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INFORMATION PAPER 6:
REGIONAL STATISTICS INITIATIVES

Purpose and Summary

Purpose

This paper is presented in two parts. The main paper provides Forum Economic Ministers with an update on regional statistics governance and finance in response to the FEMM Action Plan. The second part - **Annex 1** - provides a brief update on key statistical activities conducted in the region over the 12 months since the 2021 FEMM.

Summary

i.   The past reporting year 2021-2022 has continued to be a challenging one for national statistics offices (NSOs) around the region, as well as the technical agencies and development partners that serve and support them. The demand for statistics to inform governments and partners of the social and economic impacts of the pandemic, and now the progress in the slow recovery in several countries, has remained high. Many countries have continued to struggle to secure the necessary funds from squeezed national budgets and development partners to meet the statistical demands, especially those countries conducting population and housing census and other core surveys, including on household income and expenditure. SPC has worked closely with these countries to improve the cost-effectiveness and efficiency of the collections process.

ii. Many of the core statistical collections in the regional programme of core census and surveys, including population and housing censuses (PHC), household income and expenditure surveys (HIES), labour force surveys (LFS), demographic and health surveys (DHS) and multiple indicator cluster surveys (MICS) deferred from 2020 and early 2021 were eventually undertaken in late 2021 and 2022. The current programme of core collections for 2021 through 2024 is illustrated in Table 1 with a pro-forma costing illustrated in Table 2. Between 2021 and 2024 there are now thirteen census and a similar number of household surveys already scheduled, along with around two dozen other MICS, LFS and other core surveys. During 2021 and the first half of 2022 Rapid Assessment Surveys (RAS) were also conducted in Cook Islands, Niue and Tokelau to assess the impact of the pandemic on the lives and livelihoods of the people in these countries.

iii. The breadth and depth of the pandemic across the region turned out to be much greater than had been initially hoped, with only a few countries managing to avoid the virus completely. Social and economic disruption has been widespread although some countries are now relaxing border closures with the assistance of comprehensive vaccination cover.

iv.   However the need for "real-time" data and information has if, anything, become even more important as families try to rebuild their lives and livelihoods and governments seek to restore their fiscal and macroeconomic balances. Although many governments have begun to make more data available from administrative sources as well as improving access to secure microdata, significant gaps in the availability of key data and indicators remain. In order to make more data available for policy development, governments are again encouraged to review institutional processes and issues that might hinder or constrain the accessibility to important social and economic data.

v.   Reviews of statistics legislation to take account of technology and to recognise that confidentiality can be protected thereby enabling secure and managed data dissemination, will greatly assist in the development and implementation of recovery measures. Greater data sharing will lead to its more cost-effective and efficient use, thus will greatly increase the return on investment from conducting census and surveys.

vi.   During the past twelve months the Pacific Regional Statistics Governance Framework has continued to play an important role in statistical development, particularly in guiding the development of new and appropriate statistical methodologies for the region through the Pacific Statistics Methods Board (PSMB). Coordination of statistical activities has however become more difficult and complex with many new partners coming into the region to assist Pacific Islands countries. This has led to heavy burdens being placed on some national statistics offices and on respondents, especially in the smaller countries.

vii.   The Covid-19 pandemic has taken a severe toll on the financing and scheduling of many important statistical activities across the region over the past two years. Census and surveys have been postponed and, in some cases, cancelled resulting in significant gaps in information on demographic and other important change characteristics amongst Pacific people and their livelihoods. The financing and resource gaps have been particularly challenging for the small island states.

viii.   As regional statistics system leader, SPC's Statistics for Development Division (SDD) has continued to advocate for higher levels of funding to be made toward statistics development. Statistics and the indicators that can be derived are critical for measuring and monitoring the recovery from the Covid setbacks. Once again Ministers are encouraged to support their National Statistics offices to collect and publish the people-centred data and indicators that are derived from national census and surveys and to use this information to support evidence-based policies. In the context of the post-pandemic recovery, and the importance of monitoring progress and the lingering impact of Covid on the people of the region. It is again requested that development partners and other donors consider supporting the proposed regional statistics financing facility that was endorsed by Ministers in 2019.

ix.   For the three years (2022 to 2024), the cost of conducting the forty-five already identified core census and surveys in the smaller Pacific countries (excluding Fiji and PNG) will amount to around an estimated US$62 million, see Table 2 for the pro-forma costing. Assuming national governments will be able to finance between two-thirds to three-quarters of these costs there will be an overall funding gap of between around US$16 - US$24 million to be filled in order to enable the smaller NSOs in the region to conduct their scheduled basic core statistical collections. The use of new technology (e.g., Computer Assisted Personal Interviews (CAPI)) in conducting the censuses and surveys, and the use of a newly introduced real-time and online data management and data processing system has assisted in keeping overall costs down and shortening data processing times.

x.   The core collections covered in the forward programme are very important for the compilation of the 131 indicators of the Pacific Roadmap for Sustainable Development (PRSD) as we move well into the last decade of Agenda 2030. It is estimated that approximately 76 of the PRSD indicators –

almost sixty percent - are derived either directly or indirectly from core collections, or need the results of the core collections to be calculated.

xi.   It is important that FEMM once again reinforce the need for governments, donors and development partners to recognise the importance of having up-to-date statistics to inform national policy and decision-making, as well as meeting SDG and other regional and global reporting requirements.

The second part of the paper, **Annex 1**, provides an update of key statistical development work that has taken place in the region over the 12 months to end April 2022. Despite the continuing travel restrictions, SPC and PFTAC among other development partners have delivered a considerable number of activities in the development of both economic and social statistics, as well as on the data and reporting requirements for the PRSD. Other partners that have been involved in regional statistics development include: the Australian Bureau of Statistics; Statistics NZ; UNESCAP, UNICEF; UNFPA; World Bank; ADB, FAO and ILO. MFAT and DFAT continue to be the two main donors for regional statistics development. All agencies have adapted their ways-of-working to mitigate the effects of the international travel restrictions and domestic lockdowns.

