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9th Pacific Statistics Methods Board Meeting (PSMB) Summary Report and Outcomes

12 and 13 April 2022
Virtual meeting hosted by SPC
Noumea, New Caledonia

Prepared by the
Statistics for Development Division (SDD) of the
Pacific Community (SPC)

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List of abbreviations

ABS	Australian Bureau of Statistics
ADB	Asian Development Bank
CAPI	Computer-assisted personal interviewing
CATI	Computer-assisted telephone interviewing
EOI	Expression of interest
ESCAP	Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific
HIES	Household Income and Expenditure Survey
HOPS	Heads of Pacific Planning and Statistics
NSO	National Statistics Office
PACSTAT	Statistical Innovation and Capacity Building in the Pacific Islands
PHC	Population and housing census
PICTs	Pacific Island countries and territories
PSMB	Pacific Statistics Methods Board
PSSC	Pacific Statistics Standing Committee
SDD	Statistics for Development Division (SPC)
SPC	Pacific Community

Summary of proceedings

The 9th Meeting of the Pacific Statistics Methods Board (PSMB) was held on 12 and 13 April 2022. The virtual meeting was hosted by SPC, Noumea, and was chaired by Vince Galvin. It was the first PSMB meeting for 2022.

Part 1 of the meeting, on 12 April, was attended by PSMB members and invited observers and consultants. Part 2 of the meeting, on 13 April, was an open dialogue on the recent census round in Pacific Island countries.

The agenda and presentations are available at: <https://sdd.spc.int/events/2022/04/9th-statistics-methods-board-meeting-psmb>

Participants	<p>Melanesia – Maria Musudroka, Fiji</p> <p>Micronesia – Aritita Tekaeiti, Kiribati</p> <p>Polynesia – Viliami Fifita, Tonga (Deputy Chair of PSMB)</p> <p>Small NSO offices – Ipia Gadabu, Nauru</p> <p>Australian Bureau of Statistics – Bruce Fraser</p> <p>Statistics New Zealand – Vince Galvin (Chair)</p> <p>Observers:</p> <p>Cook Islands – Taggy Tangimetua, Lualua Tua</p> <p>Samoa – Leota Aliielua Salani</p> <p>Pacific Community (SPC) – David Abbott, Michael Sharp, Alison Culpin, Andrea Borlizzi, Sandra Gianini</p> <p>Statistics New Zealand – Ofa Ketu'u</p> <p>World Bank – Kristen Himelein, Utz Pape</p> <p>PACSTAT – Professor Wadan Narsey and Nathalie Troubat, consultants</p>
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Part 1, 12 April 2022

Session 1: Review of PSMB terms of reference (TOR)

1. The **Chair** introduced a draft of the TOR with suggested revisions, noting the draft had been circulated to the subcommittee tasked with reviewing the TOR. The subcommittee met once.
2. He presented the key updates proposed under the following headings:
 - **Roles of the PSMB**
 - Relevance and applicability of the roles defined in the TOR.
 - **Representation and quorum**
 - Two representatives to represent each subregion (Melanesia, Micronesia, Polynesia, Small NSOs), rather than one as at present. Another suggestion was to invite representatives of all NSOs to attend PSMB meetings.
 - Six members would form a quorum, assuming the PSMB had eleven members.
 - **Early circulation of the agenda and EOIs**
 - **Specifying topics for PSMB to consider**
 - The original TOR define the topics for PSMB quite closely, with a focus on census and household surveys. Is it better to be less specific and rather to respond to issues that arise?

- **Other matters**
 - Process for revising the TOR.
 - Clarification of points in the TOR that seem to confuse statistical issues and the products that PSMB might produce.

Discussion

3. **Viliami Fifita** said COVID restrictions and lack of in-person meetings had disrupted connections between PSMB members and between subregional representatives and the countries/NSOs they represented. He requested:
 - that all NSOs be provided with the infrastructure needed for reliable connectivity and communication (this could be compulsory);
 - meetings of subregions to enable their PSMB representatives to properly represent their views to the Board;
 - support for mobilising capacity through peer-to-peer initiatives.

