



Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific
Committee on Statistics

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Coordination of statistical capacity-building activities:

Statistical training

**Report of the Working Group on the Regional Coordination
of Statistical Training****

Summary

The Committee is presented with the outcomes of the deliberations of the Working Group on the Regional Coordination of Statistical Training, which was established by the Committee at its second session. The present report details the recommendations of the Working Group on an overall strategy for improving regional coordination of statistical training, which includes objectives to be met by the strategy and specific strategies and mechanisms for improving regional coordination.

The Working Group expects that improved coordination will create an environment that allows training recipients and training providers to use a common language and set of tools to describe priority needs, and identify and address training gaps in the region. The Working Group proposed strategy recommends three strategic mechanisms to enhance coordination: create an advisory body for coordination of statistical training; establish a technical expert group on classification of skills of statistical personnel; and ensure that the Statistical Institute for Asia and the Pacific (SIAP) maintains and shares databases of regional technical cooperation initiatives on statistical training and capacity building, and of resource persons for statistical training.

The Committee may wish to review and endorse the overall strategy proposed by the Working Group.

* E/ESCAP/CST(3)/L.1/Rev.1.

** Late submission due to the timing of expert consultations.

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I. Background

1. Training statistical staff¹ is an integral part of capacity-building in national statistical systems (NSSs). Many statistical staff in the Asia-Pacific region receive statistical training from various sources: established statistical training institutions (STIs); training units of human resources departments; and units adjunct to the national statistics offices (NSOs and the line ministries of their respective countries.² Some member States (and associate members), however, do not have training institutions of their own and rely mainly on external training providers to train their statistical staff.

2. Global, regional and country-specific programmes for statistical development are supported by funding from development partners. Many NSSs receive training through one or more of these programmes. A multitude of external training providers, including regional and subregional institutes and international organizations, offer training courses in different fields of official statistics to statistical staff in the Asia-Pacific region. Many statistical staff in the region participate in training courses, workshops and seminars at the subregional, regional and/or international level.

3. Training initiatives conducted by external training providers consist of a wide variety of programmes. Most of the external training providers focus on “training-of-trainers” activities, usually in the form of short-duration training courses on specific topics for the statistical staff who are already engaged in production, dissemination, management or use of official statistics.

4. SIAP is the main external provider of statistical training to countries in the Asia-Pacific region; it has established informal networking relationships

¹ Statistical staff consists of statisticians and other staff that are engaged in statistical work in the Asia-Pacific region, including the managers and information technology personnel of national statistical offices (NSOs), the line ministries and the central banks.

² STIs adjunct to the NSOs as well as the training divisions of the NSOs are mandated to specifically serve the NSSs by providing statistical staff with training on official statistics. In addition, some countries have independent academic institutions that share the responsibility of training statistical staff with the NSOs. Training units for the statistical staff of all institutes and training divisions of the NSOs are referred to as “STIs”.

with international, regional and subregional organizations and some regional NSSs for conducting its training courses. These relationships allow it to coordinate with training partners on the choice of training topics and scheduling of training activities. SIAP carries out periodical training needs surveys of the developing countries in the Asia-Pacific region and uses the survey results to identify priority training areas and potential recipients of statistical training.

5. In the Asia-Pacific region, there is no institutionalized and systematic mechanism of coordination between the external training providers and the NSSs that are in need of external training. The training plans and training activities of the STIs and external training providers are mostly determined by their respective organizational mandates. In the absence of a coordinated and coherent regional training policy or programme, many agencies conduct training courses on a limited number of priority topics.

6. Responding to the urgent need to ensure that the statistical training in the region responds adequately, effectively and efficiently to the priority needs of the recipient countries,³ the Committee at its second session established the Working Group to formulate a strategy for the coordination of statistical training in Asia and the Pacific, with the objective of improving the impact of demand-driven-statistical-training systems for capacity-building in the member States, enabling them to produce and disseminate official, high-quality statistics in accordance with the established international statistical standards. Additionally, the Committee requested the Working Group to develop a method for assessing statistical training modalities and statistical training gaps in the Asia-Pacific region and to assess the existing gaps in statistical training (annex 1 contains the terms of reference of the Working Group).

7. On the basis of the outcomes of the discussions that took place in two meetings of the Working Group, held in October 2011⁴ and July 2012,⁵ the present report was prepared by the following Working Group members: China; India (Chair); Indonesia; Iran (Islamic Republic of); Japan; Malaysia; Philippines; Republic of Korea; Russian Federation; Samoa; and Viet Nam. In reviewing the state of training and its coordination in the region, the Working Group reviewed the findings from the training needs assessment survey (TNAS), which had been conducted by the Working Group in November 2011, along with information furnished by selected NSOs and external training providers and other documentation that related to the coordination of statistical capacity-building activities.⁶

8. Section II below discusses the need for improving the regional coordination of statistical training; section III presents the proposed overall strategy and recommendations of the Working Group to improve coordination; section IV outlines the work that has been undertaken by the Working Group, which provides the basis for the proposed actions; and section V presents related initiatives on the coordination of statistical training that the Working Group considered in its discussions.

