

# GIST board meeting

6 August 2020

## Participants:

Helen (GIST chair), Mitali (USCB), Elena (UNITAR), Ashish (SIAP), Francesca and Vibeke (UNSD).

## Discussion:

### 1. Planning meeting(s) with the Stakeholder Advisory Group (SAG)

The Stakeholder Advisory Group (SAG) has now been expanded to 12 members; the eight current members all reconfirmed their interest and four new members have also confirmed. These are: Ghana, Hungary, Italy, Japan, Mexico, Morocco, Philippines and State of Palestine (reconfirmed members) and Ethiopia, Fiji, Mozambique and Sri Lanka (new members). UNSD had reached out to two more countries, but these do currently not have the capacity to join. It was agreed that UNSD would not reach out to other countries in those regions as 12 members is a good number.

It was agreed to hold the next SAG meeting early September with the following content:

- Reintroduce GIST and its work
- Specify role of SAG
- Ask for feedback on a few selected questions linked to the work of the task teams
- AOB

Ahead of the meeting, UNSD will send out summarized materials on GIST and the questions members will be asked. The types of feedback to be requested should be on what GIST is doing currently and potential other areas GIST should be covering that they are currently not. It should also be emphasized that input to the work can be provided to board members at any time. The GIST Secretariat should send out information to SAG members at least two weeks before the meeting to allow members to consult with partners and stakeholders in their countries. The meeting will take 1,5 hours from 7.30 to 9 am EST. Following this, the SAG should be asked to meet 3-4 times a year, depending on needs.

### 2. Suggested use of UNSD consultancy funds

UNSD has managed to secure some consultancy funds. It has been proposed to spend it on a) support to the work of the task team on addressing NSO needs which is working on concrete follow up on trainings for NSS coordination and the wider establishment of in-house training and b) development of COVID-19 microlearning materials. ToRs have not yet been developed in detailed ToRs.

The board provided the following input to the two proposals:

*Proposal a):* The task team has developed four different case studies which provide examples where there is a need to coordinate statistical training support better. Two case studies show examples where there are many actors and where coordination is key not to overlap and overload. The two case studies which are currently developed further are examples of areas where NSOs have expressed needs, but where there is a gap in actual support provided. The two areas are NSS coordination and in-house training. The idea for the consultancy is to do an analysis of materials available, and to work with a small number of countries, potentially from the SAG, to better understand needs and make a proposal for the way forward.

The Board appreciated that there are funds available for a consultant to help move the work of the task team forward and agreed to provide input to the ToR once developed.

*Proposal b*); Although much materials currently are being developed, there is not yet that much simple and quick training material available particularly on COVID-19 data related work and it is therefore proposed to spend some of the available funds to develop microlearning materials. This could both help NSOs and the NSS in expanding their offer to users and also help users become more aware of the data situation. The microlearning materials could also be a good GIST output linked to the planned expansion of UN SDG:learn to also cover microlearning. It has not yet been defined what will be covered related to COVID-19, but a series of materials could be developed to cover different thematic areas for instance. There may also be opportunities for co-funding with others.

The Board asked follow-up questions related to the intention of this work. A challenge identified was that there currently are many actors who develop specialized materials and that it will be important to first properly assess what is already being done to avoid duplications. Some were concerned with GIST developing COVID-19 materials and wondered whether it is GISTs role to develop materials or whether it rather should be left to members of GIST. In this particular case, members interested would be involved, but the funds could get a GIST branding.

It was suggested to compile what countries are doing and base materials on that. An example was the pulse survey which is being run in the US, similar approaches could be considered in other countries. Linked to this it was suggested to create an inventory of what members have done. Others questioned this as many COVID-19 pages already are established, among others the COVID-19 response page of UNSD.

Some board members also highlighted that there are many unanswered questions. Before putting training materials out there, we should aim at better understanding what the challenges of the NSOs/NSS are. That being said, they also saw that there was a strong need for more support on how to deal with the current situation and to produce relevant statistics.

Concretely, it was proposed to link the work to what is found out through interviews with chief statisticians and the survey among NSOs. It would also be beneficial to work with other partners on COVID-19 response. See where the needs are more acute. One concrete topic that the Board members agreed would be a very interesting and useful one in the current situation was around trust in data and institutions who provide them. The materials could also help NSOs in addressing the general public and potentially increase their trust among users. It could also be a niche for GIST which others are not covering.

It was agreed that the Secretariat would develop a first draft proposal which then could be discussed with the Board at its next meeting.

### 3. AOB

It was agreed to move the remaining agenda point on 'Overall outreach/visibility of GIST' to the next board meeting. The board also agreed that these meetings were quite useful and that they should be held rather regularly. The next meeting was proposed to take place shortly after the SAG meeting in the second half of September.