

United Nations Statistical Institute for Asia and the Pacific

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Managing Statistical Development and Information Technology
for National Statistical Offices

**Country Report for the Papua New Guinea National Statistical Office
by the National Statistician, Mr. Nick Suvulo, to the Sixth Management
Seminar for Heads of National Statistical Offices in Asia and the Pacific,
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It is my pleasure to present the country report for the Papua New Guinea National Statistical Office to the Sixth Management Seminar for Heads of National Statistical Offices in Asia and the Pacific.

PNG NSO Background

Let me first begin by giving a snap shot of the PNG National Statistical Office. The NSO was established by an Act of the National Parliament and is the central government agency in PNG responsible for providing statistical information to meet the needs of the government and its people. This involves the provision of reliable, relevant and timely statistical information on economic, social, population and environment and other related conditions in the country. These statistics are intended to assist policy makers, planners and administrators evaluate existing policies and programs.

Apart from the NSO's main function of ensuring that there is effective and efficient provision of statistical information, the NSO also liaise with international statistical agencies on statistical matters and also performs a coordinating role with other state agencies in the country, in relation to

development of statistics under the Organic Law on Provincial and Local Level Governments.

Organization Structure

The NSO organization structure consists of three divisions, eleven branches and one section. The functions of the divisions are to direct and control all operations within their subject matter areas. The divisions are economic, population and social statistics, and the statistical services.

The economic division is responsible for compiling national accounts, business statistics, household income statistics and international trade statistics.

The population and social statistics division comprises of research and development branch, compilation and field operations of censuses and surveys.

Whilst, the statistical services division has information management services, publications and library services, research and statistical coordination, administration and finance, and the staff development and training.

Senior Management

The senior management of the NSO is comprised of the National Statistician who is the chief executive of the NSO and three Deputy National Statisticians who head the three operational divisions.

The National Statistician is responsible for administering the Statistical Services Act and is the sole authority to decide on statistical procedures and methods employed in the provision of statistics. The deputy national statisticians are immediate subordinates of the National Statistician who are responsible for managing the various operations and activities of the NSO under the stewardship of the National Statistician. The National Statistical Office has a staff strength of 91 permanent staff and 11 casuals performing the daily tasks of the office.

Managing Statistical Development and Information Technology for National Statistical Offices.

I now, shift to the theme of the Sixth Management Seminar for the Heads of National Statistical Offices in Asia and the Pacific, “Managing Statistical Development and Information Technology for National Statistical Offices.”

The PNG National Statistical Office realizes the importance of Information and Communication Technology (ICT), and has established an Information Management Services Branch to oversee this field of specialization.

ICT Set Up

The NSO has a small ICT set up. It has a Local Area Network (LAN) Server with 66 workstations and an Exchange Server to service external emails and internet lines.

The National Statistical Office has also developed its own website with support from the Secretariat of the Pacific Community’s Pacific Regional Information System (PRISM). Our website address is www.nso.gov.pg.

On the website, the NSO has information on general statistics, economic statistics, population and information on migration, particularly on international departures and arrivals.

2000 National Population and Housing Census

The NSO has the 2000 National Population and Housing Census information, for the first time, on CD ROMS. The three CD ROMS produced by the NSO with the assistance from UNDP are Community Profile System (CPS), Table Retrieval System (TRS) and Thematic Mapping.

As indicated earlier, the NSO has a small ICT set up, but yet it enhances the mission and role of the office and its activities. For example, the three CD ROMS produced from the 2000 National Population and Housing Census carry the entire country’s statistical information on population, geography and its activities. These products are currently on high demand by users. It

would have been very costly to have the same information on those three CD ROMS produced in hard copies.

ICT is a Challenge

While we marvel at how ICT can work in this age, for the PNG NSO, it is definitely a challenge to have it fully established to help to produce, analyze and disseminate relevant, reliable and timely statistics that will be useful for development purposes

Most of the equipment that the NSO has needs replacement. Many of the computers, both soft and hardware need to be changed. The computers the NSO currently has are Windows 98 while the Windows Software on the market now is Windows XP. To overhaul these aging equipment, it will cost 350, 000 PNG Kina. This is equivalent to 116, 000 US Dollar. This kind of money is not in the NSO recurrent budget.

As head of the NSO, I have and still embark on the use of ICT to improve the intelligence of the office, in knowledge, experience and trained personnel. At this stage, the NSO lacks funding to purchase equipment and recruit trained ICT specialists. ICT specialists are expensive to recruit and employ them because they are scarce.

Government Link with ICT Use

The national government is now working to set up the Integrated Government Information System and enable all government departments and state agencies link up to share their policies and activities. If that comes to fruition, NSO will definitely tie up with their networking.

Also the NSO is now about to link with the government's budgets and expenditures information through its Financial Management Implementation Project. A satellite has already been installed and once hooked, the NSO will feed in information with its annual budgetary allocations and expenses to the Treasury and Finance Department through the PNG Information System (PNGIS).

Two other projects are coming on Development Information (DevInfo) and Population Geographical Information System (PopGis). These are being installed as I speak.

Devinfo is for the Millennium Development Goals. The NSO will use its statistics to feed the system for users to monitor PNG's progress with the indicators derived from NSO's statistical information compiled and analyzed from surveys.

With the PopGis, the NSO together with the Secretariat of the Pacific Community are working to put PNG's population information on maps.

Availability of ICT Training

There are two kinds of ICT training available in PNG. One, is the public training done by public institutions like the universities, and the other is private, done by privately owned IT companies and institutions.

These trainings are general on ICT and does not suit the specific needs of the NSO. The NSO needs specialized statistical package trainings such as Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS), Statistical Analysis System (SAS), a Statistical Program for Socio-Economic Analysis (STATA) and Census and Survey Processing System (CSPRO). These trainings are not available in PNG.

Major obstacles of ICT use in NSO

The ICT infrastructure is condensed and is not an open market. There are only three IT companies operating in PNG, namely Daltron, Datec and Able Computing. Since there are few IT companies, there is no competition and the prices of their IT products are expensive to purchase.

There are also four Internet Service Providers and they are Daltron, Datec, Data Net and Global. The internet usage is on high demand in the country, therefore, there is usually traffic congestion because the ICT infrastructure does not have a broadband or a super highway transmission.

Another thing that shall never go unrepeated is funding. The NSO does not get money from the National Government in its annual allocation to venture into ICT improvement and recruiting technical IT specialists to work in our Information Management Services Branch.

ICT is NSO Future

Despite the funding and lack ICT expertise at PNG's NSO, we will still pursue with the limited resources we have to cope with the increasingly growing demand for relevant, reliable and timely statistical information to support national developments. And in a forum like this, National Statistical Offices in Asia and the Pacific can discuss ways to work in partnership to solicit support from each other in the area of ICT, in order to produce quality and timely statistics for national development programs.