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Pacific Statistics Methods Board Meeting
28–29 October 2019, SPC Headquarters, Noumea, New Caledonia
Summary Report and Recommendations

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
CAPI	Computer-assisted personal interviewing
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization
HIES	Household Income and Expenditure Survey
IDA	International Development Association
ILO	International Labour Organization
MICS	Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey
NSO	National Statistics Office
PFTAC	Pacific Financial Technical Assistance Centre
PICTs	Pacific Island countries and territories
PSMB	Pacific Statistics Methods Board
RMI	Republic of the Marshall Islands
SDD	Statistics for Development Division (SPC)
SPC	Pacific Community
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund

Participants

UNICEF United Nations Children’s FundThe Pacific Statistics Methods Board (PSMB) met at SPC headquarters, Noumea, New Caledonia, from 28 to 29 October 2019. The meeting was chaired by Vince Galvin.	
Participants	The following Board members and observers attended: Melanesia – Kemueli Naiqama, Fiji Micronesia – Tyrone Taitano, Guam Polynesia – Dr Viliami Konifelenisi Fifita, Tonga Australian Bureau of Statistics – Bruce Fraser Statistics New Zealand – Vince Galvin (Chair), Dr Ofa Ketu'u, Tracey Savage UN agencies – Stanley G. Gwavuya (UNICEF) Observers: Kiribati – Aritita Tekaieti PFTAC – Luis Temes Castrillon UNFPA – Sandra Paredez World Bank – Kristen Himelein Pacific Community (SPC) – Epeli Waqavonovono, David Abbot, Michael Sharp

Summary of proceedings

All papers and presentations referred to in this report are available online:

<https://sdd.spc.int/events/2019/10/pacific-statistics-methods-board-psmb-meeting>

Agenda item 1: Confirmation of PSMB Deputy Chair

1. The Chair thanked Dr Viliami Konifelenisi Fifita, Government Statistician, Tonga, for accepting the role of PSMB Deputy Chair.

Agenda items 2 and 3: Updating methods for poverty measurement in PICTs

2. Measurement of both monetary and non-monetary poverty relates to SDG 1 and the reporting requirements for the SDG indicators 1.1.1, 1.2.1 and 1.2.2.¹

Monetary poverty measurement

3. Kristen Himelein (World Bank) presented the rationale for monetary poverty measurement and a detailed explanation of methodologies for its calculation.
4. Monetary poverty measurement, which is used to report against SDG indicators 1.1.1 and 1.2.1 (and, depending on the national definition, 1.2.2), requires analysis of two types of data: (a) a consumption aggregate, and (b) a poverty line (some countries, e.g. Fiji, use income instead of

¹ SDG indicator 1.1.1: Proportion of population below the international poverty line, by sex, age, employment status and geographical location (urban/rural); SDG indicator 1.2.1: Proportion of population living below the national poverty line, by sex and age; SDG 1.2.2: Proportion of men, women and children of all ages living in poverty in all its dimensions according to national definitions.

consumption). The World Bank is the custodian of these indicators and is therefore leading the methodology.

5. Using data from household surveys, a consumption aggregate is obtained by annualising the sum of four components (food spending; eligible non-food spending; use value of durables; and imputed rent), expressing this total in per capita or per adult equivalence terms, and then applying spatial and temporal price deflators. The presentation detailed issues that arise in measuring each component in Pacific contexts and suggested ways of addressing them.
6. The international poverty line of USD 1.90 per day (calculated by the World Bank) enables comparisons of poverty among countries globally. A national poverty line takes into account living conditions in an individual country or region. To obtain a national poverty line, the World Bank recommends using a cost-of-basic-needs poverty line based on a basket of the food that poor people actually consume, without considering its nutritional value.
7. Analysts producing poverty measurements need to use a software program that is capable of handling the calculations required and keeping a record of the steps. Choices include, among others, Stata, R, or SAS. Excel can be used for some parts of the analysis but cannot handle all the calculations and does not allow for transparent traceability of data processing/analysis steps.
8. The presentation ended by proposing draft recommendations to PSMB for monetary poverty measurement in the Pacific Islands region, noting that there will be further consultation before finalising an agreed set of recommendations.
9. The World Bank recognises that implementing new/updated methods for poverty measurement will require significant capacity building for NSOs and is committed to developing training materials, and to initiating a programme of training in partnership with SPC and other agencies. Expected benefits of implementing the recommended methods include increased NSO capability, standardisation of methods, and data comparability.
10. The following questions of detail that will be addressed in the final support material, which include areas not covered in the presentation, were put forward for PSMB's consideration. The answers will be used to expand on the final agreed recommendations for implementation.
 - 1) How should home production be priced – unit values, market survey, other?
 - 2) When calculating the number of calories per 100 g of prepared meals, should a multiplier be used? If so, how should the value be determined?
 - 3) Should urgent health-care spending be included in the non-food consumption aggregate?
 - 4) Should the household composition adjustment take into account partakers?
 - 5) What method should be adopted with regard to price deflators?
 - 6) Should there be a regional caloric requirement? How should that value be set?
 - 7) What method should be used for calculating the non-food component of the poverty line?
 - 8) How should the poverty line be adjusted over time?

