



联合国
粮食及
农业组织

Food and Agriculture
Organization of the
United Nations

Organisation des Nations
Unies pour l'alimentation
et l'agriculture

Продовольственная и
сельскохозяйственная организация
Объединенных Наций

Organización de las
Naciones Unidas para la
Alimentación y la Agricultura

منظمة
الغذية والزراعة
للأمم المتحدة

E

PROGRAMME COMMITTEE

Hundred and Twenty-first Session

Rome, 27 - 31 March 2017

Evaluation of FAO's contribution to reduction in rural poverty (SO 3)

SUMMARY

Queries on the substantive content of the document may be addressed to:

Masahiro Igarashi
Director, Office of Evaluation
Tel. +39 065705-3903

*This document can be accessed using the Quick Response Code on this page;
an FAO initiative to minimize its environmental impact and promote greener communications.
Other documents can be consulted at www.fao.org*



ms544

THEMATIC EVALUATION SERIES

**Evaluation of FAO's contribution to
reduction in rural poverty (SO3)**

SUMMARY REPORT

**FOOD AND AGRICULTURE ORGANIZATION OF THE UNITED NATIONS
OFFICE OF EVALUATION
March 2017**

Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations

Office of Evaluation (OED)

This report is available in electronic format at: <http://www.fao.org/evaluation>

The designations employed and the presentation of material in this information product do not imply the expression of any opinion whatsoever on the part of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) concerning the legal or development status of any country, territory, city or area or of its authorities, or concerning the delimitation of its frontiers or boundaries. The mention of specific companies or products of manufacturers, whether or not these have been patented, does not imply that these have been endorsed or recommended by FAO in preference to others of a similar nature that are not mentioned. The views expressed in this information product are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the views or policies of FAO.

© FAO 2017

FAO encourages the use, reproduction and dissemination of material in this information product. Except where otherwise indicated, material may be copied, downloaded and printed for private study, research and teaching purposes, or for use in non-commercial products or services, provided that appropriate acknowledgement of FAO as the source and copyright holder is given and that FAO's endorsement of users' views, products or services is not implied in any way.

All requests for translation and adaptation rights, and for resale and other commercial use rights should be made via www.fao.org/contact-us/licence-request or addressed to copyright@fao.org.

For further information on this report, please contact:

Director, OED
Viale delle Terme di Caracalla 1, 00153
Rome, Italy
Email: evaluation@fao.org

Acknowledgements

The Office of Evaluation would like to thank all those who contributed to this exercise. The evaluation team, led by Carlos Tarazona, Senior Evaluation Officer, consisted of SV Divvaakar (India), Julia Compton (United Kingdom), Alvaro Ramos (Uruguay), Norma Correa (Peru), Fabio Veras (Brazil), Asyl Undeland (Kyrgyzstan/USA), Jacques de Graaf (The Netherlands), Mohamed Mohieddin (Egypt), James Gasana (Rwanda) and Bola Akanji (Nigeria). The team was ably supported by Ahmedou Ould Abdallahi and Veridiana Mansour, Evaluation Officers, and Nadine Monnichon, Administrative Assistant. An Expert Panel provided independent advice and guidance to the evaluation and usefully commented on this report. It was composed by Leila Pakkala (Regional Representative for Eastern and Southern Africa, UNICEF), Rachel Sabates-Wheeler (Research Fellow, Institute of Development Studies), Bradford Barham (Professor, University of Wisconsin-Madison's Agricultural and Applied Economics Department) and Gustavo Gordillo de Anda (Independent consultant, Mexico).

The evaluation was carried out with the invaluable assistance of the core team of Strategic Programme 3 (SP3), including Benjamin Davis, SP3 Team Leader; Maya Takagi, Deputy SP3 Team Leader; David Conte, Senior Strategic Advisor; Philippe Ankers, Senior Programme Advisor and leader for Outcome 1 (Access and Empowerment); Peter Wobst, Senior Programme Advisor and leader for Outcome 2 (Decent Rural Employment); Natalia Winder-Rossi, Senior Programme Advisor and leader for Outcome 3 (Social Protection); Daniela Kalikoski, Programme Advisor; Ana de la O, Programme Advisor. We are also very grateful to Rob Vos, former SP3 Team Leader; Salomon Salcedo, former leader for Outcome 1; and Vito Cistulli, former leader for Outcome 3, as well as to each of the Delivery Team Leaders within Strategic Programme 3 and their colleagues. They supported this exercise patiently and continually, investing much of their time and knowledge in the evaluation.

