



Tanoa Waterfront Hotel, Lautoka, Fiji Islands

1st – 2nd June, 2016

PSSC-12 Agenda Item 4.1

Meeting Paper Title: Capacity Assessment

1. Purpose of Paper

- to provide the meeting with two potential approaches to assess capacity of NSOs

2. Introduction/Background

- 2.1. Building statistical capacity of National Statistics Offices is key to the successful delivery of the statistics function. A range of activities are undertaken to build this capacity for example training, attachments, formal academic study, mentoring, etc.
- 2.2. Assessing capacity presents some challenges mainly due to the loose nature of the defining the term and the many potential elements that contribute to capacity for example staff expertise, staff experience, number of staff and the funding required to undertake the statistical function all contribute to the NSO capacity. An ideal combination of these elements would be needed to fulfil the requirements of a National Strategy for the Development of Statistics.
- 2.3. In reality capacity is a fluid concept in the sense that it is influenced by staff retention, funding decisions, new knowledge gained and new experience gained.

3. Key Issues

- 3.1. We propose PSSC consider two concepts to assess capacity by way of a Capacity Continuum.
 - a quantitative approach using objective criteria
 - a qualitative approach using subjective self-assessment criteria
- 3.2. Both approaches use a rubric describing the continuum of NSO capacity as Initiating, Functional or Well-established. Each level of the rubric is described by set criteria.
- 3.3. A quantitative approach includes setting criteria related to the number of NSO staff, staff expertise (levels of statistics qualification), staff experience and the extent to which governments fund the NSO. NSO's will need to consider and clearly express their optimal capacity state so that when applied to the continuum criteria an assessment of current state can be made.

- 3.4. A qualitative approach makes use of concepts of Statistical Leadership, Statistical Production and Statistical Literacy as described in the Australian Bureau of Statistics' *Statistical Capability Framework*. By defining what each of these concepts might look like in a 'well-established' NSO a continuum can be developed. Self-assessment by NSO staff will provide an indication of the level of capacity at any point in time.
- 3.5. Both these approaches will highlight gaps and opportunities to improve elements of capacity. Either approach will support Technical Assistance providers and donor agencies to focus their activity on areas of NSO weakness. If a fundamental purpose of the TA provider is to build statistical capacity then more thought as to the appropriate modality in the context of each individual NSO's strategy will be required. Creating distinction between 'building capacity' and 'supporting capacity' may very well be a useful exercise.
- 3.6. Key to the success of either approach is that assessment of capability is viewed as part of a wider organisational learning environment seeking to better understand it's strengths and weaknesses in terms of its ability to deliver its core functions.
- 3.7. A presentation will be delivered showing a conceptual model for both approaches. The aim of the presentation is to prompt discussion and thoughts on both approaches prior to developing a model to test feasibility of its use as an ongoing monitoring tool within the TYPSS monitoring and evaluation framework.

4. Key Recommendations

- 4.1. PSSC endorse further development of an approach to assess capacity as part of the TYPSS Monitoring and Evaluation Framework

5. Annexes

Annex I: Paper will be accompanied by a powerpoint presentation which will be made available post the PSSC-12 discussion.

Annex II: The Australian Bureau of Statistics Capability Assessment Framework (electronic copy will be provided).