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REPORT OF THE NATIONAL WORKSHOP ON REDATAM+SP XPLAN AND WEBSERVER APPLICATIONS DEVELOPMENT FOR DATA DISSEMINATION

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CONTENTS

A.   INTRODUCTION

1.   Retrieval of Data for Small Areas by Microcomputer (REDATAM) was developed by CELADE (Population Division of ECLAC) in the mid 1980's in response to requests from national statistical offices in Latin American and Caribbean for software/program that would enable the processing and analysis of large datasets, such as censuses and household surveys.   The software played a key role in the 1990 and 2000 rounds of the population and housing census, as it allowed for the storage, processing and publication of national data in many countries across the region, and also eliminated the need for users to submit requests for data to the national statistical office. Since then the software has evolved significantly and has greater functionality. As a result, there has been renewed interest in using the software for the storage processing and dissemination of data from the 2010 population and housing census, as well as micro data from other censuses and household surveys.

2.   The national workshop on REDATAM+SP xPlan and WebServer application development was organized in response to a technical assistance request from the Government of Trinidad and Tobago through the Central Statistical Office (CSO).   This request was for specific support with developing an online application for the dissemination of data generated from the 2011 population and housing census. This training was expected to form part of broader efforts to improve access to micro data produced by the CSO and enhance the statistical products available to users.   The main objectives of the workshop were:

   (a) To increase the capacity of staff of the CSO in REDATAM+SP
   (b) To develop an online application that would allow for the timely release of the 2011 census data

3.   Given that the workshop was only five days in duration; its contents were structured to cover only the data dissemination components of the software, namely Webserver and xPlan. The workshop facilitators were drawn from CELADE and the Subregional headquarters for the Caribbean. Funding for the workshop was provided by the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA).   This workshop was the second such initiative organized through a joint partnership of ECLAC, UNFPA and the Government of Trinidad and Tobago. The previous undertaking was a national workshop which was conducted in December 2009, and enabled training of 26 staff members of the CSO and line ministries in the basic modules for creation of databases and processing of data using REDATAM+SP.

B.   ATTENDANCE AT THE WORKSHOP

Place and date of the session

4.   The national workshop on REDATAM+SP, xPlan and WebServer application development for data dissemination was held from 16-20 April 2012 in Port of Spain.

Participation

5.   The workshop targeted primarily database experts and web developers of the Central Statistical Office who received prior training in REDATAM+SP through previous introductory workshops that had been offered to member states.   In attendance, were 15 participants of which six (40%) were males and nine (60%) were females. The full list of participants is attached at Annex 1.

C.   SUMMARY OF HIGHLIGHTS AND KEY OUTCOMES OF THE WORKSHOP

Opening Session

6.   The first day of the workshop featured a brief opening ceremony which included remarks from the Director of Central Statistical Office, Dave Clement and Sylvan Roberts, Statistician, of ECLAC Subregional headquarters for the Caribbean.

7.   In his opening remarks, Mr. Clement highlighted the previous workshops that had been conducted both nationally and regionally that enabled training of staff of the CSO in REDATAM. He underscored the usefulness of this latest national workshop for developing capacity in the dissemination modules of the software, and ensured that experience with the software resided not in just one individual but a cadre of web developers and IT specialists within the office. He further emphasized the value of the workshop in the short-term in enabling the CSO to disseminate the results of the 2011 census in a timely manner. In the long term the training would assist with improving the quality of product and service delivery of the office.   In closing, he acknowledged the support of the various partners in seeing the workshop to fruition, and encouraged the participants to take advantage of the opportunity for personal development and learning.

8.   In his remarks, Mr. Roberts highlighted the features of REDATAM which made it the software of choice of many statistical offices, both in the Caribbean subregion and other regions including Africa, Asia and the Pacific. He reflected on the efforts that had been undertaken in the past to promote the use of the software that enabled member states to build capacity in its use for processing and dissemination of census data. He concluded by encouraging participants to use the forum as a medium for further learning and enhancing capacity in the use of the software.

Main Achievements

9.   The main objective of the workshop was to build capacity in the use of the WebServer and xPlan modules for the dissemination of data, particularly the results of the 2011 population and housing census. To that end, the training sessions were designed with a practical orientation that enabled participants to gain a full appreciation of those two components of the software, whilst also affording them an opportunity to develop their own applications. By the conclusion of the workshop, participants were able to develop functional applications using a sample of the 2011 census dataset, and were able to demonstrate the functionality of their respective interfaces to the Director of the CSO and their colleagues.

