



# Improving Statistics for Food Security, Sustainable Agriculture and Rural Development: An Action Plan for Africa

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This second issue of the Bulletin presents the progress made in the execution of the “Action Plan to Improve Statistics for Food Security, Sustainable Agriculture, and Rural Development in Africa.” It covers the period January to May 2011. The Bulletin can be accessed online at the following address: [www.afdb.org/en/knowledge/publications/.....](http://www.afdb.org/en/knowledge/publications/.....)

## I. Overview

The second bulletin presents progress made in the execution of the “Action Plan to Improve Statistics for Food Security, Sustainable Agriculture, and Rural Development in Africa” over the period January to May 2011. It discusses ongoing activities and includes next steps for the implementation of the Action Plan.

## II. Progress made since the last bulletin

Major achievements recorded since the last bulletin include: (i) Consolidation of the individual component proposals into a single document proposal titled “*Improving Statistics for Food Security, Sustainable Agriculture, and Rural Development - Action Plan for Africa*”; (ii) Presentation of the Action Plan for Africa at the 42<sup>nd</sup> Session of the UN Statistical Commission (UNSC) in February 2011 in New York; (iii) Initiation of the fundraising process; (iv) Establishment of a coordination office at the AfDB, with the recruitment of Mr. Vincent Ngendakumana as Coordinator. Other activities related to agricultural statistics include the development of the Food Security Portal and the preparation of food security briefing notes.

### Box 1: Governance mechanism

In order to respond to the declining quantity and quality of agricultural statistics in developing countries, a *Global Strategy for Improving Agricultural and Rural Statistics* was produced and endorsed in February 2010 by the United Nations Statistical Commission (UNSC). Africa is the first region to implement the Global Strategy. The Action Plan for Africa of the Global Strategy has been designed by the African Development Bank (AfDB), United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (ECA), and Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) in collaboration with African Union Commission (AUC). It has been shared and discussed with key stakeholders both within and outside the continent, including African countries, regional and international organizations, regional economic communities (RECs), donors, and the UNSC. The Action Plan adopts a long-term perspective (10 to 15 years) but will follow a phased approach, with the first phase covering the five-year period 2011–2015.

The continental governance arrangements, *inter alia*, execute the Action Plan for Africa, allocate resources, monitor implementation, assess and report on progress made. These arrangements include: (i) a Regional Steering Committee (RSTC) established as the decision-making body for the Action Plan for Africa. The RSTC, which includes users and producers of statistics, is under the high-level stewardship of the Chief Economist and Vice-President of AfDB as its chairperson, (ii) an Executive Committee comprising the AfDB, ECA and FAO, and (iii) a Regional Implementation Secretariat established at the AfDB. The technical components of the Action Plan (Technical Assistance, Training and Research) will be implemented in a coordinated way but under the direct leadership of AfDB, ECA, and FAO respectively.

The main beneficiaries of the Global Strategy are the countries that require sound agricultural statistics for evidence-based policies, decisionmaking, and a host of other purposes. Countries bear the primary responsibility for the Plan’s implementation.

The implementation mechanism at the national level includes:

- i. a *National Agricultural Statistical Coordination Committee (NASCC)* chaired by a data user, usually a high-level policymaker from the Ministry of Agriculture, who oversees the development of the National Agricultural Statistical System (NASS) as an integral part of the National Statistical System (NSS);
- ii. a *National Strategy Coordinator* to deal with administrative and technical work in the implementation of the Action Plan in the country; and
- iii. a *Technical Working Group* (covering different areas of agriculture) to assist the Coordinator with technical work.

### **Consolidation of the individual component proposals into a single document proposal**

The Implementation Plan for Africa adopts a long-term perspective (10 to 15 years) but will follow a phased approach, with the first phase covering the next 5 years (2011-2015).

The three components – technical assistance, training and research – of the Action Plan have been developed respectively by the AfDB, ECA, and FAO, in collaboration with AUC, as stand-alone components with their own objectives, outcomes, outputs, activities and budgets. In addition, a governance mechanism has been developed by the AfDB to ensure effective coordination at the various levels from the national and regional to the global levels (see Box 1).

To ensure that the four individual component documents are well aligned and integrated, and to facilitate the fundraising process, the AfDB has consolidated them into a unique document proposal titled *"Improving Statistics for Food Security, Sustainable Agriculture, and Rural Development – An Action Plan for Africa"*. Its Foreword has been signed by the Chief Executives of the AfDB, AUC, ECA, and FAO. The document has now been sent for printing and publication. In the meantime, it is also being translated into French. The development process of various document proposals has been sponsored by the AfDB and the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, while their consolidation has been conducted by the AfDB. The Action Plan is intended to be the main reference document for countries and donors alike in their efforts to develop and strengthen statistics for food security, sustainable agriculture, and rural development over the next five years.

