Improving Statistics for Food Security, Sustainable Agriculture, and Rural Development

An Action Plan for Africa (2011-2015) in Brief

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ABBREVIATIONS

ACBF	African Capacity Building Foundation
ACS	African Center for Statistics
AFCAS	African Commission on Agricultural Statistics
AfDB	African Development Bank Group
AFRISTAT	Observatoire Economique et Statistique d'Afrique Subsaharienne
AGROST	African Group on Statistical Training and Human Resources
AU	African Union
AUC	African Union Commission
CAADP	Comprehensive Africa Agricultural Development Program
CDL	Cropland Data Layers
CoDG	Committee of Directors-General of African National Statistics Offices
EC	Executive Committee
ECA	Economic Commission for Africa (UN)
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
GMDTFAS	Global Multidonor Trust Fund for Agricultural Statistics
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MDG	Millennium Development Goal
NASCC	National Agricultural Statistics Coordination Committee
NASS	National Agricultural Statistical System
NEPAD	New Partnership for Africa's Development
NSDS	National Strategy for the Development of Statistics
NSO	National Statistics Office
NSS	National Statistical System
OAU	Organization of African Union
REC	Regional Economic Community
RSTC	Regional Steering Committee
SROs	Sub-Regional Organizations
SSPAS	Sector Strategy Plan for Agricultural Statistics
SSPS	Sector Strategy Plan for Statistics
StatCom-Africa	Statistical Commission for Africa
STC	Statistical Training Center
TA	Technical Assistance
UNSC	United Nations Statistical Commission
US	United States

1. INTRODUCTION

The central and strategic role that agriculture plays in Africa's development makes the sector the key to economic growth, enhanced living standards, poverty reduction, and increased food security. Indeed, all the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) have direct or indirect linkages to agriculture. It is for these reasons that in 2003, the African Heads of State and Government adopted an African owned and led initiative, namely the Comprehensive Africa Agricultural Development Program (CAADP), to assist African countries to revitalize agriculture growth as a strategy to combat poverty and hunger.

The importance of the agricultural sector requires that its planning, management, and monitoring be based on sound evidence. This, in turn, requires the availability of comprehensive, reliable, consistent, and timely statistical data in a form that is intelligible and usable to a variety of users at both national and international levels. Unfortunately, agricultural statistical systems and data are in a sorry state in many African countries – the systems are weak, uncoordinated, poorly resourced, and essentially unsustainable. Moreover their outputs are wanting in terms of quantity, quality, and dissemination. This is in spite of a substantial amount of donor assistance as well as a number of initiatives on statistical development that have been implemented in Africa over the years. The situation has been exacerbated by new data requirements to inform policy on emerging development issues such as food production vs. biofuels, global warming, environment, and food security.

2. GLOBAL STRATEGY

In order to respond to the declining quantity and quality of agricultural statistics in developing countries, a *Global Strategy for Improving Agricultural and Rural Statistics* was produced and endorsed in February 2010 by the United Nations Statistical Commission (UNSC). Established in 1947, the UNSC is the highest decisionmaking body for international statistical activities, especially the setting of statistical standards, the development of concepts and methods, and their implementation at national and international levels.

2.1 Impact, purpose, and pillars of the Global Strategy

The purpose of the Global Strategy is to provide a framework and methodology that will lead to improvements in the availability and quality of national and international food and agricultural statistics, to guide policy analysis and decisionmaking in the 21st century.

The Global Strategy is built around three pillars, namely:

i. the establishment of a minimum set of core agricultural data that countries will provide to meet the current and emerging data needs for, *inter alia*:
   - monitoring national trends and policies;
   - monitoring progress toward the achievement of sectoral, national, regional and international development agendas, including agricultural development programs, Poverty Reduction Strategies, the Comprehensive Africa Agricultural Development Program (CAADP), and the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) with respect to poverty, food security, and environmental sustainability; and
   - addressing emerging policy issues such as: the food crisis; the use of crops for biofuels; land and water use; the impact of agriculture on the environment; and global warming.

ii. the integration of agriculture into the National Statistical Systems and the National Strategy for the Development of Statistics (NSDS).[1] This will

1 The National Strategy for the Development of Statistics (NSDS) is a comprehensive framework for addressing data limitations, mobilizing and prioritizing the use of resources, and integrating statistics within national policy, planning, and budget processes.

link statistical information across the economic, social, and environmental domains, and meet the expectations of policymakers and other data users who rely on the comparability of data from different sources, across different countries, and over time; and

iii. building the foundation for the sustainability of the National Agricultural Statistical System (NASS) through governance and statistical capacity building.

