

13th Meeting of the Pacific Statistics Methods Board (PSMB)
Wednesday 22nd to Thursday 23rd May 2024, (Canberra, AUSTRALIA)

MEETING REPORT AND OUTCOMES



Background

The Pacific Statistics Methods Board (PSMB) was established by the 5th Regional Conference of Heads of Planning and Statistics (HOPS) in 2017 as a technical body responsible for standardizing statistics methods, systems, classifications, and processes with the aim of fostering greater harmonisation across the region and generating efficiencies for national statistics offices (NSO) and agencies delivering support.

Participants

The PSMB membership includes NSO representatives for Pacific sub-regions of Melanesia, Micronesia, Polynesia, and Small Island States, as well as members from four development partners - Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS), Stats NZ, the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF as UN Representative), and the Pacific Community (SPC). Observers are welcome at meetings. SPC convenes the PSMB and provides the Secretariat.

PacStat and PSMB

The Statistical Innovation and Capacity Building in the Pacific Islands ([PacStat](#)) regional project, led by SPC and funded by the World Bank, supports the administration of the PSMB and the

dissemination of its recommendations. The PSMB is responsible for technical guidance and oversight for statistical research and innovative experiments commissioned through PacStat. PacStat's overall objective is to improve the quality of welfare data collection and accessibility to comparable welfare data in Pacific Island Countries.

Members

- New Zealand: Vince Galvin, Chief Methodologist, Stats NZ, Chair
- Samoa: Leota Aliielua Salani, Government Statistician, Samoa, Vice Chair
- Australia: Bruce Fraser, Principal Adviser, Survey Methodology, Australian Bureau of Statistics
- Melanesia: Kemueli Naiqama, Chief Executive, Fiji Bureau of Statistics, Fiji
- Melanesia: Andy Calo, Chief Statistician, Vanuatu Bureau of Statistics, Vanuatu
- Micronesia: Aritita Tekaieti, Republic Statistician, Kiribati
- Polynesia: Sione Lolohea, Government Statistician, Tonga
- Small Countries: Taggy Tangimetua, Government Statistician, Cook Islands
- SPC Secretariat: Peter Ellis, Director of Statistics for Development Division (SDD)
- UNICEF: James Kaphuka, Senior Policy Specialist

The list of abbreviations is presented as Annex 1, the agenda as Annex 2 and the full list of meeting participants as Annex 3.

Opening

After the opening prayer and a round of introductions, the agenda was reviewed and minor adjustments made (see Annex 3). The minutes and main outcomes from PSMB 12 (October 2023) were discussed and endorsed.

Session 1. Innovative Experiments and Commissioned Works

1.1 Tuvalu Long-Form Census – Innovative Experiment - Preliminary report on the findings of the experiment

Andrea Borlizzi, SPC consultant and **Lae Peleti**, Tuvalu NSO

The preliminary results of this innovative experiment – to combine the census survey and the Household Income and Expenditure Survey (HIES) to reduce costs whilst maintaining data quality – were presented. Among the findings were the increased length of the combined survey, which was accentuated by the delays due to COVID19 travel restrictions in Tuvalu in 2022. A preliminary comparison of the long form census and the previous HIES and census survey showed the trends in food consumption data were consistent despite the different survey designs. Next steps are to

undertake a full analysis of the different methods and report on both data quality and financial implications of the survey integration.

Discussion items:

- Tuvalu is to be congratulated on taking the initiative to conduct this experiment.
- Careful timing and scheduling of such an experiment is critical in the context of other surveys being conducted in the country.
- Whether the maintenance of data quality takes precedence over survey length and cost, recognizing that ultimately it will be a decision to be taken by individual countries.
- Reducing the length of the HIES could be a future area for research.

Outcome: The Board noted the challenges faced by Tuvalu in conducting this innovative experiment and congratulated them on the initial report. The Board looks forward to the final report, especially the data quality aspects, at the next PSMB.

1.2 Climate Change Commissioned Work – Progress update and options for next steps

Lisa Green, SPC

A proposed program of work relating to the implementation of the Natural Disaster and Climate Change Survey Sourcebook was presented. This ranged from the quantification of climate change loss and damage to the application of earth observation data to produce statistics.

Discussion items:

- Reference was made to the results of the testing of the climate change survey and core module in the Cook Islands and Kiribati. (This was presented at the Pacific Statisticians Leadership Forum earlier in the week).
- Possible combination of climate change with the existing module on disaster management.
- The Board felt they were not in a position to recommend priorities for future work, rather this is best left for the countries.

Outcome: The Board recognised the progress that had been made and they appreciated the frameworks presented. They noted the countries were in a better position to prioritise the areas to be taken forward and the Board’s role was to provide advice on how previously agreed priorities should be advanced.

1.3 Microdata Anonymisation - Commissioned Work - Introduction

Wolfgang Hertel, SPC Consultant

The objective of this agenda item was to introduce the SPC Consultant, Wolfgang Hertel, to the Board. There has been significant discussion about microdata anonymisation in the past. This

new research work will include consultation with other agencies, preparation of standardisation criteria, recommendations for best practices and a methods guidance note and a policy brief.

Outcome: The Board noted the considerable discussion that had been taken around the microdata anonymisation issue, especially data protection and confidentiality, capacity building and standardisation criteria. They looked forward to the first draft of the report at PSMB 14.

1.4 Proposed Topics for **Innovative Experiment 4 and Commissioned Work 5**

Evelyn Wareham, SPC

The purpose of this agenda item was to seek PSMB's recommendations on which topics to take forward for the next PSMB commissioned work and innovative experiment under the PacStat project for the Pacific region.