³ See E/ESCAP/CST(2)/8.

⁴ www.unescap.org/stat/WG-stat-training/Greater-Noida/report-of-WG-meeting.pdf.

⁵ www.unescap.org/stat/WG-stat-training/2nd-meet-Daejeon/2nd-meeting-report-WGRCST.pdf.

⁶ SIAP, A network for partnership of national statistical agencies and national statistical training institutes of countries in the Asia-Pacific Region, 2nd Workshop on Forging Partnerships in Statistical Training in Asia and the Pacific, Bangkok, 23-24 November 2004. Available from www.paris21.org/sites/default/files/1606.pdf.

II. The need for regional coordination of statistical training

9. Through established national training institutes and regional and international training institutions that provide external training, many NSSs in the region have improved the capabilities of their statistical staff. Yet, the gap between supply and demand in statistical training has been increasing. The Working Group believes that the only effective way to bridge the widening gap in statistical training is to develop and strengthen the in-country training capabilities of the member States, that the responsibility for training the statistical staff should be borne primarily by the respective member States, and that international/regional/subregional organizations can play a supporting role by sharing their expertise with national STIs.

10. External training providers will continue to play a vital role for the member States that are limited in terms of statistical staff, even if the national STIs of the larger member States are able to meet their own needs. Smaller member States will continue to seek external training assistance since they cannot afford to maintain a regular outfit for training their staff. In addition, a significant contribution by external training providers will be required in certain specialized fields of official statistics. National STIs and academic specialists in the Asia-Pacific region often lack the expertise to deliver the training that is required in specialized fields. Since external training of statistical staff is predominately conducted at the regional level, the training courses offer economies of scale and can facilitate the harmonization of statistical concepts and exchange of relevant country experiences.

11. Apart from the resource constraints, often stemming from low priority accorded to statistical training, the weak coordination between the NSSs and regional or international organizations that provide resources and statistical training is thought to be one of the main reasons for the wide training gaps. This has led to duplication of training efforts in some priority areas and a shift in focus to non-priority areas. Better coordination among statistical training providers, donor agencies and member States in need of external training assistance is essential for improving the use of technical and financial resources that are available for statistical training in the region.

12. Coordination fosters the development of coordinated training programmes and, potentially, common training programmes in priority areas that can meet the training needs in the region. Improved coordination of statistical training — which demands more cooperation among stakeholders — is expected to have a positive impact on the training needs of training-deficient member States in the region, diminishing the training gaps and reducing possible duplication of efforts. The table below identifies and classifies stakeholders based on their need for and/or engagement in statistical training in the region.

Table

Regional coordination of statistical training – stakeholders involved

Stakeholders	Constituents
a. Training-deficient NSSs without STIs	ESCAP members and associate members that do not have their own statistical training facilities, such as Armenia and Nepal.
b. Training-deficient NSSs with STIs	ESCAP members and associate members that have their own STIs but need external training assistance, such as Azerbaijan and China.
c. Self-sufficient NSSs	ESCAP member States that have their own STIs and mostly do not depend on external sources for meeting their training needs, such as Australia and Japan.
d. External training providers	There are three sources that provide external training for the staff of the training-deficient NSSs: STIs of self-sufficient NSSs; STIs of training-deficient NSSs, independently or in collaboration with other providers of external training, such as the STIs of China; and international, regional and subregional training providers, such as the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO).
e. Donor agencies	National and international agencies that provide the funds for statistical capacity building (in general), and provide statistical training, such as the Asian Development Bank (ADB).

Note: The categories are not mutually exclusive. For example, the category “external training providers” includes those from training-deficient as well as self-sufficient member States.

III. Proposed strategy

13. The strategy proposed by the Working Group, and its recommendations for the coordination of statistical training, cover four main areas: definition and principles of the coordination of statistical training; objectives and expected results of the strategy to improve the regional coordination of statistical training; specific strategies for the coordination of statistical training; and mechanisms for improving the regional coordination of statistical training.

A. Definition and principles of the coordination of statistical training

14. The Working Group agreed on the importance of formulating clear definitions and principles associated with “coordination” and “statistical training” as the basis for specifying objectives and expected results of any strategy to improve the regional coordination of statistical training.

Recommendation 1a

15. “Coordination” should be taken to mean normative coordination. Regional coordination will facilitate the implementation of effective statistical training activities without imposing any restrictions or standards on the training activities that NSSs choose to undertake. Coordination will create a common language to communicate statistical training needs and available resources, allowing member States and development organizations operating in the region to implement their own agenda more effectively. Coordination activities/mechanisms should not interfere in any way with the national agenda of the country for implementing statistical training activities.