10.   During a short closing ceremony on the final day of the workshop, certificates of participation were awarded to all 15 participants who successfully completed the workshop. During that ceremony, participants had an opportunity to openly provide feedback on their experience and perception of the training. Without exception, all participants stated that the workshop was relevant and useful for exposing them to a practical tool for improving their work. The representative of UNFPA also used that forum to remind participants of the far-reaching impact of the software not just as a dissemination tool for increasing accessibility to data produced by the CSO, but more importantly, for providing important information that would inform sound evidence-based policy formulation.

D.   SUMMARY OF EVALUATION

11.   The ensuing summary presents the results of the evaluation questionnaire which was administered to participants at the conclusion of the workshop, and which was aimed at assessing the impact and usefulness of the workshop. Responses were received from all 15 participants, thus, the views expressed below were fully representative of the group.
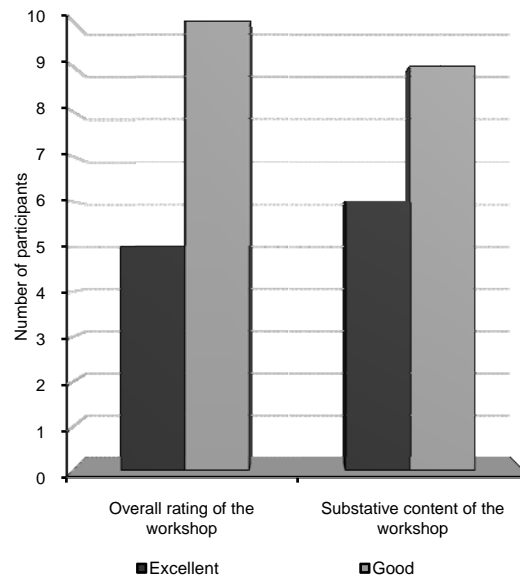
12.   Participants of the workshop were drawn from the various departments of the CSO and comprised six males and nine females.

Substantive content and usefulness of the workshop

13.   The evaluation solicited participants overall perceptions of general aspects of the training i.e. content and impact, but also required participants to elaborate on their views of specific aspects of the training as well as "takeaways".

14.   Overall, participants expressed a high level of satisfaction with the content and the various other aspects of the workshop which were assessed in the evaluation. Feedback on the substantive content of the workshop as well as overall ratings of the workshop were positive, with all 15 participants rating those aspects of the training as either "excellent" or "good". The modal rating for each of those aspects was "good". Figure 1 displays the distribution of the responses across the 5-point scale used for the two items on the quality and content of the workshop.

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

15.   Participants were also required to indicate through a dichotomous question, the extent to which the workshop lived up to their initial expectations. Twelve participants responded positively to this question and there were three non responses.
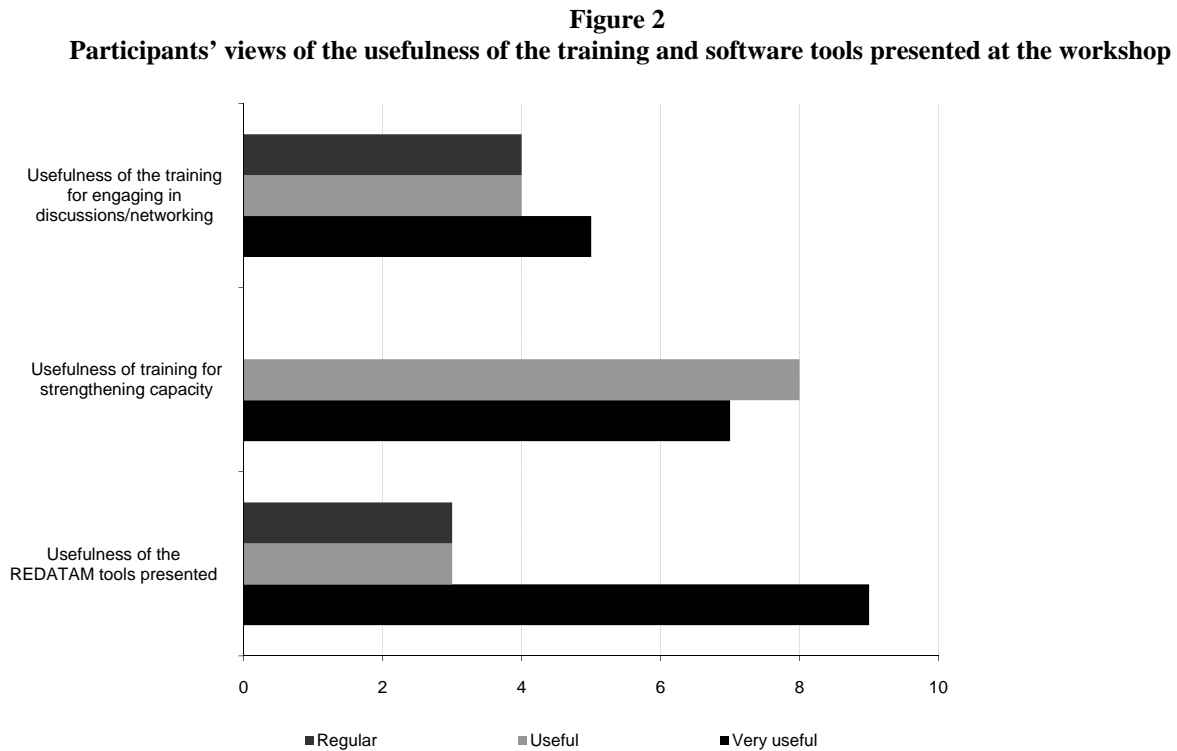
Usefulness and impact of training

