Mainstreaming FAO Statistics and SDG Indicators into UNSDCF Formulation

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United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework

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Why mainstream statistics into UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Frameworks?
The emphasis on evidence-based decision-making in governments and organizations at all levels puts a greater focus on statistics and their role in measuring relevant phenomena and monitoring progress towards national and international development goals and targets, including in the food and agriculture domains. This is particularly relevant within the context of the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda and its monitoring framework, which represents an immense challenge for countries and a serious test for national statistical capacity and resources.

Although the importance of statistics is well acknowledged and FAO responds to numerous country requests for technical assistance in this regard, key programmatic documents do not always take this into due consideration, which means that statistical requirements can go unrecognized and unfunded. This has the serious consequence that policies and programmes are developed, prioritized and implemented without benefitting from the guidance of a solid evidence base, leading to inefficient allocations of limited funds. It also means that resources are not made available to support the activity, and that the outputs formulated within the new Cooperation framework may not be closely tied to other ongoing FAO initiatives at country level. This tool highlights the entry points for FAO Representatives (FAORs) and Country Offices for including FAO statistics in UNSDCFs. To the extent that the Country Programming Framework is to be derived from the UNSDCF, all the considerations included in this document apply equally to the CFP as far as how statistics can be better integrated therein.

SDGs open up a new opportunity
The challenges posed by the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda to countries in terms of statistics are immense. Not only are there about four times more indicators for the SDGs that there were for the MDGs, but each indicator is set to be disaggregated by gender, age, income, geography, occupation and other aspects of social identity to reflect the Agenda 2030's guiding principle of "leaving no one behind". It would be beneficial to take into consideration the entire range of statistical activities to be undertaken in support of SDG achievement and reporting at country level when drafting UNSDCFs. This includes the substantial role that FAO can play in providing assistance to strengthen country capacity in adopting new statistical standards and methods, new tools for data collection (e.g. mobile phones, tablets, GPS) and new data sources, and in informing indicators, which are tailored to national circumstances.

The Common Country Analysis (CCA), which lays the foundation for the UNSDCF, will be data-driven and build an **evidence base** sensitive to dynamic changes. As such, the CCA will need to look beyond official national statistics to draw on all sources of qualitative and quantitative data from across the data ecosystem, including primary research as appropriate, non-traditional data sources, and emerging technologies to address gaps in reliability, disaggregation or timeliness.

With FAO's new Strategic Framework 2022-2031 fully aligned with the SDGs, FAO is already providing support to countries to strengthen their capacities to collect data and monitor the SDGs. FAO's role as the custodian for 21 of the 230 SDG indicators is perhaps the greatest demonstration of the centrality of food and agriculture to the whole 2030 Agenda.

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Steps to mainstreaming FAO statistics in the formulation of UNSDCFs:

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Step 1. Developing the Roadmap and Common Country Analysis	
Timeline for preparing the Roadmap for the new Cooperation Framework is agreed upon and the Roadmap is drafted	FAO staff should familiarize themselves with the UNSDCF cycle to anticipate key resources and needs, in order to identify statistics, data and skills requirements for subsequent steps. To this end, they may consider: ➢ **Identify a specific officer** (e.g. the M&E officer or a consultant hired for supporting the CCA/UNSDCF/CPF process) to focus on data with the aim of supporting the UNSDCF/CCA process with relevant data and identifying country data gaps. The identified officer should be familiar with the country's programs, investments, policies, and the main country development indicators and how they correspond to SDG indicators. The officer should be supported by Regional/Sub-Regional/HQ staff as appropriate and take into account events of national significance such as national long- and medium-term development planning, biennial reviews, national population and agriculture censuses, etc. – to identify interventions that can be proposed at specific points in time (e.g., incorporating modules in agricultural/household surveys). Please consult the available toolkit of [Resources to support Decentralized Offices](#). ➢ **Arrange a dedicated training** on data and statistics with the support of Regional Statisticians and M&E officers as well as HQ units, addressing both FAO Country Office staff and UN Country Team Data Officers (who usually are not experts in statistics). The training should focus on the SDG indicators, particularly their methodology, principal data sources and reporting procedures, as well as FAO data assets to support the CCA process.
A CCA methodology and work plan are developed	During this stage, when UN regional and global assets are deployed to support the CCA work plan, FAO staff representing the organization in the UN Country Team should familiarize themselves with the key issues related to SDG monitoring and: ➢ Assess data requirements of the CCA; identify a core set of indicators needed to produce a meaningful CCA able to guide policy action, which should include both outcome and input-type indicators; ➢ Conduct an in-country **workshop of relevant UN entities** to review the results of the statistical capacity assessment and clearly define respective roles and responsibilities with a view to maximizing synergies and avoiding overlaps in capacities and operational resources ➢ Plan or conduct preliminary **stakeholder feedback sessions** to understand key problems/challenges in the country from a data perspective, to be used as an input for the formulation of the CCA. Qualitative, analytical feedback from key country experts is an important complementary input besides hard data to interpret key challenges and underlying factors/drivers.
Country analysis support is sourced from across the system for the CCA	For the CCA, expertise is sourced across the UN system through inter-agency technical teams and networks, which support the Resident Coordinator and country team with SDG-related data, information and statistics. The Resident Coordinator's office maintains data in the data portal and supports the

