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Subregional Headquarters for the Caribbean

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Creation and Analysis
6 – 10 December 2010
St. George's, Grenada

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REPORT OF REDATAM+SP NATIONAL TRAINING WORKSHOP IN DATABASE CREATION AND ANALYSIS

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A. INTRODUCTION

Since its development in 1982, the REtrieval of DATA for Small Areas by Microcomputer (REDATAM) software program has been used by many Latin American and Caribbean countries for the processing and dissemination of census and survey data. The software, which was developed by the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) Population Division (CELADE), provides users with a quick and easy means of creating, processing and accessing databases from censuses or surveys for local, regional and national analyses. It also facilitates micro data analysis via the internet and other removal hardware such as CD-ROMS.

In light of the usefulness of the software, the Central Statistical Office (CSO) in Grenada undertook to improve the current statistical capacity in the use of the software by requesting the conduct of a national workshop. The training was especially timely as it formed part of the preparatory activities for the 2011 round of Population and Housing Census. In the long term, the training was also expected to enhance the national capacity to effectively conduct data analyses on large datasets such as the census.

In response to this technical assistance request, ECLAC Subregional Headquarters for the Caribbean, with support from the REDATAM Development Team of CELADE, conducted a workshop for statisticians and database experts from the various line ministries, CSO and the other national institutions. The workshop also formed part of a broader thrust to promote human resources and develop a cadre of skilled users of the REDATAM software at the regional level. The main objective of the workshop was to develop national statistical capacity on the use of the REDATAM computer package for processing of the 2011 Population and Housing Census and other national surveys.

The content of the workshop was structured to cover two of the core modules of the software, namely the Create and Process Modules. The Create module enabled the creation of databases for the REDATAM platform and would, therefore, be a tool for the programmes and database managers. The Process module, on the other hand, provided the analysts and researchers with a tool for processing and analyzing data, running tabulations, generating indicators and mapping. The workshop allowed for the transfer and acquisition of new skills and provided an enabling environment for networking among experts from the different government departments.

The workshop facilitators were drawn from CELADE and the Subregional Headquarters for the Caribbean. Funding for the technical assistance mission was provided under the Regular Programme for Technical Cooperation.

B. ATTENDANCE AT THE WORKSHOP

Place and date of the session

The REDATAM+SP National Workshop in Database Creation and Analysis was held from 6 – 10 December 2010 in St. George's.

Participation

The workshop targeted statisticians and database experts from the line ministries and other national data producing agencies who managed databases and manipulated statistical data through computer software. Sixteen representatives of various line ministries, the Central Statistical Office, the National Insurance Scheme and the Royal Grenada Police Force attended the workshop. Of the total participants, 6 (37.5%) were males and 10 (62.5%) were females. The full list of participants is attached at Annex 1.

C. SUMMARY OF HIGHLIGHTS AND KEY OUTCOMES OF THE WORKSHOP

The workshop was preceded by an opening ceremony which featured addresses from the Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Finance, Planning, Economy, Energy and Cooperatives, Mr. Timothy Antoine, the Director of CSO, Mr. Halim Brizan, and the main facilitator from the CELADE office, Ms. Alejandra Silva.

In his remarks, Mr. Halim Brizan acknowledged ECLAC for its support in the development of statistics in Grenada and the Caribbean subregion as a whole. He noted the timeliness of the training in increasing national statistical capacity in the software for the analysis and processing of the data from the census and the inaugural Labour Force Survey conducted in 2010. He welcomed the participation of representatives from a wide cross section of ministries and government departments. He emphasized the usefulness of the software in supporting the production of timely and reliable data, and as a platform for data analysis.

Ms Alejandra Silva, facilitator of the workshop, stated that the development of the REDATAM tool represented one of the greatest contributions to data analysis. She highlighted the value of the software in facilitating widespread access to data for socio-demographic and other analyses. She concluded by stating her expectations of the training.

