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

**Second session**

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Item 5 (a) of the provisional agenda

**Coordination of statistical capacity-building activities:**

**Statistical training**

**Response to request for information for preparation of  
document E/ESCAP/CST(2)/8 - Response by Asian  
Development Bank<sup>1</sup>**

**Guide questions**

- 1. How would your organization's mandate to provide statistical training be best described? Please provide a summary of its key features.** (*Note: You may provide a copy of available documentation that contains this information.*)

- Is providing statistical training a specific function of the organization or does it indirectly arise as part of a broader function related to statistical capacity building?
- What is the organizational set-up (infrastructure, human, financial resources) for providing training?

Statistical training provided by the ADB is part of its broader mandate of statistical capacity building (SCB) in its developing member countries (DMCs). ADB undertakes SCB through a combination of technical assistance (TA) to individual DMCs or regional technical assistance (RETA) for a group of DMCs, on statistical issues common to the participating countries. Most TA projects for SCB in ADB are initiated and managed by the Development Indicators and Policy Research Division (ERDI) of the Economics and Research Department, while a few have also been undertaken directly by ADB regional departments with assistance from ERDI.

No staffs or other resources specifically designated for training in statistics and statistical capacity building and these are implemented from available staff and financial resources for technical assistance including all

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<sup>1</sup> This document was contributed by Asian Development Bank. It has been reproduced without formal editing. The views expressed are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the views of the United Nations

training related costs. Resource persons are usually ADB statisticians and/or experts engaged using the technical assistance funds

**For national training organizations-** *If you provide training to or collaborate in the provision of training to other countries, please include information on this.*

**2. What would you consider the major achievements/outputs of your organization in relation to the provision of training in the last five years? Briefly discuss why you consider these as major achievements of your organization. What are some critical success factors that may be drawn from your experiences?**

- Training activities (training programme; workshops; courses: Please provide information on number of trainees, countries covered (if applicable), substantive area of training, mode of delivery, whether training materials are made available in the public domain.) **Please see Annex 1 (Summary table on training activities.)**

Training activities are usually undertaken in connection with technical assistance projects undertaken by ADB. These include the following:

- (i) RETA 6088 (2005 International Comparison Program for Asia and the Pacific; RETA 6482(2009 PPP Updating) – These projects use the Structured Product Descriptions, an innovation developed for the International Comparison Program 2005, to identify and price the same product across countries as comparability is a key requirement in computing PPP. These were introduced to price statistician in NSO to enable them to adopt the SPD for their regular consumer price collection activity. Selected countries have adopted the SPD for their consumer price collections. Price diagnostics tools introduced in these projects have also been adopted in conducting analysis of CPI data, particularly intra country analysis, by selected countries.

All materials used in the regional workshops are available in ADB's ICP website: <http://www.adb.org/statistics/icp/icp.asp>.

- (ii) RETA 6364: Measurement and Policy Analysis for Poverty Reduction – conducted training on advanced statistical methods for analyzing complex surveys such as panel data analysis and small area estimation techniques; advanced sampling and other survey methods for developing cost-effective and reliable data collection strategies
- (iii) TA 4688 : Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (BBS) were sent for training on national accounts Indonesia and the Philippines Aside from these overseas training, in-house training on various topics such as the consumer price index was provided to BBS staff by the TA consultants as part of their assignments.
- (iv) RETA 6483 (Use of the Supply and Use Framework Towards 1993 SNA Compliance) – Eighteen participating countries

acquired skills/expertise in either further improving their Supply and Use Tables (SUT) and/or produce their first set of SUTs. A 51 by 32 matrix was compiled based on SNA 93. Countries also acquired knowledge on how to use existing data effectively, such as the HIES data in profiling household consumption expenditure; loans and deposits to allocate FISIM; using borrowed production functions to estimate input structures, borrowed margin functions to allocate trade and transport margins, etc.

- (vi) RETA 6430: Measuring the Informal Sector - A series of training were provided to Armenia, Bangladesh and Indonesia in the process of developing and institutionalizing a sound data collection strategy for measuring informal employment and the informal sector for Armenia, Bangladesh & Indonesia..

Success of the training programs is due to several factors:

- (i) Well-prepared training materials relevant to the needs of participants. Project officers and staff exert all efforts to prepare the necessary training materials, enlisting the assistance/advice of experts if necessary.
  - (ii) Provision of hands-on exercises to ensure that concepts introduced are well-understood, where ever possible based on actual country data.
  - (iii) Close interaction with participants; create an “informal” atmosphere to get participants comfortable to ask questions. Interaction with participants continues even after training – participants are free to email queries; seek clarifications and seek additional reference materials. All these elements are always attended without fail.
  - (iv) Country follow-up missions where necessary.
  - (v) Careful selection/evaluation of workshop/training participants to maximize benefits to the participant and national statistical offices. We have not hesitated in declining nominations.
  - (vi) Ensuring “ownership” of the project by statistical agencies through constant dialogue and consultation of project managers at ADB with project implementers in the participating countries.
- Training frameworks developed and adopted (Please describe the framework.)