Following a request for proposals that was circulated to Pacific NSO heads and donor and development partners to identify priority areas for research, nine eligible proposals were received and are presented in this session (five innovative experiments and four commissioned works).

IEP 1. Construct and implement an effective (cost-effective and accurate) real-time welfare and poverty data monitoring system for Kiribati Government, to aid its policy and work programs in response to its National Kiribati Vision KV20 (2016-2036) and to be used as a benchmark for other NSOs.

Kiribati NSO.

This proposal seeks to create a successful real-time poverty monitoring system that is cost effective, by combining the 2023/24 HIES results with short-term, contextual and administrative factors.

Comments from initial SPC evaluation: Relevant, useful proposal aligned with PacStat objectives. Uses administrative data. Very ambitious - would need to adjust the scope to ensure it is feasible for completion in 12 months. Could be the first phase of a longer project.

Discussion items:

- Seeing that this project will provide a real-time poverty measurement for each person in the country, there was discussion about the need for national identity cards, which are not currently available in Kiribati.
- The proposal is ambitious as it links detailed and more general data from different ministries and sources. Could have data integration of administrative data and real-time poverty data.
- This proposal also has linkages with IEP 3 (discussed below).

Recommendation: The Board noted there was a lot of merit in this idea and recommended that a feasibility study be conducted first.

IEP 2. Strengthening Data Management and Governance for Informed Decision-Making.

Tonga NSO.

This proposal aims to develop and implement a comprehensive Data Governance Framework for Tonga Statistics to ensure the effective management, protection, and utilization of data assets by providing policy, guidelines and procedures.

Comments from initial SPC evaluation: Useful work in high value area. Data governance is a priority for HOPS – and this proposal, if a pilot, could be a model for other countries. Less relevant as an experiment because it is not a data collection innovation. Could be a commissioned work.

Discussion items:

- The budget and timeline may not be sufficient for this proposal and a more flexible modality may be required such as through commissioned work.

Recommendation: The Board noted the merit of this proposal and recommended it be considered as a commissioned work.

IEP 3. Tuvalu Statistical Population Register

Tuvalu NSO.

The Tuvalu statistical population register will provide a total list of persons in Tuvalu. It will utilise census data as the base and will be updated with administrative data from public health, immigration and marine departments to produce high frequency indicators.

Comments from the initial SPC evaluation: Relevant proposal using administrative data to answer a high priority statistical need. Useful example and pilot for the region. Sufficiently different from the previous Tuvalu experiment, which is near complete.

Discussion items:

- The availability of all the necessary data and the lack of an identity card system were key issues discussed.
- The proposal has been agreed by the government but has not yet been presented to Tuvalu’s citizens. A legal framework would need to be in place.

Recommendation: The Board noted the merit of this proposal and its importance for the region. It was noted that initial work would be needed before data integration (e.g. confirming the legal base and the social license).

IEP 4. Human-friendly time trackers or friendly tracking enumerators? A field experiment to assess innovative technological methods for welfare assessment of income and time poverty.
UN Women, ESCAP and SPC.

This proposal aims to address the complexities of measuring income and time poverty through user-friendly technologies. Specifically, it seeks to reduce the burden on respondents by testing the reliability of self-reported time-use data using time-tracker devices, compared to a Computer-Assisted Personal Interviews (CAPI) administered time-use diary.

Comments from the initial SPC evaluation: Interesting experiment that will deliver value for methods recommendations and Sustainable Development Goals (SDG). Less high priority for Pacific Island countries and territories (PICTs) and PacStat objective. No use of administrative data. Would need to have a lead country to undertake the field work.

Discussion items:

- Time use data is expensive and lacking in the region.
- The time use device described in this proposal is in the development process.
- There was concern as to whether the IT technological framework and capacity in the PICTs could support this new device and whether the Pacific was the best place to test such a device.

Recommendation: The Board, while noting there was considerable merit in this proposal, questioned whether the state-of-the-art technology was the best fit for the Pacific region with its limited IT/technological hardware and capacity.

IEP 5. Empowering Vanuatu: Harnessing Data Science and Technology to Boost Agricultural Productivity and Enhance Livelihoods.

Vanuatu NSO

This proposal will provide farmers access to important information that underlies increasingly complex local and global food chains, such as global trade analytics on imports and exports, and weather forecasts and conditions; and in return farmers share their production data. The exchange will allow farmers to fully maximise the value of their crops.

Comments from the initial SPC evaluation: A well constructed proposal in a useful and relevant area. Links with the 2023 Citizen Generated Data, but in a less sensitive area than gender-based violence. Similar approach to current Vanuatu experiment that is in implementation now.

Discussion items:

- This proposal links to previous innovative experiments where satellite data was applied. However, this proposal is different in that it involves the farmers directly.
- This proposal is in keeping with the growing trend to collect and apply citizen-generated data into production (and other) systems.

Recommendation: The Board recognised the merit of this proposal to engage science and technology with citizen generated data to increase agricultural productivity and advised that there are several stages to full implementation.

CWP 1. Exploration of the use of existing data sources to estimate the vulnerability of dwellings to natural disasters.

SPC

Using existing pictures of dwellings taken during previous HIES data collections, this proposal uses machine learning techniques to predict dwelling characteristics (type of building material, presence/absence of sources of safe drinking water and improved sanitation, etc.). These data, together with geographical characteristics, can be used to assess vulnerability to natural disasters as well as socio-economic characteristics of the household.