3. ACTION PLAN FOR AFRICA OF THE GLOBAL STRATEGY

3.1 Introduction

Africa is the first region to implement the Global Strategy. The Action Plan for Africa of the Global Strategy has been designed by the African Development Bank (AfDB), UN Economic Commission for Africa (ECA), and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), and the African Union Commission (AUC). It has been shared and discussed with key stakeholders both within and outside the continent, including African countries, regional and international organizations, regional economic communities (RECs), donors, and the UN Statistical Commission (UNSC). The Action Plan adopts a long-term perspective (10 to 15 years) but will follow a phased approach, with the first phase covering the five-year period 2011–2015.

3.2 Framework

The framework for the Action Plan includes the following key features: (i) a results-based logical framework, which will be used as an essential management, monitoring, and evaluation tool (M&E) for implementation; (ii) a stakeholder analysis to broaden and deepen the engagement of a wide range of stakeholders; (iii) a number of strategies for ensuring the sustainability of activities started under the Plan; (iv) a risk management system to ensure that risks are monitored and controlled; (v) a phased implementation with 12 countries covered in Year 1, 24 in Year 2, 36 in Year 3, 48 in Year 4, and with the remaining countries covered in Year 5; (vi) a detailed Work Program and budget for the first five years of the Plan; (viii) an overall M&E system, plus one for each component of the Plan, to monitor and report on progress at different levels; and (ix) a communication and reporting system, to enable the sharing of results with all stakeholders, as well as to enhance visibility.

3.3 Impact

The objectives of the Action Plan for Africa reflect those of the Global Strategy (see section 2.1 above). In particular, by the end of the first phase (2011–2015) of the Plan, it is expected that:

- 50 percent of the African countries will be able to produce a minimum core agricultural data set to meet the current and emerging statistical demands of the various stakeholders, such as government agencies, regional economic communities, academic and research institutions, and national and international organizations;
- 50 percent of the African countries will have integrated agricultural data into their National Statistical Systems in order to meet the expectations of policymakers and other data users that the data will be comparable across different countries and over time. The integration of agriculture into the NSS will ensure effective coordination between the National Statistics Offices (NSOs), which have experience in applying statistical methods and using sample frames, and the ministries, which are likely to have greater technical knowledge about agriculture, forestry, fisheries, and land use. The integration will be achieved by implementing a set of methodologies that include the development of:
  - a master sample frame for agriculture,
  - an integrated survey framework, and
  - a data management system, which will make the results easily available.
- 50 percent of the countries' National Agricultural Statistical Systems will achieve sustainability, owing to improvements in governance and statistical capacity building.

The availability of more accurate and consistent data, comparable over time, will have a number of positive impacts. It will allow farmers to make better sowing and selling choices and so boost agricultural productivity and incomes, thereby helping to reduce poverty. It will also allow governments to develop socioeconomic planning within the agricultural framework, and to monitor progress. Moreover, the collected data should help governments to take measures to mitigate major food crises of the type witnessed in the recent past. This is because better estimates about crop production, livestock, trade, stock levels, and animal feed will assist in the forecasting of food availability and should help to address food vulnerability issues for the future.

The Action Plan for Africa is expected to result in a number of positive benefits in the context of institutional and organizational reforms, including the following:

- Solutions to African methodological problems will be prepared, peer-reviewed, and validated by experts;
- Advanced and cost-effective methodologies, tools, and standards, aimed at the improvement of agricultural statistics in Africa, will be developed

and disseminated. These will take the form of methodological guidelines, handbooks, and the documentation of good practices;

- Institutional, organizational, and technical capacities of National Agricultural Statistical Systems will be strengthened and applied to improving data quality and usage; and
- Required agricultural data will be produced, harmonized, managed, analyzed, and disseminated.

In terms of supporting statistical training and addressing the problem of inadequacies in statistical manpower within statistical agencies, the following outcomes are envisioned for the Plan:

- Countries will be able to carry out detailed training needs analysis in agricultural statistics;
- New, more cost-effective methods of delivering training will be developed and piloted;
- The capacity of training centers to deliver effective and good-quality education and training in subjects related to agricultural statistics will be enhanced and sustained; and
- The number of people working in agricultural statistics offices, who are equipped with the appropriate training and recognized qualifications, will increase.

General targets of the Action Plan for Africa include the following:

- 50 percent reduction in the number of countries whose National Agricultural Statistical System (NASS) is classified as low capacity;
- 50 percent of countries will have their NASS integrated into the National Strategy for the Development of Statistics (NSDS);
- 50 percent of countries will have implemented a master sample frame for agricultural statistics;
- 50 percent of countries will have implemented an integrated survey framework;
- 50 percent of countries will have an integrated database up and running;
- 50 percent of countries will report key data of adequate quality to FAO; and
- 50 percent of countries will have an integrated governance framework, in line with the Global Strategy recommendations.

