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Agenda Item 5

**Overview of FAO's Activities in Asia and the Pacific Region
and follow-up of the recommendations of
the 26th Session of APCAS**

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Abstract

The paper provides an overview of completed and ongoing FAO activities in the region since the last APCAS and an Action Taken Report on the recommendations of the last APCAS.

The work undertaken by FAO and RAP in the Asia and the Pacific region involved normative and project work. The normative work of FAO where the leadership was provided by FAO Statistics Division will be reflected in the technical contribution under different agenda items. The following sections highlight some of the work carried out in the region since February 2016.

Asia and Pacific Commission on Agricultural Statistics (APCAS)

FAO RAP published the report of the 26th Session of the APCAS and the Senior Statistician played a key role in preparation and organization of APCAS 26 at Bhutan in his role as Secretary of the Commission. Preparatory mission was undertaken to Fiji to support hosting of APCAS27.

News Letter

Newsletters related to activities of the Global Strategy and other statistical work in the region are regularly produced bi-monthly and widely distributed to stakeholders electronically. The newsletter mainly consists the brief on regional conferences and seminars related to statistics, technical assistance activities implemented in project implementing countries, Champions on agriculture Statistics in the country and region, list of the research guidelines developed by Global Strategy Global Office and upcoming events.

Training Workshops and Meetings Organized/Participation in the Meetings

Since APCAS26, a number of international, regional and country level workshops and meetings were organized within the framework of projects AMIS, Global Strategy, SDG Monitoring and food security statistics. List of these events are at **Annex 1**. Besides these, the Senior Statistician also participated and made technical contribution in the High Level SDG monitoring platform organized by PSA Philippines, and various Seminars organized for the Heads of the National Statistics Office and Regional Coordination Meetings (RCM) of ESCAP Committee on Statistics.

Technical Assistance to Countries

There has been a marked spurt in level of technical assistance provided to countries under Global Strategy to improve Agriculture and Rural Statistics, Improving Agricultural Market Information System in India and Bangladesh, and other FAO funded TCP projects. List of ongoing and completed statistical projects since last APCAS which received technical backstopping from the regional office are listed in **Annex 2**. Major areas in which technical assistance was provided to the countries was through the implementation of Regional Action Plan of the Global Strategy to cover 19+1 countries in the region, and AMIS projects in Bangladesh and India. Technical assistance in conducting agricultural census in Bangladesh, Bhutan, Pakistan, Lao PDR and Timor Leste in Asia and Fiji, Samoa and Niue in the Pacific.

A new regional TCP on **strengthening the capacity for monitoring Food Security and Sustainable Agriculture in the context of Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) 2 and 12** has been made operational in December 2017, based upon request on member countries of the region. The countries proposed to benefit from the project are *Bangladesh, Bhutan, Maldives, Myanmar, Malaysia, Nepal, Pakistan, Philippines, Republic of Korea, Sri Lanka,*

Thailand, and Viet Nam. Activities under the projects will start as soon as all target beneficiary countries provide their concurrence to participate in the project. Only Nepal and Myanmar have expressed their willingness to participate so far.

Regional Action Plan of the Global Strategy to Improve Agricultural and Rural Statistics

Global Strategy has covered 19 countries in the region during 2013-17, in addition to preparation of a Pacific Strategic Plan for Agriculture and Rural Statistics. At present, the implementation of the Regional Action Plan is in progress in these countries selected sequentially during the last 4 years as under:

2013 - Bangladesh, Bhutan, Indonesia, Samoa, Sri Lanka,

2014 - Fiji, Georgia, Lao PDR, Myanmar,

2015 - Afghanistan, Cambodia, Maldives, Pakistan, Papua New Guinea, and Viet Nam.

2016 - China, Malaysia, Mongolia and Tonga

Regional Steering Committee of the project has encouraged the implementation of new cost effective tools even in non-GS implementing countries in the region. Besides these 19 countries, a separate Strategic Plan for Agricultural and Fisheries Statistics (P-SPAFS) for the Pacific Island Countries has also been prepared and is in the process of implementation through FAO support and resource mobilization.

