



Pacific
Community
Communauté
du Pacifique

SPC Headquarters

95 Promenade Roger Laroque
BP D5, 98848 Noumea Cedex
New Caledonia

Email: spc@spc.int
Phone: +687 26 20 00
Fax: +687 26 38 18

Siège de la CPS

95 Promenade Roger Laroque
BP D5, 98848 Nouméa Cedex
Nouvelle-Calédonie

Email : spc@spc.int
Tel : +687 26 20 00
Fax : +687 26 38 18

**8th Pacific Statistics Methods Board Meeting
Summary Report and Outcomes**

26 and 27 October 2021

**Virtual meeting hosted by SPC
Noumea, New Caledonia**

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

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Pacific Community (SPC) Headquarters: Noumea, New Caledonia. Regional Offices: Suva, Fiji;
Pohnpei, Federated States of Micronesia; Port Vila, Vanuatu. Country Office: Honiara, Solomon Islands.

www.spc.int spc@spc.int

Siège de la Communauté du Pacifique (CPS) : Nouméa (Nouvelle-Calédonie). Antennes régionales : Suva (Fidji) ;
Pohnpei (États fédérés de Micronésie) ; Port-Vila (Vanuatu). Bureau de pays : Honiara (Îles Salomon).

www.spc.int spc@spc.int

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List of abbreviations

ABS	Australian Bureau of Statistics	PFTAC	Pacific Financial Technical Assistance Centre
ADB	Asian Development Bank	PAPI	Pen and paper interviewing
CAPI	Computer-assisted personal interviewing	PICTs	Pacific Island countries and territories
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization (UN)	PSMB	Pacific Statistics Methods Board
HIES	Household Income and Expenditure Survey	PSSC	Pacific Statistics Standing Committee
HFPS	High-frequency Phone Survey	SDD	Statistics for Development Division (SPC)
HOPS	Heads of Pacific Planning and Statistics	SIDS	Small Island Developing States
MICS	Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey	SPC	Pacific Community
NSO	National Statistics Office		
PACSTAT	Statistical Innovation and Capacity Building in the Pacific Islands		

Summary of proceedings

The Pacific Statistics Methods Board (PSMB) met on 26 and 27 October 2021. The virtual meeting was hosted by SPC, Noumea, and was chaired by Vince Galvin. It was the second PSMB meeting for 2021. The agenda and presentations are available at: <https://sdd.spc.int/events/2021/10/8th-statistics-methods-board-meeting-psmb>

Participants	<p>Board members: Melanesia – Bimlesh Krishna, Fiji Micronesia – Aritita Tekaeiti, Kiribati Polynesia – Viliami Fifita, Tonga (Deputy Chair of PSMB) Statistics New Zealand – Vince Galvin (Chair of PSMB) Australian Bureau of Statistics – Bruce Fraser UN Agencies – James Kaphuka (UNICEF)</p> <p>Observers: Amelia Tungi, Fiji Bureau of Statistics</p> <p>Pacific Community (SPC) – Epeli Waqavonovono, David Abbott, Michael Sharp, Sandra Gianini, Gaelle Le Gall</p> <p>Statistics New Zealand – Ofa Ketu'u</p> <p>World Bank – Kristen Himelein, Taufik Indrakesuma PACSTAT – Prof. Wadan Narsey, consultant Asian Development Bank – Joseph Mariasingham, Ana Francesca Rosales, Jude Roque and Anna Durante</p> <p>UNICEF Headquarters, New York – Attila Hancioglu, Tatjana Karaulac UNICEF Regional Office, Bangkok – Jayachandran Vasudevan</p>
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Session 1: Review of PSMB's terms of reference (TOR)

