

Report of 16th Management Seminar for Heads of National Statistical Offices in Asia and the Pacific:

Transforming Institutions is Transforming People

The 16th Management Seminar for Heads of National Statistical Offices in Asia and the Pacific on the theme “Transforming Institutions is Transforming People” was held virtually on 30 November - 1 December 2021.

Introduction

The Seminar brought together representatives of statistical offices from national, regional and international organizations and universities. The aim is to share knowledge and identify priority actions for member States, United Nations entities and development partners to transform human resources management and skills development efforts in NSSs to build agile, resilient and responsive statistical institutions in Asia and the Pacific for the future.

Seminar programme and presentations are available at:

https://www.unsiap.or.jp/programmes/ms_materials/ms16.html

Main recommendations

Diagnostic session: What is the problem?:

- Invest on learning and training (internal and external trainings, management training program, upgrade hard and soft skills of senior managers). Giving staff the opportunity to propose projects on how to upgrade the services provided by the NSO.
- Work closely with universities including to train current staff and recruit future staff.
- Provide incentives to employees such as paying graduate school fees, and publish articles from staff. Have committees in place that manage trainings and transfers.
- Having the civil service act which sets out the relevant rules for joining the civil service facilitating the hiring of qualified staff.
- NSOs are competing with private sector and other government agencies for talent. The reputation of NSO is that of an employer that is not doing any innovative work. Hence, there is a need to upgrade the image of the NSOs. The new trend of utilizing administrative data, big data, and GIS can be used to attract candidates with a new set of skills. In general, there is a need to build a community and have more innovative work. Collaboration with private sector can also help in this regard.
- Marketing and promotion of the job of official statistician in key; NSOs need to be responsive to market/understand user needs.
- Promotion of staff is often a lengthy process; and in some cases, there are not enough training opportunities. NSOs are also losing highly qualified staff to private sector or other government agencies that offer better compensation and have a higher profile.
- Job design/description is often difficult to update. In many countries, the public service commission does the overall recruitment (thus NSOs having a lesser voice in recruiting their own staff). This aspect also needs to be looked after.

Session A: How to innovate HR management in NSOs?

Relevance of NSOs to policy making

- Continue to be policy relevant. This is a major motivation for current and future staff to produce high quality, timely statistics.

Organization of the NSO

- Understand that the NSOs have a different identity from the non-NSO organizations and focus on increasing the staff capacity in strengthening the potential advantages (e.g., converting administrative data into useful statistics) of NSO.
- Constantly update the organization structure of the NSO to better meet current demands and in anticipation of future needs. This includes having staff with the right mix of skills; and, allowing staff at all levels to upgrade their skills in various fields of statistics. Teams can also be created to tackle new challenges faced by the NSO. Furthermore, having a flexible organization structure in place to allow for staff rotation and short-term postings can help in building capacity and increasing motivation.

Capacity building

- Provide training opportunities to staff at all levels in order to strengthen their capacity to meet new challenges and upgrade their skills. Approaches include developing education and training programme; developing medium- and long-term talent development plan; training on new topics including use of administrative data, big data and geo-spatial information. Besides training in the hard skills, it is important to provide training on soft skills (e.g. communication, team work) and management skills (e.g. project management, HR management).

Communication

- Enhance communication at all levels; provide the right physical working environment; encourage a culture of innovation, creativity and teamwork.

Engagement with others and visibility

- Engage with NSS partners and other government institutions. Potentially beneficial programmes include secondment of staff and/or NSO staff assigned to line ministries. Increasing the visibility and communicating the importance of official statistics to NSS/other government partners can be a useful tool to increase the appeal of working in the NSO.
- Engage with non-government partners, especially universities. External partnerships and engagement with non-government partners can support staff development and training; working closely with universities can help to recruit graduates (including through having degree programmes in official statistics) and provide opportunity for staff to further train and upgrade their skills. Internships can be a useful mechanism for potential future employees to experience the work environment of the NSO.
- Engage with the private sector to understand the skills that are needed for the NSO staff in producing relevant statistics and to consider this when recruiting or training staff.

- Overall NSOs should try to raise their visibility within society, to make the people know that statistics is an important part of society, thus attracting overall more interest to the field and bringing in talented people. NSOs could also expand their interactions with the press to increase their reach; similarly, increased presence on social media can allow NSOs to directly reach the public and other user groups.