A.   Overview and Summary of Key Issues

Regional Statistics Governance Framework

In 2021 the Regional Statistics Governance Framework continued to function through virtual meetings although travel restrictions were a significant limiting factor. The PSMB held two virtual meetings and the Brisbane Accord Group (BAG) similarly met virtually on civil registration and vital statistics. The planned meeting of the Heads of Planning and Statistics (HOPS) was again rescheduled and is now planned for the second half of 2022.

2.   A review of the Ten-Year Pacific Statistics Strategy (TYPSS) 2011-2020 was eventually completed in the third quarter of 2021. The review made several key recommendations for inclusion in a successor strategy, see Box 1. An informal meeting of the Heads of Statistics was held virtually in late 2021 to consider the findings and recommendations of the TYPSS review and these have been incorporated into a new draft Strategic Framework for the Development of Statistics (TYPSS II) 2022-2030 that is now being reviewed as a final draft by Government Statisticians, development partners, donors and other stakeholders in the region.

The End-of TYPSS review noted the following Key Areas for Future Action in the Successor Strategic Framework.

➤ The growing complexity of statistical needs in the region requires a more strategic approach to regional statistics development and support.

➤ More emphasis to be given to capacity and capability building to enable NSOs to meet challenges and capability needs including analysis / interpretation.

➤ Stronger statistical coordination and governance arrangements are required both regionally and nationally, to enhance efficiency and cost-effectiveness of statistical production, dissemination, and use.

➤ Make more use through accessibility and deeper analysis of existing data, including administrative data and alternative data sources.

➤ Capabilities and capacities to be developed to assist NSOs address emerging sector-specific needs for statistics.

> ➢ Regular review and updates are required to identify gaps and priorities, both national and regional, that should inform the delivery of assistance and support by all partners.

3.   Emphasis continues to be given to the dissemination of census and survey microdata through the Pacific Data Hub - Microdata Library and under the governance of Data Licence Agreements (DLAs). Access to microdata is essential to enable national decision-makers, researchers and other *bona fide* users to have access to data that can be used for secure yet disaggregated data analysis to support the development of policies for the benefit of all Pacific people in the challenging period of post pandemic recovery.

4.   Emphasis also continues to be given to the regular dissemination of key economic and social statistics and statistical indicators that can be derived from administrative data that is collected and compiled by government ministries and agencies, including finance, revenue, customs, immigration, social security agencies, and provident funds in order to provide timely data for regular economic and social monitoring of performance.

5.   **The Pacific Data Hub** (PDH) has both broadened and deepened the range of Pacific data and indicators now available through the Pacific Data Explorer PDH.stat: Development indicator database | Statistics for Development Division (spc.int)

B.   Discussion

6.   Key issues in regional statistics governance in 2021/22 included:

- The delayed **final review and evaluation of the Ten-Year Pacific Statistics Strategy 2011-2020 (TYPSS)** was completed in the third-quarter of 2021. **The evaluation concluded that, overall, NSOs had made significant progress in statistical collection and capability development**.[1] [2] The evaluation also concluded that a wide range of supporting projects and technical assistance activities had been delivered to NSOs, either directly by SDD, PFTAC or by donors and other development partners bilaterally or in partnership.

- Measures of progress also included improved scores in the World Bank's Statistical Capacity Indicator[3],[4], increases in the number of core collections being successfully conducted and analysed, expanded breadth and depth of data coverage for key indicators including the SDGs, merchandise trade, reporting of birth and death registrations, and the development and implementation of National Strategies for the Development of Statistics (NSDS). In addition, the dissemination and analysis responsibilities and capacities were both broadened and strengthened in SDD in Phase 3 of TYPSS.

- However, the Review also identified areas that were recommended should be given greater attention for the future of statistics in the region. These included the following key points: the growing complexity of statistical needs in the region that required a more strategic approach to regional statistics development and support; including more emphasis to be

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[1] Sustineo. (2021) Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade. End of Ten-Year Pacific Statistics Strategy Evaluation Final Report

[2] The implementation of TYPSS has benefitted from a number of evaluations and reviews. These include SDD's Performance Improvement Framework (PIF) Review (2016), Pacific Statistics Steering Committee Meeting (PSSC–13) (2016), Sustineo's Pacific Statistics Assessment (2016), TYPSS Phase 2 Review (2017), and the TYPSS Final Evaluation (2021)

[3] https://datatopics.worldbank.org/statisticalcapacity/SCIdashboard.aspx

[4] Now World Bank Statistical Performance Indicators (WBSPI); SPI (worldbank.org)

given to capacity and capability building to enable NSOs to meet the challenges and capability needs including analysis/ interpretation; stronger statistical coordination and governance arrangements were needed both regionally and nationally, to enhance efficiency and cost-effectiveness of statistical production, dissemination and use; more use needed to be made of the available data and indicators, including deeper analysis and accessibility of existing data, including administrative data and alternative data sources; capabilities and capacities needed to be developed to assist NSOs address emerging sector-specific needs for statistics; and a robust; regular review and updates are required to identify gaps and priorities, both national and regional, that should inform the delivery of assistance and support by all partners.

- All these key issues have been incorporated in the new Strategic Framework for Pacific Statistics 2022-2030 (TYPSS II) that is presently being reviewed by NSOs, partners, donors and other stakeholders. .

