



Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific**Seventy-ninth session**

Bangkok and online, 15–19 May 2023

Item 4 (j) of the provisional agenda*

Review of the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in Asia and the Pacific and issues pertinent to the subsidiary structure of the Commission: statistics**Report of the Governing Council of the Statistical Institute for Asia and the Pacific on its eighteenth session***Summary*

The present document contains the report of the Governing Council of the Statistical Institute for Asia and the Pacific on its eighteenth session.

The eighteenth session of the Governing Council of the Institute was held in Chiba, Japan, and online on 12 and 13 December 2022. During the session, members of the Governing Council expressed their views on the Institute's training approaches and priorities. The Governing Council also considered its regular agenda items, including the report of the Director of the Institute on the achievements of the Institute in 2022 and the proposed work programme and financial plan for 2023.

The Governing Council recommended criteria to be used when determining training modalities; suggested conducting further training on communication, development of user-friendly output and statistical literacy; recognized the need to evaluate training courses in long term; and emphasized the need for practical examples in courses and the sharing of good practices among national statistical offices.

The Governing Council reviewed and endorsed the work programme and financial plan for 2023.

* ESCAP/79/1/Rev.2.

I. Matters brought to the attention of the Commission

1. The Governing Council of the Statistical Institute for Asia and the Pacific took note of the actions taken by the Institute to implement the recommendations made during the seventeenth session and thereafter. The Governing Council noted with appreciation the implementation of online training activities and the 2022 training needs survey. It recommended that, subject to available resources, the survey be conducted on a regular basis, and it encouraged countries and regional organizations to complete the survey.

2. The Governing Council reviewed the performance of the Institute regarding e-learning courses and in-person training. It expressed its appreciation to the Institute for its work in developing training materials and promoting e-learning courses with collaborating agencies within the region.

3. The Governing Council discussed training approaches and provided guidance and recommendations. In that regard, the Governing Council:

(a) Recognized that the training needs of countries differed depending on whether the country had a training institute for official statistics and requested that the Institute take that into consideration when designing training activities;

(b) Acknowledged the advantages and disadvantages of e-learning, face-to-face training and hybrid training, and recommended that multiple training modalities be considered, depending on topic and resource availability. It noted that face-to-face training was more appropriate for leadership, communication and quality of statistics. It also recommended that several criteria, such as degree of interaction, level of training and topic of training, be considered when determining the appropriate training modality;

(c) Noted the importance of having online courses available in languages other than English;

(d) Noted the resources already available and, recognizing the challenges national statistical offices faced when disseminating data to members of the public, decision makers, the media and other users, suggested conducting further training on communication, development of user-friendly output and statistical literacy;

(e) Considering the high turnover of staff at national statistical offices and the need to build the capacity of staff to be trainers, suggested that training-of-trainers courses include details on how to be a trainer for e-learning and how to develop interactive e-learning content. It further requested that, where possible, training-of-trainers courses include material on the evaluation of training;

(f) Recognized the need to evaluate training courses in the long term in order to assess their effectiveness and impact;

(g) Emphasized the need for practical examples in courses and the sharing of good practices among national statistical offices through improved South-South cooperation to ensure that training was relevant and applicable.

4. The Governing Council reviewed the progress achieved by the Institute as well as its administrative and financial status. The Governing Council acknowledged the significant achievements of the Institute, especially regarding the organization of web-based training courses, which in 2022 reached more participants than at any point since the Institute started offering such courses.

5. The Governing Council acknowledged the contributions of the members and associate members of ESCAP and statistical development partners in the Institute's achievement of the work programme in 2022. The Governing Council also acknowledged countries that were willing to provide in-kind contributions and host regional, subregional and national courses in their training campuses. The Governing Council encouraged the Institute to continue to collaborate with other international and regional statistical institutions such as the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) Statistics Division and the Pacific Community.

6. The Governing Council reviewed and endorsed the work programme and financial plan of the Institute for 2023. It also noted the suggestions made by ESCAP members for national, subregional and regional training courses.

