

Statistics for Development Division (SDD)

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SESSION 6 – REGIONAL DATA DISSEMINATION STRATEGY FRAMEWORK

(Document presented by the Secretariat)

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. This paper provides HOPS members with a proposal to adopt a regional data dissemination strategy framework that comprises four elements:
 - dissemination coordination,
 - regional data dissemination,
 - regional data repository, and
 - data acquisition governance
2. In developing this framework, two over-riding considerations have been to acknowledge that;
 - the ownership of statistical data and associated metadata resides with the national producers, in this case national statistics offices, and
 - the confidentiality of an individual's information must be protected, in line with requirements set out in each member countries' Statistics Act.

CONTEXT

3. Recent reviews of regional statistics development, including the role of SPC's Statistics for Development Division (SDD), have been consistent in recommending that SDD place greater priority on supporting more timely and efficient dissemination and use of statistics produced and data collected by member countries.
4. These reviews included the Sustineo Pacific Statistics Assessment (2016), SDD Performance Improvement Framework (PIF) (2017), and the Ten-Year Pacific Statistics Strategy (TYPSS) Mid-Term Review. The 13th meeting of the Pacific Statistics Steering Committee (PSSC-13) also endorsed these recommendations.
5. National statistical agencies, line ministries, and other agencies in Pacific Island countries and territories (PICTs) produce valuable information from their census, surveys, and other data collection activities. However, in most cases many of these agencies do not have the resources or technical capacity to

effectively disseminate these data, resulting in their underutilisation for social and economic development, delivering a poor return on investment.

6. Complicating this is the fact that many datasets lack supporting documentation (metadata) and are not always archived in a safe and systematic way, risking both the loss of data and institutional memory. Given the high incidences of natural disasters in the Pacific Islands region, and their impact on national statistics offices and governments' ability to access these data in a crisis, supporting national data archives in each member country comes with significant costs and significant risk.

Following the recent reviews, SDD has set about defining its new role and functions, developing a new operating model, and redefining its vision;

'Trusted Pacific data supporting well informed policy decisions that help improve pacific people's lives'.

7. The central aspect to this vision is 'Trusted Pacific data'. Today's users rightly demand that the data they are basing their research and decisions on has integrity, is supported by comprehensive metadata, and is properly catalogued and protected.
8. To help achieve this vision and meet the demands of today's users, there needs to be a regional repository and data archive that can meet these demands and provide a central focal point for users to access Pacific statistics and data services, including controlled access to microdata for bone fide purposes under controlled conditions.
9. SDD is strategically placed to provide this infrastructure deliver first-class data services for the region.

PROPOSAL

10. The Secretariat proposes a regional data dissemination framework that will guide how SPC and other technical partners can best support member countries with timely and efficient dissemination of their data. The framework comprises four core elements which are discussed below.

11. Dissemination coordination:

SDD will coordinate technical partners' dissemination activities and provide member countries with regular updates and user feedback through the meeting of the Pacific Statistics Standing Committee (PSSC).

This will ensure: i) there is no duplication of effort, ii) there is transparency in how Pacific data are disseminated, and iii) there is a better understanding by producers of users' statistical needs through regular feedback. This is in line with SDD's system leader role, where it will ensure there is effective coordination among technical partners and transparency and trust between those partners and member countries.

12. Regional data dissemination:

The Strategy covers two main areas:

- i. Promotion and user engagement, and
- ii. Products, services and channels

i. Promotion and user engagement:

This involves developing approaches for promoting Pacific data and raising awareness among key user groups in each member country, including;

- supporting each member country's data release events;
- understanding the users of Pacific statistics and their data needs; and
- raising awareness of the value and importance of statistics and data within member country governments and key user groups.

A key input into this aspect of the strategy will be the findings from the user focus project conducted by New Zealand-based Maven Consultancy and funded by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade. The project identified an unmet demand for timely Pacific statistics from users at national, regional and international levels. These included national policy analysts, community leaders, Pacific students who are studying overseas, CROP agencies, development partners and donor governments, and other academic researchers who are doing work on behalf of Pacific member countries governments. The research also identified that the biggest challenge faced by users is not being able to access Pacific data from a central point, and the difficulties in locating the required information.

ii. Products, services and channels:

This aspect of the strategy focuses on how users will interact with SDD in terms of accessing statistics and obtaining data services, and the development of statistical products. Product and services development will be greatly influenced by user feedback and similarly, channels will be determined by user preferences.

While web-based dissemination is the most cost-effective, there will be users who prefer a mix of services, ranging from web, customised services, to hard copy reports. Results of the recent User Focus Project will also provide valuable insights for the development of this aspect.