Comments from the initial SPC evaluation: Useful and relevant research testing potential for use of innovative technology to use existing data sources to produce new insights. Focused on an area of high priority for the Pacific region namely the vulnerability to climate change and natural disasters. Relevant to PacStat and PSMB objectives.

Discussion items:

- The possibility of including other information, such as sanitation and water supply that may be available from the picture was discussed.
- Similar applications have been developed in other countries.

Recommendation: The Board appreciated the merit of this proposal, and that lessons could be drawn for other countries. They recommended that it might be more relevant to funding from other sources rather than PacStat.

CWP 2. Automatic classification of people occupations with Machine Learning models (Large Language Model, classifier, ...) trained on questionnaire answers.

SPC.

The purpose of this proposal is to automatise some manual and time-consuming tasks such as the occupation codification. The research will explore the use of a pre-trained existing Large

Language Model (ChatGPT) and the use of the classification model trained on an already existing dataset.

Comments from the initial SPC evaluation: Useful and relevant proposal for research and innovation. Relevant topic for PacStat and PSMB.

Discussion items:

- This proposal will need to address each country individually and its languages.

Recommendation: The Board noted the value of this proposal and recommended that other sources of funding be found for this work.

CWP 3. Depreciation rate benchmark and core list of durable goods for HIES.

SPC

This proposal aims to establish regional benchmark values of depreciation rates for durable goods. The research work will be based on a dozen recent and older Pacific HIES datasets, to assess possible changes in the depreciation rate over time.

Comments from the initial SPC evaluation: Strong welfare and methods focus - appropriate for PSMB and PacStat. A benefit is that this would tighten and shorten the HIES questionnaire. The proposal has a link to a current Guidance Note. (Is a separate research project needed?)

Discussion items:

- There was discussion as to whether the region needed this research seeing as some countries already had depreciation rates for customs purposes, e.g. Fiji has in use depreciation rates for cars.
- Possibly use existing tax depreciation rates of durable goods to develop standards.

Recommendation: The Board recommended that existing tax depreciation rates of durable goods be used to develop standards.

CWP 4. Enhancing Data Collection Methods for Improved Statistical Indicators for dissemination.

Tonga NSO

This proposal outlines a structured approach to improving data collection processes and indicators, providing Tonga Statistics with the tools and expertise needed to enhance its statistical capabilities and support evidence-based decision-making and policy formulation. Engaging a Research Advisor to enhance data collection methods and develop indicators for key socio-

economic factors at Tonga Statistics will facilitate the generation of timely, accurate, and relevant statistical data.

Comments from the initial SPC evaluation: Review of Tonga methods from collection methods to analysis. Beneficial work for Tonga's National Statistics System, but less fit for the aims of PacStat, as the focus of the proposal is on strengthening national capacities, rather than supporting overall regional objectives and producing regional guidance.

Discussion items:

- Whilst the alignment of statistics work programs with national development plans and global commitments was beneficial for Tonga, it was recommended that further work needed to be done on the timing, scheduling and prioritisation of this work.
- Questions were raised as to whether the funding was sufficient for this proposal.

Recommendation: The Board recognised the merit of this proposal and noted that the discussion points would be given consideration.

Outcome: At the end of the session, SPC thanked all the presenters for their high-quality proposals and noted that today's discussion points had provided useful feedback for SPC to take forward.

Session 2. Pacific Indicators and the 2050 Strategy

2.1 Development of the Pacific Indicator Guidelines

Alison Culpin, SPC and **Chris Ryan**, ESCAP

UNESCAP and SPC are developing Indicator Guidelines for the Pacific, with the document to be a resource for PICTs to adapt and use in developing national indicator guidelines with three pilot countries initially - Fiji, Kiribati and Tonga. This work aims to support and enhance PICT monitoring of sector, national, regional, and global priorities. The outline for the Guidelines was developed during an Expert Group Meeting in November 2023 attended by representatives from the pilot countries. The draft guidelines focus on the national reporting landscape, the different reporting requirements, their alignment and the production of sound statistical indicators for national reporting.

Discussion items:

- The PICTs appreciated being part of this important process as it would help them improve their national processes.

- The representative from Kiribati noted that during the preparation of the National Development Plan, which was completed internally, they had seen the need for improvement in their indicators.
- These guidelines would give NSOs the opportunity to play an important role in the development of national plans.
- There was a recommendation for more case studies in the report.
- It was also noted that sector agencies needed to take ownership of their national plans.

Outcome: The Board acknowledged and appreciated the work already done to provide a good resource for countries to use in developing their own national development plans and indicators.

2.2 2050 Strategy Monitoring Framework

Alison Culpin, SPC and **Chris Ryan**, ESCAP.

This short presentation outlined the monitoring framework for the 2050 Blue Pacific Strategy. A Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (MEL) plan has been developed to be presented to the Pacific leaders in August 2024. Existing indicators for the SDGs are being used for now, and from this year onwards new Pacific-relevant indicators will need to be developed. An example of progress for the education sector, using the traffic light process, was shared. The process is being led by MEL practitioners and NSOs will be included shortly.

Outcome: The Board appreciated the update on progress, noting that further indicators are to be developed and that NSOs will be included in the process shortly.

Session 3. Gender and Human Rights Statistics Methods

3.1 Time use survey

Akhona Nkenkana, SPC, **Cecilia Tinonin** and **Sara Duerto Valero**, UN Women.

This agenda item focused on measuring time use in the Pacific and the inclusion of time use questions in existing surveys. Time use is important in gender statistics and has been endorsed by the UN Statistics Commission in 2024 (three heads of Pacific Island NSOs, SPC and UN Women were in attendance). Refined guidelines are being drafted and the Board was asked to endorse further work to address the gaps in time use statistics.