1. Epeli Waqavonovono, SDD Director, reported the results of a small survey on PSMB's TOR (six out of eight people replied). The results indicated that:
 - a. **PSMB's representation structure does not work well for Pacific NSOs.** Currently, the board has one representative each for Melanesia (Fiji), Micronesia (Guam), Polynesia (Tonga) and small NSOs (Nauru). These representatives are tasked with liaising with other PICT Government Statisticians/NSOs in their subregions, including SIDS, on PSMB's activities and recommendations and NSO questions and needs, and relaying feedback to PSMB.
 - b. **There is a lack of communication and outreach** to NSOs not directly represented on PSMB, and **low awareness** of PSMB's role and outputs. NSOs do not see PSMB as an accessible forum for providing support and responding to their needs.
2. Respondents' suggestions for improving NSO engagement in PSMB included:
 - a. **developing a practical strategy for updating NSOs' technology and equipment**, to improve connectivity, facilitate training, and increase NSOs' capacity to adopt new methodologies and best practices, e.g. in relation to some of the new SDG indicators;
 - b. **assessing the feasibility of PSMB's recommendations and providing NSOs with clear guidelines on actions needed;**
 - c. **including all PICT Government Statisticians in PSMB meetings**, and relevant technical NSO staff, possibly as observers rather than board members;

Discussion

3. PSMB members made the following points:
 - a. The present structure of representation is a burden on PICT board members, given the already heavy responsibilities of Government Statisticians.
 - b. Making PSMB meeting papers available at least two weeks in advance of meetings would give representatives more time to consult with NSOs in their subregion. Papers should include a cover sheet summarising the main points, and three or four questions for Government Statisticians to encourage feedback.
 - c. Similarly, a brief summary of the results of PSMB meetings could be sent to Government Statisticians, with links to papers and presentations so they could access in-depth information as required.
 - d. More frequent meetings during the year (e.g. one in-person meeting and three virtual meetings) could increase engagement in PSMB. (Due to COVID restrictions, the last in-person PSMB meeting was in October 2019.)
 - e. The PACSTAT project is partly designed to address some of the issues raised.

Working group to make recommendations on revising TOR

4. The Chair noted that the November 2020 PSMB meeting had agreed that a small working group would review the TOR, with members to include Vince Galvin, Ofa Ketu'u (Stats NZ), Ipia Gadabu (PSSC Chair), Epeli Waqavonovono (SDD Director) and Kristen Himelein (World Bank). This work was interrupted by COVID. He suggested that the group should now come together to discuss the TOR and issues raised, and provide specific suggestions on revising the TOR to PSMB. The revised TOR would then go to PSSC for approval.

Session 2: PACSTAT updates (standing agenda item)

2.1 Methodological review for anonymising census and survey microdata in the context of small island developing states

5. Professor Wadan Narsey has been commissioned to carry out a policy review of microdata use in the region. PICTs' microdata is largely underused and inaccessible, partly due to some countries' existing legislation and concerns about maintaining the privacy of individuals in small populations. Prof. Narsey will review the current situation, make recommendations and provide a report for the April 2022 meeting of PSMB and a policy brief for Government Statisticians.
6. Prof. Narsey said it is no use employing experts to tell PICTs to make their data freely available. They need to have their concerns addressed, and to understand and see the benefits of open data.

There is also a need to reinforce capacity in PICTs. International organisations may bring in experts who use specific methodology, analyse data, produce a report and depart, without increasing NSO capacity.

SPC's Pacific Data Hub (PDH) is able to archive and anonymise data in accordance with international standards and make them accessible, and can build capacity by including NSO staff and analysts working in other PICT government departments in these processes. ABS and Stats NZ could also contribute to this effort.

In working towards making their microdata available, Government Statisticians could consider safeguards, such as requiring researchers to deposit the results of their research with SPC, with access for the countries that own the data.

As part of the review, Prof. Narsey will send a survey to Government Statisticians and will also consult with ABS and Stats NZ on their approach to open data and their experience.

Discussion

7. Viliami Fifita (Tonga) said open data is a concern for PICTs. While Tonga supports the PDH, countries need to know who is using their microdata, given the potential for misuse. Researchers and others can make a direct request to the Tonga NSO for data and the NSO will respond.

8. Kristen Himelein stressed the need to respect data sovereignty. Where there is low capacity for analysis, or high staff turnover, countries get the benefit of open data by getting analysis done, e.g. through PhD work.

One approach to increasing access to microdata is to tier the data (e.g. Tier 1, open access; Tier 2, less access; Tier 3, restricted). (All datasets collected by the World Bank are open access.)

