

July 2010

E



منظمة الأغذية  
والزراعة  
للأمم المتحدة

联合国  
粮食及  
农业组织

Food  
and  
Agriculture  
Organization  
of  
the  
United  
Nations

Organisation  
des  
Nations  
Unies  
pour  
l'alimentation  
et  
l'agriculture

Продовольственная и  
сельскохозяйственная  
организация  
Объединенных  
Наций

Organización  
de las  
Naciones  
Unidas  
para la  
Agricultura  
y la  
Alimentación

## PROGRAMME COMMITTEE

### Hundred and Fourth Session

Rome, 25 – 29 October 2010

### FOLLOW-UP TO THE INDEPENDENT EVALUATION OF FAO'S ROLE AND WORK IN STATISTICS

#### *Background*

1. The Independent Evaluation of FAO's Role and Work in Statistics<sup>1</sup> was presented to the Hundredth Session of the Programme Committee (6-10 October 2008). The Evaluation made 31 recommendations.
2. In the Management Response<sup>2</sup>, the Secretariat welcomed the Evaluation and accepted 27 and partially accepted four of the recommendations. Those recommendations only partially accepted have been clearly indicated in this follow-up report.
3. Of the 31 recommendations made, Management considered that 19 would require further donor funding while 12 could be implemented without additional funding.

#### *Key Issues Covered*

4. The Follow-up Report reflects the efforts made by the Organization in implementing the recommendations, and reports progress on all but two of the recommendations. Factors that have contributed to this progress include the allocation of considerable additional Regular Programme resources in the Programme of Work and Budget 2010-11; the funding of two Capital Expenditure projects during the same biennium in support of the development of the Statistical Working System and a Statistical Data Warehouse; the creation of the Impact Focus Area (IFA)

<sup>1</sup> PC 100/3a

<sup>2</sup> PC 100/3a Sup.1

This document is printed in limited numbers to minimize the environmental impact of FAO's processes and contribute to climate neutrality. Delegates and observers are kindly requested to bring their copies to meetings and to avoid asking for additional copies. Most FAO meeting documents are available on the Internet at [www.fao.org](http://www.fao.org)

on capacity building in information and statistics (CBIS); the development of a global strategy to improve agricultural and rural statistics; and an award from the FAO multi-disciplinary fund for work to improve the availability and quality of FAO statistics through enhanced cooperation and integration across FAO statistical units.

5. A Statistics Programme Steering Committee (SPSC) has been established chaired by the Assistant Director-General, Economic and Social Development Department and composed of Division Directors directly involved as users and/or producers of statistics. A Statistics Coordination Working Group (SCWG) has also been established to coordinate the statistical activities of the Organization and to continue implementing its actions in that regard. Key achievements have been: the preparation of the first FAO statistical programme of work 2010-11; and the inventory of FAO data series and data sets.

6. The re-engineering of FAOSTAT has started with the creation of two Capital Expenditure projects. The first project will provide for a complete overhaul of the statistical working system used to collect and compile statistics reported by countries, including the verification of data and data entry. It will also ensure the use of common statistical norms and standards across all data domains. A third component will provide for a critical review of the methodology currently used for compilation of the supply utilization accounts and food balance sheets with a view to streamlining this exercise and developing a more transparent and automated approach to the handling of data gaps.

7. The second Capital Expenditure project will develop a Statistical Data Warehouse as a repository for the Organization's electronically-stored statistical data. This will facilitate the use of the data in a consolidated and integrated environment and promote greater analysis.

8. The Evaluation's major conclusion was that the most pressing "emerging" data need was actually a "re-emerging" need to improve the capacity of member countries for collection and dissemination of country data. A series of regional workshops are being held in 2010 to address issues related to the collection of agricultural production and trade data, as well as to insert this in the framework of the supply utilization accounts and food balance sheets as these are the two main drivers. Activities on developing an implementation plan for the global strategy to improve agricultural and rural statistics will also contribute to this re-emerging data need as will the IFA on capacity building on information and statistics.

