



Request for FIES and LFS Data FOI Practice of the Action for Economic Reforms (As of February 21, 2017)

I. ORGANIZATIONAL PROFILE

Action for Economic Reforms (AER) is a public interest organization that conducts policy analysis and advocacy on key economic issues.

II. CONTEXT FOR THE DOCUMENTS REQUESTED

AER does research, analysis, and advocacy on a variety of socio-economic and political issues. Access to relevant and timely data that can be easily managed and used for statistical analysis is a critical tool for its work. The Family Income and Expenditure Survey (FIES) and the Labor Force Survey (LFS) provide relevant data for its study and work on fiscal, industrial, and related economic policies.

The FIES is a survey conducted every three years and which provides data on the patterns of earning and spending of the Filipino family. The wealth of data gives insights into existing levels and depth of disparities among different income groups. The LFS is a quarterly survey on the labor market, and gives the most updated levels and trends in employment in the country. Aside from showing how many are jobless, LFS also provides information on the characteristics of workers and how they fare within different industry groups, among other things.

PSA already generates hundreds of tables that provide a comprehensive picture. However, access to the basic database allows for more specific analysis that can aid in policy work.

AER has made similar requests for these data before, but was asked for payments – PhP35,000 for the FIES, and PhP12,500 for a quarterly LFS. Such payments were waived when another request was made in cooperation with the Office of Rep. Erin Tañada.

III. SPECIFIC DOCUMENTS REQUESTED

AER requested the said data files from the Philippine Statistical Authority (PSA). It specifically asked for the Public-Utility Files (PUF) of the following:

- FIES 2015
- LFS October 2016

AER asked for the basic, unprocessed survey data. This would allow AER to do its own analysis beyond the tables officially generated by PSA.

IV. RESULTS

As can be seen in the request log below, PSA was quick to respond to the request. AER used both the email address of the National Statistician and Civil Registrar General (head of office) and PSA's online request form. Both worked and PSA responded accordingly. PSA sent notice to AER granting the request just a day after the request letter was sent through email. A member of the AER staff went to the PSA office to retrieve and copy the files. Unfortunately, the LFS for October 2016 was not yet available, so PSA gave the most recent series available (for April 2016).

The data released included the full survey data asked for. In a separate phone call, PSA also patiently explained to an AER staff the installation procedure so the codebooks can be accessed. The codebooks are important to understand the labels that PSA used in the files. PSA also offered to give a full in-person briefing to AER, to be set at a later date.

AER REQUEST LOG

Agency	Documents Requested	No. of Phone Calls and No. of Referrals	No. of Letters Sent	Number of Working Days Waited	Documents Retrieved
Philippine Statistical Authority	- FIES 2015 - LFS as of October 2016	0 phone call 0 referral	1	1	.datand F2 file format of FIES 2015 and LFS April 2016

V. INSIGHTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Even before, PSA (then still the National Statistics Office) had been accommodating to researchers and ready to respond to a long series of technical questions. AER found the fees too high, though, but was advised that these could be waived through inter-government office courtesy, hence AER's collaboration with the office of Rep. Tañada. AER did not ask for similar data since 2012/2013, so it could not ascertain when the charging of fees was scrapped. AER would like to think that EO No.2 had something to do with it.

FOI Request Log of Action for Economic Reforms						
Target Agency: Philippine Statistical Authority (PSA)						
Date	Action (Initial request etc.)	Fax/Hand-carried	Email	Call	Contact Person	Response/Remarks
Feb. 13, 2017	Sent Initial Request	n/a	ons@psa.gov.ph			No response received
Feb. 14, 2017			ons@psa.gov.ph			PSA said files are ready for pick-up from their library.
Feb. 21, 2017						Files retrieved and copied to AER staff's USB.
March 7, 2017				462-6600	PSA Library	AER staff called to ask about the codebook. PSA assisted AER staff on how to manipulate the file, and access the codebooks.