

Noumea, 7 October 2024

Statistical Innovation and Capacity Building in the Pacific Islands Project

REQUEST FOR EXPRESSIONS OF INTEREST

(INDIVIDUAL CONSULTING SERVICES)

Grant No. D5 44; Project ID No. PI68122

Assignment Title: Developing a Real-Time Poverty Data Monitoring System

Reference No.: FJ-SPC-435668-CS-INDV – REOI24-7208

1.0 Background:

The Pacific Community (www.spc.int) has received financing in the amount of USD 4.5 million equivalent from the World Bank toward the cost of the Statistical Innovation and Capacity Building in the Pacific Islands Project, and it intends to apply part of the proceeds for consulting services.

The consulting services (“the Services”) include those of a **Developing a Real-Time Poverty Data Monitoring System**. The Individual Consultant will be engaged for a maximum period of 10 months. The envisaged start date for the Individual Consultant is at the earliest opportunity and no later than December 2024, and the engagement will be part time. A Time-Based Contract will be executed, establishing a mutual agreement on a monthly rate and determining work hours.

The detailed Terms of Reference (TOR) for the assignment can be found at the following **website:** <https://www.spc.int/procurement>.

The Pacific Community now invites eligible individuals (“Consultants”) to indicate their interest in providing the Services. Interested Consultants should provide information demonstrating that they have the required qualifications and relevant experience to perform the Services (attach curriculum vitae with description of experience in similar assignments, similar conditions, etc.). Firms’ staff may express interest through the employing firm for the assignment and, under such situation, only the experience and qualifications of individuals shall be considered in the selection process.

The attention of interested Consultants (including firms) is drawn to paragraph 3.14, 3.16 and 3.17 of the World Bank’s *Procurement Regulations for IPF Borrowers, dated July 2016, revised November 2017 and August 2018, fifth edition September 2023*, (“the Regulations”), setting forth the World Bank’s policy on conflict of interest.

<https://thedocs.worldbank.org/en/doc/6c0602876d68949e80820507d90a14ed-0290012023/original/Procurement-Regulations-September-2023.pdf>

Further information can be requested at the email address below during office hours [0730 to 1600 hours, Noumea, New Caledonia (GMT+11)]. All the relevant information will be made available on the REOI publication link.

Expressions of interest must be delivered in a written form to the following email below no later than November 11, 2024.

ATT: Procurement Unit

Email: procurement@spc.int

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TERMS OF REFERENCE

Advisor - Consultant for Real Time Welfare and Poverty Data Monitoring System

(INDIVIDUAL CONSULTING SERVICES)

Assignment Title:	Developing a Real-Time Poverty Data Monitoring System
Location	Kiribati
Duration	10 months
Expected Starting Date	November 2024

Reference No: Kiribati - FJ-SPC-435668-CS-CQS

1.0 Background:

The Statistics for Development Division

The SPC, Statistics for Development Division (SDD) <https://sdd.spc.int/strategic-framework-pacific-statistics> is the main stakeholder in the implementation of the Strategic Framework for Pacific Statistics (SFPS), which was adopted by PICT leaders in recognition of the need for a comprehensive plan to drive improvement and development of statistics in the Pacific region. SFPS proposed a regional approach to provide regional strategic leadership to improve the scope and quality of national statistics. The 8-years strategy outlined a series of short and long-term programs to contribute to national statistics capacity development and regional coordination and capability.

SPC-SDD's goal is to strengthen the capacity of national statistical systems and social and economic planning agencies to provide policymakers and analysts with important demographic, economic, and social indicators for planning and decision-making.

SPC-SDD plays a significant role for SFPS as a large and comprehensive technical provider to national statistics offices (NSOs) in the Pacific region. SDD's technical assistance role has been strongly endorsed by NSOs, in particular the Small Islands Developing States (SIDS) where resources are limited, and technical assistance and supplementation is essential. As part of a regional organization with a broad technical and social mandate operating across 22 PICTs.

SPC-SDD has been able to translate and mediate between international standards and frameworks and Pacific contexts and focus.

