

MAIN EVENTS

INTRODUCTION

This issue of the bi-annual newsletter of the Regional Statistics Programme provides an insight into the activities undertaken in the Programme during the period January to June 2015. It also provides brief information on the future events that will take place in the second half of the year.

Support under the Tenth European Development Fund continued as activities were undertaken to advance work in the areas of Merchandise Trade and National Accounts Statistics. Work was also undertaken in the area of the Environment.

These and other articles can be found in this edition of the newsletter.

WORKSHOPS ON MERCHANDISE TRADE STATISTICS.

Two workshops were held in the area of Merchandise Trade Statistics—a training workshop for all persons working in the area of Merchandise Trade Statistics and a Train the Trainers Workshop. Details of these workshops can be found below.

Workshop on Merchandise Trade Statistics, 26th January—5th February 2015, St. Vincent and the Grenadines.

A regional workshop on Merchandise Trade Statistics was convened by the CARICOM Secretariat in Kingstown, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, during the period 26 January to 5 February 2015 and was organised under the framework of

(Continued on page 2 column1)

MAIN EVENTS

Training Workshop on Statistics and Indicators Supported Under the Tenth European Development Fund (10th EDF) to Monitor Regional Issues and Concerns in The Post-2015 Era, Port-Of-Spain, Trinidad And Tobago, 26-29 May 2015.

A training workshop on *Statistics and Indicators Supported Under the Tenth European Development Fund (10th EDF) to Monitor Regional Issues and Concerns in The Post-2015 Era*, was convened by the CARICOM Secretariat in Port-Of-Spain, Trinidad and Tobago, from 26 to 29 May 2015.

The main objective of this workshop was to provide training and to enable review of the regional contextual issues and the statistics and indicators that will form the basis of the changing development environment, including the statistics and indicators that would have implications for the Post-2015 era.

Specifically, the workshop provided the following: information on the global issues and concerns of the Post-2015 era that will supersede the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs); training and review of the statistics and indicators that were compiled by countries as part of the core datasets in Economic, Social/Gender, Environment and ICT Statistics; review of the regional and national priorities as informed by the Strategic Plan for the Caribbean Community 2015-2019 and the implications for the statistics and indicators to be produced by Member States. It critically reviewed, the core regional statistics and indicators in the context of the Global Indicator

(Continued on page 2 column 2)

Contents

Introduction; Workshops on Merchandise Trade Statistics; Training Workshop on Statistics and Indicators Supported Under the Tenth European Development Fund (10th EDF) to Monitor Regional Issues and Concerns in The Post-2015 Era,	1
Technical Assistance in the Area of the Environment; Project for the Regional Advancement of Statistics in the Caribbean (PRASC)	3
Sixteenth Meeting of the CARICOM Advisory Group on Statistics; Fortieth Meeting of the Standing Committee of Caribbean Statisticians (40th SCCS) and Related Meetings	4

MAIN EVENTS

(Continued from page 1 column 1)

the project “Consultancy on Merchandise Trade Statistics”. It was funded by the European Union under the Tenth European Development Fund (EDF). It targeted staff of the National Statistical Offices (NSOs) in Member States who worked in the area of Merchandise Trade.

The main objectives of the workshop were to enable harmonisation of the technical assistance put in place across countries; the sharing of good practices in terms of the use of Eurotrace in trade data processing and maintenance; training in the trade dissemination and trade indices modules of the Eurotrace Software and presentation and identification of best practices for the overall improvement of Merchandise Trade Statistics.

At the end of the workshop, participants were able to accurately maintain the data processing system; convert their MS ACCESS Eurotrace Domain using the SQL Server; install, configure and use Web Comext for extraction and for Mirror Statistics exercises with trading partners; establish a work plan toward International Merchandise Trade Statistics; make recommendations for the harmonisation and improvement of trade statistics; and produce trade indices and accurately analyse the results.

The workshop was attended by twenty eight (28) representatives, comprising of twenty six (26) persons from the NSOs of Member States and two (2) persons from the Regional Statistics Programme of the CARICOM Secretariat. Most Member States were represented by a Trade Statistician and a staff member from the Information Technology Unit responsible for providing support in the use of the software.

The workshop was facilitated by three experts from Artemis Information Management - the Team Leader in charge of the data processing system and IT tools, the Merchandise Trade Statistics Expert, and the Trade Indices expert. A variety of training techniques were used by the facilitators throughout the workshop. These included lectures, demonstrations, hands-on exercises and case studies.

Merchandise Trade—Train the Trainers Workshop, 23—26 February 2015, St. Kitts and Nevis.