Recommendation 1b

16. “Statistical training” refers to training activities that are undertaken in order to build the capacity of statistical staff, with the ultimate objective of improving the coverage and quality of official statistics produced by the national statistical systems:

(a) Statistical training, in the present report, covers, among other things, courses, workshops and seminars which consist of structured and guided training activities, such as lectures, practical exercises and discussions, and whose main objective is to improve the skills of the participants/trainees. Such training may be delivered face-to-face, through formal distance learning video/audio modalities or structured and guided Internet-based learning, or through e-learning;

(b) Statistical training includes all training that is aimed at enhancing the skill levels of the statistical staff and which is conducted by national, regional or international statistical training institutes and government departments and line ministries;

(c) Statistical training does not include on-the-job training. Training provided in relation to the conduct of a specific statistical activity, such as a demographic and health survey, is not considered as statistical training. Also excluded are non-guided (no trainer is involved) Internet-based self-learning activities, such as accessing and learning from training materials that are made available for reading or downloading by training or other institutions.

Recommendation 1c

17. In developing a method for assessing training gaps and analysis of the results, the Working Group recommends that stakeholders of statistical coordination of training can be classified into three, non-mutually exclusive groups:

(a) At the country level: National statistical offices, other data producers comprising the national statistical system, and local providers of statistical training;

(b) At the regional level: National, subregional, regional and international statistical training providers that provide training in the region;

(c) Other international agencies: Agencies whose mandates include developing statistical standards, methods and classifications, such as ILO, and donors/funders of statistical capacity-building activities at the bilateral, subregional and regional levels.

B. Objectives and expected results of the strategy to improve the regional coordination of statistical training**Recommendation 2**

18. The Working Group recommends the following paramount objectives for the coordination of statistical training in the Asia and Pacific region:

(a) Increase demand-driven statistical training and improve its impact on capacity building in the member States, enabling them to produce and disseminate official statistics of good quality in accordance with established international statistical standards;

(b) Facilitate better resource use, planning and effective implementation of training programmes by statistical training providers;

(c) Identify and fill training gaps in statistical capacity-building in the region;

(d) Provide an environment within which training recipients and training providers can use a common language and set of tools to describe priority needs and identify and fill training gaps in the region.

C. Strategies for the coordination of statistical training

Recommendation 3

19. The Working Group recommends the implementation of the key strategies described below in order to improve the coordination of statistical training in the Asia-Pacific region.

Strategy 1

Improve communication through a common language and the sharing of information

20. Using a common language facilitates the sharing of information and promotes a common understanding of the training needs and demands in the region. To facilitate the assessment and description of training needs, the Working Group agreed on the importance of developing a common language on statistical training and using a core skills framework (CSF), such as the framework developed by the Statistical Institute for Asia and the Pacific (SIAP),⁷ and a classification of statistical activities (CSA), such as that proposed by the secretariat of the Economic Commission for Europe (ECE).⁸ With the development of a CSF and CSA, a common terminology could be employed in listing topics and formulating objectives of training courses/programmes.

Strategy 2

Facilitate the identification of training gaps at the regional level through a coordinated regional assessment exercise among training providers

21. The TNAS questionnaire could serve as the basis for developing a tool for a coordinated regional assessment. The questionnaire should obtain information on levels of skills, areas for training and the language used during training. Data obtained through application of the tool should be accessible to all stakeholders.

Strategy 3

Share information in a systematic and organized manner

22. Sharing of information is a key strategy for improving coordination. Information on training activities, materials and resource persons should be collected and made available through a commonly accessible platform. The common language provided by a CSF and CSA should be used in providing information on training.

⁷ www.unsiap.or.jp/about_siap/coreskill.php.

⁸ <http://unstats.un.org/unsd/class/intercop/expertgroup/2011/AC234-13.PDF>.

Strategy 4**Standardize the classification and competencies of statistical personnel**

23. Developing the CSF and CSA and the standardization of classification and competencies of statistical personnel are key areas of work in which coordinated efforts by stakeholders of statistical training are necessary.

Strategy 5**Engage with regional programmes that are prioritized by the Committee**

24. The coordinated development of curricula for training programmes encourages collaborative training. This would be most effective in the gap areas identified by the various regional programmes for improving statistics in the region.

Strategy 6**Create links with subregional training initiatives**

25. Coordination of training initiatives will be more relevant and effective when done within the context of ongoing subregional training initiatives, such as those being undertaken by the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), the Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO), the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) and the Secretariat of the Pacific Community.

D. Mechanisms for the coordination of statistical training**Recommendation 4a**

26. In order to coordinate statistical training in the Asia-Pacific region, the Working Group recommends for consideration by the Committee the following:

(a) Create an advisory body for the coordination of statistical training;

(b) Create a technical expert group on the classification of skills of statistical personnel to review and refine the SIAP CSF and the ECE classification of statistical activities as a framework to describe statistical training across NSSs;

(c) Under the supervision of SIAP, maintain and share databases of regional technical cooperation initiatives on statistical training and capacity-building and of resource persons for statistical training.

Advisory body**Recommendation 4b**

27. The Working Group recommends that the nature of the advisory body — be it a steering group or a friends-of-the-chair group, for example — should be decided by the Committee. The Working Group suggests that the Committee consider the possibility that the Governing Council of SIAP could serve as the advisory body. It notes that this would entail adding such a function to the existing functions of the Council, and might require a Commission resolution.