The GS implementation is in good progress in 17 countries and work in Malaysia has just been initiated in 2018 and Tonga is still to begin. The process involves consultation with all stakeholders in preparing the strategic plans through in-depth assessment and implementing a few priority short term projects to meet countries' immediate needs. Significant progress has been made in providing technical assistance to the selected countries both in terms of SPARS preparation and in implementing approved short term project activities despite constraints on the availability of international consultants in the region.

Strengthening Agricultural Market Information Systems in Bangladesh and India,

The project 'Strengthening Agriculture Market Information Systems (AMIS) in Bangladesh' was implemented by the Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations (FAO) with sponsorship of the Statistics and Informatics Division (SID), Ministry of Planning. The Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (BBS), under the SID was the lead coordinating agency along with the other five agencies /line departments of the government.

The AMIS project in Bangladesh had synergies and compatibility with other initiatives such as activities of Global Strategy for Improvement of Agricultural and Rural Statistics, National Strategy for Development of Statistics, Statistics Act and Strategic Plan for Development of Agricultural and Rural Statistics. The project implemented priority activities identified under the Global Strategy.

The AMIS project, part of multilateral AMIS program funded by the Bill Melinda Gates Foundation, is aimed at enhancing the institutional, methodological and human resource

capacity in Bangladesh for producing data and information on production, crop forecasts and food stocks with better quality, standardisation and timeliness with focus on rice, wheat, maize and potato. The project has just been successfully completed in October 2017 with request for further support.

Strengthening Agriculture Market Information Systems in India using innovative methods and digital technology was the baby project under global AMIS initiative. The AMIS India project, aimed to strengthen capacity of the countries on the tools, methodologies and technologies for improved Agriculture Market Information Systems and to improve market transparency in target countries. The project was structured on the four areas of interventions covering:

- Food grains Stock Measurement,
- Market Price information system,
- Tools and technology for price data collection and
- Modelling and Crop Outlook.

The project has been successfully completed by October 2017 with identification of several actions being followed.

Advancing SDG2 Monitoring in Asia Pacific Region

FAO regional office organized a Regional Advocacy and Consultation Event for Monitoring the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) related to Food and Agriculture in Bangkok, Thailand from 4 to 8 September 2017. This was first of its type in any region of FAO.

The event was attended by around 100 participants from 25 countries viz. Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Cambodia, China, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Fiji, India, Indonesia, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Malaysia, Maldives, Mongolia, Myanmar, Nepal, Pakistan, Philippines, Republic of Korea, Samoa, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Timor-Leste, United States of America, Vanuatu and Viet Nam.

The participants comprised over 60 experts from national planning bodies and national statistical offices, 9 from academic, research institutions, and 12 representatives from international agencies and resource partners. Over 20 FAORAP staff and consultants attended specific technical sessions and contributed as discussants and session chairs.

The main objective of the advocacy and consultation event was to advocate and build capacity of member countries in the Asia-Pacific region to monitor the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Based on the feedback received from this TCPF, a new regional TCP on **strengthening the capacity for monitoring Food Security and Sustainable Agriculture in the context of Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) 2 and 12 in Bangladesh, Bhutan, Maldives, Myanmar, Malaysia, Nepal, Pakistan, Philippines, Republic of Korea, Sri Lanka, Thailand, and Vietnam** has just been initiated.

Cooperation with other Organizations and Agencies

Close co-operation is maintained with UN and International Organisations involved in food and agricultural statistics in the Asia and Pacific region. FAO has been represented in meetings on statistics, including those organised by ESCAP, SIAP such as the:

1. Participate in the ESCAP's Committee on Statistics
2. Participation in regional training workshops organized by UNSIAP
3. Partnering with ESCAP, ASEAN/AFSIS, SAARC, SPC and ADB in the implementation of the Regional Action Plan of the Global Strategy to Improve Agriculture and Rural Statistics.

Follow up action on the recommendations of last APCAS

A table on the follow-up action on the recommendations of the 26th session of APCAS are attached as **Annex 3**.

