

GIST board meeting

24 March 2021

Participants:

Mitali (USCB), Elena (UNITAR), Makoto (SIAP), Mamadou (IDEP), Ralf and Vibeke (UNSD).

Agenda:

Proposed agenda ahead of meeting

1. Input from UN Statistical Commission – key learnings we should take into account moving forward?
2. Priorities and plans of the new GIST board – input from you all
3. Update and discussion on
 - i. Work of consultants on sustainable training programmes
 - ii. Outreach of GIST
 - Webinar on Yammer network
 - Other (ISI, WDF etc)
 - Newsletter
 - iii. Big data/innovative data sources training needs
 - iv. Microlearning
4. GIST intern
5. AOB

The meeting was opened by welcoming the new Chair, Ms. Mitali Sen, and the new lead of the task team on *Adressing NSO demands*, Dr. Mamadou Cisse.

1. Input from UN Statistical Commission

The Board agreed that the Statistical Commission side events had gone well and that they had generated good discussions and engagement.

One point that was discussed was how to increase the engagement from representatives in regions of lower income countries, and how to get more of those voices in the GIST task teams. As many of the tools and materials that GIST is developing is mainly targeted towards statistics production in lower income countries, it would be important to have more engagement and feedback. The way GIST currently is structured is that this input would come from regional training institutes in those regions or from the representatives of the Stakeholder Advisory Board (SAG). To increase this engagement, it was agreed that:

- the GIST chair and secretariat would initiate individual calls with regional actors in Africa primarily that have been inactive in the work.
- That a new SAG meeting should be planned where this engagement also could be discussed

It was further suggested to touch base with the secretariat of the Africa group on statistical training and human resources (AGROST) to see if links could be established between the groups.

Another suggestion made was to consider regional meetings to better accommodate for time differences. For some of the work, one could also identify hub countries that could take more of a leading role and engage and involve others.

2. Priorities and plans of the new GIST board

Most of GISTs work has been more targeted towards low income countries. A general interest that comes from all countries though is training in use of innovative data sources. It was proposed to also include this more in the work of GIST. The work would it that case need to be coordinated with the work of the Big Data group (see more details below)

Another aspect that came up was increased focus on thematic statistical trainings as most of the discussions have been on cross cutting themes. It was discussed if the thematic fields should be covered more specifically, particularly in areas that receive less attention. Health, demography, agriculture and economic are generally the most developed, so focus could be on identifying trainings in other areas. A key challenge with thematic work, however, was approaches are not the same across countries.

The topic of soft skills was brought up as it had been discussed as a potential area of focus moving forward, but the board was not sure there is a whole year's worth of work. Outreach of GIST could rather be considered as a new task team. If a new task team on communication and outreach would be established, it could be set as a temporary one. A consideration would, however, be who should participate in the task team, and whether it could be possible to bring more communication experts from the different GIST members instead of the regular members. An alternative approach could be to include communication and outreach as a regular agenda item in all task teams.

The board also discussed the task team on statistical literacy and its role moving forward. It was agreed that there at present still was much work to do with the inventory of statistical literacy initiatives. Once finished, and assessment could be made on whether the task team should expand or change its scope.

3.iii. Big data/innovative data sources training needs

The GIST secretariat had invited Mr. Ralf Becker to join the meeting to share information of the ongoing work on the UN Committee of Experts on Big Data and Data Science for Official Statistics (formerly Global working group on Big Data). He presented the work of the group with an emphasis on the work currently ongoing in the task team on *Training, competencies and capacity development*. That task team is supporting the development of training courses and materials by other task teams of the Big Data Group with curriculum development, structured guidelines and quality assessment input.

Since this group is already working on big data training needs, it was agreed that GIST would not focus on this moving forward, but that the groups would strengthen exchange and learning across. Ralf is already in copy on most GIST communication and would also include Vibeke in his group. In addition, Elena also recently agreed to join the Big data training group which would help further create learning and interaction. There are also other entities that are members both of GIST and the Big data group.

The board agreed with the focus of the big data training group of using quality assurance frameworks to help ensure that good quality courses are development. In this context, it was also mentioned that the big data group was interested in the assessment tools and evaluation guidance of GIST.

3.ii. Outreach of GIST

As part of the strategy of GIST to reach more people this year, UNSD informed that they had secured the 8th April for a GIST related webinar as part of the webinar series of the Global Network of Data Officers and Statisticians on Yammer. UNSD presented a couple of ideas for what to cover in the webinar and the board agreed to focus on the work with UN SDG:learn, briefly providing a demo of it and present some of the courses currently available on it. UNSD agreed to share a draft agenda which other board members then could provide input on.

5. AOB

The Board did not have sufficient time to cover all topics and agreed to discuss remaining topics at the next Board meeting, tentatively planned for second half of April. A tentative agenda would be as follows:

- Sustainable statistical training programs
- Planning for next SAG meeting
- Outreach (WDF webinar, IAOS papers and sessions and other work)
- UN SDG:learn/statistics, status one year in