Statistical Innovation and Capacity Building in the Pacific (PACSTAT) Project

The PACSTAT project is an International Development Association (IDA; <https://ida.worldbank.org/>) funded project that is to be implemented over the period of June 2020 to June 2025. The overall development objective of PACSTAT is to *improve the quality of welfare data collection and accessibility to comparable welfare data in the Pacific Island Countries.*

The context for this project is summarized as:

- i. PICs are characterised by small populations spread across vast areas.
- ii. More comparable data is needed to understand deprivation between countries as well as identify and monitor regional trends.

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- iii. The Pacific is a region with substantial gender inequality.
- iv. Data deprivation in the PICs hinders evidence-based policy design.
- v. Public access to data is another challenge facing the region.
- vi. Data deprivation hinders the effort to track progress on gender inequality over time and design policies to address it.
- vii. National Statistics Offices (NSOs) lack funding to meet the costs of data collection in the Pacific.
- viii. Low statistical capacity is a major challenge in addressing data deprivation.
- ix. There has been some improvement in statistical capacity over time, but results have not been sustained.

Given the shared challenges and small size of the PICTs, a common approach is needed. As such, PACSTAT is part of an IDA Regional Program that seeks to address the considerable challenges of data deprivation and low quality of statistics in the Pacific region. In the first phase, SPC-SDD will work with two IDA small states – Kiribati and Tonga – to initiate the Regional IDA program¹. It is expected that additional countries will join the Program, with the ultimate objective of improving the comparability, accessibility, sustainability and overall quality of statistics across the Pacific.

PSMB Technical Support, approved Commissioned Works – Kiribati National Statistics Office

The Kiribati National Statistics Office (KINSO) is mandated to provide support through its regular production of official statistics, to respond effectively to the demands required by the government. While the responsibility is shared across sectors and data produces, the data quality assurance as well as baseline lies with the national statistics office. These official statistics played an integral part of the development progress and contribute to the monitoring and evaluation of the national development indicators through its National Development Agenda such as KV20 for Kiribati. The Vision is anchored on four (4) pillars: Wealth; Peace and Security; Infrastructure; and Governance. The *Wealth Pillar* aims to develop the natural capital, human capital and cultural capital to improve economic growth and reduce poverty. It also addresses the commitment Kiribati is made for SDGs with its overarching aspirations to end poverty in all its forms everywhere.

One of the challenges of eradicating poverty is due to time lag between the availability of the data and the ability for the government to respond. Poverty data and information is derived mainly from survey data such as the HIES. However, these surveys are only available every 5 years. Poverty is rather dynamic and subject to both macro and micro-level fluctuations. For example, economic shocks and price rise of goods along with changes in employment status affect households and individuals in Kiribati and such impacts are not trackable from HIES given this five-year interval.

With the ongoing challenges to statistical production to meet timely and quality data, the KNSO plans to conduct a Commissioned Work to construct and implement an effective (cost effective and accurate) real time welfare and poverty data monitoring system (e.g., nowcasting) for Kiribati Government to aid its policy and work programs in response to its national Kiribati Vision KV20 (2016-2036). Considering that the needs and challenges are also shared by many other NSOs in the Pacific region, the commissioned works therefore and could be used as lesson learned to them.

For this commissioned works is vital to rely on the best knowledge and practices available in the world about statistical modelling of poverty data. In particular, the use of recent breakthroughs in Bayesian

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modelling, hierarchical-based estimation of poverty at small area levels, the use of latent variable modelling to handle panel data, and advancements in microsimulation techniques.

This Commissioned Work is relevant, timely, reliable, well-maintained towards accessible data and statistics that the Kiribati 20- years vision 2016-36 (KV20) is needed for the development of the country. The system aims to develop in the future a real-time poverty measurement by live tracking, via administrative data, each person in the country so that their risk of fall into poverty is regularly updated. The rationale for this additional work is to help the government to implement means test whenever any households interact with a government ministry, or it can provide a lesson learn to other NSOs should they have enough fund to use such system.

