

REPORT OF THE SECOND MEETING OF THE NETWORK FOR THE COORDINATION OF STATISTICAL TRAINING IN ASIA AND THE PACIFIC

4 March 2016

SIAP, 4TH Floor JETRO-IDE Building, Chiba, Japan

SUMMARY

In March 2016, the Second Meeting for the Coordination of the Network was held in Chiba, Japan which was attended by eighteen participants from thirteen member States and two international organizations. The meeting reviewed and updated its work programme including that of the Sub-group on Agricultural and Rural Statistics. In the meeting the 2016-17 work programme of the Network was formulated with the following three focus outputs:

- Identified training gaps in understanding, measuring and monitoring SDGs;
- Database of compiled training resources that is accessible to the Network members; and
- Common curriculum for priority statistical training on agricultural and rural statistics.

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I. BACKGROUND

1. The ESCAP Committee on Statistics, at its third session, decided to establish a Network for the Coordination of Statistical Training in Asia and the Pacific (which will be referred to in this document as the Network) and tasked SIAP to facilitate its work. The inception and organizational meeting of the Network was held during 22 to 24 April 2014 in Chiba, Japan. As part of its work programme, the Network established a Sub-group on Agricultural and Rural Statistics (which will be referred to in this document as the Sub-group) mandated to develop necessary tools and methods for training needs assessment on the area of agriculture and rural statistics to be utilized by training providers in the region to build human capacity on generating agricultural and rural statistics.
2. The organizational meeting of the Sub-group was held during 2 to 4 September 2014 in Tsukuba, Japan. The Sub-group formulated its terms of reference and decided on a set of activities with corresponding work plan to guide its operations. The Sub-group requested the network for the formalization and finalization of its terms of reference.
3. The Second Meeting of the Network was convened on 4 March 2016 to review and update its work programme, including that of the Sub-group, and discuss and make decisions on the following:
 - Extending its work to other areas of official statistics
 - Establishing a database on experts and training resources on official statistics
 - Programme for certifying trainers and training institutes on official statistics

II. DECISION AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE MEETING

- A. Terms of Reference of the Sub-group on Agricultural and Rural Statistics.
 4. The terms of reference of the Sub-group on Agricultural and Rural Statistics under the Network for the Coordination of Statistical Training in the Asia and the Pacific was unanimously endorsed.
- B. 2016-17 Work Programme of the Network
 5. The Network formulated its work programme for 2016 – 2017. Table 1 presents an output-based work plan that defines the outputs and corresponding activities that will lead to obtain

the outputs, list of members who have volunteered to be part of the lead group for the activities and corresponding time frame.

Table 1. Output-based Work Programme of the Network for 2016-2017.

OUTPUTS	ACTIVITIES	PARTNERS	TIMEFRAME
1- Identified training gaps in understanding, measuring and monitoring SDGs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Members assess training needs on SDGs at national level • SIAP shares good practices on country assessments 	SIAP, Philippines, Thailand, Bangladesh, Pakistan, India, Indonesia	Apr–Dec 2016
2- Database of training resources compiled and accessed by the Network members	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a concept note for a prototype for the database design (including specifications of credentials, resource materials) • Create a beta version of the database of resources with contribution from the Network members (on SIAP website) • A task team reviews existing certification programme (SESRIC,...) and formulate recommendation 	Japan, SIAP, India, Malaysia, Philippines, Russia, WBG Team: Malaysia, Bangladesh, Iran, Indonesia, Pakistan	Apr 2016-June 2017 July-Dec 2017 Apr-Dec 2016
3-Common curriculum for priority statistical training on agricultural and rural statistics (ARS)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pilot testing of TNA tools • Development of training curricula for ARS 	FAO, ESCAP, ADB, Lao PDR (pilot country), India, Viet Nam, Iran?	April-Dec 2016 Jan-Dec 2017

6. The Network also recommended enhancing and strengthening the human resources of SIAP in order to promote the activities of the Network as SIAP serves the secretariat of the Network.