We also thank the Regional Strategic Programme Coordinators, Delivery managers and focal points who contributed to this evaluation: Beth Crawford, Tacko Ndiaye, Mohamed AgBendeche, Cisse Al Hassan (Africa); Xiangjun Yao, Clara Park (Asia); Raimund Jehle, Morten Hartvigsen, Katalin Ludvig (Europe and Central Asia); Adoniram Sanches Peraci, Luiz Carlos Beduschi; Katalina Moyano (Latin America and the Caribbean); Pasquale Steduto; Alfredo Impiglia, Malika Martini (Near East and North Africa); as well as the staff from the over 30 FAO decentralized offices contacted by the team, i.e. the Regional Office for Africa, the Regional Office for Latin America and the Caribbean, the Regional Office for the Near East and North Africa, the Regional Office for Asia and Pacific, the Regional Office for Europe and Central Asia, the Sub-regional Office for Central Asia, the Sub-regional Office for North Africa, and the Country Offices of Mexico, El Salvador, Colombia, Paraguay, Albania, Armenia, Georgia, Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan, Myanmar, Cambodia, Viet Nam, India, Indonesia, China, Lebanon, Tunisia, Sudan, Ghana, Senegal, Nigeria, Zambia, Kenya, Malawi and Lesotho.

Finally, we would like to express our sincere gratitude to the representatives from the government, academia, resources partners, development agencies, farmers' organizations, private sector and FAO staff who responded to our enquiries during this exercise.

Contents

Acknowledgements.....	4
I. Introduction.....	6
I.1 Purpose and scope.....	6
I.2 Methodology.....	7
I.3 Limitations and quality assurance	8
II. Description of Strategic Programme 3	8
II.1 Thematic areas and resources	9
II.2 Delivery Mechanisms	11
II.2.1 Country programmes	11
II.2.2 Regional Initiatives.....	11
II.2.3 Global knowledge products and services	13
II.3 Future directions.....	13
III. Assessment of Strategic Programme 3.....	15
III.1 Strategic Relevance: Is FAO’s approach to rural poverty reduction under the revised Strategic Framework architecture appropriate?	15
III.1.1 Rationale for the chosen approach to rural poverty reduction.....	15
III.2 Programme design: Are FAO interventions and delivery mechanisms adequate?	16
III.2.1 Intervention logic.....	16
III.2.2 Regional initiatives	17
III.2.3 Country programming frameworks	18
III.2.4 Design of SP3 programmes and projects	19
III.2.5 Mainstreaming rural poverty reduction	20
III.2.6 Capacities in decentralized offices	21
III.3 Communication: Is there a common understanding of the intervention logic?	22
III.4 Partnerships: Is FAO leveraging partnerships appropriately?.....	22
III.4.1 Resource mobilization.....	24
III.5 Effectiveness and sustainability: Is the SP3 strategy bearing signs of results? Are the results sustainable?	25
III.6 Gender equality	26
IV. Conclusions and Recommendations	29

I. Introduction

1. This report outlines the main findings and conclusions from an evaluation of FAO's contribution to reducing rural poverty (SO3) through the Strategic Programme 3. SO3 is one of the five Strategic Objectives approved at the 38th FAO Conference session (June 2013), as part of the Revised Strategic Framework 2010-19.

I.1 Purpose and scope

2. The main **purpose** of this evaluation is to examine progress in the implementation of the rural poverty reduction programme envisaged under SO3 and in particular to:

- Assess the soundness and effectiveness of the SP3 intervention logic and delivery mechanisms;
- Examine the value added of the SP3 approach; and
- Identify gaps, challenges and opportunities for SP3 implementation.

3. **Scope:** The evaluation covers the work under FAO's Strategic Programme 3 (SP3), which was set up to lead the delivery on Strategic Objective 3, during the period 2014-16. SP3 has three main work-streams, aimed at achieving three main Organizational Outcomes (OO):

- OO3.1 Rural poor are empowered through improved access to resources and services;
- OO3.2 Improved opportunities to access decent farm and non-farm employment; and
- OO3.3 Strengthened social protection systems to reduce rural poverty.