Recommendation 4c

28. The Working Group recommends the following terms of reference for the advisory body:

(a) Functions:

(i) Facilitate efficient resource mobilization by providing NSOs, statistical training providers and other stakeholders in the Asia-Pacific region with up-to-date information on statistical training gaps and available resources;

(ii) Provide advice and periodically review the implementation of the mechanisms and activities for improving the coordination of statistical training in the region, including the development of common training programmes for the priority areas identified by the Committee;

(iii) Initiate and maintain a network to foster collaborative partnerships among the national training institutes and universities, regional training institutes, and international agencies that are engaged in providing technical resources to conduct the training courses;

(b) Indicative activities to be implemented under the guidance of the advisory body:

(i) Regular updating of coordinated training needs assessment, including development of a standard assessment questionnaire and exploring the use of ASTRA or similar software as a tool to manage information on training needs assessment;

(ii) Establish network of statistical training institutions in the region and a plan for maintaining and strengthening the network, including the holding of a regular forum on statistical training, such as the “forging partnerships” workshop series of SIAP;

(iii) Facilitate implementation of the training component of the regional programme on strengthening agriculture and rural statistics by assisting the corresponding steering group in developing a more detailed implementation plan for the training component;

(iv) Report to the Committee through a regular item on the agenda of Committee sessions.

Secretariat of the advisory body**Recommendation 4d**

29. The advisory body should have a secretariat, and the Working Group recommends that SIAP serve as its secretariat.

IV. Work undertaken by the Working Group**A. Meetings**

30. On 10 and 11 October 2011, in New Delhi, the Working Group met to initiate discussions on the proposed strategy for the coordination of statistical training programmes in Asia and the Pacific. It discussed the issues surrounding the need for coordination and considered initial strategies and mechanisms for meeting that need. The members reviewed the availability of

training facilities, types of courses conducted and the training needs on different statistical topics in their respective NSSs.⁹

31. The second meeting of the Working Group was held in Daejeon, Republic of Korea, from 16 to 18 July 2012. Members agreed on a definition of coordination and the principles that guide coordination for training in the region, and finalized the recommendations on objectives, strategies and mechanisms in the context of the agreed on definition and principles. They also agreed on the need for a region-wide consultation on the recommendations with stakeholders.¹⁰

B. Assessment of statistical training gaps

Background

32. The Working Group conducted a TNAS to assess the capacity of national STIs to provide training along with the training needs of NSSs in each country. The main objective of the assessment was to identify training gaps and duplication of efforts. The results of the assessment were expected to help reveal the precise role of the regional coordination mechanism, particularly in terms of the types of interventions that would be required at different stages when external training would be made available, from the planning phase to the conducting of training courses. The assessment was also designed to provide information that could be used to prioritize training needs.

33. Data gathered during the assessment were collected through two survey questionnaires, one addressed to NSOs and another addressed to development partners. The NSO questionnaire gathered data on the number of training institutions; the number of facilities the training institutes had at their disposal; the number of courses conducted by the subjects covered; the level of participation of local and foreign trainees; funding arrangements; and training needs, covering the number of personnel at different skill levels required to be trained and subjects on which trainings are required by skill levels.

34. Information on statistical training programmes conducted by external training providers was sought in the questionnaire for the development partners and member States that are not in need of external training assistance but do provide statistical training for other countries in the region.

35. For the collection of data on statistical personnel, training needs, training facilities, training programmes and activities, a slight modification of the SIAP CSF was used. The assessment of both training needs and availability of training was based on a detailed classification of the topics of official statistics, which was based on a modification of the CSA proposed by the ECE secretariat at the Expert Group Meeting on International Economic and Social Classifications (New York, 18-20 May 2011).¹¹

36. Statistical capacity development projects usually consist of a number of technical assistance components and invariably include a component of training of the statistical staff involved. In the present report, the ensuing skills development of the statistical staff involved that results from participation in the activities of these projects is excluded from the coverage of the term

⁹ www.unescap.org/stat/WG-stat-training/Greater-Noida/report-of-WG-meeting.pdf.

¹⁰ www.unescap.org/stat/WG-stat-training/2nd-meet-Daejeon/2nd-meeting-report-WGRCST.pdf.

¹¹ www1.unece.org/stat/platform/display/disaarchive/Classification+of+Statistical+Activities.

“statistical training” unless the development includes a distinct component of statistical training in the form of structured courses and workshops that are aimed at enhancing the skills level of statistical staff.

Methodology of assessment

37. Data on the external training needs of statistical staff in the region along with the extent to which external training needs are met by the trainings currently provided by national STIs and by external training providers were generated by: (a) determining, for each topic, the volume of external training needs for responding training-deficient member States, based on the data collected through the survey; (b) deriving a range for each topic within which the volume of external training needs for the region as a whole is likely to be situated.

