

# GIST stakeholder advisory group meeting

8<sup>th</sup> September 2020

## Participants:

GIST Stakeholder Advisory Group (SAG): Aberash Tariku (Ethiopia), Marina Gandolfo (Italy), Akira Tsumura, Keiko Maruyama, Ayano Yoshinaga, Satoko Kouga (Japan), Amal Jabr, Mustafa Khawaja (State of Palestine), Eric Manuel Rodrigues Herrera (Mexico), Josefina Almeda (Philippines) Samuel Annim (Ghana)

GIST board: Helen McGillivray (GIST chair), Ashish Kumar (GIST task team lead, SIAP), Elena Proden (GIST task team lead, UNITAR), Mitali Sen (GIST task team lead, US Census Bureau), Francesca Perucci and Vibeke O Nielsen (GIST secretariat, UNSD)

## Agenda

1. Welcome and introductions
2. Reintroduce GIST and its work followed by a brief Q&A
3. Specify role of SAG followed by a brief Q&A
4. Feedback from SAG members
5. Any other business (AOB)

## Discussion

1. Welcome and introductions

Vibeke O Nielsen and Francesca Perucci (GIST secretariat) welcomed everyone briefly to the meeting followed by Helen MacGillivray (GIST chair). Helen highlighted the Terms of Reference for GIST and its overall areas of work and added that a main achievement, in addition to the concrete outputs as would be highlighted by Vibeke, was that GIST has developed into a community sharing good practices and experiences.

The rest of the GIST board then briefly introduced themselves and highlighted a couple of additional elements.

Following this, all members of the SAG present at the meeting also briefly introduced themselves.

2. Reintroduce GIST and its work followed by a brief Q&A

Vibeke gave a short introduction of GIST (see power point presentation which is shared along with this document or the word document shared ahead of the meeting). Among others, she spoke about:

- The GIST homepage: <https://unstats.un.org/gist/>
- The work of the three task teams
  - o Task team on online gateway and e-community of practice.
  - o Task team on statistical literacy

- Task team addressing NSO needs

The GIST chair and the task team leaders added a few points linked to the work they have been involved in.

Ms. Marina Gandolfo (Italy) then highlighted that the proposed work to share information, and potentially develop guidance materials, on evaluation of courses would be very useful, particularly to better understand and monitor the quality of the courses available. She also said it would be useful in the context of overall evaluation of the effect of capacity development. She suggested that the materials would be made available publicly.

### 3. Specify role of SAG followed by a brief Q&A

Vibeke provided an overview of current GIST SAG members and what the expected contributions of SAG members would be. The SAG members present had no further comments to this and mostly welcomed to be involved.

Following this, Mitali Sen (US Census Bureau) provided some more details on the plans to develop materials and guidance on sustainable in-house training systems at NSOs and on NSS coordination. Marina responded to this and agreed that both areas of work would be important. On NSS coordination, she acknowledged the challenges many NSOs are facing with NSS coordination and highlighted that an important reference to make would be to the Cape Town Global Action Plan which specifically refers to this. She also highlighted that an important first step for NSS coordination would be assessment of the current stakeholders, who produces and publishes which data.

Marina also suggested that the inventory of courses on the GIST homepage was given further tags with keywords to further identify courses. The courses on the statistics pages of UN SDG:Learn do have keywords. The 2018 GIST inventory was a one-time activity meant to provide a better understanding of the situation and will not be repeated. The aim is that all trainings that are repeated will be shown on UN SDG:learn over time.

### 4. Feedback from SAG members

The GIST secretariat had prepared a few targeted questions for the SAG members and these were briefly presented. A round table followed, in which SAG representatives also commented on their training needs in general, not all of which GIST has within its mandate to cover.

Ms. Aberash Tariku (Ethiopia):

- *Online gateway*: the page is very useful from a user perspective, but there is a need to expand with more courses, and potentially also with other types of training materials/documents. Areas she highlighted in particular were rebasing CPI/updating basket of goods, inflation, poverty measurement (particularly linked to COVID-19), business statistics data collection, agricultural statistics in a developing context and overall need for methodological documents on small-area/sub-national level.
- She also would find an *inventory of statistical literacy* initiatives relevant to official statistics useful, but not enough. One thing she specified in this regard was the need for increased outreach so that users become aware of documents, and the documents should be practical and

useable. She specified that communication strategy guidelines would also be important in this context.

- She further specified that *NSS coordination* is an area where they are lacking capacity and that they would appreciate guidance on methods and approaches to take, for instance on creating sustainable coordination structures, how to make coordination system more practical, legal framework and relation to coordination.
- On the proposed work on *sustainable in-house training* she highlighted the need for incentives/mechanisms for those providing trainings. She also suggested to provide suggestions for regulations so that NSOs can provide trainings. Standard training documents would be useful, for instance how to check quality of documents that are provided. For the in-house training she further suggested to carry out a comprehensive needs assessment and how to develop more comprehensive curriculum design. There would also be a need for guidance or training of trainers.
- A key challenge linked to *COVID-19* was how to conduct face-to-face survey with the presence of COVID and alternative approaches to carry out the surveys when face-to-face is not possible.

Dr. Samuel Annim (Ghana):

- He appreciated the work with UN SDG:learn and suggested to develop it further. One specific input was to add more materials/trainings linked to particular SDG targets and indicators.
- He highlighted specific training needs linked to use of geospatial and also linked to small area estimation
- Discussions on coaching and retraining – outcome/functional capacity
- He very much agreed that it was important to improve staff capacity and said that it is important to have a discussion how to model coaching/training. Contributions from GIST in this regard would be welcome.
- He further suggested that one could consider accreditation of statisticians within NSO system. It could be something countries could begin to think about, and also here input from GIST could be useful.

