

GIST board meeting

26 October 2020

Participants:

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

Agenda:

1. Key findings from the Stakeholder Advisory Group (SAG) meeting and potential follow up
2. GIST outreach
3. Mutual update on work, including on the consultancies and microlearning
4. Information to all GIST members, potentially followed by a virtual meeting.
5. AOB

1. Key findings from the SAG meeting

Ahead of the meeting, the secretariat had shared an overview of all input received from the members of SAG (received during the call and in writing after the meeting), as well as a summary overview. The summary sheet also contained proposed follow up on some of the items. This was discussed more in detail by the GIST board. Key points were as follows:

- Elena (UNITAR) informed that there is work in progress on adapting the UN SDG;Learn platform to provide more guidance to users as was requested by Japan. They are also planning to add tests and self-assessment functionality for those who register as users. There is nothing specifically planned on the statistics sub-page but could also be considered. Overall, course providers should be encouraged to specify learning objectives. The platform could also be adjusted to specify when it has not been specified.
- The board suggested to respond back to Japan to clarify further what their request entailed so that the needs could be better addressed.
- As a response to requests for practical examples on statistical literacy activities of countries, Mitali (Us Census Bureau) in this context mentioned that they are doing webinar on which materials they are providing on statistical literacy. This could also serve as a microlearning.
- On the individual course needs specified, the board agreed to share the list with GIST members and ask if anyone had courses or currently was developing them.
- The training needs specified linked to COVID-19 on how to use platforms and digital tools for remote work was discussed as a potential follow up action for GIST as a group. It could for instance be a webinar (series) organized by GIST. Vibeke suggested that such webinars also could be organized as part of the Global Network of data officers and statisticians (GN-DOS) which was recently established for UN Resident Coordinator data officers and statisticians from NSOs on Yammer. A webinar on that platform could have quite good coverage.
- In this context, Mitali mentioned that something they had struggled particularly with was the challenges of actually sharing data because of security issues. The approach they had taken so far was sending secure, encrypted emails to each other with 1% sample files. Other options when collaborating remotely across borders which they had considered was to tunnel into the system of the partners. She imagined that many countries would struggle with this at a more general level with staff not having access when working remotely.

- One suggestion related to in-house training was to include a comprehensive needs assessment. The board agreed to limit this to guidance on carrying out a self-assessment, potentially linking it to an overall maturity assessment.
- The board overall appreciated the input from the SAG and agreed to include it in the work moving forward.

2. GIST outreach

Helen (GIST Chair) suggested to prepare a poster or brochure which summarizes what GIST and why it is important. This can then be accompanied by more detailed documents such as reports and power point presentations. She further suggested to have a first go at it herself. She also pointed out that power points may be useful NSO focal points and managers can use it with their staff, government etc.

The board asked about updates to the GIST homepage, whether it was time consuming to update. Overall, all that is needed is to provide input to the Secretariat, who usually would be able to update quickly given that there are no other urgent tasks at the web-development team.

Mitali asked if we first needed to have more materials ready before starting to promote GIST more widely. Might be better to do a publicity blitz at a later stage. In this context it was agreed that there could be two stages, one that is initiated now which focuses on increased awareness and a later one, once more materials are in place, which is more achievement focused.

Francesca suggested that the GN-DOS could be used to share what GIST does and can do. The Network could also be used to expand the input from the statistical community, for them to understand better what we are doing and to provide input on what we should do. Vibeke agreed and suggested to offer GIST members to join GN-DOS. Vibeke also mentioned that there also had been a preliminary exchange with UNSD colleagues who manage the Yammer network on promoting the work of GIST there. They are currently looking for topics to focus on and early December was mentioned as a possible time when GIST could be in focus in a week.

Ashish suggested to create a newsletter which could be shared regularly to create a regular feedback feed. The board agreed to send it out around two times a year. The newsletter should not be too long, a summary first, potentially with more detailed reports attached or linked up to it. The preference was to have it browser based. Elena agreed to ask her communication colleagues check which tool they were using. Helen further suggested that the board members, and particularly task team leaders could contribute to the content. The aim would be to prepare a first newsletter already in 2020, potentially linked to the GIST focus week on GN-DOS.

3. Mutual update on work

Vibeke provided an update on the consultancies under the task team on addressing NSO needs. A few consultants had shown interest and interviews would be carried out the same week. The plan was to have the consultants onboard in the second half of November. Mitali would be involved in the selection process as task team leader.

Vibeke also provided a brief update on the work on microlearning. SIAP, UNITAR and UNSD have had a couple of follow up calls. UNITAR currently has an ongoing project on microlearning and has offered to spend a share of the amount on a microlearning linked to GIST. The proposal from UNSD is to link it to

trust in statistics. The story writer of UNITAR will soon be onboard and the more detailed discussion will start shortly after. A SIAP colleague is also preparing a microlearning linked to how to detect when a graph is inaccurate. Other topics have also been discussed and UNSD can follow up on some of this once the first two have progressed a bit further, also building on ideas coming out of it.

Mitali mentioned that they have some short documents, or instructions, and wondered whether they could count as microlearning. Elena responded that she believed so. Overall, she said there were two types of good microlearning; micro-tutorials and awareness raising, where the story helps you understand a certain topic.

Elena shared good news about them most probably being able to include microlearning as a main selection element also for the statistics page.

Vibeke said that the outline for the guidance document on evaluation of trainings was almost done thanks to Sokol in SIAP. Ashish mentioned that the Network of statistical training institutes for Asia and the Pacific have a meeting upcoming soon. He had included evaluation methods as an agenda item and hoped to learn more about how the different institutes are evaluating courses.

4. Info to GIST members

Vibeke provided a brief background saying that many members do not know what is going on in other task teams. At the same time, there is a need for a wider contribution on some of the products that GIST is about to develop. More courses should be added to UN SDG:learn for instance, materials are needed for the inventory of statistical literacy materials, the guidance document on evaluation would benefit from a wider contribution and it would also be useful to discuss the feedback from the SAG as a group overall. The suggestion was to first send out another information document followed by an invitation to an online all GIST members meeting. The information document could also be a first step toward the background document which will be prepared for the UN Statistical Commission as information to all member states.

Helen was concerned that there might be too many representatives to ensure a well-run meeting. She therefore suggested to have a very clear meeting plan, and to identify tasks and activities that are needed, identify where there are expected contributions from GIST members in advance. Depending on participation, members should be given only a couple of minutes to provide input each.

Francesca mentioned that all side events at the UN Statistical Commission will be virtual and are expected to take place in the two weeks ahead of the commission. This would also be an opportunity to have an all GIST member meeting. Her suggestion would be to have two, one before the end of the year and one in March as the more official annual meeting of GIST. The board overall agreed that a meeting for all of GIST would be a good idea.

5. AOB

No other business was raised.