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and evidence base established	research team in coordinating stakeholder engagement and updating the analysis. By 2021, the CCA is expected to be part of the core functionality of [UN Info], the online planning, implementation and monitoring platform of the UNSDG. UNDCO has initiated the establishment of an internal data hub for country teams to access automated country analytics, data sources and a repository for sharing datasets. In this context, FAO should: ➢ Consider suggesting to the UNCT to develop a **database at country level** to house all the data underpinning the CCA, particularly in view of the need to update it on an annual basis It is unlikely that UN Info will provide a searchable database that includes all SDG data, drivers and explanatory variables. UN Info is mainly used as a reporting space for corporate results, has faced several challenges, and it is difficult to see how it will become adapted for this purpose. ➢ Emphasize the needs and challenges of monitoring and reporting on the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development at the national level as one of the key areas that can act as a catalyst for change at a systemic level; ➢ Refer to data requirements of national policies on sustainable agricultural development, food security, poverty reduction, etc.; ➢ Proactively **reach out to Resident Coordinators** at the start of the CCA to showcase both the available FAO statistical resources that might be useful for the country (especially in the case of ongoing initiatives), and the unmet data needs. A short video showcasing FAO statistical assets and how they relate to the CCA shared with the RCs could be an effective tool for that purpose. ➢ Contribute to **facilitating consensus** on the approach and tools for integrated analysis by the UN Country Team in the CCA methodology to allow more systematic and targeted evidence-based policy analysis.
CCA report is prepared with a strong emphasis on integrated analysis	The CCA seeks to provide an integrated analysis of the country context for the achievement of SDGs. Therefore, the role of reliable, timely statistics is key in identifying critical challenges, assessing progress and setting measurable targets. To this end, FAO should: ➢ Collect the data, pulling from all relevant sources, and **develop a narrative** to **ensure the analytical use** of relevant food and agriculture statistics and SDG indicators under FAO custodianship in the CCA, including by extracting key messages from FAO flagship publications and relevant regional reports (e.g. panoramas). This should be a "red line" for FAO, in the sense that it should not accept a CCA that omits food and agriculture-related SDG indicators with available data, or that **substitutes** global SDG indicators with different, national indicators. The country profile tool and the list of resources provided in the toolkit will provide useful inputs. Consider linking data from different domains and identifying the main explanatory drivers and factors as well as key institutional, governance, finance and capacity bottlenecks. This could include an evaluation of ongoing data reported to FAO corporate processes including FAOSTAT, FISHSTAT, AQUASTAT, and the Forest Resources Assessment (FRA). ➢ Recommend a section in the CCA on the main data and statistical capacity gaps in the country, highlighting how these constitute an

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	impediment to the country's development process with reference to the principle "what gets measured gets done".
Quality assurance of the draft CCA report is undertaken	After feedback from the peer support group is incorporated, the regional UN development system endorses the CCA report and the country team shares the report with the government and key stakeholders. ➢ FAO should work to ensure that this peer group includes regional and HQ statisticians to perform quality assurance on the data used and conclusions on country's data and statistical capacity gaps. While no specific resources are currently allocated to Regional Offices to support this type of review and such reviews are hitherto conducted on a "can do" basis, OCS is working to ensure that regional statisticians will have dedicated resources.

