

Regional Meeting on Agile Statistical Systems Fit for the Future

17-19 June 2024

Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia

Concept note

1. Background and purpose

National statistical and civil registration and vital statistics systems in Asia and the Pacific are facing ever-increasing demand for statistical products that are timely, frequent, granular, and accurate. To be able to continuously respond to this demand effectively and efficiently, they need to transform into systems that are agile by taking advantage that opportunities such as new data sources, new methods, new technologies, pathways to business process improvement, and change management provide.

The United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) supports statistics development of its members and associate members, especially those that are least developed, landlocked, small islands developing States, and in or emerging from conflict. Over recent years, a broad range of work has been undertaken to strengthen national statistical and civil registration and vital statistics systems, including through system reviews and efforts to improve business processes.

The meeting will showcase the results of this work, while discussing options for the further strengthening of national statistical and civil registration and vital statistics systems, including under the Power of Data initiative.¹ In this context, the meeting will also serve as a forum for initial discussions on the high-level theme topic Agile Statistical Systems Fit for the Future of the 9th session of the ESCAP Committee on Statistics.

2. Expected outcomes

The expected outcomes of the meeting are:

- Results of recent work on strengthening national statistical and civil registration and vital statistics systems, in particular through business process improvement, is documented, reviewed, and discussed, with pertinent lessons being drawn and shared among participants
- Participants are aware and knowledgeable about the purpose and utility of reviews of national statistical systems and have reflected on their potential application in their countries
- Participants generate draft recommendations on priority elements for a roadmap towards agile statistical systems fit for the future through, for example, business process improvements, change management, and different ways of working, for subsequent consultation and consideration at the 9th session of the ESCAP Committee on Statistics

¹ See <https://www.data4sdgs.org/initiatives/power-of-data-unlocking-data-dividend-sdgs>.

3. Modalities and language

The meeting will feature presentations, and panel, group, and plenary discussions, including through the world café format.

The meeting will be organized as an in-person event. The meeting will be held in English only, i.e., without any interpretation services.

4. Participants

The meeting is being organized for the Chief Statisticians of the invited countries, as well as the focal points for work that ESCAP has recently supported on strengthening national statistical and civil registration systems under selected technical cooperation projects.

Participation is invited from countries that:

- Have worked on the strengthening of statistical systems under the project “Navigating Policy in Asia-Pacific with Data to Leave No One Behind” funded by the 13th tranche of the United Nations Development Account
- Have over recent years conducted a review of their national statistical systems, including under the ongoing project “Resilient and agile National Statistical Systems to meet post-covid-19 data needs to recover better” funded by the 14th tranche of the United Nations Development Account
- Have worked on the improvement of business processes of their civil registration and vital statistics systems under support from the Data for Health initiative²
- Are currently on the Bureau of the ESCAP Committee on Statistics
- Have otherwise recently undertaken work on transitioning towards agile statistical systems

The countries thus to be invited include Bangladesh, Bhutan, Fiji, Georgia, India, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Malaysia, Maldives, Mongolia, Nepal, Philippines, Republic of Korea, Singapore, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Uzbekistan, and Vanuatu.

5. Prerequisites

Participants will be requested to share their thinking on needs for further strengthening of the national statistical and civil registration and vital statistics systems in their countries and regionally.

Participants, from the countries concerned, will be expected to present on and otherwise engage in the meeting on the work that they have undertaken with ESCAP (and possible other partners) in strengthening their national statistical and civil registration and vital statistics systems.

ESCAP might contact selected participants with requests to take up specific roles at the meeting in due course.

² See <https://www.bloomberg.org/public-health/strengthening-health-data/data-for-health/>.