

## Statistics for Development Division (SDD)

### 5<sup>th</sup> Regional Conference of Heads of Planning and Statistics (HOPS)

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SPC/HOPS 2017/Session 2 – Working Paper 2

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## SESSION 2 – REGIONAL STATISTICS GOVERNANCE FRAMEWORK

*(Document presented by the secretariat)*

### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

#### A revised Pacific statistics governance framework

1. This paper provides HOPS members with a proposal to adopt a revised governance framework for statistics in the Pacific Islands region, taking into account discussions that have taken place on this matter over past several years, and the need to ensure that a robust, fit-for-purpose system is in place for the future.

### INTRODUCTION

2. A paper on regional statistics governance was presented to the 13<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Pacific Statistics Steering Committee (PSSC) in November 2016. At that meeting participants agreed that the Pacific region needs a revised, robust governance arrangement in the field of statistics.
3. As such, following on from the discussion at the previous PSSC meeting, this paper outlines a proposal for consideration and adoption by the Heads of Planning and Statistics (HOPS).

### PROPOSAL

4. The secretariat proposes a revised governance structure for statistics in the Pacific region with the aim of creating a clear governance framework with a strong strategic, oversight and guidance component.
5. This governance structure would have five primary components:
  - i) a Ministerial meeting.
  - ii) the Heads of Pacific Statistics meeting (HOPS).
  - iii) the Pacific Statistics Standing Committee (PSSC).
  - iv) the Development Partners Group (DPG).
  - v) the Pacific Statistics Methods Board (PSMB).
6. As regards **the Ministerial meeting**, the secretariat's preferred option would be that statistics and data become a formal, annual standing agenda item at the Forum Economic Ministers' Meeting, as most

Pacific Ministers in charge of statistics are also those in charge of economic issues. This specific agenda item would fall under the joint convening and reporting responsibility of the Pacific Community (SPC) and the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat (PIFS), in order to ensure that outcomes and decisions can be directly integrated, from a governance perspective, into both organisations and acted upon within the bounds of the respective mandates of SPC and PIFS.

7. By strengthening the FEMM's focus in statistics and data, it would become the strategic guidance and decision-making body in the statistics area with the ability to push significant issues to Pacific islands leaders via the traditional PIFS process.
8. The secretariat seeks the endorsement of HOPS to work closely with PIFS so that statistics and data are indeed given the importance they deserve on a ministerial agenda, rather than simply being tabled and considered "on the papers" with little or no time for strategic discussion as is currently the case.
9. A second option, if the first reveals itself to be unworkable, would be for SPC to convene a biennial conference of Ministers in charge of statistics. This conference would play the same role as that proposed for the FEMM.
10. At the next level, the secretariat therefore proposes that **the HOPS meeting** become a biennial "Heads of Pacific Statistics Meeting", rather than "Heads of Planning and Statistics". This change aims to ensure the critical focus remains on data and statistics.
11. HOPS would meet every two years at the most senior officials' level possible and thus provide a regular institutional interface between NSOs, development partners and SPC to help build the relationships which are crucial to the successful implementation of the TYPSS and other statistics initiatives in the Pacific. The role of HOPS would be to provide senior-level strategic oversight, guidance, recommendations and decisions on the matters placed before it. These recommendations would then, through active concertation and collaboration between SPC and the PIFS, be discussed during the standing agenda item on statistics at the FEMM.
12. **The PSSC** would evolve into an official subsidiary body of HOPS, as the "Pacific Statistics Standing Committee". PSSC would meet in years when HOPS does not meet and would be a space for members to share updates on progress in various statistics related activities, monitoring implementation and progress of the TYPSS and other essential statics-related processes and identifying priorities for NSOs and development partner attention. The PSSC would not be a decision-making body but would be empowered to make recommendations to HOPS on issues of importance for statistics development in the Pacific region.
13. The fourth element of this proposal is to formally create a **development partner group (DPG)**, along the lines of the Quintilateral Group which plays a key role in the public health space. This would ensure that all relevant development partners were provided with a means to provide concrete input into statistic governance in the Pacific, better coordinate their action and resources. The DPG would meet annually, in coordination with the timing of the PSSC and HOPS meetings, thus also providing a platform for greater and more consistent engagement with Pacific Island Countries (PICs) and NSOs. SPC, as an intermediary between its Member States and development partners would be responsible for convening the development partner group.
14. Joint sessions of the HOPS/PSSC and Development Partner Group at each meeting would create genuine scope for bringing PIC NSOs to the table alongside development partners and implementing agencies, thus encouraging a culture of debate and shared prioritisation.
15. The final aspect of this revised governance structure would be to create, under the auspices of SPC, a **Pacific Statistics Methods Board (PSMB)**. The PSMB would be a technical body with the role of standardizing statistics methods, systems, classifications and processes with the aim of fostering

greater harmonisation across the region and generating efficiencies for NSOs and agencies delivering support. A separate, more detailed paper, on the proposed Methods Board is on the agenda at this meeting for consideration by the HOPS.

16. The secretariat considers that the proposed governance model would allow all parties to have far greater and more regular strategic engagement around statistics issues. Moreover, by formalising a development partner group as part of Pacific statistics governance, it would foster deeper understanding and cooperation between the DPG and the beneficiaries of development assistance in the statistics field. The revised governance framework would also create a platform where the statistics agenda in the Pacific is driven by the countries themselves, with input and support from the DPG and regional agencies.

## RECOMMENDATION

17. The secretariat recommends that HOPS :

- i) approve the proposal for a revised governance structure for Pacific statistics;
- ii) task SPC, in consultation with countries and development partners, with (a) finalising the terms of reference for HOPS, the PSSC and the DPG and (b) proposing the new Pacific statistics governance framework for adoption at the next FEMM meeting in 2018.