



## 14<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Pacific Statistics Methods Board (PSMB) 7 and 8 October 2024 (Port Vila, Vanuatu)

### MEETING REPORT AND OUTCOMES



#### Background

The purpose of the Pacific Statistics Methods Board (PSMB) is to make recommendations to the national statistics offices (NSOs) of Pacific Island countries and territories (PICTs) on statistical best practice and standards considered fit for purpose for use in the region.

#### Participants

PSMB membership includes NSO representatives for the Pacific subregions of Melanesia, Micronesia, Polynesia, and for small NSOs, as well as members from three development partners – Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS), Stats NZ, and the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF as UN representative). The World Bank attends as a standing observer and other observers are welcome at meetings. The Pacific Community (SPC) convenes PSMB and provides the secretariat.

#### PacStat and PSMB

The Statistical Innovation and Capacity Building in the Pacific Islands (PacStat) regional project, led by SPC and funded by the World Bank, supports the administration of PSMB and the dissemination of its recommendations. PSMB is responsible for technical guidance and oversight of statistical research and innovative experiments commissioned through PacStat. PacStat’s overall objective is to improve the quality of welfare data collection and accessibility to comparable welfare data in Pacific Island countries.

The papers and presentations are at: <https://sdd.spc.int/events/2024/10/14th-pacific-statistics-methods-board-meeting-psmb>

The summary of meeting outcomes is in Annex 1; the list of abbreviations is in Annex 2; the agenda is in Annex 3; and the full list of meeting participants is in Annex 4.

## Opening of PSMB meeting

**Andy Calo, Vanuatu Bureau of Statistics (VBoS)**, welcomed participants to Vanuatu and gave the opening prayer. The Chair, **Vince Galvin (Stats NZ)**, welcomed participants.

The meeting approved the agenda, the report of its previous meeting, PSMB13, and the review of actions. Apologies were accepted from Leota Aliielua Salani (Samoa), Kemueli Naiqama (Fiji), and James Kaphuka (UNICEF).

Participants bowed their heads in a minute's silence to commemorate the recent passing of Ms Amelia Tungi (Deputy Statistician of Fiji) and to recognise her contribution to the region.

## Reflections from PSMB13

**Peter Ellis**, Director, Statistics for Development Division (SDD), SPC, noted the status of PacStat innovative experiments and commissioned work, including the Tuvalu long-form census; climate change commissioned work; microdata anonymisation; and proposed topics for future work. All these topics were discussed during the meeting.

### Revised terms of reference for PSMB, election of Chair, and membership

It was noted that the papers for the Pacific Statistics Standing Committee (PSSC) include revised terms of reference (TOR) for PSMB. The draft TOR propose expanding PSMB membership, and a process for electing members for a two-year term at the biennial Heads of Planning and Statistics (HOPS) meeting. The Chair and Deputy Chair are chosen from within the members. Vince reminded members that he is retiring from Stats NZ and his last meeting as Chair will be in October 2025. The group noted that there is time to consider possibilities, including selecting a Chair from a Pacific Island country.

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## *Session 1. Innovative experiments for collection methods*

### *1.1 Tuvalu long-form census innovative experiment*

#### **Lae Peleti (Tuvalu) and Michael Sharp and Benuel Lenge (SPC)**

The objectives of the experiment were to assess the cost effectiveness of a combined HIES (Household Income and Expenditure Survey) and census compared to two stand-alone surveys; evaluate the datasets obtained, using the stand-alone surveys as benchmarks; and identify other potential benefits of integrating surveys, such as reduced costs. HIES do not attract government investment. Countries regularly conduct a census but not a HIES and some have HIES data that is 10 years old.

Despite challenges such as fieldwork delays and high enumerator turnover, the experiment was successful in producing usable data for census and HIES. It provided lessons on planning and implementation of a combined survey, and on effective training for field staff. However, overall, the experiment highlighted the drawbacks of combining HIES and census surveys and the lack of benefits, e.g. the costs of the combined survey were 54% higher than for two separate surveys.

## Discussion items

The meeting acknowledged the quality of the draft report; noted the high cost of the combined survey; and agreed that household size was an issue for the survey – some households had 20 people and may have excluded household members for simplicity.

The Chair acknowledged the detailed information in the report and the conclusion that a census and HIES are not a good combination. The authors were asked, in finalising the report, to consider the conceptual alignment of surveys being combined; that is, to illustrate the principles of combining surveys rather than negating the possibility. Vanuatu is implementing a combined census and HIES and will learn from the results of the Tuvalu experiment.

## Outcome

PSMB:

- acknowledged the results of the experiment and thanked the authors for their professionalism in completing such a thorough description of the work;
- requested the authors to consider presenting the conclusions in a form that more explicitly identified some of the underlying principles of combining surveys, e.g. the issue of the conceptual alignment of the surveys being combined, rather than simply finding that a census and HIES may not be the best combination;
- noted that the lessons learnt from the experiment extended to planning and implementation.
- The final paper will be circulated as a noting paper for the next PSMB meeting.

### *1.2 Samoa Food Away From Home (FAFH) innovative experiment*

#### **Lilianetelani Hennemann (Samoa), and Nathalie Troubat and Michael Sharp (SPC)**

The Samoa FAFH experiment was conducted during the Samoa HIES 2023. It was based on the Samoan Manual of Food Portion Quantification. Both direct and indirect methods were used to assess FAFH, with data collected through survey responses and diary-based recall. CAPI was used for the HIES.

Preliminary results indicate that the cost of one kcal of FAFH is much more than one kcal consumed at home, i.e. 8.1 tala for 1000 kcal of FAFH compared to 3.2 tala for 1000 kcal consumed at home. Estimation of dietary energy consumed away from home could have significant implications for food security policy in Samoa. The results indicate that the multiplier of 1.25 currently advised by PSMB for processing HIES data is too low. Data analysis is continuing, and the project expects to report full results to PSMB in 2025.

