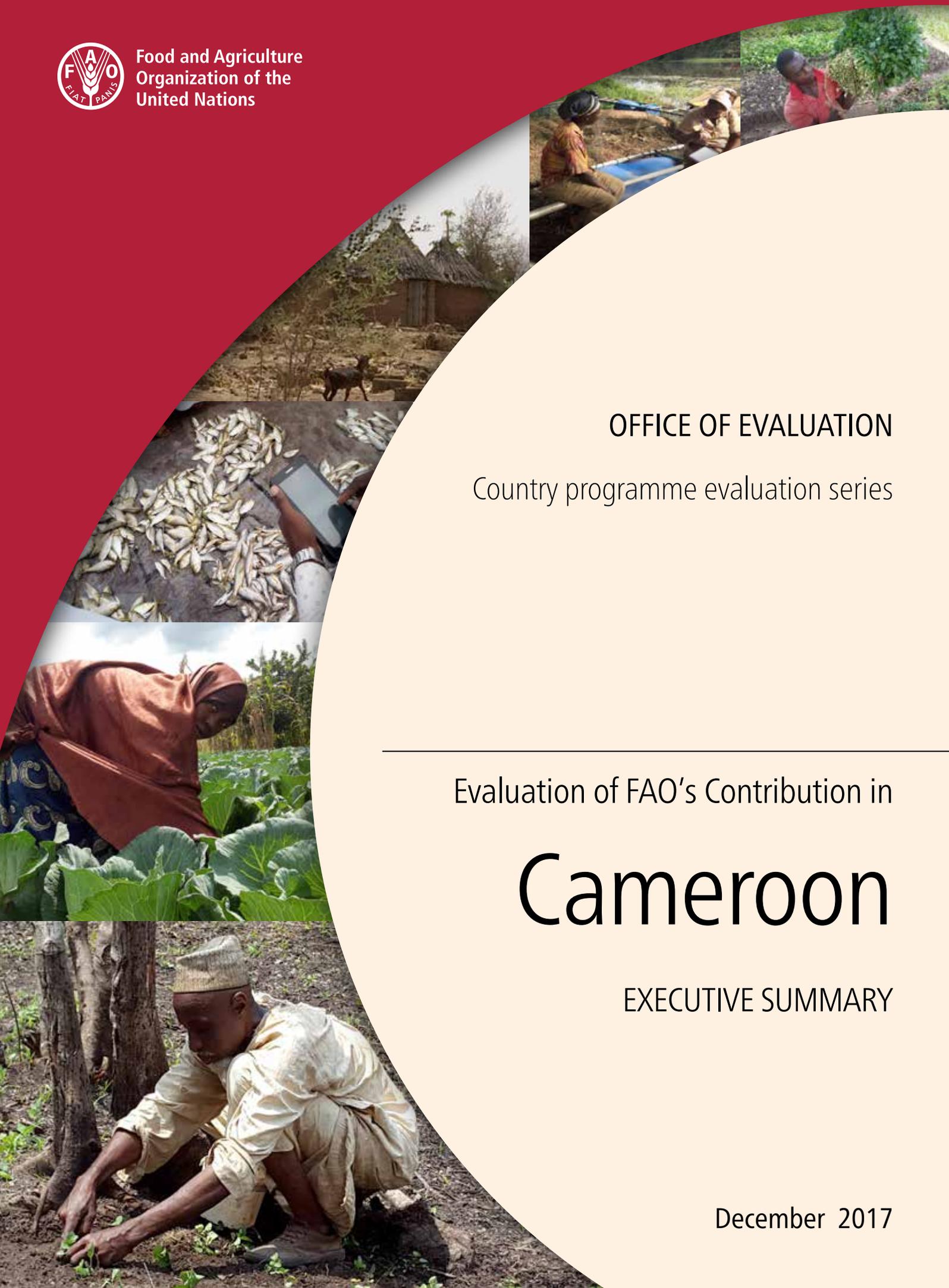




Food and Agriculture
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OFFICE OF EVALUATION

Country programme evaluation series

Evaluation of FAO's Contribution in

Cameroon

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

December 2017

COUNTRY PROGRAMME EVALUATION SERIES

**Evaluation of FAO's Contribution in
Cameroon
2013-2017**

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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For further information on this report, please contact:

Director, Office of Evaluation (OED)
Food and Agriculture Organization
Viale delle Terme di Caracalla 1, 00153 Rome
Italy
Email: evaluation@fao.org

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Executive Summary

This evaluation is part of a series of Country Programme Evaluations conducted by the FAO Office of Evaluation to improve the relevance and impact of the Organization's efforts at the country level. The evaluation had two main objectives: i) analyse the strategic positioning of the Organization; and ii) evaluate FAO's contributions in the priority areas identified in the 2013-2017 Country Programming Framework. The results of the evaluation will contribute to the development of the new Country Programming Framework of FAO in Cameroon. The main phase of the evaluation took place between March and May 2017. The evaluation team comprised experts covering the main sector of FAO's intervention in Cameroon, particularly rural development, sustainable use of natural resources, resilience and animal health and production.

In 2017, each of the three United Nations agencies based in Rome (IFAD, WFP and FAO) conducted an evaluation of their respective country programme in Cameroon. The three agencies adopted a coordinated approach during the evaluation to promote reflections on future opportunities for joint collaboration.

This summary presents the main findings, conclusions and recommendations of the evaluation.

Cameroon is a lower-middle income country and its economy accounts for more than 40 percent of the Central African Economic and Monetary Community gross domestic product in terms of production. The agricultural sector employs about 60 percent of the labour force and contributes between 19 percent and 21 percent to gross domestic product. The population is 23.3 million, with almost half under the age of 18 years. Cameroon ranks 153 out of 188 countries according to the Human Development Index, with 38% of the population living below the poverty line. Poverty is more concentrated in rural areas and in the northern part of the country, which is the most affected by food insecurity due to climatic conditions. Although Cameroon is a lower-middle income country, malnutrition rates remain high with large disparities among regions.

Strategic Positioning of FAO

The Country Programming Framework (CPF) and its interventions were well aligned with national priorities. The CPF identified three main priorities areas: i) Support the implementation of national strategies for strong and sustainable growth in the rural sector; (ii) Promote decent employment opportunities and access to resources in rural areas, especially for young people and women; and (iii) Develop and implement policies and strategies for improving the resilience of rural populations to disasters and crises.

Cameroon has recently revised its National Nutrition Policy. This policy includes a strategic focus on «household food security and food safety» that is fully within FAO's mandate. On **food safety**, FAO has supported the development of the framework law which is considered a key element for the functioning of the Food Safety system in Cameroon. However, this law has not yet been adopted and advocacy actions should be pursued to facilitate the completion of this process. In the fight against **malnutrition**, FAO has implemented some field level interventions and participates in the Movement for Scaling Up Nutrition (SUN) platform. FAO in collaboration with MINADER has implemented a project to support the creation of school gardens in the Northern Region which has increased vegetable consumption in beneficiary schools. The evaluation found good ownership of the initiative by communities and schools. The Government has continued to financially support the initiative since the closure of the FAO project.

During the period under review, the country was affected by the crisis in the Central African Republic that led to the arrival of refugees in the Eastern part of Cameroon. In addition, the insurrection of the Boko Haram sect in north-eastern Nigeria affected the Far North region and led to internal population displacement and the arrival of refugees from Nigeria. Prior to these crises, FAO's programme in Cameroon had been traditionally a development programme. FAO has not reviewed the capacity of the country office, particularly in terms of human resources (number and skills required in this new context), in order to meet emerging needs. This has been a major impediment to FAO's ability to attract funding. FAO Cameroon has been present in Maroua through a national consultant. Although this presence has allowed for better coordination of activities with the different actors, this capacity was limited as compared with the needs.

FAO actively participated in the work of the United Nations Country Team (UNCT). Along with other United Nations agencies, FAO has participated in three **joint resilience-building initiatives** in crisis-affected areas. At the field level, however, synergies among agencies have been weak. In a context where agriculture and livestock are the main sources of livelihood, the other agencies see FAO as a key partner in supporting communities.

Collaborations with the other Rome-based agencies have been relatively limited. FAO and WFP are co-facilitators of the Food Security Working Group and collaborate in the production of food security information, although FAO's contribution is limited by internal capacity. WFP also provided an office for FAO in Maroua and there was a joint effort to mobilize resources. FAO supported the design of IFAD programmes through the Investment Centre, but was not involved in their implementation. As IFAD's programmes are essentially financial loans, FAO's involvement will depend on Government's choices regarding technical partners to be involved in project implementation.

