

# GIST Board Meeting Minutes, 1<sup>st</sup> meeting of 2026

**Date:** 13 January 2026

**Time:** 9:00am – 10:00am

**Location:** Virtual (Microsoft Teams)

## Participants

- **Bianca Walsh:** IBGE Brazil (Incoming GIST Chair and outgoing Co-lead, Task team 3)
- **Tawheeda Wahabzada:** Open Data Watch (Co-lead, Task Team 1)
- **Dag Roll-Hansen:** Statistics Norway (Co-lead, Task Team 2)
- **Elizabeth Baffoe-Bonnie:** Statistics Ghana (Co-lead, Task Team 2)
- **Pedro Campos:** Statistics Portugal / ISLP (Co-lead, Task Team 3)
- **Ziad Abdallah:** AITRS (Lead, Translation Task Team)
- **Dorota Rozmus:** Statistics Poland (Lead, proposed Big Data & Data Science Task Team)
- **Amr Nour:** Chief of Data Innovation and Capacity Branch, UNSD
- **Alexander Loschky:** UNSD, GIST Secretariat
- **Gabriel Gamez:** UNSD, GIST Secretariat
- **Clarence Lio:** UNSD, GIST Secretariat
- **Francesca Perucci:** Open Data Watch

## Action Points:

- **All Task Team leads:** Reviewing their respective GIST Wiki pages. **Proposed deadline: Friday, 30 January.** (Updates must be finalized in timely manner before the Statistical Commission to ensure the public website reflects current work plans and membership.)
- **All Task Team leads:** Invite the **incoming GIST Chair Bianca Walsh** to all Task Team (planning) meetings.
- **All Task Team leads:** Propose agenda items for the annual Full Meeting of GIST to the GIST Secretariat and the incoming GIST Chair. **Deadline: Wednesday, 11 February.**
- **Dorota Rozmus:** Submit a brief bulleted list of objectives for the Big Data and Data Science task team to the GIST Secretariat to facilitate discussions with the UNCEBD.
- **Gabriel Gamez:** Facilitate an introduction between Task Team 3 and **ESCAP SIAP** (Tokyo) to bolster the literacy inventory in Asia-Pacific.
- **GIST Secretariat:** Send out the calendar invite for the full GIST meeting on 19 February.

## 1. Opening Remarks & Institutional Context

**Amr Nour** opened the meeting by introducing himself in his new capacity as Chief of the Data Innovation and Capacity Branch. He provided a briefing on the current UN fiscal climate:

- **Resource Constraints:** The UN is facing significant financial pressure resulting in the formal abolition of several positions within the Data Innovation and Capacity Branch of UNSD.
- **Strategic Direction:** GIST is viewed as a vital "system-wide effort" to optimize capacity development. Amr highlighted the upcoming report to the UN Statistical Commission<sup>1</sup> and the accompanying background documents, which aim to refocus efforts based on specific "service lines" to ensure better coordination with Member States.
- **Network Importance:** Given limited human and financial resources, Amr emphasized that GIST must leverage the comparative advantages of its members to remain effective.

## 2. Secretariat Report

**Alexander Loschky (UNSD)** reported on administrative updates and major projects:

- **Leadership Transition:** Elena Proden has transitioned from UNITAR to a new role in the Resident Coordinator Office for Seychelles and Mauritius; she is no longer involved with GIST. **Bianca Walsh (IBGE Brazil)** was proposed as the new Chair. Her appointment will be formalized during the full GIST meeting in February.
- **Website & Wiki Refresh:** All Task Team leads are tasked with reviewing their respective GIST Wiki pages. Wiki updates must be finalized well before the Statistical Commission to ensure the public website reflects current work plans and membership. A release candidate of the updated website is planned to be presented at the full GIST meeting in February. Therefore, **we propose that all necessary changes to the GIST wiki should be done by Friday, 30 January.**
- **RPTC Project Approval:** A major project under the Regular Programme for Technical Cooperation (RPTC) is pending final approval. It includes:
  - **STAT Tool Technical Upgrade:** Making the tool "language agnostic" to allow easier translation and ensuring the software is robust enough to handle survey changes without breaking. A consultant will be hired to enhance and update STAT.
  - **Country Pilots:** Implementing the upgraded tool in **Viet Nam** (initial English-run followed by Vietnamese) and either a Spanish-speaking (**Latin America, several countries** have expressed interest) or French-speaking (e.g. **Djibouti**) country.
  - **Handbook Update:** Updating **Chapter 13 (Human Resources)** of the *Handbook on Management and Organization of National Statistical Systems*. **Gabriel** noted that a consultant will be hired as a "pen holder" for this collective endeavor, ensuring it aligns

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<sup>1</sup> Report of the Secretary-General on Statistical Capacity Development (E/CN.3/2026/16), and the accompanying background document(s). ([unedited draft](#) of the SG Report)

with modern Human resource Management standards, but he underlined that the whole GIST will be involved in the update under the lead of Task Team 2 and the GIST Secretariat.