9. Michael Sharp (SPC) agreed on the benefits of microdata being publicly available and supported Prof. Narsey's view of SPC's role in curating Pacific development microdata and in undertaking anonymisation and facilitating access for users through the Microdata Library.

As part of the Terms of Use of the PDH Microdata Library, researchers are required to deposit their results with SDD and this is functioning quite well. Prof. Narsey could perhaps work with SDD to publish examples of the results of the PDH Microdata Library.

However, PDH does not have an open data policy. Requests for data are forwarded to the relevant Government Statistician, but these requests are often ignored.

The FAO SDG 2.1 workshop was an excellent example of engaging with PICTs on analysis in a virtual setting. The civil registration and vital statistics (CRVS) workshops also provided good examples.

The technical requirements for reporting on some SDG indicators are highly advanced. There is a need to be realistic about the capacity of PICT NSOs to deliver on these requirements. They will need international assistance for some time.

- a. surveys. To download MICS datasets, users must be registered as a MICS data user and must send copies of all reports and publications based on the downloaded data to the UNICEF Office and government partner that implemented the survey. MICS and MICS Plus data are anonymised so households or individuals cannot be identified.

10. Prof. Narsey said there are difficulties in getting PICT consensus on these issues, given there are legitimate concerns. He agreed some PICTs may be willing to use a tiered approach.
11. The Chair said New Zealand is willing to share its experience with managing access to data in a way that maintains the confidence of the communities represented in the data.

2.11 Review and prioritisation of proposals for statistical research (PSMB) commissioned and innovative experiments

12. Michael Sharp said four proposals were received in response to a PACSTAT Request for Proposals (RFP). Two were from SPC, one was from FAO and SPC, and one was from PFTAC:

Statistical research

- A survey module on households impacts of climate change, similar to the Washington disability module. (SPC)

Innovative experiments

- Development and testing of additional HIES modules to assess the number of meals people eat per day, and contribution of 'food away from home' (FAFH) to total daily calorie consumption. (FAO and SPC)
- Methodology for including depreciation of public capital stock in PICT national accounts. The proposed use of technology, such as drones and satellite imagery, would also allow assessment of changes in construction activity and damage resulting from natural disasters. (PFTAC)

Other

- Dashboard to monitor economic recovery from COVID impact. (SPC)

Discussion

13. PSMB was asked to assess the proposals and their priority. There were several comments on the climate change module:

- Bruce Fraser (ABS), while acknowledging he was not necessarily well informed in this area, questioned the benefit of the module. He was unaware of the use of climate change modules elsewhere, and surveys already include questions to measure changes in household incomes, changes in tourism activity, etc. It is relatively easy to measure changes such as these but more challenging to determine the reasons for them, and it is not clear how the module would assist. (Assessing the proposals was difficult because their brief format did not include background.)
 - David Abbott (SPC) said there may not be other climate change modules, but the Pacific lacks ways of understanding the impacts of climate change on households. PICTs will comment on these impacts at COP26 but do not have specific data.
 - James Kaphuka supported the module, agreeing there was a lack of information on household impacts.
14. PSMB agreed on the relevance of the FAFH project, noting that this has been an outstanding issue for PSMB's recommendation on the methodology for poverty analysis.
 15. Michael Sharp acknowledged the comments and said the project committee will now evaluate the proposals and decide whether to proceed. Although some interest was received, no NSOs responded to the RFP, which was disappointing. However, there will be another RFP round before the next PSMB meeting.
 16. The Chair said that being able to show examples of proposals may encourage more submissions. SDD will post them to the PACSTAT website.
 17. Michael confirmed that people can still send comments on the four proposals, or submit proposals if they wish.

2.111 PSMB guidance notes to be produced by PACSTAT

18. PACSTAT will produce a series of practical guidance notes for NSOs, e.g. on microdata, the results of the HIES experiment, sampling, and poverty measurement. Administrative data is also a potential topic, but there needs to be more discussion on the guidance to be provided.

The guidance notes will be part of PACSTAT's output for 2022.