FAO is the leader of the **Multi-Partner Committee on Agriculture** (CMP-Agriculture) which is considered by partners as an important forum for sharing information and discussing topics relevant to the rural sector. However, the Committee is not sufficiently dynamic and the results in terms of collaboration and coordination among partners were limited. FAO played an important role in supporting the development of the National Agricultural Investment Plan (PNIA) and facilitated dialogue between the donors and Government in this process. Coordination in the rural sector is weak and the development of the PNIA appears as one of the few opportunities for consultation among the different actors.

FAO Cameroon has limited human resources, which affects its ability to actively participate in coordination groups, monitor project implementation and develop proposals to mobilize resources for expanding its programme. The Government of Cameroon has recently signed with FAO an agreement for the establishment of a **Liaison and Partnership Office**. It is an important step that will: i) strengthen FAO's presence at the country level, with technical skills targeted to the specific needs of the context; ii) provide funding for the implementation of the CPP (USD 20 million over five years); and iii) allow for greater involvement of Cameroon in South-South cooperation initiatives in the region. The operationalization of this agreement and the provision of resources has started slowly, but some important progress has been made. The agreement was promoted by the Ministry of Agriculture and the implication of the other ministries seemed less visible.

FAO's Contributions to the priority areas identified in the Country Programming Framework 2013-2017

Priority Area 1: Support the implementation of national strategies for strong and sustainable growth in the rural sector

In support of **improving productivity and competitiveness in agricultural value chains**, FAO has strengthened producer capacities, particularly through the FFS approach (which has shown its effectiveness in terms of knowledge transfer), worked on plant protection and on linking producers to the market. FAO has conducted post-harvest loss studies and collected information on plant pests. Several of these activities have been implemented through close collaboration with the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development. These interventions have focused on capacity building for producers and have often included in-depth analyses. However, the use of the results of these pilot initiatives is sometimes limited (particularly concerning the use and dissemination of studies or lessons learned from these initiatives). In addition, their pilot nature (small-scale interventions of limited duration) affects the sustainability of results achieved.

In support of **improving the productivity and competitiveness of pastoral and fisheries value chains**, FAO has contributed to the introduction of new technologies, such as the production of tilapia in cages and a new technology for smoking the fish. FAO has also supported the organisation of producers in the animal feed industry. As in the case of support to agricultural value chains, the tilapia and the animal feed chain projects were well-designed and highly relevant, funded through TCPs and implemented in close collaboration with the Ministry of Livestock, Fisheries and Animal Industries. At the time of the evaluation, it was still too early to determine the impact. Regarding the tilapia project, information is needed on the economic sustainability of this activity, which could facilitate the involvement of potential entrepreneurs. With regard to animal health, FAO

has contributed significantly to strengthen the capacity of the National Veterinary Laboratory of Cameroon (LANAVET) and its Yaounde Annex. When the avian flu virus resurfaced in 2016, this support enabled a more rapid and precise identification of the virus. FAO has also supported the Government in its emergency response to avian influenza, which has contributed to reducing the spread of the disease. Additional efforts are needed to strengthen the surveillance system.

Projects on **sustainable development and natural resource management** represented a large part of FAO's portfolio (42% of the total). These projects were mainly funded by the Global Environment Facility. Overall, there has been an insufficient involvement of the private sector in these interventions, despite its key role. The results of some of the actions carried out as part of these interventions did not depend solely on FAO and the partners involved. For example, the classification of national parks or the completion of the process of developing the law on pesticides and its adoption goes beyond the technical aspects. Indeed, they will depend on political decisions. Projects should invest more in advocacy activities at the political level to facilitate the successful completion of the processes started.

On **agricultural statistics**, FAO provided technical and financial support to develop the methodology for the agricultural census and to strengthen the related national capacities. FAO also supported the introduction of a new methodology for production of statistics on fisheries. FAO's expertise in this area is clearly recognized as a comparative advantage and its implication is viewed as a source of credibility.

