Forum on Strengthening Statistical Management Practices

**Organized by Statistics Canada in collaboration with INEC-Ecuador,
the Statistical Conference of the Americas and
Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development Canada**

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Concept Note
(July 2015)

Background

In 2011, Statistics Canada entered into an international cooperation agreement with the Department of Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development Canada (DFATD) to share knowledge and best practices with colleagues from national statistical offices (NSOs) in Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean. Since the creation of this program called the International Statistical Fellowship Program (ISFP), Statistics Canada has delivered 11 seminars to 100 participants from 46 countries and six regional statistical organizations on governance-related topics and has worked with them to develop and implement various governance enhancement projects.

The main purpose of the ISFP is to provide managerial strategies and tools to heads and senior managers of statistical offices and, therefore to enhance their capacities to lead their national statistical systems (NSS) in a constant changing environment. The Program is aiming not only at the acquisition of management knowledge but also at continued local development and ownership.

Each cycle of the program included a two-week seminar where managers of the participating NSOs, regional statistical organizations and Statistics Canada discussed good management practices and shared experiences. The seminar was mostly an opportunity to share the realities faced by each country and to develop approaches for meeting challenges. After this seminar, there was a follow-up phase where the participants developed concrete organizational action plans on a specific theme covered during the program.

The ISFP ends in March 2016 and now that the seminars are over, Statistics Canada is working on its continuity and sustainability. As a final activity, Statistics Canada is hosting a one day side event to the November 2015 Statistical Conference of the Americas (SCA).

Purpose of the forum

The objectives of this forum are to:
- create an opportunity for ISFP participating countries to share their experience in implementing their ISFP project;
- extend the knowledge acquired and the lessons learned by NSOs on governance topics covered by the ISFP; and
- offer a networking opportunity for NSOs to share common challenges, solutions and good practices.

Target audience

The forum is open to:
- all participants of the SCA;
- all ISFP participants;
- any employee who is involved in the management of a national statistical agency; and
- any representative of a national or regional organization involved in statistical capacity building.

Agenda overview

The proposed activity consists of a series of five sessions, each focusing on a topic that was covered by the ISFP. For each session, panelists from different countries and organizations will be invited to share their knowledge, experience and lessons learned on a specific aspect of the session's topic. After each session, members of the audience will be invited to ask questions to the panelists or share their comments on their own experience in an open discussion. Here is a short description of the focus for each session.

- **Session 1: Quality assurance**

  Trust in statistics and, therefore, credibility of statistical systems can only be established if the information they produce is relevant and of high quality. Quality assurance will, consequently, always remain a very important topic for the statistical community. NSOs around the globe have developed or are in the process of developing quality assurance frameworks, tools, processes and mechanisms to improve the quality of their statistical outputs. Different factors such as available resources, institutional environment and most pressing concerns from a quality perspective will influence how the framework and processes will be elaborated.

  This session will focus on quality assurance good practices, tools, mechanisms and processes that were recently implemented by NSOs with the common goal of managing, monitoring and controlling various aspects of quality within their organization or within the NSS.

- **Session 2: Administrative data**

  To maintain an efficient statistical system, statistical organizations must focus on effective, innovative ways to produce high quality, timely and relevant information. In recent years, demands for statistics on all aspects of society and economy have continued to grow often in a climate of tight budgetary constraints and decreasing response rates. It is therefore not surprising that statistical organizations are increasingly interested in using administrative records in their statistical programs. Although these records can definitely lead to better outcomes - that is, a better balance between relevance, quality, costs and response burden – they also pose various management challenges.

  This session will try to address some of these challenges by presenting recent developments related to the access, acquisition, maintenance, management and use of administrative data in NSS.

- **Session 3: Organizational changes for an effective national statistical office and system**

  In many countries, the national statistics system is decentralized and the responsibility of producing statistics is distributed among various departments. This type of structure increases the importance of having a body that is in charge of coordinating the statistical activities within the country. Even in centralized structures, coordination inside the NSO is essential to distribute resources in an effective way, avoid duplication of efforts and incoherence and for finding efficiencies.

  This session will present various initiatives that were brought forward by different countries to find efficiencies in order to improve coordination of statistical activities.

- **Session 4: Training, learning and development**

  Training, learning and development is a blend of formal or informal activities aimed at developing and enhancing competencies. It involves the acquisition and assimilation of knowledge and experience through a diversity of activities such as formal training, practicing skills, formalized mentoring and coaching activities, as well as rotation and exchanges. Training is an organized and structured set of activities designed to transfer specific knowledge and skills that will improve or enhance job performance. Training and learning & development not only motivate employees but also stand as a key element in producing high quality statistical information.

  This session will focus on innovative training, learning and development initiatives undertaken by different countries.

- **Session 5: Communication and dissemination of official statistics**

  To ensure that statistical products are soundly used for decision making, statistical offices have an important role to play in the dissemination and promotion of their data. Communication strategies and dissemination models play a key role in this matter. Communication is also important to foster a positive image of an NSO to maintain relationships with data users. However, with the introduction of new technologies, National statistical organizations need to adapt the way they communicate their information in order to remain relevant and reach the IT-educated users.

  This session will present strategies and processes that were put in place in different countries in order to improve communication, dissemination and outreach in the context of this new communication era.

Expected outcomes

- Shared knowledge and enhanced capacity in the area of managing a statistical office;
- Increased collaboration among the NSOs and regional organizations;
- Established network of resources.