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2019, 2nd Pacific Statistics Standing Committee Meeting (PSSC)

Noumea, 30–31 OCTOBER 2019

Summary Report and Recommendations

Prepared by the
Statistics for Development Division (SDD) of the
Pacific Community (SPC)

October 2020

Contents

List of abbreviations.....	3
Summary of proceedings	4
Keynote address.....	4
Agenda item 1: Action on recommendations of the 2018 PSSC Meeting, and overview of progress on the Ten-Year Pacific Statistics Strategy (TYPSS).....	5
Agenda item 2: Report on the 2019 implementation of SDD’s Business Plan (2018–2020).....	5
Agenda item 3: Report from the Chair of the Pacific Statistics Methods Board (PSMB).....	6
Agenda item 4: Summary of decisions on the RMI HIES experiment, and Kiribati’s experience in using CAPI and recall for HIES	7
Agenda item 5: Proposal for a Pacific Statistical Collections Financing Mechanism	Error! Bookmark not defined.
Agenda item 6: Pacific Financial Technical Assistance Centre (PFTAC) update.....	10
Agenda item 7: Report on PSMB discussion on methods for monetary and non-monetary approaches to poverty measurement and SDG reporting	11
Agenda item 8: Update from NSOs on significant issues, challenges and developments in 2019 (Cook Islands, Fiji, Guam, Kiribati, Tonga, Tokelau and Vanuatu)	11
Agenda item 9: Update on .Stat/SDMX Platform, Pacific Data Hub, SDD website and POPGIS.....	12
Agenda item 10: Briefing on the Microdata Library and Data Governance Framework.....	13
Agenda item 11: Update on Pacific SDG indicators and reporting.....	14
Agenda item 12: Briefing on the draft Pacific Roadmap for Gender Statistics.....	15
Agenda item 13: Report from the Chair of the Donor and Development Partners Group (DDPG).....	16
Agenda item 14: Future investment priorities in regional statistics development	16
Agenda item 15: Preparations for the TYPSS review and ideas for future directions for TYPSS II.....	17
Agenda item 16: Topics for 2020 meeting of Heads of Planning and Statistics (HOPS)/future focus..	18
Closing.....	18
Annex 1: Pacific Statistics Standing Committee (PSSC) – Meeting outcomes.....	19
Annex 2: Pacific Statistics Methods Board (PSMB) – Meeting outcomes.....	19
Annex 3 – List of participants.....	19

List of abbreviations

ABS	Australian Bureau of Statistics
CAPI	Computer-assisted personal interviewing
CRVS	Civil registration and vital statistics
DDPG	Donor and Development Partners Group
DFAT	Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, Australia
FEMM	Forum Economic Ministers Meeting
HIES	Household Income and Expenditure Survey
HOPS	Heads of Planning and Statistics
IDA	International Development Association
MFAT	Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, New Zealand
NMDI	National Minimum Development Indicators
NSDS	National Strategies for the Development of Statistics
NSO	National Statistics Office
PFTAC	Pacific Financial Technical Assistance Centre
PICTs	Pacific Island countries and territories
PSMB	Pacific Statistics Methods Board
PSSC	Pacific Statistics Standing Committee
RMI	Republic of the Marshall Islands
SDD	Statistics for Development Division (SPC)
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
SPC	Pacific Community
SPREP	Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme
TYPSS	Ten-Year Pacific Statistics Strategy
UNICEF	United Nations Children’s Fund
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
VNR	Voluntary national review

The Pacific Statistics Standing Committee (PSSC) meeting was chaired by Mrs Taggy Tangimetua, Cook Islands Government Statistician, with Dr Viliami Fifita, Tonga Government Statistician, as Deputy Chair.

Participants	<p>Representatives of Pacific Island countries and territories: Mrs Taggy Tangimetua, Cook Islands Mr Kemueli Naiqama, Fiji Mr Tyrone Taitano, Guam Mrs Aritita Tekaieti, Kiribati Mr Kele Lui, Tokelau Dr Viliami Fifita, Tonga Mr Calo Andy Kap, Vanuatu</p> <p>Development partners/observers: Mrs Teresa Dickinson and Mr Andrew Knott – Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) Mr Dylan Roux, Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade – Australia (DFAT) (via Skype) Mr Luc Asselin de Williencourt – France Mrs Mei Lin Harley, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade – (MFAT), New Zealand Mr David Kloeden and Mr Luis Temes Castrillon – Pacific Financial Technical Assistance Centre (PFTAC) Mr Henry Cocker – Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat (PIFS) Mr Vince Galvin and Dr Ofa Ketu’u – Statistics New Zealand (Stats NZ) Mr Stanley Gwavuya – United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF) Ms Sandra Paredez – United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) Ms Kristen Himelein – World Bank</p> <p>Secretariat: Mr Epeli Waqavonovono, Mr David Abbott, Mr Phil Bright, Ms Alison Culpin, and Mr Michael Sharp – Pacific Community (SPC)</p>
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Summary of proceedings

All papers and presentations referred to in this report are available online:

<https://sdd.spc.int/events/2019/10/2nd-pacific-statistic-standing-committee-pssc-meeting>

Keynote address

1. Cameron Diver, SPC Deputy Director-General, said that this year, the Forum Economic Ministers Meeting (FEMM) called on ministers and development partners to increase their support for Pacific statistics, specifically for the core statistical collections that provide the data needed to guide policy and measure each country’s progress towards achieving the SDGs.
2. He acknowledged the support and advocacy of Australia, New Zealand and the World Bank, and the collaboration of ABS, Stats NZ, UN agencies and PFTAC, and urged PSSC to think strategically about the issues to be put forward to next year’s meetings of Pacific Heads of Statistics and Planning (HOPS) and FEMM.

