GLOBAL STRATEGY to improve agricultural and rural statistics in ASIA PACIFIC
ADVANCING STATISTICS CAPACITY IN ASIA AND THE PACIFIC

Asia contains the world’s largest population and is its most rapidly developing continent. As this growth escalates, new challenges of implementing sustainable and equitable solutions in agriculture and rural development emerge, necessitating strong policies and actions grounded in accurate and applicable statistics. The Global Strategy seeks to empower developing countries to produce better agricultural and rural statistics for effective policy-making and to improve lives. It will also help countries in meeting the current and emerging data requirements to monitor the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

THE GLOBAL STRATEGY RESTS ON THREE FOUNDATIONAL PILLARS

- **Establish a Minimum Set of Core Data**
- **Integrate Agriculture into National Statistical Systems**
- ** Foster Sustainable Agricultural Statistics Systems**

DEVELOPING A SOUND AGRICULTURAL STATISTICS SYSTEM

The size and diversity of the Asia-Pacific region presents many challenges for gathering and utilizing good agricultural and rural statistics. This presents a number of constraints for their improvement, including weak institutional infrastructure, lack of human and financial resources, outdated methodologies, slow adoption of technology and absence of strategic planning. As the intense growth in the Asia-Pacific region continues, burgeoning economies will need to overcome these constraints through better collection and better-targeted use.

The Asia Pacific Regional Action Plan (RAP) builds on the Global Strategy by developing coordination and cooperation at the global, regional and national level. The Plan encompasses four key components: technical assistance, training, research and advocacy. This comprehensive foundation is key to improving statistical systems by encouraging government and partner participation.

ACHIEVING PROGRESS THROUGH COLLABORATION

The Asia Pacific Regional Action Plan convenes a diverse range of partners and stakeholders in the region, with implementation led by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the United Nation’s Statistical Institute for Asia and the Pacific (SIAP) and the Asian Development Bank (ADB). Global Strategy collaboration is achieved through a number of governance mechanisms, including a regional steering committee that meets bi-annually to guide implementation with the advice of national stakeholders and experts in the region. The Plan has collaborated with the Pacific Community (SPC) and launched a strategy for building sustainable agricultural statistics system in the Pacific region.

This broad coalition has already achieved progress in the RAP’s key components.
WHERE WE WORK

2013
- Bangladesh
- Bhutan
- Indonesia
- Samoa
- Sri Lanka

2014
- Georgia
- Lao PDR
- Myanmar

2015
- Afghanistan
- Cambodia
- Fiji
- Maldives
- Pakistan
- Papua New Guinea
- Viet Nam

2016
- China
- Malaysia
- Mongolia
- Tonga
IMPLEMENTATION

**16** In-depth Country Assessments (IdCA) were completed, 10 of which have already been endorsed by their respective governments.

**16** Country Project Proposals (CPP) were drafted based on IdCA.

Roadmaps for strategic plans for agricultural and rural statistics (SPARS) were completed.

CPPs and SPARS roadmaps paved the way for technical assistance activities in implementing countries in the Asia-Pacific region.
STRATEGIC PLANS FOR AGRICULTURAL AND RURAL STATISTICS (SPARS)

**STRATEGIC PLANNING STARTED**
Coordination mechanisms among key stakeholders of agricultural and rural statistics established

**SPARS DRAFTED**
- Strategic goals to overcome constraints, achieve vision and prioritize actions identified
- Detailed Action Plan: Timeframe, Budget, Financing Plan prepared
- Monitoring mechanisms established

**SPARS ENDORSED BY THE GOVERNMENT**
Commitment for development of Agricultural and Rural Statistics stated

**SPARS IMPLEMENTATION STARTED**
Selected priority activities in SPARS undertaken
PROGRESS OF GLOBAL STRATEGY IN ASIA-PACIFIC

2012
- Regional Action Plan for Global Strategy to Improve Agricultural and Rural Statistics adopted

2013
- First meeting of the Regional Steering Committee held in March

2014
- In-Depth Country Analysis (IdCA) completed in Bangladesh, Bhutan, Indonesia, Sri Lanka and Samoa
- Four new countries join the Global Strategy:
  - Bangladesh
  - Samoa
  - Bhutan
  - Sri Lanka
  - Indonesia

2015
- Bangladesh and Bhutan Government endorses IdCA
- Pacific Strategic Plan for Agricultural and Fisheries Statistics (P-SPAFS) initiated
- Mid-term conference held in Rome
- Six new countries join the Global Strategy:
  - Fiji
  - Georgia
  - Lao PDR
  - Myanmar
  - Afghanistan
  - Cambodia
  - Maldives
  - Pakistant
  - Papua New Guinea
  - Viet Nam

