SECRETARIAT OF THE PACIFIC COMMUNITY

REGIONAL MEETING OF HEADS OF PLANNING AND HEADS OF STATISTICS (HOPS)
(Noumea, New Caledonia, 22–26 July 2013)

Session 3: Report on the 2011 Skills Audit
(Document presented by the Secretariat of the Pacific Community)

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. To assist the development of a long-term statistical training and capacity development strategy, PSSC requested SDD to undertake a Skills audit assessment of PICT NSO staff, seeking information on formal education and training, as well as job-specific training and ongoing professional capacity development. With most of SDD statistical training focusing on the countries and the 3 US territories (the NSOs of the three French pacific territories are generally self-sufficient in training and/or supported by France), the audit focused on 18 PICTs, with every office except PNG participating in this survey from September – November 2011, involving a total staff of N=224.

Key outcomes

2. Too numerous to mention all in an executive summary, it is worth noting up-front that
    a. Almost three-quarters of staff (73%) had some kind of job-specific training;
    b. The three most common training exposures were census/survey planning (34.8%), specialized-thematic workshops (34.1%) and Data analysis and Report Writing (26.8%).
    c. The three most common training providers, in terms of staff numbers having attended courses, were SPC (41.5%), SIAP (29.9%) and training received in-house by colleagues of the respective NSO (27.4%).

Challenges

3. Notwithstanding many positives emerging from this audit, major challenges persist for many NSOs in terms of competently managing diverse workloads, especially in small offices
    a. Many offices were understaffed: only 4 NSOs had a staff contingent of 25 staff or more (24%), while 8 of the 17 NSOs surveyed had less than 5 staff (47%).
    b. A substantial training gap exists between current professional work undertaken by NSO staff, and formal training received in this particular field of activity.
    c. Only one in three staff having received job-specific training (38%) believed this training to be sufficient to do a competent job in their office.

Proposed Way Forward/Recommendations

4. Following on from, and supporting recommendations of WP-31, HOPS is requested to consider:
    a. a revised Skills-Audit to be administered a 2nd time, in line with reasons outlined in paragraph 11, and also to give PNG another opportunity to participate;
    b. to request PSSC to convene a Statistical Training technical working group to develop a long-term Pacific statistical training strategy: acknowledging (i) statistical capacity gaps and training needs apparent from the skills audit and (ii) statistical training programs/capacity building undertaken by other developing countries.

INTRODUCTION

1. An NSO staff skills audit was administered in late 2011 to establish a baseline for the development of a long-term training and professional development strategy. The audit focused on all countries and US territories (18) where SPC was engaged in regular training. All countries and territories participated except for PNG, resulting in responses from 17 countries. French territories were excluded, as SPC training activities are very limited there. The skills audit was undertaken by the Heads of NSOs and supported by SPC and PFTAC.

2. It is important to remember that this audit provides a **snapshot of the situation prevailing in these offices at the time**. Staff recruited since the audit are not covered in the results of this report.

KEY ACHIEVEMENTS

3. Most staff (73%) indicated they did indeed receive job-specific training for the activities they are currently engaged in. On average, staff experienced between 2 and 3 such trainings, with 17 percent stating that they had received 4 or more such opportunities.

4. Of this group, the vast majority (87%) participated in **formal training events** provided by different statistical training providers such as SIAP, SPC, USP, UN agencies, statistical agencies of Australia, NZ and the US, PFTAC, IMF, and the World Bank. Most staff (72%) had exposure to between 1 and 3 such opportunities.