- The enhanced demand for national accounts, government finance statistics and external sector statistics, especially for pandemic economic impact monitoring, continues to emphasise importance of the support provided through PFTAC. It reinforces the need for Pacific countries to produce regular and timely quarterly data; the lack of timely and reliable data hinders the measurement and assessment of the economic and social impacts of the pandemic on the lives and livelihoods of the people;

- Support continued from PFTAC for the Government Finance Statistics programme, based on strong demand from PICTs Recognising the importance of macroeconomic indicators the PFTAC has recently announced an increase in its support to the region, including in public finance, climate finance and macroeconomic indicators.

7.   Other important issues in statistical developments included:

- Continued progress on developing updated guidelines for the estimation of both monetary and multidimensional poverty measurement. Progress on this was once again delayed but is now expected to be completed with guidelines issued late in 2022.

- The high and ever-increasing demands on NSOs, for SDG-related data and data for national, regional and global monitoring and reporting commitments.

- In late 2021 SDD appointed a gender and human rights statistician to strengthen the Division's capacity to support SPC's work on gender equality, empowerment and related issues.,

- SDD was also able to recruit a Statistics Adviser (Data Analysis and Capacity Development) in early 2022. This is an important new position providing capacity development in the use of data for evidence-based policy development. by NSOs and sector ministries.

- Long term consultant positions for a Welfare Economist and a HIES Statistician were recruited under a World Bank Project and a number of short-term consultants were engaged to support the core SDD team.

- The PDH expanded its breadth and depth of available data and indicators including through the dotStat database platform and the Pacific Microdata Library. The SDG dashboard and progress wheels were regularly updated and the PopGIS 3 (data visualisation and mapping), was made faster and more responsive than previous versions and can be used on laptops and smartphones;

- Unfortunately SDD's CRVS Adviser departed during 2021 but the Division's funding situation precluded the position being replaced, a similar issue being experienced with the vacant opposition for a prices statistician.

Regional Statistics Response to COVID-19

8. Although travel restrictions are now being eased across the region there are still many difficulties and risks from the Covid-19 pandemic. The economic and social impacts of the pandemic are likely to persist for several years as the recovery gradually spreads through the region's economies. Whilst the postpone of some census and surveys has limited data availability for some countries, the demand for data has improved the supply of data, particularly administrative data, in others. SDD continued to compile and publish quarterly data on available Covid-impact indicators throughout the year. A review of the available indicators for 2021 can be found at: [da10d7d82e450b280ec0f63ec1630b4f.pdf (windows.net)](da10d7d82e450b280ec0f63ec1630b4f.pdf)

  - Regional Covid-19 infection and vaccination rates and other relevant data can now be found on the SPC website at https://www.spc.int/updates/blog/2021/05/covid-19-pacific-community-updates this page is updated weekly.

  - The Covid-19 socio-economic indicators page continues to be updated on a quarterly basis primarily from available administrative data and now covers the whole of 2021; this can be found at https://sdd.spc.int/disasters-data/covid-19, the page brings together a selection of key regional data that highlights the impacts of the pandemic on selected economic and social factors where data is available; the page also includes selected population density maps highlighting areas of high population density etc., as places of higher vulnerability to infection.

  - The coverage of administrative data increased over the period as more countries recognized the importance of making data available; but there is still a long way to go. It is hoped that these indicators could be a transitional stage towards the production of quarterly macroeconomic data as recommended by PFTAC.

  - Rapid Assessment Surveys on the impact of Covid-19 on the people and socio-economic situation in Cook Islands, Niue and Tokelau were conducted during 2021/22. A second-round High frequency Phone Survey was also conducted by World Bank and UNICEF in Solomon Islands in 2021.

C.   Next Steps: Way Forward for Covid-19 Recovery

9. Recognising the importance of increasing the flow of data to monitor the recovery phase from the impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic on the people and socio-economic situation of the region; the following approaches can assist in meeting the needs of both national governments and development partners for such data in developing and supporting recovery focussed policies and measures:

- Improve the regular dissemination of administrative data that can be used to produce economic leading indicators, as recommended, as a transitional process towards the production of quarterly data for macroeconomic monitoring through national accounts, government finance and external sector statistics, and including finance, revenue, customs, immigration, social security and provident funds and electricity generation;

- Support the dissemination of census and survey microdata through the Pacific Data Hub - Microdata Library and under the governance of Data Licence Agreements (DLAs), to enable national decision-makers, researchers and other users to have access to data that can be used to develop policies for the benefit of all Pacific people;

Table 1: Core Collection Plan as at May 2022:

Revised to take Account of Rescheduling as a Result of COVID-19

Statistical Collection Plan; PICT Summary 2021 - 2024				
PACIFIC ISLAND COUNTRIES	2021	2022	2023	2024
American Samoa				AGR
Cook Islands	PHC		LFS	
Cook Islands	AGR			
Cook Islands	COVID 19 RAS survey	COVID 19 RAS survey		
Fed. States of Micronesia	MICS-DHS	PHC	HIES	
Fed. States of Micronesia			LFS	
Fiji	MICS	EUS	HHL	HIES
French Polynesia	LFS	PHC	LFS	LFS
French Polynesia		LFS	AGR	
Guam				
Kiribati	LFS	AGR	HHL	
Kiribati	DISABILITY		MICS-DHS	
Kiribati			HIES	HIES
CNMI	HIES	HHL		
CNMI	LFS			
Marshall Islands	PHC	HIES	MICS-DHS	
Nauru	PHC	MICS-DHS	HIES	
New Caledonia	LFS	LFS	LFS	PHC
New Caledonia				
Niue	COVID 19 RAS survey	COVID 19 RAS survey		
Niue	AGR	PHC		
Palau		HIES	HIES	HHL
Palau				
Papua New Guinea	HIES	HHL	PHC	
Samoa	SSDS	LFS	DISABILITY	MICS-DHS
Samoa	PHC		HIES	
Samoa	NID/CRVS			
Samoa				
Solomon Islands			HIES	MICS-DHS
Tokelau	COVID 19 RAS survey	PHC	DISABILITY	MICS-DHS
Tonga	PHC	AGR		
Tonga	HIES	DHS		
Tuvalu		PHC	DISABILITY	
Tuvalu		HIES		
Vanuatu	MICS-DHS	AGR		HIES
Vanuatu	LFS	Business Survey		
Wallis and Futuna			PHC	

