

Country Report on Support to Statistics (CRESS) Implementing CRESS in Asia Pilot exercise in the Philippines

Background

One of the key objectives of the Busan Action Plan on Statistics (BAPS) is to increase resources for statistical systems. Continued investment is necessary to break the cycle of neglect and disuse of statistics. Government investment on statistics should be the primary source of financial support to national statistical systems. However, development partners' support will remain essential to fuel critical statistical activities at the country level.

To increase financing of statistical systems, it is first necessary to have a better understanding and documentation of the sources, amount, and type of financing received by national statistical systems. A monitoring system should also be in place to track the investments on statistics that are currently available or to be made available.

In 2006, the Partnership in Statistics for Development in the 21st Century (PARIS21) has initiated the "Light Reporting Exercises" which aimed at generating information on the extent of support to statistics, both technical and financial, provided by multilateral and bilateral development partners. This exercise was later mainstreamed into the regular program of the PARIS21 Secretariat as the Partner Report on Support to Statistics (PRESS).

In 2011, PARIS21 launched the Country Report on Support to Statistics (CRESS) in Africa following the concept of PRESS but tailored for country level reporting of support to statistics from various sources such as government, development partners, and other entities. The CRESS exercise was done in collaboration with the statistical authorities of Cameroon, Ethiopia, Malawi, and Senegal. The pilot exercises in Africa helped develop a tool to identify the amount and sources of funding committed to the national statistical system (NSS)¹ as well as the types of statistical activities being financed.

Statistical systems in developing countries would benefit from the information the CRESS will generate which could aid them in better planning for their statistical development. The increased demand for statistics in the Post-2015 era will necessitate prioritization as resources become more limited. To expand the CRESS as a tool to aid statistical offices and statistical systems to better plan for national statistical development, PARIS21 is launching a pilot exercise in Asia with Philippines and Vietnam as pilot countries.

¹ National Statistical System refers to an ensemble of statistical organisations and units within a country that jointly collect, process and disseminate official statistics on behalf of national government (OECD Glossary of Terms, <http://stats.oecd.org/glossary/detail.asp?ID=1726>).

Objective

The ultimate objective of the CRESS is to **improve financing of NSS** and **increase investments in statistics** by helping countries better plan for their statistical development. Specifically, it aims to:

1. Provide information on the current financing made available to NSS and future requirements;
2. Analyse funding priorities for statistics;
3. Promote harmonization of external support for statistics;
4. Validate and monitor the extent of financing for statistics by development partners.

Methodology – CRESS-Philippines

1. Launching Forum

CRESS-Philippines involves many stakeholders in the Philippine Statistical System (PSS). The cooperation of these stakeholders, particularly those who will supply information during the pilot and those who will be involved in the institutionalization of CRESS in the PSS is essential to its success. At the same time, it is necessary that the stakeholders appreciate the rationale and objectives of CRESS-Philippines.

A launching forum is therefore deemed an important component of the CRESS process.

2. Scope of data collection

Statistics cuts across various sectors thus data collection must be undertaken systematically across the entire statistical system. CRESS data collection will therefore attempt to obtain both commitments and expenditures for financial, technical or material support from the following:

- National resources: This includes resources intended to finance the statistical activities of the PSS, i.e., national statistics council, national statistical office, statistics units in government ministries/agencies collecting/producing data, and statistics training institutes. The UNECE Classification of Statistical Activities will serve as guide in identifying the type of statistical activity being financed.
- External resources (grant, loan, aid): These resources are provided by development partners, private sector (or others outside of government) as a targeted support for statistics improvement in a particular sector/agency, for the PSS as a whole, as a specific statistics project, or a component of a development project/program that they manage, usually part of monitoring and evaluation activities. A specific questionnaire has been developed to collect relevant information on these that may support/complement the data from the PRESS².

² PRESS Methodology, December 2009, PARIS21

3. Period covered

CRESS should be both backward-looking as well as forward-looking and consistent with PRESS coverage.

