



COUNTRY REPORT ON SUPPORT TO STATISTICS
CRESS

VIETNAM

2016



ABOUT

The CRESS is an initiative led by a country to gather all data relating to the funding of the National Statistical System (NSS), whether deriving from domestic resources or external aid. The ultimate objective is to improve efficiency of the NSS through better information sharing and co-ordination.

COVER



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COUNTRY REPORT ON SUPPORT TO STATISTICS

VIETNAM



GENERAL STATISTICS OFFICE



**PARTNERSHIP IN STATISTICS
FOR DEVELOPMENT IN THE 21st
CENTURY**

Vietnam, August 22, 2016

Message from the Deputy Director General



Dr. Vu Thanh Liem

On behalf of the General Statistics Office (GSO) leadership, I would like to express our sincere thanks to the PARIS21 for its support to the GSO in implementation of the pilot Country Report on Support to Statistics (CRESS). The report discusses the budget for the Viet Nam Statistical System in the period of 2012-2014, and expected budget for the period of 2015-2017 from domestic and external sources. To accomplish the report, the GSO collected information from 100 units, including 23 ministries/agencies, 14 development partners and 63 Provincial People's Committees.

The GSO also held two consultation workshops with different stakeholders, in which the first one was for developing the report outline and the questionnaires for information collection, and the second one was for getting comments on the draft report. The GSO received many constructive opinions from the ministries/agencies and localities for the report finalization in these two workshops.

On this occasion, I would like to convey very special thanks to Ms. Millicent Gay B. Tejada, Program Co-ordinator for Asia Pacific and Dr. Romuo A. Virola, international expert, and the Viet Nam CRESS group for successfully compiling the pilot CRESS in Viet Nam.

The GSO appreciates the objectives of CRESS and expects that the pilot CRESS in Viet Nam is a good reference for other countries in their development of the CRESS.

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ABBREVIATION

CRESS	Country Report on Support to Statistics
CSA	UNECE Classification of Statistics Activities
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GSO	General Statistics Office
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
NSDS	National Strategy for the Development of Statistics
NSS	National Statistical System
ODA	Official Development Assistance
PARIS21	Partnership in Statistics for Development in the 21 st Century
PC	People's Committee
PRESS	Partner Report on Support to Statistics
SB	State Budget
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SS	Statistical Science
VSDS	The Vietnam Statistical Development Strategy in period 2011-2020 and vision to 2030
VSS	Vietnam Statistics System

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Country Report on Support to Statistics (CRESS) is a country-led exercise to gather all data related to the funding of the entire State Statistics System, including those derived from national (domestic resources) and external (development partner support) sources. The objective is to improve efficiency of the national statistical system through better co-ordination and better information sharing on investments in statistics.

On October 6, 2015, the General Statistics Office (GSO) and the Partnership in Statistics for Development in the 21st Century (PARIS21) jointly organized an Operational Conference on CRESS. The conference was participated by more than 80 representatives from various ministries and agencies in Vietnam, development partners, and relevant units of the. After the conference, the data collection toolkit was distributed to 100 organizations including 23 ministries, 63 People's Committees, and 14 development partners.

As of March 11, 2016, the Institute of Statistical Science (ISS) received a total of 90 (out of 100) units of information, in which, 19 were submitted by ministries; 8 were provided by development partners, and 63 were from People's Committees (Local Bureau of Statistics)¹.

CRESS Findings in Vietnam

Financial

Financial support for activities of the State Statistics System in the period 2012-2014 reached 4866.20 billion VND, of which 94.02% came from domestic sources and 5.98% from external sources. On average, funding reached 1,622.07 billion VND annually, which accounts for 0,045% of GDP (in current price) or 0.17% of the total state budget. Financing for the implementation of statistical activities in the State Statistics System showed a downward trend.

The data collected from Ministries showed that 630.93 billion VND in total foreign funding was committed for statistical activities in 2012-2014 for 7 projects, but total disbursement was only 46.10%, an average disbursement of 41.55 billion VND per project. On the other hand, information from development partners on total foreign funding committed for statistical activities for the period of 2012-2014 was 261,06 billion VND (only 41,3% compared with data from Ministries). The reported number of project supported was 16 (9 projects higher compared to the reports by Ministries). Disbursement was reported at 132.99 billion VND (accounting for 50.94%) or averaging 8.31 billion VND per project.

Financial support from development partners to statistical activities in 2015-2017 amounts to 87.79 billion, VND, for 5 projects. Compared with the total commitments for 2012-2014, there was a decrease of 173.27 billion VND with 11 projects.

Employees in the Vietnam Statistical System

In 2012, 6331 employees worked in the State Statistics System. This number increased to 6856 employees in 2014, a growth of 8.29%. In 2012-2014, more than 4000 statistical employees in the State Statistics System have undergone training and retraining.

¹ Questionnaire 1 has 19 (out of 23) responses; Questionnaire 2 has 19 (out of 23) responses; Questionnaire 3 has 9 (out of 23) responses; Questionnaire 4 has 8 (out of 14) responses; Questionnaire 5 has 4 (out of 14) responses; and Questionnaire 6 has 63 responses.

Action Forward for CRESS

(i) Integration of CRESS data collection with the monitoring of the Vietnam Strategy for the Development of Statistics (VSDS) to facilitate data collection, reduce respondents' burden, save on resources money, widen scope of information collected, and improve data input on resources and investments in the statistical system.

(ii) Conduct the CRESS every 5 years in conjunction with the VSDS mid-term or end-term monitoring and review exercise to ensure alignment with the system-wide review of progress on statistics development.

(iii) Widen the scope of data collection on CRESS not only in ministries and agencies of government but also the People's Committees.

INTRODUCTION

The Country Report on Support to Statistics (CRESS) in Vietnam was pilot-implemented with support from the Partnership in Statistics for Development in the 21st Century (PARIS21). The purpose is to collect information related to financial support and human resources for statistical activities for the period of 2012-2014 and financial support received from external sources, including pledges/commitments for external support of statistical activities for 2015-2017. The structure of the Report on the CRESS in Vietnam, excluding the addendum and reference documents, is as follows:

Section 1. Overview of CRESS in Vietnam which includes information about the Vietnam Statistics System; State Statistics organization system; the Vietnam Statistical Development Strategy in 2011-2020 and vision to 2030; About PARIS21; Partnership Report on Support to Statistics (PRESS) and CRESS.

Section 2. Implementation of pilot CRESS Vietnam which provides an overview of the organization of CRESS activities and the methodology used.

Section 3. Results of the pilot CRESS in Vietnam; key findings, specifically the financial support received for the implementation of VSS activities; status of human resources on statistics; challenges in operationalizing CRESS; and lessons learned.

Section 4. Recommendations for improving CRESS in Vietnam.

SECTION 1: OVERVIEW OF CRESS IN VIETNAM

1.1 Statistics and the development agenda

Demand for statistics has been growing and becoming more sophisticated. However, there is still the challenge of underinvestment in statistics that persists in many developing countries. Monitoring the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) - 8 goals, 21 targets, and 60 indicators - was already a big challenge for the majority of countries. This is further magnified with the expected monitoring of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) - 17 goals, 169 targets, and over 230 indicators – where an even bigger challenge faces national statistical systems (NSS) that are currently facing many resource constraints.

Supporting NSS development

PARIS21 has been supporting statistical capacity building in developing countries, including Vietnam, specifically in providing guidance on resource mobilization. It initiated the Partners' Report on Support to Statistics (PRESS) to monitor global support to statistics from development partners and launched the Country Report on Support to Statistics (CRESS) to document financing of statistics at the country level, help improve financing of the NSS and increase investments in statistics through better planning for statistical development. CRESS has been implemented since 2011 in Africa (pilot countries including Cameroon, Ethiopia, Malawi and Senegal) while in 2015 it was piloted in Asia (Philippines and Vietnam).

1.2 PARIS21

Since 1999, PARIS21 has supported developing countries in strengthening their statistical capacity. Its mission is to build statistical capacity in developing countries towards improved provision, availability and use of data; promote better dialogue within societies on data use for accountability and evidence-based policy-making towards enhanced well-being of people by contributing in improving the monitoring of national and global development goals. Their programs of support include advocating for statistics, linking strong statistics to policy, developing national statistical systems, improving data management and increasing resource mobilisation for statistics, amongst others.