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Step 2. Cooperation Framework Design	
Catalytic development solutions for the country to achieve the SDGs are identified	In this stage, in which United Nations entities and the government proactively involve all relevant stakeholders, FAO should work to systematically link catalytic development solutions with data accelerators. It should: ➢ Aim to integrate in the CCA work plan an **assessment of country data and statistical capacity gaps**, which should be unified, done in one go, with a common tool, accommodating the needs of all custodian agencies. To identify and address gaps in the analysis stage, a criteria/guidance can be prepared to identify the most high-priority issues. The assessment should determine data and statistics needs for informing the UNSDCF. To identify data gaps for food and agriculture, consider using response rates to FAO questionnaires; missing information in country profiles; and identifying missing data for key disaggregation dimensions. A checklist of data collection initiatives (agricultural census in past 10 years, farm surveys, UNSD data etc. can be prepared). Thematic assessments by individual agencies, such as FAO's Statistical Capacity Assessment and the Guidelines for Assessing Country Capacity to Produce Agricultural and Rural Statistics, could be used as a complementary input. ➢ Promote FAO's statistical capacity development initiatives and services as available here.
A Theory of Change is prepared, moving from prioritized catalytic development solutions to determining UN contributions.	In this context, the potential contribution of a strong national agricultural statistical system to SDG achievement in the country should be highlighted. To this end, FAO can provide technical assistance on topics such as: o Developing a Strategic Plan for Agriculture and Rural Statistics (SPARS) document to be endorsed by the Government, consistent with the National Strategy for Development of Statistics (NSDS); o Strengthening institutional coordination/statistical governance to support evidence-based decision making; o Review the plan of national surveys and data collection activities to a) better align the policy and data collection cycles; and b) improve the alignment of the national and global SDG indicator frameworks;

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	○ Support General Agricultural Census and thematic surveys to streamline and integrate SDGs; ▪ Adapting existing population and household surveys to ensure they collect adequate data on household-based farming, food security and nutrition; ▪ Organizing a National Agriculture and Livestock Census using the most appropriate approach based on the country context and with reference to World Programme for the Census of Agriculture 2020 guidelines; ▪ Establishing an agriculture integrated survey programme (AGRISurvey) or adapting existing agricultural surveys to cover relevant SDG indicators ○ Strengthening RAF, SRO and country capacity to produce and disseminate food and agricultural statistics, including SDG indicators under FAO custodianship; ○ Improving the capacity of the Ministry of Agriculture to use agricultural statistics in policy-making processes and the VNR process; consider preparing national versions of flagship reports (e.g. national SOFI) ○ Defining and developing monitoring and evaluation mechanisms for statistical capacity development initiatives at country level. ✓ Depending on the specific country needs identified, the Country Office may consult with OCS to determine whether available resources exist, or whether additional resources should be mobilized for this purpose.
Theory of change translated into a results framework	In the process of capturing the theory of change developed into the results framework, through active consultation FAO should aim to **embed statistical activities** in the UN development system's programming, with clearly defined responsibilities and partnerships with governments and other stakeholders. To this end, FAO should: ➤ Ensure that **SDG indicators are integrated** in the UNSDCF monitoring framework at all relevant result levels, particularly the outcome level, and as such, ensure that support for the production/reporting of these indicators is integrated in the UNSDCF
Regional Peer Support Group provides support for process and content in UNSDCF development	As with the peer review of the CCA, FAO should work to ensure that this peer group includes statisticians able to critically review the statistics-related activities foreseen in the UNSDCF. To this end, FAO should: ➤ Ensure that FAO regional/sub-regional statisticians are involved in the validation of statistics-related activities. While no specific resources are currently for this purpose, OCS is working to ensure that regional statisticians will have dedicated resources that can support this type of activity.

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Step 3. United Nations Country Team Configuration	
Assessment of entity-specific capacities is undertaken and discussed	This stage involves identifying the expertise and services needed by the UNCT, whether those services require in-country presence to be delivered, whether there are local service providers who could deliver them, what implementation modalities should be leveraged, and whether any agencies need to scale up or could scale back their country-level capacity. In consultation with relevant sectoral ministries and technical counterparts, and in line with host country agreements, FAO must therefore determine how to ensure capacities are in place to deliver on its UNSDCF commitments. To this end, it may consider: ➢ Pointing to relevant FAO experience and the way in which FAO can contribute to strengthening national statistical capacity and contribute to the priorities identified. OCS will support the FAOR in highlighting this informationSharing, as a background document to the workshop, a draft statement of its capacities and plans to deliver on its UNSDCF commitments.