9. CountrySTAT, FAO's statistical storage and dissemination system at country level, is currently being implemented in 17 sub-Saharan countries with financial support from the Gates Foundation. This initiative has attracted considerable interest from member countries and it is expected that the programme will continue to expand. CountrySTAT directly addresses the need to improve the capacity of member countries for storage and dissemination of country data.

10. Good progress is thus reported on the implementation of many of the Evaluation's recommendations, though it is also recognised that much remains to be done to make FAO's role and work in statistics fit for purpose in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. The Organization remains committed to this long-term goal.

#### *Guidance Sought*

11. The follow-up report is for the information of the Committee.

Queries on the substantive content of this document may be addressed to:

Mr. Pietro Gennari, Director, Statistics Division  
Tel. (06) 5705-3599

Recommendations	Action agreed in Management Response (October 2008)	Action taken	Comment/Explanation
<p><b>Recommendation 3.1 (para 146):</b> Re-direct FAO resources towards a renewed commitment to improving national statistical capacity for agriculture, forestry, and fisheries and the expanded development of “best practices” for building statistical capacity in member countries.</p>	<p>FAO Management agrees that the focus of the Organization’s activities should be re-directed towards capacity building at the national level, and the development of ‘statistical tools’ and promotion of ‘best practices’.</p>	<p>YES from November 2009</p>	<p>A series of 7 regional workshops on data collection, processing and dissemination systems of food and agricultural statistics (see also 3.3) and a regional training on sampling to improve national staff capacity in data collection methodology were held in 2010.</p> <p>Considerable Regular Programme staff resources were redirected to statistical capacity building activities in support of these workshops and other activities designed to strengthen national statistical capacity.</p>
<p><b>Recommendation 3.2 (para 149):</b> FAO should pursue the development of an integrated capacity building strategy for agriculture, forestry, and fisheries that diagnoses the relative size, urgency and type of country needs and demands with respect to statistical capacity building.</p>	<p>The development of an integrated capacity building strategy can be done within FAO Regular Programme resources. However, the implementation of the strategy requires extrabudgetary and flexible funding as some countries will need a major and long-term commitment from FAO and its partners in order to improve their statistical systems. Any such strategy should be done within a corporate capacity building framework.</p>	<p>YES from February 2009</p>	<p>Addressed through the development of the Global Strategy to Improve Agricultural and Rural Statistics and the establishment of the IFA on capacity building on information and statistics (CBIS). Regional and global implementation plans are being developed and the plan for Africa is well advanced. Funding being explored with a number of donors including the European Union, the Bill &amp; Melinda Gates Foundation, the World Bank and the African Development Bank.</p>
<p><b>Recommendation 3.3 (para 154):</b> FAO should work to improve the quality of country submissions for agriculture, forestry, and fisheries by enhanced training, dialogue and feedback with reporting countries on the questionnaires for production and for trade, and on definitions, classifications, and standards for reporting.</p>	<p>Much closer dialogue will be established with reporting institutions with a view to improving the quality of country submissions. Definitions, classifications and standards will be reviewed and updated. Training will be provided as required and as resources permit.</p>	<p>YES from May 2010</p>	<p>Regional training courses conducted as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• RLC – Costa Rica 24-28 May 2010; Spanish-speaking countries</li> <li>SAPA – Fiji 24-28 May 2010; Pacific Island countries</li> <li>RNE – Tunisia 21-25 June 2010; Near East countries</li> <li>RAF – Mali 12-16 July 2010; French-speaking countries</li> <li>RAF – Kenya 20-24 September 2010; English-speaking countries</li> <li>RAP – Bangkok September 2010; English-speaking countries</li> </ul>