Training framework on price sample design and product and outlet selection was developed for the international comparison program. Training frameworks (including the set of training materials) on developing a master sample design for household surveys and implementing the mixed survey for measuring the informal sector and informal employment (including a handbook) were also developed

A detailed data assessment questionnaire to gauge data availability by source was developed to identify data gaps for SUT compilation. Templates to compile components of the SUT were also developed to facilitate data compiling (output and intermediate consumption by ISIC; household consumption expenditure by COICOP/CPC; government

consumption expenditure by COFOG/CPC; NPISH by COPNI/CPC; CPC/HS for external trade). In addition concordance tables linking the various international standards (ISIC Rev 3.1 with CPC 1.1; CPC1.1 with COICOP, COFOG, COPNI and HS) were developed to facilitate different standard adopted by countries.

Price capture tools for recording quarterly prices of household consumption and annual prices for machinery and equipment and construction inputs were developed to facilitate data entry and conduct statistical diagnostics. Similar tools were also developed for analysing compensation of employees (public sector) and gross domestic expenditure.

- Assessment and evaluation frameworks and tools developed and applied (Please describe the frameworks and tools.)

For the supply and use tables, evaluation frameworks were developed and applied to analyse input output structures/ratios; and trade and transport & margins by country at sub regional levels (e.g. comparing these ratios amongst the Mekong region countries). Consistency checks on share of consumption patterns to total GDP by country by sub-region were also applied.

The price capture tools developed for the computation of Purchasing Power Parity data included statistical diagnostics to assess and evaluate price data submitted at intra country level and against country CPI data. The tool could also be used by countries for their CPI work.

### **3. How does your organization develop its strategy and determine its priorities for providing training?**

- Describe the overall process undertaken currently to determine priorities. What are considered in the selection of substantive area, target trainees, target countries (if applicable), mode of delivery? What assessment tools are used to determine training needs?

Some of the recently conducted training programs (from Table 1) under various technical assistance projects focused on few selected DMCs with weak statistical capacity and were prioritized based on the training needs assessment in the diagnostic studies of the national statistical systems conducted for each of these DMCs.

The identification of the topics for regional TA projects and hence the training component, if any, of the project is guided both by the capacity building needs of the group of countries participating based on the available assessments, and also on the objectives of the TA.

Selection of participants may vary across technical assistance projects. However, the usual requirement is that the participants should be directly involved in the field of training so that expertise gained can directly benefit not only the TA but more importantly, the office itself. Also, some may require that the participant not be close to retirement age

For some training programs that are conducted in a series (such as those in the ICP), as far as possible the same participants are encouraged to

be nominated by to ensure development of expertise and capacity building in the institution. .

- Are you considering changes in the current process? If so, what are these changes and why are these changes being introduced?

A more systematic approach to conducting training programs may be implemented after the planned review and revision of ADB's statistics capacity building strategy.

ADB is also attempting to better coordinate its capacity building and training activities with regional organizations by sharing of information regarding current and future projects and attempting to collaborate the conduct of training activities by leveraging on the strengths of the partner institutions. Thus, training programs and capacity building projects have been implemented in close consultation with other national statistics offices/international organizations including the UNSIAP.

**4. Future directions in the provision of training.** Please respond to the questions below from the perspective of a training provider in the ESCAP region:

4.1. What are the *existing* major gaps in the knowledge and skills of organizations comprising the national statistical systems that hamper the accomplishments of their mandates?

In most countries with weak statistical capacity, skills required relate to the need for basic diploma or undergraduate degrees in statistics. Staffs also need to develop their basic statistical skills by acquiring a good understanding of statistical methods and their applications in official statistics. Apart from the basic training needs of the staff there are training needs in specialized areas – such as national accounts; balance of payments; government finance; sample surveys – designing surveys, conducting survey operations, data processing, tabulation, report writing and data dissemination; data analysis and interpretation; ICT applications in official statistics; etc. Training in official statistics requires a twin approach, one - the classroom training with practical exercises is necessary to provide the theoretical basis of data collection and compilation based on international standards; two - the real learning is accomplished only through their practical application by learning on-the- job.

