Expert Meeting 4
New metrics to measure and monitor performance in agriculture and food security
05 DECEMBER 2012, 09:00 – 16:00
WFP HEADQUARTERS

Summary Report

Context

With agriculture, food and nutrition security taking centre stage in the international development agenda, a need has emerged to both systematize and harmonize the way progress can be measured and monitored. This need is being driven by resource allocations, interventions and policies that are increasingly premised and prioritized on comprehensive, timely and objective evidence. The heightened emphasis on evidence-based decision-making requires rising to the collective information demands of countries, resource partners and international organizations in their pursuit of development goals.

In meeting emergent needs, FAO is widening the evidence base, compiling novel metrics on food and nutrition security as well as developing new suites of indicators that assess the performance of agriculture. In order to be more '*client-orientated*', a scorecard framework has been designated that will enable comparisons across countries and over time. But scorecards can potentially offer much more.

To assess this potential, a side event at the recent Committee on World Food Security (CFS) was convened. Participants comprised development partners including those that have already leveraged the use of scorecards and other metrics in monitoring and evaluation (M&E) frameworks for evidence-based learning. This event sought to shed light on (i) how complex phenomena, such as agricultural development and food security can be monitored and measured, thus facilitating policy formulation and resource allocation; (ii) identifying country needs, capacity and commitments, and mapping them into programmes of work thereby informing decision-making; (iii) how country scorecards can inform a corporate scorecard; (iv) how scorecards can be used to better coordinate the development efforts of resource partners and development agencies; and (v) how can scorecard initiatives be aligned to facilitate synergies among stakeholders.

Objectives

This one-day workshop will continue to build on the findings of the CFS side event, with an aim to clarify pathways that could implement an all-encompassing performance measurement and monitoring framework for agriculture, food and nutrition security. The workshop will focus on the perspectives of users, concrete applications of the scorecard approach, and identify and agree on ways forward. With the participation of a broad array of stakeholders, the workshop will focus on three objectives:

1) *Stocktaking: What are current initiatives to measure, monitor and evaluate performance at national and global levels? How can scorecards best reflect the views of users and address their needs? What are the linkages between policy, targeting, aid strategies, resources and accountability?*
2) *Application: Have initiatives in the agricultural sector affirmed the role of scorecards and the need for new systems to measure and monitor? What are the concrete applications that can help us move forward?*
3) *Ways forward: What are the lessons learned and what information gaps exist? What resources are needed? How can development partners share results of current M&E efforts and how can they do*

more to support each other? How can we harmonize approaches? Can frameworks be linked to donor accountability, especially the five Rome principles?

Outcomes

The workshop was organized in three sessions, which are summarised as follows:

Session 1. Stocktaking: addressing users' needs

The session started with an introduction to the scorecard framework by Pietro Gennari, Director Statistics Division of FAO. After briefly describing the use of the scorecard approach within FAO for the monitoring and evaluation (M&E) of its strategic framework, Mr. Gennari highlighted the need for matching M&E demand with the supply of scorecard frameworks, focusing on their objectives and taking stock of the existing scorecards available. The links between different types of scorecard – i.e. country, donor, corporate scorecard - were presented, as well as how the linkages are addressed in the design of an M&E framework for FAO's programme of work and budget. In order to guide discussions, the presentation also pointed out the need for coordination of initiatives and for establishing mechanisms to address technical issues and quality assurance in terms of standards and norms setting. For this, both the Alliance for Harmonizing Monitoring & Evaluation and an Inter-Agency and Expert Group on agricultural statistics under the auspices of UNSC were proposed.

Mary Bohman[1] presented how indicators and scorecards are used by the Economic Research Service (ERS) of USDA to inform policy formulation and targeting. The presenter highlighted the importance of knowing stakeholder demands in terms of data and information requirements and of adapting to them as demands evolve, in order to adequately satisfy them. Well-designed metrics should provide valuable feedback to policy-makers, support public accountability and serve as input to the analysis on behaviour and causality. Further capacity building efforts are needed at the country level for the use and analysis of the data collected through different surveys. The critical need for coordination between stakeholders was also highlighted, both regarding data collection efforts as well as agreements on common metrics for measuring progress. Appropriate coordination mechanisms should be sought and employed (e.g. M&E Alliance-Learning Initiative, Global Food Security Information Network, etc.) in order to undertake collective efforts.