Recommendations	Action agreed in Management Response (October 2008)	Action taken	Comment/Explanation
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Definitions, classifications and standards under review.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Recommendation 3.4 (para 161):</b> The pace of CountrySTAT implementation should be accelerated as resources allow, but based on the increased efficiency and the improved quality of country submissions for direct reporting of validated, edited data to FAO.</p>	<p>CountrySTAT is still in its early stages. Focus is currently on Africa.</p> <p>Further expansion will take place once the system has been fully developed and consolidated, subject to resource availability. In terms of its scope, CountrySTAT will explore ways to incorporate, or link to, forestry and fisheries data. CountrySTAT should maintain very close links with FAOSTAT and facilitate data flow to FAOSTAT.</p>	<p>YES from May 2010</p>	<p>The Bill &amp; Melinda Gates Foundation has indicated its willingness to continue funding CountrySTAT to consolidate activities in countries that have already adopted CountrySTAT and to enable the expansion of the programme to new countries. Other partners have also expressed an interest to support the CountrySTAT initiative, including sub-regional organizations such as West African Economic and Monetary Union and East African Community.</p> <p>Links to GIEWS, another country-level information dissemination system, have been established. Forestry and fisheries data at national and subnational level can be integrated into CountrySTAT at the discretion of the countries owning the systems.</p> <p>A semi-automated data harvesting system to transfer data to FAOSTAT based on Statistical Data and Metadata Exchange (SDMX) has been successfully tested and is waiting for funds for adaptations before going into production.</p> <p>The use of CountrySTAT as a tool for the storage and dissemination of subnational data is becoming increasingly important, especially for livestock where there is a need to evaluate and harmonise datasets in the Statistics Division (ESS) and Animal Production and Health Division (AGA).</p>

Recommendations	Action agreed in Management Response (October 2008)	Action taken	Comment/Explanation
<p><b>Recommendation 3.5 (para 170):</b> FAO should develop a <b>corporate quality framework for agriculture, forestry, and fisheries statistics</b>, which provides a set of statistical standards and “best practices”: common country classifications; common approach to imputation; common definition and attribution of “official” statistics (data which are verified and agreed by country statistical offices) versus “FAO Estimates” for countries.</p>	<p>Corporate quality framework for statistics to be developed by a working group under the guidance of the SCC.</p>	<p>YES from September 2009</p>	<p>Work initiated by a task team set-up under the Statistical Coordination Working Group (see also 6.5). This work will continue under the Capital Expenditure project on the new Statistical Working System.</p>
<p><b>Recommendation 3.6 (para 177):</b> For every instance where gender responsive statistics are being generated with FAO support, an ancillary programme should be initiated to assist countries (who request it) with <b>analysis of the implications of gender responsive statistics</b>.</p>	<p>This is already the approach adopted for many projects, particularly those associated with the Census of Agriculture. In future it will be mainstreamed.</p>	<p>YES Ongoing</p>	<p>Close collaboration between ESS and the Gender, Equity and Rural Employment Division has resulted in the adoption of this approach for agricultural census-related activities, the primary source of gender disaggregated statistics.</p>
<p><b>Recommendation 4.1 (para 181):</b> FAO, under the direction of the Chief Statistician (see Recommendation 6.3), should develop a strategy for capturing user needs and feedback on an ongoing basis.</p>	<p>FAO Management recognizes the importance of both internal and external user feedback and will develop and implement such a strategy.</p>	<p>YES from July 2010</p>	<p>User feedback is captured in a number of different ways:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. A more systemized approach is being introduced through the new FAOSTAT Registration process, which will enable regular surveys of FAOSTAT users to be conducted.</li> <li>2. External and internal users are supported on their immediate needs and problems by an upgraded Help Desk called AskFAOSTAT. The findings are clustered and systematized for identification of improvement areas.</li> <li>3. Within FAO, a ‘statistics users’ group will be established to determine, in a systematic manner, the data needs of current and prospective users in addressing the changing data needs in the light of the rapidly changing nature of global agriculture.</li> </ol>

