

Background Note

Global Strategy to Improve Agricultural and Rural Statistics – Progress with Implementation in Asia Pacific

Note by the Regional Office – September 2014

Summary

This document provides some background information on the Global Strategy to Improve Agricultural and Rural Statistics, including information about the regional component. The focus is on the implementation of a Regional Action Plan for Asia Pacific. The paper describes activities related to the Global Strategy which have been undertaken by each of the implementing partners.

1. Global Strategy to Improve Agricultural and Rural Statistics

1.1 Scope and outcome of the Global Strategy

To address the weakness in basic data and availability of information including emerging data needs in developing countries, a [Global Strategy to Improve Agricultural and Rural Statistics](#) was developed through a long and extensive consultative process with national and international organisations and endorsed by the United Nations Statistical Commission (UNSC) in February 2010.

Outcome of the Global Strategy is to enable target developing countries (90 targeted countries in 2012-2017, including 20 in Asia Pacific) to build sustainable statistical systems that will produce accurate and reliable agricultural and rural data to inform and guide policy analysis and decision-making. The conceptual framework of the Global Strategy covers a broader scope of agriculture statistics by including aspects of forestry, fisheries, land and water use in order to address the emerging and closely related economic, social and environmental issues faced by policy makers.

Its **three main pillars** are the following:

- Establishing a minimum set of core data required to meet current and emerging demands
- Integrating agriculture into the national statistical system to improve comparability across economic, social, and environmental domains
- Fostering the sustainability of agricultural statistical systems through governance and statistical capacity building

In order to achieve the outcome of the Global Strategy **four global outputs** have been identified:

- Effective governing bodies set up and functioning at global and regional levels
- Coordinating bodies of the national statistical system, legal frameworks and strategic plans established in the target countries, to enable the integration of agriculture into the national statistical systems
- New cost effective methods for data collection, analysis and dissemination developed and disseminated
- Increased capacity of agricultural statistics staff in regional training centres and target countries

A [Global Action Plan](#) for implementation was endorsed in February 2012 by the UNSC.

1.2 Regional component of the Global Strategy

A regional structure has been set up to ensure appropriate implementation of the Global Strategy in the regions. This structure includes a [regional office](#) for Asia Pacific based in Bangkok, Thailand at the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAORAP), responsible for coordination and technical assistance issues, a training component which is the responsibility of the Statistical Institute for Asia & the Pacific (SIAP), and a Regional Steering Committee to guide implementation decisions. While not a formal part of the partnership, the Asian Development Bank is funding and undertaking research activities related to the Global Strategy. A [Regional Action Plan \(RAP\)](#) has been developed to guide implementation in the region.

2. Regional Office Activities

Establishment of the Regional Office

The Regional Office has been established and is functioning.

Finalization of the Regional Action Plan and overall project budget

A Regional Action Plan (RAP) was initially developed by a Steering Group on Agricultural Statistics set up for this purpose. Following the establishment of the Regional Office, detailed workplan and budget documents were prepared in conjunction with the lead agency for the training component, the Statistical Institute for Asia and the Pacific (SIAP).

The completed RAP was endorsed at the Third Session of the ESCAP Committee on Statistics on 13th December 2012 (E/ESCAP/CST(3)/17, decision 3/6) and approved by the Global Steering Committee (GSC) on 26th February 2013. A copy of the RAP may be accessed online at: <http://www.fao.org/asiapacific/rap/agricultural-statistics-in-ap/globalstrategy-in-ap/en/>.

Regional Steering Committee

The Regional Office (RO) acts as secretariat for the Regional Steering Committee (RSC) which is the ultimate decision-making body at the regional level. The RSC is comprised of eight country members as well as members representing donors, implementing partners and training and research institutions. The RO organized the formation of the RSC, provided secretariat support and prepared a number of discussion and information papers for the two meetings of the RSC in 2013.

The inaugural meeting of the RSC was held in April 2013 with the main purposes of the meeting being approval of the 2013 work plan and budget, and the identification of initial countries for inclusion in 2013. The main outcomes of this meeting included:

- The election of a Chair and Deputy Chair, who would facilitate meetings of the RSC and to also serve as representatives for Asia Pacific on the Global Steering Committee.
- Endorsement of the Annual Work plan and budget for 2013 for Technical Assistance and Training Components.
- Selection of Bhutan, Indonesia, and Sri Lanka as initial countries for prioritizing RAP implementation in 2013. Samoa was also later selected for implementation in 2013 by an out of session decision.