4. GOVERNANCE MECHANISM, COUNTRY ASSESSMENT, AND TECHNICAL COMPONENTS

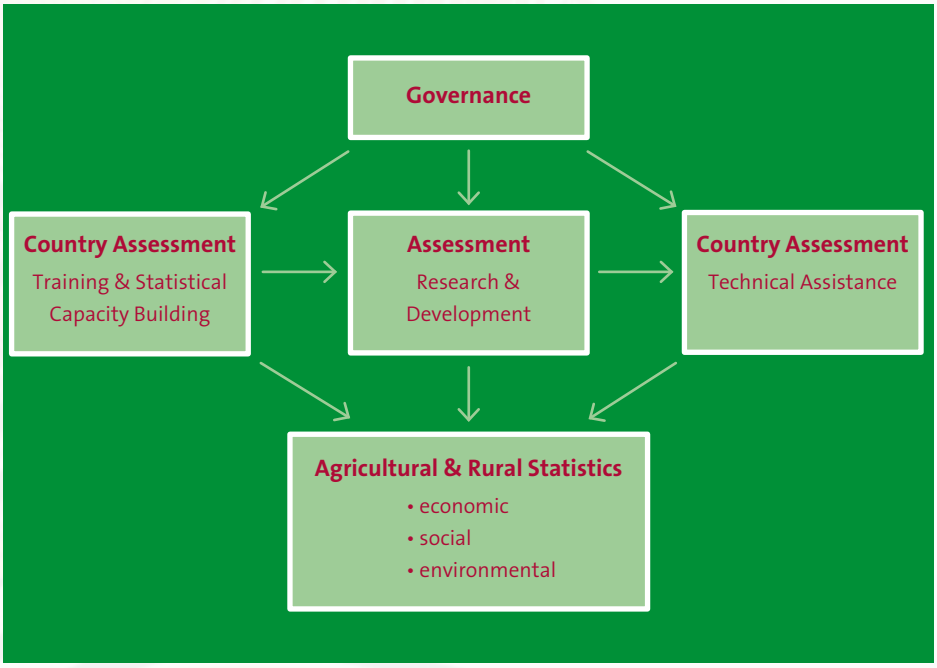
4.1 Introduction

In their endorsement of the technical content and strategic directions of the Global Strategy, the UN Statistical Commission (UNSC) recommended that a comprehensive technical assistance (TA) program, an articulated training program, and a well-targeted research agenda be included in the Action Plan. The UNSC further recommended that clear directives on fund management and governance arrangements at global, regional, and national levels be set out in the plan. Accordingly, the Action Plan for Africa was designed comprising three technical components, viz. technical assistance, training, and research. The Plan also elaborates a governance mechanism and a comprehensive and detailed country assessment framework. The country assessment, which will constitute a first step in the implementation of the Plan, will help to determine the country-level activities to be undertaken during the first phase, particularly under the training and technical assistance components.

Stakeholders agreed that the development and implementation of the training component should be led by ECA, the research component by FAO, and the technical assistance component as well as governance mechanism and country capacity assessment by the AfDB. The three technical components and the governance mechanism were developed as standalone proposals. They were then consolidated by the AfDB, together with the country assessment proposal, into a single overarching document, taking into account a number of linkages that exist between them. The implementation will guarantee the full integration of the technical components (see Figure 1). This integrated approach will also call for phased implementation and will avoid duplication of effort on the part of the lead institutions. Technical assistance and training will depend on the assessment of the countries' capacities and requirements. An assessment of the research needs will also be conducted.

Outputs from the research component will form the basis for innovative technical assistance and training.

Figure 1: Interdependent linkages of the components of the Action Plan



4.2 Strategy for implementation

The implementation of the Plan will follow a twin-track approach:

i. On one track, activities will cover:
   - the country assessment;
   - capacity building;
   - the development of sustainable statistical infrastructure (e.g. developing an integrated NASS and mainstreaming agriculture into NSDS); and
   - research.

ii. On the other track, activities will include:
   - training in areas where updated materials are already available;
   - technical assistance where NSDSs have already been designed and thus the country assessment has already been performed; and the quick wins of the research activities are completed.

One of the outputs of the country assessment will be the grouping of countries according to their level of development in agricultural statistics. Technical assistance and training will be carried out in the weakest countries first, since they are in most urgent need of support; thereafter in the remaining countries, according to the prioritization made by the country assessment.

4.3 Governance mechanism

Effective implementation of the Global Strategy will require good governance at global, regional, subregional, and country levels. Accordingly, a governance mechanism for the implementation of the Action Plan for Africa has been elaborated to establish the institutional framework, coordination arrangements, and reporting lines at different levels, as detailed below.

