

Capacity needs assessment for improving Statistics for Sustainable Agriculture in Kenya

Over the last 20 years the FAO has noted that the quality of Agricultural data in many developing countries has declined. However, the demand for high quality Agricultural statistics by governments to undertake evidenced-based decision-making, amongst programme beneficiaries such as farmers to adapt to factors related to climate change and various development partners including the World Bank for programme assessments, has increased dramatically. In Kenya, Agriculture is a key sector for the country's economy, contributing an estimated 25% to GDP (KNBS). The importance of the sector for Kenya has been highlighted in a number of key policy documents including the Agricultural Sector Development Strategy (ASDS), 2009-2020, Kenya Vision 2030, while the need for timely, accurate and relevant Agricultural data in support of policy development is emphasised through the Strategic Plan for Agricultural and Rural Statistics (SPARS) Kenya, 2015-2022 and the KNBS Strategic Plan.

The World Bank through its investments in two key projects in Kenya the "National Agricultural and Rural Inclusive Growth" project and "Kenya Climate Smart Agricultural" project aims to support the National Statistical System in Kenya and the improvement in Agricultural Statistics, focusing on capacity development including institutional, technical, physical and human capacity. The support for improving Agricultural data comes at the request of the Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Fisheries (MoALF) and the Kenya National Bureau of Statistics (KNBS) based on the challenges faced by these two institutions in providing quality Agricultural statistics.

At the heart of the quality of Agricultural Statistics in Kenya is the impact of the devolution process in 2013 from a national to county level administration, impacting in particular the MoALF which was devolved to the county level. The devolution of authority to the counties negatively impacted on the statistical programs manifesting in Agricultural data not provided on a regular basis to the National MoALF while county staff being unclear regarding which data must be provided to the national level due to the new reporting lines. The resulting uncertainty has disrupted, what was in the past, a close relationship between National and county Government employees at the "working and program delivery level" in the county and Sub-county offices.

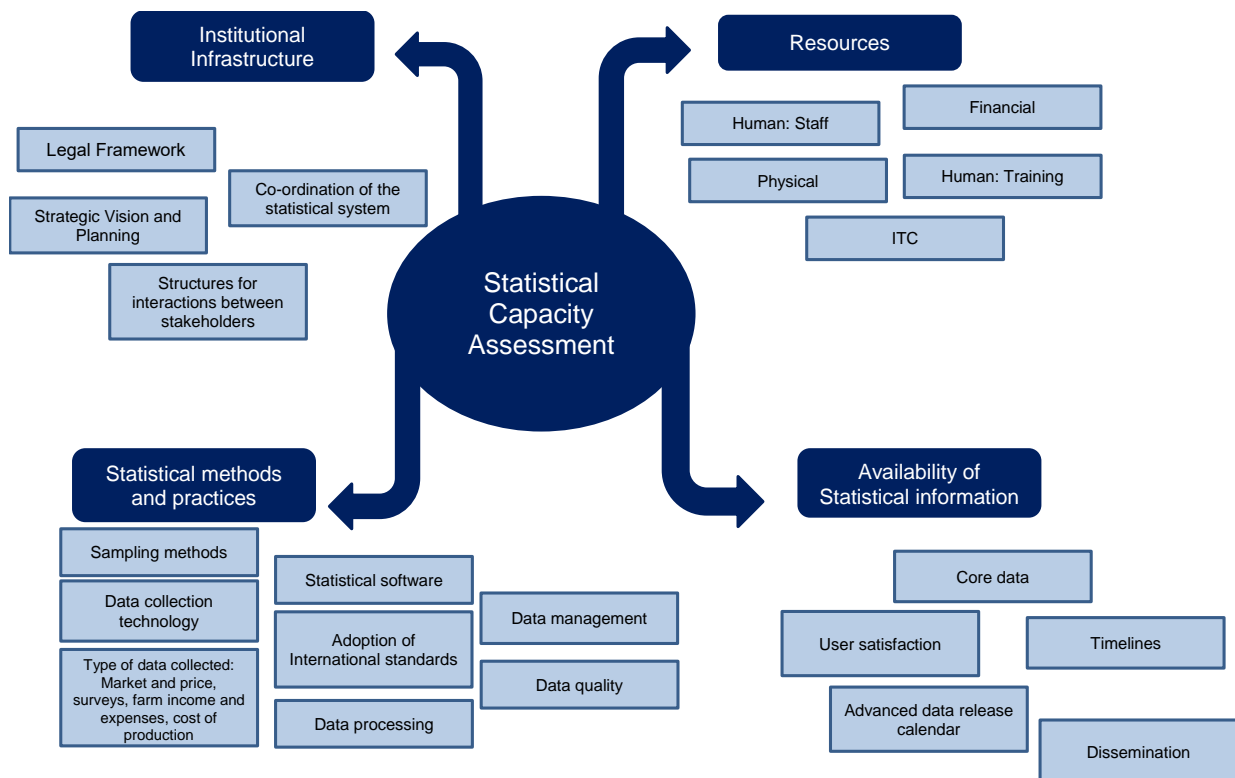
The Oxford Policy Management undertook a capacity needs assessment (physical, organisational and human) for the production of high quality agricultural statistics in support of generating data for evidence-informed policy making. The diagnostic also focused on the existing gaps in the current data collection value chain, providing recommendations for addressing these gaps in the short, medium and long-term based on a SWOT analysis for prioritisation. In addition, the gap analysis points to certain key priority investment areas, which provided direction for the costing of these priority activities.

