

10th Pacific Statistics Steering Committee Meeting

Novotel Hotel, Nadi, Fiji

25th – 29th May 2015

Agenda Item 7: TWG Pacific Survey Futures – Progress and Plans

Government Statistician, Fiji, to lead discussion on progress report,

Pacific Survey Futures Working Group

Terms of Reference

1. Chair and Membership

The chair is Fiji, appointed by the PSSC. The Working Group should ideally have 5-7 expert members drawn from within the PSSC. The group can also identify and appoint external experts to support the working group.

2. Background

The Pacific Survey Futures working group was set up to identify areas where the nature of Pacific states had a specific influence on the context of statistical survey taking, statistical practices, systems and statistical infrastructure.

There are a wide range of innovations that have been developed globally utilising new technologies and methods to improve surveys and reduce costs. At the same time there is increasing demand for more frequent and new information to meet additional requirements which, in the face of increasing cost constraints, means that the current approaches are not sustainable.

There is a need to identify and assess these innovations to whether they are more cost effective and sustainable, providing a more flexible and sustainable survey infrastructure for both large and small surveys that cannot be collected through administrative sources.

The PSSC has created this working group to provide a mechanism for innovations to be assessed and provide recommendations to the Pacific Statistics Steering Committee (PSSC) on the need to modify and/or improve current practices.

3. Vision

All PICs have access to cost effective, flexible and integrated survey infrastructure which can be utilised to provide higher frequency and cost effective statistics which meets the countries needs.

4. Things a working group might usefully do

Based on a review of current practices, the Pacific Survey Working Group will submit advice to the PSSC on ways to improve the design and implementation of economic and household surveys in the Pacific, including in:

- Clear view of planned Census, cyclical survey and major rebases to identify funding gaps, efficiency opportunities and balance work programs,
- Technology opportunities for design, collection and processing,

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- Methodology opportunities for design, collection and processing,
- Identifying Country Best Practices to guide survey takers

5. What does success look like and how do we measure it?

Success will be the ability of PICs to meet national, regional and international regional monitoring and reporting requirements by:

- Improved coordination between partners to prioritise scarce resources
- Adoption of new technologies and methodologies that delivers more frequent and cost effective comparable data for example innovative data capture methods (mobile phones) used in advanced administrative processes

6. Synergies and identification of overlap between working groups

Key areas of overlap include:

- UNSC February 2014 Commission Meeting on the future of household surveys
- ICT working group and admin working group as enabling
- HIES working group

7. Barriers that might be considered by the working groups

The working group will focus on identifying new opportunities and assessing, but key challenges that will need to be monitored include:

- getting buy in to support testing, implementation and adoption,
- the trade-off between consistency (time series) and more flexible, timely and cost effective approaches,
- geographic distance between members mitigated through regular communications and taking opportunities to meet alongside other meetings (e.g. PSSC).

8. Potential Topics for consideration

1. Ten year plan for major planned activities (Census, HIES, CPI rebase, GDP Rebase) including whether funding has been secured (SPC)
2. Improvements in Hybrid HIES survey approach taking into account both informational needs and local capacities and resources.
3. Use of Computer Assisted Personal Interviewing (CAPI) techniques and GPS in data collection of complex surveys – potential pilot in Tonga. (World Bank has contacts)
4. Combining information from Population Censuses and Household Surveys to generate small area estimates of key statistics (World Bank)
5. Extend commonality of data management systems
6. Leverage across the region from development initiatives, to reduce development costs [in collaboration with ICT working group]
7. Regional co-ordination of initiatives that all/most countries are engaged in.
8. Development and endorsement of common standards, classifications and practices across the Pacific Islands
9. Enable the standards, classifications, registers and practices of statistical surveys to be used in managing administrative records of sector agencies.
10. By the application of common systems and practices, enable the integration of Pacific statistical sources both at a country and regional level.
11. Build up country registers of business, addresses, places through collaboration with administrative departments, legislative change and clear protocols

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12. There is now the likelihood of common economic surveys, initially being developed in the larger states, but with the potential for adoption in all most other Pacific states.
13. Population, address and business registers are rare so far, with Fiji (and??) being the main countries with business registers, and two countries (Nauru and Tuvalu) examining population registers.
14. The emergency services agency of the Cook Islands has completed the development of an address register there, as part of an ESCAP funded pilot for the Pacific. The existence of such registers brings together and codifies a huge amount of potential auxiliary information that could enable survey designs to take into account pockets of homogeneity of survey populations when determining sample selection and sample size.
15. Integration of administrative and survey sources to increase frequency and subnational analysis of measures.
16. The need to explore how administrative sources can enrich sample surveys is seen in the potential of tax records to support or replace economic surveys and in the potential of employment, health and educational records to supplement household surveys on these topics to provide subnational measures.
17. The great potential of contemporary information and communications technologies are applications that have more relevance to island states than to their more developed development partners, such as mobile phone applications.
18. The implementation of common tools and systems has obvious benefits not only in the initial development costs, but in the regional ability to develop its own support capability, the ability to share innovative approaches to their use, and then to reduce the costs of managing the obsolescence of whatever systems are put in place.