

SECRETARIAT OF THE PACIFIC COMMUNITY

REGIONAL MEETING OF HEADS OF PLANNING AND HEADS OF STATISTICS (HOPS)
(Noumea, New Caledonia, 17-21 September 2007)

Future directions for evidence-based decision making in the Pacific

FUTURE OF STATISTICS IN THE PACIFIC REGION
(Document prepared by the Secretariat of the Pacific Community)

INTRODUCTION

1. This paper provides the Regional Heads of Planning and Heads of Statistics (HOPS) meeting with a summary of the “Future of Statistics in the Pacific Region” workshop held at SPC headquarters in Noumea, 19-21 March 2007. The workshop report is attached as Appendix 1.

BACKGROUND

2. The workshop was attended by 41 representatives of a broad cross-section of the statistical community of the region. The initial intention of the workshop was to have a brainstorming session among a limited number of stakeholders prior to the HOPS meeting in September 2007. It quickly became apparent that other stakeholders/contributors to statistics in the region were also keen to participate and contribute, and this was accommodated. This would also be consistent with the Pacific Plan initiative to expand and improve the full range of statistical databases/information for the region.
3. The intention was always for the workshop outcomes to be a key input to the September 2007 HOPS meeting and for further refinements to the future directions to be determined during that meeting, and thereby reflect the true needs of the region. With the HOPS meeting being owned by the PICTs, this meeting would ensure their priorities are appropriately addressed. In addition, representatives from each of the Pacific sub-regions (including the French territories) were invited to and attended the March workshop.

WORKSHOP OBJECTIVES

4. The overall objective of the workshop was to secure the basis for a strategic framework to improve Pacific statistics. This would be achieved by:
 - a) Identifying key weaknesses/gaps in the statistical systems of the Pacific region; that is the capacity to deliver across a broad spectrum of activities and sectors;
 - b) Identifying the best modalities to address these key weaknesses/gaps; and
 - c) Where appropriate, identify the most appropriate agency(ies) to take the lead role in addressing these key weaknesses/gaps.

WORKSHOP FORMAT

5. The broad format of the workshop was designed to proceed in a working group format, with participants allocated to one of the eight thematic working groups below to address the workshop's three main objectives, before reporting back to the plenary for review and endorsement:

- ***Statistical Activity working groups***
 - [i] Data collection
 - [ii] Dissemination
 - [iii] Analysis/interpretation
- ***Sectoral statistical Issues working groups***
 - [iv] Industry statistics
 - [v] Macro-economic indicators
 - [vi] Population/demography indicators
 - [vii] Social indicators
- ***Structural/institutional issues working group***
 - [viii] Structural/institutional issues

6. Each working group was requested to systematically address the workshop's three main objectives, as they pertained to the working group's specific thematic focus. The principal outcomes of these discussions focused on key issues and concerns, as well as directions required to address these matters, which can be grouped under the following topics:

- National Statistical Office (NSO) institutional matters
- Statistical Plans
- Minimum data-sets
- Data collection/processing
- Analysis/interpretation/utilization capability
- Dissemination
- Sectoral data

SUMMARY OF KEY DIRECTIONS IDENTIFIED

- ***National Statistical Office (NSO) institutional matters:***
 - i) International agencies to promote the necessary structural change to encourage greater demand.
 - ii) NSOs to focus on increasing demand as a key priority.
 - iii) A balance between capacity building, sharing, supplementation (full suite of options) to be discussed and agreed with individual countries (this applies across all statistical activities).
 - iv) Statistical priorities to be agreed across national agencies and incorporated in legislation (long term). This process will require support/assistance from regional agencies.
 - v) Legislative issues should be addressed through targeted, specialist consultancies, coordinated by a regional agency.

- vi) Standardisation of methods, classifications, definitions, standards within the Pacific context to be promoted by all (where appropriate).
 - vii) Capacity building through USP formal training to be promoted/encouraged by all.
 - viii) Partners providing statistical assistance to PICTs to improve coordination.
 - ix) Regional/international agencies to ensure improved representation at key international meetings through greater coordination.
 - x) Successful national government statisticians to be invited to key regional meetings
 - xi) The forthcoming regional benchmark study (see Appendix 2) to take the above issues/directions further.
- ***Statistical Plans:***
 - i) A regional agency to develop and present the strategic statistical plan concept and a recommendation for supporting such plans in the Pacific region to FEMM (to gain their buy-in). High level endorsement is needed for such plans, FEMM is the logical endorsee.
 - ii) External assistance/support required to develop national strategic statistical plans.
 - iii) Active national coordination advisory groups to be established (a pre-cursor to the strategic statistical plan).
 - iv) External assistance/support to be linked with the current PARIS21/ESCAP initiative.
- ***Minimum data sets:***
 - i) National agreement on data/indicator needs required, leading to definition of national minimum data-sets
 - ii) The definition and agreement of national minimum data-sets will often require external assistance/support to finalise.
- ***Data collection/processing:***
 - i) The necessary regional support services must be available
 - ii) Best practice data collection/processing guidelines to be developed and promoted by regional agencies
 - iii) Success stories on the use of administrative data to be developed and promoted by regional agencies