2016
- Strategic Plans for Agricultural and Rural Statistics (SPARS) completed in Bangladesh, Lao PDR, Samoa and Myanmar
- Work on technical assistance activities starts
- Four new countries join the Global Strategy:
  - China
  - Mongolia
  - Malaysia
  - Tonga

2017
- IdCA completed in 14 countries
- SPARS drafted in 13 countries
- P-SPAFS ready for endorsement
- 16 countries received technical assistance on GS cost-effective methods
ADB has implemented two technical assistance projects between 2011 and 2017 to support the Regional Action Plan for implementing the Global Strategy. The first was implemented to increase the use of agricultural and rural statistics in policy making to enhance food security through regular collection of better quality data. The second was implemented to promote the use of satellite-based technology in formulating and monitoring food security policies. Currently, ADB is implementing a third project, which aims to improve the coverage, quality, and timeliness of statistical indicators produced by national statistical systems in the region through the implementation of CAPI in field data collection activities.

**ADVOCACY**
Outreach to the donor community and collaborative efforts continue to engage additional partners, including the Pacific Community (SPC), the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) and the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA).

### TRAINING

**COLLABORATION WITH SIAP HAS LED TO SIGNIFICANT PROGRESS UNDER THE TRAINING COMPONENT OF GLOBAL STRATEGY:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Training Area</th>
<th>Details</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>99</strong> statisticians and trainers were trained in building training resources</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>86</strong> statisticians and policy makers trained in analyzing global food and agricultural systems</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>47</strong> participants from 21 countries trained on Computer Assisted Personal Interviewing (CAPI)</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>23</strong> participants from 17 countries trained on 'New Food Balance Sheet Methodology and Tools'</td>
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<td><strong>24</strong> participants from 13 countries trained in statistical sampling methods</td>
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<td><strong>20</strong> participants from 15 countries trained in Cost of Agricultural Production Statistics</td>
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<td><strong>17</strong> participants from 7 countries trained on the use of ICT tools for survey data analysis</td>
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<td><strong>8</strong> countries trained on the use of cost effective methods</td>
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<td><strong>5</strong> trainings on innovative data collection methods were held in 3 countries</td>
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**COMPUTER ASSISTED PERSONAL INTERVIEW (CAPI)**

Computer Assisted Personal Interviewing (CAPI) allows the user to record responses on a computer or tablet instead of the traditional method of using a paper and pencil (PAPI). It offers a cost-effective and sustainable solution for conducting large-scale surveys by reducing the resources required for data entry, processing and validation.

The use of tablet computers further enables new opportunities with the ability to capture new multimedia data types such as audio recordings, photos, and GPS coordinates.

**COST OF PRODUCTION STATISTICS**

Agricultural Cost of Production (CoP) serves as a means to better understand and assess farm operations by valuing of all inputs and processes used in the production processes of crops and livestock. Data on agricultural CoP is generally scarce and unreliable, particularly in developing countries. The improvement of such data will result in better-targeted government policies involving, for example, price support schemes and agricultural subsidies. In addition, it benefits farmers by providing information on the profitability of cropping and livestock activities, which assists in increasing crop diversification.

**FOOD BALANCE SHEETS**

Food balance sheets (FBS) provide a comprehensive pattern of a country’s food supply and demand in aggregate terms during a specified period, calculated from the annual production of food, changes in stocks, imports and exports, and distribution of food within the country. The results can be used to monitor trends over time within a country. It provided theoretical presentations and practical exercises on the New Guidelines for the compilation of Food Balance Sheets that are more adapted to country’s needs and capacity.

The Global Strategy has carried on capacity building work in the preparation of food balance sheets in countries such as:

- Cambodia
- Maldives
- China
- Pakistan
- Lao PDR
- Sri Lanka
- Myanmar
- Viet Nam

Under its technical assistance programme, the Global Strategy built the human resource capacity of the following countries to use CAPI technology for the efficient collection of survey data:

- Bhutan
- Mongolia
- Cambodia
- Timor-Leste

In 2017, the Global Strategy built the capacity of the following countries to improve their CoP statistics:

- Bangladesh
- Papua New Guinea
- Mongolia
- Viet Nam

Based on in-depth country assessments and country project proposals, specific technical assistance activities on cost effective methods developed by the Global Office of Global Strategy have started in all 16 implementing countries in Asia and the Pacific. These activities will build the statistical capacity of implementing countries for evidence-based policymaking and assist in monitoring the Sustainable Development Goals.
THE AGRICULTURAL INTEGRATED SURVEY (AGRIS)

AGRIS is a 10-year integrated survey methodology, which includes core modules like crop and livestock production and auxiliary modules like economy, labour force and agriculture mechanization. It has been proposed to national agencies for further customization based on their specific needs. It is both affordable and manageable and lays the foundation for the creation of an efficient agricultural statistics system.

