

Statistics for Development Division (SDD)

5th Donor and Development Partners Group (DDPG) Meeting

Meeting Report and Outcomes

(<https://sdd.spc.int/events/2024/04/5-pacific-statistics-donor-development-partner-group-ddpg-meeting>)

Meeting time: 1 pm – 3.00 pm Noumea time (UTC+10)

Venue: Online (MS Teams)

Chair: Matthew Powell, Pacific Financial Technical Assistance Centre (PFTAC)

Purpose: Facilitate a more coordinated, strategic approach to statistical assistance and overall donor collaboration in the Pacific region. DDPG provides a platform for more consistent engagement by donor agencies and development partners with Pacific Island countries and territories (PICTs) and National Statistics Offices (NSOs).

Responsibilities:

- Enhance coordination and collaboration and minimise real or perceived duplication of support.
- Share information including updates on ongoing and new statistical development initiatives and emerging issues.
- Maintain a Pacific Regional Statistics Partnership Programme document.
- Encourage implementation of innovative ideas to enhance statistical coordination.

1. Approval of report of 4th DDPG meeting

The meeting reviewed the outcomes of the 4th meeting and noted that SPC's Statistics for Development Division (SDD) had undertaken to review its business plan annually. The SDD Director said the finalisation of the plan tabled at DDPG4 is under discussion, including the question of appropriate sign off, given the input from various stakeholders.

The meeting agreed that SPC could sign off the plan.

Outcome:

SDD will review its business plan annually, as already agreed, and SPC will sign off the revised document.

Session 1: Partner spotlight

Jun Fan, UNICEF

UNICEF Pacific serves 14 PICTs through its multi-country office in Fiji and field offices in Solomon Islands, Kiribati, Vanuatu, Federated States of Micronesia (FSM) and Samoa. Multiple Indicator Cluster Surveys (MICS) are UNICEF's main data collection tool. The survey focuses on children and women, including health, education, and child protection, with the data providing 40 of the SDG indicators, information for Voluntary National Reviews (e.g. by Samoa, Fiji and Tuvalu), child poverty assessment, and education analysis.

UNICEF support for MICS includes technical assistance, funding, NSO capacity building (e.g. developing survey plans, data analysis), and partnership with other agencies, e.g. UNFPA, SPC. MICS published surveys for countries and MICS Plus (phone surveys) are provided in the presentation slide.

MICS – Lessons learned

Opportunities: Reliable and timely data; SDG indicators increased by 50% in relevant PICTs; stronger statistical systems; and evidenced based decision-making and advocacy. MICS is flexible and open to adaptation at country level. All PICTs include reproductive and domestic violence modules in their MICS and a climate change module is being discussed.

Challenges: High costs and logistical issues due to remote islands and small populations; survey fatigue; lack of internet access for CAPI; low NSO staffing; and disruption by natural disasters.

UNICEF is currently seeking funding from donors for the 2024/2025 rounds. DFAT has indicated interest, with discussion to come. NSOs must own MICS as a national survey, e.g. FSM provides 70% of the MICS budget; Kiribati provides 20%.

The DFAT representative requested UNICEF to share its proposals so they could be passed on to relevant people.

UNICEF agreed, noting the proposals had been shared with High Commissions based in Fiji.

Outcome:

DDPG acknowledged UNICEF's support for MICS in the region and the value of MICS, and noted that funding is being sought for future MICS rounds.

UNICEF will share its proposals with DFAT so they can be passed on to relevant people.