Prabhu Pingali[2] presented how scorecards could better inform aid strategies and resource allocation. A scorecards approach would provide answers on whether money is spent effectively towards an intended change and whether that change is actually happening. There is a need to establish metrics for this purpose, considering that part of the underlying data exist already in the form of surveys and statistics. However, the presenter exposed how existing metrics are mainly focusing on global goals, such as the MDGs or World Food Summit (WFS), while a framework to assess the requirements in terms of R&D, market management, and other capacities is still missing. Such assessments are essential to identify country needs in order to better target actions and also to monitor them. Developing indices that allow the ranking of countries still constitutes a challenge. In terms of governance and coordination, it was noted that relevant mechanisms should include all stakeholders present in the development arena.

Minà Dowlatchahi[3] and Adam Prakash[4] presented how the scorecards approach is being applied to FAO's reviewed strategic framework. The experience with the previous strategic framework showed that having many strategic objectives of a sectoral nature did not provide a sound basis for measurement of performance in terms of outcomes and longer-term objectives, and that indicators were not systematically SMART[5] and were often focusing on outputs and activities. A consultative strategic thinking process led to the conception of five strategic inter-disciplinary objectives, and efforts are now being undertaken to have a more robust results-based framework and M&E. Emphasis is also put on better quality indicators that

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[1] Administrator, Economic Research Service, USDA
[2] Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation
[3] Office of Strategic Planning, FAO
[4] Statistics Division, FAO
[5] Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant and Time-bound

allow the determination of the uptake and use of FAO outputs, which will contribute to improved development outcomes. A scorecard approach would allow to cluster indicators both at the SO level (development outcome) and the OO level (capacity and commitment towards development outcome), where FAO has a clear comparative advantage. Some of the challenges faced in this ongoing work are the need for a validated "global data pool" and the need of harmonization of standards and frameworks that attest to better evaluation and accountability.

The discussions that followed the presentation were centred around the following:

- Indicators/Scorecards:
    - Indicators: there is a need to clarify –and agree on– the questions that are being asked. There are a lot of data and information available yet clarity on which would constitute the better indicators is not forthcoming. As well as ensuring that we are asking the right questions, it is important that these can be answered.
    - Users: involving users in the compilation of indicators was seen as one of the lessons learned, and therefore continuous communications with them is deemed key to understand who the users are and for what purposes are the indicators needed, i.e. what are the demands.
    - Data quality: in designing the indicators it is important to review data availability but also the quality of the data available. Where unavailable, data collection needs should be considered prior to setting the indicator, in order to ensure that they can be reasonably met.
- Coordination:
    - Harmonization processes take time, the first challenge is to come to an agreement on the key issues that need to be harmonized. How this type of agreement can be obtained is still a challenge.
    - At the same time, it is important to move away from one "grand system" that would be all-encompassing. Rather than seeking global harmonization in efforts, the approach should be to put together manageable collaboration efforts on concrete activities and then moving these efforts upward and forward.
- Capacities:
    - At the country level, there is a need to enhance capacities of data users to use information more effectively, and how data are used could even be monitored order to justify enhancements and to allow for better prioritization.
    - Continuous and joint assessment –among all stakeholders and across relevant sectors– of data needs as well as of existing available data, is essential in order to identify gaps and agree on actions to address them.

Session 2. Application: affirming the role of scorecards and other metrics
This session included the presentation of concrete applications of a scorecard approach to measure and monitor performance at national, sector-wide and corporate levels.

Agricultural Transformation Index (ATI)

Following the 2008, 2010 and 2012 food price crises (or alerts), the G8 has called for a composite indicator for agriculture and food security to support strategic planning of actions and effective monitoring and impact evaluation. Thomas Elhaut[6] presented progress of the Copenhagen process towards this composite indicator, which involves multi-stakeholders led by the US Government and the Government of Denmark. The ATI proposes a commonly agreed set of indicators that inform on the structure of the agricultural sector, reflecting all contributions to agricultural development with a special focus on the role of smallholders. The purpose is to inform policy-making by monitoring the rural structural transformation underway in the agricultural sector and the global food system. The ultimate goal is that the ATI would guide and respond to the question on "who will feed the world in 2050, where, how and at what cost?". The index is composed of four main dimensions:

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[6] Director, Statistics and Studies for Development Division, IFAD

- Food system structure, including the structural transformation of the agricultural sector and food systems and gender considerations
- Enabling institutional framework, including policies, prices, rural organisations, infrastructure and investment
- Resilience and sustainability, including social inclusion, market volatility and food security
- Productivity, including value chains and commercialization

Although there is agreement on the need for such an index, there is no agreement yet on the composition, weights, etc. Another challenge will be to identify the data for the components. Data fulfilment would rest on national systems, as well as on other established, nationally representative, data collection systems (such as LSMS), but some of the data required would still need to be collected. For this, it is proposed to look at innovative approaches to data collection, such as the systems used by the Doing Business Index of the WB, the Gallup poll initiative of FAO, the World Agricultural Watch (FAO/CIRAD) and the AMIS approach.

