

IMF - SINGAPORE REGIONAL TRAINING INSTITUTE



ANNUAL REPORT 2020/2021



The STI is jointly funded by the IMF, the Government of Singapore, and the Government of Japan, with additional support from the Government of Australia.



Singapore



Japan



The STI serves the following countries:

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Bangladesh
Bhutan
Brunei Darussalam
Cambodia
China
Hong Kong SAR
Macao SAR
Cook Islands
Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste
India
Indonesia
Iran
Kiribati
Republic of Korea
Lao People's Democratic Republic
Malaysia
Maldives
Marshall Islands
Federated States of Micronesia
Mongolia
Myanmar
Nauru
Nepal
Niue
Pakistan
Palau
Papua New Guinea
Philippines
Republic of Fiji
Samoa
Singapore
Solomon Islands
Sri Lanka
Thailand
Tonga
Tuvalu
Vanuatu
Vietnam

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ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
CD	Capacity Development
CDOT	Capacity Development Office in Thailand
CDMAP	Capacity Development Management and Administration Program
CLMV	Cambodia, Lao P.D.R., Myanmar, Vietnam
COVID-19	Coronavirus Disease 2019
CY	Calendar Year
EXCO	Executive Committee
FPP	Financial Programming and Policies
FY	Fiscal Year
ICD	Institute for Capacity Development
MPAF	Model-Based Monetary Policy Analysis and Forecasting
OAP	Office for Asia and the Pacific
PATS	Participant and Applicant Tracking System
PFTAC	Pacific Financial Technical Assistance Centre
STI	IMF – Singapore Regional Training Institute
TA	Technical Assistance
TIMS	Travel Information Management System



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SECTION I

INTRODUCTION

INTRODUCTION

The years 2020 and 2021 have been remarkably challenging, with many events beyond our imagination. The pandemic tragically took lives, put unprecedented pressure on vulnerable segments of societies, and upended our lives, both professional and personal. Lockdowns, travel restrictions, social distancing, and work-from-home requirements forced us to rethink the way the IMF - Singapore Regional Training Institute (STI) serves its constituency.

In STI, the pandemic forced us to shift our predominantly in-person capacity development events to virtual delivery. Indeed, we expect virtual programs to become a permanent fixture of our effort, even if we plan gradual resumption of in-person activities in 2022 and 2023. Virtual deliveries allow delivery of IMF's high-quality training and technical assistance programs as well as IMF expert webinars at lower cost and to a much larger audience, while reducing emissions from air travel. Nonetheless, virtual delivery can be an imperfect substitute for in-person interactions and we remain committed to resuming in-person activities as soon as conditions allow and as appropriate. Finding balance between in-person and virtual delivery of STI capacity development will become a key focus of our strategic discussions.

The past year has also brought two positive developments. We are happy to report that STI's financial future is secured as the Government of Japan approved a new three-year funding program. Over the next three years STI will continue

to provide high-quality training, while also increasing STI's technical assistance (TA) on building macroeconomic frameworks in the region in line with fast-rising demand.

Finally, STI bid farewell to its old location at the Monetary Authority of Singapore building and moved to its new premises on 79 Robinson Road (Box 1), bigger and brighter than before. The boundaries between being physically in the office and out of the office have blended, as always-on videoconferencing, remote cooperation spaces (such as virtual whiteboards), and an asynchronous-collaboration working model have become STI's standard practices.

STI continues to be jointly funded by the IMF and the Governments of Singapore and Japan, with support from Australia (Figures 1 and 2). The institute helps further the work of the Singapore Cooperation Programme, which coordinates the resources available in Singapore for TA to other countries. STI is also a key part of Japan's contribution to IMF capacity development. In addition, STI received financing from the Government of Australia.

STI's work is overseen by its Executive Committee, which meets annually (Figures 3 and 4), with the last meeting on December 15, 2020 to review activities. Members endorsed new training modalities and TA projects to strengthen knowledge transfer and implement change in institutional practices.

The 2020/21 Annual Report covers STI activities during calendar year (CY) 2020 and financial data during the IMF's fiscal year (FY) 2020-21 from May 1, 2020 to April 30, 2021.

BOX 1: OFFICE RELOCATION

STI moved into a new office space at 79 Robinson Road on February 1, 2021, amid circuit breaker measures in place since April 2020. The success of the relocation underscores STI's effective cooperative working relationships with our donors, the main contractor, suppliers, and all other stakeholders. Our new space is bigger than the last, with lots of light, and the feel of a fresh start and new possibilities.

The new office space focuses on “empathy and connectivity” and elevates three main principles: people first, dynamic and purposeful workspaces, and a culture of experimentation. Mr. Stephan Danninger, former STI Director said: “I am extremely proud of the future we are creating for the STI and the 2021 office move was another milestone on our journey. The new office highlights our commitment to deliver high-quality training to our global clients and responds to stakeholder needs. Our team spent many hours painstakingly planning every detail to facilitate a smooth execution of the project. We have created a place that immediately felt like home for our team and a welcoming collaboration space for participants, lecturers, or partners who come to visit.”

The move gave STI an opportunity to revisit the workplace technology, find ways to better utilize resources, better position ourselves to meet new challenges, and improve staff well-being. To maintain productivity, teamwork, learning, and preserve the corporate culture, the boundaries between being physically in the office and out of the office have blended. Always-on videoconferencing, remote cooperation spaces, and asynchronous-collaboration working model have been shifted from futuristic ideas to STI's standard practices. To support this new working pattern, the office and training facilities have been set up with the latest software, web applications, and infrastructure, with STI staff being trained accordingly.

Ms. Gillian Tan, Assistant Managing Director, Development and International, Monetary Authority of Singapore said: “We congratulate IMF-STI on its move to its new office at 79 Robinson Road in Singapore. With enhanced facilities such as flexible room designs to cater to training for different group sizes, as well as videoconferencing systems to enable online course delivery, IMF-STI will be able to better cater to regional members' needs for training and capacity development to strengthen the region's macroeconomic and financial management policies.”



The airy space with a cool blue wall welcome visitors to STI.

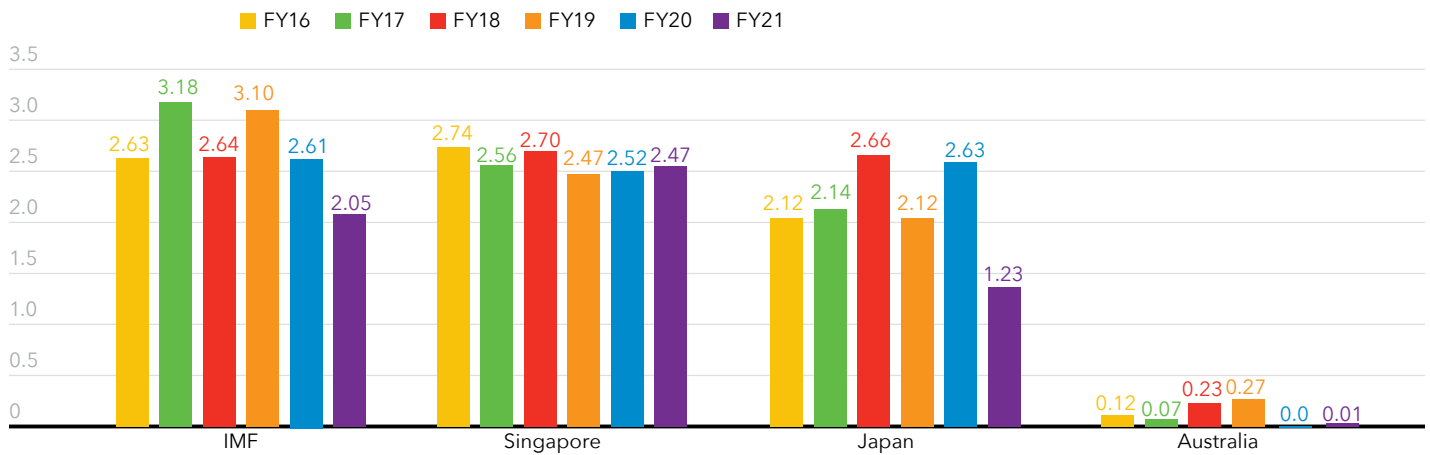


The lecture room is calming, with modern interiors that hint at the vibrant and creative learning space.



Reconfigured workspace to create a sense of energy and innovation for a virtual course.

FIGURE 1. CONTRIBUTIONS TO STI FINANCING, FY2016-21, (US\$ MILLIONS)



Source: IMF Office of Budget and Planning.

