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## Open data in the Statistics Division of FAO Challenges and approaches

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# Open data in ESS

## The main challenges



# Challenges and Setting

1. Limited **IT and statistical capacity** at country level
2. **Poor governance**, ineffective or missing **institutional frameworks** (FAO internal & external)
3. Restrictive or unclear **data policies**

## These result in:

- Lack of **metadata management and data description**
- Dispersed and uncoordinated data **life cycle management** (data divorced from meta-data)
- **Poor data dissemination** systems, limited **communication** and user awareness
- **Limited interoperability** between systems
- Limited **user orientation** and focus on needs



**ESS approach to**

(open)

**DATA  
MANAGEMENT**

Open access to data *per se* is not enough for any practical purpose (FS monitoring, investment, R&D monitoring, etc.)

1. Need to establish a functioning **governance system** (Internal/external): **dialogue with national and international partners** to coordinate data/metadata harmonization and access (e.g. data, metadata, standards, etc.);
2. Need to share and adopt **common technologies**, methods and tools to promote access to and wide use of available data
3. Provide **capacity development** at country level  
➔ Make **open data sustainable and relevant**

# Example: micro data

## Complaints from users:

- *“we didn’t know they had these data”* Visibility
- *“they don’t want to share them”* Accessibility
- *“these data are messy”* Reliability
- *“this is not really what I need”* Relevance
- *“how can I assess progress?”* Comparability
- *“where is the documentation?”* Usability
- *“there is no transparency”* Quality, credibility

# Example: micro data (2)

Issues faced by producers:

- *“we don’t know how to deal with microdata”*
  - can we disseminate them in our country?
    - If YES, how to disseminate them?
    - To whom?
    - What costs?
  - how to document them?
  - how to improve transparency on sources?
- *“what do others do?”*
  - where is the good practice?

# ESS approaches



1. Provision of **capacity development**: CountrySTAT, Global Strategy, WCA-2020, IHSN, Adept, and bilateral initiatives to enable partners/countries provide their data as open, sustainable, and user-oriented data in line with international standards
2. Adoption of **international standards** for **data exchange** (SDMX, DDI, ISO19115), provision of services to fully exploit metadata for re-use and to be machine-readable
3. Partner with others to use **common standards** and avoid duplication of efforts (e.g. with IFPRI to obtain GIS layers for CountrySTAT using the WMS protocol)
4. Lifting licensing constraints; **data** and **tools** are provided as a “**public good**”; full redistribution rights
5. Adoption of machine-2-machine data exchange facilities (**APIs**, etc.)



# ESS data products



The largest global  
database on agriculture



Supports national/regional  
agencies on data preparation  
and publication. It feeds into  
**FAOSTAT**

**Microdata: Censuses and HH surveys,  
Adept**



Early warning and monitoring tool for  
food market prices and balances for  
the 4 main food commodities (wheat,  
maize, rice and soybean)



Helps mobilize resources and  
tracks official development  
assistance (ODA) data flows



# Thanks

## Partnership & Institutional network (Committees of key stakeholders)