4. Building on the findings of the evaluability assessment (Annex 1), the evaluation **focuses** on examining progress at country level. In doing so, the evaluation sought to analyse the strategic relevance, programme design, communication, partnerships, effectiveness and sustainability prospects of SP3. Within this framework, gender equality was reviewed at every step through the inclusion of dedicated sub-questions in the evaluation matrix as well as in the interview checklist. This has been integrated in a separate analysis of SP3 contributions to gender equality. The evaluation also pay attention to the delivery mechanisms (Regional initiatives, country programming frameworks) established to implement the Strategic Framework¹.

5. The **evaluation questions** are shown in Box 1. Given the short history of the SPs, the evaluation was not intended to assess impacts. The evaluation's Terms of Reference (Annex 2) provides further details on the evaluation approach.

BOX 1. EVALUATION QUESTIONS

- (i) **Strategic relevance:** Is the FAO approach appropriate?
- (ii) **Programme design:** Are FAO interventions and delivery mechanisms adequate?
- (iii) **Communication:** Is there a common understanding and commitment to FAO's intervention logic among FAO headquarters, FAO decentralized offices, country counterparts and development partners?
- (iv) **Partnerships:** Is FAO selecting and leveraging partnerships to achieve the intended results?
- (v) **Effectiveness and sustainability:** Is SP3 bearing signs of results in the form of institutional change, improved policy frameworks and enhanced resource mobilization?

¹ Guidelines for the Implementation of the new Strategic Framework. Available at <http://www.fao.org/3/a-bb021e.pdf> (2014-15) and at <http://intranet.fao.org/fileadmin/templates/faomanual/OSP/GuideImplementSF.pdf> (draft 2016-17)

6. The evaluation undertook separate assessments of FAO's support to access and empowerment, decent rural employment and social protection to better capture the distinctive role and breadth of SP3 thematic work. These assessments provide the evidence for the evaluation report and are available in Annexes 3 (access and empowerment), 4 (decent rural employment) and 5 (social protection). As requested by the Programme Committee, Annex 6 has been dedicated to the analysis of SP3 contributions to gender equality within the framework of the FAO gender equality policy².

1.2 Methodology

7. The evaluation was led by the FAO Evaluation Office and conducted with the support of external consultants with geographic and thematic expertise. The evaluation also benefitted from the expert advice of an external panel as well as insights and comments from the SP3 core team throughout the evaluation process. Appendix 1 contains more information on the evaluation process.

8. The evaluation used a range of methods and tools to collect information. Sources of data included programme and project documentation, evidence from past/ongoing evaluations³, literature from FAO and partner organizations, etc. Primary data was mainly gathered through interviews of FAO staff and stakeholders involved in FAO's rural poverty alleviation work in a sample of countries⁴.

9. The list of references used and people contacted is included in Appendices 2 and 3, respectively. The team reviewed over 200 documents and interviewed over 500 programme stakeholders, including staff from FAO, government and development partners in 25 countries, 16 of which were visited by the team⁵. Some key partners interviewed included staff of Rome-based agencies (IFAD and WFP), UN sister agencies (ILO, UNICEF, UN Women and UNDP), international financing institutions (World Bank), as well as a range of representatives from regional organizations, academia, civil society, private sector, farmer organizations and donors.

10. For each of the 16 countries visited, the team reviewed key indicators designed to assess progress on SP3 themes. The parameters selected reflect key stages of programme implementation, namely: i) national commitment to SP3 themes; ii) prioritization of SP3 in Country Programmes; iii) analytical base of SP3 interventions; iv) Country Office capacities in SP3 themes; v) awareness of government and partners; vi) partnership leverage; and vii) evidence of contributions. A fuller description of the rubrics used is included in Appendix 4.

11. The team also reviewed documents from a random sample of SO3 projects approved since June 2015⁶ (61 in total) to assess design issues relating to: i) poverty analysis; ii) poverty targeting; iii) partnerships' leverage; and iv) gender. It also analysed data on country contributions to SP3 results already collected by FAO, including on gender equality⁷, in the period 2014-16.

² FAO Policy on Gender Equality. Available at <http://www.fao.org/docrep/017/i3205e/i3205e.pdf>

³ This included the country programme evaluations in Bangladesh, Egypt, Kyrgyzstan, Myanmar, Niger and Tanzania.

