Stakeholder Advisory Group Meeting of the Global Network of Institutes for Statistical Training (GIST)

19 April 2023, 7:00 – 8:30 am (EST)

Agenda
- **Opening and GIST Achievements in 2022**
  - Dr. Elena Proden, UNITAR (Chair of GIST)
- **Discussion on translation of learning materials**
  - Mitali Sen, US Census Bureau and TT1 Co-lead
- **Discussion on work of Task Team 1: Sustainable statistical training**
  - Dag Roll Hansen, Statistics Norway and TT1 Co-lead
- **Discussion on work of Task Team 2: E-learning gateway and community of practice**
  - Sophie Ditlecadet, FAO and TT2 Co-lead
- **Discussion on work of Task Team 3: Statistical literacy**
  - Bianca Walsch, IBGE and TT3 Co-lead
- **Discussion of future role and involvement of SAG in GIST work**
  - Ms. Vibeke O Nielsen, Inter-regional adviser, UN Statistics Division (GIST secretariat)
- **Closing**

Opening speech by chair

Elena opened the meeting by briefly explaining the history and mission of the GIST as well as how the network operates in practical terms. GIST was set up to promote sustainable statistical capacities at the national level by enabling its members to collaborate in effective, efficient and harmonized delivery of statistical training.

GIST meets annually with all membership and works through the year through task teams. In the absence of dedicated funding, the focus of collaboration is mostly on developing joint recommendations, guidance materials and inventories/gateways although some partners could identify opportunities for collaboration on developing more specific learning products or inventories or could bring in in-kind contributions to support specific outputs. The GIST Board is composed of leads and co-leads of the task teams and meets regularly to discuss common issues, such as communications, for example, and share updates with each other. Finally, as the GIST is mostly composed of training providers globally and regionally, a SAG was created to help obtain feedback and guidance from NSOs as the main beneficiaries of GIST's work on their priority needs and how GIST could help address them.

The Report of the 54th session of UN Statistical Commission referred to GIST under item 54/113 e) that "Supported the proposal for an in-depth analysis of targeted statistical capacity development programmes, underlying methodologies, coordination and modes of delivery of capacity development activities, including hybrid modalities and dissemination of materials in all official UN languages, and to develop a set of recommendations in collaboration with relevant partners, such as those which are part

of the Global Network of Institutions for Statistical Training (GIST)" [Report-on-the-54th-session-draft-E.pdf (un.org)](Report-on-the-54th-session-draft-E.pdf)

Key achievements for 2023 were presented in the [GIST background document](#) prepared for the 54th session. They include:
- Increased membership
- Assessment of training needs
- Collaboration with IAEG-SDGs and increase of courses on UN SDG:Learn
- Guidance on effective and remote learning and certification of programs
- Guidance on statistical literacy initiatives
- Communication and outreach, among others through newsletter
- **Newsletter** available
- GIST related **webinars and sessions** including a side-event at the HLPF, side event during UN Statistical Commission in March 2023

GIST was organizing two sessions during the UN World Data Forum in Hangzhou on 26 April, 10:45-11:30:
- In-person session "*LEARN318 Learning and teaching official statistics with the help of UNSDG:Learn*"
- Online session *"TA4.31 Sector-Specific Approaches to Addressing the International Development Data Skills Gap"*

Discussion on translation of learning materials

Guiding questions:
1. *Which materials would be a priority for you for translation/where do you see the biggest gaps?*
2. *How would you see that your agency could contribute to translation of materials?*

Mitali explained that several GIST members expressed an interest in translating materials related to GIST or that of its members as an in-kind contribution to make it useful to their staff and other countries. Mitali invited SAG members to comment on what materials should be translated as a priority and how SAG members could help.

Morocco noted that most materials are in English and that their translation into French as a first step and into Arabic as a second could help increase the impact. He noted that Morocco could help with translations and the documents could be reports, guidelines, etc. to be defined with producers. Priority topics could be SEEA, use of R and Pyton.

Mexico reiterated their readiness to contribute to translations into Spanish. Similarly, Dominican Republic expressed their willingness to help translate a part of material into Spanish but also inquired whether GIST could approach IADB to seek help on that.

UN SIAP said that they would be happy to share their course materials, if any GIST SAG members are interested in translating those courses.

A common concern was related to ensuring high quality of translation if AI is used for the first drafts and how to validate this. It seemed also that guidance documents could be an easy way to kick of work, however, more discussions will be required on the translation of e-learning, for example, where beyond the translation there are other aspects involved, such as the implementation of the translated content in the software, adding of sub-titles and the administration where both the translating agency and learning provider need to be involved.

The discussion concluded with the announcement that GIST Secretariat will send a follow-up email to those who volunteered already and other GIST members to see who would like to join the new language group to organize the work. This group could help work out specific modalities for collaboration.

