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PACIFIC ISLANDS FORUM SECRETARIAT

PIFS(15)FEMM/FEOM.12

**FORUM ECONOMIC MINISTERS MEETING
AND
FORUM ECONOMIC OFFICIALS MEETING**

Rarotonga, Cook Islands
27 & 29 October 2015

**SESSION 4
Regional Statistics Initiatives**

Purpose

To provide an update on regional initiatives for strengthening statistics in Pacific Island Countries through the implementation of the Ten Year Pacific Statistics Strategy (TYPSS) 2011-2020.

Recommendation

Ministers are invited to:

1. **support** greater use of regional and international statistical standards by National Statistical Offices (NSOs) across the region; and
2. **consider** addressing resources requirements of their NSOs for improved statistical compilation, especially in light of demands placed on NSOs for reporting against the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

SPC support to Statistics Initiatives in the Pacific

The Secretariat of the Pacific Community (SPC), in line with Phase 2 of the Ten-Year Pacific Statistics Strategy (TYPSS) and in collaboration with technical partners, provides technical assistance to its member countries in relation to developing National Strategies for the Development of Statistics (NSDS), standards and classifications, Household Income and Expenditure Survey (HIES), prices, business statistics, International Merchandise Trade Statistics (IMTS), agriculture and rural statistics, tourism statistics, demographic health surveys, population and housing census, education statistics, use of administrative databases in sourcing data, civil registration and vital statistics, and dissemination of statistics/information. Progress of work under TYPSS is monitored by the Pacific Statistics Steering Committee (PSSC) which convenes twice a year, as mandated by the Triannual Regional Conference of Heads of Planning and Statistics (HOPS). The PSSC in its current term (2013 – 2016) is chaired by the Government Statistician of Vanuatu, who is assisted by two vice-chairs (Cook Islands, Nauru) and a recently appointed coordinator.

2. SPC provides technical assistance and professional development to national counterparts through training, workshops, attachments, in-country visits, and facilitation of South-South cooperation. On



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many occasions, particularly with the small island states, SPC has also provided capacity supplementation to NSOs.

3. The following is an update of work by SPC since the last update prepared (April 2014) for the 2014 FEMM and work planned. Refer to **Annex 1** for details.

- a. **NSDS:** SPC is continuing its successful collaboration in this field with Partnership in Statistics for Development in the 21st Century (PARIS21), with NSDSs completed for Cook Islands and Vanuatu, and work-in-progress for Tonga and Fiji. Papua New Guinea (PNG) has also recently completed a NSDS and work is underway in the Solomon Islands.
- b. **Standards and classifications:** (i) Pacific/regional - Industrial activity classification was published. Work is in progress for the compilation guides for international merchandise trade statistics, Consumer Price Index (CPI) and occupational classification. (ii) National – Industrial classifications were derived from the Pacific classifications for PNG and Tonga. Business register manual for Tonga was completed. Work is in progress for Vanuatu's industrial classification.
- c. **HIES:** Report and factsheets were published for Nauru. HIES was completed for Solomon Islands, Federated States of Micronesia (FSM) and Palau. HIES is currently underway in Tokelau, Tuvalu and Tonga. HIES preparatory work is in progress for Niue, Cook Islands and Kiribati.
- d. **Prices:** (i) Work completed - review of the progress of the Producer Price Index (PPI) services component was done in Fiji, and new weights were derived and item list updated in Nauru, while scoping missions were done in Samoa and Vanuatu. (ii) Work planned - base period review is planned for Fiji and CPI base period revisions are scheduled for Palau and FSM.
- e. **Business statistics:** (i) Work completed – A business register was set-up in Tonga. (ii) Work planned - review of Tonga's business statistics questionnaires.
- f. **IMTS:** A trade release was completed for American Samoa, Tonga, FSM and Kiribati. Work is in progress for Nauru and Vanuatu.
- g. **Fiji's Tourism satellite Account** review was completed.
- h. **Data Dissemination:** Data are being updated and disseminated through PRISM (www.spc.int/prism), NMDI database (www.spc.int/nmdi), PopGIS2, Pacific COMtrade database (still under development) and Statistical Pocket Summary (latest 2015). Work on Regional tables is in progress.
- i. **Workshops and Technical meetings: Refer to Annex 2 for details.**
- j. **South-South technical collaboration**
 - Fiji Bureau of Statistics provided the South-South collaboration to set up a computerised Business Register (BR) in Tonga from 18-28 August 2015.
 - From 13-24 April 2015, Statisticians from PNG, Tonga and Vanuatu were attached to the Fiji Bureau of Statistics (FBoS) to study and learn how the Bureau compiled its business statistics.
- k. **Professional attachments at SPC headquarters in Noumea:**
 - PNG successfully completed its national industry classification from 13-23 May 2014.
 - Tonga successfully completed its national industry classification from 30 September-10



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October 2014.