In the keynote address, Mr. Timothy Antoine highlighted the key achievements in statistical development for 2010 that made the year significant for the CSO. He commended the organization of the workshop for addressing the optimization of resources which was a key priority for his government, and for facilitating the production of timely data for sound evidence-based planning and policy formulation. He concluded by challenging participants to use the training opportunity to initiate a local network of statisticians with a view to building a community of practice to promote capacity-building and best practices.

The main focus of the workshop was to strengthen and increase capacity in the use of the REDATAM software. Participants were trained in the use of two of the core modules, Create and Process, which were used for database creation and data processing, respectively. Participants were introduced to the full functionality of each module and had opportunities to generate results and get hands-on practice in database creation and analysis. As a means of ensuring relevance, participants were allowed to work with a sample of the datasets from the Population and Housing Census conducted in Grenada in 1991. The exercises enabled an appreciation of some of the issues related to the data processing and database creation.

The workshop was conducted in an interactive learning environment where facilitators' demonstrations and explanations were followed by practical exercises geared at maximizing participants' experiences and practical skills. By the end of the workshop, at least two participants were able to demonstrate their mastery of the software and techniques taught during the workshop by creating their own databases using samples of data from their respective offices or departments.

Upon completion of the workshop, participants' mastery of the new skills was assessed through a short test. Certificates of participation were awarded to all persons who successfully completed the workshop. Participants were encouraged to apply the skills acquired and to use the software to explore its features. They were also apprised of the various resources available for technical support and other medium such as the Caribbean Network of REDATAM Users.

D. SUMMARY OF EVALUATION

The summary presented the views expressed by participants through an anonymous evaluation which was administered upon the completion of the workshop. Responses were received from the 13¹ participants who attended all five days of the workshop, thus the views expressed below were fully representative of the group.

The composition of the respondents of the evaluation by sex and department/ ministry was as follows:

Table 1
Sex of respondents by department or ministry

		<i>Type of organization being represented</i>		<i>Total</i>
		<i>National Ministry</i>	<i>Other National Institution</i>	
Sex of Participant	Male	6	0	6
	Female	5	2	7
Total		11	2	13

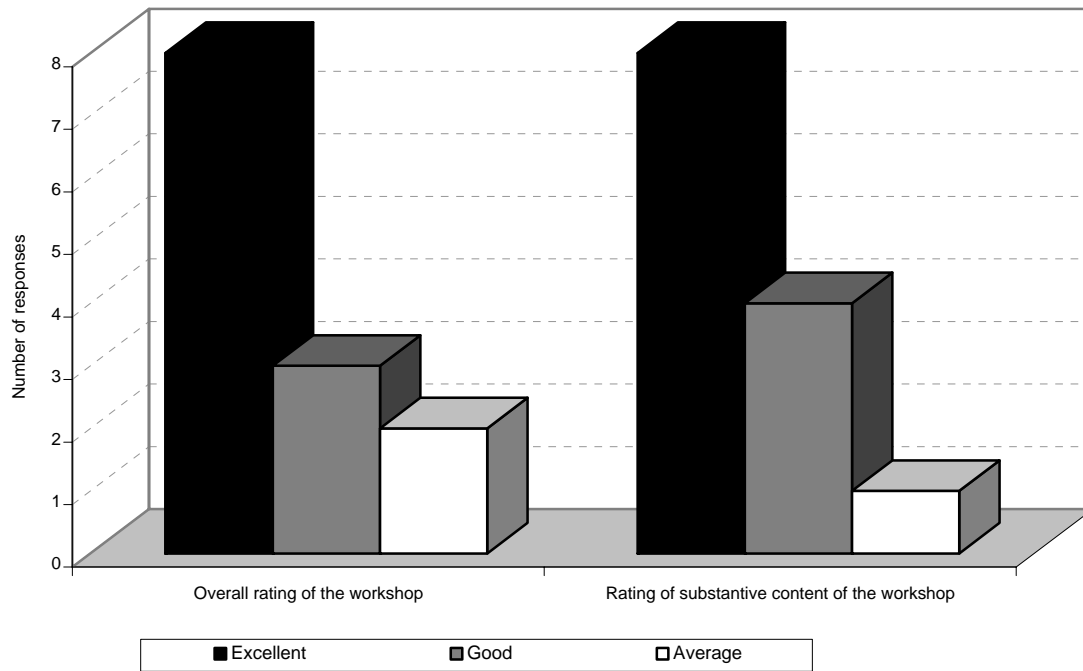
Substantive content and usefulness of the training

In general, participants provided very positive ratings for the various aspects of the workshop which were assessed in the evaluation.

