



USDA-NASS Assessments of Official Agricultural Statistics Systems

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Expert Meeting on Assessing Country Capacity
to Produce Agricultural and Rural Statistics

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NASS International Programs

*helping to improve
agricultural data systems
worldwide
for over 60 years*

training & technical assistance in all aspects of
statistical surveys & data systems

technical review of agricultural statistics programs



Request of Country Government

general advice on how to improve
existing agricultural statistics system

assistance to improve methodology for
generating official agricultural statistics

Request of Development Partners

e.g. USG's Feed the Future initiative - USAID

strengthen country-owned systems for agriculture & food security data
to generate M&E indicators for investments

General goals for NASS assessments



- Develop understanding of current agricultural statistics programs at national & regional levels.
 - ✓ data requirements of the agricultural sector
 - ✓ organizational structures & general methodologies used to generate official agricultural statistics

- Identify strengths & weaknesses of current programs, & recommend ways to improve availability & quality of statistics.

- Identify gaps in existing capacity building efforts, taking into account work of other development partners.

- Identify potential activities for building statistical capacity of relevant government institutions to establish & maintain sustainable agricultural data systems.

Additional goal for NASS FTF assessments



- Determine extent to which existing information systems are capable of generating data needed by
 - ✓ Government to effectively monitor the country's food security situation
 - ✓ Development Partners to evaluate effectiveness of interventions aimed at alleviating food shortages



➤ Government websites

National Statistical Office, Ministry of Agriculture & other ministries

- ✓ organizational structures
- ✓ agricultural statistics programs & methodologies
- ✓ agricultural reports & data availability
- ✓ statistical laws
- ✓ partnerships
- ✓ agricultural/statistical development initiatives & strategies

➤ Development partner websites

- ✓ in-country agricultural/statistical interests & investments
- ✓ current & previous support provided on agricultural statistics

➤ General web searches

- ✓ previous studies/summaries of in-country agricultural statistics programs
- ✓ in-country agricultural situation
- ✓ maps



- Government staff responsible for generating official agricultural statistics
 - ✓ Ministry of Agriculture
 - ✓ National Statistical Office

- Others who provide input to &/or share responsibilities for the national agricultural statistics system
 - ✓ other Government ministries
 - ✓ regional/local agricultural/statistical offices
 - ✓ other individuals & organizations involved in collecting, processing, analyzing &/or disseminating agriculture-related statistics

- Development partners - USAID, FAO, World Bank, DFID, EU, WFP, etc.

- Data users
 - ✓ Government
 - ✓ NGOs
 - ✓ Universities
 - ✓ private sector

Examples of questions to launch in-depth discussions



- ◆ Why did they request a program evaluation?
- ◆ What would they like to see happen as a result?
- ◆ What is their vision for agricultural statistics in the country?
- ◆ What are their biggest challenges? concerns?

- ◆ What is the agricultural situation?

- ◆ What organizations have responsibility for collection and dissemination of agricultural statistics?
- ◆ Does a statistical law outline responsibility and define rules on collection and handling of data?

- ◆ What are the organizational structure and staffing levels?
- ◆ What is the background and training of statistical staff? data collection staff?
- ◆ Are data collection staff paid? full time? informed observers?
- ◆ What are the training needs of the organization?

Examples of questions to launch in-depth discussions



- ◆ What official agricultural statistics are currently being generated?
- ◆ What do they consider to be statistical information?
- ◆ How is the information generated?
- ◆ Is there an operational survey program in place? At what level - national and/or regional?
- ◆ What was the latest data collection activity? How were the data collected and processed?
- ◆ What sampling frames are available? used?
- ◆ What hardware and software are available? used?
- ◆ How are the survey activities funded?

- ◆ What is the publication policy - secret or available to public?
- ◆ What is being disseminated? How?

- ◆ Who are the data users?
- ◆ Are the data users needs being fulfilled?

Common findings of NASS assessments



- lack of resources for agricultural data collection
 - ✗ funding
 - ✗ staff
 - ✗ transportation
 - ✗ data collection tools
- limited statistical & analytical capacity of units responsible for agricultural statistics
- lack of institutional coordination
 - ✗ use of vastly different methodologies leads to inconsistent results
 - ✗ duplication of effort leads to inefficient use of limited resources
- lack of understanding of data users' needs
- **lack of vision for the agricultural statistics system**

Common findings of NASS assessments



- inadequate sample designs & sizes
 - ✗ may not address complexity of agricultural situations
 - ✗ samples too small for desired degree of precision, detail &/or level of disaggregation

- surveys request too much information
 - ✗ takes time to collect, process & analyze
 - ✗ some not obtainable
 - ✗ heavy emphasis on data for numerous M&E indicators detracts from efforts to obtain reliable basic information

- lack of clarity in concepts, definitions, reference dates/periods

- potential for stakeholder influence

- lack of timely access to results

- limited public dissemination of agricultural data