Evaluation Digest                                               Issue 1, November 2015

# FAO analytical tools and engagement on national strategies help advance climate change adaptation and mitigation

*A recent evaluation by the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO)[1] has shown that the advanced analytical tools and data of the Organization and its support to national climate change strategy development processes have helped to strengthen developing country efforts for climate change adaptation and mitigation (CCAM).*



The evaluation, which was conducted by the Office of Evaluation (OED) in 2015, covered FAO's contributions to CCAM from 2009 to 2014, with selected case studies from 11 countries: Kenya, Malawi and Zambia in sub-Saharan Africa, Bangladesh, The Philippines, Vietnam, and Vanuatu in Asia and the Pacific, Morocco in the Near East and North Africa, and Peru, Bolivia and St. Lucia in Latin America and the Caribbean. It examined how FAO is addressing climate change in the various sectors under its mandate and its comparative advantages in CCAM.

Based on analyses and interviews with government and development partners, knowledge organizations and donors, the evaluation found that the analytical support tools and data systems of FAO, where they were of an advanced nature and tailored to country contexts, helped to strengthen national knowledge and data systems for CCAM. Some of the data systems and tools that stakeholders found most useful included the Modelling System for Agricultural Impacts of Climate Change (MOSAICC), AquaCrop, FAOSTAT emissions database, Mapping System and Services for Canal Operation Techniques (MASSCOTE), AquaStat, CropWat and the Ex-Ante Carbon-balance Tool (Ex-ACT). Some of these tools have been supported and adopted by development investment institutions like the World Bank, thus enabling FAO to increase the reach and impact of its expertise.

The best illustration of FAO's technical assistance for developing country knowledge systems for CCAM is its support to 16 countries for monitoring, reporting and verification (MRV) of carbon emissions under the UN programme for Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation (UN-REDD).[2] It has been the

---

1   An Evaluation of FAO's Contributions to Climate Change Adaptation and Mitigation. The Office of Evaluation of the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO). September 2015. The full evaluation report can be accessed at: http://www.fao.org/evaluation/oed-documents-and-reports/en/

2   UN-REDD is a collaborative initiative of the FAO, UNDP and UNEP to help developing nations access funding for enhanced forest management as a way to reduce net emissions of greenhouse gases.

largest, most significant and most frequently cited example by countries of FAO's noteworthy contributions on climate change.

In addition to its analytical tools and data, a second strength of FAO in CCAM is its policy and strategy engagement. FAO has supported countries to develop climate change strategies for agriculture through facilitating and coordinating partners at the country level. In doing so, it has helped countries to align and harmonize their approaches across different ministries and departments, and for longer term adaptation, disaster risk reduction (DRR) and emergency response.

One of the best examples of this work is FAO's support for stakeholder coordination for the development of Peru's *Plan de Gestion de Riesgo y Adaptación al Cambio Climático en el Sector Agrario, Periodo 2012-2021* (Risk Management and Climate Change Adaptation Plan for the Agriculture Sector, PLANGRACC-A). FAO's assistance brought attention to the impacts of climate change on the smallholder sector and rural food security. It linked DRR and longer term adaptation in agriculture, thus helping to shift the government's response to climate change from its previous emergency-oriented approach. Its ability to act as a neutral UN body and its technical expertise have allowed FAO to play this unique role of aligning different approaches and strategies for CCAM.

In many of the other countries covered as well, FAO's contributions to climate change policy and strategy development for the agriculture, fisheries and forestry sectors have been relevant and innovative in other ways, and have led to notable advances in the enabling environment for CCAM at the country level.

The evaluation also identified areas for improvement in FAO's climate change programme, in particular the capacity of FAO to engage with host governments at country level, and the lack of an organization-wide strategy on the issue.

In the near future, FAO will be preparing a cross-cutting corporate climate change strategy that will guide FAO's work in this area and integrate regional and country priorities. FAO will also seek to improve CCAM mainstreaming in all of its work, integrate capacity development and gender in climate initiatives, enhance the position of its country offices in national climate dialogues, and expand its partnerships.

Regarding the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), as a neutral knowledge provider, FAO will aim to furnish countries with more information on climate change, the agricultural sectors and food security in order to facilitate their participation in the forum. It will also ensure clear communication on its definition of climate-smart agriculture.

These developments will allow FAO to increase its relevance and effectiveness in assisting countries to tackle climate change as it relates to agriculture and food security.