16.   The first three items of the questionnaire assessed the value added through the national training workshop. 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 and the usefulness of the training in improving statistical capacity. A combination of open-ended and rating scale items were used for this component of the evaluation.   Each of the closed-ended items was scored along a continuum from "highly useful" to "not useful at all".

17.   The item on the usefulness of the software yielded positive responses with nine (60.0%) respondents indicating that it was "very useful", three (20.0%) stated it was "useful" and the remaining three viewed it as "regular".

18.   Given that the main objective of the workshop was to improve national capacity in the use of REDATAM as a tool for the development of applications for dissemination of census data, the evaluation questionnaire also included one close-ended item which sought to assess the extent to which this objective was met. Participants' responses to this item were also a key indicator of actual impact of the training. Participants indicated agreement that the training met this goal through their selection of the options "highly useful" or "useful". The disaggregation of responses for each option is given in figure 2 below.

19.   Participants held divergent views on the usefulness of the workshop as a forum for engaging in discussions or dialogue with colleagues from other departments. One third of the respondents rated this aspect of the workshop as "highly useful" and four (26.7%) deemed it "useful". The views of the other respondents were split between "regular", "not very useful" and "not sure". The distribution of responses for this item is displayed in figure 2.

Figure 2
Participants' views of the usefulness of the training and software tools presented at the workshop

20.   To substantiate their responses on the previous close-ended items, respondents were asked to state the specific aspects of the workshop that they would consider implementing in their day-to-day work. Three respondents indicated their intention to incorporate all aspects of the training into their work. A few respondents noted their intention to use the software for disseminating the data from the census and other surveys. Others identified the following areas:

- "this tool could be used for the presentation of the results of the 2011 Population and Housing Census via the web"
- "making statistical data available on the web"
- "Maps"
- "It was very much relevant towards my special project in designing and implementing web pages"
- "the web-based dissemination tool; R+SP xPlan"
- "within our department the maps and charts outputs will be an asset"

21.	Feedback on the relevance of the training for the work of their institutions was positive. Of the fifteen respondents 10 (66.7%) stated that the training was "very relevant" and four (26.7%) rated it as "relevant" and one (6.7%) respondent deemed it as "somewhat relevant".

22.	In terms of areas for improvement, participants made suggestions that related to the following core areas, including increasing the duration of the workshop, providing more detailed explanations of terms and processes as well as training in the creation of databases. The specific comments for each main area were as follows:

- Increasing the duration of the workshop
  "The workshop should have been over a 2-week period and include the creation of REDATAM dic file"
  "more time required"
  "more days extended to work on actual group assignment"
  "longer duration e.g. two weeks"

- Providing further elaboration on terms/content
  "Security of information as it relates to REDATAM application on the internet"
  "INL files should be explained greater as to its function, why we create numerous files"

Organization of the training workshop on the development of applications for data dissemination

23.	The final aspect of the workshop that was assessed in the evaluation related to the organization of the workshop. Three main components of the organization were assessed through close-ended questions. In addition, participants were provided with an opportunity to register their views of general aspects of the workshop through a series of open-ended questions.