Discussion

11. The following points were raised during the discussion of the recommended approaches to measuring monetary poverty:
 - Pricing is a critical issue that needs to be resolved. In most countries, unit prices are used for home consumption, but this does not work well in PICTs (the presentation gave the example of breadfruit consumption in Tonga). Exchange of goods, or barter, is important in some PICTs, e.g. Kiribati. Barter should be priced.

- SPC, among others, has used a shadow pricing methodology over the past decade. The need for more surveys to collect prices has been suggested.
- The definition of calorie requirements was discussed, including the appropriateness of using the FAO definitions.
- PSMB could look at appropriate adult-equivalence scales for the regions, noting, however, that these should not vary widely from those for other regions.
- The core assumption that there is a direct relationship between people's income and their spending on food was questioned. In many Pacific Islands, people have no trouble meeting their dietary energy requirements even with very low incomes.
- Health elasticities are quite high for most PICTs. One of the questions to be resolved is whether spending on urgent health care should be included in the non-food consumption aggregate. It was noted that household expenditure on health is generally a low proportion of total expenditure because most health care is free in PICTs.
- In relation to imputed rent, the World Bank recommends a decision path for assessing rents to overcome the problem of thin rental markets and the tendency to overestimate values compared to actual values (as is common everywhere). Several specific factors affect rent prices in Pacific markets, e.g. low rents paid by occupiers of unused houses whose owners have migrated.

General concerns

- There was concern about the feasibility of implementing the recommendations in Pacific NSOs, given their capacity constraints, small staff resources (in some SIS, only one or two people) and widespread use of Excel.
 - How will Government Statisticians persuade policy makers they need more resources? What is the role of PSMB in ensuring NSOs have the resources they need to implement the recommendations?
 - The World Bank considers that with training and long-term support, countries will be able to build the required capability to implement the new methods including using new software, though this may be a gradual process. The Pacific Island region is the only one in the world that does not use a statistical analysis package. The planned IDA project at SPC (Agenda item 4) will include an economist who will deal full time with these issues.
12. The meeting agreed that the proposed recommendations should be accepted in principle and also agreed on the steps for producing a final, agreed set of recommendations and guidelines.

Recommendations

13. PSMB:
- i. accepted in principle the following recommendations from the World Bank on monetary poverty measurement, noting that the recommended methods are universal best practice:
 1. SDG 1.1.1 should be measured using the USD 1.90 PPP per capita per day International Poverty Line. SDG 1.2.1 should be measured using a national cost-of-basic-needs poverty line based on national survey data and national criteria.
 2. Food consumption should include purchases (including prepared meals and food consumed away from home), gifts received, food provided in-kind, home production, and rations.
 3. Non-food consumption should include the use value of assets, imputed rent, education spending, health spending on preventative and elective procedures, but exclude 'lumpy' expenditures, investment, loans, interest, taxes, and transfers out of the household (including gifts, remittances, and religious contributions).
 4. Household composition adjustment should take partakers into account.

5. Imputed rent should be calculated using the proposed decision path to account for local price differences and compensate for owners' tendencies to overvalue their dwelling.
 6. Countries should continue to use the current per adult equivalence scale instead of per capita measures to adjust the consumption aggregate for household composition, and further research could be done on this issue.
 7. The reference population for the consumption basket should always exclude the top and bottom decile, and otherwise use an iterative approach to determine the correct part of the distribution.
 8. Poverty analysis should use the Foster-Greer-Thorbecke (FGT) measures, including poverty headcount, poverty gap, and poverty severity.
 9. All data cleaning and calculations should be done using replicable methods in a statistical analysis program such as Stata or R. The do / R studio files should be retained and archived along with the dataset.
- ii. noted that the World Bank, in collaboration with the University of Waikato (John Gibson), FAO (Nathalie Troubat) and SPC (Michael Sharp), will draft a guidelines paper on the recommendations for poverty measurement. The paper will be circulated for comment and used to update the final list of recommendations at a subsequent PSMB meeting. The full set of recommendations will be subject to a peer review process;
 - iii. recognised that the move to using the recommended statistical analysis programmes is a significant transition for national statistics offices (NSOs), which will require ongoing support and training. It was noted that special measures will be required to support non-World Bank/IDA member countries, i.e. the NZ Realm, and French and US territories;
 - iv. further noted that a companion text document will be drafted for formal adoption by the PSMB and disseminated to members. The World Bank will develop training materials (including a dummy dataset and example Stata / R code), and, along with SPC and other development partners, initiate a programme of training in the region in partnership with SPC, prioritising those countries with recently completed, or soon to be completed household income and expenditure surveys (HIES);
 - v. agreed that all aspects of poverty measurement should be done concurrently with the member country to strengthen capacity; and
 - vi. agreed that further research could be considered on the following topics:
 - Online 'rent skimming', to bolster data for computation of imputed rents;
 - Calculating Pacific adult-equivalence scales;
 - Estimating dietary energy requirements that are based on Pacific anthropometry (body measurement) and economic activity;
 - Establishing multipliers for expenditure on prepared meals (takeaway and food away from home).