### 3. Task Team Updates

#### Task Team 1: Addressing specific NSO demands

- **Namibia Workshop:** Conducted in Nov 2025. The NSO plans to launch the staff survey in April 2026, with a goal of producing a multi-year training plan by September 2026.
- **Regional Expansion:** Actively seeking collaboration with **INEGI Mexico** to spearhead expansion in Latin America.
- **STAT Promotion:** Plans to promote STAT via webinars and via collaborations with other networks like e.g. the Gender Data Network (focusing on incorporating a "gender lens" into training assessments).
- **Co-leadership:** A vacancy exists for the TT co-lead following the withdrawal of **DANE Colombia** due to internal institutional priority shifts.

#### Task Team 2: Learning culture and sharing of knowledge

- **Experience Sharing:** Held five meetings in 2025 featuring presentations from the **NSOs of India, Ghana, Maldives, Kenya, and Namibia** and a workshop on learning culture
- **Indicator Development:** Under the lead of Haleema Saeed (**PCBS State of Palestine**) the TT is developing a framework for measuring "learning culture". The TT is currently analyzing data from **Morocco** to inform the development of this indicator framework and to test how the indicators can be visualized in the Power BI module of STAT to compare progress across different parts of the NSO.
- **Handbook Contribution:** The team is specifically focused on adding sections to the Handbook regarding "culture for sharing," which was previously absent. The TT is also coordinating together with the GIST Secretariat the contributions of the various GIST Task Team to the update of the Handbook Chapter 13 - Human Resources Management and Development<sup>2</sup>.

#### Task Team 3: Statistical Literacy in the context of the 2030 Agenda

- **"Grow" Webinars:** Two sessions were completed in 2025 (Citizen Data and Algorithm Literacy). It was also suggested to hold in 2026 a webinar specifically on the STAT tool to reach international coordinators.
- **Literacy Inventory:** New entries were received from **Belgium, Norway, and one African nation**. It was emphasized that the inventory needs to be more "alive" and consistently populated.

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<sup>2</sup> [Chapter 13 on Human Resources Management and Development](#) of the [Handbook on Management and Organization of National Statistical Systems](#).

- **Youth Engagement:** The TT proposes a **Virtual Youth Camp/Datathon**. This could be a flagship event at the sidelines of the next World Data Forum. The GIST Secretariat proposed to collaborate with the **UN Youth Office** and the **UN Major Group for Children and Youth (MGCY)** on any youth-related event.
- **CSO Outreach:** Bianca Walsh shared plans for an extension project in Brazil targeting **Civil Society Organizations (CSOs)** to develop data literacy through problem-based approaches.

#### Translation Group

- **The translation group** reported ongoing coordination with the **League of Arab States (LAS)** and **GCC-Stat**.
- Priority areas for translation into Arabic, French, and Spanish include: **SNA 2025**, **Trade Statistics**, and **Census** methodology.

#### Big Data & Data Science (Proposed Task Team)

- **Dorota**, the provisional lead of this Task Team noted that organizational meetings were delayed due to time constraints but are planned for late January.
- **The GIST Secretariat** advised that the team must define its "complementarity" with the **UN Committee of Experts on Big Data and Data Science (UNCEBD)** to avoid duplication. The focus should be on "delivery and training" rather than the "substance" (which the UNCEBD handles).

#### 4. Planning for the Full GIST Meeting

The board agreed to hold the annual "Founding Members" meeting virtually ahead of the UN Statistical Commission (which takes place in early March).

- **Agreed date and time: Thursday, 19 February 2026, 8:00 AM – 9:00 AM New York Time**
- **Draft proposed Agenda:**
  - Official election of Bianca Walsh as Chair.
  - Overview of the 2026 Task Team Work Plans.
  - TOR Review: Discussion on updating the Terms of Reference, specifically regarding the "life-cycle" of Task Teams (e.g., setting expiration dates to ensure topics remain relevant).
  - Additional or alternative agenda items should be submitted by the TT co-leads to GIST Secretariat and the incoming GIST Chair by Wednesday, 11 February.