24.	A 6-point scale was used to assess the three components on the quality of the documents and materials, the duration of the sessions and time for discussions, the quality of the infrastructure (room, sound and catering). For all aspects except the quality of the infrastructure, at least seven (46.7%) of the participants provided ratings of "excellent" or "good"; the modal score for each being "good". Participants had disparate views on the quality of infrastructure; seven (46.7%) indicated that the quality was "excellent' or "good" and the remaining eight (53.3%) opted for ratings of "regular" or "poor". Figure 3 shows the distribution of these ratings.

25.	Participants were also given an opportunity to provide comments and suggestions on organizational aspects and just general aspects of the meeting. Most participants commented specifically on the positive aspects of the meeting in terms of the quality of the sessions and facilitators, as well as the quality of the information provided. Some of the comments included:
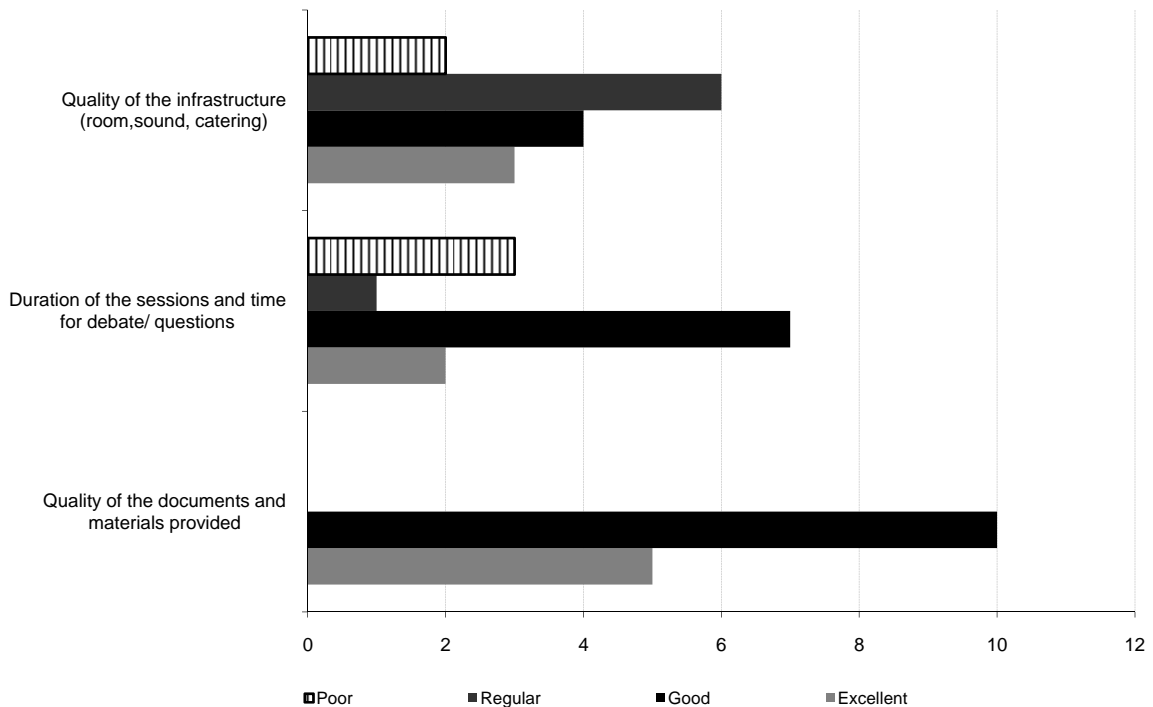
- "overall the structure of the course was well organized"
- "it was a learning experience that can and will be put in to practical usage. A bit intense but excellent for a short course"
- "the quality of documents and materials provided worked well. The training was effectively delivered by the facilitators"
- "the dissemination of information relevant to the core topic was great"

26.	There were also a few comments on the infrastructure for the workshop especially the functionality of the computers and the software. These comments validated the ratings provided in the previous section and were as follows:

- "improvement needed in upgrading and updating necessary software required "