Recommendation

3. PSSC:
 - i. noted that the 2019 Forum Economic Ministers Meeting (FEMM) acknowledged the need for increased resourcing for Pacific statistics, which is essential to meet the reporting

requirements of the Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) indicators and to properly reflect the region's progress towards the 2030 Agenda; and

- ii. acknowledged the support of Australia's Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT), New Zealand's Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade (MFAT) and the World Bank, and the collaboration of partners including the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS), Statistics New Zealand (Stats NZ), UN agencies and the Pacific Financial Technical Assistance Centre (PFTAC).

Agenda item 1: Action on recommendations of the 2018 PSSC Meeting, and overview of progress on the Ten-Year Pacific Statistics Strategy (TYPSS)

4. The Director of SPC's Statistics for Development Division (SDD), highlighted significant progress by country NSOs and the support provided by SDD, particularly to smaller NSOs under TYPSS.
5. In addition to its focus on data dissemination and SDG reporting, SDD's work has included support for the development of:
 - economic statistics – e.g. price indexes, and international merchandise trade statistics; and
 - civil registration and vital statistics (CRVS) systems in PICTs, including death registration (cause of death is a key health indicator).
6. The mid-term review of TYPSS, which is scheduled for the first quarter of 2020, will inform the development of the next regional strategy.

Recommendation

7. PSSC:
 - i. noted the update from the Director of SPC's Statistics for Development Division (SDD) on progress made in addressing the recommendations from the 2018 PSSC meeting, major developments under TYPSS and plans for the mid-term review of TYPSS Phase 3.

Agenda item 2: Report on the 2019 implementation of SDD's Business Plan (2018–2020)

8. SDD's business plan has a strong focus on improved analysis and dissemination of data and support for using Pacific statistics in national and regional policy-making. Work has included:
 - redesigning SDD's website, with a focus on user preferences for accessing data; and
 - publishing and maintaining the regional SDG dashboard, which provides a centralised location for SDG indicators and other development indicators and analysis. The regional approach to SDG reporting is innovative and has attracted interest from other regions.
9. The Pacific Regional Data Dissemination Strategy was circulated for comment and is about to be finalised and published. However, funding is needed to implement the strategy.
10. Most PICTs now have a National Strategy for the Development of Statistics (NSDS), which has enabled NSOs to prioritise and plan their work and enhanced data sharing between in-country custodians, among other benefits. This work has been supported by SDD.
11. SDD's Census and Survey Technical Support team has provided technical assistance (TA) and training for conducting HIES and census in PICTs. TA includes planning, sample design, household listing, field team training and field-work management, through to preparation of the final data set and dissemination. There has also been an increase in the number of peer-to-peer exchanges between PICT NSOs for capacity development. The following activities were noted:
 - In partnership with UNICEF and the Pacific Disability Forum, the Washington Group short module on disability is being incorporated in surveys.
 - To provide information on food systems, existing datasets are being used for food security analysis.
 - Integrated programming – SDD is working with other SPC divisions to collect data and look

at the relationship between access to marine food and health outcomes.

- Under the ongoing Pacific Microdata project, the Pacific Microdata Library (microdata.pacificdata.org) has been established to enable safe access to the region's survey, census, and administrative-based microdata and documentation for research and analysis.
12. The Five-Year Data Collection Plan for core statistics and SDD's [Census and Survey Calendar](#) outline an intensive programme of work for both NSOs and SDD. Additional resources are needed to provide the support that PICTs require for successful implementation of their collection programmes.

Recommendations

13. PSSC:
- i. acknowledged SDD's implementation of its business plan, including support for developing National Strategies for the Development of Statistics (NSDS) and strengthening capacity in National Statistics Offices (NSOs);
 - ii. significant progress in improving data dissemination; and
 - iii. innovative work on regional reporting of the Pacific SDG indicators.

Agenda item 3: Report from the Chair of the Pacific Statistics Methods Board (PSMB)

14. The PSMB Chair, Vince Galvin (Stats NZ), presented a report of the Board's activities in 2019, including:
- the Sampling 'Boot Camp' held in February 2019, the timing of which aligned with HIES planning in several PICTs. In week one, participants prepared a HIES sample design, and in week two, a costing and implementation plan. The ratio of trainers to participants facilitated interaction and learning;
 - the RMI HIES Experiment, which has provided an evidence-base for PICT decisions on HIES collection. (Plans to support implementation of the recommendations from the experiment are reported under Agenda item 4);
 - production of Sampling Guidelines, which are intended to be accessible and relevant to PICT NSOs. These were circulated for comment and will be finalised for PSMB's next meeting in April 2020; and
 - a set of draft recommendations for poverty measurement (monetary and multi-dimensional), which PSMB will consider further before finalising (Agenda item 7).

Future work for PSMB

15. Given the upcoming census round in the region, PSMB is looking at what guidance will be most useful to those planning and running a census in 2020/2021 and will consider pathways forward for Pacific census beyond this round.
16. The new World Bank-financed Regional IDA Project will enable a PSMB secretariat to be established in SDD to assist in operationalising the Board's recommendations in PICTs, and will also support PSMB-commissioned research, e.g. on anonymisation of PICT microdata.