Multidimensional poverty measurement

14. Dr Viliami Fifita presented approaches to multidimensional poverty measurement.
15. The complexity of poverty is well documented (e.g. 'Voices of the Poor' (World Bank) and 'Global Study of Child Poverty and Disparities' (UNICEF)). Poverty is more than just being unable to feed the family. It also means exclusion from social participation.
16. The SDGs are an opportunity to address multidimensional poverty, but there are challenges in establishing 'all the dimensions of poverty' referred to by SDG 1.2.2.

17. The consensual approach (CA) to poverty measurement, which is based on Townsend's theory of relative deprivation, takes into account the public's opinions about the items and activities that are necessary for an acceptable standard of living. This approach to defining and measuring poverty enables populations, rather than only policy makers or politicians, to determine what constitutes poverty and to identify solutions.
18. Data for multidimensional poverty measurement is obtained by inserting a module in a survey such as a HIES (e.g. the Tonga HIES in 2015/2016) or a Demographic and Health Survey. The survey modules are pilot tested. To date, the approach has been rolled out in Tonga and four other PICTs – Solomon Islands, Tuvalu, Kiribati and Fiji.
19. In terms of the support mechanism for CA implementation, the method is simple. (Some Pacific NSO staff were trained to use it but are unfortunately no longer working in the region.) All training materials are available online. In addition, the Townsend Centre for International Poverty Research, University of Bristol, UK, can provide assistance. The aim is to institutionalise the training. Training could be provided to SPC (training of trainers).
20. The presentation also noted other approaches to measuring multidimensional poverty that have been implemented in the Pacific region.

Discussion

- Countries can define how they measure poverty but must be consistent in their approaches and methods.
- The importance of comparability over time was emphasised. It was noted that there are universal needs that provide comparability.
- Deprivation can change over time (e.g. the introduction of cell phones). Individual items in the module list may change, but this does not change the ability of the module to identify deprivation.
- PSMB can disseminate recommendations for poverty measurement and at the same time advise on the support available for implementation, including links to resources.

Recommendations

21. No recommendations were made, and this is an area to follow up on for subsequent meetings of PSMB.

Agenda item 4: Regional International Development Association (IDA) project – Statistical innovation and capacity building in Pacific Islands (PacStat-PI)

22. Michael Sharp, SPC, described the overall project which will run from July 2020 to December 2024. It consists of three projects (in Kiribati, Tonga, and the Pacific Island region) that will focus on statistical innovation, efficient production and dissemination of data used to measure poverty, and capacity building. The common theme of the projects is HIES and prices.
23. SPC will implement the regional project in IDA eligible countries. It will include:
 - establishment of a PSMB secretariat to support the operationalisation of PSMB recommendations in PICTs; and support for PSMB-commissioned research including on anonymisation of microdata in PICTs;
 - strengthening of SDD's ability to act as the region's 'statistical system leader' and provide technical assistance on data collection methods;
 - support for SDD's transition to the role of a regional knowledge producer and leader in disseminating data analysis;
 - research on innovative data collection methodologies to reduce the costs and complexity of collecting socioeconomic data in the Pacific region, given its geographic spread and

sparse populations. Initial ideas include village-based enumerators and use of satellite imagery for household listing.

Discussion

24. Suggested research topics for the Regional IDA project included:

- A paper on anonymisation to allow datasets to be shared with confidence that they are anonymised.
- Potential for a system approach for surveys in SIS with very small populations – PSMB has previously discussed possibilities for combining administrative data and survey data.
- A backup method for CAPI/Survey Solutions where there is no internet.

Other issues

- The project provides an opportunity to work on microdata. Staff from Stats NZ or ABS could work at SPC for a time.
- The appointee who comes in will be able to leverage assistance from Stats NZ and ABS, e.g. by connecting with staff who have expertise in specific areas, or with academics for research.
- How will project learning be applied in non-IDA countries? What is PSMB's role in this process?

Recommendations

25. PSMB:

- i. agreed that the regional IDA project will be a standing item on the PSMB agenda, noting that its objectives are: strengthening institutional capacity, efficient production and dissemination of data used to measure poverty, and statistical innovation;
- ii. agreed that priorities for innovative research under the regional project will include data anonymisation to allow sharing of datasets.

