ESCAP
Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific

Asia-Pacific STATISTICS WEEK
Building Trust in Official Statistics
30 November - 4 December 2026

CONCEPT NOTE

Building Trust in Official Statistics in a Digital Society

21st SIAP Management Seminar

Statistical Institute for Asia and the Pacific (SIAP)
1 December 2026 (10:00 a.m. to 05:00 p.m. UTC+7)
UN Conference Centre, Bangkok

Background

The annual SIAP Management Seminars aim to strengthen the leadership and management capabilities of heads and senior managers of national statistical offices in Asia and the Pacific.

Bearing in mind the theme of the tenth session of the Committee on Statistics, *building trust in official statistics in a digital society*, the 21st SIAP Management Seminar focuses on applying the dimensions of trustworthiness—credibility, transparency, accessibility and ethical integrity—to leadership decisions and practical institutional improvements. The Seminar is organized to help statistical leaders examine how the four dimensions of trustworthiness are affected by digital transformation, exchange institutional responses, and identify practical measures to strengthen and sustain trust in official statistics as data ecosystems become more digital and interconnected.

The seminar will examine issues including:

- Strengthening implementation of the Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics, including safeguarding professional independence, impartiality, scientific integrity, statistical confidentiality and privacy as digital data sharing, cybersecurity threats and partnerships with data holders expand;

- Improving the visibility, accessibility and appropriate interpretation of official statistics, with clear metadata, sources, and limitations, in increasingly complex digital information environments;

- Responding to rapid and wide online circulation, misuse, misinterpretation and misrepresentation of official statistics, including through effective communication, timely clarification, and proactive user engagement;

- Promoting responsible innovation in the use of artificial intelligence, new technologies and data sources while safeguarding trustworthiness in official statistics;

- Identifying leadership and organizational actions, capacity needs and opportunities for national and regional collaboration to strengthen trustworthiness in official statistics.

The seminar will draw on the experiences of participating heads of national statistical offices and international experts. Through peer learning and facilitated exercises, participants will reflect on their own institutional context and identify practical follow-up actions.

The seminar is organized jointly by the ESCAP Statistical Institute for Asia and the Pacific (SIAP) and Statistics Division.

Objectives

Trust in official statistics is a strategic asset of national statistical systems and a prerequisite for their effective use in policymaking and public discourse. Rapid technological change, increasing use of artificial intelligence, the growing diversity of data sources, information providers, and digital platforms are reshaping how statistics are produced, disseminated, encountered, and used. These developments create opportunities for more timely, accessible and relevant statistics, but also specific challenges for maintaining confidence in official statistics.

Recent regional discussions have emphasized the importance of strengthening trustworthiness through the continued implementation of the Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics and through measures that reinforce credibility, transparency, accessibility and ethical integrity. National statistical offices are increasingly called upon not only to

produce high-quality statistics but also to demonstrate trustworthiness through professional independence, quality assurance, effective communication, responsible data stewardship and appropriate use of new technologies.

The tenth session of the Committee on Statistics will consider building trust in official statistics in a digital society as a priority topic for regional discussion and cooperation. Complementing that discussion, the Management Seminar will provide a practical leadership forum for heads and senior managers of national statistical offices to examine country experiences, consider institutional measures they can lead, and identify practical actions to strengthen trustworthiness across national statistical systems. Insights on common capacity gaps and effective approaches will also inform SIAP's implementation of its Strategic Plan 2025–2029 and areas for regional peer learning and cooperation.

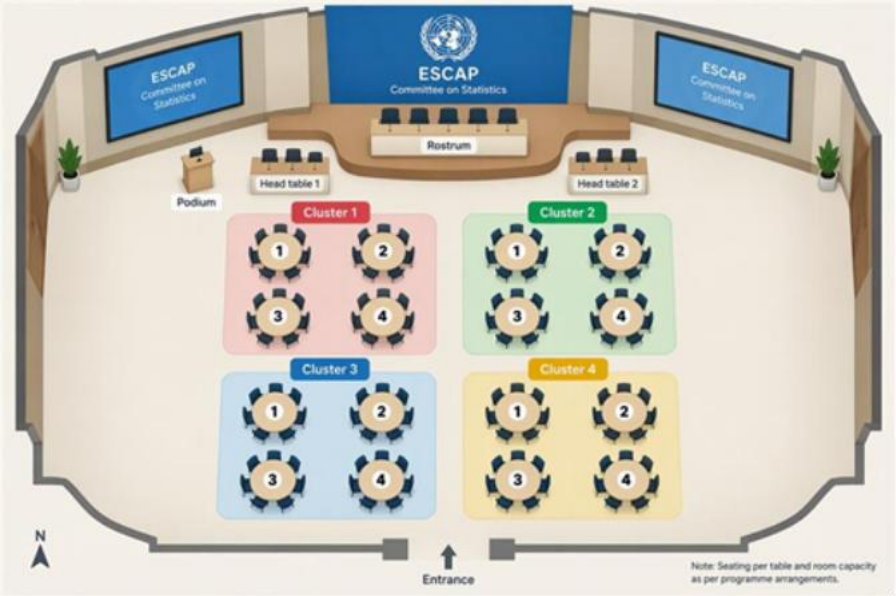
Participation

The Seminar is open to all participants in Asia-Pacific Statistics Week, with discussions designed particularly for heads and senior managers of national statistical offices. Participants are encouraged to share country experiences and, where possible, identify practical management measures applicable to their own institutional context.

