

Improving the coordination of technical cooperation programs in statistics at the sub-regional level

CCSA Task Team 3 - Terms of Reference

Objectives and outputs

The objectives of the Task Team on improving the coordination of technical cooperation programs at the sub-regional level are:

- To complete an inventory of technical cooperation programs in statistics being implemented by CCSA members on a sub-regional basis and to recommend a process to update the inventory as projects are completed and new projects started;
- To prepare recommendations and guidelines on good practice in the design and management of sub-regional technical cooperation programs in statistics and to disseminate these to CCSA members
- To collate and disseminate, as far as is feasible, relevant material on the design and implementation of sub-regional technical cooperation programs on statistics

Background

While the majority of technical cooperation and investment projects in statistics and related topics operate at the national level, a number of CCSA members do, from time to time, design and implement projects and programs that operate at the sub-regional level. Sub-regional projects are generally of three main types. First there are projects that deal with a number of countries, but where the objective is to improve the capacity of national statistical systems. Second are initiatives where the immediate beneficiary is a sub-regional agency or other body, with a mandate to promote regional integration and cooperation. Third, some programs or projects may include aspects of both types and may include some components looking to strengthen the capacity of sub-regional agencies and some components delivering support and investment directly to countries.

Sub-regional groupings of countries may be formed for a number of purposes, including political integration, management of common resources, and trade promotion. Depending on the purpose of the organization there may be some kind of regional secretariat with a number of functions. In many cases the secretariat will have some kind of statistical function, for example, compiling regional data and promoting harmonization of data and data processes.

While there are certainly still issues concerned with the coordination of donor financed technical cooperation and investment programs at the national level, the mechanisms are at least agreed and are clear. National strategies for the development of statistics (NSDS) are country owned and prepared medium to long-term programs to strengthen the capacity of statistical systems and to address key constraints and weaknesses. Increasingly, donor assistance in statistics is being channeled into supporting the implementation of the NSDS and the strategy provides the framework for determining priorities and for monitoring progress. At the sub-regional level, however, no formal

parallel process exists and consequently other mechanisms for coordination of donor programs in statistics and other areas are required.

Responsibilities of the Task Team

The main responsibilities of the Task Team will be:

- In collaboration with Task Team 1, the task team will compile an inventory of statistical projects and programs that operate at the sub-regional level. It is expected that this will involve the preparation and circulation of a questionnaire. One decision will be whether the questionnaire should be sent to sub-regional organizations or to CCSA members, or possibly, both.
- Make recommendations on how the inventory can be kept up to date once the Task Team has completed its work
- Identify what mechanisms already exist for coordinating assistance in statistics
- On the basis of the inventory and review, prepare guidelines to increase coordination or address problems identified in the earlier two stages.
- Compile publicly available material on sub-regional programs on statistics;

Methods of working

It is expected that much of the work will be carried out through virtual meetings and e-mail exchanges, although the possibility of organizing a physical meeting will be assessed depending on the circumstances. For this process to work it will be important for different members of the Task Team to take on responsibility for some of the individual tasks.

Duration

It is expected that the work of the Task Team will be carried out over a period of one year, including the compilation of the inventory and completion of the review. An initial report will need to be provided to the CCSA meeting scheduled for Madrid in September 2007.

Composition

Membership to the Task Team is open to any interested development partner, supporting statistical development. To be effective, it is proposed that the Task Team be limited initially to up to 10 development partners and between three to five representatives of sub-regional agencies. Representatives of each partner and sub-regional agency on the Task Team should be identified and given time to participate in Task Team's activities.

Budget of Task Team

It is assumed that each development partner would cover the costs of its representative on the Task Team, including travel and per diem for one or possibly two meetings, and that most communication will be done electronically. It may be necessary, however, to meet the costs of some of the representatives of sub-regional agencies to participate in the meetings. It is estimated that the cost of three people to attend two meetings will be of the order of US\$ 30,000. The World Bank will investigate how these costs could best be financed.