Session 3: Potential items for discussion by PSMB

19. Michael Sharp presented a list of items suggested by board members and NSOs:
 - i. Modernisation of dissemination and data sharing via PDH.stat (<https://stats.pacificdata.org/>)
 - ii. Coastal mapping and elevation
 - iii. Collecting climatic change data via census to assess household-level climate change impacts. A good example is the Integrated Vulnerability Assessment (IVA) data being collected in Kiribati (<https://www.kiribatiiva.net/about-the-iva--kiva-database.html>)
 - iv. Review of the Pacific census editing manual. The draft manual is almost ready and will be presented to PSMB for review in April 2022.
 - v. Update from Government Statisticians on their census programme (currently, seven PICTs are at various stages of their census).
 - vi. Pacific Observatory (see Session 5, page 8).
 - vii. Results of poverty studies.
 - viii. Guidance from PSMB on high-frequency phone surveys (HFPS) and interpretation when the results of these surveys differ from those for HIES.
 - ix. Asian Development Bank (ADB) statistics projects in the Pacific region (see Session 6, page 9).
 - x. UNICEF – MICS Plus methodology (see Session 4, page 7).
 - xi. Stocktake of software used by PICT NSOs. (At its meeting in October 2019, PSMB discussed the number of software programs introduced to NSOs by their various partners.)

Discussion

20. Update from Viliami Fifita, Tonga:

Tonga census – Tonga is using both CAPI and PAPI for its census. Because there were problems procuring sufficient tablets, PAPI will be used for some small islands. However, CAPI has huge benefits in terms of accuracy, timing and cost, and Tonga will not return to PAPI in general. The census is costing around \$3.5 million and is funded by Tonga. Tonga learned from SPC and Vanuatu about the need to complete enumeration in one week, not two.

Poverty measurement innovation – Poverty is normally measured through HIES. In 2020, the World Bank wanted to assist a project to support Tongan students who dropped out of high school, especially those from poor households. To identify these households, the NSO ran a statistical model to match HIES and census data. The model enabled the NSO to identify poor households, noting that households can enter or exit poverty depending on changes in their circumstances. The government was also able to use the list of poor households to distribute COVID benefits.

21. Updates from Amelia Tungi and Bimlesh Krishna, Fiji Bureau of Statistics:

MICS – Amelia Tungi said Fiji had finalised collections for MICS using CAPI and had also completed validation of the results of the MICS with partners. The Bureau is now awaiting the appointment of a new CEO before releasing the results.

Economic data – Bimlesh Krishna said the Bureau’s Economic Statistics Division has been working on small and medium enterprises (SMEs). There is a lack of statistics in this area and no standard definition of SMEs.

The division is working on tourism satellite accounts to assess the contribution of the sector to PICT economies. There are also requests from stakeholders for forestry satellite accounts. At present, there is no capacity or expertise to capture this sector in national accounts or to assess its impacts on other sectors. The Bureau is approaching partners for assistance.

In addition, the Bureau does not have the resources to buy software to process large datasets. The office uses purchased software at present, but it is expensive. Partner support in this area would also be appreciated.

22. The Chair asked if PSMB could have a presentation on Tonga’s innovative method for identifying poor households.

23. Michael Sharp supported the Chair’s request and noted that the World Bank recently studied targeted cash transfer programmes and was able to decide which targeting would most reduce household poverty.

SDD has already carried out a survey of the software programs currently used in PICT NSOs and will present the results to the next PSMB meeting.

Session 4: MICS Plus methodology

<https://mics.unicef.org/mics-plus/methodology-and-use>

24. Attila Hancioglu (Global MICS Coordinator, UNICEF) said MICS Plus provides near real-time reporting, which has been especially useful during the pandemic. MICS Plus can be used for:

- generating longitudinal data
- collecting specific programme indicators
- opinion polling
- crisis monitoring
- question testing.

Currently, there are surveys in Mongolia and Georgia, Samoa is in the design phase, and planning has started for surveys in Fiji, Nigeria and Vietnam.

MICS Plus uses the respondents to a MICS as a sample frame. Representative subsamples of respondents are selected, and data is collected using short telephone interviews with one adult household member. It

does not replace MICS, but rather focuses on data gaps best measured with high frequency (e.g. child well-being, emergency monitoring).