- 7-18 September 2015: Nauru finalised its draft COMtrade database and the IMTS Dissemination tables from 2002 - 2014.
- 21 September-2 October: Vanuatu worked on its COMtrade database and Dissemination tables from 2005 to August 2015. Vanuatu has moved onto monthly compilations of IMTS now.

4. **Challenges faced by SPC are:**

- **Weak resources base of most Pacific NSOs.**

Regarding *human resources*, this is illustrated in limited staff numbers in most countries, high staff turn-over and unmet needs for ongoing staff professional development. With regards to *operating budgets*, many NSOs work on very limited budgets, catering only for salaries, with most statistical collections only possible through external financial assistance, and when such assistance is available.

- **Access to administrative data**

The most critical issues are with data coverage/ completeness due to no or irregular recording of all events; data not being processed on time; data not correctly classified; and data not accessible on a regular basis due to administrative bottlenecks.

- **Countries take time in responding to data requests**

Pacific regional economic statistical tables cannot be regularly updated due to lack of response by some countries.

- **Persistent reluctance by some NSOs to commit to use regional statistical standards and classifications**

Despite recent success with countries' support to, and use of a newly developed Pacific HIES methodology, and a standard Demographic Health Survey (as used world-wide), a similar commitment by countries is needed during the upcoming 2020 Round of Population and Housing censuses. Without NSO and their Ministers' commitment to a regional approach as outlined in **Annex 2-b**, it will be impossible to raise the quality and comparability of key socio-economic statistics, such as those pertaining to the labour force, economic activities, unemployment and vulnerable populations (such as those not in training, education or employment).

PFTAC Support to Statistics in the Pacific

5. The PFTAC and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) provide technical assistance (TA) on economic statistics to the Pacific Islands Countries with a focus on national accounts, external sector and government finance statistics.

6. PFTAC has continued to focus the TA of its two resident advisers on achieving substantial improvements in national accounts statistics in the Pacific region through the delivery of in-country missions, the provision of remote support and the delivery of additional training using sub-regional training courses. This approach enables the training to focus on local statistical issues in a cost effective way. PFTAC has continued this mode of delivery with sub-regional training courses for countries from



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the Northern Pacific (FSM, Republic of the Marshall Islands (RMI), and Palau), Melanesia (PNG, the Solomon Islands and Vanuatu), and the rest of the member countries.

7. Progress achieved by PFTAC since the last FEMM includes:

- **Producing at least two independent measures of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) to a high standard:** *Fiji, Kiribati and Palau*. The compilation of two independent measures of GDP at current and constant prices enables data confrontation, the identification of inconsistencies and ultimately supports the improvement of estimates. This is a key component of PFTAC's strategy to improve national accounts statistics in the region.
- **Improving national accounts data sources and methodologies:** *PNG*. Working closely with the Australian Bureau of Statistics, TA has been provided to improve coordination between the stakeholders, to reform the NSO, and to improve the coverage of economic activities included in GDP estimates and to enhance methodologies used to compile value-added estimates. A roadmap is in place which aims to have the NSO produce GDP estimates—for the first time in many years—by December 2015. Methodology improvements have also been the focus in *Nauru, Niue, FSM, RMI, and Palau*.
- **Rebasing constant price estimates at least every 10 years:** *Cook Islands, Fiji, Solomon Islands, and Vanuatu*. Regular rebases of constant price GDP estimates are essential to maintain unbiased growth measures. PFTAC has continued to provide TA to assist with a further rebase of GDP estimates in Fiji using 2011 as a base year. Rebased estimates were published during August 2015. Preparatory work has continued in the *Cook Islands, Solomon Islands and Vanuatu*. HIES have been conducted in several Pacific Islands Countries with support from SPC. The incorporation of HIES results in national accounts statistics will improve periodic benchmarks of national accounts.
- **Producing quarterly estimates of GDP:** *Cook Islands, Fiji, and Vanuatu*. In countries where data sources enable the compilation of more frequent estimates, quarterly GDP estimates enable better monitoring of the state of the economy. The quarterly methodology used in the *Cook Islands* has continued to be refined, development work is now at an advanced stage in *Fiji* and planning is underway in *Vanuatu*.
- **Building capabilities for the compilation of national accounts statistics:** *FSM, RMI, and Palau*. Sub-regional national accounts training courses have continued to be provided to compilers from the Northern Pacific (March 2015), training courses on the use of HIES (October 2014), and national accounts (May 2015) were delivered to participants from *Solomon Islands, PNG, and Vanuatu*. National accounts training with a focus on measurements in constant prices was provided to compilers from the rest of the region in October 2014. In each case the materials were adapted to suit the capacity and needs of the participants and the workshops focused on introducing them to methodologies, and the optimum use of various data sources. These courses provide participants with a better understanding and a basis for implementing improvements.
- **Assisting the authorities with capacity supplementation:** Where resources are insufficient, capacity supplementation has enabled regular compilation and availability of national accounts statistics. TA from PFTAC has enabled *Kiribati, the Solomon Islands and Niue* to