FIGURE 2. STI PARTNERS



FIGURE 3. STI EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE



GILLIAN TAN

Assistant Managing Director
Development and International
Monetary Authority of Singapore



SHARMINE COOREY

Director
Institute for Capacity Development, IMF



WILLIAM TAN

Director-General
Technical Cooperation Directorate
Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Singapore



ROGER NORD

Deputy Director
Institute for Capacity
Development, IMF



HIDEAKI IMAMURA

Director, International Organizations
Division, International Bureau, Ministry
of Finance, Japan



STEPHAN DANNINGER

Ex-Officio
Director
IMF - Singapore Regional Training Institute

FIGURE 4. STI ALTERNATE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

LUZ FOO

Executive Director
International Department
Monetary Authority of Singapore

ELENORE KANG

Deputy Director
Asia-Pacific Programmes
Technical Cooperation Directorate
Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Singapore

TAKUYA KAMOSHIDA

Deputy Director, International
Organizations Division, International
Bureau, Ministry of Finance, Japan

PAUL CASHIN

Assistant Director
Institute for Capacity
Development, IMF

PHILIPPE KARAM

Deputy Division Chief
Institute for Capacity Development, IMF



Face shield

Protective Isolation Mask

e 4132 4045

rate to be

3

4-5%

>5%

NETARY FUND

SECTION II

GLOBAL TRENDS
IN CAPACITY
DEVELOPMENT

GLOBAL TRENDS IN CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT

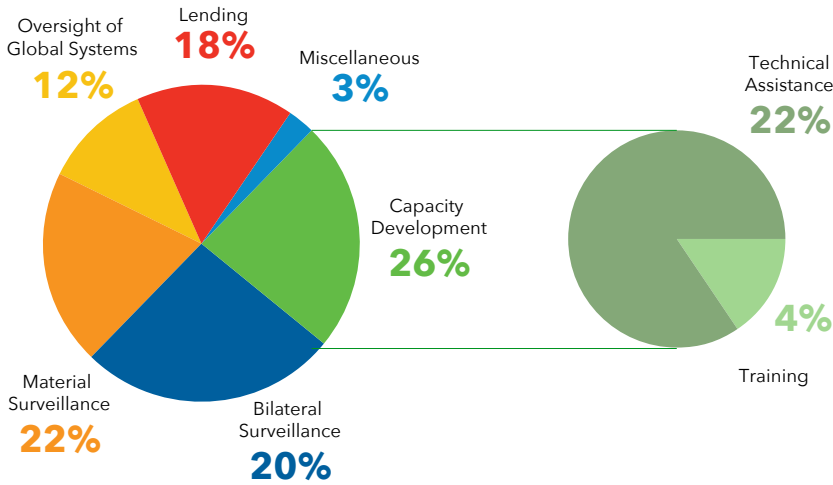
The pandemic dominated capacity development activities in 2020 and STI concentrated its efforts in two directions, as other capacity development providers did. First, it transformed its training and TA from predominantly in-person delivery to virtual and developing new delivery modes. Second, the change in the macroeconomic policy toolkit necessitated by the pandemic calls for more technical assistance to STI member countries to address the challenges of post-pandemic development.

While worldwide IMF capacity development (CD) has doubled over the last decade and now stands at around 26% of what the Fund does (Figure 5), the pandemic-associated lockdowns temporarily reversed this trend. For example, in Asia and Pacific countries, training participation fell by almost one-third (Figure 6). Quantitative comparisons with pre-pandemic years are difficult, however, as in-person delivery was temporarily replaced with much cheaper virtual delivery (Figure 7).¹ Furthermore, we developed new modes of capacity development delivery, such as STI expert webinars featuring IMF experts and STI-assisted online courses. Qualitative comparisons with pre-pandemic years are even more complicated. On the one hand, capacity development recipients have expressed virtually identical levels of satisfaction with virtual delivery. On the other hand, they have also stressed their desire to return to in-person delivery as soon as practical, given that virtual modalities have not enabled the full range of capacity development benefits to be delivered.

IMF's capacity development will continue to pursue an integrated approach. Building on the 2018 IMF Capacity Development Strategy Review, it is striving to deliver more effective capacity development. The IMF's approach is to provide to its members integrated packages of capacity development activities by drawing on synergies across different IMF work streams, ranging from lending, surveillance, training, and TA. The overarching goal is to strengthen the skills of officials to formulate and implement sound macroeconomic and financial policies through practical and policy-oriented courses and TA. Complementing these activities are efforts to deepen the dialogue with members on emerging policy issues, such as climate, inequality, and gender, and facilitate sharing of policy experiences through peer-to-peer learning. To support this integrated approach, the IMF is drawing on a new Capacity Development Management and Administration Program (CDMAP) system, which aims to improve decision making and strengthen integration with IMF surveillance and lending activities.

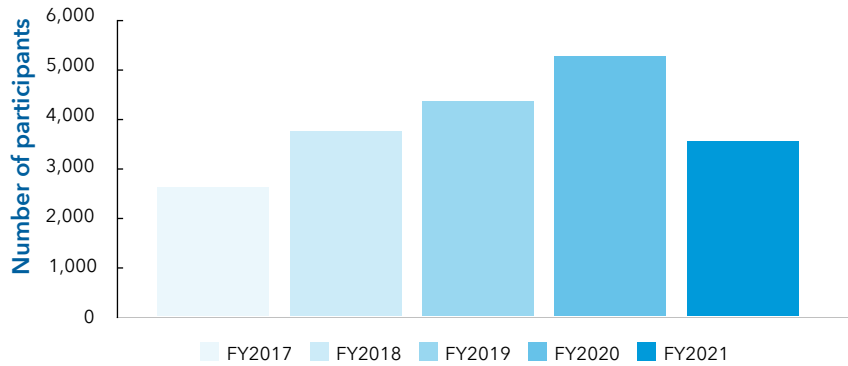
¹ Cancellation of in-person courses led to significant underspending relative to the STI budget and we anticipate similar underspending in 2021 and 2022.

FIGURE 5. IMF CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT SPENDING: TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE AND TRAINING, FY2021



Sources: Office of Budget and Planning Analytic Costing and Estimation System; IMF staff calculations.

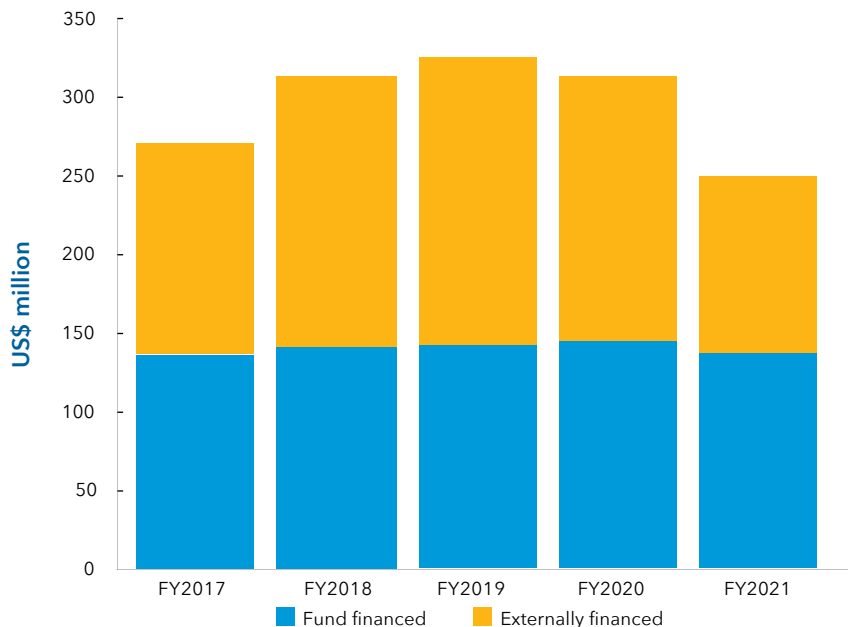
FIGURE 6. IMF TRAINING IN ASIA AND PACIFIC



Sources: Participant and Applicant Tracking System; IMF staff calculations.

Note: Most IMF training falls under the IMF Institute for Capacity Development (ICD) Training Program, which includes training that ICD coordinates and that ICD and other departments in headquarters and at the IMF's Regional Training Centers and Programs deliver to country officials. Training also includes IMF online courses successfully completed by country officials. It is provided by functional departments outside the ICD Training Program.

FIGURE 7. IMF SPENDING ON CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT



Sources: IMF Office of Budget and Planning Analytic Costing and Estimation System; IMF staff calculations.

Savings-Investment Perspective CA balance as inter-temporal choice

The current account balance seen from the perspective of the **difference between savings and investment** may be viewed as an additional source of financing accumulation of assets

Capital account thus affords an opportunity for **TA - TL** to:

...ent C or I by **reducing** the country's net foreign asset position, ...
...ently face repayment

...ature C or I by **increasing** the country's net foreign asset position, ...
...means reducing current C and I.

$$CAB < 0 \leftarrow \text{flow}$$



$$Y - (G + I) < 0$$

Absorption

$$CA = F - FA + \Delta RES$$

Capital flow

$$\lll 0$$

SECTION III

TRAINING IN
SINGAPORE

TRAINING IN SINGAPORE

The year 2020 was like no other. When borders closed and countries went into lockdown, little did we know that it would last so long. STI and IMF initially suspended all in-person training in February 2020, and when it became clear that the pandemic was here to stay, the institute quickly concentrated its resources to adapt courses for online delivery. This involved innovations to content and format (Box 2), including typically shortening the course and narrowing scope, while increasing workshop time.

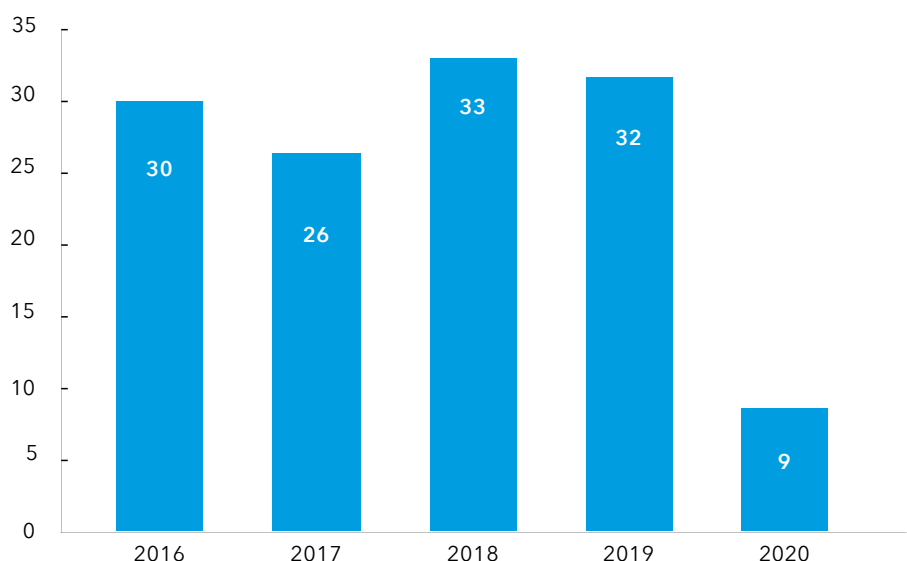
The pandemic was thus an opportunity for creativity. STI developed a new COVID-19 Experts Webinar Series (Box 3) to support member needs. Instantly popular, the webinars allowed officials to learn and interact with IMF experts and share experiences while working from home. COVID-19 temporarily halted many activities, but our training did not stop for long. We even got a head start on in-person training by organizing the inaugural hybrid seminar in our new premises, fully leveraging the new equipment and technology (Box 4).