Ideally, MICS Plus surveys run for 12 or more months, depending on the country's data needs. CATI is used for data entry, and results are presented using tables, snapshots or dashboards. There are strict protocols to protect the privacy of individuals.

Advantages of MICS Plus include high response rates (above 80% and 90% in Georgia and Mongolia, respectively). The contents of the surveys are flexible, which enables introduction of topical questions, e.g. on COVID vaccination, child discipline and distance learning.

Disadvantages of MICS Plus can include frequent changes in phone numbers and low phone ownership in some areas, especially for vulnerable people.

Discussion

25. Kristen Himelein said the World Bank has conducted HFPS surveys in around 100 countries and has found differential response rates based on wealth quintile. Those with a data plan keep their phone number; those using pre-pay change their SIM cards often.
26. Michael Sharp asked if there were privacy issues in collecting phone numbers, especially in using numbers from previous surveys.
27. Ofa Ketu'u said Stats NZ looks after Cook Islands, Niue and Tokelau and asked how UNICEF addresses the respondent burden in very small countries.
28. In relation to longitudinal data, the Chair asked whether MICS Plus found examples of trends or transitions.
29. Attila Hancioglu responded as follows:
 - Changes in phone numbers are a problem. If substitutions are required, they are based on indicators that enable comparison of households. However, the survey results do not show huge disparities in response rates based on wealth quintile.
 - Advice on privacy issues was sought from UNICEF colleagues with relevant expertise.
 - In relation to the respondent burden, after six rounds of calls (one year) there is increasing burden on respondents, and some drop out. New samples are then selected. To avoid overlap with other surveys in PICTs, the timing of MICS Plus can be altered when necessary (noting, for example, that the World Bank plans to run a HFPS in Fiji in 2022).
 - In terms of longitudinal data, the surveys focus on issues that are fast changing or new (such as changes in COVID policy and lockdowns), rather than collecting the same information with each call. Seasonality can cause differences (e.g. in water, sanitation and hygiene facilities) and people may change their location.
30. The Chair agreed on the importance of agencies being aware of each other's survey and collection activities and looked forward with interest to the results of MICS Plus in PICTs. He asked if PSMB had any objections to endorsing MICS Plus, noting that the board had previously endorsed MICS.

Session 5: Pacific Observatory – update from the World Bank

31. Kristen Himelein said the project's objective is to:
 - improve welfare for the poor and vulnerable in Papua New Guinea and PICTs by expanding socio-economic information for better, data-driven policy-making.

Its intermediate goals are to:

- identify non-traditional data sources to complement official statistics, e.g. mobile phone surveys; geospatial/satellite data; administrative data including tax records; call detail records; web-scraping; air freight and shipping data; tourist arrivals; and fishing revenue;
- develop processes to improve the frequency, timeliness and level of detail of key economic/development indicators.

The project's components include: (1) HFPS for just-in-time data collection; (2 and 3) alternative data sources for economic and sector statistics; and (4) research, documentation and dissemination to ensure provision of a lasting resource.

Year 1 of the work plan will include expanding HFPS to other PICTs (beyond Fiji, PNG and Solomon Islands) and developing and testing a phone survey for rapid roll-out in crisis situations; researching alternative data sources (e.g. mobility, migration and poverty estimation) for economic statistics; setting up a project website; and developing a roadmap for handing over the Pacific Observatory to regional partners and clients.

Discussion

32. Responding to a comment on the number of new projects in the region and the potential to overwhelm NSOs, Kristen said PSMB can play a role in ensuring project plans are coordinated and there is no duplication. It is also important that NSOs have a clear understanding of the aims and benefits of projects. The onus for achieving this is on development partners, not member states.
33. Viliami Fifita said the mode of collection is quite new. Because respondents may not take a phone survey seriously, it would be good to run a verification sample. He appreciated the ideas on coordinating the development community.
34. Kristen said Tonga is on the list for a HFPS. The World Bank could work with the NSO on validation – it is important to know if a method succeeds or fails.
35. In response to a question from Epeli on incentives for survey respondents, Kristen said they are given phone minutes.

