



Food and Agriculture Organization
of the United Nations

DATA DRIVING DEVELOPMENT

Achievements and successes from
FAO's Agricultural Integrated Survey
(AGRISurvey) programme



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AGRISURVEY'S ORIGINS AND OBJECTIVES



In **2017**, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), with support from the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, launched a **programme to design and implement a new and cost-effective approach for agricultural data collection in developing countries.**

The AGRISurvey programme is based on and uses the Agricultural Integrated Survey (AGRIS) methodology, as developed by the Global Strategy to Improve Agricultural and Rural Statistics, an important initiative aimed at addressing the decline in agricultural statistical systems in many developing countries.

As an overall objective, AGRISurvey was developed to provide support

to countries in designing and implementing a customized survey tool, to ultimately accelerate the production and use of high-quality disaggregated data on the technical, economic, environmental and social dimensions of agricultural holdings. More specifically, the programme was developed to fill critical data gaps in farm surveys, in order to enable countries to satisfy global and regional reporting requirements.

A total of nine countries participated in AGRISurvey implementation from 2017 to 2021: Armenia, Cambodia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Georgia, Nepal, Senegal, Uganda and Uruguay.

From the very beginning, the programme emphasized a country-owned approach, ensuring a collaborative process between FAO and relevant stakeholders, with implementation managed and spearheaded in each case by national statistical agencies. Partner countries were therefore in the driver's seat with regard to AGRISurvey implementation – contributing a significant share of the resources required to implement the surveys, and taking full financial and technical responsibility for their survey programmes in the long term.

In order to achieve this level of country ownership, AGRISurvey activities focused on a step-by-step process for developing and strengthening the capacity of national stakeholders over time, through targeted training, workshops and technical support across three critical areas as described in the following sections: data production, data dissemination and data use.

The Global Strategy to Improve Agricultural and Rural Statistics

The Global Strategy to Improve Agricultural and Rural Statistics is a long-term, coordinated initiative to address the decline in agricultural statistical systems in developing countries, and to enable the production of more and better agricultural statistics. Work on the initiative began in 2012, as part of a 15-year process to be implemented in several phases. During the first phase of its implementation (2012–2018), the Global Strategy centred on three areas of output, as produced through three technical components – methodological research, technical assistance and training – and as implemented in two regions (Africa, and Asia and the Pacific). The second phase continues the work begun in the first, with a view to strengthening the statistical capacities of countries through training and technical assistance.

AGRISURVEY IN NUMBERS

9

countries

5

years

USD 16.8 million

23

**agricultural surveys conducted
(annual cycles and/or pilots)**

67

**training sessions in
statistics conducted**

37

publications

**Data
computed for
3 Sustainable
Development
Goal (SDG)
indicators:**

5

**data points
for SDG 2.3.1**

4

**data points
for SDG 2.3.2**

2

**data points
for SDG 5.a.1**

3

**tests undertaken
for SDG 2.4.1**

174

**national staff trained on data use for
informed policymaking and monitoring**

6

**AGRISurvey microdata sets
disseminated**

Data production

AGRISurvey supported nine partner countries in successfully incorporating integrated agricultural survey systems into their national statistical planning, building on already existing survey instruments to meet more agricultural data needs at national, regional and global levels.

This support included various types and levels of assistance in developing national government capacity to plan and implement survey activities and ensure effective monitoring. The programme provided

technical assistance in establishing a survey programme timeline, as well as in defining and developing tools for data collection, sampling design and sampling frames, data processing, cleaning and imputation. Assistance was also provided in the development and revision of relevant questionnaires, manuals, reports, pilots and sampling designs, as well as in enumerator and supervision training for field staff. In addition, the programme provided training on the use of advanced technologies for data collection and management, and support for transitioning from paper questionnaires to computer-assisted personal interviewing (CAPI) systems.



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Data dissemination

Production alone does not ensure that agricultural data are actually available and accessible to users for evidence-based decision-making and policy development. As highlighted by the first of the United Nations (UN) [Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics](#), dissemination is a key responsibility of national statistical agencies. The data produced through national statistical systems must be made available and accessible as a public good to inform and support evidence-based research, decision-making, policy and policy analysis, as well as monitoring across all relevant contexts including government, civil society, business and academia.

A major area of focus for AGRISurvey therefore related to increasing accessibility to agricultural statistics, including survey microdata, and supporting national statistical agencies in ensuring the data they generate are disseminated in a systematic manner, in line with open data best practices and international standards. In particular,

the programme's data dissemination component worked with partner countries at opening and improving access to agricultural survey data and statistics by:

- promoting data dissemination policies and programmes as part of institutional processes;
- improving dissemination practices for greater findability and usability of data; and
- increasing accessibility to agricultural statistics through systematic dissemination, including of survey microdata files.

As a result, a wide range of statistical products as generated from agricultural surveys (including reports, statistical briefs, statistical tables and microdata sets) were released online using national and international platforms, thereby increasing the findability, accessibility, and usability of the data, as well as their overall availability to the wider public.

Data use

The third critical component of AGRISurvey support to countries centred on facilitating the effective use of agricultural survey data to inform sectoral policymaking and monitoring processes. This involved a focus on promoting greater alignment between user needs and the data on offer, building awareness on the availability of national agricultural survey data and

strengthening statistical literacy, as well as promoting policy dialogue, networking and coordination among national and international stakeholders.

In all partner countries, AGRISurvey proposed statistical literacy training for data users from different backgrounds (including policy analysts, academics and data journalists). These sessions proved essential for increasing awareness on the potential uses of the data generated through the programme,

Sharing information and staying updated: the AGRISurvey website

As work on AGRISurvey progressed, the need arose for sharing information on the status and impact of activities in and across partner countries. The AGRISurvey website was launched in 2019, with a specific section on country-level work that continues to provide users with a range of key information and resources, along with the latest news and updates on programme implementation. The website also features a series of specially developed country briefs that showcase the programme's impact at the national level.

AGRISurvey website

www.fao.org/in-action/agrisurvey/en

AGRISurvey country briefs

www.fao.org/in-action/agrisurvey/resources/country-outputs/en

and for strengthening capacities in data application for analysis. More generally, it helped to foster a progressive shift towards a culture of increased data use and evidence-based decision-making.

Other activities included stakeholder workshops and presentations on key

results from national agricultural survey programmes, policy dialogue workshops, and support with the drafting and development of policy notes and papers. These activities underscored the importance of coordination across various levels and contexts, to ensure a multidimensional approach to

policy programme development and implementation. This included a focus on connecting national agencies to promote policy dialogue among local stakeholders, as well as on networking and coordination between data producers and users.