Tonga's NSO has benefited from assistance on technology from its government and the World Bank. The assistance included training and connection to experts.

4. **Ipia Gadabu** agreed with Viliami on the need for better communication between PSMB representatives and their constituents, noting that the Pacific Statistics Standing Committee (PSSC) formerly had a communication programme for subregional consultation. He also agreed with the concept of maintaining the robustness of the PSMB by having two delegates for each subregion.

PSMB should be more active in determining the risk factors the region should look at, given the impacts of COVID and other catastrophic events.

5. **Michael Sharp** noted communication had been raised as a critical issue and suggested that PSMB return to having one face-to-face meeting a year in combination with virtual meetings.
6. The **Chair** agreed on the importance of face-to-face meetings including the benefits of forming personal relationships, as PSMB members had been able to do initially. As Viliami highlighted, in-person and virtual meetings complement each other, with the latter allowing for more frequent meetings, especially for subgroup discussions.

He suggested circulating the draft TOR to all PSMB members to give everyone time to reflect on the updates and provide feedback before they are signed off. There were no objections.

Session 2: PACSTAT (standing agenda item)

Innovative experiment on food away from home (FAFH)

Presenter: Nathalie Troubat, SPC consultant (*the presentation was pre-recorded*).

7. FAFH is defined as food and beverage acquired and consumed out of a person's dwelling, that is, at restaurants, work, schools and feasts. It is a significant source of dietary energy for Pacific people, but current data collection and processing methodologies are potentially introducing error in estimating calories from FAFH. This in turn affects the measurement of poverty (SDG 1.1 and 1.2) and undernourishment (SDG 2.1).
8. To more accurately estimate dietary energy sourced from FAFH in PICTs, SDD will conduct an experiment to:
 - i. test the assumption that the cost of a calorie consumed at home is the same as the cost of a calorie consumed away from home;
 - ii. propose alternative ways to collect FAFH consumption.

9. To collect data, an additional survey module on FAFH will be included in Samoa's HIES in 2023. The experiment will also involve building a database including photos, recipes, weights, nutrient content and cost of the main meals available for FAFH consumption.
10. The project will take two years. Projected outcomes include improved estimates of the prevalence of poverty and undernourishment for Samoa's SDG reporting; a more accurate estimate of the average amount of dietary energy consumed in Samoa; better information on dietary patterns in Samoa; and a contribution to the region's knowledge on estimating calories sourced from FAFH consumption.

Discussion

11. **Ipia** queried the cost adjustment factors relating to trade, saying that consumption patterns in small island states (SIS) are affected by changes in shipping routes and external factors such as the cost of flour and rice.
12. **Nathalie** said that, for the moment, a cost adjustment factor of 1.5 (derived from an old Papua New Guinea survey) is being used. This factor will be revised.
13. **Andrea Borlizzi** said cost adjustment factors might not be stable over time in the same country. Ideally, once factors are estimated, they should be recalculated in the event of a crisis such as COVID.
14. **Utz Pape** expressed caution about the expected outcomes. There is no convincing evidence as yet that cost adjustment factors are consistent across a region. This needs to be a follow-up research question. As already noted, many factors affect costs, such as terms of trade, taxes and labour shortages. The experiment is a starting point that will inform future calculation of cost adjustment factors, but it should not be seen as a basis for providing recommendations for a 'gold standard' protocol for the whole region. For example, a seven-day diary of food consumption is only accurate if there is careful supervision.
15. **Nathalie** said the comments on cost adjustment factors were noted. The project will follow World Bank guidelines on assessing the calorie approach to seven-day recall.

Draft climate change module

Presenter: Alison Culpin, SPC

16. The project will develop a climate change and natural disasters module and a reference manual. It is designed to improve household data collection and analysis, assess socio-economic impacts and find positives in adapting to climate change. The work will be done under the guiding framework of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC).
17. The research will include a literature review, stakeholder consultation, development of a core module with six to eight questions (similar to the Washington disability module), and a larger model questionnaire for PICTs.
18. It is hoped to have a draft product to consult on by mid-year. The questionnaire will be field-tested in the Tuvalu long-form census. The aim is to go beyond yes/no answers and to develop composite indicators to summarise multi-dimensional climate change issues and contribute to policy discussions.