Methodology

As data collection activities in Kenya occur at the county level, county level county visits were deemed important to provide insights into the capacity constraints and challenges prevalent at the administrative level where data collection activities occur. Six counties, namely Bungoma, Uasin Gishu, Nakuru, Nyeri, Embu and Machakos were selected for the in- depth field visits. While the counties represent case studies, a number of commonalities emerged across these 6 counties and as such the issues identified may point to patterns relevant for the agricultural statistics system in Kenya more broadly.

Key Informant Interviews (KII) based on a checklist for the capacity assessment was used to guide the county level engagement with staff of the 2 organisations at the county level. The approach to the assessment was to ask staff members to discuss the data they collected (administrative and survey data depending on the organisation), the data collection procedure, (methodology, data collection instruments, data capturing, quality assurance, data storage and archiving) and finally to identify the challenges based on the areas set out in the capacity assessment checklist, namely institutional, resources (human, physical, financial), statistical approaches and capacity as well as dissemination activities related to Agricultural data.

Figure 1: Components of the checklist for Kenya statistical capacity assessment



This policy brief was produced from a report emanating from Oxford Policy Management's contract with the World Bank to conduct a Capacity Needs Assessment for Improving Statistics for Sustainable Agriculture in Kenya. The project manager is Monet Durieux (monet.durieux@opml.co.uk) and the project team leader Michael Trant (michael.trant@yahoo.ca)

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Key Findings

Prioritisation and action plan



Legislative Framework

Lack of a legal and institutional framework which underpins the sharing of information and data between KNBS, MoALF at county and national level



Statistical methods and practices

Use of desk-based and eye-observations should be replaced by a regular survey programme including a Seasonal Agricultural Survey (SAS)

Prioritisation and action plan



Lack of Human resources

Aging staff and the lack of succession planning can lead to critical staff shortages



Lack of Physical resources

Physical resources such as vehicle, buildings and ITC equipment including laptops and printers are limited or non-existent

Prioritisation and action plan



Lack of metadata

There is a need to provide metadata to accompany all statistical estimates.



Lack of skills

MoALF staff require training on data collection, the use of sound statistical methods and practices, data analysis and report writing

