

Webinar on the Operational Guidelines of the World Programme for the Census of Agriculture 2020 (WCA 2020)

Budapest, Hungary - Virtual Meeting, 25-29 October 2021

Purpose: This Webinar complements the roundtable on the FAO World Programme for the Census of Agriculture 2020 (WCA 2020) Round in 2017, and aims at disseminating among the countries from the Eastern Europe and Central Asia region the Operational Guidelines¹ of the WCA 2020 (Volume 2), which covers the period 2016-2025. The meeting offered participants a deeper understanding of the new census guidelines, with the main focus on the practical aspects of the conduct of an agricultural census, from census planning and preparation to its implementation, until data dissemination and archiving of census results with the opportunity to share countries experiences in census taking.

Organizers: The FAO Regional Office for Eastern Europe and Central Asia (FAOREU Budapest) in collaboration with the FAO Statistics Division (HQ Rome).

Participants: 97 participants attended the Webinar, of which were 91 representatives from 18 countries, namely: Albania, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Georgia, Israel, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Moldova, Russian Federation, Serbia, Tajikistan, Turkey, Ukraine, Uzbekistan, plus representatives from Eurasian Economic Commission Statistics Department (EECSTAT), EUROSTAT and FAO. All participants were directly involved in agricultural censuses (ACs) and surveys and analysis of their results. The list of participants is attached in **Annex 1**.

Mr Vladimir Rakhmanin, Assistant Director-General, FAO Regional Representative for Europe and Central Asia (REU), delivered the welcoming remarks to the participants of the Webinar. Mr Giorgi Kvinikadze, FAO-REU Regional Statistician, delivered the opening remarks, while Mr. Jairo Castano, Team Leader, Agricultural Censuses and Surveys, FAO Statistics Division, FAO-ESS, welcomed the participants and provided a background of the meeting.

The participants were encouraged to consult guidelines at the dedicated FAO website <http://www.fao.org/world-census-agriculture/wcarounds/wca2020/en/>, both in English and Russian languages. The presentations and reference materials are accessible at the FAO website <https://www.fao.org/index.php?id=112635>. In addition, the participants were encouraged to consult also the WCA 2020 web-resources at <https://www.fao.org/world-census-agriculture/wcarounds/wca2020/web-based/en/#chapter01> and country census documents at <https://www.fao.org/world-census-agriculture/wcarounds/wca2020/countries2020/en/>.

¹FAO. 2018. World programme for the census of agriculture 2020. Volume 2 Operational Guidelines. FAO statistical development series 16. Rome. 348 pp. Licence: CC BY-NC-SA 3.0 IGO.

1. The meeting included eight technical sessions (including one roundtable), covering the main chapters of the Operational Guidelines of the WCA 2020 and an open-ended review. Technical sessions consisted of presentations by FAO and country presentations, followed by discussions.
2. A total of 20 presentations were delivered and discussed, of which 11 were delivered by FAO and nine by countries. The meeting programme is presented in **Annex 2**.
3. Three countries in the meeting conducted agricultural censuses in the WCA 2020 round (2016-2025), namely: Belarus (2019), Israel (2017) and Russian Federation (2016). Belarus implemented the agricultural census jointly with the Population and Housing Census. Russian Federation and Israel conducted a classical census. An essential feature of these last two ACs is the use of new technology (CAPI, CAWI and CATI) for census data collection.
4. Due to COVID-19 pandemic most countries had to postpone/delay their initial census plans/activities. The following countries confirmed/informed of their new plans to conduct ACs under the WCA 2020 round: Albania (Pilot census 2023, AC 2024, CAPI will be used), Armenia (2024, budget submitted to the government), Azerbaijan (2025), Bosnia and Herzegovina (2023), Georgia (AC jointly with PHC 2024), Kazakhstan (2024/2025, after the population census 2021), Kyrgyzstan (plans may start in 2022; currently preparing the population census), Moldova (AC jointly with PHC 2024), Montenegro (2023 in line with EU methodology, CAPI will be used), North Macedonia (Pilot census 2022, AC 2023, CAPI and CAWI will be used), Russian Federation (last census in 2016, next census in 2026, micro-census of agriculture in 2021 using CAPI and CAWI, satellite monitoring and piloting drones for checking data quality for the whole country and some regions, respectively), Serbia (AC 2023 combined with modular approach in line with the EU, CAPI will be used), Tajikistan (2023), Turkey (tentatively a farm register in 2022 and the census in 2023), Ukraine (no plans as there is a land reform underway) and Uzbekistan (tentatively in 2024).
5. Countries' census materials from the WCA 2020 round were requested to be provided to FAO during the meeting (reports on census results, questionnaires, other census products and material) when available. These materials are being used to complete the existing gaps in the FAO web census repository available at <http://www.fao.org/world-census-agriculture/wcarounds/wca2020/countries2020/en/> and to prepare Metadata Reviews. In particular, Israel assured to provide the questionnaires and methodology of the Agricultural Census 2017 as soon as translated in English.
6. Extensive discussions took place on other specific issues, such as:
 - The use of the PHC and administrative data sources to prepare the frame of agricultural holdings;
 - The importance of developing a general Work Plan together with detailed ones for specific tasks such as: training, enumeration, data processing, etc.;
 - Use of administrative registers as a data source for some census items;
 - The issues related to census coverage and the use of thresholds in the AC;

- Use of various listing methods for various types of holdings;
- Use of new technologies like hand-held devices, satellite imagery and aerial photos for collection and validation of the census data.
- The challenges of jointly conducting the census of agriculture and the population census;
- The risk of including non-essential items in the census;
- Implementing Post Enumeration Surveys and usefulness;
- Various issues related to planning, organization of fieldwork (including pre-test and pilot census), as well as census data collection, data processing and archiving and the use of technology were also discussed;
- The importance of user friendly and wide dissemination of results.

7. The participants appreciated the relevance and usefulness of the guidelines and other FAO resources in providing recommendations and best country practices.

FINAL REMARKS

8. The participants agreed that the Webinar achieved its objective to help the participants gain a deeper understanding of the WCA 2020 guidelines and share countries' experiences in census taking to assist them in the implementation of their agricultural censuses in the 2016 - 2025 period.

9. The participants welcomed the new WCA 2020 Operational Guidelines. They highly appreciated the Webinar's content and timing, especially taking into account that most of the countries are planning to conduct their censuses in the next three-four years.

10. The participants acknowledged the continuous assistance provided by FAO to countries' agricultural censuses in the region. They looked forward to receiving further guidance for the preparation and implementation of the ACs within the overall framework of the system of integrated agricultural censuses and surveys. Countries acknowledged the need to collaborate closely with national stakeholders, FAO and other development partners to include the agricultural census as a priority for country assistance by FAO and the donor community.

11. The participants expressed gratitude to FAO (REU and ESS) for the excellent organization of the Webinar.