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GLOBAL NETWORK OF INSTITUTIONS FOR STATISTICAL TRAINING (GIST)



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MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR

This is the third in a series of issues of the newsletter of the Global Network of Institutions for Statistical Training (GIST). Its aim is to disseminate information about GIST's products, services, and ongoing activities. The network was established in 2017 with a view to harnessing the collective potential of the work of international, regional and national players to increase the accessibility of relevant and high-quality statistical training as well as methodological guidance, in particular, for National Statistical Offices and Systems with the most substantive capacity needs.



**Ms. Elena Proden - Senior Specialist,
Strategic Implementation of the 2030
Agenda Unit, UNITAR**

Among key areas of GIST's work is the development of guidance for NSOs on how to design and run sustainable statistical training programmes. Several countries are currently participating in piloting the new needs assessment tool. This is the first step in strengthening the internal capacity of NSOs to have a more strategic approach to training its staff as well as members of the National Statistical System. This work is led by task team 1 and was showcased during the IAOS conference in Zambia.

Many countries face a mismatch between the significant scope of training needs, and the in-house capacity to train. Some of the learning needs can be addressed through global e-learning. Here, the work of the Task Team 2 and a common gateway at www.statistics.unsdglearn.org have an important role to play in enabling NSOs to offer relevant e-learning for their staff in combination with more tailored activities. An example of how this can work in practice was presented by the National Planning Commission of Morocco during a successful GIST learning session held at the UN World Data Forum in April 2023. In 2022, the Inter-Agency Expert Group on SDG indicators has also decided to invite all custodian agencies to use the gateway for all learning on global SDG indicators.

Improved data production cannot support evidence-based policies for sustainable development if policy-makers, businesses, and citizens do not use data accurately and effectively. The Task Team 3 has been steering work on the statistical literacy initiatives inventory, as well as the development of guidance for NSOs on how to partner and develop such initiatives. This work was discussed during a 2023 UN Statistical Commission side event and will be presented in more detail during the 64th ISI World Statistical Congress.

The main objective of the Network, which operates almost exclusively through staff time contributions of its members, is to develop guidance for NSOs and share knowledge. Its impact, however, goes far beyond. Over more than 6 years, it has spurred multiple collaborations between its partner agencies on joint products and services. As part of this, GIST is about to launch a new group that will focus on increasing the availability of learning services and resources in other languages than English and already counts Morocco, Dominican Republic, Mexico and Colombia among its contributing members.

In 2023, GIST's Board and Stakeholder Advisory Group memberships were renewed. The new Stakeholder Advisory Group has already been instrumental in setting a course for the coming year. As the new GIST Chair, I hope that the good work that has been done by the Network so far will continue, and we will be able to collectively offer to NSOs much more than any one of our agencies individually.



Welcome new Stakeholder Advisory Group and GIST members

Changes to the Stakeholder Advisory Group (SAG)

Ahead of the GIST annual meeting in March 2023, the GIST board contacted current GIST SAG members to ask if they would like to continue engaging with GIST. Eight of the 12 countries remain SAG members (Fiji, Ghana, Italy, Japan, Mexico, Morocco, Phillipines and State of Palestine). Following this, the GIST board reached out to a few countries with which there had been recent engagement either directly through GIST or with one of the GIST board members.

We want to welcome our new GIST SAG members:

- Dominican Republic: Oficina Nacional de Estadística (ONE)
- Malawi: National Statistical Office (NSO)
- Maldives: Maldives Bureau of Statistics (MBS)
- Moldova: National Bureau of Statistics (NBS)

Later in this newsletter you can read more about the last SAG meeting and how some of the SAG members now also contribute to work of the task teams.

Changes to the GIST board

At the GIST annual meeting in February 2023, the former GIST chair, Dr. Mitali Sen, stepped down after her 2 years serving as chair were over. GIST expressed sincere thanks for her work and engagement in the two years.



A new chair, approved and welcomed by the GIST board, is Dr. Elena Proden, Senior specialist, Strategic Implementation of the 2030 Agenda Unit, UN Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR). She has been actively engaged in GIST since its establishment and had a key role in the work around the UN SDG:Learn statistics hub and as a lead of task team 3.