5. The three **most commonly referred to trainings** covered census/survey planning (34.8%), specialized-thematic workshops (34.1%) and Data analysis and Report Writing workshops (26.8%). Around 10 percent of staff were trained in data processing, leadership/project management type activities, and introduction to basic computer skills (Figure 1).
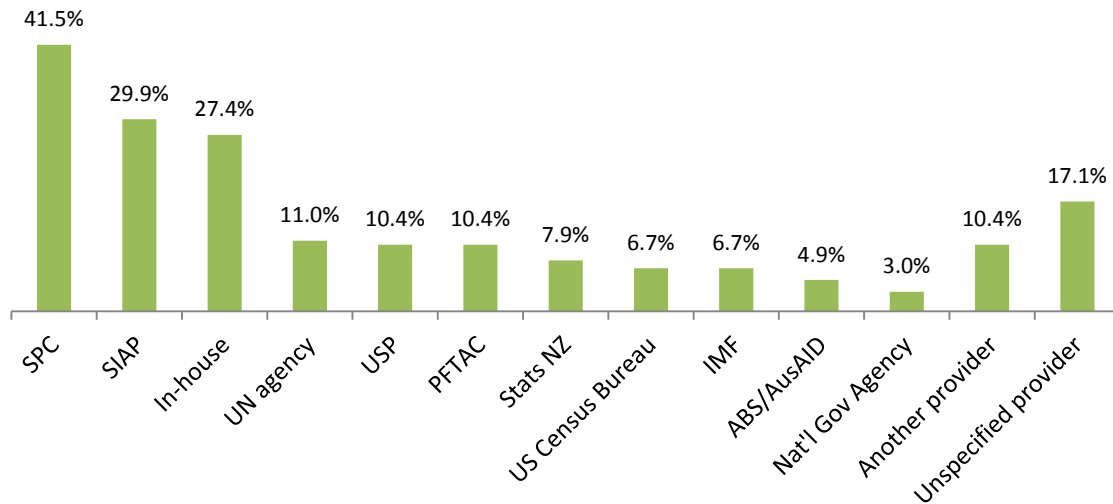
Figure 1: Percent of Job-Specific Trained Respondents by Training Topic
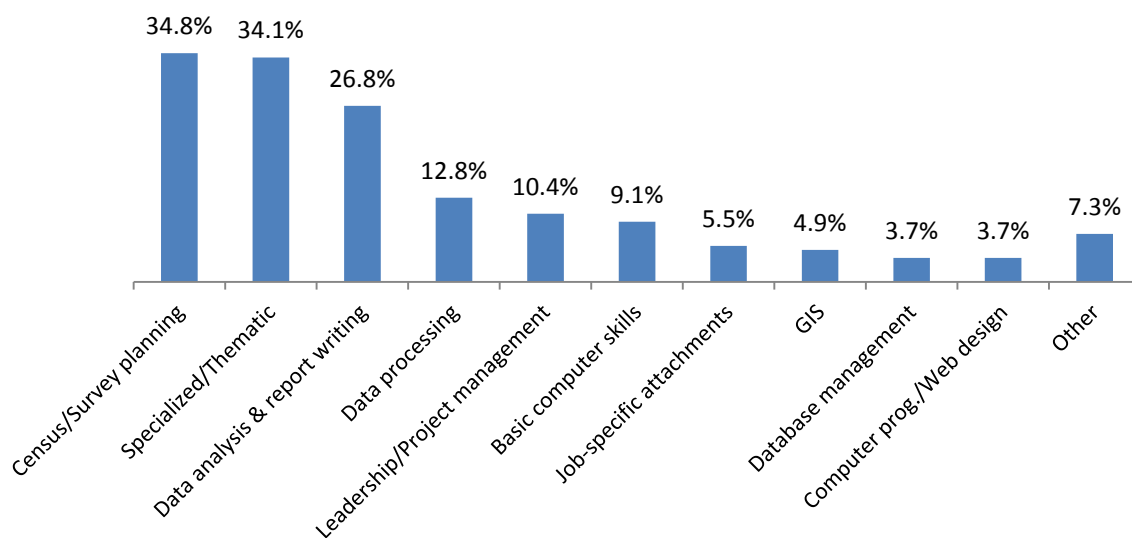
Note: Excludes respondents who did not indicate receiving job-specific training. N=164

6. The three **most common training providers** for Pacific island statistical agencies, in terms of staff numbers having attended courses, were SPC (41.5%), SIAP (29.9%) and trainings received in-house by colleagues of the respective NSO (27.4% - Figure 2).

**Figure 2: Percent of Respondents Who Had Job-Specific Trainings by Training Provider**

Note: Excludes respondents who did not indicate receiving job-specific training. N=164

MAIN CHALLENGES FACED

7. Many offices were understaffed: only 4 NSOs had a staff contingent of 25 staff or more (24%), while 8 of the 17 NSOs surveyed had less than 5 staff (47% - Figure 3).