Recommendations

17. PSSC:
- i. acknowledged the report of the PSMB Chair on its work in 2019, which included:
 - a. producing Pacific-specific Sampling Guidelines, following circulation of drafts for comment;

- b. providing an evidence-base for decisions on conducting national household income and expenditure surveys (HIES) following analysis of data from the HIES experiment conducted in the Republic of the Marshall Islands (RMI);
 - c. holding a successful sampling workshop that focused on critical practical elements of survey planning; and
 - d. developing updated recommendations for poverty measurement in Pacific Island countries and territories (PICTs), which will be finalised in 2020; and
- ii. recognised PSMB's value in providing a focus for collaboration between highly skilled people on several key technical issues for Pacific statistics.

Agenda item 4: Summary of decisions on the RMI HIES experiment, and Kiribati's experience in using CAPI and recall for HIES

18. The purpose of the HIES experiment in the Republic of the Marshall Islands (RMI) was to update the regionally standardised HIES data collection method and associated instruments that were developed in 2011.
19. All PICTs conduct HIES with objectives including rebasing their GDP and CPI; conducting poverty and nutrition analysis; producing socioeconomic data to inform policy; and populating development indicators, including a fifth of the Pacific SDG indicators.
20. The experiment assessed the effectiveness of using diary or recall methods to collect consumption data. It also tested the use of tablets and computer assisted personal interview (CAPI), and inclusion of complementary survey modules in HIES to avoid the need for stand-alone surveys.

Findings

- Seven-day recall is not inferior to a monitored diary for collecting consumption data. It is also up to five times cheaper in an urban setting.
 - CAPI is suitable for collecting HIES data. (A switch to CAPI is a break in trends so the change should be made once and then maintained.) Lack of internet connectivity can be managed.
 - Some of the additional modules worked well. Others need further development or adaptation to the Pacific context (e.g. the food insecurity module).
21. Based on the results of the RMI experiment, PSMB has recommended a new, regionally standardised HIES data collection methodology in the Pacific region. (The presentation to PSSC provides a summary of the recommendation. The full PSMB report is available at [PSMB May 2019 report and recommendation](#).) The recommendations and methodology will be one of the topics of the 2020 Regional Statistics Development Workshop (10–21 February 2020, Nadi, Fiji).

Kiribati HIES

22. Ms Aritita Tekaieti (Government Statistician, Kiribati) described Kiribati's experience in using the new methodology for its 2019/2020 HIES.

CAPI

- CAPI was efficient and improved data quality but as with any survey tool, achieving good results required intensive planning, a well-trained data monitoring team and considerable checking/rechecking. To assist CAPI use and communication, two chat groups were set up on Facebook Messenger, and an ATHKL 'business talk connection' enabled free phone calls to supervisors and headquarters.
- Limited connectivity presented challenges for syncing data. On most islands, field staff had to travel to the island council office to access the internet. On islands where there was no internet, risk management included taking great care to look after the tablets and having back-up tablets.

Recall

- Seven-day recall suited Kiribati (there is little vegetable production because of poor soil).

- For the Food Away from Home (FAFH) and Partakers modules, there were issues with under- and over-valuing food consumed.
 - For non-food items, there is potential for double counting, e.g. coconut and copra are both tradable for cash and although these transactions are small, they are important.
23. Kiribati listed some practical recommendations for implementing the revised HIES methodology, including the need for CAPI training, guidelines for secondary editing of data, a defined method for valuing goods, risk management, and spot checks of field interviewers to ensure they are carrying out their task properly, e.g. some filled out forms without visiting the household. (For the full list of recommendations, see the presentation.)

Discussion

- What is the risk of data loss when using tablets compared to paper – PSMB concluded that the risks are similar. Regional connectivity is continually increasing, which will allow immediate syncing of data in more locations in future and also enable NSOs to take full advantage of CAPI functionality.
- Kiribati provided excellent information in terms of where support is needed on the ground for a CAPI-based survey.
- Recall/interviewer integrity is an issue for all surveys, regardless of country size.
- Comprehensive risk management that takes local conditions (e.g. geographic spread) into account is an essential part of planning and managing surveys in SIS.

Recommendations

24. PSSC:
- i. noted the specific findings of the RMI HIES experiment to test optimised methods for collecting socioeconomic data;
 - ii. noted that PSMB has endorsed recommendations for a new regionally standardised HIES data collection methodology in the Pacific region, with further work now planned to support implementation of the recommendations; and
 - iii. acknowledged Kiribati's report on its recent HIES, and lessons learned including the benefits of CAPI and how to deal with limited internet connectivity; the appropriateness of a seven-day recall method; and the need to incorporate risk management in all aspects of the survey.