### **Presentation of the Action Plan for Africa at the 42<sup>nd</sup> Session of the UN Statistical Commission in New York in February 2011**

A report by **the Friends of the Chair on Agricultural Statistics** was presented to the 42<sup>nd</sup> Session of the UN Statistical Commission (UNSC), where it was announced that in Africa, the AfDB and ECA in collaboration with the AUC and FAO, had taken the lead in developing a strategic *"Action Plan for Africa for Improving Statistics for Food Security, Sustainable Agriculture, and Rural Development."* The FAO and AfDB also organized a meeting on the margins of the session on the theme: *"Implementing the Global Strategy to Improve Agricultural Statistics: Roles of International, Regional and National Organizations"*. The objective of the meeting was to introduce the Global Strategy for Agriculture Statistics, outline the process and progress made in developing the global and regional implementation plans of the Global Strategy, and identify the way forward. Furthermore, the meeting considered the role of regional and multilateral organizations, regional institutions, countries, and donors and their participation in supporting the implementation of the Strategy. The AfDB delegation presented the development process of the Action Plan for Africa and the way forward. It was stressed that Africa is the first region to champion the implementation of the Global Strategy. The participants congratulated the Africa region for the progress made under the leadership of the AfDB and ECA, and recommended that the Africa model be emulated by other global regions. In addition, the Commission was informed about the next steps the AfDB was taking to develop a country assessment framework and instruments to assess national statistical systems. This was deemed essential, in order to determine the nature and level of support required by each African country. This country assessment is due to be launched before the end of the year.

### **Initiation of the fundraising process**

To fund the implementation of the Strategy, a Global Multidonor Trust Fund for Agricultural Statistics will be set up and hosted by the FAO/World Bank. For the Action Plan for Africa, a Regional Trust Fund will be hosted by the AfDB. The budget for implementing the Action Plan in the 52 Regional Member Countries (RMCs) over five years is estimated to be around US\$ 66 million. The **regional implementing structures** are expected to

provide inputs to the project through in-kind contributions up to 15-30 percent of the total budget. At the country level, **governments** will be paying salaries for national staff involved in the implementation of the Strategy, allocating work space, etc. The remaining balance will be mobilized by other donors. In this regard, in February 2011, the AfDB, FAO and World Bank embarked on a fundraising campaign to mobilize resources by undertaking joint missions to consult with potential donors. A **donors' conference** has since been scheduled for **September, 6, 2011** to discuss, among other things, the Action Plan for Africa and to mobilize the requisite resources. A number of potential donors have indicated their interest in contributing to the implementation of the Strategy and Action Plan, including joint funding of activities in African countries.

### **Establishment of a coordination office at AfDB**

To ensure that activities related to the preparation of the launching of the Action Plan for Africa are being executed smoothly, a coordination office is being established at the AfDB and Mr. Vincent Ngendakumana has been recruited as a Coordinator. The team will progressively be enhanced to take full responsibility for a Regional Secretariat and for technical coordination of the implementation of the Action Plan for Africa.

### **Other activities related to agricultural statistics**

Given the long-term challenges that the continent is facing in terms of food security, and in an effort to contribute to its management for results agenda and to assist the Operations complexes of the AfDB, the Statistics Department has initiated the following activities related to agricultural statistics:

- (i) **Development of a dedicated data portal for the food security situation in Africa.** This provides information on the following topics: Population Numbers (total, agricultural, rural and urban population), Food Availability and Accessibility (production and trade, food supply, food aid, and vulnerability related indicators), Hunger and Malnutrition, Agricultural Inputs (land use, agricultural tractors, and fertilizers), and an Early Warning Information System (EWIS) for cereal products (monthly prices, cereal balance sheet indicators, and related aspects). Data can be easily and simultaneously viewed through maps and graphs. Some standard tables and an option for downloading and analyzing data further are provided for. There is also a Resource Center that gives access to some important reports on food security subjects. For the moment, the web page is limited to AfDB internal use at: <http://intranet.afdb.org/statistics>. It will be kept updated and flexible enough to include new data requirements so that it can effectively serve as a monitoring and evaluation tool of the food security situation in Africa.
- (ii) **Briefing notes on the food security situation in Africa.** In order to report and monitor on the food security situation in Africa, it has been initiated with related quarterly briefing notes. The first one, corresponding to the 2<sup>nd</sup> quarter of this year, is being finalized. These notes will use data from the Portal.

## **III. Ongoing activities**

Ongoing activities include the following: (i) Finalization of tools for assessing statistical capacity and needs in countries; (ii) Preparation of the first Regional Steering Committee of the Action Plan for Africa; and (iii) Preparation of the Donors' Conference for fundraising.

### a) Finalization of tools for assessing statistical capacity and needs in countries

In order to better plan for the implementation of the Strategy, an assessment of statistical capacity in countries will be undertaken. In a cascading fashion, a **Concept Note** on the assessment has been prepared by the AfDB and discussed with key stakeholders, followed by the preparation (by AfDB) of a **framework for undertaking the assessment**, which has been also shared with key stakeholders for discussion. A simplified but comprehensive **questionnaire** is being finalized. Guidelines for data collection, compilation, and analysis are also being prepared. The assessment will be used by countries to help establish gaps and priorities for the implementation of the Global Strategy. It will constitute a valuable tool for monitoring and evaluating the performance of the Action Plan, as well as a basis for providing baseline information. Where possible, linkages will be made with any ongoing assessments in countries, especially in the context of designing National Strategies for the Development of Statistics (NSDS).

### b) Preparation for the first meeting of the Regional Steering Committee

Preparations are underway to conduct the first Regional Steering Committee meeting, scheduled to be held in July 2011, in Tunis.

### c) Preparations for a donors' fundraising conference

A Donors' Conference has been scheduled for September 6, 2011, in Rome, to mobilize the requisite resources for the Global and Africa Action Plans.

## IV. Next steps

In the next few months, the following activities will be undertaken:

- Testing and validation of the country assessment tools will be undertaken in a number of countries;
- Data will be collected and compiled for assessing statistical capacity and needs in countries;
- The old version of separate Action Plan components will be revised to accommodate new elements that have been included into the consolidated Action Plan; and
- The Action Plan will be printed and disseminated to serve as a main reference document for implementing activities in African countries and for fundraising.

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