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produce up to date national accounts data. Assistance has also been provided to *Nauru* which is seeking IMF membership. The dissemination of relevant data and metadata in a timely manner is a key aspect to ensure proper and efficient use of national accounts statistics to support policy making and provide high quality economic statistics to the community.

8. The IMF headquarters has continued to provide significant TA to the IMF member countries in the Pacific region supported by Japanese funding for the following projects.

- **External sector statistics:** This project has continued to improve the accuracy, availability, comparability, and timeliness of external sector statistics for selected countries in the Pacific region. This three-year programme overseen by the Statistics Department will conclude in November 2015 and support will continue as required from IMF Head Quarters and possibly from PFTAC when the new funding cycle (Phase V) gets underway.
- **Government Finance Statistics (GFS):** This project has contributed to improvements in the quality of government finance statistics and assisted Pacific countries to migrate their fiscal statistics to *Government Finance Statistics Manual 2014* standards. Twelve Pacific Island Countries have been involved in the project which has also just concluded, although a new project does include PNG. PFTAC is expected to continue the work begun by this project by expanding GFS TA under Phase V.
- **General Data Dissemination System (GDDS):** The purposes of the GDDS are to encourage member countries to improve data quality, provide a framework for evaluating needs for data improvement and setting priorities in this respect; and to guide member countries in the dissemination to the public of comprehensive, timely, accessible, and reliable economic, financial, and socio-demographic statistics. PFTAC also supports regular updates of GDDS information.

Challenges

9. The main challenge for improving economic statistics in the region is the insufficient number of staff and still-developing statistical capacities in a number of NSOs. Staff turnover is an issue in a number of countries. Given the importance of economic statistics for informed decision making, additional resources should be allocated to NSOs. Pay scales of statisticians should also be better aligned with highly skilled staff working in other government agencies in order to improve staff retention and build expertise in NSOs. Given that resources are always limited, they need to be allocated efficiently. Consequently, PFTAC recommends maximising the use of administrative data. Specifically, annual income tax data and value added tax data where applicable, in preference to undertaking economy-wide business surveys. This essentially is the mandate of the Administrative Data Working Group, of which PFTAC is a member, which reports to the Pacific Statistics Steering Committee.

Secretariat of the Pacific Community
Pacific Financial Technical Assistance Centre
12 October 2015



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ANNEX 1: DETAILED SUBMISSION BY SPC

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Secretariat of the Pacific Community Regional Statistics Initiatives

Status report, October 2015 by Statistics for Development Division

1. Mandate

The Secretariat of the Pacific Community (SPC), in line with the mandate from the Pacific Plan and guided by the **Ten-Year Pacific Statistics Strategy (TYPSS) 2011–2020, continues to provide** technical assistance, including professional development of national counterparts, to its member countries¹ in statistics through workshops, attachments, in-country visits, and facilitation of South-South cooperation. On many occasions, particularly with the smallest Pacific Small Island Developing States (PSIDS), SPC also provides capacity supplementation to National Statistical Organisations (NSOs).

