

PACIFIC STATISTICS METHODS BOARD (PSMB) TERMS OF REFERENCES

1. PURPOSE

The purpose of the Pacific Statistics Methods Board (PSMB) is to ensure that relevant best practice standards are identified and/or developed and are “fit for purpose” for use in Pacific Island countries and territories (PICTs) for a suite of core censuses and surveys, and other statistical collections, including administrative data, and analytical methodologies where appropriate.

2. ROLES

The role of the PSMB shall include, but not necessarily be limited to the following:

- a. Assist in the compilation of production schedules and forward work programmes and utilise these for assessing the need to improve methods, the extent of capability gaps or the need to support production activity. These include to:
 - i. Establish the drivers of regular statistical production in terms of methods, system and procedures
 - ii. Identify common statistical needs and opportunities across the region
 - iii. Help broker access to capabilities in other statistical or provider agencies
 - iv. Support the development of best practice methods for analytical tools and statistical outputs for use in evidence-based policy and planning
- b. Assess and approve proposals put forward by statistics providers working in the Pacific on: questionnaire design, sampling methodologies, classifications, collection tools and systems, and quality assurance processes. The type of proposals can include:
 - i. Matters of statistical practice e.g. timing and scheduling of collections, timing and scope of historical revisions
 - ii. Changes in standard approaches to statistical methodologies and classifications
 - iii. Implementation approaches including choices around software
- c. Provide advice and recommended courses of action on issues such as how to:
 - i. Identify best practice between alternative methodological approaches suggested by different statistical and/or development agencies
 - ii. Identify best practice between national statistics offices and statistical and/or development agencies on methods, systems, procedures and analysis
 - iii. Balance the need for standard approaches with the need to reflect the diversity of requirements of Pacific countries.
 - iv. Optimise a programme of data acquisition to meet extensive data requirements
 - v. Assess the long-term capability consequences and future capacity needs of proposals to change methods
- d. Provide advocacy to enable the particular requirements of the Pacific region to be adequately reflected in international standards. These include:

- i. Identify where work is needed to develop methodological approaches that reflect the situation of Small Island States
 - ii. Explore opportunities to have these issues worked on within the wider international statistical community
- e. Initially the focus of the Board's work will be on the following core statistical activities:
- population and housing censuses,
 - household income and expenditure surveys,
 - multi-indicator cluster surveys,
 - demographic and health surveys,
 - disability surveys,
 - agriculture surveys.
 - labour force surveys??
 - trade statistics??
 - price and production indices??
- f. The Board may commission work, such as:
- literature reviews,
 - experiments to test methodologies,
 - consultative qualitative research.

This work may be commissioned proactively or reactively based on issues raised by constituents.

3. MEMBERSHIP

- a. PSMB membership will include;

Four representatives from among regional statistics development partners, namely; Statistics NZ (Chair 2016-2018), Australia Bureau of Statistics, World Bank and one of the UN Agencies.

A representative (Government Statistician) from each of the four PICT areas, namely; Polynesia (Tonga), Melanesia (Fiji), Micronesia (Guam) and Small Island States (Nauru). In the event that a representative of an area cannot attend a meeting, or cannot continue as a Board member, the Government Statisticians from the area concerned will nominate a Government Statistician to replace.

- b. Terms; the term of the PSMB Chair will be for a period of 3 years before the next election. The current Chair may be re-elected if a simple majority votes in his/her favour. The term of the deputy chair will also be 3 years. The deputy chair will be a Government Statistician representative. Following the initial election of a deputy, the position will be rotated amongst the Government Statistician representatives.
- c. Secretariat; Secretariat services will be provided by the Statistics for Development Division (SDD).
- d. Attendance; to ensure the integrity and credibility of the PSMB, attendance at Board meetings shall be compulsory for Board members. Representative from the Pacific NSOs should be at Government Statistician or Deputy level. Should a Board member be unable to attend, a suitable representative must be provided.

Presenters, observers and invited members; Board members may nominate officers from their respective agencies who have authored and/or co-authored papers, to attend board meetings to present the paper and respond to questions. The Board may co-opt, or invite as an observer, a member country's government statistician or relevant staff member as and when required. The Board may invite other stakeholders as observers if and when specialist interest issues are to be considered.

4. PROCEDURES

- a. Meetings; Meetings will be held twice a year; in April and October. The April meeting will be via teleconference and the October meeting will be face-to-face. The October meeting will be held one

day before the Pacific Statistics Standing Committee (PSSC) Meeting. The Board may set its own procedures for the conduct of Board Meetings.

- b. Reporting and Governance: The Board will come under the umbrella of the Pacific Statistics Standing Committee (PSSC) and Head of Planning and Statistics (HOPS). It will submit a briefing on key decisions, progress and achievements to PSSC and HOPS for the information of members. Matters requiring a broader view and/or guidance will be referred to PSSC as they arise.

Timing: The secretariat will distribute the agenda and papers to the Board and invited members one month prior to the meeting date. Key decisions to be released for Board approval one month after the meeting. Minutes will be made available on SDD's website following Board approval.

- c. Papers: The board may:

- review all submitted papers to ensure that all relevant information has been provided,
- make all decisions on submitted papers,
- endorse papers that propose changes to methods in the above national collections, and
- endorse papers in principle but require further work at its request.

Board Members or representatives of member countries or relevant stakeholders wishing to present papers should notify the secretariat of their intention to do so as early as possible in the meeting cycle. The paper must clearly state the purpose for submission and with clear recommendations on decisions requires from the board.

- d. Retention of papers: All papers submitted to the Board will be stored and archived by SDD. This will ensure that papers are easily located in the future and that member countries, technical partners, donors and consultants working on related issues and/or collections have easy access to them.
- e. Structure and content of papers: A style guide for Board papers and their submission will be provided by the secretariat and should be followed.

Urgent issues and/or changes: Board papers and matters requiring immediate consideration/ approval and/or implementation outside Board meetings may be considered through circulation to Board members for comment and a decision, although the aim is to limit the need for urgent changes. Any urgent changes requiring implementation without Board scrutiny should be documented for review at the next available meeting.

- f. Out-of-session papers: In some cases, papers may need to be circulated for the record, or for information only. Before submitting a paper out-of-session, papers must be signed off by the Secretary and Chairman of the Board. This is to ensure that the content has had the appropriate level of scrutiny. Out-of-session papers will be noted on the agenda but will not be presented for discussion.
- g. Action items: An action item should be created when further work is required on a presented paper that will need to be reviewed and monitored by the Board as it progresses. The Board will determine, if any actions are required following its presentation.
- h. The chair and secretariat: The chair will endeavour to reach a consensus position on recommendations but otherwise will, depending on the balance of opinion, either signal endorsement with reservations, or rejection.

The secretariat will;

- organise meeting times and venues;
- call for agenda items and accompanying written material;
- circulate the final agenda and accompanying written material;
- manage and following up on outstanding action items;
- prepare the minutes of the meeting and seeking clearance from presenters;
- file approved papers and associated documents electronically within SDD; and

- create and maintain a ‘methods’ corner on its website, where all documents and standards endorsed by PSMB can be uploaded to inform all member countries, technical partners, donors of the board’s decisions.
- i. The chair and secretariat will be jointly responsible for ensuring that the purpose of each item on the agenda is clear and unambiguous.

5. REVIEW OF TERMS OF REFERENCE

The PSMB retains the right to review and amend its Terms of Reference as changes in context and circumstances require.