Regarding resource mobilisation, PARIS21 provides guidance in setting-up financing plans for statistical development of the NSS, facilitates donor co-ordination on funding statistics and monitors investments in statistics at the global level through PRESS and at the national level through CRESS.

1.3 From PRESS to CRESS

PRESS is a means to monitor support for statistical activities from development partners worldwide. Its objective is to document the financial resources and technologies provided by development partners to support statistics development in countries and help identify which countries are in further need of assistance. Such information is provided to development partners and countries to better target support for statistical capacity.

CRESS is a country-led exercise to gather all data relating to the funding of the entire NSS whether derived from national/domestic resources or from the support of external/development partners. It is a valuable tool as it documents national funding and investments as well as foreign assistance for statistics, which remains unreported or under reported in many countries. It supplements the results from PRESS by highlighting development partners' aid-related data, program objectives, recipient countries and committed and disbursed financial support.

The ultimate objective is to improve the efficiency of the NSS through better co-ordination and better information sharing on investments in statistics. CRESS provides better coverage of investments in statistics, yields more accurate information, has a more exhaustive coverage of projects reported, and also covers statistical capacity support imbedded in partners' broader development programs (e.g., health, education, budget support) which are usually not easily identified and quantified in the PRESS.

The outcomes of CRESS include a report on the investments on statistics: trends in levels as a percent of GDP and the national government budget; type of statistical activities; database on statistical funding; validated support to statistics from development partners; strengthened dialogue and co-ordination amongst the NSS, line ministries, private sector, and development partners; and improved statistical budgeting at the national level.

In the case of CRESS Vietnam, the ultimate objective is to improve the financing of the VSS and increase investments in statistics in Vietnam while the overall strategy involves compiling and disseminating better information on the financing of the VSS.

1.4 State statistics system

The Vietnam state statistics system includes the centralised statistics system, sectoral statistics organization, Ministerial-level and government agencies, the Chief Judge of the Supreme People's Court and the Director of the Supreme People's Prosecutorate, State Auditor (call Statistics organization in Ministries, Ministeral-level)².

1.4.1 Centralised statistics system

The centralised statistics system is vertical including the General Statistics Office (GSO) and local statistics agencies (63 provincial/city statistics offices and 703 district statistical offices nationwide).

The General Statistics Office is directly managed under the Ministry of Planning and Investment (MPI). The GSO is the national statistics agency, mandated to consult and assist the Minister of the MPI in the state's role of managing statistics, coordinating statistical activities, ; organizing statistical activities and providing socio-economic statistics to organizations and individuals. To help the Director of the GSO implement the state's management of statistics, the GSO is organised to include Departments and service bodies such as the ISS, Statistical Computer Centre, Figures and Events Journal, Statistical Publishing House, and College of Statistics³.

1.4.2 Sectoral statistics organizations

The Ministers, Heads of Ministerial-level and Government agencies, the Chief Judge of the Supreme People's Court and Director of the Supreme People's Prosecutorate, and the State Auditor

²Article 61 in the 2015 Statistics Law which was adopted by the Thirteenth National Assembly of Socialist Republic of Vietnam and came into force on the July,1, 2016;

³The scheme 54, August 24, 2010 of the Prime Minister.

General within their duties and powers are responsible for the implementation of statistics work. The government's decree No. 03/2010/NĐ-CP, issued on January 13, 2010, specifies the tasks, powers and organizational structure of ministerial and sectoral statistics organizations.

To date, 18 of the 23 ministries and sectors (78.26%) have established sectoral statistical units⁴. Among these, 5 of the 18 ministries and sectors (38.46%) have department-level statistics units while 13 of the 18 (61.54%) have division-level statistical units under Departments.

1.5 Vietnam Statistical Development Strategy 2011-2020 and vision to 2030

On October 18, 2011, the Prime Minister of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam signed Decision No. 1803/QĐ-TTg, approving the Vietnam Statistical Development Strategy 2011-2020 and vision to 2030 (VSDS). The VSDS was advised and consulted by many national and international scientists and experts, and was technically backed by several international organizations, namely PARIS21, UNDP, and the World Bank. The VSDS aims to develop Vietnam statistics quickly and sustainably by improving the system of organization, ensuring adequate quantity and improving the quality of human resources, advanced statistical methods and modern technology. The national centralized statistics information system is to be developed consistently, and efficiently, resulting in an increasing amount of better quality information. The system serves administrators in planning, policy-making, and implementing and monitoring of the economic development plan. It also backs the leadership and administration of the Party's agencies and leaders, the State, the Party committees, and the governments at all levels. Furthermore, it fulfills the statistical information needs of the other domestic and international individuals and organizations. The VSDS strives for greater statistical standards by 2020, moving towards a fairly advanced level in 2030 regionally. In order to achieve the objectives outlined in the VSDS, 9 action programs and solutions are proposed to carry on the strategy.

1.6 Reference documents in the state statistics organization system

Legal documents for financial resources

- The State Budget Law
- The Statistical Law, Article 9 on Funding for statistical activities
- The scheme 312, September 9, 2010 of the Prime Minister, referring to the development of human and financial resources and the implementation of statistical practice
- The VSDS, which mentions the Human Resource Development Program for statistics and the program to strengthen the statistical infrastructure and promote dynamic financial resources for statistical activities
- The scheme 803, June 28, 2012 of the Prime Minister, referring to the National Statistical Survey
- The General Statistics Office issued the list of surveys
- The Circular guiding the implementation of estimates, issued by the Ministry of Finance (The scheme 2879, November 28, 2011; The scheme 3062, December 3, 2012; The

⁴ Results of 03 years implementing the Vietnam Statistical Development Strategy period 2011-2020 vision to 2030.

scheme 2985, November 30, 2013 of the Director Ministry of Finance referring to the estimates of revenues and expenditure of State budget for 2012, 2013 and 2014)

- The Circulars guiding the management and the use of funds for statistical surveys and census, issued by the Ministry of Planning and Investment (The scheme 124, February 06, 2012; The scheme 162, February 5, 2013; The scheme 152, February 11, 2014 of the Director Ministry of Planning and Investment referring to the estimates of State budget for 2012, 2013 and 2014)
- Guidelines for implementation, issued by General Statistics Office (The scheme 23, February 07, 2012; The scheme 316, February 5, 2013; The scheme 66, February 11, 2014 of the Director General Statistics Office referring to the estimates of State budget for 2012, 2013 and 2014)
- Joint Circular No. 06 / 2009 / TTLT MPI - BNV - BTC, guiding the practice of the decision No. 45/2009 / QD - TTg, March 27, 2009 by the Prime Minister on allowance for statistical officials and civil servants
- Circular No. 223/2010 / TT – BTC, December 31, 2010, regulation on making estimations, managing and use of funding, settlement of the expenditure of the scheme “Synchronous innovation of statistical indicators system”
- The Circular No. 58/2011 / TT – BTC, May 11, 2011, that regulates the management, use and settlement of funds for the implementation of statistical surveys
- The Circular No. 53/2012 / TT – BTC, April 9, 2012, regulates the management, use and settlement of funds for the census statistics approved by the Prime Minister
- Decision No. 1397 / QD – TTg, August 13, 2013 by the Prime Minister on approval of the budget to implement the "Innovating comprehensively the statistical indicators system" project
- Directive No. 10 / CT - TTg , April 29, 2014 by the Prime Minister, on strengthening of ministerial statistics

Legal documents for human resources

- The Statistical Law 2015, (Article 61. The system of state statistical organizations; Article 62. The system of centralized statistical organizations; Article 63. Sectional statistics; Article 66. The statisticians)
- The official Law 2010
- Decision No. 03/2008/QĐ–BNV, November 12, 2008 by the Minister of Internal Affairs, Issued on titles, codes and professional standards for the classification scale of Statistics
- Vietnam human resource, implement follow Decision No. 299/QĐ – TCTK, February 4, 2013

State-employed statisticians are those working in the state statistics organization system, in-charge of statistical work at commune-level, state institutes, public-service delivery units and statistical enumerators, (see Appendix 5. Statistics law 2015).

