

Concept Note

Sixth meeting of the Regional Steering Committee for Asia and the Pacific for the Global Strategy to Improve Agricultural and Rural Statistics

17 November 2016,

Bangkok, Thailand

Background

The *Global Strategy to Improve Agricultural and Rural Statistics* initiative is the outcome of a three-year effort initiated by the UN Statistical Commission and supported in the Asia Pacific region by the Asian Development Bank (ADB), the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), and the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UNESCAP); as well as national statistics offices, agricultural ministries, and other government and private institutions producing and using agricultural statistics in the region.

Members of the Steering Group for Agricultural Statistics (SGAS) in Asia Pacific in early 2012 drafted a Regional Action Plan for the Asia Pacific region under the Global Strategy initiative with the objective to not only rebuild statistical systems producing agricultural statistics, but also to meet the emerging data requirements and the need to monitor cross-cutting issues. This Regional Action Plan for Asia and the Pacific has since been endorsed by the Asia and Pacific Commission on Agricultural Statistics (APCAS) at its twenty-fourth session in October 2012 (RAP Publication 2012/22) and subsequently, by the ESCAP Committee on Statistics at its third session in December 2012 (E/ESCAP/CST(3)/17, decision 3/6), and finally by the Global Steering Committee on 26 February 2013.

Each year, the Regional Steering Committee for Asia Pacific selects a number of countries to participate in Global Strategy implementation activities. To date, the Global Strategy in Asia Pacific is active in nineteen countries including: Afghanistan, Bhutan, Cambodia, China, Fiji, Georgia, Indonesia, Lao PDR, Malaysia, Maldives, Mongolia, Myanmar, Pakistan, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Sri Lanka, Tonga and Viet Nam; as well as in Bangladesh for a related project supported by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation. Work has also started on development of an overall Pacific Strategic Plan for small island countries. It was agreed upon by members of the Regional Steering Committee that regular meetings would be held at least biannually to monitor and provide further guidance to the implementation process.

Objective

The objective of the meeting is to bring together members of the Regional Steering Committee (RSC) to facilitate a broader consultation on the implementation of the Regional Action Plan for the *Global Strategy to Improve Agricultural and Rural Statistics*. The main areas of focus will be on the informing the progress made in the implementing countries, endorsement of technical assistance activities in Global Strategy implementing countries, the selection of additional countries for in-depth country assessment in 2017 and the approval of a workplan and budget for 2017.

Outputs

Outputs of the meeting are:

1. Provide RSC members with timely updates on the activities being carried out by the implementing partners so far in 2016;
2. Endorsement of technical assistance activities proposed by Global Strategy implementing countries in the Country Proposal Paper drafted and endorsed during the SPARS development process.
3. Selection of additional countries by RSC members for further implementation in 2017 under the *Global Strategy* initiative;
4. Detail to RSC members the process of in-depth country assessments being carried out in the 15 countries currently participating, as well as progress with training and research components;
5. An approved workplan and budget for 2017.

Participants

Participants of the meeting will include nominated members of the Regional Steering Committee comprising of national government representatives from Bhutan, China, Fiji, Lao PDR, Papua New Guinea, the Republic of Korea, Sri Lanka, and Viet Nam; as well as representatives from APAARI, ASEAN, NSSTA, SPC, DFID, SAARC, USDA-NASS, ADB, UNESCAP-SIAP, and FAO. A total of 21 participants are expected to participate in the 6th RSC meeting.

Duration

The 6th Regional Steering Committee meeting will last one day and is scheduled for 17 November 2016.

Venue

Participants will be informed at a later date.

Sustainability of the activity

One of the main outputs of the Regional Steering Committee will be endorsement of target countries for further implementation of the Global Strategy in 2017. The endorsement in this respect will review the guidelines of the implementation process and seek feedback from member countries on the suitability of planned activities for the benefit and efficiency of subsequent phases of the Global Strategy initiative.