Global Network of Institutions for Statistical Training (GIST)

Second Executive Board Meeting

Tuesday, February 12, 2019

7:00am – 8:30 am, New York Time

Meeting Summary

- The following executive **members were present**: Brazil, ISI, India, PARIS21 (connection issues with Skype, but provided inputs via email), UNSD, UNITAR.

- Task team leaders provided status updates on the **work conducted so far**.
  - **Task team on stock taking and needs assessment**
    - Regular video conferences conducted with task team members
    - Agreed on dimensions on which to describe training. This was used by the consultant to gather information about training courses among GIST members.
    - Guided a consultant who produced an inventory of training course and conducted a needs assessment study. Defined the scope of the assessment study.
    - The inventory and needs assessment will be put online on the GIST website soon and will be included as a background document for the Statistical Commission.
  - **Task team on identifying exemplars**
    - Provided inputs to the consultant on needs assessment study and provided feedback on the template used for preparing the inventory.
    - Given that envisaged work for this task team required a complete inventory, scope for additional work was limited.
  - **Task team on technology and innovation**
    - Regular video conferences conducted with task team members, and also had a side meeting on the sidelines of the World Data Forum, with the GIST chair.
    - While there were some early difficulties in identifying activities of the task team, the team focused on understanding needs and expectations around e-learning/online learning platform.
    - Some of the identified needs include: how to better and more strategically leverage online learning; improvement of pedagogical approaches used in current e-learning; organization of the process, quality assurance mechanisms and project management in online learning; and needs specific to e-learning platforms, for instance cost, infrastructure etc. The needs also

touched upon good practices related to e-learning courses and platform, innovation, and key lessons learned.
- This document would be shared on the GIST website and included in the UNSC background document.

  o **Task team on statistical literacy**
    - Regular video conferences conducted with task team members.
    - The team has been working in understanding two aspects of statistical literacy
      - Data literacy of policy makers/decision makers
      - Communication capabilities of national statisticians
    - The task team has conducted a few surveys targeted towards policy makers at various venues. Most recently, SDG focal points in all UN member states were surveyed on their statistical literacy needs, and a report is being prepared based on answers from more than 100 respondents. A summary of key responses will be shared on the GIST website.

- Based on the tasks completed so far, the following was discussed regarding **next steps for GIST**:
  o The shape/composition of future task team need not adhere to the existing task teams. The Board decided that the following areas could be considered for future task teams, with composition to be determined after Statistical Commission. An important aspect to keep in mind is that the new task teams have practical and concrete deliverables, and suggested outputs be concrete and feasible in context of the resources that are available.

  o The following have been identified for consideration of **areas for next steps**:
    - **Online gateway for training**: One task team could develop an entry point for individuals seeking information on statistical training. The information from the current inventory that has been compiled by GIST can serve as a starting point for this exercise, either on GIST website or a new portal, and can be updated as new information becomes available.

    - **E-learning community of practice**: Based on the needs specified by the task team on technology and innovation, a task team could focus on providing practical information on various aspects of e learning: for example, cost, technology platform, pedagogy etc. The scope of the community can be defined by the group.

    - **Statistical literacy**: Building on the needs identified by the current task team on statistical literacy, one task team could focus on preparing a guide/handbook on statistical literacy. Following the approach currently used, the team could produce outputs useful for both policy makers to understand statistics, and for statisticians to better communicate statistics. If members have ongoing work in this area, synergies could be leveraged.

- **Continuing work on assessing demand and supply**: The work on assessing demand could be further extended, as the existing demands assessment was based on only few selected NSOs. However, to be meaningful, this activity should be done with a more realistic timeframe and exact deliverables which is in line with resources brought to the group (e.g.: consultants) and the dedicated resources from the GIST members themselves.

  Similarly, additional information could be gathered to provide users with richer information than currently available in the inventory. They would be very helpful to provide information that helps users gauze the true level of the course (basic/intermediate), or the starting date of the course, for example. However, there is a need to be cognizant of a) resources required to complete such a task for a wide range of courses, and b) striking a balance between asking members additional questions vs. using existing information/or information that might already be online. For example, during the recent stock taking exercise, many members directed the consultant to their website/existing catalog, and the consultant had to manually enter information on selected dimensions. Therefore, the value added of acquiring new information need to be weighed against the resources required.

- **Other business**
  - Side event for GIST to be held on 7th March 2019, 8:15am to 9:30am in UN Secretariat Building.
  - If they have not already done so, GIST members should confirm their participation with UNSD.