- Task team 1: Addressing NSO demands
 - Lead: Mitali Sen, US Census Bureau
 - Co-lead: Dag Roll-Hansen, Statistics Norway
- Task team 2: Online gateway and e-learning community of practice
 - Lead: Shailja Sharma, UN SIAP
 - Co-lead: Cristina Petracchi, FAO
- Task team 3: Statistical literacy
 - Lead: Pedro Campos, Statistics Portugal
 - Co-lead, Bianca Walsh, IBGE



Meet the lead from task team 2

Dr. Shailja Sharma is Director of the Statistical Institute for Asia and the Pacific (UN SIAP). She has over thirty-six years of experience working in various capacities within the Government of India. Prior to her joining the Institute, she served as Director-General, Statistics, at the National Statistical Office of the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation. She holds a Doctor of Philosophy, Master and Bachelor of Science degrees in mathematics and statistics from University of Lucknow, India.

Please describe your expertise and experience related to the mission of GIST and the task team.

The Statistical Institute for Asia and the Pacific is a subsidiary body of UNESCAP and a center for quality training on statistics and SDG Monitoring for the Government Statisticians. The trainings delivered in SIAP are in partnership with International and Regional Organizations, Research Institutions, and member states. The pursuit of SIAP to deliver trainings effectively with partners is in line with the mission of GIST to facilitate the delivery of trainings on statistics in a more coordinated manner.

How have the training needs of national statistical systems evolved over the last decade and what has been the response to the new needs?

With the advent of technology and the Sustainable Development Goals, the National Statistical Systems had to modernize their data production systems and expand their data sources to address the expectation of all stakeholders. As such they have become more equipped to handle the ever evolving training demands. This is in the form of building in-house capacities through trainings in coordination and partnerships with other UN agencies/international organisations on some of the latest topics on Environment, Big Data, GIS and Social Sector SDG indicators (health, Gender, Education). SIAP has led the capacity development in the region by delivering trainings on the SDG indicators based on the Training Needs Assessment Survey conducted annually.

You have worked in the national statistical system in India and now are with UNSIAP which works at the international level. What are some of the things that are working well between international organizations and national training organizations?

Much effort on strengthening national statistical systems is being put in to emphasize the need to expand data governance to include new data sources and actors outside of the traditional sources. As the SDGs focus on Leaving No One Behind and require a lot of disaggregated data for monitoring, inclusive processes of data collection, and use of data need to be concretized. SIAP is supporting member states in this endeavor through need-based training. SIAP held a management seminar on Data Governance and Data Stewardship in which the statistical heads of member states were present.

What is the user engagement in SIAP while designing and delivering training?

Wherever possible national and international organizations should be working with partners for local implementation and making themselves relevant partners in statistical capacity building initiatives. The collaboration should not be limited to the National Statistical Offices but a larger one with the National Statistical Systems as most of the line Ministries /Departments are responsible for their respective SDGs and all related administrative data is generated there.

What hopes do you have for task team 2 of GIST?

TT2 has developed a paper on Effective Online Training: Approaches and Recommendations. Since e-learning courses are and will continue to be a very important mode of training in the future, task team 2 will be holding webinars inviting all the stakeholders to sensitize them of the best practices and challenges of e-learning trainings and the way forward after inputs from the member states. The approach of delivering training in e-learning mode need to be improvised in a regular manner and the task team will be taking it forward.

A GIST tool in development: The Statistical Training Assessment Tool



GIST has developed the “Statistical Training Assessment Tool” (STAT) with the aim of providing NSOs with a tool they can manage themselves to identify current level of staff skills and training needs. The tool will help NSOs to think more strategically about training and to set up their own training programme based on staff needs. STAT also provides an option for the NSO to assess skill levels and training needs within the National Statistical System. Further, STAT provides recommendations on how the NSO can prioritize among the many training needs and how to meet those needs by looking at training provision more broadly and plan more strategically how training needs can be met.

STAT consists of three questionnaires to assess skills levels and training needs at the NSO and NSS as well as a guidance document to support the prioritization process and establishment of a national training programme.