## Discussion items

The meeting questioned the transportability of the experimental method to other countries; the effects of consuming FAFH at a restaurant or in a home; cultural differences in consuming FAFH; a suitable multiplier; and FAFH estimation for events such as 'potluck'.

The authors responded that the method is transportable, e.g. the food list, though there will be cultural differences between countries. The project will investigate a suitable multiplier including the implications of altering the multiplier and will provide a report and lessons to PSMB.

## Outcome

PSMB:

- acknowledged and appreciated the quality of the research undertaken;
- requested the research team to complete the report of the experiment and identify lessons from both the results and from reflecting on the project process;
- requested SDD to consider what further analysis is required to provide advice on how insight from the experiment can be applied to poverty analysis in other countries, including advice on an appropriate multiplier (current multiplier is 1.25). PSMB asked SDD to consider this issue both from a materiality perspective and from the perspective of how the information acquired could be formulated into a model that would enable more relevant calculations to be made in other countries.

### *1.3 Vanuatu Data Science – Driving innovation in climate change and natural disasters*

#### **Andy Calo (VBoS)**

Vanuatu has had various datasets developed by organisations after disasters, but these have not been sustained. It has therefore been decided that Vanuatu should develop and run its own management

information system (MIS). The system will be developed by VBoS but will sit with the Ministry of Climate Change as one of the end users.

The project has three phases:

- Phase 1: Gain ministerial support for collecting all datasets. Wide consultation with government, partners, the community and private sector. Confident that machine learning using satellite imagery is feasible. Supported by UNESCAP.
- Phase 2: Development of innovation using reproduceable analytical pipelines, including machine learning models and management information system.
- Phase 3: Implement innovations.

## Discussion items

AI is not always useful to keep track of changes. At what level will the system be able to estimate economic impact, noting that SMA will soon require information on asset degradation, etc.?

PSMB is willing to support the project where possible and congratulated Vanuatu on the project's development and progress. VBoS acknowledged the comments and asked if the SPC Director-General could visit Vanuatu and support the project.

### 1.4 Tuvalu Statistical Population Register (SPR)

#### Lae Peleti (Tuvalu) and Benuel Lenge (SPC)

Tuvalu is using administrative data sources to create an SPR, in line with the Pacific Road Map for Development of Statistical Population Registers developed by PSMB in 2020–2022. Census data will be updated with administrative data from public health, immigration and marine departments (internal movements) to produce high-frequency indicators. The SPR will include everyone residing in the country (i.e. nationals and non-nationals).

Steps in developing the SPR include reviewing legislation and building a complete register of births and deaths, with the aim of eventually transitioning to a web-based, centralised administrative census. Tuvalu also requires capacity building and support. The project has been approved, and a grant application has been submitted. Engagement strategies have included stakeholder meetings and visits to islands.

## Discussion items

Vanuatu has built a population registry with support from UNDP. The registry is based with the Ministry of Internal Affairs. Tonga is looking forward to a similar system but first needs improvements, including coordination of statistical systems.

Project constraints include funding for 12 months. It was suggested that *Step 8 (Produce a business register)* should be deleted as this is a separate area of work. The Chair noted PSMB's goodwill towards the project, and suggested SPC may be able to tap into technical resources to support it.

### Outcome

PSMB:

- noted the previous engagement of PSMB on the use of administrative data and registers for census and population statistics in line with the 2022 Pacific Roadmap for Development of Statistical Population Registers.
- noted that increased funding is now available for SPC to take forward this type of methods work, both through PacStat and other sources.
- agreed to provide guidance and advice on next steps for methods work in this area.
- also agreed to recommend the experiment to partners and stakeholders.

### *1.5 High-frequency phone surveys (HFPS) – summary of key findings and lessons learned Shohei Nakamura (World Bank)*

The World Bank's high-frequency phone surveys (HFPS) have been implemented in Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands, Samoa, Fiji and Vanuatu since 2020. Respondents are paid compensation in some countries (e.g. Vanuatu) but not in others (e.g. Fiji). Advantages of HFPS include lower cost and higher frequency compared to traditional data collection, no enumerator travel, interviews of the same panel of respondents, and ease of adding new modules, e.g. after a natural disaster. Methodological concerns include sample representativeness – reaches only those with mobile phones; type of information collected; high sample attrition with frequent changes of SIM and phone; and initial cost of setting up HFPS.

Phone surveys are useful for tracking socio-economic outcomes with relatively low costs. The World Bank recommends scaling up HFPS across countries; building good partnerships with local telecoms; using HFPS for disaster damage assessment and monitoring for recovery, evaluation of programmes, etc.; and further examining and validating the methodology.

#### **Discussion items**

The meeting questioned whether payment to respondents disrupted results, and the effect of using private providers for surveys. Phone surveys could be conducted using phone numbers collected in a census.

The World Bank responded that there are ways to address bias, including in sample design. NSOs are consulted to avoid disrupting national surveys and to discuss NSO requests for specific information. The Chair, who is a member of the International Network of Chief Methodologists, confirmed huge interest in phone survey applications and the idea of integrating HFPS with regular data collection.

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## *Session 2. Commissioned work*

### *2.1 Methodological review for anonymizing census and survey microdata in the context of Small Island Developing States*

#### **Wolfgang Hertel (Consultant, SPC)**

Microdata anonymisation has inherent challenges in the Pacific region due to small populations, large sample fractions, and the potential for a record with unique characteristics to also be unique in the population. Statistical disclosure control (SDC) methods, which are used to anonymise data, are customisable, and can be used alone or in combination. Options include adding synthetic data, noise, or data suppression, which may affect data utility and result in information loss. SPC's current anonymisation method (*k*-anonymity) has a target of 10 records, which is highly conservative, noting that the literature recommends three records.