Global level

At the global level, a Global Strategy Implementation Office will be established, based at FAO. This will coordinate the implementation of the Global Plan, set standards, ensure harmonization across regions, coordinate with other global initiatives, undertake advocacy, and provide support to regions that are unable to take the lead in implementation. Implementation of the Action Plan for Africa will be the responsibility of the regional, subregional, and national governance structures.

Regional level

The continental governance arrangements will, *inter alia*, execute the Action Plan for Africa, allocate resources, monitor implementation, assess and report on progress made. These arrangements will include a Regional Steering Committee, an Executive Committee, and a Regional Implementation Secretariat.

The Regional Steering Committee (RSTC) has been established as the decisionmaking body for the Action Plan for Africa. The RSTC, which includes users and producers of statistics, will be under the high-level stewardship of the Chief Economist and Vice-President of AfDB as its chairperson. The Committee will comprise representatives (one from each member institution) of the African Statistical Coordination Committee (namely, AfDB, ECA, African Union Commission (AUC), the African Capacity Building Foundation (ACBF), African Friends of the Chair of the UN Statistical

Commission (Morocco, Uganda, Ethiopia, Senegal), Chair of the Statistical Commission for Africa (StatCom-Africa), Chair of the African Commission on Agricultural Statistics (AFCAS),[2] Statistical Training Centers (one representative), Ministries of Agriculture (two country representatives from Cameroon and Mozambique), agricultural research institutions (one representative), FAO, and donors (World Bank, DFID, United States Department of Agriculture, and the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation).

An *Executive Committee (EC)*, which comprises a smaller body of the three lead organizations (AfDB, ECA, and FAO), will act as the bureau for the RSTC. The EC will be expected to meet more frequently than the RSTC and to get things done on behalf of the Committee.

A *Regional Implementation Secretariat* will be established at the AfDB. The responsibilities of the Secretariat will include: mobilizing and allocating resources, and monitoring, evaluating and reporting on Strategy implementation. The other two lead institutions (FAO and ECA), and in particular, the Coordinators of the research, training, and technical assistance components, will be members of the Secretariat. Other members will comprise the Regional Strategy Secretary, a Finance Officer, an M&E Officer, and an Administrative Assistant.

A mechanism will be instigated to allow reports to be received and acted upon by African and global stakeholder organizations, which include the following:

- the Statistical Commission for Africa (StatCom-Africa), which will report to the UN Statistical Commission as well as the Joint AU/ ECA Conference of African Ministers of Finance and Economy;
- the Global Implementation Office, which will report to the biennial FAO Regional Conference for Africa;
- the Committee of Director Generals of National Statistics Offices in Africa (CoDG), which will report to New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD)[3] in the context of its CAADP; and
- the AfDB, which will report to its Board of Directors.

2 The African Commission on Agricultural Statistics (AFCAS) is the apex body for agricultural statistics in Africa. It was established by the FAO Director-General in October 1962 to review the state of food and agricultural statistics in the region; to advise member countries on the development and standardization of agricultural statistics within the general framework of FAO's work in statistics; and to convene expert group meetings or other subsidiary bodies of national experts required for this purpose. It meets once every two years.

3 NEPAD was formally adopted by the 37th Summit of Organization of African Unity (OAU) in 2001 as a strategic framework document that promises Africa's renewal. It was designed by African leaders to address the specific development challenges of their nations and to place them, both individually and collectively, on a path of sustainable growth and development; thereby extricating the continent from the malaise of underdevelopment and exclusion in a globalizing world.

Regional Economic Community[4]/ Subregional Organization level

Regional Economic Communities (RECs) and Subregional Organizations (SROs) like AFRISTAT[5] and Statistical Training Centers have been playing an important role in statistical development in member states. Where appropriate, these bodies will be used in the implementation of the Strategy. The operational structure at the level of the REC comprises the Statistics Committee, which brings together all heads of National Statistics Offices in the member states, and the Statistics Departments/ Units at the Secretariat level. Where capacity is lacking, support will be provided to build it up.

National level

The main beneficiaries of the Global Strategy will be the countries that require sound agricultural statistics for evidence-based policies, decisionmaking, and a host of other purposes. Countries will bear the primary responsibility for the Plan implementation. The implementation mechanism at the national level will include:

i. a *National Agricultural Statistical Coordination Committee (NASCC)* chaired by a data user, usually a high-level policymaker from the Ministry of Agriculture, who will oversee the development of the National Agricultural Statistical System (NASS) as an integral part of the National Statistical System (NSS);
ii. a *National Strategy Coordinator* to deal with administrative and technical work in the implementation of the Action Plan in the country; and
iii. a *Technical Working Group* (covering different areas of agriculture) to assist the Coordinator with technical work.