7. The Governing Council entrusted the Chair, the Vice-Chair and the Institute, in its capacity as secretariat, to agree on the dates and venue of the nineteenth session, of the Governing Council, to be held in 2023.

II. Proceedings

A. Matters arising from the seventeenth session of the Governing Council (agenda item 2)

8. The Governing Council had before it a document on matters arising from the seventeenth session of the Governing Council. It noted with satisfaction the action taken and the status of the matters as reported by the Institute.

9. The representative of Japan noted that the training needs survey conducted by the Institute was a useful tool to reflect the training needs of national statistical offices and, taking into account the available resources, recommended that the survey be conducted more regularly.

10. The representative of Malaysia expressed the willingness of the national statistical office to collaborate with the Institute in conducting regional training workshops in Malaysia and to make available training facilities for such training workshops.

11. The representative of Indonesia suggested that basic training courses could continue to be held online, and also suggested that participation in those courses could be a prerequisite for participation in intermediate training courses, which should be held face-to-face whenever possible.

12. The secretariat noted that since the training needs of member States were evolving, regular feedback through the training needs survey was a useful input in determining the work programme of the Institute.

B. New training-related challenges (agenda item 3)

13. The Governing Council had before it a document from the Director of the Institute for discussion. The Governing Council was to provide comments and guidance related to new training-related challenges.

14. The representative of the Philippines noted the need for a more standardized and institutionalized approach to the evaluation of training activities delivered by national and international organizations. The representative requested that training-of-trainers courses be continued owing

to turnover in training staff. Additional training courses that would be of high relevance to staff of the Philippine Statistics Authority included training on leadership, creative thinking and negotiation. Other relevant training courses in more established domains included courses on the environment, economics, health and big data. The representative mentioned the difficulties that national training institutions faced in tailoring training activities to different audiences.

15. The representative of the Republic of Korea informed the Governing Council that it conducted basic, intermediate and advanced big data courses. In 2023, Statistics Korea, in collaboration with the Institute, planned to organize training courses on education-related Sustainable Development Goal indicators and big data. The representative noted that Statistics Korea planned to strengthen its collaboration with the Institute and with other member States.

16. The representative of China noted the usefulness of the training needs survey conducted by the Institute to better understand the needs in Asia and the Pacific, given the diversity of national statistical systems in the region. The representative emphasized that, among staff members of the National Bureau of Statistics of China, there was a high level of interest in participating in the e-learning courses offered by the Institute, especially in courses that focused on data quality management. A request was made to allocate funds for the translation of the courses into Chinese, as this was a barrier for some participants from China.

17. The representative of India informed the Governing Council of the steps taken by the national training institute during the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic, including enhancing the information and communications technology (ICT) infrastructure to conduct online training. Participants in online training noted the limitations of such training, and more training activities were now being conducted face-to-face or in hybrid mode, both of which allowed for improved interaction among participants. The representative provided the following recommendations for training courses: incorporate real data examples into the training curriculum and include the sharing of experiences by countries; provide advice on best practices for e-learning content development as part of training-of-trainers courses; given the data needs for Sustainable Development Goal monitoring, include training on the integration of various data sources, and methods for data disaggregation and survey weights, as appropriate; and provide training courses on data governance and stewardship.

18. The representative of Indonesia indicated that there was a demand for training on communication and on the dissemination of user-friendly publications.

19. The representative of Samoa noted the need for different levels of training as there were significant differences in the capacities of national statistical offices in the region. Subregional training courses focused on the Pacific should be conducted in collaboration with partners in the subregion. There was also a need for training courses on labour statistics, immigration statistics, government finance statistics and the balance of payments.

20. The representative of Maldives informed the Governing Council of the difficulties faced by many national statistical offices in the region in disseminating outputs to different audiences and requested that the Institute consider conducting training courses on communication, management of human resources, user engagement and statistical literacy. The representative reiterated the need identified by other representatives for training courses for

those in national statistical offices who were tasked with developing e-learning content.

21. The representative of Viet Nam noted that for planning purposes, it was helpful to have a programme of training courses to be conducted by the Institute that could be updated as needs arose. The representative also noted the value of having countries share their experiences and expertise during training courses.

