

Technical Workshop on Statistical Literacy and Capacity Development in the Pacific

Background

SPC (Pacific Community), being a development organization, is working with multisectoral international and national stakeholders to respond to the Pacific challenges. SPC's Statistics for Development Division (SDD) has the principal role in the implementation of the Ten Years Statistics Strategy (TYPSS) which outlines the development of capacity and capability across the region as an important milestone to achieve in the coming years. SDD in this regard works closely with a wide community of donors, the United Nations, and its divisions, for example, the United Nations Statistics Division (UNSD) which also serves as the secretariat of the Global Network of Institutions for Statistical Training (GIST), and the UN's Statistics Institute for Asia and the Pacific (SIAP). This collaboration builds more sustainable statistical capacities through efficient, effective, and harmonized delivery of training at the sub-regional level that will enable the production and use of quality data and statistics.

One of the challenges, for the Pacific countries, is the statistical capacity scores, e.g., Statistical Capacity Indicator (SCI) and Statistical Performance Indicator (SPI) developed by the World Bank, which consistently fall below the average scores from other regions of Asia and the Pacific. The challenges to improvement of scores also are linked to the applicability of such scores for the Pacific which requires region-specific contextualization and then Pacific Statistical Capacity could be benchmarked that could help the region to develop over the years on these grounds.

The issue

Pacific Island Countries and Territories (PICTs) differ significantly in statistical capability and capacity, reflecting multiple factors ranging from the scope and size of the NSOs to the country-specific statistical systems. To better understand the challenges around statistical capacity and capability, from the NSOs' perspective, this opportunity will help understand the unmet need for capacity building within NSS to ensure that national development goals and policies are drawn through adequate analysis of quality and timely official data. It also requires identifying key stakeholders in the national system who can take the lead on this to have a more sustainable impact.

As per the discussions during the GIST meetings and on the advice of the Director, Statistics Division, UN ESCAP, a panel discussion with representatives from NSOs is planned to help highlight the **differential needs** and current **practices** and **needs** in this regard. **A Stats Café** was organized and held on 12th September with a few Pacific NSOs presenting specifically on statistical literacy¹. Three **sub-regional workshops** will follow in October/November this year and next year to cover the Pacific as a sub-region for comprehensive understanding. Following the workshops, the different parameters of capacity intervention needs will be quantified through a survey, which will gather capacity needs at the individual staff level of NSOs, NSS, and User groups.

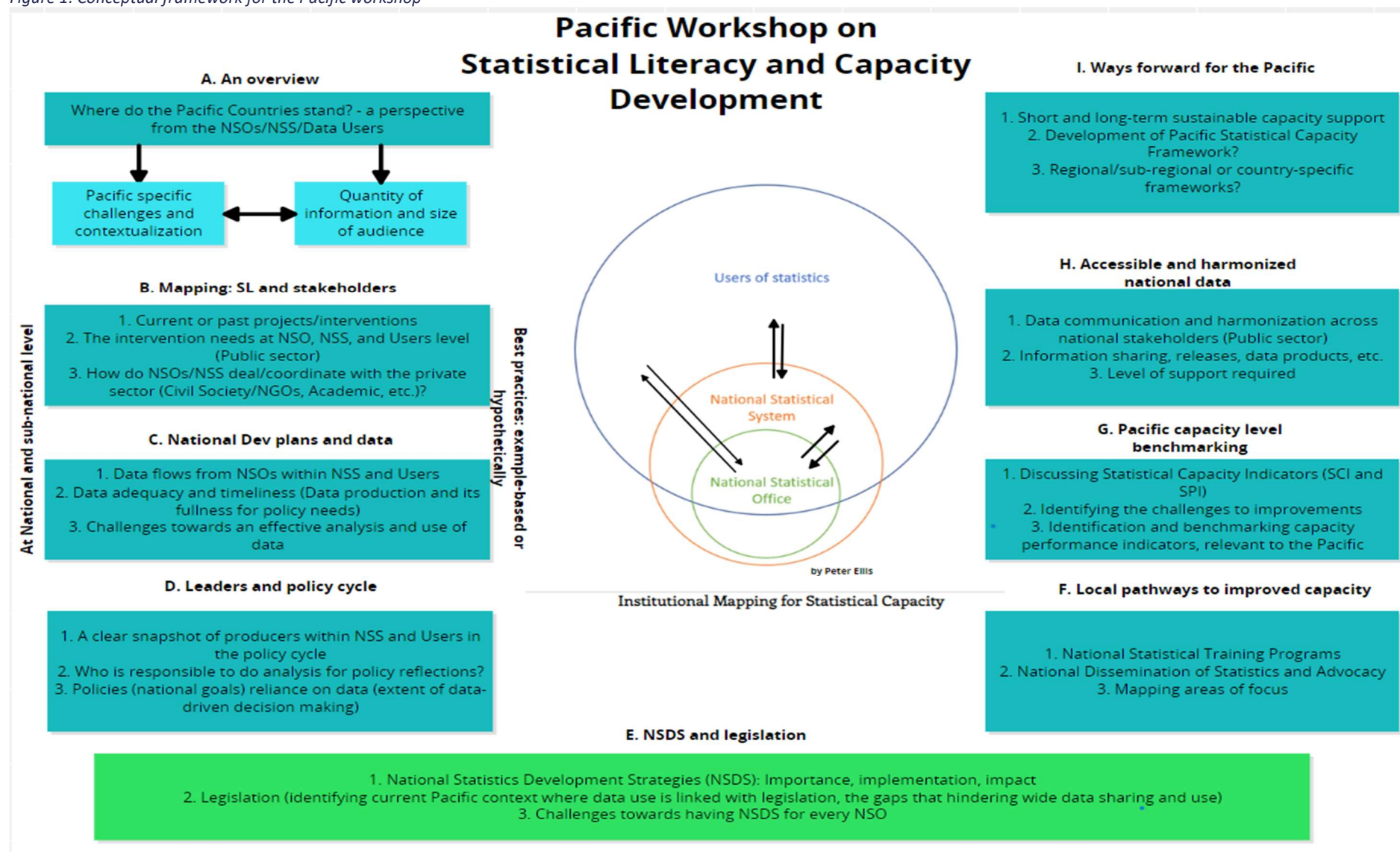
In this regard, first workshop is scheduled for last week of October at Nadi, Fiji, where delegates from Fiji, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Kiribati, Tuvalu, and Tonga will be invited. The second workshop is scheduled in the first quarter of year 2023 at Noumea, New Caledonia where delegates from Cook Islands, Nauru, Niue, Papua New Guinea, and Vanuatu will be invited. The last and third workshop is scheduled either in Guam or Palau in the second quarter of year 2023 with delegates coming from Federate States of Micronesia, Marshall Islands, Palau, and Guam will be invited.

