

## IDWG on Statistics - Technical Task Force

29 June 2022 – 14:00-16:30

### Minutes

**Presence:** Branthomme, Anne (NFO); Chen, Zhongxin (CSI); Diulgheroff, Stefano (NSP); Gennari, Pietro (OCS); Mane, Erdgin (ESP); NGomaKimbatsa, Paul (FAORAF); Pekkarinen, Anssi (NFO); RoseroMoncayo, Jose (ESS); Steel, Ashley (NFO); Kvinikadze, Giorgi (REU); Dorazio, Marcello (OCS); Beram, Ngarsaim (OCS); Baumung, Roswitha (NSAG); Seid, YakobMudesir (OCS); Liu, Suyu (OCS); Luciene, Maxime (FAOSLC); Rahija, MichaelAustin (FAORLC); Sharma, Tania (OCS); Shang, Max (OCS); Santos, Nuno (CFID); Khalil, ClaraAida (OCS); McGuire, Mark (DDCG); Uno, Tomoyuki (OSP); Vannuccini, Stefania (NFISS); MejiasMoreno, Patricia (NSL); Charef, Aymen (OCS); Gianfaldoni, Veronica (ESSDD); Moletsane, Atang (OCS); Charef, Aymen (OCS); Sharma, Raymond (OCS); Arkhipova, Iana (NFO); Sorrenti, Simona (OCS); Guerrero, Margarita (OCS); Anidi, Oluwakayode (OCS)

#### **Agenda:**

- AGENDA ITEM 1 – Review of Action items from previous meeting (5 mins) – Valerie Bizier **(for information/action)**
- AGENDA ITEM 2 – Update on the Creation of the new data governance structure (Programme committee and Council recommendations) and ToRs of the Data Coordination Group and renewed IDWG on data and statistics (10 mins) – Pietro Gennari **(for information)**
- AGENDA ITEM 3 – Creation of the new IDWG technical subgroup on the System Of Economic and Environmental Account (IDWG-SEEA) (5 mins) – Pietro Gennari **(for information)**
- AGENDA ITEM 4 – Revision of the Statistical Standards on observation flags (45 mins) – Marcello Dorazio **(for information/decision)**
- AGENDA ITEM 5 – Revised Statistics and Data Quality Assurance Framework (45 mins) – Valerie Bizier **(for information/decision)**
- AGENDA ITEM 6 – Key Performance Indicators for FAO statistical and data work (Objective 5.2 and Data accelerator 5.2) (30 mins) – Valerie Bizier **(for information/decision)**
- AGENDA ITEM 5 – Update on the implementation of the CAPEX project (SDW and SWS) (10 mins) – Pietro Gennari **(for information)**

**Video recording:** <https://unfao.sharepoint.com/:v:/s/OCS/EdXHkTb7X6pGv8m--Q-j3ngBrpwkTM96mHwmM3inQWdlmQ?e=Ka5IAf>

#### **Summary of discussions and action items**

##### ***1) Review of Action items from previous meeting***

Ms Bizier informed the group that they were two action items following the previous IDWG-TFF meeting:

- 1) Statistical process owners who did not yet filled out their QAPS questionnaire should do so before the end of the week.
- 2) All technical units that have subscribed to the CC licenses including the data owners of the nine (9) corporate databases mentioned in [FAO Statistical Database Terms fo Use](#) should add the following on their database website.



This work is made available under the Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 3.0 IGO license (CC BY-NC-SA 3.0 IGO; <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/3.0/igo>). In addition to this license, some database specific terms of use are listed: [Terms of Use of Datasets](#).

Ms Bizier mentioned that the first action item has, since the meeting, been fully implemented but pointed out that several databases were still not compliant with the addition of the note in their associated website.

#### **ACTION ITEM 1.1**

All technical units that have subscribed to the CC licenses including the data owners of the nine (9) corporate databases should add the note to their website if they haven't done it already. OCS will monitor compliance.

#### **2) Update on the Creation of the new data governance structure (Programme committee and Council recommendations) and ToRs of the Data Coordination Group and renewed IDWG on data and statistics**

Mr Gennari provided a summary of the discussions that took place in the Programme committee (133<sup>rd</sup> session) and the Council (170<sup>th</sup> session) regarding the proposed new governance for FAO data and statistics and how it will align with the new Data protection and Intellectual Property Rights policies. Mr Gennari mentioned that while the proposal was endorsed by the PC/Council, but that the two bodies have requested to receive regular updates through the Governing bodies and informal technical consultations on the implementation of the governance and its alignment with the two policies as well as on the content, use and technical characteristics of data and statistical tools and platforms deployed by FAO. Mr Gennari also mentioned that Council members had requested the list of FAO data sharing agreements, which explains the request sent by him to technical divisions.