38. As only a third of the NSOs of the region responded to the survey, the assessment was based on estimates arrived at by inflating the reported figures by different factors, based on information available from other sources. While not precise, the estimated ranges for the needs and availability of external training are expected to indicate the additional training needs for different topics, as well as illuminate possible duplication of efforts in providing external training for the region.

Key findings

39. The Working Group prepared a detailed report on the methodology and results of the analyses based on survey responses.¹² The main findings, summarized in tables A1-A6 in the annex, are presented below.

40. Table A1 presents the information provided by the responding NSOs. Table A2 shows that over a third of the training-deficient countries have no training infrastructure or facilities of their own and that most of the countries with in-country training facilities have training policies for statistical staff. Countries with in-country training facilities also hold scheduled training events and regularly evaluate their training programmes. Table A3 indicates that the STIs are mostly government institutions or universities, the majority of which are equipped with facilities, such as classrooms, projectors and individual computers. The results indicate that these institutions invariably provide training for primary-level staff and that there are fewer institutions for training higher-level staff.

41. Table A4 estimates the total training needs in the Asia-Pacific region as falling within a range of 52,000 to 70,000 topic-participants per year. Of these needs, about 6 per cent is met by in-country training courses conducted in training-deficient countries. Therefore, there is an overall need for external training courses for 41,000 to 55,000 topic-participants, if all training needs reported by the respondents are taken into consideration. The overall existing training gaps (that is, the unmet demand even after receiving external trainings) are within the range of 38,000 to 53,000 topic-participants, which is equivalent to training an average of 3,800 to 5,300 officials on 10 topics. Considering only the top two priorities, existing training is estimated to be between 7,000 and 11,000 training participants.

42. National STIs are the main agencies for providing training for statistical staff. Regional and international agencies and academic institutions are

¹² The Report on Training Needs Assessment in the ESCAP Region is available as a room document for the current session.

expected to play only supplementary roles. However, external training providers, particularly the regional and international training institutes, contribute much more than half of that provided by the national STIs (see table A4). Tables A5 and A6 provide estimated ranges of training gaps by topic. The training gaps revealed in tables A5 and A6 cannot be met solely by external training providers.

43. NSO responses indicate that, while most of them could adopt the modified CSF in order to respond to the survey, some, such as those of Japan and Thailand, are not able to satisfy their training needs for different skill levels. Most of the individual training courses conducted by STIs were reported to be attended by staff of different skill levels.

44. The Working Group holds the view that the CSF needs further development in order to become more usable and complete and that a detailed subject-wise description for each skill level should be specified.

C. Region-wide consultation

45. The Working Group agreed that its recommendations to the Committee would be subject to a region-wide consultation with stakeholders of statistical training coordination. The consultation process would obtain the views of stakeholders, through a survey questionnaire, in order to ensure that the proposed strategy addresses a wide range of statistical needs in the region. It would be a consensus-building process among stakeholders on the principles of the proposed strategy and roles and modalities of the coordination mechanism for statistical training. The process itself would aim to create a sense of ownership among stakeholders which would facilitate a commitment on their part to implement coordinated statistical training activities in the region.

V. Related initiatives on the coordination of statistical training

46. The present section describes some global and regional initiatives relating to the coordination of statistical training that the Working Group considered in its discussions on strategies and mechanisms.

A. Information sharing: partner report on support to statistics

47. The establishment of the Partnership in Statistics for Development in the 21st Century (PARIS21) in 1999 marked the beginning of a formal global partnership for the promotion of statistical capacity development. The Secretariat of PARIS21 coordinates and promotes the exchange of information to facilitate investments to build capacity, which are primarily financed by national Governments, with additional resources being made available from multilateral and bilateral aid as well as technical support from the United Nations and other agencies.

48. Since the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness was adopted in 2005, the international community has stepped up efforts to improve the effectiveness of development interventions. The 2008 Accra Agenda for Action (A/63/539, annex) and the recent Fourth High-level Forum on Aid Effectiveness further concretized this agenda. The *Partner Report on Support to Statistics* (PRESS), prepared by the PARIS21 Secretariat (See E/ESCAP/CST(3)/INF/7), is a tool for assisting development stakeholders in implementing best practices and respecting the principles of aid effectiveness. The PRESS exercise is designed to provide a snapshot of ongoing support to statistical development worldwide. The *Partner Report*, which covered

ongoing activities that supported statistical development during the period 2009 to 2011, provides a special focus on the findings relevant to countries in Asia and the Pacific. Information on funding for projects solely for statistical training can be obtained from the PRESS data. The Working Group at its second meeting suggested that future PRESS reports could continue to provide a focused analysis of capacity-building activities in the Asia-Pacific region.

B. Tools for assessment of training needs

ASTRA

49. The Assessment of Statistical Training (ASTRA) database is one of the tools of Eurostat's management information system for statistical training (MIS-ST). It is designed to support the global statistical capacity-building processes. It is an information tool with components of assessment and monitoring for identification of training needs and demand which can be used by training providers and donors for regional coordination of statistical training.