The second meeting of the RSC was held in November 2013 with the main purpose of the meeting being the identification of additional countries for inclusion in 2014. The main outcomes of this meeting included:

- Selection of Fiji, Georgia, Lao PDR, and Myanmar as implementing countries in 2014.
- Bangladesh was also endorsed as an implementing country for 2014 noting the similarity of ongoing work being done by the Regional Office and the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation.

In addition, given the need to have a number of reports endorsed by the RSC at various times, the RSC agreed to a set of arrangements to enable endorsement out of session. It is expected that the November 2014 meeting will identify additional countries for inclusion during 2015.

Coordination

This activity is mainly devoted to ensuring the coordination of the Global Strategy's implementation at regional level. To achieve this goal the following activities are undertaken:

- Regional Office staff attend all relevant technical meetings within the scope of the Global Strategy, particularly meetings organized by ESCAP. Participation in these meetings enables the RO to report on the progress of the Global Strategy, share the main achievements and explore other areas of collaboration. It also facilitates informal meetings with Resource Partners and back to back governing body meetings.
- The training component of the GS in the region is implemented by the Statistical Institute for Asia Pacific (SIAP), while the Asian Development Bank (ADB) is actively collaborating on the research component. It is noted that ADB is not receiving funds from the Global Trust Fund, hence it is collaborating with its own resources. In order to improve communication and enhance open discussion and collaboration between the regional partners and at regional level, a Task Force meeting is held monthly and regional coordination meetings are held periodically.
- FAO's coordination role will be prominent during the interventions at country level. FAO will ensure coordination among partners in order to ensure the best result for each country and avoid duplication.

Reporting activities

Under the governance arrangements set in place for the Global Strategy, the RO is required to prepare and present a set of reports each year. These reports are prepared in conjunction with implementing partners. Those reports required during 2014 are:

- 2013 Activity Report for endorsement by the RSC and then approval by the GSC (approved in April)
- 2013 Certified Financial Report for endorsement by the RSC and then approval by the GSC (approved in May)
- 2014 Workplan for endorsement by the RSC and then approval by the GSC (approved in March)
- 2014 Budget for endorsement by the RSC and then approval by the GSC (approved in March)
- Draft 2015 Workplan and Budget for consideration by the GSC (December)
- Progress reports to each RSC meeting

Communication, advocacy

This activity will be mainly devoted to increase the promotion and visibility of the Global Strategy at regional level and support the Resource Mobilization efforts:

- During 2014, the regional office will draft a regional communication plan in line with the global communication plan. Promotional materials, using the newly established visual identity, will be developed.
- Resource mobilization efforts will be conducted in 2014. Advocacy activities (such as donor meetings and expert meetings) will be focused on the identified technical assistance needs.
- The Regional Office will conduct missions to establish new contacts and consolidate relations with donors in the countries.
- The Regional Office established a website to disseminate the relevant information such as the regional action plan and documents, regional conference, expert consultation meetings, and related links for the GS.

Monitoring and Evaluation

The M&E framework developed by the Global Office will be used as the basis to assess progress in the implementation of the Global Strategy at regional level. The Regional Office is working with the High level consultant on identifying suitable indicators at regional level.

3. Technical Assistance Activities

Initial Country Assessment Questionnaire

Most countries in Asia Pacific completed a pilot [Country Assessment Questionnaire \(CAQ\)](#) in 2011-2012 and the information contained in the questionnaire has been used to derive a set of capacity indicators for those countries on a range of aspects of statistical capacity. A Country Profile has also been produced. This information was used as one factor when considering which countries should be selected for detailed assessment.

In-depth Country Assessment Guidelines and Reports

An [In-depth Country Assessment \(IdCA\)](#) is the starting point for work in each selected country. The intention is to provide a comprehensive assessment of current statistical capacity, including the identification of areas of weakness. The IdCA and its resulting report set the platform for all future work in the country. The Regional Office developed a set of guidelines for the conduct of the IdCA process and a template for the resulting report.