In all, STI conducted nine courses in CY2020 (Annex 1), one in-person in January before borders closed and the rest virtual (Figure 8).

The eight virtual courses were two Financial Programming and Policies courses, Monetary Policy, Maintaining Financial Stability under COVID-19, Financial Development and Financial Inclusion, and Fiscal Policy Analysis. At the STI, the IMF's Monetary and Capital Markets Department and the Legal Department offered specialized courses in Advances in Macroeconomic Stress Testing and Legal Aspects of International Financial Institutions.

During January-April 2021, 10 virtual courses were conducted at STI: (1) Macroeconomic Diagnostics, (2) Managing Capital Flows, (3) Financial Sector Surveillance and, (4) Model-Based Monetary Policy Analysis and Forecasting; specialized statistics courses on (5) Financial Soundness Indicators, (6) Monetary and Financial Statistics, (7) Securities Statistics, and (8) National Account Statistics; and specialized regulatory and financial courses on (9) Selected Issues in the Evolving Financial Regulatory Framework and (10) Risk-Based Supervision.

FIGURE 8. COURSES DELIVERED AT STI



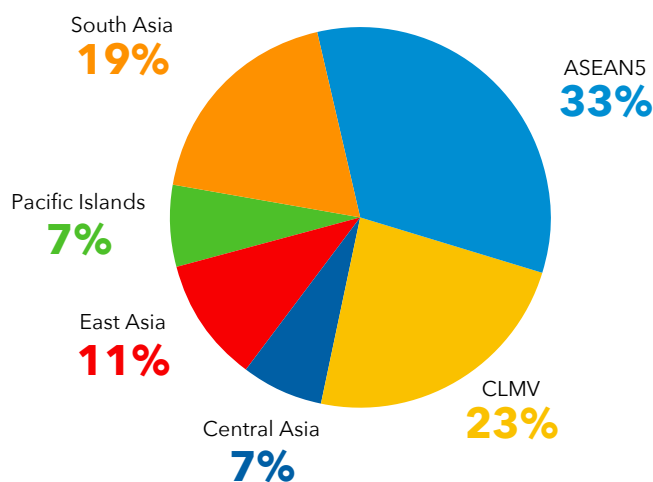
Source: Participant and Applicant Tracking System.

The pandemic put unprecedented work pressure on government officials in our member countries, who had less time available for training. Still, the demand for STI training dipped only marginally: during CY2020, the over-subscription rate stood at 2.1% compared to 3.2% in 2019, as measured by the total applications divided by the total participants in open application courses. Correspondingly, the acceptance rate for training in Singapore for 2020 increased to 46.7% from 31.6% in 2019. The average class size increased from 28.5 in 2019 to 33 in 2020, reflecting accommodation for more people in the new virtual environment than in-person.

Training in Singapore declined to 494 in 2020 from 1,273 in 2019, as measured in participant-weeks (number of officials times the number of weeks trained), due to both pandemic-related cancelations and shortening of virtual deliveries. We also observed significant shifts in the regional composition of officials trained: participants from ASEAN5 increased from 19% in CY2019 to 33% in CY2020 while participants from other regions declined (Figure 9)². This is mainly due to (1) a special invitation to Philippines officials to attend the Financial Programming and Policies (FPP1.0x) course and (2) a general increase in demand from the

other ASEAN5 countries as compared to other courses, presumably reflecting faster and more reliable broadband connections in ASEAN5. ASEAN5 countries accounted for one-third of participants; Cambodia, Lao P.D.R., Myanmar, and Vietnam (CLMV) for almost one-quarter; South Asia for one-fifth, and East Asia for one-tenth. Acceptance continued to be based on standard criteria such as job relevance, background, prior online course participation, gender balance, country, and regional composition.

FIGURE 9. PARTICIPANTS IN STI COURSES BY SUBREGION, CALENDAR YEAR 2020



Source: Participant and Applicant Tracking System.

Note: Regional Country Groups

ASEAN5: Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand

CLMV: Cambodia, Lao P.D.R., Myanmar, Vietnam

Central Asia: Afghanistan, Iran, Pakistan

East Asia: China, Hong Kong SAR, Korea, Mongolia

South Asia: Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal, Sri Lanka

Pacific Islands: Cook Islands, Fiji, Kiribati, Marshall Islands, Micronesia, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Timor-Leste, Tonga, Vanuatu

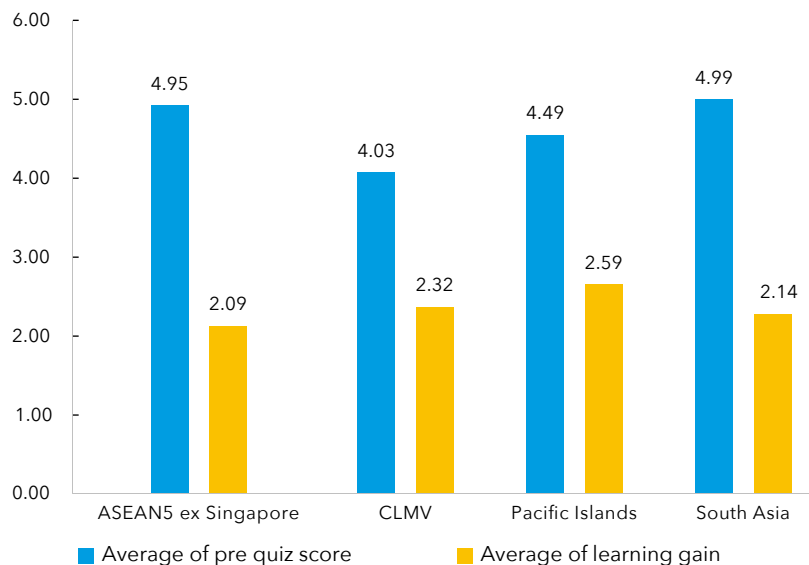
² Annex 4. STI Course Participants by Country CY2016–20 (Courses held in Singapore)

Annex 5. STI Course Participants by Country CY2016–20 (Courses held outside Singapore)

Interestingly, test and learning gain results were higher in FY2020 than in the last few years. Average pre-course test scores increased from 3.77 in 2019 to 4.62 in 2020. As in the past, participants from South Asia scored highest in the

pre-course tests, at almost 4.99 out of 10 (Figure 10), closely followed by ASEAN5 participants, excluding-Singapore, who scored 4.95. Pacific Island participants saw the biggest learning gains, followed by the CLMV countries.

FIGURE 10. AVERAGE LEARNING GAINS BY COUNTRY GROUPS, FY2020

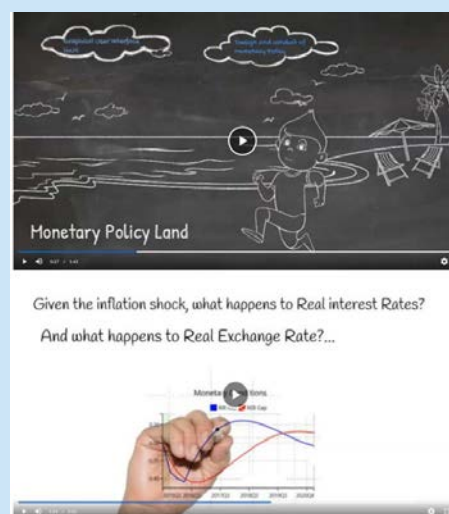


CLMV = Cambodia, Lao P.D.R., Myanmar, Vietnam.
Source: Participant and Applicant Tracking System.

BOX 2: ADAPTING AND INNOVATING DURING THE PANDEMIC

The pandemic has changed the way we operate. With in-person training suspended, virtual delivery was the only way to connect with members and serve their training and TA needs. STI responded quickly to this challenge, by June 2020 offering courses and webinars online. Fortunately, STI had begun online adaptation before the pandemic. We tapped into a suite of IMF Institute online courses available on the edX platform and drew on experience from our inaugural blended learning course with Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas (the central bank of the Philippines).³

We worked hard to ensure that the online sessions were well packaged, tightly choreographed, and engaging. No matter how much we prepared, our delivery could only be as good as the ability of participants to engage effectively online. To this end, we produced welcome cartoon videos and educational videos. Virtual delivery was preceded by instructional videos and “connectivity test” sessions to address participants’ IT issues. To prevent online fatigue, our courses made extensive use of Mentimeter, a web-based polling tool to engage the audience.



³ STI collaborated with the Resident Representative (Mr. Yang Yongzheng) to deliver a blended online course on Financial Programming and Policies in May 2019.