Conclusions

Besides the regular programmes of FAO, Regional Action Plan of the Global Strategy has made significant impact on importance of agricultural statistics in countries, and led to significant rise in demand for technical assistance. RAP's statistical project work has grown significantly and data needs for SDG monitoring will further intensify the statistical activities in the region. Besides the RAP's contribution to support statistical capacity building in the region through TCP projects and regional workshops/meetings, it is expected that with the implementation of country strategic plans, demand for technical assistance from the countries in the region will grow further and many more experts will need to be deployed in the region to meet this demand for technical assistance.

Statistical capacity on SDG monitoring continues to remain relatively weak area in the region. Support in this area is highly relevant as more reliable and timely information will result in optimal formulation and monitoring of SDG and food security policies.

World Programme for Census of Agriculture (WCA) 2020 has been launched. With significant focus on agricultural statistics through Global Strategy activities and the need for assisting countries with development of integrated statistical systems, more countries in the region will need support in implementing WCA 2020 guidelines.

Sub-regional Statistician

In order to service better the Pacific countries FAO has created a position of sub-regional statistician based in its Samoa office who is working in close collaboration with the Pacific Community (SPC). The person has been in position since April 2017.

Annex 1

Training Workshops and Meetings Organized/Participation in the Meetings

Advancing SDG2 Monitoring in Asia Pacific Region

1. Regional Advocacy Event for Monitoring the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) related to Food and Agriculture Sector & Demonstration Workshop on tools for Monitoring Food Security (SDG 2) 4-8 September, 2017, Bangkok
2. Sub regional workshop on Implementation of the 2030 Agenda on Sustainable Development Goals in Food and Agriculture (1-4 December, 2017, Dhaka)

AMIS related International Seminars

1. International Seminar on Approaches and Methodologies for Crop Monitoring and production Forecasting, 25-26 May 2016; Dhaka, Bangladesh
2. International Seminar on Private food grain stock measurement, 09-11 Nov 2016, New Delhi, India

AMIS related workshops/trainings and meetings in Bangladesh

1. Estimation Methodology of Crop Production of Main Crops, 18 May 2016, Bangladesh
2. Methodology of Crop Monitoring and production Forecasting, 15 June 2016, Bangladesh
3. Crop Estimation Methodology, Issues and Techniques, 13, 14, 16 and 19 June 2016
4. Methodologies for Crop Monitoring and Production Forecasting, 20 to 23 June 2016
5. International Study Tour to Phillipines, 18-23 July 2016
6. Reporting and Dissemination of Crop Monitoring and Production Forecasting, 8-11 August 2016
7. Use of Geographical information system (GIS) in Agricultural Statistics
8. Training on "Use of Geographical Information System (GIS) in Agricultural Statistics" **1st Batch, Part 1**, 28 August to 1 September, 2016
Part 2, 18-20 September, 2016,
2nd Batch, Part 1, 4-8 September, 2016, **Part 2**, 21-23 September, 2016
9. Training of the Master Trainer on "Methodologies of Data Collection and Compilation of Agriculture Statistics", 18-19 June, 2017
10. Training of the Enumerator on "Methodologies of Data Collection and Compilation of Agriculture Statistics", 21-22 June, 2017
11. Training on "Weather Data Quality Control", 14-15 June, 2017, 18-19 June, 2017
12. Training on "Crop Yield Forecasting and Projection using Climate Data and Water Balance Estimates", September, 19-21, 2017
13. Training on "Crop Forecasting using Time Series Modelling and Forecasting Method"
24 to 28 September, 2017
14. Dissemination Workshop of the project AMIS in Bangladesh, 11 October, 2017

AMIS related trainings/workshops in India

1. Commodity Simulation Model (COSIMO) Training, July 26-29, 2016
2. International Study Tour to Philippines , September 19-22, 2016
3. Computer Assisted Personal Interview CAPI Training, 11-15 July, 2016, New Delhi, India
4. Dissemination and closing workshop in October 2017

Others

1. Regional workshop towards improving small-scale fisheries and aquaculture data collection: Introduction of the "Guidelines to Enhance Fisheries and Aquaculture Statistics through a Census Framework" 07-08 March, 2016 Indonesia
2. Workshop on Establishing Agricultural and Rural Survey Calendar of Bangladesh based upon Integrated Planning of Agricultural Census and Surveys, 1-5 August, 2016, Pattaya, Thailand
3. Coordination Workshop with SAARC, 2016, New Delhi , India
4. Regional Roundtable on the World Programme for the Censuses of Agriculture 2020 (WCA 2020) - 19-23 September 2016, Bangkok, Thailand, 19 - 23 Sept 2016, Bangkok, Thailand
5. Regional Workshop On the Monitoring of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) related to Food and Agriculture Sector and the World Programme for the Census of Agriculture 2020 (WCA 2020), Nadi, Fiji 6-10 November 2017