⁴ The countries selected for study were largely chosen based on the volume of SP3 interventions reported in the biennium 2014-15 and 2016, and their membership of Regional initiatives.

⁵ **Albania**, Armenia, **Georgia**, **Kyrgyzstan**, **Tajikistan**, **Lebanon**, **Tunisia**, **Sudan**, **El Salvador**, **Paraguay**, **Colombia**, **México**, **Zambia**, **Kenya**, **Malawi**, Lesotho, **Senegal**, **Ghana**, Myanmar, Cambodia, Indonesia, China, India, Viet Nam, Nepal. Countries in bold were visited by team members.

⁶ FAO environmental and social safeguards (June 2015). Available at <http://www.fao.org/3/a-i4413e.pdf>

⁷ Some of this data was included in the publication "Meeting Our Goals: FAO's programme for gender equality in agriculture and rural development". Available at <http://www.fao.org/3/a-i6618e.pdf>

1.3 *Limitations and quality assurance*

12. This evaluation made an effort to cover SP3 major interventions, but was unable to examine all contributing projects and activities in depth. Given the early stages of implementation of many interventions, it was not feasible to conduct impact analyses. Instead, the evaluation focused on evidence of intermediary results in the form of institutional and policy changes at the country level. Also, it was not possible to assess the collective influence of a full-scale SP3 approach given that at the evaluability stage it was not possible to find programmes that included all SP3 elements together.

13. The (final) evaluation report benefited from suggestions and comments from SP3 Managers and FAO staff, as well as from an external panel of experts. It was also subject to internal quality control to ensure that it met the UNEG/FAO evaluation norms and standards.

II. Description of Strategic Programme 3

14. Combating rural poverty and inequality is one of the “greatest challenges of FAO” and, through the SDGs, a commitment of the whole world⁸. The Director-General’s Medium Term Plan 2014-17⁹ aims at “helping fight rural poverty by promoting an integrated approach to rural development, which seeks to improve rural livelihoods through interventions aimed at dynamizing and diversifying the rural economy at large”.

15. FAO has a long story of engaging in rural development through access and empowerment lenses. This goes back as early as 1946 when FAO convened a Special Meeting on Urgent Food Problems which prepared a set of proposals for dealing with age-old issues related to food insecurity, malnutrition and poverty. Reducing global hunger did not only imply bringing food to people; it also entailed an overall increase in investments in agriculture and in farmers’ know-how and access to technology. Farmers worldwide needed technical assistance, support and advice to improve their crop production. This is also why one of the most important developments in the Organization’s work has been an increased emphasis in helping farmers with assistance and support¹⁰. The celebration of the International Year of Family Farming in 2014¹¹ was a landmark in this process.

16. In the past decade, there have been many successes in tackling poverty, notably in Asia and Latin America. However, many countries in the developing world are lagging behind. Even in countries where poverty has been reduced, inequalities remain pervasive – between rural and urban areas, among regions and ethnic groups, and between men and women. Such inequalities hamper progress in reducing poverty and improving food security¹². In 2013, FAO revised its Strategic Framework to propose a new approach to address rural poverty. It recognized that “helping small farmers to improve farm productivity can be one important vehicle, but in most contexts, it is not enough to lift all rural poor out of poverty”. As part of this new vision, FAO has developed a Strategic Programme (SP3) to implement a multi-sectoral approach to rural poverty reduction, which pays greater attention to the

⁸ 70 years of FAO (1945-2015). “Greatest FAO Challenges”. Available at <http://www.fao.org/3/a-i5142e.pdf>

⁹ The Director-General’s Medium Term Plan 2014-17 (Reviewed) and Programme of Work and Budget 2016-17. Available at <http://www.fao.org/3/a-mm710e.pdf>

¹⁰ 70 years of FAO (1945-2015). “Key events First decade 1945-55”. Available at <http://www.fao.org/3/a-i5142e.pdf>

¹¹ <http://www.fao.org/family-farming-2014/en/>

¹² FAO’s Strategic Objective 3: Reduce Rural Poverty. Available at <http://www.fao.org/3/a-i3872e.pdf>

interphase with important issues such as nutrition and climate change. This is a new direction for FAO and therefore recent in comparison to the other areas of FAO's work.