Country Proposal document

Information gathered during the IdCA process will be used to produce a Country Proposal document. The Country Proposal documents are intended to act as a guide for short and medium term activities. They will provide a list of projects needed to improve agricultural and rural statistics, in priority order. For each project a description of the proposed objectives and outcomes will be provided, as well as a broad description of the work needed and approximate costs.

Global Strategy funds will be used to implement some of the high priority short-term projects, and it is expected that a number of these projects will start in 2014, particularly in the countries which started the IdCA process in 2013. Donor funding will be needed for remaining projects.

Strategic Plan for Agricultural and Rural Statistics (SPARS)

A SPARS is a long-term (10 year) strategy document for agricultural and rural statistics. It is intended to be compatible with, and integrated into, a country's National Strategy for the Development of Statistics (NSDS). In-country work should include preparation of a roadmap for the development of a SPARS.

In-country activities

A broad outline of the technical assistance to be provided to each country is as follows:

- Documentation is sent to National Strategy Coordinators (NSC) and consultants
- A meeting of all stakeholders is held early in the process to
 - Provide an overview of the Global Strategy
 - Discuss the minimum core data set
 - Outline the process to be followed
- NSC and consultants conduct individual interviews with all stakeholders to
 - Gather information about existing data availability and quality
 - Identify data gaps
 - Identify deficiencies in aspects of the agricultural statistics system
 - Discuss and review the minimum set of core data
 - Assess capacity of the Agricultural Statistical System to produce minimum core dataset
- Draft assessment report is prepared to document
 - Current data availability, quality and accessibility
 - How data is used by policy makers and other users
 - Data limitations and gaps
 - Minimum set of core indicators
 - Identified areas for improvement

- The RO scrutinizes draft report for completeness and coverage before circulation to stakeholders
- Stakeholder's workshop reviews draft report and discusses priorities
- NSC and consultants revise report
- Further stakeholder consultations
- NSC and consultants create a draft roadmap for production of a SPARS
- NSC and consultants produce a draft country proposal for future priority work
- National stakeholder's workshop is held to review and endorse the revised assessment report, the roadmap and the country proposal
- NSC and consultants finalise the above documents in line with workshop comments
- Documents are sent to RSC for consideration and discussion on future work
- Regional office drafts proposals for short term activities and identifies funding sources

On average, three missions per country will be conducted by International consultants. The Regional Office provides Backstopping support to in-country activities through:

- Liaison with NSO/MoA/FAOR to organize missions to countries
- Scrutiny of in-country outputs such as IdCA Reports, Country Proposals and Roadmap for SPARS for quality and completeness
- Organization advocacy activities at national level through meetings with donors
- Preparation of proposals for short term assistance and follow up with their approval and implementation

A brief overview of each of the countries for which in-country activity has started is given below.

Bangladesh

Bangladesh is one of the anchor countries for the Global Strategy, with country level work funded under a Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation project. The IdCA in the country has been completed through an extensive consultative process by an inter-ministerial Task Force. The IdCA report has been validated in a workshop of stakeholders. A donor's meeting was also organized to present the IdCA report and resulting country proposals for further technical assistance. A project document to provide assistance for improving crop estimation and monitoring, as well as for measuring food stocks is being prepared for funding under a Global AMIS project being implemented by FAO. The main focus of the Country Proposal for funding through the Regional Action Plan will be the preparation of a SPARS, which will include

- Improving coordination and institutional relationships
- Establishment of an integrated plan of surveys and related calendar
- Preparation of a Strategy Paper and
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As this stage it is foreseen that SPARS will have backward linkage with NSDS and forward linkage with the National Development Planning process for the agriculture sector.

Bhutan

Two missions have been completed in Bhutan, an IdCA report has been endorsed by the Government and a Country Proposal paper is being prepared. Expected projects (some of which will start in 2014) include:

- Improvements to annual crop statistics through improved survey design and a range of training for relevant staff

- Improvements to annual livestock data through improvements to the frame and revised questionnaire design
- A range of improvements to institutional and HR capacity of line agencies
- Production of updated and revised Land Cover Maps
- Support to the development of the next Census of Renewable Natural Resources
- Support to the development of the next Bhutan Living Standards Survey

Indonesia

Two missions have been completed in Indonesia, an IdCA report has been endorsed by the key stakeholders and is awaiting Government endorsement, and a Country Proposal paper is being prepared. The main focus in Indonesia is the quality of current annual crop area and production estimates. It is proposed to replace the current system with a more scientific, sample survey based approach, as well as provide appropriate training and resources to enumerators. Improvements will also be made to statistics in the Fisheries and Forestry sectors. Development of a SPARS and its integration into the NSDS 2015-19 through collaborative approach with STATCAP project has also been identified as a priority area.