Discussion on work of Task Team 1: Sustainable statistical training

Guiding questions:
1. *Sustainability is only possible when countries prioritize and take ownership. What are the barriers countries (NSO and NSS) encounter to prioritize training and taking ownership of a training program?*
2. *How can GIST or other institutions help address some of those barriers?*

Dag provided a summary of achievements of TT1 including continued work on **sustainable statistical training programs at national level, by focusing on the** development of the gap assessment of training needs through questionnaires to individual staff, managers, and staff in agencies that are part of the NSS. The TT also developed a guidance document on how to prioritize training needs identified, and with an overview of options for how to fill training gaps. It has initiated a discussion with countries on pilot work that will continue in 2023.

Following this, SAG members were invited to react to the two discussion questions. A common barrier mentioned by many is a lack of time. Even when NSO member attend training they may be simultaneously multi-tasking decreasing the overall effectiveness and usefulness of the learning service. Another common problem is the lack of budget for training to help mobilize external experts. One example was that even when there are very good in-house specialists on the subject manner, they may lack pedagogical skills to run the training. Dag pointed out specifically to the usefulness of a training on pedagogy for their staff. In terms of other training needs mentioned by SAG members were maintenance of administrative registrers, and on new topics. Having guidance on standard curricular would be also useful. It was also pointed out that the delivery mode is important. For example, it would be really helpful to have access to self-paced virtual trainings that can be accessed at any time and on topics that are not so clear.

One example of how to incentivize training was mentioned was making promotion conditional on training. Training is part of performance appraisals.

Some countries face a high turn-over of staff, with no training available nationally. In Maldives, for examples, there are no degrees in statistics offered by Universities due to a low attractiveness of this discipline compared to business administration, etc. Training more widely than NSO is therefore needed.

TT1 is currently in the process of piloting the training needs assessment template in cooperation with interested NSOs. We are looking forward to work with the NSOs to ensure that the tool can be easy to use and provide useful information.

Finally, it was pointed out that ToT could be a good solution and that it was important to have practical exercises that could be done using country level data in the training.

Discussion on work of Task Team 2: E-learning gateway and community of practice

Guiding questions:
1. *How is the UN: SDG Learn platform being used in your office, and what suggestions do you have for making it more user friendly?*
2. *Besides e-learning approaches, are there any other topics you would like the task team to focus on?*

Sophie briefly presented key achievements of GIST in this area, including:

- UN SDG:learn statistics: statistics.unsdglearn.org, with over 140 courses and microlearnings available, collaboration with IAEG-SDGs that ahs designed the gateway as the main go-to place for learning on SDG indicators, and new features/adjustments to the interface to better promote community pages such as the on dedicated to statistics.

- An **exchange of experiences and reports** on
  - Assessment and potential template for certification of courses;
  - Approaches and recommendations on effective online training.

Morocco noted that they were using unsdglearn.org platform to help their staff formulate their learning pathways by drawing on learning available from different providers. Philippines suggested that they were interested in training on experimental design.

One recommendation for the gateway was to make it easier to search for courses by dates and months when it comes to non-self-paced programs.

Discussion on work of Task Team 3: Statistical literacy

Guiding questions:
- *Considering the actions below, inspired by the suggestions made in the 2023 Annual Meeting, which ones would you like GIST to contribute to?*
  - *Production of sample materials as an approach for a statistical literacy training program*
  - *Expert assistance to develop a training program (e.g. running a pilot with an interested country)*
  - *Sharing of experiences and best practices from different countries and NSO regarding Stat Literacy initiatives*
  - *Elaboration of statistical literacy curricula (considering different audiences)*
  - *Developing an indicator for evaluating Stat Literacy initiatives*
- *Which target audience should be prioritized in GIST's plans and actions?*

- *media professionals*
- *general society*
- *policy makers*
- *school children*
- *tertiary education students*
- *NSOs staff*

Bianca made a brief presentation on the work of the TT 3, including the engagement with International Statistical Literacy Program and on the template for adding materials, to expand the **inventory of initiatives in statistical literacy relevant to official statistics:** https://unstats.un.org/gist/statistical-literacy/, as well as the development of the concept note for a guidance document for NSOs on statistical literacy.

In the subsequent discussion, the following recommendations have been made by SAG members. Morocco pointed out that guidance on the statistical literacy curriculum would be very helpful. Mexico noted the need for statistical literacy materials to address the needs of media representatives but also school children. Others indicated policy-makers and general audience as the ones they need to target, in particular, on helping people understand better economic indicators. One suggestion was to develop animations for laymen on CPI, inflation and GDP.

Discussion of future role and involvement of SAG in GIST work
Guiding questions:
1. *Would you like to be more involved in the work of GIST? If yes, what would be your preferred area of involvement?*

Further to a brief reminder by Vibeke on the objectives of the SAG, she explained that there was an interest for some SAG members to get involved more directly into the activities of GIST Task Teams. She invited all present to express their interest mentioning specific TTs.

Maldives wanted to join TT1, Dominican Republic and Mexico mentioned TT1 and TT2, while Morocco picked TT2.

Closing
Elena Proden announced that a follow-up communication will be sent with a summary of this meeting, SAG members will be invited to TT meetings they picked and an invitation email will be circulated by Vibeke regarding the set-up on a language group. GIST will organize another SAG meeting in the second half of the year.