Eleven of the 13 participants (84.5%) rated the overall quality of the workshop as "excellent" or "good". Participant feedback on the substantive content of the workshop was consistently positive, with 12 of the 13 participants rating that aspect of the training as "excellent" or "good". Table 1 displays the distribution of the responses for those two aspects of the evaluation across the 5-point scale used for those two items.

¹ Sixteen persons registered on day 1 of the workshop, however by the second day, two persons withdrew because they felt the training was not relevant to them. A third participant fell ill and was only able to attend the workshop up until the end of the third day.

Figure 1
Participants' feedback on content and overall quality of the workshop



Participants were also required to rate along a 4-point scale, the extent to which the workshop met their expectations. With the exception of one participant who registered ambivalent feelings, through the option “neither agree nor disagree”, all other participants agreed with the statement.

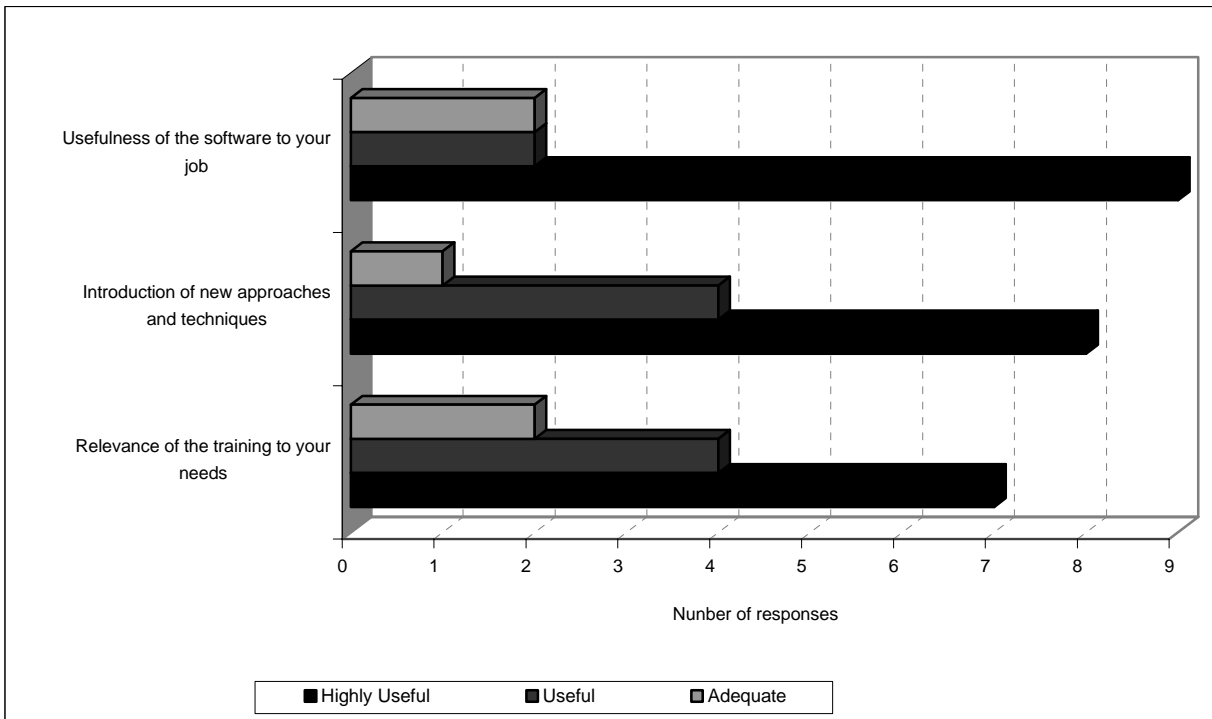
Participants were asked to rate elements of delivery and structure of the workshop along a 5-point scale ranging from “excellent” to “very poor”. Feedback on the pace of the session varied with nine participants rating it as “excellent” or “good”, two rating it as “adequate” and one rating it as “poor”. In terms of the effectiveness of the activities, 11 participants rated that aspect of the workshop as “excellent” or “good” and 2 rated it as “average”. Participants provided similar ratings for their views on the pitch of the content, with 77% rating that aspect as either “excellent” or “good”.