- iv) Statistical legislation to be reviewed and updated across the region.
- v) National key data sources (including administrative data) across the region to be audited (this is recognised as a significant project if done properly).
- ***Analysis/interpretation/utilization capability:***
 - i) A regional analytical capability required (interpretation & utilization must stay mainly national, except perhaps for Small Island States).
 - ii) Greater regional efforts required to develop national interpretation & utilization capability (critical to demand). Need to educate users.
 - iii) Reach out to non-traditional target groups (civil society, media, schools). Produce interesting products for these audiences – maps, graphics, etc.
 - iv) Regional agencies to develop and disseminate best practice examples.
- ***Dissemination:***
 - i) Expanded regional information service to be developed, expanding/complimenting PRISM
 - ii) Metadata standards to be improved across the region
 - iii) Access to census/survey data to be enhanced
 - iv) User charging to be discouraged where possible
 - v) NSOs to have dissemination strategies targeted at their clients, with clear publication schedules, and project designs need to include dissemination plans.
- ***Sectoral data:***
 - i) Priority national and regional sectoral indicators to be specified
 - ii) Existing sectoral data to be “released” by identification of source data and then analysis/interpretation/utilization of existing data
 - iii) Gaps in priority indicators to be filled
 - iv) Greater support for the regions economic statistics (identified as a key sectoral weakness) to be provided.
 - v) SPC to be the lead regional agency for information in the population, demography, health, gender, youth and economic sectors, with PRISM as the dissemination tool, building on the existing system.
 - vi) Focus to be on internal national requirements.

Where to from here?

7. Although the workshop was well attended by a broad cross-section of the region's statistical community, it was recognised that the principle stakeholders (the Statistical and Planning Offices of the region) were only partially represented. This was always known to be the case, and this workshop was the first step in the process of determining the future directions; input from the development partners of the region.
 8. The next step in the process is the current HOPS meeting. A substantial part of this meetings agenda has been devoted to "Future directions", with the outcomes of the March workshop forming a key input to the meeting's deliberations.
 9. The Pacific Island Forum Secretariat (PIFS), in collaboration with the SPC, are to undertake a regional benchmark study "Strengthening Statistical Services Through Regional Mechanisms: A Benchmark Study and Way Forward". It is expected that the outcomes of the current HOPS meeting will input to the benchmark study, which will further clarify the way forward.
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APPENDIX 1

REPORT OF WORKSHOP

Future of Statistics in the Pacific Region (Noumea, New Caledonia, 19–21 March 2007)

INTRODUCTION

1. The “Future of Statistics in the Pacific Region” workshop was held from 19 to 21 March 2007. It was attended by 41 representatives of a broad cross-section of the statistical community of the region, including 4 member countries/territories of the Secretariat of the Pacific Community (SPC) {see Appendix 1 for a list of participants}.
2. The initial intention of the March workshop was to have a brainstorming session amongst key agency stakeholders and SPC prior to the Regional Heads of Planning and Heads of Statistics (HOPS) meeting in September 2007. One of the difficulties in previous HOPS meetings was a lack of clear understanding by PICT participants of the regional priorities of agency stakeholders and the areas that they were likely to support. For many years agency stakeholders had expressed general support for regional statistics, but there had not been a coordinated or comprehensive assistance strategy. By key stakeholders articulating their regional priorities for the future of statistics in the region and this feeding into the HOPS meeting, the PICTs would be better placed to focus their assistance needs on areas which were likely to receive external stakeholder support.
3. AusAID, ADB and SPC were the initiating agencies of the March meeting. It quickly became apparent that other stakeholders/contributors to statistics in the region were also keen to participate and contribute. By expanding the workshop to include a broad constituency of stakeholders to canvass a comprehensive range of ideas, concepts and proposals pertaining to the future of statistical development in the region, a sound basis for future progress could be developed. This would also be consistent with the Pacific Plan initiative to expand and improve the full range of statistical databases/information for the region.
4. It is important to note that this workshop was never seen as an end in itself. The intention was always for the outcomes of this workshop to be a key input to the September 2007 HOPS meeting and for further refinements to the future directions to be determined during that meeting, and thereby reflect the true needs of the region. It was considered unlikely to be practical for the March workshop to include all relevant external stakeholders as well as PICT representatives, since this would have been too large a workshop to enable appropriate input from the range of participants (with the diversity of external stakeholders participating in the March workshop, it was difficult to ensure appropriate input from even these stakeholders). With the HOPS meeting being owned by the PICTs, this meeting would ensure their priorities are appropriately addressed. Nevertheless, representative participants from each of the Pacific sub-regions (including the French territories) were invited to the March workshop to ensure the workshop outcomes broadly reflected the needs of the region, and were not purely external stakeholder driven.

5. The meeting was opened by the Director-General of the SPC, Dr Jimmie Rodgers. Dr. Rodgers recognised the breadth and diversity of the stakeholders with an interest in the future of statistics in the region and the strong representation at the workshop. He also noted the consistent message that he had received for many years; that the region's statistics were inadequate for its decision making purposes and his desire that this workshop will assist in addressing this inadequacy.

