

Status update



Global Network of Institutions
for Statistical Training (GIST)

12th June 2021

The GIST homepage provides general information on the Network, including its overall goals and objectives, current members and strategic action areas. Please visit the page here:

<https://unstats.un.org/gist/>

The work of GIST is currently carried out in three task teams:

- Online gateway and e-learning community of practice
- Statistical Literacy in the context of the 2030 Agenda
- Addressing specific NSO demands

In addition, GIST is currently focusing on increased outreach of its work so that more people can benefit from it.

Below an update on the work.

General update

Since the GIST Annual Meeting in March 2021, GIST has continued its work along the three task teams, but a few other streams of work have also had progress

Microlearning

Microlearning has been added as a functionality of the statistics pages of UN SDG:learn and can be found here: https://www.unsdglearn.org/microlearning/?_sfm_statistics=1 Microlearning is a mixture of materials of shorter duration such as videos of a few minutes, a quiz, a tool or similar that provides the key information on a concrete topic. At present, the microlearning pages do not have a large number of materials, but the GIST Secretariat will work actively with members and other key providers to add materials.

UNSD and UNITAR have also been working on the development of microlearning videos. The videos are targeted towards the general public in countries, providing input on what an NSO does and why it is important while at the same time including key aspects of official statistics. Once finalized, the videos can hopefully be a useful tool to promote official statistics production.

Big data update

During the board meeting, and the earlier SAG meeting, some GIST members specified needs for more training and guidance in the use of big data, or generally use of non-conventional data sources. The GIST

board has followed up on this and exchanged with the UNSD secretariat of the UN Committee of Experts on Big Data and Data Science for Official Statistics. The group has a team of experts that are currently working on training materials, including e-learning, on the use of various innovative data collection and processing approaches. Several of the GIST members are also contributing to the work of that group, so we will rather contribute to their ongoing work and help distribute materials once available.

Outreach

Following the guidance by the GIST board and annual meeting, the GIST secretariat has started work to reach out to a wider audience more actively. So far, there have been two webinars related to GIST. There was one in April that was linked to the webinar series of the Global Network of Data Officers and Statisticians on Yammer. In May, the World Data Forum webinar series asked the questions “What will be the new normal in statistical training” where three of four speakers are active GIST members and also highlighted some of GISTs work in their interventions. There will also be a live session as part of the ISI World Statistical Congress in July 2021.

The IAOS Statistical Journal will have a special feature on training in official statistics in September 2021 to which several GIST members contribute.

The GIST secretariat is also in the process of developing a communication strategy together with the GIST board and will also be reaching out to members for input. A first newsletter is planned for the Autumn of 2021.

Access to materials

The GIST secretariat is currently in the process of setting up a Wiki page where all materials will be made available to GIST members

Advisory group

GIST has tasked the formal chair of GIST, Ms. Helen MacGillivray, with creating a small advisory group teaching statistics, not just in training for official statistics, and the GIST Board proposes to set up a small advisory group linked to IASE (the International Association for Statistical Education) and ISLP (the International Statistical Literacy Project), to which GIST task teams or GIST members can ask for input as desired

Work of the task teams

1. Online gateway and e-learning community of practice

The task team has established a **statistics gateway** or hub for statistical training materials **on UN SDG:learn: www.unsdglearn.org/statistics**. It provides information on courses and training provided by different members of GIST and others and gives the link to where the course can be found. The hub was launched at the UN Statistical Commission in March 2020 and now has around 65 statistics courses available, mostly e-learning. More courses are in the process of being added, including from other actors, such as the DHS team. As specified above, the pages now also include microlearning materials.

Aim: to make it easier for users to find and explore statistical training materials and avoid duplication

In addition, the task team is focusing on **exchanging experiences across agencies on development of e-learning materials**. Recent focus has been on processes for peer feedback, course evaluation and participant's learning and benefit from the trainings which has led to a brief introductory guidance document which is available here: <https://unstats.un.org/gist/resources/documents/Evaluation-guidance-doc-GIST-AM.pdf>. The task team has also developed a template for external reviews of courses, in the format of movie or book reviews. The idea is that GIST members could use this to evaluate courses and place it for information on UN SDG:learn, with the consent of the course provider. That way, potential students get more input on what the course is about. The task team is currently considering how to further develop or expand on some of this work.