The policy brief recommends four measures:

1. Enhance the method for anonymisation and measuring disclosure risk.
2. Establish the value of variables before measuring information loss.
3. Explore the impact of using a reduced *k* value for *k*-anonymity.
4. Look beyond SDC to increase data utility. SPC and Pacific NSOs could look at how other NSOs are using the Five Safes Framework (that is, safe people, projects, settings, data, and outputs).

#### **Discussion items**

The meeting questioned SPC's conservative requirement for 10 records; weaknesses in differencing techniques; the role of geocoding in anonymisation; and the reliability of the Five Safes. The need for capacity building was also noted.



The consultant said the literature on SDC starts at three records. The risk of differencing is proportional to the number of records and respondents involved. The more information released the greater the risk of differencing. Geocoding is a different way of coding information.

The Chair recommended reading the whole paper on this technical area of work noting that SPC needs guidance from PSMB on implementing the recommendations. SPC agreed, suggesting that once the paper is completed, PSMB should request a country (volunteer) to implement a pilot project. There may be PacStat funding for Stage 2 of the work.

### Outcome

PSMB:

- acknowledged the excellence of the draft paper and agreed the consultant should finish the report on the technical aspect as planned. PSMB will then request a country (volunteer) to implement a pilot project that would look more closely at the application of statistical disclosure control in a particular country context;
- noted there may be PacStat funding for completing the report.

## *2.2 Climate change survey and core module: Interim results of the field test in Cook Islands and updates on methodological progress*

### **Lisa Green (SPC) and Monica Madrid (Consultant, SPC) with Taggy Tangimetua (Cook Islands) and Aritita Tekaieti (Kiribati)**

The module aims to provide countries with a guide to producing statistics/socio-economic data on natural disasters and climate change vulnerability and impacts and adaptation responses at the household level. The module and sourcebook include a tabulation plan, metadata sheets, enumerator guidelines and training material. In the Cook Islands field test, the survey was administered in combination with a five yearly labour force survey to all private households (531).

The results showed the distribution of natural disasters impacting household in 2023 and the economic value of damage on dwellings, agriculture, fisheries and other assets. There is funding for seven countries to implement the survey by 2027.

### Discussion items

The meeting noted that the survey will help establish a baseline that can be used in future disaster assessments and asked if it was possible to reconcile climate change results with household data.

The authors responded that it should be possible to reconcile the results with household data and also to look at non-monetary losses. The climate change survey could be combined with other surveys, e.g. on agriculture production. Ideally, climate change information should be collected every year. Questions can be adjusted to fit country situations.

### Outcome

PSMB:

- noted progress on the climate change survey and core module work programme funded by the World Bank as part of PacStat;
- supported recommended improvements to the sourcebook based on PICT experiences and international best practice;
- noted that SPC has secured added funding to enable at least seven PICTs to implement the climate change survey by 2027.

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## Session 3. Progress on data harmonisation and methods

### 3.1 International Comparison Programme (ICP) 2024 for the Pacific

#### Geoffrey Wong (SPC)

The main purpose of the ICP is to estimate purchasing power parities (PPPs) and price level indexes at a global level. PPPs allow cross-country comparisons of gross domestic product (GDP) and expenditure components. These measures also contribute towards the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

The last cycle of the International Comparison Programme (ICP) for the Pacific was in 2011. The next cycle will be implemented in 2025. For the 2024 ICP in the Pacific, a balanced approach, including a reduced product list, will be used to ensure the core requirements of ICP are met, given NSO resources. All countries have indicated that they will take part, except for Palau and Samoa.

#### Discussion items

There was concern about the ability of NSOs to collect the product information the World Bank needs, including lack of sufficient staff. The Chair noted that countries have an intention to take part but are short of capacity and suggested an options paper identifying courses of action. The

World Bank said the difference between a CPI and ICP is that an ICP is comparing across countries, so it requires detailed information.

#### Outcome

PSMB:

- noted the implications of conducting ICP 2024 in the Pacific.
- identified the need for an options paper on courses of action (such as do nothing, do a cut-back version of ICP, or some alternative) and their costs and benefits, given capacity issues in PICTs.

### 3.2 Pacific Food Consumption Database (PFCD)

#### Nathalie Troubat, Michael Sharp, Helani Kottage and Olivier Menaouer (SPC)

The Pacific Food Consumption Database was created, using HIES data, to provide an evidence base for the region. An experiment was conducted in Marshall Islands using 7 day recall to collect consumption data as opposed to a 14 day diary. The method was found to be feasible and SDD developed a system to process the food consumption data. SDD decided to re-process the 14 day diary data and added the results to the PFCD. The PFCD also contains datasets from 12 other Pacific countries.

From a government perspective, the PFCD has PPP implications and policy relevance to NCDs, welfare and nutrition, and agricultural productivity. Currently, the PFCD is accessed under license between the Pacific Data Hub-Microdata Library and the data producer. The PFCD is only accessible by SPC staff and its long-term consultants (Nathalie Troubat and Helani Kottage). No results have been published. The database will be curated, and countries will be consulted on approving publication.

#### Discussion items

The datasets belong to countries and their citizens, and their ownership should be acknowledged. Potentially relevant information is already available from the World Health Organization's STEPS survey. UNICEF considered the PFCD a good initiative, particularly in relation to child nutrition; it's difficult to collect the data, but a high percentage of children do not consume adequate nutrition. The World Bank does not assume comparability of data from a 14 day diary and 7 day recall.

The authors responded that data sharing was one of the objectives of presenting this work and agreed that recognition of NSO contributions is essential. They are looking at applications of the PFC, perhaps through secondment of researchers to SPC. The Chair noted that the Stats NZ framework covers the situation of acknowledging country ownership. Countries must consider that there are sufficient benefits in publicising the data.