	LFS - Labor Force Survey
	DHS - Demographic Health Survey
	HIES - Household Income and Expenditure Survey
	PHC - Population and Household Census
	AGR - Agriculture Census / Surveys
	MICS - Multi Indicator Cluster Survey
	Other Household Collections
	HHL - Household Listing
	Disability

Table 2: Core Collection Plan Pro-Forma Costing as at May 2022:

Statistical Collection Plan; Pro-Forma Costing Summary 2021 - 2024 (US$)					
PACIFIC ISLAND COUNTRIES	**2021**	**2022**	**2023**	**2024**	
American Samoa				681600	
Cook Islands	183,600		45,900		
Cook Islands	183,600				
Cook Islands	45,900	45,900			
Fed. States of Micronesia	949,500	1,266,000	633,000		
Fed. States of Micronesia			2,685,000		
Fiji	8,055,000	5,370,000	2,685,000	5,370,000	
French Polynesia	836,700	3,346,800	836,700	836,700	
French Polynesia		836,700	3,346,800		
Guam					
Kiribati	356,100	1,424,400	356,100		
Kiribati	356,100		1,068,300		
Kiribati			712,200	712,200	
CNMI	339,600	169,800			
CNMI	169,800				
Marshall Islands	655,200	327,600	491,400		
Nauru	140,400	105,300	70,200		
New Caledonia	819,000	819,000	819,000	3,276,000	
New Caledonia					
Niue	4,800	4,800			
Niue	19,200	19,200			
Palau		107,400	107,400	53,700	
Palau					
Papua New Guinea	53,610,000	26,805,000	107,220,000		
Samoa	596,100	596,100	596,100	1,788,300	
Samoa	2,384,400		1,192,200		
Samoa	596,100				
Samoa					
Solomon Islands			4,272,600	6,408,900	
Tokelau	4,500	18,000	4,500	13,500	
Tonga	1,197,600	1,197,600			
Tonga	598,800	898,200			
Tuvalu		127,200	31,800		
Tuvalu		63,600			
Vanuatu	2,652,300	3,536,400		1,768,200	
Vanuatu	884,100				
Wallis and Futuna			136,800		
Total Estimated Costs	75,638,400	47,085,000	127,311,000	20,909,100	270,943,500
Fiji+PNG	61,665,000	32,175,000	109,905,000	5,370,000	209,115,000
Small States exc Fiji&PNG	13,973,400	14,910,000	17,406,000	15,539,100	61,828,500

Summary of Key Statistical Activities Conducted in the Region by PFTAC and SPC-SDD since the 2021 FEMM

Part A: PFTAC support to Statistics Initiatives in the Pacific

Summary

Reliable macroeconomic statistics that are available in a timely manner are essential for evidence based economic policy making by government authorities. They also provide the private sector, foreign investors, rating agencies, and the public in general with important inputs in their decision-making, while informing national and regional economic analysis including for International Monetary Fund (IMF) surveillance.

Discussion

At the beginning of Fiscal Year 2022, PFTAC had one resident advisor in Real Sector Statistics (RSS) and one in Government Finance Statistics (GFS). The RSS Adviser remained in post throughout the year and was replaced when his assignment concluded in April 2022, however the GFS advisor was not immediately replaced when his assignment concluded on August 31 2021. Assistance to Government Finance Statistics was supplied instead by short-term experts (STX) arranged through the Government Finance Statistics division in Washington. Plans are in place for a new GFS advisor to join PFTAC in October. Additionally, a small External Sector Statistics (ESS) program has been supported by external STXs and from the IMF regional office in Bangkok. Because of the COVID restrictions all TA for the year was delivered virtually.

The number of days of direct delivery of TA slightly increased in FY2022 versus the previous year (172 days in the RSS program (of which 81 were by STX) in FY2021 versus 134 in FY2020, and 51 days in the GFS program in FY2022 versus 79 in FY2020. Despite the increase in the number of TA days, fewer missions/training events were delivered in FY2022 (RSS was 15 down from 16 and GFS was 6 down from 12). This development is a result of advisers taking the opportunity provided by remote TA to provide longer inputs.

i) **Targets:** In 2022, PFTAC's main objectives in national accounts were to assist member countries keep up with their regular publication schemes despite the period of crisis and to promote the introduction of Quarterly National Accounts programs. The COVID-19 pandemic increased the demand for timely QNA to better inform recent economic developments and support effective and evidence based economic policymaking. Governments, businesses, and citizens require timely, high frequency data to track the depth of the recession and the pace and shape of the recovery.

GFS and ESS programs continued to deliver on the same themes as in previous years, albeit with fewer missions.

ii) **Progress:** The most important achievements in FY2022 in macroeconomic statistics were; Reviewing and finalizing experimental GDP(E) compilation in Samoa; First time compilation and publication of QNA data adjusted for seasonal and calendar variations in the Cook Islands; and starting implementation of a QNA program in the Solomon Islands.

