

## **The Development of Agricultural and Rural Information Systems in Sub-Saharan Africa and Challenges in Capacity Building to Meet Design, Monitoring and Policies Evaluation Needs**

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**Abstract:** The National Agricultural Statistical Systems (NASS) development process has not been continuous in Africa. They worked better during the periods corresponding to the existence of a real request of decision makers who face a particular economic situation requiring objective economic policies and, to the existence of a reliable source of financing and the availability of real capacities of production. These assertions can be illustrated by examples from Côte d'Ivoire and CILSS countries. In Côte d'Ivoire, the period of good international economic situation for export crops (coffee and cocoa) was also that of the best functioning of the agricultural statistics; (ii) the experience of CILSS countries is eloquent as a food crisis period (years 1983-1984) imposed statistics needs for food crisis forecasting in view of better targeting of actions. This allowed governments and technical and financial partners to collaborate in the construction of a durable information system on food security satisfying the needs for information for operational decision-making.

Today, the context seems to be more favourable for the construction of efficient and durable NASS because there is a general consensus on the need for democratization, decentralization and the PSRP as a new form of governance, global commitments like MDG, regional integration and globalization. Aid effectiveness, result-based agenda, accountability became the great principles which must guide all actions. That implies requirements in data and new tools for designing, monitoring and evaluation of economic and social policies in general and in agriculture and rural development in particular. For better formulation of policies, the NASS must provide the decision makers with information on socio-economic situation of rural households and farmers and on the situation of the farms and agricultural products chain, in particular, conditions of production, constraints and economic performances. In the same way, to make policies implementation operational, budget-program and sector MTEF are tools for planning by objective.

For all these needs, some fields of statistical capacity building of African countries are identified and must be implemented to ensure that NASS address statistical needs in a durable way.