Motivation

- Increase motivation of staff, including monetary and non-monetary recognition. In some countries NSOs have limited control over staffing and/or cannot provide the same compensation as other government agencies due to the legal status of the NSO. There might be a need to update the legal framework for the NSO to better manage its human and financial resources. Talent programmes and competitions can be set up to motivate staff to innovate/upgrade their skills.

Session B: How to manage human resources in support of data integration and enhanced uptake of new data sources?

- Formal orientation/training programme for all staff to ensure a common level of knowledge about data integration; offering specialized trainings, especially on new IT tools is necessary to utilize big data, administrative data, and other new data sources. Knowledge of data integration is low in line ministries and training is needed to make sure that they are aware of best practices in this area.
- Integration of different data sources requires a distinct set of hard skills (e.g. programming, data management) and soft skills (e.g., teamwork, project management); there is a need to first analyze the current capacity of staff, re-structure units within the organization to be able to take on this work, train/upgrade the skill on current staff and hire staff that has the IT skills needed for the integration of data (e.g., data engineer, data scientist, data steward, data broker, data wrangler). Determining the roles and skills needed for each staff profile facilitates recruitment. NSOs should expand their recruitments to include graduates/experts in fields such as information systems, computer programming and data science. Strengthening the NSO brand can help recruit highly qualified staff. Providing competitive compensation is key to recruiting the staff with the needed skills.
- Documentation and publishing of approaches and methodologies used in data integration serves several purposes including: increased transparency, giving colleagues within NSO and outside experts an opportunity to provide comments/suggests improvements, and, facilitates collaboration among different NSO. Creating a community of practice can also help in bringing together all the relevant partners/expertise.
- To further develop the skill of staff, especially those needed for data integration/use of new data sources, NSOs should consider job rotation programmes/secondments (within NSO as well as more broadly within government); and, allowing staff to work on large cross-cutting projects (again within NSO or more broadly within government). NSO should also consider utilizing any public sector training programs that are managed by the civil service commission (or equivalent institution in a country). In order to implement data integration and development of the staff, situation analysis of legislation, technology and human resources is required.

Session C: How to ensure gender equality in NSSs?

- Collection and dissemination of data on women's issues as well as gender disaggregated data is useful to sensitize policy makers, the public at large and other audiences. Data gaps and coordination with other ministries can be a challenge in the compilation of gender disaggregated data. Survey on gender data during COVIDd-19 crisis can be a useful tool for policy measures.
- There is a need to improve participation of women in field activities of the NSO; this can be achieved by better outreach to women at universities for example.
- International agreements, including the SDGs, and national laws, rules and regulations can serve as an impetus for countries to improve gender equality and opportunities for women within NSO staff.
- Increasing the percentage of women who are participating in trainings and providing opportunities to female staff to raise qualifications in international events, can aid in increasing the representation of women in managerial and leadership positions

Annex 1.

Sixteenth Management Seminar (Webinar) for the Heads of National Statistical Offices in Asia and the Pacific

Transforming Institutions is Transforming People

30 November and 1 December 2021, Online

CONCEPT NOTE

1. Background

Countries in Asia and the Pacific have made two umbrella commitments to transform official statistics for the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development: *“Advancing official statistics for the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development: A collective vision and framework for action by the Asia-Pacific statistical community¹”* endorsed by the Committee on Statistics at its fifth session in 2016, which focuses on strengthening national statistical systems (NSSs), and the *“Declaration on Navigating Policy with Data to Leave No One Behind²”* endorsed by the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) at its seventy-fifth session in 2019, which focuses on whole-of-government support to NSSs.

The collective vision and framework for action includes five action areas of which Action Area E is dedicated to human resources management and skills building: which is having requisite skills sets. Here, the statistical community of Asia-Pacific states: *“Any organization is only as good as the people who work for it.”* And, further, *“In addition to the lack of staff and the challenges to attracting and retaining talent, the need to diversify the traditional skills base in statistical organizations to include expertise on management, communication, coordination, ICT, and data mining are emphasized in the transformative 2030 Agenda. The need for multi-disciplinary expertise is added to the basket in recognition of current inability to produce statistics for integrated policy analysis.”*

In August 2020, the Committee on Statistics, ESCAP decided (decision 5) that the strengthening of national statistical offices, including the development of training and train-the-trainer programmes to address skill gaps in line with the 2030 Agenda, should be among the priorities of the Committee. The Committee also decided (decision 2) to advance the mainstreaming of gender in its work.³

The 2021 Management Seminar is organized to take forward these decisions as they pertain to human resources management in National Statistical Offices (NSOs). The outcomes of the Management Seminar will be reported to the Committee at its eighth session, scheduled to be held in August 2022.