4.4 Country assessment

The first step in the implementation of the technical components of the Action Plan will be to undertake an in-depth and up-to-date country assessment. This will identify the specific statistical needs and capacities of each country.

The assessment will, *inter alia*, look at the state of the data currently being produced and disseminated, the methodologies used, and the countries' readiness to begin

4 The Regional Economic Communities (RECs) group together individual countries in subregions for the purposes of achieving greater economic integration and development. They are described as the "building blocks" of the African Union. Currently, there are eight RECs recognized by the AU, each established under a separate regional treaty.
5 AFRISTAT (Economic and Statistical Observatory for Sub-Saharan Africa) was established in 1993 to contribute to the development of the economic, social, and environmental statistics in 19 African member states, which are mostly French-speaking countries of West and Central Africa.

implementing planned activities of the Global Strategy. The information produced from these assessments will be used to:

- elaborate country profiles and to identify countries that require special attention;
- elaborate relevant national plans of action;
- prioritize development needs and decide areas of intervention;
- provide M&E baseline information; and
- group and rank countries in terms of data quality and their level of statistical development.

The exercise will be repeated at some frequencies during the Global Strategy implementation, for M&E purposes.

4.5 Technical assistance (TA) component

The purpose of the technical assistance component is to help African countries to improve and strengthen institutional, organizational, and technical capacities for the development of their National Agricultural Statistical Systems, based on a detailed assessment of their capacities and needs. A multilingual approach will be followed (at least English and French).

This component takes stock of and critiques the technical assistance that countries have received over the years to help develop statistical systems. It concludes that while the state of statistics in Africa has improved to some degree, this improvement has, by and large, been uneven and incommensurate with the quantum of the assistance that has been delivered. The evidence points to the need for more and better delivered TA, to accelerate the development of sustainable statistical capacity in African countries.

Elements of the technical assistance

The following four elements of a TA program for Africa have been identified and elaborated.

i. *Development of institutional and organizational capacities:* Most African countries continue to experience institutional and organizational weaknesses that inhibit effective development of National Agricultural Statistical Systems in particular and National Statistical Systems in general. TA will be required to address these weaknesses and will be sought by countries, based on specific needs.

ii. *Design of the Sector Strategic Plan for Agricultural Statistics (SSPAS) as an integral part of the National Strategy for the Development of Statistics (NSDS):* There is a consensus that the design and implementation of a National Strategy for the Development of Statistics (NSDS) – covering all sectors, data producers, and data users – is the best way to build capacity and strengthen statistics in support of national and international development. Best practice requires that the NSDS adopt a bottom-up or sectoral approach, whereby Sector Strategic Plans for Statistics (SSPSs) are designed first, to serve as building-blocks for the design of NSDS. Technical assistance will be required by countries to bring objectivity, international best practices, and experiences from other countries/regions to bear in the design of the SSPS.

iii. *Development and harmonization of data sources:* Data sources in Africa tend to be poorly developed and poorly harmonized; consequently, the resulting data are not well integrated. Countries will need TA to: (i) better plan and manage their agricultural census as a source of benchmark agricultural data and indicators; (ii) implement a program of agricultural surveys to maintain timely performance indicators for the agriculture sector; (iii) improve administrative data sources; and (iv) audit data systems and data from censuses, surveys, and administrative sources.

iv. *Data harmonization and management:* Existing agricultural data tend to lack comparability among sources and over time; moreover the data are scattered among the institutions producing them. Frequently, the data are stored in different media and are not readily accessible. Technical assistance will therefore be required to help countries to: (i) assemble, review, analyze, and document existing agricultural datasets; (ii) verify the accuracy and reliability of the agricultural production data series, using information from other sources; and (iii) establish and maintain CountrySTAT – which is a web-based information technology system for food and agricultural statistics at the national and subnational levels.[6] It is also planned to establish RegionSTAT at the AfDB level.

Technical assistance delivery system

The effectiveness of the technical assistance will depend not only on the amount delivered, but also on the method of its delivery. A TA delivery system has been proposed which builds on the following pillars: (i) to take into account the country's level of development for its National Agricultural Statistical System, relative to other countries in the region; (ii) leveraging existing structures instead of creating

6 CountrySTAT provides decisionmakers with access to statistics across thematic areas such as production, prices, trade and consumption. This supports analysis, informed policy-making, and monitoring.

parallel ones; (iii) harnessing and leveraging regional capacities to fill gaps in certain countries; and (iv) using well-qualified and experienced international experts, as appropriate, to bridge capacity gaps.