He mentioned that first steps have been taken to implement the new governance, in particular the preparation of an official communication (DG Bulletin) containing the ToRs of the new Data Coordination Group and renewed IDWG have been shared with Maximo for transmission to the ODG for approval and issuance. Mr Gennari mentioned that the ToRs will be shared with the group as soon as the latest points that required clarifications from Maximo are addressed.

#### ***Discussions***

- *Mr Rosero commented that his reading of the PC and Council discussions was that interest for statistics and data is very high, which he thought was an important thing to mention. Then, he requested clarifications on the next steps for the establishment of the new governance. -> Mr Gennari mentioned that once the DG bulletin is issued, OCS together with Maximo will organize the first meeting of the DCG to discuss its Programme of work and discuss the membership of the IDWG. Directors of the relevant divisions to be included in the IDWG will be contacted for their official nominations.*

#### **ACTION ITEM 2.1**

OCS will distribute the ToRs to the group for information once they are finalized.

### **3) Creation of the new IDWG technical subgroup on the System Of Economic and Environmental Account**

Mr Gennari mentioned that FAO has received a strong request from UNSD and other organizations to resume its contribution to the development of System of Economic and Environmental Accounts. FAO's contribution is particularly relevant to advance the following topics: revised classification on land cover and land use, evaluation of ecosystem services (forestry, fishery/ocean and agriculture) and data generation to support country-level SEEA estimation process. To facilitate this work and coordinate FAO's inputs to the UN-level Committee of experts, OCS is proposing the creation of a new IDWG-SEEA group which will operate under the new IDWG.

ToRs have already been established for the group and are at the last stage of approval. In addition, OCB has mobilized resources to assign one RP staff (Paulo Lourenco Dias Nunes) and one consultant (expected to join FAO at the beginning of July) to support the coordination and the outputs of the IDWG-SEEA group.

#### **ACTION ITEM 3.1**

OCS will distribute the ToRs to the IDWG-SEEA for information once they are finalized as well as the list of focal points for the group.

### **4) Revision of the Statistical Standards on observation flags**

Mr Dorazio presented the proposal for the revision of the Standards on observation status flags that should be disseminated together with FAO data at the record level. He explained that this revision was motivated by the recent update of the SDMX standard on observation status. He however reminded the group that the Standards on observation flags only applies to FAO disseminated data and unlike the SDMX standard, it does not constitute a standard for data exchange which involves more complicated provisions/rules for senders and recipients.

The revision includes the better alignment of FAO flag codes with SDMX codes, the addition of rules for the assignment of flags in the case of derived variables and aggregates, and the addition of hierarchical assignation rules for flags. Members of the group were invited to endorse the new Standards.

#### **Discussions**

- *Ms Gianfaldoni summarized ESS comments sent to OCS prior to the meeting. In particular, she raised the following points:*
  - *ESS is generally satisfied with the Standards*
  - *The proposed standard does not make use of the SDMX terminology related to senders/recipients. She believes however that SDMX rules to derive "E" and "I" using the sender/recipient status would be easier to implement if these concepts were introduced in the standard. -> To this comment, Mr Dorazio responded that the two concepts were omitted on the basis of the purpose of the Standards (i.e. establishing dissemination flags only). If the objective of the revision is to adopt a full scale Standards for data exchange than the distinction between sender and recipient should be introduced, otherwise it is not necessary.*
  - *In the proposed standard, the proposed use of the flag "V" by FAO (Data estimated by FAO but unvalidated by countries) is conflicting with the meaning intended by the SDMX flag "V" (Data submitted by countries without further evaluation of data quality by FAO). This contradiction should be addressed and she proposed to use a different letter for FAO's intended flag -> Marcello agreed with the proposal.*
  - *Is the proposed rules for determining the flag associated with a derived variable addressing the request made by NFO to have a separate flag for derived variables? -> Mr Dorazio clarified that the rules for the flag associated with derived variables were meant to provide more flexibility with the use of the "official data" flag for variables that are mainly derived from*

official data instead of flagging them as estimated. He clarifies that in cases where FAO received the derived variable (total) but not necessarily all values that are considered in the derived variables, NFO should use the flag "I" as it imputes the missing values.