¹ [https://undocs.org/en/E/ESCAP/CST\(5\)/1/REV.1](https://undocs.org/en/E/ESCAP/CST(5)/1/REV.1)

² https://www.unescap.org/sites/default/files/ESCAP_CST_2018_7_Declaration.pdf

³ ESCAP/CST/2020/6

Sessions of the Management Seminar will be organized with reference to the Handbook on Management and Organization of National Statistical Systems.⁴

2. Objectives

The aim is to share knowledge and identify priority actions for member States, United Nations entities and development partners to transform human resources management and skills development efforts in NSSs to build agile, resilient and responsive statistical institutions in Asia and the Pacific for the future.

Diagnostic session: What is the problem?

Agile, resilient and responsible institutions are underpinned by their staff. The session will debate to what extent human resources management in NSOs contributes to agile, resilient and responsible institutions. Panelists are invited to reflect on what they do well and what they need to improve in their current human resources management, for example with respect to job design, recruitment, hiring and selection, diversity, training and development, compensation and benefits, promotion, performance management, managerial relations, etc.

Session A: How to innovate human resources management in NSSs?

Innovative human resources management forms part of the efforts of NSOs to respond more effectively and efficiently to the new policy requirements and become more flexible in addressing the challenges confronting their operations for producing statistics. Participants are expected to discuss the following topics.

- Which skills do we need now and in 2030?
- How do we attract staff with such skills, or develop those skills among existing staff?
- What can the NSO/NSS offer to staff?
- How do we communicate job opportunities internally and externally?
- How do we train staff and develop their skills?
- How do we create an attractive working environment?

Session B: How to manage human resources in support of data integration and enhanced uptake of new data sources?

NSSs need new data sources and data integration among varied data sets. Human resources management needs to evolve to employ those with new knowledge and/or to nourish/train staff to obtain them. Participants are expected to discuss the following topics.

- Are we getting people/staff who are interested in and have the required skills to work across teams and organizations?
- Are we attracting or developing knowledge and expertise related to data integration, IT systems integration/engineering/inter-operability?
- Are we attracting or developing expertise on conceptual and methodological aspects of integration?
- Are staff recognized by management and peers for their ability to work across teams and experiment with multi-domain statistics?

⁴ Beta version 2.3 of the handbook is available at <https://unstats.un.org/capacity-development/handbook/index.cshtml>

- Is recognition primarily given to staff who are doing well as “traditional” statisticians such as contributing to the “stove-pipe” business process model and survey-in to product-out?

Session C: How to ensure gender equality in NSSs?

SDG Target 5.5 is to ensure women’s full and effective participation and equal opportunities for leadership at all levels of decision-making in political, economic and public life. The ESCAP Committee on Statistics in 2020 decided to advance the mainstreaming of gender in its work. Though NSSs are promoting gender equality, the gender composition is still different among countries and gender gaps exist in opportunities of work in some levels and areas. For human resources policy to ensure diversity, strong and consistent leadership against tradition is significant. This area highlights on human resources management from the aspect of gender equality.

3. Annotated agenda

30 November 2021

Tokyo Time	Items
14:00-14:10	Opening
14:10-15:00	Diagnostic Session: Panel Discussion
15:00-15:50	Session A: Presentation and Discussion

1 December 2021

Tokyo Time	Items
14:00-14:50	Session B: Presentation and Discussion
14:50-15:40	Session C: Presentation and Discussion
15:40-16:00	Evaluation and Break
16:00-16:10	Summary, Recommendation and Closing

4. Target Participants

The seminar is designed for Heads of NSOs in the Asia-Pacific region and participants of Human Resources departments/units nominated for the event.

5. Expected Output of the Seminar

The management seminar will be to:

- Identify good practices of human resources management and skills development efforts in NSOs
- Identify future steps that should be taken to lead to innovative human resources management in NSOs

Annex 2.