Session 2: Partnership Programme Update

Evelyn Wareham and Elizabeth Ragimana, SPC

Progress update on mapping of current donors, partners, and activities, and on proposed regional co-ordination platform

The report included the following:

- (1) An update on major partners' key statistical activities in 2023 and 2024 by country, and by key focus areas (KFAs) of the Strategic Framework for Pacific Statistics 2022–2030.
- (2) Funding commitments by partners over the 2015–2025 period to support statistics development in the region.
- (3) Mapped activities reached 588 in total in 2023 and 2024, showing a significant increase by 75 in 2023 to 261 in 2024, with capacity building the highest activity. Civil registration and vital statistics (CRVS) is also an important area for SDD and NSOs.
- (4) An action paper is in draft for tabling at FEMM (Forum Economic Ministers Meeting) 2024.
- (5) Other activities:
 - a) Working Group set up for review of terms of reference of regional governance groups
 - b) Capacity development needs assessment completed
 - c) Gender statistics road map is being implemented
 - d) Design is underway for a system to manage technical assistance requests from PICTs
 - e) SPC and Partners Calendar of Events is available online: <https://sdd.spc.int/events>

Outcome:

SPC to circulate draft FEMM paper to DDPG members and Heads of NSOs for comment before submission.

Partners to advise SPC on other information that should be included in the mapping of Pacific statistics development programmes and activities.

Partners to provide information to SPC for events to include in regional calendar of events.

Session 3: Round table

Round table on partners' statistical development initiatives in the Pacific and emerging issues

PFTAC supports government finance and economic statistics management for 14 PICTs. Activities this year include support for: PICTs moving to new IT systems; rebasing of Kiribati's national accounts; improvements to Palau's tourism and import pricing; PNG's informal sector; staff changes in Solomon Islands; Samoa's supply and use tables; Timor Leste national accounts issues; maintaining momentum on national accounts in Tonga; and Tuvalu's annual GDP estimates.

Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) introduced Brigitte Batschi, who is the new Assistant Director, International Relations, responsible for ABS's Pacific programme. ABS has had increased funding from DFAT for Pacific work. Prices work is continuing in several PICTs including Solomon Islands. In a joint

mission with SPC and UNESCAP to various PICTs, ABS delivered courses on recording causes of death, and worked with SPC in Fiji on demographic characteristics.

Stats NZ acknowledged MFAT's full funding of its Pacific work, which covers 5 PICTs – Cook Islands, Tokelau, Niue, Tonga and Samoa. The programme delivers about 11 activities each year, focusing on PSMB (Pacific Statistics Methods Board), NSO support including capacity building and supplementation, liaison with development partners, and support for regional governance.

UNESCAP is working with SPC to develop a set of Pacific indicator guidelines. A draft will be presented to PSMB, but the document will likely take the rest of 2024 to complete. Tonga, Fiji and Kiribati are pilot PICTs. Other activities include a business process improvement report for Fiji; GPS modelling with Vanuatu; review of Cook Islands' NSDA; and support for SDG monitoring.

The ninth session of the Committee on Statistics of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UNESCAP) will be held from 11 to 13 December 2024 at the United Nations Conference Centre in Bangkok. The UN Statistics Division is holding a June conference for PICTs in Nadi on meeting new statistical demands.

PIFS is working with SPC on the monitoring, evaluation and learning (MEL) plan for the 2050 Strategy for the Blue Pacific and will hold a talanoa in Suva at the end of April 2024.

DFAT strongly supports Pacific statistics including through SPC. It has committed AUD 7.5 million to the region through its grant agreement with SPC. In March, it allocated an additional AUD 2.5 million for disability statistics, and it is currently discussing further survey support of AUD 750,000, as well as additional funding of AUD 250,000 for ABS's Pacific programme. DFAT has separate arrangements with some PICTs and the Australian High Commission in Samoa has been collaborating with Samoa's NSO.

UNICEF is working with Nauru and will launch MICS there shortly. Other UNICEF activities were highlighted during the partner's spotlight.

MFAT is working with SPC on several programmes, including the Pacific Data Hub (PDH) and entry of data from other agencies. MFAT would like to further support the Stats NZ Pacific programme, noting the positive feedback it has received.

UNFPA supports surveys including MICS and censuses, population policies, and migration. UNFPA works with SPC and DFAT. A census provides about 100 indicators.