Recommendations	Action agreed in Management Response (October 2008)	Action taken	Comment/Explanation
<p><b>Recommendation 4.2 (para 187):</b> Press forward with upgrading the system to be able to provide full and free (non-paying) access to all of FAO's data and statistics.</p>	<p>The recommendation is accepted, but further study is needed to determine whether registration is still needed for larger users to avoid system overload. Depending on the solution identified, extra funding may be required.</p>	<p>YES July 2010</p>	<p>The subscription service to FAOSTAT was phased out over a 12-month period resulting in free access to all users from 1 July 2010.</p>
<p><b>Recommendation 4.3 (para 195):</b> The Organization, under the Chief Statistician (see Recommendation 6.3), should develop an IT and ICT strategy for a data warehouse system for integrating FAO statistics systems, using data exchange standards such as SDMX which will allow information systems, and legacy databases, on different platforms to efficiently link data over network infrastructures. This would be within the enterprise strategy and architecture of FAO as adopted by governance structures for IT and ICT. The initial linking of data systems must be followed by a concerted effort to bring FAO data systems to an agreed common set of standards and classifications, under the governance structures proposed in Recommendations 6.4 and 6.5.</p>	<p>Accepted. However, additional resources would be required to develop a strategy and to eventually implement it (see also 4.4 and 4.5). The strategy should also address the need for linking of food composition data with FAOSTAT.</p>	<p>YES from November 2009</p>	<p>A Capital Expenditure Project was included in the PWB 2010-11 to develop a Statistical Data Warehouse and the relevant IT and ICT strategy led by the Chief Information Officer Division (CIO).</p> <p>The formulation of agreed common standards and classifications will be done through the SCWG and under the Capital Expenditure project on the Statistical Working System.</p> <p>The alignment of data systems with standards and classifications must be promoted by the statistical governance mechanisms.</p>
<p><b>Recommendation 4.4 (para 202):</b> An Organization-wide, strategic process to design the long-term technical support of statistical applications should be initiated by KCT and ESS working jointly, and the process should include all other significant statistical units.</p>	<p>This strategic process could be overseen by a technical working group set-up by the SCC (see also 4.2 and 4.4). The strategy will be linked with the Organization's Enterprise Architecture and IT Sourcing strategy.</p>	<p>YES from November 2009</p>	<p>A Capital Expenditure project was included in the PWB 2010-11 to develop a new Statistical Working System for ESS and the entire FAO Statistical System. This project will have both ESS and CIO as senior suppliers and the SCWG as senior user. The project board will be chaired by the ADG/ES. Long-term support of statistical applications will be proposed as part of this project. However, its availability would depend on ongoing Regular Programme funding being allocated.</p>

Recommendations	Action agreed in Management Response (October 2008)	Action taken	Comment/Explanation
<p><b>Recommendation 4.5 (para 206):</b> FAO should review the technology strategy for statistical information systems and develop a new approach that combines and reconciles an efficient internal technology support model with practical arrangements for collaboration with major statistical offices outside FAO. The externally-focused software cooperation and support model used to justify the FAOSTAT-2 technology strategy must be revisited to confirm that it has meaningful, long term and tangible benefits, not just for ESS, but for the entire FAO Statistical System. Alternative support models should be considered that give adequate priority to internal cooperation at the technology level.</p>	<p>This strategic process could be overseen by a technical working group set-up by the SCC (see also 4.3 and 4.4). The strategy will be linked with the relevant strategies of the Organization.</p>	<p>YES from November 2009</p>	<p>The technology strategy and support model for statistical information systems will be reviewed as part of the Capital Expenditure projects. The agreed approach will be endorsed by the IT governance committee.</p>
<p><b>Recommendation 5.1 (para 218):</b> Under the guidance of the FAO Chief Statistician (see Recommendation 6.3), FAO should undertake concerted action to regain <b>international leadership</b> in agriculture, forestry and fishery statistics and make this leadership role <b>visible</b>.</p>	<p>Action already initiated with development partners. As a first step, a framework for a strategy to link data requirements and ensure they are integrated with national statistical systems will be provided to the 2009 UN Statistical Commission Meeting.</p>	<p>YES from February 2009</p>	<p>ESS is leading the preparation of a global strategy to improve agricultural and rural statistics. In February 2010, the United Nations Statistical Commission endorsed the technical content and strategic direction of the global strategy and urged FAO and its partners to expedite the development of an implementation plan.</p>
<p><b>Recommendation 5.2 (para 222):</b> The Chief Statistician (see Recommendation 6.3) should set up <b>an integrated and coordinated plan with major partners/donors for statistical capacity building</b>.</p>	<p>A number of mechanisms are already in place, such as PARIS21 and the World Bank Trust Fund for statistical capacity building. FAO will play a more active role. Linked to 5.1.</p>	<p>YES from February 2010</p>	<p>ESS is leading the development of an implementation plan for the global strategy to improve agricultural and rural statistics. The implementation plan is being developed on a regional basis with the plan for Africa the most advanced. This plan will be discussed at the Fifth International Conference on Agricultural Statistics (ICAS-V), Kampala, Uganda, October 2010.</p>
<p><b>Recommendation 5.3 (para 229):</b> The FAO Chief Statistician (see Recommendation 6.3) should create a Remote Sensing Working Group consisting of in-</p>	<p>This recommendation was only partially accepted. Rather than create a new working group, it is suggested to build on</p>	<p>YES Ongoing</p>	<p>Much progress has been made by Land and Water Division (NRL) on the preparation of a draft international standard for land cover: "Geographic</p>

