

Pacific Statistics Methods Board Meeting

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

Meeting Outcomes

THE PACIFIC STATISTICS METHODS BOARD (PSMB):

1. Deputy Chair

- i. welcomed the confirmation of Dr Viliami Konifelenisi Fifita, Government Statistician, Tonga, as Deputy Chair of PSMB.

2. Monetary poverty measurement

- i. accepted in principle the following recommendations from the World Bank on monetary poverty measurement, noting that the recommended methods are universal best practice:
 1. SDG 1.1.1 should be measured using the USD 1.90 PPP per capita per day International Poverty Line. SDG 1.2.1 should be measured using a national cost-of-basic-needs poverty line based on national survey data and national criteria.
 2. Food consumption should include purchases (including prepared meals and food consumed away from home), gifts received, food provided in-kind, home production, and rations.
 3. Non-food consumption should include the use value of assets, imputed rent, education spending, health spending on preventative and elective procedures, but exclude 'lumpy' expenditures, investment, loans, interest, taxes, and transfers out of the household (including gifts, remittances, and religious contributions).
 4. Household composition adjustment should take partakers into account.
 5. Imputed rent should be calculated using the proposed decision path to account for local price differences and compensate for owners' tendencies to overvalue their dwelling.
 6. Countries should continue to use the current per adult equivalence scale instead of per capita measures to adjust the consumption aggregate for household composition, and further research could be done on this issue.
 7. The reference population for the consumption basket should always exclude the top and bottom decile, and otherwise use an iterative approach to determine the correct part of the distribution.
 8. Poverty analysis should use the Foster-Greer-Thorbecke (FGT) measures, including poverty headcount, poverty gap, and poverty severity.

9. All data cleaning and calculations should be done using replicable methods in a statistical analysis program such as Stata or R. The do / R studio files should be retained and archived along with the dataset.

- ii. noted that the World Bank, in collaboration with the University of Waikato (John Gibson), FAO (Nathalie Troubat) and SPC (Michael Sharp), will draft a guidelines paper on the recommendations for poverty measurement. The paper will be circulated for comment and used to update the final list of recommendations at a subsequent PSMB meeting. The full set of recommendations will be subject to a peer review process;
- iii. recognised that the move to using the recommended statistical analysis programmes is a significant transition for national statistics offices (NSOs), which will require ongoing support and training. It was noted that special measures will be required to support non-World Bank/IDA member countries, i.e. NZ Realm countries, and French and US territories;
- iv. further noted that a companion text document will be drafted for formal adoption by the PSMB and disseminated to members. The World Bank will develop training materials (including a dummy dataset and example Stata / R code), and, along with SPC and other development partners, initiate a programme of training in the region in partnership with SPC, prioritising those countries with recently completed, or soon to be completed household income and expenditure surveys (HIES);
- v. agreed that all aspects of poverty measurement should be done concurrently with the member country to strengthen capacity; and
- vi. agreed that further research could be considered on the following topics:
 - Online ‘rent skimming’ – to bolster data for computation of imputed rents;
 - Calculating Pacific adult equivalence scales;
 - Estimation of dietary energy requirements that are based on Pacific anthropometry (body measurement) and economic activity;
 - Establishing multipliers for expenditure on prepared meals (takeaway and food away from home).

3. Multi-dimensional poverty

No recommendations were made and this is an area to follow up on for subsequent meetings of PSMB.

International Development Association project: Statistical Innovation and Capacity Building in Pacific Islands (PacStat-PI)

- i. agreed that the regional IDA project will be a standing item on the PSMB agenda, noting that its objectives are: strengthening institutional capacity, efficient production and dissemination of data used to measure poverty, and statistical innovation;
- ii. agreed that priorities for innovative research under the regional project will include data anonymisation to allow sharing of datasets.

4. Establishing the ‘Pacific Statistical Collections Financing Facility’ to Resource Core Statistical Collections in the Pacific Region, 2019–2023

- i. a role of PSMB is to identify how it can contribute to finding efficiencies in the way statistical work is conducted;
- ii. endorsed, in principle, the proposal to establish the ‘Pacific Statistical Collections Financing Facility’, noting that the objectives are to: provide a more coordinated and cost-effective approach to funding Pacific statistics collections; assist PICTs to cover gaps in statistical

collection budgets; and provide additional resources to technical partners to support PICTs to produce high-quality and timely data;

- iii. noted that the Pacific Statistics Standing Committee Meeting (30–31 October 2019) will further discuss the proposed mechanism, including where it should be housed and how it should be operationalised; and
- iv. noted that the details of where this facility will be located, how it is funded and the role of Pacific NSOs are yet to be defined and this should be submitted to HOPS for a final decision.

5. Pacific Population and Housing Census framework

- i. noted that 10 PICTs will conduct their census in 2020;
- ii. acknowledged the resources that have been developed and are available to countries, including the recommended approach to preparing for and conducting a census, and SDD's core census questionnaire, which can be tailored to countries with supplemental questions/modules;
- iii. recognised the positive experiences and challenges of some PICTs in using CAPI for census and surveys and agreed it would be useful to pull this information together to make an up-to-date body of knowledge available to PICT NSOs considering a move to CAPI (noting there are also existing resources, e.g. from ADB);
- iv. noted that CAPI implementation will be a topic for the upcoming Stats NZ/UNFPA workshop and further work can be considered based on those discussions; and
- v. noted that the Board still needs to be clear on how it can specifically support the census framework.