Figure 3: Staff Numbers in National Statistical Offices in the Pacific Region by Country, 2011
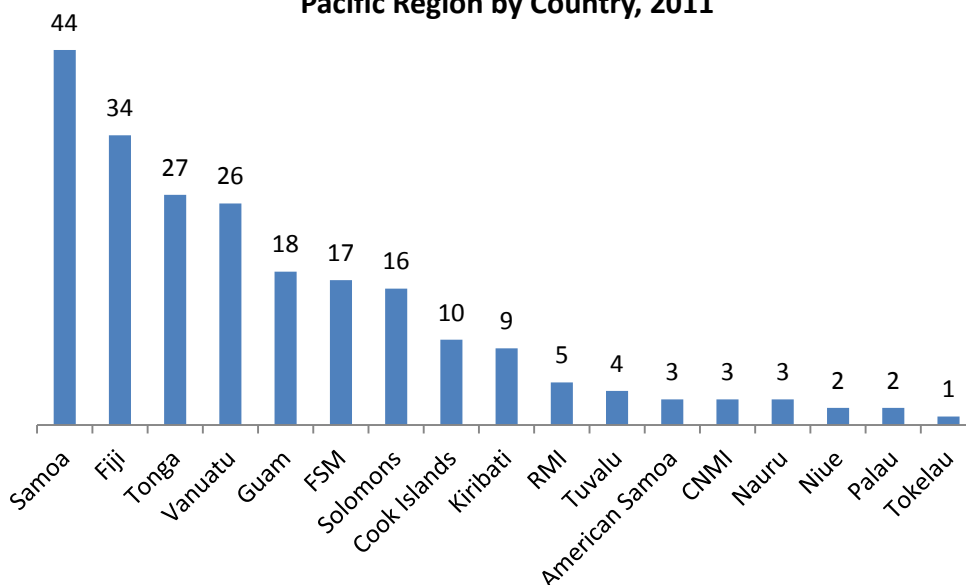
8. Training was not evenly dispersed: 24 per cent of staff never attended any formal training, while one person managed 32 such training events.

9. A **substantial training gap** exists between current professional work undertaken by NSO staff, and formal training received in this particular field of activity (Table 1). Most staff working across each of the 17 major task categories have not been exposed to formal training in the areas they currently work in. When it comes to the majority of NSO staff performing **core statistical business**, such as data collection, tabulations, analysis and report writing, the **training gap is substantial (Table 1)**.
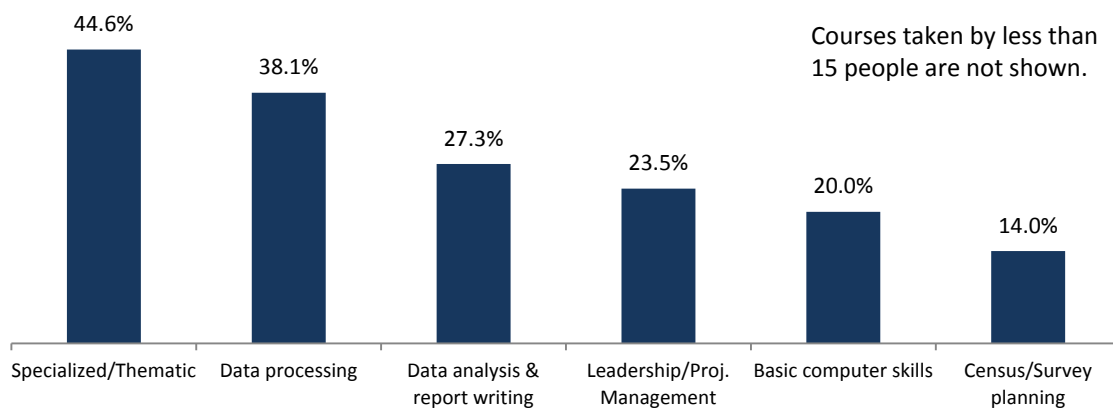
Table 1: Percent of Job-Specific Training Courses Taken by Duty Type*

