



Increasing the quality of statistics and timeliness of delivery

Reliable and accurate statistical data are the bedrock for policy formation around the globe. Decision-makers need high quality data to make sound policy choices in such diverse areas as trade, investments, and services at both national and regional level.

Although data collection systems were in place in ASEAN, data were difficult to harmonise for several reasons;

- Lack of standard formats for data collection at national level and for transmission to ASEANstats;
- Non-harmonised data and insufficiently computerised transmission systems between ASEAN Member States and ASEANstats leading to encoding errors;
- Discrepancy among National Statistical Offices' resources, preventing some Member States from providing sufficient detailed data.

These factors led to a lack of comparability of national statistics which greatly increased the workload to process the data at regional level and impacted on the delivery time.

"Delivering quality regional statistics is like playing in an orchestra - everyone must follow the score for the music to flow in symphony"

H.E Julian Wilson, Head of the European Union Delegation to ASEAN

How did the EU Programme help?

The EU-ASEAN Statistical Capacity Building (EASCAB) Programme assisted this process in several ways.

At regional level support included;

- Study visits to the EU to see how data transmission, production and dissemination is organised there, and what lessons could be learnt;
- Provision of technical expertise to design ASEAN data templates, and standardised data transmission protocols;
- Provision of IT equipment and software to upgrade ASEANstats' capacity to compile, process and disseminate data;
- Provision of on-the-job training on the application of international best

Since 2011, ASEANstats is able to deliver:

- Quarterly and annual publications on ASEAN trade in goods of the previous year;
- Annual reports on Foreign Direct Investments of the previous year;
- First statistical report on trade in services of the previous year;
- First statistical report on ASEAN Millennium Development Goals.

practice and the use of IT tools;

- Support to the production of a series of regional quarterly and annual statistical reports.

At national level support included;

- Delivery of an extensive capacity building programme for all eligible ASEAN countries;
- Delivery of training of trainers' courses on international trade in goods, foreign direct investment, and international trade in services statistics;
- Provision of IT equipment and software to upgrade national systems of Cambodia, Laos, and Vietnam to narrow

statistical development gaps;

- Provision of training on the adoption of new international frameworks agreed at regional level, and the use of new IT tools.

What was the impact of this change?

Quality and timeliness of the data have improved considerably. Quarterly trade figures are now available well within standard delivery norms. With the on-line database system in place, you can directly extract the information you need - <http://aseanstats.asean.org>

"It was enlightening to meet colleagues in Europe and to see how such regional systems work there"

**Mr Sairi M Hasbullah,
Director BPS, Indonesia**

Delivery times have been reduced considerably, making the regional aggregated figures produced by ASEANstats more timely for policymakers, for those working in trade negotiations, or regional policy to facilitate the creation of the ASEAN single market. And in the trade in services, countries have been able to provide new data sets to help policy making at national level.

What next?

Although much progress has been made, there still remains a lot to be done. ASEAN Member States are committed to carrying on the delivery of timely, high-quality, and relevant ASEAN statistics.

FDI flows from dialogue partners to ASEAN by source country (2010)