- TYPSS is now in its second phase, 2015-2017, and SPC's Statistics for Development Divisions current strategic plan covering this period focuses on five core objectives:
 - i) undertaking core statistical collections, including the use of key administrative databases;
 - ii) producing the agreed core set of statistics across key sectors;
 - iii) ensuring countries have a national statistics strategy or plan in line with their national development strategies;
 - iv) advising statistics stakeholders about emerging statistical tools and systems;
 - v) contributing to effective and efficient national and regional statistics governance.
- The Pacific Statistics Steering Committee (PSSC) which monitors the progress of TYPSS on behalf of the Heads of Planning and Statistics (HOPS) recruited a coordinator in early 2015.

2. National Strategy for the Development of Statistics (NSDS)

Pacific NSOs realise the importance of nationally owned NSDS that should tie in with what is in their national development plans², for developing statistical capacity across the entire national statistical system. SPC partners with PARIS21 to assist countries develop such medium to long-term statistical development strategies³.

Countries with completed NSDS: Samoa and Cook Islands already launched; Vanuatu and Papua New Guinea (PNG) waiting to be launched – these two countries are not participating in the regional PARIS21-SPC programme; and Tonga yet to consolidate its sectoral assessments into a national report.

NSDS under development: Solomon Islands and Fiji.

Countries that have shown interest in the development of NSDS – yet to confirm: Federated States of Micronesia, Nauru and Tuvalu.

3. Partnerships/collaboration for the development of Statistics in the Pacific

¹ **Melanesia:** Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands, Fiji, New Caledonia and Vanuatu. **Micronesia:** Federated States of Micronesia, Guam, Kiribati, Northern Marianas, Marshall Islands, Nauru and Palau. **Polynesia:** American Samoa, Cook Islands, French Polynesia, Niue, Samoa, Tonga, Tuvalu, Tokelau, Pitcairn and Wallis and Futuna.

² Statisticians need to be consulted when developing plans

³ PNG and Solomon islands do not participate in the regional PARIS21-SPC partnership.



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SPC continues to collaborate with technical agencies to strengthen technical assistance in the Pacific whilst at the same time ensuring there is no overlap of work between them. Key technical partners are various United Nations agencies, such as ESCAP, FAO, ILO, UNESCO, UNFPA, UNICEF and WHO; the Pacific Financial Technical Assistance Centre (PFTAC), the Asian Development Bank, and the World Bank; the University of the South Pacific (USP); and the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) and Statistics New Zealand.

4. Standards and Classifications

SPC strives for greater harmonisation of statistical standards, classifications and systems to enable Pacific Island Countries and Territories (PICTs) to use common tools for statistical collections, compilations and dissemination.

- **New Classification released**

The Pacific Standard Industrial Classification (PACSIC) 2014, used for classifying productive activities undertaken in PICTs is derived from the United Nations International Standard Industrial Classification (ISIC). PICTs have large informal activities that need to be accounted for in the GDP, thus PACSIC 2014 dedicates a chapter to accounting for the informal sector. Other than being used by the PICTs National Statistical Organisations (NSOs) for the compilation of the Gross Domestic Product, Demography of enterprises and Employment, it is also being used by some PICTs tax collection agencies, authorities issuing business licenses and provident funds. The classification can be downloaded using <http://www.spc.int/prism/>.

- **Workshop held**

SPC held a workshop on Statistical Classifications in the Pacific in Fiji from 27 April – 1 May 2015. 10⁴ Pacific Island countries attended the workshop and amongst the numerous sessions held, the Classification theory and the detailed discussion on the Commonly used classifications in the Pacific were the focus.

- **Work in progress**

SPC has collaborated with the ABS and the Fiji Bureau of Statistics (FBoS) to derive a Pacific Regional Classification of Occupation (PACSCO) using the ILO standard. Technical assistance will be provided by the ILO and the review of PACSCO will be done by Statistics New Zealand – the current Chair of the UN Expert Group on Classifications.

5. Household Income and Expenditure Survey (HIES)

SPC assists NSOs from the design, collection, analysis to the dissemination of HIES data in readiness for them to be used in national accounts, poverty studies and rebase of the consumer price index.

