



# Completion Report

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Project Number: 45261-001  
Technical Assistance Number: 8029  
December 2015

## Improving Agricultural and Rural Statistics for Food Security

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TA Number, Country, and Name:			Amount Approved: \$ 500,000.00	
TA 8029-REG: Improving Agricultural and Rural Statistics for Food Security			Revised Amount: N/A	
Executing Agency: Asian Development Bank		Source of Funding: TASF-Other Sources	Amount Undisbursed: \$ 74,181.64	Amount Utilized: \$ 425,818.36
TA Approval Date:	TA Signing Date:	Fielding of First Consultant(s):	TA Completion Date Original: 30 June 2013	Actual: 31 August 2015
13 December 2011	16 December 2011	5 March 2012	Account Closing Date Original: 30 June 2013	Actual: 30 September 2015

#### Description

The Regional Advisory Technical Assistance (R-PATA) 8029 was formulated in response to an invitation from the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) and the Committee on Statistics to support the development of a Regional Action Plan (RAP) for implementing the Global Strategy to Improve Agricultural and Rural Statistics (Global Strategy). The Global Strategy was endorsed by the United Nations Statistical Commission (UNSC) in February 2010 to reverse the trend of global decline in availability of reliable agricultural and rural statistics. It established the framework to rebuild statistical systems producing agricultural statistics, meet emerging data requirements, and address the need to monitor agricultural development.

The Global Strategy rests on three pillars: (i) establishment of a minimum set of core data that countries will collect to meet emerging demands, (ii) integration of agriculture into national statistical systems to satisfy the demands of policy makers and other users for comparable data across location and time, and (iii) ensuring sustainability of agricultural statistics through governance and statistical capacity building. ESCAP, Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and representatives of National Statistical Systems (NSS) were consulted in the planning of this TA which aimed at addressing an increased need for comprehensive, reliable, and up-to-date agricultural and rural statistics.

#### Expected Impact, Outcome, and Outputs

The TA's intended impact was to increase the use of agricultural and rural statistics in policy making to enhance food security. The expected outcome was an increase in agricultural and rural statistics of better quality collected on a regular basis. The TA's expected outputs were: (i) RAP preparation to improve agriculture and rural statistics; (ii) methodological studies; and (iii) training programs and workshops to support countries in developing their own action plans.

#### Delivery of Inputs and Conduct of Activities

The TA supported the following three activities: (i) development of the RAP to improve the agricultural and rural statistics in the Asia and the Pacific region, (ii) conduct of methodological studies, and (iii) train implementing agencies' staff on statistical concepts, techniques, and software packages.

A steering group for agricultural statistics (SGAS) was formed to spearhead the development of the RAP, the first activity under this TA. Both online and physical drafting committee meetings were conducted which allowed for broader consultation with senior officials of NSS and Ministries of Agriculture, representatives of International Organizations, and other global partners in the region. The RAP was based on careful assessment of capacities and constraints of agricultural statistical systems in the region, and its implementation was divided into three components: technical assistance, training, and research. FAO was designated as the lead on the technical assistance component, while ESCAP and the United Nations Statistical Institute for Asia and the Pacific (SIAP) handled the training component, and ADB led the research component. ADB provided the first draft of the RAP based on the inputs from countries, FAO, ESCAP, and SIAP. The final version of the RAP was endorsed by the ESCAP Committee on Statistics, the Asia Pacific Committee on Agricultural Statistics, and the UNSC. Upon the completion of the RAP, 20 pilot countries were selected by SGAS with the goal of formulating individual Country Action Plans (CAP's). ADB was assigned the task of drafting the CAP's for four countries—Bhutan, Lao PDR, Maldives, and Viet Nam.

As part of the second and third activities of this project, letters of no objection to participate in the R-PATA activities were sent to National Statistical Offices (NSO's) who expressed interest in the project and four countries (Bhutan, Lao PDR, Maldives, and Viet Nam) initially responded to ADB. Consultations through in-country workshops were conducted with major stakeholders in Bhutan (12–14 September 2012), Lao PDR (12–14 November 2012), Maldives (10–12 March 2013), and Viet Nam (19–21 November 2012). The in-country workshops focused on (i) discussing the current situation and issues in the agricultural statistical system; (ii) identification of the minimum core data items; and (iii) finalization of an effective results-based framework for each pilot country. The Project Officer and an international consultant undertook the initial country assessments, formulated recommendations, and proposed methodological studies and training activities to improve agricultural and rural statistics in these pilot countries. At this stage, CAP's were also drafted for Bhutan, Lao PDR, Maldives, and Viet Nam.