Priority Area 2: Promote decent employment opportunities and access to resources in rural areas, especially for young people and women

Promotion of decent employment with a focus on youth and women was among the priority areas of the CPF. During the period under review, FAO did not implement specific interventions dedicated to this priority, but women and youth have been among the beneficiaries of FAO's interventions. In general, FAO did not conduct analyses on the specific needs and interests of these groups to better target and involve them in its activities. Creating decent job and entrepreneurship opportunities for young women and men is a cross-cutting theme of FAO's Regional Initiative two on "Sustainable intensification of agricultural production and value chain development in Africa". There is a need to get more involved in this area in Cameroon.

Priority Area 3: Develop and implement policies and strategies for improving the resilience of rural populations to disasters and crises

FAO has been a co-facilitator with WFP of the **Working Group on Food Security**. This group was established during the period covered by the evaluation and is considered an important achievement. It fills an existing gap in the coordination of the multiple actors intervening in response to the crises that are affecting the country. Since the beginning of crises, there has been an increased demand for **information on food security** to guide the response of intervening partners. FAO contributed to some food security surveys conducted by WFP in collaboration with the National Programme on Food Security (PNSA). The PNSA is aiming to introduce the "Cadre Harmoinisé" and to establish sentinel sites for food security monitoring. Technical support from FAO is expected in this area.

In crisis-affected regions, FAO has helped to rehabilitate the **livelihoods** of beneficiaries. During focus groups conducted as part of the evaluation, beneficiaries indicated among the results of FAO's interventions: improved food security as a result of quality seed distributions; improved living conditions as a result of animal distributions; and income generation as a result of interventions in market gardening activities, with an increase of vegetable products on local markets. Issues were identified on targeting and on adaptation of the response interventions to the context. In addition, the duration of the projects (which depended on the typology of the funds mobilized) has not often made it possible to go beyond the response to immediate needs, thus limiting the sustainability of the results achieved. FAO has been able to integrate medium- and long-term activities only in joint projects (for instance processing and storing facilities and rehabilitation of infrastructure on transhumance corridors). There are several areas in which FAO Cameroon could work to generate more sustainable changes, but this requires increased efforts in resource mobilization.

Cross-cutting issues: Gender

The evaluation finds that **gender** issues are not adequately integrated into FAO's programme and projects. In addition, FAO Cameroon does not have capacities dedicated to gender.

Conclusions and Recommendations

Conclusion 1: Partnership and Liaison Office

The establishment of the Partnership and Liaison Office and the signature of the partnership agreement (through which the Government committed USD 20 million over five years to finance collaborations with FAO in support of rural development) are important steps that will change FAO's presence at the country level and the modality of cooperation. In particular, this modality will strengthen FAO's technical expertise in areas targeted to the needs of the country. This expertise could also be made available to other countries in the sub-region through South-South cooperation initiatives. Cameroon was among the first countries to sign this agreement and could be an example for other middle-income countries that decide to follow this path. However, this change is also a source of uncertainty with regard to the provision of resources allocated.

Recommendation 1: Partnership and Liaison Office

- FAO and the Government of Cameroon should continue to put in place the necessary actions to make the new Partnership and Liaison Office and the related agreement operational. This is needed for providing certainty on the resources FAO could rely on for the implementation of the next CPF. FAO and the Ministry of Agriculture, which has been the leading national institution in this process, should ensure the buy-in of the other ministries involved in the rural sector.
- Based on the existing priorities at national level, FAO and the Government should conduct an analysis of the technical skills needed by the new office. These skills could include food safety, forests and the management of natural resources.

Conclusion 2: Nutrition and Food Safety

Strengthening the national food safety system is among the priorities of the National Nutrition Policy. The national system suffers from several weaknesses. The development of a framework law on food safety, supported by FAO, is considered a key step. The adoption of this law will depend on the definition and clarification of the roles and responsibilities of the various actors involved, something that goes beyond the technical aspects and belongs more to the political sphere. The continuation of advocacy actions in this area is necessary to facilitate the successful completion of this process.

In the framework of the recently revised National Nutrition Policy, FAO could contribute in several areas, in particular: the promotion of the production and consumption of food with high nutritional value; the analysis of eating habits and products available at the local level; nutrition education; and capacity building of partners on integrating nutrition into food security programmes and projects. The CPP could be an opportunity to reflect with partners on the added value that FAO could bring to the fight against malnutrition.