- "basic software to assist workshop was not provided; slow PC; e.g. WinZIP and software. Apache was not working on my machine in the training rooms"
- "the tools used could be upgraded e.g. the computers and basic software apps"
- "the main area of concern was the functionality of the computers; networking need to be done to save time copying files from one to another"

Figure 3
Participants' views of the organization of the workshop

27.   With regard to the organizational aspects of the workshop, participants commended the organization of the workshop but also restated the need to consider increasing the duration of the workshop:

- "Everything went smoothly for the most part"
- "Excellent course"
- "Well organized and timely but the pace and intensity of delivery was too rushed"
- "More time required to lend greater depth overall"
- "I suggest that the length of the time for training should be longer"
- "From the third day of the workshop delivery was a bit rushed "

Follow up activities and areas for future work

28.   The final section of the evaluation required participants to provide comments on the ways in which ECLAC could support the work of their institution, in the area of statistics. In response, participants articulated their interest in the following areas:

- "Support and guidance on the development of the web aspect of the application when the process is started"
- "SPSS Training Advanced"
- "More insight towards other statistical databases on how to utilise and manage"

- ▪ "Any other statistical database packages that are available that would be implemented by the CSO"

E. CONCLUSIONS

29.   Overall, participants' responses to the evaluation reflected a generally high level of satisfaction with the training provided during the weeklong workshop. There was evidence that the workshop met its immediate objective of improving capacity in the use of the software particularly for dissemination of the 2011 census data but also strong indications of participants' intentions to make continuous use of the software within their offices/departments. Feedback on the organizational aspects of the workshop was also positive.   There was however the recurring concern about the duration of the workshop and recommendations for lengthening the training period.

F. FUTURE ACTIONS

30.   The completion of the week long training was not an end in itself but the beginning of a process that is expected to lead the development of efficient web-based applications that would enable the timely dissemination of the 2011 census results, as well as micro data from future surveys/ censuses to be conducted by the CSO. Within a few days of the end of the workshop, the Director of the CSO would convene a meeting of the main partners (UNFPA and ECLAC) and selected participants for an initial meeting to discuss and prepare timelines for the development of a full web application for the dissemination of the 2011 census results. At the meeting, decisions will also be made about the scheduling of a workshop for some staff of the CSO on the creation of the database. This activity is especially necessary to introduce participants to the steps involved in creating a REDATAM database; which is essential but could not have been done during the course of the workshop because of time constraints.

31.   Participants of the workshop would be added as members of the Network of Caribbean Users which was formed in 2008 as a community of practice for the Caribbean subregion. Through the network, users of the software would have an opportunity to interact and exchange experiences with other members with similar interests. The networks also serves a support forum through which users may be able to share experiences/ challenges and provide support in finding solutions for technical issues. As part of the network, users would also routinely get copies of the biannual newsletters and other information and updates on the software.

32.   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 through an electronic survey via the Vovici Survey Platform in October 2012.

Annex 1

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WORKSHOP EVALUATION

UNITED NATIONS

ECLAC

REDATAM+SP NATIONAL WORKSHOP ON REDATAM+SP XPLAN AND WEBSERVER APPLICATIONS DEVELOPMENT FOR DATA DISSEMINATION
Port of Spain
16-20 April 2012

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
☐ Male   ☐ Female

Institution(s) you represent: _____

Title/Position: _____

Type of organization you represent:

☐ National ministry   ☐ Subregional institution
☐ Other national institution   ☐ International organization
☐ Academic institution / university   ☐ NGO
☐ Private sector   ☐ Civil society
                                         ☐ Other: _____

Substantive content and usefulness of workshop

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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

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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. Yes   2. No   3. Not sure / no response

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4. How relevant was the training for the work of your institution?

1. Very Relevant   2. Relevant   3. Somewhat relevant   4. Not relevant   5. Not sure/no response

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5. How would you improve this workshop in terms of the subjects addressed (for example, issues you would have liked to address or analyze in greater depth or subjects which were not so important)?

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6. How useful did you find the software tools presented at the workshop for your work?

1. Very useful   2. Useful   3. Regular   4. Not very useful   5. Not useful at all   6. Not sure /no response

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7. Based on the above, what specific aspects or components would you consider incorporating in the work of your office?

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8. Did you find the training in REDATAM useful for strengthening your capacity to develop applications for the timely dissemination of micro data?