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WHAT'S IN THE BOX: AGRIS methodology

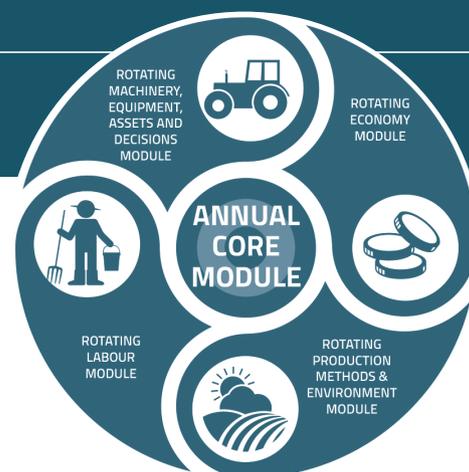
AGRISurvey is a farm-based, modular system of integrated agricultural surveys that operates over a ten-year cycle. The modules include a **core module**, along with **four rotating modules**.

The **core module** is an enhanced production survey that is designed to be implemented every year, and remains largely unchanged through each survey round. It collects essential structural data on agricultural holdings and households, and mainly addresses crop and livestock production inputs (including labour inputs), farm productivity, shocks and coping mechanisms, and access to information. It also collects data on other activities for each holding (e.g. the processing of agricultural products, handicrafts, and so on), production methods, and the share of agriculture in the overall income of the holding. The **core module** allows for the monitoring of a set of

key indicators on an annual basis, enabling the identification of trends and changes in a timely manner, as well as forecasting on future scenarios and farmer expectations.

The **four rotating modules** address specific themes, and are designed to be implemented with varying frequency, depending on the agricultural systems, data demand priorities and needs of each country:

- > The **rotating economy module** gathers information on the income of farm holdings, including details on revenues and expenses. It provides the necessary data to measure farm income, production costs and profitability for different production systems and farm types.
- > The **rotating production methods and environment module** gathers data that can be used to measure the sustainability of farms, environmental impacts

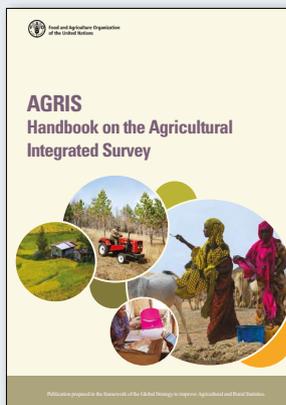


and greenhouse gas emissions. In particular, data can be used to analyse the cost of production for different types of agricultural production methods.

- > The **rotating labour module** collects information on the labour force working in holdings, by category. It measures labour inputs in agriculture and contributes to understanding rural transformations (such as the organization of labour on farms, the identification of age- and sex-specific roles, and the participation of different household members in the work).

- > The **rotating machinery, equipment, assets and decisions module** captures information on the different structural characteristics of holdings, builds knowledge on the responsibilities and roles within them (for example, in terms of equipment quantity and value, as well as ownership and decision-making), and includes a specific focus on gender.

Developed and published by the programme in 2018, **the AGRIS Handbook on the Agricultural Integrated Survey** provides further details on AGRIS methodology, including rationale, generic questionnaires and methodological notes.



Tracking progress: ensuring data for indicators – and more

AGRISurvey methodology and technical assistance contribute directly to critical processes for evidence-based decision-making at the national and regional level, by ensuring a regular flow of statistical data and relevant indicators in response to country needs and priorities. This includes monitoring for the following Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) indicators, as part of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development:

- > **2.3.1** Volume of production per labour unit by classes of farming/pastoral/forestry enterprise size (i.e. labour productivity of smallholders);
- > **2.3.2** Average income of small-scale food producers, by sex and indigenous status (i.e. income of smallholders);
- > **2.4.1** Proportion of agricultural area under productive and sustainable agriculture (i.e. land area under productive and sustainable agriculture); and
- > **5.a.1** (a) Proportion of total agricultural population with ownership or secure rights over agricultural land, by sex; and (b) share of women among owners or rights-bearers of agricultural land, by type of tenure (i.e. agricultural land ownership and tenure rights of women and men).

Data provided through AGRISurvey also enable countries to monitor progress across other important national and regional policy agendas and frameworks, such as the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP), and others.

AGRISURVEY ON THE GROUND: Country achievements and successes

Armenia

During the three-year implementation phase (2018–2021), AGRISurvey worked with the Statistical Committee of the Republic of Armenia (Armstat) to integrate the AGRIS approach into the Armenian agricultural survey system, in partnership with the International Center for Agribusiness Research and Education (ICARE).

The programme provided support in the preparation and implementation of pilot surveys in four *marz* (provinces) of the country.

It also supported Armstat in determining the additional data needs of a large variety of users and in developing a sampling frame, along with comprehensive questionnaires



Julianna Drinan (Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation), Neli Georgieva (FAO), Michael Steiner (International Fund for Agricultural Development), Lusine Tadevosyan (ICARE) laid the groundwork for AGRISurvey implementation in Armenia.

for surveys on agricultural production. The questionnaires covered topics such as the quantity and value of agricultural production, the quantity and cost of inputs used, and the amount and cost of labour, as well as calculations for indicators such as income and expenditure.

Intensive training and other capacity development activities included the training of trainers and of enumerators, as well as training on data editing and imputation, improved dissemination processes, tabulation and survey cataloguing.

In particular, the introduction of CAPI data collection and the training of enumerators and supervisors on the use of tablets had a significant impact on the work of field officers, as it reduced the time required to fill in comprehensive questionnaires. The use of tablets also had a positive impact on the perceptions and behaviour of survey respondents, who seemed more inclined to provide accurate information in these cases.

AGRISurvey also assisted in the setup and launch of the **Armstat Microdata Library**, a fully

documented catalogue that enables users to browse, search, compare, and apply for access to the country's survey and census microdata.

Overall, the implementation of AGRISurvey in Armenia resulted in increased capacity among national statisticians in collecting, analysing and disseminating farm-based agricultural statistics data. Moreover, the programme helped to build trust in Armstat's work and the importance of producing reliable and timely agricultural data.

“Exactly what we needed”

“The AGRISurvey programme turned out to be exactly what we needed to improve the coverage and the quality of the data collection process and practices. The first feedback on the AGRIS questionnaires from different data user groups indicates that the new data collected and the coherence of the questionnaires, definitions and concepts obviously ensure richer and more reliable data. The data also include the main elements needed for computation of farm-based economic indicators and for SDG indicators 2.3.1 and 2.3.2. These data are well appreciated and will serve for many government agricultural development programmes, including those supporting smallholder producers.”

Arsen Avagyan

Head of the Agriculture and Food Security Statistics Division
Statistical Committee of the Republic of Armenia



Cambodia

Cambodia was the first country in Asia and the Pacific to implement AGRISurvey. Work began with the Cambodia Inter-Censal Agriculture Survey for 2019 (CIAS 2019), with the aim of continuing on an annual basis thereafter, to secure a regular flow of agricultural statistics and ensure a solid basis for improving policy and decision-making in the sector.

The 2019 edition of the CIAS was implemented under the leadership of the National Institute of Statistics (NIS) of the Ministry of Planning, in partnership with the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, and Fisheries (MAFF) and with FAO's support; it was followed by two other rounds of data collection: the Cambodia Agricultural Survey (CAS) 2020 and CAS 2021.