Discussion

19. **Viliami** asked what gaps the new survey will fill and what data is not available through current tools. NSOs have to consider their capacity and resources to fulfil the requirements of numerous surveys, while also providing information in response to strategies such as the SDGs, SAMOA Pathway, etc.

20. **Ipia** said the small size of Nauru's NSO meant having to use other government departments with expertise in climate change, etc. The NSO can help with data analysis, but is more likely to use other departments to collect or provide information. Small NSOs lack the ability to provide Tier 1 and Tier 2 indicators.
21. **Alison** said at present there is no good way of measuring climate change-induced migration. Countries are receiving large amounts of funding for climate change adaptation, but there is little data to show whether the money is improving conditions for people on the ground. North Pacific countries, e.g. Federated States of Micronesia, have tried to include questions in their census and would find it useful to be able to include tried and tested questions.

Innovative experiment on the Tuvalu long-form census

Presenter: Michael Sharp, SPC

22. The project is a collaboration between the Tuvalu NSO, ADB and SPC. It addresses the issue of under-resourced NSOs and their challenges in implementing national surveys. National collections require extensive planning and analysis and are a burden on households.
23. To address this issue, SDD is assisting Tuvalu to integrate its HIES into its census, with the intention of creating a one-visit survey. When interviewing respondents selected for the HIES, enumerators will see the HIES questions, but for census-only respondents they will not.
24. ADB is providing CAPI and data processing support, and collaboration between ADB and SDD is going well. The project is currently at the stage of questionnaire design. There are still some details to be ironed out, including fieldwork organisation and internet connectivity issues.

Discussion

25. **Ipia** asked whether the project will look at seasonality effects on import prices/consumer price index (CPI). Seasonality can result in shortages of some foods in Nauru.
26. **Michael** acknowledged Ipia's concerns about price risks and said global trade prices also have food security implications. FAFH may not be as well reflected in the CPI as it should be.

The presentation was for information only and no decisions were required at this stage.

Session 3: Methodological review for maximising the dissemination and use of microdata in the context of Small Island Developing States – draft report

Presenter: Prof. Wadan Narsey, consultant

27. The TOR for the review (PSMB Commissioned Work 1) were broad, with a focus on agriculture, food security, gender and labour. The basic question was 'What is blocking access to, and use of Pacific microdata?'
28. The review included a look at the history of microdata in the Pacific and its use. According to international standards and openness rankings, PICTs are generally lagging behind other comparable developing countries globally in the openness of development data indicators in general, and use and access to microdata in particular.
29. The use and performance of the Pacific Data Hub–Microdata Library (PDH–ML) are clearly mixed and there is much room for improvement. SDD should build stronger relationships with both regional and national universities and Australian and New Zealand institutions and universities. Gathering and analysing data will help strengthen links.
30. As part of the review, PICT NSOs were asked to respond to a questionnaire. The response was small, limiting generalisation. However, the responses received indicated the following:

- Consensus that NSOs want more evidence-based reports and policy recommendations based on their microdata, and more work on anonymisation. SDD can provide the support required.
- A small proportion of those responding thought their governments might not be interested in more reports in case they reflected adversely on their performance (this fear can be addressed by NSO sensitivity).
- Several PICTs need to update their legislation relating to data sharing.
- There is no standard practice in PICTs for microdata storage. This requires urgent attention since a natural disaster (e.g. a tsunami) could destroy all of a country's data.