## Outcome

PSMB:

- acknowledged the work done to create the database and the excellent analysis;
- acknowledged the importance of recognising the contribution of NSOs and their ownership of the datasets, and the associated legal requirements;
- recognised the importance of the research being done, with the database meeting the policy and programme needs of Pacific Island governments, and noted the possibility of research trials to assess if it has value for Pacific Island national statistical systems;
- requested that the database stay an SPC-only asset and not be released to researchers until these issues are resolved.

### *3.3 Household Income and Expenditure Surveys: Field work monitoring*

#### **Aritita Tekaieti (Kiribati) and Bertrand Buffière (SPC)**

The most recent Kiribati HIES finished in June 2024. The presentation focused on building a HIES monitoring dashboard and the process for checking inconsistency of data. Quality checks were included in the HIES questions to enable cross-checking. Graphs of results were shown for household response rate, unanswered questions, household unavailability, and household overspending.

#### **Discussion items**

The meeting asked if Kiribati is moving to open-source software, and whether there is training available for field monitoring when CAPI is used.

The authors responded that Kiribati wants to move to open-source software and that SPC could provide training information in a HIES manual. The Chair noted that Stats NZ is contractually bound not to do this type of monitoring. However, PSMB encouraged continuation of the work.

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## *Session 4. Economic statistics*

### *4.1 Trade statistics and PACComtrade: Lessons learned so far from the Vanuatu pilot and implications for statistics methods*

#### **Andy Calo (VBoS), Nilima Lal and Denis Grofils (SPC)**

The Pacific Customs Commodity Trade (PACComtrade) Database is designed to provide disaggregated data on imported and exported goods. It will contribute to the International Merchandise Trade Statistics (IMTS). The project is a collaborative effort between SPC, Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat, Oceanic Customs Organisation (OCO) and the Melanesian Spearhead Group, with assistance provided by the United Nations Conference of Trade and Development (UNCTAD) and United Nations Trade and Industry Statistics Section.

The project includes only countries using or about to use UNTAD's ASYCUDAWorld; i.e. Samoa, Fiji, Solomon Islands, Vanuatu, Papua New Guinea, New Caledonia, Cook Islands, Kiribati, Nauru, Niue, Tonga, Tuvalu, Marshall Islands, Palau and Federated State of Micronesia. Data is sourced from Customs administrations with support from OCO. Assistance to NSOs included training, workshops, peer-to-peer facilitation and capacity supplementation. The database is hosted on PDH and will be automatically published. SPC is responsible for all



legal aspects including license agreements. A pilot version has been implemented by Vanuatu and will also be implemented by Tuvalu, Kiribati and Tonga. The pilot has shown that PACComtrade is feasible.

## Discussion items

There will be overlap between databases. Countries will also have to consider the effect on their national accounts. The database has been discussed with PIFS and data will be up to date. The Chair encouraged countries to consider PACComtrade as an option, especially those with outdated trade data.

The Chair acknowledged that Nilima Lal is soon retiring from SPC and commended her excellent contribution to the region.

### Outcome

PSMB:

- acknowledged the development of the PACComtrade Database, noting that data have been sourced under a license agreement and that the database will provide timely commodity data on goods that are imported and exported;
- encouraged countries using ASYCUDAWorld to consider participation in the PACComtrade Database, especially those countries with out-of-date trade data;
- noted that it is to be expected that this process of creating trade statistics in a regionally standardised manner may highlight inconsistencies or areas for improvement in countries' past IMTS production, which will need to be addressed on a country-by-country basis if and when they emerge;
- noted that the current project does not intend to replace IMTS in any country, but that individual countries might consider doing so or using the PACComTrade database as part of their IMTS process; and that in doing so, care would need to be taken of the great number of dependencies (balance of payments, national accounts, etc.) and systems that run in parallel for a while to identify the relationship between old and new.

## 4.2 System of National Accounts (SNA) 2025 revisions: Implications for Pacific Island countries' statistical method

### Donna Marie Grcman (PFTAC)

In 2020, the UN Security Council (UNSC) requested the Inter-Secretariat Working Group on National Accounts (ISWGNA) to submit a road map for the revision of the SNA for adoption in 2025. A draft of the revised SNA was circulated for global consultation in June 2024. There are not many changes for GDP, NDP, etc. The last significant change occurred in 2008. Most countries will not be greatly affected. The SNA does not have the power of law, but has the objective that as many countries as possible take part.

There are plans to develop microlearning videos on why the standards need updating, main themes and major changes. In 2025, a second round of regional outreach events is planned, following the endorsement of the 2025 SNA and seventh edition of the Balance of Payments and International Investment Position Manual, developed by the IMF.

UN website – System of National Accounts <https://unstats.un.org/unsd/nationalaccount/sna.asp>

## Discussion items

Countries asked if there was training available, and whether they should rebase on the data they currently have.

They were advised not to go early on 2025 but rather to rebase after their next HIES. Countries must consider their own priorities. Production of datasets, etc. has to respond to government requirements. There will be online training available.

## Outcome

PSMB:

- noted that the revisions are unlikely to affect PICTs significantly;
- noted that measuring the depletion of natural resources and counting it as a cost of production would require significant work and would impact on gross national product or income, not gross domestic product.

### 4.3 HIES methods and recommendation

#### Bertrand Buffière (SPC)

The presentation focused on standardising HIES, in collaboration with IMF PFTAC and the World Bank, to meet the requirements of calculating national accounts and CPI. There is a good match between HIES data and national account requirements. The HIES collects all household transactions, with a focus on consumption. In terms of CPI, the HIES specifies whether a household consumed numerous named items. The recall method uses 150 items.

In terms of gaps, the HIES does not report on fees for financial services, unlike CPI requirements; distinguish between imported/local items; define FAFH cost in relation to the source of food; or specify fuel type when reporting expenditure on fuel. Water and soft drink consumption are collected separately depending on where they are consumed. However, place of consumption is not reported for alcohol. PSMB was asked to advise on the efficiency of the HIES questionnaire for updating the CPI and ways to improve HIES data.

