



Food and Agriculture Organization
of the United Nations



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SUPPORT TO STATISTICS AND INFORMATION MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS OF THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (MoA) IN LIBERIA

June 2020

SDGs:



Countries:

Liberia

Project Codes:

TCP/LIB/3602

FAO Contribution

USD 458 000

Duration:

26 October 2016 – 31 October 2019

Contact Info:

FAO Representation in Liberia

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Implementing Partners

Ministry of Agriculture (MoA).

Beneficiaries

The direct beneficiary is the Statistics Unit of MoA. Indirect beneficiaries include government ministries, county administration, rural farmers, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and United Nations agencies.

Country Programming Framework (CPF) Outputs

CPF Output3.1: Improved national inter-sectorial co-ordination and dialogue through capacity building of key stakeholders for sustainable management and use of natural resources.



BACKGROUND

In Liberia, access to accurate and reliable data for planning and programming processes remains a challenge. The key focal institution for statistics and geo-information services is the Liberia Institute of Statistics and Geo-Information Services (LISGIS). This works closely with the Statistics Unit of MoA in the conduct of surveys and assessments, with the latter also providing reliable and timely statistics for evidence-based planning, policy formulation and decision making. However, despite being functional, both LISGIS and the Statistics Unit are constrained by limited technical and logistic capacity, especially in terms of resources. They also lack the institutional framework and support needed for effective agricultural statistics and other related information management systems.

The aim of the project was to support statistics and information management systems by strengthening the institutional capacity of MoA to provide, manage and sustain a reliable database on agricultural performance. The strengthening of the Statistics Unit in the Department of Planning and Development of MoA would ensure reliable and timely statistics for evidence-based planning, policy formulation and decision making, as well as allowing timely access and availability of reliable data, baselines and statistics to guide and support the planning and programming processes of partners, including the Government.

IMPACT

Agriculture and food security policies and programmes require reliable and timely agricultural and food security data produced by national agencies and stored in a database that is accessible to all stakeholders. The Statistics Unit of MoA has been re-established and, with appropriately trained staff, will be in a position to provide such data.

ACHIEVEMENT OF RESULTS

The project had three expected outcomes. It would enhance the institutional capacity of MoA to collect, analyse and report all agricultural statistics, assessments, surveys and data. In addition, it would strengthen MoA capacity to monitor trends in food security status and its determinants. Finally, it would increase the availability and accessibility of crop production statistics, crop forecasting and market price statistics. It would do this by building MoA capacity, by re-establishing the Statistics Unit of MoA to ensure the collection, storage and dissemination of reliable and timely statistics for evidence-based planning and decision making, and by collecting and managing agriculture data and making them available to all stakeholders, including researchers.

These outcomes were partially achieved. An elaborated survey methodology using Computer Assisted Personal Interview (CAPI) for data collection was introduced, an experienced international database consultant and statistician were hired to enhance the capacity of MoA statisticians, and equipment was provided with a refurbished unit and a server. The operational capacity of the MoA Statistics Unit was restored, although the provision of personnel with the capacity required to cope with statistical work proved challenging, and capacity to independently conduct surveys was limited. At the end of the project, the FAO CountryStat platform was not in place. A pilot crop survey was conducted but, as a result of inconsistencies in data collection, had to be repeated, with consultants being rehired to conduct refresher training. At the time this report was written, the survey report had not been concluded.





IMPLEMENTATION OF WORK PLAN

As a result of problems encountered during implementation, the project was extended from its initial duration of two years, with no increase in budget. Risks envisaged by the Project Document included the inadequate technical human resources and administrative capacities of MoA and LISGIS, limited funding and an unpredictable political situation, especially with regard to changes of government ministers. All three risks materialized during implementation. MoA failed to provide the Statistics Unit with relevant staff with adequate statistical capacity. Despite attempts to mitigate this through the provision by the Government of relevant personnel, the funding required to source additional staff was unavailable. Finally, the protracted time taken to appoint a new head of MoA following the transition of the new Government in 2017/2018 was mitigated by the strong collaborative efforts of those being replaced.

FOLLOW-UP FOR GOVERNMENT ATTENTION

It is recommended that the Government make every effort to ensure that the FAO CountryStat platform is put in place.



SUSTAINABILITY

1. Capacity development

At the end of the project, no legal framework was in place for agriculture data availability and there was no clear long-term support from MoA to the restored Statistics Unit, although it was hoped that this would be provided. There was significant cooperation from the National Statistical Office.

2. Gender equality

The project was designed to respond to the needs of both men and women. A female member of the statistics staff attended a regional training census workshop in Kenya.

3. Environmental sustainability

The project conducted no activities that would endanger the environment.

4. Human Rights-based Approach (HRBA) – in particular Right to Food and Decent Work

Human rights issues were not taken into specific consideration during the design of the project.

5. Technological sustainability

CAP, adopted as the main data collection tool for MoA, is an appropriate and flexible technology.

6. Economic sustainability

Economic issues were not taken into specific consideration during the design of the project.



DOCUMENTS AND OUTREACH PRODUCTS

- ❑ CAPI manual. Lamin Janneh.
- ❑ End-of-mission and associated reports. Lamin Janneh.
- ❑ End of mission report. Ageyman-Duah Kofi.
- ❑ Pilot survey documents. Lamin Janneh. October 2019.