A Train-the-Trainers Workshop on Merchandise Trade Statistics was convened by the CARICOM Secretariat in St. Kitts and Nevis during the period 24 to 27 February 2015.

(Continued in column 2)

MAIN EVENTS

(Continued from page 1 column 2)

Training Workshop on Statistics and Indicators Supported Under the Tenth European Development Fund (10th EDF) - Cont'd

Framework, recommended for the monitoring of the Post-2015 Agenda, relative to the indicators of the CSMDGs.

The meeting targeted a cross-section of personnel from National Statistical Offices (NSOs), and other statistics producing agencies and from selected thematic areas in the public sector in order to enable training and a comprehensive review of the indicators required to inform the various dimensions of development.

The main outcome of the workshop was the identification of indicators that are relevant to the development of CARICOM and which would then be used in the determination of the global indicator framework.

(Continued from page 2 column 1)

Merchandise Trade—Train the Trainers Workshop, 23 to 26 February 2015, St. Kitts and Nevis.—Cont'd

The objective of the workshop was to provide participants with relevant information and materials in order to perform quality training on the data processing and dissemination of Merchandise Trade statistics. In addition, the participants were trained on the use of the Eurotrace suite and Comext systems for processing data.

The specific objective was to set up, a team of qualified trainers in the region who will be able to provide training and assistance to new users and to respond to some of the challenges being experienced by countries. This would be based on their competencies. Fundamentally, the workshop would set the basis for the development of Centres of Excellence.

Some of the expected outcomes of this workshop were: to identify key components of an effective training program; to train other persons based on the experience gained during the workshop; to gain knowledge on participant's training style based on the feedback received at the workshop; and to describe the crucial role of a good data

production system in linking theory to practice and consolidating learning.

The main topics covered during the workshop were the

(Continued on page 3 column 1)

MAIN EVENTS

(Continued from page 2 column 2)

Merchandise Trade—Train the Trainers Workshop, 23 to 26 February 2015, St. Kitts and Nevis.—Cont'd

Principles of Effective Communication - "Getting the Message Across"; Effective Oral Communication; Introduction to Data Processing and Data Dissemination; the Content of Basic and Advanced Training on Eurotrace and Comext Systems and the Evaluation of Trainee Profiles.

During the facilitator's presentation he reminded participants that Eurostat would always seek feedback regarding the software through its Eurotrace interest group forum. He therefore urged participants as trainers to actively communicate with Eurostat via this forum regarding any issues they may encounter with the software as well as suggest ways to improve it. They were also encouraged to share the weaknesses of the software.

Technical Assistance in the Area of the Environment, March 11-13, 2015 – St. Georges, Grenada

A technical assistance mission was jointly organised by the CARICOM Secretariat and the Statistical Office of Grenada and was funded under the Tenth European Development Fund (10th EDF), from 11 to 13 March 2015, in St. Georges Grenada. Technical assistance was requested by Grenada from the CARICOM Secretariat to improve their Environment Statistics. This technical assistance activity represented the first of five such activities planned under the 10th EDF project. The overall objective of this activity was to fill data gaps, provide assistance with the concepts and definition of indicators and to encourage inter-agency collaboration in this area.

The 2014/2015 work programme in Environment Statistics included activities to strengthen capacity in Member States through collaboration with the CARICOM Secretariat Technical Action Services Unit (TASU) with support from the Tenth EDF. Technical assistance visits and attachment programmes were proposed to assist countries to fill the data gaps where these exist. This mission was expected to provide support to staff of relevant line ministries, departments and the Statistical Office who compile data in the area of the environment. The main expected outputs were: a review of data collection mechanisms and data collected to fill gaps; information provided on the concepts, definitions, method of computation and source of data for the environment indicators; and strengthened inter-agency collaboration.

(Continued in column 2)

MAIN EVENTS

(Continued from column 1)

Technical Assistance in the Area of the Environment, March 11-13, 2015 – St. Georges, Grenada—Cont'd

The following were achieved: officers utilized the technical assistance to meet with heads of stakeholder agencies to strengthen inter-agency collaboration as well as to determine whether the core indicators were being collected or could be obtained from existing databases. Follow-up meetings were planned. The metadata and table formats compiled by the CARICOM Secretariat were shared with the relevant stakeholders; data were collected to fill data gaps; feedback was documented from interaction with stakeholders, served as a basis for making further revisions to the metadata such as the data sources, limitations of the data, rationale, and best practices. An assessment of data available for an environment compendium was also undertaken.