16th Management Seminar for Heads of National Statistical Offices in Asia and the Pacific
Transforming Institutions is Transforming People

Online, 30 November - 1 December 2021

Provisional PROGRAMME

Tokyo Time	Sessions	
DAY 1: 30 November 2021		
14:00-14:10	Opening	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Welcome message from ESCAP • A portrait of statistician (Video) 	<p>Mr. Kaveh Zahedi <i>Deputy Executive Secretary, ESCAP</i></p> <p>Ms. Rikke Munk Hansen <i>Chief, Economic and Environment Statistics Section, Statistics Division, ESCAP</i></p>
14:10-15:00	Diagnostic session: What is the problem?	
	<p>Agile, resilient and responsible institutions are underpinned by their staff. The session will debate to what extent human resources management in NSOs contributes to agile, resilient and responsible institutions.</p> <p>Panelists are invited to reflect on</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> i. what they do well, and ii. what they need to improve <p>in their current human resources management, for example with respect to job design, recruitment, hiring and selection, diversity, training and development, compensation and benefits, promotion, performance management, managerial relations, etc.</p>	<p>Session Moderator: Ms. Rikke Munk Hansen</p> <p>Panelists:</p> <p>Mr. Hem Raj Regmi <i>Deputy Director General, Central Bureau of Statistics, Nepal</i></p> <p>Mr. Ilya Matyushev <i>Deputy Director of International Statistics Department, Federal State Statistics Service, Russian Federation</i></p> <p>Mr. Prasad Anura Kumara Palamullalage <i>Director General, Department of Census and Statistics, Sri Lanka</i></p> <p>Mr. Elias Dos Santos Ferreira <i>Director General of Statistics, Timor-Leste</i></p>

15:00-15:50	Session A: How to innovate human resources management in NSSs?	
	<p>Innovative human resources management forms part of the efforts of NSOs to respond more effectively and efficiently to the new policy requirements and become more flexible in addressing the challenges confronting their operations for producing statistics. Participants are expected to discuss the following topics.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Which skills do we need now and in 2030? - How do we attract staff with such skills, or develop those skills among existing staff? - What can the NSO/NSS offer to staff? - How do we communicate job opportunities internally and externally? - How do we train staff and develop their skills? - How do we create an attractive working environment? 	<p>Session Moderator: Ms. Shailja Sharma <i>Director, SIAP</i></p> <p>Presentations: Mr. Lin Tao <i>Deputy Commissioner of National Bureau of Statistics of China</i></p> <p>Mr. Mohd Uzir Mahidin <i>Chief Statistician, Malaysia</i></p> <p>Ms. Aishath Hassan <i>Chief Statistician, Maldives Bureau of Statistics</i></p> <p>Mr. Javad Hosseinzadeh <i>Deputy Vice President for Plan and Budget Organization and Head, Statistical Centre of Iran (Video)</i></p>
Day 2: 1 December 2021		
14:00-14:50	Session B: How to manage human resources in support of data integration and enhanced uptake of new data sources?	
	<p>NSSs need new data sources and data integration among varied data sets. Human resources management needs to evolve to employ those with new knowledge and/or to nourish/train staff to obtain them. Participants are expected to discuss the following topics.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Are we getting people/staff who are interested in and have the required skills to work across teams and organizations? - Are we attracting or developing knowledge and expertise related to data integration, IT systems integration/engineering/inter-operability? - Are we attracting or developing expertise on conceptual and methodological aspects of integration? - Are staff recognized by management and peers for their ability to work across teams and experiment with multi-domain statistics? - Is recognition primarily given to staff who are doing well as “traditional” statisticians such as contributing to the “stove-pipe” business process model and survey-in to product-out? 	<p>Session Moderator: Ms. Hataichanok Chinauparwat <i>Director of Statistical Forecasting Division, National Statistical Office, Thailand</i></p> <p>Presentations: Mr. Batdavaa Batmunkh <i>Chairman, National Statistics Office of Mongolia</i></p> <p>Ms. Seet Chia Sing <i>Director, Human Resource, Singapore Department of Statistics</i></p> <p>Mr. Gary Dunnet <i>Deputy Chief Methodologist, Stats NZ</i></p>