- **Recently completed HIES**

- i. Nauru:
 - a) Report published April 2014
 - b) Fact sheets produced September 2014 (Fisheries, Agriculture, Health)
- ii. Solomon Islands:
 - a) Report submitted to the NSO in February 2015 (in press)
- iii. FSM:
 - a) Field work July 2014
 - b) Report published May 2015
- iv. Palau:
 - a) Field work completed October 2014
 - b) Report submitted to Palau NSO in September 2015 (in press)

- v. **HIES currently underway**

- Tokelau - field work from May 2015 to February 2016
- Tuvalu - field work from October 2015 to October 2016
- Tonga - field work from October 2015 to October 2016

- vi. **HIES preparation**

- Niue - field work scheduled for November 2015 to August 2016
- Cook Islands - field work scheduled for December 2015 to November 2016

⁴ Cook Islands, Fiji Islands, Kiribati, Nauru, Niue, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Tonga, Tuvalu and Vanuatu



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- Kiribati - planning HIES for 2016
- vii. **HIES Technical Working Group meeting**
The meeting was held at SPC in Noumea from 2 to 4 June 2015 and brought together representatives from:
 - SPC member countries that recently completed HIES, applying the new Pacific HIES methodology (Federated States of Micronesia, Nauru, Palau, Solomon Islands), including one representative from the national statistical agency and one from a HIES data using agency
 - technical collaborating partners, including the PFTAC and ABS
 - colleagues from various SPC technical divisions making substantial use of regional economic and socio-demographic household surveys to inform their technical work, such as Land Resources, Human Development, Public Health and Statistics for Development.
 The outcome of the meeting was an agreement on achieving a set of common HIES outputs for all countries:
 - a standardised structure of the HIES analytical report
 - a simplified HIES data-set to be produced as a standard HIES output, to simplify data use and analysis
 - discussion of various technical matters – imputed rents, operating costs, investment expenditure, underreporting of expenditure, income classification
- viii. **HIES project timeline**
 - The standard methodology recommends field operations of 12-months, including in-field data entry.
In consideration of this, the HIES project runs for approximately 30 to 36 months, which includes:
 - Pre-field operations (6 - 12 months) – survey planning, budgeting, financing, questionnaire design, coding, testing, field material development (manuals, etc.), training, procurement, mapping, data entry system development, recruitment.
 - Field operations (12 months) – implementation of survey
 - Post-field operations (12 months) – data editing/cleaning/recoding, meta-data production, data analysis, reporting, dissemination (plus associated activities, such as CPI rebase, national account compilation and poverty analysis)
 - The post-enumeration activities, especially the data editing is greatly facilitated if HIES field operations are well managed and in-field data entry is conducted according to defined timelines. It is aimed that the HIES report will be produced within 12-months of finalising field work, which usually includes NSO attachments to build capacity in data processing and analysis. Capacity building of NSOs in HIES data analysis and interpretation is necessary and strategies are currently being devised to address this.

The meeting report and recommendations will be put forward for review and endorsement at the next meeting of the PSSC, which is tentatively scheduled for mid-November 2015.

6. Prices

A new Price Statistician to assist PICTs construct a Consumer Price Index (CPI), Producer Price Index (PPI), Export Import Price Index (XMPI) and others was recruited in March 2015.

- **Work completed**
 - Fiji: review of the progress of the PPI services component
 - Nauru: new weights derived and item list updated
 - Samoa: a] scoping mission to assess the quality of HIES data and familiarization with the CPI system used
b] 2 staff attached to SPC to rebase the CPI – weights derived, item list updated and system updated
 - Vanuatu: scoping mission on the CPI system used in preparation of the base period revision
- **Work in progress**



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- Preparations for a CPI workshop on item substitution and quality adjustments scheduled for November 23-27, 2015 in collaboration with PFTAC and University of the South Pacific (USP).
- A Pacific CPI compilation guide is in progress, the review of which will be done by the USP
- **Work planned**
 - Fiji: base period review scheduled for 2016.
 - Palau: mission on CPI base period revision
 - FSM: mission on CPI base period revision

7. Business Statistics

- **Work completed**
 - 13-23 May 2014 Papua New Guinea (PNG) successfully completed its national industry classification, PNG Standard Industrial Classification through an attachment at SPC in Noumea.
 - 30 September-10 October 2014 Tonga successfully completed its national industry classification, Tonga Standard Industrial Classification through an attachment at the SPC in Noumea.
 - 13-24 April 2015 statisticians from PNG, Tonga and Vanuatu were attached to FBoS to study and learn from FBoS on how FBoS went about compiling its business statistics. The opportunities enabled attaches' to upskill themselves and on return to their countries train their colleagues as well as refine their business statistics compilations.
 - 18-28 August 2015 a computerised Business Register (BR) was set up in Tonga with FBoS providing the South-South collaboration. Training on using the BR was provided to staff. A manual on the BR for use as a source of information about the BR and a guide in using the BR was compiled.
- **Work in progress**
 - Editing and release of Vanuatu's national industry classification - Vanuatu Standard Industrial Classification.
 - Review of Tonga's Business Statistics questionnaires.