SECTION 2: IMPLEMENTATION OF PILOT CRESS VIETNAM

CRESS in Vietnam is officially carried out in the following steps:

2.1 Establishment of the CRESS team

The ISS was the organizational unit in-charge of the implementation of the pilot CRESS in Vietnam. It established a CRESS Team with 8 members from ISS and relevant units (see Annex 2 List of CRESS Team members).

2.2 Study materials related to CRESS report

The CRESS Team has carried out the following activities:

- a) Translated to Vietnamese and studied the data collection toolkit of the pilot in the Philippines
- b) Translated to Vietnamese and studied content of Classification of Statistical Activities by UNECE
- c) Studied the materials on state budget management and use by GSO for 2012, 2013, 2014, 2015
- d) Studied documents related to human resources

2.3 Added, repaired and completed data collection toolkit

Based on the Philippines' CRESS questionnaire set, the CRESS Team, with assistance from Dr. Romulo A. Virola, PARIS21 international consultant, developed the data collection toolkit relevant to Vietnam which included 7 questionnaires to be piloted in some units. The CRESS Team prepared the Instructions for completing the CRESS questionnaires.

2.4 Pilot-testing of the questionnaires

The questionnaires were pilot-tested in 7 units – 2 units in the GSO, 2 statistics organizations in Ministries, 1 development partner, and 2 local offices, to ensure it captures the relevant needs of the Vietnam statistics situation and to start finalization of the questionnaires before data collection.

(1) Questionnaires tested in 2 units of GSO:

- Financial Planning Department is an institution that advises and assists the Director General in monitoring, managing and organizing financial tasks to clarify funding from the state budget for the implementation of GSO's statistics. Annually, the GSO budget is allocated in accordance to the Decision on annual estimated budget by MPI. The General Director of GSO then allocates its estimated annual budget and expenditure items for all subordinate units of GSO (a centralized statistical system). The expenses are based on the state budget index issued by the Finance Ministry.
- The Project entitled Support for Implementation of the Vietnam Statistical Development Strategy for 2011-2020, vision to 2030.

(2) Questionnaires piloted in 2 statistics organizations within Ministries:

- The State Bank of Vietnam is one of the ministries whose statistical department-level organisation was selected for the trial of questionnaires. However, the State Bank is unable to separate the funding for all statistical activities, except salary. For

instance, the cost for maintenance of operation apparatus (according to staffing norms), the procurement and office repair expenditure, office equipment, computers, cars that are utilized for statistical work are not separately shown.

- The Ministry of Industry and Commerce has a statistical section under the Department of Planning and Investment. This unit faces the same problem as the statistical organisation in State Bank and is unable to provide the appropriate disaggregation of the total funding for statistics.

In both the State Bank and the Ministry of Industry and Commerce, the budget allocated for statistical activities is integrated into the whole budget of the organisation and it is difficult to provide the budget details on particular statistical activities as is done in the GSO.

(3) Questionnaire piloted in UNDP:

It was recommended to use the electronic version of the questionnaire in order to facilitate the provision of information by respondents as well as enable the team to expand its scope of research. The electronic questionnaire is also convenient in the processing of data. However, although the CRESS Team considered designing electronic questionnaires, they were unable to use it due to the time and infrastructure limitations. Nonetheless, some questions in the forms are modified to better suit the reality. For instance, the term “disbursement rate” is utilised instead of the term “disbursement of funds” to reflect the practice of project management. Further, the forms of project support and concepts such as reciprocal capital, etc. were edited under the governmental provisions for foreign projects funded with official development assistance (ODA) and preferential loans from donors.

(4) The trial of data collection form for 2 local Bureau of Statistics, in Bac Ninh Province and Vinh Phuc Province:

The CRESS Team aims to obtain information on funding support from other state agencies for statistical activities at the local level such as from Provincial People’s Committee and other entities (if any). The resulting pilot-test shows funding support from other state agencies for statistical activities at the local level, including funding for statistical activities at local statistical organizations and funding for statistical activities at local statistical units (e.g., Health department; Construction department, etc.).

Challenges and limitations

(1) Most of the units in the pilot activity had difficulty in disaggregating its funds for specific activities. The focal point of statistical activities was not tasked with allocating the funds, thus was unable to provide further information.

(2) Except for the GSO, funding mechanisms for statistical activities in different ministries, institutions and localities are not uniform. Thus, it is difficult to finalise the questions in the questionnaire to cover all possible cases.

Recommendations

(1) There is a separate questionnaire form for MPI (GSO); the funding for statistical activities is mainly at GSO and it can be split into the funds/budget for detailed activities. However, this form could not be used for other ministries and governmental institutions. The questionnaire form for other Ministries was simple compared with MPI (GSO).

(2) Integrating information collection for CRESS compilation in data collection for the VSDS implementation mid-term review.

2.5 CRESS Implementation workshop

On October 6, 2015, the GSO organized an Operational Conference for CRESS Vietnam jointly with PARIS21. The conference was attended by more than 80 representatives from ministries, development partners, and relevant units of the GSO. During the conference, the CRESS project methodology, and the questionnaires to collect information (completed after pilot-testing with units) were presented. The participants contributed a number of suggestions on the feasibility/possibility of collecting financial data, the existing statistical stages in ministries and sectors, and commented about the information on the completed questionnaires.

2.6 Finalised data collection toolkit

Based on the result of pilot-testing in 7 units and comments from the conference, the CRESS team finalised the data collection toolkit.

(1) Questionnaires used to collect information (see Annex 3.1 on Questionnaire Forms to collect information CRESS in Vietnam):

- Form 01. Information on resources for the GSO
- Form 02. Information on budget from national resources for statistical activities of ministry and agencies
 - Form 02A. Information on budget from national resources for statistical activities of the GSO (disaggregated budget by type of expense)
- Form 03. Information on international budget for statistical activities
- Form 04. Information on funds for statistical activities from development partners period 2012-2014
- Form 05. Information on funds for statistical activities from development partners period 2015-2017
- Form 06. Information on funds for statistical activities in the territory of provinces and cities

The Forms to collect information are allocated as follows:

- Ministry of Planning and Investment (GSO): Forms 01, 02A and 03
- Other ministries, agencies: Forms 01, 02 and 03
- Development partners: Forms 04 and 05
- Committees of People's Committee of provinces and cities: Form 06

(2) Classification of statistical activities

The classification was reviewed prior to being integrated into the Questionnaires to ensure that supported statistical activities were correctly identified. While pilot-testing the Forms in some units, there were recommendations to apply the classification of statistical activities by UNECE and integrate it on the forms to collect information for CRESS Vietnam, which makes it more convenient

for the information providers to look it up. Accordingly, the classification of statistical activities by UNECE was integrated in the forms. The information submitted reflects that most of the areas of statistics work in Vietnam are compatible with the classification of UNECE.

(3) Guideline to fill out the forms

In order to facilitate the provision of correct information, the CRESS Team prepared guidelines in filling out the questionnaire mentioning the basic concepts, and explaining the contents/details expected (see Annex 3.2).

2.7 Organization of data collection

Organizing data collection for 100 units included 23 ministries/agencies, 5 units at the Ministry of Planning and Investment (GSO), 14 Development Partners and 63 People's Committees of provinces and cities.

Data collection methods include combined methods of face-to-face interviews and sending questionnaires with guidelines to participants who then sent the questionnaires back to ISS.

On November 12, 2015, the Deputy Head of the Central Census Steering Committee for Implementation of Statistics Strategy and the General Director of GSO signed the Official Letter to the ministries and 63 Provincial People's Committees⁵ as well as an Open Letter to development partners⁶ to gather information. This questionnaire, instructions and Official Letter or Open Letter was submitted in hard copy. The soft version of these forms was sent via a web link⁷. For the convenience of all respondents, the forms included phone numbers and emails of the CRESS Team in order to facilitate questions and aide in further explanation and assistance when filling out the questionnaire.