Samoa

Two missions have been completed in Samoa, an IdCA report is awaiting Government endorsement, and a Country Proposal paper is being prepared. The main focus in Samoa is the lack of availability of regular estimates of agriculture production. The three main projects planned to address this issue are:

- Re-introduction of an Agricultural Survey every ten years (which would enable an Agricultural Survey / Census every 5 years), including
 - Project planning
 - Questionnaire development
 - Sample design
- Development of an agriculture ‘module’ to be included in other national surveys as appropriate
 - Evaluation of an agriculture module tool
 - Development of the questionnaire
- Improved capacity of staff in relevant ministries
 - Detailed capacity needs assessment
 - Subsequent training to address needs

Sri Lanka

Two missions have been completed in Sri Lanka, an IdCA report is awaiting Government endorsement, and a Country Proposal paper is being prepared. Main projects in the Country Proposal include

- Assessing data needs for National Accounts
- Improving rice crop cutting surveys
- Improving crop forecasting
- Processing and dissemination of Agriculture Census data
- Improving production estimates of selected highland crops
- Improving Cost of Production statistics for Fisheries
- Improving Cost of Production statistics for Rice

- Improving data quality in Food Balance Sheets
- Improving livestock production statistics

Fiji and Lao PDR

An initial mission has been completed in each of these countries and the first draft of an IdCA is currently being prepared.

Further activities in country to the end of 2014.

The following activities are expected to be undertaken for *Bangladesh, Bhutan, Indonesia, Samoa and Sri Lanka*:

- Third mission and stakeholder's workshop to
 - present and endorse all documents
 - inform donors and seek their support
- Work to start on selected projects from Country Proposal documents.

Second missions are expected to be completed in *Fiji and Lao PDR* by the end of 2014.

An initial mission to Myanmar is expected to be undertaken by the end of 2014, and one to Georgia is expected early in 2015.

4. Training Activities

4.1 Status of training activities in 2014

The status of implementation of training activities in 2014 is reflected in the table below:

Activities	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
1. Organizational meeting of Network for Coordination of Statistical Training in the Asia & Pacific Region (the 'Network'), including creation of expert groups		C		
2. Development and piloting of system for accrediting/certifying expert trainers for agricultural statistics		O	O	O
3. Experts meeting on skills framework and training needs assessment tools			O, C	
4. Regional training-of-trainers on applying skills framework and training needs assessment tools and country pilots				S
5. Experts meeting—e-learning strategy for training in agricultural statistics			O	Q1-2015
6. Development of standardized training syllabus and materials for producing the minimum core data—basic statistical methods for agricultural statistics	O	O	O	O
7. Preparatory activities for piloting graduate degree programme curriculum for agricultural statisticians through twinning arrangements		O	O	O
8. Regional Training of Trainers Workshops on Basic Statistical Methods for Agricultural & Rural Statistics (2)				S, S
9. Developing e-learning tools and piloting one e-learning course for agricultural and rural statistics			O	Q1-2015
10. In-country/sub-regional training (2) on improving advocacy and communication skills of agricultural statisticians				S
11. Sub-regional course on data analysis to support agricultural policy analysis (in collaboration with CAPSA)				S
12. Meeting of 'the Network' to review outcomes of pilots, applications of skills framework and training needs assessment, proposal for graduate degree programme curriculum			O	Q2-2015

Legend: C-completed; O- Ongoing; S-scheduled

The organizational meeting of the Network for the Coordination of Statistical Training in Asia and the Pacific (the "Network") was held 22 - 24 April 2014 in Chiba, Japan. The Network was established by the Bureau of the ESCAP Committee on Statistics, with the Statistical Institute for Asia and the Pacific (SIAP) as its secretariat, to facilitate information sharing and

promoting coordination among national statistical training institutions, regional and international statistical training providers, and donor agencies providing funding for statistical training in the Asia-Pacific region.