2.0 Objective of the assignment

The Real Time Welfare and Poverty Data Monitoring System experiment aims to create a cost-effective I real-time welfare and poverty monitoring system. This type of system of course, requires several stages for its consolidation and the overarching aim is to set the underpinnings of a system that requires guidance about potential short-term changes in the magnitude and dynamics of poverty in Kiribati conditional on some key factors that can be connected to policies (e.g. spells of unemployment, family formation, illness). A system that allows to track short term individual and national/aggregate changes in poverty would set the basis for better policy response to country that is in a very fragile position in the Pacific. The consolidation of such a system is a long-term goal that requires to meet several conditions:

1. Complementing available cross-sectional data to enhance the capabilities to make inferences of poverty over-time, across population groups and geographical locations.
2. Tracking down short-term (e.g. annual) changes in the prevalence of poverty in Kiribati.
3. Tracking down short-term changes, at the individual-level, in the risk of experiencing poverty given key factors.
4. Mapping the spatial distribution of poverty at the smallest possible level and update such distribution regularly.

The lack of more frequent cross-sectional surveys, high-quality panel-surveys, and robust administrative data impedes meeting these conditions and empirical research would help to set the basis for a better poverty monitoring system. Such a system needs to be developed using what is in place in Kiribati and a first stage consists of three main activities:

1. Assessment of predictors of poverty using the most recent cross-sectional data (HIES 2023/24): Using statistical modelling techniques, the analysis should provide an idea of the contribution of the likelihood of experiencing poverty of the following: social inequalities (e.g. disability etc.), short-term changes and shocks (e.g. family formation/unemployment etc.) and contextual factors (e.g. natural disasters, economic crashes etc.).
2. Draw on the previous findings and perform an assessment of potential integration of administrative data: Given that administrative data in Kiribati is understood and, at this point, it lacks information about most of the predictors of poverty commonly found in HIES. First, it is necessary to assess what is available and in place in Kiribati's administrative data to monitor changes in key predictors of poverty at individual level (i.e. unemployment, family formation, illness). Second, draft a plan for the development and potential integration of administrative data with the other available data sources or findings from empirical poverty research.
3. Analysis of the spatial distribution of poverty in Kiribati: Use the available data to produce poverty maps at the smallest area-level possible.

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4. Use the findings of these three aspects to inform the bases of developing overtime a dynamic tool that joins administrative data and secondary data to make a probabilistic approximation of poverty status each person in a country condition on the narrow set of key factors that can be mounted into administrative data, so that their poverty status is almost instantaneously know and policy actions can be developed. The rationale for this additional work is if government wanted to assess the welfare situation whenever any household interact a government ministry, or it can provide a lesson learn to other NSOs should they have enough fund to use such system.

3.0 Scope of Services

The consulting services (“the Services”) include working with Resident Advisor to KNSO and the KNSO staff in delivering the following tasks:

i	Strengthening the National Statistical System. Stronger national capacities for analysis, interpretation and evidence-based policy development through institutionalizing technical support provided for this -Commissioned works through various phases and in doing so, giving opportunity for hands-on exercises and custom-tailored workshops and trainings to meet the needs of those involved. This is important or improving quality of data for decision making.
ii	Provision of real time data and relevant indicators. Accessible data, statistics and indicators derived from the best practices in microsimulation, hierarchical modelling and small area estimation. The commissioned work should be able to produce in real time, relevant indicators to address the challenge of eradicating poverty is due to time lag. This should enable the government and its partners to respond in time and targeting the right target areas in need with the right response.
iii	Systematic Standard Operation Procedure (SOP). Improved regional statistics system coordination and governance. The project will help improve work relationships and partnerships with stakeholders through consultations, coordination and data sharing through an effective system with KNSO. This coincides with the current PACSTAT-KI project that looks after data coordination in Kiribati. PACSTAT-KI is working on designing an integrated system that could be used to link information units within Line ministries. It allows KNSO to play a coordinator role and act as a data hub with data sharing within the National Statistical System to improve the overall quality of evidence base policy making. Therefore, the commissioned work will use the data flow from the PACSTAT-KI as a tool to coordinate its administrative data from Line Ministries that are needed for the real time data.
iv	Derive additional indicators. Coordinated census and survey technical support. Utilizing HIES and Census data for the construction of the real time data for poverty using Bayesian small area estimation techniques, and latent variable modelling and predictive methods to model HIES indicators to rank the population according to poverty status. This not only generates useful information but adds value to the datasets that can be used to derive additional indicators.
v	Documentation Meta Data and Commissioned Work. Improved quality of welfare data collection and accessibility to comparable welfare data in the Pacific Island Countries.