AGRISurvey provided training for enumerators, training of trainers, and training on data editing and imputation, with a view to strengthening the statistical capacity of government officials. Support was also provided to improve the dissemination of statistical data

generated from the national survey, including microdata. As a result, **all data from CIAS 2019 were successfully disseminated**, providing Cambodian policymakers, national and international stakeholders with easy access to critical information for agricultural sector policy design, analysis and monitoring.

Beyond these improvements in data accessibility, CIAS 2019 set new standards at the NIS with its impressive and varied array of statistical products (including a full-length report, a brief, thematic maps, and both micro- and aggregated datasets), all of which were made available to users online.

Indeed, the scope and significance of this achievement go beyond improvements in the accessibility of agricultural statistics alone; they pave the way for better dissemination practices across all thematic divisions of the NIS.



Data collection for CIAS 2019.

“Timely and reliable data – for zero hunger”

“Timely and reliable data on agriculture, forestry, and fisheries for agricultural policy, monitoring and evaluation will contribute to achieving the second goal of the SDGs – zero hunger.”

His Excellency Rin Virak
Secretary of State
Ministry of Planning of Cambodia

Cambodia Inter-Censal Agriculture Survey 2019: Report Release Workshop

As the first large-scale survey of the country's agricultural sector since 2013, the successful completion of CIAS 2019 represented a major achievement for the Cambodian Government, in particular given the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic. To mark the release of the CIAS 2019 Final Report, the NIS held a special Report Release Workshop in February of 2021.

The workshop, which was organized in partnership with MAFF and with FAO support, brought together over 150 participants, including both national and provincial government officials, international organizations, staff from non-governmental organizations (NGOs), local researchers and press.

The workshop itself highlighted CIAS 2019 as an outstanding example of effective cooperation between government partners, development partners and donors, and emphasized its innovative approach. Indeed, as the first national survey to use CAPI, CIAS 2019 demonstrated the many advantages of tablet-based data collection, including for data quality, timely data access and overall cost efficiency.

Joint press release on CIAS 2019 Report Release Workshop:

www.fao.org/cambodia/news/add-news/detail-events/en/c/1372906



Stakeholders attend the Report Release Workshop, 9 February 2021.

Thanks to the implementation of AGRISurvey, Cambodia was able to scale up the production, dissemination and use of agricultural statistics as a solid foundation for improved policy and decision-making in the agricultural sector. The programme helped to strengthen the national capacity, ownership and autonomy of the national agricultural statistical system, which in turn contributed to the establishment of an efficient data collection system.

AGRISurvey continues to provide support to Cambodia as part of the **50x2030 Initiative**, a multi-partner effort that seeks to bridge the global agricultural data gap by transforming country data systems in 50 countries by 2030. Ongoing and foreseen support will focus on consolidating activities already begun under AGRISurvey.

Costa Rica

AGRISurvey began providing technical assistance to Costa Rica's National Institute for Statistics and Census (Instituto Nacional de Estadísticas y Censos or INEC) in April of 2019. This support focused mainly on improving and expanding the National Agricultural Survey (Encuesta Nacional Agropecuaria or ENA), conducted annually by INEC, to increase the relevance of its findings for the national agricultural sector.

The work also involved the active participation of the country's Central Bank (Banco Central de Costa Rica, BCCR) and the planning secretariat of the Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock (Secretaría Ejecutiva de Planificación Sectorial Agropecuaria, SEPSA) – both of which were instrumental to its success.

As part of a pilot process, the inclusion of two of AGRISurvey's **rotating modules** was tested in the existing ENA – the **economy module** and the **machinery, equipment, assets and decisions module** – thereby expanding its scope to include information on the value of agricultural production; the quantity

and cost of inputs used; the amount, type and cost of labour; and the machinery and equipment employed on farms. The methodological work involved the design of the new survey modules, the development of indicators and calculation procedures, and the inclusion of questions on livestock production.

Building on this experience and on the tools developed, INEC has begun to incorporate the new modules into the normal workflow of the ENA, and expects the new, integrated survey system to be operational in 2023.

FAO also organized a series of workshops to build country capacity on data dissemination. This included extensive training on data anonymization, as well as support in upgrading the **INEC Microdata Catalogue** and improving the website layout for a better user experience.

Training also focused on data use, with a workshop on applying agricultural data to inform sectoral policy. In addition to strengthening statistical literacy across the broader user community (including data and policy

analysts, researchers and journalists) and reinforcing collaboration and partnership among the various stakeholders, this workshop improved stakeholder knowledge on the main features of the ENA, and therefore on its potential to inform national policy frameworks.

Additional resources

Country brief: **AGRISurvey Programme in Costa Rica: Process, findings and perspectives of implementation**



Ecuador

AGRISurvey implementation began in Ecuador in 2018, in partnership with the country's National Institute of Statistics and Censuses (Instituto Nacional de Estadística y Censos or INEC). While the overall objective was to expand the scope of ongoing surveys, INEC requested technical assistance in specific areas in order to improve the country's Annual Agricultural Area and Production Survey (Encuesta de Superficie y Producción Agropecuaria Continua or ESPAC), and accelerate the release and use of data.

To this end, FAO provided support for the inclusion of **rotating modules** – in particular the **economy module** and the **labour module** – as part of ESPAC. Support was also provided on sampling and estimation procedures, including the calculation of number of farms using an area frame approach.

The programme promoted the use of new technologies in data collection, including CAPI and computer-assisted web interviewing (CAWI), along with the integration of satellite images in ESPAC questionnaires

to improve field logistics and area measurement.

Capacity building on data use included two training courses on the application of survey data to analyse agricultural and rural development policies. Both courses were designed to strengthen country capacities to formulate more efficient and solid policies, programmes and investment plans.

Additional support was also provided for producing indicators, based on survey data from ESPAC, to analyse irrigation and agricultural insurance in Ecuador. These analyses were then included as inputs towards formulation of the Plan Nacional Agropecuario de Ecuador 2020–2030 (PNA 2020–2030).



Georgia

FAO began providing support to the National Statistics Office of Georgia (Geostat) in 2018, to improve the scope of the country's ongoing annual Survey of Agricultural Holdings (SAH) through the application of AGRIS methodology and the introduction of two **rotating modules**. The plan also included activities to support the country in the calculation of priority SDG indicators, in particular SDG indicator 2.3.1 (labour productivity of smallholders) and SDG indicator 2.3.2 (income of smallholders).

Relevant variables from AGRISurvey's rotating **economy module** – such as quantity and value of inputs used, labour on holdings, and agricultural income and expenditure – were added to the SAH, thus providing data for the computation of major economic aggregates such as productivity and profitability.

A new **rotating production methods and environment module** was introduced in 2021, enabling the collection of data required for the computation of SDG indicator 2.4.1 (land area under productive

and sustainable agriculture). The methodological work included module design and agroenvironmental indicator development.