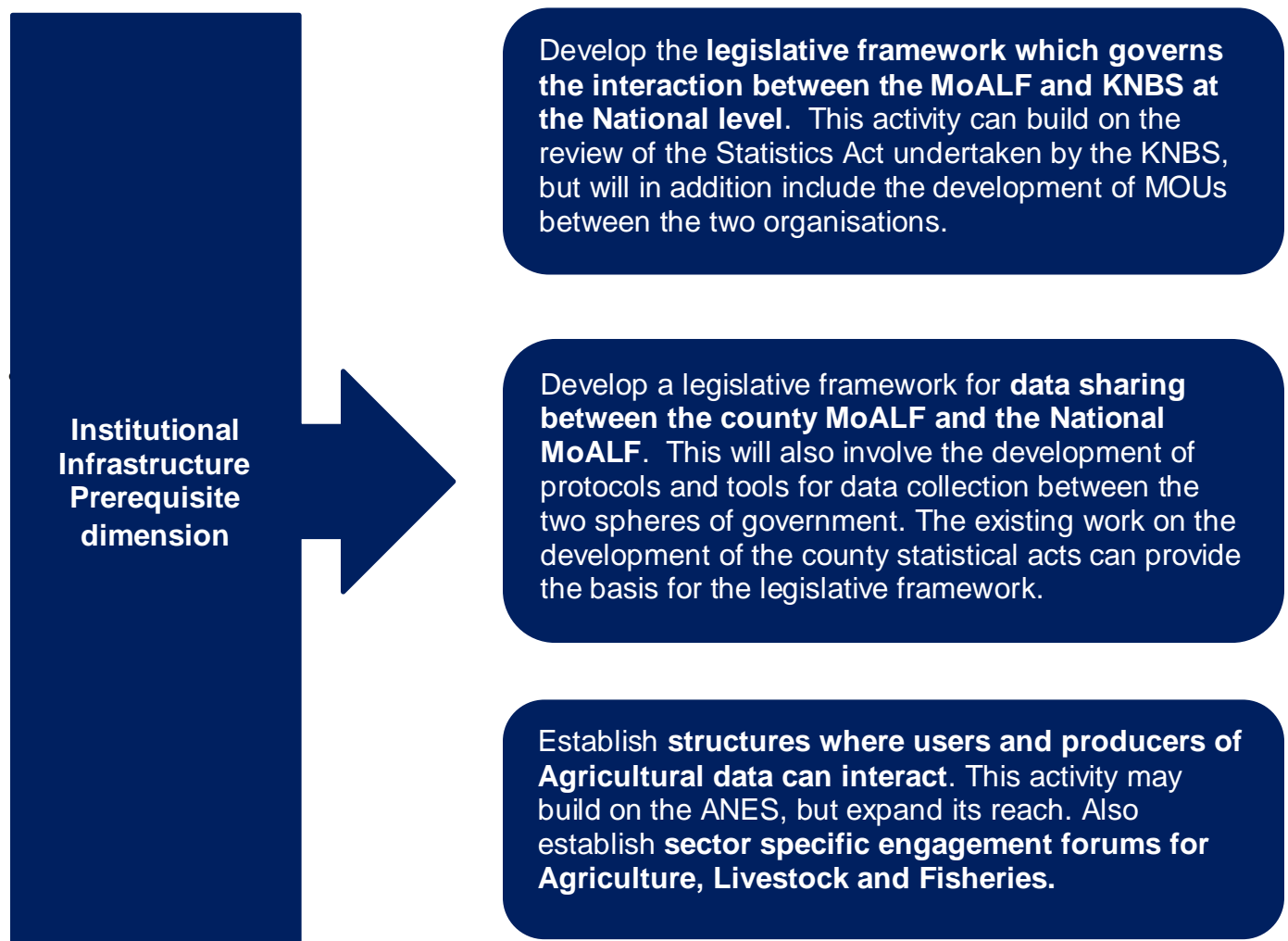
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Recommendations

Based on the capacity assessment checklist used during the Key Informant Interviews (KII) with stakeholders at the National, county, sub-county and ward level, the OPM team identified the following priority areas which also informed the costing exercise. The recommendation for prioritisation in the short-term are related to the following capacity dimensions; the institutional infrastructure, resources (human, physical and financial) and statistical methods and practices. The action plan further identifies the medium and long-term activities which need to be undertaken by the KNBS, MoALF at national and county level.



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Recommendations

Statistical methods and practices
Throughput dimension

Development of a **Seasonal Agricultural Survey (SAS)** by the KNBS

Statistical methods and practices
Throughput dimension

Establishment of **M&E/Statistics units in each county MoALF** which has close ties to the newly established Agricultural Statistics unit within the National MoALF