Overall, the main activities in National Accounts were:

a. In the Cook Islands: (1) an STX mission helped refine the applied methodology for compiling GDP(E), extended the series to 2020, and developed an experimental quarterly series; (2) a mission incorporated quarterly GFS into both annual and quarterly GDP(E), improving the coherence of the estimates; and (3) a further mission assisted the authorities with the compilation and finalization seasonal and calendar adjusted QNA data with a following first time publication of results.

b. In Fiji the statistical office was supported by: (1) the introduction of new annual benchmarks in QNA compilation; and (2) a review of new annual national accounts estimates for FY20 and providing advice on the upcoming rebase.

c. Technical assistance to FSM included: (1) reviewing and updating national and state government GFS working files and align to the GFSM 2014. Compiled public sector gross debt statistics; In Kiribati, TA mainly focused on: (1) an update of annual GDP(P) and GDO(E) to 2020; and (2) the introduction of new benchmark statistics in national accounts.

d. Nauru was supported with: (1) an update of annual national accounts to the fiscal year 2020; and (2) capacity supplementation from headquarters to compile annual BCG fiscal data for FY2019 and FY2020. Niue received an STX mission helping with: (1) updating the national accounts estimates for 2019 and 2020; and (2) introduction of updated and improved data sources to the accounts.

e. In RMI, TA helped: (1) the authorities to compile value added for several market producing industries; (2) deliver training on the recommended method to compile value-added for non-market producers and its application to public administration, education and health service; (3) provide advice on the appropriate price adjustment of taxes and subsidies on products; and (4) assist in refining quarterly GFS and expanding coverage to report consolidated general government fiscal statistics.

f. In Palau, PFTAC's support contributed to: (1) expanding coverage to report consolidated general government fiscal statistics. Compile public sector gross debt statistics.

g. In PNG, support mainly focused on: (1) review and refine the national budget volume II classifications to align to GFSM 2014; (2) review quarterly GFS compilation and narrow down statistical discrepancies; and (3) review and improve the classification of the functions of government expenditure.

h. In Samoa, developments included: (1) assisting the Samoa Bureau of Statistics with an STX mission improving experimental GDP by expenditure estimates and finalizing the data for publication; and (2) expanding coverage to include stocks and flows for the budgetary central government statement of operations and balance sheet.

i. In the Solomon Islands, the PFTAC program provided: (1) an LTX who conducted a remote mission to assist the Central Bank ANNUAL REPORT 2022 | PFTAC 59 with training and the start of the implementation of a QNA program; and (2) a remote STX mission led by the IMF's Statistics Department assisted the Central Bank with the start of an SUT program.

j. The focus of PFTAC assistance to Tonga was: (1) the continuation of the implementation of an experimental QNA programs with two missions.

k. In Tuvalu PFTAC assisted in: (1) compiling the balance of payments and international investment position (IIP) for 2019; and (2) strengthening the compilation framework and provide hands-on training to the staff.

On GFS, the main activities and achievements in 2022 were:

a. TA in FSM, Palau and RMI to continue the extension of coverage for consolidated general government fiscal statistics and start to extend coverage of the rest of the public sector by developing bridging tables to convert public corporations' audited accounts data to the standards in GFSM 2014 (the latest international manual for Government Finance Statistics);

b. In Samoa, assistance focused on integrating stocks and flows into the fiscal accounts using the government public account balance sheet data. Improvements were also made in the classification of expenditures using the COFOG (classification of the functions of government) system;

c. Improvements were suggested to budgetary central government quarterly fiscal statistics for Papua New Guinea, and recommendations were made in expanding the GFS coverage in the national budget volume II and the use of COFOG for expenditure classification;

d. Synergies between PFTAC funded activities and Capacity Development funded by the headquarters Data for Decisions (D4D) trust fund were achieved by using the latter to deliver assistance to FSM, Papua New Guinea, and the Solomon Islands in increasing the coverage of their Public Sector Debt Statistics (PSDS), and also providing training to Timor-Leste on the GFS framework and its practical application.

e. Reviews and updating of business process documentation for GFS and PSDS compilation were completed for FSM, Palau, and the RMI.

A regional workshop was planned for March 2022 but postponed to August 2022 to allow for travel conditions to improve with the aim of delivering the workshop in person. This will provide an opportunity to take stock of countries' GFS and PSDS implementation status and update action plans ahead of the start of Phase VI.

i) **Comments:** Concerning the introduction of QNA programs in PFTAC member countries, two problems became apparent. First, the number of staff in several smaller NSOs is very limited restricting their ability to maintain even regular annual national accounts work. Such limitations make the longer-term introduction of such programs risky. Secondly, the high-frequency source data (quarterly or monthly indicators) necessary for compiling quarterly GDP are sometimes not accessible to the statistical offices. The cooperation concerning data sharing with other public administration agencies and provident funds needs improvement before such programs can be realised.

Next Steps

Real sector, external sector and Government Finance statistical CD needs vary significantly over the PFTAC member countries. While some small countries struggle to keep up regular work due to an insufficient number of staff, others are able to improve quality, scope, and timelines of their National Accounts statistics. The RSS and GSS programmes try to cover all such needs, from CD to limited capacity substitution.

As countries emerge from the first round of direct COVID-19 effects, governments across the region face an acute need to map out medium term strategies to stabilize their fiscal positions and cope with the debt that some have taken on during the crisis. In order to do this, they are turning to Macro-Fiscal forecasting models that depend on the projection of government and household expenditures within a coherent macroeconomic framework. This has, in turn created an increased need for more and stronger estimates of GDP from the expenditure side (see box).

Meanwhile the acute need experienced during the first months of the pandemic to track the quarter-to-quarter economic impacts of the crisis have receded slightly. PFTAC has supported and will continue to support both quarterly disaggregation of annual GDP estimates made from the production side, and improvements to annual expenditure side estimates, but during FY2023 the emphasis will shift towards the latter. In making this shift, we will take great care to coordinate with and facilitate the efforts of other PFTAC advisers and their colleagues across the region to strengthen Macroeconomic Forecasting and PFM. As one reflection of this shift, the annual national accounts workshop for FY2023 will have a particular focus on expenditure side estimates.