From a data collection perspective, capacity development activities and training focused on optimization of sample design, revision of questionnaires to improve efficiency and accommodate more modules, improvements to the tabulation programme and training on small area estimation. The implementation also enabled Geostat to use CAPI and CAWI questionnaires to collect more data on crop area and production and on livestock and animal products, as well as more economic data, and assisted in the preparation and calculation of selected SDG indicators, in line with Georgia's National Document for the Sustainable Development Goals (published in 2019).

The programme also provided support on the dissemination of survey results; this included training on data cleaning, processing and tabulation, as well as on survey cataloguing and in particular on microdata anonymization. As a result, the Geostat website now

releases more statistical data on a regular basis, according to an official dissemination calendar.

With regard to data use and application, training on survey data management and agricultural policies was delivered to build country capacity to compute and use economic indicators from the agricultural surveys for more robust policy analysis and evidence-based decision-making.

Starting in 2022, Georgia has begun implementing activities related to the 50x2030 Initiative, as part of the country's continued efforts to improve its system of modular agricultural surveys and thereby ensure the availability of timely and high-quality information for the agricultural sector, along with better use of such information to inform and orient national and regional policies.



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Nepal

AGRISurvey implementation began in Nepal in August 2018, to broaden the scope of existing official statistics on the country's agricultural sector and expand coverage to non-household holdings. The programme worked with Nepal's Central Bureau of Statistics (CBS) and Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock Development (MoALD), to design and implement a large and representative pilot survey for the country's Chitwan district, based on AGRISurvey methodology. Technical assistance for this Pilot Agriculture Integrated Survey – inclusive of household and non-household sector holdings – involved the development of the sampling methodology and sampling frame, along with the design of survey instruments. The **core module** and the **rotating production methods and environment module** enabled the generation of key agricultural indicators – such as production quantities – as well as data required for the calculation of SDG indicator 2.4.1 (land area under productive and sustainable agriculture). Conducted in 2019, the survey also collected data on disasters, damages and losses in agriculture,

with a view to informing strategies for national disaster and risk reduction, and climate-change adaptation.

In building on the success and lessons learned from the Pilot Agriculture Integrated Survey, Nepal's next goal was to implement the country's annual livestock survey according to the AGRIS model. In 2021, MoALD and CBS jointly conducted the first nationwide survey of commercial livestock-oriented farms, using both the annual **core module** and the **rotating production methods and environment module**. This new survey provides rich data on commercial livestock farm characteristics, livestock population and production, livestock production methods, and more. The survey report is scheduled for release in the first half of 2022.

Through the AGRISurvey programme, country capacity in designing agricultural surveys was also enhanced, with several training sessions on topics such as sampling methodologies, weight adjustment and calibration, CAPI programming, data editing and data processing.

FAO, CBS and MoALD also collaborated on microdata dissemination, including through technical assistance and training on data anonymization, microdata catalogue administration and maintenance. As a result, another significant milestone for the country involved the release of the microdata sets from the Pilot Agriculture Integrated Survey of 2019, as part of the **CBS Microdata Catalogue**.

Moving forward, Nepal will continue activities with AGRISurvey support in the context of the 50x2030 Initiative, ensuring the solidification of acquired expertise and know-how, and further improvements in data production and data dissemination systems.

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Senegal

Technical and financial assistance to Senegal as part of AGRISurvey began in 2017, with the aim of using AGRIS methodology to expand the country's Annual Agricultural Survey (Enquete Annuelle Agricole or EAA). The primary national partner for implementation was the Senegalese Directorate of Analysis, Forecasting and Agricultural Statistics (Direction de l'Analyse, de la Prévision et des Statistiques or DAPSA) which is the department, within the Ministry of Agriculture, in charge of EAA design and implementation. The partnership was extended to the National Agency for Statistics and Demography (Agence Nationale de la Statistique et de la Démographie or ANSD), as well as other line ministries (i.e. of livestock, fisheries and environment) and government bodies involved with agricultural and rural issues.

FAO initially supported DAPSA in building the capacity of its technical staff in the AGRISurvey approach, and in refining the methodology and technical documentation for the existing version of the EAA. The introduction of the AGRISurvey



Data collection activities in Senegal.

approach led to a reorganization of the structure of the survey questionnaire, paving the way for a more efficient implementation of the new system.

The programme supported DAPSA in the implementation of four cycles of the EAA, with the gradual introduction of two **rotating modules** – the **economy module** and the **production methods and environment module**.

From the 2019/20 survey cycle onwards, the EAA survey sample was revised to better take into account non-rainfed agricultural activities; this resulted in the generation of a large

amount of general and diversified data on agriculture, including livestock, horticulture, forestry production, and fisheries and aquaculture.

The gradual introduction of the two **rotating modules** on **economy** and on **production methods and environment** made it possible to compute and disseminate more data on farm economy and technology. It also facilitated the generation of SDG indicators 2.3.1 and 2.3.2 (labour productivity and income of smallholders), as well as indicators on environment-related aspects of agricultural activities.



The AGRISurvey team directed significant effort at promoting increased data uptake to inform the policy debate in Senegal. A tailored approach was used to address the data-use challenge across different groups of data users, with targeted initiatives bringing producers and users together on a regular basis to sound out the relevance of AGRIS data for key stakeholders – including policymakers and analysts from the public sector, universities, NGOs and international institutions. Training sessions on using statistical software and on applying agricultural data for policy analysis were also provided, and a set of special thematic policy notes were developed and presented for discussion during a national workshop. The notes, which are available on the [DAPSA website](#), feature policy

The programme also provided capacity building for DAPSA on the use of the Survey Solutions CAPI platform. This improved the data collection process significantly, while enabling DAPSA to take on ownership of this cost-effective data collection tool as quickly as possible.

Special attention was also given to building DAPSA's capacity in data processing and dissemination.

As a result, a range of statistical outputs – such as annual survey reports, thematic statistical tables and EAA microdata – were released to the public across various national data portals, thereby providing policymakers in the country and other national and international stakeholders with easy access to critical information for agricultural policy design and monitoring.

Additional resources

Policy notes (available in French):

- Access to finance by agricultural households (**« L'accès au financement par les ménages agricoles. Mise en application avec les données de l'EAA au Sénégal »**)
- Access to agricultural land among youth and women in Senegal (**« L'accès au foncier agricole par les jeunes et les femmes au Sénégal. Mise en application avec les données de l'EAA au Sénégal »**)
- Family-type farms in Senegal (**« Les exploitations agricoles de type familial au Sénégal »**)



recommendations on strategic topics such as access to financial services by agricultural holdings, access to land by women and youth, the use of inputs, and strategies for building resilience to shocks and stressors.

Another country-led initiative involved the launch of the AGRIData Prize (**Prix AGRIDATA**) in 2021 – a data-use competition sponsored by FAO through AGRISurvey – targeting different levels of users (including young researchers, analysts and data journalists), to encourage, promote and increase the availability, application and use of data.