- Funding in the last three years (2012-2014)
- Future funding in the next three years (2015-2017)

4. Coverage of financing

Funding items to be considered are those recurring and periodic statistical activities and broken down according to:

- **Personnel services** – salaries, allowances of statistical personnel
- **Maintenance and operating expenses** – of statistical agencies and units
 - Recurring statistical activities (e.g., administrative data collection, maintenance of information systems/databases, data processing, data dissemination/publication, training etc.)
- **Capital outlay** – investments in statistics (e.g., construction of new buildings for the PSA, upgrading of information systems and/or databases, purchase of computers and/or devices for surveys/census and regular statistical activity, purchase of softwares, improvements in internet, etc.)
- **Periodic data collection activities** – (e.g., census, survey) not part of the above categories
- **Special projects** – funding for new/developmental initiatives on statistics (e.g., updating of statistical methodology, generation of new indicators, conduct of new survey, capacity building, etc.)

In some cases, financing for statistics would be difficult to identify and quantify because it is embedded in regular (government) agency program. As such, it would help to include certain assumptions (e.g., maintenance of databases that directly relates to data collection, training of staff on statistics, etc.) in collecting data.

5. Classification of statistical areas funded

To facilitate the proper identification of statistical activities, a classification of activities in the domain of statistical capacity building statistical areas in pdf file is included herein. The document provides information on the types of statistics/statistical activities such as demographic, social, economic, environment and multi-domain statistics as well as data collection, processing, dissemination and analysis that could be considered. This is particularly relevant in documenting external support for statistics. It is a slightly modified version of the UNECE CSA.

6. Instruments to be used in collecting information

Questionnaires will be used to collect data and information from different stakeholders in the PSS that are identified to provide information regarding financing on statistics. However, complementary or additional methods may be employed by the country to

collect data (e.g., use of government budget documents, interviews with key respondents, etc.) provided an explanation will be included in the report. Depending on the quality of information supplied thru the questionnaires, follow-up consultations with respondents may be conducted.

PARIS21 prepared a set of questionnaires for the CRESS exercise which have been adapted to the needs and objectives of the country, following a test of the questionnaires with the former National Statistical Coordination Board (NSCB), the highest policy-making and coordinating body in the PSS. An additional column in Questionnaire 3 was incorporated for the source documents of the information provided. This will facilitate the institutionalization of the CRESS process, recognizing the expected staff turnover in the future. Also, appropriate definitions, metadata, and instructions have been added.

7. Periodicity

In the institutionalization of CRESS in the PSS, the recommended periodicity of reporting is every three years. This is frequent enough so as to be able to capture and address emerging trends in the financing of statistical activities without putting too much burden on the reporting process.

8. Data Transmission Protocols

In order to facilitate the transmission of CRESS data from the data sources to the PSA as the administrator of the CRESS-Philippines database, it will be useful for the PSA to define the data transmission protocol most suited to the IT infrastructure in the PSS.

9. Institutional Framework: Coordination Arrangements

While coordination mechanisms have existed and have worked relatively well in the PSS, it is desirable that the institutional framework for CRESS-Philippines coordination be clearly defined and formally agreed upon, either thru bilateral or multilateral arrangements. It is highly recommended and expected that the PSA will take the role of coordinator, with the Department of Budget and Management as an active partner.

10. Analysis Framework

In line with the CRESS objectives, the framework will cover both a qualitative and a quantitative analysis of financing statistics in the Philippines. Based on the data capture instruments/questionnaires, the qualitative factors facilitating or hindering support for statistics and its measurement will be identified/assessed. In addition, a quantitative analysis of the current levels, trends and the nature, distribution and priorities of financing in statistics will be done. Lastly, to the extent possible, the financing of statistics as reported by countries through the CRESS will be compared with what is reported by development partners through the CRESS as well as through the PRESS.

11. Dissemination and Communication of CRESS-Philippines Results

The CRESS results are expected to provide important information on the financing of statistics in the Philippines. On top of sharing this information with the international community, its dissemination to key stakeholders within the country will be crucial in improving the financing of statistics and in increasing investments in statistics.

A communication plan should therefore be designed and implemented to disseminate the CRESS results.

