

Country Challenges

A Pacific island nation made up of the two main islands of Upolu and Savai'i, Samoa has only a little over 12 percent of its mountainous land area devoted to agriculture, but close to 40 percent of its population employed in the sector. Though the government has set up the Samoa Bureau of Statistics (SBS), a lack of available professional and technical support staff constrains its operations. Samoa conducts an agriculture census only once per decade, and it, and related surveys, depend on external financial assistance. This has resulted in data gaps and inconsistencies in a number of areas, including crops, livestock, fisheries, water and the environment. Technical skills are also lacking, with a need for more training in the gathering and using of good data. The use and value of good statistics is also not widely understood, and needs to be demonstrated to a wider range of decision and policy makers.



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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 Samoa. Professional and technical support staff numbers need to be boosted, as well as more staff made available for statistical activities. Closer cooperation and collaboration between the various Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries (MAF) divisions and the Samoa Bureau of Statistics should be made a priority, and new activities need to be properly funded, through external assistance if necessary. Training should be held to improve skills in statistical and survey techniques, analytics and sample selection for agricultural surveys. Samoa should initiate a more regular – biannual or annual – agricultural survey programme. It is also recommended that data gaps and inconsistencies be addressed through better coordination, more resource mobilization and higher personnel capacity. The value of data for decision makers should also be made clearer, and capacity building should focus more on dissemination of information relevant to policy.

Current Country Work

The Global Strategy in Asia Pacific is collaborating with the Samoa Bureau of Statistics and Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries to activate an ambitious plan that will meet the country's agricultural and rural statistics needs. The plan will concentrate on the following actions.

- Support planning for the 2015 Agricultural Survey
- Develop a questionnaire for the Agricultural Survey
- Develop and adopt a sample selection methodology for the Agricultural Survey
- Evaluate the potential of an agricultural module approach for use in other national surveys
- Develop an agricultural module survey tool
- Improve the capacity of the SBS and MAF in agricultural statistics and survey activities
- Develop a Strategic Plan for Agricultural and Rural Statistics (SPARS)

Towards a Statistics Secure Future

Samoa has advanced towards its goal of improved agricultural and rural statistics through receiving four missions and conducting three 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 Agriculture and Rural Statistics. The first five short-term activities identified in the country proposal and under current country work have been completed or are ongoing, under the management of the FAO Subregional Office for the Pacific Islands through a technical partnership agreement. Capacity building for Samoa Bureau of Statistics and Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries is also underway and ongoing. The Global Strategy in Asia Pacific is also assisting with the capacity building, and is collaborating with the SBS and MAF to develop a Strategic Plan for Agricultural and Rural Statistics.



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