8. International Merchandise Trade Statistics

- **Work completed**
 - 5-9 May 2014 Technical Assistance (TA) Mission to American Samoa on International Merchandise Trade Statistics (IMTS) to compile the COMtrade⁵ database and the IMTS Dissemination tables⁶. COMtrade database and the Dissemination tables from January 2002-2013 were checked and recommendation for improvements made.
 - 9-20 June 2014 Tonga, through an attachment at the SPC in Noumea, successfully finalised its COMtrade database and the IMTS Dissemination tables on a monthly basis, from January 2013 to February 2014. A monthly draft release for February 2014 and an annual draft release for 2013 were finalised.
 - 11-22 August 2014 TA Mission to the Federated States of Micronesia on IMTS to compile the COMtrade database and the Dissemination tables. 2013 COMtrade database and Dissemination tables and the January 2014 Dissemination tables and a release were finalized.
 - 20-31 October 2014 TA Mission to Nauru to assist statisticians turn mirror statistics into Nauru imports and exports. Worksheets drawn to allow currency conversions and valuation adjustments.
 - 3-14 November 2014 American Samoa, through an attachment at the SPC in Noumea, successfully finalised its COMtrade database and the IMTS Dissemination tables from 2002 - 2013. A draft release was also finalised for 2013.
 - 2-20 February 2015 TA Mission to Kiribati with Tonga on South-South. COMtrade database and the IMTS Dissemination tables were compiled by months for 2012 and 2013 and counterpart trained.
 - 15-26 June 2015 TA Mission to Nauru to check the IMTS worksheets compiled from 2002 to 2014 using mirror statistics. Work on the COMtrade Database and the Dissemination tables started.

⁵ Commodity trade database

⁶ Set of tables recommended for PICTs to compile



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- 20-31 July 2015 TA Mission to Vanuatu to assist them begin work on the COMtrade database and the Dissemination tables.
- 7-18 September 2015 Nauru, through an attachment at SPC in Noumea, finalised draft COMtrade database and the IMTS Dissemination tables from 2002 - 2014.
- 21 September-2 October Vanuatu was attached to SPC in Noumea to continue work on their COMtrade database and Dissemination tables from 2005 to August 2015. Vanuatu has moved onto monthly compilations of IMTS now.
- **Work in progress**
 - FSM: a detailed report on IMTS is in progress.
 - Nauru: draft COMtrade database and the IMTS Dissemination tables from 2002 – 2014 are being checked.
 - Vanuatu: work on their COMtrade database and Dissemination table from 2005 to August 2015 is in progress
 - A Pacific IMTS compilation guide is in progress.
- **Work planned**
 - Nauru: March 2016 release of COMtrade database, the IMTS Dissemination tables from 2002 – 2014 and the trade release.
 - Vanuatu: review of COMtrade database and Dissemination tables from 2005 to August 2015 and finalisation of the IMTS release.

9. Agricultural and rural statistics

SPC has partnered with the Food and Agricultural Organisation to revamp Pacific statistical systems through technical assistance, training, and research so as to be able to produce crop and livestock statistics to meet current and emerging user needs. This project is being undertaken as part of the Global Strategy on Agricultural and Rural Statistics and is being implemented by the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), the Asian Development Bank (ADB), and the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UNESCAP).

A workshop is being held in Fiji from 5-9 October 2015.