#### Discussion items

The HIES is critical to CPI updates. In Tonga, the World Bank worked with the CPI team to make sure the survey produced the information needed, including by deviating from SPC's HIES template.

The author thanked the World Bank and agreed that some of the changes made in Tonga could be incorporated in the SPC HIES template. SPC is working on a guidance note for HIES and would appreciate assistance from CPI experts.

## Outcome

PSMB:

- noted the critical link between HIES and national accounts and CPI, and encouraged experts in these domains to contribute to the development of HIES guidance.

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## Session 5. PacStat and future projects to support Pacific methodology and innovation

### 5.1 PacStat progress and milestones to date

#### Peter Ellis (SPC)

The overall objective of the World Bank-funded PacStat is: *To improve the quality of welfare data collection and accessibility to comparable welfare data in Pacific Island countries.* PacStat's three components are support for PSMB; institutional strengthening and support for implementation; and alternative data collection methods. To date, SDD has published several guidance notes and major reports; implemented innovative experiments and commissioned work; and carried out multi-country collections of harmonised microdata. Notable wins include resolving a poverty measurement method; the move to HIES diaries; and use of economic microdata and access for researchers.

Successor projects could include administrative data sources; extending the work on poverty to livelihoods; addressing gaps in guidance; building statistical population registers; and updating statistical processes. It will be important to ensure successor projects include adequate finance and administration; use of PSMB for technical advice and formal decision-making; and simplified procurement (either SPC or World Bank systems, not both).

## Discussion items

The importance of sustaining a project and working with NSOs from the beginning were noted. The statistics community can learn from both successful and unsuccessful experiments.

PSMB has focused on guidance notes but has not tried to influence international standards (as mentioned in the TOR).

### Outcome

PSMB:

- noted SPC's achievement of PacStat targets to date, and wins including a poverty measurement method; the move from HIES diaries to recall; and increased use of economic microdata and access for researchers.

## 5.2 Discussion on needs, priorities, and options for a future regional project

### Taufik Indrakesuma (World Bank), Peter Ellis (SPC)

All current World Bank projects in the Pacific – regional and country-level – are operating smoothly. The main lesson from Phase 1 of PacStat is the preference for **bigger and simpler projects**. The World Bank's priority is to break the cost trap by lowering the cost of data collection.

Options for Phase 2 of PacStat include reducing the cost of welfare data collection, and increasing the use of administrative data, especially in education, health and agriculture. What other priorities should be considered?

## Discussion items

Countries requested funding for HIES; for extra NSO staff, including contracted staff; and for a multi-dimensional vulnerability index. It was suggested that enumerators could come from resources already available. SPC asked about funding for statistical population registers, given the high interest expressed during the meeting. Other suggestions included different approaches to surveys, e.g. carrying out a census in an area of Papua New Guinea rather than conducting a national census; and integrating HFPS in surveys.

The World Bank responded that it has been considering funding HIES for all Pacific countries. SPC could perhaps act as a sub-granting mechanism; however, government Ministries of Finance have to prioritise HIES support before a grant can be made. Rather than funding extra staff for small NSOs, the Bank would prefer to fund SPC support. In terms of a resident enumerator model – recruiting locals who could deliver more than one survey would save time and costs, reduce complexity and ensure capacity. SPC will provide further information on the multi-dimensional vulnerability index, which was developed by the UN. The World Bank said the discussion had been very useful and the ideas would be discussed further with management and SPC.

### Outcome

PSMB:

- noted the World Bank's interest in Phase 2 of PacStat and its preference for 'bigger, simpler' projects;
- asked the World Bank and SPC to work together to develop a concrete proposal for members to consider.

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## Closing

The proposed date for the next PSMB meeting is **12–14 May 2025 in conjunction with the ABS Pacific Statisticians Leadership Forum**. ABS and SPC are considering locating these meetings in a Pacific Island country. There will be a call for agenda items for the next meeting closer to the date.

The Chair thanked PSMB members for their end-to-end, system thinking approach and noted it has been an enjoyable and stimulating meeting, with state of the art technical papers and discussions. He gave a sincere thank you to Vanuatu and to VBoS for their outstanding welcome and hospitality. Sione Lolohea of Tonga gave the closing prayer.

## Annex 1: PSMB14 – Summary of meeting outcomes

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### *Session 1. Innovative experiments for collection methods*

#### *1.1 Tuvalu long form census innovative experiment*

PSMB:

- acknowledged the results of the experiment and thanked the authors for their professionalism in completing such a thorough description of the work;
- requested the authors to consider presenting the conclusions in a form that more explicitly identified some of the underlying principles of combining surveys, e.g. the issue of the conceptual alignment of the surveys being combined, rather than simply finding that a census and HIES may not be the best combination;
- noted that the lessons learnt from the experiment extended to planning and implementation.
- The final paper will be circulated as a noting paper for the next PSMB meeting.

#### *1.2 Samoa Food Away From Home (FAFH) Innovative Experiment*

PSMB:

- acknowledged and appreciated the quality of the research undertaken;
- requested the research team to complete the report of the experiment and identify lessons from both the results and from reflecting on the project process;
- requested SDD to consider what further analysis is required to provide advice on how insight from the experiment can be applied to poverty analysis in other countries, including advice on an appropriate multiplier (current multiplier is 1.25). PSMB asked SDD to consider this issue both from a materiality perspective and from the perspective of how the information acquired could be formulated into a model that would enable more relevant calculations to be made in other countries.

#### *1.4 Tuvalu Statistical Population Register (SPR)*

PSMB:

- noted the previous engagement of PSMB on the use of administrative data and registers for census and population statistics in line with the 2022 Pacific Roadmap for Development of Statistical Population Registers.
- noted that increased funding is now available for SPC to take forward this type of methods work, both through PacStat and other sources.
- agreed to provide guidance and advice on next steps for methods work in this area.
- also agreed to recommend the experiment to partners and stakeholders.