In terms of format, we streamlined our lectures and workshops, refocusing them on a strictly limited set of issues, and experimented with various blended learning models. In the process we “**Flipped the Classroom**”, so that participants watched online lectures hosted on the edX platform either at their own pace or with the counselors and then gathered in “live” sessions for discussions and Q&A sessions. In FY2020–21, STI conducted two Financial Programming and Policies courses and one Financial Market Analysis course in such a format. The first delivery combined IMF Institute online learning modules hosted on the edX platform with live virtual support sessions, featuring videos, checkpoints, and assignment questions. The videos from the online Financial Programming and Policies course worked well, but live lectures and staff

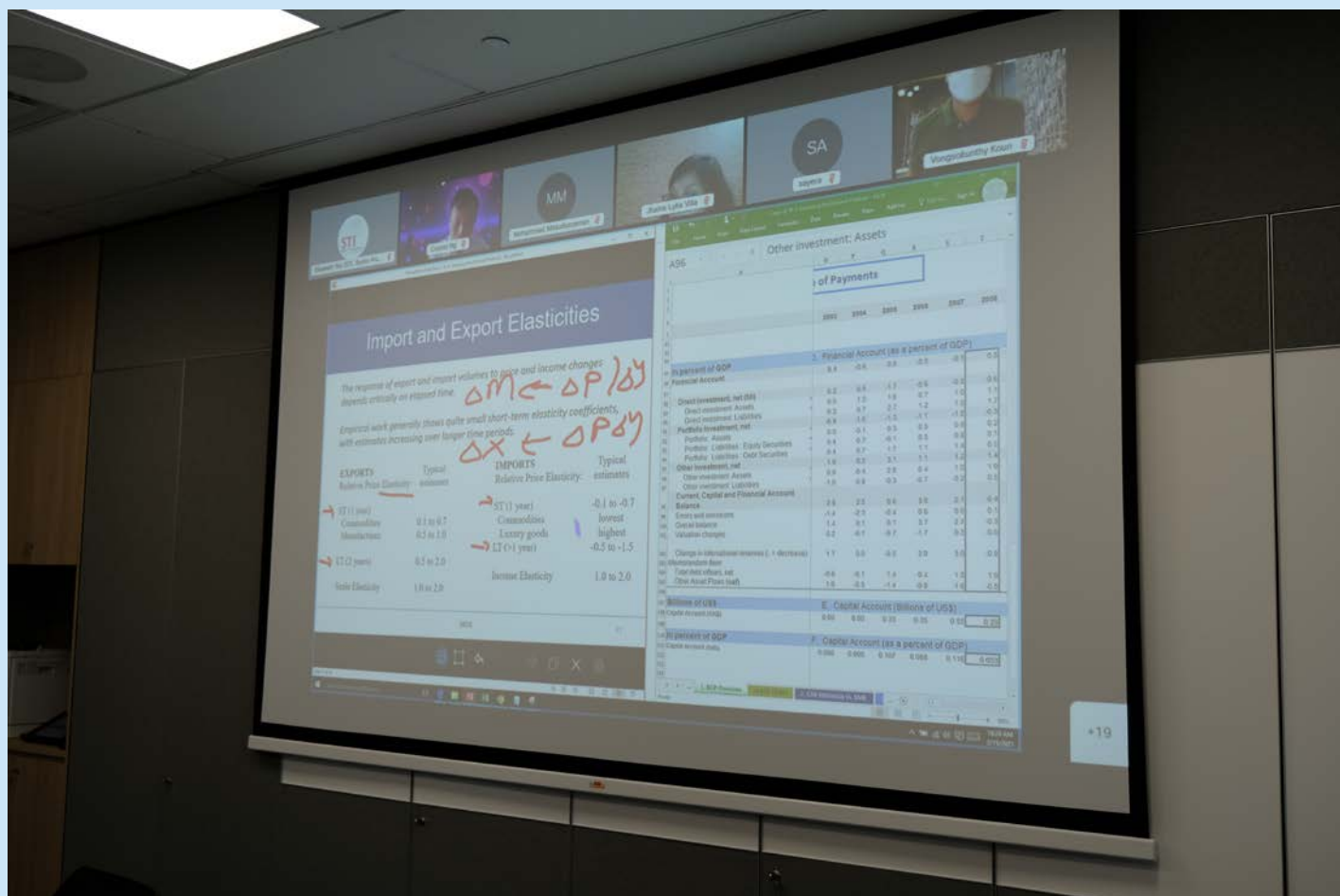
interventions during video playback generated richer interactions among participants. The second delivery dedicated most of the online time to workshops while participants watched relevant videos from the online course on their own. This setup allowed more time for substantive interactions among participants and counselors during workshops.

During the first four months of 2021, STI delivered two additional online learning courses with live support sessions. First, the Financial Market Analysis course (FMAX) for officials from the Philippines central bank during February 24–April 12, 2021. Second, FPP1x for officials from the Ministries of Finance and Economic Planning (BAPPENAS) in Indonesia during April 5–27, 2021. Participants watched the videos and answered assignment questions on

the edX and then, in live sessions on alternate days, could pose questions to STI staff on the subject matter.

Technology played a big role in transforming our classrooms.

The experience shows that online training can complement in-person engagements and be blended flexibly to best serve the needs of the target audience. Our new lecture rooms are equipped with state-of-the-art technology that facilitates online teaching and enhances online experience. For example, the rooms feature roving cameras that track the lecturer’s movements, Samsung Flip panels, which are great for annotations and split screens, and big mobile screens to show the audience and chats for better interaction. Our lecturers put these tools to good use during the 2021 courses.



BOX 3: THE COVID-19 EXPERT WEBINAR SERIES

Governments had to react quickly to the challenge posed by the unprecedented fall in output in early 2020. How big should the fiscal stimulus be and should it be delivered through lower taxes or higher spending? How to further loosen monetary policy that was close to the zero-lower bound even before the pandemic? How to adjust regulation of banks and other financial institutions to the new conditions? To provide answers, IMF staff prepared dozens of expert notes published on the IMF website starting in early Spring of 2020. We soon realized, however, that many Asian officials were unaware of these materials!

STI stepped up and created a new COVID-19 Experts Webinar Series centered around the notes. The 2-hour webinars brought together IMF experts, Asian policymakers, and technical staff to discuss the challenges posed by the pandemic and the appropriate policy responses. It also created a platform for member countries to exchange views and learn from others. During CY2020, STI conducted 35 webinars (Annex 2), with topics ranging from regulatory and supervisory responses to COVID-19, CPI and PPI measurement continuity during the pandemic, and cybersecurity risk and remittance flows.

The webinars were a resounding success, with officials highly appreciating their practical aspects. The webinar series also enabled STI to expand its reach to a much wider audience than before. Overall, the webinars attracted a total of 4,050 participants from STI's 37 member countries. On average, there were a total of 116 participants per webinar, with broadly equal participation of men and women.

Which Strategy to Promote Agility in FY2021 Budget Execution ?

Each option has pros and cons and the appropriate strategy will depend very much on country-specific factors.

Strategy	Pros and Cons	Comments
Contingency / Reserve Envelopes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> + Increases capacity for swift reaction - Can limit information of Parliament 	Need for transparency and safeguards on the triggers for the use of funds : avoid that the use of the reserve becomes an alternative budget process.
Increased in-year budget flexibility mechanisms	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> + No need for specific arrangements - Too limited if the need for reallocation is greater than anticipated 	Highly dependent on the country's legal framework, that may or may not allow for more discretion in period of stress.
Supplementary budget(s)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> + Guarantees parliamentary scrutiny as well as a tailored and timely adjustment to circumstances - May be too cumbersome and slow for countries with limited capacity 	An excessive number of supplementary budgets may also undermine credibility.

Participants (120):

- temujin sukhaatar
- Thin Myat Myat Khaing
- U D M Gunarathne
- Udemi Thilakarathne
- Venadette Ilagan
- Willip
- Yadanae Su Kyi
- Yeshi Lhendup
- Yin Min Naing
- yurika gunawan
- Zaw Hein Tun
- Zeno Abenaga
- zin
- Zinmar Oo
- zolboo garbold

Chat:

From Jean-Guili to everyone: Greetings from the STI the Singapore Regional Training Institute. Please use the Chat function to submit questions and comments. We hope you enjoy the session!

To: Everyone

In adapting to COVID-19, here are some examples of what countries are doing:

- Provide **additional guidance on the application of KYC/CDD measures** in adapting to the pandemic, in particular on digital and other non face-to-face identification and verification measures
- Extension of submission deadline** for regulatory or supervisory reporting
- Sharing of **risk typologies and threats** relating to the pandemic, and maintaining **open communication** with regulated entities either through direct channel, industry associations or public-private collaboration
- Provide **time-bound regulatory/supervisory flexibilities or exemptions**, with intention to facilitate efficient implementation of stimulus package or ease operational burden due to pandemic restrictions
- Provide **relevant information to public** particularly on fraud/scams or accessing financial services during the pandemic
- Adapt risk-based supervisory approaches:** Postpone or limit on-site examination for high risk entities or activities, shift to virtual supervisory engagement approach, requiring entities to submit digital documents/records, amp up off-site supervision/analysis for a more targeted follow-up supervisory activities

Sources: Public disclosure of AUSTRAC, UK FCA, US OCC/FrCEN/Federal Reserve, HKMA, and MAS.

3. In coming out of the pandemic, do you expect the AML/CFT supervision in your jurisdiction to change for the longer term?

Response	Count
I expect AML/CFT supervision to change for the better	51
No, I think AML/CFT supervision will remain unchanged	8
I expect AML/CFT supervision to deteriorate	2
I don't say I am uncertain	35

TESTIMONIALS

"During the pandemic your COVID-19 related webinar (gave) me a good opportunity to learn the specific sectors present conditions, problems and by discussion of the presenters they (tried) to show us the solutions of these problems. I am very much delighted to join your two webinars. Thanks a lot."

STI Webinar on Are Remittance Flows Another Casualty of COVID-19? October 14, 2020

"Appreciate every webinar held by the STI, diverse topics, the presentation is concise, and I am looking for other webinars ahead. Thank you for enriching our knowledge and raising awareness through these challenging times."

STI Webinar on Combatting Money Laundering and Terrorism Financing During the Pandemic, August 19, 2020

"Central Bank of Samoa will take the knowledge attained from this platform into action, this will assist us to manage our foreign reserves and to be able to collaborate more with our debt managers (Ministry of Finance) in terms of our external debt services."

STI Webinar on Responding to COVID-19: Meeting Cash & Debt Management Challenges, August 26, 2020

BOX 4: HYBRID SEMINAR ON INFLATION AND COST OF LIVING

On 29 April 2021, the STI tested its new training facilities in the hybrid seminar, Inflation and Cost of Living in Singapore and Asia: Post-Pandemic Implications. This was the first “live” event STI had hosted since the pandemic. Mr. Edward Robinson, Deputy Managing Director and Chief Economist, Monetary Authority of Singapore, gave the opening remarks. The other speakers of the webinar were Professor Aurobindo Ghosh, Singapore Management University; Professor Thomas Lam, Sim Kee Boon Institute for Financial Economics; Mr. Taimur Baig, DBS Bank; Ms. Natalia Novikova, Resident Representative, IMF; Professor Dave Fernandez, Sim Kee Boon Institute for Financial Economics. Fifteen people attended the in-person hybrid seminar and 246 attended online.