Expected Outputs

1. CRESS report following a recommended outline
2. Database in the form of an Excel file
3. Co-ordination arrangement on financing statistics in the Philippines (between and among NSS stakeholders, decisionmakers in government, and development partners)

Institutional Framework (Cooperative Arrangement between Country and Paris21)

The CRESS will be conducted and implemented by the national statistics office of the country, with the commitment of the National Statistician or the Director General. The conduct of CRESS activities should be within the existing coordination mechanism in the statistical system. Should an ad hoc steering group need to be created, such group should be composed of NSS stakeholders, ministries involved in financing/funding statistics (e.g., Budget, Finance, Treasury, Planning, etc.) and development partners. A focal person from the PSA will need to be appointed who shall be responsible in coordinating all CRESS activities and would be directly working with the PARIS21 consultant.

To guide the CRESS work,

PARIS21 shall:

1. Update the CRESS methodology to adapt to the needs and requirements of the country
2. Engage PARIS21 consultant to assist and guide the country in the CRESS activities
3. Develop guideline for the CRESS report in consultation with the country
4. Provide funding for the data collection and in launching and dissemination meetings
5. Fund the publication of the CRESS report and disseminate results via its website

PSA shall:

1. Provide technical support on CRESS activities
 - Provide comments and inputs in the CRESS methodology
 - Adapt/revise the CRESS questionnaires provided by PARIS21, if necessary
 - Collect data on financing with support of the PARIS21 consultant
 - Compile and process questionnaires in collaboration with PARIS21 consultant
 - Create database on CRESS

- Conduct validation exercises on the data collected, with guidance from the Consultant
- Assist PARIS21 consultant in the analysis of the results of the CRESS, as necessary
- Assist PARIS21 consultant in the preparation of the draft and final reports on CRESS
- Present the preliminary results of the CRESS in forum/meeting with stakeholders
- Secure approval of the final report from relevant national authority/ies, where necessary
- Provide PARIS21 copy of the final report for publication
- Disseminate the results of the CRESS

2. Take charge of logistics and administrative requirements

- Appoint a focal person (from PSA) for the CRESS exercise
- Identify PSS stakeholders and development partners (those currently involved in financing statistics) to be part of the CRESS exercises
- Coordinate meetings and consultations with key PSS stakeholders (line ministries and development partners)
- Organize the launching meeting and dissemination forum
- Submit funding proposal to PARIS21 prior to launch of CRESS
- Submit financial report to PARIS21 after completion of the project

Proposed Timelines/Schedule

Activity	Schedule	Responsibility Center
Preparatory work		
1. Sending of formal letter and concept note to NSO regarding the CRESS activity	9 February	PARIS21
2. Preparatory activities - Engagement of PARIS21 Consultant - Contract preparation and fund transfer	April 2-May 30	PARIS21 and PSA
3. Updating of CRESS methodology to adapt to country needs and requirements	April 30 - May 30	PARIS21 Consultant and PSA
CRESS launching and data collection		
4. Launching meeting of NSS stakeholders	June 8	PSA and PARIS21 Consultant
5. Data collection, checking	June 8 - 26	PSA with guidance of PARIS21 Consultant
6. Consultation meetings with key stakeholders	June 15 - 26	PARIS21 Consultant with assistance from PSA
7. Data processing and validation	June 22 – July 17	PSA with guidance of PARIS21 Consultant
8. Preliminary analysis	July 17 – 31	PARIS21 Consultant with assistance from PSA
9. Prepare first draft CRESS report	Aug 1 – 17	PARIS21 Consultant with assistance from PSA
Dissemination and finalization of CRESS report		
10. Dissemination workshop	Aug 18	PSA with guidance of PARIS21 Consultant
11. Finalize CRESS report (incorporating	Aug 18 – Aug 31	PARIS21 Consultant and PSA

comments in the dissemination workshop)		
12. Endorse CRESS report for approval of relevant national authority	Sept 1 - 4	PSA
13. Provide PARIS21 with final report for publication	Sept 7 -11	PSA
14. Dissemination of final CRESS report	Sept 14 - onwards	PARIS21 and PSA

Note:

The CRESS is a pilot exercise and hence can be improved at any time and adapted to the country's situation and/or needs. Following the pilot phase, a report on the lessons learned will be produced by the PSA and PARIS21 consultant to be submitted to PARIS21 Secretariat.