As of 2022, Senegal is continuing activities under the 50x2030 Initiative. Country participation in 50x2030 represents an important opportunity to consolidate the progress and success achieved under AGRISurvey, as well as to continue to enhance and expand the agricultural survey programme. Support through the 50x2030 Initiative will help to further reinforce the technical capacities of staff and consolidate survey tools, both of which are essential prerequisites for ensuring the technical sustainability of the EAA in the long term.

Uganda

AGRISurvey began providing financial and technical assistance to the Uganda Bureau of Statistics (UBOS) in 2018, to strengthen and expand the national Annual Agricultural Survey (AAS), and to promote access to and use of agricultural statistics. Over the years, this has included training on questionnaire development, CAPI programming, data processing (including the calculation of SDG indicators), data documentation, data anonymization and dissemination, and data use.

With AGRISurvey support, UBOS, in coordination with the Ministry of Agriculture, Animal Industry and Fisheries (MAAIF), implemented three agricultural surveys to meet the growing demand for agricultural statistics in the country. In addition to core production data, these surveys collected data on input use and acquisitions, labour input, individual land tenure rights, shocks and food security, and extension services. As such, the data have been used to generate SDG indicators 2.3.1



(labour productivity of smallholders), 2.3.2 (income of smallholders) and 5.a.1 (agricultural land ownership and tenure rights of women and men).

The programme also supported the integration of the AAS and the Uganda National Panel Survey (UNPS) into the Uganda Harmonized and Integrated Survey (UHS). Launched in October 2021 and currently underway, the UHS integrates the agricultural survey and the living conditions survey into one survey programme, measuring both poverty and agricultural and rural development.

The country also made significant achievements with regard to data dissemination. The dissemination programme for AAS 2018 allowed users to access high-quality data from the survey and maximized its public use value, while the publication of statistical outputs helped to fill a crucial data gap by providing Ugandan policymakers and national and international stakeholders with easy access to critical information for agricultural policy analysis, design and monitoring.

“Facts for evidence-based decision-making”

“Regular agricultural statistics help in understanding the trends of the Ugandan agricultural sector as well as cross-cutting issues. For instance, they shed light on the adoption of new agricultural technologies and sustainable production methods, or on the effects of new weather conditions on agriculture. In summary, they provide facts for evidence-based decision-making and policy development to improve the performance of the sector and for sustainable growth in the country.”

Antonio Querido
FAO Representative in Uganda

Data use was also a key priority throughout the programme, with a series of training sessions organized and delivered to strengthen country capacity in using data for analysis and for evidence-based policymaking.

Moving forward, FAO and AGRISurvey will continue to provide country support through the 50x2030 Initiative, to ensure the successful implementation of data production activities in Uganda.

Additional resources

Country brief: [AGRISurvey Programme in Uganda: Key findings of the Annual Agricultural Survey 2018](#)



Uruguay

Since 2018, AGRISurvey's technical assistance to Uruguay has focused on strengthening the country's system of national agricultural surveys by using AGRIS methodology to improve data quality, expand activity coverage and thematic scope, respond to SDG requirements for agriculture, and enhance the relevance of the statistics produced.

An initial assessment identified a critical need for an integrated survey to produce statistics not only on core variables such as area and production, but also on detailed aspects of the environmental impact of farms, along with economic information such as cost of production and additional information for computing some SDGs. In addressing this and other identified needs, AGRIS methodology was customized for the local context, including specific adaptations to take advantage of the existing administrative registers maintained in the country.

Targeted technical assistance was provided to the Agricultural Statistics



Office (Oficina de Estadísticas Agropecuarias or DIEA) of the Ministry of Livestock, Agriculture and Fisheries in the form of training on the use of new technologies such as CAPI and CAWI. A pilot of the new survey system, consisting of all survey process phases, was conducted in the fourth quarter of 2021, and a plan for its full implementation was developed and

put in place – to be activated and managed autonomously by DIEA after the Agricultural Census of 2022.

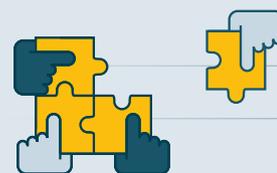
With regard to data dissemination, capacity development activities included training on survey cataloguing, particularly for microdata anonymization and documentation in compliance with the DDI metadata standard.



FIVE YEARS ON:

AGRISurvey impact at scale

1 **BUILT TO LAST: ENSURING THE LONG-TERM SUSTAINABILITY OF COUNTRY CAPACITIES**



Throughout its implementation cycle, a key objective of AGRISurvey centred on ensuring the long-term sustainability of the programme and its results. All AGRISurvey activities were therefore implemented with a view to continuous strengthening of technical capacities in partner countries, and the empowerment of national stakeholders to build and solidify country ownership of the programme.

As a result, the support provided by the AGRISurvey team at FAO, the continuous coordination between FAO and national institutions, and the provision of national consultants all served to facilitate a transfer of

skills as part of a highly participatory, “learning by doing” approach. This helped to build accountability and a sense of local responsibility in each country, ensuring national ownership and leadership throughout the process and particularly in decision-making, which in turn contributed to building trust around data. In this context, the cultivation and development of effective and long-standing partnerships between different country implementing institutions also proved to be a critical outcome of the programme.

Technology matters

In addition to targeted country assistance and support for the set-up and improvement of national data dissemination platforms, all participating countries received support in the set-up and maintenance of microdata catalogues; these were implemented to run on the NADA platform, an open-source, web-based cataloguing application designed to allow researchers to browse, search, compare, apply for access and download research data.

AGRISurvey achievements in technology were particularly

successful with regard to the strengthening of national statistical capacities in the use of computer-assisted interviewing techniques (such as CAPI and CAWI) to streamline data collection, reduce costs associated with paper-based questionnaires, and increase data quality through built-in validation procedures.

In Cambodia for example, FAO began building country capacity in the use of CAPI in 2019, including through training on system design and survey management. This included in-person training with the assistance of FAO and World Bank Survey Solutions experts, as well as massive online open courses (MOOCs) developed by the Asian Development Bank and FAO. With support from the FAO Office in Cambodia, the coursework was locally adapted (subtitles were translated to Khmer) and delivered along with supportive face-to-face tutorials.

As a result, CIAS 2019 was the first survey in the country to include large-scale use of CAPI. The following year's CAS 2020 improved further on these methods and techniques, and the use of CAPI was then expanded to other sectors.

Building relationships: a slow yet steady change in the mindsets of Armenian farmers

Hermine Baghramyan lives in the town of Abovyan, in the Armenian *marz* or province of Kotayk. She is a statistician working for the AGRISurvey programme through Armstat, with around 30 rural communities in the *marz*.

“I think statistics is about building relationships”, explains Hermine. Along with her colleagues, she has taken to heart a key concept from the training sessions provided through AGRISurvey via ICARE. The concept stresses the importance of an objective and even-handed approach with all respondents while in the field, right from the moment an interview or survey starts, and regardless of how willing or reluctant they are to answer questions.

“After having a hard time with many farmers in different communities, explaining the ‘innocent’ purposes of my questions, I am now enjoying good relations with most if not all of them.”