II.1 Thematic areas and resources

17. In the period 2014-17, SP3 has been structured around three thematic areas ("Organizational Outcomes") – Access and Empowerment Initiative (Outcome 3.1), Decent Rural Employment (Outcome 3.2) and Social Protection (Outcome 3.3). Each of these "outcomes" has a set of deliverables ("outputs"), whose delivery is an FAO responsibility. Each of the "outputs" has a pre-defined number of target countries and a process indicator to monitor progress with implementation. Appendix 5 contains the full set of outcomes, outputs, indicators and targets for the period 2014-17. Below is a non-exhaustive list of SP3-related initiatives and instruments under implementation. A full description is provided in the thematic assessments.

TABLE 1. SP3 SELECTED INSTRUMENTS BY AREA OF WORK

Area of Work	Selected initiatives and instruments
Strengthening rural institutions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support to producer organizations and vulnerable groups through the Forest and Farm Facility, DIMITRA, etc. • Strategic partnerships with civil society organizations), producer organizations and cooperatives • Methodologies to enhance effective participation of inclusive Civil society organizations, Producer organizations and cooperatives in policy dialogue spaces and implementation and to support organizational strengthening • Mechanisms to foster collaboration and exchanges among farmer organizations. • Support to indigenous and tribal peoples
Access to services (finance, extension)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inclusive finance for rural development • Rural Advisory Services, including Farmer Field Schools and community-based animal health services
Access to natural resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Good governance in Land tenure around the Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land, Fisheries and Forests in the Context of National Food Security • Promotion of community-based forestry
Access to knowledge, technologies and markets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appropriate technologies for seed production, irrigation and water management, food preservation, small-scale forest, fisheries, dairy enterprises • Agroecology • Agricultural innovation systems
Gender equitable and inclusive rural development policies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rural Women's economic empowerment • Gender in Agriculture policy assessment and mainstreaming guidelines
Evidence based policy support and capacity development on Decent rural employment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Decent Rural Employment Policy Support and Capacity • Rural Youth Employment •
Application of International Labour Standards to rural areas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rural Areas and International Labour Standards • Child Labour in Agriculture Prevention • Voluntary Guidelines for Securing Sustainable Small-Scale Fisheries in the Context of Food Security and Poverty Eradication
Data and knowledge on Decent rural employment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rural Employment Information Network
Expansion of coverage of social protection to the rural poor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enhancing the economic case for social protection and advocacy for programme scale-up

Area of Work	Selected initiatives and instruments
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Providing knowledge on innovative solutions for expansion of coverage to non-formal sectors • Assessing feasibility of extending social security and insurance to non-formal agricultural workers
Nutrition sensitive social protection	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Operationalizing the linkages between social protection, nutrition and agricultural interventions across the food systems • Strengthening of monitoring tools, including nutrition and nutrition-sensitive indicators for impact assessments of social protection, and multi-sector interventions • Impact assessment, knowledge generation and dissemination on combined interventions focusing on impacts on food security, nutrition and rural development • South-South collaboration and partnership with strategic actors
Social Protection, agriculture and natural resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Qualitative and quantitative impact evaluations to assess the impacts of social protection programmes (or combination of interventions) on resilience • Resilience measurement and vulnerability analysis • Supporting countries to operationalize the linkages and coherence between social protection, rural development and agriculture programmes (policy, programmatic and evidence generation work) and associated national budget allocations.
Social Protection and resilience building	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development of global guidance on the role of social protection to strengthen livelihoods in fragile, humanitarian and protracted contexts • Support national governments in the design of CASH+ to accelerate results for poverty reduction and resilience. • Support capacity development to design, implement, monitor and rigorously evaluate shock-responsive social protection programmes