Agenda item 5: Establishing the Pacific Statistical Collections 'Financing Facility' to resource core statistical collections in the Pacific Region, 2019 to 2023

26. Michael Sharp presented a proposal for the establishment of a regional statistical collections 'financing facility'. The paper, which was prepared by Michael Sharp (SPC), Stanley Gwavuya (UNICEF) and Sandra Paredes (UNFPA), was recently presented to the Donor and Development Partner Group (DDPG), which was reported to have 'a strong appetite' for the concept. It will also be presented to the Pacific Statistics Standing Committee.
27. Lack of funding for Pacific statistics undermines evidence-based policy and planning and the ability to monitor development progress in PICTs, including commitments to reporting against the SDG indicators.
28. Eighty-one core statistical collections (census, MICS, HIES, DHS, LFS, agriculture and disability) are scheduled in PICTs from 2019 to 2023. These collections contribute data to populating 63 of the 132 Pacific SDG indicators and 87% of the population-based indicators. An average of nine core national statistical collections should be conducted in every PICT before 2030 (i.e. 136 collections) to produce two data points under the Agenda for Sustainable Development.
29. The current funding gap for collections planned for 2019–2023 is USD 40 million–45 million, comprising USD 28.1 – 33.2 million for in-country costs, and USD \$11.9 million for regional technical support (e.g. Solomon Islands census, which is due to take place soon, has 80% of the required funding in place). (The estimated total cost of all collections is approximately USD 220

million; the estimated funding gap of USD 40 million–45 million assumes contributions of at least 50% from governments and excludes the costs of collections in PNG and Fiji.)

30. The proposed funding mechanism would enable significant gains in efficiency through supporting a logical order of collections in countries; alignment of PICTs' collection schedules; and standardisation of census instruments, methodologies, data capture and processing.
31. Better resourcing would give SDD, as the regional statistical system leader, more leverage in encouraging efficiencies and providing technical assistance.
32. Details of how the mechanism would operate and where it would be housed are still to be worked out.

Discussion

33. The World Bank expressed support for the concept, agreeing that it is preferable to piecemeal financing, but recalled that when funding for HIES support was discussed with SPC, SPC responded that it cannot assume fiduciary responsibility for projects run by countries. This situation would need to be clarified.
34. SPC noted that its governance and financial systems have been strengthened since then and the issue could be raised with the executive team.

Recommendations

35. PSMB:
 - i. a role of PSMB is to identify how it can contribute to finding efficiencies in the way statistical work is conducted;
 - ii. endorsed, in principle, the proposal to establish the 'Pacific Statistical Collections Financing Facility', noting that the objectives are to: provide a more coordinated and cost-effective approach to funding Pacific statistics collections; assist PICTs to cover gaps in statistical collection budgets; and provide additional resources to technical partners to support PICTs to produce high-quality and timely data;
 - iii. noted that the Pacific Statistics Standing Committee Meeting (30–31 October 2019) will further discuss the proposed mechanism, including where it should be housed and how it should be operationalised; and
 - iv. noted that the details of where this facility will be located, how it is funded and the role of Pacific NSOs are yet to be defined and this should be submitted to HOPS for a final decision.

Agenda item 6: Pacific Population and Housing Census framework

36. Sandra Paredes (UNFPA) and Michael Sharp (SPC) presented the Pacific Population and Housing Census Framework, including the schedule of PICT censuses 2019–2022; the recommended approach to conducting a census; and a standard census instrument.
37. SPC leads coordination of the Five-Year Data Collection Plan (2019–2022). Several agencies support the various collections, with UNFPA focusing on census and Demographic and Health Surveys. Thirteen PICTs will conduct a census between 2019 and 2022. Some of the recommendations from the 2015 meeting² have yet to be implemented and it is not clear what stage countries are at in their preparations.

² 2020 World Round of Population and Housing Censuses – Pacific Island countries' census planning meeting (July 2015). Meeting documents are available at <http://census2020.spc.int/documents>

38. UNFPA has prepared a step-by-step reference guide to conducting a census, which itemises and describes the major census activities for the country, and the partner/s with the key support role. Partner input depends on the country's own resources and requirements. The guide includes a sample Gantt chart for census operations.
39. The focus of census planning is on utilisation of the results in policy and planning, with stakeholders providing input to questionnaire design to ensure the usefulness of the information that is produced.
40. Around 16 SDG Pacific indicators can be derived directly from the census. For other indicators, reporting can be derived from a combination of administrative and census data.
41. SPC has developed a core census questionnaire that countries can tailor as required by using supplementary modules and questions. The core questionnaire, which has also been produced for CAPI, include the Washington Group short module on disability. Many of the results from the survey questions provide a sampling frame for specific surveys (e.g., MICS, HIES, agriculture and disability).
42. SPC has also developed a supplementary census questionnaire to avoid the need for some additional surveys, e.g. on agriculture in atoll countries; fisheries catch, effort, consumption, etc. (developed with SPC's fisheries division, FAME); and education.
43. The Pacific Standard Census Instrument (core and supplementary questionnaires) is on the PSMB website.

