UNITED NATIONS
ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMISSION FOR ASIA AND THE PACIFIC

STATISTICAL INSTITUTE FOR ASIA AND THE PACIFIC (SIAP)

CONCEPT NOTE

Regional Course on Statistical Business Registers:
Making a Business Case for an Operational Statistical Business Register

26 – 30 January 2015
Perak, Malaysia

I.   BACKGROUND & RATIONALE

The statistical business register (SBR) plays an essential role in the construction and maintenance of an integrated economic information system, serving multiple purposes. One of these objectives is to provide quality data needed for the compilation of national accounts indicators. The growing demand for better and more detailed business statistics has put focus on statistical business registers (SBRs) and their role in the production of business statistics. While traditionally the primary role of SBRs has been to provide sampling frames for business statistics, SBRs of today often include more information so that they can be used in their own right as a source from which to derive harmonised business and industrial statistics that conform to global classification systems. SBRs have also proved to be central to efforts of statistical offices to reduce response burden, better utilise administrative data sources and for combining survey data and administrative data.

In developing the *Regional Programme for the Improvement of Economic Statistics in Asia and the Pacific* (RPES), ESCAP undertook in depth country assessments on the ability of 49 member countries and territories to produce a minimum core set of economic statistics. SBRs emerged as one key statistical infrastructure that needs to be established or strengthened in half of the surveyed countries. Consequently, one of the goals of the RPES is to increase the availability of appropriate and properly maintained SBRs.

As part of institutional capacity building for SBRs, the Statistical Institute for Asia and the Pacific (SIAP) in collaboration with the Malaysia Department of Statistics and the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) will organize a regional training course on statistical business registers in Perak, Malaysia from 26 to 30 January 2015.

II.   OBJECTIVES OF THE COURSE

The course aims to provide a platform for demonstrating good practices and exchanging experiences in dealing with challenges and issues in the development, maintenance and use of statistical business registers and for developing a business case for supporting an operational SBR suitable to national contexts.

III.   LEARNING OUTCOMES

The training course is designed to assist participants in identifying practical approaches and solutions to key issues and problems in establishing, maintaining and fully utilizing SBRs that are relevant to the current state of SBR implementation in their statistical system. Specifically, as a result of the course participants are expected to be able to:

(a) Specify/assess outputs, uses and users of their SBR and mechanisms for ensuring confidentiality, access and effective dissemination of SBR information;

(b) Specify/assess/improve coverage, units, content and data sources of their SBRs;

(c) Specify/assess/improve maintenance procedures of their SBR;

(d) Take action to better assure and measure quality of their SBRs;

(e) Assess IT requirements for their SBR system

(f) Develop a business case for establishing or strengthening their national SBRs.

IV.   TARGET PARTICIPANTS

The Workshop is designed for senior and middle level statisticians from national statistical offices whose main responsibilities include the conceptualization, development and maintenance of SBRs; preparation and use of sampling frames for business surveys; or production of statistics from SBRs.   Approximately 30 participants (including 11 local participants) are expected to attend the workshop from: Bangladesh, Bhutan, Cambodia, China, Fiji, Hong Kong (China), India, Indonesia, Lao PDR, Malaysia, Myanmar, Philippines, Singapore, Sri Lanka, Thailand, and Viet Nam. The statistical offices invited represent a mix of those with well-functioning SBRs, those with SBRs that need to be improved and those in the process of developing SBRs.

V.   COURSE DESIGN and CONTENT

The course is comprised of six modules. Each module will consist of (a) a trigger presentation to introduce the main topic and related issues/problems; (b) illustrative good practices from resource persons presenting practical approaches and solutions to the issues/problems; (c) sharing of relevant country experiences and concerns; and (d) plenary discussions.

To facilitate exchange of experiences, **each participant will need to submit a country paper on or before 5 January 2015 to staff@unsiap.or.jp**. *For countries with existing SBRs*, the paper should describe (a) the national SBR; (b) main challenges encountered and actions taken in developing and maintaining the SBR; and (c) ongoing issues and problems. *For countries without existing SBRs*, the paper should describe (a) plans for establishing an SBR and (b) expected challenges in developing and establishing the SBR.

Course Outline

Module	Topics
Module 0: What is a statistical business register (SBR)?	Presentation and demonstrations of SBRs
Module 1: Understanding the role of SBRs	• Outputs, uses and users of SBRs • Issues: confidentiality; access; and dissemination
Module 2: Design considerations	• Conceptual issues: coverage; units; characteristics of units (content/variables): ID, start/end dates; economic variables; stratification/classification variables; etc) • Selection of data sources and issues: administrative sources; statistical sources; other sources
Module 3: Issues in maintaining SBRs	• Principles of maintenance • Handling of changes in variables (births; deaths; activities; classification; etc), population; demographics and continuity
Module 4: Issues in assuring quality of SBRs	• Errors • Quality criteria and measurement
Module 5: Issues in establishing an SBR	• Organizational and operational issues (data providers; institutional cooperation; etc) • SBR system and information technology requirements
Module 6: Developing a business case	• Putting together the "Who, why, what and how" • Strategic planning