A core team of three people (the TA Coordinator, an expert in data management, and an associate expert) will be recruited on a full-time basis and attached to the Regional Implementation Secretariat in order to manage the implementation of the TA program. The TA Coordinator will work closely with the other Component Coordinators in delivering technical assistance specific to their components and in linking this to the Global Strategy. An M&E system will be used to monitor and report on progress at different levels.

4.6 Training component

The purpose of the training component is to strengthen the capacity of the agencies concerned with the collection, compilation, and use of agricultural statistics. It aims to achieve this by (i) increasing the knowledge, skills, and competencies of agency staff and (ii) strengthening and sustaining the capacity of African Statistical Training Centers (STCs) to develop and deliver good-quality training in agricultural statistics and statistics-related subjects. A multilingual approach will be followed (at least English and French).

Subcomponents

The training component will be implemented through three subcomponents, which together will generate nine related outputs. The subcomponents are:

i. *Identification of training needs and the management of human resources*. Training and technical assistance will be provided to countries to enable agricultural statistics agencies to identify their priority needs for training and to improve the management of their human resources;
ii. *Increasing the capacity of Statistical Training Centers (STCs).* The aim is to strengthen the capacity of regional and national training agencies to design and deliver effective training courses according to the country's needs; and
iii. *Increase the demand for training* by building the knowledge, skills, and competencies of people working in agricultural statistics agencies.

Implementation

The training component will be implemented by ECA with technical support and backup from FAO. A training component Implementation Unit will be set up, to

be based in the Africa Center for Statistics (ACS) at ECA. The Unit will have the following expertise: an Action Plan Manager, who will have experience in training management and a background in agricultural statistics; a Secretary, and IT support and website management.

Selected training centers and other agencies will implement the training program, including the preparation and delivery of different courses. These agencies will also be required to evaluate and report on progress and outcomes. Implementation will be monitored and supervised by the African Group on Statistical Training (AGROST),[7] whose Secretariat is hosted by ECA. Various progress reports will be prepared, shared with key stakeholders, and published on the Action Plan for Africa website, which will also be hosted by ECA.

4.7 Research component

Need for research

In Africa, agriculture is characterized by a large number of small subsistence farmers with low levels of education. These smallholders undertake rain-fed agriculture using a wide variety of agricultural practices (mixed-cropping, continuous planting, and harvesting on small and irregular shaped plots, etc.). There are specific methodological challenges associated with the measurement of some of the most basic agriculture variables, including crop area, yield, and production (particularly production for own-consumption) in Africa. These difficulties are accentuated when farmers do not keep any records and do not use standard measurement units.

Additional measurement challenges include: (i) a wide regional diversity in terms of the importance of the crops grown; (ii) variation in the agricultural year (from one to two/three rain and planting seasons, which may span two different calendar years); (iii) enumeration of livestock and livestock products of nomadic and semi-nomadic populations; (iv) estimation of fish production for inland traditional fishery and marine fishery; and (v) estimation of edible forest products, fire wood production, and the extent of deforestation.

The collection and analysis of data may be further complicated by the local farmers' decisionmaking processes. Agricultural practices in Africa are shaped by the fact that most producers are also consumers, who make both production and consump-

7 AGROST was established in 2009 under the aegis of the Statistical Commission for Africa (StatCom-Africa) to coordinate various initiatives on statistical training in Africa. This was a response to the mushrooming of groups and initiatives on statistical training in Africa, which was leading to an inefficient use of scarce resources and duplication of efforts.

tion decisions simultaneously. Other problems that affect agricultural statistical activities linked to exogenous factors, namely the environment in which they take place and the impact of external events, especially weather related.

These factors, combined with the lack of evidence-based information on the farming practices used, represent some of the major obstacles to the performance of efficient and consistent data collection systems. However, technological advances could be introduced into the African context to assist in the compilation of factual information, particularly the geospatial information and geo-referencing devices and mechanisms that are now available in other global regions. For example, the US Department of Agriculture's National Agricultural Statistics Service uses satellite imagery known as Cropland Data Layers (CDL) as a useful tool for monitoring crop rotation patterns, land use changes, water resources, and carbon emissions. Similar methods and tools relevant to the African context could be developed and implemented for improving data collection systems and data quality.

Another factor to consider is the rapidly changing nature of agriculture and the emergence of new issues that make the available data and some methods obsolete. For example, information on biofuels, climate change adaptation and mitigation practices, as well as its impact on poverty is seldom collected. Furthermore, little is known about the best methods and practices to garner such information.

Purpose

The purpose of the research component, therefore, is to develop and disseminate advanced and cost-effective methodologies, tools, and standards related to the pillars of the Global Strategy (see Section 2.1). The dissemination will be carried out through methodological guidelines, handbooks, and documentation of good practices in priority research areas. All these will be used by agricultural statisticians in Africa for the efficient production of reliable agricultural statistics.