The tool is currently being piloted before a final version will be made available to everyone. The NSOs in Colombia, Ghana, Maldives, Malawi and Papua New Guinea have kindly offered to pilot the tool.

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GIST Stakeholder Advisory Group meeting

The GIST SAG met on 19th April 2023 and discussed the work of the three task teams, the translation of learning materials and the future role and involvement of the SAG in GIST work. The GIST board and majority of SAG members participated.

The GIST chair opened the meeting providing background and context for new members (Dominican Republic, Malawi, Maldives and Moldova). This was followed by a discussion on translation of learning materials where all countries re-emphasized the need for translation into languages other than English. Morocco, Dominican Republic and Mexico all offered to contribute to translations into Arabic, French and Spanish, and also to participate in the planned language group of GIST. A common concern was to ensure high quality of the translation and work across agencies, especially when specialized tools are being used. This will be further discussed in the new language group.

The SAG was otherwise supportive of the work of the three task teams and some expressed interest to join the task teams in the regular meetings, thus strengthening the voices of the NSOs in those meetings and helping ensure that what is developed remains relevant.

UN SDG:Learn spotlight: E-learning courses by FAO



COURSE Self-paced e-learning

SDG Indicator 2.1.2 - Using the Food Insecurity Experience Scale (FIES)

FAO

SDG 2, SDG 17, SDG 17: Systemic Issues

A course to learn how to use the Food Insecurity Experience Scale (FIES)

How we use the Food Insecurity Experience Scale (FIES) to measure food security is the focus of an FAO e-learning course that aims to help countries track progress towards SDG Indicator 2.1.2. Primarily intended for those who play a role in the collection, analysis and reporting on the indicator, the self-paced course will provide guidance on the collection and analysis of data, and on how the information provided by the FIES can be used to inform and guide policy.

Enroll now in Arabic, English, French, Russian and Spanish, with free digital badge certification! [SDG Indicator 2.1.2 - Using the Food Insecurity Experience Scale \(FIES\) | UN SDG:Learn \(unsdglearn.org\)](https://www.unsdglearn.org/learning/?tx=fao)

FAO e-learning courses on SDG indicators under FAO custodianship

As the custodian organization for 21 SDG indicators and a contributing agency to another five indicators, FAO plays a critical role in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. With the aim of assisting Member Countries in this global effort, the Organization has developed a series of e-learning courses on SDG indicators under FAO custodianship to support national statisticians and other government officers in their data collection, analysis and reporting of SDG indicators.

The courses, available in multiple languages, cover thematic areas such as: food security, smallholder productivity and income, sustainable agriculture, forestry and fisheries, biodiversity, food losses and water stress.

Find out more on the UN SDG:Learn platform: <https://www.unsdglearn.org/learning/?tx=fao>