The CRESS Team regularly monitors and supervises all units subjected to information collection and rapidly deploys the process of questionnaire collection at the ministries and development partners. Through monitoring, the Official Letters sent to the ministries were mostly transferred to the ministerial statistical organizations and the Official Letter sent to People's Committees of provinces and cities were transferred to the Bureau of Statistics for response. For development partners, CRESS contacted the program officers to connect to the main focal point.

After a period of monitoring via email, phone calls and face-to-face meetings for some units, ISS had collected 122 questionnaires and 1 questionnaire from Developments Partners by March 11, 2016. Details on the number of responses obtained are as follows:

(1) Ministerial institutions

9 of the 23 Ministries were sent 3 questionnaires (Forms 01; 02 and 03); 10 of the 23 Ministries were sent 2 questionnaires (Forms 01 and 02); 2 of the 23 Ministries declined to provide information; 1 of the 23 Ministries responded that "They don't have statistical activities".

With the exception of the Ministry of Planning and Investment (GSO) most of other ministries do not have separate or disaggregated expenses, such as salaries and organizational operations, procurement and office repairs, office equipment and computers to support statistics. Because

⁵Official Letter No. 817/TCTK-VTKE dated 12 Nov 2015 sent to ministries, ministerial-level agencies, government agencies, the Supreme People's Court, Supreme People's Procuratorate;

⁶Open Letter to development partners on 12 Nov 2015 titled "Request to Provide Information for the Implementation of Country Report on Support to Statistics".

⁷ Web link to the questionnaires <https://www.mediafire.com/folder/fy7nupnw7xo7o/doiactacphatrien>

statistics organizations in some ministries were established as divisions under Departments, some Ministries have established departments while some ministries/agencies assign officials to do statistics on part-time basis instead of establishing a statistics unit. Statisticians work in the same workplace with the ministries so it is impossible to separate budget for statistics.

One of the limitations involves filling out Form 03, Section 13 on the Capital of statistics project, statistical surveys, including capital that has been committed (including funds that have been disbursed, estimated up to December 31, 2014) and counterpart funding (if any); and Form 02, Section II. 2, funds from foreign sources to collect specific information for each year: 2012, 2013 and 2014. This is the basis for recommending improvement of CRESS questionnaires in the next cycle.

(2) Development partners

4 of the 14 Development Partners submitted Forms 04 and 05; 4 of 14 Development Partners submitted only Form 04; 1 of the 14 sent a list of technical support, no information was provided on other questionnaire forms; 5 of the 14 units declined to provide information. The low response rate of development partners contributed to the discrepancy in the data reported by Ministries and Development Partners on support to statistics.

(3) Localities

Complete responses were received from the 63 provinces and cities (People's Committee), including information about their statistical programs and projects and funding (Form 06).

Challenges and limitations

(i) Data is collected for a short time while as informed by most participants, the financial data is hardly accessible and mostly unavailable. The information collection is timed at the end of the year when participants are occupied with their own tasks, thus delaying their responses to the questionnaires, especially for ministries and development partners.

(ii) Regarding the scope of information collection, particularly in the group of ministerial institutions, there are some cases which have not been mentioned in the instructions, thus imposing challenges for participants.

For instance, at the Ministry of Finance, there are some general offices. It is unclear whether information should be collected from the statistical office of those general offices.

(iii) Though instructions on how to fill out the questionnaires is delivered, some guidelines were incompatible with specific agency situations and sometimes the respondents simply did not follow the instructions resulting in irrelevant or no information.

(iv) It was difficult to obtain information supporting classification for detailed statistical programs and projects. The team had to call or ask in person. Many indicators were unfilled and thus failed to meet the expectation when designing the questionnaire. The CRESS Team and sectoral statistics organizations calculated and detailed the distribution following the expense for statistical activities because most sectoral statistics organizations do not provide specific expenses for statistical activities.

(v) The questionnaire for collecting the information is mainly produced by statisticians rather than financial officers, so it hardly covers all the funds.

(vi) The period for collecting information is not in line with milestones, socio-economic events in Vietnam or the circles of assistance projects, making it difficult for the respondents to provide information.

2.8 Check questionnaire and update information

The responses were checked for logic among the indicators in one questionnaire and between the questionnaires. The CRESS Team directly contacted the participants for further information. The collected information is recorded in Excel sheets.

2.9 Processing, synthesizing data and building the database

As is practiced in all other countries where CRESS was conducted, the CRESS Team conducted data entry for all the collected questionnaires in Excel which was designed as the database of CRESS and compiled the data according to the expected output tables, to support in-depth analysis of the funding assistance (national and international sources) and the human resources to support statistical activities in Vietnam.

2.10 Writing analytical reports

A detailed analytical report is in section III of this report.

2.11 Verification of the report

The draft report was sent to some ministries/agencies, development partners and localities for comments and validation (i.e., Finance Ministry; State Bank of Vietnam; UNDP in Vietnam and PSOs Bac Ninh).

2.12 Workshops

A workshop was conducted to announce the first draft of the report to participants from ministries/agencies, local government and development partners in Vietnam. PARIS21 and an international consultant provided comments on the pilot steps and the key findings of the report.

2.13 Finalization and publication of CRESS

The CRESS report was finalized after the inputs from PARIS21, the international consultant, some ministries, agencies, development partners and localities, and participants in the workshop on March 22, 2016.

CRESS was submitted to the leaders of GSO and with the endorsement of the Director General, the report was prepared for dissemination.

SECTION 3: RESULTS OF THE PILOT CRESS IN VIETNAM

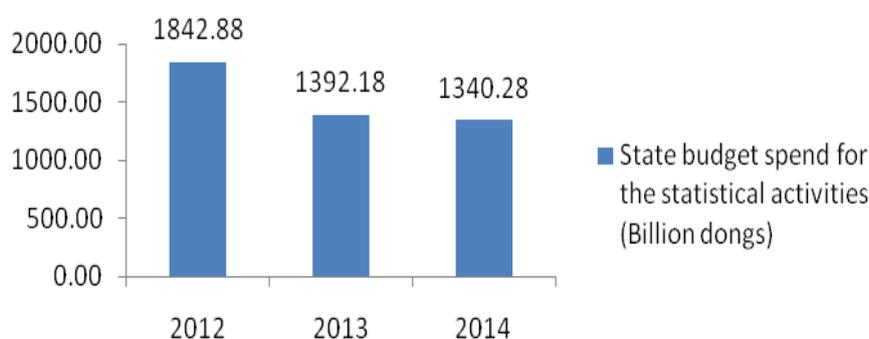
3.1 Key findings

The total financial support for the implementation of Vietnam statistics activities for the period 2012-2014 reached 4866.20 billion VND. On average, it reached 1,622.07 billion VND annually, of which, the State budget for statistical activities accounted for 0.17% of the total State budget. This accounted for an average of 0.045% of GDP (current price) in the period of 2012-2014 (annually it accounted for 0.058% of GDP in 2012; 0.042% of GDP in 2013; and 0.037% of GDP in 2014 (all in current price) (see Table 9). The following are the detailed financial support for VSS in 2012-2014:

(i) Domestic Finance

Domestic financial support for the implementation of VSS activities in the period of 2012-2014 was 4,575.35 billion VND which is 94.02% of the total financial support for statistics activities of VSS (2012 was 1,842.88 billion VND; 2013 was 1,392.18 billion VND; 2014 was 1,340.28 billion) VND. The State budget support for the operation of the VSS in the period of 2012-2014 has a downward trend (see Chart 1).

Chart 1. State budgete spent on statistical activites



From 2012 to 2014, statistical activities were funded from State support (see Table 1) which is consistent with the provisions in the Statistics Law that “Finance for state statistics activites are borne by the States.

Considering the ministries and agencies that are implementing statistical activities, the Ministry of Planning and Investment (GSO) has a budget for statistical surveys, censuses, programs, and projects that accounts for 95.37% (equal to 1,850.40 billion VND); for other ministries and agencies, the share is 4.63% (equal to 89.83 billion VND) in the total budget of 1,940.23 billion VND spent on statistical surveys, censuses, programs, and projects for the period 2012-2014 (see Table 10).