10. Other Statistics

- **Tourism Statistics**
 - 15-26 September 2014 completed the review of Fiji's Tourism Satellite Account (TSA).
 - 13-24 April 2015 reviewed tourism indicators/data available for doing a TSA annually. Preliminary work started on constructing the Supply and Use tables on an annual basis.
- **Demographic and Health Survey (DHS) technical support to Solomon Islands DHS 2014/2015.**
 - **Work completed:** DHS planning, questionnaire design, household listing and training manual/training documentation
 - **Work in progress:** Data processing
 - **Work planned:** tabulation planned for Q1 2016, analysis and reporting for Q 2-3 2016 and DHS Dissemination for Q4 2016.
- **2020 Round of Pacific Population and Housing Censuses (2015-2024)**
 - TA to Palau (Census April 2015) and Kiribati (Census November 2015): Technical support commenced in 2014 and covered assistance with census planning: questionnaire design, household listing/census mapping, training manual/training documentation, pilot census and questionnaire processing, tabulation, analysis, and census reporting.
 - Pacific Meeting on Planning for the 2020 round of population and housing censuses, July 2015, Noumea, New Caledonia
All countries and invited technical partners attended. The main purpose of the meeting was to standardise core questions for the Pacific to enable standardized census processes and outputs, especially for small islands states with small statistical offices. The meeting output included the following:



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- Recommendations for the 2020 census round in the Pacific
 - Pacific core set of census questions covering standard census topics
 - A range of supplementary census modules for selected thematic topics
 - Censuses in 2016 – Cook Islands (November/December), Samoa (November), Tonga (November), and Niue (October). Technical support commenced in 2015 and covered assistance with census planning: questionnaire design, household listing/census mapping, training manual/training documentation, pilot census, questionnaire processing, tabulation, analysis, and census reporting, census dissemination and post enumeration survey.
 - Education Statistics: work in progress with data quality assessment frameworks (DQAF) and Education Management Information Systems (EMIS).
 - Assisting countries source data from administrative records.
 - Civil registration and vital statistics⁷ (CRVS)
- Pacific Island governments have been working on improving national CRVS systems over the last several years with support from development partners (the Brisbane Accord Group which SPC coordinates) under the Pacific Vital Statistics Action Plan which sits under the Ten Year Pacific Statistics Strategy. The range of work has included infrastructure improvements, training and capacity building, process changes, certification and analysis training, and community engagement and outreach programs. Recently, previous commitments to this work through the Ministers of Health and Heads of Planning and Statistics have been re-enforced by the 2014 adoption of the Asia Pacific Regional Action Framework for CRVS through UN ESCAP, and the declaration of a CRVS Decade (2015-2024) for Asia and the Pacific. Through this mechanism, countries have committed to setting specific targets on improving the coverage and formal registration of births and deaths, and the availability and quality of vital statistics, and reporting these, along with any national improvement strategies to the UN before the end of the year. While most Pacific countries have undertaken a formal assessment and priority setting process over the last few years, many of the national plans have either not been formally endorsed or need updating, and there is a critical need to elevate the issue beyond the registry and health sectors to a national development issue.

11. Dissemination

SPC continues to strengthen its dissemination mechanisms. The tools and projects are always designed and implemented to improve data accessibility and utilization:

- **PRISM:** Pacific Regional Information System Management allows users to access information by countries. A **workshop** attachment was held for two weeks in Noumea in November 2014 with participants from five countries - Solomon Islands, Niue, PNG, Fiji and Tuvalu. Website content management training was undertaken with participants working on their country website upgrades and content updates.
Several Countries have gone live with Content Management System (CMS) version upgrades including templates that are responsive for viewing on mobile devices. These include Samoa, Tonga, Tuvalu, PNG, Kiribati, Nauru and Wallis & Fortuna. Before the end of 2015 American Samoa, Solomon Islands, Fiji and Cook Islands will have upgraded sites launched.
The Prism website www.spc.int/prism has been upgraded with new content added and a responsive template.

Work in progress: Regional tables are being compiled and will be published year end.

- **NMDI:** National Minimum Development Indicator database continues to be regularly updated. The NMDI indicators which provided the statistical basis for the annual Millennium Development Goals

⁷ A national civil registration and vital statistics system (CRVS) provides essential data for governance and planning, and provides a foundation for ensuring legal identity and protection of human rights. The routine collection of data on births and deaths provides information on health issues and trends, identifies areas of growing population and subsequent needs in areas such as infrastructure, education and social services, and over the long term can provide real-time population data. The data is also critical for updating electoral rolls, public service payrolls, and providence fund planning. Additionally, as governments move closer to national identity or “e-government” systems, a strong foundation through civil registration is critical. The importance of CRVS to identity has been recognised in the new SDG targets with a specific goal established for ensuring all births are registered.