Agenda item 5: Proposal for a Pacific Statistical Collections Financing Mechanism

25. A regional statistical collections financing mechanism was proposed to address the gap in funding for scheduled core collections (the Five-year Collections Programme) in PICTs and for the technical assistance they require.
26. A paper (prepared by Michael Sharp, Stanley Gwavuya (UNICEF) and Sandra Paredez (UNFPA)) was recently presented to the Donor and Development Partners Group (DDPG), and the meeting of the PSMB (28–29 October 2019), which endorsed the proposal in principle.
27. Eighty-one core statistical collections (census, MICS, HIES, DHS, LFS, agriculture and disability) are scheduled in PICTs from 2019 to 2023. These collections contribute data to populating 63 of the 132 Pacific SDG indicators and 87% of the population-based indicators. An average of nine core national statistical collections should be conducted in every PICT before 2030 (i.e. 136 collections) to produce two data points under the Agenda for Sustainable Development.
28. The current resource gap for PICT collections planned for 2019–2023 is USD 40 million–45 million. This amount comprises USD 28.1 – 33.2 million for in-country costs, and USD \$11.9 million for regional technical support. (The estimated total cost of all collections is approximately USD 220 million; the estimated funding gap of USD 40 million–45 million assumes contributions of at least 50% from governments and excludes the costs of collections in PNG and Fiji.)

29. The proposed funding mechanism would enable significant gains in efficiency through supporting a logical order of collections in countries; alignment of PICTs' collection schedules; and standardisation of census instruments, methodologies, data capture and processing.
30. Better resourcing would give SDD, as the regional statistical system leader, more leverage in encouraging efficiencies, improving coordination and providing technical assistance.
31. Details of how the proposed funding mechanism would operate and where it would be located are still to be worked out.

Discussion

32. There was general agreement that the concept of a regional funding mechanism was good in principle. Participants divided into two groups – NSO representatives, and development partners/agencies – to discuss what form the mechanism should take.
33. The NSO group highlighted the following issues:
 - The huge burden of data demands (national, regional, international) on NSOs. An up-to-date NSDS is key to setting priorities and managing demand, particularly for small NSOs. National priorities come first.
 - Transparent governance of the mechanism, with a fair process for allocating resources, not just for collections but also for plugging capacity gaps and providing technical assistance. Different countries have different needs. What would be the basis for allocating funds?
 - Importance of FEMM in statistical governance, including ensuring that the recommendation for more government support for statistical functions is implemented. The proposed mechanism would not absolve governments of their responsibility for funding statistical systems.
 - Need to support political empowerment of Government Statisticians.
 - Requirements for capacity building for NSOs.
 - Roles of the implementing agency for the funding mechanism, SDD as the regional Statistical Systems Leader, and development partners.
 - Consideration of the future of data collection in small NSOs and use of administrative data.
 - How would realm countries and territories access the facility?
 - The need to address the funding gap now, given that only 10 years remain to achieve the SDGs.
34. The development partners/agencies group:
 - Discussed options for housing the facility, i.e. with the UN system, SPC or the World Bank.
 - Agreed to go back to their respective institutions for fact finding on the feasibility of the proposed mechanism – Is it possible? How will it work? What will be the governance structure? Access for realm countries (i.e. non UN or World Bank members)?
 - Agreed that the next steps will depend on the outcome of this fact finding.
35. It was suggested that depending on the results of the fact finding, a temporary resource could be brought in to work on the proposal, noting that the upcoming TYPPS review may also offer an opportunity to consider it (Agenda item 15).
36. UNFPA said that development of the proposal was looking like a long-term plan. Meanwhile, there are pressing gaps in funding for the censuses being held in 2020 and an interim plan is needed.
37. MFAT suggested there could be opportunities to use a pilot approach for the mechanism to address these immediate needs.

Recommendations

38. PSSC:
 - i. supported in principle the proposed funding mechanism, which is intended to provide a

- coordinated approach to funding for Pacific statistics collections and to achieve efficiencies and improved cost effectiveness;
- ii. agreed that further work is needed on the details of how the mechanism will be operationalised, noting current governance arrangements for regional statistics;
 - iii. noted that development partners have agreed to look at the pros and cons of options for housing the funding mechanism, i.e. with a UN agency, the World Bank or SPC (by end of December 2019);
 - iv. acknowledged the following key considerations raised by NSOs, which will be further developed as part of the proposal:
 - a. governance of the facility, including fair and transparent allocation of assistance;
 - b. responsiveness to country needs;
 - c. role of leading agencies, including SDD as the regional statistics system leader, and the role of development partners;
 - d. national priorities (as articulated in NSDS), which should be primary;
 - e. consideration of realm countries – how would they access the funding mechanism?
 - f. government commitments – what should they look like?
 - g. political empowerment of Government Statisticians; and
 - h. extent to which the funding proposal will build NSO capacity;
 - v. agreed that the SDD Director (Eveliina Waqavonovono), and the PSMB Chair and Deputy Chair (Vince Galvin and Dr Viliami Fifita) will prepare a note that further explores these NSO considerations (by end of December 2019). The note will also provide input to the mid-term review of TYPPS; and
 - vi. in recognition of the limited scope to cover funding gaps for the Five-Year Data Collection Plan, requested development partners to actively investigate with SPC ways in which upcoming funding opportunities could be used to pilot the proposed mechanism to leverage further funding from other partners.