Human Resources: Staff Input dimension

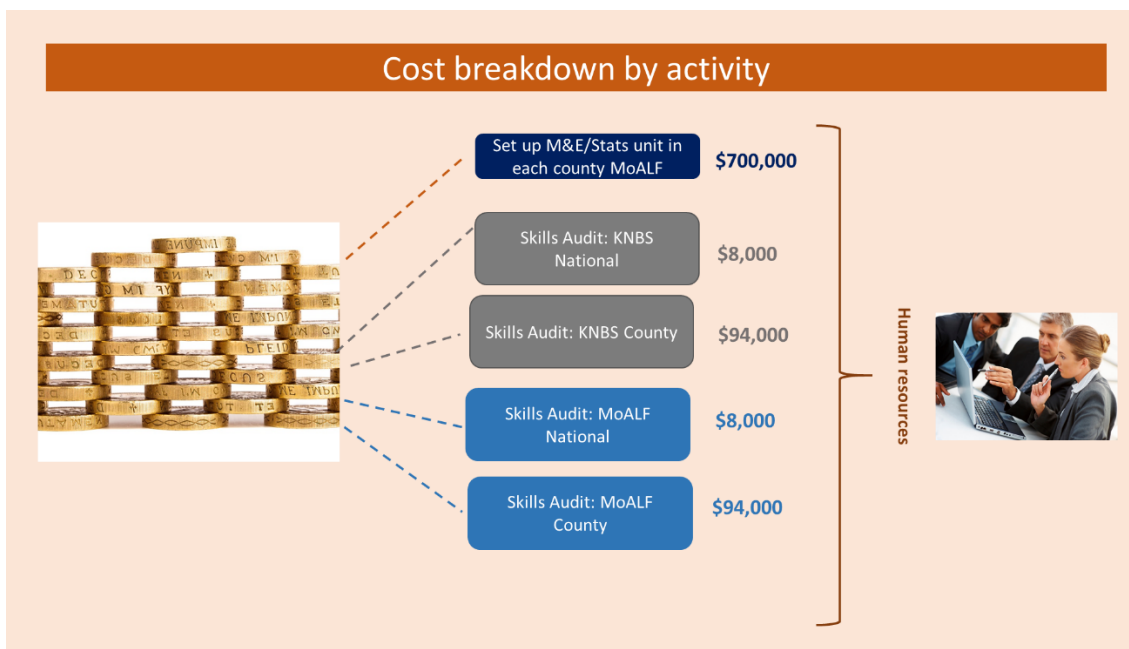
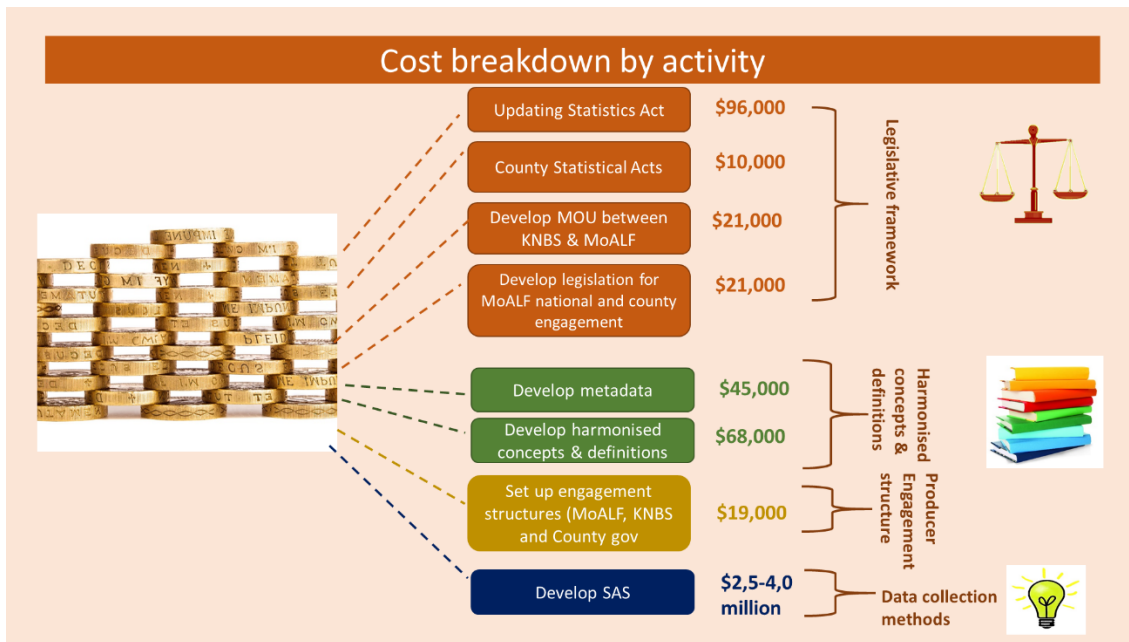
Address the human constraints and risk associated with the aging staff component and lack of succession planning in both organization at particular the county level. It is essential that succession plans be developed with details on the replacement rate. This should also include a skills audit of the existing skills set of the staff the skills required over the next 5 years.

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Costing of activities



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