The reason why spending in the Ministry of Planning and Investment (MPI) is higher than other ministries and agencies is because the MPI (GSO) is leading the implementation of 43 national statistical surveys, accounting for 62.32% of the total number of surveys in the National Programs of Surveys and Censuses⁸, with 3 censuses (Population and Housing Census; Rural, Agricultural and Fishery Census; Economic Census) and other ministries, agencies are in charge of 26 surveys, accounting for 37.68% (not any census in the National Program of Surveys and Censuses).

(ii) International Budget Resources

International budget resources supported statistical activities during the period 2012-2014 with 290.85 billion VND, accounting for 5.98% of the total budget for statistical activities. There is a declining trend in the budget coming from international sources, according to the report from ministries and agencies. In 2014, it 126.01 billion VND while in 2013 it was 128.02 billion VND (declined by 1.57%), (see Table 1).

Considering by ministry and agency, the budget for statistical activities of MPI (GSO) accounted for 93.10% (equal to 270.79 billion VND) and that of other ministries, agencies accounted for 6.90% (equal to 20,06 billion VND) in total 290.85 billion VND for statistical activities during the period 2012-2014.

The number of statistics projects and surveys (referred to as Project) has a downward trend from 140 projects in the period of 2012-2014 to 116 expected Projects (decreased by 24 projects) for the period 2015-2017. The reduced number of Projects is broken down as follows:

- Domestic finance supported 133 projects in 2012-2014, planned support for 115 projects (decreased by 18 projects) for 2015-2017
- Foreign finance supported 7 projects in 2012-2014; planned support for 1 project (decreased by 6 projects)⁹ for 2015-2017 (see Table 2)

Human resources working on statistics activities has increased and are younger in age, with more men than women. The largest majority work in the centralized statistical system (GSO) (*Reference Thematic Report 2015 "Evaluation of civil servants and official in Statistical Sector"*).

The trend of budget assistance to statistical activities and human resources doing statistical work will be presented in detail in the following sections.

3.2 Support fund for statistical activities in Vietnam

3.2.1 Classifying statistical activities by local funding

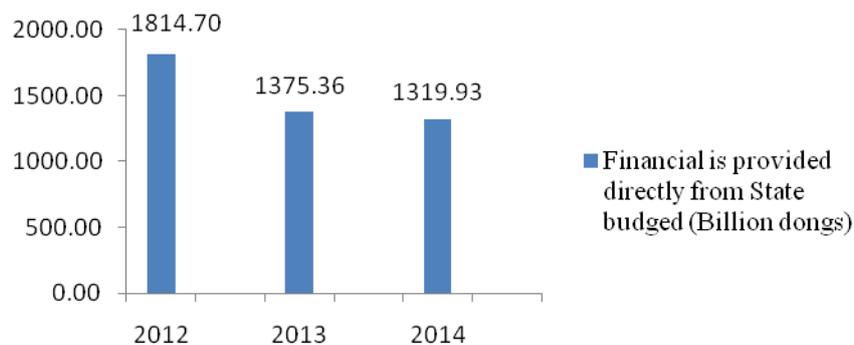
(1) In 2012-2014, implementation of statistical activities is mainly funded through the State budget, accounting for 98.57% of the total national fund for statistical activities and funds received through other government agencies. Other ministries and agencies do not receive non-state funds for statistical activities (see Table 1).

⁸ Decision No. 803/QĐ-TTg, dated 28 June 2012 of by the Prime Minister which approves the National Program of Surveys and Censuses.

⁹ Excluding projects implemented before 2014 and continues to period 2015-2017 in the project cycle.

(2) The State budget (directly from the Ministry of Finance) that funded statistical activities has a declining trend, with 1,375.36 billion VND in 2013 compared with 1,814.70 billion VND in 2012 (decline of 439.34 billion VND or 24.0% decrease) and 1,310.93 billion VND in 2014 (decline of 55.43 billion VND or 4.03% decrease), as reflected in Chart 2.

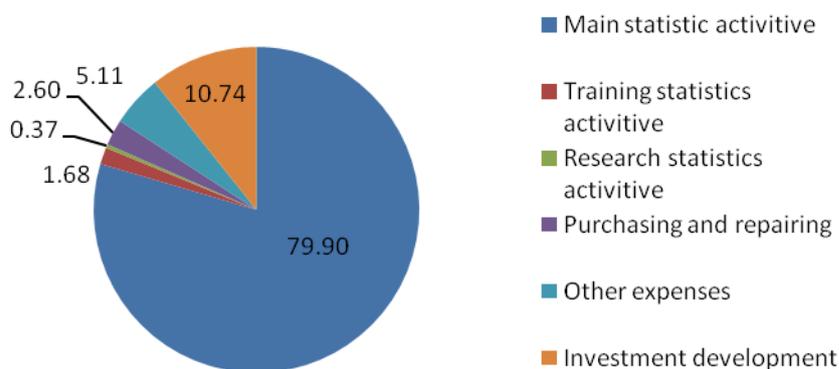
Chart 2. Finances provided directly from State budget



The decline in the State budget allocated for statistical activities in 2012-2014 is due to slow economic growth in the country. In 2012, GSO also implemented Directive No. 30/CT-TTg dated 26/11/2012 of the Prime Minister on strengthening thrift practice and anti-prodigality. Despite the decrease in funding in 2013 and 2014, the performance of Vietnam Statistics in terms of the World Bank Statistical Capacity Building Indicator has improved with a performance indicator rising by 11.7 points, from 65 (out of 100) points in 2010 to 76.7 points in 2014.¹⁰

(3) The structure of budget allocation for statistical activities according to the State Budget items in the period of 2012-2014 is illustrated in Chart 3.

Chart 3. The structure of budget allocation for statistics activities, 2012-2014 (in %)



¹⁰ Please see: <http://datatopics.worldbank.org/statisticalcapacity/SCIdashboard.aspx>;

The budget allocated for main statistics activities of VSS¹¹ accounted for 79.90%, while the share of investment development was 10.74%¹². The fund for scientific activities serving statistical activities has the smallest share, accounting for only 0.37% of the total budget allocated for statistical activities according to the State budget items in the period of 2012-2014 (see Table 3).

(4) The spending for main statistical activities over the total expenditures for Vietnam statistical activities increased annually. This amount in the respective years of 2012, 2013 and 2014 accounted for 71.32%; 80.25% and 91.32% of the total Sate budget allocated for statistics activities.

However, some expenditure items tend to decrease, such as those for other regular activities (i.e., conference, subsidy, typical spending with specific characteristics, etc). In 2012, the other expenditure was 4.40% compared to 2014 where it was 2.42%. The change in the structure of financing for statistical activities in the statistical system is presented in Chart 4, 5, and 6.

Chart 4. 2013

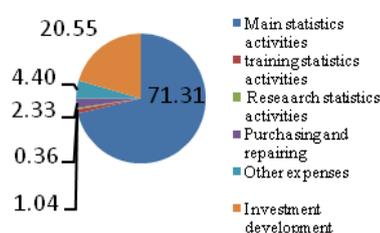


Chart 5. 2014

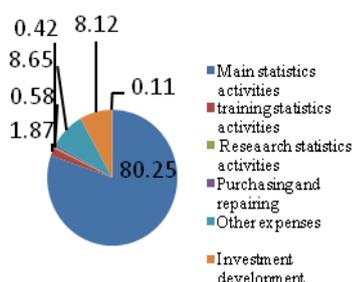
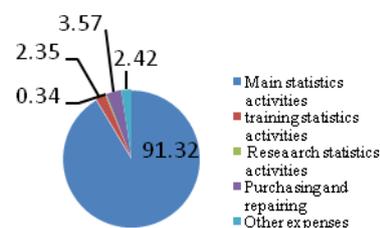


Chart 6. 2015



The changes are due to the increase in the number of people working on statistics (there was an increase of 525 people in 2014 compared to 2012) and the policy of wage increase for civil servants and public employees of Vietnam, particularly those working in the statistics sector. There was also an implementation in cost savings to maintain the operational apparatus of the statistics system.

