
Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific

Statistical Institute for Asia and the Pacific

Governing Council

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New training-related challenges

New Training-related Challenges²

Note by the secretariat

Training modality challenge

1. Usually blended, or hybrid learning refers to a combination of traditional face-to-face classroom teaching methods and online learning platforms. This can mean traditional live instructors teaching some courses while self-paced modules are used for other training topics, or an online curriculum paired with on-the-job training or mentoring. However, during the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic, a different sort of blended learning has evolved: blended online learning which is a combination of self-paced courses and virtual instructor led training.

2. During the pandemic, most of the events organized by the Institute were held online, and visual and interactive web-based statistical training sessions were developed. As pandemic-related restrictions have eased, some countries and organizations are once again participating in face-to-face and hybrid events. The new normal i.e. a blend of face-to-face and hybrid training will increase efficiency, reduce travel costs and the UN's climate footprint and be more inclusive and reach audiences who typically would not attend face-to-face events.

3. As such there is a need to discuss the best modality for conducting trainings in the Institute in future, that is, whether in-person, online or hybrid or a blend of all these as per requirement and the topic of the course. The use of materials which will enrich the quality of the trainings such as micro learning videos, webinars or any other facility deemed fit for enhancing the quality of virtual training programs also need to be discussed. Training modalities that are most appropriate for the future also need to be discussed.

¹ E/ESCAP/SIAP/GC/2022/L.1

² Issued without formal editing

Training design challenge

4. Blended learning methodologies for capacity development³ introduced new approaches that use real-time data to iteratively design, measure and improve learning are increasingly being used. This allows for making changes to the training while it happens, and is well suited for modular, bitesize and continuous learning opportunities. It is also easier to incorporate data driven learning design into online platforms due to the data being generated on the online platforms such as: (a) User demographics, e.g. location, (b) Training type, e.g. online, blended, (c) Training history data, e.g. training registrations, completions, (d) Aggregated evaluation data, e.g. overall satisfaction with certain types of methodologies, (e) User engagement data, e.g. how long users spent on a training or dropped out. Data will be useful not only for statistics but also for statistical training.

5. Some member states need a predictable training schedule from the Institute so that advance preparations can be made at their end. However, it may be noted that statistical training needs often appear unexpectedly (e.g. telephone surveys during the pandemic). In such cases, identifying appropriate training methodologies in a limited time frame poses a challenge. The system for organizing training sessions needs to be discussed so as to better meet recent needs, including the need to balance communication and flexibility.

Training topic challenge

6. The demand for data and statistics on policy and development priorities continues to grow, spurred by a steadily better informed and educated population, information technology and data developments, and evolving interest and demand from decision-makers and electorates to use evidence to shape policy. Global agendas, such as the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the Paris Agreement, the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015–2030 and the Convention on Biological Diversity, with their focus on developing monitoring frameworks, have created a complementary pull effect that has further increased the demand for statistics and well-functioning national data coordination and quality assurance. These developments are positive but challenging for national statistical offices and national statistical systems.

7. As for the topics of training sessions, new areas of statistics have emerged recently. For example, the bureau of the Committee on Statistics, Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific has identified measuring progress beyond gross domestic product as an emerging priority issue for the Asia-Pacific region. While this topic is already under discussion among statistical and other communities, some elements are dependent on capacity-building. Training course on informality was and will be organized in person with International Labour Organization. E-learning courses on environment statistics such as System of Economic and Environment Account and climate change have been organized during 2021 and 2022, Nevertheless, there may be the other topics, such as well-being and unpaid household activities, that should be highlighted for training in the future.

Action requested from the Council

8. The Governing Council may wish to provide comments and guidance on these new training-related challenges.

³ Issued by Economic and Social entities of the UN Secretariat in 2020