

# GLOBAL STRATEGY FOR IMPROVING AGRICULTURAL STATISTICS TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE COMPONENT OF THE IMPLEMENTATION PLAN FOR AFRICA

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## **Abstract N.114**

In February 2009, the United Nations Statistical Commission endorsed the Global Strategic Framework for Improving Agricultural Statistics. The Strategy was developed in response to the declining quantity and quality of agricultural statistics and the need to provide data to support emerging data requirements mainly on bio fuels, the environment, global warming, and the requirement for the data systems to be integrated.

A Conference of Development Partners on the Global Strategy for Improving Agricultural Statistics: Implementation Plan for Africa held in February 2010 endorsed the idea of developing four separate components to the Strategy implementation plan for Africa, namely governance, technical assistance, training and methodological research components.

This paper will present the Technical component of this implementation plan. It will review the unprecedented increase in latent demand for statistics in developing countries due to the new focus nationally and internationally on managing for development results (MfDR), poverty reduction strategies, MDGs and other development programmes (sectoral). There are also new and emerging policy issues in agricultural sector including environment and climate change, gender, biofuels, etc. which need to be illuminated by good statistics. It is shown that Agricultural Statistical Systems (ASSs) in most countries in Africa are weak, vulnerable and unsustainable; some are unable to meet even the minimum requirements for agricultural statistics and are badly in need of strengthening.

A number of recent developments and initiatives for improving agricultural statistics in Africa will be reviewed including (i) FAO/World Bank Initiative on Agricultural Statistics which was discussed in 1999 at the 16<sup>th</sup> Session of the African Commission for Agricultural Statistics; (ii) the National Strategy for the Development of Statistics (NSDS) universally recognized as the best way to build national capacity and strengthen statistics in support of MfDR; (iii) the FAO capacity building programme designed to contribute to improved decision-making, monitoring and evaluation in rural development, sustainable management of agriculture, food and poverty alleviation; (iv) the World Bank and Gates Foundation initiative to improve the quality and policy relevance of household level data on agriculture in Sub-Saharan Africa; and (v) the Global strategy for improving agricultural statistics that is expected to lead to the better national and international food and agricultural statistics to guide policy analysis and decision making.

A case will be made for country needs for technical assistance to be guided by the UN Guiding Principles for Technical Cooperation in Statistics and the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness to make technical assistance more relevant and have greater impact. Six elements of a TA programme for Africa will be presented. These elements which also touch on other components of the Strategy include: (a) designing national integrated agricultural statistics project proposals complete with objectives, outputs, activities and work plans, inputs (government and donors); (b) design of Sector Strategic Plans for Agricultural Statistics as

building blocks for the bottom-up approach in the design of the NSDS; (c) develop institutional and organizational capacities including establishing coordination arrangements, developing human resources and building an enabling infrastructure for developing agricultural statistics; (d) develop and/or adapt sustainable methodologies for agricultural data production including capacity in economic and policy-related data analysis as well as data use for managing for development results; (e) prepare and distribute self-contained technical manuals and guides; (f) effect data harmonization and management, and establish CountrySTAT in countries to provide decision-makers access to statistics across various thematic areas; and (g) strengthen data systems including periodically auditing existing data, improving the quality and management of administrative data and implementation of the 2010 world census programme as well as a programme of inter-censal agricultural surveys.

Possible risks and related mitigating measures will be analyzed. Ways to ensure the sustainability of provided technical assistance will be also explored.

The strategy implementation and management arrangements will be presented, including: the required institutional framework and coordination, the best approach to be used in order to ensure success of the implementation, the technical support mechanism, Management and Operational Support Arrangements.

Provision will be made for a system for oversight and reviews, monitoring and evaluation system, Risk, Quality and Performance management system, information and communication management and reporting system of TA as well as impact assessment and reporting system.