(5) The change in financing structure for main statistical activities during the period 2012-2014 is as follows (refer to Table 3.2):

(i) Salary and other income (working add hour, etc.) for statisticians and financing for surveys, censuses tended to increase, as follows:

- Wages and salaries payments accounted for 19.19%, 34.18% and 39.73%, respectively of the total expenditures for key statistical activities in 2012, 2013 and 2014
- The expenditures for surveys and censuses accounted for 43.54%, 37.13%, and 42.32%, respectively of the total budget for key statistical activities in 2012, 2013 and 2014

(ii) The percentage share of expenditure to implement statistical programs, projects declined, accounting for 1.33%, 0.43%, and 0.43% in total budget for implementing key statistical activities in 2012, 2013 and 2014, respectively.

¹¹ Including: Wages and salaries for staff doing statistical work; Expenses to maintain the apparatus (according to the staff norm); Expenses for conducting surveys and censuses; Expenses for statistical programs, schemes and projects.

¹² Investment development including: Building GSO and local statistics agencies (provincial/city statistics offices) and district statistical offices nationwide.

(6) The level of interest (to take care statistical activities) in other Ministries for statistical activities in their organizations is represented by the following indicators:

(i) The percentage of Ministries with separate State budget lines for statistical activities in the period of 2012-2014 is 26.23% out of the total number of Ministries which sent their feedback for Questionnaire Form 02. GSO had separate State budget lines for statistical activities annually, when the Financial Ministry provided financial reports for MPI.

(ii) The number of statistics and statistical survey projects included in the VSIDS period 2012-2020 and vision to 2030 accounted for 57.10%.

(7) The budget for the VSIDS in the Ministries in 2012-2014 was 9,438 billion VND, of which the respective budget allocated for the years 2012, 2013 and 2014 was 2,508 billion VND; 2,098 billion VND and 4,832 billion VND, respectively.

Regarding the implementation of the VSIDS (questions 8, 9 of Questionnaire Forum 02 on spending budget to implement 9 action programs of the statistical development strategy), 7 out of 12 ministries and agencies (58.33%) provided answers while 5 out of 12 agencies did not provide information related to questions 8 and 9.

The budget for the Action Plans to implement the VSIDS is allocated by Ministries in the period of 2012-2014 as follows:

Action Plan 1: "Improving the institutional, legal framework and mechanisms for the coordination of statistical activities" funding was provided in 7 out of 7 ministries that implemented the activities.

Action Plan 2: "Intensifying research and application of advanced statistical methodologies and building, standardizing statistical processes according to international standards", 5 out of 7 ministries provided funding.

Action Plan 3: "Innovating, improving and enhancing the quality of statistical information collecting activities", 6 out of 7 Ministries provided funding.

Action Plan 4: "Innovating, improving and enhancing the quality of processing, synthesizing and disseminating of statistical information", 6 out of 7 Ministries provided funding.

Action Plan 5: "Intensifying statistical analysis and forecast", 5 out of 7 Ministries provided funding.

Action Plan 6: "Applying and developing information and communication technologies in statistical activities", 6 out of 7 Ministries provided funding.

Action Plan 7: "Developing the human resource for statistical work", 5 out of 7 Ministries provided funding.

Action Plan 8: "Expanding and improving the efficiency of international cooperation in statistical sector" was allocated fund by 4 out of 7 ministries; implemented activities in Action Plan 8 was allocated fund by 3 out of 7 Ministries for the period of 2012-2014 and by only 1 out of 7 Ministries for the period of 2012-2013;

Action Plan 9: "Intensifying material facilities and mobilizing financial resources for statistical activities" was allocated fund by 2 out of 7 Ministries.

In summary, 7 out of 12 ministries and agencies provided a budget to implement 9 action programs of the strategy. The program with the highest number of ministries and agencies providing a budget to implement was program No. 1 with all 7 ministries and agencies; programs 3, 4, and 6

with 6 out of 7 ministries and agencies; and the lowest number was for program 9, with 2 out of 7 ministries and agencies.

(8) The State budget allocated to Ministries by other State agencies to support statistical activities:

- Other State agencies which support statistical activities include Ministries other than the Ministry of Finance which provides financial support for central statistical activities of other Ministries; People's Committees of provinces and cities; Provincial Departments other than the Department of Finance which supports statistical activities in the province or city.
- The financial support from other State agencies for statistical activities of Ministries in the period of 2012-2014 reached 65.36 billion VND, which accounted for 1.43% of total domestic financial support for statistical activities. The amount funded for the years 2012, 2013 and 2014 was 28.19 billion VND; 16.82 billion VND and 20,35 billion VND, respectively. However, when looking at the fluctuations in the financial support for statistical activities received by Ministries from other State agencies, it was found that:

(i) The funds from other public agencies or local budgets to support statistical activities in period 2012-2014 was 50,92 billion VND, which accounted for 1.11% of the total national budget for statistical activities and 70,91% of the total budget from other public agencies to support statistical activities at the local level.

The financial support from other State agencies for statistical activities in provinces and cities tended to decrease. There was a decline of 6.63 billion VND (0,24%) in 2013 compared to 2012. Funding in 2014 was further reduced by 0.02 billion VND compared to 2013 (0,01%). At the provincial level, funding was mainly reserved for (1) Statistical surveys conducted by the province or city; (2) Broadening survey contents and survey samples of statistical survey of GSO and Ministries to meet the management requirements of the province; (3) Other activities such as compiling a provincial statistical yearbook; organizing classes statistics training courses, etc.

(ii) The budget from other public agencies to statistical activities in ministries, agencies at the central level, during the period 2012-2014 was 14.44 billion VND, which accounted for 0,32% of the total national budget for statistical activities and 29,09% of the total budget from other public agencies to support statistical activities.

The financial support from other State agencies for statistical activities of Ministries tended to increase in the period of 2012-2014. There was a decline of 11.11% in 2014 compared with 2013. The funding was mainly reserved for statistical surveys and censuses such as the Census of Business Establishments and Administrative Establishments in 2012, etc.

3.2.2 Classifying statistical activities by foreign funding

Reports from Ministries

The total foreign funding committed for statistical activities in 2012-2014 was 630.93 billion VND. As of December 31, 2014, the disbursement rate was 46.10% of the total foreign funding committed for statistical activities.

The projects supported primarily fall into 19 statistical fields (see Table 4):

(1) Scientific and Technology Innovation received the top support with 3 assistance projects reported in 2012-2014.

(2) 5 statistics fields received 2 assistance projects each (i.e., such as principles and institutional framework; the role and organization of official statistics; management and development of human resources; sources of data; dissemination, data warehouse; and statistical data analysis).

(3) 13 statistics fields with 1 assistance project for each (i.e., Population and Migration; Labour; Education; Population Stabilization and Housing; Statistics of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries; Statistical Programs; Coordination in the statistical system; promotion, dissemination of statistics; Statistics of banking, insurance and finance; Environment; Multi-cluster indicators; Data editing and data connection; Confidential statistical data; Management and construction engineering resources; and others).

The proportion of statistical projects and statistical surveys to be institutionalized into documents applied in statistical work is 14.29% of the total number of projects.

Forms of support for statistics and statistical survey projects include 5 of the 7 projects that received financial and technical support; one project received financial support only and one project received other forms of support (material facilities support) (see Table 5; for names and objectives of the Projects, see Annex 4).

Reports from development partners

For 2012-2014

(1) The total fund committed by 8 development partners was 261.06 billion VND. The average fund for each project was 16.32 billion VND and disbursement as of December 31, 2014 was at 132.99 billion VND, accounting for 50.94% of the total committed fund for statistical activities for the period. The average disbursement rate was 8.31 billion VND per project (see Annex 4 for names and objectives of the Projects).

(2) Development partners provide support for 41 statistical areas, accounting for 93.18% of the total statistical areas (under the sub-sector classified by UNECE), distributed as follows, mainly for Labour statistics, 10.0%; data analysis, 8.18%; Technical cooperation and capacity building, 7.27%, and others, 0.91% (see Table 6).