Session 6: ADB Pacific projects – updates from ADB

6.1 KSTA 6565: Strengthening economic statistics for measuring progress toward sustainable development goals

<https://www.adb.org/projects/54260-001/main>

36. Ana Francesca Rosales (ADB) presented the objectives and intended impacts and outcomes of the project, and listed the participating PICTs (Cook Islands, Federated States of Micronesia, Kiribati, Marshall Islands, Nauru, Niue, Palau, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu and Vanuatu).

The project provides countries with support and training to:

- establish functional statistical business registers;
- produce detailed supply-use tables and input-output tables annually;
- ensure consistency of balance of payment statistics with national accounts;
- use big data for statistical compilation;
- disseminate data and share knowledge.

To date, online training and workshops have been held for some PICTs in collaboration with PFTAC, Graduate School USA and SPC. A regional inception workshop will be held when travel is permitted.

6.2 KSTA 6666: Strengthening digital information of national statistical data systems

<https://www.adb.org/projects/54350-001/main>

37. Jude Roque (ADB) said the project provides technical assistance for CAWI (computer-assisted web-aided interviewing), CATI (computer-assisted telephone interviewing) and CAPI surveys. Four PICTs – Nauru, Niue, Samoa and Tuvalu – are taking part in the project. They were chosen because of their plans to conduct a large survey in 2022/2023 (Nauru, HIES in 2022; Niue, economic census in 2023; Samoa, HIES in 2023; Tuvalu, long-form census in 2022).

To date, survey activities and equipment needed are being discussed with Samoa and Tuvalu, and the project is waiting for the Nauru and Niue NSOs to respond on proposed activities.

Online training on Survey Solutions and GIS will be provided for Samoa in 2022 and on-site CAPI training in 2023. ADB is collaborating with SPC on supporting implementation of the Nauru and Tuvalu surveys.

6.3 KSTA 9646: Data for development (Phase 2): Agricultural statistics/sampling component

<https://www.adb.org/projects/51193-002/main>

38. Anna Christine Durante (ADB) said the project's intended outcome is to enhance the capacity of national statistics systems to meet the data requirements of the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda.

The project includes a sampling frame component, with the main output being a methodology that includes applying sampling techniques and using land measurement methods to validate national parcel area estimates significant at the subnational level.

Cook Islands is taking part in the project. Activities include:

- reviewing the agricultural census questionnaire and developing a post-census questionnaire;
- developing GPS training materials and field procedures for a pilot survey;
- training of trainers (GPS team) for the pilot survey;
- field data collection for a pilot survey in Rarotonga.

39. ADB is also in discussion with the Vanuatu NSO on potential projects on big data analytics and small area estimation.

Discussion

40. Viliami Fifita said SPC is often Tonga NSO's first point of contact in seeking technical assistance. In mobilising assistance, it is useful for NSOs to know what SPC can do, or how partners will collaborate. It is also important that development partners are aware of work that has already been done.

Currently, Tonga is looking for support for an agricultural census. What is the protocol for approaching ADB for assistance – are there guidelines?

41. Michael Sharp suggested involving FAO, noting that the Cook Islands agricultural census is co-supported by ADB and FAO.
42. The Chair noted PSMB's role in supporting the introduction of new initiatives to PICTs and ensuring the coherence of methodologies, given that the region has had a history of development partners working individually. PSMB looks forward to learning from ADB's findings and seeing how the work described is integrated with work already done.
43. Epli Waqavonovono said there have been meetings between SPC and ADB on the Tuvalu census and the assistance that each will provide. Collaboration is essential to achieve the best results for PICTs, given that organisations have different capabilities and resources.
44. Taufik Indrakesuma (World Bank) said ADB's work is a welcome addition and the World Bank looks forward to collaborating with them.
45. Joseph Mariasingham (Economic Research and Regional Cooperation Department, ADB) responded to the comments as follows:
- When ADB begins working with countries, its first step is to form a legal agreement with the government.
 - ADB has experience in working in different countries. It has funding and can complement the work of others, and vice versa, to achieve long-term objectives, including developing NSO capacity.
 - Given SPC's role in the Pacific, ADB will always work with SPC. ADB is also willing to collaborate with PSMB where that is useful.
 - The project activities described above were decided on after online discussions and sharing of information with countries.
46. The Chair acknowledged ADB's support of NSO capacity and the cooperation between ADB and SPC, and said PSMB looked forward to collaborating with ADB in future.