Recommendation 2: Nutrition and Sanitary Security of Foods

- FAO should continue to advocate for the adoption of the law on food safety that it supported.
- FAO should work more in the fight against malnutrition by providing support at the institutional and field levels. The choice and design of interventions should be the result of a consultation with partners on the added value that FAO could bring and the exploration of opportunities to build partnerships with other actors working in this area (including WFP, NGOs and universities).

Conclusion 3: Response to crises

Over the period, there has been a deterioration of the food security situation in the northern, eastern and western parts of the country.

The crisis at Chad Lake, that has affected the Far North region, received a lot of attention from the international community. FAO's regional strategy in response to this crisis consisted of a phased approach, beginning with the response to the immediate needs of the people and continuing with the implementation of longer term activities. This vision is considered especially pertinent by the evaluation team, but it remains to be seen how the strategy will be translated into national interventions. The East is a relatively more stable area with less international attention; refugees live largely in the host villages and most of them intend to stay. Activities in the agriculture and livestock sector are needed to help the refugees become more self-sufficient and to integrate with the host communities. Promoting social cohesion is also a priority. FAO should propose approaches at community level, such as the FFS or DIMTRA listening clubs, which could be used to strengthen relationships between different population groups. The capacity of the country office remains limited, which limits the possibility of expanding FAO's programme in crisis-affected areas.

In the current environment, there is an increased demand for information on food security. FAO could collaborate with Government to develop tools for food security monitoring, including the "Cadre Harmonisé" as well as the sentinel sites.

Recommendation 3: Response to crises

- FAO should clearly define its role in Cameroon regarding the humanitarian crises in the Far North region and the eastern part of the country, and strengthen the country team based on an analysis of existing capacities.
- Given the limited staff at country level, FAO headquarters and the Dakar-based West Africa and Sahel Resilience Team should be more supportive of FAO Cameroon to: i) operationalize, in consultation with partners and government, the Lake Chad strategy into concrete regional or national project proposals; ii) develop a support programme for refugees in the Eastern part of the country; and iii) support FAO Cameroon in resource mobilization and implementation of interventions. In addition, given the deterioration of the food security situation in the western part of the country, FAO should look more closely at opportunities for supporting vulnerable populations in these areas.
- In both the East and the Far North, FAO should give attention to social cohesion in its interventions.
- FAO should contribute more to the facilitation of the Food Security Working Group and, in collaboration with PAM, support the implementation of tools for monitoring the food security situation (particularly the "Cadre Harmonisé" and the sentinel sites) at the national and at the regional level.

Conclusion 4: Contribution to the National Agricultural Investment Plan and Coordination in the Agriculture Sector

Coordination mechanisms in the rural sector in Cameroon are weak. The Multi-Partner Committee on Agriculture is considered an important forum for information sharing and dialogue among technical and financial partners; in general, however, there is a demand for this group to be more dynamic and to conduct joint advocacy actions at the government level.

FAO assisted the Government in developing the National Investment Plan on Agriculture and facilitated discussions among Government, donors and civil society in this process. A series of commitments have been made by the donors, and FAO has a role to play in continuing to facilitate discussions among the various actors.

Recommendation 4: Contribution to the National Agricultural Investment Plan and Coordination in the Agriculture Sector

- As a leader of the Multi-Partner Committee on Agriculture, FAO should try to facilitate more dialogue among donors, United Nations agencies and Government, and promote joint advocacy actions.

- FAO should support the Government in: revising the National Agricultural Investment Plan and its alignment with the Malabo Declaration; integrating the recently approved nutrition policy; and developing programmes and projects to make the PNIA operational.
- Through the Partnership and Liaison Office, FAO should continue its role of liaison between the Government and partners and provide support for the mobilization of additional resources to finance the PNIA.

Conclusion 5: Collaboration with other agencies of the United Nations System

FAO has been involved in several joint United Nations initiatives in response to the crisis in the Far North region and in support of refugees and host communities in the Eastern part of the country. FAO's technical expertise in the rural sector is viewed as an added value for supporting the affected populations and several actors are open to partnerships. Collaborations with the other United Nations agencies based in Rome have been more limited. The evaluation highlights the existence of several opportunities for collaboration with WFP in response to crises in the Far North region and in the Eastern part of the country. With regard to IFAD, there are areas of common interest such as aquaculture and youth employment. IFAD's programmes consist mainly of loans and FAO's involvement will depend on the Government's choice of technical partners to involve in the implementation.