Recommendations	Action agreed in Management Response (October 2008)	Action taken	Comment/Explanation
house and external experts, users and producers of imagery data, including for example the EU's Joint Research Centre (JRC) and USDA. Besides co-ordination of related activities the WG would also take the lead in international definitions, classifications and standards in agricultural statistics data from remote sensing.	existing coordinating mechanisms. Work on definitions, classifications and standards should also include those related to nutrition. CIO and Climate, Energy and Tenure Division (NRC) to advise on overall enterprise architecture.		Information Classification Systems - Part 2: Land Cover Meta Language (LCML)". ESS is part of Global Earth Observation System of Systems (GEOSS) network and is working closely with NRL and key Remote Sensing Agencies on applications of remote sensing to improve agriculture statistics. Country applications in countries such as Ethiopia are ongoing. Given the wide divergence in the current estimates of agricultural land use generated by AFRICOVER, GLOBCOVER and GLC 2000, there is a need to bring these outputs closer to the statistical information at our disposal.
<b>Recommendation 6.1 (para 234):</b> FAO should implement a corporate-wide <b>Statistics Programme Strategic Planning Process</b> and prepare, on a biennial basis, a <b>FAO Statistical Programme of Work</b> .	A statistics programme strategic planning process is an important initiative. A biennial FAO statistical programme of work should be prepared.	YES April 2010	The FAO statistical programme for 2010-11 was prepared under the auspices of the SCWG and endorsed by the SPSC.
<b>Recommendation 6.2 (para 243):</b> Restructure the International Advisory Group on Agriculture Statistics into an <b>International Advisory Group on FAO Statistics (IAGFS)</b> with a <b>reinforced mandate</b> concerning <b>influence</b> and <b>accountability</b> . Use international venues like ICAS to receive feedback from member countries on FAO's Programme of Work in Statistics.	The restructuring of the International Advisory Group on Agriculture Statistics (IAGAS) to the IAGFS is accepted. It will meet on a biennial basis. International venues, such as the International Conference on Agricultural Statistics (ICAS), provide informal feedback on FAO's work in statistics but do not provide the appropriate vehicle for a more formal review. Major statistical units in FAO will participate.	YES from June 2010	TORs prepared and membership determined. First meeting scheduled for November 2010.  The Fifth International Conference on Agricultural Statistics (ICAS-V), Kampala, Uganda, October 2010 will be used to solicit feedback on the new strategy of capacity development .
<b>Recommendation 6.3 (para 253):</b> FAO should establish the position of Chief Statistician for FAO. The incumbent will hold the D-2 position currently in ESS and will have dual responsibilities as Chief Statistician and Director of ESS. The Chief	This recommendation was only partially accepted. In discussing this recommendation, the principle that FAO needs stronger unity and internal coordination in its corporate statistical system and its global statistics role was	NO	Further review and discussion of this recommendation resulted in a consensus that the position of Chief Statistician was not necessary and that the coordination of the FAO statistical system could be achieved through the established governance mechanism (SCWG and SPSC).