Usefulness and impact of training

The items in this section were critical for assessing the value added by the training provided through the technical assistance mission. Initial impact of the training was assessed in terms of key factors such as the relevance of the training to their needs, the usefulness of the software as well as the introduction of new approaches and techniques. Participants were required to rate those factors along a continuum from “highly useful” to “highly inadequate”.

Feedback for those items was positive and in all cases at least 11 of the 13 respondents indicated the substantive contributions of the training as either “highly useful” or “useful”. Figure 3 shows the distributions of the ratings across the three areas assessed.

Figure 2
Participants' views of the impact of the workshop



In terms of the relevance of the training, the vast majority (84.6%) of participants indicated that the training was either “highly useful” or “useful”. Only two participants deemed it “adequate”. Similar views were expressed about the value of the training in introducing new approaches and techniques.

With regard to the usefulness of the software to their job, nine (69.2%) rated it as “highly useful” while the ratings for the remaining four participants was split equally in the categories “useful” and “adequate”.

Participants were required to state how they would apply the knowledge and skills acquired from the training. Without exception, all participants indicated that they would use the software either to undertake analyses of existing data or to convert existing databases into the REDATAM format. The vast majority of the participants registered their intention to use the software to create REDATAM databases:

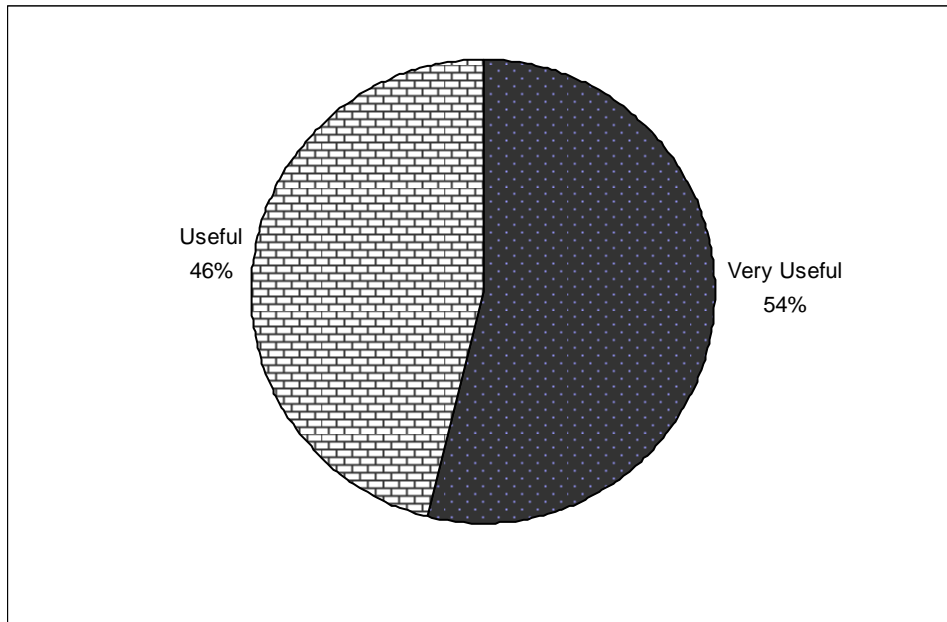
- “To develop a database, so that we can retrieve the results in a timely manner. We have the data (raw) but not in a database programme”
- “Creating database and applying the basic test/ process as count, average and crosstabs”
- “Adapt an excel database to REDATAM using DBF format”
- “I will try to convert the database that I now use to REDATAM format to do more analyses”