III. SUMMARY OF PROCEEDINGS

A. Agenda Item 1: Opening of the Meeting

7. The meeting adopted the agenda. (*Annex I: Agenda of the Second Meeting of the Network*)

B. Agenda Item 2: Review of the Programme of Work of the Network

8. The Secretariat explained briefly the implementation of the work programme of the Network for 2014–2015, and emphasized that the Governing Council of SIAP recognized the importance of coordination of statistical training as well as facilitating the mobilization of training resources across in the region.
9. A representative of Japan noted that there were no remarkable activities of the Network other than the creation of the Sub-group on Agricultural and Rural Statistics since its establishment. Japan emphasized the necessity to enhance and strengthen human resources of SIAP in order to promote the activities of the Network. The representative noted that the Government of Japan provided an adequate cash contribution which could cover the cost of SIAP staff members including the current two vacant posts for lecturers, and such vacant posts should be filled as soon as possible as per recommendation in the eleventh session of SIAP Governing Council. Japan also noted that the Network should request this matter to the ESCAP Committee on Statistics and SIAP.
10. The terms of reference for the Sub-group was endorsed with no amendments. However, there were inquiries from the representatives of India and Malaysia about the size and the process to be a member of the Sub-group. The Secretariat replied that the size of the Sub-group were assumed about 10 to 15 and membership to the Sub-group is through invitation to be sent by the Network's Secretariat.

C. Agenda Item 3: Expanding the Network's Work to Other Areas of Official Statistics

11. At the beginning of the session, the following three presentations relevant to the topic were made.

- “Global Coordination of Statistical Training” by Mr. Chris Ryan, Statistics Division, ESCAP
 - “Tackling the Twin Goals and SDGs with Household Surveys - World Bank Survey Initiative” by Mr. Olivier Dupriez, World Bank
 - “Subjects and Happenings in Official Statistics” by Mr. Arman Bidarbakht Nia, SIAP
12. Taking into account the presentations, the meeting discussed about priority areas which require immediate actions for coordination of training by the Network. Main comments from the participants of the meeting were as follows.
- On the global network, the issue that was raised is that the global network is an idea worthwhile but it needs to have a bottom-up approach i.e. the initiatives of the global network should be regional or country driven and priorities of the region should be communicated to the global network. It is important the regional network should stay fully operational to ensure training developments address regional considerations.
 - Issues of language in the design of network activities were also raised by some participants given the diversity of languages in the region. The representative of Russia pointed out that a regional network could better address the language problems associated with conducting trainings for countries covering many different languages.
 - World Bank made their presentation highlighting the new multi-topic household surveys. World Bank also indicated its keenness to build partnerships and highlighted development of training manuals and promoting their use, which would be an area they could work in regional initiatives such as the Network.
13. The meeting selected four priority areas listed below for further discussion in relation to the future activities of the Network. The participants were divided to four groups and each group discussed a particular topic.
- Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)
 - Civil Registry and Vital Statistics (CRVS)
 - Economic Statistics
 - Household Surveys
14. Main points of the group discussions are as follows.

Sustainable Development Goals: Linkages of various statistics should be established to ensure they support SDG indicators. Given the explanation about SDG indicators at global level, goal specific training will be needed at global and regional level. To facilitate it, linkage between global and regional network is needed. To address issues related to SDGs should be a priority of the Network's work programme.

Civil Registry and Vital Statistics: A priority area of demographic and health statistics is gap analysis on health indicators and designing specific training based on it. Assessment of CRVS and linkages to the Demographic and Health Surveys (DHS) could also be a priority.

Economic Statistics: Since the region is undergoing rapid economic development this should be a priority area. The role of the Network could be knowledge sharing through training activities.

Household Surveys: The priority work of the Network is to facilitate the establishment of a platform to share expertise/experience including analytical capacity about household surveys.

