



**Pacific SIDS Regional Preparatory Meeting
16-18 August 2023
Nuku'alofa, Tonga**

**Roundtable 5: Building Effective Institutions in Pacific SIDS and
strengthening Statistical Capacities**

17 August 2023, 1:45pm – 3:30pm

Background Note

Introduction

In the pursuit of sustainable development, Pacific SIDS face numerous challenges that demand well-informed and effective decision-making. Building institutional and statistical capacity is crucial for enabling governments to plan, implement, monitor, and evaluate development initiatives accurately and transparently. The establishment and development of governance institutions is a necessary, but potentially costly, exercise.

A major priority in terms of gaps relates to the need to strengthen data systems (including the collection, analysis and use of data). The ESCAP analysis shows that out of the 93 SDG indicators that have been used to make assessments of progress to date, there are 15 indicators for which there is 'no data available' and 27 indicators where there is 'insufficient data' available in the PSIDS.

The collection of data to measure the indicators of progress, has been problematic in the Pacific. The measurement of implementation requires better efforts in data collection.

The Session will focus on ways to improve data collection efforts in the region, as well as potentially rationalising the indicators and data required for SIDS. The discussion will explore ways to make institutions more effective, improve their governance impact and at the same time developing less costly mechanisms for these institutions.



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Challenges and perspectives

It is important to address the challenges on data to ensure that everyone in the Pacific region has access to accurate and timely information for planning and implementation of policies and programmes. Establishing live, easily accessible to the public, national platforms on progress against the SDGs in each of the Pacific SIDS could be beneficial. It could encourage increased collaboration between different institutions in all sectors to work towards the achievement of agreed national development priorities.

The UN Secretary General's report noted that there was inadequate data to assess progress on capacity building and international support for SIDS. The assessment shows that for data and statistics all SIDS regions show high levels of stagnation.

In 2019, governments from the region backed the vision agreed by the Asia-Pacific statistical community to meet the demand for statistics for the 2030 Agenda and committed to the Declaration to Navigate Policy with Data to Leave No One Behind which calls for investments in national statistical systems.

An SPC analysis points to weaknesses in statistical institutions as the main reason for the state of economic statistics production - inadequate human resources and skills, insufficient funds, outdated IT systems and lack of institutional coordination hinder production of timely, frequent and accurate economic indicators.

Inability to produce core economic indicators means less information is available to make informed policy decisions. Some PSIDS do not produce wage/earnings data and labour supply and demand data is produced by only four PSIDS, whereas none produce labour cost and wage indices. Statistical institutions are not the only ones that needed strengthening. A number of governance institutions were under-resourced and lacked the ability to fulfill their functions. Institutions cost money and enough finances are not always available. PSIDS may require a rethink on the governance institutional architecture.



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Recommendations for Action

The Pacific region needs to have an exchange of views and action to improve institutional and data capacity to support planning, decision-making, monitoring and evaluation for improved governance and operationalization of development plans for these SIDS.

- Focus on a rethinking of the governance institutions in the PSIDS that would focus on establishing multi-purpose institutions that fill the roles of more than one institution.
- Ensure improved availability of disaggregated data (by gender, age, area coverage etc..) that would allow for more thorough assessments of progress, including gaps in implementation.
- Focus on collecting data on climate and disaster risk reduction with inputs from government officials responsible for the management of the services such as emergency response and assistance.
- Encourage collection of data from multiple resources for more accurate assessments of progress, including gaps in implementation. The general absence of reliable data across most PSIDS remains a significant obstacle to better planning and implementation of key priorities, including raising investment to strengthen data portals.
- Focus on coordination with SPC, through the Pacific Data Hub, to further strengthen improvement of collection, analyses and use of data in the Pacific SIDS.

Proposed Guiding Questions for the Discussions

- How can we effectively address these statistical and institutional arrangements across the Pacific region?
- What are the key factors that will help increase data collection, analysis and use of data through regional frameworks at the national level?
- How can we prepare data and statistics policies to support national institution-building efforts within the Pacific regional context?