Ten member States (Australia, China, Indonesia, Islamic Republic of Iran, Japan, Pakistan, Philippines, Republic of Korea, Russian Federation and Thailand) and seven regional and international agencies (ADB, FAO, IMF, ISI, SPC, World Bank and USP) attended the meeting. India, New Zealand, Eurostat, Paris21, SESRIC and UNSD also signed on to the Network.

The members agreed on a set of objectives, strategies and mechanisms for promoting coordination and facilitating information-sharing in support of the key regional statistics development programmes pursued by the Committee on Statistics. Towards this end, the Network adopted its 2014-2015 Work Programme that would (a) develop, test and finalize tools and a systematic process for a coordinated regional statistical training needs assessment and analysis to be conducted in 2015; create a web-based platform to facilitate the sharing of existing training materials and a database of statistics experts/trainers and development of e-learning courses; establish a sub-group in support of the training component of the Asia-Pacific Regional Action Plan of the Global Strategy to Improve Agricultural and Rural Statistics.

SIAP convened the 6th Workshop on Forging Partners in Statistical Training: Coordination and Networking for Agricultural and Rural Statistics to organize the sub-group on agricultural and rural statistics on 2-4 September 2014. Heads of statistical training institutions and agricultural and rural statistics statisticians and experts from international agencies, research institutes and universities participated. FAO and UN Economic Commission for Africa, the Global Strategy training coordinator for the African region also participated. With support to the training objectives of the RAP with sustainability as its primary goal, participants agreed on the objectives, role and functions of the sub-group, and a programme of work. Developing and applying core skills framework and training needs assessments, coordinated development of training materials and the design of training-for-trainers modules are some of the expected outputs of the sub-group.

An experts meeting to develop guidelines for developing core skills frameworks for agricultural and rural statisticians and training needs assessment tools for agricultural and rural statistics immediately followed the workshop on 5 September 2014.

4.2 Training activities planned for remainder of 2014

Preparations are ongoing for training courses targeting priority RAP countries to be organized by SIAP during the 4th quarter of 2014, as follows:

- Regional Training Course on Sampling Methods for Producing Core Data Items for Agricultural and Rural Statistics [29 September – 10 October 2014]. Jakarta, Indonesia. In collaboration with BPS-Statistics Indonesia.
- Regional Workshop on Integrated Survey Framework for Agricultural and Rural Statistics [29 November – 3 December 2014]. Tehran, Islamic Republic of Iran. In collaboration with Statistical Centre of Iran.
- Regional Training-of-Trainers Course on Developing and Applying Core Skills Framework and Training Needs Assessment Tools for Countries [November 2014]. Chiba, Japan.

- Sub-regional Workshop on Improving Advocacy and Communication Skills of Agricultural and Rural Statisticians [November 2014]. Beijing, China. In collaboration with China-National Bureau of Statistics.
- Sub-regional Course on Data Use in Agricultural Policy Analysis [December 2014]. Venue to be determined. In collaboration with ESCAP Centre for Alleviation of Poverty through Sustainable Agriculture.

With reference to activities 2, 5, 6, 7 and 9 the table of activities above, coordination meetings with the global office and with ECA, with the aim of carrying out a collaborative programme of work is envisioned. The first such meeting was held on 10 September 2014 in Rome.

5. ADB Activities in Support of the Global Strategy

ADB's regional policy and advisory technical assistance (*R-PATA*) 8029: *Improving Agricultural and Rural Statistics for Food Security* aims to enhance the coverage and quality of agricultural and rural statistics for data intensive analysis and monitoring of policies of food security in the region and to assist some countries for developing country action plans in support of the Global Strategy to Improve Agricultural and Rural Statistics. R-PATA 8029 is being implemented in five pilot countries – Bhutan, Lao PDR, Maldives, Thailand and Viet Nam.