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(MDG) Pacific Regional tracking Report, compiled by the Pacific Island Forum Secretariat and that which also fed into the various UN interagency working groups for Global reporting will now strive to cater for the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). NMDI can be accessed using the link www.spc.int/nmdi

- **PopGIS2:** Population Geographic Information System 2 launched in 2014 other than only displaying information on population on the map now displays other indicators such as well-being. Visualising such information spatially tells a more powerful and compelling story when compared to the same data being hidden in cumbersome statistical tables. PopGIS2 (www.spc.int/popgis2) is an online application built by the SPC Statistics for Development Division to respond to these demands.
- **Pacific COMtrade database:** Development work is ongoing on the trade database by Harmonised System (HS) commodities and countries of SPC member countries. Disaggregated data at this disaggregated level (with passive confidentiality exercised) is needed by users for food balance sheet, Non-communicable disease (NCD) study.
- **Pocket Summary:** Pocket Statistical Summary allows users to carry most used core information about PICTs in your pocket. SPC has just published its 2015 Pocket Summary and this can be accessed using the link www.spc.int/prism

Work continues to make SPC the preferred regional information source/Pacific repository for all PICTs statistics. Ideally, all users, including the international agencies, should be able to source data from SPC to avoid overlaps.

12. Challenges for the Improvement of Statistics

- Weak resources base of most Pacific NSOs.
Regarding *human resources*, this is illustrated in limited staff numbers in most countries, high staff turnover and unmet needs for ongoing staff professional development. And regards *operating budgets*, many countries NSOs work on mere survival budgets, catering for salaries, with most statistical collections only possible through external financial assistance, and when such assistance is available.
- Access to administrative data: most critical issues are with data coverage/completeness due to no/irregular recording of all events; data not being processed on time; data not correctly classified; and data not accessible on a regular basis due to administrative bottlenecks.
- Countries take time in responding to data requests: Pacific regional economic statistical tables cannot be regularly updated due to lack of response by some countries.
- Persistent reluctance by some NSOs to commit to use of regional statistical standards and classifications.
Despite recent success with countries' support to, and use of a newly developed Pacific HIES methodology, and a similar embrace over the years of using a standard Demographic Health Survey (as used world-wide), we need a similar commitment by countries during the upcoming 2020 Round of Population and Housing censuses. Without NSO and their Ministers' commitment to a regional approach as outlined earlier (paragraph 3-j), it will be impossible to raise the quality and comparability of key socio-economic statistics, such as those pertaining to labour force, economic activities, unemployment and vulnerable populations – such as those not in training, education or employment.



ANNEX 2: Meetings and Technical Workshops conducted by SPC to support Statistical Services

a. Workshops:

- A workshop on Statistical Classifications in the Pacific was held in Fiji from 27 April – 1 May 2015. The focus was on the classification theory and detailed discussions on the commonly used classifications in the Pacific.
- A CPI workshop on item substitution and quality adjustments is scheduled to be held in Fiji from 23-27 November 2015 in collaboration with the Pacific Financial Technical Assistance Centre (PFTAC) and the University of the South Pacific (USP).
- A workshop was held for two weeks in Noumea in November 2014 with participants from five countries - Solomon Islands, Niue, PNG, Fiji and Tuvalu. Website content management training was undertaken with participants working on their country website upgrades and content updates.
- A workshop on Agricultural and Rural Statistics to discuss data needs and ways to source and compile the data was held in Fiji from 5-9 October 2015.

b. Technical Meetings:

- The final HIES Technical Working Group meeting was held from 2-4 June 2015. The outcome of the meeting was an agreement on a set of common HIES outputs for all countries within the HIES project timeline.
- A regional planning meeting for the upcoming 2020 World Round of population and housing censuses was held in July 2015 in Noumea, involving all countries and key invited technical partners. The main purpose of the meeting was to reach agreement on the use by all countries of a standardised core set of thematic census questions that correspond to international statistical classification. This is essential to ensure quality data and comparability of data between countries, which at the moment is not possible across the full spectrum of statistical information collected by national censuses. The use of common core census modules would also allow SPC to produce common data analysis and tabulation programmes for countries, which will help achieve much needed efficiency gains relating to the provision of technical assistance and training.