Session 7: Administrative matters

7.1 Agenda items for the next PSMB meeting

47. The following potential agenda items were identified for PSMB's next meeting:

- Outcome of the working group's review of PSMB's TOR
- Review of the Pacific census editing manual
- Update on the census programme – lessons learned
- Results of the World Bank's poverty studies
- Tonga's use of data matching to identify poor households
- Results of the software survey by SPC
- Support for economic statistics capacity (e.g. SMEs, tourism and forestry satellite accounts)
- Support for NSO measurement of the informal sector and its inclusion in national accounts, and consideration of the training required
- Review of results of PACSTAT PSMB Commissioned Work 1 (microdata dissemination and use)

7.2 Other business

48. James Kaphuka (UNICEF) gave an update on the MICS surveys conducted so far in PICTs. Findings have been published for Kiribati, Tonga, Samoa, Tuvalu and Fiji, and are available online. Because of COVID restrictions, MICS planned for Nauru and FSM have been postponed.

7.2 Next PSMB meeting

49. Michael Sharp said the next PSMB meeting is planned for March–April 2022. SDD will notify members of the dates and agenda closer to the time. At present, it is assumed that the meeting will be virtual.

Closing

50. The Chair thanked everyone for their contributions, including those who organised the meeting, noting the difficulties of virtual meetings in comparison to the benefits of meeting in person.

8th Pacific Statistics Methods Board Meeting (PSMB)

26 and 27 October 2021

Meeting website: <https://sdd.spc.int/events/2021/10/8th-statistics-methods-board-meeting-psmb>

Meeting outcomes

1. Review of PSMB's TOR

PSMB agreed that a small working group, consisting of Vince Galvin, Ofa Ketu'u (Stats NZ), Ipia Gadabu (PSSC Chair), Epeli Waqavonovono (SDD Director, SPC) and Kristen Himelein (World Bank) will review the TOR, and provide specific suggestions on revisions, including to increase engagement with all NSOs, to the next PSMB meeting.

2. PACSTAT

2.1 Microdata access – review

PSMB recognised NSO concerns about permitting access to their microdata and looked forward to the consultant's report on improving the availability of Pacific microdata, including considering a tiered approach (e.g. Tier 1, open access; Tier 2, less access; Tier 3, restricted).

2.2 Proposals for statistical research and innovative experiments

PSMB noted that

- i. four proposals were received in response to PACSTAT's request for proposals (survey module on households impacts of climate change; HIES modules on 'food away from home'; inclusion of depreciation of public capital stock in PICT national accounts; and a dashboard to monitor economic recovery from COVID impact), and that the project committee will evaluate the proposals and decide whether to proceed;
- ii. further comments on the proposals can still be sent to the committee, and new proposals can be submitted;
- iii. there will be another RFP round before the next PSMB meeting.

2.3 Guidance notes

PSMB welcomed PACSTAT's plans to produce a series of practical guidance notes for NSOs in 2022, with topics to include microdata, the results of the HIES experiment, sampling, poverty measurement and, potentially, administrative data.

3. MICS Plus

PSMB endorsed UNICEF's conduct of MICS Plus in Pacific Island countries and territories, noting the board had previously endorsed MICS.

4. Pacific Observatory

PSMB acknowledged the update from the World Bank on the progress of the Pacific Observatory and, given plans to use non-traditional data sources, the benefits of working with an NSO on validation.

5. Asian Development Bank projects

PSMB:

- i. thanked ADB for its presentation of three projects being carried out in several Pacific countries and territories (Strengthening economic statistics for measuring progress toward sustainable development goals; Strengthening digital information of national statistical data systems; and Data for development (Phase 2): Agricultural Statistics/Sampling Component);
- ii. welcomed ADB's support of the region's statistical capacity, and its collaboration and coordination with other Pacific organisations including SPC.

6. Next PSMB meeting

The next PSMB meeting is planned for March–April 2022. SDD will notify members of the dates and agenda closer to the time (it is assumed the meeting will be virtual).