



Expert Meeting 2

**Developing Sector Strategic Plans for Agricultural and Rural Statistics and
Integration into the National Strategies for Development of Statistics**

04 DECEMBER 2012, 14:00 – 17:30

RED ROOM, WFP HEADQUARTERS

ANNOTATED OUTLINE

for

Guidelines on Sector Strategic Plans for Agricultural and Rural Statistics (SSPARS)

I - WHY SPECIFIC GUIDELINES ON SSPARS?

Guidelines on SSPARS will be of particular help to staff of the agricultural statistics sector to work (together with the NSO) to mainstream agricultural statistical systems into national statistical systems by integrating their SSPARS into NSDS process. Or in the cases where the NSDS process is not being prepared or implemented to formulate a SSPARS which could be considered as a transitional response to respond to the situation in the short term. There are several reasons for developing specific SSPARS guidelines: (1) recognizing that the agricultural sector was not sufficiently mainstreamed into the first round NSDSs or not mainstreamed at all, and there is a need to raise the profile of agricultural statistics (2) to consider issues specific to the SSPARS process, due to the extreme complexity of agricultural and rural statistical systems which has many sub-sectors and stakeholders who are producing, compiling and using agricultural statistics (3) to benefit from the on-going updating of NSDS guidelines by PARIS21 (4) to take account on the importance given to SSPARS as one of the three pillars of the Global Strategy.

The SSPARS guidelines, as a reference document for the implementation of the Global Strategy at country level, has to be seen as a complement to the updated NSDS guidelines. However, it is suggested that the guidelines should also be used as a stand-alone reference document - thus allowing agricultural statisticians to use the SSPARS guidelines without being obliged to refer systematically to another document. It is therefore suggested that the SSPARS guidelines use the same structure and approach as the updated NSDS guidelines, including the development of a dedicated webpage and the access to e-learning tools. Although there will be complementarities the SSPARS guidelines will add value by looking at the development of the strategy from the point of view of the agricultural sector and addressing issues specific to the sector, through best practices and recommendations. While the steps are similar to that for developing the NSDS, what should be done under each differs due to the specificities of the agricultural sector.

The annotated outline sets out the proposed key principles and proposed contents of the Guidelines. This is complemented by the case study presentation which highlights the main specificities which apply to the agricultural sector during SSPARS design and implementation. Agreement should be reached on the key principles, the approach and draft structure; and discussion raised on the specificities for the agricultural sector and agricultural sector data collection which should be highlighted under each of the 7 design and 5 implementation steps. Discussion should also highlight specific examples of best practices and lessons learned for these steps.

II - KEY PRINCIPLES TO BE CONSIDERED FOR STRUCTURING THE SSPARS GUIDELINES

Principle 1: Introducing the SSPARS as a building block of NSDS

The need for a close relationship between the formulation of the SSPARS and the NSDS does not need to be demonstrated as in principle the NSDS covers the entire NSS. Experience has shown that first NSDS's have been almost NSO-centric and did not adequately mainstream the agricultural sector. It is also true that with resource constraints it is difficult to develop each statistical area simultaneously. Given the importance of agricultural sector there is no reason why a strategic plan for agricultural statistics should not be formulated before the rest of the NSS is ready to start. As a main principle, SSPARS should be understood as a building block of the NSDS, developed autonomously but able to be integrated into the NSDS cycle of a country once it is in place. The formulation of SSPARS and the synchronisation with NSDS cycles will have to be precisely addressed in the guidelines.

Principle 2: Making a clear difference between Design and Implementation

While implementation is a continuous activity (5 to 10 years) over time following the design of the first SSPARS, the design of the SSPARS itself may occur at a specific moment within the overall NSDS cycle. However these two processes are not independent since the **implementation** of the SSPARS for year N overlaps with the **preparation** of the next NSDS or sectoral strategy in year N+1. It will be important to cover these two processes separately in the SSPARS guidelines, exactly as it is structured in the NSDS guidelines.

Principle 3: A different process each for the design and the implementation of SSPARS

The SSPARS design process includes two types of processes (i) those which are carried out at a specific moment in time (sequenced processes) or (ii) those which are to be considered as permanent steps throughout the overall design process. Sequenced processes refer to specific steps relevant to the design phase. Permanent processes refer to horizontal activities such as: overall management, overall advocacy tasks, continuous political commitment and the overall process of monitoring-reviewing-evaluating. During the design phase, **7 sequenced steps** and **5 permanent steps** are proposed. During the implementation stage the 5 permanent steps will remain relevant.

The 7 specific sequenced steps proposed for the design phase:

1. Acknowledging, recognizing (by government or by highest authority in agricultural statistics): that agricultural statistics are important for development, that strategic planning has to be considered and that the SSPARS approach is a potential catalyst for significant change in the agricultural and rural sector. This stage is the starting point for launching the process and will be have to be treated carefully since it requires specific attention linked to the existing governance of the NSS and existing status of coordination mechanisms for agricultural statistics (different options may be taken according to the existence of a centralized or decentralized system, the existence and efficiency of coordinating bodies across the NSS etc..).