The inflation and cost-of-living topic was timely. The Monetary Authority of Singapore started by discussing the factors behind price developments during the crisis, highlighting the impact of containment measures, supply disruptions, and wage rigidity. While acknowledging manifold upside risks to inflation, it stressed that mechanical increases in CPI indices need not ignite long-run cost and price pressures given slack in key factor and product markets. The Singapore Management University team, which maintains the Singapore inflation expectations survey, then highlighted an increase in inflation expectations in Singapore over the last 3–6 months across various measures. The expected core and headline expectations remain below their medium-term averages, however.

The format of a hybrid seminar with live telecast worked well—the speakers and guests in the room had a lively exchange with the online audience. Hybrid seminars will remain a viable option for both training and outreach events in countries where the pandemic continues to prevent travel.





Aurobindo Ghosh
Singapore Management University

SECTION IV

TRAINING OUTSIDE
SINGAPORE

TRAINING OUTSIDE SINGAPORE

During May 2020–April 2021, STI delivered five regional and national virtual courses in collaboration with regional capacity development providers and country authorities to 187 participants. One course each was held with the IMF Capacity Development Office in Thailand, the IMF Pacific Financial Technical Assistance Center in Fiji, the IMF Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific in Japan, the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas, and the Ministry of Finance and of Economic Planning in Indonesia. Compared to the past, the total number of courses declined due to travel suspensions and adapting to virtual course delivery.

The Capacity Development Office in Thailand (CDOT): STI and the Thai office jointly delivered a four-day event on macro-financial linkages. Participants from Cambodia, Lao P.D.R., and Vietnam learned how to analyze risk, conduct solvency stress tests, and analyze pandemic impact and the effect of policy responses.

The Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas: STI supported an online, edX-hosted Financial Markets Analysis course with live support sessions. The training request made by Assistant Governor Johnny Noe E. Ravalo was to help build

basic skills for a newly established Systemic Risk Group. The course covered basic concepts relevant for financial sector risk analysis and was very well received. In a letter to the Director STI, BSP Governor Benjamin E. Diokno expressed his thanks and appreciation for STI's support for the course.

The Pacific Financial Technical Assistance Center (PFTAC): STI and the center jointly delivered the three-day workshop, Fiscal Analysis, Debt sustainability and Risks, which was much appreciated by participants, with an overall value rating of 4.7. Participation by Mr. Scott Roger from IMF's Asia and Pacific Department facilitated discussions of challenges in the Pacific Island region and potential mitigation strategies.

The Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific (OAP): With funding from the Government of Japan, STI and the OAP delivered an Inclusive Growth course requested by the Japan International Cooperation Agency and the OAP. The participants were mid-career public-sector alumni from the Japan-IMF Scholarship Program for Asia, and mostly from low-income or fragile states. One program objective is

to promote networking among alumni, many of whom are senior government officials in their home countries.

The Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning: STI supported an online Financial Programming and Policies Part I (FPP1x) course with live support sessions. Over three weeks, staff reviewed and discussed course-related questions with officials from the ministry. The training request was made to help build skills in macroeconomic policy analysis and learn to design an economic and financial program for Indonesia.

TESTIMONIALS

“The combination of the live learning session and online learning is perfect. The live session complements the learning and is very helpful for providing clarification, and insights from the esteemed speakers are very helpful.”

A comment from a participant received via Mentimeter



SECTION V

TECHNICAL
ASSISTANCE

TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

STI's future training will be increasingly complemented by technical assistance activities on building macroeconomic and debt analysis frameworks in the region, in line with fast-rising demand. These are typically multiyear projects helping governments strengthen frameworks for forecasting and policy analysis. Projects that started before the pandemic—in Cambodia and Vietnam—moved instantly to virtual delivery using videoconferencing

and other digital collaborations. New projects—in Federated States of Micronesia, Mongolia, Solomon Islands, Timor-Leste, and Vanuatu—will commence in the second half of 2021.

Macroframework TA work has become a natural extension of STI training. Starting in 2015, STI staff have been supporting macroframework TA for the so-called core groups in Cambodia, Lao P.D.R., and Myanmar. Subsequently, STI staff have delivered

macroframework TA for the Central Bank of Vietnam, for the Ministry of Finance and Economy in Cambodia, and for the Ministry of Finance in Bhutan (Box 5). Commencing in late 2021, STI will take the lead on TA for macroeconomic frameworks in the Pacific countries of the Federated States of Micronesia, Timor-Leste, and Vanuatu.

BOX 5: VIRTUAL PROGRESS: TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE TO CAMBODIA

The IMF team—led by STI's Aleš Bulíř—completed the first in-person TA mission in January 2020, just before the suspension of IMF mission travel. The IMF team worked with Ministry of Economy and Finance staff to design and calibrate a prototype “New-Keynesian” macroeconomic model to simulate the impact of various domestic and external developments on the domestic economy. Needless

to say, the pandemic immediately provided an urgently needed scenario that was of interest to the policymaker.

To sustain momentum in early implementation of the TA project the IMF team scaled up virtual TA support to the Ministry of Economy and Finance in the remainder of 2020. Alternative modes of delivery were tested: (1) follow-up bi-weekly interactions during February–June; (2) a month-long

intensive mission in July and August; and (3) low-intensity interactions in lieu of a full virtual mission in September to December. The topics progressed from elaborating on the calibration of the model, to developing the baseline and alternative scenarios, and to preparing a presentation to Ministry of Economy and Finance management on options for fiscal policy response to the pandemic.



SECTION VI

OUTLOOK FOR 2022
AND BEYOND

OUTLOOK FOR 2022 AND BEYOND

Our medium-term outlook for STI capacity development is affected by the long-term effects of the pandemic and we foresee two major driving forces. First, the impact of travel restrictions introduced in early 2020 will be felt into the mid-2020s, necessitating long-lasting virtual and hybrid delivery modes for STI activities. Second, the economic upheaval caused by the ensuing economic crisis and increasing public debt call for major retooling of public policies. Adding to the post-pandemic challenges are the tasks of addressing climate change, income inequality, and gender issues, topics where IMF has been ramping up its resources to provide sound policy guidance.

Virtual delivery is likely to remain the main mode in 2021 and early 2022. Any chance of an early return to in-person training and technical assistance will be conditional on progress in combating the pandemic. The good news is that initial concerns about poor connectivity have largely proven unwarranted. Videoconferencing has become a widely used communication tool in emerging market countries and the transition has been fast. We foresee continued and rising demand for both online (pre-recorded) and virtual (live) training. Training sessions will continue to be shorter than in in-person courses, between 1–3 hours on a given day, and focused on accommodating the more demanding nature of remote learning. We expect to continue offering remote training alongside in-person classroom training once travel resumes. A hybrid format, with some participants onsite and others remote, is a possibility that IMF and STI are actively exploring.

STI will expand its technical assistance in macroeconomic frameworks in addition to its training. An important lesson from past training experiences has been that tailored training supporting TA has a greater chance of creating a lasting impact and enabling institutional changes than either standalone training or TA. We plan to expand country-specific TA projects to about 4–6 countries from the two projects in Cambodia and Vietnam that started in 2019. In line with our mandate, these TA projects will focus on development of forecasting and policy analysis systems for ministries of finance and central banks, and implementation of debt dynamics tools.

SECTION VII

ADMINISTRATIVE AND
PERSONNEL HIGHLIGHTS

ADMINISTRATIVE AND PERSONNEL HIGHLIGHTS



In 2020, STI staff carried a heavy workload, supporting the increased volume of virtual webinars and remote training activities, while preparing for the office move in early 2021. They quickly adjusted to more flexible and innovative working models and implemented new digital technologies, with senior management empowering teams and making fast decisions amid uncertainty.

Natan Epstein relocated to headquarters in Washington D.C. in mid-2020.

Aleš Bulíř (pictured on the left) joined the STI in September 2020 as the new Deputy Director.

SECTION VIII

FINANCIAL REPORT

FINANCIAL REPORT

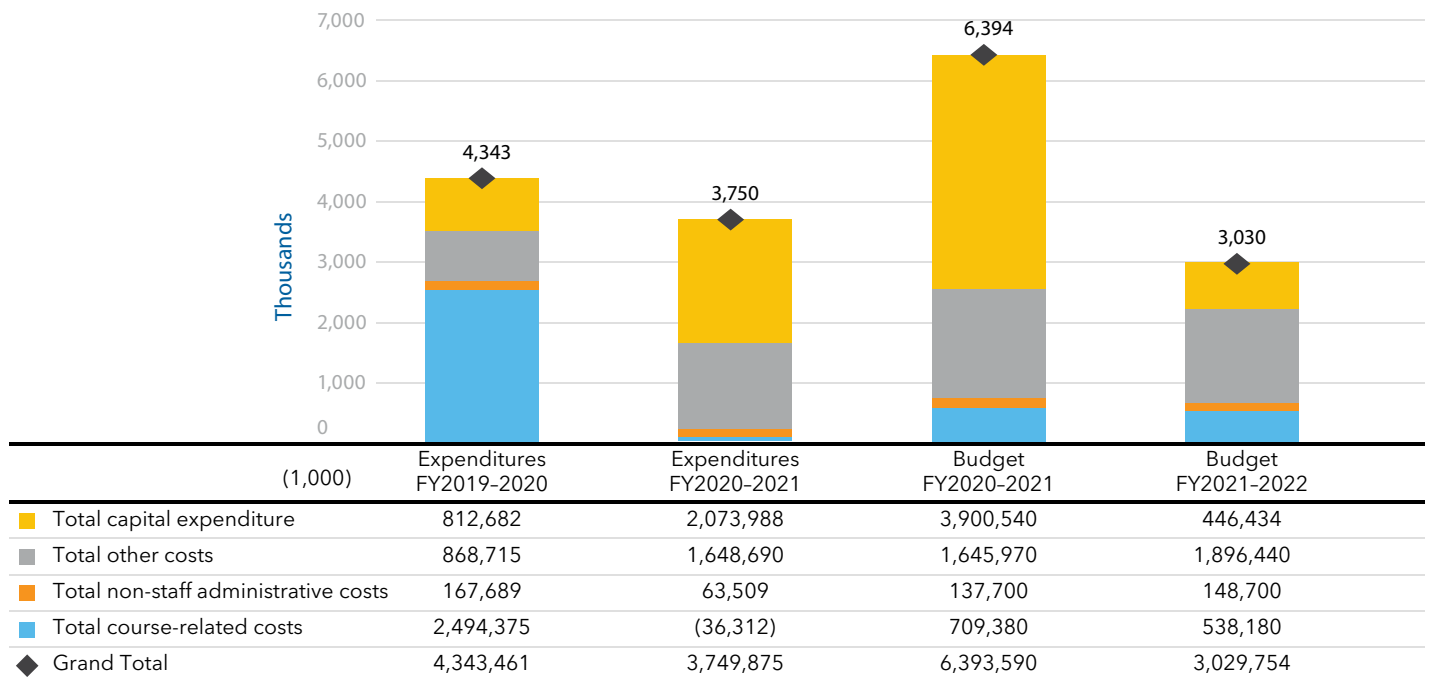
STI expenditures declined in FY2020-21 relative to the previous year (Figure 11).⁴ Overall spending of S\$3,749,875 was 13.7 percent lower because of the pandemic-related suspension of in-person training in early 2020. Spending reductions would have been greater but were partly offset by relocation outlays related to STI's move to the new premises. Budget execution was some 41 percent below the limits approved for FY2020-21. Notable details are as follows (Annex 3):

