

GIST board meeting

20 May 2020

Participants:

Helen MacGillivray (GIST chair), Mitali Sen (US Census Bureau), Elena Proden (UNITAR), Ashish Kumar (SIAP), Francesca Perucci and Vibeke O Nielsen (UNSD – GIST secretariat).

Discussion:

1. Objective and work approach of GIST Board

This was the first meeting of the GIST Board for over a year which also had new members. Helen, the chair of GIST therefore provided a **background** of the initial role of the GIST Board.

The GIST secretariat specified that it would be important with a Board to discuss **strategic direction**, including discussing if the right aspects are covered. Another potential **cross-cutting role of the GIST Board** would be to help making GIST and its work more visible as well as potentially discussing funding opportunities. The Secretariat appreciated that there is a good representation across different types of agencies in the GIST Board; one international agency, one regional training institute and a NSO who provides training within and outside own borders. In addition, the Chair has strong connections to academia.

2. Involvement of the stakeholder advisory group of GIST

The GIST Board discussed how the Stakeholder Advisory Group (SAG) of GIST could become more involved. The SAGs role generally is to provide guidance to the work of GIST members as conducted in the different task teams and overall. The GIST board agreed:

- That there should be regular meetings with the SAG where they provide input and feedback on the overall work of GIST, as well as specify their needs and demands. These meetings should have a specific agenda.
- To expand the membership of the SAG to 12-14 members with a stronger representation from Africa and Asia. The Secretariat would reach out to existing members to re-confirm their interest and then contact additional countries to join. SAG members should be to take a role of representing their region (potentially with support from regional commissions and regional training institutes)
- Another objective of re-activating the SAG would be to increase the awareness of the statistical community of the work of GIST and what it has to offer
- The advisory group could also have direct involvement with task teams and that all minutes could be shared with them regularly. This could be thought of as governance interactions. Task teams would receive regular feedback from the advisory group from time to time. In addition, they could be involved in certain work of the task teams, work which is more demand driven and practical.
- A first meeting of the new SAG should be conducted once all members are on board, potentially holding meetings by region to make the timing of the meetings more convenient for members.

3. Information across task teams

The GIST Chair opened by saying that the task teams have been progressing very well in the past year.

The Board discussed **the activity level of the different members**, where there is a smaller group of active members and how to get more members actively involved.

- The GIST secretariat informed that they regularly are following up with inactive members to re-engage them which generally has been successful, with a few exceptions where there mostly are good reasons.
- It was highlighted that the increased activity level from regional training institutes, particularly in Africa, has been very valuable to bring in more of the user perspective. The secretariat would reach out to a few more to (re-)engage them.
- The task teams should probably not get much bigger overall as one hour meetings have limitations. Instead, task teams could engage with other members (from other task teams) or the SAG related to practical implementation, such as sharing good practices or filling templates.
- A key challenge still remaining is contributions between meetings and not participation in meetings as such, although this also has improved with the increased activity level. Since much of the contribution comes from individuals, it was discussed if there should be a mechanism of acknowledgement and recognition. Linked to this, it was suggested that when working on case studies for instance, the group should also think about how they will be promoted, how they are presented etc.

The Secretariat summarized from the three task teams and a few follow up questions were asked.

4. COVID-19

The Secretariat briefly introduced saying that COVID-19 had been on the agenda of all three task teams, but that there so far had not been any strong incentives from the teams to respond to specific COVID-19 needs as part of GIST and asked if the GIST Board believed something should be done in the area.

- The task team on online gateway is very relevant now. UNITAR are doing general promotions for UN SDG:Learn where they also are mentioning the statistics page. Might consider promoting it somewhere else in addition. One option could be to write an 'Opposite the Editorial Page' (OpEd), in the name of GIST, on data and COVID-19 and try to get it published in a well renowned newspaper
- UNSD and UNITAR also need to send out promotional text which GIST members can make available through their networks.
- A new partnership which is meant for microlearning, EdApp, could potentially be used to make targeted materials available. For instance, develop something simple on data and Covid-19. Could be a short quiz on Covid-19, raising statistical literacy of population. Microlearning materials could be rolled out quickly on that platform.
- Board members also highlighted that they have received requests from different people. Many of them see data on Covid-19 in the media and ask what is 'your view on this as a statistician'. One option could be to build something quickly along these lines.

- Another option could be to prepare microlearning materials around a process model which provides lots of information in Covid-19 context such as different ways of estimating reproduction number

5. AOB

The GIST secretariat mentioned that there was a suggestion in one of the task teams to establish a common place where all GIST files would be saved. The easiest option for UNSD would be to create a google drive, but it became clear that this is not feasible for all members as some have restricted access to it. It was suggested to put it on the platform itself. The Secretariat would follow up on this.

It was agreed that the GIST Board would meet more often in the beginning and then see how often meetings would be needed. Next meeting would be in preparation for the first (set of) meeting(s) with the Stakeholder Advisory Group.

Action points

- GIST secretariat to reach out to current Stakeholder Advisory Group (SAG) members to reconfirm their interest.
- GIST secretariat to reach out to potential new SAG members, where needed with support from GIST Board members
- GIST Board to prepare meeting with SAG and convene it once all members are on board
- GIST Secretariat to continue following up with inactive members
- GIST Board to continue and potentially expand promotion of UN SDG:Learn in the context of COVID-19 and consider development of COVID-19 data related materials
- GIST Secretariat to establish a common place where key GIST files can be saved