50. Based on Microsoft Access, ASTRA is an input tool equipped with features that can generate assessment reports for decision-making processes at different stages. It is expected to help with the collection of detailed information relating to training needs and the training provided by national STIs for the statistical staff of NSSs. NSOs are required to take a leading role in the collection of information regarding statistical functions and training needs from all the units of NSSs that are responsible for the production of official statistics. The system also provides for the collection of information from national STIs on their training-providing capacity that could be used as the basis for determining the kind of support required from donors and external training providers for meeting the training needs of the staff of NSSs. ASTRA facilitates the generation of proper reports at various stages, which could be used by the NSO in order to prepare a national-level report on training needs and the in-country availability of training and, thus, the need for external training.

51. The MIS-ST tool kit¹³ also contains a handbook that provides step-by-step guidance for identifying and determination of training needs. It also provides guidance for use of the ASTRA input tool for recording training needs related information and the database for compilation of assessment reports. The tool has been tested in Africa, and the Working Group suggested that it could be piloted in the Asia-Pacific region.

SIAP survey on training needs

52. SIAP has conducted training needs surveys (the last in 2009) that seek the views of the heads of the NSOs about their priorities for skills development in their organization, the priorities for existing courses offered by SIAP, how the work of SIAP could be improved, and the opportunities for SIAP to work in partnership with other organizations in the region. The results of the training needs surveys are used to develop the long-term strategic plan of SIAP. The Working Group suggests that the items of information that are contained in the questionnaires for the training needs surveys and the TNAS should be reviewed for the purpose of constructing a training needs and assessment tool in support of a coordinated regional assessment exercise.

¹³ http://circa.europa.eu/Public/irc/dsis/internationalstatisticalcooperat/library?l=call_for_tenders/2009/1-000199_international&vm=detailed&sb=Title.

C. Workshop series on forging partnerships in statistical training

53. In 2002, SIAP and the ESCAP Statistics Division organized the first in a series of workshops on forging partnerships in statistical training in Asia and the Pacific. Held biennially until 2009, the workshops brought together managers of STIs and external training providers to discuss issues related to coordination strategies, mechanisms and tools for addressing the demand for training in official statistics.

54. Proposals emerging from these workshops to be considered by ESCAP include the following:

(a) Set up a task force that may be raised to the level of a committee for strengthening partnerships for statistical training;

(b) Establish a centralized capacity-building hub in the region and forums for regional/subregional organizations and STIs to support countries in the region;

(c) Create a forum wherein international and regional organizations can present a multi-year package of statistical capacity-building activities and develop an outcome-oriented training programme using the CSF;

(d) Refine the CSF, taking into account country suggestions with regard to NSO experiences of the specific skills required at the different levels of the CSF and specific topics required by NSOs;

(e) Continue to support ongoing networking between NSOs, statistical training institutes and global, regional and international bodies;

(f) Continue to sponsor the workshop on forging partnerships.

55. The deliberations and proposals of the workshops on forging partnership have led to a network of collaborative partnerships between SIAP and national STIs in the region and other external training providers, such as ADB, ILO, IMF, FAO, UNFPA and World Bank. SIAP has developed partnerships with other organizations within and outside the United Nations system in order to carry out its regular training courses and implement an expanded training programme consisting of short-term training courses in specialized topics.

56. The Working Group suggests that the proposals from the workshops be reviewed for possible implementation in line with the proposed coordination strategies, and recommends that workshops be continued as a networking mechanism which provides regular discussion forums for training providers in the region.

D. Statistical training networks

African Group on Statistical Training and Human Resources

57. The African Group on Statistical Training and Human Resources (AGROST) was created in 2009 after a series of meetings that started in 2008 between key partners, namely the Economic Commission for Africa, the African Development Bank, PARIS21 and the Internationale Weiterbildung und Entwicklung. The Statistical Commission for Africa has endorsed AGROST as one of its working groups. The main objective of AGROST is to ensure coordination of activities and initiatives in support of statistical training and human resources development in Africa. AGROST is comprised of representatives of NSOs from different subregions, the training centres of the region and regional economic committees.

58. The Working Group noted that it may be difficult for the Asia-Pacific region to adopt the African model of a separate and permanent body for coordination of training owing to the diversity between ESCAP member States. In addition, a permanent body for statistical training – the Governing Council of SIAP – already exists in the Asia-Pacific region.

SIAP country partner institutions

59. SIAP has been collaborating in the delivery of short-term regional and subregional training courses with an informal network of country partner institutions (CPI) of national STIs in the region with relatively advanced statistical systems and well-equipped statistical training facilities. Multi-year training programmes on poverty statistics, sampling, SNA and research-based training have been conducted, with cost-sharing arrangements and provision of experts by STIs from India, Indonesia, the Islamic Republic of Iran, the Philippines and the Republic of Korea. The Working Group suggests that collaborative arrangements could be expanded and further institutionalized for cost-effective delivery of statistical training in the region.