Mr. Akira Tsumura (Japan):

- It would be helpful with an overview of statistical literacy initiatives relevant to official statistics as it is hard to find the right materials. He is looking forward to it being made available, populated and updated.
- They assumed that there would be more e-learnings on COVID-19 upcoming, including self-paced courses. It was suggested that GIST might be able to coordinate between providers and potential participants.

Japan also provided the following additional input per email right after the call:

- They would like to see on UN SDG learn platform a kind of guidance to choose courses. There will be a need to provide more segmented courses with interactive dialogue between lecturers and participants.
- Regarding trainings on soft skills, Japan also benefits from trainings provided by SIAP for which Japan is the host country, and they see that there is a strong need for this, particularly on training of communication skills

- They think guidance and tools for establishing sustainable in-house training programs would be useful also in the Japanese context even if they already have a system in place
- Overall they expressed a hope that GIST might be able to cooperate to coordinate communication between lecturers and participants for interactive courses.

Mr. Eric Rodriguez (Mexico):

- The current COVID-19 situation creates challenge with standard data collection, particularly face to face surveys. They see the use of administrative registers as a very useful tool to improve the statistical system, but also something that they need to improve. It would be useful with more guidance on this.
- They would also appreciate input/guidance in how to change the design in surveys, linked to the move from face-to-face approaches to phone/internet-based surveys.

Ms. Amal Jabr (State of Palestine):

- Specified a need for more e-learning materials in the current situation, but also that there is a need to take into consideration that not all training can be provided remotely, such as some IT trainings. She also suggested to include a training on how to provide remote learning, for instance which platforms/approaches/tools are most useful when doing online workshops and meetings.
- The Statistical literacy initiatives inventory would be very useful. Good practices from other countries would be helpful and something they would want to benefit from this.
- Input on how to improve NSS coordination would also be welcome. In Palestine they have been working with the NSS for a number of years and they would appreciate input on the best way to assess capacity and needs of the NSS entities. They have used a variety of methods, sometimes surveys, other times evaluations. Linked to this, they have looked for their needs and how to assist/address their needs.
- Providing trainings in soft skills is not a challenge to them, they have many national in-house institutions to provide such trainings. They would, however, like to see a guidance for sustainable in-house training program, also from other countries. While they have systems in place, they would find it beneficial to learn from other countries experience.
- On types of trainings, they would like to see courses on data science/artificial intelligence/big data/open data etc.
- Overall on COVID-19 they would be interested in guidance on new data collection approaches. They used telephone surveys, but were not very successful. A key aspect they would like to be covered in this context would be on data quality, and how this links to the new situation.

Mustafa Khawaja (State of Palestine) added:

- There is a need to focus more on the use of administrative data for statistical purposes. He suggested to create a special task team on this topic in addition to the other three ones.
- They have an inventory to map NSS actors needs, tried over last 10 years in PCBS, to survey/serve the needs of NSS members including training activities. One of the issues is the lack of ownership of the needs and the lack of commitment among agencies in taking part in activities.

- This becomes particularly challenging linked to the overall commitment to fulfil data for SDGs, especially in the context of the pandemic when they would need to rely on the admin data. It becomes a triangle challenge for the NSOs (need for data from NSS members – want to provide guidance and input – lack of ownership and no sufficient data sharing)

Dr. Josefine Almeda (Philippines):

- Would like to see more training materials (methodology) for tier 2 and 3 indicators of the SDGs as they still do not have all necessary methods to measure those.
- Linked to earlier comments on the use of administrative data, she would also like to have trainings on different sources of data, including administrative data. In this connection, she also highlighted that she would like to see more awareness raising around the fact that it is not always necessary to have most recent data, and that one therefore does not always need a survey. Some politicians have the notion that they need most updated data for policies.
- She also said that template materials on course development would be useful. They have templates of their own but would welcome input/new ideas.
- An inventory on statistical literacy initiatives relevant to official statistics would also be useful. The more the better.
- She particularly highlighted overall needs for development of e-learning courses on:
  - o Data management – how to manage data after a survey (missing observation, imputation techniques, non-response – doesn't see trainings being done on that matter)
  - o Experimental design – for instance linked to agriculture (farming, fishing, crops)
  - o Multivariate techniques and sampling techniques.
  - o Questionnaire design – will questionnaire give reliable results whether it is accurate? For household surveys, are there methodologies that will help us say that it will give us reliable results?
- Soft skills is not a challenge – there is openness on this and they provide trainings on management, communication, writing skills and alike.
- She also agreed to participate as a pilot country for testing training materials, training needs assessment etc.

### Summary:

Helen and Vibeke summarized the meeting with the following main points:

- The work GIST is currently doing is useful, but there are also additional needs
- The needs specified for specific courses/e-learning are overall not something that will be covered directly by GIST as it is more a job of member entities, but GIST can share with members what the needs are to help fill the gap. If they already have filled the gap, GIST can help share the information
- On administrative data, Vibeke suggested to link the Collaborative on administrative data and GIST more closely together to jointly cover training needs in this area.

SAG members were encouraged not to hesitate to provide further input, either on questions posed or on anything else. They were also encouraged to promote the work of GIST to others to make it and its work more known. Input on how to reach out more widely would also be welcome

The GIST board would reach out to SAG members as specified either if they would be needed as pilot and/or for assessing materials that GIST is developing. GIST may also consider reaching out to other countries that could provide relevant examples.

5. Any other business (AOB)

Nothing was raised here.