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**VIETNAM STATISTICS:  
DIRECTION FOR DEVELOPMENT**

## **Introduction**

Current global macroeconomic conditions, however, have created a volatile context for Vietnam's economy, and have highlighted the need for accurate, timely statistics essential for policy planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation.

Vietnam has taken action to improve its administration and monitoring activities. The Program of Administrative Reform of the Government of Vietnam simplified the rules of government, clarified the roles of government bodies and decentralized powers to provinces and districts. An outgrowth of this reform was a new statistical law that went into effect in 2004, giving the General Statistical Office (GSO) a larger, more centralized, and precise role concerning all statistics collected by government.

GSO is now working to match its capacity to these greater powers, to provide for the more time-sensitive and diversified statistical needs from other government bodies, and to transition to becoming an independent administration service institution for government on all levels and for all users both domestic and international.

In this connection, all activities of the GSO were directed to meet new demand of the country in the next decade. This report will describe major activities of the GSO in capacity building and direction toward development in the coming years.

## **Human development**

Human resource plays extremely important role in the whole process of development, especially in the time of big changes in implementation of duties. The means for human resource development are:

- Strengthen capacity of Statistical College and School in the system of GSO.

In the system of GSO, Statistical College which is also included in the system of Universities and Colleges of Vietnam under Ministry of Training and Education. That means, GSO provides financial and human resource for the College, while the Ministry of Training and Education control training program with consultation from the GSO.

- Cooperation with universities in creation of training programs relating to statistics;
- Development of training program:

GSO has already established in-house training activities, which have been used in different undertakings during the last years. However, there is still a need to further develop the schemes and the areas of training in order to fill gaps of knowledge, e.g. more advanced sampling skills, survey and questionnaire design, etc.

But there are also needs to launch more general training programmes for different staff categories. To achieve this there might be a need to more precisely classify the staff into different categories and also to look into some principles regarding the manning of the units within GSO.

Another useful approach regarding staff development is to introduce job rotation, i.e. a staff member should not be allowed to stay longer than a specific number of years on a post after which she/he will take up a new post in another department. If possible this rotation should also encourage rotation in/out from development and operations, respectively. – It should be noted that if staff is “linked too hard” to a specific category or class this might create obstacles for a successful job rotation.

The activities aimed at:

- Identification and classification of different staff categories
- Identification of necessary skills for each category
- Identification of special areas for expert training
- Development of training program for categories
- Develop a prioritising plan for the training activities

- Short-term Training Program includes:

Short term training for statisticians with attention to the staff at district level and in ministries.

Training for management staff on management skills.

Training on IT application;

Training on various statistical subject matter.

- Hiring the staff: GSO conduct annually wide public competition to hire the most qualified staff to work for the GSO system both in the Central and local offices. The information on competition is widely announced in public newspapers and TV.

- Subsidies for statisticians:

To make Statistics more attractive for people to work for, by decision of the Government, all staff working now in the GSO system get a professional subsidies about from 10 to 25% of their salary.

## **Renovation of the GSO system**

In April 2009 The Prime Minister of Vietnam has directive No 548-TTg assigned GSO in collaboration with other Ministries and local Authorities to build up a Project on “Comprehensive Renovation of Statistical Indicators System” to be applied in 2011 to provide timely and accurate statistical information to meet demand both national and international on analysis and assessment of socio-economic development of the country for policy and plan making, creation of Country Development Strategy.

The Steering Committee headed by the minister of Planning and Investment was established. Leaders of other Ministries and local Authorities were involved in the Committee.

In fact, this Project will change all GSO system and activities.

The Project is divided into following Programs:

### **1.1 Renovation of National Statistical Indicators System (NSIS)**

In 2005, the Prime Minister of Vietnam signed decision on promulgation of the National Statistical Indicators System. By this decision, the Prime Minister clearly assigned responsibility of each ministry and organization in statistical data collection. From total of 274 indicators, the GSO is responsible to collect data for 120, other ministries are responsible to collect data for 154 indicators.

However, in the process of application it was found that in the NSIS not included many indicators reflecting quality and effectiveness of development, competition capacity of the economy as well as social safety and environment.

Moreover, content and coverage of a number of indicators not meet international standards.

The new NSIS has been created including 350 indicators reflecting new structure of the market economy, where private sector and foreign investment sector rapidly developed in the last some years.

From 350 indicators, the GSO will collect directly data for 196, the rest 154 belong to ministries. From 350 indicators, data for 250 will be collected from 2011, for other 100, data will be collected during the time up to 2015.

