



# Strategic Plans for Agricultural and Rural Statistics (SPARS)

**Strengthening agricultural and rural statistical systems to facilitate evidence-based decision-making**



Several challenges persist in the National Statistical Systems (NSSs) of developing countries:

- Data gaps due to a lack of integration of agricultural statistics
- Weak institutional structures & processes
- Insufficient financial support

These challenges should be addressed to produce adequate statistics that result in effective policies.

## Why are agricultural and rural statistics important?

The agricultural sector plays a vital role in rural development and in the economic advancement of developing countries, by:

- ▶ Acting as a driver to promote economic growth and sustainable development.
- ▶ Serving as a supplier of food, feed, fibre and fuel, as well as environmental services.
- ▶ Contributing to the well-being of rural populations by increasing food security, reducing price volatility and enhancing incomes by absorbing rural labour force.



# Why is a strategic planning approach needed?

- ▶ To develop sustainable statistical systems.
- ▶ To better integrate agricultural and rural statistics into NSSs and National Strategies for the Development of Statistics (NSDS) in terms of content, schedule and approaches.
- ▶ To optimize the use of limited resources across priority areas.
- ▶ To prioritize statistical programs and interventions, particularly in the areas of technical assistance, research and training.
- ▶ To provide a framework for mobilizing, harnessing and leveraging resources to accomplish a sustainable national agricultural statistical system.
- ▶ To raise the profile of statistics and increase the demand for statistical products and services.



# What are SPARS?

A **strategic** approach developed and recommended by the Global Strategy to improve Agricultural and Rural Statistics (GSARS), which supports the **development** of long-term sustainable **agricultural and rural statistical systems at the national level.**

## THE MAIN BUILDING BLOCKS



# What is the SPARS process?

Generally, the SPARS process involves the following steps:



## LAUNCHING PHASE

### Preparation:

- National authorities and key stakeholders must understand and acknowledge the importance of SPARS, and commit towards planning and implementation.
- Build a constituency, establish a design team and develop a roadmap.

## ASSESSING PHASE

### In-Depth Country Assessment (IdCA):

- Helps understand users' expectations and needs.
- Results may be used as inputs for designing strategic objectives and action plans, and as a benchmark for measuring subsequent progress.
- It can be used as an advocacy tool for statistical capacity building programs.

## PLANNING PHASE

### Results-Based Management Approach:

- Clear vision and mission statements.
- Setting strategic objectives, i.e. goals and related outputs.
- Developing an action plan.
- Costing the action plan and preparing a financing strategy.
- Designing Monitoring and Evaluation plans.

