

**Statistics for Development Division (SDD)**

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**SESSION 7 – PACIFIC STRATEGIC PLAN FOR AGRICULTURAL AND FISHERIES STATISTICS: STRENGTHENING THE EVIDENCE BASE FOR ACHIEVEMENT OF THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS**

*(Document presented by the secretariat)*

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**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

1. The Pacific Strategic Plan for Agricultural and Fisheries Statistics (P-SPAFS) is a ten-year plan that aims to guide the development of agricultural and fisheries statistics in the Pacific Small Island Developing States (SIDS) and to address unprecedented data demand for monitoring of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The plan will thereby increase the quality of evidence-based policymaking through collaborative efforts of national governments and the donor community.
2. P-SPAFS was conceived and developed by representatives from Pacific Island's National Statistics Offices and Ministries of Agriculture and Fisheries. It was subsequently developed by a Technical Working Group (TWG) that represented different geographic regions and statistical scope and capacity in the region. P-SPAFS development was supported through partnership between the Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations (FAO) and the Pacific Community (SPC).
3. The Pacific Statistical Steering Committee (PSSC) endorsed the Vision, Mission and Objectives of the Strategic Plan in May 2016. Heads of Fisheries endorsed P-SPAFS in March 2017 and Ministers of Agriculture endorsed P-SPAFS in October 2017. Endorsement of the Strategic Plan is hereby sought from HOPS.

## PURPOSE

4. The purpose of this paper is to:

- provide a summary of P-SPAFS; and
- seek endorsement from Heads of Planning and Statistics on the Strategic Plan, which is appended herewith.

## RATIONALE

5. Three quarters of the Pacific population live in rural areas and rely largely on agriculture and fishing for their livelihoods. These populations are vulnerable to the long term impact of climate change and the devastation caused by frequent natural disasters. Long term declines in agricultural productivity are undermining the sustainability of these livelihoods and have contributed to a rise in diet related Non-Communicable Diseases (NCDs) such as obesity and diabetes. NCDs are responsible for three quarters of deaths in the Pacific (World Bank, 2014). Investing in sustainable agricultural development will help tackle two of the greatest challenges facing the region: climate change and NCDs.
6. While the agriculture sector is a priority for development, the delivery of effective government programmes is hampered by insufficiently accessible and reliable data. Evidence-based policy requires timely, relevant and reliable statistics for use by policy makers.
7. The SDG monitoring indicator framework has placed new demands on statistical systems, requiring a broad range of data in various fields, including agriculture and rural development, triggering new momentum for engagement towards statistical capacity building.
8. P-SPAFS provides a mechanism through which Pacific users and producers of agricultural statistics can define their priorities and establish a common vision for the development of sustainable agricultural statistics systems. Furthermore, it provides a structure for bringing together existing and potential partners to give support and resources to help achieve that vision.

## DEVELOPMENT OF P-SPAFS

9. The Strategic Plan was initiated in 2015 through a regional meeting of more than 50 agricultural statisticians and planners from 14 Pacific Islands. It has since been developed under the guidance of a TWG comprised of planners and statisticians representing the different sub-regions of the Pacific and different capacities with agricultural statistics. P-SPAFS is joint outcome of long-term efforts made by FAO and SPC.
10. P-SPAFS will guide the development of agricultural and fisheries statistics in the Pacific SIDS and will address unprecedented data demand for monitoring of the SDGs. It will thereby increase the quality of evidence-based policymaking through collaborative efforts of national governments and the donor community.
11. The Strategic Plan conveys the commitment of both FAO and SPC to work together to improve food, agricultural and fisheries statistics in the Pacific SIDS. This brings together the comparative advantages of SPC's Statistics for Development Division (SDD), which has bilateral connections with all statistics institutions in the Pacific region, and FAO, which plays a lead role in setting the technical standards and methods for agriculture and rural statistics as an intergovernmental organization, and provides technical assistance services and dissemination of data for global monitoring. This partnership will support the delivery of the results of the methodological developments achieved under the Global Strategy to Improve Agricultural and Rural Statistics, which served as a basis of the P-SPAFS, with the aim of producing a core set of agricultural statistics in a cost-effective manner. This strategy will provide

a regional framework for enlisting the support of other partners to ensure synergies in undertaking the work at the county level, to ensure the work has a lasting impact to strengthen the evidence base for securing food and sustainable livelihoods.

12. The publication of and inputs into P-SPAFS were carried out with the financial support of the Multi-Donor Trust fund of the Global Strategy to Improve Agricultural and Rural Statistics, for which the United Kingdom's Department for International Development (DFID) provided a major contribution, along with the FAO regular programme and the European Union-supported Intra ACP Pacific Agriculture Policy Project, managed by the Land Resources Division of SPC.
13. PSSC endorsed the Vision, Mission and Objectives of P-SPAFS in May 2016. Heads of Fisheries endorsed the Strategic Plan at the 10<sup>th</sup> SPC Heads of Fisheries Meeting in March, 2017. Ministers of Agriculture endorsed the Strategic Plan at the Pacific Week of Agriculture in October 2017. HOPS is the last forum to see endorsement for P-SPAFS prior to proceeding into Phase 1 in 2018.