Recommendations	Action agreed in Management Response (October 2008)	Action taken	Comment/Explanation
<p>Statistician should have a mandate from the Director General to lead the FAO Statistical System into the 21st Century and would report to the Office of the Director General, directly or through the appropriate ADG, on all matters related to the broader FAO Statistics Programme</p>	<p>recognized, but the modalities were not agreed. In order to ensure that this key recommendation is fully considered, FAO Management commits to giving it priority attention and to arrive at an agreed modality for implementing it in time for presentation to the May 2009 session of the Programme Committee.</p>		
<p><b>Recommendation 6.4 (para 261):</b> Implement a formal decentralized statistical system within FAO, by establishing a governance structure consisting of a Statistics Programme Steering Committee (SPSC), under the leadership of the Chief Statistician, made up of the Directors of Divisions with units carrying out significant statistics/data and data development activities, and Divisions/units representing Knowledge Management.</p>	<p>This recommendation is critical to the efforts to improve coordination. The SPSC should provide strategic and policy direction for the FAO statistics programmes. Guidance should be provided by the IAGFS on technical and operational issues. The membership of the Committee will be small so that accountability is ensured.</p>	<p>YES from June 2009</p>	<p>A Statistics Programme Steering Committee (SPSC), comprised of Division Directors, was established. The first meeting was held on 19 June 2009 and meetings are held on an annual basis.</p>
<p><b>Recommendation 6.5:</b> Establish a Statistics Coordination Committee, with representation from each of the statistics and data systems units. The Statistics Coordination Committee, under the leadership of the Chief Statistician, would meet on a regular basis to exchange information on statistical and data gathering activities across the Organization and to coordinate potential joint efforts in technical support, questionnaire development, and the harmonization of standards, classifications, methodology, and quality of information. When more strategic issues are identified they would be elevated to the Programme Steering Committee for consideration.</p>	<p>This recommendation is critical to the efforts to improve coordination. It is fully supported by Management.</p>	<p>YES from July 2009</p>	<p>A Statistics Coordination Working Group (SCWG) was established with a wide-ranging membership. The first meeting was held on 15 July 2009 and meetings have been held approximately every two months since then. Key outputs of the SCWG were the FAO statistical programme for 2010-11 and the inventory of FAO statistical datasets and activities.</p>

Recommendations	Action agreed in Management Response (October 2008)	Action taken	Comment/Explanation
<p><b>Recommendation 6.6 (para 274):</b> Form a series of <b>regional teams</b> from among the two Services of ESS. Members of the Teams, particularly when on mission to a country, would have dual responsibilities, as technical specialists in a statistical area, and a responsibility to assist with statistical capacity building, as well as direct support for FAO data collection.</p>	<p>This recommendation was only partially accepted. In order to build on FAO existing expertise and ensure integration of thematic approach activities with country data quality, it is proposed to have thematic teams who will also have regional responsibility for data collection and compiling. The formation of the teams will be done in consultation with staff.</p>	<p>YES from January 2009</p>	<p>The team structure adopted for 2009 included five regional teams, as well as six thematic teams. A review of this structure, at the divisional retreat at the end of the year, concluded that there were too many teams and that they were too fragmented. The regional approach was, therefore, discarded in favour of the thematic approach and ESS is currently operating with five thematic teams in 2010.</p>
<p><b>Recommendation 6.7 (para 280):</b> All the posts of Regional Statistician should be filled through rotation within ESS. FAO should also consider expanding the Regional Statistician office for Africa and Asia, where there is an increased need for backstopping new funding efforts in agriculture statistics.</p>	<p>This recommendation was only partially accepted. Whenever possible, ESS staff should be preferred. However, this may not always be possible. Other statistical units could also participate in any rotation policy.</p>	<p>YES Ongoing</p>	<p>Staff rotation, without incentives, has not attracted interest in ESS. The Regional Statistician post in RNE was recently filled through the promotion of an ESS staff member following an internal vacancy announcement and the formal selection process. Staff have been encouraged to apply for the regional statistician posts in RAF and RLC, which are currently vacant.</p>
<p><b>Recommendation 6.8 (para 285):</b> Given the high priority now being assigned to FAO's role as global agricultural statistics agency, FAO Country Representatives should have as part of their job description to represent FAO's statistical reporting and development activities in the country, assisting in ensuring a regular and dependable flow of statistics to the FAO databases.</p>	<p>The Assistant FAOR (Programme) could be the focal point for this activity.</p>	<p>YES Ongoing</p>	<p>Support to statistics is part of the TORs of the Assistant FAOR (Programme). The office of the FAOR plays a key role in ensuring a regular and dependable flow of statistics to the FAO databases, as well as in resolving data queries. Statistics, as a core function, is being systematically included in the National Medium Term Priority Frameworks (NMTPFs).</p>
<p><b>Recommendation 6.9 (para 289):</b> Under the guidance of the FAO Chief Statistician initiate a <b>programme of training and skill enhancement</b> for all FAO staff doing statistical work, including regional and, when appropriate, country office staff as well.</p>	<p>Supported by Management. Training and skill enhancement is critical to statistical capacity building within FAO. e-Learning may be considered for decentralized training.</p>	<p>YES Ongoing</p>	<p>A programme of training in the statistical software package SAS (Statistical Analysis System) was organized in two sessions.</p> <p>A plan of training courses is being developed in collaboration with the Italian National Statistical Institute.</p>