Benchmarking the Business of Agriculture (BBA)

Federica Saliola[7] presented on-going efforts within the World Bank to develop options for generating a "Doing Business in Agriculture Index" that would constitute a fast track of the ATI (agri-business component). The BBA project is to be initiated in 2013, and its main approach is in the integration of legal and regulatory indicators of the agricultural business environment. The initiative builds on both the Doing Business program –with in-depth multi-country studies and on the Agribusiness Indicators program– to analyse the factors that affect agricultural productivity, market access, and the policy environment. The resulting indicators will cover areas that are most important for the productivity of agribusiness traders and smallholder farmers, and where relatively simple regulatory reform can have a positive short-term impact on the investment climate for agriculture. There is still discussion to be undertaken in order to integrate the BBA within the ATI process, mainly agreeing on the set of indicators for the "Enabling institutional framework" component of the ATI, but also as a possible "fast track" of the whole index.

Identification of vulnerable countries and households: A Two-Step Score Card Approach

Joyce Luma[8] presented the approach currently being used at the World Food Program (WFP) to select and to classify vulnerable countries and households. The first step involves selecting vulnerable countries, for which the US drought impact analysis framework is applied to identify countries at risk. Three main dimensions are analysed, i.e. i) country exposure to shocks; ii) coping capacity (underlying vulnerability); and iii) vulnerability of the population. An overall score is then created for each dimension by averaging the individual scores of variables within the dimension. Countries are then ranked on the basis of the average score of the three dimensions, in order to identify countries of concern (high risk and vulnerability). The second step consists of selecting vulnerable households by combining the food consumption groups resulting from WFP's "food consumption module" with the household condition groups resulting from the Integrated Phase of Classification (IPC) in food security. An algorithm is subsequently used for classifying households based on two dimensions, i.e. the current consumption status and household consumption capacity, each involving a set of indicators, which allows the classification of households by a 4-point food security scale.

The Voices of the Hungry: Monitoring the severity of experienced food insecurity

Carlo Cafiero[9] presented a new project to launch a global indicator to monitor people's experiences and perceptions of their own level of food security. This indicator will provide valuable information on the food insecurity situation in a particular country. The "household food insecurity scale" methodology has been

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[7] Global Indicators & Analysis Department, FPD, World Bank Group
[8] Vulnerability Analysis and Mapping, World Food Program
[9] Statistics Division, FAO

validated and applied in several countries, and proposed to be included as a Food Insecurity Experience Module in the Gallup's World Poll. Involving more than 140 countries, the survey will start in 2013. The presentation showed how opinion polls are increasingly used in policy formation and debates, while using sound survey and analysis methodologies. Besides the validation and endorsement of the scale at international and country level, capacity development activities are needed to ensure the proper use of the scale by relevant food security information systems and/or statistical agencies.

Hunger and Nutrition Commitment Index (HANCI)

Dolf te Lintelo[10] presented the revised version of the HANCI, which assesses political commitment levels by scoring and ranking governments for their action (or lack of action) in terms of four main elements: (a) legal frameworks; (b) policies and programmes; (c) public expenditures; and (d) Functioning of government. Promoting stronger accountability is the main purpose of this initiative, based on the underlying assumption that measuring commitment will help to foster greater efforts in this area as well as promoting the uptake of measures. The HANCI includes a set of indicators for each of the above mentioned elements, providing an overall score that allows the ranking of countries by level of commitment towards hunger reduction. The scores are then analysed against food security outcomes. The revised methodology is expected to be finalized in 2013 and applied in developing countries.