Through R-PATA 8029, the following activities were completed in collaboration with the implementing agencies:

Development and Implementation of Country Action Plans

- Extensive consultations with major stakeholders of agricultural and rural statistics were conducted in Bhutan (September 2012), Lao PDR and Viet Nam (November 2012) and Maldives (March 2013). The current situation and issues in the compilation of agricultural and rural statistics in each country were identified and discussed collectively in consultative workshops with stakeholders.
- The minimum core data sets were identified in each country listed above through a series of consultations. The country-specific minimum core data set became the basis for drafting the country action plan that went through review and further consultations with major stakeholders including the government agency responsible for budget allocation.
- High level meetings between top management of key government agencies were conducted in Viet Nam and Lao PDR (September 2013) to (i) showcase the importance of agricultural and rural statistics for informed decision making, (ii) solicit support for the implementation of the country action plan, and (iii) advocate for adequate resources for agricultural and rural statistics.
- The approval of the Lao PDR and Viet Nam Country Action Plans in December 2013 enhanced coordination and established mechanism for continuous dialogue between key agencies responsible for collecting and compiling agricultural and rural statistics. The Lao PDR action plan was endorsed by the Vice Ministers of the Ministry of Planning and Investment and the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry, while the Deputy Director General of the General Statistics Office and the Vice Minister of the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development endorsed the implementation of the action plan in Viet Nam.
- Consultation for the revision of the Renewable Natural Resources (RNR) Statistical Framework was also conducted in October 2013 in Bhutan to streamline statistical mandates and form the basis for the creation of RNR Statistical Steering Committee.

Training activities

- Basic training on statistics was provided to the staff of the Center for Agricultural Statistics (CAS), Ministry of Agriculture & Forestry on September 2013. Staff were trained on how to interpret the official statistics that Lao Statistics Bureau (LSB) disseminate and those that were generated from the Census of Agriculture and National Vulnerability and Risk Survey which they helped conduct.
- Training on the Application of Sample Survey was conducted in Viet Nam on February 2014. Technical staff of the General Statistics Office (GSO) and Center for Informatics and Statistics (CIS), Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development in Viet Nam were trained on basic sample survey techniques that are applicable for crops and livestock production sample surveys.

On-going methodological research

- R-PATA 8029 supported the review, analysis and documentation of good practices as well as existing agricultural datasets including causes of inconsistencies and discrepancies in agricultural data from different sources and ways to reconcile them. It also assisted some countries in the implementation of relevant and sound statistical methodologies that is best suited to the situation of the country. Some of the ongoing methodological studies under R-PATA 8029 are the following:
 - i. Lao PDR: Comparative Analysis of Estimates from Household Surveys, Census of Agriculture and Administrative Reporting System
Completed Activities: Datasets from National Vulnerability and Risk Survey, Lao Expenditure and Consumption Survey, Census of Agriculture and the annual publication from administrative reporting system have been examined and compiled for analysis. Analytical framework has been drafted
 - ii. Bhutan: Comparative Analysis of Rural and Urban Households Using Bhutan Living Standard Survey (BLSS)
Completed Activities: Survey datasets from the BLSS 2004, 2007 and 2012 were consolidated. Analytical framework has been drafted.
 - iii. Viet Nam: Understanding the Application of Sample Surveys for Agricultural and Rural Statistics
Completed Activities: Datasets and reports from Rural, Agricultural and Fishery Census, Living Standards Survey, Multiple Cluster Indicators Survey, Statistical Yearbook, reports from the MARD's administrative reporting systems and other data sources on agriculture that are used for compilation of national accounts and for policy analysis were compiled for analysis.
- R-PATA 8029 also supported the adoption of Agricultural Land Information System (ALIS) for agricultural area estimation in the Philippines. In collaboration with the ASEAN Food Security Information System (AFSIS), two training courses were provided to Bureau of Agricultural Statistics (BAS) staff: (i) Training on the use of GPS mobile mapper for agricultural area estimation and (ii) Training on the use of modified ALIS software. R-PATA 8029 supported the pilot testing of the methodology in one province and the validation of the results through field survey.
- The regional capacity development technical assistance (R-CDTA) 8369 also assist four pilot countries – Lao PDR, Philippines, Thailand and Viet Nam, to apply and adopt emerging technologies and tools such as remote sensing for the estimation of crop area and production. A pre-inception meeting was held in September 2013 to discuss in detail the R-CDTA 8369's activities and schedule and the approach that will be taken to develop the rice crop area and production estimation software applications with the implementing agencies and Japan Aerospace Exploration Agency (JAXA), the project's technical adviser.

Schedule of Activities and Work plan:

Table 2 shows the implementation schedule of the activities under R-PATA 8029 and R-CDTA 8369 in each pilot country.