Discussion items:

- It was noted that time use modules are already integrated into the MICS used by UNICEF and that time use is also included in HIES.

- The Board discussed whether there should be a standalone time use survey every 5 – 10 years whilst also noting the increased burden this would entail. The alternative is to find ways to include time use in other existing surveys.
- Time use surveys can contribute to wellness and other goals and it is up to the countries on how this will be integrated into their own surveys and systems.

Outcome: The Board noted the progress that had been made on the time use guidelines and endorsed the establishment of a small expert thematic sub-group to develop operational guidelines for the integration of a time-use module into a parent survey over the period June to August.

3.2 Possible integration of data collection activities (HIES and MICS)

James Kaphuka UNICEF

A costing exercise of surveys in the Pacific showed that the cost of surveys in the Pacific was significantly higher than in the typical International Development Association (IDA) country and that performance lags limit the use of the data. Proposals for lowering costs were presented, including the more efficient use of investments such as training and tablets, coordination of design, telephone surveys and the use of administrative and non-traditional sources (e.g. satellite data, shipping transponders). A resident enumerator model where enumerators work where they live and there is just one listing for HIES and MICS was shared for discussion.

Discussion items:

- PICTs are always looking at ways to reduce costs and SPC has been helping the countries collaborate such as using the same listing for HIES and MICS and reducing the length of questionnaires.
- The proposed enumerator model would only work for certain countries and surveys due to geographical and demographic constraints. Additionally, differences between the three Pacific regions would need to be accommodated.
- Concerns were raised about data quality issues and the length of the training required for this model.
- PICTs and SPC are interested to explore further cost saving and possibly one country could opt to test the resident enumerator model.
- There are many cost saving ideas, and it is important to determine where the greatest impact would be achieved.

Outcome: The Board agreed to establish a small working group to continue the exchange of ideas on enhancing cost effectiveness noting that no one solution will fit all countries.

3.3 The Pacific Disability Statistics Program.

Evelyn Wareham, SPC and Akhona Nkenkana, SPC.

The Pacific Group on the Disability Statistics (PGDS) project, funded by the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) from 2024-2026, aims to develop regional guidance on methods to improve disability data collection and analysis in the Pacific region. There are three main components: governance and coordination, preparation of a guidebook and capacity building. The guidebook will be aligned with the international guidance from the Washington Group in Disability Statistics and will be submitted to the PSMB for review and approval.

Discussion items:

- Much of the discussion centred around viewing disability through a vulnerability lens:
 - A request was made to expand the project to include the most vulnerable populations e.g. the displaced, the elderly etc.
 - There needs to be country stocktakes of which groups comprise the vulnerable.
 - In Fiji persons with disabilities are the largest group of vulnerable persons.
 - In very small countries, persons with disabilities are such a small group that they cannot always be found in surveys.
 - The disabled community is a very diverse group with different levels of challenges, and degrees of vulnerability could be developed.
 - In the Pacific an entire population can become vulnerable, such as occurred in Tonga after the 2022 volcanic eruption.

Outcome: PSMB acknowledged the good progress made by the Pacific Group on Disability Statistics, and also noted the need to expand social statistics work programs to include other vulnerable groups (e.g. the elderly, the displaced).

Session 4. Pacific Methods Guidance Notes – Part 1

4.1 Food Data Processing - draft Guidance Note

Nathalie Troubat, SPC

This presentation outlined a standard approach to follow when preparing the food consumption data collected in HIES, to transform data into a format that can be used for food security and poverty analysis, informing the consumer price index and national accounts, or for deriving food consumption and nutrition patterns. The main output of this process is a dataset with quantity, dietary energy and monetary value for every food item consumed by the household, from every source of consumption (purchases, own production, etc.). The goal is to enable more timely, consistent, and reliable statistics derived from food consumption data, while also improving the quality and transparency of the data processing.

Discussion items:

- An experiment with the food away-from-home survey conducted in Samoa in 2023 provided positive results although more needs to be done with training the enumerators especially in non-standard units.
- It was noted that the food-away-from home survey needs to include other places besides restaurants (e.g., church gatherings).
- There was discussion as to the flexibility of the standard questionnaire to the situation in different countries.
- The guidelines need to be tailored to each country's context.
- There was general agreement that training of the enumerators needs to be given particular attention.
- The member countries NSOs were consulted during the preparation of these guidelines.

Outcome: The Board approved publication of the Guidance Note. The Board noted that ongoing training would be needed to complement the Guidance Note. Experience with applying the Guidance Note, and any changes advised, will be presented to the PSMB in May 2025.

4.2 Estimation of the use value of fixed assets – Draft Guidance Note

Jean-Paul Zoyem, SPC

This presentation focused on methods and techniques to value durable goods use in the consumption aggregate when measuring monetary well-being, poverty and inequality. The different approaches to estimate the annual consumption flow of the services rendered by durable goods were outlined and included the acquisition cost, the equivalent rental cost and the user cost. The user cost method is the most reliable. A case study using the HIES surveys in Tonga and Tuvalu was presented to illustrate the computation of the use of durable goods in consumption aggregates. The analysis was based on the user cost approach.

Discussion items:

- The case study in Tuvalu and Tonga had a very small sample size, so the results were not statistically valid.
- The presentation was appreciated, but no PICT has an institutional account, so eliminating durable goods from the HIES would be a serious risk.
- The question was raised as to whether this very elaborate Guidance Note was useful in the Pacific context. Further there was a need for more consultation with the countries.