31. Considerations

- As a first step, PSMB must prioritise data storage in the PDH for all PICTs, with data only able to be used with PICT permission.
- Consideration should be given to making suitably edited microdata available to anyone who wants to use it.
- Changes in methodologies affect data and the continuity of information. It is important that researchers have access to the original data, but the question of 'who owns the data' needs to be considered.
- PSMB needs to agree on a project for analysts, agencies and academics to come together and look at microdata. PICT microdata, including HIES data, should be put in Tier 1 to be analysed and used to produce information that countries can use.
- Freeing up access to data for research, with government agreement, can yield valuable information, e.g. evidence of unfair sharing of unpaid labour between men and women. Relevant policy can be made based on this type of evidence. As a minimum requirement, all research reports produced should be deposited with the PDH, and ideally be available to all PDH users.

Discussion

32. **Viliani** asked for clarity on 'who is doing what'. NSOs are responsible for the primary collection and analysis of data but need experts for further thematic analysis, e.g. education analysis. It is important to make data available, as the draft report states. The SDGs have shown needs for increased planning, decisions, and monitoring, evaluation and learning.
33. **Ipia** asked for confirmation that there was already a data archiving agreement with SPC. He agreed that data should be available to researchers, etc., but some PICTs have very small populations. Data has to be aggregated but releasing it may incur a criminal penalty. He recalled proposing a Pacific Centre of Excellence for Statistics at a PSMB meeting in July 2020. There has been no action as yet, although there was a recommendation for such a centre in an earlier HOPS meeting report.
34. **The Chair** submitted the following comments on the review shortly after the meeting (these were not presented during the meeting due to time constraints).

Jurisdictional issues

For a long time, Stats NZ did not put its unit record files into repositories in other jurisdictions because of advice that its enabling legislation did not allow putting the files in an environment where New Zealand law could not be enforced. Currently, new legislation in process will enable the NZ Government Statistician to make this decision. Other countries may have similar obstacles.

Confidence of Iwi Maori

In the New Zealand context, it became apparent that Maori were not happy with their data being accessed by people they did not know to conduct research they did not find accessible,

with outcomes they often felt stigmatised by. The response to this issue is outlined in the link below to the relevant part of the Stats NZ website.

Stats NZ extended the idea of the '5 Safes' to incorporate a series of protocols (tikanga) to explicitly respect the subject of the data. The process has worked well in practice despite initial fears that it would cause frustration with researchers and unresolvable problems.

The protocols require researchers to consider their relationship to the community being studied, their competence to understand their issues, and their ability to articulate the impacts on the community. It is a form of research ethics constructed from a Maori worldview.

As well as the capability issue discussed above, PICT NSOs may be concerned that research conducted on their unit record data may not understand important nuances of the collection context, and authors may not give explicit consideration to the consequences of the work. (In examples in the draft report, Prof. Narsey emphasised experiences where he had gone back into communities to discuss the implications of his research with them.)

The framework that Stats NZ uses (Nga Tikanga Paihere) could be looked at as a potential resource in thinking about these issues:

<https://www.stats.govt.nz/integrated-data/apply-to-use-microdata-for-research/how-to-apply-nga-tikanga-paihere-to-microdata-research-projects/>

35. **The Chair** thanked Professor Narsey for presenting the draft review. An updated draft will shortly be circulated to PSMB members together with possible next steps.

Session 4: Closing of Part 1

36. The Chair thanked everyone for their contributions to Part 1 of the meeting. He noted there was no time to discuss administrative matters but said members would be advised of the dates and agenda of the next PSMB meeting closer to the time.

Part 2, 13 April 2022

Session 1: Open dialogue on the challenges, issues and lessons learned in conducting a census in a COVID-19 environment

Samoa population and housing census (PHC), 2021

Presenter: Leota Aliielua Salani

37. Samoa's census is conducted every five years, using the *de jure* approach (individuals are enumerated at their usual place of residence where they have been living at least three months).

Challenges

- COVID caused complications and required adjustments to enumeration methods. CATI was used to meet social distancing requirements. The call-back period was extended to capture those not at home at the first call.
- Data imputation, using information from other surveys, was used to supplement census information.
- GPS was used to link households with data.

Opportunities

- The national ID project will be supported by census information.
- Improved civil registration – a new system is being introduced.
- Street naming address project – the Bureau of Statistics will work with this project, which will reduce census costs and the burden on respondents.