<p>SDG Indicator 2.1.2 - Using the Food Insecurity Experience Scale (FIES)</p> <p>FAO</p> <p>SDG 2, SDG 17, SDG 17: Systemic Issues</p>	<p>SDG Indicator 2.c.1 - Food price anomalies</p> <p>FAO</p> <p>SDG 2, SDG 17, SDG 17: Systemic Issues</p>	<p>Introduction to Sustainable Development Goal indicators under FAO custodianship</p> <p>FAO</p> <p>2030 Agenda, SDG 2, SDG 5, SDG 6, SDG 12, SDG 14, SDG 15</p>	<p>SDG Indicator 6.4.2 - Level of water stress</p> <p>FAO</p> <p>SDG 6, SDG 17</p>	<p>SDG indicators 15.1.1 and 15.2.1 - Forest area and sustainable forest management</p> <p>FAO</p> <p>SDG 2, SDG 15, SDG 17: Systemic Issues</p>	<p>SDG Indicator 5.a.1 - Equal tenure rights for women on agricultural land</p> <p>FAO</p> <p>Leave no one behind, SDG 2, SDG 5, SDG 17, SDG 17: Systemic Issues</p>
<p>SDG Indicators 2.5.1 and 2.5.2 - Plant and Animal Genetic Resources</p> <p>FAO</p> <p>SDG 2, SDG 17, SDG 17: Systemic Issues</p>	<p>SDG Indicator 6.4.1 - Change in water-use efficiency over time</p> <p>FAO</p> <p>SDG 6, SDG 17</p>	<p>SDG Indicator 2.a.1 - Agriculture orientation index</p> <p>FAO</p> <p>SDG 2, SDG 17, SDG 17: Systemic Issues</p>	<p>SDG Indicator 14.4.1 - Fish stocks sustainability</p> <p>FAO</p> <p>SDG 14, SDG 17, SDG 17: Systemic Issues</p>	<p>SDG Indicator 2.4.1 - Sustainable Agriculture</p> <p>FAO</p> <p>SDG 2, SDG 17, SDG 17: Systemic Issues</p>	<p>SDG Sub-indicator 12.3.1.a - Food Loss Index</p> <p>FAO</p> <p>SDG 2, SDG 12, SDG 17, SDG 17: Systemic Issues</p>
<p>SDG Indicator 5.a.2 Women's legal rights to land ownership and/or control</p> <p>FAO</p> <p>Leave no one behind, SDG 5, SDG 17, SDG 17: Systemic Issues</p>	<p>SDG Indicators 2.3.1 and 2.3.2</p> <p>FAO</p> <p>SDG 2, SDG 17, SDG 17: Systemic Issues</p>	<p>SDG Indicator 2.1.1 - Prevalence of Undernourishment (PoU)</p> <p>FAO</p> <p>SDG 2, SDG 17, SDG 17: Systemic Issues</p>	<p>SDG Indicator 14.b.1 - Securing sustainable small-scale fisheries</p> <p>FAO</p> <p>SDG 2, SDG 14, SDG 17, SDG 17: Systemic Issues</p>	<p>Producing Statistics on Asset Ownership from a Gender Perspective</p> <p>FAO</p> <p>Leave no one behind, SDG 5, SDG 8</p>	

GIST at UN Statistical Commission



The 8th Annual Meeting of GIST was held on the 16th February as a closed side-event to the 54th session of the UN Statistical Commission. The meeting was opened by Dr. Mitali Sen, GIST chair and closed by the new GIST chair, Dr. Elena Proden. The meeting otherwise included an overview of work in the last year and discussed future directions of GIST, including a focused discussion on how NSOs can help promote statistical literacy.

GIST also organized an in-person open event at the UNSC titled *What are NSOs doing to lead national efforts to increase data literacy?* This event focused on how the statistics community engage with citizens to increase overall data and statistical literacy and how NSOs train their staff to be better equipped to do so. After hearing from a few selected countries, participants discussed various approaches to engagement, and whether the engagement has led to increased understanding and interest in data and statistics among the population.

GIST at IAOS in Zambia

The International Association of Official Statistics (IAOS) held a Conference in Livingstone, Zambia 4-6 April 2023. GIST coordinated a session on how we can help ensure that statistical training in Africa is sustainable. The panelists were Lizzie Chikoti, Commissioner of Malawi National Statistical Office, Isabella Schmidt from UN Women and Dag Roll-Hansen from Statistics Norway. Oliver P. Fischer from the US Census Bureau was the discussant, and Faryal Ahmed from UNSD was the moderator.



National Statistics Offices face challenges in attracting skilled staff, training them to overcome the challenges and in receiving sufficient and relevant support from regional and international organizations. As an example, economic challenges have hampered capacity development at the NSO of Malawi for years. Lack of staff, training and resources has been a challenge for the production of quality statistics. The Statistical Common Service in Malawi mandates NSO to support the statistical production in Government Ministries of Malawi, increasing the need for statistical training.

On the global scene we find that trainings provided are often only used once. In many cases it would be cost efficient to provide the same training again, either within the same institution or by sister organizations. E-learning can be particularly easy to share and reuse, and represent a potential still untapped. We find an example of this in the way UN Women combine electronic learning material from different sources in the training they set up on gender statistics.

The Statistical Training Assessment Tool (STAT) tool presented on the previous page was presented as a potential tool to generally help address the challenges - through identification of the needs for training and making a plan to fill the gaps.