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### *Session 2. Commissioned work*

#### *2.1 Microdata anonymisation*

PSMB:

- acknowledged the excellence of the draft paper and agreed the consultant should finish the report on the technical aspect as planned. PSMB will then request a country (volunteer) to implement a pilot project that would look more closely at the application of statistical disclosure control in a particular country context;
- noted there may be PacStat funding for completing the report.



## *2.2 Climate change survey module*

PSMB:

- noted progress on the climate change survey and core module work program funded by the World Bank as part of PacStat;
- supported recommended improvements to the sourcebook based on PICT experiences and international best practice;
- noted that SPC has secured added funding to enable at least seven PICTs to implement the climate change survey by 2027.

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## *Session 3. Progress on data harmonisation and methods*

### *3.1 International Comparison Program (ICP) 2024 for the Pacific*

PSMB:

- noted the implications of conducting ICP 2024 in the Pacific;
- identified the need for an options paper on courses of action (such as do nothing, do a cut-back version of ICP, or some alternative) and their costs and benefits, given capacity issues in PICTs.

### *3.2 Pacific Food Consumption Database (PFCD)*

PSMB:

- acknowledged the work done to create the database and the excellent analysis;
- recognised the importance of recognising the contribution of NSOs and their ownership of the datasets, and the associated legal requirements;
- recognised the importance of the research being done with the database meeting the policy and programme needs of Pacific Island governments and noted the possibility of research trials to demonstrate if it has value for Pacific Island national statistical systems;
- asked for the database to stay an SPC-only asset and not be released to researchers until these issues are resolved.

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## *Session 4. Economic statistics*

### *4.1 Trade statistics and PACComtrade*

PSMB:

- acknowledged the development of the PACComtrade Database, noting that data have been sourced under a License Agreement and that the database will provide timely commodity data on goods that are imported and exported;
- encouraged countries using ASYCUDAWorld to consider participation in the PACComtrade Database, especially those countries with out-of-date trade data;
- noted that it is to be expected that this process of creating trade statistics in a regionally standardised manner may highlight inconsistencies or areas for improvement in countries' past IMTS production, which will need to be addressed on a country-by-country basis if and when they emerge;
- noted that the current project does not intend to replace IMTS in any country, but that individual countries might consider doing so or using the PACComTrade database as part of their IMTS process; and that in doing so, care would need to be taken of the great number of dependencies (balance of payments, national accounts, etc.) and systems that run in parallel for a while to identify the relationship between old and new.

## *4.2 System of National Accounts (SNA) 2025 revisions*

PSMB:

- noted that the revisions are unlikely to affect PICTs significantly;
- noted that measuring the depletion of natural resources and counting it as a cost of production would require significant work and would impact on gross national product or income, not gross domestic product.

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## *Session 5. PacStat and future projects to support Pacific methodology and innovation*

### *5.1 PacStat progress and milestones to date*

PSMB:

- noted SPC's achievement of PacStat targets to date, and wins including a poverty measurement method; the move from HIES diaries to recall; and increased use of economic microdata and access for researchers.

### *5.2 PacStat and future projects to support Pacific methodology and innovation*

PSMB:

- noted the World Bank's interest in Phase 2 of PacStat and its preference for 'bigger, simpler' projects;
- asked the World Bank and SPC to work together to develop a concrete proposal for members to consider.

## Annex 2: List of abbreviations

ABS	Australian Bureau of Statistics
AI	Artificial Intelligence
CAPI	Computer assisted personal interview
COVID-19	Corona virus disease 2019
CW	Commissioned work
ESCAP	United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific
DFAT	Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade
HIES	Household Income and Expenditure Survey
HOPS	Heads of Planning and Statistics
IDA	International Development Association
ISI	International Statistical Institute
IEP	Innovative experiment proposal
MICS	Multiple Indicator Cluster Surveys
NSO	National Statistics Office
NSS	National Statistical Systems
PacStat	Statistical Innovation and Capacity Building in the Pacific Islands
PDH	Pacific Data Hub
PDH-ML	Pacific Data Hub Microdata Library
PFTAC	Pacific Financial Technical Assistance Center
PICTs	Pacific Island countries and territories
PIFS	Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat
PSMB	Pacific Statistics Methods Board
SDD	Statistics for Development Division
SIDS	Small Island Developing States
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
SPC	Pacific Community
UNCTAD	United Nations Conference on Aid and Development
UNICEF	United Nations Children’s Fund
VBoS	Vanuatu Bureau of Statistics