Discussion

44. Some PICTs will conduct a paper-based census (e.g. Palau); others will use CAPI (e.g. FSM); others will use a hybrid (CAPI and paper; e.g. Solomon Islands).
45. Tonga strongly advocates CAPI, which was used for its 2016 census. The 600 tablets that were purchased for the census have been used for other surveys (four in 2018), with estimated overall savings of TOP 2 million. In addition, CAPI allows monitoring of the location of enumerators in the field, including whether they actually visit all households. (Tonga and Fiji were acknowledged for sharing their tablets with other PICTs.)
46. Kiribati has now used CAPI with Survey Solutions in several surveys. Lack of Internet connectivity in the outer islands is dealt with in various ways, noting that improved connectivity should be in place by next year. Kiribati agreed with Tonga on the advantage of being able to monitor the location of enumerators.
47. The region uses mainly CSPro and Survey Solutions software with CAPI. The use of CAPI with Survey Solutions for census is not common in the rest of the world, though it has been used in a few SIS in other regions – this is not to say that it Survey Solutions is not an appropriate software for use when conducting census and experiences in the Pacific region (e.g., Nauru, Tonga, Vanuatu) indicate that it appropriate.
48. Survey Solutions has the benefit of being user friendly, while CSPro has start-up costs. Survey Solutions, which was developed by the Development Research Group of the World Bank, is likely to continue to be maintained if it remains popular. However, there are no guarantees.
49. Participants agreed it would be useful to pull all the information on CAPI together – either in a paper or some other instrument – including successes and failures.
50. Systematic census planning is as critical to the success of a census as the specifics of technology. Planning needs strengthening, and support may need to be more proactive. Countries need to know where to access support.

Recommendations

51. PSMB;
 - i. noted that 10 PICTs will conduct their census in 2020;
 - ii. acknowledged the resources that have been developed and are available to countries, including the recommended approach to preparing for and conducting a census, and SDD's core census questionnaire, which can be tailored to countries with supplemental questions/modules;
 - iii. recognised the positive experiences and challenges of some PICTs in using CAPI for census and surveys and agreed it would be useful to pull this information together to make an up-to-date body of knowledge available to PICT NSOs considering a move to CAPI (noting there are also existing resources, e.g. from ADB);
 - iv. noted that CAPI implementation will be a topic for the upcoming Stats NZ/SPC/World Bank workshop and further work can be considered based on those discussions; and
 - v. noted that the Board still needs to be clear on how it can specifically support the census framework.

Agenda item 7: The future of census in the Pacific region

52. Bruce Fraser (ABS) and Vince Galvin (Stats NZ) discussed the problems encountered during Australia's 2016 census and New Zealand's 2018 census, both of which were predominately digital for the first time, and the relevance of the lessons learned for future PICT census processes.

Australia's experience

53. Australia's census is held every 5 years. The most recent census in 2016 was the first to be run as a largely online process as opposed to the traditional model of enumerators visiting households. One of the drivers for the digital process was money saving.
 - 82% of households were advised by mail of the digital process using an address register.
 - 18% used the traditional approach.
54. ABS made a strong effort to communicate that 9 August was census night, though people actually had several days to complete the form. A denial of service (DOS) problem on 'census night', caused by overseas hackers, forced ABS to shut down the website and attracted a great deal of adverse publicity and harsh comments from the Prime Minister. Although there was no data loss, people were concerned about the privacy of their data.
 - 63% completed the census digitally, which was below the target, and 36% by paper, resulting in a satisfactory return rate overall.
 - Despite the census night problems, an independent panel decided the data was good.
 - ABS's objectives for the 2021 census are smooth running, strong support, and high-quality data.

Lessons learned:

- Do not outsource risk – IBM was contracted to build the e-form, including protecting against DOS attacks. ABS should have done independent testing and had contingencies in place.
- Importance of social licensing and public support – there was resistance in the community because of privacy concerns. Numerous people withheld their name and date of birth so data could not be linked.
- Do not focus communication only on 'census night' – ensure people are aware that they have several days to complete the census.

Discussion

- Did ABS provide training on filling out the form? – There was no printed guideline, but help could be accessed by clicking on parts of the form.
- What are the challenges of an address register? – The register required a lot of effort. ABS drew on several sources and used field checks. The register is now being used for other surveys. From a methodological point of view, there were concerns about under-coverage. In fact, over-coverage is more likely to be a problem.
- The respondent burden in SIS was noted, with many surveys being run in addition to those conducted by the NSO. ‘People get irritated by being questioned all the time.’ The answer may be a clearing house for national surveys. The mode of collection also has an impact.