A number of participants also indicated their intentions to use the software to increase accessibility of existing data to users or the public, and for analysis. Some participants also stated their plans to conduct some in-house training to increase utility of the software:

- “Endeavour to have some of the present survey report converted so that it can be easily analyzed and present more relevant information to the public/users”
- “Analyze data from surveys and censuses”
- “It is my intention to introduce the programme to the entire statistical unit of my ministry so that it can be used when conducting surveys and census”
- “For analysis and processing of census 2011 and LFS 2010”
- “By giving back to my workplace and trying to implement the program in some form of data capture and reports generated.”
- “This training will assist me in better manipulating the data which exist in the department”
- “After practicing on my own and developing a clearer understanding of the software, I will use the knowledge for the generation of tables and analysis of data on a daily basis in the office”
- “Census and survey analysis of data”
- “First of all it is a means of collecting data that can be meaningful in making strategic decisions. With the knowledge and skills gained we could use information to forecast and plan before implementing programs”

Feedback on the usefulness of the training in improving national statistical capacity was split between the two categories of “very useful” and “useful”. Figure 3 shows the distribution of those responses.

Figure 3
Usefulness of the training for improving national statistical capacity in REDATAM



Participants were also asked to provide suggestions on how to improve future workshops. Two participants indicated that they were satisfied with the training and had no suggestions for improving it:

- “It was quite easy for me since I have working knowledge of databases and its structure”
- “All aspects of the training were adequately dealt with”

However, a majority of the participants felt that the duration of the training was too short and made suggestions for an extension of the allotted time of five days:

- “The duration should be longer; Ongoing/continuous training; Technical support, when necessary”
- “The training material can be a bit more explicit-step by step. The pace was just a little bit too fast. Training could have been over an eight-day period”
- “Extended time for the creation and more exercises”
- “By extending the time from one week to two weeks”
- “The training can be improved by allotting sufficient time for the introduction of the many new concepts and individual training. I think the time was too short”
- “The timeframe could be extended to include all the modules and perhaps go more in depth”

There were a few recommendations for reducing the pace of the training and for including more exercises and practical examples:

- “More practical examples”
- “Pace needs to be slower; more exercises required”

A few participants also highlighted some specific areas of weakness with the content and suggested the use of targeted activities that could improve comprehension. There was also a suggestion to do some follow-up training:

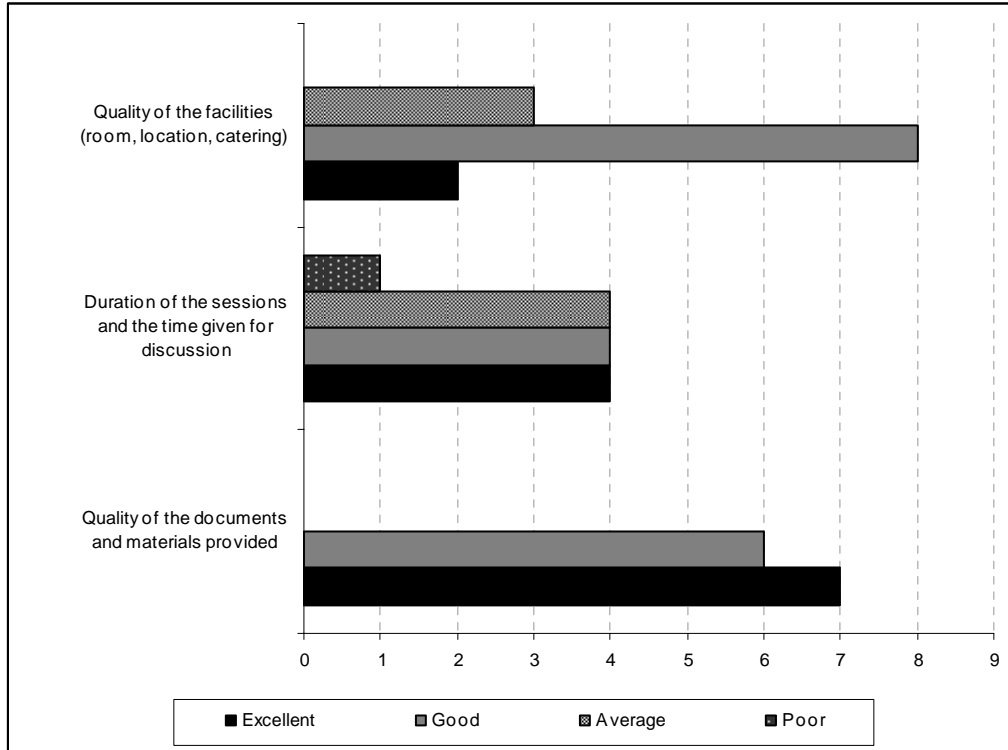
- “Having a sample of the questionnaire or someone who knows the questionnaire to help with the explanation of the data”
- “Demonstration of data entry into dictionary”
- “More frequent follow-up sessions”

Facilitators and overall organization of workshop

Participants rated the facilitators on a 5-point scale ranging from “excellent” to “very poor”. With the exception of one participant who rated the facilitators as “average”, all other participants (84.6%) rated them as “excellent” or “good”.

The same 5-point scale was used to evaluate the organization of the workshop. The three components of the organization that were assessed were the quality of the documents and materials, the duration of the sessions and time for discussions and the quality of the facilities. In general, the ratings for these items were on the positive end of the scale and in all cases the modal score was “good”. Figure 4 shows the distribution of the scores for those three areas.

Figure 4
Participants' views of the organization of the workshop



In the final section of the evaluation, participants were given an opportunity to provide general comments and suggestions. Some of the comments provided were consistent with those provided in the section on areas for improvement. The more frequently mentioned comment related to the conduct of a follow-up:

- “That there should be a follow up session for participants”
- “A follow-up program would be useful and of course collaboration with participants to provide frequent feedback”
- “My suggestion is that the group of us that did this training, we keep together as a group to continue working with REDATAM to develop whatever software we may need for Grenada”

Participants also reiterated that the time allocated for the workshop was too short and suggested that more time was needed for such a course:

- “Period should have been a bit longer; too much in too short a time”
- “Longer duration for the training which should target more persons in the CSO”

Other suggestions for consideration included the use of data from sectors other than the social sector, for example, agriculture and education:

- ‘It might be useful to have data from different sectors, for example, education or agriculture, so that a greater appreciation of the use of REDATAM can be felt, and participants can see how the software can benefit them’

Participants also used that opportunity to thank the facilitators and commend the organization of the workshop.

- “The training was well organized. Congrats on a job well done”
- “Prior knowledge of SPSS would be critical to moving forward. Thank you to both facilitators.”

E. FUTURE ACTIONS

The participants who had successfully completed that initial workshop in REDATAM would be added to the Network of Caribbean Users which was formed in 2008 as a community of practice for the Caribbean subregion. Users of the software would have an opportunity to share their experiences and network with other users with similar interests. As part of the network, users would routinely get copies of the biannual newsletters and other information and updates on the software.

As a follow-up activity, ECLAC would conduct a post-training evaluation six months after the workshop to assess the transfer of knowledge and actual use of the software. The evaluation would be conducted by a mailed survey in June 2011.

Participants who were regular users of the software would also have an opportunity to participate in the follow-up regional workshops carded for the first quarter of 2011. The focus of those workshops would be on building the skills base and advancing to two of the other modules used for dissemination of data via the web and CD-ROMS.