Apart from gaps in the statistical capability of NSOs, other factors also affect the accomplishment of their mandates. These include lack of support for statistics from government; lack of funding support; lack of opportunity for staff who have undergone training to make use of the knowledge they have acquired due to staff transfers; lack of knowledge or resources to disseminate statistics to a wide audience in a cost-effective manner through, say, the Internet.

In certain situations trained NSO staffs are “pirated” by international organizations with better compensation and career prospects.

4.2. What are new knowledge areas and skills that producers of official statistics should be equipped with in order for them to be able to respond readily to emerging needs in the next five to ten years?

Many statistical agencies have a rich data base but lack the knowledge to convert these into information. Ability to package and repackage data into information as required by planners and policy makers has to be developed.

NSOs have to move with times; adapt the existing survey instruments to collect more relevant data to meet current needs.

Developing cost effective data collection strategies in support of both official statistics and data for policy making (managing for development results or evidence-based policy making) should be explored. Topics could include climate change, ICT, small area estimation techniques, financial soundness among others.

Application of statistical methods on data analysis on existing surveys to provide more data support for policy making. In addition, data dissemination capability should be developed to maximize use of available data.

4.3. What new strategies and training approaches have your organization recently adopted or are being considered and tested to better meet the training needs in the region? Please elaborate the reasons for these choices to meet the abovementioned needs for training in the region.

No new strategies and training approaches have been recently adopted by ERDI but there are plans to review/revise its statistics capacity building strategy. Training would be an important component of the revised strategy. Presently, given its limited human and financial resources, training activities are focused on core social and economic statistics such as the MDGs, national accounts, and sample surveys. The emphasis has been to coordinate the conduct of trainings with other development agencies such as the UNSIAP, Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO) and Germany's National Statistics Office.

## **5. Regional coordination of training.**

5.1. Does your organization have existing policies or practices with regard to coordination of training? If yes, please briefly describe these. What are the benefits for your own organization?

Not at the international level, except for selected projects (eg. ICP and Informal Sector) although ADB is a member of the CCSA. Coordination of training and collaboration with other development organizations has to be further improved to maximize ADB resources.

5.2. In your view,

- What are the benefits of better coordination in the provision of training for the national statistical systems in the region?

Better coordination would reduce duplication of efforts and topics covered among development organizations and hence, optimize limited resources for training. In statistical agencies with limited human resources, there have been instances where staff spends a large amount of time just attending training.

- What principles and strategies for regional coordination would be most relevant? What corresponding mechanisms would be most useful?

International development organizations should share their strategies, training plans and schedules, and must also coordinate, if possible and applicable, the selection of topics and criteria for screening participants. A specific working group on training needs comprising of focal persons from various international organizations may be formed to coordinate training programs in their respective organizations. This will help reduce duplication of training.

- What are two main issues related to coordination of training that you wish the Committee on Statistics to consider at its Second Session?
  - (i) Identification of relevant topics for training that is more responsive to existing and emerging needs of statistical systems in the region; including the development of a regional timetable (for the next 2 to 3 years or so) to avoid duplication of efforts.
  - (ii) Exploring and maximizing statistical strength in the region to help countries in need of statistical assistance. Examples are the development of an apprenticeship program in which countries with more advanced statistical systems could host staff from other countries or they could provide advisory services to statistically weak countries such as the ASEAN help ASEAN model adopted by the ASEAN Secretariat.

**Annex****Table 1. Summary of Trainings/Workshops Undertaken by the ERDI**

<b>Project</b>	<b>Type</b>	<b>Target participants</b>	<b>Number of trainees</b>	<b>Duration</b>	<b>Substantive area of training</b>	<b>Countries covered</b>	<b>Remarks</b>
RETA6333	Workshop	NSO Heads/Senior officials of Finance and Planning	19	5 days	Management of National Statistical System	Afghanistan, Cambodia, Lao PDR, Maldives, Mongolia, Nepal, and Timor-Leste	Trainers from the German Statistics Offices conducted the workshop
RETA6333	Short course	Mid level statisticians engaged in sample survey work	21	4 weeks	Sampling techniques and surveys of households and enterprises	Afghanistan, Cambodia, Lao PDR, Maldives, Mongolia, Nepal, and Timor-Leste	At the ISEC, Kolkata
RETA6333	Short course	Mid level statisticians from the NSOs	14	3 weeks	Analysis and interpretation of official statistics (Social statistics)	Afghanistan, Cambodia, Lao PDR, Maldives, Mongolia, Nepal, and Timor-Leste	At UNSIAP, Tokyo
RETA6333	Workshop	Statisticians from NSOs and Agriculture and officers responsible for agriculture planning departments	21	4 days	Agriculture statistics and Agriculture Census	Afghanistan, Cambodia, Lao PDR, Maldives, Mongolia, Nepal, and Timor-Leste	In collaboration with the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO)
RETA6356	Country training workshop	Statisticians from NSO and line ministries	30	1 week	Using administrative data for compiling MDG and other indicators	Mongolia	In collaboration with the UNSIAP