New Zealand’s experience

55. Planning for the 2018 census was disrupted by an earthquake. Despite this, the decision was made to go ahead using an online process targeting 70% of returns. Considerable effort was invested in preventing DOS and an online response rate of 70% was achieved.
56. However, the results showed that Stats NZ did not pay sufficient attention to non-online users, and processes for paper users were overcomplicated. New Zealand has used self-completion of forms rather than interview for a long time; however, many people expected to be contacted. (Enumerators were used for the homeless.)
57. The biggest failings were (1) not understanding the level of risk, and (2) descope testing.
58. Normally the New Zealand census achieves a 93% response, but for 2018 it was 83%. There was low coverage of Maori communities (70%) and also of young people.
59. There is now a research project on using administrative data to fill in gaps, which are particularly relevant because health funding depends on census information.
60. An external expert data quality panel was established, including two Maori users. They were concerned about the use of administrative data but agreed with the methods³. The report of the Independent Review of New Zealand's 2018 Census is also available⁴.
61. As a result, 11% of the file is administrative data, which incidentally has also shown a high growth rate for the Pacific Island population, which may have been undercounted by previous censuses.

Lessons learned:

- Change budget – Stats NZ is about to submit a business case for the next census, taking note of the need for a change budget based on a Canadian idea.
- Contingency planning must be taken very seriously.
- Descoping of testing in the face of so much change was a big error.

Discussion

62. Noting that the Pacific region is heading towards using online processes, NSOs suggested:
 - PSMB needs proper advice on risk. Having a risk expert at SPC would help ensure that risk management is properly incorporated in NSO planning.
 - A package for the region on community census awareness and understanding.
 - Employing an expert to provide guidance on census processes.

³ <https://www.stats.govt.nz/reports/initial-report-of-the-2018-census-external-data-quality-panel>

⁴ <https://www.stats.govt.nz/reports/report-of-the-independent-review-of-new-zealands-2018-census>

- People are often unwilling to disclose the number of people in the household. It is necessary to get community trust on disclosing household numbers.

Recommendations

63. PSMB:

- i. noted the lessons learned from Australia's 2016 census and New Zealand's 2018 census, which were both predominately digital for the first time;
- ii. agreed that Stats NZ, ABS and SDD will discuss what guidance can be provided to countries, including on:
 - managing risk in census
 - the support countries need to assess their readiness to pursue new technology.

Agenda item 8: Review of the recently developed short Labour Force Module for inclusion in census in the Pacific region

64. On behalf of the International Labour Organization (ILO), Michael Sharp presented a proposed new economic characteristics module for inclusion in Pacific censuses.
65. For several years, the region has implemented a standard labour force module that collects primary and secondary activity. It is now out of date and does not collect data according to updated international data standards. The current approach relies on interviewer training to determine primary/secondary activity. The new module includes verification and covers people who fall outside the existing module.
66. It captures all core and additional topics recommended for inclusion as part of the 2020 Round of Population Censuses and also topics that are particularly relevant to the Pacific region, including:
 - main activity status;
 - labour force status of the population (employed, unemployed, outside the labour force);
 - main job characteristics of the employed; and
 - participation in own-use production of goods (from agriculture, animal production, fishing, handicrafts).
67. The new module will not provide direct comparability with previous data.
68. ILO offers good support to take up the module, including manuals, but no financial support.
69. ILO wants to find a pilot country to test the module in its census. It was suggested that they test the module between now and February. An interim PSMB meeting could then be convened to review and endorse the module.
70. ILO has confirmed that the labour force module in the RMI HIES meets its data needs. It is also intended to meet national needs.

Discussion

- ILO will not run any more labour force surveys as the census will give more relevant information than the old module.
- It was suggested that the training workshop scheduled for February 2020 (see below) might be a suitable opportunity to convene an interim meeting of PSMB. The finalised poverty measures could also be presented to PSMB then.
- In relation to additional survey modules, the FAO food insecurity experience module was mentioned. It was noted that RMI, Vanuatu and Wallis and Futuna believe the food insecurity experience scale is offensive.

Recommendations

71. PSMB:
 - i. acknowledged the limitations and implementation challenges of the current economic characteristics module, which does not collect data according to international standards;
 - ii. acknowledged the positive response of ILO to PSMB's recommendation to develop a short version of the economic characteristics module for inclusion in censuses;
 - iii. requested that the new module be tested in the context of a census in the Pacific; and
 - iv. agreed that following the testing, PSMB will convene an interim meeting to review the module for inclusion in Pacific censuses, noting that this meeting will also be an opportunity to discuss the updated recommendations for poverty measurement.

Agenda item 9: Sampling Guidelines

72. Bruce Fraser (ABS) said the aim of the Sampling Subcommittee is to promote best practice for sampling in PICTs.
73. The subcommittee has drafted the Sampling Guidelines Part 1. There are various other resources available, but they are more like manuals than the guidelines, which are intended to be accessible and relevant to PICT NSOs. In further work, the intention is to flesh out the guidelines in regard to specific surveys such as MICS.
74. At the previous meeting, PSMB members were invited to provide feedback on the draft. A small amount was received and will be incorporated. The subcommittee requests any further feedback from NSOs and interested parties, noting that other agencies (e.g. FAO) have offered to contribute.