Recommendations	Action agreed in Management Response (October 2008)	Action taken	Comment/Explanation
<p><b>Recommendation 7.1 (para 294):</b> Initiate a Statistical Infrastructure Investment Facility from Regular Programme funds. The Infrastructure Facility would be used to fund new or renewed statistical infrastructure projects within FAO, jointly with other Organizations, and/or with member countries.</p>	<p>RP should be funding this Investment Facility for sustained system. Additional extrabudgetary funds may complement this funding.</p>	<p>NO</p>	<p>A Statistical Infrastructure Investment Facility, <i>per se</i>, has not been established. Very considerable funding has, however, been provided through the RP for two Capital Expenditure projects supporting statistics and funds have also been provided through the multi-disciplinary fund (MDF).</p>
<p><b>Recommendation 7.2 (para 303):</b> (1) Data from EU and EFTA countries and other countries with well-developed statistical system should be harvested from web portals when appropriate; (2) FAO should undertake an Organization-wide review of the scope, coverage and periodicity of all data collection activities with the view of deciding if there are activities that can be abandoned or whose periodicity and coverage can be adjusted.</p>	<p>(1) Already being implemented; (2) to be included in the TORs of the SCC.</p>	<p>YES Ongoing</p>	<p>Discussion with EUROSTAT to streamline the data collection activities and minimize the burden on reporting countries, have been positive and are ongoing.</p>
<p><b>Recommendation 7.3 (para 327):</b> Regular Programme resources are re-directed to statistics in order to support 8 additional staff and increase non-staff resources to 40% of organizational target levels, representing roughly the same share of Net Appropriation level as in 2000-01 (5.2%). The Statistics Infrastructure Investment Facility should be initially funded at US\$ 250,000 in Regular Programme funding.</p>	<p>Essential to achieve FAO's vision to be "recognized as the world's authoritative source of statistical information on nutrition, food and agriculture, including forestry and fisheries". Without additional resources "FAO statistics programme will continue on the road to obsolescence and irrelevance" [304]. Proposals should take into account the needs of all statistical units and supporting divisions in FAO and not just ESS. However, given the limited overall RP resource available to the Organization, Management will seek funding from extrabudgetary sources and also look at internal resources.</p>	<p>YES from November 2009</p>	<p>Substantial additional RP resources were re-directed to statistics in the PWB 2010-11. Financial provision was made for six additional posts in ESS at P-2 and P-3 levels. Funds have also been made available to support the work of the SCWG through the multi-disciplinary fund in the amount of USD 300,000 in biennium 2010-11. Additional staff and non-staff resources are being sought from extrabudgetary sources. The Statistics Infrastructure Investment Facility has not been set-up.</p>