CALCULATION OF POST-HARVEST LOSSES

After production, agricultural produce goes through a series of post-harvest activities like transportation, processing and storage. Losses can occur, resulting in a decrease in the availability of food. Reducing these losses can improve overall food availability. The Global Strategy has begun the process to support countries in estimating post-harvest losses through guidelines on cost-effective methods and to adopt remedies to minimize them. The adoption of these methods will facilitate in the monitoring of the SDGs as well as FAO’s Regional Initiative on Zero Hunger Challenge in Asia and the Pacific.

IMPROVEMENT OF ADMINISTRATIVE DATA

Administrative data plays an essential role in agricultural statistics system. A large proportion of official statistics in developing countries rely on administrative data. Data on livestock, fisheries, forest, land and water is derived from administrative reports prepared by subject matter experts. However, improving the use of administrative data in agricultural statistics systems continues to be a problem in developing countries. The Global Strategy aims to develop strategies and methodologies for the collection and management of data from administrative sources and their use in an integrated agricultural system in developing countries.

CROPS

Accurate estimation of both crop area and crop yield is important to determine production estimates for the country. As such, the Global Strategy is helping several developing countries to improve their methodologies on estimation of crop area and yield by conducting crop-cutting surveys.

AGRI MODULE IN THE POPULATION CENSUS

Many developing countries in Asia and the Pacific lack the resources to conduct independent agricultural surveys. In order to strengthen the capacities of these countries, the Global Strategy is providing support in order to integrate agricultural modules into population census/surveys.

LIVESTOCK

The Global Strategy is assisting countries to improve methods for estimating livestock production and productivity, and to provide guidelines for the enumeration of nomadic and semi-nomadic livestock. For better efficiency and effectiveness, it is essential that field activities are coordinated with wider agricultural surveys and the data collected are in line with the integrated survey framework and international classifications and definitions advocated by the Global Strategy.

MASTER SAMPLING FRAME

The Master Sampling Frame is a unique sampling system that is used for several surveys or several rounds of the same survey. It is a cost-effective method which can lead to better planning and coordination of other surveys within an integrated survey programme. The Global Strategy advocates for an agricultural survey system based on a single Master Sampling Frame to facilitate the integration of agriculture into national statistical systems. It also serves as an effective tool for the implementation of SPARS and the foundation of the Agricultural Integrated Survey (AGRIS) frame.
Around three-quarters of Pacific Island populations live in rural areas and rely on agriculture and fisheries for their livelihoods. These populations are vulnerable to frequent disasters and are susceptible to the long-term impacts of climate change. Declining agricultural productivity is undermining the sustainability of their livelihoods. While agriculture remains a priority for development, insufficient accessible and reliable data is impeding effective policy making by decision-makers. Evidence-based policy-making requires timely, relevant and reliable statistics, which continues to be a pressing need.

The Asia-Pacific Plan has expanded through a collaboration with the Pacific Community and has developed a Pacific Strategic Plan for Agricultural and Fisheries Statistics (P-SPAFS) for building sustainable agricultural statistics systems. P-SPAFS was initiated in 2015 through a regional meeting of agricultural statisticians and planners from 14 Pacific Island countries and envisages a region where high quality and timely statistics inform decisions relating to food security, sustainable agricultural and fisheries development, as well as assists in monitoring the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals.

WAY FORWARD FOR GLOBAL STRATEGY

The Asia-Pacific Plan has engendered important progress in the region and has expanded to the Pacific SIDS through collaboration with the SPC. SPARS have been instrumental in garnering attention of governments towards the development of agricultural statistics, resulting in an increased demand for technical assistance on cost-effective methodologies. Engaging 19 countries already, the Plan is on its way to achieving the Global Strategy goals through the development of sustainable statistics system, which will produce timely and reliable agricultural and rural data – comparable over time and across countries. This will further help countries to address the unprecedented data demand for monitoring the SDGs.

The Global Strategy has set the stage for countries to continue their momentum through strong political will and commitment, as well as made concerted efforts to produce better agricultural and rural statistics. The next phase of the Global Strategy implementation could focus on further helping countries adopt cost-effective methodologies and build their statistical system by implementing strategic priorities identified in their respective SPARS.
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