22. The representative of Sri Lanka emphasized the need for capacity-building as it had a direct impact on the quality of data. Furthermore, it was noted that face-to-face training courses were more effective, especially for courses that required more interaction (e.g. training-of-trainers courses). Training courses on conducting surveys, on utilizing administrative data and on statistical literacy and communication was also necessary. Other priority topics included environment statistics, poverty statistics and the 2025 System of National Accounts.

23. The representative of Thailand expressed appreciation to the Institute for providing e-learning courses during the pandemic. The representative echoed the need for more face-to-face courses, especially for topics that would benefit from in-person interactions, and noted the need for training on big data.

24. The representative of the Lao People's Democratic Republic acknowledged the benefits of online training courses and thanked the Institute for providing many such courses. However, language barriers limited the number of participants from the Lao People's Democratic Republic who participated in online training courses. Training topics that would be of high interest in Lao People's Democratic Republic included communication; data quality; new data sources; and economic, environmental and poverty statistics.

25. The representative of Cambodia reiterated that the national statistical offices had different capacities across the region and requested that training on data dissemination and communication be provided.

26. The representative of Japan emphasized the advantages of face-to-face training activities, including the increased motivation of participants and the ability to network and to learn from each other. The representative requested that the Institute resume face-to-face training when conditions permitted and that it continue to implement online training courses.

27. The representative of Malaysia acknowledged the popularity and added value of online training courses and noted the need for adequate information and communication technology infrastructure for the delivery of such courses.

28. The representative of the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women) informed the Governing Council that training related to communication was included in training courses conducted by UN-Women, the Institute and other partners. The representative acknowledged the need for guidance on the evaluation of training activities and expressed an interest in working with others on that topic.

29. The Director of the Institute informed the Governing Council of the availability of self-paced online courses on the e-learning platform of the Institute; acknowledged the importance of having face-to-face training; and noted that two regional training courses had been conducted during the last quarter of 2022, with additional in-person courses planned for 2023. The Director echoed the need for training on data quality and communication and

noted that the Institute had included those subject areas in its workplan for 2023. Furthermore, the Director acknowledged the need for the sharing of good practices among national statistical offices and requested that countries continue to participate in webinars organized with the Institute and ESCAP Statistics Division, which provided good platforms for sharing experiences. The Director concurred that the methodology of evaluating training activities needed to be further developed to measure medium- and long-term impacts.

C. Report of the Director of the Institute (agenda item 4)

30. The Governing Council had before it the report of the Director of the Institute. In the report, the Director highlighted key results and accomplishments in 2022 and summarized the Institute's financial and administrative status.

31. The representative of Japan requested the Institute to provide an update on its vacant posts and pledged to continue to provide in-kind contributions for its activities. The Director of the Institute informed the Governing Council that as of December 2022, the posts of the Deputy Director and Team Assistant were vacant. The Deputy Director would join the Institute in January 2023, whereas the Team Assistant post was under recruitment and was expected to be filled during the first quarter of 2023.

32. The representative of Samoa noted the need for an improved rate of response to the training needs survey, especially from the Pacific region. To that end, the Institute should coordinate with the Pacific Community to better understand the training needs of the Pacific region.

33. The representative of the Philippines noted that the sessions of the Governing Council were a good opportunity for national statistical offices to provide inputs on their training needs and priorities. The representative commended the Institute for developing detailed and interactive e-learning courses and requested that training be provided to countries on tools for developing interactive e-learning courses.

34. The representative of the Lao People's Democratic Republic informed the Governing Council that the national statistical office was working with the relevant national ministries to facilitate cash contributions from the country to the Institute.

35. The representative of Thailand thanked the Institute for its continued support of the national statistical offices.

D. Work programme and financial plan for 2023 (agenda item 5)

36. The Governing Council had before it the work programme and financial plan for 2023 of the Institute.

37. The Director of the Institute presented the proposed 2023 training courses, training development activities and indicative timetable. The plan had been prepared with the assumption that the COVID-19 situation would improve during 2023 and that if the situation continued as it had been and travel restrictions remained in place, face-to-face training programmes and events would be cancelled, postponed or changed into virtual mode, according to the severity and period of travel restrictions, in consultation with partners of each course/event.

