

Country Statement: New Zealand

SIAP, 3rd Workshop on Forming Partnerships in Statistical Training in Asia-Pacific

1. What are the goals and mandates of your organization (what is your organization really trying to achieve)?

Statistics New Zealand is a department of the New Zealand Public Service. Our mission statement is:

"Turning data into knowledge, efficiently."

Statistics New Zealand's role is set out in the Statistics Act 1975. Broadly it is to:

- Lead New Zealand's Official Statistics System
- Build and maintain trust in official statistics
- Be the key contributor to the collection, analysis and dissemination of official statistics relating to New Zealand's economy, environment and society
- Ensure official statistics are of high integrity, quality, and are equally available to all
- Guarantee that statistical information provided to Statistics New Zealand remains confidential, and that it will be used for statistical purposes only.

2. Does your organization have indicators that measure the contributions of your staff in your organization's goal achievement? If yes, what are these indicators?

The performance rating system measures the contributions of staff to organisational goals. Every 12 months, staff and their managers develop a performance agreement which outlines a set of project deliverables and development objectives. These objectives are the subject of ongoing discussion, and at the end of the year a rating is given (not performing, improvable, developing, effective, very effective, outstanding) to reflect the extent to which the objectives have been met. Pay increases are guided by performance ratings. A rating of 'Effective' and above would indicate that the staff member is contributing to the organisational goals.

There has also been a recent push within Statistics New Zealand towards improving and developing organisation-wide performance indicators. Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) evaluate the alignment of Stats NZ practices with organisational goals. Some examples relevant to statistical training include:

- Number of open/external training sessions held by Statistics New Zealand (monthly)
- Number of participants in national working groups, conferences, training, lectures and seminars (monthly)
- Number of participants in international assistance/aid programs, Pacific graduate training scheme and delegations (monthly)
- Number of staff engaged in training (monthly)
- Number of specific knowledge-sharing seminars, and number attended (monthly)
- Proportion of employees attaining 'Effective' in their Performance Reviews (annually)

3. How do your people acquire the knowledge and skills for their current position's job performance?

Statistics New Zealand has an organisation-wide learning philosophy, and is very supportive of staff undertaking work-related training activities. There are a range of training options to provide staff with the skills and knowledge they need to perform their jobs. However, knowledge and skills are often particular to a person's position. For example, entry-level Statistical Analyst roles are typically filled by university graduates, whereas second-level Statistical Analysts tend to be staff who have been promoted from within the organisation, or have arrived with relevant experience from another organisation.

Internal staff training tools include:

- Coaching - new staff members are assigned a coach who provides guidance
- Skillport - an intranet learning device which offers a wide range of statistical training software
- Mentoring - Senior staff are encouraged to mentor less experienced staff
- Communities of Practice - seminars where staff share their work experiences with others
- Orientation Journey - 6 month induction course which teaches organisation goals, values, code of conduct and other corporate policies.

- Statistical Methods Networks - internal networks based on shared knowledge of core topics (such as confidentiality)

External training options include Microsoft Excel, touch typing, conferences, and university qualifications.

Work is also underway on the Capability Framework, which will list 8 key competencies at each promotion level along with development opportunities available to meet those competencies.

4. Where do professional staff members of your organization mainly come from (universities and colleges etc.)?

Statistics New Zealand operates a graduate Leadership Development Programme which actively targets university students across all disciplines in their final year of study. Successful candidates receive a year of intensive personal development in the form of career coaching, monthly training days, and a 4 month project rotation system. Other entry-level Statistical Analysts are recruited from universities as well as other organisations (with transferable skills) and receive a number of development opportunities including on-the-job training, internal statistical training, corporate projects etc. Second-level Analysts and Senior Researchers are typically developed within the organisation as part of normal career progression, or are sourced through international secondments from other statistical agencies or permanent staff from roles in other organisations who have transferable skills, such as analysis and numeric proficiency. Management typically have experience working across several different internal business units, or have held leadership positions in public or private sector organisations, either locally or internationally.

5. Does your country have an institutionalized professional training in statistics? Is it ladder-typed (basic, intermediate, advanced)?

There are currently two distinct statistical training pathways supported by the Ministry of Education:

1) New Zealand education institutions teach basic statistics at secondary school, and more advanced statistics at tertiary (university under-graduate) and advanced tertiary (post-graduate) level. Interestingly, the new school curriculum (to be introduced into schools over the next 2-3 years) expands the teaching of statistics. Maths as a subject is to be renamed Maths and Statistics, *"In a range of meaningful contexts, students will be engaged in knowing, doing, and thinking mathematically and statistically."*

2) The second pathway for statistical learning is the New Zealand Qualification Authority (NZQA) Certificate of Official Statistics. This qualification targets government workers in the interest of building statistical capability across the public sector. The Certificate does not delve into statistical formulas or calculations; rather it includes components on data interpretation, data collection, and legal aspects of statistical analysis. The Certificate of Official Statistics was introduced in 2007 and has yet to be completed or evaluated by students.

6. Please give the number of your staff who have received training during the last three years, in which area, for how long (average duration) and where (place, including domestic training as well as overseas) during the last three years? Indicative numbers or percentages would suffice.

Statistics New Zealand does not currently operate a Learning Management System, therefore, exact figures of how many individual staff members have completed training over the past 3 years, and in which areas, is unknown. The domestic training calendar for the past year contains an estimate of attendees at training sessions for each month over the past year. It is important to note that staff who attended more than one training session have been counted more than once, and so the total is greater than the total number of employees at Statistics New Zealand. These figures do not include staff who have completed the self-directed on-line intranet training programme, Skillport. There were 808 Skillport training courses completed by Stats NZ employees over the past 10 months (since its introduction).

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Total Attendees
20	40	110	80	150	120	110	90	160	210	140	70	1,300

In terms of overseas training, 2 staff from Government and International Accounts have attended Balance of Payments training at the International Monetary Fund (funded by the IMF), and 5 GIA staff have attended Government Finance Statistics training at the Australian Bureau of Statistics in the past 3 years (funded by the ABS).

7. How many of those referred to in Question 6 are still currently working in your agency?

Given that all staff undergo some form of training during their employment at Statistics New Zealand, it is reasonable to assume that the organisation retention rate reflects the proportion of those referred to in Question 6 who are still currently working for Statistics New Zealand. The retention rate is defined as the percentage of employees who were

employed at the beginning of a period, and remain with the company at the end of the period. There were 647 core staff employed at Stats NZ in October 2004, of these, 396 are still employed with Stats NZ (October, 2007). This gives a retention rate of 61%. It is worth noting that employees who joined and subsequently left during this period are excluded from this estimate.

8. Does your agency have policies; procedures and work instructions that need to be implemented by the staff upon returning from training to assist in the implementation of your agency's goals and mandates?

Guidelines are provided for Statistics New Zealand managers to follow-up staff who have attended training to ensure that knowledge is applied to work and disseminated to others. Staff who attend conferences are required to submit trip reports, and typically present their findings to other Statistics New Zealand employees in the interest of knowledge-sharing. Staff are encouraged to use learning journals for later reflection. All training courses are evaluated by staff.