Agenda item 6: Pacific Financial Technical Assistance Centre (PFTAC) update

39. PFTAC's 25th anniversary was celebrated in early December 2018 with events including a three-day technical workshop on sustainable growth, and a two-day high-level dialogue on capacity development and growth focusing on 'Making the most of Pacific growth opportunities'.
40. In terms of capacity development, PFTAC delivered 2,793 TA days in 2019, with Tonga, Fiji, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Solomon Islands and Cook Islands being the biggest beneficiaries of this assistance. Sixty-three percent of TA related to public financial management or revenue.
41. The Government Finance Statistics (GFS) programme, which is much appreciated by PICTs, was threatened by a funding shortfall, but there is now optimism that it will continue, with confirmation expected soon.
42. Recent developments include joint PFTAC/Caribbean Events, e.g. on PFM and climate resilience, and dissemination of PFTAC TA advice to qualified recipients via a secure website. Plans for TA in FY2020 are the most ambitious in PFTAC's history, with the Revenue Programme accounting for most TA.

Recommendations

43. PSSC:
 - i. noted the update on PFTAC's operations in 2019; and
 - ii. acknowledged PFTAC's support and technical assistance and the positive outlook for continued funding of the Government Finance Statistics programme, based on strong demand from PICTs.

Agenda item 7: Report on PSMB discussion on methods for monetary and non-monetary approaches to poverty measurement and SDG reporting

44. Concepts of poverty are complex and vary with cultures. It is therefore difficult to measure. One way is to measure monetary poverty. The International Poverty Line (currently USD 1.90 per capita per day) provides a point of comparison for countries. The national monetary poverty line (based on consumption aggregates and cost of basic needs) is country-specific and allows policy-makers to understand poverty patterns in their own country. Non-monetary poverty is a relative measure. Both measures are required to report against indicators for SDG 1 (No poverty).
45. PSMB accepted in principle a set of draft recommendations for updating methods for monetary poverty measurement in PICTs (Annex 2: PSMB Outcome statement). However, there are several outstanding questions that need to be resolved before the recommendations are finalised (e.g. How should home production be priced – unit values, market survey, other? What method should be used for calculating the non-food component of the poverty line?).
46. The World Bank will draft a guidelines paper on the draft recommendations for monetary poverty measurement, which will be circulated for comment and used to update the final agreed list of recommendations for dissemination. Ongoing TA and training will be provided to PICTs to support the implementation of updated methods.
47. Dr Viliami Fifita gave the background to measurement of multidimensional poverty. There are many definitions, but all relate to the individual's ability to participate in the society in which they live. The SDGs offer an opportunity to address the wider dimensions of poverty 'according to national definitions'. The consensual approach is one way of defining multidimensional poverty (that is, asking the public 'If you refer to your society, what do you need to live?').

Discussion

- The presentations to both PSMB and PSSC on poverty measurement are available on the SDD website.
- There has already been considerable work done to define national poverty in PICTs based on expenditure. The work presented to PSMB is a move forward from that analysis.

Recommendations

48. PSSC:
 - i. recognised the challenges of measuring poverty, including for the SDG indicators, given that concepts of poverty vary with cultures;
 - ii. welcomed PSMB's work on developing updated guidelines for monetary poverty measurement and multidimensional poverty measurement; and
 - iii. noted that PSMB's recommendations for poverty measurement will be finalised for dissemination in 2020.

Agenda item 8: Update from NSOs on significant issues, challenges and developments in 2019 (Cook Islands, Fiji, Guam, Kiribati, Tonga, Tokelau and Vanuatu)

49. NSOs highlighted:
 - the benefits of an NSDS (for some PICTs, these are still to be finalised)
 - the role of an NSO in providing unbiased advice to government, and the potential need to revise related legislation and reporting arrangements
 - plans for census in 2020
 - increased emphasis on developing trade statistics
 - development and use of administrative data

- value of TA, training attachments and peer-to-peer support for capacity development.

Challenges:

- heavy demands on NSOs, including for data to report on the SDG indicators
- demand for data in new areas (e.g. for the Kiribati NSO, new work includes an environment-related Integrated Vulnerability Assessment for every island)
- challenges of adopting new technology such as CAPI, which also affects interviewees, and new statistical analysis programs (e.g. R)
- the need for realistic assessment of NSO capability and training needs when introducing new systems.

Recommendations

50. PSSC:

- i. recognised the high and increasing demands on NSOs, e.g. for SDG-related data, and their efforts to address these demands, including through capacity development and adoption of new technology;
- ii. acknowledged the value of peer-to-peer knowledge sharing between NSOs and the mutual benefits of these arrangements;
- iii. emphasised the value of an up-to-date NSDS for supporting NSO planning, prioritisation and advocacy; and
- iv. acknowledged with appreciation the support from development partners, including for capacity building.

Agenda item 9: Update on .Stat/SDMX Platform, Pacific Data Hub, SDD website and POPGIS

51. SDD's significant progress on online dissemination in 2019 includes:

- A comprehensive revamp of the SDD website with a focus on the way that users search for data. A beta version of the new site went live in mid-2019.
- Continued development of the Pacific Data Hub, which provides a central location for Pacific data, not only SPC data. Data sites feature links to related resources.
- Enhancement of the SDG website, which focuses on topics and countries and provides links to country reports, data and other resources (Agenda item 11).
- Establishment of the Pacific Microdata Library in an ongoing project (Agenda item 10).
- Transfer of NMDI indicators to the .Stat Suite (the NMDI database is being phased out by the end of 2019).
- Update of PopGIS to PopGIS3, which has more functionality and can be used on mobile devices.
- Coastal population mapping to assess numbers living within 1 km, 5 km and 10 km of the coast, in a collaborative project between SPC and WorldFish. Excluding PNG, 57% of the Pacific population lives within 1 km of the coast. This information is of particular interest to food security and disaster management bodies.
- Use of social media (Twitter and Facebook) to communicate with users, and LiveChat to respond to user queries.