38. The representative of Indonesia emphasized the need for training courses to include practical examples and applications, aspects that needed to be reinforced when updating training material from previous courses, such as the 2008 System of National Accounts training courses. It was noted that Statistics Indonesia was willing to host courses at its facilities, in collaboration with the Institute.

39. The representative of Japan expressed the hope that the Institute's work programme and financial plan for 2023 would proceed as planned, with the resumption of face-to-face training activities. The representative again highlighted the in-kind contribution from the Government of Japan, and noted that staff of the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications would continue to provide administrative support to training courses hosted at the Institute's training facilities in Chiba, Japan.

40. The representative of Malaysia endorsed the Institute's work programme and financial plan for 2023 and expressed particular interest in having staff of the Department of Statistics Malaysia participate in training on the quality of statistics and the Sustainable Development Goals. The Department of Statistics Malaysia welcomed the opportunity to conduct training courses at its facilities, in collaboration with the Institute. As for priority training courses, the representative mentioned training in leadership and in communication using social media, given its important role in reaching different audiences. The representative also requested information on the process of selecting participants for training courses led by the Institute. The Director of the Institute recognized the increased demand for leadership training courses and informed the Governing Council of a planned face-to-face course on leadership in 2023. On the question of participant selection, the Director noted that for online training courses, participation had virtually no limits. For face-to-face courses, participation was limited due to financial costs. For regional training courses, government officials from countries within the Asia-Pacific region were invited, while for subregional training, government officials from a particular part of the region (e.g. the Pacific) were invited. For country courses, only government officials from one country were invited to the training.

41. The representative of the Philippines echoed the demands for leadership training, not only for senior managers in national statistical offices, but also for mid-level managers. The representative requested information on the mechanism for conducting a national training course in collaboration with the Institute. The Director of the Institute informed the Governing Council that administrative and substantive arrangements needed to be agreed upon between the Institute and its national counterparts for national training courses.

42. The representative of Viet Nam mentioned that priority areas for the country included training courses on measuring the digital economy and on administrative data analysis. There was a need for closer collaboration with regional organizations such as the ASEAN Statistics Division, given the differing needs across subregions of Asia and the Pacific.

43. The representative of Maldives expressed an interest in hosting country courses on the analysis of survey data and on utilizing administrative data for official statistics. For smaller national statistical offices, it was noted that topics such as big data were still relatively new.

44. The representative of Samoa noted the importance of data integration to reduce costs, especially when faced with unexpected challenges, such as the COVID-19 pandemic, which severely hindered traditional data collection.

Training courses and the sharing of experiences on data integration, which would be beneficial to all in better integrating data sources, were also important.

E. Other matters (agenda item 6)

45. No other matters were raised by the Governing Council.

F. Dates and venue of the nineteenth session of the Governing Council (agenda item 7)

46. The Governing Council entrusted its Chair, Vice-Chair and the Institute, in its capacity as secretariat, to agree on the dates and venue of the nineteenth session of the Governing Council, to be held in 2023.

G. Adoption of the report of the Governing Council on its eighteenth session (agenda item 8)

47. On 13 December 2022, the Governing Council discussed section I of the present report.

48. The recommendations and decisions of the Governing Council at its eighteenth session were adopted.

49. It was agreed that, as the secretariat of the Governing Council, the Institute would prepare the full report of the Governing Council on its eighteenth session for transmittal to ESCAP at its seventy-ninth session.

III. Organization of the session

A. Opening of the session

50. The eighteenth session of the Governing Council of the Institute was held on 12 and 13 December 2022. In view of the situation surrounding the COVID-19 pandemic, the session was held in hybrid mode with members participating in person in Chiba, Japan, and online.

51. The representative of Japan, Vice-Chair of the seventeenth session of the Governing Council, officially opened the eighteenth session.