Table 2. Implementation Schedule by Country

Activities	Schedule
Lao PDR	
Training of technical staff of Center for Agricultural Statistics (CAS) on data handling, data analysis and report writing for Research 1: Comparative Analysis of Data Sources	March 2014
Training on questionnaire design, survey operations, planning and budgeting for Research 2: Designing Crops and Livestock Production Survey using Census of Agriculture as Sampling Frame	April 2014
Presentation of the sampling strategy, questionnaire and survey operations plan to CAS technical staff and management	April 2014
In-country inception workshop for Innovative Data Collection Methods for Agricultural and Rural Statistics	
Training on software installation and configuration, including basic training on Linux OS and remote sensing; and training on the use of the software applications using archived data	August 2014
Comparison of area and production estimates using archived satellite imagery and other data with available official statistics	August 2014
Application of software to capture at least one cropping cycle	July-November 2015
Philippines	
Presentation of results and recommendation on the adoption of Agricultural Land Information System (ALIS) in the Philippines	February 2014
In-country inception workshop for Innovative Data Collection Methods for Agricultural and Rural Statistics	
Training on software installation and configuration, including basic training on Linux OS and remote sensing; and training on the use of the software applications using archived data	September 2014
Comparison of area and production estimates using archived satellite imagery and other data with available official statistics	September 2014
Application of software to capture at least one cropping cycle	July-November 2015
Thailand	
In-country inception workshop for Innovative Data Collection Methods for Agricultural and Rural Statistics	
Training on software installation and configuration, including basic training on Linux OS and remote sensing; and training on the use of the software applications using archived data	September 2014
Comparison of area and production estimates using archived satellite imagery and other data with available official statistics	September 2014
Application of software to capture at least one cropping cycle	July-November 2015
Viet Nam	
Drafting of analytical framework and analysis of datasets for Research 1: Understanding the Applications of Sample Survey for Agricultural and Rural Statistics	March 2014
Training on questionnaire design, survey operations, planning	March 2014

and budgeting for Research 2: Application of Sample Survey	
Presentation of the sampling strategy, questionnaire and survey operations plan to General Statistics Office (GSO) and Center for Informatics and Statistics (CSI) technical staff and management	April 2014
In-country inception workshop for Innovative Data Collection Methods for Agricultural and Rural Statistics	
Training on software installation and configuration, including basic training on Linux OS and remote sensing; and training on the use of the software applications using archived data	September 2014
Comparison of area and production estimates using archived satellite imagery and other data with available official statistics	September 2014
Application of software to capture at least one cropping cycle	June-November 2015

The two TA initiatives will also support the dissemination of research results and analytical reports through conferences, workshops and seminars as well as through interactive websites such as the Community for Agricultural and Rural Statistics (CARS).

6. Synergies between FAO Regular Programme Activities and the Global Strategy

The FAO regular program of activities, particularly the normative work of development of standards, capacity building and technical assistance, includes many activities relating to improvement of agricultural statistics in member countries. Most of the objectives of the Global Strategy to Improve Agricultural and Rural Statistics are covered by FAO's ongoing regular programme. FAO recognizes the importance of building synergies and complementarities between on-going FAO programme of works and activities of the Global Strategy, for the maximum benefit of countries. At operational level these synergies are established by: (1) assigning the GS work to FAO staff having mission to countries for FAO funded projects; (2) using FAO regular programmed funds to organize activities towards fulfilment of goals of the GS, jointly with other Implementing Partners of the GS in the region. One such event is the Expert Meeting on Crop Monitoring for Improved Food Security organized by FAO-ADB partnership, built on the principles of comparative advantage, pooling of resources and sharing of experience and knowledge. FAO management will welcome further proposals of partnership for such impact making events which contribute to improvement of agricultural and rural statistics, as also for fulfilment of Strategic Objectives of FAO.

7. Conclusion

Implementation of the Global Strategy is well advanced in five countries (Bangladesh, Bhutan, Indonesia, Samoa and Sri Lanka) and started in another two (Fiji and Lao PDR). Experience in the first five countries has enabled the procedures and reporting documents to be refined and they are now well established, though flexible enough to accommodate particular situations in an individual country.

Areas of high priority needs have been identified and work to address these areas will begin soon.