- The credit in course-related costs of S\$43,051 was due to a refund of participants' airfares by travel agents for all planned in-person classes in FY2020-21.
- Expenditures for non-staff administrative and other costs (S\$1,712,200) increased by 65 percent relative to the previous year. The increase resulted from higher (1) rental cost and (2) office cleaning cost in 79 Robinson Road, while partly offset by savings on business travel.

- Capital expenditures of S\$2,073,988 were related to the STI relocation.

The budget for FY2021-22 shows a substantial but temporary decrease in spending reflecting the completion of STI office relocation, with the exception of the final payment of \$446,434. Participant costs are budgeted as lower owing to fewer expected in-person participants for FY2021-22 (15 participants) as compared to the FY2020-21 budget (20 participants).

FIGURE 11. STI FINANCIAL REPORT BY COST CATEGORY (S\$)



Source: IMF Office of Budget and Planning.

⁴ IMF fiscal year is May to April.

SECTION IX

ANNEXES

ANNEX 1. STI REMOTE TRAINING (V = VIRTUAL), CALENDAR YEAR 2020

		Begin Date	End Date	No. of Participants (average for multi-sessions)	No. of Registrations	No. of Days	No. of Sessions (75-90 mins total)
ST20.01	Bank Restructuring and Resolution	1-13-2020	1-17-2020	30	65	5	20
ST20.33V	Virtual - Financial Programming and Policies, Part 1:	7-20-2020	8-7-2020	65	81	15	9 (210 mins each)
ST20.32V	Virtual - Maintaining Financial Stability	7-24-2020	7-29-2020	51	52	3	3
ST20.34V	Virtual - Financial Programming and Policies, Part 2:	9-7-2020	9-25-2020	23	26	15	9 (210 mins each)
ST20.35V	Virtual - Monetary Policy	10-12-2020	10-23-2020	18	28	10	5-10
ST20.26V	Virtual - Financial Development and Financial Inclusion	11-23-2020	11-27-2020	20	76	5	5-10
ST20.28V	Virtual - Legal Aspects of International Financial	11-30-2020	12-4-2020	31	54	5	5
ST20.38V	Virtual - Advanced Macro-Stress Testing	12-1-2020	12-4-2020	35	55	4	4
ST20.36V	Virtual - Fiscal Policy Analysis	12-7-2020	12-18-2020	27	49	10	5-10

Source: STI.

ANNEX 2. EXPERT WEBINAR SERIES, CALENDAR YEAR 2020

		Date	No. of Participants (average for multi-sessions)	No. of Registrations	No. of Countries Participating
STR20.01	Core Group Outreach and Pandemic Macro Tool Webinar (Laos)	5-12-2020	16	16	1
STR20.04	Core Group Outreach and Pandemic Macro Tool Webinar (Myanmar)	5-14-2020	23	23	1
STR20.06	Core Group Outreach and Pandemic Macro Tool Webinar (Cambodia)	5-19-2020	52	52	1
STR20.02	Roundtable on Banking Sector Regulatory and Supervisory Response to Deal with the Impact of Coronavirus	6-17-2020	124	199	25
STR20.03	Consumer Price Index Continuity during the COVID-19 Pandemic	6-18-2020	80	97	11
STR20.08	Dampening Global Financial Shocks in Emerging Markets - Can Macroprudential Regulation Help?, World Economic Outlook, April 2020	6-22-2020	-	-	-
STR20.05	State-Owned Enterprises in the Time of COVID-19	7-1-2020	66	119	21
STR20.10	Liquidity Support for Businesses	7-2-2020	211	335	25
STR20.11	CPI and PPI Continuity during the COVID-19 Pandemic	7-2-2020	55	65	8
STR20.12	Recording Government Related COVID-19 Support to Businesses and Households	7-8-2020	122	159	25
STR20.13	Cybersecurity of Remote Working and Cybersecurity Risk Supervision	7-9-2020	442	722	32
STR20.14	Ensuring the Continuity of Quarterly National Accounts in the Face of the COVID-19 Pandemic	7-15-2020	139	193	24
STR20.18	Combating Money Laundering in the Time of the Pandemic	7-21-2020	-	-	-
STR20.17	Digital Solutions to Support the COVID-19 Fiscal Policy Response	7-23-2020	159	279	27
STR20.20	Budgeting in a Crisis: Guidance for Preparing The 2021 Budget	7-29-2020	126	205	20
STR20.21	Regulatory and Supervisory Response to Deal with the Coronavirus Impact: The Insurance Sector	8-4-2020	103	152	22
STR20.23	Tax Policy Responses to COVID-19 and its Aftermath	8-18-2020	58	83	15
STR20.16	Combatting Money Laundering and Terrorism Financing during the Pandemic	8-19-2020	197	292	33
STR20.29	Responding to COVID-19: Meeting Cash & Debt Management Challenges	8-26-2020	223	344	31

		Date	No. of Participants (average for multi-sessions)	No. of Registrations	No. of Countries Participating
STR20.22	Regulatory and Supervisory Response to Deal with the Coronavirus Impact: The Securities Sector	9-4-2020	58	85	18
STR20.30	IMF Approach to Integrated Policy Framework	9-11-2020	98	98	15
STR20.31	Government Finance Statistics during the COVID-19 Pandemic	9/23/2020 -9/24/2020	67	112	26.5
STR20.34	Managing Systemic Risk in the Time of Pandemic: What has Changed since the Global Financial Crisis?	9-29-2020	-	-	-
STR20.32	2020 External Sector Report: Global Imbalances and the COVID-19 Crisis	9-30-2020	194	385	30
STR20.33	COVID-19 Funds in Response to the Pandemic	10-7-2020	153	236	22
STR20.36	Are Remittance Flows Another Casualty of COVID-19?	10-14-2020	295	439	33
STR20.35	Central Bank Policy Mix during COVID-19 Pandemic	10-19-2020	-	-	-
STR20.38	Digital Financial Supervision: Strengthening Off-site Supervision Framework in the Time of Pandemic (do not publish online)	10-27-2020	-	-	-
STR20.37	Macrofinancial Considerations for Assessing the Impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic	11-3-2020	249	399	32
STR20.39	Government's Support for Workers and Households during COVID-19 and Beyond	11-11-2020	185	301	23
STR20.40	How to Model Macroeconomic and Epidemiological Interactions to Assess COVID-19 Impact and Mitigation Policies	11-19-2020	77	126	20
STR20.42	COVID-19 and the Treatment of Restructured Loans for Financial Soundness Indicators (FSI) Compilation	11-20-2020	150	216	24
STR20.43	The New Financial Soundness Indicators (FSI)	11-30-2020	133	248	25
STR20.46	Regional Economic Outlook (REO) Presentation: COVID-19 and Inequality in Asia: Risks of Social Unrest?	12-2-2020	131	268	27
STR20.44	Public Debt Management under COVID-19 in Asia: Adapting the Financing Strategy and Improving Communications and Investor Relations	12-17-2020	64	115	17