Outcome: PSMB agreed to just note the paper. It requires further consultation with NSOs before being progressed for approval by PSMB. As a reminder, all papers submitted to the Board must be well consulted before submission.

Session 4. Guidance Notes – Part 2

4.4 HIES Methods Toolkit – draft Guidance Note

Bertrand Buffiere, SPC, and **Andrea Borlizzi**, Consultant, SPC.

This item presents a draft HIES Methods Toolkit which aims to draw together in one place various advice, guidance notes and teaching materials from the Pacific experience in conducting HIES, which are a complex, 3-year-long process. This initial draft is for feedback only and it is planned to bring the final version to the October PSMB meeting. The toolkit has been drafted primarily by the SPC data collection team. It builds on the information shared with Pacific Island participants and development partners at the HIES regional conference in Nadi in 2023 and other HIES trainings.

Discussion items:

- An initial discussion on Guidance Notes in general covered the following:
 - Guidance notes are very useful for the continuity and advancement of survey work in the countries.
 - Countries appreciate the effort put into the preparation of the Guidance Notes.
 - Countries need to play a part in the selection of Guidance Notes and to determine if they have the capacity to implement some of the more elaborate methods.
- The Board requested a map / dashboard of all the available Guidance Notes and indicators and the re-organisation of guidance to make it easy to find on the SDD website, as agreed at PSMB13.
- Further revisions of the HIES toolkit should take a product-driven approach with guidance notes on products such as poverty reports, fact sheets and involve consultations with the countries.
- The Board discussed using the MICS toolkit as a model for the revised HIES toolkit and favoured the approach adopted by MICS of bringing involved parties together before moving to the final report stage.

Outcome: The Board endorsed the development of the comprehensive toolkit and agreed that a complete version be presented for approval to PSMB 14. In completing the toolkit, SPC was asked to carefully distinguish between designing a HIES and managing one; to take a product-focused approach based on identifying the survey's end products (reports, tables, etc); and to look to the UNICEF MICS toolkit for inspiration and good practice.

Session 5. Innovative methodologies

5.0 Professional Capacity Building Proposal

Gemma van Halderen, International Statistical Institute

The International Statistical Institute (ISI) is an independent professional statistical organization established to set a global standard for ethical practice, connect members and share recent developments, and provide capacity development for statisticians. The establishment of a voluntary body, such as a Pacific Island Statistical and Geospatial Society was proposed.

Discussion:

- As there was too little time to discuss this proposal in detail, it was agreed that SPC would hold further discussions with ISA.

Comments: The Board noted with interest this proposal and agreed that SPC would hold further discussions with ISI.

5.1 The scheduled presentation (5.1) on the UNODC Network Scale-up Method (NSUM) had to be cancelled due to illness of the presenter.

5.2 The WFP Mobile Vulnerability Analysis and Mapping (mVAM) project

Saidamon Bodamaev, WFP and **Moses Qaloewai**, WFP

Mobile Vulnerability Analysis and Mapping (mVAM) is a remote data collection tool which relies on mobile technology to monitor household food security and nutrition, livelihoods and essential needs. The tool was first developed in conflict countries and in 2021 it was introduced in five PICTs (Fiji, Kiribati, Samoa, Tonga, Vanuatu). The tool is particularly useful for collecting primary data during crises.

Discussion items:

- While this is a useful tool, there are content and coverage issues.
- Data quality issues were discussed in detail. Recognising this tool provides a snapshot to the situation after a disaster, the data can be released in a preliminary form. Particularly in a crisis situation preliminary data is better than no data.

Comments: The Board noted with interest this new tool that is especially useful during crises and looked forward to its further development and application in the PICTs.

5.3 Machine learning and AI for Statistics

Anders Holmberg, ABS

This presentation outlined how ABS is using the full scope of machine learning (ML) and artificial intelligence (AI) for official statistics. They described in detail Deep Dive 1 which used aerial imagery machine learning for address use classification and Deep Dive 2 which raised survey response rates by using ML to predict GOLD providers (units requiring no follow-up). Ongoing work includes the evaluation of Large Language models and the coding of text data to ABS structured classifications.

Discussion items:

- There was considerable interest in this presentation and whether the coding could eventually be shared with the PICTs.
- Machine learning had reduced Vanuatu's trade data compilation from three months to ten days.

Comments: This presentation on machine learning and AI for statistics by the ABS was very informative and there may be opportunities for sharing the business case with PICTs in the future.

5.4 Moving towards “Digital first” data collections

Bruce Fraser, ABS

This presentation compared different modes of survey, in particular, the web response and the CAPI response modes. It was found that when field work is used, there is an even response rate by areas of socio-economic disadvantage. But when fieldwork is withdrawn there is a much lower level of response from young people (15-34), unemployed, households outside of the capital city region, single parent and single person households. This discrepancy can be addressed by weighting.

Discussion items:

- The geographical/demographic context and the nature of the survey determines the modality to be used, e.g. the number of households with mobile phones in some PICTs is very low.
- In some PICTs, governments are advocating for online surveys.
- In some of the larger PICTs, online surveys may work in urban areas. Back-up modes are needed in the rural and outlying island areas, e.g. combining a village event with completing a survey.


Comments: The Board appreciated the presentation and noted the advantages and disadvantages of the different survey modes.

Session 5 Innovative methodologies

The Board appreciated hearing about these informative new methodologies.

Session 6. Topics for future methods guidance – discussion on needs and priorities

SPC presented a list of items for future meetings.