Tonga census, 2021

Presenter: Viliami Fifita

38. In 2016, Tonga conducted its first census using CAPI. Teachers collected the data though not all were familiar with the technology. For the 2021 census, a pool of data collectors was formed, with a view to finding a balance between senior, committed people and young, less experienced ones. The census finished in December before COVID cases occurred in Tonga.

Challenges

- With CAPI, tone of voice matters in getting accurate information from respondents. It would be useful to trial the accuracy of different data collection methods, such as CATI and CAPI. Answers to questions face-to-face are not always true and the same applies to CATI.
- Technical capacity and sampling – Tonga normally does household sampling but is moving to area sampling.
- The volcano eruption in December 2021 affected everyone in Tonga but to different degrees depending on location. A natural disaster, or a pandemic such as COVID, may require changes in collection method.
- Some minorities do not believe in vaccination or being enumerated – 'being told what to do by government'. A campaign is needed to inform people about the importance of data, e.g. the NSO asked the Ministry of Finance not to provide assistance to poor households who had declined to take part in the census. People who had not taken part called and asked to be included so they could get the benefit.

Kiribati PHC, 2020, and COVID-19 impacts

Presenter: Aritita Tekaieti

39. The census was conducted before COVID hit Kiribati. Nevertheless, COVID caused challenges due to impacts on overseas countries, e.g. lack of spare parts for planes. Enumerators had to travel to the Line Islands by ship and spend eight months there. Extra funding was required and training was difficult.

Unexpected positive impacts of COVID

- It was a good time to adopt new technology (CAPI).
- Communication between SPC and the NSO was greatly facilitated by the new technology.
- Staff became more confident in using technology and developed their skills. Local technical capacity was also used.
- The budget for the census was increased.
- Staff worked well together.

Nauru PHC, 2021

Presenter: Lindsay Thoma

40. Census enumeration took place in November and December 2021.

Challenges

- Slow process for renewing weekly charge to top up tablets (some enumerators paid for their own top-up and were reimbursed).
- Shortage of enumerators – some resigned during fieldwork and some were incompetent. Replacements were recruited, but they needed rapid training. Some enumerators took on additional areas.
- Nauru was COVID-free during census data collection but still used virtual training. Enumerators had protective equipment (enumeration was face-to-face).
- Survey overlap – other surveys were also being conducted, e.g. a child protection survey, so enumerators sometimes clashed, fatiguing household members. Some households did not want to respond because they had just been interviewed.

Next steps

- Data editing, release of preliminary tables, preparation of full analysis report (six months after completion of fieldwork), dissemination of the full report, and a data utilisation workshop.

Lessons learned

- The census included modules on agriculture, fisheries, climate change and environment. This meant the questionnaire was very long.
- Virtual training requires better wi-fi connection (especially as there were 50 or 60 participants) and a proper venue. The costs should be included in the census budget.
- Training included CAPI, which was used in Nauru for the first time, and manual GPS mapping.

Marshall Islands census, 2021

Presenter: Frederick J. De Brum

41. The census started in 2021, with CAPI being used for the first time. SPC was acknowledged for providing census assistance.

Challenges

- Isolation of rural areas and low connectivity with outer islands (needed to be sure tablets were fully charged).
- Some people refused to be enumerated. They were tired of surveys and disagreed with the government.
- Timing of the census, including training.

Cook Islands census

Presenter: Lualua Tua

42. Cook Islands conducted its population census alongside an agricultural census. The population census is now at the data cleaning stage. It was delayed due to legal issues and around 20 enumerators were lost. At enumeration, more dropped out due to performance and availability issues.

Challenges

- The timing of the census was too close to Christmas, e.g. people were travelling to New Zealand.
- Mode of collection – in addition to CAPI, paper forms were also prepared for self-interviews for some households. These were used mostly for Rarotonga. The forms were dropped off and collected later for online data entry. Considerable follow-up was required because of the quality of the data.
- Household listing was a problem. There were many missing GPS points (e.g. new houses were not included).

Lessons learned

- The need for better planning and improved household listing.
- Avoidance of overlapping surveys.