Recommendations

75. PSMB:
 - i. acknowledged the work of the Sampling Subcommittee in drafting accessible Sampling Guidelines for Pacific NSOs;
 - ii. requested any further feedback from NSOs, and other interested parties, on the draft guidelines, and noted that other agencies (e.g. FAO) have offered to contribute to them; and
 - iii. noted that the Sampling Committee aims to deliver the finalised Sampling Guidelines – Part 1 to the next PSMB meeting (April 2020).

Agenda item 10: 2020 Statistical Development Workshop

76. Dr Ofa Ketu'u (Stats NZ) said the 2020 Regional Statistics Development Workshop will be held 21 February to 3 March 2020 in Nadi, Fiji.
77. The original plans for the workshop changed during the course of the current meeting, with the decision made to combine the PSMB workshop with the Population Census Planning Workshop also planned by UNFPA/SDD for early next year.
78. The workshop targets PICT NSO directors and census managers and has three broad objectives: (1) build PICT NSO capability in census planning, methods and systems, ahead of the 2020/2021 round of Pacific censuses; (2) disseminate PSMB recommendations based on the RMI HIES experiment; and (3) gather feedback on the Pacific Sampling Guidelines
79. Objective 1 will be led by UNFPA and Objectives 2 and 3 by Stats NZ. The workshop is funded by UNFPA and Stats NZ. Its broad theme is to support the work of PSMB.

80. Stats NZ will send out a 1 pager outlining plans for the workshop and content for comment. All countries will be invited to attend. The workshop is split into two weeks so countries may decide that different people should attend Week 1 and Week 2.

Discussion

- The workshop will be an opportunity to sound out participants on barriers to implementing PSMB recommendations and will help PSMB decide its focus in future and which tools are most useful.
- Suggestions for content included:
 - risk management as part of census planning.
 - the relationship between questionnaire length and loss of data quality – how long is too long?
- Kiribati noted that the NSO has already submitted its budget and plan for 2020. The workshop will help countries with their planning, but it would be useful if PSMB could give earlier notice of workshops and other events so budgeting and planning can take possible changes resulting from training into account.

Recommendations

81. PSMB:
 - i. noted that the workshop will be held in Nadi (10–21 February 2020) in a collaboration with UNFPA and Stats NZ;
 - ii. acknowledged the request for feedback on the proposed content of the workshop, which Stats NZ will circulate for comment; and
 - iii. acknowledged Kiribati's request that countries/NSOs be advised earlier of workshops and training events, given that workshop outcomes may affect NSO budgets and plans that have already been submitted for the following year.

[NOTE: due to logistical challenges, the workshop objectives have since changed. PSMB's Sampling Subcommittee will circulate a concept note to PSMB in due course. The workshop concept, agenda and training resources are available here: <https://sdd.spc.int/events/2020/02/2020-hies-regional-sampling-and-planning-workshop>.

Agenda item 11: Dissemination of the results of the RMI HIES experiment and PSMB recommendations

82. Michael Sharp outlined efforts to disseminate and communicate the results of the RMI HIES experiment, and the PSMB recommendations for conducting a HIES, which were endorsed at the May 2019 PSMB meeting (the meeting report is available [online](#)).
83. The recommendations, including use of CAPI for HIES, are among the topics for the February 2020 workshop. The results will also be communicated to the PSSC meeting (30–31 October 2019).
84. Other plans for communicating the findings of the experiment include:
 - a World Bank working paper (in draft);
 - an academic paper (early 2020);
 - a poster to be presented to ICAS (Why, Who, Where, How, What) in mid-November 2019, together with a four-page summary;
 - a success story in SPC's quarterly newsletter; and
 - dissemination of products on the SDD website.

Discussion

- What practical support will be provided to NSOs for implementing the recommendations, e.g. on using CAPI for HIES?
- In addition to the February workshop, the Regional IDA Project may enable action on some of the issues being raised.
- There is a PSMB HIES Subcommittee, but it has not been active. The Subcommittee will continue until the appointment of the Statistics Advisor at SDD under the IDA project.

Recommendations

85. PSMB:

- i. acknowledged plans for increased efforts to disseminate and communicate the results of the RMI HIES experiment; and
- ii. recognised the need to support NSOs in operationalising PSMB's recommendations on HIES methodology, e.g. use of CAPI for HIES.