VI. Actions to be taken by the Committee

60. The Committee may wish to review and endorse the strategy proposed by the Working Group and provide advice on its implementation. In particular, the Committee may wish to:

- (a) Endorse the recommended objectives, key strategies and mechanisms to improve regional coordination of statistical training;
- (b) Decide on the nature and composition of the advisory body for coordination of training;
- (c) Review and provide guidance on the proposed terms of reference, activities and secretariat of the advisory body.

Annex I

Terms of reference of the Working Group on the Regional Coordination of Statistical Training

I. Background

1. A multitude of institutions, including training facilities of national statistical offices (NSOs), regional and subregional institutes, and international organizations are active in the field of training in official statistics. The statistical training initiatives in the region include programmes of a wide variety, including, ad hoc short-duration advocacy workshops to regular long-duration courses on specialized topics or official statistics in general. Trainings on some topics are now offered by many agencies, while none or little training exists on other topics.

2. At the regional level, there is, at present, virtually no system for setting priority of training needs, particularly for the developing countries of the region. Considering the urgent need for ensuring statistical trainings in the region are coordinated and respond adequately to the needs of countries, the Committee, at its second session in December 2010, decided to establish the Working Group to develop a strategy for the coordination of statistical training in Asia and the Pacific.

II. Key expected outputs

3. The Working Group will prepare a proposal, for the consideration by the Committee, on the strategy for the coordination of statistical training programmes in the Asia-Pacific region, with the objective of improving the impact of a demand-driven statistical training system on the capacity of all countries in the region to produce timely and reliable official statistics in accordance with established international statistical standards.

4. The specific outputs of the Working Group will include:

(a) A method for assessing statistical training modalities and statistical training gaps in the Asia-Pacific region;

(b) An assessment of the existing gaps in statistical training in the region and the priority issues that need to be addressed through improving coordination among training providers, donor agencies (including NSOs);

(c) A proposal on the strategy for improving coordination among the statistical training providers and donor agencies in the region, including a possible mechanism for coordination, taking into account the existing processes and means.

III. Membership, Chair and Vice-Chair

5. The Bureau of the Committee on Statistics has appointed Mr. T. C. A. Anant, Chief Statistician and Secretary, Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation of the Government of India, to chair the Working Group.

6. The Working Group will include representatives of countries in the Asia-Pacific region that have statistical training facilities or active statistical training programmes which are open to both their own nationals and foreign nationals (including countries that serve as host countries for international training institutions).

7. To determine its membership, the Chair of the Working Group shall issue invitations to the countries described above for the nomination of a representative to serve on the Working Group.

8. After the establishment of the Working Group, the Chair shall select a Vice-Chair to ensure continuity and completion of work in the eventuality of non-availability of the Chair.

9. The members of the Working Group will not be paid by the United Nations and will not be considered staff members. Hence, they will not be entitled to the privileges and immunities accorded to staff members of the United Nations.

IV. Functioning

10. The Working Group shall meet as needed, in person or using other means, including through teleconferencing. It is also envisaged that the Working Group shall conduct discussions by means of electronic communication.

11. The Statistical Institute for Asia and the Pacific, with support from the secretariat of the ESCAP Committee on Statistics, will serve as the secretariat of the Working Group.

12. The secretariat will support the Working Group in carrying out its functions as described above.

V. Reporting

13. The Working Group shall report to the Bureau through its secretariat. The membership of the Working Group will be reported to the Bureau at the time the group is established; the Bureau will be kept abreast of meetings of the Working Group; and the Working Group may communicate to the Bureau as determined necessary by the Working Group or the Bureau.

14. The Working Group shall submit a written and, if requested, oral report to the Bureau, within six months after the Working Group is established.

15. The Bureau will be responsible for consulting members of the Committee on Statistics regarding the proposed strategy for improving coordination. On that basis, the Bureau will determine an appropriate mechanism for further follow-up.

VI. Sunset clause

16. Unless the Bureau of the Committee on Statistics decides otherwise, the Working Group shall expire by the end of third session of the ESCAP Committee on Statistics.

Annex II

Major findings of the statistical training needs assessment survey

Table A1

Information provided by 18 responding NSOs

ESCAP members and associate members	Providing information on		
	Training facilities available	Trainings provided	Training needs
1. Armenia	√	√ (none)	√
2. Azerbaijan	√	√	√
3. Cambodia	√	√ (none)	x
4. China	√	√	x
5. Hong Kong, China	√	√	√
6. India	√	incomplete	√
7. Indonesia	√	√	x
8. Iran (Islamic Republic of)	√	√	√
9. Japan	√	√	√
10. Macao, China	√	√ (none)	√
11. Malaysia	√	√	√
12. Nepal	√	√ (none)	√
13. New Caledonia	√	√ (none)	√
14. Philippines	√	√	√
15. Russian Federation	√	√	√
16. Singapore	√	√ (none)	√
17. Sri Lanka	√	√	√
18. Thailand	√	√	x

Note: √ stands for required information provided
X stands for required information not reported

Table A2
In-country training programmes in 18 responding members and associate members

NSSs with	Self-sufficient	Training-deficient	Total
Formal training programmes	2	10	12
of which those with			
training policy for NSO staff	2	10	12
training policy for non-NSO staff	2	9	11
training calendar	2	10	12
regular evaluation of training programmes	2	8	10
of which those providing training to			
primary level staff	2	9	10
junior level staff	2	6	8
middle level staff	2	6	8
senior level staff	2	6	8
senior management level staff	2	3	5
Number of responding countries	2	16	18

Note: Australia is not included among the responding members and associate members. Only the questionnaire for development partners was sent to the Australian Bureau of Statistics, since it is a provider of external training.