52. In 2020, SDD's web developer will provide TA for repairing and upgrading NSO websites.

53. SDD acknowledged MFAT for its support for the website redesign and Pacific Data Hub.

Discussion

- The revised website demonstrates SDD's shift to dissemination. Stats NZ is also working with Cook Islands to improve data dissemination.

- NSOs requested:
 - visual displays of data rather than tables (Cook Islands).
 - support for establishing a centralised location for country data (Kiribati).
 - more frequent training from SPC.
 - notices concerning statistics training be directed to the NSO to ensure the appropriate people attend workshops and other events rather than staff from line ministries.
- Vanuatu expressed concern about sharing data and related legislative issues, noting there are plans for open access to HIES information, probably through the NSO.
- SDD responded that:
 - .Stat can be used to generate infographics, etc.
 - an SDD survey of website users showed that the most requested products were census and survey reports. If countries wish to conduct their own user-focus surveys (e.g. What data are users looking for? How do they want it presented?), the results will be used to inform NSO website upgrades.
 - SPREP has set up an environment portal in every PICT and is working in partnership with SDD on the Pacific Data Hub. It may be possible to use this portal as a central location for data.
 - work on the Pacific Data Hub includes looking at legislative issues for data sharing.

Recommendations

54. PSSC:

- i. acknowledged the significant progress made by SDD to improve data dissemination and enhance user access, including through:
 - a. the two-year project to revise and update the SDD website based on the findings of the user engagement survey in 2017;
 - b. the creation of the Pacific Data Hub (PDH), which provides a central, sustainable and accessible platform for cataloguing or hosting Pacific data from SPC and other partners and institutions;
 - c. the development of PopGIS 3 (for data visualisation and mapping), which is faster and more responsive than previous versions and can be used on laptops and smartphones; and
 - d. the update of the National Minimum Development Indicators (NMDI) database and its migration to the new 'dotstat' platform linked to the PDH;
- ii. noted that in 2020, SDD's web developer will focus on supporting the repair and upgrading of NSO websites and building their staff capacity; and
- iii. noted the NSO request for more frequent training from SPC, and the request that notices of statistics-related training are directed to NSOs to ensure the appropriate staff attend workshops and other events.

Agenda item 10: Briefing on the Microdata Library and Data Governance Framework

55. The [Pacific Data Hub – Microdata Library](#) is a central repository for online cataloguing and dissemination of Pacific Island statistical microdata, metadata, reports and documents. It provides safe access to microdata to enable research and analysis that will benefit PICTs.
56. The [Pacific Microdata Library](#) allows users to discover datasets. A stocktake of regional microdata sets found 600, including census and official surveys. SDD has to date documented 150. In some cases, SDD does not have PICT permission to disseminate microdata and is addressing this issue.
57. SDD does not assume ownership of PICT data. Risk management is taken seriously and there are policies and procedures in place for data cataloguing, disclosure, etc. In response to requests for data from external users, more information may be asked for (e.g., Who are you working for?

What do you need the data for? What will be the outputs?).

58. SDD acknowledged the World Bank's support of the project to improve data access and use via the Pacific Microdata Library, and also recognised the support and contributions of NSOs.

Discussion

59. The World Bank has a similar user licence agreement to that used by SDD and has lately been splitting datasets into tiers according to sensitivity. Some tiers are highly protected. The tier system allows a more targeted response to requests and reduces the burden of responding. There have not been many cases of data misuse.

Recommendations

60. PSSC:
- i. welcomed the establishment of the Microdata Library and Data Governance Framework and SPC's leadership of this new capability for the region;
 - ii. noted that SDD is working on guidelines for harmonised structuring of data sets to enhance data sharing;
 - iii. recognised countries' concerns about privacy and confidentiality when sharing their data and the need to address related legislative issues; and
 - iv. noted that SDD has procedures and protocols in place to manage risks in data sharing.

Agenda item 11: Update on Pacific SDG indicators and reporting

61. The SDGs have increased demands for data, including data that has not traditionally been used in the Pacific (or elsewhere in the world). Most PICTS have an SDG committee or task force and most work happens at the national level. The progress wheels that SDD has developed for each PICT allow countries to visualise their progress against relevant indicators (<https://sdd.spc.int/sdds-involvement-sdgs>).
62. Thirteen countries, including Australia and New Zealand, have completed their Voluntary National Review (VNR) and SDD is working with countries planning a VNR in 2020. The VNR is a good tool for assessing country priorities and most countries find that the reporting process has benefits.
63. The extent to which VNR are being used in government policy and planning may be a relevant agenda item for HOPS in 2020.
64. PICTs are using their National Development Strategies as a basis for integrating the SDG indicators into planning. SDD assisted standing committees in the Fiji Parliament to build the indicators into national processes.
65. The SAMOA Pathway pre-dated the SDGs but many of its paragraphs align with SDG targets. A monitoring tool has been developed for the SAMOA Pathway and presented to the UN for approval.

