



Rapid Assessment Surveys and COVID-19 Socio-Economic Impact Assessments in the Pacific Information Sharing and Planning

CONCEPT NOTE

Background

Although the Pacific has so far escaped the worse impacts of the COVID-19 virus from a health perspective, restrictions on international travel and both global and domestic lock-downs have caused severe economic disruptions. Unfortunately there is currently a lack of reliable and timely data on the depth and breadth of the socio-economic impacts of COVID-19 and its consequences in the Pacific. This has generated a lot of interest from Development Partners and Donors around the region, all with the best of intentions in assisting developing economies in particular, with understanding the full impacts of the pandemic to assist in the recovery process. Likewise, National Governments across the Pacific have been actively working to identify the impacts of the COVID-19 crisis in order to provide the best support to its citizens and residents, during this challenging period.

At the forefront of any national assessment work measuring the impacts of COVID-19, whether they be additional rapid assessment data collections or desk studies of existing data sources, should be the National Statistics Offices (NSOs). NSOs have both extensive knowledge of existing data sources currently available and experience in guiding data collections across a wide range of topics, in their respective countries. Having said that, concerns exist that some NSOs in the Pacific region are still not fully aware of the extent of activities currently underway or planned, hampering their ability to engage to the full extent necessary to maximize their unique skills set.

The purpose of this meeting is to provide an opportunity for NSO heads (and senior NSO staff) to better understand what is happening across the region, both in other countries as well as activities driven by development partners, so they are aware what options are available to them to address the demands of data assessment needs.

The meeting will also provide an opportunity for development partners and donors alike, to demonstrate that a coordinated effort is paramount in their minds, to provide the necessary support to NSOs in undertaking COVID-19 response activities from a data needs perspective.

Objectives

- 1) Information sharing: The first key aspect of the meeting will be to provide information sharing to all participants on what has been taking place and planned with respect to Rapid Assessment Surveys (including the proposed High Frequency Phone Monitoring [HFPM] surveys, see Annex 2 for the HFPM Concept Note and the draft questionnaire) and COVID-19 Socio-Economic Impact Assessments, as follows:
 - a. NSOs learn from other NSOs what is taking place in each of their countries
 - b. Partners and Donors learn from NSOs on what is taking place in countries
 - c. NSOs learn from Partners on what plans have been developed or planned for PICTs with respect to COVID-19 surveys/assessments
- 2) Way forward: The second key aspect of the meeting will be to get further understanding and agreement on best ways to proceed in each country with respect to Rapid Assessment Surveys and COVID-19 Socio-Economic Impact Assessments, as follows:
 - a. Through an open plenary, NSOs share their views on what they feel works best for them given the current situation of progress and planned activities
 - b. Partners share their views in response to NSO feedback
- 3) Finalize a plan for key next steps to address the common understanding on “ways forward” within each country

Format

Conduct the meeting over two days as follows:

- Day 1 (Phase 1): Information sharing (1-4 in draft Agenda below) (Approx 2 hrs duration)
- Day 2 (Phase 2): Planning a way forward (5-6 in draft Agenda below) (Approx 1.5 hrs duration)

Dates, Times and Modality

Proposed Dates & Times

- Thursday 25 June (9:30am – 11.30am Fiji time)
- Friday 26 June (9:30am – 11:30am Fiji time)

Modality

- Microsoft Teams

Meeting Conduct

The meeting is being convened at the suggestion of Ipia Gadabu, Government Statistician for Nauru and current Chair of the HOPS as a means to share information between NSOs and partners and to consider ways forward for improving statistical capacities and responses in times of emergencies.

Recognising the importance of coordination and cooperation the meeting is being jointly convened between SPC, the World Bank and UN agencies in the region, and with NSOs.