The priority areas are: the reference framework; the master frame for integrated survey; data collection methods; food security; market information; data analysis; and administrative data. The results of the research activities will serve as inputs for both the training and the technical assistance components.

Research topics

An initial list of possible research topics has been developed, based on the recommendations of various sessions of the biennial meetings of the AFCAS. This has been complemented by a survey undertaken among key stakeholders in agricul-

tural statistics in Africa. The research topics were classified under the priority areas mentioned above.

Implementation, monitoring, and evaluation

A Research Unit will be established within the Global Strategy Implementation Office at FAO. The Unit will be in charge of the coordination and the quality control of the research and will be led by one senior statistician, one statistician, and one assistant. The Unit will work in close collaboration with Advisory Expert Groups selected from a network of specialists (institutions, academia, and individual experts). The actual conduct of the research on specific topics will be led by selected partner institutions/experts.

Many of the topics selected are relevant to more than one region; further, the best qualified institutions to implement the research may be located in any region. FAO will therefore work with the most qualified regional and international structures for a decentralized implementation. The lead partner will be mainly responsible for the conduct of research on a specific topic, where it has established expertise and experience in the preparation of relevant handbooks and guidelines.

A system for monitoring and reporting on implementation will be established.

5. WORK PROGRAM AND BUDGET

Work program

A work program for the Action Plan for Africa was elaborated in such a way as to increase the probability of success and lead to better results, lower costs, harmonized efforts, shorter timeframes, better relationships, and to build synergies among the lead institutions. The work program's ethos is to continuously improve performance. The work program cascades down from the outcomes, to outputs, and then activities. Work packages have been broken down into the smallest activities that can be easily planned for in terms of cost, time, and quality. Not only have the key activities for the three technical components and the governance mechanism been identified, but they have also been sequenced (following the order in which they will be executed), scheduled taking into account linkages among them (through relationship dependencies), and assigned to responsibility centers. For instance, some research activities are expected to feed into training and technical assistance activities.

To simplify the presentation of the work program, activities have been listed by the quarter in which they are scheduled to take place. More detailed activity scheduling is expected to be carried out by the three Component Coordinators as they prepare their respective action plans. It is important that this is carried out in a consistent manner, using a common electronic tool and system to enable easy data exchange and retrieval. The tool and the system should also be useful in scheduling revisions/updates in the activities. In this connection, it was recommended that MS Project software be used for the purpose of action planning, tracking progress, and managing the resources of the Action Plan for Africa.

To ensure that Plan implementation is managed more efficiently – on time and on budget – it will be necessary for all personnel involved in the execution of the Action Plan to develop the necessary skills and to be trained to use this software for the stated purposes.