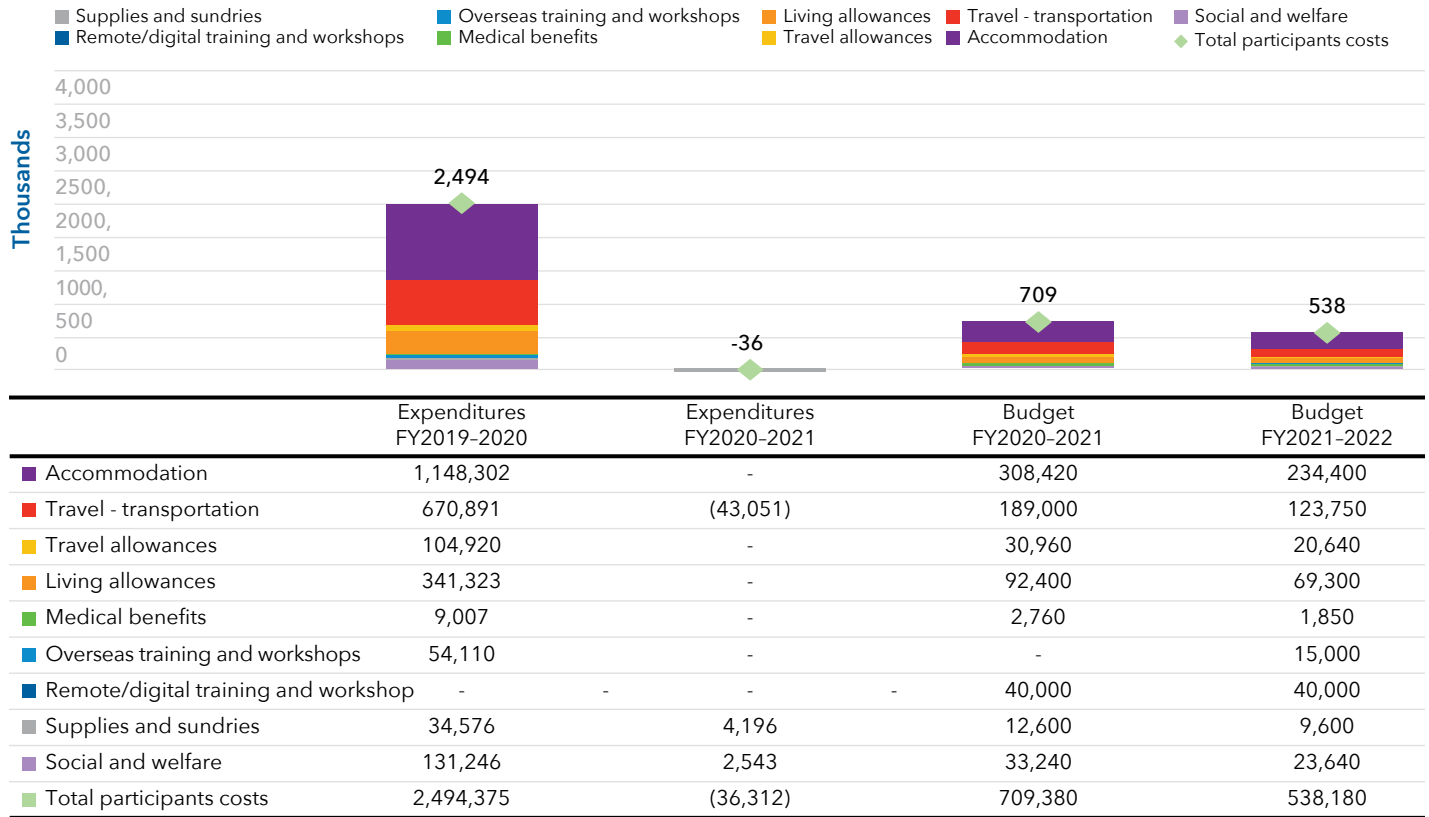
Source: STI.

ANNEX 3. STI FINANCIAL REPORT

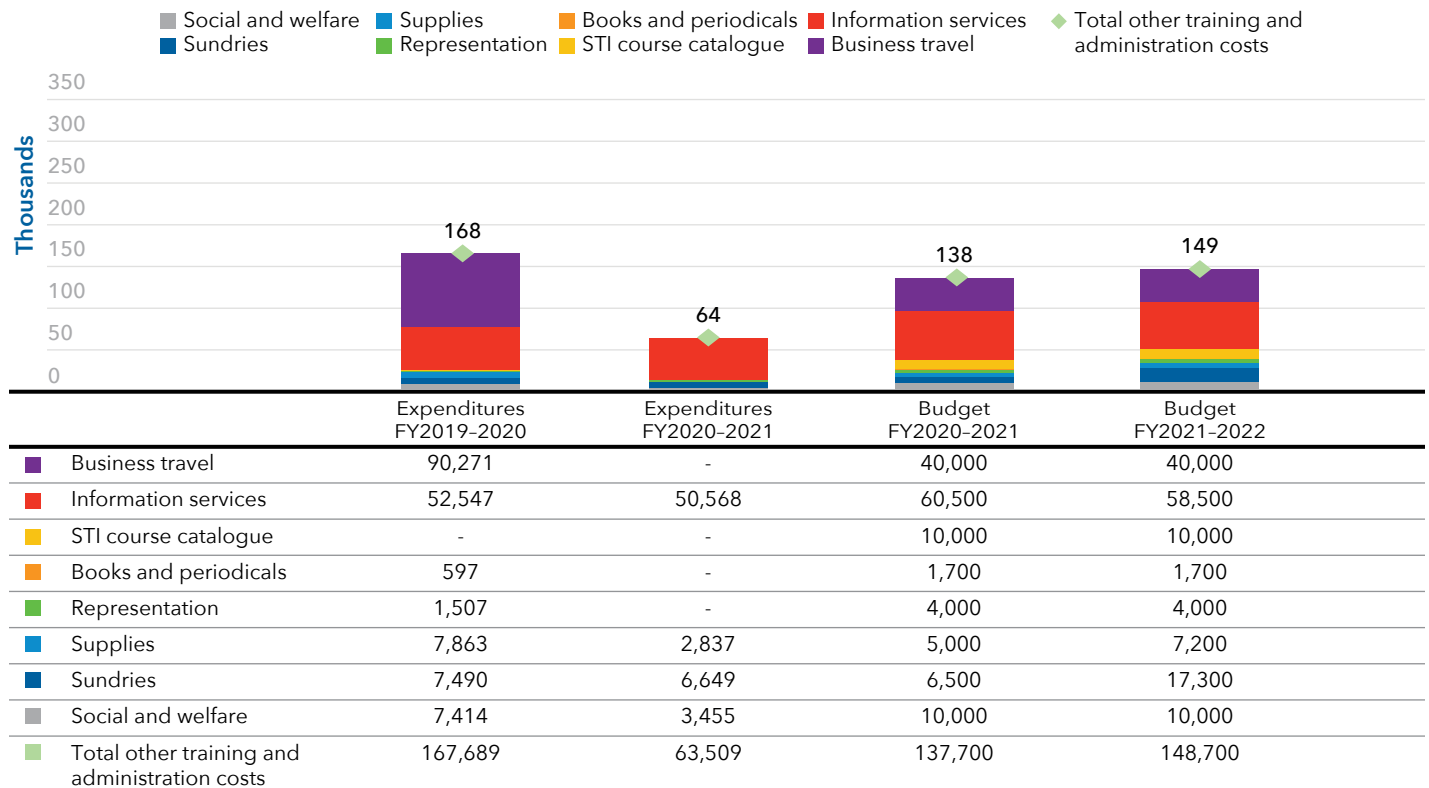
Budget for FY2021-22 (May 2021 to April 2022)

Outturn for FY2020-21 (May 2020 to April 2021)

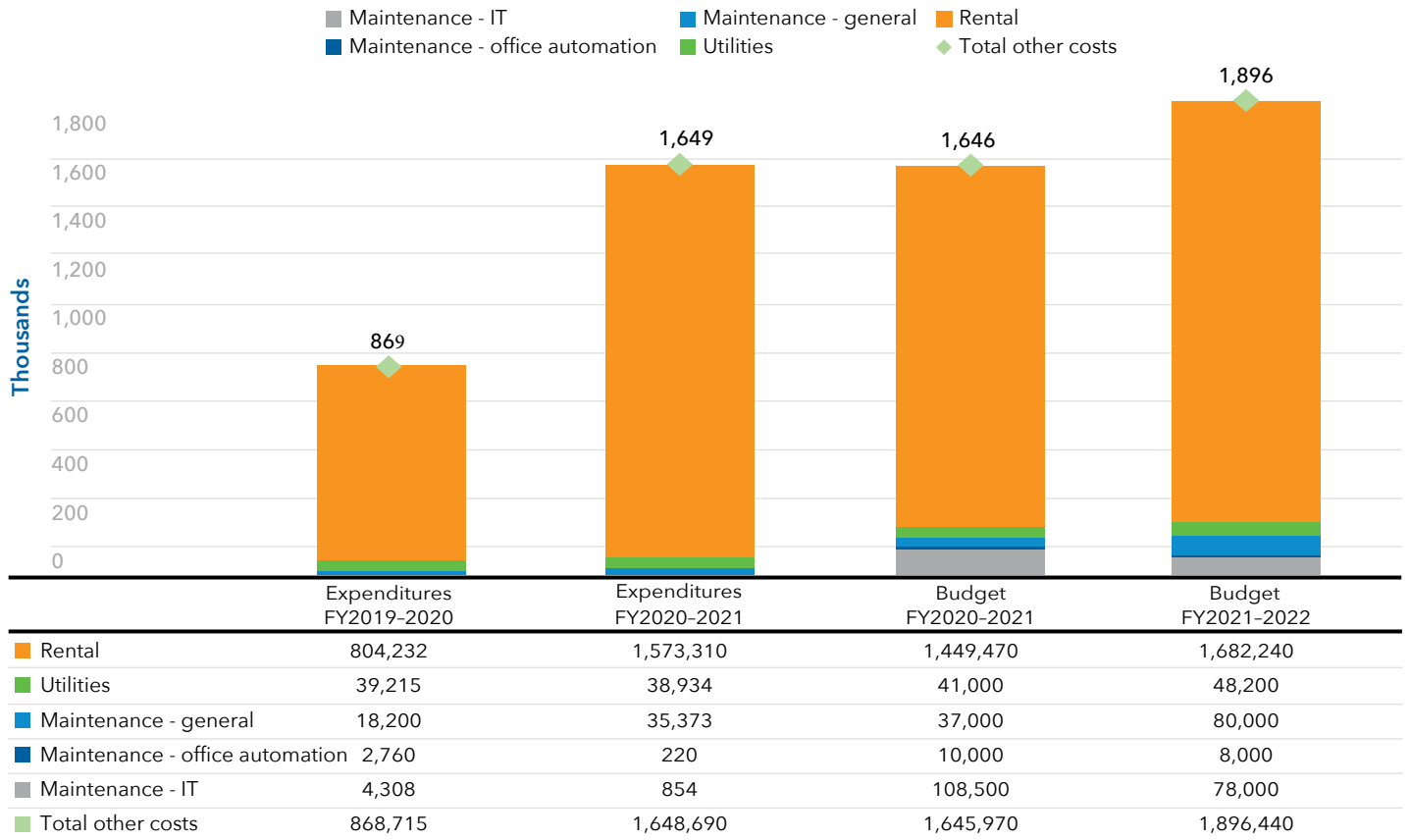
Course-Related Costs: Participants Costs (\$\$)