Global Strategy related

Meetings

1. Sixth meeting of the Regional Steering Committee for Asia and the Pacific for the Global Strategy to Improve Agricultural and Rural Statistics *Bangkok, Thailand, 17 November 2016,*
2. Seventh meeting of the Regional Steering Committee for Asia and the Pacific for the Global Strategy to Improve Agricultural and Rural Statistics *Bangkok, Thailand, 17 November 2017*

Workshops

Regional

1. Orientation Programme for Implementation of the Global Strategy (GS) to Improve Agricultural and Rural Statistics, *14 November 2016, Bangkok, Thailand*
2. Workshop on Statistical Capacity of countries to monitor the Sustainable Development Goals related to Agricultural and Rural Statistics and Adoption of new cost-effective methods developed under the Global Strategy, *Bangkok, Thailand, 15-16 November, 2016*
3. Meeting of the Expert Group on the Application of Cost of Production Methodologies” organized by FAO *Regional Office, Asia Pacific – Global Strategy at Bangkok, Thailand, 1 - 3 May 2017*

4. Technical Working Group on the Implementation of Technical Assistance activities under the Global Strategy *Bangkok, Thailand, 15-16 November, 2017*
5. Technical meeting on implementation of Bhutan RNR Census, 30-31 January, 2018

Regional Trainings organized by UNSIAP under GS and contribution by FAO

1. Computer-Assisted Personal Interviewing (CAPI) training, 03 - 07 Oct 2016, Bangkok, Thailand
2. Regional Dissemination Workshop on Innovative Data Collection Methods for Agricultural and Rural Statistics organized by the Asian Development Bank from 21 – 22 November 2016, Manila Philippines
3. Regional Training Course on Agricultural Cost of Production Statistics, Communication and Advocacy for Statistics, 26– 30 June 2017, Daejeon Republic of Korea
4. Regional training on Computer-Assisted Personal Interviewing (CAPI) in Chiba Japan, August 2017
5. Regional Training Course on The New Supply Utilization Account/Food Balance Sheet Methodology and Compilation Tool , 20 – 24 November 2017 , Daejeon, Republic of Korea

National

1. Report (IdCA/SPARS/PPP etc) sharing workshops: Vietnam, Maldives, Afghanistan, Sri Lanka, Myanmar, Cambodia, Fiji, Pakistan, Indonesia, Mongolia
2. Inception Workshops on Global Strategy, 2016, Pakistan, Mongolia
3. Training workshop on AGRIS module, Jul-16, Bhutan

National Training Workshops related to SUA/FBS

2016

1. Preparation of SUA/FBS under Global Strategy, 13-17 June 2016, Colombo, Sri Lanka
2. Preparation of SUA/FBS under Global Strategy, 30 August to 2 Sept, Naypyidaw, Myanmar

2017

3. National Training Workshop on Compilation of Supply Utilization Account (SUA) and Food Balance Sheet (FBS), 12- 16 June, 2017,; Vietnam
4. Pilot Test / National Training Workshop for the New Food Balance Sheet (FBS) methodology and Compilation Tool, Colombo, 31 July to 4th August
5. National Training Workshop on Compilation of Supply Utilization Account (SUA) and Food Balance Sheet (FBS), 10-14 September, 2017, Male'
6. National Training Workshop for the preparation of Supply Utilization Account (SUA)/Food Balance Sheet (FBS) of Cambodia, Phnom Penh, Cambodia, 6-10 November, 2017

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7. National Workshop on SUA/FBS Data Validation 26 – 29, December 2017, Training Hall, CSO Office, Naypyidaw Myanmar