Discussion

66. In 2020, Tonga will produce a report on SDG progress after five years, including the impact of SDG work on policies, budgets, etc. The report will act as a key monitoring mechanism and will also include areas that Tonga cannot report on due to methodological issues. At present, there is a gap between the information generated, and the use of the information. To address this situation, Tonga is running workshops on policy interventions that have worked elsewhere.
67. Fiji said some Tier 3 indicators and their measurement are yet to be confirmed. The indicators will be submitted to a meeting in March 2020. Some may be replaced with more measurable targets (e.g. SDG 14.1.1: Index of coastal eutrophication and plastic debris density).
68. The inclusion of Australia and New Zealand in regional reporting changes the regional picture.

The difference between these countries and PICTs has been pointed out to the UN. Nevertheless, they share some issues such as cross-sectoral work, and the difficulty of measuring some indicators despite good statistical systems. Although Australia and New Zealand can meet reporting requirements for headline indicators, disaggregation is a challenge.

69. PSMB has been looking at what resources/problems are most useful for consideration or collaboration without duplicating work happening elsewhere. One possible area is new forms of data, such as satellite data, which could help measure more indicators. (There are now UN manuals on the use of satellite data.) SDD agreed that looking beyond traditional surveys (e.g. census and HIES) could enable measurement of more indicators. The UN is looking at similar questions, including the use of satellite data.
70. There will be no overall report aggregating SDG indicators for the region. Reporting will be by individual PICT due to differences between PICTs. However, some indicators (e.g. for fisheries) do fit better regionally. In reply to a suggestion that an aggregated report would strengthen the Pacific voice, UNICEF suggested that a Pacific MICS could address this issue.
71. PIFS supported using regional indicators and VNR information for policy-making, which would also have the effect of increasing the visibility of statistics internally with governments and externally with development partners.

Recommendations

72. PSSC:
 - i. recognised SDD's contribution to regional work on SDG reporting, noting the SDGs have increased demands for data, including data that has not traditionally been required in the Pacific, or elsewhere;
 - ii. recognised the value of the Voluntary National Review process as a tool for assessing country priorities and progress, noting that to date 13 countries (including Australia and New Zealand) have completed a VNR, and SDD is supporting others planned for 2020;
 - iii. encouraged the use of VNR findings in national policy and planning; and
 - iv. agreed on the need to look beyond traditional data collection methods (such as census and HIES) to new methods, such as use of satellite data, to enable measurement of more indicators.

Agenda item 12: Briefing on the draft Pacific Roadmap for Gender Statistics

73. The Pacific Roadmap for Gender Statistics is a collaborative effort by SPC and UN Women. It was initiated following realisation of the lack of a specific agenda for gender data and statistics endorsed by PICT NSOs. e.g. for Samoa, 74% of data required for reporting on gender-related SDG indicators is not available (but the corresponding figure for Norway is only 62%).
74. The Roadmap was drafted during two workshops in 2019. Gender and Environment Statistics, Women's Economic Empowerment, and Violence Against Women were identified as the top thematic priorities for the region based on their relevance to PICTs and the urgent need to fill existing data gaps. The draft has been circulated to PICTs for comment.
75. The work aims to build on established platforms, e.g. by taking opportunities to re-analyse existing collections, and to build capacity for using the data. The results framework will be adapted to country contexts and priorities.
76. PSSC was asked to support taking forward the work on the Roadmap.

Discussion

77. As yet there is no funding strategy for the Roadmap. The likelihood is that existing collection processes, e.g. MICS, will provide data, in addition to general work plans. UN Women is very supportive.

78. Priority areas such as ‘Gender and Environment’ may require extra data collections. This process will need to be managed coherently. In this regard, it was noted that in Vanuatu, analysis showed the value of engaging women in decision-making on water collection points.

Recommendations

79. PSSC:
- i. acknowledged the development of the draft Pacific Roadmap for Gender Statistics in a collaboration between SPC and UN Women; and
 - ii. supported further work on the Roadmap, noting that the aims include building on already established platforms, developing capacity to use data, and exploring opportunities to re-analyse existing collections.

Agenda item 13: Report from the Chair of the Donor and Development Partners Group (DDPG)

80. Dylan Roux (DFAT) reported on the DDPG meeting (via Skype):
- Terms of reference setting out the purpose of the DDPG have been drafted but not yet finalised.
 - The summary of the RMI HIES experiment and PSMB meeting outcomes were noted.
 - All partners presented an update on their activities.
 - There was also an update on the Five-Year Collection Plan.
 - DDPG agreed that financing for statistics is a challenge, (e.g. for census in Solomon Islands and PNG) and noted the proposal to establish a financing mechanism.

Recommendations

81. PSSC:
- i. noted the Chair’s report, including that:
 - a. terms of reference (TOR) for the DDPG have been drafted but are yet to be finalised; and
 - b. the DDPG agreed that financing is a challenge, e.g. for upcoming censuses in some Pacific Island countries, and had discussed the proposal for a Pacific statistics funding mechanism.

Agenda item 14: Future investment priorities in regional statistics development

82. Australia is keen to participate, engage and support statistics in the Pacific region. DFAT’s intentions are that funding for ABS and SPC will continue at current levels. There has also been some additional funding through ABS for CRVS work in the region.
83. DFAT is supporting the TYPPS review (AUD 80,000 is available). TOR for the review will be circulated for comment shortly, based on the mid-term review. It is proposed to carry it out in the first quarter of 2020 to allow time to discuss the findings before considering the next strategy.
84. MFAT has been able to increase funding for statistics this year including for the Pacific Data Hub and continues to provide core funding that supports SDD’s role as regional Statistics System Leader. Stats NZ also provides support.
85. MFAT provides support for PFTAC and UN agencies. The next phase of MFAT’s collaboration with the UN is currently being discussed.
86. MFAT considers that although more analysis is needed, the proposal for a Pacific funding mechanism makes sense. It could provide efficiencies, including through greater coordination of partner support, and could also address the needs of small NSOs.