The GFS and PSDS workstreams will focus particular attention to debt sustainability and debt issues, improving sectoral and instrument coverage of debt data, and close coordination with the debt management program. Selected countries would need to complete the delineation of the public sector and expand sectoral coverage to include the general government. Countries will strengthen their classification systems to align to the latest Government Finance Statistics Manual 2014 (GFSM 2014) and the Public Sector Debt Statistics Guide for Compilers and Users 2011 (PSDSG 2011). For countries with stronger institutional capacities, assistance will be focused on improving availability of reliable, consistent, and timely source data on State Owned Enterprises to expand GFS and PSDS coverage to public nonfinancial corporations.

To enhance data transparency and create the strong synergies between dissemination and surveillance by having comprehensive, timely, and accessible statistical data available, PFTAC will encourage participating countries to regularly review and upload official statistics onto the National Data Summary Page. This process will be inclusive of updating metadata which supports the underlying data sets.

Part B: SPC support to Statistics Initiatives in the Pacific

1. Ten Year Pacific Statistics Strategy (TYPSS) and Successor TYPSS II

The TYPSS end-of-programme review was completed last year with TYPSS II now under development based on the recommendations of the review. TYPSS II, is being developed as a Strategic Framework to provide more flexibility than the original TYPSS in recognition of the rapidly evolving role of statistics in the region and the increasing number of partners and stakeholders involved. TYPSS II is scheduled to support statistical capacity development, donor and partners coordination and the strengthening of data collection, data processing, analysis, dissemination and use of data for more evidenced-based policymaking throughout the region through to 2030, the end period of the Sustainable Development Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

2. Pacific Statistics Methods Board

Pacific Statistics Methods Board (PSMB) met in October 2021 and May 2022. Key topics addressed were welfare statistics research and innovation, social surveys, review of Pacific statistics projects from World Bank and ADB, climate change statistics, Tuvalu Long Form Census Project, Samoa Food Away from Homes Project and experiences in conducting population and housing census during COVID-19. The Terms of Reference for the PSMB were also reviewed and updated.

Gaining approval of Government Statisticians for development partners and academia to access census and survey microdata continues to be a barrier to use of these important datasets for

policy and planning purposes. FEMM is encouraged to support Government Statisticians to make these important public goods available so they can be used for policy and planning across numerous sectors and themes. The return on investment in statistical collections increases each time an additional data user accesses the data and produces information and statistics using the data.

3. **Project Management: Improving Pacific Statistics and Data (PSD)**

The PSD project including the Pacific Data Hub component was fully operational throughout 2021 although outreach activities were somewhat constrained by regional travel restrictions; this project continued to support the following work streams: i) the official launch and operation of the Pacific Data Hub (PDH), ii) the expansion and enhancement of the data, indicators and useability of the PDH DotStat development indicator database, iii) the continued maintenance and update of the SDG database, dashboard and progress wheels, iv) continued support for PICTs to compile their SDG Voluntary National Reports (VNR) for presentation to the UNGA, v) continued support to national statistics offices to improve their national statistics websites and link these to the PDH to enhance dissemination and data sharing. PSD Key achievements in 2021 were:

   a. **Modernisation of statistical dissemination** and the ongoing data updates and systems improvement. This resulted to double digit increases in indicators on Pacific datasets with meta data/documentation, including the number of users accessing the PDH and SDD websites across the year.
   b. **PDH platform and partnership developments strengthened in 2021** with continued improved trust in data sharing and collaboration with SPC Divisions and external stakeholders. A greater range of regional and national Pacific data (statistical, administrative, indicator data and microdata) is curated and available through the PDH and PDH.Stat. The platform also supports programmatic activities.
   c. **Technical Support** provided on hosting services, maintenance, and support for eight PICTs NSOs websites including *data analysis, assessment and dissemination*.
   d. **Outreach and stakeholder engagement activities** which included establishment of the Pacific Data Community of Practise with four *Talanoa sessions*[5] attended by about 200 participants. Developed a Road Map for Stakeholder Engagement.
   e. **Capacity Development programs.** Delivered three series of webinars on open data for good governance, data analysis and data dissemination.
   f. **Development of a data governance framework.** The completion of the Data Governance Policy Draft (Discovery phase) in 2021 has demonstrated SPC's leadership in data governance and data management best practises in the Pacific.

   PSD Formative Evaluation and Implementation Review undertaken with report published in both MFAT and SPC websites: PSD formative evaluation and implementation review report.

4. **Pacific Sustainable Development Indicators**

   a. Pacific Community (SPC) and the Pacific Islands Form Secretariat (PIFS) have led the regional process. The set of 131 (1 indicator has since been deleted from the global Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) framework) regional sustainable development

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[5] Community of Practice

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indicators was endorsed by Leaders at the 48th Pacific Islands Forum Leaders meeting in Samoa, in 2017, as part of the Pacific Roadmap for Sustainable Development.

b. SPC, United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia (UNESCAP), United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and PIFS are working with Pacific Island Countries and Territories (PICTs) to populate these indicators, and data are being progressively loaded into the Pacific Data Hub for use by countries, as well as regional and global agencies and donors.

c. A regional Biennial update report, to supplement the 2018 Pacific Sustainable Development Report, was launched in 2020 after the Pacific Islands Forum Leaders meeting. This included a section on COVID-19, and the measures taken by PICTs to address the health pandemic. Work is now progressing on the second Quadrennial Report, which will be presented to Pacific Leaders in 2022.

d. Four PICTs (Federated States of Micronesia, Papua New Guinea, Samoa and the Solomon Islands) presented a Voluntary National Review in 2020, and the Republic of the Marshall Islands presented in 2021. These describe national progress against the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. French Polynesia also prepared a national report on the SDGs in 2021. In 2022, Tuvalu is preparing to present at the High-Level Political Forum in July.