Agenda item 12: Update on Multiple Indicator Cluster Surveys (MICS) programme

86. Stanley Gwavuya (UNICEF) outlined the status of MICS surveys in Kiribati, Samoa, Tonga, Tuvalu, Nauru and FSM:
- The Kiribati Sustainable Development Indicator Survey 2018/2019 has been completed and the report is being finalised.
 - Field data collection is underway for the Samoa DHS-MICS 2019, and Tonga MICS 2019.
 - The main training is being provided for the Tuvalu MICS 2019/20.
 - The Nauru MICS 2019/20 and FSM National Social Indicator Survey 2019/20 are at the stages of planning/questionnaire design, listing (Nauru) and resource mobilisation (FSM).
87. Stakeholder consultation during survey planning has shown there is limited engagement between NSOs and sector ministries, departments and other data users.
88. Capacity varies in countries, which requires flexibility in providing remote and in-country support. Unavailability of NSO staff due to other commitments and shortage of staff resources can lead to delays.
89. Data collection is in CSPro and countries' prior knowledge is proving useful. An SPSS license is provided as part of MICS technical assistance, but there is little previous experience in using this software and training is being considered.

Discussion

- Depending on which software MICS switches to, it may be possible to move jointly and deliver joint training with the World Bank.
- Is there a standard software package recommended for the Pacific? Could PSMB recommend Stata or is it up to countries? Stata could be the standard with some regional training provided.
- The World Bank has run report writing workshops in Africa (though for very big data sets).
- MICS has downsized sampling for PICTs. The disadvantage, however, is that all the indicators that MICS can produce will not be possible for Pacific countries.
- MICS is well structured, and metadata is included from the beginning. There are lessons for HIES. The survey process is also self-documenting, with all documents tied to the survey planning document.
- SDD would like to lead the production of MICS metadata in partnership with its members.
- MICS implementation demonstrates good collaboration, e.g. between UNICEF, UNFPA and SPC, and with country partners and development partners.

- Kiribati noted the difficulties of the timing of MICS (the end-of-year travelling time should be avoided).

Recommendations

90. PSMB:

- i. noted the successful implementation of the MICS programme of surveys, which is at various stages in Kiribati, Samoa, Tonga, Tuvalu, Nauru and Federated States of Micronesia, and lessons learned to date; and
- ii. recognised the collaboration on MICS that has occurred across the region.

Agenda item 13: Report to Pacific Statistics Standing Committee (PSSC)

91. Participants agreed that the report should focus on:

- the results and recommendations from the RMI HIES experiment;
- the draft recommendations and guidance for poverty measurement;
- the benefits of PSMB in:
 - enabling the development of a hub of people who are working together outside the meeting to develop substantive guidance on Pacific statistical issues (e.g. HIES, sampling, poverty measurement);
 - providing a point of engagement for agencies coming into the region; and
- opportunities in front of PSMB to optimise work across the region through supporting effective practice, training and capability development.

Agenda item 14: Update on issues raised in previous PSMB meetings

92. PSMB:

- i. acknowledged the results achieved in response to the recommendations of previous PSMB meetings, including completing the RMI HIES experiment and deriving recommendations; developing updated poverty measurement guidance; and drafting the Sampling Guidelines; and
- ii. agreed that further follow-up is needed on the priority of ensuring transparency of statistical analysis (preserving code, editing/processing rules), noting that moving to new software, such as Stata/R, could address some of these issues.

Agenda item 15: Issues/agenda items for next PSMB meeting

- i. PSMB agreed that the following issues will be considered for inclusion on the agenda of the next meeting:
 - Updated guidelines for monetary poverty measurement/multi-dimensional poverty measurement guidelines – progress update on recommendations from PSMB October 2019;
 - Report back from the 2020 Statistical Development Workshop (February 2020);
 - Census – where should PSMB focus its efforts?
 - What can PSMB do to help those in the midst of planning and running a 2020/2021 census?
 - How to use the impetus of the 2020/2021 round of censuses to start thinking about pathways forward, and longer-term census transformation in the Pacific?
 - Pacific Sampling Guidelines – Part 1: Progress update, and final version for endorsement by PSMB;

- IDA Project (standing agenda item), including discussion of:
 - initial priorities for PSMB research projects, e.g. data anonymisation;
 - further discussion of new methodological innovations to pursue for the Pacific;
 - Improving processes for representation of all PICT NSOs on PSMB and supporting their engagement in initiatives (noting that the Chair and Deputy Chair will discuss approaches ahead of PSMB's next meeting).
- ii. PSMB noted potential agenda items for the April 2020 PSMB meeting:
- Software selection in the Pacific, e.g.
 - Stocktake of current programmes in use (SPC-SDD);
 - How to make investment decisions re new tools;
 - Training in use of new tools; including for non-World Bank member countries; and
 - Pros and cons in relation to tools for MICS, HIES, etc. (noting the World Bank will develop poverty measurement tools in R and Stata unless PSMB directs otherwise).
 - The role of PSMB in reviewing and approving new questionnaire modules that have been developed by partners (e.g. the ILO Labour Force Module for Pacific censuses).

Next PSMB meetings

- i. the next PSMB meeting will take place on 7 and 8 April 2020 in Auckland; and
- ii. PSMB will have an interim meeting to review (a) the finalised ILO labour force module for censuses in the Pacific, and (b) the updated recommendations for poverty measurement. Details of the interim meeting will be advised in due course.