

8th Annual Meeting of the Global Network of Institutes for Statistical Training (GIST)

A closed Side Event at the United Nations Statistics Commission,
16 February 2023, 7:00 – 8:30 am (EST)



Global Network of Institutes
for Statistical Training (GIST)

Agenda

- **Opening speech by chair**
 - o Dr. Mitali Sen, US Census Bureau (Chair of GIST)
- **Brief overview of work in the last year**
 - o Ms. Vibeke O Nielsen, Inter-regional adviser, UN Statistics Division (GIST secretariat)
- **Q&A**
- **GIST community – how can NSO's promote Statistical Literacy?** (Plenary discussion)
- **Presentation of initial proposed plans for 2023** (Vibeke introduces)
- **Discussion on future directions of GIST** (Plenary discussion)
- **Closing**
 - o Elena Proden, Incoming Chair of GIST

Opening speech by chair

- o Dr. Mitali Sen, US Census Bureau (Chair of GIST)

Mitali welcomed everyone and opened the annual meeting stating that despite the fact that GIST in 2022 had struggled to get the attention of members due to them catching up on time lost during Covid-19, many achievements have been made.

Her full opening remarks are available as an annex to these minutes.

Mitali closed by informing GIST members that she is stepping down as Chair. However, the work of GIST will continue to benefit greatly through the valuable input of all the members and under the leadership of Elena Proden from UNITAR who will be the new Chair for 2023-2024.

Several GIST members thanked Mitali for her excellent work as Chair in the past 2 years.

A brief overview of work in the last year

- o Ms. Vibeke O Nielsen, Inter-regional adviser, UN Statistics Division (GIST secretariat)

Vibeke introduced the agenda for the meeting, introduced GIST achievements over the last year, and highlighted the homepage and background document (under 3A). Details can be found in the power point presentation shared, as well as in the background document.

Following the presentation, Italy asked whether the UN SDG:Learn platform has any built-in feedback mechanism to learn about the usefulness of the course. Elena Proden (UNITAR) informed that so far there is no feedback mechanism in place as people are directed to the platform of the owner of the

course, and it is thus expected that people will not return to the hub for evaluation of courses they have taken. There are however, some discussions about setting up an evaluation mechanism on the usefulness of the UNSDG:Learn platform.

Members were reminded of the concept note on different approaches to evaluation which GIST produced in 2021.

GIST community – how can NSO’s promote Statistical Literacy?

- o Facilitated by Ms. Bianca Walsh, IBGE Brazil (GIST task team co-lead)

Questions were addressed to the participants based on the work of the task team on statistical literacy:

1. What is statistical literacy? Why is it important? And who are we going to target?
2. Do NSOs consider it their responsibility to promote statistical literacy in the country?
3. If yes, what kind of support do NSOs need for improving statistical literacy?
4. How can GIST help NSO to promote statistical literacy?

Following this, examples on how different countries work with improving statistical literacy were presented. This was based on an earlier questionnaire to the countries who are members of the GIST Stakeholder Advisory Group (SAG).

In addition, the task team wanted additional feedback from the members on how GIST can contribute to the following needs but:

- Production of standard materials
- Expert assistance of developing statistical literacy programs
- Facilitating the sharing experience and best practices of different countries
- Rolling out a GIST training program on statistical literacy

Discussion:

- Morocco: NSOs increasingly need to use digital methods to talk with users. Statistical literacy can also be seen as a tool to increase the population’s interest in participating in surveys as they will better understand their role in contributing. HCP will use the upcoming 2024 population census to promote statistical literacy.
- Italy: Statistical literacy has to be part of the institutional capacity within the NSO. E.g. statistical literacy is part of the mission statement of Istat. Italy also shared info on their annual “Festival of Statistics” which e.g. includes games for young people.
- Norway: Statistical literacy should be an integrated part of an NSO’s communication strategy as it will identify which users the NSO is going to target in the coming years. We cannot target everyone at once. The inventory on examples of statistical literacy initiatives is very useful. Norway also shared information on their project for teachers, where teachers receive information on how they can use statistics in their education.
- UNECA: The understanding of the population on statistics (incl terms) is sometimes low, which can contribute to the credibility of statistics. It is crucial to train journalists in statistical terms as they sometime misunderstand concepts (e.g. the difference between unemployment and underemployment) and thus write articles that misinform the population. This issue creates problem for NSO’s credibility as the population cannot see themselves in the stories written by the journalists.

- UNITAR: It is important that statistical literacy materials produced by countries are shared with those who do not have the resources to develop new materials, Besides, there is also no need to reinvent the wheel.

The task team on statistical literacy will take the feedback forward in its work in 2023.

Presentation of initial proposed plans for 2023

- Facilitated by Ms. Vibeke O Nielsen (GIST secretariat)

Vibeke summarized the tentative workplans of the different task teams and the cross-cutting work managed by the GIST board. Work was summarized in discussions as follows:

Task Team: Addressing specific NSO needs

- Continue work on training gaps/needs assessment tool and related guidance
- Explore possibilities of piloting/testing the tool
- Discuss feasibility of other areas of work, taking into account guidance by the SAG (the Task Team is also open to ideas from other members)
- Translation of documents into other languages than only English

Task Team: Online gateway and e-learning

- Outreach activities to increase awareness and facilitate sharing of experience (series of webinars to share good practices around certification and practices for online courses; additional webinars to be organized on needs and interest – therefore please reach out to SIAP/FAO who lead this Task Team)
- More courses to be added to the UNSDG:Learn hub
- Curated list of courses specifically on SDG indicators to be made in collaboration with IAEG-SDG

Task Team: Statistical literacy

- Collect more practices from countries to upload on the statistical literacy inventory. GIST members are encouraged to add good examples to the GIST inventory.
- Continue work on a guidance note on statistical literacy for NSOs who do not have a program (to be produced either by collaboration of members or by a consultant)
- Continue work on the evaluation approach for statistical literacy initiatives
- Organize webinars to showcase statistical literacy work of GIST and countries

From SAG

- Program for trainers to develop qualified trainers at NSOs (from technical and pedagogical aspects)
- Training engineering skills at NSOs
- Establish more partnerships with GIST

Discussion on future directions of GIST

Areas where GIST needs more input:

- Language / translation: How do we increase the numbers of languages for GIST products? Currently, most materials are only available in English.

- Communications/fundraising: How do we do a better job on outreach (e.g. how to promote the two newsletters to be published in 2023; communicate around webinars at UNSC, UN WDF, IAOS, ISI, Blog contributions etc.)
- Sustainable training: Are we on the right track?

Input from members:

- Identify the languages that we want materials/tools to be translated to and then reach out to members and ask for help. Besides English - Arabic, French, Spanish are the priority languages
- We need to ensure that we have the permission of the owner of the course/material to translate the original production
- Start with the low hanging fruit: Translating courses are more difficult than translation of materials. GIST should therefore start with translating the materials that GIST has produced e.g. the training needs assessment tool and the statistical literacy initiatives. We need to identify what is most important to translate.
- Experience from other translation efforts: Use Google translate as a starting point and then have experts to finetune the language as it saves time. SIAP would also be happy to share how they go about translation of courses.
- Morocco/HCP happy to lead the new “language group” and is also working on initiating Arabic translation.
- The Colombian NSO is happy to support the translation to Spanish.
- GIST also needs to focus on “Training of trainers” so training can be done better and learning outcome increased.

Closing

Elena Proden from UNITAR is the new chair of GIST and is honored to have been appointed as Chair for 2023-2024.