5. **Civil Registration and vital statistics**[6]

a. Continued to collaborate with the global CRVS group in compilation of updates on the impact of the COVID-19 on CRVS systems across various parts of the world.

b. Developed country profiles and regional summary on the status of civil registration systems in the Pacific covering information from 18 PICTs across various themes e.g., legislation, organization, and management of CRVS systems the levels of completeness of birth and death registration [Civil Registration and Vital Statistics profiles for the Pacific Island region | Statistics for Development Division (spc.int)](#).

c. Developed training curricula on medical certification and coding of causes of death in collaboration with the partners of Brisbane Accord Group. These curricula have been made available to regional academic institutions for incorporation as appropriate into their academic training programmes for medical doctors and other health professionals.

d. Supported Tonga in the analysis of register-based births and deaths (and causes of death) data and release of their vital statistics report for years 2013-2018.

e. Supported Fiji, Tuvalu, Nauru and the Republic of Marshall Islands in auditing certificates of causes of death and in the review of the quality of cause of death coding.

f. Working with Vital Strategies, US Centre for Disease Control and the Australian Bureau of Statistics in developing a concept note and proposal for a regional cause of death coding facility.

6. **International Merchandise Trade Statistics (IMTS)**

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[6] All initiatives under the civil registration and vital statistics work programme are undertaken in collaboration with Brisbane Accord Group partnership.

a. Monitored progress periodically in the development of trade statistics in PICTs. American Samoa, Cook Islands, Fiji, FSM, Guam, Kiribati, Niue, Palau, PNG, Samoa, Tonga, Tuvalu and Vanuatu were assisted with the review/estimation/compilation, analysis and dissemination of IMTS using appropriate international best practices and standards. SDD participated in a virtual meeting with the U.S. Department of Interior's Office of Insular Affairs on issues in improving the capture of trade data by RMI, Guam, CNMI and American Samoa. For International Merchandise Trade Statistics (IMTS) of PICTs click https://stats.pacificdata.org/.

b. The work on the Pacific Commodity Trade Database (PACComtrade) in collaboration with the Oceania Customs Organisation, United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, Melanesian Spearhead Group and PIFS is progressing well. Heads of all four organisations have already signed the letter of agreement and work has now advanced to setting-up systems and drafting of legal documents to source the data. The PACComtrade database will be hosted on the Pacific Data Hub.

c. Supervised South-South assistance provided by Fiji to PNG on IMTS.

7. Business Statistics

Participated in ESCAP's Data Integration Community of Practice (CoP) on different topics including on Business Registers and e-commerce.

8. Tourism Statistics

Supported SPTOs 'Pacific Sustainable Tourism Network Community of Practice.

9. Revenue Statistics

On-going virtual collaboration with OECD on Revenue Statistics in the Pacific.

10. Knowledge Products

a. Regional tables on IMTS, Gross Domestic Product, Government Finance Statistics, Visitor arrivals, Inflation and Total reserves in months of imports of goods and services were reported on, analysed and disseminated through SDD Website, dotStat platform and the Pacific Data Hub. https://sdd.spc.int/topic/economy.

b. The following were released on https://sdd.spc.int/topic/economy:

   i. an information paper on 'International trade as a share of gross domestic product in selected Pacific economies,'

   ii. an information brief on 'Imports of rice and wheat flour in selected Pacific Island countries and territories,'

   iii. an information brief on 'Pacific kava production, trade and consumption: Gaps in data hinder full analysis,' and

   iv. a blog on 'Changes in Consumer Prices in Selected Pacific Island Countries and Territories in 2020'.

c. Near real time indicators on economic and social impacts of COVID-19 on PICTs were disseminated/redisseminated on the SDD website and the Pacific Data Hub (PDH.Stat).

11. Pacific Standards and Classifications

  a. The 'International Merchandise Trade Statistics Pacific Compilation Guide' containing training materials was compiled and released.
  https://sdd.spc.int/news/2021/12/16/imts-pac-compilation-guide-2021

  b. Collaborated with OCO on the compilation and release of the Regional HS22. In addition, provided the correlation table between 1] HS22 and HS17 and 2] HS 22 and SITC Rev. 4.
  https://sdd.spc.int/news/2022/01/21/new-goods-classification-system-effect

  c. Supported International Labour Organisation's Technical Working Group on Occupations in discussing revisions to the International Standard Classification of Occupations 2008.

12. UN Statistical Commission and other meetings

  a. Participated remotely in the UN Statistical Commission Annual Meeting, Paris 21 Annual meeting and the annual FEMM meeting.

13. Household Income and Expenditure Survey (HIES) status

Household income and expenditure survey is the primary source for data relating to poverty, malnourishment and food security. The HIES also importantly provides data to rebase the household component of GDP and to update the CPI basket. The HIES produces data to report against around 20 percent of the SDG indicators.

  a. Vanuatu 2019/20 HIES complete.

  b. Kiribati 2019/20 HIES complete with some knowledge products (poverty and labour reports) still in production.

  c. Republic of the Marshall Islands 2019/20 HIES complete with some knowledge products still in production.

  d. Wallis and Futuna 2019/20 HIES complete.

  e. Tonga 2021 HIES field work complete and dataset under preparation.

  f. Tuvalu 2022 HIES in preparation and to be integrated into the census for the sake of efficiency (ref. below 'Tuvalu Long Form Census').

  g. Palau 2022 HIES in preparation with decisions currently being made in relation to the HIES method.

  h. Samoa 2023 HIES in preparation and to include experimental research to better estimate calories sourced from consumption of food away from home, such as at cultural events, Sunday lunch with family, at restaurants, and food at work, which is an important and increasing source of dietary energy for Pacific Islanders (ref. below 'Samoa Food Away from Home').