For application of the new NSIS, a set of metadata, being created including consistent definitions, coverage, methodology of compilation. Training courses for staff of the GSO system and other ministries during 2010.

Improvement of the System of statistical surveys and censuses by revise existing system and add new surveys to ensure data input for the new NSIS. In this context whole process of data production of all statistical subject matters will be strengthened from data collection to data dissemination.

### 1.2 Strengthen National Statistical System

#### - Strengthen GSO System:

According to the Law of Organization of the Government, organization of ministries and Government Agencies have to be approved by the Government with proposal of the Ministry itself, appraisal comments of Ministry of Home Affairs and Ministry of Justice.

New organization of the GSO system was submitted to the Government for approval.

In the proposed new organization of the GSO, a number of statistical activities will be strengthened such as Price statistics; Investment and infrastructure building, Management of ICT within GSO system.

#### - Strengthen Statistical organization in line ministries:

By proposal of GSO, the Government already has decision on organization of statistics in ministries for producing official statistics. The decision of the Government also specified methodological coordination role of the GSO in relation with ministries. The decision also indentified relation between GSO and Agencies in the Justice system.

The decision also indentified organization of statistics in the units of local Authorities, where the Provincial Statistics Office of the GSO plays coordination role.

### 1.3 Development of Information Technology (IT)

The strategy for IT development of the GSO are being created. The objectives of this strategy are:

- Strengthen IT infrastructure by providing PC for all level of GSO as needed.
- Wide application of IT in data collection, processing, compiling and dissemination.
- Building a system of data bases.
- Improvement of existing Business register.
- Building a system of database of administrative data and microdata.
- Promotion of application PDA in data collection.
- Application of IT in statistical analysis and data dissemination.

#### 1.4 Strengthen legislative environment for Statistics

The Statistical Law that went into effect in 2004, giving the General Statistical Office (GSO) a larger, more centralized, and precise role concerning all statistical activities specially in data collection.

For more effective implementation of the Law it is great need to review implementation of the Law and related documents of the Government on function and operation of official statistics in Vietnam. Activities in this programme will be:

- Review activities relating to implementation of the Law in and out of Statistical system at all levels.
- Making proposal to the Government on revising related to statistics legislative documents.
- Request the Government to submit the Parliament on revising some articles of the Statistical Law if needed.
- Making propaganda on Statistical Law in particular and all statistical activities in general.

#### 1.5 Funding for Statistics

The Steering Committee for Renovation of NSIS already submitted to the Government request on funding for implementation of the Project with total fund of 6.130 billion VND (325 million USD) for the period of 2011-2015, including:

- For conducting censuses and surveys: 1,900 billion VND
- For Application of IT: 2,310 billion VND, of which, for GSO system: 700 billion VND, for statistical organization of Ministries: 960 billion VND and for Local Authorities: 650 billion VND.
- For training of staff: 600 billion VND
- For improvement of working conditions in GSO system: 1,320 billion VND ( building offices, purchasing vehicles, equipments)

The annual regular funding from the state budget to the GSO is not included.

#### 1.6 International Cooperation

Promotion of international cooperation is one of the most important activities of the GSO. During the implementation of the Direction of the Prime Minister on Development of Vietnam Statistics in 2001-2010, the GSO has created Action Plan of International Cooperation with major content such as: Enhancing exchange of statistical information, Active participation in international statistical activities, Expanding bilateral cooperation with other countries, Calling for international assistance, ...

In the next decade, beside the above mentioned activities the GSO will aim at:

- Make more availability of international comparable statistics;
- Responding to international trends in quality of statistics;
- Active participation in international statistical Programmes;
- Promotion of data exchange with international institutions; and
- Active dissemination and coordination of international statistical standards in Vietnam Statistics.

### **Statistical Development Strategy 2011-2020 with vision to 2025**

. GSO has improved over the past several years, but new challenges are demanding a much higher level of capacity, as a direct result of a changing social, economic and political environment. The new national and provincial role for GSO as mandated by the Statistical Law in conjunction with the implementation of the Renovation Plan requires GSO to strengthen capacity by a development strategy.

The strategy will point out the need for consistent statistical coverage of all areas that is up to international standards. One important need is to strengthen capacity to implement the task on renovation of the country's statistical system.

For creation of the Strategy a Working group has been established for drafting the strategy.

The two challenges for the strategy is how to create a set of indicators to meet both specific domestic requirements and international standards, and the second how to make marketing of statistical products for dissemination through suitable policy.