

Title of Proposed Project/Programme:
Capacity development in Agricultural Census

Programme Description:

The proposed programme aims to provide assistance to the Iraqi national statistical offices, the Central Office for Statistics and Information Technology (COSIT) as well as the Kurdistan Region Statistical Office (KRSO) within the Ministry of Planning and Development Cooperation (MoPDC), and the Iraqi Ministry of Agriculture (MoA) in the planning, execution, analysis and dissemination of Agriculture Census data.

In support of the MoPDC-COSIT/KRSO plans to conduct an agriculture census in Iraq during 2010/2011, FAO will accompany the complete process providing training and technical assistance to GOI national staff. This will ensure the execution of a high quality agriculture census that complies with established international norms and standards including the FAO World Programme for the Census of Agriculture 2010 which is also in line with the FAO "System of Integrated Agricultural Censuses and Surveys."

The absence of reliable and updated information on the state of agriculture in Iraq is a serious obstacle to the proper implementation of development plans and reform programmes planned by the Iraqi government. Supporting the GOI in the execution of the agriculture census would empower the GOI in three tasks: (i) in setting national agricultural policies and plans on equitable distribution and allocation of national resources; (ii) in planning and monitoring of agricultural and rural development efforts with the international community; and (iii) facilitating the increased participation of the Iraqi and international private sector in agricultural production.

Programme Costs:

Total Cost: US \$4.5 million

Govt. Contribution (tentative): US \$1.5 million

Programme Location: Nationwide

Governorate(s): Country-wide

Programme Duration: 20 months

National priority or goals (NDS 2007- 2010 and ICI):

NDS:

One of the thrust areas identified in the National Development Strategy is the agricultural census is clearly stated: "agricultural surveys and industrial censuses will need to be conducted on a timely basis so as to prepare high-quality estimates of trends in employment and human well being" for setting baseline values and monitoring development trends. (NDS, pp. 48)

ICI Benchmarks (as per the Joint Monitoring Matrix 2008):

Benchmark 6.4.1.1a: Improve the quality of analytical data from the macro-economic, sectoral, and sub-national levels; Achieve higher degrees of data desegregation by gender, by age and by geographical area to better focus those policies and actions aimed at reducing disparities and increasing efficiency in the use of resources.

Benchmark 6.4.1.1b: Establish mechanisms for the reconciliation and harmonization of aggregate, sector-specific and sub-national data;

Benchmark 6.4.1.1c: Improve and standardise data collection and processing functions in Ministries, SOEs, regions and provinces;

Benchmark 6.4.1.1d: Design additional data collection and analysis mechanisms according to reform and investment programs.

Sector Team Outcome(s):

Outcome 3: Agricultural Policy & Natural resource Management Improved.

1. Executive Summary:

Proper agricultural planning requires quality, detailed and timely information on agricultural production. For Iraq, the need for advancements in agricultural planning is self evident as decades of wars, sanctions, a Public Distribution System (PDS) providing food and heavy government interventions have distorted the agriculture sector, creating disincentives for private investment in agriculture and reducing production and productivity levels.

The Iraqi National Development Strategy (NDS) have put straightforward goals to reform the agriculture sector through the reduction of state subsidies and fostering market-led growth, restoring irrigation and marketing infrastructures while also developing a viable agricultural research and extension service. While these reforms are essential, they all require reliable information on the current state of agricultural assets, necessary inputs and up to date information on agricultural production and productivity. Policy development and analysis of the effect of the proposed reforms requires such data in order to minimize the immediate adverse effects of reform on producers and consumers while maximizing the medium and long term gain in production and profit.

The proposed programme supports the current plans of MoPDC-COSIT/KRSO of conducting an Agriculture Census in 2010/2011. The programme will provide significant capacity building to the relevant national institutions responsible for Agricultural Census and Surveys (namely MoPDC-COSIT/KRSO and MoA) with essential skills, knowledge and technology for its implementation and follow-up activities. This would fall within the framework of the FAO World Programme for the Census of Agriculture 2010 and in line with the FAO "System of Integrated Agricultural Censuses and Surveys". Moreover, the programme will create a base for further analysis and use of data originated from the census in long-term planning process.