Source: elaborated by the evaluation team, based on data provided by SP3

18. SP3 is the smallest Strategic Programme at FAO. It has a budget of around US\$ 160 million per biennium, which correspond to 6.4 percent of FAO's total budget (US\$ 2.5 billion). In 2016-17, the Access and Empowerment Initiative has the largest share (80 percent), followed by Decent Rural Employment (12 percent) and Social Protection (8 percent)¹³. In terms of human resources, SP3's work on decent rural employment and social protection has been largely supported by staff from the Social Policies and Rural Institutions Division (ESP) with contributions from staff of other technical divisions and decentralized offices. The workforce of the Access and Empowerment Initiative is distributed across the Organization¹⁴. With the exception of two posts in Regional Offices (one in Asia and one in Africa) and the staff working in the SP3-related Regional Initiatives, FAO does not have long-term staff in decentralized offices funded from the Regular Programme specialized in the new themes. FAO has compensated this gap through the fielding of short-term professionals to country offices (for example social protection consultants in Zambia, Kyrgyzstan, Mali and Lesotho, or decent rural employment consultants in Guatemala, Senegal and Uganda) in a case-by-case manner.

¹³ Medium Term Plan 2014-17 (Annex 1). Available at <http://www.fao.org/3/a-mm710e.pdf>

¹⁴ Further details on the resource distribution and workforce are available in the thematic assessments.

II.2 *Delivery Mechanisms*

19. The revised Strategic Framework established “multidisciplinary working mechanisms to enhance delivery”¹⁵, consisting of country programmes, regional initiatives and global knowledge products, the latter developed as part of corporate technical activities. It also established Strategic Programme Management teams to oversee the implementation of outputs and outcomes through these delivery mechanisms, under the leadership of the SP Team leader, as well as Regional Initiatives Delivery managers and focal points, under the coordination of Regional Strategic Programme Coordinators, to ensure their effective contextualization and joined-up implementation at regional level.

20. As part of the new arrangements, FAO’s Country Programming Frameworks (CPFs) become “the entry point for the prioritization of in-country technical assistance” whereas Regional Initiatives “address a main theme of the lead SO and a related key regional priority”. Global knowledge products and services are “thought papers, guidelines, methodological tools, publications, other knowledge products, expected to have ultimately an impact at country level”¹⁶.

II.2.1 *Country programmes*

21. FAO’s field work related to SP3 has been conducted in 60 countries in the period 2014-15 (FAO, 2016a) including activities in 45 “focus countries” identified for targeted support. By the end of 2016, the number of countries reporting SP3-related work in access and empowerment, decent rural employment and social protection activities are 57, 44 and 35, respectively.

22. In this period 2014-15, FAO contributed to the strengthening of producer organizations and their participation in policy dialogue, and to providing poor households with access to services, inputs and technologies. FAO assisted with policy support, the formulation and implementation of models for youth employment and young people’s engagement in agriculture, as well as in extending the application of international labour standards to rural areas, particularly for child labour prevention. In social protection, FAO strengthened partnerships with key actors and provided policy advice on national and regional levels, including through the generation of evidence on the productive impact of social protection and on strengthening policy linkages between social protection and agriculture. Mainstreaming the role of gender equality for poverty reduction was also a prominent focus during 2014-15, with a large span of activities addressing gender-based barriers to escaping rural poverty in agriculture and through employment opportunities and social protection. Work on monitoring multi-dimensional rural livelihoods through better statistics increased in prominence¹⁷.

II.2.2 *Regional Initiatives*

23. In the period 2014-16, three Regional Initiatives (RIs) have been linked to SP3. These have been implemented in 29 focus countries located in Latin America and the Caribbean, Europe and Central Asia, and North Africa and the Near East. There were no SP3-linked RIs in Africa and Asia Pacific. The Regional Initiatives linked to SP3 are described below.

¹⁵ The Director-General’s Medium Term Plan 2014-17 (reviewed) and Programme of Work and Budget 2016-17

¹⁶ Guidelines for Implementation of Regional Initiatives (July 2014); 2016-17 Main Products and services (May 2016)

¹⁷ SP3 High level work plan for 2018-21 (August 2016)

24. **Latin America and the Caribbean:** This RI focus on family farming and inclusive food systems for rural development and has sought to address the following problems: i) weak capacities among government agencies to facilitate inclusive, people-centred and sustainable management of natural resources that is also considerate of cultural diversity and human rights; ii) poor access of family farmers to rural (public) services; iii) poor access of family farmers to productive resources (water, land, seeds, mechanization, etc.); iv) low levels of production and productivity and lack of competitiveness among family farmers; v) high vulnerability to climatic risks and environmental threats among family farmers; vi) weakness of producer organizations and poor access of family farmers to local and regional markets; vii) high underemployment in rural areas and lack of income-earning opportunities, especially among youth, women and indigenous peoples; and viii) weak linkages between social protection schemes and agriculture and rural development programmes. This RI contributes to SP3 and SP4 (inclusive value chains and efficient food systems). It focuses on the following countries: Bolivia, Colombia, El Salvador, Guatemala, Haiti, Honduras, Nicaragua, Paraguay, Belize, Granada, Guyana, Jamaica, Suriname and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines.