2018

8. National Training Workshop for the preparation of Supply Utilization Account (SUA)/Food Balance Sheet (FBS) of Pakistan, Islamabad, 8-12 January, 2018
9. National Training Workshop for the preparation of Supply Utilization Account (SUA)/Food Balance Sheet (FBS) of LAOS, Vientiane, 12-16 February, 2018 (Confirmed)

National Training workshops related to PoU/FIES

1. Support to Indonesia to estimate PoU trend analysis from SUSNAS data (7-11 August, 2017 in Jakarta)
2. Participation and presentation on “Methods to Compute Food Security Indicators for Sustainable Development Goals 2” in international Conference on SDGs (Manila 3-7 October, 2017)
3. Participation and presentation on “SDG indicators related to food and agriculture (incl. FAO support)” in Regional Workshop for South Asia: Implementation of the 2030 Agenda on Sustainable Development Goals in Food and Agriculture (1-4 December Dhaka).
4. Training of trainers (ToT) for FIES module in VHLSS survey (January 2018)
5. Office based support on PoU estimation to Pacific Island countries, Timor Leste and Pakistan
6. Office based support on FIES for Solomon Islands

Annex 2

List of completed and ongoing projects on Agriculture Statistics and SDG Monitoring

Regional Projects

Completed

1. Regional TCP Project on Building statistical capacity for quality food security and nutrition information in support of better informed policies' for Bangladesh, Lao PDR, Philippines and Nepal, 2014-2016
2. Technical support to Thailand to review the agricultural and food statistics for the monitoring of MDG and WFS hunger targets, 2013-2016.
3. MTF/GLO/359/BMG – Strengthening Agricultural Market Information System (AMIS) globally and in selected countries (Bangladesh and India) using innovative methods and digital technology EOD 24 Aug 2012 NTE June 2016
4. *Advancing SDG2 Monitoring in Asia Pacific Region, 2017*

Ongoing

1. MTF/RAS/372/MUL-Global Strategy to Improve Agricultural and Rural Statistics - Asian Component, 2012-2018
2. Strengthening the capacity for monitoring Food Security and Sustainable Agriculture in the context of Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) 2 and 12 in *Bangladesh, Bhutan, Maldives, Myanmar, Malaysia, Nepal, Pakistan, Philippines, Republic of Korea, Sri Lanka, Thailand, and Vietnam, 2017-2019*
3. Regional Project on Technical Assistance for conducting Ag Census, Laos and Pakistan, 2017-2019
4. Forest Resource Assessment (FRA) in Asia Pacific Region 2016-2020

Country Projects

1. TCP/MYA/3601: Improvement of data collection on fisheries and aquaculture production: pilot system for the Yangon Region, 2017-2018
2. UNJP/MYA/022/OPS: Improving Farmer Livelihoods in the Dry Zone through Improved Livestock Health, Productivity and Marketing, 2016-2018
3. TCP on Agricultural Census of Timor Leste- TCP/TIM/3608 - Preparatory Assistance for the First Timor-Leste Agriculture Census (TLAC), 2017-2018
4. TCPF- Bangladesh on Agricultural Census TCP/BGD/3608: Technical Assistance to Agricultural Census in 2018 to Bangladesh, 2017-2018.
5. TCPF- Bhutan: TCP/BHU/3604/C2: Initial Technical Assistance Support to Planning of Technically sound Renewable Natural Resources (RNR) Census in Bhutan, 2017-2018.
6. TCP/PNG/3604: Strengthening Capacity for Data Processing, Analysis and Management in PNG, 2016- 2018.

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7. GCP /PNG/006/EC: Technical support to the Papua New Guinea Forest Authority to implement a multi-purpose National Forest Inventory.2014-2019
 8. TCP/SAM/3502 - Improving the capacity for evidence-based policy monitoring and development. Completed 30 September 2017.
 9. TCP/VAN/3501 - Improving the capacity for evidence-based policy analysis of agriculture sector development. Completed 30 September 2017.
 10. TCP/FIJ/3503 - Development of Agricultural Information for Policy. Closing date was 31 December 2017, but Phase II is being prepared for better linkage with NSDS, SPARS and e-agriculture strategy planned to be endorsed in 2018.
 11. TCP/MIC/3503 - National Agriculture Census in the Federated States of Micronesia. Completed in 31 December 2017.
 12. TCP/SOI/3602 - Solomon Islands National Agriculture Livelihood Survey (SINALS). Started in October 2016 with closing date September 2018.