WORKSHOP OBJECTIVES

6. The overall objective of the workshop was to secure the basis for a strategic framework to improve Pacific statistics. This would be achieved by:
 - a) Identifying key weaknesses/gaps in the statistical systems of the Pacific region; that is the capacity to deliver across a broad spectrum of activities and sectors;
 - b) Identifying the best modalities to address these key weaknesses/gaps; and
 - c) Where appropriate, identify the most appropriate agency(ies) to take the lead role in addressing these key weaknesses/gaps.

WORKSHOP FORMAT

7. The broad format of the workshop was designed to proceed in a working group format, with participants allocated to one of eight thematic working groups to address the workshop's three main objectives, before reporting back to the plenary for review and endorsement. These thematic working groups addressed statistical activities (i-iii), sectoral issues (iv-vii), and structural/institutional issues (viii), comprising a balanced representation of development partners, technical agencies (including UN agencies), SDP staff and the four PICT representatives.

- ***Statistical Activity working groups:***
 - [i] Data collection
 - [ii] Dissemination
 - [iii] Analysis/interpretation
- ***Sectoral statistical Issues working groups***
 - [iv] Industry statistics
 - [v] Macro-economic indicators
 - [vi] Population/demography indicators
 - [vii] Social indicators
- ***Structural/institutional issues working group***
 - [viii] Structural/institutional issues

8. Each working group was requested to systematically address the workshop's three main objectives, as they pertained to the working group's specific thematic focus. The principal outcomes of these discussions focused on key issues and concerns, as well as directions (in some cases, mentioning strategies and associated activities) required to address these matters, which can be grouped under the following topics:

- A. National Statistical Office (NSO) institutional matters
- B. Statistical Plans
- C. Minimum data-sets
- D. Data collection/processing
- E. Analysis/interpretation/utilization capability
- F. Dissemination
- G. Sectoral data

SUMMARY OF KEY WORKING GROUP OUTCOMES

9. The outcomes of each working group's deliberation and recommendations, and endorsement by the plenary, can be summarized as follows:

- I. General issues and challenges
- II. Detailed list of issues and challenges
- III. Key directions identified by workshop as essential to address these issues

A. NATIONAL STATISTICAL OFFICE (NSO) INSTITUTIONAL MATTERS

A-I General issues and challenges:

- i) NSO inter-relationships and engagement with national/regional/international stakeholders
- ii) General capacity constraints
- iii) Sustainability
- iv) Legislation.

A-II Detailed list of issues and challenges

- i) Linking NSO activities to national priorities/plans will demonstrate value and encourage demand for statistical services.
- ii) Need to improve in-country consultations with key line ministries; to secure access to and improve the quality of administrative data sets in such ministries.
- iii) Need whole of government appreciation.
- iv) Lack of demand of NSO services within countries leads to a lack of national resources.
- v) Co-location/integration of NSOs with key line ministries would foster better links, and potentially enhance statistical resources. However, loss of independence would be a real issue with such co-location/integration.
- vi) Noted that creating demand does not necessarily increase the burden on NSOs.
- vii) Strong NSO leadership/initiative is needed to increase demand.
- viii) The importance of an effective NSO needs to be recognized, with greater funding, improved salaries and staff retention. This will be likely if other issues are addressed.
- ix) Regional capacity building is required. Not necessarily in each country for all statistical processes; capacity building, sharing (South-South co-operation) and supplementation should all be considered.

- x) Core competencies/skills (both nationally and regionally) need to be defined.
- xi) Understanding of methods, classifications, definition and standards are critical. Consistency is very important to such understanding.
- xii) NSO staff capability demonstrated to have improved through regional capacity building efforts (e.g. participation in USP courses, SPC training programs, etc.).
- xiii) Regional human resource capacity building needs to tap into the regions educational institutions (e.g. through USP), as part of a sustainable solution.
- xiv) Regional capacity building requires joint (multi-partner) country strategies in the development of statistical assistance to PICTs (including the development of MSDs), as well as multi-sector statistical development plans/strategies.
- xv) The most critical factor in regional capacity building is long term sustainability.
- xvi) Need to have a Pacific voice heard at International forums.
- xvii) This Pacific voice would not necessarily be only that of SPC or a regional agency.
- xviii) Successful national government statisticians should be invited to key regional meetings (e.g. FEMM).
- xix) The role of the NSO and other national agencies in the National Statistical Service need to be defined. A clear understanding of the role of the NSO with respect to standards/classifications, coordination and confidentiality is required. NSOs are not independent from government, but should follow (as closely as possible) the international Official Statistics Principles.
- xx) Legislation is dated and in many cases not appropriate for the region.
- xxi) Linking NSO activity plans to budget processes can be useful.

A-III Key directions identified by workshop as essential to address these issues

- i) International agencies to promote the necessary structural change to encourage greater demand.
- ii) NSOs to focus on increasing demand as a key priority.
- iii) A balance between capacity building, sharing, supplementation (full suite of options) to be discussed and agreed with individual countries (this applies across all statistical activities).
- iv) Statistical priorities to be agreed across national agencies and incorporated in legislation (long term). This process will require support/assistance from regional agencies.

