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Country Paper

PRESENTED BY LE THI MINH THUY
DEPARTMENT OF TRADE, SERVICE AND PRICE STATISTICS
GENERAL STATISTICS OFFICE (GSO)
VIETNAM

INSTITUTIONAL and DATA SOURCES



General Statistics Office of Vietnam (GSO)

country practices of vietnam

I. Overview

1. The statistical system of Vietnam is as centralized organization with the General Statistics Office (GSO) as the central statistical agency located in Hanoi, the Provincial Statistics Offices (PSO) located in 64 the provinces/cities and the District Statistics Division in districts and towns. The GSO comprises 8 operational departments specializing on statistical areas and others:

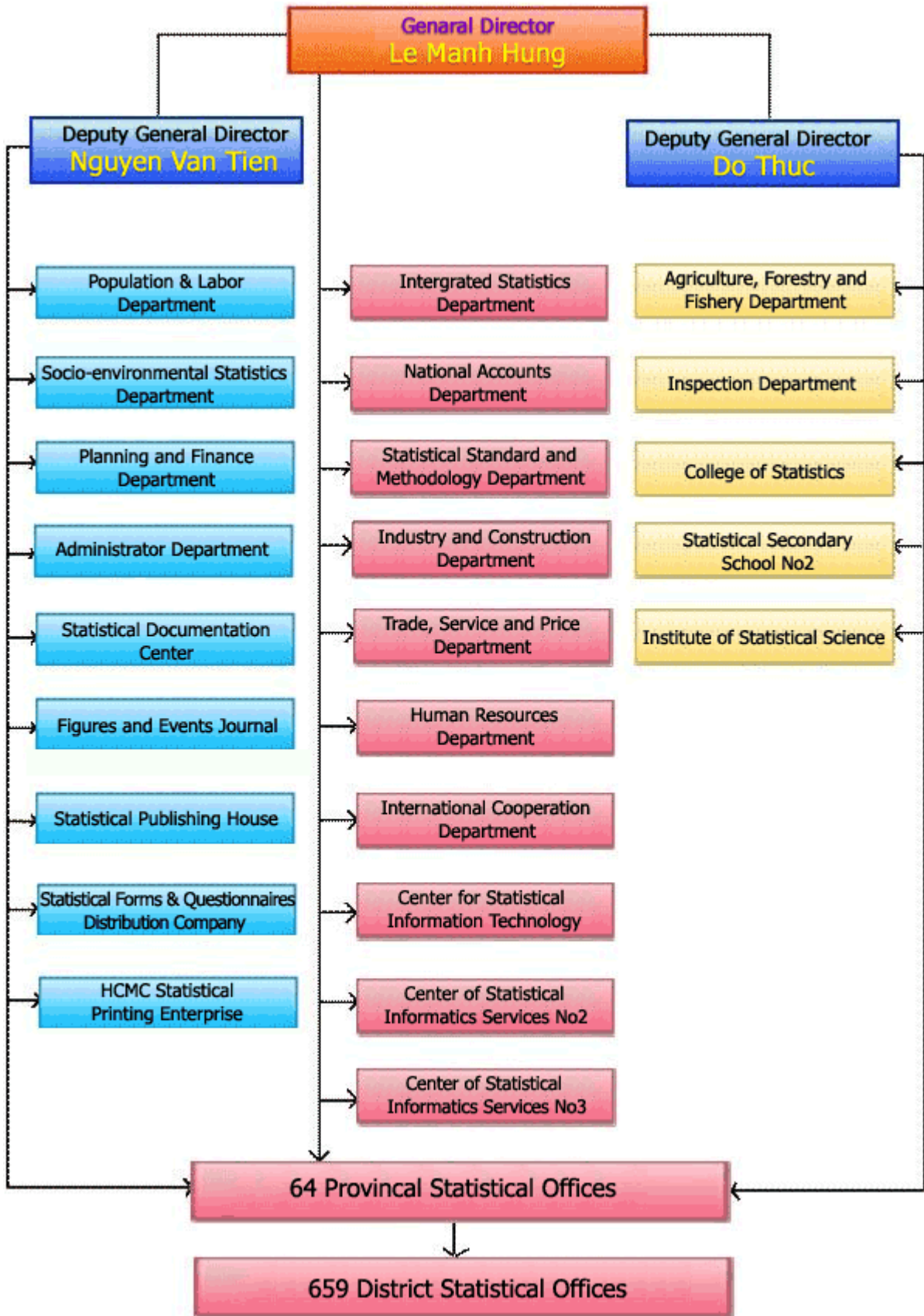
- National Accounts
- Agriculture, Forestry and Fishery
- Social- Environment
- Population and Labor
- Industry and Construction, Trade, Service and Price
- Statistical Standards and Methodology
- Integrated Statistics
- Others.