14. Pacific Population and Housing Censuses

Population and housing census is the primary source of population-based information on the Pacific people. Around 70 of the Pacific SDGs require population-based data, which are primarily sourced from census. Census also provides a range of information on all persons, which informs policy across sectors and demographics.

a. Palau 2020 Census data editing complete and population and household tables under review.

b. Vanuatu 2020 Census completed, tabulation report published, analytical report drafted.

c. Kiribati 2020 Census completed, tabulation report published, analytical report in preparation.

d. Nauru 2021 Census field operations completed; data being edited.

e. RMI 2021 Census field operations completed, data being edited; numerous validation checks have been undertaken due to the lower-than-expected provisional population count and it is recommended that a national household listing is undertaken with the purpose of validating the census dataset so it can be used for statistical purposes, but also to serve as a sampling frame for the upcoming social survey (MICS) and economic survey (HIES).

f. Tuvalu 2021 Household Listing data editing complete and under review.

g. Cook Islands 2021 Census field operations completed, data being edited.

h. Samoa 2021 Census field operations completed; data being edited.

i. UNFPA provided financial support to SPC to enhance the technical support in areas of census monitoring and data management to enable NSOs and SPC to better monitor and control the quality of the census.

j. Tuvalu 2022 Census planned for October 2022. The census will be an integrated census-HIES to become a 'Long Form Census'. The project aims to collect all of the information that you would collect separately in a census and HIES in one survey and during one survey visit. The project aims to increase the efficiency (both cost and potential use of the integrated dataset) of collecting these essential demographic, social and economic datasets.

k. Tokelau 2022 Census delayed from February 2022 due to travel restrictions and scheduled for end-2022.

15. Poverty Indicators

Analysis and draft reports of poverty indicators for Cook Islands, Niue, Samoa and Tokelau were completed and were awaiting final endorsement by national authorities. Poverty reports for Vanuatu, Marshall Islands and Kiribati based on the 2019 HIES have recently been published in collaboration between the NSOs and World Bank..

16. Food Security

Food security and food systems analysis were undertaken, including food security profiles for Solomon Islands, Vanuatu, Kiribati, Marshall Islands, and Wallis and Futuna produced, opportunities to build a robust response to COVID-19 and Pacific food system resilience published, 9 microeconomic factsheets produced for COVID-19 baseline matrix, 7 statistical briefs on food systems published, and collaborated with FAO in the implementation of the regional TCP

on SDG 2.1. SDD is also a key stakeholder in SPC's integrated programme on Food Systems. Food Systems **https://sdd.spc.int/food-systems**

17. Targeted technical support for core collections

    a. Vanuatu 2020 Post Disaster Needs Assessment Survey (Cyclone Harold).

    b. Cook Islands 2019 Labour Force Survey.

    c. Papua New Guinea and Solomon Islands 2020 High Frequency Phone Monitoring Survey (COVID-19).

    d. Marshall Islands 2020 Socioeconomic Impact Assessment Survey (COVID-19).

    e. Kiribati 2018 Social Development Indicator Survey (MICS).

    f. Tonga 2019 Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey.

    g. Cook Island Rapid Assessment Survey 2021

18. Disseminating statistics/information

    i. **SDD website**

    SDD's divisional website continues to be improved and expanded with new data and content https://sdd.spc.int/; a range of interactive charts and maps link to dynamic data stored in https://stats.pacificdata.org/ .

    ii. **National Minimum Development Indicator Database (NMDI) redevelopment**

    Indicator list reviewed and added to the Pacific Data Hub Indicator Database (https://stats.pacificdata.org/); old NMDI website decommissioned.

    iii. **Pacific Data Hub**

    PDH catalogue/website now contains 1,171 datasets and 10,268 publications of which many come from SDD. SDD's Microdata Library (https://microdata.pacificdata.org/) and PDH.Stat Indicator Database (https://stats.pacificdata.org/) are directly integrated.

    iv. **SDG Dashboard**

    The dashboard provides easy access to, and visualisation of the 131 Pacific Sustainable Development Indicators (https://pacificdata.org/content/17-goals-transform-pacific). It is hosted within the Pacific Data Hub and pulls data from https://stats.pacificdata.org/ which now "feeds" more than 100 visualisations.

    v. **Microdata Library https://microdata.pacificdata.org/**

    The Microdata library is focused on preservation, documentation and anonymization of microdata. 156 microdata sets have been documented, published and curated according to international standards, making data discoverable, useable and accessible for secondary analysis for evidence informed development. Lack of approval for microdata dissemination remains a barrier and hinders evidence-based policy.

    vi. **Pacific Data Hub Indicator Database (PDH.stat)**

    This flagship development indicator database now contains 1,153 Pacific Development Indicators belonging to a range of thematic areas including economy, social, population

and health as well as multi-domain indicators related to SDGs and NMDIs. There are currently more than 1.34 million data observations in the database. A range of plugins were developed to allow users to easily access the data (Excel, PowerBI, Stats, R, Python). COVID-19 cases, deaths and vaccination data have recently been added by SPC's Public Health Division in collaboration with SDD as well as visualisations on the SPC COVID-19 update page (https://www.spc.int/updates/blog/2021/04/covid-19-pacific-community-updates). Currently one of the most popular pages on the SPC website.

vii. **Regional Tables**

IMTS and related regional economic statistics tables on GDP, Government Finance Statistics, Visitor arrivals, Inflation and Total reserves in months of imports of goods and services were reported on, analysed and disseminated in collaboration with Information and Publications Officer through SDD Website, dotStat platform and the Pacific Data Hub. International Merchandise Trade Statistics and Population dashboards available at https://pacificdata.org/dashboards.

viii. **2020 Pocket Statistical Summary** was released; Search | Statistics for Development Division (spc.int)