¹ <https://www.unescap.org/our-work/statistics/stats-cafe/2022>

Outcomes

- A general understanding of Pacific-specific statistical capacity and capability challenges to set the foundations and understanding for a wider and comprehensive needs assessment and capacity-building plan for the Pacific with sub-regional differentials.
- Better positioning SPC and partners to understand and structure their training programs that can help improve PICTs NSOs/NSS and Data Users' capacity.
- Identifying the challenges, and areas for strengthening, and highlighting/discussing the role of NSOs in the broader national statistical system, and identifying key stakeholders at each cycle of the data-driven policy-making cycle.
- Development of the Pacific Capacity Development Framework and identification of key entry points for a more sustainable capacity development approach

Figure 1: Conceptual framework for the Pacific workshop



The conceptual framework explained

Areas	Dimensions
Institutional mapping for statistical capacity building	Countries committing to international development goals heavily rely on official statistics and the interplay between national institutions is essential to make progress toward the multidimensional nature of socio-economic development.
Statistical Literacy and data use	Where do the Pacific countries stand? – a perspective from the NSOs/NSS/Users?
Pacific-specific challenges and contextualization	Understanding the changing context within the Pacific. General discussion and identification of key areas; understanding the variation within the Pacific; and identification of priority areas by this variation.
Quantity of information and size of the audience	The discussion around these points will inform about the type of information being preferred/collected and who is the audience for such data collection process – to see if any groups are not mapped as important audiences and how to address this gap.
Mapping: SL and stakeholders	<p>Any notable SL intervention in the Pacific. The stakeholders to focus on this could be from UN, ABS, StatsNZ, Paris21, etc. Countries and stakeholders (participating) would be encouraged to discuss the stories and lessons learned.</p> <p>Identification of the best practices towards SL within the Public and Private Sector, may be based on any example, or what could be the optimal solutions to this challenge?</p> <p>The outcome would be to have an outline of who to work with on regular basis and what areas to cover for increasing SL and utilization of data to reflect on the national policies.</p>
National development plans and data	Understanding the data flows from NSOs within NSS and Users, data completeness and timeliness, and the level of analysis being performed at the national level.
Lead organizations and policy-making process	<p>Identification of lead organizations at the various levels of the data cycle, particularly at analysis and interpretation levels: Production (NSO+?); Analysis (who in NSS?); policies & plans (?); and implementation & monitoring (?) – identifying the capacity needs at each cycle leader level.</p> <p>To what extent do policy-making processes rely on the use of official statistics? Discussions and examples based on current country development plans.</p>
NSDS and legislation	<p>From the strategic perspective, NSDS plays a key role in the overall development of statistics in countries, however, depending on the national structure, capabilities, and legislation, there may be challenges to the development and implementation of NSDS.</p> <p>Also, it is important to initiate and discuss the evidence-based policy-making process, data sharing, and in-depth analyses possibilities, and to relate to an extent this would be possible in the regional and country contexts.</p>

Local pathways to capacity enhancement	Existence and need for national statistics training programs, the need for such programs. How are national statistics dissemination and advocacy happening? Identification of focus areas for training programs, dissemination, advocacy support, etc.
Benchmarking Statistical Capacity for the Pacific	<p>An overview of the existing statistical capacity indices: what works and what does not for the Pacific.</p> <p>Technical discussion around SCI and SPI – its applicability to Pacific by dimensions – why Pacific could not provide data for all dimensions.</p> <p>Which areas could unanimously be agreed upon to benchmark Statistical Capacity for the Pacific?</p>
Data accessibility and harmonization	<p>Data communication and harmonization across national stakeholders (Standardization, duplication, and common national definitions); key issues in the operationalization of national indicators as per international standards.</p> <p>The commitment and capacity towards data releases, products, dashboards, etc., and support required.</p>
Ways forward for the Pacific	A final approach towards short and long-term capacity needs, development of statistical capacity frameworks at region or sub-regional level, and capacity building program framework for next years.