- v) Legislative issues should be addressed through targeted, specialist consultancies, coordinated by a regional agency.
- vi) Standardisation of methods, classifications, definitions, standards within the Pacific context to be promoted by all (where appropriate).
- vii) Capacity building through USP formal training to be promoted/encouraged by all.
- viii) Partners providing statistical assistance to PICTs to improve coordination.
- ix) Regional/international agencies to ensure improved representation at key international meetings through greater coordination.
- x) Successful national government statisticians to be invited to key regional meetings
- xi) The forthcoming regional benchmark study (see Appendix 2) to take the above issues/directions further.

B. STATISTICAL PLANS

B-I *General issues and challenges:*

- i) The clear need for such plans
- ii) Need to focus on realistic country priorities (with guidance from international benchmarks).

B-II *Detailed list of issues and challenges*

- i) Countries/territories need strategic statistical plans to guide their National Statistical Service.
- ii) National statistical plans should be focused on national priorities through linkages to national development plans and related monitoring and evaluation frameworks and development strategies.
- iii) National statistical plans should be developed by countries for countries, with guidance from international agencies and benchmarks (e.g. MDGs).
- iv) Clear expectations/benchmarks are required as part of statistical plans, which will vary according to country size/capacity/needs.
- v) Currently, externally driven projects can absorb all available NSO resources.

B-III *Key directions identified by workshop as essential to address these issues*

- i) A regional agency to develop and present the strategic statistical plan concept and a recommendation for supporting such plans in the Pacific region to FEMM (to gain their buy-in). High level endorsement is needed for such plans, FEMM is the logical endorsee.

- ii) External assistance/support required to develop national strategic statistical plans.
- iii) Active national coordination advisory groups to be established (a pre-cursor to the strategic statistical plan).
- iv) External assistance/support to be linked with the current PARIS21/ESCAP initiative.

C. MINIMUM DATA SETS

C-I *General issues and challenges:*

- i) Realistic minimum data set benchmarks are required for all countries
- ii) Minimum data sets to be nationally focussed, while considering international standards.

C-II *Detailed list of issues and challenges*

- i) A minimum set of data/information (MSD) is required for all countries. The MSD will vary across countries (e.g. balance of payments may not be a part of the MSD for Niue, but would be for Fiji), but needs to be defined and agreed by key ministries within countries.
- ii) A study of national data/indicator needs, availability and gaps is required. In the process of this study, a minimum list of indicators for each sector (which will define the MSD) should be developed.
- iii) National priorities needs to be the focus of the MSD.
- iv) The MSD should consider and harmonise with international standards.
- v) MSDs should focus on national policy statements/development strategies/plans. Should also consider international agreements.
- vi) MSDs must be realistic and clear about what they will do, but just as importantly, what they will not do.
- vii) Benchmarks need to be set for national MSDs, on which the MSDs can be assessed and built upon.

C-III *Key directions identified by workshop as essential to address these issues*

- i) National agreement on data/indicator needs required, leading to definition of national minimum data-sets
- ii) The definition and agreement of national minimum data-sets will often require external assistance/support to finalise.

D. DATA COLLECTION/PROCESSING

D-I *General issues and challenges*

- i) Varying complexity of data collection/processing activities means varying approaches will be required across countries/territories
- ii) Sharing and harmonising of systems is critical to effective and sustainable statistical systems
- iii) Weak legislation, data editing skills and output timeliness are significant issues.

D-II *Detailed list of issues and challenges*

- i) Some data collection activities (e.g. sample design) should be undertaken on a capacity sharing/supplementation basis.
- ii) Some data collection activities should be undertaken nationally in collaboration with external assistance (e.g. questionnaire design, field work quality control, data processing).
- iii) Some data collection activities should be undertaken solely nationally (e.g. field work management, questionnaire translation, printing), but even some of these activities require assistance through training and external support.
- iv) Consistent methodology, standards, classifications, definitions, software is needed (for small offices even understanding these issues is very challenging).
- v) International methodology, standards, classifications and definitions need adaptation for the Pacific environment.
- vi) Sharing of best practice – through PRISM - is critical. Examples of experiences (including where initiatives did not work) would be very useful.
- vii) Software options for processing and analysis should reflect capacity within the PICTs, while maximising harmonisation/consistency across the region.
- viii) Data editing identified as a particular area requiring improvement.
- ix) Timeliness of census/survey data processing needs to be improved.
- x) Data collection legislation generally exists, but requires adaptation to local environment and is often not complied with.
- xi) Pre-collection research work is weak, due to lack of documentation and corporate knowledge.
- xii) Survey budgets are usually determined before any design work is undertaken. A small budget for design work is needed, and then a budget for undertaking the survey.

D-III Key directions identified by workshop as essential to address these issues

- i) The necessary regional support services must be available
- ii) Best practice data collection/processing guidelines to be developed and promoted by regional agencies
- iii) Success stories on the use of administrative data to be developed and promoted by regional agencies
- iv) Statistical legislation to be reviewed and updated across the region.
- v) National key data sources (including administrative data) across the region to be audited (this is recognised as a significant project if done properly).