(3) The difference in the level of funding from external sources as reported by development partners and Ministries is mainly due to:

(i) For projects with a long committed duration which were not finished by the information collection time (2012) and were extended during the collection time (2012-2014), only “Disbursement” in the time from 2012 to 2014 was considered. “Annual Committed Fund” cannot be separated because committed funds are allocated for the whole project duration. This was the case in one of the reported statistics project.

(ii) Some ministries and development partners provided conflicting levels of foreign funding for Vietnam statistical activities.

(4) In terms of the type of funding for statistical projects, 10 out of the 16 projects reported were funded through grants while six projects were funded through technical assistance such as “Employment for Youth” (ILO-funded) and the project of Jaca. The number of projects supported through grants and those supported by other forms of funding accounted for 62.5% and 37.5% respectively of the total projects implemented in the same period (see Table 8).

(5) The annual funding for the 16 statistical projects were allocated to implementing agencies as follows:

(i) 2 received funding from the State budget (accounting for 12.5% of the total number of implemented projects)

(ii) 9 were transferred directly to the sponsoring agencies (56.25%)

(iii) 5 received funding in other ways (31.25%)

(6) The average committed duration for each project in the period of 2012-2014 and 2015-2017 was 61 months and 35 months, respectively.

For the period 2015-2017

(1) There is a downward trend in the expected funding from development partners for 2015-2017 with only 87.79 million VND commitment fund, compared to 2012-2014 with 261.06 billion VND (a reduction of 173.27 billion VND or 33.63%). There are 5 projects to be implemented from 2015 to 2017, reduced from 11 projects during the 2012-2014 period (see Table 7).

(2) The funds from development partners for 2015-2017 would support 15 of the 44 statistical areas (34.09%) per the UNECE CSA. The statistical areas supported include labour, data analysis, technical cooperation and capacity building.

(3) On types of funding for statistical projects, 3 projects will be funded through ODA grants and 2 projects will be supported through technical assistance (see Table 8 for names and see Annex 4 for objectives of the Projects).

The information on support from development partners to statistical activities as reported by ministries, agencies is different from that reported by development partners. The number of projects reported by development partners is higher than that reported by ministries. The Pilot CRESS in the Philippines also had a similar discrepancy in the number of projects and amount of financial support as reported by ministries and agencies (beneficiaries) compared to the reports from development partners (sponsors) (see Table 7.1).

3.3 Human Resources in the Vietnam Statistical System

(1) In 2012-2014, there was an increase in the number of employees working in the Vietnam statistical system due to the increasing statistical workload in Ministries. In 2012, the number of people working in this field was 6144 employees and increased to 6558 employees in 2014 (an increase of 414 employees or 6.74%).

The actual number of statistical employees increased from 6331 in 2012 to 6856 in 2014 (an increase of 525 or 8.29%) (see Table 9) to accommodate a growing workload, such as the demand for statistical data in the National Statistical Indicator System under Decision No. 43/2010/QĐ-TTg dated 02/6/2010, which has 350 indicators, 171 higher than that provided in Decision No. 305/2005/QĐ-TTg dated 24/11/2010.

(2) There is a changing trend in the staffing pattern among Ministries within the Vietnam Statistical System with an increase in the number of male workers. Classifying by age, in 2014, the age group 40 and below in the Ministry of Planning and Investment (GSO) accounted for 60.30%; the 41-50 and 51-55 age groups accounted for 20.0% each; and the 56-60 age group accounted for only 7.5%. Based on gender, the number of male and female workers accounted for 53.43% and 46.57%, respectively of the total employees working in the statistical sector¹³ (see Table 11).

¹³ Thematic Report 2015 “Evaluation of civil servants and official in Statistical Sector”

(3) The budget for training in statistics for statistical staff increased in 2012-2014 with a total budget of 75.59 billion VND, accounting for 1.68% of the total budget for statistical activities of ministries and agencies funded from the State budget. For 2012, 2013, 2014 the budget represented 1.04%, 1.87%, and 2.35%, respectively of the total budget directly funded from State budget for statistical activities.

(4) From 2012 to 2014, more than 4000 officer-level learners/trainees in the Vietnam statistical system received training in statistics and public administration (557 in 2012; 1337 in 2013; and 2282 in 2014).

(5) The quality of human resources has improved every year during 2012-2014 as evidenced by an increase in the number of staff that passed exams to improve work level and appointments (481 officers in the centralized statistics system). In 2013, 253 officers took an exam to improve work level and 233 officers were promoted from statisticians to senior statisticians; in 2014, 283 officers took the exam to improve their work level, and 248 officers were promoted from college graduate statistics to statisticians.¹⁴

3.4 Factors affecting CRESS information collection in Vietnam

During the CRESS information collection in Vietnam, the CRESS Team noted the following:

Advantages

(1) The CRESS Team received support from CRESS respondents in most of the Ministries, Provincial People's Committee and development partners in Vietnam and benefitted especially from the care and direction of the Steering Committee for the implementation of the Vietnam Statistical Development Strategy in the period of 2011-2020 and vision to 2030 at the central and local levels as well as from the Leaders of GSO and Director of the Institute of Statistical Science.

(2) The support of PARIS21 and the dedicated guidance of international experts engendered the spirit of responsibility of the CRESS Team during the collection of information in ministries, agencies, localities and development partners in Vietnam.

Disadvantages

(1) The lack of prior experience in collecting relevant information for the CRESS report in Vietnam provided some difficulties for the CRESS Team. Some information requested in the forms posed some challenges and revealed limitations which required the CRESS team to contact the data providers (ministries, agencies and development partners) several times. For instance, information on annual external assistance (Form 01), detailed information of each project and annual disbursements (Form 03) were difficult to collect because most of the ministries and agencies do not declare information on an annual basis. Thus, the CRESS Team had to rediscuss with ministries and agencies to clarify and request supplementary information.

(2) Difficulty in collecting scattered information from different units within a Ministry. Some Ministries and development partners refused to provide information.

(3) There was a lot of information to be collected from many different units such as the personnel department, the finance department and unit in charge of statistical work in a Ministry, thus being a burden on respondents. Some Ministries failed to separate repairing cost and fixed-asset purchasing to serve statistical work. Most of the Ministries could not provide information on "Cost

¹⁴ Report 3 on the implementation of Viet Nam Statistical Development period 2011-2020 and vision to 2030 (Proposal No. 3066/TT-BKHDT, dated 21 May 2015 of the Minister of Planning and Investment, report to the Prime Minister).

for maintaining apparatus operation” despite detailed guidance in the Questionnaire and explanation by the CRESS Team.

(4) The data collection was conducted late in the calendar year when all Ministries and Vietnam Development Partners are busy fulfilling their annual work plan, which affects the progress of information collection and processing.

3.5 Achievements, lesson learned and shortcomings of the pilot CRESS Vietnam

3.5.1 Achievements

(1) Meeting the goal of collecting information and preparing the pilot Vietnam CRESS report;

(2) The collected information reflects the overall picture of funding (local and foreign sources) and human resources for Vietnam statistical activities, especially reflecting the trend in funding and human resources of the Vietnam Statistical System.

(3) The contributions to best practices from the pilot CRESS Vietnam such as the following;

(i) Integration of CRESS data collection with the monitoring of the National Strategy for the Development of Statistics (NSDS) of Vietnam or the Vietnam Strategy for the Development of Statistics (VSDS). This can facilitate data collection, reduce respondents’ burden, save money, ensure scope collected and improve data quality input.

(ii) Collection of CRESS data from provincial statistical offices was not done in the Philippines pilot but it could significantly enrich the analysis in the CRESS Report.

(iii) Combined method of face-to-face interviews and sending questionnaires, the response rate was higher.

(iv) Design of separate questionnaires for GSO/NSO from the questionnaires for line ministries. It was noted by the CRESS Vietnam Team that the GSO was able to provide detailed information on the financing of statistics that the line ministries could not provide during the pilot. In the context of the existing PARIS21 questionnaires, Questionnaires 01, 02A and 03 may be designed for the GSO/NSO, while questionnaires 01; 02; 03 will be designed for the ministries. In addition to current questionnaires by PARIS21, Vietnam added form 6 for localities.