14:50-15:40	Session C: How to ensure gender equality in NSSs?	
	<p>SDG Target 5.5 is to ensure women’s full and effective participation and equal opportunities for leadership at all levels of decision-making in political, economic and public life. The ESCAP Committee on Statistics in 2020 decided to advance the mainstreaming of gender in its work.</p> <p>Though NSSs are promoting gender equality, the gender composition is still different among countries and gender gaps exist in opportunities of work in some levels and areas. For human resources policy to ensure diversity, strong and consistent leadership against tradition is significant. This area highlights on human resources management from the aspect of gender equality.</p>	<p>Session Moderator: Ms. Orié Hirano <i>Director for International Statistical Affairs, Office of Director- General for Policy Planning on Statistical Policy, Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications, Japan</i></p> <p>Presentations: Ms. R. Savithri <i>Additional Director General, National Statistical Office, Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation, India</i></p> <p>Mr. Bakhodir Begalov <i>Chairman, The State Committee of the Republic of Uzbekistan on Statistics</i></p> <p>Mr. Leota Aliielua Salani <i>Acting Government Statistician, Samoa Bureau of Statistics</i></p>
Evaluation and Break		
16:00-16:10	Closing	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recommendations • Closing message 	<p>Ms. Shailja Sharma <i>Director, SIAP</i></p>

Annex 3.

List of Participants

Country/Area	Name
China	Ms Song Shaoying
	Mr Tao Lin
Georgia	Mr Paata Shavishvili
India	Ms R. Savithri
	Mr Himmat Raghav
	Mr Cyriac George
Iran (Islamic Republic of)	Mr Javad Hosseinzadeh
	Mr Seyed Nematollah Mirfallah Nassiri
	Mr Ashkan Shabbak
	Mr Arash Fazeli
Japan	Ms Orié Hirano
	Mr Tohru Tachibana
	Ms Satoko Kouga
	Ms Chika Haruna
	Ms Ayano Yoshinaga
	Mr Katsuhiko Ueyama
Mr Hiroaki Sumida	
Iran (Islamic Republic of)	Ms Atiyeh Faghieh Khoushabi
Kazakhstan	Mr Zhasser Jarkinbayev
Lao People's Democratic Republic	Ms Chanthapany Mahathilath
	Ms Minilath Chanthabounxay
Malaysia	Mr Mohd Uzir Mahidin
	Mr Mohd Ridaudin Masud
	Ms Siti Zakiah Muhamad Isa
Maldives	Ms Aishath Hassan
	Ms Fathimath Rifahath
Mongolia	Mr Batdavaa Batmunkh
	Mr Batbuyan Ganbaatar
Nepal	Mr Hem Raj Regmi
New Zealand	Mr Gary Dunnet
Philippines	Mr Leo Malagar
	Mr Benjamin Arsenio Navarro
Republic of Korea	Ms Jaemin Na
Russian Federation	Mr Ilya Matyushev
Samoa	Mr Leota Aliielua Salani
	Ms Ailepata Simanu
Singapore	Mr Edmond Lee
	Ms Chia Sing Seet
Sri Lanka	Mr Prasad Anura Kumara Palamullalage
Thailand	Ms Hataichanok Chinauparwat
	Ms Yaowapa Maneechai
	Ms Tittita Aungabsee
Timor-Leste	Mr Elias Dos Santos Ferreira
Turkey	Mr Gürdal Gedik
Uzbekistan	Mr Bakhodir Begalov
	Mr Odiljon Mamadaliyev
Viet Nam	Ms Huong Nguyen Thi
	Ms Ha Hoang Thi Thanh
Hong Kong, China	Ms Shui-yu, Marion Chan

International/Regional Organizations/University		Name
ASEAN		Mr Anang Laksono
FAO		Ms Sangita Dubey
ILO		Mr Rafael Diez de Medina
		Mr Tite Habiyakare
PARIS21		Mr Philippe Gafishi
		Ms Catherine Krüger
SESRIC		Mr Atilla Karaman
UNCTAD		Ms Anu Peltola
UNICEF		Mr Jayachandran Vasudevan
		Mr Achraf Mrabet
UNSD		Mr Gabriel Gamez
UN-Women		Ms Sara Duerto Valero
University of the Philippines Los Banos		Ms Zita Albacea
ESCAP		Mr Kaveh Zahedi
		Ms Rachael Beaven
		Ms Rikke Munk Hansen
		Ms Petra Nahmias
		Ms Sharita Serrao
		Ms Afsaneh Yazdani
		Mr Alick Mjuma Nyasulu
		Mr David Rausis
		Ms Wanaporn Sridama
		SIAP
Mr Makoto Shimizu		
Ms Pinar Ucar		
Mr Sokol Vako		
Mr Christophe Bontemps		
Ms Sinovia Moonie		
Ms Ni Ni Thein		
Ms Eunyoung Lee		
Ms Akiyo Shibuya		
Mr Shuji Fukuyama		