Items for future meetings

Already committed: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The four innovative experiments• Microdata confidentialisation• Survey efficiencies• Response burden and interview times• Structuring and presentation of existing guidance• Finish Guidance Notes on HIES toolkit, imputed rent, durable goods, and data visualisation• Disability statistics manual / guidance• Climate change various methodological issues	Possible new topics: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Building new connections – data science network, ISI chapter, methodologists network• Ian Cope follow-up – population registers and admin data• Labour force survey or other survey toolkits?• CPI / price index reweighting standard / guidance• Wellbeing indicators and “Beyond GDP”• Vulnerability definition and indicators (individual level, not country)• System of National Accounts revisions• Regional statistics strengthening after PacStat• Population projections• Pacific Statistics Strategic Framework – alignment of PSMB’s work program (and maybe also with NSDSs?)
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Discussion items:

- The list was noted as being tentative.
- The Board requested receipt of the papers well in advance of future PSMB meetings to provide sufficient time for their pre-review.
- William Hutchins Seitz of the World Bank advised the Board that there was a cautious expectation that there would be a PacStat 2 expanding the scope of the initial PacStat. This announcement was well received by the Board. Initial discussion by email with SPC and the Board members will begin shortly, and a request was made to include this item in PSMB 14.

Session 6. Topics for future methods guidance – discussion on needs and priorities

SPC presented a tentative list of items for future meetings. The Board requested receipt of the papers well in advance of future PSMB meetings to provide sufficient time for their pre-review. William Hutchins Seitz of the World Bank advised the Board that there was a cautious expectation that there would be a PacStat 2 expanding the scope of the initial PacStat. This announcement was well received by the Board, and initial discussion with SPC and the Board members will begin shortly. A request was made to include this item in PSMB 14.

Session 7. Outcomes and Closing Chair Outcomes report

Other Business

- A request was made to include government statisticians, possibly as observers, and possibly remotely, in PSMB meetings to expose them to new ideas such as AI. The Board agreed to explore the idea.
- Revising the terms of reference for the Board is a work in progress.
- Peter Ellis advised the Board that Andrea Borlizzi and Jean-Paul Zoyem, SPC long-term consultants, were leaving and thanked them for their extensive contributions. They have been replaced with SPC staff members.

Approval of the Meeting Outcomes

The following outcomes were noted and/or approved.

Session 1 Innovative Experiments and Commissioned Works

- 1.1 Tuvalu Long Form Census: The Board congratulated Tuvalu on the preliminary report and looks forward to the final report to be presented at PSMB 14.
- 1.2 Climate Change Commissioned Work: The Board noted the progress that had been made and advised the countries were in the best position to prioritise the areas to be taken forward.
- 1.3 Microdata Anonymisation Commissioned Work: The Board noted the considerable discussion that had been taken around the microdata anonymisation issue, especially data protection and confidentiality, capacity building and standardisation criteria. They looked forward to the first draft of the report at PSMB 14.

1.4 Proposed Topics for Innovative Experiment 4 and Commissioned Work 5: SPC thanked all the presenters for their high-quality proposals and noted that today's discussion points had provided useful feedback for SPC to take forward.

Session 2 Pacific Indicators and the 2050 Strategy

2.1 Pacific Indicator Guidelines: The Board acknowledged and appreciated the work already done to provide a good resource for countries to use in developing their own national development plans and indicators.

2.2 2050 Strategy Monitoring Framework: The Board appreciated the update on progress, noting that further indicators are to be developed and that NSOs will be included in the process shortly.

Session 3 Gender and human rights statistics methods

3.1 Time Use Survey: The Board noted the progress that had been made on the time use guidelines and endorsed the establishment of a small expert thematic sub-group to develop operational guidelines.

3.2 Integration of Data Collection Activities (HIES and MICS): The Board agreed to establish a small working group to continue the exchange of ideas on enhancing cost effectiveness, noting that no one solution will fit all countries.

3.3 The Pacific Disability Statistics Program: PSMB acknowledged the good progress made by the Pacific Group on Disability Statistics, and also noted the need to expand social statistics work programs to include other vulnerable groups (e.g. the elderly, the displaced).

Session 4 Pacific Methods Guidance Notes

4.1 Food Data Processing: The Board approved publication of the Guidance Note. The Board noted that ongoing training would be needed to complement the Guidance Note. Experience with applying the Guidance Note, and any changes advised, will be presented to the PSMB in May 2025.

4.2 Estimation of the Use Value of Fixed Assets: PSMB agreed to just note the paper. It requires further consultation with NSOs before being progressed for approval by PSMB. As a reminder, all papers submitted to the Board must be well consulted before submission.

4.3 HIES Methods Toolkit: The Board endorsed the development of the comprehensive toolkit and agreed that a complete version be presented for approval to PSMB 14. In completing the toolkit, the SPC was asked to carefully distinguish between designing a HIES and managing one; to take a product-focused approach based on identifying the survey's end products (reports, tables, etc); and to look to the UNICEF MICS toolkit for inspiration and good practice.

Session 5 Innovative methodologies

The Board appreciated hearing about these informative new methodologies.

Session 6. Topics for future methods guidance – discussion on needs and priorities

SPC presented a tentative list of items for future meetings. The Board requested receipt of the papers well in advance of future PSMB meetings to provide sufficient time for their pre-review. William Hutchins Seitz of the World Bank advised the Board that there was a cautious expectation that there would be a PacStat 2 expanding the scope of the initial PacStat. This announcement was well received by the Board, and initial discussion with SPC and the Board members will begin shortly. A request was made to include this item in PSMB 14.