E. ANALYSIS/INTERPRETATION/UTILIZATION CAPABILITY

E-I General issues and challenges:

- i) Analysis and interpretation must be relevant and targeted for the intended audience
- ii) In-country interpretation and utilisation of statistics is critical to recognising the importance of statistics, and therefore national support for statistical systems
- iii) In-country analysis/interpretation/utilization skills are weak, a challenging task to improve.

E-II Detailed list of issues and challenges

- i) Need to make analysis/output relevant for a broad range of users (including non-traditional users). To ensure use in decision making processes, local ownership/utilization is needed.
- ii) Need to have a national focus; analysis and interpretation that will be relevant and used within the countries.
- iii) Need to generate demand at the country level (which in turn will lead to national commitment for statistics).
- iv) To demonstrate the value of the statistical information, need to keep analysis simple, with clear examples of how analysis/interpretation can be linked to utilization,.
- v) Time gaps between collection and analysis of data need to be reduced.
- vi) The benefits of data/analysis/interpretation/information need to be promote. NGOs, academics and other researchers/consultants need to be considered and engaged in; dissemination activities, utilization of data and promotion/advocacy/related training activities. The media is the mechanism to be used to engage with the population more generally.
- vii) Greater awareness, understanding and recognition of the value of data/analysis/interpretation/information will increase demand for these outputs, enhancing the respect for NSOs, leading to an improved case for greater statistical resources.

- viii) In-country analysis/interpretation/utilisation skill levels are quite low, and experience shows that when skill levels are developed, high turnover rates of such skilled staff can be expected.
- ix) Political involvement – need greater political support in promoting the benefits of utilizing analytical outputs, while retaining analytical output independence from political processes.

E-III *Key directions identified by workshop as essential to address these issues*

- i) A regional analytical capability required (interpretation & utilization must stay mainly national, except perhaps for Small Island States).
- ii) Greater regional efforts required to develop national interpretation & utilization capability (critical to demand). Need to educate users.
- iii) Reach out to non-traditional target groups (civil society, media, schools). Produce interesting products for these audiences – maps, graphics, etc.
- iv) Regional agencies to develop and disseminate best practice examples.

F. DISSEMINATION

F-I *General issues and challenges:*

- i) An expanded information service, building on PRSM, is required
- ii) Metadata across the region is very weak
- iii) Charging for data/information is a disincentive to utilization
- iv) Alternative dissemination mechanisms to the Internet should still be considered.

F-II *Detailed list of issues and challenges*

- i) PRISM endorsed as the primary dissemination mechanism.
- ii) Need a wider dissemination information service for the region (supplementary to PRISM) to take the pressure off the burden of information requests on the region.
- iii) PRISM should be expanded to be a repository or gateway for regional and international statistical reports and information.
- iv) Need to further broaden the information service provided to the region (e.g. analytical reports from international agencies).
- v) Storage of information in a central location would be very useful.
- vi) Improvement in metadata (concepts, definitions, classifications, source, quality assessment) required.
- vii) Metadata standards should be defined, developed and promoted in NSOs, and disseminated on their websites.

- viii) A metadata database tool (enabling searching) would be useful.
- ix) National NGOs should be encouraged to disseminate through NSO websites.
- x) National sectors (e.g. Education Department) could take responsibility for their component of their national website? (Recognised that this is likely to lead to coordination problems).
- xi) Access to census/survey unit record data by research workers needs to be strengthened.
- xii) NSOs should be encouraged to release data at the most detailed level of aggregation possible (unit record data?) to users (noted that legislation, standards and protocols required).
- xiii) Charging for data is an issue (perhaps a national decision?).
- xiv) User pays for outputs leads to negativity toward outputs. International practice is moving away from user pays for base statistical products from the national statistical service.
- xv) The Internet is not the only form of electronic dissemination (e.g. CDs, DVDs). These other means of dissemination need to be considered in national and regional dissemination strategies.
- xvi) Paper publications still have a function in the region.
- xvii) Regular national digests agreed to be very useful.
- xviii) National and regional publication schedules should be set and adhered to.
- xix) Greater dissemination via the media is required.
- xx) Professional advocacy required to follow-up dissemination.

F-III *Key directions identified by workshop as essential to address these issues*

- i) Expanded regional information service to be developed, expanding/complimenting PRISM
- ii) Metadata standards to be improved across the region
- iii) Access to census/survey data to be enhanced
- iv) User charging to be discouraged where possible
- v) NSOs to have dissemination strategies targeted at their clients, with clear publication schedules, and project designs need to include dissemination plans.

G. **SECTORAL DATA**

G-I *General issues and challenges:*

- i) While significant sectoral data exists, important gaps remain

- ii) Priority national sectoral indicators are difficult to define and secure agreement
- iii) Much greater analysis/mining of existing data is required
- iv) Once agreed, gaps in priority sectoral indicators need to be progressively filled.