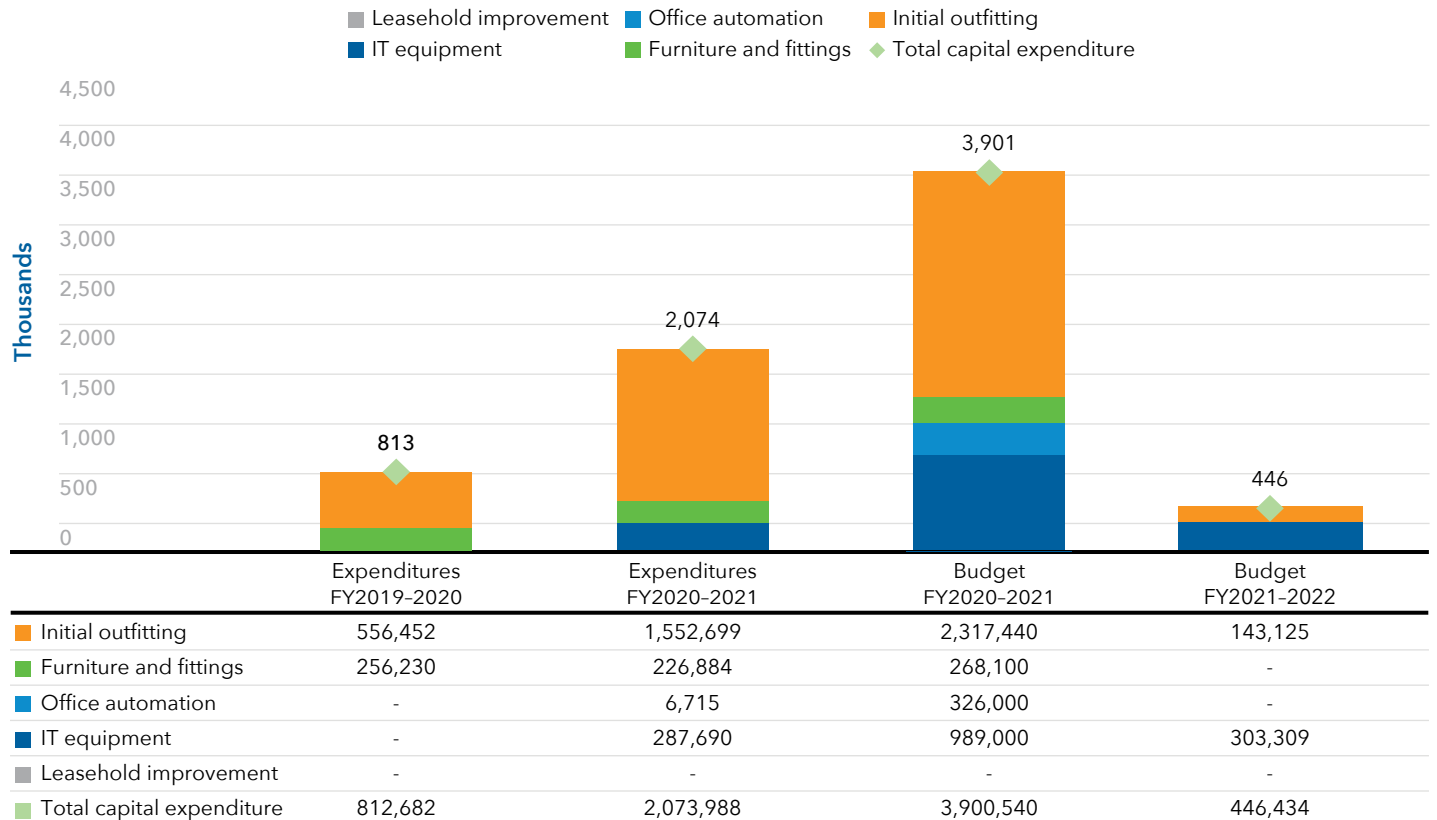
Non-Staff Administrative Costs (\$\$)



Other Costs (SGD)



Capital Expenditure (SGD)



Source: IMF Office of Budget and Planning.

ANNEX 4. STI COURSE PARTICIPANTS BY COUNTRY CY2016-20 (COURSES HELD IN SINGAPORE)

COUNTRY	2016-20 Trend	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	Total 2016-20
Afghanistan		38	25	31	33	13	140
Bangladesh		36	33	29	37	12	147
Bhutan		17	16	32	26	9	100
Brunei Darussalam		10	8	9	10	1	38
Cambodia		50	43	86	71	37	287
China		44	35	41	24	9	153
Cook Islands		0	0	1	1	0	2
Fiji		19	14	24	32	5	94
Hong Kong SAR		13	9	11	8	6	47
India		30	23	19	28	10	110
Indonesia		53	38	59	49	15	214
Iran		9	7	8	1	0	25
Kiribati		3	3	1	1	0	8
Korea		18	14	17	13	1	63
Lao P.D.R.		37	44	44	46	8	179
Macao SAR		0	5	6	2	0	13
Malaysia		36	35	36	48	15	170
Maldives		18	15	15	13	10	71
Marshall Islands		2	1	1	3	0	7
Micronesia		5	1	0	4	0	10
Mongolia		44	57	75	67	16	259
Myanmar		19	34	30	24	16	123
Nauru		0	0	0	1	0	1
Nepal		29	28	22	36	14	129
Niue		0	0	0	0	0	0
Pakistan		50	44	46	27	7	174
Palau		5	1	3	3	0	12
Papua New Guinea		15	12	12	17	6	62
Philippines		45	42	55	60	51	253
Samoa		8	2	15	14	3	42
Singapore		14	9	17	19	4	63
Solomon Islands		14	7	10	8	5	44
Sri Lanka		50	35	29	41	1	156
Thailand		46	46	50	54	14	210
Timor-Leste		6	3	10	4	0	23
Tonga		12	5	5	8	2	32
Tuvalu		0	2	2	2	0	6
Vanuatu		6	2	5	5	0	18
Vietnam		50	44	64	54	9	221
Grand Total		860¹	756²	932³	913⁴	300⁵	3761

Source: Participant and Applicant Tracking System.

1. Includes 9 observers from Australia, IMF, South Africa, and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations.

2. Includes 14 observers from Asian Development Bank, Australia, New Zealand, and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations.

3. Includes 12 observers from Argentina, Colombia, IMF, Jamaica, Japan, Suriname, the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, West Bank and Gaza, and World Bank.

ANNEX 5. STI COURSE PARTICIPANTS BY COUNTRY CY2016-20 (COURSES HELD OUTSIDE SINGAPORE)

COUNTRY	2016-20 Trend	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	Total 2016-20
Afghanistan		0	0	0	0	0	0
Bangladesh		0	5	14	1	0	20
Bhutan		0	4	6	0	0	10
Brunei Darussalam		0	0	0	0	0	0
Cambodia		31	31	64	26	33	185
China		0	0	36	0	0	36
Cook Islands		0	0	0	0	0	0
Fiji		0	0	2	0	0	2
Hong Kong SAR		0	0	11	0	0	11
India		24	13	45	57	0	139
Indonesia		11	36	39	7	0	93
Iran		0	0	0	0	0	0
Kiribati		0	0	0	0	0	0
Korea		3	1	1	0	0	5
Lao P.D.R.		22	18	53	15	0	108
Macao SAR		0	0	0	0	0	0
Malaysia		10	38	5	0	0	53
Maldives		0	0	1	0	0	1
Marshall Islands		0	0	0	0	0	0
Micronesia		0	0	0	0	0	0
Mongolia		0	0	2	7	0	9
Myanmar		63	51	52	41	0	207
Nauru		0	0	0	0	0	0
Nepal		11	3	10	0	0	24
Niue		0	0	0	0	0	0
Pakistan		0	0	0	0	0	0
Palau		0	0	0	0	0	0
Papua New Guinea		3	1	2	56	0	62
Philippines		12	1	7	14	0	34
Samoa		0	0	1	0	0	1
Singapore		0	0	5	0	0	5
Solomon Islands		0	0	1	6	0	7
Sri Lanka		2	16	7	1	0	26
Thailand		10	12	12	1	0	35
Timor-Leste		0	0	0	2	0	2
Tonga		0	0	0	0	0	0
Tuvalu		0	0	0	0	0	0
Vanuatu		0	0	2	0	0	2
Vietnam		27	36	36	16	0	115
Grand Total		229	266	423⁶	253⁷	33⁸	1204

4. Includes 19 observers from Asian Development Bank, Bank for International Settlements, Islamic Development Bank, Japan, and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations.

5. Includes 1 observers from The Association of Southeast Asian Nations

6. Includes 9 observers from Kazakhstan, Kyrgyz Republic, Tajikistan, The Association of Southeast Asian Nations, and Uzbekistan.

7. Includes 3 observers from Kazakhstan, Kyrgyz Republic, and Uzbekistan.

8. Training organized as part of the January 2020 macroeconomic framework technical assistance mission to Cambodia (Box 5).

ANNEX 6. STI STAFF MEMBERS



Stephan Danniger
Director



Ales Bulir
Deputy Director



Rajan Govil
Senior Economist



Tok Yoke Wang
Senior Economist



Mary Carmen Wong
Administration
Manager



Patricia Ong
Finance Officer



Bettina Guevarra
Senior Administrative
Executive



Thitipat Chansrinyom
Research Assistant



Reagin Lie
Information
Management Officer



Willip Ho
Information
Management and
Communication Officer



Alina Tan
Senior Programs
Executive



Elizabeth Teo
Senior Programs
Executive



Jolina Wong
Senior Programs
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