The Scope, Coverage and Methodology of the In-depth Assessment of the National System for Agriculture Statistics

Global Strategy to Improve Agricultural and Rural Statistics

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- **In-depth Assessment report**

  Proposed Headings to be used

  Issues for discussion in the expert meeting

Implementation of Global Strategy began with an initial Country Assessment (CA) through a self-reported questionnaire

- Assessments made in **Panorama reports** for CountrySTAT, NSDS and now Country Assessments spearheaded by AfDB in Africa

- Country responses converted to set of indicators characterizing the dimensions and elements of the country capacity to produce agriculture statistics.

- Need to **develop indicators** to support the choice of target countries for priority action.

- **In-depth Assessment** will be carried out in each selected country to provide the baseline information for monitoring impact and outcome of the support to be provided for improvement in the agriculture and rural statistics system.

- Assessment should provide insight into the problems faced by the country.

The Main Objectives of the In-depth Assessment

▪Provide a thorough "***diagnostic report***" as the basis for developing a Sector Strategic Plans for Agricultural and Rural Statistics (SSPARS) for the country.

▪The **Assessment Report** will also identify a set of nationally owned priorities to be addressed in the preparation of the SSPARS, and to be taken up for providing assistance to the country under the Action Plan for Implementation of the Global Strategy.

▪Serve as the basis for preparation of country proposal for seeking support by way of technical assistance, training and/or in implementation of new methodologies/technologies. It will also assist in identifying research topics.

▪ Report will be an authentic reference document for wider national and international community interested in the development of agricultural statistics.

▪In the short run, it should obviate the need of other assessments by partners interested in funding development of a specific aspect of agriculture statistics system.

Scope and Coverage of the Assessment

▪Cover the wider definition of agriculture, i.e. crops, livestock, aqua-culture, agro-forestry, environment, water. Debate of wider coverage of Fisheries and Forestry Sectors plus rural activities.

▪*Focus on* existence or otherwise of means to produce the minimum the core data item identified in the Global Strategy (Chapter 3, the FAO/UN, 2011) - take into account the data needs of the users, particularly those relating to current development priorities. National and Agricultural Sector Plans.

▪*Comprehensively cover statistical activities as all stages:* from availability and use of statistical infrastructure, methodologies in use, field operation, data dissemination, its analysis and use.

▪ **Engage all the agencies involved** - NSOs/CSOs, Ministries of Agriculture, Livestock, Environment, Land and Water Resources; academic & agricultural research institutions; Commodity Boards, Exporter Associations and Councils, as appropriate in the country.

▪*Take a holistic view of the system* of data collection and dissemination, i.e. cover all the data producers and users, and

▪*Evaluate* the existing or potential linkages between statistical activities within the agriculture and between agriculture and other sectors.

Log frame indicators for the Global Strategy

The following indicators in the log frame will be obtained from the in-depth assessment:

1. Number of target countries that have agreed a minimum set of core data to be produced
2. Total national budget for agricultural statistics (proportion from government)
3. Number of target countries with statistical staff having core statistical skills of one or more of the following advanced skills:
   - Sample design and survey organization for food and agricultural sector;
   - Master sampling frame : area frame, listing frame and multiple frame;
   - Estimation of crop area yield and production
   - Use of remote sensing, GPS, GIS in agricultural statistics.

Methodology of the Assessment

This involves:

- Designation of the **focal point** and establishing a **national team**

- **Steps** for the assessment

- **Specific issues** to be addressed during the course of assessment

Methodology of the Assessment
Designation of the focal point and establishing a national team

▪Designate a "**national focal point**" to serve as the national counterpart for the assessment. Should be a senior officer located in the main agency/institution responsible for agriculture statistics.

▪Desirable to have "**alternate focal point**" & "**contact persons**" in different agencies since agricultural statistics is collected in several agencies.

▪**Visiting experts and/or the national consultants** will facilitate the work of the national team to come up with a nationally owned report of the assessment.

▪Model ToR   to be prepared for all and annexed to the Guidelines on In-depth Assessment .

▪Some Countries already have National Agricultural Statistics Technical Committees co-ordinating Agric. Stats. These have Chairpersons & Secretariats. The in-depth assessment could be built on this framework.

Methodology of the Assessment
Steps for the assessment

▪Draw up a comprehensive list of institutions engaged in collection of agriculture statistics , the contact persons there in, a list of activities of these institutions and key constraints. **CAQ**; or where panorama reports for **CountrySTAT, NSDS** or **SSPARS** already exist what is required is review and up-dating;

▪A meeting of stake holders at an early stage of the assessment is important for validation & ownership.

▪Hold **interviews** with ministers, policy makers and respective national officers to clarify and validate issues and buy-in of the process.

▪ The **lead international expert** will have 2 or 3 missions to complete the in-depth assessment. The first mission will be more fact finding and diagnostic type, the second/third mission will conclude with a stakeholders' workshop to validate the findings in the draft report of the assessment.

Methodology of the Assessment
Specific issues to be addressed during the assessment – 1

- Structure of food and agriculture system – several ministries & agencies covering sector.