Upon the completion of the in-country workshops, there was a sudden change of government in the Maldives to which the Ministry of Fisheries and Agriculture and the Department of National Planning advised the Project Officer that they will not be able to proceed with the remainder of the TA's activities. Meanwhile, the Philippines expressed their interest in joining the project, and were taken aboard for subsequent activities of this TA.

In order to conduct methodological studies in the pilot countries, an extensive review of documentation on existing agricultural datasets within the pilot countries was conducted to outline good practices, causes of inconsistencies in results from different sources, and ways to reconcile them.

The Ministry of Agriculture and Forests and the National Statistics Bureau of Bhutan reviewed their existing system that employs mostly administrative reports and explored other potential data sources such as Bhutan Living Standards Survey (BLSS) to complete their minimum set of core data items for agricultural statistics. Collaboration with the Partnership in Statistics Development in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century (PARIS21) was pursued to assist Bhutan with documenting metadata for their existing data storage system. Two methodological studies were completed: (i) Comparative Analysis of the Socioeconomic and Demographic Characteristics of Rural and Urban Households, BLSS 2003, 2007, and 2012 and (ii) Examining the Available Data Sources for Agriculture Statistics.

In Lao PDR, the Center for Agricultural Statistics (CAS), Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry undertook a comparative analysis of existing data sources to improve their administrative reporting system by incorporating a supplemental approach that could render improved measures of data reliability. From the analysis, two methodological studies were drafted: (i) Examining the Existing Agriculture Data Sources and (ii) Improving Agricultural Reporting System for Agriculture. These studies were subsequently finalized through consultation with other stakeholders, including the Lao Statistics Bureau (LSB).

In the Philippines, ADB supported the Bureau of Agriculture Statistics (BAS) with the implementation of Agricultural Land Information System (ALIS). The project explored the use of Google Earth optical satellite imagery to supplement BAS's land use statistics. In collaboration with the ASEAN Food Security Information System (AFSIS), ALIS was pilot tested to provide estimates of areas planted for major crops using freely available satellite imagery. The TA also funded the modification of the software upon the completion of the pilot to support government planning at the provincial level. The adoption of ALIS resulted in recommendations for further studies using stratification measures which are expected to improve the reliability of estimates. The results of the study were presented during the National Convention on Statistics in 2013 and also published under the TA.

In Viet Nam, the General Statistics Office (GSO) and the Center for Informatics and Statistics (CIS), Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development worked together in planning a sample survey to enhance the quality and coverage of livestock production estimates. Under the collaboration, a paper on Designing a Livestock Production Probability Surveys was completed, which provided emphasis on the adoption of systematic sampling of villages for the livestock survey.

As part of the third activity of this TA, statistical training programs were offered to upgrade the skill of implementing agencies (IAs) staff involved in the production of agricultural statistics. For Bhutan, a workshop was organized with Paris21 on how to archive data and metadata from existing agricultural data collection systems. In Lao PDR, four training programs were offered: (i) Basic Course in Statistics, (ii) Understanding National Accounts, (iii) Basic Sample Survey Concepts and Analysis, and (iv) Improving the Data Collection System for Agricultural Statistics. In the Philippines, two training programs on (i) the use of GPS mobile mapper and (ii) the use of ALIS software for agricultural area estimation were organized. Four training programs were also conducted in Viet Nam: (i) Basic Sample Survey Concepts and Analysis, (ii) Intermediate Course on Probability Sample Survey, (iii) Redesigning the Livestock Survey: Designing Survey Instruments, and (iv) Questionnaire Design and Survey Operations Planning.

Dissemination activities and publication of papers were conducted to share the results of methodological studies. The TA also supported the publication and dissemination of the CAP in Lao PDR and Viet Nam. Consultation workshops were also organized to streamline statistical mandates through the review of government circulars such as the Bhutan Renewable Natural Resources Statistical Framework and the Lao PDR Minister of Agriculture's Decision on the Production, Management and Publication of Agricultural Statistics. Through the TA, the Community for Agricultural and Rural Statistics (CARS, cars.adb.org) website was developed to provide a forum for discussion and exchange of ideas to enhance the coverage and quality of agricultural and rural statistics and monitor policies on food security in the region. The CARS website is regularly updated and continues to track other agricultural TAs being managed by ERDI.