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Step 4. Funding the Cooperation Framework	
Implementation of a multi-year Funding Framework with results-based budgeting approach	The Cooperation Framework Funding Framework, which is prepared after UNSDCF is signed with the government and responds to the requirements of the Funding Compact, should document how the UN Country Team aims to use the catalytic role of funding to leverage SDG financing, defining a concrete approach to mobilizing and allocating funding for the agreed UNSDCF. The starting point has to be an understanding of how much it costs to deliver the Cooperation Framework, irrespective of entities' existing budgets. To this end, FAO should: ➢ Objectively **assess the cost** of all the statistics-related activities that have been assigned to its purview, through Steps 1-3; ➢ Project realistic **resource mobilization targets** to address the funding gap, based on inter-agency analysis and consultations with donors and other stakeholders; ➢ Ensure that each funding allocation for an identified policy priority includes a **dedicated budget line** for data and statistics, to strengthen the link between broader resource mobilization efforts with fundraising for statistics. ➢ Undertake solo and/or joint **resource mobilization initiatives**, coordinating as needed with relevant HQ units (Resource Mobilization Division, Office of the Chief Statistician) and other relevant partners depending on the specific indicator (e.g. UN-Women for 5.a.1) ➢ Provide updated financial data as required through UN Info, including available resources, actual expenditure, potential new resource commitments and the funding gap related to the activities FAO is managing

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Step 5. Implementation, Monitoring and Learning	
Cooperation Framework governance and management structures and systems are established. Joint annual performance review is undertaken.	FAO is expected to adopt the Cooperation Framework as the basis for its own country programming document (CPF). The CPF reflects the elements of the CCA and the TOC that are relevant to FAO, and contains outcomes and outcome indicators that are copied verbatim from the UNSDCF and may include, exceptionally, additional CPF-specific outcomes to capture normative, standard-setting activities not included in the UNSDCF. This process will be supported through clear communication to FAO Representatives at Country level for confirmation. At this stage, the country team may, depending on context, establish additional structures such as a programme management team/group and a cross-cutting thematic technical advisory group to enhance effective and coherent delivery of the Cooperation Framework. ➢ If FAO has managed, throughout Steps 1-4, to establish data and statistics as a key pillar of the UNSDCF, it could recommend, in this stage, the establishment of a thematic technical advisory group specifically focused on data and statistics. Depending on the specific country time commitments this entails, the Country Office may consult with OCS to determine whether available resources exist, or whether additional resources should be assigned for this purpose. ➢ FAO is responsible for monitoring, reporting and generating learning from its specific projects/programmes contributing to Cooperation Framework results, and updating this information in UN Info. In this regard, FAO should ensure that any monitoring and learning process should be based on sound, quality data and statistics.

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FAO's Strategic Framework 2022-31 puts the 2030 Agenda at its center and aims to increase preparedness and effectiveness in supporting Members to achieve the SDGs, using selected SDG indicators to monitor implementation. The Strategic Framework seeks to implement the vision of leaving no one behind through sustainable, inclusive and resilient food systems able to deliver four "Betters": better production, better nutrition, a better environment, and a better life. Each of the four Betters encompasses a number of Programme Priority Areas (PPAs), which articulate FAO's value-added and comparative advantage in contributing to the SDGs. Although the 20 PPAs have a strong anchor in a specific Better, they generally contribute to all four Betters. The Strategic Framework also foresees the implementation of four cross-cutting accelerators in all its programmatic interventions to accelerate impact while minimizing trade-offs, one of which is **data**.

One of the key aims of the present Guidelines is to ensure that, where appropriate, the UNSDCF outputs make **explicit reference to the support required to improve the evidence base for policy-making on food security, nutrition and sustainable agriculture**. To this end, FAO UN Country Team representatives are encouraged to consult the following non-exhaustive list of statistical activities foreseen under the data accelerator component of the various PPAs, arranged by SDG Goal.