2. Understanding the overall NSDS and SSPARS process and the context for developing it (by national stakeholders...and technical and financial partners). This step is one of the most important. Experience has shown that success of NSDSs was highly correlated with the appropriate awareness and ownership of the stakeholders. Before launching the whole process, it is therefore a strong prerequisite that stakeholders are informed and aware of the importance of managing for development results (MfDR); of the necessary linkages to be established between the SSPARS and the national development and agricultural/rural policies (the demand), incl. budget cycles (MTEFs); of the importance to build on what is in place (SSPARS is not starting from scratch), the need to be realistic and pragmatic. It is also crucial that they understand the importance of engaging users of statistics and all departments and sub-sectors (including universities, NGO's, farmers unions) involved in the production/use of statistics and not only the Ministry of Agriculture and the National statistical office; the importance of management and arrangements for coordination across the NSS (legislative framework, council) with specific committees or working groups on agriculture; the importance of regional, international commitments and initiatives (the Global Strategy in particular) and the existing development agendas (Aid effectiveness, use of country systems). This chapter will be fully developed with systematic reference to existing standards, tools and good practices. Focus will also be placed on the organization of workshops for stakeholders (to be organised throughout the NSDS process or more specifically for the SSPARS process)

3. Preparing (the launching of the process). Before launching the whole SSPARS process itself it is crucial that some preparatory work be carried out. A series of issues will be covered, in particular building the specific constituency for the SSPARS, setting up administrative procedures, identifying the SSPARS design team; developing the “roadmap” for designing the SSPARS (who will do what, where and when and how the design will be financed); launching officially the process. Attention will have to be paid on the precise definition of the scope of the agricultural sector and its possible links with other sectors. This chapter will insist in particular on the importance of national ownership of the process and on the need to use national experts and teams as much as possible. Concrete example of roadmaps will be presented. Specific issues relating to the coordination between producers of agricultural statistics and between users and producers, and how to manage this for development of the SSPARS will also be set out in this section.

4. Assessing (the existing agricultural and rural statistical system). Assessment of the overall agricultural statistical system will be a crucial phase of the SSPARS drafting phase, considering the complexity and multiplicity of actors in the sector. This phase answers the question: Where are we now? It will be important to take benefit of the existing opportunities in terms of assessment (country assessments carried out through the global strategy, DQAFS, CountrySTAT, inventories of surveys with NADAs) and to describe in detail the various methodologies and best practices in terms of assessment (SWOT, document reviews, stakeholders interviews, questionnaires...). This chapter will also describe in detail the possible items to be covered (user satisfaction and needs, assessment of agricultural statistical system, assessment of existing legal framework, organization, financial resources and infrastructure) and will be illustrated by several examples taken from countries.

5. Envisioning (the future). The next step to be described will be the establishment of the mission and the vision and will offer the possibility to establish various scenarios, answering two questions: Where do we want to go and what can we do? Various examples and best practices will illustrate this chapter.

6. Identifying strategic goals. On the basis of the previous steps, the objective will be to describe what will be the strategic goals, answering the questions: What do we want to achieve and how will we achieve it? Several examples taken from countries will be presented and commented. All the possible capacities to be reinforced will be listed as a kind of reference for the countries: governance, adequacy of physical-capital resources-human resources, policies, finances, infrastructure, statistical products (coverage, periodicity, integrity, quality), partnerships.

7. Developing action plans. The last sequenced step during the design phase will be the preparation of annual action plans which will need to be costed. Various examples of good practices will be used and discussed.

The implementation phase:

Implementing. Whatever the quality of the strategic management process, plans will need to be sufficiently flexible to be regularly reviewed. Mechanisms for managing change will have to be planned as well as plans for timing and sequencing the next SSPARS (and NSDS) cycle. These aspects should have been integrated into the SSPARS design phase but it has been considered important to raise these points in this specific chapter. Experience acquired in countries over recent years will be largely used for illustrating this subject.

The 5 permanent steps (concerning both design and implementation):

A. Managing. The issue of leadership and management is one of the main issues for ensuring the success of the SSPARS and its mainstreaming within the NSDS process. Managing is to be considered a permanent task, particularly because the SSPARS process brings change and change has to be monitored and managed adequately. The chapter will focus on the need to have a champion for the SSPARS process, will insist on the role of the Ministry of Agriculture and the NSO in this process and will provide some recommendations on the organizational-operational level, including the necessary coordination structures, for managing the SSPARS and its links with the overall NSDS process, based on best practices collected in the countries.

B. Committing. High-level political commitment is needed, not just for launching the SSPARS process or for increasing funding but also for increasing the use of statistical information for policy and decision making. Leadership at political level will be required permanently during the design phase but also during implementation. It will also be necessary to ensure that all major decisions are endorsed at the same level. This chapter will insist on this challenging issue of lasting political commitment and will illustrate its importance through appropriate examples. It will explore the role of national commitment at the highest possible level and sectoral level commitment.

