



Expert Meeting 1

Assessing Country Capacity to Produce Agricultural and Rural Statistics

3 DECEMBER 2012, 14:00 – 17:30

RED ROOM, WFP HEADQUARTERS

Summary Report

I. Introduction

Assessing country capacity to produce core agricultural and rural statistics is the starting point for implementation of the Global Strategy. The results of the assessment will determine the scope of the national implementation plans, the critical areas for priority intervention, the time frame of activities, and the choice of appropriate methodologies for areas of improvement.

A number of frameworks for assessing statistical systems are available, and there is general agreement on the dimensions of statistical systems that determine the capacity; and on the measures of capacity based on the activities of the system and the quality of its outputs. These frameworks have evolved under the leadership of international organizations including IMF, the World Bank, EUROSTAT, UNESCO and the UN. However, none of the frameworks specifically address agricultural and rural statistics.

The development of the country assessment methodology for the Global Strategy took into account the available frameworks for statistical capacity and also the methods for monitoring regional agricultural statistical systems, in Asia and the Pacific and Africa, used for the FAO Commissions on Agricultural Statistics. These methods compared the performance of agricultural statistical systems based on responses to a standard questionnaire, reported in their biennial regional meetings.

The proposed country assessment methodology consists of an initial assessment using a self-reporting Standard Questionnaire followed by an in-depth assessment by experts.

The Standard Questionnaire was developed through an international consultation process starting from the work of the FAO Commissions. The data collected through the Standard Questionnaire will be used to develop indicators in order to create a profile of country capacity. These indicators which will provide information on various dimensions and elements of country capacity could be used to group countries according to the level of development of their statistical systems. These groupings will be used to determine the priority countries for implementation of the Global Strategy as well as for monitoring their progress as per logical frame work of Action Plan of the Global Strategy.

In-depth assessments will be carried out in the selected priority countries through expert missions and stakeholder workshops. A common methodology and guidelines for the in-depth assessment will be developed. The in-depth assessments will provide the necessary information to prioritize capacity development activities in countries and select critical areas for intervention. It will also contribute to preparation of the Sector Strategic Plans for Agricultural and Rural Statistics (SSPARS) which will guide the implementation of the Global Strategy in the countries.

The meeting will review the normative work carried out by FAO and its partners so far. The inputs of the experts will contribute to the refinement and finalization of the Country Assessment methodology.

II. Objectives

- 1) To be informed of the progress of the work on Initial Country Assessments in different regions.
- 2) (a) To build consensus on the approach to building Indicators of Country Capacity and country profiles.
(b) To build consensus on the criteria and methodology to be used for grouping the countries (based on the indicators).
- 3) To agree on the objective, scope, methodology and reporting format of the in-depth country assessments.
- 4) To identify unresolved technical issues, if any, on the above themes for a detailed discussion in the Task Force meeting following the Expert Meeting.

III. Timetable

CHAIR: Mr. Ben Kiregyera, AfDB	
Indicators for measuring and monitoring country capacity to produce agricultural and rural statistics and the criteria for grouping the countries	
14:00 – 14:15	Progress of Initial Country Assessments in Asia and the Pacific, Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean and CIS regions (Mr. Mukesh Srivastava, FAO)
14:15 – 14:30	Indicators of country capacity to produce agricultural and rural statistics (Mr. Mike Trant, FAO)
14:30 – 14:45	Possible criteria and methodology for grouping the countries (Mr. Ben Kiregyera, AfDB)
14:45 – 15:00	Alternative criteria for grouping the countries (Mr. Miguel Galmes, FAO)
15:00 – 15:30	Discussion;
15:30 – 16:00	Coffee break
CHAIR: Mr. Miguel Galmes, FAO	
The scope, methodology and result of the in-depth country assessment	
16:00 – 16:30	Presentation of initial ideas scope, methods and reporting format of In-depth Assessment (Mr. Muwanga Zake, FAO)
16:30 – 16:45	Experience of NASS, USDA in assessing country capacity (Ms. Terry Holland, NASS)
16:45 – 17:30	Discussion

IV. Main conclusions

Session 1: Indicators for measuring Country Capacity and Grouping of Countries

- Absence of a framework and adequate guidelines makes the country assessments incomparable over time and space, as it would then depend upon personal preferences of the person leading the work. The fluctuations in the Capacity Indicators build by World Bank were noted.
- IMF structure for defining capacity of the statistical system was seen a good starting point for building capacity indicators for monitoring the GS.
- Weighting of indicators should be avoided as some dimensions of the capacity may be more important than others. The importance attached to individual dimension depends upon the country situation and the preferences of the decision maker.
- Although it may be a good idea to group the countries according to the level of development, the location of a country in a specific group does not provide information on the nature of the issues that the country is facing. The suite of indicators based on the Country Assessment Questionnaire (CAQ) is in general more informative. These indicators could be used for any purposive grouping by the users for designing specific assistance/investments programmes.

