Background

The implementation of the Regional Programme on Economic Statistics (RPES) in Asia and the Pacific is supported by the UK Department for International Development (DFID), including with technical assistance focused on South and South-East Asia.

The objective of the support is to increase the availability of high quality economic statistics and improve the capacity of national statistical systems to produce quality economic statistics. At the country level, this objective is pursued through in-depth institutional reviews and customized technical assistance.

Three project support meetings have been held so far with participation by the project countries: Bangladesh, Bhutan, Cambodia, Lao PDR, Maldives, Myanmar, Nepal, Sri Lanka, Timor Leste and Viet Nam. The meetings have benefited from the participation of representatives from Japan, the Russian Federation, DFID, SIDA, the Asian Development Bank, the Food and Agricultural Organization of the UN, the Statistical Institute for Asia and the Pacific and the United Nations Statistics Division.

The project support meetings are focused on exchanging experiences and ideas among project countries to facilitate project implementation.

The meetings also serve to identify and address common issues in need of further development and support. Issues identified during the first three meetings include; improvement of statistical legislation, reviews of economic statistics programmes, statistical business registers, use of administrative statistics and informal sector statistics.

During the third project support meeting, demand was expressed for technical support on informal sector statistics. As such the fourth project support meeting will include two days workshop on informal sector statistics; including relevant data sources and the incorporation of the informal sector in the national accounts. The workshop will benefit from presentations by project countries on current practises related to informal sector data sources and their use in national accounts compilation.

The third project support meeting will also include presentations and discussions on opportunities for supporting national training within RPES, aiming to generate recommendations for specific outputs (activities, materials, etc.) to be delivered through the project.

Participants:

One Project focal point and one expert / manager involved in informal sector estimation from Bangladesh, Bhutan, Cambodia, Lao PDR, Maldives, Myanmar, Nepal, Sri Lanka, Timor-Leste, and Viet Nam. The ESCAP project team, a lecturer from SIAP and relevant national, regional and international partners and resource persons.
Day 1 – Project Support Meeting

Day one of the meeting will focus on the status of RPES project implementation. Each project country will share progress and lessons and receive feedback from other countries and resource persons. In addition there will be a presentation and discussion on the training component of RPES with the goal of defining topics and identifying pilot countries.

Country presentations: Each project country will present for 15-18 minutes on a topic, as indicated in the table below. The presentation will use the template provided. Feed-back will be provided by another project country – also as indicated in the table. Feedback should be constructive, pointing to alternative approaches or sharing other reflections that may be of benefit to further implementation.

Preparations Topics by Country

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Presentation Topic</th>
<th>To review and provide Feedback</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bangladesh</td>
<td>Present on planned the “Informal Sector Study”, key lessons and how it relates to the RPES.</td>
<td>Timor-Leste</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bhutan</td>
<td>Present on progress of Import and Export Price Indices and need for development of Bhutan System of Industrial Classifications (BSIC).</td>
<td>Myanmar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cambodia</td>
<td>The new NSDS developed in collaboration with the WB and how this relates to planned RPES project activities. Also present on plans for National Accounts development with ESCAP / SIDA.</td>
<td>Viet Nam</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lao PDR</td>
<td>The World Bank collaboration with Lao PDR project – LAO Stat ‘Strengthening the Lao Statistics System’. Also, key learnings from the project that are relevant to the RPES.</td>
<td>Nepal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maldives</td>
<td>Key learnings and experiences from the NSS review and National Account developments.</td>
<td>Cambodia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Myanmar</td>
<td>Present on planned collaboration with ESCAP on the development of a statistical business register.</td>
<td>Bhutan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nepal</td>
<td>Present on the economic component of the “Evidence for Development (E4D) Programme” supported by DFID. Include possible areas for value-addition by RPES project activities.</td>
<td>Bangladesh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sri Lanka</td>
<td>Present on the plan to conduct a NSS review with ESCAP and PARIS 21.</td>
<td>Maldives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Timor-Leste</td>
<td>Update on development plans and progress for economic statistics.</td>
<td>Lao PDR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Viet Nam</td>
<td>Present on the development of energy statistics and balances and collaboration with ESCAP.</td>
<td>Sri Lanka</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Objective

For project country representatives to learn about best practice in informal sector statistics; from both a data source and national accounts perspective. This will be achieved by presentations from international informal sector statistics experts and from countries on their informal sector data sources and statistics. This will enable countries to receive feedback from the experts and each other as well as seeing examples of what other countries have achieved.

It is important for other country participants and experts to properly understand the informal sector statistics for all participating countries. As such, all participating countries are required to submit a report (maximum 8 pages) informal sector statistics. A detailed guide will be provided.

Day 2 – Informal Sector Data Sources

Expert Presentation: The day will open with an expert presenting on informal sector data sources. This presentation will include details on various survey types, data uses and the importance of informal sector data sources and statistics in SDG monitoring and policy implementation.

Country Presentations:
- Presentation from five counties on their informal sector statistics (template will be provided)
- Each presentation will be 12-15 minutes
- The presentations will include details on the informal sector in that country, data sources and inclusion of the informal sector in national accounts. For day two presenters will be asked to focus more on data sources.
- Feedback and questions from the experts and from other countries after each presentation

Plenary Discussion: After country presentations and discussions, there will be a plenary discussion to summarize key learnings from the day and identify areas of interest of the project countries in informal sector data sources.

Day 3 – Informal Sector in National Accounts:

Expert Presentation: The day will open with an expert presenting on informal sector in the National Accounts. This presentation will include details on how nations include / adjust for the informal sector in the national accounts and key concepts from a National Accounts perspective.

Country Presentations:
- Presentation from other five counties that have not presented on day 2. These presenters will be asked to focus more on National Accounts compared to day 2.
- Each presentation will be 12-15 minutes
- Feedback and questions from the experts and other countries after the presentations.

Plenary Discussion: After country presentations and discussions, there will be a plenary discussion to summarize key learnings from the day and identify areas of interest of the project countries in informal sector statistics.

End of the Fourth Project Support Meeting: An ESCAP representative will conclude the meeting.
Other Details

The PowerPoint templates and report guidelines are prepared for guidance purposes. They can be amended by participating countries if needed.

The final agenda and PowerPoint templates will be provided closer to the start of the project support meeting, once attendance is confirmed.