The Country Food Security Commitment and Capacity Scorecard

José Valls Bedeau[11] presented a methodological framework developed by FAO to monitor action on food security and malnutrition, by measuring the level of commitment and capacities existing at country level. The scorecard goes beyond the usual tracking of the food security and nutrition situation and proposes to look into the commitment and capacities, in order to: i) monitor public performance over time; and ii) identify gaps and needs for capacity development, understanding capacities as individual and organizational capacities and especially, as the enabling environment for appropriate action against food insecurity and malnutrition. Commitment and capacity in these contexts is measured through a set of "essential factors of success" that have been identified from country experiences: i) policies, programmes and legal frameworks (existence and content); ii) human and financial resources; iii) governance, coordination mechanisms and partnerships; and iv) evidenced-based decision-making. Each of these dimensions was represented by a set of indicators to measure the extent to which the essential success factors are present in a country. Data are obtained both from secondary sources and collected through expert opinion surveys at the country level. The methodology is being adopted by FAO to monitor progress in its Strategic Objective on reducing hunger, food insecurity and malnutrition (SO1) and the underlying methodological framework is being adapted for other strategic objectives of the organization as well.

Feed the Future Scorecard

Mary Bohman presented how USAID is using the scorecard approach to measure performance of the Feed the Future initiative. The initiative has identified eight strategic areas of performance critical to meeting its global food security targets: i) reduce poverty and under-nutrition; ii) ensure country ownership and sustainability; iii) engage US stakeholders; iv) optimize resource and goal alignment among the U.S. government and stakeholders: v) manage effectively; vi) apply learning; vii) drive innovation; and viii) be accountable and transparent. Each strategic area has specific goal statements describing what the programme intends to improve as it delivers development aid, and each statement has associated measures of performance and annual milestones to be met by 2015. An additional metric, the Women's Empowerment Index, is based on experience and behavioural measurement and looks into women's roles in the agricultural sector such as production, resources, purchases, income and leadership.

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[10] Institute of Development Studies
[11] Statistics Division, FAO

This session brought interesting discussion and reflection, which responded to the core questions and issues of the workshop:

- The need to coordinate and agree on a common suite of indicators that is used sustainably was highlighted again, especially considering the number of similar indices and indicators that are being developed in parallel (some of which were presented in this session). For this, it was proposed to establish an inter-agency group that would set standards and support identification of common indicators acceptable to everyone. A further challenge that has raised concerns was the need to continuously adapt to moving concepts and targets, whereby any proposed approach needs to be flexible. There are also lessons to be learned from how bilateral donors measure their effectiveness, e.g. MOPAN (OECD), MAR (DFID), etc.
- Once indicators are identified for a composite index, common efforts should be sought for targeted data collection, rather than systematically focusing on using existing data, which are often produced for other purposes. It was considered key to bring together data producers and (not only) users in order to make sure that demand is met by supply.
- Ownership is key for the sustainability of the indices and indicators: the institutions that will use and fund these metrics should lead the process in developing them. The process has to be demand driven, there is little sense in producing indices for others to eventually use them.

Session 3. Ways Forward

Three working groups were established to discuss on possible ways forward towards better coordination and harmonization of approaches. The results of the discussions of each of the groups are presented below.

Group 1

- Mapping of existing initiatives, with needs, known and potential information gaps, and overlaps identified. This mapping should include both geographical and thematic perspectives. Importance placed on identifying data needs for these indicators prior to looking at data availability so data collection can be targeted rather than using existing data which most of the time are produced for other purposes and not very suitable for the indicators.
- International coordination mechanism to be established (TOR/functions to be defined), or adapted (need to use existing mechanisms to the extent possible, instead of creating new ones) in order to help:
  - Focusing the agenda
  - Peer reviewing data, indicators and methods, ensuring quality assurance, setting standards
  - Providing methodological guidance
  - Harmonisation and coordination with the MDG/SDG process and other global mandates
  - Information sharing
  - Research prioritization
  - Linking with policy decisions: beyond indicators, provide analytical frameworks for the interpretation of the data and effects on the indicators

Group 2

- Need to identify a set of *core* indicators that will be reported by all countries. While a common set of indicators may also include *optional* indicators that countries can sign up to, the idea is to have a shared core set of indicators on which all countries/organizations would report on. For this, a common reporting framework should be established as well. The type of indicators would be two-fold:
  - Outcome oriented: on status of hunger, nutrition, food insecurity, etc.
  - Process/input oriented: Political commitment and capacities towards improved outcomes and accountability
- Donor coordination at country level can provide important lessons. The growing popularity of basket funds will drive coordination efforts, however, it is important to ensure that coordination is not limited to programming but that M&E is effectively streamlined.
- The harmonization process should allow governments to voice their requirements at the global level, for which one possible vehicle would be the Committee on World Food Security.