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	Traditionally, poverty data is obtained from HIES that is only available at least in every 5-years period. However, this commissioned works aimed to obtain a real time data on poverty to aid government with its welfare program in both using as evidence-base for decisions and as monitoring progress of its current initiatives.
vi	<p>Repository of Data for KNSO. Aligned monitoring and reporting of National Development Plans and regional and global commitments</p> <p>The National Development Agenda such as KV20 for Kiribati vision is anchored on four pillars: Wealth; Peace and Security; Infrastructure; and Governance. The Wealth Pillar aims to develop the natural capital, human capital and cultural capital to improve economic growth and reduce poverty. Further it addresses the commitment Kiribati is made for SDGs with its overarching aspirations to end poverty in all its forms everywhere. Responding to the KV20 also means addressing the SDG 2023.</p>
vii	<p>Data Governance Framework. Tailored innovative data collection, analysis and dissemination methods, statistical assets and indicators to suit Pacific needs.</p> <p>This commissioned work is tailored to National, Regional and International needs as it addresses poverty data and drive welfare initiatives of Kiribati government to access such data on a timely and accurate manner. During the entire commissioned work this will be applied to data collection, analysis and dissemination methods and processes.</p>

4.0 Expected outcomes, deliverables and timeline

The following outcomes and deliverables have been anticipated

Tasks	Timeline
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Determine different factors that explain the likelihood of experiencing both non-monetary poverty and monetary using multilevel/hierarchical modelling techniques, preferably using 2023/2024 Household income and Expenditure Survey (HIES). 	Dec – Jan 2024
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use of 2020 Census data and 2023/2024 HIES to produce disaggregated metrics of multidimensional poverty using the best practice in small area estimation (SAE) techniques. 	Feb – June 2025
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conducting an assessment of the current available administrative data and its potential to identify the risk of being poor at the individual level from line ministry (Health, Education, Labour and Commerce, Agriculture and Fisheries, Finance) and the statistical system. 	Dec 2024 – July 2025
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Capacity building on, data processing, modelling and analyses including Small Area Estimation (SAE). 	August 2025

5.0 Duration of the Assignment and Estimated Expert-Time Input

The Individual Consultant will be engaged for a maximum period of 10 months. The envisaged start date for the Advisor is at the earliest opportunity and no later than December 2024. A Time-Based Contract will be executed, establishing a mutual agreement on a monthly rate and determining work hours.

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6.0 Reporting Requirements

The consultant will work closely with KNSO and report directly to the Statistics Collection Manager.

Reporting obligations for the consultants encompass the following, though not exclusively:

1. Based on weekly progress monitoring submission of a concise Monthly Work Plan to the PacStat Project Manager and KNSO in advance.
2. Provision of a brief Monthly Progress Report aligned with the Monthly Work Plan.
3. Delivery of key outcomes as outlined within the Scope of Work, including the submission of an initial Inception Report within the first month. This report, developed in collaboration with the KNSO team, will evolve into a comprehensive plan outlining the execution of the assignment mandated by the Scope of Work.
4. Compile a final report on findings and guidance on the lesson learned from the Commissioned Work
5. Any other reports/related work as requested by the client.

7.0 Working Arrangements

The consultant will work closely KNSO, the SDD Collection team, PacStat Project Manager, and relevant stakeholders. The client will provide access to relevant data, resources, and personnel necessary for the successful completion of the assignment.

Throughout the assignment, the consultant is expected to operate in accordance with the mutually agreed-upon number of workdays and associated deliverables as determined in consultation with the SPD-SDD and KNSO. This will reflect as part of the consultant's contract after the negotiation of contract. The consultant shall demonstrate diligence and effectiveness in executing assigned duties to the highest acceptable standards.