Annex 1**LIST OF PARTICIPANTS**

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Annex 2**WORKSHOP EVALUATION****REDATAM+SP NATIONAL WORKSHOP IN DATABASE CREATION & ANALYSIS***St. George's, Grenada**6-10 December 2010***WORKSHOP EVALUATION**

In an effort to assess the effectiveness and impact of this workshop, kindly complete the following evaluation form. Your responses will be invaluable in providing feedback on the overall training received, identifying areas of weakness and help improve the organization of future workshops.

IDENTIFICATION	
Sex	<input type="checkbox"/> Male <input type="checkbox"/> Female
Type of organization you represent:	
<input type="checkbox"/> National ministry <input type="checkbox"/> Other national institution <input type="checkbox"/> Academic institution / university <input type="checkbox"/> Private sector	<input type="checkbox"/> Subregional institution <input type="checkbox"/> International organization <input type="checkbox"/> NGO <input type="checkbox"/> Civil society <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____

Substantive content and usefulness of workshop

1. What is your overall rating of the workshop?					
1. Excellent	2. Good	3. Average	4. Poor	5. Very poor	6. Not sure / no response

2. How would you rate the substantive content of the workshop?					
1. Excellent	2. Good	3. Average	4. Poor	5. Very poor	6. Not sure / no response

3. Did the workshop live up to your initial expectations?			
1. Agree	2. Neither agree nor disagree	3. Disagree	4. Not sure / no response

4. How would you rate the following aspects of the training received through this technical mission?					
	Excellent	Good	Adequate	Poor	Very Poor
Pace and structure of the sessions	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]
Effectiveness of Activities	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]
Pitch of the content	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]

Usefulness and Impact of training

5. How would you rate the substantive contributions made by this training to your area of work?					
	Highly Useful	Useful	Adequate	Inadequate	Highly Inadequate
Relevance of the training to your needs	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]
Introduction of new approaches and techniques	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]
Usefulness of the software to your job	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]

6. How will you apply the knowledge and skills acquired from this training?					
7. How useful was the technical assistance provided for improving national statistical capacity in Redatam?					

1. Very useful	2. Useful	3. Regular	4. Not very useful	5. Not useful at all	6. Not sure / no response
8. How do you think the training provided could be improved?					

Facilitators and overall organization of workshop

9. How would you rate the facilitators of the workshop?					
1. Excellent	2. Good	3. Average	4. Poor	5. Very poor	6. Not sure/No response

10. How would you rate the organization of the workshop? If you choose “poor” or “very poor” please explain your response so that we can take your opinion into account.						
Quality of documents and materials provided	1. Excellent	2. Good	3. Average	4. Poor	5. Very poor	6. Not sure/No response
Duration of the sessions and time for discussion	1. Excellent	2. Good	3. Average	4. Poor	5. Very poor	6. Not sure/No response
Quality of the facilities (room, location, catering)	1. Excellent	2. Good	3. Average	4. Poor	5. Very poor	6. Not sure/No response

11. Do you have any other comments or suggestions?					
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THANK YOU

Annex 3**RESPONSES TO QUANTITATIVE ITEMS**

Table 1
Sex of Participants

	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percent</i>	<i>Valid Percent</i>	<i>Cumulative Percent</i>
Male	6	46.2	46.2	46.2
Female	7	53.8	53.8	100.0
Total	13	100.0	100.0	

Table 2
Type of organization being represented

	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percent</i>	<i>Valid Percent</i>	<i>Cumulative Percent</i>
National Ministry	11	84.6	84.6	84.6
Other national institution	2	15.4	15.4	100.0
Total	13	100.0	100.0	

Table 3
Overall Rating of the workshop

	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percent</i>	<i>Valid Percent</i>	<i>Cumulative Percent</i>
Excellent	8	61.5	61.5	61.5
Good	3	23.1	23.1	84.6
Average	2	15.4	15.4	100.0
Total	13	100.0	100.0	

