Implementation of Global Strategy to Improve Agricultural and Rural Statistics

Report on In-depth Capacity Assessment of Bangladesh to Produce Agricultural and Rural Statistics
The agriculture and rural sector in Bangladesh has particular significance for the sustained food and livelihood security of its large, dense and growing population. The agricultural activities in the country are pursued intensively for the crop as well as allied sectors and in conditions of stressed natural resources. Crop husbandry, with about 55% share in the agri-GDP, is a major contributor in the economy and further more, paddy has predominance with about 75% crop sown area. However, the Bangladesh farm families are also engaged in commercial and diversified agricultural activities including fish and shrimp farming, poultry and livestock rearing, and vegetable, maize, and oil crop production. The spread of water tributaries in the great Sunderbans delta and other water bodies support the fishery subsector that has about 23% share in the agricultural economy. Hydrology also supports the cultivation of winter rice (boro) crop and its vast rice area becomes available for rice-fish culture.

The diversified agriculture sector has a distinct perspective of planned development and growth, which is a national priority and for this reason and for regular monitoring of the demand and supply of food and agriculture produces, there is a realized regular need for agricultural statistics. The National Statistical System (NSS) is mandated to be responsive and sensitive to such needs. The objectives of NSS are aimed to be achieved through the National Strategy for the Development of Statistics (NSDS) prepared in 2012. The NSDS focuses on the needs of different data users, to promote better generation and dissemination of statistics and to strengthen all statistical services so that they meet the needs of a rapidly developing nation. For implementing the NSDS, a total of 61 strategic goals have been identified with responsibility distributed over the functional wings of the Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (BBS) in the Statistics and Informatics Division (SID) of the Ministry of Planning.
The Global Strategy to improve Agricultural and Rural Statistics is a global initiative endorsed by the United Nations Statistical Commission (UNSC) as well as by the Ministerial Conference of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), aimed at repositioning national and international agricultural and rural statistics systems to meet the requirements of various stakeholders in the twenty-first century. The three pillars of the Strategy, constituting its conceptual framework, are:

I. enhancement of capacities of the countries to produce a minimum set of core agricultural and rural statistics with desired quality and timeliness,
II. support to the integration of agriculture into the national statistical system, and
III. strengthening of the institutional mechanism for sustainability of these actions.

The implementation of the Strategy is carefully crafted in global and regional perspectives. FAO, in collaboration with other international development agencies, is entrusted with its implementation.
In-depth Capacity Assessment (IdCA) of the country to produce agricultural and rural statistics is the stepping stone in the implementation of the Global Strategy. The IdCA report becomes the basic reference for the development of Strategic Plan for improvement of Agricultural and Rural Statistics (SPARS) that will follow to deal with specificities of technical and resource requirements in the identified areas.

In this global endeavor, Bangladesh is identified as one of the anchor countries in Asia Pacific region and this attaches added significance to the task of IdCA accomplished and documented herewith. FAO had the pleasure to provide technical support in this strategic planning process that desired determination of in-country functional structure of statistical activities to oversee integration of agriculture into the NSS, profiling country specific set of core data items and its qualitative characteristics and need assessment for technical assistance, training, and research. It is heartening to note that the IdCA findings are already receiving responses from resource partners and this process is expected to get further stimulated.
The IdCA report is finalized by the Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (BBS), in participative collaboration with various line departments of the Government of Bangladesh, represented in a specially constituted task force and with technical support of FAO.

The report is aligned with the framework of GS and is having synergy with the strategic goals of NSDS. The process followed a standard framework for assessing capacity of the statistical system which comprises 23 elements in four well defined capacity dimensions viz, (i) Institutional Infrastructure, (ii) Resources, (iii) Statistical Methods and Practices and (iv) Availability of Statistical Information. The Standardised Questionnaire (SQ) is a key instrument used in the IdCA to assess capacity to generate agricultural and rural statistics in the country.

The identified proposals in the IdCA Report cover wide-ranging aspects from strategic planning to institutional, capacity and methodological development and contribute in multiple dimensions, such as Pillars of GS, NSDS strategic goals, stakeholders and sub sector priorities to improve agriculture and rural statistics in Bangladesh in a sustainable manner.
This association of FAO in Bangladesh is in sequence to the continued partnership and collaboration in the country in various innovative and successfully completed programmes and projects, contributing to efficient management of the farm sector and development and well being of the people. The IdCA process involved assimilation of statistical activities in a complex domain, associating different stakeholders. Its successful accomplishment is attributed to committed engagement of all participants with the encouraging support from all concerned quarters of the Government of Bangladesh. It is hoped that the IdCA work presented here will usher an improved agricultural and rural statistical system, not only meeting the needs of stakeholders in the country but also setting an example in the global initiative of implementation of the Strategy.
Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations

FAO Representation in Bangladesh

House # 37; Road #08, Dhanmondi R/A
P.O. Box 5039 (New Market)
Dhaka-1205, Bangladesh.

Phone +88 02 9126673
+88 02 8118015-8
FAX: +88 02 58152025
E-mail: FAO-BD@fao.org