A similar structure are also organized in almost of PSO. Beside the centralized organization, there are many statistical division/units in almost ministries, which are in charge of statistical works for meeting data requirements of the GSO according to national obligation and their management.

2. Legal base: the GSO is an agency under direct authority of the Government management with the responsibilities and power are regulated by the Statistical Law and Decree of the Government, which are modified and issued in 2003. At the national level, the GSO is responsible for collecting, compiling and disseminating socio-economy statistics. The GSO is also in charge of constructing different statistical regimes or surveys/census to apply for the Ministries and enterprises.

At the local level, the PSOs are in charge of collecting, compiling socio-economic statistics belongs to each provinces/cities following the GSO's work plan and data requirements of the local governments

Chart 1: the GSO organization



3. In GSO, International Merchandise Trade Statistics (IMTS) are produced and reported by the Department of Trade, Service and Price Statistics. Before 1996, IMTS were collected and processed by the GSO based on the regular statistical reports of the export and import company. The data sources of IMTS have changed since 1997 to Custom's data following the international standards recommended by UNSD. These data have to meet variety of requirements from many users, including Government, commercial enterprises, researches and national and international organizations. In current situation of Vietnam, to meet increasing user needs fully and sufficiently is important more and more.

II. Institutional arrangements on IMTS

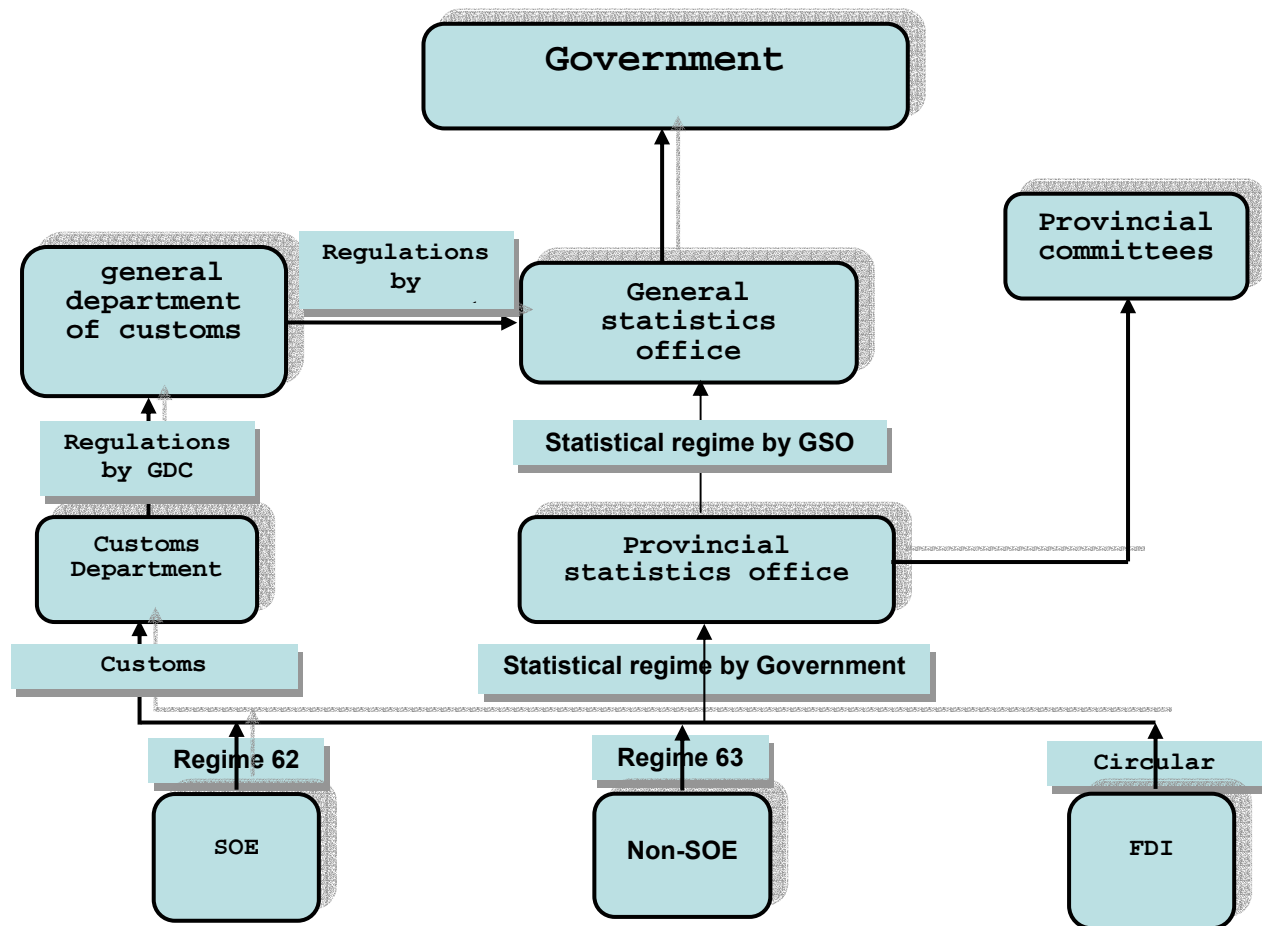
4. There are two agencies involved IMTS: the GSO is mandated by the Government to compile and disseminate IMTS nationally and internationally and the General Department of Customs (GDC) is responsible for data collecting based on Customs Declaration Forms, checking and providing aggregated data to the GSO periodically.
5. Legislation provides for the institutional arrangements on IMTS at national level:
 - Statistical Law and Decree of the Government on Functions, responsibilities, powers and organization of the GSO (2003) are relating to the legal base
 - Decision of Prime Minister (2005) on promulgation a "System of National Statistical Indicators", including a table indicating the code of the indicators, name of the indicators, main breakdown of the indicators, frequency and Ministries/agencies in charge of data collecting/disseminating and explanatory notes for each indicator.. The System of National statistical indicators shall be the basis for assigning and co-coordinating the taking of statistics, for establishing a national program of statistical investigations, for establishing regimes on consolidated statistical reports and regimes on basic statistical reports. Beyond these Indicators, the Ministries/agencies can collect data to