Duties	Training Taken										
	Leadership/Project management	Census/Survey planning	Data analysis & report writing	Specialized/Thematic	Job-specific attachments	Database management	Data processing	Basic computer skills	GIS	Computer prog./Web design	Other
Managerial *(N=41)*	24.4	36.6	26.8	51.2	4.9	4.9	12.2	2.4	4.9	2.4	7.3
Demographic collection *(N=24)*	12.5	29.2	25.0	20.8	0.0	8.3	16.7	8.3	4.2	4.2	8.3
Economic collection *(N=39)*	5.1	28.2	17.9	25.6	10.3	2.6	10.3	5.1	2.6	0.0	5.1
Unspecified collection *(N=33)*	0.0	33.3	27.3	27.3	0.0	0.0	12.1	9.1	6.1	0.0	9.1
Demographic tabulation *(N=27)*	0.0	22.2	25.9	37.0	3.7	0.0	18.5	14.8	7.4	7.4	11.1
Economic tabulation *(N=72)*	4.2	29.2	18.1	31.9	8.3	1.4	11.1	8.3	2.8	0.0	2.8
Unspecified tabulation *(N=22)*	0.0	27.3	45.5	27.3	4.5	0.0	13.6	18.2	13.6	9.1	4.5
Dem. analysis & report writing *(N=19)*	5.3	21.1	15.8	26.3	5.3	0.0	15.8	0.0	5.3	5.3	10.5
Econ. analysis & report writing *(N=19)*	5.3	24.6	15.8	33.3	12.3	1.8	10.5	5.3	0.0	0.0	0.0
Unspecified analysis & report writing *(N=23)*	4.3	21.7	26.1	30.4	4.3	0.0	8.7	8.7	8.7	8.7	8.7
Data processing and CSPro *(N=5)*	0.0	20.0	20.0	20.0	20.0	20.0	0.0	0.0	40.0	0.0	0.0
Statistical support *(N=63)*	6.3	22.2	7.9	12.7	0.0	1.6	6.3	7.9	0.0	0.0	4.8
GIS *(N=12)*	16.7	33.3	25.0	16.7	0.0	0.0	8.3	8.3	16.7	0.0	25.0
Computer programming/hardware *(N=12)*	8.3	8.3	25.0	16.7	8.3	8.3	8.3	0.0	8.3	16.7	8.3
Maintains website *(N=2)*	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	100.0	0.0
Unspecified demographic *(N=8)*	0.0	12.5	25.0	12.5	0.0	0.0	12.5	12.5	0.0	0.0	0.0
Unspecified economic *(N=8)*	0.0	25.0	12.5	37.5	0.0	12.5	12.5	0.0	25.0	12.5	0.0

*This refers to respondents' statements of their principal job duties. Note: Categories are not mutually exclusive.

10. Apart from a not always perfect fit between technical job demands and having had access to job-specific training, a second major finding is that **only one in three people** having received job-specific training (38%) **believed this training to be sufficient to do a competent job** in their office (Figure 4).

    a. Nearly half of all staff having received job-specific in specialized fields (44.6%) stated they require further training in this area.

    b. The same applies to staff having been exposed to Data processing (CSPro) training, with one in three expressing the need for more training (38.1%).

    c. One in four people who attended Data analysis and Report writing training (27.3%) or leadership/ project management courses (23.5%) stated they require further training in these fields.

**Figure 4: Percent Who Received Job-Specific Training and Required
Further Training in That Same Topic**

Courses taken by less than 15 people are not shown.

Specialized/Thematic	Data processing	Data analysis & report writing	Leadership/Proj. Management	Basic computer skills	Census/Survey planning
44.6%	38.1%	27.3%	23.5%	20.0%	14.0%

PROPOSED WAY FORWARD

11. It is recommended that the skills audit be administered a second time to determine:
    a. If the training gap has increased
    b. Which courses are in highest demand
    c. What staff turnover looks like

RECOMMENDATIONS

12. Following on from, and supporting recommendations of WP-31, HOPS is requested to consider:

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    b. to request PSSC to convene a Statistical Training technical working group to develop a long-term Pacific statistical training strategy: acknowledging (i) statistical capacity gaps and training needs apparent from the skills audit and (ii) statistical training programs/capacity building undertaken by other developing countries.