G-II Detailed list of issues and challenges

- i) Need clear specification of priority national and regional sectoral indicators.
- ii) A lot of sectoral data exists (from censuses, surveys and administrative data sets), but a lot of required data does not exist (e.g. gender based violence, national income by sex, control of land by sex).
- iii) Much of the data is locked in administrative data; needs to be “released” and transformed into information.
- iv) Need greater analysis/data mining of existing data (particularly in education).
- v) Improved coordination between sectoral stakeholders at national, regional and international levels is required.
- vi) Internal (national) and external (international) stakeholder requirements for data sometimes conflict.
- vii) For macro economic indicators, skills often don’t exist within countries (lack of qualified economic statisticians). Regional support services a clear need.
- viii) Macro-economic indicators very inter-related, requiring considerable coordination.
- ix) Generally adequate data for the formal economic sector, poor quality data for the informal sector.
- x) Regional census standards are generally good (following international standards), with quality control still requiring improvement.
- xi) Lack of registration of births/deaths in the region remains a significant issue.
- xii) In youth and gender sectors, some critical data not readily available, believed to be mainly due to:
 - 1. ad-hoc collection of data
 - 2. inadequate resources
 - 3. cross cutting in nature, therefore considered too difficult
 - 4. locked in inaccessible administrative datasets
 - 5. not a priority across the region, lack of political will.

- xiii) Youth and gender sectors require:
 - 1. identification of lead agency
 - 2. framework for cooperation, implementation and monitoring
 - 3. maintenance/monitoring of frameworks
 - 4. enhancement of PRISM to address these issues.

- xiv) In education sector, key issues are:
 - 1. multiple players in data collection without national coordination/leadership
 - 2. poor quality source data
 - 3. lack of national skills to compile quality data
 - 4. minimum use of existing data for policy purposes.

- xv) Education sector requires:
 - 1. regional coordination
 - 2. regional framework and action plan to support capacity building.

- xvi) In health sector, key data/indicators required are:
 - 1. Mortality and Cause of Death
 - 2. Morbidity and health status
 - 3. Risk factors
 - 4. Service statistics
 - 5. Health resources.

- xvii) Health sector requires improvements in:
 - 1. Legislation
 - 2. Source data
 - 3. Indicator compilation
 - 4. Information products/presentation.

- xviii) Three sectors which are likely to be sustainable are population data (for political reasons), tourism data (simple and significant demand) and consumer price index (linkage to pay increases).

- xix) Solutions need to be acceptable to national leadership.

G-III Key directions identified by workshop as essential to address these issues

- i) Priority national and regional sectoral indicators to be specified
- ii) Existing sectoral data to be “released” by identification of source data and then analysis/interpretation/utilization of existing data
- iii) Gaps in priority indicators to be filled
- iv) Greater support for the regions economic statistics (identified as a key sectoral weakness) to be provided.

- v) SPC to be the lead regional agency for information in the population, demography, health, gender, youth and economic sectors, with PRISM as the dissemination tool, building on the existing system.
- vi) Focus to be on internal national requirements

WHERE TO FROM HERE?

28. Although the workshop was well attended by a broad cross-section of the region's statistical community, it was recognised that the principle stakeholders (the Statistical and Planning Offices of the region) were only partially represented. This was always known to be the case, and this workshop was the first step in the process of determining the future directions; input from the development partners of the region.
 29. The next step in the process will be the submission of the report and its key directions to the Regional Heads of Planning and Heads of Statistics (HOPS) meeting to be held in Noumea, 17-21 September, 2007. A substantial part of that meetings agenda has been devoted to "Future directions", with the outcomes of this workshop forming the basis of that meeting's deliberations (while not constraining the meeting's deliberations/outcomes).
 30. The Pacific Island Forum Secretariat (PIFS), in collaboration with the SPC, are to undertake a regional benchmark study "Strengthening Statistical Services Through Regional Mechanisms: A Benchmark Study and Way Forward" (see Appendix 2 for a summary of the PIFS presentation at the workshop on the benchmark study). It is expected that the outcomes of the September 2007 HOPS meeting will input to the benchmark study, which will further clarify the way forward.
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LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

Mr. Michael ANDREWS
Statistics Advisor
Pacific Financial Technical Assistance Centre
(PFTAC)
Fiji
Tel.: +679 330 4866
Fax.:+679 330 4045
Email: Mandrews@imf.org

Mr. Gérard BAUDCHON
Director
Institut de la statistique et des études
économiques (ISEE)
New Caledonia
Tel. +687 27.54.81
Fax +687 28.81.48
email itsee@itsee.nc
Email gerard.baudchon@itsee.nc

Mr. Justus BENZLER
Communicable Diseases Surveillance
Specialist
Secretariat of the Pacific Community (SPC)
New Caledonia
Tel. +687 26 20 00
Fax. +687 26 38 18
email justusb@spc.int

Mr. Kulufeinga BLOOMFIELD
Programme Manager
Regional Trade Facilitation Programme
OCOSec
Fiji
Tel. +679 3370 733
Fax. +679 3386 326/ 3370 021
Email: kulub@spc.int

Dr. Andrew BALEMI
Senior Tutor
University of Auckland
New Zealand
Tel. +687-27 82 13
Email : balemi@stat.auckland.ac.nz