meet their requirements. Referring to IMTS, National Statistical Indicators include 6 indicators with different breakdown as following:

- Exports value (by economic sectors, by partner country, by provinces and by HS codes)
 - Imports value (the same as exports)
 - Quantity and value of exported commodities
 - Quantity and value of imported commodities
 - Exports and imports by partner country
 - Trade balance in merchandise by partner country
- Statistical regime applying for the GDC, which comprises different reporting forms and reporting instruction monthly, quarterly and annually. Based on the “System of National Statistical Indicators”, the GSO have to modify the existing statistical regime - which has been applied for GDC since 1996 as the first regulation - following the current situation of data production and use . The new one is expected to submit to the Government for signing and issuing officially in the next year. This regulation will indicate clearly the detailed level, frequency of data provided from the GDC to the GSO and the access rights of the GSO to the GDC’s database.

6. Beside the statistical system based on the Customs Data at national level, the other statistical system apply for enterprise. This regulation is issued by the GSO (2003) based on the Statistical Law for meeting data requirements of the local government only. The main reason is the data provided from GDC to GSO currently are not meet the detail needs of data estimation for PSOs monthly. However these data are not yet disseminated at national level

Chart 2 - GSO Coordination at the Central and Provincial Level



III. Data source

7. **At national level:** Currently, the GSO compile and disseminate IMTS based on two data sources: Customs data as the main source and the enterprise's reports as the additional source.
 - Customs data: from 1996, by assigning officially of the Government, The General Department of Customs (GDC) is in charge of collecting, checking and keying data into computer system. Export and imports information are filled by exporters and importers in every customs checkpoints of the country. Up to the end of 2005, there are 36 Customs offices at provincial level with the computer system linked to a headquarter of GDC in Hanoi.

IMTS are currently provided from GDC to GSO with the different detail level and frequency:

- Ten daily: aggregated data are directly provided to GSO and some other ministries, by two paper tables are the total exports value and 30 exported commodities, total imports value and 34 imported commodities (preliminary data, no code, 10 – 15 days after reference period). Data include reference ten days and accumulated data (year to date). General speaking, GSO use these data for estimating data of reference month ended at 20th – 22nd of that month (including revised data in accumulated data) and the analysis report.
- Monthly report: the GDC provides aggregated data to GSO (20 – 22 days after reference month), by paper forms, with the same tables above and other tables as exports /imports value by some provinces, by some FDI enterprises, by 50 major partner countries/major commodities, imported consumer goods falling under the list of consumer goods under Government control. Data include reference month and accumulated data and are provided to GSO and other ministry agencies at the end of the next month. GSO use these data to revise estimated data of previous month and to compile some other data for analysis report of the next month.
- Six monthly: two files of exports/imports value of all enterprises located in whole country provided to GSO (3 months after reference period) with 4 fields: name of enterprises, tax code and address, value of exports and imports. These files are processed by GSO and sent to 64 PSO electronically. PSO uses this data for updating their enterprise list, contact to the new one for increasing the response rate.
- Annually: aggregated data are transferred to GSO (14 - 15 months after reference year) electronically by two FoxPro files (export and imports files) including 6 data field: commodity code (HS 6 digits), descriptions, unit of quantity, quantity, value and partner country. This data base including 6 data fields as HS code (6 digits), description of commodity, unit of quantity,