B. Attendance

52. The session was attended by representatives of the host Government, Japan, and the following members of the Governing Council: China; India; Malaysia; Philippines; Republic of Korea; Thailand; and Viet Nam. Representatives of Bangladesh were unable to attend the session.

53. Representatives of the following ESCAP members attended the session as observers: Azerbaijan; Cambodia; Georgia; Indonesia; Iran (Islamic Republic of); Lao People's Democratic Republic; Maldives; Pakistan; Russian Federation; Samoa; Sri Lanka; Tonga; and Uzbekistan.

54. Representatives of ESCAP attended the session.

55. Representatives of the following United Nations bodies, specialized agencies and funds attended as observers: International Labour Organization; United Nations Children's Fund; and UN-Women.

56. Representatives of the following intergovernmental organizations attended as observers: ASEAN secretariat; Asian Development Bank; and Statistical, Economic and Social Research and Training Centre for Islamic Countries.

C. Election of officers

57. The Governing Council elected the following officers by acclamation:

Chair: Mr. Mohd Uzir Mahidin (Malaysia)

Vice-Chair: Ms. Orie Hirano (Japan)

D. Agenda

58. The Governing Council adopted the following agenda:

1. Opening of the session:
 - (a) Opening statements;
 - (b) Election of officers;
 - (c) Adoption of the agenda.
2. Matters arising from the seventeenth session of the Governing Council.
3. New training-related challenges.
4. Report of the Director of the Institute.
5. Work programme and financial plan for 2023.
6. Other matters.
7. Dates and venue of the nineteenth session of the Governing Council.
8. Adoption of the report of the Governing Council on its eighteenth session.

Annex I

Financial statement of the Statistical Institute for Asia and the Pacific for the year ended 31 December 2022
(United States dollars)

<i>Income</i>	
Contributions	360 915
Interest income	25 355
Total income	386 270
<i>Less: Expenditure</i>	
	(1 820 678)
Net income over expenditure	(1 434 408)
Fund balance as at 1 January 2022	6 089 768
Refunds to donors/fund transfer	-
Fund balance as at 31 December 2022	4 655 360

Annex II

Financial statement of the Statistical Institute for Asia and the Pacific for the year ended 31 December 2022, by project component (United States dollars)

	<i>Joint contributions- capacity development project</i>
<i>Income</i>	
Contributions	360 915
Interest income	25 355
Total income	386 270
<i>Less: Expenditure</i>	
	(1 820 678)
Net income over expenditure	(1 434 408)
Fund balance as at 1 January 2022	6 089 768
Refunds to donors/fund transfer	-
Fund balance as at 31 December 2022	4 655 360

Annex III

Cash contributions to the Statistical Institute for Asia and the Pacific for the institutional support account received for the years ended 31 December 2021 and 31 December 2022
(United States dollars)

<i>Country/area</i>	<i>Year ended 31 December 2021</i>	<i>Year ended 31 December 2022</i>
Australia	-	-
Azerbaijan	-	-
Bangladesh	-	7 000
Bhutan	-	-
Brunei Darussalam	15 000	15 000
Cambodia	2 000	4 000
China	70 000	70 000
Fiji	9 754	8 767
Hong Kong, China	30 000	30 000
India	24 962	25 000
Indonesia	-	-
Iran (Islamic Republic of)	-	-
Japan	1 843 765	-
Kazakhstan	3 500	3 500
Kiribati	-	-
Macao, China	20 000	20 000
Malaysia	20 000	20 000
Maldives	-	4 000
Mongolia	9 561	7 622
Myanmar	1 000	-
Pakistan	-	-
Papua New Guinea	-	-
Philippines	36 750	18 375
Republic of Korea	53 546	50 661
Russian Federation	30 000	-
Samoa	3 962	3 990
Singapore	15 000	30 000
Sri Lanka	10 000	-
Thailand	23 000	23 000
Timor-Leste	-	-
Tonga	-	-
Türkiye	-	-
Tuvalu	-	-
Vanuatu	-	-
Viet Nam	20 000	20 000
Total	2 241 800	360 915