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Overview of the Operational Guidelines of the WCA 2020

Technical Session I

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Background of the WCA

- FAO is the leading UN agency for providing technical guidelines and support to member countries for the conduct of national censuses of agriculture.
- Since 1948, FAO has developed a dedicated decennial *World Programme* that helps countries carry out their national censuses on agriculture.
- The *World Programme for the Census of Agriculture (WCA)* is updated every 10 years to build countries' capacities in the use of the most recent standards and methods to gather agriculture-related statistics.

Background (cont'd)

- In 2015, FAO published its 10th decennial WCA 2020 “*Programme, concepts and definitions*”. It provides methodological guidelines to agricultural censuses to be undertaken between 2016 and 2025.
- In 2018, FAO published Vol 2 - *Operational Guidelines* – the practical aspects.
- The *Operational Guidelines* provides practical guidance to national census practitioners on the stages/steps involved in census preparation and implementation.

What's new?

- Since the publication of a similar book in 1996, there have been substantial methodological and technological developments in the census environment.
- Methodological: the modular approach, the integrated census & survey modality, and the use of registers as a source of census data.
- Technological: more affordable tools for data capture (mobile, online), census planning (digital frames, geo-referencing, remote sensing imaging), archiving (digital preservation SDMX compliant) and online dissemination (dynamic tables, infographics) provide cost-effective alternatives to traditional ways.
- The *Operational Guidelines* takes into account these game changers.
- The publication is user-friendly and practical. It provides cross-references between sections, links to country practices, and hyperlinks to Web-based resources created specially for this book.
- A USB version of the *Operational Guidelines*, including resources, is enclosed in the front cover pocket of the book. Available in six languages. The English version is available at <http://www.fao.org/3/CA1963EN/ca1963en.pdf>

Steps in planning & conducting a CA

Design and Planning

Field Work

Processing, Analysis, Publication

Identify the role of the census of agriculture as a component of the system of integrated agricultural censuses and surveys

Determine the objectives of the census of agriculture and its overall strategy

Define the methodology and data collection method (paper, mobile device, etc.)

Develop a work plan and establish the budget to carry out the census

Prepare census legislation, if required

Establish the institutional framework, create the Agricultural Census Office and recruit the necessary staff

Develop and implement the census publicity campaign

Design data quality assurance framework

Prepare frames and mapping

Develop the tabulation plan

Design and test questionnaires; prepare field instruction manuals

Design and test the computer processing system, including data capture, editing and tabulation

Develop the field system (including monitoring system); recruit and train field staff

Census enumeration

Post-Enumeration Survey (PES)

Process and archive data, and prepare tabulation

Analyse data and prepare census reports, disseminate and publicize results

Reconcile the data from the system of current statistics with the census data

1. Structure of the *Operational Guidelines*

- The steps and associated activities illustrated before are described in the book in 25 different chapters organized in three parts:
 - **Part 1** covers the planning of the census and the necessary framework.
 - **Part 2** relates to the methodology for the census of agriculture, their main issues and suggested solutions.
 - **Part 3** refers to the preparation and implementation of the census.

Structure: Part 1 - Planning

- **Part 1** starts emphasizing the need to carry out the census of agriculture not in isolation but as a component of an integrated system of agricultural censuses and surveys.
- This precondition ensures that the census can be focused on a coherent and manageable set of items given that other (non-structural) items needed more frequently are available elsewhere (surveys, registers).
- Then, the importance, uses and relevance of the census in the development policy agenda is discussed.
- A new feature is a guidance on how to demonstrate the benefits (both qualitative and quantitative) of the census to make a convincing case for its funding. This seeks to help census authorities to make a good case with national decision-makers and resource partners on why they should fund the census and ensure value for their money.
- Part 1 ends discussing the preparation of the census legislation, the institutional framework, the elaboration of a work plan and the associated budget. Other planning activities include the communication and publicity strategy and the quality assurance framework to prevent and minimize potential errors at all stages.

Structure: Part 2 - Methodology

- **Part 2** discusses the implementation aspects of the four census methodological modalities presented in WCA 2020:
 - a. the classical approach (a single one-off field operation);
 - b. the modular approach (a core module followed by sample-based supplementary modules);
 - c. the integrated census and survey modality (a core census module followed by sample-based rotating modules);
 - d. the use of registers as a source of census data.
- It discusses, for each census modality, the implementation steps, timing, requirements, advantages and limitations.
- This is illustrated with country experiences to help countries select and implement the modality most suitable, taking into account the statistical and technological development of each country.

Structure: Part 3 – Preparation and implementation

- **Part 3** is devoted to the preparation of census fieldwork and implementation of data collection, processing, analysis and dissemination activities.
- The discussion on fieldwork activities covers the building of frames, the growing use of digital maps, elaboration of questionnaires and manuals, selection of staff, training, pretests, pilot census, listing operation and data collection (PAPI, CAPI, CAWI, etc.).
- The use of new technology and tools (such as tablets, Web questionnaires, Global Positioning Systems and remote sensing) is also examined.

Structure: Part 3 – Implementation (cont'd)

- **Part 3** also addresses census data processing and archiving, which depend on the country's information and communication technology (ICT) capacity.
- The issue of access to agricultural census microdata (preserving confidentiality) is strongly advocated as it increases the relevance and value of the census.
- The Post-Enumeration Survey (PES) is promoted as a good practice to evaluate the accuracy of the data collected.
- The preparation and dissemination of census reports is then discussed, including user-friendly methods (e.g. online reports, social media releases, infographics, interactive maps and anonymized microdata).
- The book ends discussing the reconciliation of discrepancies between previously published estimates (e.g. from surveys) and the results of the new census.

Final remarks

- The new *Operational Guidelines* is available in six languages (English, French, Spanish, Chinese, Russian and Arabic) and also online (including resources).
- FAO Statistics Division organized regional workshops in Near East, Latin America, Francophone Africa and Anglophone Africa in 2019-2020 to disseminate the new guidelines.
- More regional workshops depending on additional resources.
- FAO hopes that countries find the new *Operational Guidelines* useful at every step of the way to plan and implement such a large and complex operation as the census of agriculture.



Thank you