Recommendations 5: Collaboration with other agencies of the United Nations System

- FAO should continue to look for opportunities to develop joint projects with other United Nations agencies, and to ensure that these interventions create synergies at the field level.
- In responding to crises in the Far North region and the Eastern part of the country, FAO should work more with WFP. The two agencies could develop a long-term roadmap in which each agency will contribute on the basis of its skills and comparative advantages. This exercise should consider the strategies of FAO and WFP at the regional level.
- With IFAD and the Government, FAO should explore opportunities for its involvement in IFAD funded programmes based on its comparative advantages.

Conclusion 6: Supporting the Economic Inclusion of Youth

In Africa, FAO member countries have placed a high priority on the economic inclusion of youth. During the period, FAO Cameroon did not mobilize resources for actions targeting this group, but youth were in several cases among the beneficiaries of FAO's interventions. Youth employment is also a priority at the national level. There is a need to invest more in this area in the coming years by adapting FAO's interventions to the needs and interests of youth and in developing interventions specifically targeted to this group.

Recommendation 6: Support for the economic inclusion of young people

- When developing interventions targeting youth, FAO should conduct analyses of their specific needs and interests to better tailor activities.
- Youth employment is also a priority for IFAD. In this area, the two agencies should reflect on possible collaborations in favour of youth, for example, in the field of aquaculture which is an area of interest for both organizations.

Conclusion 7: Value chain development

- FAO has implemented several projects in support of value chain development with a focus on linking producers to the market and the introduction of new approaches. The Organization has also conducted several studies and analyses, including a study on post-harvest losses on several commodity chains, collected information on plant pests and conducted surveys on livestock diseases in the country. These interventions, which have often been funded through TCPs in response to specific requests from the Government, have been implemented through a close collaboration with the relevant ministries. However, the limited duration and the pilot nature of these initiatives did not always allow for sustainability of results.

Recommendation 7: Value chain development

- Under TCP as well as interventions that will be funded through the partnership agreement, FAO and the ministries should select more carefully the types of interventions implemented to ensure sustainability of results.
- FAO should conduct business feasibility analyses of the economic activities proposed in pilot projects and should continue to maintain a strong focus on commercialization (linking producers to the market);
- FAO and the ministries should invest in the dissemination of studies conducted and promote their use;
- FAO should continue to build the capacity of Civil Society Organizations (including Non-Governmental Organizations and Farmer Organizations) that can play a role in the dissemination of knowledge, as was the case in the project on inclusive business models.

Conclusion 8: Animal Health

FAO contributed to strengthening national capacities for the diagnosis of animal diseases; at the time of the avian flu outbreak it successfully supported the country in limiting the impact of the crisis. Several actions are still to be conducted for reinforcing the surveillance system.

Recommendation 8: Animal Health

- FAO should continue its collaboration with the Ministry of Livestock, Fisheries and Animal Industries to strengthen the national surveillance network (RESCAM). In particular, it should assist the Ministry in (i) ensuring the sustainability of RESCAM; ii) strengthening the operational capacity of RESCAM at all administrative levels; and (iii) improving collaboration with the human health sector as part of the «One Health» approach.

Conclusion 9: Gender

In Cameroon, women play a central role in ensuring food security. In agriculture, they face several obstacles, including limited access to credit and means of production (particularly land), a high illiteracy rate and an unequal distribution of labour and resources in the household. Women were included in FAO projects and in some cases they represented the majority of beneficiaries. In general, at the time of project design, gender sensitive analysis has not been conducted. In addition, the country office does not have a person with expertise in this area who can dedicate enough time to ensure that gender issues are taken into account in the interventions.

Recommendation 9: Gender

- In the design of interventions, FAO should conduct more in-depth analyses to better tailor activities to the needs of women according to their specific needs and interests.
- FAO should use the elaboration of the new CPF as an opportunity for establishing partnerships with national actors to develop initiatives targeting women and further integrate gender equality into its programme.



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