The reporting aspect of this component is focused primarily on Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). With the SDG reporting requirements under the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, SDD will assist member countries with maintaining and updating the 132 Pacific Headline Indicators from its own website as well as keeping the existing National Millennium Development Indicators (NMDI) up to date.

13. Regional data repository:

In order to service users, support member country NSOs, and advance the use of their data to support social and economic development, a central regional data repository and data archive are vitally important. This will require SDD and its technical partners having access to all official statistics that have been produced by member countries at both the aggregate and eventually micro level. Different users require different levels of detail and it is important that these different statistical needs are accommodated.

At an aggregate level, there are many users who need data that can give them a snapshot of the situation without involving a detail analysis of the data. There is also a small, but important, sector of users of Pacific statistics, mainly researchers and policy analysts, who require access microdata to enable them to interrogate data at a more detailed level. Micro-data used correctly, can also aid disaster relief efforts in member countries and it is important that this type of demand is able to be met.

Having a repository and data archive that is more complete and can be accessed via an open data portal, will enable an increased range of products and service offerings.

SDD currently holds aggregate and meta data for 48 surveys and censuses, however, 73 datasets are still missing. These include:

- population and housing censuses: 44
- household income and expenditure surveys: 14
- demographic health surveys: 5
- agriculture censuses: 5
- labour force surveys: 3
- disability survey: 1
- STEPS: 1

A first order priority for SDD will be to establish a process for acquiring:

- missing aggregate datasets,

- metadata for all aggregate datasets, and
- micro datasets and associated metadata from willing members.

SDD plans to extend acquisition to include: trade, prices, civil registration and vital statistics, and education, and over time extend this to include economic statistics such as: balance of payments, government finance and monetary statistics, business surveys and GDP.

All microdata held in behalf of member countries will be partitioned off from general users, with access being provided under controlled conditions for specific purposes. With more data available to SDD and other technical partners, such as World Bank, users will be able to use data to support research, policy development and other socioeconomic development. SDD will soon launch a new open data portal that will support all types of users, including access to microdata via its Pacific data archive.

SDD will develop partnerships with other data centres, including the World Bank Microdata Library, leveraging their expertise to ensure the process for acquisition, documentation, anonymisation, archive and dissemination is in line with international best practices, especially the confidentiality of individual information collected by National Statistics Offices to facilitate the production of official statistics. The Secretariat, in collaboration with the World Bank, will work with member countries to progressively acquire micro datasets.

Data access governance: It will be important for SDD and member countries to formalise arrangements for the acquisition of official statistics produced by member countries, both at the aggregate and micro levels. SDD aims to achieve this through a standing memorandum of understanding (MOU). The purpose of the MOU will be to:

- place SPC's relationship with members onto a formal footing, clarifying expectations
- and accountabilities for both parties;
- address technical support, data management, dissemination and archiving; and
- establish processes and protocols for data access including access at the micro level.

Annex 1 outlines a potential set of protocols for managing micro data access. These will be further developed over the coming months as part of developing this element of the strategy.

CONCLUSION

The four elements of the Regional Data Dissemination Strategy will be run concurrent projects in consultation with members and technical partners ensuring that they play an active part in the process.

Having all 4 elements completed, will mean a comprehensive centralised data centre for the Pacific region that can deliver "first class" data services for national, regional and international users of Pacific data.

The aim is to have the strategy completed in time for submitting to the Forum Economic Ministers Meeting (FEMM) 2018. This program of work will be led and managed by the new Manager of Data Analysis and Dissemination.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The secretariat recommends that HOPS:

1. Approve the proposed Regional Data Dissemination Strategy framework and its four elements;
2. Task SPC, in consultation with countries and development partners, with finalising the Regional Data Dissemination Strategy for submission to FEMM 2018.

Annex 1: Proposed Microdata Protocols

- Production of a policy and protocols for the acquisition, documentation, cataloguing, anonymisation, dissemination and preservation of datasets.
- Acquisition of datasets (acquisition will not involve a transfer of ownership of the data; the data will remain the property of the respective producers).
- Assessment of the quality and completeness of the data and metadata, based on a standard assessment framework.
- Documentation of datasets in compliance with international metadata standards (the DDI for microdata, the Dublin Core for related materials, and the ISO 19135 for geospatial data should the archive cover such datasets).
- Anonymisation of the dataset, to ensure compliance with legal and ethical constraints.
- Dissemination of the data and metadata, according to formal terms of use agreed with the data producer (the level of accessibility will be specific to each dataset).
- Promotion of the use of data (e.g. through partnerships with research organisations or other archives).
- Preservation or archiving of datasets and related documentation.
- Maintenance of a citations database (a catalogue of papers, books, report and other analytical output generated using datasets listed in the Pacific Data Archive), providing evidence of the use and value of the data.
- Reporting to data producers on the use of the data, and transfer of feedback obtained from users to data producers.