Discussion

43. **Lindsay Thoma** (Nauru) asked if other PICTs encountered language barriers, e.g. with people who speak Mandarin or Cantonese. Nauru did not have interpreters.

44. **Viliami Fifita** (Tonga) said Tonga has a student exchange programme with China so there are people who can interpret. However, Tonga's Chinese population speaks Tongan fluently. Where necessary, interpreters are used.

Tonga has a problem with home addresses. There are no names for streets. There are island divisions, districts and villages and also constituencies – land owned by nobles or government. The lack of a home address system has an impact on people's safety including during emergencies.

45. **Casmir Remengesau** (Palau) said Palau also has Chinese-speaking locals who can interpret. Palau produced its census forms in several languages. However, he did not recommend conducting a census during a pandemic. Many people went overseas and many households did not want to participate in the census. Listing was inaccurate because many people had left the country.

46. **The Chair** noted chat comments (see paragraphs 49–55 below) on using GPS codes for home addresses and a request to Cook Islands to share information on the challenges of conducting agriculture and census surveys at the same time.
47. **Lualua Tua** (Cook Islands) said the collaboration went well at first, with the NSO providing its lists to the agriculture sector and identifying households involved in agriculture. However, they were unable to continue the work for many reasons. The benefits of combining the censuses were limited and there are still problems to be resolved.
48. **Ipia Gadabu** said Nauru included other modules in its census, but this resulted in a long list of questions. The information may be published in stages, with census information first. Nauru's HIES and MICS are scheduled for 2022/2023 and they may provide information for SDG indicators.

Summary of chat comments

Lack of street address systems

49. Several PICTs noted the challenges presented by lack of proper street address/number systems, and the difficulty of identifying separate households living in apartment buildings. PICTs used GPS locations, which link to household heads, but these produce numbers of up to 18 digits.
50. In Tonga, the responsible ministry has not been able to assign street names or respond to requests to enable the NSO to link the GPS location of a household dwelling/household head to an address. Administrative locations also overlap and need to be revised.
51. In 2019, Palau used hand-held GPS devices to plot all houses in Palau. The resulting household listing was then provided to the Office of the Palau Automated Land and Resources Information System, which plotted the households on to maps. These maps are now easily accessible and are being used for a street address project, using the household listing information, linked with census data. SPC is using the data for its PopGIS application, which PICTs can also use for their street address projects.
52. In addition to Palau, Samoa and Tonga are also currently undertaking projects to establish street address systems.

'what3words' address system

53. SDD commented that *what3words* has given every 3-metre square in the world a unique three-word address. It combines GPS locations with three words that are randomly assigned to each square and that will always stay the same.

what3words.com has possible applications to geolocate small areas in emergency situations, but also to identify infrastructure and possibly a dwelling. For example, to go to the Central Statistics Division in Funafuti atoll, use three words: 'drum.skies.fields' (<https://what3words.com/drum.skies.fields>). These words provide a unique three-word address.

Conducting a population and agricultural census together

54. In response to a question on the challenges and benefits of conducting population census and agriculture census surveys at the same time, Cook Islands said the biggest challenge with the agriculture census was coordinating the fieldwork. This issue will need further work if the decision is made to run the two censuses alongside each other in future.
55. SDD referred participants to the FAO publication, 'Guidelines for linking population and housing censuses with agricultural censuses with selected country practices' (<https://www.fao.org/documents/card/en/c/22775ca6-0589-54fb-810e-bc08c30e0e9e>).

Technical support to PICTs – Use of CAPI systems

Presenter: Toga Raikoti, SPC

56. Due to COVID restrictions, SDD provided remote support to several PICTs, including:

- a model questionnaire and technology support, such as procurement of tablets;
- training of enumerators and supervisors via Zoom/Teams;
- fieldwork support and data monitoring;
- data processing – editing and tabulation.

Highlights

- Building NSO capacity to work independently on planning, field operations and training. Many NSO staff had previous experience with CAPI and were effective and competent.