- Structure of the NSS and the place of agricultural statistics within it – in CSO or MOA? (if several agencies covering sector)

- Existence and status of the national strategy/plan for improving of statistics (NSDS) and role and place of agriculture in it.

- Role and place of statistics in agriculture sector development plan – in some countries agric. Stats. not even mentioned!

- Determination of the data needs & priorities – see below

- Validation of the core data set in consultation with users to come up with minimum set of core data - keeping in view national development and agricultural sector priorities.

Methodology of the Assessment
Specific issues to be addressed during the assessment – 2

▪Current status of agriculture statistics, including regularity of major activities like agricultural census, surveys, administrative data

▪Ongoing statistical activities in the agricultural sector and their SWOT analysis

▪Institutional capacity and training needs of different institutions (a set of standard indicators to be identified)

▪Budget or Funding of the activities between govt & donors -separately for NSO and the line ministries (a set of standard indicators or methodology to be identified) - (check list to be completed after expert meeting)

▪ Is this a good opportunity to collect data on costs of recent censuses and/or agric surveys? Then costs per holding/farm could be computed!! One challenge will be getting "Estimated Costs" Versus "Actual Costs"!!

▪Determining Cost-effectiveness of agric censuses and/or surveys. This may provide data for comparisons and advising other countries!

Methodology of the Assessment
Specific issues to be addressed: Determination of data needs

No formal procedures to identify data needs

■Generally there is no clear & systematic identification of data needs;

■No agreed formal procedures for identifying data needs; it is not clear whose role it is – data users or suppliers –

■Generally one cannot obtain the data needs even from users; if the users give their needs these needs are not clear enough with specified margins of error and levels of confidence;

■Where gaps are identified they are covered in an ad hoc fashion; and

■Generally there is no regular examination of the relevance and uses of the existing data.

Methodology of the Assessment
Specific issues to be addressed:
Determination of data needs

The possible approaches for determining data needs include:

▪ The examination of how data were or are actually used in the real world of management choices, policy decisions and planning, etc;

▪ Dialogue between data users and providers; - stakeholders' meetings

▪ Using checklists from national and international organizations(e.g. FAO) , other countries, etc.;

▪ Using the M & E approach. This is through the Logical Framework, which is a model of the sequence of causes and consequences between the intervention activity and the development process. This process identifies the inputs, outputs, effects and impacts and hence the Objectively Verifiable Indicators (OVI) leading to the data needs.

Methodology of the Assessment

Specific issues to be addressed: Determination of data priorities

It is imperative to set up a method for ranking the data items according to their benefits or value so that data can be collected in some optimal – or at least less haphazard – way. This is in the realm of Economics of Information.

Information is a resource which is used as an input to decision making. In general, the better the quality and quantity of information, then the greater the likelihood that a "less erroneous" decision will be made.

As a resource in a decision making process, information has both **a cost and a value**. The **cost** can be expressed in terms of the resources expended to collect or generate the initial data and the processing of this data into an accessible and understandable form, the resources expended in searching and analyzing this data for information and the cost of delays (in terms of net benefits foregone) of waiting for this information to become available prior to making a decision.

The **value** can be expressed in terms of the greater returns associated with a "less erroneous" decision. This is based on the differences in return between actions based on a bad decision, or no decision at all, and those based on a good decision, i.e. the opportunity costs of a bad decision or the losses foregone (added benefits) as a result of a good decision.

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Methodology of the Assessment
Specific issues to be addressed: Training Needs

▪Requires determination of current staffing levels with qualifications, practical experience;

▪Projected staffing requirements which may best come out of the **SSPARS**

▪Projected Training requirement as per SSPARS

In-depth Assessment Report – Proposed Outline

▪General Development & Statistical Scenario

▪Stakeholders' analysis

▪Capacity analysis of the responsible institutions

▪Data needs analysis and priorities

▪Main data gaps – includes unavailable data and data "not fit for use"

▪Technical evaluations of the main data collection activities

▪Constraint Analysis *to:*

  • identify weakness in the system which hamper collection and dissemination of data

  •to bring out the most important or binding constraint(s) for the main or priority statistical activities. The constraints may be methodological or operational or resource and infrastructure related.

  •precisely assess the needs of training of human resources, technical assistance or special research needs.

  ✓SWOT analysis framework.

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Issues for discussion

▪ What should be the time frame for the In-depth Assessment? How many missions are needed by international experts?

▪How do we ensure that the report on the in-depth assessment is adequate for the development of SSPARS? What indicators are required?

▪What are the additional points/issues to be addressed in the Assessment?
▪What should be the contents (headings for a standard template) of the Country Proposal for seeking assistance under the Global Strategy?

▪Should the country assessment also indicate some strategic vision in terms of choice of methodology or stop at providing a diagnosis of the situation.

▪How to measure/assess resource use to facilitate comparisons between countries, with a view to advising improvements and to ensure efficiency or cost-effectiveness of agricultural statistics activities? – collection of data on costs & other resources of surveys/censuses??

THANK YOU