Date and Location for Next PSMB Meeting

PSMB 14 is scheduled to be held on 3-4th October 2024 in Noumea, but it was noted that this will be dependent on the current unrest situation.

Concluding Remarks

The Chair thanked all the participants for making PSMB 13 a very successful meeting. He acknowledged the special efforts made by SPC who had to work remotely due to the current crisis in Noumea, and to the ABS staff who took on the administrative duties in the absence of SPC. After a closing prayer the meeting closed.

Annex 1 List of Abbreviations

ABS	Australian Bureau of Statistics
AI	Artificial Intelligence
CAPI	Computer assisted personal interview
COVID19	corona virus disease 2019
CW	Commissioned work
ESCAP	United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific
DFAT	Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade
HIES	Household Income and Expenditure Survey
HOPS	Heads of Planning and Statistics
IDA	International Development Association
ISI	International Statistical Institute
IEP	Innovative experiment proposal
MEL	Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning
MICS	Multiple Income and Cluster Surveys
mVAM	mobile Vulnerability Analysis and Mapping
NSO	National Statistics Office
NSS	National Statistical Systems
OECD	Organisation for Cooperation and Economic Development
PacStat	Statistical Innovation and Capacity Building in the Pacific Islands regional project
PATS	Pacific Aid-for-Trade Strategy
PDF	Pacific Disability Forum
PDH	Pacific Data Hub
PDH-ML	Pacific Data Hub Microdata Library
PGDS	Pacific Group on Disability Statistics
PFTAC	Pacific Financial Technical Assistance Center
PICTS	Pacific Island countries and territories
PIFS	Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat
PSMB	Pacific Statistics Methods Board
NSUM	Network Scale-Up Method
SDD	Statistics for Development Division
SDS	Small-Island Development States
SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
SPC	Pacific Community
UNCTAD	United Nations Conference on Aid and Development
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNODC	United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime
VBoS	Vanuatu Bureau of Statistics
WFP	World Food Programme

Annex 2 Agenda

13th Meeting of the Pacific Statistics Methods Board (PSMB)

Wednesday, 22nd and Thursday, 23rd of May 2024

AGENDA

Time: 8.30 am – 4.30 pm Canberra time (UTC+10)

Venue: Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS), 45 Benjamin Way, Belconnen ACT 2617, Canberra, Australia

Day 1 – Wednesday 22nd May		
Time	Item	Lead / Documentation
08.00–08.30	Arrival and greetings – Coffee, tea, water available	
08.30–09.00	Opening, welcome and meeting procedures Opening prayer Review of agenda Approval of previous meeting report and review of actions	Leota Aliielua Salani Chair / Agenda and previous meeting report
09.00–10.30	Session 1. Innovative Experiments and Commissioned Works 1.1 Tuvalu Long-Form Census Innovative Experiment – preliminary report on findings of experiment 1.2 Climate Change Commissioned Work – progress update and options for next steps 1.3 Microdata Anonymisation Commissioned Work – introduction	Andrea Borlizzi (Consultant, SPC) and Lae Peleti (Tuvalu NSO) / presentation Lisa Green (SPC) Wolfgang Hertel (Consultant, SPC)
10.30–11.00	Group Photo, Morning Tea / Coffee	
11.30–12.30	1.4 Proposed Topics for Innovative Experiment 4 and Commissioned Work 5	Andrea Borlizzi (Consultant, SPC) or Evelyn Wareham (SPC)
12.30–13.30	Lunch	
13.30–14.30	Session 2. Pacific Indicators and the 2050 Strategy 2.1 Development of the Pacific Indicator Guidelines 2.2 2050 Strategy Monitoring Framework	Alison Culpin (SPC) and Chris Ryan (ESCAP)
14.30–14:45	Afternoon Tea	
14:45-16.15	Session 3. Gender and Human Rights Statistics Methods 3.1 Time use survey 3.2 Possible integration of data collection activities (HIES and MICS) 3.3 The Pacific Disability Statistics Program	Akhona Nkenkana (SPC) James Kaphuka (UNICEF) Will Seiz (World Bank) Evelyn Wareham (SPC) and Akhona Nkenkana (SPC)
16.15 – 16.30	Wrap up of Day 1	Chair
Day 2 – Thursday 23rd May		

08.30–10.00	Session 4. Pacific Methods Guidance Notes – Part 1 4.1 Food Data Processing 4.2 Estimation of the use value of fixed assets	Nathalie Troubat (SPC) / draft Guidance Note Jean-Paul Zoyem (SPC) / draft Guidance Note
10.00–10.30	Morning Tea / Coffee	
10.30–12.00	Session 4. Guidance Notes – Part 2 4.3 HIES Methods Toolkit	Bertrand Buffiere (SPC) and Andrea Borlizzi (Consultant, SPC) / draft Guidance Note
12.00–13.00	Lunch	
13.00 – 15.00	Session 5. Innovative methodologies 5.0 Professional Capacity Building Proposal 5.1 The UNODC Network Scale-up Method (NSUM) Cancelled 5.2 The WFP Mobile Vulnerability Analysis and Mapping (mVAM) project 5.3 Machine learning and AI for Statistics 5.4 Moving towards “Digital first” data collections	Gemma van Halderen , International Statistical Institute Kamran Niaz and Mari Jane Fatiaki (UNODC) Saidamon Bodamaev (WFP) and Mosese Qaloewai (WFP) Anders Holmberg (ABS) Bruce Fraser (ABS)
15.00-15.30	Afternoon Tea	
15.30-16.00	Session 6. Topics for future methods guidance – discussion on needs and priorities	Chair
16.00-16.30	Session 7. Outcomes and Closing <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Any other business ▪ Approval of meeting outcomes ▪ Date and agenda for next PSMB meeting ▪ Concluding remarks ▪ Closing prayer 	Chair / Outcomes report