## Annex 3: Agenda

### 14<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Pacific Statistics Methods Board (PSMB)

Port Vila, Vanuatu, 7–8 October 2024

#### Agenda

##### Day 1 – Monday 7 October

Time	Item	Lead/Documentation
08.00–08.30	Arrival and registration – Coffee, tea, water available	VBoS (Vanuatu Bureau of Statistics)
08.30–09.00	<b>Opening and welcome – 30 mins</b> Opening prayer Welcome to Vanuatu from host Roundtable: Introductions	Andy Calo, VBoS
09.00–10.00	<b>Opening of PSMB Meeting</b> Review of agenda – 10 mins Approval of previous meeting report and review of actions – 10 mins Reflections from PSMB13 – 20 mins Discussion on PSMB future chair and membership appointments 20 – mins	Chair Vince Galvin Agenda and previous meetings report
10.00–10.30	<b>Group photo Morning Tea/Coffee</b>	
10.30–11.15	<b>Session 1. Innovative Experiments for Collection Methods</b> <b>1.1 Tuvalu Long-Form Census</b> Innovative Experiment – report on evaluation and lesson learnt on the experiment – 45 mins <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ What worked well (planning and design, training and fieldwork, data processing and analysis) and how?</li> <li>▪ What are the challenges (planning and design, training and fieldwork, data processing and analysis)? How can they be improved?</li> </ul>	Benuel Lenge (SPC) and Lae Peleti (Tuvalu)/Final report and presentation
11.15–12:00	<b>1.2 Samoa Food Away From Home (FAFH)</b> Innovative Experiment – report on evaluation of experiment – 45 mins <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ What worked well (planning and design, training and fieldwork, data processing and analysis) and how?</li> <li>▪ What are the challenges (planning and design, training and fieldwork, data processing and analysis)? How can they be improved?</li> </ul>	Nathalie Troubat and Michael Sharp (SPC) and Lilianetelani Hennemann (Samoa) presentation
12.00–13.00	<b>Lunch</b>	
13.00–13.45	<b>1.3 Vanuatu Data Science Driving Innovation in Climate Change and Natural Disasters</b> – 45 mins	Andy Calo (Vanuatu) and Phil Bright (SPC)/Presentation
13.45–14.00	<b>1.4 Tuvalu Statistical Population Register (SPR) – 15 mins</b> <i>PSMB Recommendation – the need for initial work (e.g. confirming the legal base and the social license) before data integration</i>	Lae Peleti (Tuvalu) and Benuel Lenge (SPC)/Presentation
14.00–14.30	<b>1.5 High-frequency phone surveys</b> – summary of key findings and lessons learned – 30 mins	Shohei Nakamura (World Bank)/presentation
14.30–15.00	<b>Afternoon tea</b>	
15.00–15.45	<b>Session 2: Commissioned Work</b> <b>2.1 Microdata Anonymisation – 45mins</b> <i>Draft report – data protection and confidentiality, capacity building and</i>	Wolfgang Hertel (Consultant, SPC)/Paper and presentation

	<i>standardisation</i>	
15.45– 16.30	<b>2.2 Climate Change Survey and Core Module</b> – <i>45mins</i> Interim results of the field test and updates on methodological progress	<b>Lisa Green</b> (SPC) and <b>Monica Madrid</b> (SPC Consultant) with <b>Taggy Tangimetua</b> (Cook Islands and <b>Aritita Tekaieti</b> (Kiribati)/Paper and presentation
16.30– 17.00	<b>Wrap-up of day 1</b>	<b>Chair</b>

## Day 2 – Tuesday 8 October

Time	Item	Lead/Documentation
8.30– 9.00	<b>Session 3. Progress on data harmonisation and methods</b> <b>3.1 International Comparison Program 2024</b> for the Pacific – <i>30 mins</i>	<b>Geoffrey Wong</b> (SPC)/Paper
9.00– 09.30	<b>3.2 Pacific Food Consumption Database (PFCD)</b> Objective: Introduce PSMB to the PFCD and to discuss next steps, including dissemination – <i>30 mins</i>	<b>Michael Sharp, Nathalie Troubat</b> and <b>Helani Kottage</b> (SPC)/Presentation
9.30– 10.00	<b>3.3 Household Income and Expenditure Surveys Field Work Monitoring</b> – <i>30 mins</i>	<b>Aritita Tekaieti</b> (Kiribati) and <b>Bertrand Buffiere</b> (SPC)/Presentation
10.00– 10.30	<b>Morning Tea</b>	
10.30– 11:00	<b>Session 4. Economic Statistics</b> <b>4.1 Trade statistics and PACComtrade</b> – lessons learned so far from the Vanuatu pilot and implications for statistics methods <i>30 mins</i>	<b>Andy Calo</b> (VBoS) <b>Nilima Lal, Denis Grofils</b> (SPC)/Paper/Presentation
11.00– 11:30	<b>4.2 System of National Accounts 2025 revisions</b> – implications for Pacific Island countries statistical method – <i>30 mins</i>	<b>Donna Marie Grman</b> (PFTAC)
11.30– 12.00	<b>4.3 HIES Methods and recommendations</b> – <i>30 mins</i>	<b>Bertrand Buffiere</b> (SPC )
12:00– 13:00	<b>Lunch</b>	
13.00– 13:30	<b>Session 5. PacStat and future projects to support Pacific methodology and innovation</b> <b>5.1 PacStat progress &amp; milestones to date</b> – <i>30 mins</i>	<b>Siulai Elisala</b> (SPC)/Presentation
13.30– 14.30	<b>5.2 Discussion on needs, priorities, and options for future regional project</b> – <i>60 mins</i>	<b>William Seitz and Taufik Indrakesuma</b> (World Bank), <b>Peter Ellis</b> (SPC)/ Presentation
14.30– 15.00	<b>Afternoon Tea</b>	
15.00– 15.30	<b>PSMB14 Outcomes</b> – <i>30 mins</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Any other business</li> <li>▪ Approval of meeting outcomes</li> <li>▪ Priority topics for future meetings of PSMB</li> </ul>	<b>Chair/Outcomes report</b>
15.30– 16.00	<b>Closing</b> – <i>30 mins</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Date and agenda for next PSMB meeting</li> <li>▪ Concluding remarks</li> <li>▪ Closing prayer</li> </ul>	<b>Chair</b> <b>VBoS</b>



