

Appendix-2

Recommendations from the Mid-term Review of Pacific Statistics Strategy Action Plan Phase-1

Lessons and recommendations of the review team for future support include:

Lesson 1. TYPSS has generated considerable capacity development. Implementation of a program such as TYPSS, which contains numerous objectives, many countries and a number of TA providers, is a complex undertaking. The improvement in capacity, which was commented upon to the review mission and has been measured using the World Bank capacity, index is a substantial achievement and should be commended.

Lesson 2. TYPSS structure remains relevant. The six objectives of TYPSS and priority of economic, vital, education and health statistics remain relevant to statistical capacity development in the Pacific. The overall structure of the program was positively viewed by those interviewed during the review mission.

Lesson 3. TYPSS focus has been on survey collections and core statistics. Much of the effort in the first phase of the program has centred on census, DHS and HIES collections, along with core statistics. This focus is appropriate as there was a paucity of data in the region. With improved capacity in NSO collection capacity, less emphasis could be placed on Objective 1.

Recommendation 1. TYPSS's overall structure and objectives should be maintained. The overall structure of TYPSS and its prioritisation of sectors remain relevant. The addition of new thematic areas – such as gender, climate change, food security, disaster risk, disability, and environmental-economic accounting should be considered as part of each individual country's NSDS priority setting.

Recommendation 2. PSSC should endorse an increased TYPSS focus on capacity to generate demand for official statistics. The planned focus of the 2015-2017 phase was to complete region-wide statistical systems, which includes fostering demand for official statistics through improved advocacy and communication. Greater emphasis should be placed on these activities in TYPSS.

Recommendation 3. PSSC should endorse an increased TYPSS focus on data analysis and dissemination. With increasing availability of data there is greater need to improve the skills of national statisticians in data analysis and dissemination. ABS, StatsNZ (Victoria University), UN and SPC have experience in data analysis and dissemination training and mentoring which should be provided across the region. Completion of the skills audit will provide guidance for longer term training needs. Where possible, training should be accredited with the cooperation of training institutions such as USP.

Lesson 4. Limited National Statistical Plan Development. NSDS development was an objective of the TYPSS first phase with one country so far developing a plan. The NSDS process is more inclusive than traditional NSO-centric statistical master plan development and provides a means for national stakeholders to articulate and prioritise statistical needs.

Lesson 5. Limited Quantitative M&E Reporting. Measurement to date has largely concentrated on individual providers (SPC, PFTAC, UN, ABS) and countries describing TYPSS outputs and inputs. SPC has defined and quantified inputs in terms of staff time committed in each country, along with output (description of activities) and some outcome achievements. Greater reporting of progress is required from countries.

Recommendation 4. The PSSC should identify NSDS development as a major priority. Countries must clearly identify the need for better scheduling timing and scale of required intensity assistance. National statistical development strategies (NSDS) are critical for NSOs to assess reporting requirements and provide a road map for statistical system development.

Recommendation 5. All TA Providers and countries should improve M&E reporting. The reporting framework and template should be enhanced to quantify inputs by country/objective, and allow for strategic monitoring of expenditures by country/program, along with outputs and results/outcomes. Reporting should be against time-bound action plans. The first priority for measuring outcomes is associated with tracking the benefits of training and technical assistance. Training assessment and surveys of participants should be used to determine the outcomes of these activities.

Lesson 6. The PSSC could more adequately report progress, endorse standards and coordinate activities. The PSSC has provided a valuable forum for countries, providers and donors to discuss TYPSS implementation. The forum could be improved with the presentation of more in-depth progress data. Coordination would be improved with the PSSC supporting a real-time activity calendar and a second phase with time-bound activities. Terms of reference for the PSSC are relatively broad and could be strengthened with guidelines for endorsement and technical work group functions.

Recommendation 6. PSSC engage a part-time coordinator. A part-time coordinator should be initially engaged to help collate country and TA provider M&E data, assist with PSSC reporting and sustaining a real-time online calendar of regional statistics activities.

Recommendation 7. The PSSC should develop guidelines for endorsing definitions and standards, along with technical working group operations. Objectives of the PSSC include ‘endorsing common definitions and standards that will underpin a greater harmonization of statistical processes’ [and] convening ‘technical working groups on particular topics involving experienced subject matter specialists’, however the nature of these processes is unclear to the review team.

Recommendation 8. Donors provide PSSC members with communications support. PSSC members represent multiple countries and face difficulties in collating data for meetings, as e-mails are often not answered. Communications funds should be provided so counterparts can be readily contacted and PSSC reporting improved.

Recommendation 9. The PSSC should review its TORs to coincide with the upcoming HOPS meeting in July 2013. A review of the TORs, with increased member input, will allow members to decide the best role for the PSSC, the preferred method of operation, membership, and the approach to the next phase of steering and monitoring TYPSS implementation.

Lesson 7. TYPSS Phase-1 design was sound and based on benchmarking and implementation studies. The formulation of TYPSS was based on a number of program preparatory studies, and the experience of key technical assistance providers.

Lesson 8. TYPSS has reduced the transactions costs associated with collections and continuity of funding helped sustain provider capacity. Significant lumpy costs are associated with collections, which PICTs cannot entirely finance. Securing funding for collections and technical assistance has been a time consuming exercise for NSOs, which has been made more manageable with the longer-term financing and predictability of TYPSS. Longer-term financing has also increased capacity in technical agencies. An example is in civil registration and vital statistics area, where funding for the Health Information Systems Knowledge Hub at the University of Queensland is about to cease.

Recommendation 10. PSSC should endorse an Independent Phase-2 design. An independent design team should be commissioned by the PSSC to design the follow-on activities of TYPSS for all TA providers. Activities should be aligned under current objectives and scheduled using Gantt charts on a quarterly timeframe. Indicators for tracking inputs, outputs and outcomes need to be quantifiable and specified in the M&E framework. The proposed design would be presented to the PSSC for endorsement.

Recommendation 11. Donors should provide longer term rolling funding. Longer term, more predictable funding – such as rolling budgets would assist planning and improve the longer-term performance of the TYPSS.

Recommendation 12. Donors should sustain the civil registration and vital statistics program. The capacity developed for vital statistics should be sustained through continued funding for BAG activities under the UQ Health Information Systems Knowledge Hub, with a stronger focus on developing an integrated health information system for the prevention and control of NCDs, amongst others.