D. Agenda Item 4: Expanding the inventory of and access to trainers on official statistics in the region

1. Creation of database of experts

15. The representative of World Bank seek for clarification on what this database should be like. There were some discussions on the specifics of the database to be developed. The Network could come up with the concept paper for the development of this database to include the specific requirements of the database. From this the database will be constructed, and Network members will provide information needed to populate the database.
16. The representative of Japan expressed that the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications is willing to cooperate for the development of the database created on SIAP's computer system as a cooperating agency to SIAP. The input data including information about experts should be inputted by each country who owns the relevant data. As a first step of the development of the database, the Network should identify the information about statistical experts which could be shared among countries.
17. The representative of Malaysia noted that an international database would be beneficial to its

member countries for obtaining new knowledge and he also informed the Network that Malaysia had some experiences on the development of the knowledge management system.

18. The representative of Russia informed the body that since national statistics offices (NSOs) of member countries of CIS have data on statistical experts, Russia could contribute to the development of the database using the CIS network.
19. The meeting recognized the challenges of identifying experts i.e. who should be registered as an expert and what should be the criteria in the identification. Another issue on this is how to ensure the relevance and quality of information stored in the database.
20. The meeting agreed to create a working group of volunteers to start working on the development of the database.

2. Procedures for certifying trainers

21. About the key issue on how to certify trainers, several questions were raised at the discussion which are listed as follows:
 - Who should certify trainers? Will it be UN ESCAP and/or training institutions with some possibility of utilizing a criteria established by the Network?
 - What is the purpose of the certification? Should those who are uncertified not be hired?
 - How would language issues be addressed? Since statistical officials are not necessarily proficient in English, languages other than English maybe necessary for statistical training in such countries.
22. Some options were proposed by country members of the Network on procedures for certifying trainers and these are given below:
 - To consider a list of recommended trainers of statistical organizations who have several years of experiences as statistical trainers.
 - A process of certified credentials from specific institutions based on their qualification and experience with training.
 - A trainer should also be able to do instructional design. Certification may also require demonstration of how they can design training programs and not to merely look at their academic credentials
23. The meeting noted that it would be useful to find countries where the certification had worked

and look at the possibilities of how it could work in other countries or in the region as a whole.

24. The meeting agreed to create a task team to review existing certification programmes and formulate their recommendations.

E. Agenda item 5: Future Programme of Work of the Network

25. Based on the discussions under previous agenda items, the meeting formulated the 2016-2017 work programme of the Network as discussed in “*II. Decision and Recommendations of the Meeting*” section of this report. The three focus outputs of the work programme include
 - Identified training gaps in understanding, measuring and monitoring SDGs;
 - Database of compiled training resources that is accessible to the Network members; and
 - Common curriculum for priority statistical training on agricultural and rural statistics.
26. The representative of Japan requested that the report of the meeting should be circulated to members of the Network before finalizing the report for submission to the Committee on Statistics.

IV. ORGANIZATION OF THE MEETING

A. Opening of the meeting

27. The Second Meeting of the Network for the Coordination of the Network for the Coordination of Statistical Training in Asia and the Pacific was held in Chiba, Japan, on 4 March 2016.
28. Welcome statements were delivered by SIAP and the Chair of the Network to open the Second Meeting of the Network.

B. Attendance

29. The meeting was attended by eighteen participants from thirteen member States and two international organizations. The member States include Bangladesh, China, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Japan, Malaysia, Pakistan, Philippines, Republic of Korea, Russia, Thailand, and Viet Nam. The international organizations who were present in the meeting are the International Statistical Institute (ISI), and World Bank.

C. Appointment of the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Network

30. The following officers were appointed as the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Network by the Bureau of the ESCAP Committee on Statistics based on the terms of reference of the Network prior to the second meeting of the Network.

Chair: Ms. Zita Albacea, Executive Director, Philippine Statistical Research and Training Institute (PSRTI)

Vice-Chair: Mr. Olivier Dupriez, Lead Statistician, World Bank, Development Data Group

D. Adoption of the agenda

31. The meeting adopted the agenda as attached in Annex I.