## Annex 4: List of participants

### MEMBERS

Organisation/Country	Physical attendance	Virtual attendance
<b>New Zealand</b>	<b>Mr Vince Galvin</b> (Chair) Chief Methodologist, Stats NZ <a href="mailto:vince.galvin@stats.govt.nz">vince.galvin@stats.govt.nz</a>	
<b>Australia</b>	<b>Mr Bruce Fraser</b> Principal Adviser, Survey Methodology, Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) <a href="mailto:bruce.fraser@abs.gov.au">bruce.fraser@abs.gov.au</a>	
<b>Cook Islands</b> (for small NSOs)	<b>Mrs Taggy Tangimetua</b> Government Statistician, Cook Islands National Statistics Office <a href="mailto:taggy.tangimetua@cookislands.gov.ck">taggy.tangimetua@cookislands.gov.ck</a>	
<b>Kiribati</b> (for Micronesia)	<b>Ms Aritita Tekaieti</b> Republic Statistician, Kiribati National Statistics Office <a href="mailto:atekaieti@gmail.com">atekaieti@gmail.com</a>	
<b>Tonga</b> (for Polynesia)	<b>Mr Sione Lolohea</b> Government Statistician, Tonga Statistics Department <a href="mailto:slolohea@stats.gov.to">slolohea@stats.gov.to</a>	
<b>Vanuatu</b> (for Melanesia)	<b>Mr Andy Calo</b> Chief Statistician, Vanuatu Bureau of Statistics <a href="mailto:acalo@vanuatu.gov.vu">acalo@vanuatu.gov.vu</a>	
<b>APOLOGIES:</b> <b>Fiji:</b> Mr Kemueli Naiqama, Chief Executive, Fiji Bureau of Statistics: <a href="mailto:knaiqama@statsfiji.gov.fj">knaiqama@statsfiji.gov.fj</a> <b>Samoa:</b> Mr Leota Aliielua Salani, Government Statistician, Samoa Bureau of Statistics: <a href="mailto:aliielua.salani@sbs.gov.ws">aliielua.salani@sbs.gov.ws</a> <b>UNICEF:</b> Mr James Kaphuka, Statistics & Monitoring Specialist, <a href="mailto:jkaphuka@unicef.org">jkaphuka@unicef.org</a>		

### OBSERVERS & PRESENTERS

Organisation/Country	Physical attendance	Virtual attendance
<b>Australia</b>	<b>Ms Denise Carlton</b> Program Manager, Population Statistics, ABS <a href="mailto:Denise.Carlton@abs.gov.au">Denise.Carlton@abs.gov.au</a>  <b>Mrs Brigitte Batschi</b> Program Management Officer, Pacific and Fiji Program, ABS <a href="mailto:brigitte.batschi@abs.gov.au">brigitte.batschi@abs.gov.au</a>	
<b>New Zealand</b>	<b>Dr Ofa Ketu'u</b> Senior Manager, Pacific Data Capability, Stats NZ <a href="mailto:ofa.ketuu@stats.govt.nz">ofa.ketuu@stats.govt.nz</a>  <b>Tracey Savage</b> Senior Design Analyst, Pacific Data Capability, Stats NZ <a href="mailto:tracey.savage@stats.govt.nz">tracey.savage@stats.govt.nz</a>	
<b>Solomon Islands</b>	<b>Mr Samson Kanamoli</b> Acting Government Statistician, Solomon Islands National Statistics Office <a href="mailto:Skanamoli@mof.gov.sb">Skanamoli@mof.gov.sb</a>	

<b>Tuvalu</b>	<b>Lae Peleti</b> Acting Government Statistician, Central Statistics Division <a href="mailto:lpeleti@gov.tv">lpeleti@gov.tv</a>	
<b>IMF PFTAC</b>	<b>Donna Marie Grcman</b> Regional Advisor on Real Sector Statistics <a href="mailto:dgrcman@imf.org">dgrcman@imf.org</a>	
<b>World Bank</b>	<b>Dr Shohei Nakamura</b> Economist <a href="mailto:Snakamura2@worldbank.org">Snakamura2@worldbank.org</a>	<p><b>Mr Taufik Indrakesuma</b> Economist <a href="mailto:tindrakesuma@worldbank.org">tindrakesuma@worldbank.org</a></p> <p><b>Mr William Hutchins Seitz</b> Senior Economist; Team Lead - Statistical Systems in East Asia and the Pacific <a href="mailto:wseitz@worldbank.org">wseitz@worldbank.org</a></p> <p><b>Mr Sharad Alan Tandon</b> Senior Economist <a href="mailto:standon3@worldbank.org">standon3@worldbank.org</a></p>

## SECRETARIAT

Organisation/Country	Physical attendance	Virtual attendance - Presenters
<b>Pacific Community (SPC)</b> Statistics for Development Division (SDD)	<p><b>Mr Peter Ellis (Member)</b> Director, SDD <a href="mailto:petere@spc.int">petere@spc.int</a></p> <p><b>Ms Evelyn Wareham</b> Manager, Statistics Leadership, Governance and Use <a href="mailto:evelynw@spc.int">evelynw@spc.int</a></p> <p><b>Ms Maria Musudroka</b> Manager, Statistics Collection <a href="mailto:mariam@spc.int">mariam@spc.int</a></p> <p><b>Mr Phil Bright</b> Manager Statistics Infrastructure and Dissemination <a href="mailto:philb@spc.int">philb@spc.int</a></p> <p><b>Mr Benuel Lenge</b> Statistics Adviser, PACSTAT <a href="mailto:blenga@spc.int">blenga@spc.int</a></p> <p><b>Mrs Elizabeth Ragimana</b> Statistics Advisor, Governance and Coordination <a href="mailto:elizabethr@spc.int">elizabethr@spc.int</a></p> <p><b>Mrs Nilima Lal</b> Statistics Advisor, Economic <a href="mailto:nilimal@spc.int">nilimal@spc.int</a></p>	<p><b>Mr Wolfgang Hertel</b> PACSTAT Consultant, SPC <a href="mailto:Wolfgang.Hertel@abs.gov.au">Wolfgang.Hertel@abs.gov.au</a></p> <p><b>Other SPC staff may also attend as observers.</b></p>

	<p><b>Ms Lisa Green</b> Statistics Advisor, Climate Change   <a href="mailto:isag@spc.int">isag@spc.int</a></p> <p><b>Mr Bertrand Buffière</b> Statistics Adviser (Methods) <a href="mailto:bertrandb@spc.int">bertrandb@spc.int</a></p> <p><b>Mr Michael Sharp</b> Statistics Adviser (Economic) <a href="mailto:msharp@spc.int">msharp@spc.int</a></p> <p><b>Ms Angela Templeton</b> Rapporteur <a href="mailto:templetona@gmail.com">templetona@gmail.com</a></p>	
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