The above activities involved substantial backstopping work and visits to the countries.

Annex 3

Report on action taken by FAO on the recommendations of the last session (APCAS 26)

Para No.	Recommendations	Action taken
15	<i>FAO and member countries to improve coordination mechanisms by (a) maintaining up-to-date focal point(s) lists and data reporting calendars, (b) developing and piloting data-sharing methodologies such as online questionnaires and (c) close monitoring of responses [by FAO] to FAO questionnaires. The Commission also recommended FAO to publish methodological guidelines to facilitate completion of the questionnaires by countries. The Commission further recommended that countries collaborate with FAO to request and support targeted capacity development activities on this topic.</i>	Discussion will take place with additional information from FAO Statistics Division. A presentation will be prepared and presented during APCAS 27
31	<i>SAARC should explore methods of collaboration with FAO to improve the profile of agricultural and rural statistics in SAARC and to assist SAARC countries to improve the quality and availability of agricultural and rural statistics.</i>	FAO participated in Coordination Workshop with SAARC, 2016, New Delhi , India. Global Strategy activities which has led to improved coordination among data producers. National Plan of Action for SDG support in Afghanistan and Bangladesh prepared. This matter requires continued effort by SAARC member countries and FAO.
36	<i>FAO should take the lead in setting standards and providing technical support at national and regional levels for the production of the necessary data to meet the SDG monitoring demands, especially on the new indicators identified by the IAEG-SDGs.</i>	Under the leadership of Chief Statistician of FAO the methodologies have been developed for 9 (Tier I) and 6 (Tier II) indicators and research work is still ongoing for remaining 6 (Tier III) indicators among all 21 indicators for which FAO is a custodian.
41	<i>The Commission recommended that country members provide feedback on the outline of Volume 2 of WCA 2020 to FAO</i>	Country Offices have provided the valuable comments on the draft volume 2 of WCA 2020 and now it's at the final stage of <u>publication</u> .

51	<i>FAO to provide support for capacity development for the planning and implementation of the integrated programme of agricultural censuses and surveys.</i>	FAO is working in close collaboration (assisting) with the national authorities of Bangladesh, Bhutan, Laos, Pakistan and Timor-Leste to implement their Agriculture Census/Surveys in AP region
56	<i>countries consider further integration of fishery information needs into national data collection systems, in particular into the census, and enhance collaboration between line ministries and national statistical offices</i>	
64	<i>The Commission recommended that FAO should coordinate with the ILO, United Nations Statistics Division and the World Bank in exploring additions to the FIES module.</i>	
70	<i>Based upon the successful experience of the project on improving food security information, and the request of member countries for continued technical support in this domain, the Commission recommended that FAO should continue this support</i>	Food Security Statistics are the main components of SDG2 and they have been embedded with the ongoing regional project on SDG monitoring in 12 countries.
76	<i>Commission recommended the establishment of the Global Commission on Agricultural Statistics using the two-tiered approach and recommended that the functions and representations of the new regional bodies would either be enhanced or equate to those of the Regional Commissions/APCAS in order to meet country aspirations at the regional level.</i>	
81	<i>The Commission encouraged FAO to develop a strategy for exploring the usefulness of SEEA-Agriculture towards development of SDG indicators within a coherent, transparent and comparable monitoring framework. The Commission recommended FAO to support countries in Asia and the Pacific through establishment of</i>	

	<i>country pilots.</i>	
83	<i>FAO encouraged countries to respond to the FAO GEA questionnaire, and to collaborate with their central banks in reporting Credit to Agriculture. The Commission recommended that FAO provide technical assistance to members in improving the collection and reporting of GEA and Credit to Agriculture data.</i>	
88	<i>The Commission recommended that FAO compile an updated manual on statistics pertaining to prices received by farmers, and document existing challenges and good practices in the field. The Commission encouraged member countries to share with FAO documentation of their programme for compilation of Producer Price Index for Agriculture sector, including questionnaires, meta-data and challenges and solutions in implementation of the programme..</i>	