

**EXPERT GROUP MEETING: Opportunities and advantages of enhanced collaboration on statistical information management in Asia and the Pacific**

**CONCEPT NOTE**

*Background: Official Statistics in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*

National Statistical Institutions (NSIs) face significant challenges and opportunities in a rapidly evolving information environment. The ease and speed with which information is available are creating new expectations from NSI clients, while new technologies are expanding the opportunities for NSIs to meet those expectations.

The amount of data generated from personal devices, sensors, instruments and computers is increasing, representing an important source of information for statistics production, which is being used actively for information service provision. The project by Google to develop a real-time consumer price index calculated from online purchases is a recent example. How does this development impact the traditional role of NSIs as the primary providers of official statistics?

This was the context for an event organized during the second session of the Committee on Statistics (17 December 2010) entitled “*Modernization of Statistical Information Systems*” (see <http://www.unescap.org/stat/cst/2/side-event>). Discussions covered a variety of issues related to statistical information systems, the transformation of statistical business processes within national statistical systems and the future role of official statistics.

It was noted that transforming information management within national statistical systems requires action at strategic, managerial and technical levels. National Statistical Offices (NSOs) as the main coordinators of the national statistical systems are called on to initiate and coordinate the transformation.

The meeting stressed that fundamental changes would be required to the business architectures of NSIs and that management teams would need to be mobilized as change agents, taking the lead in the transformation process. The development and application of emerging standards and conceptual frameworks were considered fundamental requirements and the application of information technology essential for transforming information management by NSIs. The discussions highlighted the key role of capturing metadata throughout the statistics production process to facilitate the exchange of data across heterogeneous systems and assist users in manipulating data from multiple sources.

Participants stressed the urgent need for the statistical community to work together to develop common solutions, recognizing that the quality and cost-effectiveness of their respective transformation processes would greatly benefit from joint development of related concepts, standards, tools and capacity development programmes. It was suggested that a regional platform for discussion be established to further explore the issues and develop methods for working collectively. The ESCAP secretariat informed the meeting that an expert group meeting would be organized in 2011 to pave the way for further regional cooperation in the area.



**ADVANCING STATISTICS FOR DEVELOPMENT**

### *Objectives*

- To exchange information on current statistical business processes and efforts to document and improve statistical business processes in selected Asia-Pacific NSIs
- To provide an overview of ongoing efforts at the global level, such as the High Level Group for Strategic Developments in Business Architecture in Statistics (HLG-BAS) of the Conference of European Statisticians, and the UNECE-Eurostat-OECD initiatives on statistical metadata (METIS) and management of statistical information systems (MSIS)
- To discuss the potential of generic statistical business process models, including common metadata frameworks and standards, for improving data quality, production efficiency and IT systems in order to better meet NSI client expectations
- To discuss the potential of emerging common models, frameworks and terminology for facilitating regional collaboration on the improvement of statistical business processes within statistical institutions
- To review and discuss a proposal for the establishment of a regular, Asia-Pacific forum to discuss and strengthen regional collaboration for the improvement of statistical business processes
- Based on the above, draw conclusions and make expert recommendations on priority areas of work for countries and the ESCAP secretariat

### *Participants*

- Experts from Asia-Pacific NSIs will be invited on the basis of their in-depth knowledge and practical experience with formulating and implementing business operations or information management strategies in national statistical institutions,
- Experts from international organizations will be invited on the basis of their experience in conceptualizing and implementing multi-lateral initiatives related to the modernization of statistical systems

### *Tentative programme (3 days)*

- Current statistical business processes and efforts to document and improve statistical business processes in Asia-Pacific NSIs
- Recent developments of generic statistical business process models, metadata frameworks and other emerging standards at the global level
- Discussion:
  - Potential of generic statistical business process models, common metadata frameworks and other standards for meeting the needs of the modern NSI client
  - Development and application of common models, frameworks and terminology for facilitating regional collaboration on the improvement of statistical business processes
  - Proposal for the establishment of a regular, Asia-Pacific forum to discuss and strengthen regional collaboration for the improvement of statistical business processes
- Conclusion and recommendations

### *Dates*

20-22 June 2011, Bangkok, Thailand

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