Participants

- Government Statisticians (or senior officials) from the following Pacific Island National Statistics Offices:
 - Cook Islands, Federated States of Micronesia (FSM), Fiji, Guam, Kiribati, Marshall Islands (RMI), Nauru, Niue, Northern Marianas, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu, Vanuatu, Tokelau (SPC will ensure that other PICTs not listed here will be fully briefed on the outcomes of the meeting).
- Senior advisory statisticians from Australian Bureau of Statistics and Statistics New Zealand
- Development Partners & Donors (SPC, WB, ADB, All relevant UN Agencies, DFAT, MFAT)

Annex 1: Draft Agenda

Annex 2: HFPM Concept Note and Questionnaire

Annex 1: Draft Agenda

DAY 1: THURSDAY 25 JUNE 2020		
INTRODUCTION		
Fiji Time		
9:30 – 9:40	Opening remarks by Ipia Gadabu (Government Statistician of Nauru & HOPS Chair) Opening remarks by Epeli Waqavonovono (Director, SPC, Statistics for Development Division)	
SESSION 1: Overview from NSOs on known COVID-19 Activities		
9:40 – 10:00	Overview of data collection plans from some Development Partners <u>Household & Business Surveys (15 mins)</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Outline of Development Partner plans with respect to Household Rapid Assessment Surveys <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Questionnaire design strategy ○ Data collection strategy ○ Collaboration plans 	WB SPC UNICEF WFP ILO
10:00 – 10:15	Overview of Socio-Economic Impact Assessments in the Pacific <u>Socio-Economic Impact Assessments (7 mins each RCO)</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide an overview of the plan to conduct Joint Socio-Economic Impact Assessments of COVID-19 in the Pacific <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Countries covered ○ Objectives of study ○ Who is involved? ○ Timeline of activities <p><i>NB: Countries are encouraged to save queries and questions for their presentation in Session 2</i></p>	UNRCO (Fiji & Samoa)
SESSION 2: Update from Partners on Developed/Planned COVID-19 Activities		
10:15 – 11:25	Overview from each NSO present on their knowledge of what is happening to address the impact of COVID-19 from a data/statistics perspective (approximately 5 mins per country) <u>Issues NSO are encouraged to address include:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Modifications to existing data collection plans (eg, Census, HIES, MICs, etc) • Knowledge of Rapid Assessment Surveys being planned in country (HH based) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Status of plans for the survey ○ Development Partners involved (if any) • Knowledge of Rapid Assessment Surveys being planned in country (Business based) 	All NSO Govt Statisticians (or senior reps)

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Status of plans for the survey ○ Development Partners involved (if any) ● Knowledge of other statistical activities taking place in country to inform COVID-19 response <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Socio-Economic Impact Assessments ○ Use of administrative data for economic monitoring ○ Quarterly macro-monitoring ● Responses to the presentations by development partners in Session 1 	
11:25 – 11:30	Wrap up of Day 1 and Preparations for Day 2	HOPS Chair
DAY 2: FRIDAY 26 JUNE 2020		
SESSION 3: Understanding and Agreement on Ways Forward		
9:30 – 9:40	Recap of discussions on Day 1	HOPS Chair
9:40 – 11:00	<p>Plenary discussion on Ways Forward</p> <p><i>Open plenary discussion chaired by current chair of HOPS (Ipia Gadabu)</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Contributions to be provided from all participants where NSOs, Development Partners and Donors share views on ways forward. Expected inputs from each group include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ NSOs: Preferred approaches for tackling Rapid Assessment Surveys, and proposed contributions to assist Socio-Economic Impact Assessments ○ Development Partners: Strategies to accommodate NSO concerns (if any) on the conduct of Rapid Assessment Surveys, and strategies for NSOs to support Socio-Economic Impact Assessments ○ Donors: Views/thoughts on ways forward from a donor perspective, including approaches which would be most appealing to fund <p>The plenary could operate in a manner in which NSOs could be offered the chance to speak first, followed by Development Partners and then views from Donors</p>	HOPS Chair to lead
SESSION 4: Next Steps Summary and Closing Remarks		
11:00 – 11:30	<p>Wrap up summary on key next steps</p> <p>The last session will conclude with a wrap up on the key next steps which need to be taken based on discussions from Sessions 1-3, to support and coordinate statistical activities in response to COVID-19</p> <p>Closing remarks by Sanaka Samarasinha (UNRC Fiji) Closing remarks by Ipia Gadabu (Government Statistician of Nauru & HOPS Chair)</p>	SPC