(v) In order to reach some of the above results, particularly the response rate for the questionnaires to collect information in ministries, agencies and development partners in Vietnam which is much higher than that in the Philippines, it is important to strengthen the relationship and cooperation mechanism with ministries, agencies and development partners.

In this regard, for ministries and agencies, the Minister of Planning and Investment signed on 12 October 2015, Decision No. 1471/QĐ-BKHĐT on the regulations on contents and mechanisms for cooperation and data sharing between GSO and ministries, agencies. Under the Vietnam Statistical Law, Article 62 “The central statistics office is the national statistics office to provide advice to the Minister of Planning and Investment to carry out state management on statistical operations...” Accordingly, as of April, 2016 there had been: (1) 10 ministries and agencies signing memorandum of understanding on strengthening statistics work with GSO, including Ministry of Transportation, Ministry of Defence, Ministry of Science and Technology, Ministry of Health, Ministry of Industry and Trade, Ministry of Public Security, State Bank of Vietnam, Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Construction, Ministry of Home Affairs; and (2) 04 ministries and agencies signed the mechanism of cooperation and data sharing in GSO, including Ministry of Industry and Trade, the Central Economics Committee, Committee of Ethnic Minority Affairs and Tax Authority.

Regarding development partners, each year the Ministry of Planning and Investment (General Statistics Office) organises an annual meeting with development partners in Vietnam in order to discuss, update information and strengthen cooperation among partners and call for support from international organisations, sponsors and development partners in Vietnam for statistical activities.

3.5.2 Some lessons learned

As part of the CRESS learning experience, there is a need to highlight the lessons learned. Many challenges were encountered in the pilot exercise, but CRESS Vietnam achieved better than expected results, with response rates/cooperation from respondents higher even if some were not able to provide the data needed. The pilot was certainly a good start for CRESS in Vietnam. Some of the lessons learned include:

(1) The NSO in some countries may not have the mandate to collect CRESS data which makes the data collection challenging especially the first time it is conducted. Expectations from the CRESS pilot will therefore have to be managed well. Refusal by respondents to provide information should not be unexpected and should be addressed properly. Understandably, as noted by the CRESS Vietnam Team, some respondents were scared to provide information. In some cases, the respondents made sure that information provided to CRESS first passed through the leadership of the organization.

(2) Confidentiality issues on data collected by the NSO/GSO should be managed with great care, in line with Principle 6 of the UN Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics (FPOS) since the CRESS data may not be available in the public domain.

(3) It is desirable to involve the budget officers of line ministries to help the statistical units/focal point for statistics in filling out the questionnaires on the statistical budget. This appears to have not been done in the Vietnam pilot.

3.5.3 Shortcomings

- (1) Some Ministries and development partners in Vietnam did not provide information, and responses of subordinate statistical units of some Ministries such as the Ministry of Finance were not collected.
- (2) The amount of information to be collected is huge and relating to many different units, which affects the information collection process.

SECTION 4: RECOMMENDATIONS

(1) Completing CRESS implementation methods

Local funding

All Ministries have to follow State budget items. However, there are some expenses mentioned in the Questionnaire that should not be covered such as financial expenses because they are not included as Vietnam State budget items;

Foreign funding (reported by Ministries)

On collecting detailed information of each project, the disbursement time for each project is accumulated up to December 31, 2014 while funding for statistical activities of Ministries is disaggregated by year 2012, 2013 and 2014. Therefore, in the Questionnaire to collect information about foreign funding for statistical activities, the disbursement of each year should also be collected separately (not accumulated).

Human resources

On training, update knowledge for people working in the statistics sector, there is a need to pay closer attention to the indicator “the actual number of people working in statistics sector” because in most of the Ministries other than the Ministry of Planning and Investment, the people in charge of statistics do their job concurrently with other functions. Based on the statistical workload in their office, Ministries shall make arrangements for statistical work. The question is whether we should supplement the indicator of “Essential number of people doing statistical work” for Ministries.

It is recommended that the following indicators be added to the questionnaire about human resources: (i) number of people needed to do the statistical work in ministries; (ii) actual number of people working in statistics (by age group, gender); (iii) number of people working in statistics, training, fostering knowledge of statistics and other operations; (iv) level of statistical workers in ministries, the data collected, its help to make human policy work in statistical activities.

(2) Improving statistical assistance capacity of the entire Vietnam Statistical System comprises the central statistical system and the ministerial statistical system.

(3) Institutionalization of the CRESS activity as a regular statistical program in the VSS. Vietnam CRESS report should be conducted every five years and a survey titled “collect information on the implementation of VSIDS” should be added to the National Statistical Census and Survey Program. Some information should also be added to the Questionnaire for Ministries, for example, information reflecting quality of Ministries’ statistical activities outputs, the level of satisfaction of statistical data users, etc.

The results of the current CRESS pilot exercise in Vietnam could be used as benchmark information for succeeding assessments on statistical resources in the country. During these succeeding assessments, care must be taken to ensure comparability of CRESS data over time, as it is expected that better and more responses to the CRESS questionnaires will be collected in the future.

With the integration of CRESS data collection with the data collection for the mid/end-term review of the VSIDS, there is a need to review the data collection instruments to be used. The midterm review of the VSIDS is more comprehensive than what CRESS covers and it is important that the questionnaires are designed as to ensure that the objectives of CRESS are achieved.

(4) Time for data collection should be in 2nd or 3rd Quarter of the year, every five years, to be integrated with information collection for the mid-term review and end-term review of the implementation of VSDS.

(5) It is recommended that Ministries and agencies, except for the Ministry of Planning and Investment (GSO), allocate annual budget with a separate line for statistics activities of the Ministry/agency. The GSO's role as coordinator of the VSS should be strengthened to facilitate better monitoring of financing for statistics.

(6) One great challenge for statistical systems is to secure funds for statistics from the government without losing independence from political interference. In this regard, some options are available to the NSS:

(i) Prepare a Medium Term Expenditure Framework (MTEF) as a component of the VSDS. This is not easy, especially in the beginning, but the potential benefits for statistical development are great, providing for a financial plan for the activities proposed in the VSDS that is recognized by stakeholders of statistics including the government.

(ii) Establishment of a System of Designated Statistics that defines and delineates the institutional responsibilities in the generation and dissemination of statistics. It designates who is responsible for which statistics and usually defines the frequency, the time lag, and the level of disaggregation of the data to be produced by the NSS. It is expected that the designated statistics be given a higher priority in the allocation of funds.

(7) Greater investment in statistical human resources should be a key priority in the VSS (quantity and quality aspects) and must be periodically monitored.

(8) Finally, in order to gain increased and sustainable support for statistics, there is a need to ensure the relevance of statistical outputs to emerging concerns, particularly to monitoring progress of the national and global development agenda. Thus, CRESS should be linked to the Agenda 2030 on Sustainable Development with a greater number of indicators on SDGs (230) monitored and reported.

LIST OF REFERENCE DOCUMENTS

1. Statistic Law 2015, No 89;
2. Budget Law 2015, No 83;
3. Development Strategy for Vietnam's Statistics 2011 – 2020, vision to 2030. The Prime Minister approved Decision No. 1803/QĐ-TTg, January 18, 2011;
4. Scheme 803, June 28, 2012 of the Prime Minister, referring to the National Statistical Survey;
5. Report of results of 03 years implementing the Vietnam Statistical Development Strategy period 2011-2020 vision to 2030.
6. Pilot questionnaire in Philippines;
7. Classification of Statistical Activities (CSA) of UNECE;
8. Statistics Year Book 2014;
9. Presentation of Dr. Virola in workshop CRESS in Vietnam.

Appendix

Appendix 1. The data tables

<http://bit.ly/2mWEIHE>

Appendix 2. Members of the CRESS team

<http://bit.ly/2ndht84>

Appendix 3.1 Questionnaires

<http://bit.ly/2mAfjm6>

Appendix 3.2 Instructions for Questionnaires

<http://bit.ly/2mEvUFP>

Appendix 4. List of name's project

<http://bit.ly/2mkEpoB>

Appendix 5. Statistics Law

<http://bit.ly/2mkwyXO>