Table A3
Number of statistical training institutes in 18 responding members and associate members

Number of training institutions	Self-sufficient	Training-deficient	Total
Total	5	29	34
government training institutions	3	16	19
universities	1	8	9
others	1	5	6
Those providing			
boarding	4	2	6
lodging	0	2	2
both	0	15	15
Those with all the five facilities	4	24	28
Those providing training to			
primary level staff	5	17	22
junior level staff	4	11	15
middle level staff	4	21	25
senior level staff	0	21	21
senior management level staff	0	14	14

Note: Australia is not included among the responding members and associate members. Only the questionnaire for development partners was sent to the Australian Bureau of Statistics, since it is a provider of external training.

Table A4
Estimated range of training gap
(in number of topic participants)

Training provided and training gaps	As reported by 11 training-deficient NSOs		Estimated range for the region	
	For 2011 and 2012	Annual average	LL	UL
Training provided by national STIs	7 446	3 723	11 169	14 892
Total needs – all 5 priorities	--	17 436	52 306	69 744
Total needs - top 2 priorities	--	7 613	22 839	30 452
External training needs - all	--	--	41 139	54 852
External training needs - top 2 priorities	--	--	9 725	13 615
External training provided	4 253	2 127	2 552	2 339
Existing gap – all 5 priorities	--	--	38 476	52 513
Existing gap - top 2 priorities	--	--	7 173	11 276

Table A5

Estimated range of additional external training need per year by selected topic
(in number of topic participants)

Code	Topic	Annual estimates for the region					
		External training needs		External training provided		Additional external training need	
		UL	LL	UL	LL	UL	LL
1.5	Income and consumption	588	784			588	784
2.1	Macroeconomic statistics	1 637	2182	84	92	1545	2098
2.2	Economic accounts	1481	1974	135	147	1334	1839
2.3	Business statistics	1743	2324	9	10	1733	2315
2.4.1	Agriculture, forestry, fisheries	1149	1532	35	38	1111	1497
2.4.2	Energy	1149	1532			1149	1532
2.4.3	Mining, manufacturing, construction	1143	1524	11	12	1131	1513
2.4.4	Transport	1146	1528			1146	1528
2.4.5	Tourism	1143	1524			1143	1524
2.4.6	Banking, insurance, financial statistics	1103	1470	9	10	1093	1461
2.7	Prices	803	1070	50	54	749	1021
2.8	Labour cost	333	444			333	444
2.9	Science, technology and innovation	297	396			297	396
3.3.2	Gender and special population groups	984	1312	127	139	845	1185
3.3.3	Information society	2384	3178			2384	3178
4.1	Metadata	827	1102	183	199	627	919
4.2	Classifications	2361	3148	22	24	2337	3126
4.3.1	Population and housing censuses; registers of population	1140	1520	44	48	1092	1476
4.3.2	Business and agricultural censuses surveys and registers	1955	2606	50	55	1900	2556
4.3.3	Household surveys	1997	2662	62	68	1929	2600
4.3.4	Business and agricultural surveys and censuses	882	1176	29	31	851	1147
4.3.5	Other administrative sources	822	1096	28	30	792	1069
4.4	Data editing and data linkage	2058	2744	60	65	1993	2684
4.5	Dissemination, data warehousing	1851	2468	154	168	1683	2314
4.6	Statistical confidentiality and disclosure protection	903	1204	65	71	832	1139
4.7	Data analysis	1301	1734	90	98	1203	1644
6.3	Index numbers	720	960	45	49	671	915
6.7	Report writing	599	798	54	59	540	744

Note: "UL" stands for "upper limit" and "LL" for "lower limit".

Table A6

Estimated range of additional external training need for the topics of Domain 5*(in number of topic participants)*

Code	Topic	Annual estimates for the region					
		External training needs		External training provided		Additional external training need	
		UL	LL	UL	LL	UL	LL
5.1	Institutional frameworks and principles; role and organization of official statistics	1431	1908	34	37	1394	1874
5.2	Statistical programmes; coordination within statistical systems	516	688	15	16	500	673
5.3	Quality frameworks and measurement of performance of statistical systems and offices	528	704			528	704
5.4	Management and development of human resources	-108	-144	48	52	-160	-192
5.5	Management and development of technological resources	-318	-424	58	63	-381	-482
5.6	Coordination of international statistical work	323	430	6	6	317	425
5.7	Technical cooperation and capacity building	423	564			423	564

Note: “UL” stands for “upper limit” and “LL” for “lower limit”.