6. Future of census in the Pacific region

- i. noted the lessons learned from Australia's 2016 census and New Zealand's 2018 census, which were both predominately digital for the first time; and
- ii. agreed that Stats NZ, ABS and SDD will discuss what guidance can be provided to countries, including on:
 - managing risk in census, and
 - the support countries need to assess their readiness to pursue new technology.

7. Review of the recently developed short Labour Force Module for inclusion in Pacific censuses (presented on behalf of the International Labour Organization)

- i. acknowledged the limitations and implementation challenges of the current economic characteristics module, which does not collect data according to international standards;
- ii. acknowledged the positive response of ILO to PSMB's recommendation to develop a short version of the economic characteristics module for inclusion in censuses;
- iii. requested that the new module be tested in the context of a census in the Pacific; and
- iv. agreed that following the testing, PSMB will convene an interim meeting to review the module for inclusion in Pacific censuses, noting that this meeting will also be an opportunity to discuss the updated recommendations for poverty measurement.

8. Update on Sampling Guidelines

- i. acknowledged the work of the Sampling Subcommittee in drafting accessible Sampling Guidelines for Pacific NSOs;

- ii. requested any further feedback from NSOs, and other interested parties, on the draft guidelines;
- iii. noted that other agencies (e.g. FAO) have offered to contribute to the guidelines; and
- iv. noted that the Sampling Committee aims to deliver the finalised Sampling Guidelines – Part 1 to the next PSMB meeting (April 2020).

9. 2020 Statistical Development Workshop (Fiji, February 2020)

- i. noted that the workshop will be held in Nadi, Fiji, (10–21 February 2020) in a collaboration with the World Bank, UNFPA and Stats NZ.
- ii. acknowledged the request for feedback on the proposed content of the workshop, which Stats NZ will circulate for comment; and
- iii. acknowledged Kiribati’s request that countries/NSOs be advised earlier of workshops and training events, given that workshop outcomes may affect NSO budgets and plans that have already been submitted for the following year.

10. Dissemination of the results of the RMI HIES experiment and PSMB recommendations

- i. supported plans for increased efforts to disseminate and communicate the results of the RMI HIES experiment; and
- ii. recognised the need to support NSOs in operationalising PSMB’s recommendations on HIES methodology, e.g. the use of CAPI for HIES.

11. Update on Multiple Indicator Cluster Surveys (UNICEF)

- i. noted the successful implementation of the MICS programme, which is at various stages in Kiribati, Samoa, Tonga, Tuvalu, Nauru and Federated States of Micronesia, and lessons learned to date; and
- ii. recognised the collaboration on MICS that has occurred across the region.

12. Update on issues raised in previous PSMB meetings

- i. acknowledged the results achieved in response to the recommendations of previous PSMB meetings, including completing the RMI HIES experiment and deriving recommendations; developing updated poverty measurement guidance; and drafting Sampling Guidelines;
- ii. agreed that further follow-up is needed on the priority of ensuring transparency of statistical analysis (preserving code, editing/processing rules), noting that moving to new software such as Stata/R could address some of these issues.

13. Issues/agenda items for next PSMB meeting

- i. PSMB agreed that the following issues will be considered for inclusion on the agenda of the next meeting:
 - Updated guidelines for monetary poverty measurement/multi-dimensional poverty measurement guidelines – progress update on recommendations from PSMB April 2019;
 - Report back from the 2020 Statistical Development Workshop (February 2020);
 - Census – where should PSMB focus its efforts?
 - What can PSMB do to help those in the midst of planning and running a 2020/2021 census?

- How to use the impetus of the 2020/2021 round of censuses to start thinking about pathways forward, and longer-term census transformation in the Pacific?
 - Pacific Sampling Guidelines – Part 1: Progress update, and final version for endorsement by PSMB;
 - IDA Project (standing agenda item), including discussion of:
 - Initial priorities for PSMB research projects, e.g. data anonymisation; and
 - Further discussion of new methodological innovations to pursue for the Pacific;
 - Improving processes for representation of all PICT NSOs on PSMB and supporting their engagement in initiatives (noting that the Chair and Deputy Chair will discuss approaches ahead of PSMB's next meeting).
- ii. noted potential agenda items for the October 2020 PSMB meeting:
- Software selection in the Pacific, e.g.
 - Stocktake of current programmes in use (SPC-SDD);
 - How to make investment decisions re new tools;
 - Training in use of new tools; including for non-World Bank member countries; and
 - Pros and cons in relation to tools for MICS, HIES, etc. (noting the World Bank will develop poverty measurement tools in R and Stata unless PSMB directs otherwise);
 - The role of PSMB in reviewing and approving new questionnaire modules that have been developed by partners (e.g. the ILO Labour Force Module for Pacific censuses).

14. Next PSMB meetings

- i. PSMB noted that its next meeting will take place on 7 and 8 April 2020 in Auckland; and
- ii. agreed that PSMB will have an interim meeting to review (a) the finalised ILO labour force module for censuses in the Pacific, and (b) the updated recommendations for poverty measurement. Details of the interim meeting will be advised in due course.