Table 4
Rating of substantive content of the workshop

	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percent</i>	<i>Valid Percent</i>	<i>Cumulative Percent</i>
Excellent	8	61.5	61.5	61.5
Good	4	30.8	30.8	92.3
Average	1	7.7	7.7	100.0
Total	13	100.0	100.0	

Table 5
Did workshop live up to initial expectations

	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percent</i>	<i>Valid Percent</i>	<i>Cumulative Percent</i>
Agree	12	92.3	92.3	92.3
Neither agree not disagree	1	7.7	7.7	100.0
Total	13	100.0	100.0	

Table 6
Pace and structure of the sessions

	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percent</i>	<i>Valid Percent</i>	<i>Cumulative Percent</i>
Excellent	4	30.8	30.8	30.8
Good	5	38.5	38.5	69.2
Adequate	3	23.1	23.1	92.3
Poor	1	7.7	7.7	100.0
Total	13	100.0	100.0	

Table 7
Effectiveness of the activities

	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percent</i>	<i>Valid Percent</i>	<i>Cumulative Percent</i>
Excellent	9	69.2	69.2	69.2
Good	2	15.4	15.4	84.6
Adequate	2	15.4	15.4	100.0
Total	13	100.0	100.0	

Table 8
Pitch of the content

	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percent</i>	<i>Valid Percent</i>	<i>Cumulative Percent</i>
Excellent	7	53.8	53.8	53.8
Good	3	23.1	23.1	76.9
Adequate	3	23.1	23.1	100.0
Total	13	100.0	100.0	

Table 9
Relevance of the training to your needs

	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percent</i>	<i>Valid Percent</i>	<i>Cumulative Percent</i>
Highly Useful	7	53.8	53.8	53.8
Useful	4	30.8	30.8	84.6
Adequate	2	15.4	15.4	100.0
Total	13	100.0	100.0	

Table 10
Introduction of new approaches and techniques

	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percent</i>	<i>Valid Percent</i>	<i>Cumulative Percent</i>
Highly Useful	8	61.5	61.5	61.5
Useful	4	30.8	30.8	92.3
Adequate	1	7.7	7.7	100.0
Total	13	100.0	100.0	

Table 11
Usefulness of the software to your job

	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percent</i>	<i>Valid Percent</i>	<i>Cumulative Percent</i>
Highly Useful	9	69.2	69.2	69.2
Useful	2	15.4	15.4	84.6
Adequate	2	15.4	15.4	100.0
Total	13	100.0	100.0	

Table 12
Usefulness of the technical assistance in increasing national statistical capacity in the use of REDATAM

	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percent</i>	<i>Valid Percent</i>	<i>Cumulative Percent</i>
Very Useful	7	53.8	53.8	53.8
Useful	6	46.2	46.2	100.0
Total	13	100.0	100.0	

Table 13
Rating of the facilitators of the workshop

	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percent</i>	<i>Valid Percent</i>	<i>Cumulative Percent</i>
Excellent	8	61.5	61.5	61.5
Good	4	30.8	30.8	92.3
Average	1	7.7	7.7	100.0
Total	13	100.0	100.0	

Table 14
Quality of the documents and materials provided

	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percent</i>	<i>Valid Percent</i>	<i>Cumulative Percent</i>
Excellent	7	53.8	53.8	53.8
Good	6	46.2	46.2	100.0
Total	13	100.0	100.0	

Table 15
Duration of the sessions and time given for discussion

	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percent</i>	<i>Valid Percent</i>	<i>Cumulative Percent</i>
Excellent	4	30.8	30.8	30.8
Good	4	30.8	30.8	61.5
Average	4	30.8	30.8	92.3
Poor	1	7.7	7.7	100.0
Total	13	100.0	100.0	

Table 16
Quality of the facilities (room, location, catering)

	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percent</i>	<i>Valid Percent</i>	<i>Cumulative Percent</i>
Excellent	2	15.4	15.4	15.4
Good	8	61.5	61.5	76.9
Average	3	23.1	23.1	100.0
Total	13	100.0	100.0	