C. Budgeting-Financing. Prior to its implementation, the SSPARS will need to be carefully costed. This will require the preparation of detailed budgets, at least for the first years of implementation. Funding of the SSPARS will have to seriously addressed and probably integrated into the overall question of support to statistics of the NSS. Activities will have to be reflected in national annual budgets (with links to existing MTEFs) and probably complementary funding to be found from external partners. A lot of experience has been gained in this field over recent years and best practices can be shared, particularly on questions related to external funding and in-country coordination of donors at NSS and sectoral levels. This chapter will concentrate on the following elements: costing, budgeting the strategy; mobilizing funding for the strategy (design – implementation), existing financial mechanisms = understanding the aid environment; coordination mechanisms between government, the agricultural sector and technical and financial partners.

D. Advocating. The SSPARS is a fantastic opportunity for statistical advocacy, in particular during its design phase where important questions such as ownership, actors involved, dialogue between producers and users, political support, funding, financial assistance, governance of the system are debated. The question of advocacy has been systematically under-estimated and needs to be considered as a strategic component for raising the profile of statistics. As outlined in the concept note, this section takes the view that statistics is envisaged as a whole national entity, rather than sector by sector. A lot of experience has been gained in this field and this chapter will benefit from lessons learnt from countries.

E. Monitoring, reviewing, evaluating, reporting. Monitoring, reviewing, and evaluating the SSPARS process are fundamental components of the SSPARS cycle. Even if some of these tasks are carried out at a specific period of time, they are considered as a continuous tool feeding important information to fully enable the managing step during the whole NSDS process and thus classified as permanent tasks. In particular, monitoring requires a constant organisation of activities aiming at tracking or alerting management to potential problems. Reporting is also a task which has to be seriously taken into account. The chapter will describe the following processes in detail and will be based on concrete examples from countries: monitoring mechanism: a continuous activity, monitoring plan; evaluations: mid-term, final, methodologies (peer reviews...); reporting mechanisms

Principle 4: Systematic linkage of each process with existing norms, tools and best practices

For each of the described sequenced and permanent steps systematic references (when it is relevant) may be made to case studies taken from existing country practices showing (1) national/international standards or norms, (2) specific tools and (3) best practices in strategic planning in agricultural statistics.

III - HOW TO REFLECT THESE KEY PRINCIPLES IN THE SSPARS GUIDELINES?

SSPARS as a building block of the NSDS will form the introductory part of the guidelines.

Then the description of the methodology will have to be presented in such a way that the links between the processes (sequenced-permanent) and the correspondences with the existing norms, tools and best practices are kept. The proposed following linear structure is therefore an option among several possibilities but is considered as the most logical one: starting with permanent tasks (A to E) then followed by all the sequenced steps of the design phase (1 to 7) and the implementation phase (0). For each of the steps, links with existing norms/standards, tools and best practices and linkages with the relevant other processes will be systematically indicated.

The guidelines will have also to address specific issues such as the possibility to have strategies developed at other geographical levels (regional level or infra-national levels). The question of SSPARS for specific situations such as small islands or fragile states should be also addressed (light SSPARS) as well as the possibility to develop strategies for sub-sectors. Material developed on NSDS guidelines should be used as an input for this.

IV - DRAFT STRUCTURE OF SSPARS GUIDELINES

Introduction: overview of the guide, how to use the material

1. Scope of agricultural sector: Specificities of the Agricultural Sector and impact on agricultural statistics data collection

This section will provide an overview of the demand for agricultural statistics and the relationship between SSPARS as a pillar of the Global Strategy; showing both how the Global Strategy serves as a reference framework for the SSPARS and how the SSPARS is incorporated into the implementation of the Global Strategy. It will outline the specificities of agricultural decision making in terms of complexity, uncertainty, the multi perspectives involved and the issues this presents for collection of agricultural statistics.

2. SSPARS as a building block of NSDS

Overview of NSDS process and NSDS cycles; and role of the SSPARS in developing the NSDS

Formulating the SSPARS in synchronisation with NSDS. This will explore how to integrate the SSPARS with the NSDS in the various scenarios: when there is as yet no NSDS being prepared or implemented; an NSDS is being prepared and NSDS is already being implemented or the second stage design has begun.

3. Designing and implementing the SSPARS

Permanent tasks of the overall SSPARS cycle

- A Managing
- B Committing
- C Budgeting-Financing
- D Advocating
- E Monitoring-Reviewing-Evaluating-Reporting

Designing the SSPARS: the steps

- 1 Acknowledging
- 2 Understanding
- 3 Preparing
- 4 Assessing
- 5 Envisioning
- 6 Identifying Strategic Goals
- 7 Developing action plans

Implementing the SSPARS

Main success factors

Best practices

4. Specific issues

- Regional agricultural strategies - this will discuss the role to be played by broader statistical strategies and the extent to which regional and infra-national strategies on agriculture (e.g. Horn of Africa) should play a part in the SSPARS
- Infra-national strategies
- Fragile states and small island states
- Sub-sectoral strategies: discussion of integration of fisheries and livestock when these are separate sub-sectoral groups. The broader conception of agriculture - what should be included? Environmental issues? Climate change?
- Other issues

Annexes