Dr. Yok-Ching CHONG
Regional Adviser in Health Information
World Health Organization (WHO)
Philippines
Tel. +632 528 9812
Fax. +632 521 1036
Email: CHONGYC@wpro.who.int

Mr. Jean-Michel DURR
Chief
Demographic statistics section
United Nations Statistics Division
United States of America
Tel. +1 917 367 9165
Fax.+1 212 963 1940
Email: durr@un.org

Mr. Roderic EVERS
Entrepreneurship Development Specialist
United Nations Development Programme
(UNDP)
Fiji
Tel.: +679 3300399
Fax.:+679 3301976
Email: roderic.evers@undp.org

Ms. Haishan FU
Chief
Statistics Development Section
UNITED NATIONS ESCAP
Thailand
Tel.: +662 2881 653
Fax.:+662 2881 082
Email: fuh@un.org

Mr. David J. GEYER
Effective States & Pacific Plan Section
Australian Agency for International
Development (AusAID)
Australia
Tel. + 61 2 6206 4607
Fax + 61 2 6206 4720
email david.geyer@ausaid.gov.au

Mr. Anthony GILL
Country Specialist
Asian Development Bank (ADB)
Philippines
Tel. +632 632 6510
Fax +632 636 2442
email agill@adb.org

Mr. Jean-Paul GOEPFERT
Director
Service territorial de la statistique et des
Études économiques
Wallis and Futuna
Tel. +681 72 24 03
Fax +681 72 24 87
email jpg.stats@wallis.co.nc

Mr. Malcolm GREIG
Regional Director
Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS)
Australia
Tel. + 61 7 3229.6351
Fax + 61 7 3222.6042
email malcolm.greig@abs.gov.au

Mr Carl HACKER
Director
Economic Policy, Planning and Statistics
Office
Marshall Islands
Tel. +692 625 3802/3803
Fax +692 625 3805
email planning@ntamar.net

Ms. Penny HAWKINS
Deputy Director and Evaluation Advisor
New Zealand Agency for International
Development (NZAID)
New Zealand
Tel. +64 4 439 8149
Fax +64 4 439 8513
email penny.hawkins@nzaid.govt.nz

Ms. Paula HOLLAND
Senior Advisor Natural Resources Governance
Pacific Islands Applied Geoscience
Commission (SOPAC)
Fiji
Tel. +679 3381 377 ext. 245
Fax +679 3370 040
email PaulaH@sopac.org

Mr. Mark LEWIS
Director
University of the South Pacific
(USP)
Fiji
Tel.: +679 323.2888
Fax.:+679 323 1524
email: mark.lewis@usp.ac.fj

Mr. Franck MAGRON
Reef Fisheries Information Manager
Secretariat of the Pacific Community (SPC)
New Caledonia
Tel. +687 26 20 00
Fax. +687 26 38 18
email franckm@spc.int

Mr. A. David MARSHALL
Senior Statistician
Food and Agriculture Organization of the
United Nations (FAO)
Italy
Tel. +39 065 705 3796
Fax +39 065 705 5615
email David.Marshall@fao.org

Dr. Lene MIKKELSEN
Senior Advisor
Health Metrics Network (HMN)
Australia
Tel. + 61 7 336 554 42
Fax + 61 7 336 553 45
email l.mikkelsen@sph.uq.edu.au

Mr. Jared MORRIS
Import Management Adviser
Pacific Island Forum Secretariat
Fiji
Tel. +679 3312 600
Fax +679 3312 112
email jaredm@forumsec.org.fj

Mr. Sanjesh NAIDU
Economic Adviser
Pacific Island Forum Secretariat
Fiji
Tel. +679 3312 600
Fax +679 3312 112
Email : sanjeshn@forumsec.org.fj

Mr. Wali M. OSMAN, PH.D.
Economist
United States Department of the Interior
United States of America
Tel. +1 202 208 4292
Fax.+1 202 501 7759
Email: Wali_Osman@ios.doi.gov

Mr. Garth PARRY
Consultant
Private Consultant
New Caledonia
Tel. +687 479 100
Email : gdparry@gmail.com

Ms. Linda PETERSEN
Human Development Programme Manager
Secretariat of the Pacific Community (SPC)
New Caledonia
Tel. +687 26 20 00
Fax. +687 26 38 18
email lindap@spc.int

Mr. Paul PETERU
Programme Manager
Commonwealth Youth Programme (CYP)
Solomon Islands
Tel. +677 383 74
Fax.+677 383 77
Email: paul.peteru@cypsp.org.sb

Mr. Jean-Pierre PIERARD
Chargé d'affaires
Union Européenne
New Caledonia
Tel. +687 288 707
Fax. +687 277 002
email Jean-pierre.pierard@ec.europa.eu

Ms. Ilaisaane PONGI
Planning and Development Office
University of the South Pacific (USP)
Fiji
Tel.: +679 323 2075
Fax.:+679 323 1525
email: pongi_i@usp.ac.fj

Mr. Biman C. PRASAD
Associate Professor
School of Economics, Faculty of business and
economics
University of the South Pacific (USP)
Fiji
Tel.: +679 323 2568
Fax.:+679 323 2522
email: chand_b@usp.ac.fj