She also appreciates the use of tablets for data collection, noting how much easier and less stressful it is to analyse and correct errors. Overall, she feels better prepared for setting things right in stressful situations, both technologically and in terms of the skills and expertise she has gained from the training.

“Believe me, with my tablet in my hand, I make a different impression on respondents, and become a better enumerator in their eyes”, she adds triumphantly.

Sos Avetisyan

Head of Information and Public Relations Division
Armenian National Agrarian University

2 BETTER, BROADER AND MORE POWERFUL: IMPROVING SURVEY SYSTEMS



AGRISurvey implementation resulted in a range of improvements across various aspects of existing national agricultural survey systems. Generally, survey data in all partner countries was extended beyond the classic (crop and livestock) production and productivity measures that are typically covered in agricultural surveys, and overall, the adoption of thematic **rotating modules** allowed countries to expand the scope of their national agricultural surveys. As a result, countries were able to collect more and better data on a regular basis, and calculate more complex indicators, including in particular for SDG 2 (on hunger) and SDG 5 (on gender equality).

Countries are now exploring additional dimensions – for example on individual tenure rights (including with regard to gender-based disparities), input use and value (i.e. fertilizers, labour, etc.), production methods

and environmental aspects of farming, post-harvest losses and food security. In this context, AGRISurvey's support in the restructuring of survey questionnaires and the rearrangement of survey calendars was instrumental in achieving a more optimal and cost-effective process for the different phases of data production, analysis and dissemination.

In Armenia for example, when agricultural data were collected across four provinces in 2020, the use of AGRISurvey's **core** and **economy modules** facilitated the gathering of the data needed to compute important national production and productivity indicators. These included SDG indicators 2.3.1 (labour productivity of smallholders) and 2.3.2 (income of smallholders).

In Cambodia, information from CIAS 2019 provided fundamental insights on the agricultural sector,

along with basic data to help assess progress towards achieving national development targets. Cambodia's agriculture surveys now capture data across a broader range of agricultural themes, with more details on numerous crop types, agricultural holding characteristics, and other economic and labour topics.

Georgia is another example of outstanding progress in the calculation of complex indicators through the use of AGRISurvey. Using the SAH 2020 dataset, Geostat was able to calculate additional indicators relevant to the national agricultural policy (such as the share of own consumption, the sales of the main crops, and labour input by farm type), along with economic indicators linked to the labour productivity and income of agricultural holdings, disaggregated by size of holdings and by sex of the holder.

3 SPREADING THE WORD: DISSEMINATION AND OPEN DATA



Due to a range of factors (including changes in technologies, costs, demands and the open data movement) recent years have seen accelerated progress in data dissemination among national statistical agencies. Nevertheless, significant work is still required to ensure that agricultural data are disseminated in a systematic manner

and according to best practices for open data. Increasing accessibility to agricultural statistics, including survey microdata, was therefore a major area of focus for AGRISurvey implementation in each country.

A wide range of statistical outputs were generated and made available to users as a result of these efforts.

In Cambodia for instance, the NIS organized a comprehensive dissemination programme around CIAS 2019, to serve a range of strategic and user needs. This included a final report, thematic maps, a statistical release, dynamic tables and microdata sets – all of which were published and accessible from the NIS website.



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Small talk: a focus on microdata

For microdata in particular, microdata sets in all partner countries were either set up or upgraded, using the NADA open source platform to ensure IT standardization and maximize data findability. Countries also received training on key aspects of microdata sharing, including anonymization, access models and DDI standards for metadata. As a result, several partner countries successfully prepared and released AGRISurvey microdata sets via their national microdata catalogues.

In Senegal for example, DAPSA completed the dissemination of microdata from three rounds of the EAA (from 2017/18 to 2019/20), all of which are now available via the [DAPSA website](#).

Similarly, Cambodia and Uganda released fully documented and anonymized microdata from CIAS 2019 and AAS 2018, respectively, and Nepal released microdata from the Pilot Agriculture Integrated Survey of 2019, as part of the national catalogue. Additional microdata sets are scheduled for release by other AGRISurvey countries in 2022.

The Food and Agriculture Microdata (FAM) Catalogue

As part of the AGRISurvey programme, FAO launched the [Food and Agricultural Microdata \(FAM\) Catalogue](#), an online microdata library providing access to microdata sets generated through farm and household surveys and census or administrative data collection, that contain information on agriculture and the rural sector, food security and nutrition.

The FAM Catalogue represents an important tool for FAO and for countries, as well as for international organizations and the research community at large. In responding to growing demand for highly granular and disaggregated microdata, as well as growing reliance on such datasets, it aims to serve not only as an international depository for data producers, but as a global access point and reference for studies on agriculture and the rural sector, food security, and nutrition. The FAM Catalogue contains over a thousand surveys. Since its launch in July of 2019, over 25 000 unique users have accessed the catalogue, around 800 of whom registered to create an account (for access to licensed datasets). Academic institutions make up the majority of users (at 60 percent), followed by international organizations (18 percent), public administration (8 percent), commercial enterprise (7 percent), NGOs (5 percent) and private or unaffiliated users (2 percent).



4 ON TARGET: CALCULATING FOR SDG INDICATORS



Data provided through AGRISurvey implementation help countries monitor progress towards targets set by the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in the agricultural sector, covering in particular SDG indicators 2.3.1 (labour productivity of smallholders), 2.3.2 (income of smallholders), 2.4.1 (land area under productive and sustainable agriculture) and 5.a.1 (agricultural land ownership and tenure rights of women and men).

Small-scale farmers play an essential role in global food production, but they face major constraints in accessing land, inputs and other productive resources, as well as knowledge, financial services, markets and opportunities. Producing and disseminating data and information on their labour productivity and other indicators is therefore critical for tackling inequalities through informed policy and decision-making.

Cambodia, Georgia, Senegal and Uganda were able to generate both national and subnational estimates for SDG indicator 2.3.1 (labour productivity of smallholders) from their national agricultural surveys, and Senegal and Uganda also computed estimates for SDG indicator 2.3.2 (income of smallholders).

In Cambodia, SDG indicator 2.3.1 has been calculated since the first survey round conducted under AGRISurvey in 2019. Important findings from CIAS 2019 reveal that 75 percent of the country's total holdings are small-scale, and that all small-scale holders in Cambodia operate less than 3.2 hectares of land.



In Costa Rica, the implementation of the pilot survey proved successful in providing indicators on costs, income and profitability at commodity level, as well as on labour productivity (SDG indicator 2.3.1) and average income at farm level. Building on the tools developed and the experience

gained through the pilot, INEC will incorporate these statistics into the normal workflow of the ENA.

And in Georgia, Geostat was able to release data from the SAH 2020 dataset, as required for monitoring SDG indicators 2.3.1 and 2.3.2,

disaggregated by sex of agricultural holders. The indicators were first published on the Geostat website in December of 2021, with updates scheduled to be released every three years.

