

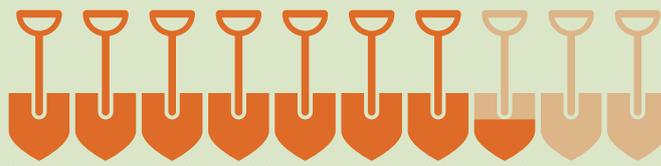
LAO PDR

Country Challenges

Agriculture is vital to the landlocked Southeast Asian nation of Lao PDR. The sector employs more than 73 percent of its labour force and contributes about 28 percent to the country's GDP. Lao PDR has a national strategy for the development of statistics, which came into force in 2010, that details broad areas for improvement of agricultural statistics. Lao PDR currently does not have an integrated system for agricultural statistics, and most of the data demands of the agriculture sector are met through its administrative reporting system, which has its own inherent weaknesses. There is concern regarding the reliability of the data emanating from this system and there is a need to migrate to better and more objective methods of data collection. Key data gaps include agricultural prices, costs of production, food stocks and agro-processing activities. Lack of uniform standards, concepts and methods for collection of agricultural statistics, an inadequate number and low level of statistical skills of staff, and inadequate coordination mechanisms among stakeholders are some additional important challenges.



Agriculture contributes about 28 percent to the GDP of Lao PDR



In Lao PDR, agriculture employs more than 73 percent of the labour force



Global Strategy Solutions

An In-depth Country Assessment (IdCA) by the Global Strategy to Improve Agricultural and Rural Statistics in Asia Pacific recommended a number of actions for Lao PDR. A suggested approach is to give priority to improving the administrative reporting system in the short term by introducing quality-control mechanisms and effective management and supervision, and gradually migrating to the use of sample-survey methods for data collection. The system must first build capacity in agricultural statistics through the development of statistical infrastructure, improved availability of statistical staff and regular training programmes to develop and refine staff statistical skills. It must improve both its national accounts and a wide range of basic agricultural statistics, such as for fisheries, forestry, livestock and crop production. Lao PDR should also develop new statistical systems and methodologies in important areas such as farm-gate prices. Statistics dissemination, both inside relevant Government agencies and to other stakeholders, also needs to be improved.

Current Country Work

The Global Strategy in Asia Pacific is collaborating with the Lao PDR Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry (MAF) and the Lao Statistics Bureau to improve agricultural statistics through the following actions.

- Improve the administrative reporting system for agricultural and rural statistics
- Improve dissemination of agricultural statistics
- Develop a system for collection of farm-gate prices
- Develop cost of production statistics for rice
- Improve the quality of data used on the food balance sheet
- Develop a strategic plan for agricultural and rural statistics

Towards a Statistics Secure Future

Lao PDR has advanced towards its goal of improved agricultural and rural statistics through receiving three missions and conducting two workshops in support of Global Strategy work. This has resulted in the completion of three key reports, including an In-Depth Country Assessment, a country proposal for short-term technical assistance and training, and a road map for a Strategic Plan for Agricultural and Rural Statistics (SPARS). The SPARS has been drafted and will be submitted for endorsement in early 2016. Improvement of the administrative reporting system will also be launched as a short-term country action in 2016. Global Strategy collaboration has also encouraged the Government of Lao PDR to launch both a Steering Committee and Technical Working Group for agricultural and rural statistics, which will enable quick action on the SPARS, and its better integration with the National Strategy for the Development of Statistics.



FAO Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific
39 Phra Atit Road
Bangkok 10200, Thailand
GlobalStrategy-AP@fao.org
www.gsars.org

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