GIST at the UN World Data Forum

There is an increasing need for timely, granular and quality statistics to help inform decisions. Tremendous amounts of data are generated, but they are often not well structured and useable. National Statistical Offices (NSOs) and the wider National Statistical System (NSS) have a key role to play in helping structure the information and providing unbiased, quality statistics. Yet, many NSOs struggle to ensure they have sufficient staff with relevant competencies to harness these opportunities or, at times, even to produce key statistics. Building sustainable statistical training programs at the national level can help strengthen the capacities of staff. This is also crucial for ensuring effectiveness in human resource investments. Where feasible it can draw on a mix of globally available e-learning and microlearning materials. Finding relevant materials, however, may not always be easy due to a multitude of providers.

Recognizing this challenge, GIST organized a learning session entitled “*Learning and teaching official statistics with the help of UN SDG:Learn*” on 26 April 2023 as part of the 2023 World Data Forum (2023 WDF) held in Hangzhou, China. 44 in-person participants attended the session.

One of the examples from countries who have deployed a comprehensive statistical training is Morocco. Mr. Samir ISSARA, Director of Human Resources and General Affairs, High Commission for Planning of Morocco (HCP), explained how they use the UN SDG:Learn Statistics to complement the national statistical training programme for Morocco’s NSO. This was done as HCP looked to bridge the training gap in the area of statistics and data collection relevant for monitoring of national priorities and SDGs. More specifically, HCP mapped relevant learning on the UN SDG:Learn Statistics and then featured it on HCP Academy platform alongside MOOCs, webinars, learning videos and face-to-face training from HCP and other providers.



Mr. Samir Issara presents on the experience from Morocco

Ms. Madina Imaralieva, UNITAR provided a demo of the UN SDG:Learn statistics platform. It allows search by key words, area of statistical activity, SDG or type of learning. Since 2020, the UNSDG:Learn Statistics gateway has been providing a one stop-shop for learning and training on official statistics from GIST members and other organizations.



Ms. Vibeke Oestreich Nielsen, GIST secretariat/UNSD, presents on the statistical training work of GIST

Ms. Vibeke Nielsen, UNSD, linked the e-learning work to GISTs work on sustainable statistical training programs, stressing the need to think about how NSOs and NSSs can leverage existing e-learning by combining it, for example, with discussion groups and lectures around issues that require contextualization. Another aspect to consider is how they can partner with other organizations such as academia who may be able to provide relevant trainings.

GIST also chaired a virtual session on *Sector-Specific Approaches to Addressing the International Development Data Skills Gap* where the work of GIST and of non-governmental actors was highlighted.

Upcoming events

UNITAR is organizing a virtual side-event at the High-Level Political Forum on 10 July at 8 am est. The event is called *UN:SDG Learn: A OneUN+ initiative to transform skillsets and mindsets for sustainable development*.



HIGH-LEVEL POLITICAL FORUM ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

Created during the 2019 HLPF with stewardship from the UN Deputy Secretary-General, UN SDG:Learn partnership has grown since to include 66 organizations, provide dedicated community pages, including the one for statistics. The side event will illustrate how UN agencies and other partners working together can transform skillsets and attitudes of learners globally by offering a more integrated learning experience through the use of technology and partner content. Numbers speak for themselves: in a recent survey, 93% of respondents evaluated the platform as comprehensive and 74% indicated having developed or implemented coherent or inclusive processes and practices.



At the ISI World Statistics Congress, GIST is organizing a session on Tuesday 18th July titled *Partnering for statistically literate societies*. Partnerships are instrumental for statistically literate societies to flourish. Statistical literacy is a common objective for many stakeholders - National Statistical Offices, Schools, Universities, national associations and international networks and organizations – and they all have different advantages to offer. The session will be an opportunity to highlight the role of partnerships and includes speakers from the International Statistical Literacy Project, GIST/UNSD, the NSO of Brazil and the University of KwaZulu-Natal and from UNITAR.

STAY IN TOUCH WITH US!

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

GIST WEBPAGE: <https://unstats.un.org/gist/>

UN SDG LEARN STATISTICS: <https://www.unsdglearn.org/statistics/>

UNSD WEBPAGE: <https://unstats.un.org/home/>

LIST OF MEMBERS: <https://unstats.un.org/gist/Membership/List-of-members/>

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