

The Updated and Revised Wye Handbook and Links to Implementing the Global Strategy for Agricultural Statistics

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The Wye City Group was established by the UN Statistical Commission in 2007. Its purpose is to promote the development and adoption of international standards in statistics for rural areas and agriculture household incomes. Within this remit, the Group aims to support the adoption of comparable methods of data collection across countries and to give special focus to the application and value of the data standards in developing countries, especially as it may support the construction of MDG indicators. Other concerns are to assess and explore the potential for the use of statistics for the analysis of policies for farm and rural households, natural resources, and regional economic development.

There are clearly strong areas of overlap between the scope of the Global Strategy and the mandate of the Wye Group. Both are directly concerned with improving the availability and use of agricultural statistics and of linking the indicators and data more directly to the ways in which they are used. In particular, the revised Handbook provides a means of putting many of the main recommendations of the Global Strategy into effect. Statistics on rural areas and on agricultural incomes are core to many of the main policy concerns facing both developing and developed countries, especially those focusing on rural development, poverty reduction and reducing inequalities. In almost all developing countries achieving the Millennium Development Goals will be impossible unless and until the incomes and well being of rural populations and people dependent on agriculture can be improved. Better statistics, covering a wide range of topics, integrated and coordinated with data from other sources will be essential for setting policy, for allocating resources and for monitoring and evaluating progress.

This paper discusses how the earlier version of the Handbook, which focused mainly on developed countries and was published in 2006, has been updated and revised. It will provide a summary of the main structure and present some of the main findings and recommendations. It will also discuss how it can be used to support the implementation of the Global Strategy and improve the coverage, quality and use of statistics on rural development and the well-being of agricultural households.