Recommendations	Action agreed in Management Response (October 2008)	Action taken	Comment/Explanation
<p><b>Annex 2 para 55 [Recommendation 1.1]:</b> For a corporate project such as FAOSTAT-2, FAO should envisage continuous <u>Independent Performance Evaluation</u> of the various project phases after which there should in each case be a sign-off by the project sponsor. Preceding the Independent Performance Evaluation, there should be Internal Expert/Stakeholder Review and escalation part, if necessary, to catch major problems as early as possible.</p>	<p>FAO Management considers this as a ‘lesson learnt’. Any further development work on FAOSTAT will follow this recommendation. The same applies for other major information systems.</p>	<p>YES from June 2010</p>	<p>To be built into the Capital Expenditure projects supporting FAOSTAT development. It is proposed that the IAGFS should play a key role in providing direction to the projects. In addition, an Independent Performance Evaluation will be planned for the end of the first phase of the development (Dec 2011).</p>
<p><b>Annex 2 para 57 [Recommendation 1.2]:</b> Mandates for User Groups, such as the IDAG, should be strengthened and clarified. They should be stronger bodies to ensure that their advice is adopted by the project management, but, on the other hand, they should be accountable for the advice given (or not given). However, advice and recommendations from user groups have to be vetted at the corporate level to ensure that they “fit into the overall corporate view”.</p>	<p>The importance of user groups and user feedback is recognized by Management. The ‘vetting’ at corporate level is also important as is the recognition that it is impossible to satisfy all users on all issues. All levels of staff should be involved in this process.</p>	<p>YES from June 2010</p>	<p>User groups will be set up as an integral part of the new communication strategy (see also 2.3).  The TORs of the IAGFS has been strengthened with a clear role in the implementation of the Capital Expenditure projects.</p>
<p><b>Annex 2 para 63 [Recommendation 2.1]:</b> The Technical Working Group on the future of FAOSTAT should undertake a detailed technical review of the various components of the FAOSTAT Project within the next few months, to include 1) The harmonized commodity/product classification system, metadata, and country aggregations; 2) The revised methodology for developing FBS, and for calculating energy availability; and 3) The methodology underlying the “Core” Data of FAOSTAT-2. This should lead to a proposed corporate policy for what data to release, as</p>	<p>The FAOSTAT WG, in operation since August 2007, has a number of technical working groups that will address these issues. To be carried out in close collaboration with the WAICENT Advisory Group (WAG) and WAICENT Committee and relevant groups related to nutritional standards and classifications. Technical workshops will need to be organized.</p>	<p>YES from June 2010</p>	<p>The FAOSTAT Working Group has been subsumed by the SCWG. Task teams have been set-up to address each of these issues with the exception of the methodology underlying the “Core” data of FAOSTAT2, which has been discarded.</p>

Recommendations	Action agreed in Management Response (October 2008)	Action taken	Comment/Explanation
“official” data, and what data to release as “FAO” estimates.			
<b>Annex 2 para 64 [Recommendation 2.2]:</b> This Technical Working Group should establish rules for any component to be (re)introduced into the FAOSTAT System. The components should be introduced to users one component at a time with advance communication and training of users under a careful process of managed change. Once the new component is anchored with users (external and internal), proceed to release/introduce other components.	The FAOSTAT WG, in operation since August 2007, has a number of technical working groups that will address these issues. To be carried out in close collaboration with the WAICENT Advisory Group (WAG) and WAICENT Committee.	YES from June 2010	The FAOSTAT Working Group has been subsumed by the SCWG, which will address this particular recommendation.
<b>Annex 2 para 65 [Recommendation 2.3]:</b> To create a FAOSTAT User Group, consisting of substantial internal and external users as well as methodological and IT experts, which should continuously advise on various phases of methodological and structural issues on FAOSTAT. Back- to-back with such User Group meetings, one or two of the major external users, possibly in combination with a major internal user, should be asked to carry out performance evaluation to be reported to the main User Group meeting as well as to the Steering Group and the Governing Body.	Further development of FAOSTAT will be driven by users’ needs and resource availability (see also Recommendation 1.2). For FAO internal issues, consideration will be given to also using existing committees such as WAG.	YES from June 2010	User groups are being set-up as an integral part of the new communication strategy.  A core user group of FAOSTAT has been established with registered FAOSTAT users, FAO divisional statistical focal points and international partners. Feedback from this core user group will be regularly canvassed using various available media (the FSN Forum, mailing lists, etc.). Findings of these dialogues are reviewed by the Statistics Division and the Statistical Coordination Working Group. Further inputs are regularly reviewed as part of ongoing technical consultative meetings at headquarters and in the field.

IAGFS – International Advisory Group on FAO Statistics

SPSC – Statistics Programme Steering Committee

SCWG – Statistics Coordination Working Group

SCC – Statistics Coordinating Committee

WAG – WAICENT Advisory Group