Mr. Jean Louis RALLU
Population and Development Advisor
United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA)
Fiji
Tel. +679 330 8022 ext. 105
Fax.+679 331 2785
Email: jrallu@unfpa.org.fj

Ms. Kim ROBERTSON
SPC/ADB Regional Poverty Programme Team
Leader.
Private Consultant
Vanuatu
Tel.: +678 27 765
email: kimr@spc.int

Mr. Masamdu ROY
Biosecurity and Trade Facilitation Adviser
Secretariat of the Pacific Community (SPC)
Fiji
Tel. .+679 3370 733 – ext. 231
Fax. +679 3386 326/ 3370 021
Email: roym@spc.int

Ms. Yayoi SEGI-VLTCHEK
Education Adviser
UNESCO
Samoa
Tel. +685 26593
Fax.+685 24276
Email: Yayoi@unesco.org.ws

Dr. Sunil SENANAYAKE
Medical Officer
Health Information and Surveillance
World Health Organization (WHO) Vanuatu
Tel. +678 27 683
Fax.+678 22 691
Email: senanayakes@van.wpro.who.int

Mrs. Kesaia SENILOLI
Associate Dean (Teaching & Learning)
Faculty of Islands and Ocean
University of the South Pacific (USP)
Fiji
Tel.: +679 323 2258
Fax.:+679 323 1509
email: seniloli_s@usp.ac.fjj

Mr. Suma SIDNEY
Biosecurity and Trade Facilitation Adviser
Secretariat of the Pacific Community (SPC)
Fiji
Tel. .+679 3370 733 – ext. 231
Fax. +679 3386 326/ 3370 021
Email: sidneys@spc.int

Mr. Keith SYKES
International Relations Manager
Statistics New Zealand
New Zealand
Tel. +64 9 920 9130
Fax.+64 9 920 9395
Email: keith.sykes@stats.govt.nz

Mr. Sam TAUFAO
Information Technology Manager
Secretariat of the Pacific Community (SPC)
New Caledonia
Tel. +687 26 20 00
Fax. +687 26 38 18
email samt@spc.int

Mrs Taggy TANGIMETUA
Government Statistician
Department of Statistics
Cook Islands
Tel. +682 29 511
Fax +682 21 511
email info@stats.gov.ck

Mr. Tangata VAINERERE
Youth Development Adviser
Secretariat of the Pacific Community (SPC)
New Caledonia
Tel. +687 26 20 00
Fax. +687 26 38 18
email tangatav@spc.int

Mr. Edward VRKIC
Executive Officer for the
Pacific Plan
Pacific Island Forum Secretariat
Fiji
Tel. +679 3312 600
Fax +679 3312 112
email edwardv@forumsec.org.fj

SECRETARIAT OF THE PACIFIC COMMUNITY (SPC)

B.P. D5, 98 848 Noumea Cedex, New Caledonia

Tel. +687 26 20 00

Fax +687 26 38 18

Website www.spc.int

Dr. Jimmie RODGERS
Director-General
email jimmier@spc.int

Mr Raymond VUTI
PRISM Manager
email raymondv@spc.int

Mr. Richard MANN
Deputy Director-General
email richardm@spc.int

Mr. Rick BAXTER
Population Specialist (Census and Surveys)
email rickb@spc.int

Mr. Graeme BROWN
Programme Manager
email graemeb@spc.int

Ms. Leilua TAULEALO
Population Data Officer
email leiluat@scp.int

Dr Gerald HABERKORN
Demographer
email geraldh@spc.int

Mrs. Sandra GIANINI
Secretary to Meeting
email sandrag@spc.int

Mr Arthur JORARI
Population Specialist
email arthurj@spc.int

Ms. Gladys BECCALOSSA
Secretary to Meeting
email gladysb@spc.int

Mr Phil BRIGHT
Programmer (GIS)
email philb@spc.int

Mr Patrick DELHAYE
Interpreter
email patrickd@spc.int

Mr Scott PONTIFEX
Programmer (GIS)
email scottp@spc.int

Mrs. Dominique Toulet
Interpreter
email dtoulet@canl.nc

Mr Chris RYAN
Statistics Adviser/Trainer
email chrisr@spc.int

Mr. Roy BENYON
Interpreter
email royb@spc.int

APPENDIX 2

PIFS/SPC BENCHMARK STUDY

**“Strengthening Statistical Services Through Regional Mechanisms:
A Benchmark Study and Way Forward”**

The PIFS presented this proposed benchmark study into the statistical services of the region. The study was mandated by the 2006 FEMM (Forum Economic Ministers Meeting) and would build on a preliminary Cost Benefit Analysis previously undertaken, looking into possible modalities of delivering support to the region’s statistical services through regional and/or sub-regional approaches. A regional statistical office (providing a one-stop-shop for statistical services) would be one option considered.

It was noted that the regions statistical offices were yet to be consulted about the study. It was further noted that the report of the study was proposed to be presented to the Regional Heads of Statistics and Planners meeting, the Pacific Plan Advisory Committee and then the FEMM.