Project	Type	Target participants	Number of trainees	Duration	Substantive area of training	Countries covered	Remarks
RETA6356	Country training workshop	Statisticians from NSO and line ministries	23	1 week	-do-	Nepal	In collaboration with the UNSIAP
RETA6356	Country training workshop	Statisticians from NSO and line ministries	24	1 week	-do-	Sri Lanka	In collaboration with the UNSIAP
RETA6356	Country training workshop	Statisticians from NSO and line ministries	29	1 week	-do-	Palau	In collaboration with the UNSIAP
RETA6356	Country training workshop	Statisticians from NSO and line ministries	27	1 week	-do-	Viet Nam	In collaboration with the UNSIAP
RETA 6088	Country and regional workshops	Price statisticians from NSOs and national accounts statisticians	One or two representative(s) per country  23 participating countries	Several workshops at country/ regional level for 1 week each	Knowledge in ICP concepts, methodologies; sampling methodology for ICP price surveys; intra & inter-country price validation tools; ICP software; disaggregating GDP expenditure weights.	Bangladesh; Bhutan; Brunei Darussalam; Cambodia; PRC; Fiji; Hong Kong, China; India; Indonesia; Iran; Lao PDR; Macao, China; Malaysia; Maldives; Mongolia; Myanmar; Nepal; Pakistan; Philippines; Singapore; Sri Lanka; Taipei, China; Thailand; Viet Nam	In collaboration with the World Bank for the ICP 2005
RETA 6482	Country and regional workshops	Price statisticians from NSOs and national accounts statisticians	One or two representative(s) per country  21 participating countries	Several workshops at country/ regional level for 1 week each	PPP updating methodology for non-benchmark years; and computation of sub-national PPPs	Bangladesh; Bhutan; Brunei Darussalam; Cambodia; PRC; Fiji; Hong Kong, China; India; Indonesia; Lao PDR; Malaysia; Maldives;	ADB resources

Project	Type	Target participants	Number of trainees	Duration	Substantive area of training	Countries covered	Remarks
						Mongolia; Nepal; Pakistan; Philippines; Singapore; Sri Lanka; Taipei,China; Thailand; Viet Nam	
RETA 6483	Regional workshops	National accounts statisticians	One or two representative(s) per country  18 participating countries.	Several workshops at regional level. For duration of 1 week.	Compilation of Supply and Use table.	Bangladesh; Bhutan; Brunei Darussalam; Cambodia; PRC; Fiji; Hong Kong, China; India; Indonesia; Malaysia; Maldives; Mongolia; Nepal; Singapore; Sri Lanka; Taipei,China; Thailand; Viet Nam	ADB resources
TA 4313	Long course	Statistical Officers from Central Statistical Office	4	10 months	Regular course on General Statistics	Afghanistan	International Statistical Education Centre, Kolkata, India
TA 4987	Long course	Statistical Officers from Central Statistical Office	2 courses with 4 trainees each	10 months	Regular course on General Statistics	Afghanistan	International Statistical Education Centre, Kolkata, India
TA 4987	Short course	Statistical Officers from Central Statistical Office	25	3 weeks	Basic Statistics	Afghanistan	ADB resources
TA 4987	Short course	Statistical Officers from Central Statistical Office	25	3 weeks	Intermediate Statistics	Afghanistan	ADB resources
RETA 6364	Short course	Statistical officers	22		Statistical methods for analysing survey data	India, Indonesia, Philippines	

<b>Project</b>	<b>Type</b>	<b>Target participants</b>	<b>Number of trainees</b>	<b>Duration</b>	<b>Substantive area of training</b>	<b>Countries covered</b>	<b>Remarks</b>
RETA 6364	Short Course	Statistical officers	18		Advanced sampling	India, Indonesia, Philippines	
RETA 6430	Short course	Statistical officers	Varies in the participating country		Measuring the informal sector	Armenia, Bangladesh, Indonesia	
TA 4688	Short Course	Statistical Officers from Statistics Bureau	4	2 weeks	National Accounts	Bangladesh	Training conducted at BPS- Statistics Indonesia
TA 4688	Short Course	Statistical Officers from Statistics Bureau	3	2 weeks	National Accounts	Bangladesh	Training conducted by PNSC Board in Philippines
TA 4688	Short Course	Statistical Officers from Statistics Bureau	2	2 weeks	National Accounts	Bangladesh	Training conducted jointly by SRTC & UNSIAP in Philippines