



Measuring the use of statistics in designing food and agricultural policies

Pietro Gennari*

Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) – pietro.gennari@fao.org

In a context of shrinking public funding and greater emphasis on the accountability in its use, national and international statistical organizations are increasingly requested to demonstrate that the cost of producing statistical information is balanced by its benefits.

Statistics is a core function of FAO and represents a highly visible area of the Organization's work. In particular, FAO performs an essential role in helping to reduce hunger and poverty by informing decision-makers through the provision of reliable and timely data.

As part of its new monitoring approach, in 2013-2014 FAO conducted a corporate baseline assessment in about 80 countries to obtain robust evidence on their commitments and capacities in the areas where FAO has committed to achieve results [food security and nutrition / agriculture and natural resources management / rural poverty reduction / resilience to threats and crises]. The sample countries were chosen as being representative of the entire 'population' of 149 countries in which FAO has ongoing activities. The data were collected through 4 structured questionnaires, completed by a wide range of respondents in each sample country including from Government, UN agencies, international donors and International Financial Institutions, research institutions/academia, civil society and the private sector. Each questionnaire included a specific question on the extent in which statistical information is used in designing national food and agricultural policies.

This paper provides a description of the methodology used by FAO for measuring its organizational outcomes and, in particular, the use of statistics in policy making processes and the results obtained through the corporate baseline assessment. It also describes the plans to repeat this assessment at the end of 2015 and 2017 to evaluate the progress made by countries in implementing evidence-based food and agricultural policies and FAO's contribution to this achievement.

Keywords: evidence-based policymaking; value of statistics; monitoring corporate results; balance sampling method.