Logistics

We expect around 120 participants. There will be four clusters with four tables in each cluster as shown below.

There will be free seating, and we will move people around during the day. Note some participants may bring an interpreter and will therefore move together with the interpreter.



Draft Programme

Time	Agenda
10:00–10:45	**SESSION 1: SETTING THE SCENE: BUILDING TRUST IN OFFICIAL STATISTICS IN A DIGITAL SOCIETY** MC: Rikke Hansen **Opening remarks:** Ms. Lin Yang, Deputy Executive Secretary, ESCAP **Seminar objectives:** Ms. Jessamyn Encarnacion, Director, SIAP, ESCAP **Format:** Plenary exercise - The Statistical Trust Line **Facilitator**: Ms. Jessamyn Encarnacion, Director, SIAP, ESCAP An interactive exercise exploring the tensions and trade-offs facing NSOs, in building and maintaining trust in a digital society. Partcipants will consider issues ranging from trust and independence to transparency, innovation and the continuing relevance of the Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics.
10:45–12:00	**SESSION 2: TRUST UNDER PRESSURE: LEADERSHIP DILEMMAS FOR HEADS OF NATIONAL STATISTICAL OFFICES** **Facilitator**: Ms. Rachael Beaven, Director, Statistics Division, ESCAP **Framing remarks**: Lisa Bersales, Undersecretary for Population and Development of the Philippines and Paul Cheung, academic and policy leader at National University of Singapore, will each share a leadership experience in which trust was at stake. **Format: Table Discussions on Managing leadership dilemmas** Working through scenarios, participants will explore how statistical leaders navigate complex decisions and competing priorities. Each table will consider the decisions to be made, the principles guiding them, the trade-offs involved and the institutional changes needed for the future. Participants will reflect on what these dilemmas reveal about leadership for trust and identify practical safeguards and leadership actions that could be adapted for use within their own institutions.
12:00–13:00	***GROUP PHOTO FOLLOWED BY LUNCH (COURTESY OF SIAP)***
13:00- 14:45	**SESSION 3: STRATEGIES FOR STRENGTHENING TRUSTWORTHINESS IN OFFICIAL STATISTICS** **Facilitator**: Ms Rikke Hansen, Statistics Division, ESCAP **Format:** World Stats Café – exploring four themes: A. **Looking through a glass onion? …** Transparency about digital methods, metadata, revisions, and uncertainty. B. **We are here! Where? …** Discoverability, attribution, and communication. C. **Only used statistics are good statistics …** Accessible, understandable, and useful for diverse digital users D. **Say again? …** Responding to online misuse and strengthening user interpretation and statistical literacy. The session will begin with brief reflections by Lisa Bersales and Paul Cheung to introduce the themes, followed by a World Stats Café in which participants

	rotate between four discussion groups to exchange ideas and identify practical strategies for strengthening trustworthiness.
14:45- 15:15	***COFFEE BREAK***
15:15- 16:00	**SESSION 4: WHY TRUST IS LOST AND HOW IT IS REBUILT** **Facilitator**: TBD **Format:** Peer learning and experience-sharing exercise Participants will begin by sharing real experiences of when trust in official statistics was lost or challenged, first in pairs and then in table discussions to identify broader lessons and principles. They will explore what builds and sustains trust, and which leadership actions and institutional investments make a difference. The session will conclude with feedback from each cluster, highlighting practical actions to prevent a loss of trust and rebuild it when damaged.
16:00-17:00	**SESSION 5: FROM REFLECTION TO ACTION** **Facilitator:** Ms. Jessamyn Encarnacion, Director, SIAP, ESCAP **Format: Sub-Regional Feedback and Action-setting Exercise.** Participants will come together in their respective five sub-regional groups to reflect on the key messages and lessons from the management seminar. Each group will identify up to three priority actions to strengthen the four dimensions of trustworthiness, together with one opportunity for regional cooperation. Each group will capture its key messages and proposed actions on a flipchart. One representative from each sub-region will share the group's feedback with the committee on statistics during a strategic dialogue under agenda item 3(a). **Concluding remarks:** Rachael Beaven, Director Statistics Division, ESCAP

Reference materials

ESCAP/CST(10)/4: Building trust in official statistics in a digital society. Available at ESCAP/CST(10)/4: Building trust in official statistics in a digital society

Building trust in official Statistics in a digital society, ESCAP Working Paper, 2026. Retrieved from Building trust in official statistics in a digital society | ESCAP

General Assembly Resolution A/RES/68/261 (29 January 2014): United Nations Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics. Retrieved from Document Viewer

Generic Law of Official Statistics, UN-ECE, 2016. Retrieved from Generic Law on Official Statistics | UNECE

Handbook on Management and Organization of National Statistical Systems, UN-DESA, 2025. Retrieved from Handbook on Management and Organization of National Statistical Systems — Capacity Development // UNSD

Registration

Invited participants are kindly requested to register on Indico at https://indico.un.org/event/1023597/ or via the QR code.

For information, please contact Ms. Rikke Munk Hansen, Chief, Economic and Environment Statistics, Statistics Division, ESCAP at hansenrm@un.org.

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