Budget

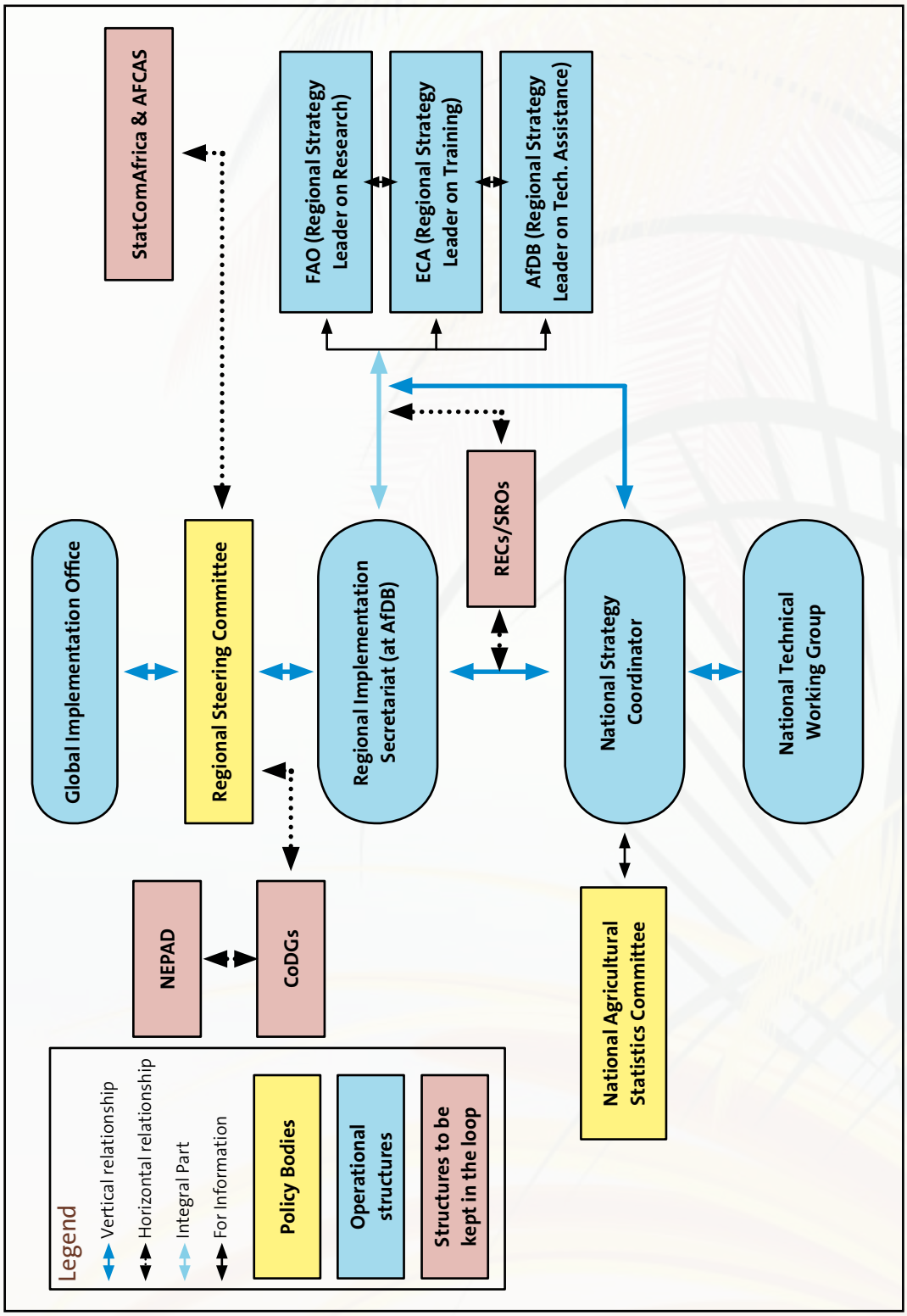
The Global Implementation Plan will be supported by a Global Multidonor Trust Fund for Agricultural Statistics (GMDTFAS), to be hosted by FAO/World Bank. This Fund will allocate resources to the regions where the mobilization of funds is weaker. In addition, for Africa there will be a Regional Trust Fund, to be managed by the AfDB. At the national level, country programs will be prepared for funding through the GMDTFAS and the Regional Trust Fund. Once agreed by the Regional Steering Committee, these will be implemented under the leadership of focal institutions, depending on their technical content. The focal institutions may draw technical support from the most appropriate REC and/or SRO, in agreement with the countries.

The initial estimation of the budget needed for this first phase (2011-2015) will be an average of US$ 13.2 million per year to support work in all African countries over 5 years. The first phase total budget can be broken down by geographic distribution, technical component allocation, and by annual expenditure, as follows:

- *Geographic breakdown:* 75 percent of the budget will be spent in the countries and only 25 percent at the regional level. This is justified by the Plan's strategic targeting of the individual countries as the prime beneficiaries.
- *Technical component allocation:* 43 percent will go to technical assistance aimed at building statistical capacity; 27 percent to training; 15 percent to research; and 15 percent to governance.
- *Annual expenditure:* 15.8 percent will be spent in Year 1; 20.6 percent in Year 2; 23.1 percent in Year 3; 22.9 percent in Year 4 when almost all countries are expected to be implementing the Strategy. Yearly expenditure then drops to 17.5 percent in Year 5.

It is expected that the required total budget will be mobilized by donors. The regional implementing structures may be able to provide between 15–30 percent of the budget. It is also expected that in addition to contributing funds to the project, some donors may provide inputs in kind. In particular, AfDB will be hosting the Regional Implementation Secretariat and providing some inputs in kind (e.g. office space and staff); FAO will be hosting the Global Office and may provide similar inputs; and the three institutions hosting the Regional Strategy Coordinators (i.e. the Technical Assistance, Training, and Research Coordinators) may also provide office equipment and supplies as well as communication facilities and assistants. At the country level, governments will be funding the salaries of the national staff involved in the implementation of the Plan, allocating space, etc.

ANNEX: GOVERNANCE STRUCTURES OF THE ACTION PLAN FOR AFRICA


StatComAfrica & AFCAS
FAO (Regional Strategy Leader on Research)
ECA (Regional Strategy Leader on Training)
AfDB (Regional Strategy Leader on Tech. Assistance)
Global Implementation Office
Regional Steering Committee
Regional Implementation Secretariat (at AfDB)
RECs/SROs
National Strategy Coordinator
National Technical Working Group
NEPAD
CoDGs
National Agricultural Statistics Committee
Legend
Vertical relationship
Horizontal relationship
Integral Part
For Information
Policy Bodies
Operational structures
Structures to be kept in the loop

Better Statistics for Better Development Outcomes

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