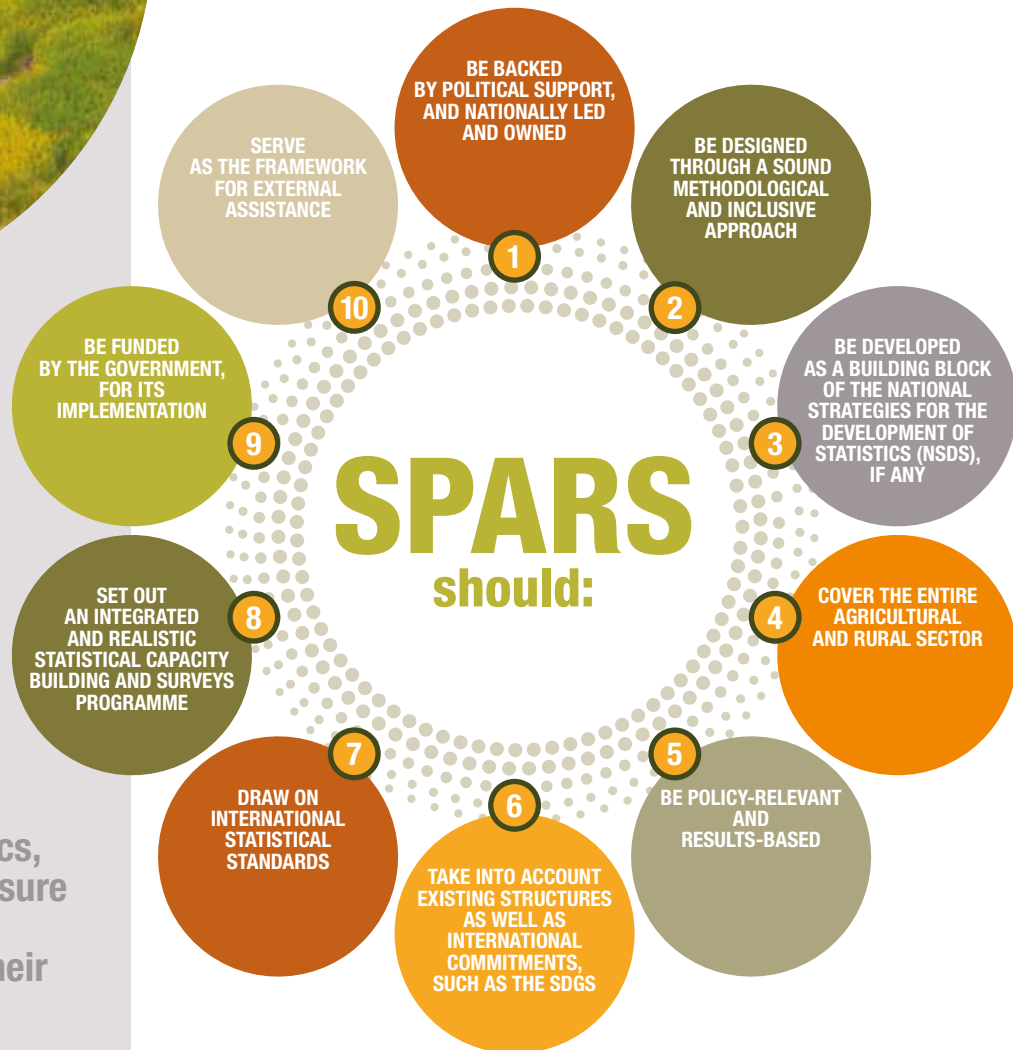
## IMPLEMENTATION PHASE

### Execution:

- Leverage existing governance and management structures.
- Verify consistency and feasibility of action plans.
- Continuously monitor, evaluate and adjust plans as required.
- Execute communication and advocacy strategies.

REVIEW AND ADJUSTMENT

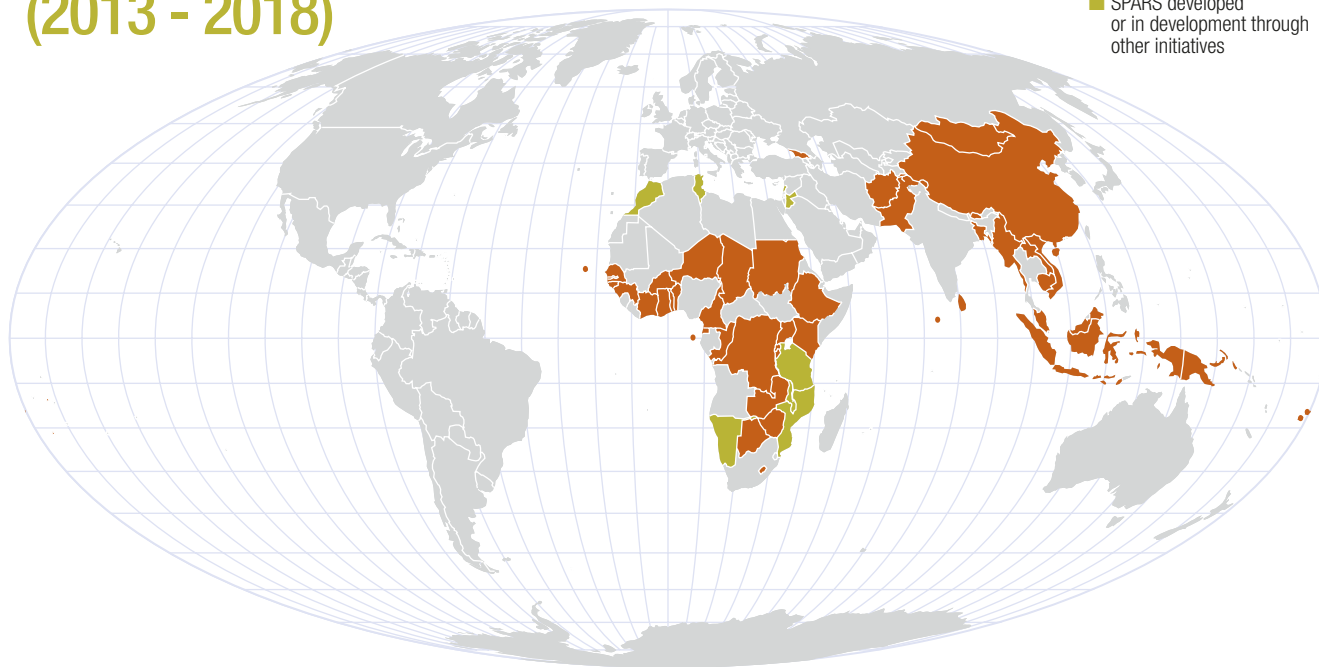
# SPARS design and implementation: 10 essential principles



To improve agricultural and rural statistics, it is crucial to ensure their inclusion in the NSS and their integration in the NSDS.

# SPARS design and implementation (2013 - 2018)

- SPARS developed or in development through the Global Strategy
- SPARS developed or in development through other initiatives



Over the last six years, more than 50 countries have engaged into the SPARS process.

## An example of successful implementation: Tanzania

Tanzania was one of the first countries to develop an Agriculture Statistics Strategic Plan (ASSP). The objective was to improve agriculture statistical systems and enable them to generate relevant data that is vital for national development initiatives and evidence-based policy-making.

The design phase of the strategy kicked-off in 2012, led by the Agriculture Sector Ministries in collaboration with development partners and supported by FAO and USDA/NASS. As result of the design phase, a comprehensive roadmap was

developed to establish a sustainable agricultural statistical system over a timeframe of five years (2014/15 – 2018/19).

In addition to domestic budgetary allocations, the key development partners pledged funds to support various areas and aspects of the ASSP during its implementation phase, e.g. Census of Agriculture – 2016 (EU & WB), Annual Agricultural Sample Survey (USDA & NASS), Improvement of Administrative Data (JICA), Improving Crop Forecasting Estimates (FAO), and Improvement of District Level Data (Irish Aid, FAO & Swiss cooperation).



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### SPARS Guidelines



### Country SPARS Kenya



### Samoa



### Global Action Plan



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