



**Global Strategy**  
IMPROVING AG-STATISTICS



# **Role of the Global Strategy in Improving the Data on Agriculture and Rural Sectors**

Allan Nicholls  
Regional Coordinator  
Regional Office for the Asia-Pacific Regional Action  
Plan to Improve Agricultural and Rural Statistics



# Overview of the presentation

- Why are agricultural and rural statistics important?
- Why do we need a Global Strategy?
- What is the Global Strategy?
- Impact, Outcome and Outputs
- Three pillars of the Global Strategy
- Key features of the Global Strategy
- Challenges
- Implementation at country level

# Agricultural and Rural Statistics

- As we have seen in the previous session, these are important because
  - Three out of four poor people in developing countries live in rural areas
  - Most rely directly or indirectly on agriculture for their livelihoods
  - Agricultural development is vital to achieving the Millenium Development Goals, particularly those related to poverty and food security and to environmental sustainability
- The need to measure agricultural performance and the results of agricultural investment has become an increasingly pressing priority
- A wide range of important policy issues depend on good quality agricultural and rural statistics

# Why do we need a Global Strategy?

- Basic data requirements are not being met, especially in developing countries
    - countries' capacity in agricultural statistics has declined since early '80s
    - there are a declining number of countries reporting basic production
    - declining resources are being allocated to agricultural statistics by countries and development partners (low priority)
  - Agricultural statistics are not integrated in the National Statistical System
    - lack of coordination between NSO & Min. of Agriculture
    - duplicated efforts in data collection → conflicting numbers
    - National Statistical Plans often do not cover agricultural statistics
  - Emerging data needs (impact of agriculture on environment; investment in agriculture; biofuels; water and land use, climate change, etc.)
    - Need for a new conceptual framework
- *Lack of sound basis for deciding direction of agricultural development, monitoring crop conditions for advance decision making for import/export, Food Security policy formulation and implementation, monitoring and evaluation of development programmes*

# What is the Global Strategy?

- An initiative of the FAO and World Bank developed under the auspices of the United Nations Statistical Commission
- Partnership between International Agencies, developed and developing countries involving an extensive consultation process
- 2 intergovernmental processes for its adoption:
  - UNSC and National Statistical Offices
  - FAO Governing Bodies and Ministries of Agriculture
- Basis for a renewed initiative of capacity building in agricultural statistics: mobilization of resources
- Provides a conceptual framework to meet emerging requirements

# Impact and Outcome

- IMPACT
  - Improve evidence-based decision making for poverty reduction, increased food security, sustainable agriculture and rural development
- OUTCOME
  - Enable target countries to develop sustainable statistical systems for production and dissemination of accurate and timely agricultural and rural statistics, comparable over time and across countries.

# Global Outputs

- Effective governing bodies set up and functioning at global and regional levels
- Coordinating bodies of the NSS, legal frameworks and strategic plans established (by the countries) in target countries to enable the integration of agriculture into the NSS
- New cost effective methods for data collection, analysis and dissemination developed and disseminated
- Increased capacity of agricultural statistics staff in regional training centres and target countries

# The Three Pillars

1. Establish a minimum set of core data that countries will disseminate on a regular basis to meet current and emerging demands
2. Integrate agriculture into national statistical systems in order to meet the requirements of policy makers and other data users that statistical information be linked across the economic, social and environmental domains
3. Foster the sustainability of agricultural statistical systems through governance and statistical capacity building



# 1. Minimum Set of Core Data

- Not possible to meet every data requirement every year
  - Eg FAO database includes over 150 crop items
- Global Strategy defines a minimum set
  - 15 commodities – 95% of world production
    - Wheat, maize, barley, sorghum, rice, sugar cane, soybeans, cotton
    - Cattle, sheep, pigs, goats and poultry
    - Core aquaculture and fisheries commodity (country specific?)
  - Key economic, environmental, social indicators
  - A starting point for building agricultural statistics systems

# Core Data items are...

- Selected on the basis of their importance to agricultural production globally
- Contribute to many indicators needed to monitor and evaluate development policies, food security and progress towards meeting MDGs
- Provide inputs to the national accounts and global balances of supply and demand for food and other agricultural products
- Crops which
  - account for a major proportion of land use
  - contribute significantly to farm and rural household well-being
  - Have an effect on the environment and climate
- NOTE: Countries can delete items not relevant (eg if no rice is grown) and add other items which are important to the country