Annex 3 List of Participants

Members

Organisation/Country	Physical attendance	Virtual attendance
New Zealand	Mr Vince Galvin Chair Chief Methodologist vince.galvin@stats.govt.nz	
Samoa	Mr Leota Aliielua Salani Vice-Chair Government Statistician aliielua.salani@sbs.gov.ws	
Australia	Mr Bruce Fraser Principal Adviser, Survey Methodology bruce.fraser@abs.gov.au	
Cook Islands (represents Small countries)	Mrs Taggy Tangimetua Government Statistician taggy.tangimetua@cookislands.gov.ck	
Fiji (represents Melanesia)	Mr Kemueli Naiqama Chief Executive, Fiji Bureau of Statistics knaiqama@statsfiji.gov.fj	
Kiribati (represents Micronesia)	Ms Aritita Tekaieti Republic Statistician atekaieti@gmail.com	
Tonga (represents Polynesia)	Mr Sione Lolohea Government Statistician slolohea@stats.gov.to	
United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)	Mr James Kaphuka Social Policy Specialist jkaphuka@unicef.org	
Vanuatu (represents Melanesia)	Mr Andy Calo Chief Statistician, VBoS acalo@vanuatu.gov.vu	
Secretariat Lead SPC		Mr Peter Ellis Director, SDD petere@spc.int

Observers and Presenters

Organisation/Country	Physical attendance	Virtual attendance
Australia	<p>Ms Denise Carlton Program Manager, Population Statistics Denise.Carlton@abs.gov.au</p> <p>Mr Andrew Knott Assistant Director andrew.knott@abs.gov.au</p> <p>Mr Anders Holmberg Manager, Methodology & Data Science anders.holmberg@abs.gov.au</p> <p>Ms Brigitte Batschi Assistant Director, International Relations brigitte.batschi@abs.gov.au</p> <p>Mr Ed Leslie International Relations Section ed.leslie@abs.gov.au</p> <p>Mr Jonathan Perotti DFAT Jonathan.Perotti@dfat.gov.au</p>	<p>Ms Gemma van Halderen, International Statistical Institute</p>
ESCAP		<p>Mr Chris Ryan Statistician ryanc@un.org</p>
New Zealand	<p>Dr Ofa Ketu'u Senior Manager, Pacific Data Capability ofa.ketuu@stats.govt.nz</p>	
Niue	<p>Ms Fanuma Sioneholo Government Statistician Fanuma.Sioneholo@gov.nu</p>	
Samoa	<p>Ms Lilianetalani Hennemann lilianetalani.hennemann@sbs.gov.ws</p> <p>Mr Siala Lova siala.lova@sbs.gov.ws</p>	
Solomon Islands	<p>Mr. Samson Kanamoli Deputy Government Statistician (Acting GS) SKanamoli@mof.gov.sb</p> <p>Ms Anna Pitaboe NSDS Project Coordinator apitaboe@mof.gov.sb</p>	
Tonga	<p>Ms Ativeniana Pomana Deputy Government Statistician apomana@stats.gov.to</p>	
Tuvalu	<p>Mr Lae Peleti Senior Statistician, CSD lpeleti@gov.tv</p>	

World Bank	Mr Taufik Indrakesuma Economist tindrakesuma@worldbank.org Mr William Hutchins Seitz Senior Economist; Team Lead - Statistical Systems in East Asia and the Pacific wseitz@worldbank.org	
World Food Program (WFP)		Mr Saidamon Bodamaev Head, Food Security and Vulnerability Unit saidamon.bodamaev@wfp.org Mr Mosese Qaloewai mosese.qaloewai@wfp.org

Secretariat

Organisation/Country	Physical attendance	Virtual attendance - Presenters
The Pacific Community (SPC) Statistics for Development Division (SDD) Noumea, New Caledonia	Ms Lisa Green Statistics Advisor, Climate Change lisag@spc.int Mr Yohannes Kinfu Statistics Adviser, Demography yohannesk@spc.int Ms Gillian Cambers (Rapporteur) g_cambers@hotmail.com	Mrs Evelyn Wareham Manager Statistics Leadership, Governance and Use evelynw@spc.int Ms Maria Musudroka Manager, Statistics Collection mariam@spc.int Mrs Elizabeth Ragimana Statistics Advisor, Governance and Co-ordination elizabethr@spc.int Mr Bertrand Buffiere Statistics Adviser (Methods) bertrandb@spc.int Mr Leo Cann-Polydor Data analyst leoc@spc.int Ms Alison Culpin Social Statistics Adviser alisonc@spc.int Ms Akhona Nkenkana Statistics Advisor, Gender and Human Rights akhonan@spc.int Mr Andrea Borlizzi Statistics Advisor, PACSTAT extandreab@spc.int Ms Nathalie Troubat Data Harmonization Advisor, PACSTAT nathalietr@spc.int Mr Jean-Paul Zoyem

		<p>Welfare Economist, PACSTAT extjeanpaulz@spc.int Ms Monica Madrid Arroyo PACSTAT Consultant, SPC monicamadrida@gmail.com Mr Wolfgang Hertel PACSTAT Consultant, SPC Wolfgang.Hertel@abs.gov.au Other SPC staff may also attend as observers.</p>
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