ACHIEVEMENT OF RESULTS - LOGICAL FRAMEWORK

Expected Impact	Agriculture and food security policies and programmes are based on reliable and timely agricultural and food security data produced by national agencies and stored in a database accessible to all stakeholders		
Outcome	1. National Agricultural statistics system led by MoA is restored with strengthened technical, operational and institutional capacity of the Statistics Unit for all agricultural statistics and vulnerability assessments surveys, data collection, processing, analysis and reporting 2. Survey methodology using CAPI for crop production and forecasting estimate and vulnerability assessment is prepared, pilot-tested and adopted by Government for annual implementation 3. Agriculture and food security web-based database is set up to assemble, verify, integrate, validate and disseminate all available data in the sector and allow smooth access and utilization by all stakeholders using FAO CountryStat Platform		
	Indicator	Agriculture and food security database with quality crop production and forecast, price statistics and vulnerability assessment periodically updated and accessible by Internet.	
	Baseline	No operational system and appropriate skills in place for regular crop and food security data collection and dissemination and no database for easy access to data by policy makers.	
	End Target	Crop data (production, forecast) and food security assessment survey system in place with elaborated tools and well-trained personnel, producing timely annual figures accessible by policy makers through web-based database.	
	Comments and follow-up action to be taken	These targets were partially achieved; an elaborated survey methodology using CAPI for data collection was introduced, an experienced international database consultant and statistician were hired to enhance the capacity of MoA statisticians, and equipment was provided with a refurbished unit and a server. Alongside this provision, however, there were several shortcomings, including the lack of competent personnel to absorb the training.	
Output 1	Statistics Unit of MOA restored with technical and operational capacity to design crop production and forecast surveys, monitor data collection in the field, process and analyse data, and disseminate results		
	Indicators	Target	Achieved
	Crop production and forecast surveys conducted and results disseminated.	Strengthened operational capacity of MoA Statistics Unit in place to conduct and disseminate results.	Partially
Baseline	No functional Statistics Unit at MOA.		
Comments	The unit was restored logistically but not technically. Equipment and tools to put an elaborated system in place were provided but the technical aspect was impossible because of the failure of MoA to provide relevant personnel with the required capacity. A pilot survey was conducted twice; the first survey was not validated by a committee because it was characterized by flaws despite the training conducted. The survey was repeated but was still being prepared at the time of this report. The Government has promised to provide the relevant personnel.		
Activity 1.1	Inception meeting		
	Achieved	Yes	
	Comments	An inception meeting was conducted with the participation of all stakeholders.	
Activity 1.2	Strengthening Statistics Unit operational capacity		
	Achieved	Yes	
	Comments	The operational capacity of the MOA Statistics Unit was restored through the renovation of the Unit and the provision of survey and office equipment (nine laptop computers, one server, office furniture, 30 tablets for data collection, 30 power banks, five motorcycles, one large colour printer, one small colour printer, 5 desktop computers, etc.).	
Activity 1.3	Technical capacity strengthening of Statistics Unit personnel		
	Achieved	Partially	
	Comments	Consultants were hired locally and internationally to strengthen the capacity of MoA Statistics Unit personnel. The training conducted included; – training of trainers in survey methodology and tools implementation. – training of enumerators and supervisors in field data collection using CAPI and tablets. – training in CsPro and SPSS, using mobile data collection equipment (tablets). Three personnel conducted a knowledge exchange visit to the Ghana Statistics Department and other statistical centres for experience-sharing purposes.	

Output 2	Crop production and forecast, vulnerability assessment methodology including sample design, questionnaires and training manuals, field supervision system, data processing programmes using CAPI, tabulation plan and data dissemination reports outlines prepared, pilot-tested and validated		
	Indicators	Target	Achieved
	Number of crop production pilot surveys conducted using CAPI.	One pilot crop survey using CAPI.	Partially
Baseline	0		
Comments	The pilot survey was conducted twice; the first was not validated because of flaws despite the training given. The pilot survey was conducted again but the report was being prepared at the time of this report.		
Activity 2.1	Data collection methodology and tools preparation		
	Achieved	Yes	
	Comments	The actions required to conduct this activity were taken. An international consultant-statistician was hired to train MOA statistics personnel in design methodology, sample, questionnaires, training manual, tabulation plan for survey on crop production and forecasting estimate. The international consultant in data processing conducted additional missions to retrain personnel in design data entry, data editing and cleaning and tabulation programmes with tablets, prepare training material and provide appropriate training to survey personnel. Two backstopping missions were conducted by the Lead Technical Officer to address some of the shortcomings with the Government and to accelerate implementation.	
Output 3	Web-based agriculture and food security database using CountryStat platform set up, tested and launched for the use of stakeholders and policy makers		
	Indicators	Target	Achieved
	FAO CountryStat Platform in place.	Country Platform set up and tested.	No
Baseline	CountryStat not in place.		
Comments	The CountryStat Platform is not in place owing to the failure of the statistics personnel to designate an information technology (IT) focal point and to apply the lessons learned from the training provided.		
Activity 3.1	Web-based agriculture and food security database using CountryStat		
	Achieved	No	
	Comments	The CountryStat Platform is not in place because of the lack of follow up by the IT staff and the non-availability of data to populate the database.	

Partnerships and Outreach

For more information, please contact: Reporting@fao.org

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