Challenges

- No control of what is happening on the ground, especially when PICTs are using CAPI for the first time. More time is required for clarification of training and information.
- Interpretation of training information in PICTs can be a problem.
- Troubleshooting of technology is difficult when not in country.
- When working offline, PICTs may make changes that SDD is not aware of.

Lesson learned

Technical support has to be done in country to be successful.

Tapping into administrative data

Presenter: Afsaneh Yazdani, Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP)

57. In the Pacific, paper-based methods are still the main method for data collection.

- Using admin data reduces costs and improves coverage, but it requires interoperable systems.
- Data must be high-quality and public approval is important.
- A population register is often the best source of data and can combine admin and survey data.
- Most countries in the Asia-Pacific region use traditional census methods.
- ESCAP has good resources for exploring the use of admin data.

Take-aways

- Admin data can improve the quality and efficiency of a census.
- Transition to a full admin census is a gradual process.

Use of administrative data and population registers for census

Presenter: Gloria Mathenge, UN Economic Commission for Africa

58. Key drivers of change for PHC are the gradual shift to more use of admin data and population registers. This move is likely to be increased by the pandemic and the Pacific region should not be left behind.

- UN programme on legal ID – the UN advocates integrated population registers as a basis for admin census methods.

- In the Pacific, all PICTs have civil registration systems and some are achieving credibility. Some PICTs also have ID legislation. As yet, no PICT has a population register (efforts began between SPC and Tuvalu but the work was interrupted).

Recommendations

- It is crucial that Pacific census systems prepare for the future.
- Admin data must be high quality and monitored.
- Digital registration systems are a challenge, requiring investment and consideration of security.
- Implementing register-based surveys will require strengthening institutions.
- PICTs have opportunities to learn from other countries including Scandinavian countries.

Discussion

59. **Leota Aliielua Salani** (Samoa) said Samoa agreed with the use of population registers to complement census data but recognised they take years to develop. One of Samoa's strategies is to renew its legislation to support development of a population register.
60. The **Chair** agreed with Samoa's approach, noting New Zealand has made slow progress despite government approval in 2015.

Session 2: Close of meeting

61. Andrea Borlizzi, SPC, asked PICT representatives who have not yet done so to return their questionnaires on microdata sharing.
62. The Chair thanked everyone for their participation and contribution of information and encouraged NSOs to submit agenda items to PSMB, e.g. on continued development of administrative data and population registers.

Meeting outcomes

Meeting website: <https://sdd.spc.int/events/2022/04/9th-statistics-methods-board-meeting-psmb>

1. Review of PSMB's terms of reference

PSMB noted the results of the review of the TOR and agreed that an updated draft would be circulated to all members for further comment before the TOR are signed off. Members also highlighted the importance of holding both in-person and virtual meetings of PSMB.

2. PACSTAT

PSMB acknowledged the updates on three statistical research projects being conducted under PACSTAT:

- i. Developing more accurate estimates of calories contributed by consumption of Food Away From Home.
- ii. A new climate change module that will provide data, e.g. on climate-induced migration, that is not otherwise available.
- iii. The Tuvalu long-form census, which will combine the HIES and census in one survey.

PSMB expressed caution about the regional applicability of the cost adjustment factors being produced in project i and noted that the ever-increasing number of surveys are stretching NSO capacity and resources.

3. Methodological review for maximising the dissemination and use of microdata in the context of Small Island Developing States – draft report

PSMB acknowledged the comprehensive review report and the suggested recommendations, including the need for urgent action on data storage, and making microdata more freely available, provided certain conditions are met. The meeting agreed that an updated draft of the review would be circulated to PSMB members together with possible next steps.

4. Open dialogue on the challenges, issues and lessons learned in conducting a census in a COVID-19 environment

PSMB listened with interest to presentations from Samoa, Tonga, Kiribati, Nauru, Marshall Islands and Cook Islands on their censuses in 2021 and acknowledged progress being made in adopting new technology such as CAPI and CATI. PSMB also noted:

- i. common challenges including unreliable internet connectivity and difficulties in recruiting and training enumerators;
- ii. the reluctance of some householders to be interviewed due to the increasing number of surveys they are expected to respond to, and to COVID-19-related safety measures;
- iii. the need to avoid conducting a census during a pandemic;
- iv. the need for better identification of street addresses in some countries.

