CONCEPT NOTE: NETWORKING EVENT

Building the Future of Data Together: Networking Event for Census, Statistics and Geospatial Leaders

ESCAP Statistics Division and DESA Statistics Division
Friday 4 December 2026, 12:30-13:30
Conference Room 1, UN Conference Centre Bangkok

Background

The International Workshop on Geostatistical Integration for Population and Housing Census, incorporating the Ninth Meeting of the United Nations Expert Group on the Integration of Statistical and Geospatial Information, and the Tenth Session of the ESCAP Committee on Statistics bring together two communities that are increasingly central to the future of evidence-informed decision-making.

The statistical community plays a critical role in producing trusted official statistics, monitoring development progress, and supporting policy decisions. At the same time, the geospatial community provides the geographic context that allows data to be linked to people, places, services, infrastructure and the environment. Together, these communities are helping countries build modern data ecosystems that are more integrated, timely, granular and responsive to national priorities.

The coincidence of these two events in Bangkok provides a unique opportunity to bring together leaders, experts and practitioners from across Asia and the Pacific. Beyond formal meeting sessions, there is significant value in creating space for participants to exchange experiences, discover common interests, explore new partnerships and strengthen professional networks that can support future collaboration.

This networking event is designed to bring participants from the International Workshop on Geostatistical Integration for Population and Housing Census and the Tenth Session of the ESCAP Committee on Statistics together to foster dialogue between the two groups, encourage cross-sector learning, and build relationships that can help advance integrated national data systems in support of sustainable development, population and housing censuses, and emerging data priorities beyond 2030.

Objectives

The networking event will:

- Bring together participants from both events in an informal and engaging setting;
- Strengthen connections between the statistical and geospatial communities across Asia and the Pacific and across the global community;
- Promote greater understanding of the complementary roles of official statistics and geospatial information;
- Encourage the exchange of practical experiences, innovative approaches and lessons learned;
- Foster new partnerships and professional networks that can support future regional and national collaboration; and
- Contribute to a shared vision of how integrated data systems can better serve people, communities and policymakers.

Format

The event will be organised as a facilitated networking session designed to encourage meaningful interaction among participants who may not ordinarily meet during formal sessions.

The programme will begin with brief welcome remarks and reflections from one representative of each community, highlighting the importance of collaboration between statistical and geospatial institutions and the opportunities that arise from bringing these communities together.

Participants will then take part in a structured networking activity designed to spark conversation and encourage engagement across organisations, countries and disciplines. Each participant will receive a "conversation card" containing a series of prompts and challenges. Participants will be encouraged to meet colleagues they do not already know and identify individuals who match the various descriptions on the card.

The activity provides a fun and inclusive way to discover the diverse expertise represented in the room while promoting conversations that may lead to future collaboration.

The networking session will conclude with a facilitated reflection, during which participants will be invited to share, in a single sentence, the most interesting thing they learned about the other community or a new perspective they gained during the event.

Programme

Time	Agenda
12:30–12:33	**OPENING SESSION** Welcome by **Ms. Rachael Beaven,** Director, Statistics Division, ESCAP
12:33-12:45	**REFLECTIONS** **Reflections from the Statistical Community** on the value of collaboration and integrated data systems **Ms. Amalia Adininggar Widyasanti,** Chief Statistician, BPS – Statistics Indonesia **Reflections from the Geospatial Community** on opportunities for partnership and innovation **Mr. Claudio Stenner,** Co-Chair, Expert Group on the Integration of Statistical and Geospatial Information (EG-ISGI), Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics (IBGE)
12:45-13:15	**NETWORKING ACTIVITY** **Structured Networking Activity using conversation cards.** Participants engage with colleagues from different organisations, countries and disciplines and identify peers matching various prompts and challenges. Moderated by **Mr. Mark Iliffe,** DESA Statistics Division and **Mr. Richard Tonkin,** ESCAP Statistics Division.
13:15-13:25	**PARTICIPANT TAKEAWAYS** **Facilitated Reflection Session**. Participants share, in one sentence, an interesting insight, connection or new perspective gained during the networking activity. Moderated by **Mr. Mark Iliffe,** DESA Statistics Division and **Mr. Richard Tonkin,** ESCAP Statistics Division.
13:25-13:30	**CLOSING** Closing remarks by **Mr. Roberto Bianchini,** Inter-Regional Adviser, DESA Statistics Division

Expected Outcomes

By the end of the event, participants will have established new professional connections, gained a deeper appreciation of the other community's expertise and priorities, and identified opportunities for future collaboration. The event will contribute to a stronger regional network of statistical and geospatial leaders and practitioners, reinforcing the partnerships needed to build integrated data systems that meet the challenges and opportunities of the decade ahead.

In-person event only:

Online registration here or via QR code

For information, please contact Mr Richard Tonkin, Statistician, ESCAP at richard.tonkin@un.org or Mr Mark Iliffe, DESA at mark.iliffe@un.org.

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