SDD (SPC) acknowledged the extra DFAT funding for gender and disability statistics and noted new SDD staff, including in the fields of climate change and prices statistics. More will join soon including an economic statistician. New Zealand funds PDH, as well as climate change statistics with regional workshops coming up. Pricing statistics workshops are also planned. Peter noted that PNG is launching its census this month – this is an ambitious project and partner agencies need to provide support.

Session 4: Closing

SDD acknowledged the work of the Chair, Matthew Powell, who is leaving PFTAC shortly, and thanked him for his service to the region.

The Chair thanked all participants.

Date and agenda for next DDPG meeting: 9 October 2024, Noumea. The meeting will be in person with invitations to be sent soon. It will be chaired by PIFS.

Summary of outcomes of 5th DDPG meeting

- 1) SDD will review its business plan annually, as previously agreed, and SPC will sign off the revised document.
- 2) DDPG acknowledged UNICEF's support on MICS in the region and the value of UNICEF's MICS and noted that funding is being sought for future MICS rounds. UNICEF will share its proposals with DFAT so they can be passed on to relevant people.
- 3) The paper for FEMM will be circulated to DDPG members and Heads of NSOs for comment before submission.
- 4) Partners to advise SPC on other information that should be included in the mapping of Pacific statistics development programmes and activities. Partners to provide information to SPC on events to include in the regional calendar of events.
- 5) Date and agenda for next DDPG meeting: 9 October 2024, Noumea. The meeting will be in person with invitations to be sent soon. It will be chaired by PIFS.

Annex A: List of DDPG participants

Organisation/Country	Virtual attendance
Australian Bureau of Statistics, Australia,	<p>Ms Denise Carlton Program Manager, Population, Statistics denise.carlton@abs.gov.au</p> <p>Ms Brigitte Batschi Assistant Director, International Relations brigitte.batschi@abs.gov.au</p> <p>Mr Andrew Knott Assistant Director andrew.knott@abs.gov.au</p>
Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, Australia	<p>Mr Jonathan Perotti Senior Policy Officer, Economic Policy and Partnership Jonathan.Perotti@dfat.gov.au</p>
Ministry of Foreign of Foreign Affairs and Trade, New Zealand	<p>Ms Reneeta Mogan Senior Adviser MERL Reneeta.Mogan@mfat.govt.nz</p>
International Monetary Fund Pacific Financial and Technical Assistance Center (PFTAC), Fiji	<p>Mr Matthew Powell Real Sector Adviser mpowell2@imf.org Chair</p>
Pacific Community (SPC) Statistics for Development Division (SDD) Noumea, New Caledonia	<p>Mr Peter Ellis Director, SDD petere@spc.int</p> <p>Mr Phil Bright Manager Statistics Infrastructure and Dissemination philb@spc.int</p> <p>Ms Maria Musudroka Manager Statistics Collections mariam@spc.int</p> <p>Ms Evelyn Wareham Manager Statistics Leadership, Governance and Use evelynw@spc.int</p> <p>Mrs Elizabeth Ragimana Statistics Advisor Governance and Co-ordination elizabethr@spc.int</p>

	Ms Angela Templeton Rapporteur
Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat	Mr Henry Cocker Engagement Adviser – Sustainable Development Henryc@forumsec.org
Stats New Zealand, New Zealand	Dr Ofa Ketu'u Pacific Programme Manager ofa.ketuu@stats.govt.nz
United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia Pacific (ESCAP)	Mr Christopher Ryan Statistician ryanc@un.org
United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)	Mr Jun Fan Chief of Social Policy jfan@unicef.org
United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA)	Mr Mohamed Laghdaf Cheikh Malainine Technical Advisor - Population and Development cheikhmalainine@unfpa.org
United Nations Statistical Institute for Asia and the Pacific (UNSIAP)	Mr Sokol Vako Statistician/Lecturer vako@un.org

Apologies:

1. Mrs Rachael Beaven, Director, ESCAP: rachael.beaven@un.org
2. Mr Vince Galvin, Chief Methodologist, Stats NZ: vince.galvin@stats.govt.nz
3. Ms Shailja Sharma, Chief of Service (Director): shailja.sharma@un.org