After Mr Dorazio's answers, Mr Gianfaldoni asked some clarifications on the use of flags E and I for three particular cases and which were agreed as follow:

- data received from countries as estimated -> should receive a flag "E"
- data received by a country but modified by FAO -> should receive a flag "I"
- data generated completely by FAO -> should receive a flag "E"

- *Ms Vannuccini, in line Ms Gianfaldoni's comments, mentioned that the use of flags 'E' and 'I' should be better clarified. -> Mr Dorazio agreed.*

*She also mentioned that this new Standards will imply additional work if the SWS does not fully automatize the assignation of flags. For example, the assignation of flags 'X' (data from international organizations that are part of the CCSA community) and 'T' (data from international organizations that are not part of the CCSA community) will probably have to be derived manually. She therefore requested ESS and OCS to confirm if all flags could be automatized in the SWS. -> Mr. Dorazio agrees on the importance to have the SWS in line with the standards and mentioned that OCS have worked with ESS towards this objective. He mentioned that few cases (recalculation of total by SWS resulting in a change of flags, Unvalidated data...) that need to be resolved and agreed to have a dedicated meeting with ESS and the key IDWG-TFF members who are part of the SWS to discuss flag automation with SWS.*

*She also raised the issue that historically the distinction between 'X' and 'T' was not captured in Fishery statistics, therefore the introduction of the two flags will not be possible for historical data and could be introduced from next year. -> Mr Dorazio agrees that they will probably be a break in the flags series*

- *Ms Steel explained that NFO disseminated many variables that are summing up to a total provided by countries and appreciated OCS/ESS efforts to address the flag assignation problems related to totals so that the flag remains official even if some of the parts were imputed/estimated.*

*She however questioned the extent to which the Standards needed to be SDMX compliance, and if there were some opportunities to introduce an additional flag for 'derived variable'.*

*She also mentioned that she sees the value of the 2/3 cut-off but worries that the resulting flag of derived variables will be very much dependent on the quality of the estimated values. She explained that if the 2/3 is based on the weighed contribution of the official estimates to the total, the sum of the estimated part of the total could be flagged as official or estimated on the sole basis of the values of the estimated variables. She said that users should look at all the variables included in the sum to make their own opinion of the quality of the total, thus the importance to have a statistical flag for derived variable if possible. -> Mr Dozario responded that it will be difficult to have a specific flag for derived variables since we have decided to use a system of unique flag. One possibility could be to use a lower-case letter for derived variable but this needs to be reflect more on this. He proposed to discuss this in another meeting with an updated version.*

- *Mr Rosero and Ms Gianfaldoni came back on the use of 'E' and 'I' flags as the SDMX and proposed standards seem to recommend the use of 'I' only when the recipient organization impute a missing value, while FAO use it to both impute a missing value or modify an existing one. -> Mr Dorazio clarified that in practice 'I' should cover both cases in the standard, but if FAO wants to develop a full data exchange flag system and introduce the sender/receiver status, then we should agree to be fully compliant to the SDMX standard. This is a question that should be resolved asap.*

### **ACTION ITEM 3.1**

OCS and ESS will organize a meeting with the units involved in the SWS to clarify the automation of the flags in the system, discuss further the issue of derived variables and further discuss the need to have a Standard for data exchange

#### **5) Revised Statistics and Data Quality Assurance Framework**

Ms Bizier introduced the revised Statistics and Data Quality Assurance Framework, which provides a series of principles to consider in order to properly manage the quality of FAO data and statistics as well as their key implementation modalities. She highlighted the changes to the document in comparison to its 2014 version, which mainly concerns the need to have better quality assurance mechanisms in place for the use of non-statistical data in the production of FAO statistics, to reflect changes in FAO governance for data and statistics and address alignment with the new Data protection and IPR policies. IDWG-TTF members were invited to pre-endorse the document in order for OCS to finalize the new QAPS methodology necessary to calculate KPI 5.2.C. The SDQAF will be finalized once the Policies on data protection and intellectual property rights and the standards on the use of bigdata for statistical purposes are promulgated.

#### **Discussions**

- *Mr Rosero welcomed the document as an important element that will show our alignment with data protection and intellectual property rights policies and requested clarifications on how this framework will be updated once two policies are promulgated -> Ms Bizier mentioned that the Policy on Data protection was already taken into account in this version of the SDQAF and any changes to this policy and the adoption of the intellectual property rights policy will be considered in the final version. Mr Rosero also asked clarifications about the process leading to the development of the Standards on the use of big data for statistical purpose -> Ms Bizier mentioned that the core of the Standards is currently been developed by OCS and that the IDWG members (under the new governance mechanisms) will be consulted in particular with the best practices to be implemented by type of big data and the document will be endorsed by the new governance structure.*

#### **ACTION ITEM 5.1**

IDWG-TTF members have **until July 6th COB** to provide comments to the Document. After this date, the document will be considered pre-endorsed and will be updated by OCS for final endorsement once the Policies on data protection and intellectual property rights and the standards on the use of big data for statistical purposes are promulgated.

