

**INAUGURAL MEETING OF THE PACIFIC STATISTICS METHODS BOARD  
3-4<sup>TH</sup> MAY 2018**

**DRAFT TERMS OF REFERENCE – Paper 1**

**1. Purpose**

The purpose of the Pacific Regional Statistical Methods Board (PR SMB) is to ensure that relevant best practice standards are developed and are “fit for purpose” for use in Pacific Island countries and territories (PICTs) for a suite of core censuses and surveys.

**2. Roles**

- a. Assist in the compilation of production schedules and forward work programmes and utilise these for assessing the need to improve methods, the extent of capability gaps or the need to support production activity. These include:
  - i. Establish the drivers of regular statistical production in terms of methods, system and procedures
  - ii. Identify common needs and opportunities across the region
  - iii. Help broker access to capabilities in other statistical or provider agencies
- b. Assess and approve proposals put forward by providers working in the Pacific on: questionnaire design, sampling methodologies, classifications, collection tools and systems, and quality assurance processes. The type of proposals can include:
  - i. Matters of statistical practice e.g. timing and scope of historical revisions
  - ii. Changes in standard approaches to statistical methodologies and classifications
  - iii. Implementation approaches including choices around software
- c. Provide advice and recommended courses of action on issues such as;
  - i. Resolve conflicts between alternative methodological approaches suggested by different development agencies
  - ii. Resolve conflicts between national statistics offices and development agencies on methods, system or procedures
  - iii. How to balance the need for standard approaches with the need to reflect the diversity of requirements of pacific countries.
  - iv. How to optimise a programme of data acquisition to meet extensive data requirements
  - v. The long-term capability consequences for proposals to change methods
- d. Provide advocacy to enable the particular requirements of the Pacific region to be adequately reflected in international standards. These include:
  - i. Identify where work is needed to develop methodological approaches that reflect the situation of Small Island States
  - ii. Explore opportunities to have these issues worked on within the wider international statistical community

e. Initially the focus of the Board's work will be on the following core statistical activities:

- population and housing censuses,
- household income and expenditure surveys,
- multi-indicator cluster surveys,
- demographic and health surveys,
- disability surveys,
- agriculture surveys

### 3. Membership

a. PRSMB membership will include;

Four representatives from among regional statistics development partners, namely; Statistics NZ (Chair), Australia Bureau of Statistics, World Bank and one of the UN Agencies.

A representative (Government Statistician) from each of the four PICT areas, namely; Polynesia (Tonga), Melanesia (Fiji), Micronesia (Nauru) and Small Island States (Guam).

b. *Terms*; The term of the PRSMB Chair will be for a period of 3 years before the next election. The current Chair can be re-elected if majority vote in his/her favour. The deputy chair will be a Government Statistician representative. Following the initial election of a deputy the position will be rotated annually amongst the Government Statistician representatives.

c. *Secretariat*; Secretarial services will be provided by the Statistics for Development Division (SDD).

d. *Attendance*; Compulsory for Board members. Should a board member be unable to attend, a suitable representative must be provided.

e. *Presenters, observers and invited members*; Board members may nominate people from their respective agencies who have authored and/or co-authored papers in partnership with SDD, to attend board meetings to present the paper and respond to questions. The Board may co-opt a member country's government statistician or relevant staff member as, and when required.

### 4. Procedures

a. *Meetings*; Meetings will be held twice a year; in April and October. The April meeting will be via teleconference and the October meeting will be face-to-face. The October meeting will be held one day before the Pacific Statistics Standing Committee (PSSC) Meeting.

b. *Servicing*; The Board will be serviced by SDD, which will submit standards to the board for review and approval.

c. *Reporting*; The Board will come under the umbrella of the PSSC, and will provide an annual report to PSSC outlining progress and achievements. Matters requiring a broader view and/or guidance will be referred to PSSC as they arise.

d. *Timing*; The Board's secretariat will distribute the agenda and papers to the Board and invited members one week prior to the meeting date. Papers to be submitted to the secretariat no later than two weeks prior to the meetings taking place.

Draft minutes to be released for Board approval two weeks after the meeting. Minutes will be made available on SDD's website within one week following Board approval.

e. *Papers*; The board will:

- review all submitted papers to ensure that all relevant information has been provided,
- make all decisions on submitted papers,

- endorse papers that propose changes to methods in the above national collections, and
- endorse papers in principle, but require further work at its request.

Members wishing to present papers should notify the secretariat of their intention to do so as early as possible in the meeting cycle. Board members are expected to have read all papers submitted and make necessary investigation in advance of PRSMB meetings.

- f. Retention of papers: All papers submitted to the Board will be stored and archived by SDD. This will ensure that papers are easily located in the future and that member countries, technical partners, donors and consultants working on these collections have easy access to them.
- g. Structure and content of papers: A style guide for Board papers and their submission will be provided by the secretariat and should be followed.

Urgent issues and/or changes: New methods requiring immediate clearance and implementation outside Board meetings will be considered through circulation to Board members for comment and a decision, although the aim is to limit the need for urgent changes. Any urgent changes requiring implementation without Board scrutiny should be documented for review at the next available meeting.

- h. Out-of-session papers: In some cases, papers may need to be circulated for the record, or for information only. Before submitting a paper out of session, papers must be signed off by the Secretary and Chairman of the Board. This is to ensure that the content has had the appropriate level of scrutiny. Out-of-session papers will be noted on the agenda but will not be presented for discussion.
- i. Action items: An action item should be created when further work is required on a presented paper that will need to be reviewed and monitored by the Board as it progresses. The Board will determine, if any actions are required following its presentation.
- j. The chair and secretariat: The chair will endeavour to reach a consensus position on recommendations but otherwise will, depending on the balance of opinion, either signal endorsement with reservations, or rejection.

The secretariat will;

- organise meeting times and venues;
  - call for agenda items and accompanying written material;
  - circulate the final agenda and accompanying written material;
  - manage and following up on outstanding action items;
  - prepare the minutes of the meeting and seeking clearance from presenters;
  - file approved papers and associated documents electronically within SDD; and
  - create and maintain a 'methods' corner on its website, where all documents and standards endorsed by PRSMB can be uploaded to inform all member countries, technical partners, donors of the board's decisions.
- k. The chair and secretariat will be jointly responsible for ensuring that the purpose of each item on the agenda is clear and unambiguous.

## 5. Recommendations

That the Board endorse the Terms of Reference