CURRENT EVENTS

Project for the Regional Advancement of Statistics in the Caribbean (PRASC).

The Project for the Regional Advancement of Statistics in the Caribbean (PRASC) held its first Project Steering Committee Meeting on 20th July 2015. The committee members consisted of the CARICOM Secretariat, the Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS), the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), representatives from two Member States, members from regional/international organizations, the Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development Canada and Statistics Canada. At that meeting the Project Implementation Plan and Annual Work Plan for 2015-2016 were approved. The next meeting of the Steering Committee will be held in February 2016 to seek approval for the 2016-2017 activities.

With the approval of the annual work-plan, the teams for the project components will be in contact with the various Member States to commence work on the planned activities slated for 2015-2016. A Planning Meeting is scheduled for 21 to 24 September 2015 in Ottawa. It will be attended by representatives from the fourteen Member States, the CARICOM Secretariat and the OECS. This meeting will look at the long-term planning for the project.

(Continued on page 4 column 1)

FUTURE EVENTS

(Continued from page 3 column 2)

Project for the Regional Advancement of Statistics in the Caribbean (PRASC) - Cont'd

A Planning Meeting was scheduled for 21 to 24 September 2015 in Ottawa. It will be attended by representatives from the fourteen Member States, the CARICOM Secretariat and the OECS. This meeting examined the long-term planning for the project.

Sixteenth Meeting of the CARICOM Advisory Group on Statistics, 13-17 July 2015, Port-of-Spain, Trinidad and Tobago

The CARICOM Secretariat convened the Sixteenth Meeting of the Advisory Group on Statistics (16th AGS) from 13 to 17 July 2015 in Port-of-Spain, Trinidad and Tobago. The focus of the meeting was on the way forward post the preparation and submission of the Action Plan developed out of the Second High Level Advocacy Forum on Statistics, which was held in Grenada in May 2014. Specific focus was on the Post 2015 Development Agenda and the issue of Big Data and its impact on Official Statistics.

The AGS also focused on finalizing the reporting format of the Regional Statistical Work Programme (RSWP) and finalizing the High Frequency Indicators (HFIs) for endorsement at the Fortieth Meeting of the Standing Committee of Caribbean Statisticians (40th SCCS); development of the South-South Cooperation Programme in Statistics/Centres of Excellence in collaboration with the Technical Action Services Unit (TASU) of the Secretariat; development of a System of Peer Review in countries and advancing the project on the Database of Experts in Statistics.

The main recommendations of this meeting were discussed at the 40th SCCS and endorsed.

Fortieth Meeting of the Standing Committee of Caribbean Statisticians (40th SCCS) and Related Meetings.. 26—30 October 2015.

The CARICOM Secretariat convened the 40th SCCS meeting from 26 to 28 October 2015, in Bridgetown, Barbados. The meeting focused on advancement of the Action Plan out of the Second High Level Advocacy Forum on Statistics (2nd HLF) and other initiatives related to the HLF. Discussions took place on the review of the reporting and monitoring framework of the Regional Statistical Work Programme (RSWP), the various areas of economic statistics, demographic and social statistics and environment and multi-domain statistics. Discussions were

(Continued in column 2)

FUTURE EVENTS

(Continued from column 1)

held on the development of a framework for the Post-2015 Development Agenda, Project on the Regional Advancement of Statistics in the Caribbean (PRASC), the development of the Caribbean Association of Professional Statisticians (CAPS) and the activities undertaken for the commemoration of Caribbean Statistics Day 2015 and recommendations for the year 2016.

The Twenty-Fifth Meeting of the Regional Census Coordinating Committee (RCCC) was held on 29 October 2015. It followed the 40th SCCS and focused on reports from countries on the status of the 2010 Round of Population and Housing Census; countries also reported on the implementation of the Regional Strategy of Support to the Conduct of the 2010 Round of Population and Housing Censuses in CARICOM. A further review of the 2020 census round – issues raised in the 2014 regional census symposium was undertaken and international organisations reported on their support for the conduct of the 2010 Round of Population and Housing Censuses in CARICOM.

The Eight Regional Statistical Research (8th RSS) will take place on 30th October 2015.

Publication

Forthcoming publications:

National Accounts Digest; 2008—2014 Vol. I

The Consumer Price Index of CARICOM Member States: 2010—2014

The External Debt of CARICOM Member States: 2010—2014

IMPORTANT LINKS

The Regional Statistical Work Programme:

http://www.caricomstats.org/Files/RSWP_230512.pdf

The Statistics Model Bill:

<http://www.caricomstats.org/Files/Statistics%20Model%20Bill.pdf>

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