

Global Network of Institutions for Statistical Training (GIST)

Minutes from Second Annual Meeting

8:15 am - 9:30 am; Wednesday, March 4th, 2020

United Nations, New York

Notes

1. Participants

The meeting was a combination of a physical meeting in New York and a call-in option for those who could not attend in person.

Present in person:

- GIST members: AITRS, Norway, Paris21, SESRIC, UNITAR, UNSIAP, WB, UNSD (secretariat)
- GIST advisory group: Japan, Morocco, Philippines, State of Palestine,

Joined remotely:

- GIST members: Helen MacGillivray (GIST chair), Brazil (IGBE), China, FAO, IDEP, ILO

2. Welcome and overall update

UNSD (GIST secretariat) welcomed the participants and there was a short round of introductions. Following this, UNSD introduced agenda including presenting the work of the three task teams and showcasing the online gateway.

The Chair, Ms. Helen Gillivray, welcomed the participants and highlighted the growing membership and participation in the network. She further provided an overview of the work of GIST starting with the nine initial action areas which evolved into the ten current strategic action areas with the extra action area of building community of practice through sharing experiences and best practices. The Chair also noted the inherent challenges of GIST as a network with each member organization operating under their own mandates, experiences and limits. Taking account into this challenge and the extensive wish list, the network originally set up task forces as a way of working. The Chair remarked that one of the main tasks of the network was to build a practical roadmap for 2019 and beyond. She noted that one of the necessities has been the online gateway, which was also part of initial inventory/wish list. The online gateway will facilitate the collaboration within the community.

3. Update on task teams

GIST members have worked in three different task teams in the last year:

1. Addressing NSO needs (summarized by Kieran Walsh, ILO, temporary lead)
2. Online gateway and e-learning community of practice (summarized by task team leader Ashish Kumar, UNSIAP)
3. Statistical literacy (summarized by task team leader, Elena Proden, UNITAR)

Key points of the work of each task team can also be found in the summary provided to members ahead of the meeting.

Task team on addressing NSO needs

To get a better understanding of gaps in statistics training, the team looked at both the demand and supply sides to see where training is needed and where training is at.

- On the supply-side, it used the inventory established in 2018 to see if it could be structured along common frameworks such as the SDGs or GSBPM. The team conducted this supply-side review through an assessment of 20 random courses of the inventory. This approach was challenging because the course inventory overall does not provide information and details for easy classification. Also, some of the trainings cross cutting such as those that might be relevant to all SDG indicators. Others cut across all statistical activities. In conclusion the supply-side assessment did not yield enough details to effectively find gaps. The task team also noted that once the online gateway is populated, it might be feasible to conduct a systematic review of existing courses. The forthcoming UNSD calendar of events could also be useful for the same purposes.
- On the demand side assessment, the task team did not want to burden people with surveys and instead used the information from a review of nine GIST member countries conducted by a consultant for GIST in 2018. One common message was the request for better coordination across agencies that provide training. Another-review done by FAO on NSO training needs also showed clear gaps and therefore needs for training on statistical coordination.

Next the task team looked at cases studies on how coordination can work in statistical training. Currently there are challenges both with gaps emerging where there are no international agencies with the specific mandate and, on the other hand, that cross cutting work often lacks a single agency with a mandate. Positive examples include the World Bank coordinating CRVS training and UN Women coordinating gender statistics training. The task team will continue working on the challenges. Potential suggestions could give coordination responsibilities to regional training centres to avoid overlaps where many are active and to build a coalition of agencies to coordinate input/materials and deliver training on specific, identified gaps.

Task team on the online gateway

The task team introduced the online gateway for statistical training www.unsdglearn.org/statistics which was launched at the Statistical Commission two days earlier. The gateway was designed to bring

together all available learning material to benefit not only the users but also the trainers to help the community in building collective knowledge and improving collaboration.

During development of the statistics gateway, the task team discussed various aspects of the gateway including what content should be included, how to assess quality of the contents, taxonomy/classification, governance (UNSD should take lead) and administration (who is uploading, who is validating and etc.), and accessibility and visibility. In February 2020, the members of GIST started uploading courses and materials.

The task team also noted that outreach, including during the 51st Statistical Commission, is key to ensuring that the gateway is visible and populated. The task team thanked the UNITAR and UNSD teams for their efforts on the online gateway and laid out future areas of work for 2020 including the work on the e-community of practices.

The task team presented the gateway including the current outline and several functionalities.

Task team on statistical literacy

The task team presented main deliverables including the survey of decision makers, particularly SDG coordinators, on the demands for data literacy and the World Data Forum (WDF) webinar on statistical literacy which was well attended. The webinar included shared experiences from the US Census Bureau, Philippines Statistical Research and Training Institute (PSRTI) and Paris 21. Overall, the task team reported greater collaboration among GIST members on developing training materials. One example being a UNITAR course to address stat literacy among decision makers which both ECA and UNSD contributed to.

For the development of further material and work, the team re-assessed some parameters including the main target audience (NSS vs. broader national stakeholders) and stock taking of current materials and good practices on statistical literacy. The task team noted that it seeks further guidance from GIST members on these issues.

4. Q&A

On the online gateway, members of GIST asked information on how courses/materials are reviewed, classified and uploaded; suggested peer-to-peer assessments on the courses; explored the issue of coherence in the recommendations and messages; recommended to examine the Indian National Skills Qualifications Framework for mapping courses (i.e. survey enumeration); and requested information on how the success of the gateway will be measured (e.g. downloads, views) as well as feedback mechanism.

The task team on the online gateway noted that the above-mentioned issues will be address in this current year. Particularly on review, the task team suggested a review process (e.g. book or movie review) aimed at providing more information on the courses so that the users can decide rather than an evaluation. Also, the task team noted that getting more courses on the gateway will allow for better comparison and peer review. On peer review, the task team proposed to create a subgroup of the team which will conduct peer reviews with the aim to summarize and not criticize courses. On exploring the

Skills Qualification Framework, the task team noted that it will look into this possibility. On the user engagement, the task team noted that data analytics will be used to assess outreach and usage. On feedback, the task team noted that this could be a more sensitive issue, particularly relating to individual courses. The team suggested to brainstorm ideas on feedback and evaluation mechanisms including a user questionnaire.

Related to online gateway, UNSD noted that it is compiling a calendar of events. PSRTI summarize their capacity building efforts.

On addressing NSO need, members of GIST noted that NSO needs vary widely and proposed to work with pilot countries and analyzing their needs in depth before scaling up. GIST members also noted that the training should be needs-based and it is important to incorporate own data in the workshops.

On coordination among agencies, GIST members noted that the materials in different languages is a significant challenge that requires a coordinated effort including translations. GIST members also highlighted the need to develop and share a roster of experts.

On future work, the Chair underscored that several important issues such as enhancing the capacity for SDG indicators in Africa and data quality in SDG indicators. The Chair also proposed the task team leaders to address the questions and suggestions raised in this meeting.