## 2. Integrate agriculture into NSDS

- Development of a master sampling frame
  - to be the source for all samples for surveys of agricultural holdings, farm households and rural non-farm households
- Integrated survey framework
  - based on standard concepts and definitions
  - provides an annual work programme which is consistent from year to year
  - minimizes the required scope of censuses
  - recognizes that some data needs to be collected more often than annually
  - includes data sources such as administrative data, remotely sensed data and community surveys
- Data dissemination strategy
  - access to official statistics for dissemination purposes
  - storage and retrieval of survey results
  - access to farm, household and geo-referenced data for research

# 3. Sustainability

- Sustainability of a statistical system is largely a function of
  - demand for the data it produces
  - financial support that is required to satisfy demand
- Need to get a better understanding of
  - the demand for statistical information at national level
  - what is required to supply that information
- Governance and Statistical capacity building are both required to achieve sustainability

# 3a. Governance

- Governance at national level involves the organization of a national statistical system that includes sector ministries and other agencies that provide data
- A coordination mechanism (such as a National Statistics Council) should
  - ensure adherence to a common set of standards
  - ensure statistical integrity by making data available and accessible
  - provide a common voice to seek resources for the agricultural statistics system within the NSS

## 3b. Statistical Capacity Building

- Needs to address aspects of quality of agricultural statistics
  - accuracy, relevance, timeliness, comparability, availability and accessibility
- Technical assistance (as part of Global Strategy) will be provided to develop strategies, not to undertake data collection
- Donor funding and support will be essential to improve national statistical systems, but
- The collection of core data should, over time, become sustainable using national resources

# Global Strategy – Key Features

- Broadens the scope of agricultural statistics
  - Adds social and environmental dimensions to traditional economic statistics (production, farm income, etc)
  - Includes aspects of rural households, forestry, fishery
- Translates policy into statistical language
  - Provides methodology to connect data on farm holdings to rural households and to the natural environment – land
- Integrates agriculture into the National Statistical System
  - Perhaps the most significant outcome of the global strategy
  - Enables mobilization of resources
  - Promotes coordination of efforts and data harmonization

# Global Strategy – Challenges

- Integrate agriculture into National Statistical Systems
- Rebuild statistical capacity
  - Statistical methodology for sampling, survey design, data analysis
  - Data dissemination – advocacy
  - Uses of administrative and other data
- Implement new methodology and technology to meet emerging data needs
  - Master sample frame, integrated surveys
  - Remote sensing, Global Positioning Systems, etc
- Continuous feedback from data users



# Global Strategy – Challenges

- An integrated approach is needed
  - Governance bringing together NSOs and statistical offices from MoAs
  - Governance at global and regional levels to support statistical capacity building
    - Well defined and documented statistical standards for methodology and technology to be used
    - Statistical capacity building through NSDS – technical assistance and training
  - User participation to determine content, scope and coverage of national statistics
  - Statistical methods for master frame; integrated data system

# Global Strategy – Broad Implementation

- Country Assessment Questionnaire to obtain basic capacity data
- Classify countries by capacity and other key criteria
- Select priority countries
- Conduct in-depth assessments
- Develop country proposals to improve statistics (detailed requirements for technical assistance, training and overall capacity building)
- Arrange or provide appropriate assistance

# Global Strategy: Asia-Pacific Region

- Regional Action Plan (RAP) has been developed and approved
- Regional Steering Committee (RSC) is established
  - RSC will guide implementation based on the RAP
- Country assessment questionnaire completed for most countries (all countries here completed the CAQ)
- Selection of priority countries for 2013 has been made (Bhutan, Indonesia, Samoa and Sri Lanka)
- Training courses have begun, this being the 2nd
- Procedures and documentation have been developed to enable in-depth country assessments to be undertaken
- Next step is Country missions to undertake in-depth assessments

# Country level implementation

- Identify a National Strategy Coordinator in country
- Recruit national and international consultants to assist countries
- Conduct in-depth interviews with all stakeholders to identify aspects of current statistical demand and capacity
- Create a road map for development of a SSPARS
- Produce a country proposal for future work in capacity development

# Outputs from in-country work

- An In-depth Country Assessment of all aspects of statistical capacity
- A roadmap for development of a SSPARS
- A Country Proposal
  - A definitive document which identifies and prioritizes future work needed to improve the agricultural statistics system
  - Directed to donors and international organizations with the aim to mobilize funds