<u>Group 3</u>
- Need to involve data users (policy-makers) in the process in order to ensure a pragmatic and sustainable process (e.g. through opinion surveys, stakeholder consultations)
- Design indicators in an inclusive but pragmatic way, starting with focus groups and eventually moving towards larger consensus building. In addition, establish mechanisms to assess the validity and effectiveness of the indicators.
- Assess the feasibility of the Agricultural Transformation Index with a view to move forward with this initiative

Action Plan

The primary objective of the workshop was to shed light on the necessary pathways for achieving an enhanced measurement and monitoring framework for agriculture, food and nutrition security. Drawing on the perspectives of users, and the lessons learnt from existing scorecard applications, a recurrent set of issues emerged:
- A greater need for coordination in efforts to monitor and evaluate progress towards development goals, either country or global, which would be facilitated through a proper governance mechanism
- A comprehensive survey of the indicator landscape – country, regional and global – and stock taking of scorecard initiatives. At the operational level, this would identify duplication, overlaps and gaps, allowing a more efficient use of resources in M&E efforts. At the technical level, this would be important for establishing baselines towards measuring performance in development goals, but also in terms of capacity and commitment.
- Understanding better the demands of users of scorecards and ensuring that the underlying data are relevant to their M&E needs. In a nutshell, efforts to compile scorecards and to collect data must be demand-driven. In the latter regard, focus should be placed on data quality rather than quantity.
- Harmonization in terms of compliance to international statistical standards, norms and methods, ensuring cross comparability in diverse development agendas.

The above pathways to M&E enhancement require concerted effort from all those in the development arena, especially in addressing those issues which portend to the longer term. Consensus pending, the first steps in moving forward would consist of the following:
- Forming a coalition of partners, involving "doers" (e.g. the IOs), donors and country stakeholders. This could build on or have formal linkages to existing coalitions, such as the Copenhagen Group/M&E alliance, Committee on World Food Security (CFS) and the Inter-Agency and Expert Group (IAEG) on MDG Indicators.
- The coalition, with a FAO-based Secretariat, would agree on standards, norms and methodological guidance on types of indicators, indices, scorecards and other metrics for M&E in the domains of agriculture and food security. The coalition would also define priorities and promote strategies to support countries in data collection, analysis and reporting on development goals, to ensure that different metrics are in concordance in terms of comparability, with a special focus on statistical harmonization.
- A web-based portal, constituting both a "global clearinghouse" for data, indicators, indices and ultimately scorecards, as well as informing users on how these metrics contribute in measuring development outcomes. The objective would be to develop and promote a "one-stop shop" that links existing initiatives and relays their data through the portal.

The immediate payoffs of these first steps would be to meet BMG calls for "better informing aid strategies and resource allocation" and to meet FAO demand (or at least contribute to substantially) by a corporate framework that measures progress towards its five strategic objectives.

Facilitator: Ms Jennifer Nyberg

SESSION 1: STOCKTAKING: ADDRESSING USERS' NEEDS

A. Introducing the scorecard framework

Setting the scene: Towards a new system of monitoring and evaluating development efforts (Pietro Gennari, FAO)

B. Scorecards from a users' perspective
   a. Scorecards informing policy formulation and targeting (Mary Bohman, USDA)
   b. Scorecards informing aid strategies and resource allocation (Prabhu Pingali, BMGF)
   c. Scorecards in FAO's reviewed Strategic Framework (Minà Dowlatchahi and Adam Prakash, FAO)

SESSION 2: CONCRETE APPLICATIONS: AFFIRMING THE ROLE OF SCORECARDS AND OTHER METRICS

C. Concrete applications
   i. Agricultural Transformation Index (Thomas Elhaut, IFAD)
   ii. Benchmarking the Business of Agriculture (Federica Saliola, World Bank)
   iii. Vulnerability Analysis and Mapping (Joyce Luma, WFP)
   iv. The voices of the hungry project (Carlo Cafiero, FAO)

Lunch Break (12:30-13:30)

   v. Hunger Reduction Commitment Index (Dolf te Lintelo, IDS)
   vi. Country Commitment and Capacity to Act on Food Insecurity and Malnutrition (José Valls Bedeau, FAO)
   vii. Feed the Progress Scorecard (Mary Bohman, USDA)

SESSION 3: WAYS FORWARD

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