The consultant must maintain accurate time sheets reflecting inputs and the corresponding deliverables achieved to facilitate effective monitoring. In assessing the consultant invoices for payment, the Project Coordinator will review these timesheets based on guidance from the KNSO.

The Consultant will work remotely on part time during the duration of the contract, with a maximum of three to four visits from their home base to Tarawa, Kiribati. The confirmation of this arrangement will be incorporated into your contract during the negotiation process and will be mutually agreed upon by both parties.

The consultant will be travelling in economy class and on the most economical and direct itineraries. The refund will be made based on the actual cost as demonstrated by the supporting document.

8.0 Selection Criteria – qualifications, experience, and skill requirement

- Master's degree in development economics, statistics, or other relevant discipline.
- At least 5 years of relevant professional experience in poverty measurement, analysis of household survey data, microsimulations and imputation methods.
- Experience in capacity building on data collection, data processing and analyses including Small Area Estimation
- Experience in providing client-facing technical assistance, including conducting workshops and

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- Experience specific to the Pacific region is highly desirable.
- Superb interpersonal skills; ability to collaborate effectively with multi-disciplinary teams, and to listen and integrate ideas from varied sources, governments, NGOs, and donors, while being diplomatic and sensitive to cultural, political, and gender issues.
- Ability to work with staff from all levels and to mentor, coach, and motivate more junior staff.
- Excellent written and oral communication skills in English, with French language skills also being desirable.
- General statistical knowledge and analytical skills: demonstrated track record of working with survey data; understands the underlying statistical concepts.
- Good Knowledge of defining and develop indicators for key socio-economic factors.
- Experience ins establish monitoring and evaluation mechanisms, assessing and refinement of data collection methods and indicators.
- Integrative skill: working to develop an integrated view across all facets of the current sector.
- Written and verbal communication delivers information effectively in support of team or workgroup.

Evaluation Criteria

CVs of eligible candidates that meet the minimum requirements will be evaluated according to the following criteria:

Criteria	Maximum Score
1. General qualifications (general education, training, and experience):	20
2. Adequacy for the Assignment (relevant education, training, experience in the sector/similar assignments	60
3. Competences and other personal aptitudes/skills (fluency in both Kiribati and English languages, computer literate and well-versed skills in MS Office software, Good analytical skills, result-oriented, honesty and integrity, etc.)	20

Expressions of interest must be delivered in a written form to the address email:

ATT: Procurement Unit

Email: procurement@spc.int

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TEMPLATE FOR CURRICULUM VITAE (CV)

Name of Expert:	{Insert full name}
Date of Birth:	{day/month/year}
Country of Citizenship/Residence	

Education: {List college/university or other specialized education, giving names of educational institutions, dates attended, degree(s)/diploma(s) obtained}

Employment record relevant to the assignment: {Starting with present position, list in reverse order. Please provide dates, name of employing organization, titles of positions held, types of activities performed and location of the assignment, and contact information of previous clients and employing organization(s) who can be contacted for references. Past employment that is not relevant to the assignment does not need to be included.}

Period	Employing organization and your title/position. Contact information for references	Country	Summary of activities performed relevant to the Assignment
[e.g., May 2015-present]	[e.g., Ministry of, advisor/consultant to... For references: Tel...../e-mail.....; Mr. Hbbbb, deputy minister]		

Membership in Professional Associations and Publications:

Language Skills (indicate only languages in which you can work): _____

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Adequacy for the Assignment:

Reference to Prior Work/Assignments that Best Illustrates Capability to Handle the Assigned Tasks
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Expert's contact information: (e-mail, phone.....)

Certification:

I, the undersigned, certify that to the best of my knowledge and belief, this CV correctly describes myself, my qualifications, and my experience, and I am available, as and when necessary, to undertake the assignment in case of an award. I understand that any misstatement or misrepresentation described herein may lead to my disqualification or dismissal by the SPC-SDD, and/or sanctions by the Bank.

{day/month/year}

Name of Expert
Date

Signature