2. Situation Analysis:

One of the goals of the Iraqi National Development Strategy is to reform the agriculture sector through reducing state subsidies and fostering market-led growth. This process requires analyses of the effect of the proposed reforms and careful planning. This would minimize the immediate adverse effects on producers and consumers while maximizing the gain in production and profit. Currently, however, the information necessary for such analyses is incomplete and whatever information exists is unreliable.

Quantitative analysis is required to forecast the net effect of the proposed government actions in order to ensure success of the mentioned reform while maintaining an adequate, pro-poor social safety net. Therefore, a comprehensive review of the available information which builds an understanding of informational gaps and supports the government to improve its data collection processes while building its capacity in utilizing the information for planning purposes. This is necessary for the success of the Iraqi reform process.

The last Iraqi agriculture census was conducted in 2001 covered only 15 of the 18 Iraqi governorates – totally excluding the Kurdistan Region. The thematic coverage of the 2001 census is incomplete as it excluded many themes normally covered in agricultural censuses and provided only partial information on themes included in the census. Table 1 (see Annex A) provides an overview of the thematic coverage of the 2001 census.

The agriculture census would provide essential and much-needed quality data for the GOI. The government can therefore utilize the data to make informed national reconstruction/recovery and development plans. At every level, policy makers and planners require census results to set national agricultural policies and plans on equitable distribution and allocation of national resources. The census provides baseline

and benchmark data for agricultural development planning and a new sampling frame. This new frame would be used for the implementation of specialized agricultural surveys needed in order to monitor agricultural and rural development efforts. In addition, the private sector, civil society and the public at large will benefit from the published census results.

It is expected that the successful implementation of the proposed project will result in the following: (i) enhanced capacity of the Iraqi government in planning and executing agriculture sector reforms that aim at improving the level of production; (ii) the productivity and profitability as well as increased private sector participation in the agriculture sector, raising on and off farm rural incomes; and (iii) reducing rural unemployment rates. It will also result in better understanding of food security issues in Iraq.

3. The Proposed Integrated Programme:

The proposed programme would provide technical assistance to the execution of the agriculture census planned during 2010/2011 through all the planned census phases. Accordingly, key staff from the MoPDC-COSIT and the Ministry of Agriculture (MoA) will be trained to ensure that a sound and modern census will be implemented in a timely and efficient manner and for providing sound sampling basis for subsequent agricultural surveys.

While the actual enumeration will be conducted by COSIT and KRISO, the activities of the programme will enable COSIT and KRISO to execute each phase of the census from design to the final report. The phases of the census are listed below:

- Determine the overall strategy for the agricultural census as part of the system of integrated agricultural censuses and surveys.
- Define the objectives of the agricultural census.
- Develop a work plan and budget for developing and carrying out the census.
- Prepare census legislation, if required.
- Form a National Census Committee to oversee the census.
- Develop and implement the census publicity campaign.
- Create the Agricultural Census Office and recruit the necessary staff.
- Prepare frames.
- Prepare maps for census field operations.
- Develop the tabulation plan.
- Design and test questionnaires.
- Design and test the computer processing system, including data entry, editing and tabulation.
- Prepare field instruction manuals.
- Develop the field system; recruit and train field staff.
- Census enumeration.
- Data processing.
- Undertake quality control checks on the data.
- Tabulate and analyse the data.
- Prepare census reports and disseminate results.
- Reconcile the census data with the data from the system of current statistics.

The programme will also enhance the capacity of the key stakeholders in adequate analysis and utilization of the census results. The programme aims to ensure the compliance of the planned agriculture census with established internationally recognized norms and standards – namely the FAO World Programme for the Census of Agriculture 2010. In view of this, setting up a system for quality assurance and monitoring, observation, and evaluation of the census is indispensable for its success and recognition.