Aim: To facilitate knowledge and improvement of training materials through mutual experience exchange. Guidance materials are also expected to be made generally available.

2. Statistical Literacy in the context of the 2030 Agenda

The task team has developed an inventory of materials on statistical literacy relevant to official statistics. A template for initiatives in statistical literacy has been developed and trialed through drafts by task team members. At present it only has 7-10 examples, but the task team members will be reaching out to partners, including SAG countries to collect more good examples. The materials could be used by partners and by NSOs who want to reach out to users to help increase statistical literacy. The literacy materials are structured along a few categories. One key category is the main recipients of the statistical literacy materials: school children, students, media, decision makers or others. Other categories are type of guidance or learning materials, language etc. One example of such materials is the toolkit for schools that the US Census Bureau is providing to children and teachers in the US. Another example is the international poster competition of the International Statistical Literacy Project (ISLP), which has reached more than 50,000 school students across more than 30 countries. These have been used as templates for development of materials in other countries.

Aim: To make it easier to find statistical literacy materials

This task team was initiated in 2018 when GIST conducted a survey among policy makers on their overall statistical literacy level. The insights from the survey and from SAG members have led to the development of an e-learning course on statistical literacy led by UNITAR where UNSD and UNECA also provide input. Four of five modules are now available on UN SDG:learn [here](#).

Aim: To increase statistical literacy among important user groups

3. Addressing specific NSO demands

In 2019, the task team spent much time discussing how to best approach the work, looking at the earlier created inventory of courses, which can be found on the GIST homepage, and assessing results from the needs assessment a consultant carried out for GIST in 2018. Through these conversations it became clear that GIST could play a role in helping better coordinate statistical training activities. While there are areas where there are many actors and a risk of overlap in training provided (more supply than

demand), there are other areas where very few if any partners are providing support, although there is a clear need for it (more demand than supply).

Two areas were identified where there is a strong demand from NSOs and the NSS for more training and guidance and not sufficient support provided. One is linked to coordination of the National Statistical System and one is linked to NSO's managing, planning and implementing continuing professional development of their staff through sustainable national statistical training programmes. To get a better overview of the situation in these areas, and to help inform further action, three consultants were hired to interview a selected number of countries and partners and prepare reports.

The report on training for the NSS provides an overview of how the NSOs engage with members in the NSS in eight countries. Based on this and other findings, a proposal is made for what to focus training information on when engaging with members of the NSS. It is further proposed to develop NSS training materials at global level. The report is available here:

<https://unstats.un.org/gist/resources/documents/Report-training-NSS-coordination-Final.pdf>

The initial report on sustainable statistical training programs at national level shows that there is much variation in how training is provided in the countries that are covered by the study. Some countries have entirely external training institutes, other have internal units while others again only have a few dedicated staff. There are also countries where there is no staff working on training at all. Further, the approaches to how training needs are assessed and trainings provided also differs from comprehensive assessment systems and training plans to more ad hoc approaches. The report can be accessed here:

<https://unstats.un.org/gist/resources/documents/Sustainable-statistical-training-programs-at-NSOs.pdf>

Based on these and other findings, the report proposes four areas of follow up:

- A repository of training material and tools that can be used as a global common good
- An overview of a standard set of training courses to potentially cover in a training programme.
- Development of a set of recommendations for training
- Strengthening and clarifying the role of regional and international organizations in building training programs at the country level

GIST already is progressing on the first item with the establishment of UN SDG:learn/statistics. The consultants were asked to initiate the work on the second and third point. This was initiated through online workshops with a number of participants and resulted in three documents. A draft suggested standard set of training courses, a proposal for how to establish and maintain national statistical training programs and a proposal around e-learning. These documents have not yet been published as the task team first needs to agree on this, but are made available as needed.

Aim: Improve coordination of statistical training provided and help fill clear gaps in training. The ultimate outcome would be better functioning NSOs and NSS and a more relevant skillset of its employees.