- The ranking of countries based on the results of the Country Assessments poses some challenges. It was nonetheless noted that ranking may be implicit as part of the procedure for grouping process.
- The regions need flexibility in the grouping criteria, though the consistency of methodology for defining indicator needs to be maintained globally.
- The weakness of CAQ to measure Resource (human and financial) dimension was noted.
- The CA exercise need to be repeated periodically over time to monitor the progress.

Session 2: In-depth Country Assessments (IdA)

- The most important issue was how to ensure that the in-depth assessment makes available all information needed for providing the necessary evidence for developing SSPARS.
- The report of the assessment should be compressive document in the public domain, as it could then also serve the purpose of creating multilateral donor interest for development or for promoting bilateral cooperation between similarly placed countries.
- The available guidelines from AfDB and examples from assessment made in some African countries should be used for developing the proposed guidelines on In-depth Assessment.
- The presentation from NASS on their experience on Assessments highlighted a number of good points which need to include in the proposed guidelines.
- It was noted the that many of the assessments already carried out in the countries are purpose driven, and usually focus on a specific domain of agriculture or area that is of particular interest to the donor .e.g. Monitoring and Evaluation.
- There is a need to highlight in the guidelines the methodology to prioritize the needs of the stakeholders in agriculture statistics system, and how to synthesize the data needs of a wide variety of users (starting from national accounts, research bodies, private sector to the general public) in a meaningful way to be able to decide an action plan.
- The issue of availability of human recourses, their professional skill level and training needs should be included in the IdA.
- Role of advocacy and fielding of a champion for SSPARS should be built in the IdA process.
- IdA should be carried out keeping in view the actions that we want to take, and it should lead to a Vision for development of the agriculture statistics system.
- There should be a provision to revisit the guidelines (tool) to see how these have worked.
- The depth of coverage of specific subsectors such as fishery and aquaculture in the assessment process would depend upon the importance of the sector in the country. In this sense, the methodology of the assessment should provide some flexibility at the country level.



ANNEX 1: List of participants

No.	Name	Organisation/Country	E-mail
1	Castano Jairo	FAORAP	Jairo.Castano@fao.org;
2	Chin Nancy	FAO, ESS	Nancy.Chin@fao.org;
3	Duarte António Dos Reis	Cape Verde, Instituto Nacional de Estatística (INE)	Antonio.R.Duarte@ine.gov.cv;
4	Falorsi Pietro Demetrio	ISTAT	falorsi@istat.it
5	Fioretti Julia	European Union	Julia.Fioretti@eeas.europa.eu;
6	Galmes Miguel	FAO consultant	mgalmes@hotmail.com;
7	Goryacheva Irina	CISSTAT	goryacheva@cisstat.org; shevchenko@cisstat.org;
8	Hanephom Savanh	Laos, Deputy Director-General , Planning and Cooperation Department Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry	hsavanh@yahoo.com;
9	Holland Terry	USDA/NASS	Terry.Holland@nass.usda.gov;
10	Jinguji Issei	Japan	jinguji@marble.ocn.ne.jp;
11	Kiregyera Ben	AfDB	bkiregyera@yahoo.com
12	Knipschild Henning	Federal Office for Agricultural and Food, Germany	Henning.Knipschild@ble.de;
13	Kohler Franziska	DFID/UK	f-kohler@dfid.gov.uk;
14	Kvinikadze Giorgi	FAO, ESS	Giorgi.Kvinikadze@fao.org;
15	Lavender Sharyn	USDA/NASS	Sharyn.Lavender@nass.usda.gov;
16	Muwanga Zake Eliaj	FAO consultant	muwangazake@hotmail.com;
17	Mwisomba Titus	Tanzania, National Bureau of Statistics (NBS)	tmwisomba@nbs.go.tz; likanga@yahoo.com;
18	Neciu Adriana	FAO, ESS	Adriana.Neciu@fao.org;
19	Serghini Hassan	MEDSTAT, Lead Expert	hserghini2@gmail.com;
20	Smith Jeffrey	Statistics Canada	Jeffrey.Smith@statcan.gc.ca;
21	Soares João	GEOGLAM GEO Secretariat Scientific Consultant supporting Agriculture	jsoares@geosec.org;
22	Srivastava Arun		arunsrivast@gmail.com;
23	Srivastava Mukesh	FAO, ESS	Mukesh.srivastava@fao.org

No.	Name	Organisation/Country	E-mail
24	Tariku Aberash	CSA-Ethiopia, Director, National Statistician Data Quality and Standard Coordination	aberash_t@ethionet.et; kaberash@yahoo.com;
25	Tayyib Salar	FAOREUT	Salar.Tayyib@fao.org;
26	Trant Michael	FAO consultant	mtrant9918@rogers.com;
27	Tsuji Sachiko	FAO, FIPS	Sachiko.Tsuji@fao.org;
28	Whiteman Adrian	FAO, FOE	Adrian.Whiteman@fao.org;