Recommendations

87. PSSC:

- i. noted with appreciation that DFAT currently has intentions to continue funding for statistics at present levels;
- ii. further noted that DFAT is providing some additional support through the Australian Bureau of Statistics for work on civil registration and vital statistics;
- iii. noted with appreciation that MFAT has increased funding this year including for the Pacific Data Hub; provides support for PFTAC and UN agencies; and continues to provide core funding that supports SDD's role as system leader;
- iv. further noted that Stats NZ also provides support for Pacific statistics; and
- v. noted that the next phase of MFAT's collaboration with the UN is currently under discussion.

Agenda item 15: Preparations for the TYPSS review and ideas for future directions for TYPSS II

88. The relevance of the proposed funding mechanism to the sustainability of TYPPS was noted. It was suggested that the TYPPS review could consider:

- clear articulation of the need for the mechanism.
- which components of work plans should be funded?
- possibilities for funding sources and funding arrangements (which need to match).

The timeline for finalising the TOR for the review before the end of 2019 requires input on the funding mechanism to be provided by development partners and NSO representatives as soon as possible (Agenda item 5).

89. Under the current TYPPS, there have been changes to the governance of Pacific statistics and a focus on data dissemination. These changes need time to become embedded and the review should take into account that they are in the early stages.

TYPSS II

- Ideas for the direction of TYPPS II focused on increasing users understanding of data and the capacity to apply information in policy-making, e.g. to make good use of SDG-related data and other data from census and surveys, as well as administrative data.
- It was noted that the First Quadrennial Pacific Sustainable Development Report 2018 (published by PIFS) served as a monitoring and evaluation mechanism for SDG progress and raised the visibility of the work of NSOs and the regional statistical system. (Pacific Leaders used the report for their statements to the UN General Assembly.)
- Looking to the future and the theme of using data, there should be consideration of modernising statistical systems and adopting new practices where appropriate.
- NSDSs identify country needs, which should be key components of TYPPS II.
- There is a need to revise legislation relating to data sharing both in country and externally.
- The issue of Pacific data quality and the need for consistent improvement was also raised.

Recommendations

90. PSSC:

- i. noted that TOR for the mid-term review of the TYPPS will shortly be circulated for comment, with the review proposed to take place in the first quarter of 2020;
- ii. agreed that the TOR should include consideration of the potential for advancing the proposed Pacific statistics funding mechanism, and that relevant input will be provided by development partners and NSO representatives by the end of December (as noted under Agenda item 5);

- iii. acknowledged that DFAT will support the TYPPS review, with funding of AUD 80,000 available; and
- iv. suggested the following ideas for the future direction of TYPPS:
 - a. challenges in collaboration between partners;
 - b. data dissemination;
 - c. focus on use of statistics in policy making;
 - d. sustainability and modernisation of statistics production;
 - e. legislative review (e.g. for microdata liberation) and potential for data sharing between line ministries and NSOs; and
 - f. Pacific data quality.

Agenda item 16: Topics for 2020 meeting of Heads of Planning and Statistics (HOPS)/future focus

91. PSSC suggested the following topics for HOPS and areas of future focus:
- Findings and recommendations of the TYPPS review.
 - Outcomes of PSSC meetings.
 - Reports of PSMB's work and achievements/DPPG's work and achievements.
 - Outcomes of 2020 censuses to date, including status and challenges.
 - Status of the proposal for a Pacific Statistics funding mechanism.
 - Consequences of commitments made by governments.
 - IDA project funding for innovative experiments ('What if we did it differently?'; 'What data would policy-makers like to have at their fingertips?').
 - Opportunity for PICTs to provide input to the development of PFTAC's 6th phase (2022–2027).
 - Greater engagement of planners at HOPS, e.g. through requesting a presentation on their use of data (similarly, representatives of key data users in sectors such as health, gender and population policy could provide presentations).
 - Opportunity to advocate a virtuous circle of data production → use → policy → outcome.
 - Discussion of which issues should go up to FEMM for high-level support.

Closing

92. PSSC accepted the draft recommendations and agreed they would be circulated for comment.
93. The SDD Director thanked the Chair, Mrs Taggy Tangimetua, for her excellent conduct of the meeting and acknowledged the support of the Deputy Chair, Dr Viliami Fifita.
94. The dates and location of PSSC's 2020 meeting will be advised in due course.

Annex 1: 2nd Pacific Statistics Standing Committee (PSSC) – Meeting outcomes

(30–31 October 2019, SPC headquarters, Noumea, New Caledonia)

This report is available online: [PSSC2 Oct 2019 Meeting outcome statement](#)

Annex 2: 4th Pacific Statistics Methods Board (PSMB) – Meeting outcomes

(28–29 October 2019, SPC Headquarters, Noumea, New Caledonia)

This report is available online: [PSMB4 Oct 2019 Meeting outcome statement](#)

Annex 3 – PSSC2 List of participants

(30–31 October 2019, SPC headquarters, Noumea, New Caledonia)

This report is available online: [PSSC2 Oct 2019 Participants List](#)