Breaking it down: the importance of sex-disaggregated data

Given the important role that women play in agriculture, the need for more, better and more comparable statistics on their contributions, needs and constraints across geographic and thematic areas is critical. In response, AGRIS methodology recognizes the potential value of data collected through agricultural surveys to inform and illustrate areas of gender inequality in the sector, and prioritizes the disaggregation of data by sex. Data collection and production includes a focus on gender-relevant issues, including in relation to ownership and rights over land, decision-making within holdings, and the specific roles of men and women.

More specifically, all agricultural surveys supported by the programme collected the data required to monitor gender disparities in tenure rights for agricultural land, as required for SDG indicator 5.a.1. Uganda was the first AGRISurvey country to report on the indicator, with findings from AAS 2019 showing that 41 percent of adults living in agricultural households hold rights over agricultural land. The share gets as high as 52 percent among men, but lowers to 30 percent among women.

Additional resources

Country brief:

Use of AGRISurvey data for computing SDGs and national indicators



5 FROM DATA TO DECISION-MAKING: IMPACTING POLICY FORMULATION



From inception, increasing and improving country use of survey data for decision-making was a key priority for AGRISurvey. Data use was therefore an essential component of the programme, as further underscored by

its positive reception in partner countries.

Across all countries, key activities in this regard focused on aligning the data on offer with user needs, and building awareness on the importance

and potential of agricultural survey data among relevant stakeholders.

In Senegal and Uganda for instance, several consultation workshops were organized between data production agencies and expert



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groups in charge of monitoring agricultural sector policies. The workshops familiarized policy experts with the data collected through the agricultural survey programmes, including by mapping data to specific indicators in sectoral policy monitoring frameworks. In addition and where relevant, new indicators already supported by the survey systems were proposed for inclusion and enhancement of policy monitoring. These activities also served to identify data gaps to be addressed in future survey rounds or updates to the survey systems.

Through another series of workshops, the programme focused more generally on building capacity in applying data for policy analysis, and increasing overall statistical literacy. These activities also served to bring data producers together with a wide range of users (including data and policy analysts, researchers and data journalists), thereby cultivating and strengthening linkages across all stakeholders. As with many other activities conducted in the context of data use, they also contributed implicitly to an overall and

progressive shift towards a culture of increased data use and evidence-based decision-making.

To more effectively bring data into policy debate, data producers were also encouraged to participate in the policy design and development process. In Senegal for example, the programme trained staff at DAPSA on statistical and econometrics methods for using agriculture survey data for policy analysis. As a result, DAPSA produced three thematic policy notes on topics related to agricultural production. The notes were discussed during a national stakeholder workshop in June of 2021, thereby contributing directly to the policy debate in Senegal.

Training of this kind – on using survey data for agricultural and rural development policy analysis – was a key aspect of support to partner countries.

Overall, a total **174 officers and staff** received training, including from ministries of agriculture and other government and non-government institutions.

“Understanding the agriculture sector better”

“As a data producer, it is rewarding to see how many applications can be used on our microdata, to produce indicators that contribute to understanding the agricultural sector better. I did not know that so much could be done!”

Johanna Quesada

Statistician and AGRISurvey training attendee (“Uso de datos de encuestas en políticas agrícolas”, June 2021)

INEC of Costa Rica





SUCCESSES

IN SPITE OF COVID-19

In almost all participating countries, the COVID-19 pandemic posed a serious challenge to survey implementation, disrupting activities and impacting statistical operations significantly. In particular and due to difficulties in conducting face-to-face interviews in rural areas, data collection activities were heavily affected.

At the same time however, the pandemic further underscored the importance of timely, accurate and high-quality agricultural statistics to inform policy decisions, and thanks in part to AGRISurvey support, countries responded to the challenge in a variety of ways:

Armenia

Following the outbreak of COVID-19, interviewer visits with respondents were temporarily suspended, and a number of data collection initiatives were adapted over the course of the

year. For example, the training of enumerators and supervisors was conducted via Zoom, whereas the group pilot surveys that had been scheduled for after the training were cancelled. The first- and second-quarter surveys were merged into one semi-annual survey (carried out in summer 2020, in line with national anti-COVID-19 measures), and the third-quarter survey was merged with the fourth-quarter/annual round of data collection.

Costa Rica

Data collection activities for the pilot survey were significantly impacted by the pandemic. Due to government regulations, INEC was obliged to suspend face-to-face interviews at the end of March 2020 and replace them – when possible – with phone or web-based interviews. As a result, the final week of interviews for the ENA and AGRISurvey pilot survey

were conducted by phone. While this did not generate problems for the ENA, interviews for the pilot survey were significantly affected, as they were longer and more complex. A high proportion of producers declined the interview, did not finish, or refused to answer sensitive questions (e.g. on costs) over the phone.

Georgia

While the data collection mode for agricultural enterprises remained unchanged through the pandemic (i.e. via web-based forms), Geostat was forced to rethink interviewer visits with respondents, and switched to using mobile phones and tablets (via CAPI). Despite some issues (including incomplete questionnaires due to dropped connections, incorrect phone numbers, etc.), the general quality of the data collected was high enough to enable the survey process to continue without

disruption. Thanks in large part to the technical support provided by AGRISurvey (in particular, the intensive training of survey enumerators and supervisors), the overall strategy proved successful.

Senegal

COVID-19 challenged the implementation of EAA 2019/20, with direct consequences for data collection and field work, as well as for technical assistance. In terms of data collection, the survey's second round of field visits, initially scheduled to start in March 2020, were cancelled due to the national lockdown. After several postponements, a final decision was made to call off post-harvest data collection – both in view of continuing anti-pandemic measures and the approaching calendar window for the launch of the next survey (EAA 2020/21). Given the length of the survey questionnaire and the inconsistency of mobile phone coverage across the country, it was not possible to substitute phone interviews for the face-to-face activities that had been cancelled. Despite this major setback, DAPSA was able to use the data collected

during the first round of visits to publish a report rich in information. In terms of technical assistance, the continued effects of the pandemic forced a review of the existing model (which required in-person missions with international experts). The team switched to a remote model,

organizing a series of technical sessions (one or more per week) online. In this way DAPSA was able to successfully mitigate the impact of COVID-19 on the country's commitment to produce agricultural data.