4. Anticipated Outcomes, Outputs and Results:

The project's main outcome is:

Enhance national capacities in Agricultural planning and monitoring processes at national, governorate and districts levels.

The proposed programme will contribute to rural development in general and agricultural development in specific through achievement of the following outcome: *“Enhance national capacities in Agricultural planning and monitoring processes at national, governorate and districts levels”*.

Three outputs will contribute to achievement of this Outcome:

Output 1: Technical capacities of COSIT/KRSO at national and governorate levels are increased to plan and implement agricultural censuses in accordance with internationally recognized norms and standards.

Output 2: Capacities of COSIT/KRSO and the MoA at national & governorate levels are enhanced to conduct disaggregated analysis and evaluation of agricultural census data and other survey data.

Output 3: Capacities of MoPDC, the MoA and other key national stakeholders (i.e. MoWR) at national and governorate levels are enhanced to disseminate and utilize disaggregated agricultural census data and analysis.

5. Implementation and Management:

Conducting the agriculture census remains the full responsibility of MoPDC-COSIT/KRSO and the MoA including the establishment of national committees and the census steering committee, FAO is responsible for the implementation of the capacity development activities outlined in this programme proposal.

Whereas the FAO Iraq O-i-C retains overall responsibility for the programme implementation, the International Chief Technical Advisor (CTA) recruited by FAO will be responsible for (i) the day to day management of the programme; (ii) for the technical aspects of programme implementation; and (iii) for maintaining an Agriculture Census Capacity Development Programme Steering Committee with the active participation of UN and GOI stakeholders.

6. Feasibility, risk management and sustainability of results:

Given the highly technical nature of the programme with a strong field work element, a number of potential risks are identified and must be managed to ensure the proper implementation of the programme and sustainability of its outcome. These risks include:

- Unpredictability of the general security situation could restrict movements of government trainees, UN staff and consultants;
- Limited number of UN staff and consultants allowed inside Iraq due to limited slots;
- High rate of turnover of COSIT staff;
- Variation in competencies and absorptive capacities of Iraqi staff at central and governorate levels.

7. Monitoring, Evaluation, and Reporting:

A monitoring and evaluation framework will be developed by FAO, in accordance with FAO normative M&E guidelines, with the participation of GOI stakeholders to measure progress towards the expected programme outcome. This entails the identification of indicators, their baseline values and desired targets for the programme outcome and outputs.

Monitoring and evaluation reports, including progress on the programme outputs, will be completed and provided to the Joint Programme Steering Committee (PSC) on a quarterly basis.

Evaluation of the Programme will take place through a midterm review and a final evaluation at the end of the programme. The midterm review will be conducted by FAO and representatives of the line ministries in the PSC. The terms of reference of the midterm review will be set by the PSC, which will enact the recommendations of the review team. The final evaluation of the Programme will be carried out by an independent evaluation team and will cover lessons learned on management and implementation of the programme as well as advancement towards achievement of the Programme outcome.

Annex A

Table 1: Thematic coverage of the 2001 Iraqi Agriculture Census

Core/Supplementary Items	Census	Availability Status
Location of agricultural holding		Yes - Partial
Legal status		Yes - Partial
Sex of holder		Yes
Age of holder		Yes
Household size		Yes
Main purpose of production		No
Land use type		Yes - Partial
Area of holding		Yes - Partial
Land tenure type		Yes - Partial
Irrigation		Yes - Partial
Temporary crops		Yes - Partial
Permanent crops		Yes - Partial
Livestock numbers		Yes - Partial
Aquaculture		No
Forest and other wooded land		No
Other economic activities		No
Community Level Census Items		
Access to urban centre		No
Risk of natural disasters		No
Economic status		No
Occurrence of seasonal food shortages		No
Presence of periodic produce market		No
Access to veterinary services		No
Access to farm input trading centre		No
Access to rural bank		No
Access to farmers' association		No
Development programme		No