quantity, value and partner country. These final file are used for producing the official data in the final report and publication

- Enterprise reports: submitted to the GSO monthly, quarterly and annually (exports/imports of electricity to/from neighboring countries and exported crude oils that are co-mined with Malaysia in the high sea). Export values are 40 – 50 million USD per year. The information flow through Provincial Statistics Offices and directly reported to the GSO about 10 days after reference month

8. **At Provincial level:** All enterprises, which are located in that province/city and business licensed by the Ministry of Planning and Investment and have commodity exportation or importation activities, are required to report monthly and annually to relevant Provincial Statistics Office (PSO).

- Monthly report is estimated report consists of some key information such as total value, main commodities, main country partners, revised data for previous month and estimate for reference month.
- Annual report is final report. Enterprise has to report total value of exports, all commodities classified by all partner country.

After processing the data collected from enterprises, each PSO delivers monthly and annual aggregated report to GSO (for reference and stored in the Province's database) and to provincial government agencies where the PSO located. This data also serves to calculate provincial GDP done by PSO.

IV. Data quality control

8. In the GSO: General speaking, the data quality control have done by the GDC and the limitation of checking are done by the GSO. Every month, in order to meet data requirement of the Government, the GSO and relating agencies uses the ten daily/monthly aggregated data provided by the GDC for estimating data of all reference month at the end of that month. Data quality control is done only for

aggregated data by the GSO mainly by comparison data between reference month with previous month or the same month of the last year or the data of enterprise's reports (for example crude oils) in order to find out extraordinary changes or the difference. In that case, the GSO contacts the GDC for clarification of questions.

Annually, data checks are done by GSO as: logic of data in comparison with previous year, released estimates, price unit, misclassification of commodities. Then questions are sent to GDC for checking and editing .

9. A system of quality checks and validations are undertaken at the GDC

V. Problems and solution

At national level, the data provided by GDC are meet the Government's and GSO's requirements for estimation of the aggregated statistics monthly. However, because some limitation of current conditions on staff and technical infrastructure of the GDC's statistical system and others, there are some problems encountered not only with the GSO but also other data users on detail level and timeliness by data providing of the GDC currently. Both agencies GSO and GDC have been awarded of improvement situation by the solutions itself and conducted a reconciliation study in the few next years.

10. Problems: with the GSO, the major problems encountered to the GSO with the data provided by the GDC currently as following:

- The detail level of quaterly and annually data do not meet data requirements of IMTS for both GSO/PSOs and data users both national and international sides. This one is considered as the biggest problem.
- The delay providing detailed data to the GSO annually effects to data dissemination nationally and internationally by the GSO
- Data quality is a very important issue and interested in by the GSO

11. Solution: In order to meet growing requirements of user community, the GSO has been cooperating with the GDC to finish the new regulations, which mentioned above.

- To study on data coverage: currently Vietnam uses the relaxed special trade system (see United Nations Manual on International Merchandise Trade Statistics, M52, para. 67) rather than the general system, since it does not include in the trade statistics imports of goods, which are intended to be stored at custom warehouses for re-export at a later stage. The GSO would like to include this type of trade in the regular trade statistics and thus move from the special trade system to the general trade system. Therefore, the GDC may need assistance to redefine the trading transaction coverage and data sources be recorded from custom declaration.
- The GSO should finish the revise statistical regime for the GDC and other statistical regulations according to the Statistical Law to resolve some problems mentioned above with co-operation to the GDC and relevant agencies.
- The GDC are expected to upgrade the capacity of IMTS during and after the WB project. The GDC needs to conduct an assessment of what causes the delay providing detailed data to the GSO before any actions are proposed e.g. is it delay in businesses lodging complete records, slow processing etc. The GDC also should be clearly aware on data providing responsibility based on Statistical Law and the Government's decision above.