1. Very useful   2. Useful   3. Somewhat useful   4. Not useful   5. Not sure/no response

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9. How useful did you find the workshop for engaging in discussions and exchanging experiences with representatives of other institutions/ departments?

1. Very useful   2. Useful   3. Regular   4. Not very useful   5. Not useful at all   6. Not sure /no response

Organization of the training workshop on the construction of xPlan and Webserver Applications

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. Regular	4. Poor	5. Very poor	6. Not sure/No response
Duration of the sessions and time for debate/questions	1. Excellent	2. Good	3. Regular	4. Poor	5. Very poor	6. Not sure/No response
Quality of the infrastructure (room, sound, catering)	1. Excellent	2. Good	3. Regular	4. Poor	5. Very poor	6. Not sure/No response

11. Based on the ratings selected above, please indicate what worked well and what could be improved.

12. Do you have any other comments or suggestions on the organizational aspects of the workshop?

13. a. What additional technical cooperation activities in the field of statistics would you suggest that ECLAC undertake in the future?

b. Would you like to receive more information about activities or publications by ECLAC in the field of statistics?

    Yes   No

c. If yes, please provide your e-mail address:_____

RESPONSES TO QUANTITATIVE ITEMS

Table A.1
Sex of Participants

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Male	6	40.0	40.0	40.0
Female	9	60.0	60.0	100.0
Total	15	100.0	100.0	

Table A.2
Overall Rating of the workshop

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Excellent	5	33.3	33.3	33.3
Good	10	66.7	66.7	100.0
Total	15	100.0	100.0	

Table A.3
Rating of substantive content of the workshop

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Excellent	6	40.0	40.0	40.0
Good	9	60.0	60.0	100.0
Total	15	100.0	100.0	

Table A.4
Did workshop live up to initial expectations

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Yes	12	80.0	80.0	80.0
Not sure/no response	3	20.0	20.0	100.0
Total	15	100.0	100.0	

Table A.5
Relevance of the training to the work of your institution

	Frequency	*Percent*	*Valid Percent*	*Cumulative Percent*
Very relevant	10	66.7	66.7	66.7
Relevant	4	26.7	26.7	93.3
Somewhat relevant	1	6.7	6.7	100.0
Total	15	100.0	100.0	

Table A.6
Usefulness of the software tools for participants' work

	Frequency	*Percent*	*Valid Percent*	*Cumulative Percent*
Very useful	9	60.0	60.0	60.0
Useful	3	20.0	20.0	80.0
Regular	3	20.0	20.0	100.0
Total	15	100.0	100.0	

Table A.7
Usefulness of the training in REDATAM for strengthening capacity in the develop of applications for timely release of micro data

	Frequency	*Percent*	*Valid Percent*	*Cumulative Percent*
Very useful	7	46.7	46.7	46.7
Useful	8	53.3	53.3	100.0
Total	15	100.0	100.0	

Table A.8
Usefulness f the workshop for engaging in discussions and exchanging experiences

	Frequency	*Percent*	*Valid Percent*	*Cumulative Percent*
Very Useful	5	33.3	33.3	33.3
Useful	4	26.4	26.7	60.0
Regular	4	26.7	26.7	86.7
Not very useful	1	6.7	6.7	93.3
No sure/ No response	1	6.7	6.7	100.0
Total	15	100.0	100.0	

Table A.9
Quality of the documents and materials provided

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Excellent	5	33.3	33.3	33.3
Good	10	66.7	66.7	100.0
Total	15	100.0	100.0	

Table A.10
Duration of the sessions and time for debate and questions

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Excellent	2	13.3	15.4	15.4
Good	7	46.7	53.8	69.2
Regular	1	6.7	7.7	76.9
Poor	3	20.0	23.1	100.0
No response	2	13.3		
Total	15	100.0		

Table A.11
Quality of the infrastructure (sound, equipment, catering)

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Excellent	3	20.0	20.0	20.0
Good	4	26.7	26.7	46.7
Regular	6	40.0	40.0	86.7
Poor	2	13.3	13.3	100.0
Total	15	100.0	100.0	

Table A.16
Interest in receiving more information about activities or publications by ECLAC in the field of statistics

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Yes	14	93.3	93.3	93.3
No	1	6.7	6.7	100.0
Total	18	100.0	100.0	