Five minor changes in implementation arrangements were approved to (i) assure that the IAs can adapt the results of the methodological studies; (ii) include training courses that were not in the initial planned activities; and (iii) realign the TA funds to accommodate the services of a copy editor for the finalization and publication of the methodological studies.

A total of 5.9 person-months of international consultancy services were used under the TA to provide technical advice and conduct training programs and workshops while 23.2 person-months of national consultancy services were used as administrative support to the IAs and assistance in the conduct of training programs, workshops, and dissemination activities. All individual international and national consultants performed satisfactorily and their work was closely monitored by TA's Project Officer.

#### **Evaluation of Outputs and Achievement of Outcome**

All the outputs listed in the design and monitoring framework were achieved. The Asia-Pacific Regional Action Plan to Improve Agricultural and Rural Statistics was developed, finalized, published, and disseminated under a co-publishing agreement among ADB, ESCAP, and FAO in November 2013. The regional action plan is a tool to assist countries on how to integrate agricultural statistics system into the national statistical system and to ensure that the countries can sustain the production of high-quality agricultural and rural statistics.

Out of the 20 target countries by the ESCAP and FAO, ADB assisted with the finalization of the CAP for Lao PDR and Viet Nam and drafting of the CAP for two additional countries—Bhutan and Maldives. The CAP enhanced the coordination and established mechanism for continuous dialogue between key agencies responsible for collecting and compiling agricultural statistics in these countries.

Six methodological papers were produced and published under the TA surpassing the target of four papers. These reports presented the results of the methodological studies that were specifically designed and undertaken with the IAs. Through the TA, ADB also co-published with FAO, the Proceedings of the Experts Meeting for Crop Monitoring for Food Security held in Lao PDR in February 2014.

In addition to undertaking the methodological studies, specific training courses were also offered to IAs. In Bhutan, 17 technical staff from different statistical units participated in the training on data documentation and archiving. In Lao PDR, 21 technical staff from CAS and LSB participated in the short course on national accounts, 22 staff participated in the training course on sample survey and analysis, and 19 staff attended the culminating course on improving the data collection systems for agricultural statistics. Ten participants from BAS, Philippines attended the training on GPS mobile mapper, use of ALIS software for agricultural area estimation, and validation of estimates through field survey. In Viet Nam, 37 staff from GSO and CIS attended the training course on sample survey design, 29 participants joined the intermediate course on probability sample survey, 34 staff participated in the training on redesigning their livestock surveys, and 29 staff trained on questionnaire design and on survey operations planning and budgeting. ADB also co-organized with FAO the Experts Meeting on Crop Monitoring for Food Security which was attended by 50 participants from different organizations in the region.

#### **Overall Assessment and Rating**

The overall TA rating is successful. The desired outputs were achieved within the revised completion date and budget in a cost-effective manner. The TA was highly relevant since it supported the development of the RAP and CAP which will increase the use of the agricultural and rural statistics in policy making to enhance food security. The TA was also effective since all the outputs of the TA were achieved and the TA resources were efficiently managed. The outcome achieved will be sustainable if the pilot countries continue to use their CAP to improve their compilation of agricultural and rural statistics.

#### **Major Lessons**

One of the lessons learned from this study is the need to provide technical assistance to DMCs in the future to improve administrative data collection systems since sample surveys are expensive to implement. Another lesson is to promote the application of innovative data sources such as satellite data to improve precision of agricultural and rural statistics. To monitor the goal of increasing agricultural and rural statistics by 30%, it is recommended that ADB continue to coordinate with IAs, partner organizations, and other major stakeholders through the Regional Steering Committee for Asia and the Pacific for the Global Strategy to Improve Agricultural and Rural Statistics by participating in the quarterly meetings, periodic review missions, and frequent email exchanges. Additionally, CARS website should continue to be utilized for other ongoing agricultural statistics work in the department. Finally, collaboration with regional departments is needed to get National Statistics Offices and Ministries of Agriculture to participate in the Global Strategy activities.

#### **Recommendations and Follow-Up Actions**

Three out of the five pilot countries—Bhutan, Lao PDR, and Viet Nam, were subsequently chosen as pilot countries for FAO's technical assistance component of the RAP. The progress of these countries will be monitored closely by ADB and if necessary, further technical assistance will be provided based on our experience.

TA = technical assistance.