#### **6) Key Performance Indicators for FAO statistical and data work (Objective 5.2 and Data accelerator 5.2)**

Ms Bizier presented the proposed Key Performance Indicators (KPI) to monitor outcomes related to data and statistics under the Medium Term Plan 2022-2025. She reminded the IDWG-TTF members that data and statistics have been planned under outcomes 5.2 (Technical Capacity of FAO related to statistics) and 5.4 (Data accelerators for FAO Priority programme areas). The methodology, baselines and targets of the three KPIs related to outcome 5.2. and the one related to 5.4. were presented for discussions and endorsement. Ms Bizier explained that in the case of KPI 5.2C (Proportion of FAO statistical processes and data outputs of good quality on the basis of the relevant FAO Quality Assurance Framework), the methodology used would be very similar to the one used for KPI 6.2B under the previous result framework but still need to be refined with regards to the changes integrated in the new SDQAF. As such, the baseline

and targets are not yet available but will be shared with the group prior to the the 134<sup>th</sup> session of the Programme Committee planned in November.

### **Discussions**

- *Mr Uno appreciated that KPI 5.2C will have a baseline and target in due time for the next Programme Comment and had a comment regarding KPI 5.4C. Since the methodology of this indicator includes existing database, maybe this should be reflected in the title of the indicator (e.g. number of data sets updated). Same comments about the use of the term 'global' database. Since for some database the scope might region- or country-specific, it might be worth reflecting that in the title as well. -> Ms Bizier agreed with the comments and will apply the proposed change. Also, since there are existing data sets, he wondered why the baseline was set to 0 and if it was possible to see the distribution between the existing and new data sets in the targets. -> Ms Bizier responded that the baseline is set to zero since at the beginning of the biennium none of the data sets has not been yet updated. As per the data sets considered, she mentioned that she could share the Mr Uno recommended to look at the data sets that have been updated since January 2022 to make sure we are on track*

*Mr Rosero requested to have more information on how the targets of indicator 5.2Ab) were defined as he found them quite optimistic. à Ms Bizier, Ms Khalil and Mr Gennari mentioned that the targets were set based on simulations agreed with SDG indicator focal point. Simulation scenarios will be shared with the IDWG-TTF members as background information.*

*Ms Vannucini mentioned that KPI 5.2B is probably also too optimistic given current trends in response rates and another issue is that the SWS is not automatically calculate this indicator -> Ms Bizier mentioned that we can expect increase on the basis of the collection of new questionnaires that have a response rate of 0 at the moment. Mr Uno also supported the proposed target on the basis of strategic consideration and feasibility, and updates are possible along the way.*

*Mr Luciene mentioned that there are two problems to our low response rates: 1) countries have the data but do not know how to respond to our questionnaires; or, 2) countries do not have the underlying data to report. Has an analysis been done on the reasons that could explain low reporting rate in order to evaluate how to focus our capacity development activities and the increase response rates we could realistically obtained? -> Ms Bizier mentioned that to her knowledge the data owners might have this information but the information has not been aggregated.*

*Regarding the disaggregation of FIES data, his understanding is that it very much depends if the FIES module is collected at the individual or household level. Has any methods been developed to disaggregate data by age, sex... that has been collected through a household-level FIES module. This would help with the achievement of the KPI 5.2Ab) -> Ms Bizier recommended Ms Luciene to contact ESS and Aida Khalil on this.*

### **ACTION ITEM 6.1**

**IDWG-TTF members have until July 6th COB to provide additional comments to the KPI Document based on additional data provided. After this date, the document will be shared to IDWG Directors for information/final endorsement.**

### **7) Update on the implementation of the CAPEX project (SDW and SWS)**

Ms Gennari recalled FAO management decision regarding the deployment .StatSuite based on SDMX as a corporate platform to integrate and disseminate several domains of statistics, for which the CAPEX Board has allocated funding at the end of 2023. The project board will meet soon to have an official kick-off of

the CAPEX project. Focal points for the different components of the project will then be established with the responsibility to regularly monitor progress in the implementation of the project and report back to the project board. MoU to be signed on .StatSuite is still under discussion between FAO and OECD LEG departments.

Ms Gennari requested a full engagement and collaboration for the success of this project and to work together as co-owners of the new SDW. OCS core team conducted a preliminary assessment on the SDW data inputs for data modelling (FAOSTAT, FISHTAT, SDG data) and facilitated two consultation meetings between technical units and OECD. It was an opportunity to better understand the project functional requirements and data owners' expectations. Relevant technical units of FAOSTAT and FISHTAT under this first phase of the project were requested to provide notes on technical requirements for the SDW. Once all these notes are received, we will have an internal discussion and agree on the critical points that will need to be addressed with the OECD. Ms Gennari mentioned that training activities on SDMX, .STATSUITE and SDMX-based tools to address technical issues will be organized in the following weeks. Finally, Ms Gennari mentioned that he will be able to provide more information on the progress of this project in the next meeting after the first meeting of the project board.

**1) AOB**

Nothing was reported for this agenda item