5. Use of administrative data and population registers for census

PSMB agreed on the advantages of moving to greater use of administrative data as part of census processes, while noting that considerable work is required to bring PICT administrative data up to the required standards. The meeting also recognised the value of population registers and the potential for Pacific countries to learn from other countries that have established registers.

6. Next PSMB meeting

PSMB members will be advised of the dates and agenda of their next meeting closer to the time. When COVID restrictions permit, PSMB supports having one face-to-face meeting a year in addition to virtual meetings.

List of participants (Day 1)

Members

New Zealand Statistics NZ	Vince Galvin Chair Chief Methodologist, Statistical Methods
Tonga	Dr Viliami Fifita Konifelenisi Vice-Chair Government Statistician
Australia Australian Bureau of Statistics	Bruce Fraser Director, Household Statistical Methodology
Fiji Islands	Maria Musudroka Acting Chief Executive of the Fiji Bureau of Statistics
Nauru	Ipia Gadabu Director of Statistics Chair PSSC
Cook Islands	Taggy Tangimetua Government Statistician and Chief Electoral Officer Vice-chair of PSSC
Kiribati	Aritita Tekaieti Republic Statistician
Samoa	Leota Aliielua Salani ACEO-Finance Statistics SBS

Observers

World Bank	Kristen Himelein Senior Economist/Statistician Utz Pape Senior Economist, Poverty & Equity Global Practice
New Zealand Statistics NZ	Dr Ofa Ketu'u Programme Manager: Pacific Statistics Support Programme (Pacific Programme)

Secretariat

Pacific Community (SPC)
Statistics for Development Division (SDD)
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David Abbott
Acting Director, SDD
Manager, Data Analysis and Dissemination

Michael Sharp
Economic Statistics and Microdata Specialist

Andrea Borlizzi
Statistics Advisor

Sandra Gianini
Finance and Administration Officer

Rapporteur

Angela Templeton
New Zealand

List of participants (Day 2)

Members

New Zealand Statistics NZ	Vince Galvin Chair Chief Methodologist, Statistical Methods
Tonga	Dr Viliami Fifita Konifelenisi Vice-Chair Government Statistician
American Samoa	Meleisea Vai Filiga Chief of Statistics
Australia Australian Bureau of Statistics	Bruce Fraser Director, Household Statistical Methodology
CNMI	Justin H. Andrew Director
Cook Islands	Taggy Tangimetua Government Statistician and Chief Electoral Officer Vice-Chair of PSSC
Federated States of Micronesia	Brihmer Johnson Assistant Secretary
Fiji Islands	Maria Musudroka Acting Chief Executive, Fiji Bureau of Statistics
Guam	Tyrone Taitano Director, Bureau of Statistics and Plans
Kiribati	Aritita Tekaeiti Republic Statistician
Marshall Islands	Frederick J. De Brum Director
Nauru	Ipia Gadabu Director of Statistics Chair of PSSC
Niue	Kimray Vaha Government Statistician
Palau	Casmir Remengesau Director
Papua New Guinea	John Igitoi Acting National Statistician
Samoa	Leota Aliielua Salani ACEO-Finance Statistics SBS
Solomon Islands	Douglas Kimi Census Commissioner and Government Statistician
Tokelau	Kele Lui Statistician
Tuvalu	Grace Alapati Government Statistician
Vanuatu	Benuel Lenge Government Statistician

Observers

American Samoa	Meleisea Vai Filiga Chief of Statistics
FAO	Eriko Hibi Subregional Coordinator Joseph Nyemah
UNESCAP	Chris Ryan Statistician
UNFPA	Sandra Paredes Population and Development Adviser
World Bank	Utz Pape Senior Economist/Statistician
New Zealand Statistics NZ	Dr Ofa Ketu'u Programme Manager: Pacific Statistics Support Programme (Pacific Program)

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