Global Network of Institutions for Statistical Training (GIST)

Terms of Reference

Background

1. The range and depth of data demands emerging out of the 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) is unprecedented. The global indicator framework contains 232 indicators, addressing each of the Goals and targets of the 2030 Agenda. Therefore, the full implementation of the indicator framework to monitor the SDGs presents an enormous challenge for all countries. Significant efforts are required to strengthen national statistical capacities to provide the necessary data and statistics for the full implementation of the 2030 agenda. The UN General Assembly, in its resolution 71/313, has fully recognized the crucial importance of data for sustainable development and the urgent need to strengthen statistical capacities in countries. The Cape Town Global Action Plan for Sustainable Data also prioritizes statistical training as essential action area.

2. Statistical training is a key in strengthening countries' statistical capacities. While many international and regional institutions work in this area, a quick scan of the current scenario in how training in official statistics is provided reveals diverse approaches.

3. There is, therefore, a strong need to optimize and harmonize the training offerings of various institutions and to maximize their outreach to ensure that trainings are delivered in a more efficient and cost-effective manner. Many international and regional organizations engaged in statistical training recognize this, and through various fora, have agreed to establish a Global Network of Institutions for Statistical Training.

Goals and objectives

4. The Goal of the GIST is to build sustainable capacities in countries through efficient, effective, and harmonized delivery of training at global and regional levels that will enable production and use of quality data and statistics including monitoring and implementation of SDGs.

5. The overall objective of the GIST is to facilitate collaboration among members of the network in the delivery of trainings on statistics in a more harmonized and standardized manner as well as to improve effectiveness of these trainings through maximizing their outreach.

Areas of work

6. GIST will focus on the following work areas:

    a) Conduct a preliminary assessment to redefine country needs in wake of the new demands arising out of the 2030 Agenda and SDGs;
    b) Assess training gaps vis-à-vis the training needs of countries to systematically address them;
    c) Systematically share training courses and calendars, training materials through a web-based platform;
    d) Harmonize statistical training courses/curricula in line with international guidelines and standards on concepts and methods;
    e) Build capacities of existing statistical training centres to deliver training on official statistics based on harmonized and standardized training curricula;
    f) Promote training that enables data producers to improve data literacy and usage within stakeholder communities;
    g) Develop and nurture pools of trainers in all regions on different statistical areas and maintain a roster of resource persons that can be used by countries as and when required;
    h) Foster a global discussion on certification; and
    i) Leverage capacity for increased use of distance learning.

Membership

7. The following 15 institutions are the founding members of GIST as of end of February 2018:

    - International Monetary Fund (IMF)
    - The World Bank (WB)
    - International Labour Organization (ILO)
    - United Nations Statistical Institute for Asia and the Pacific (UNSIAP)
    - Eurostat
    - Secretariat of the Pacific Community (SPC)
    - Eastern Africa Statistical Training Centre (EASTC)
    - Ecole Superieure de Statistique et d'Economie (ENSEA)
    - Arab Institute for Training and Research in Statistics (AITRS)
    - Statistical Economic and Social Research Center for Islamic Countries (SESRIC)
    - United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR)
    - PARIS 21
    - United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (ECA)
    - International Statistical Institution (ISI)
    - United Nations Statistics Division (UNSD)

8. A few countries that have statistical training centres that cater to training needs of statistical staff from other countries will be invited to join the founding member group

9. UNSD will serve as the Secretariat of the GIST.

Governance and Management

10. The founding members' group (FG) will be responsible for managing the operations of GIST on a regular basis. The FG, with consultations with key international and regional statistical institutions, can decide to include new members based on pre-determined criteria.

11. One of the member institutions from the FG will be nominated as the Chair through consensus. The Chair will be rotated every two years.

12. The GIST will report progress of its activities to the UN Statistical Commission (UNSC) every year.

13. Advisory Group (AG) with representatives of selected NSOs and other data stakeholders to be selected on rotational basis – to provide guidance to the GIST on various matters including the implementation of programme activities.

14. The AG and FG will mainly work through exchange of e-mails and hold their meetings at an agreed interval through teleconferencing or other electronic means. Physical meetings meeting can be held on the side-lines of major meetings.

15. The FG will meet at least once a year in the margins of the UN Statistical Commission

16. A detailed two-year workplan will be developed by the FG and reviewed by the Advisory group, which would then be implemented by the GIST.