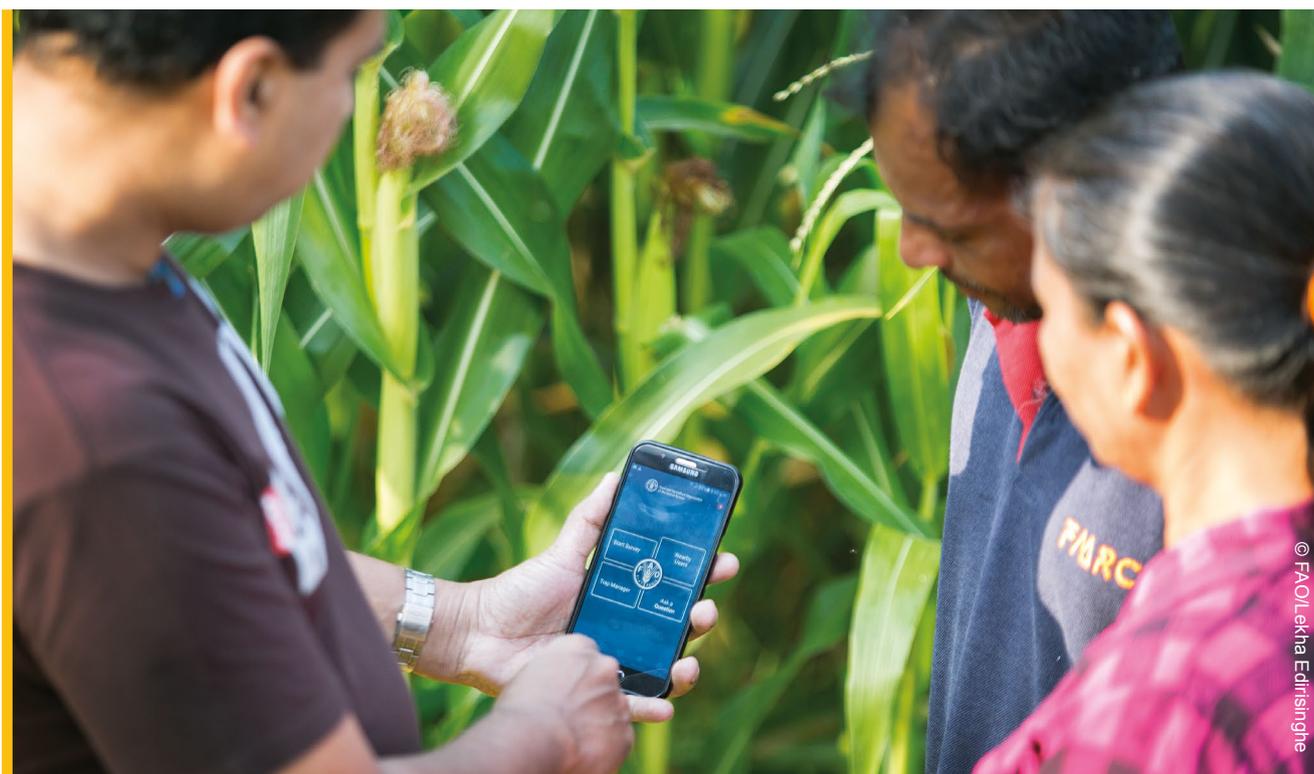
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LOOKING AHEAD: the future of AGRISurvey

In 2019, AGRISurvey was scaled up as part of the 50x2030 Initiative to Close the Agricultural Data Gap, a multi-partner programme which

seeks to transform national data systems in 50 low-income and lower-middle-income countries by 2030. Working across Africa, Asia, Latin

America and the Middle East, the Initiative builds upon the experiences of the AGRISurvey programme, together with the World Bank's



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Living Standards Measurement Study - Integrated Surveys on Agriculture (LSMS-ISA), to promote the implementation of integrated surveys that combine a farm-based agricultural survey programme with a household-based, rural socioeconomic survey programme, for the cost-effective production of more and better data within a single system. The International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) also contributes, with its experience in policy engagement, evidence-building and knowledge generation to promote sustainable rural transformation in countries. In this way 50x2030 enables, empowers and supports the development of robust national data systems that produce and use high-quality and timely agricultural and rural survey data.

A key aspect of the 50x2030 model relies on the capacity of partner countries to implement complex integrated agricultural surveys. In low-income or lower-middle-income countries however, the capacity of staff working on agricultural statistics is generally lacking, and this can significantly delay or otherwise compromise data collection and the

computation of expected indicators. The Initiative therefore works in close coordination with the second phase of the Global Strategy to Improve Agricultural and Rural Statistics (GSARS II 2020–2025). Funded by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation and the European Commission, GSARS II focuses on strengthening capacities in African countries

that are eligible for 50x2030, by providing training and technical assistance at national, regional and continental level. In doing so, it lays a critical foundation for faster and more successful implementation of 50x2030 surveys, ensuring less time is required for survey preparation and personnel training.

AGRISurvey impact at FAO

The implementation of the AGRISurvey programme allowed the FAO Statistics Division to strengthen its own capacities in providing technical assistance at country level. The survey team in charge of the programme collaborated closely with other divisional teams (for example on work related to censuses, agricultural production and methodology) and with the FAO Office of Chief Statistician (on the compilation of SDG indicators). Experts from these different teams also had the opportunity to benefit from hands-on experience in the implementation of AGRISurvey in different countries, and from the various internal training sessions organized by the AGRISurvey team between 2019 and 2021. Practical expertise and know-how acquired through overall AGRISurvey implementation was and continues to be of direct relevance and use in the implementation of the 50x2030 Initiative, and enables FAO to provide the necessary methodological and capacity support to countries that require specific assistance in the design and implementation of integrated agricultural surveys.

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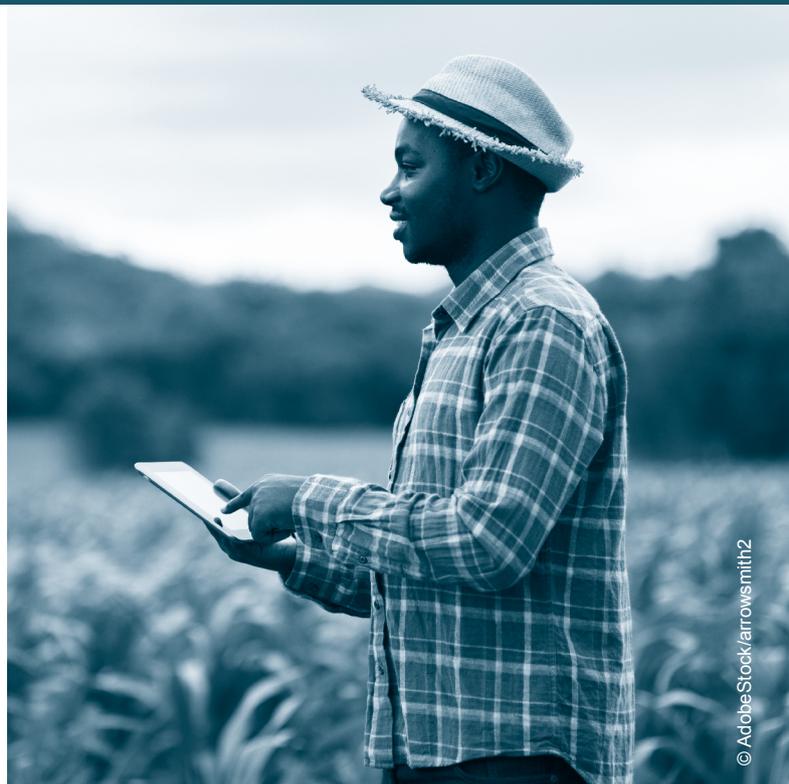
AGRISurvey programme

Website: www.fao.org/in-action/agrisurvey

Statistics Division – Economic and Social Development

Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations

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