## THE VISION

14. P-SPAFS envisions a region where high-quality and timely statistics inform decisions relating to food security and sustainable agricultural and fisheries development, and assist monitoring the achievement of the SDGs. This will be achieved through strengthening the collection and dissemination of statistics related to food security, agriculture, fisheries and natural resources to support policy formulation and sector decision-making. The Plan has four main objectives:
  - a. Significantly increased availability and quality of a core set of regionally comparable statistical indicators related to food security, agriculture, fisheries and natural resources ('agricultural statistics');
  - b. Agricultural statistics fully integrated into national statistical systems with robust coordinating mechanisms established through National Strategies for the Development of Statistics (NSDS) or other appropriate frameworks;
  - c. Better use of agricultural statistics through data dissemination systems and tools and increased awareness by policy and decision makers of the data collection sources, processes, data quality and data limitations; and
  - d. Increased capacity to collect, compile, process, interpret, analyse and disseminate agricultural statistics on a sustainable basis and to use a wide range of data and information for evidence based policy and decision making.

## SCOPE

15. Agricultural statistics in P-SPAFS include statistics on crops, livestock, forestry, aquaculture, fisheries and land use and will be used to understand issues relating to food security, sustainable livelihoods, climate change and disaster risk management, and economic development. The Strategic Plan includes all Pacific Community members and participation in activities will be determined by national needs, interests and priorities.

## IMPLEMENTATION

16. From the outset, P-SPAFS seeks to bring together users and producers of agricultural statistics to ensure data is relevant and used to create evidence based policy creation. It will also focus on building regional level tools and approaches in order to provide the greatest benefit to the greatest number. It will work with and complement other regional frameworks particularly the Ten Year Pacific Statistics Strategy (TYPSS).

17. One of the first activities will be establishing data demands by reviewing Pacific priority SDGs and data demands in National Agricultural Policies as well as other relevant regional frameworks and the existing agricultural National Minimum Development Indicators. Data demands will then be used to help shape the design of data collection activities.
18. Support will be provided for cost-effective collection methodologies which help improve the quality and comparability of statistics. This may include moving towards an integrated system of data collection across different surveys, the improvement of administrative data and greater use of technology, particularly tablets and smartphones for survey management.
19. Emphasis will be placed on strengthening the integration of agriculture into national statistics systems in order to improve co-ordination and collaboration between statistics users and producers. Resources will also be directed towards increasing the availability of statistics that are produced and to raising the visibility of the importance of agricultural statistics through advocacy events.
20. All areas of work will be supported by capacity building through a variety of different mediums. Priority will be given to using existing knowledge within the region by supporting south-south co-operation and mentoring and twinning arrangements. This will be augmented through the development of formal training programmes and, where appropriate, strengthening statistical units within Ministries of Agriculture.
21. P-SPAFS will be a 10 year strategy overseen by a Steering Committee of stakeholders including agricultural and fishery statisticians and planners, regional private and civil society organisation representatives and key contributing partners. It is envisioned that a Secretariat will be established to support management of the P-SPAFS and deliver some core technical assistance. 2017 is a critical preparatory phase of foundational activities such as formalising the governance structure, finalising the activities for Phase 1 (2018-2020) and committing resources.
22. Building a sustainable agricultural statistical system is a long term process. This process started many years ago in the Pacific and it will continue after the lifetime of P-SPAFS. P-SPAFS will therefore endeavour to help the agricultural sector engage and articulate their requirements in the development of their NSDS. It will also report to and participate in activities within TYPSS such as working groups and intra-regional cooperation. The ultimate indicator of the success of P-SPAFS will be that a separate coordinating mechanism for agricultural statistics is no longer required but is fully integrated into regional and national statistical systems.

## RECOMMENDATION

23. Heads of Planning and Statistics are invited to:

- Note the progress made by representatives of Pacific Statistical Offices and Ministries of Agriculture and Fisheries, and the Technical Working Group, in conceiving and developing P-SPAFS.
- Note the collaboration between FAO and SPC in supporting the development of P-SPAFS and the opportunity for ongoing partnership under the guiding framework of P-SPAFS.
- Endorse the Pacific Strategic Plan for Agricultural and Fisheries Statistics (appended herewith).

## APPENDIX

24. Refer document “P-SPAFS\_HOPS\_endorsement”, which is the full Strategic Plan for which endorsement from HOPS is being sought.

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