➢ **SDG 1**
  o Capacity development provided to develop a methodology on measuring damages and losses to agriculture due to disasters (SDG indicator 1.5.2);
  o Capacity development provided on the adoption of real time data collection tools within an emergency context.
  o Country capacity strengthened to collect, analyze and disseminate data on rural livelihoods, decent work and social protection in agriculture and rural areas;

➢ **SDG 2**
  o Food Security indicators (SDG indicators 2.1.1 and 2.1.2) are produced at National and Sub-National levels including the adoption of the Food Insecurity Experience Scale (FIES) in national household surveys;
  o Capacity is strengthened to produce food balances (Country Cereal Balance Sheets, Supply Utilization Accounts (SUA) tables) and Dietary Energy consumption data; Food security data domains under FAOSTAT; Food composition data (INFOODS, INFOODS-UFish, FISH4FSN), and micro-level food consumption data (FAO/WHO GIFT);
  o Capacity is strengthened on compiling the Women's Dietary Diversity Score (WDDS);
  o Technical assistance is provided on implementing open data policies for food and agriculture microdata, including through the FAM Catalogue;
  o Institutional and technical capacity development provided to support national and subnational agri-environmental indicators for sustainability analysis;
  o Institutional and technical capacity development provided on piloting the System of Environmental-Economic Accounting (SEEA) for Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries;
  o Capacities are reinforced at national level to collect, analyze and disseminate investment and price statistics, including on food price volatility (SDG indicator 2.c.1);
  o Capacities are strengthened to implement integrated surveys in agriculture conducted with the support of FAO, in order to monitor productivity and income of smallholders as well as land under sustainable agriculture (SDG indicators 2.3.1, 2.3.2 and 2.4.1);
  o Government expenditure statistics compiled and published with the support of FAO in order to generate the Agriculture Orientation Index for Government Expenditures (SDG indicator 2.a.1).
  o Capacities are strengthened to collect and report data on the conservation of plant and animal genetic resources, including by implementing livestock census and/or breed population size surveys (SDG indicators 2.5.1.a, 2.5.1.b and 2.5.2).

➢ **SDG 5:**
  o Capacities strengthened at national level to use sex and age disaggregated data for the monitoring of rural livelihoods, poverty and gender inequalities;
  o Capacities strengthened at national level to conduct legal assessments on the degree to which legislative frameworks protect women's access to land (SDG indicator 5.a.2)
  o Capacities strengthened at national level to measure land ownership and secure rights over agricultural land, by sex and share of women among owners or rights-bearers of agricultural land, by type of tenure (SDG indicator 5.a.1).

➢ **SDG 6:**
  o Capacities strengthened at national level for collecting data on water use, water withdrawals, total available renewable and non-renewable water resources, environmental water requirements, and related parameters to inform indicators on water stress and water use efficiency (SDG indicators 6.4.1, 6.4.2).

➢ **SDG 12:**
  o Capacities are reinforced for collecting data on post-harvest losses at the farm level and subsequent value chain stages (SDG indicator 12.3.1.a);

➢ **SDG 14**
  o National capacities strengthened to undertake fish stock assessments (SDG indicator 14.4.1);
  o Capacities are strengthened to collect the basic catch and fishing effort data underpinning fish stock assessments;
  o Provide support for implementing a more comprehensive and detailed data collection and analysis on the fisheries and aquaculture sector, encompassing the entire value chain from production to consumers, and with an emphasis on improving the knowledge of the Small Scale fisheries sector, so as to allow understanding the gaps and needs and tailor interventions accordingly.
  o National capacities strengthened to measure SDG indicators 14.6.1 (Illegal, unreported unregulated fishing), 14.7.1 (Value added of sustainable fisheries) and 14.b.1 (Access rights for small-scale fisheries)

➢ **SDG 15**
  o Integrated monitoring systems developed and strengthened with the support of FAO to provide reliable forest, tree resource and land use/change information to support reporting on sustainable forestry and mountains (SDG indicators 15.1.1, 15.2.1, 15.4.2)
  o Capacities are strengthened for using earth observation/remote sensing data to generate statistics

Contacts:
- **First point of contact:** Statisticians in Regional or Sub-regional Offices
- **Contacts at HQ:** Chief-Statistician@fao.org
- **FAO public resources on statistics:** http://www.fao.org/statistics/en/
- **FAO public resources on SDG indicators:** http://www.fao.org/sustainable-development-goals/indicators/en/
- **Intranet:** http://intranet.fao.org/statistics_coordination_portal/home/