

**First meeting of the Data Coordination Group
14 July 2022**

Annotated Agenda

1. Opening remarks by Maximo Torero

2. Terms of Reference of the Data Coordination Group (DCG)

The DCG needs to approve its ToRs and officially appoints the two additional Directors to the permanent members of the group, which will be replaced after two years. The proposal is to appoint:

- EST Director, given EST important role in generating and using data products;
- OCB Director, given that OCB probably has a good overview of the data needs and gaps related to various topics such as Climate Change, Biodiversity, Environment, Green Blue Finance and Innovation for Sustainability

3. Membership of the DCG

Permanent members

- The Chief Economist (chairperson)
- The Chief Scientist
- The Chief Statistician
- The Regional Assistant Director General for Africa
- The Regional Assistant Director General for Asia and the Pacific
- The Regional Assistant Director General for Europe and Central Asia
- The Regional Assistant Director General for Latin America and the Caribbean
- The Regional Assistant Director General for the Near East and North Africa
- The Director of the Statistics Division
- The Director of the IT Services Division (CSI)
- The Director of the Forestry Division (NFO)
- The Director of the Fishery Division (NFI)
- The Director of the Land & Water Division (NSL)
- The Director of the Office of Emergencies and Resilience (OER)
- Two additional directors, one from the Economic and Social Development Stream and one from the Natural Resources and Sustainable Production Stream - appointed for a period of 2 years, renewable

The Director, EST, and the Director, OCB, are invited to the first meeting of the DCG as observers in view of their possible appointment for a period of two years. (Agenda item 1)

4. Workplan of the DCG 2022-2023

The proposed topics of discussions for the DCG in 2022-2023 are as follow:

a. Implementation of Data protection and Intellectual Property Rights policies

As requested by its Members, FAO will need to provide an update on the implementation of the two policies in the next governing bodies' sessions (probably PC 135 in March 2023 and CL 172 in April). The Data Protection Policy has been promulgated (Admin circular AC2022/06 shared on Monday) and the

IPR policy will be discussed in the relevant governing bodies will be discussed in the fall (CCLM 117 in October).

It is proposed that DCG members will examine the compliance of data/statistical activities and policies to the principles and prerogatives of the two policies, in order to identify non-compliance and weaknesses in their implementation, and agree on remedial actions necessary to address these issues.

Proposed timelines:

- End of July or Early September 2022 for the data protection policy
- Date to be determined for the IPR Policy

b. Capacity of decentralized offices on statistics and data for statistics

The Independent Evaluation of FAO's statistical work and FAO members in various recent governing body meetings have requested the Organization to strengthen the statistical capacity of decentralized offices to ensure a stronger support to the national statistical institutions for the production of food and agricultural statistics and SDG indicators. This strengthening cannot be implemented at the cost of weakening the statistical capacity of the technical units at HQ, which is already insufficient.

The "Implementation Plan for the FAO Strategy for the Modernization of Statistics", released last year, proposed a three-pronged strategy for obtaining this result:

- providing regional statisticians with dedicated resources and guidance for supporting the implementation of country-level strategic and operational activities;
- providing dedicated training on SDG monitoring to the data officers hired in each UN Country Office to the M&E officers present in FAO Country offices.
- leveraging the emerging network of coordination mechanisms and partnerships among UN Agencies at regional level for supporting country-level activities.

Proposed timelines:

- September 2022: update and extension of the strategy

c. Data contribution to the implementation of the Strategic Framework and the PPAs

Under the new strategic framework, data has been identified as a key accelerator for the implementation of the PPAs. However, it seems that it has not been translated in key new data initiatives. Are there opportunities for two or three key global or regional data initiatives (might it be in repackaging the data we have, expanding our data assets or working with countries to fill existing data gaps)? What are the regional and county offices doing to support the data accelerators and data/statistics initiatives? Analysis done on PIREs results indicate that there might be fewer data/statistics activities implemented in the regions and countries. Is it a real de-emphasis in the number of data/statistics initiatives or is there a structural problem related to the planning process used this time around?

Proposed timelines:

- October/November 2022

d. IT infrastructure related to data and statistics.

Under this topic a progress Report on the implementation of the CAPEX project on the "Modernization and Integration of the FAO statistical system", approved at the end of last year by the CAPEX Board, will be provided. The DCG will be regularly briefed on progress in the implementation of this project

e. Quality assurance and control of geospatial data and Big data

FAO Statistics Quality assurance framework needs to be revised in order to enlarge it to the use of alternative data sources and latest development in quality management. Data Quality Control Guidance and procedures also need to be established and documented to ensure that our data products are of the highest quality.

The Office of the Chief Statistician has already started working on the revision of FAO Statistics and Data Quality Assurance Framework and a series of standards for the acquisition and use of alternative data sources in the production of statistics and other data products. In particular, the use of geospatial information and other big data should be better assessed and validated, as currently there are no guidelines and quality control mechanisms in place to assess the quality of the input data, validate the methods used to generate our data products from these data sources, and validate and disseminate the final data outputs. There are various models as to how quality control mechanisms could be implemented and it is proposed that the DCG examines and agrees on the best course of action.

Proposed timelines:

- Initiate this work in Early September 2022, based on the OCS update on current practices and identified gaps, by delineating a concrete workplan.

f. Specific Coordination issues in the production of statistics and data for statistics

A stronger coordination in the production of statistics and data for statistics is needed in order to avoid the dissemination of inconsistent estimates for the same or for similar indicators, which generates confusion among users. Traditional areas where duplicative and/or inconsistent figures are published by different units within FAO are: land cover/land use; food security; prices; trade.

Proposed timelines:

- September 2022, food security indicators
- January 2023, land cover/land use indicators

5. Terms of Reference of the Inter-Departmental Working Group on Statistics and Data for Statistics and its membership

In addition to the DCG, the new governance on data for statistics and statistics foresees the creation of an IDWG technical level group to support the development and harmonization of methods, standards, tools and processes for the acquisition, production and dissemination of data for statistics and statistics. The DCG should review and agree on the ToRs, and agree on a process for the nomination of the IDWG members.