25. **Europe and Central Asia:** The RI aims at empowering smallholder and family farms in the following domains:

- Adoption of innovative sustainable production technologies and practices;
- Identification, assessment and dissemination of integrated and multi-sectoral approaches for ecosystem management, restoration climate change adaptation and mitigation;
- Strengthening national governance frameworks that foster sustainable agricultural production and natural resources management;
- Strengthening rural organizations and institutions and facilitate empowerment of rural poor;
- Fostering processes that address land tenure and land fragmentation issues;
- Innovations in rural services provision and infrastructure development accessible to the rural poor; and,
- Providing policy advice and capacity development for the definition of gender equitable and sustainable rural development and poverty reduction strategies.

26. This RI contributes to SP3 and SP2 (sustainable management of natural resources). It works in Albania, Armenia, Georgia, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova, FYR Macedonia and Tajikistan¹⁸.

27. **Near East and North Africa:** The RI on Small-Scale Family farming aims to reduce rural poverty by promoting and supporting inclusive small-scale agricultural development, with special attention to governance and institutions, including, access of smallholders to social protection, rural services and markets, strengthening the capacities of producers' organizations and promoting youth employment and sustainable value chain development¹⁹. The RI addresses the challenges of small-scale agriculture using a three-pronged approach: (i) improve the understanding of various types of smallholders, their labor dimensions, linkages with markets and barriers in order to support evidence-based policy and strategies and to prioritize interventions as well as better target public and private investment; (ii) sustainably improve productivity, quality, value addition, social sustainability and viability of the sector; and (iii) empower smallholders engaged in agriculture, forestry and fisheries, including strengthening professional organizations and supporting the creation of decent rural employment opportunities for youth and women. As such, it is the only RI seeking to address all SP3

¹⁸ <http://www.fao.org/3/a-i5669e.pdf>

¹⁹ <http://www.fao.org/neareast/perspectives/sustainable-agriculture/en/>

components. It focuses on the following countries and territories: Egypt, Lebanon, Morocco, Sudan, Tunisia, Jordan, Mauritania and West Bank and Gaza Strip.

II.2.3 Global knowledge products and services

28. FAO, under SP3 related areas of work, has developed a wide range of knowledge products during the period under review. Given the early days of some of these products and the focus of the evaluation on country-level results, it was not feasible to gather comprehensive evidence on their use or application. The evaluation thus limited itself to an assessment of their relevance and potential contribution to the work of SP3 within their thematic area. An illustrative list of the products and services reviewed is below:

- The 2015 State of Food and Agriculture, one of FAO's flagship publications, focused on social protection (FAO, 2015)²⁰.
- Information base on rural development. This global product aims to improve the availability of analytical information on income and related livelihoods in rural areas²¹.
- Guidance materials, e-learning courses²² and tool kits on Decent Rural Employment²³, including an online Policy Database²⁴ and a Toolbox²⁵: a compendium of materials to aid practitioners to apply decent rural employment in program design and monitoring, including handbooks on child labour in agriculture and guidance for preventing child labour in fisheries and agriculture²⁶.
- Global initiative on universal social protection and expansion of coverage of social protection for the rural poor: a joint advocacy with strategic partners WB/ILO and Social Protection Inter-Agency Coordination Board (SPIAC-B) to support the expansion of coverage of social protection to the rural poor²⁷.
- Guidance materials, papers and methodological tools to support social protection work²⁸.

II.3 Future directions

29. In December 2016, FAO presented an outline of its revised Strategic Framework and Medium Term Plan (MTP) for the period 2018-21 (FAO, 2016b). This includes a new narrative for SP3 consisting of four (instead of the existing three) organizational outcomes.

- Rural poor and rural poor organizations empowered to access productive resources, services and markets (3.1);

²⁰ <http://www.fao.org/3/a-i4910e.pdf>

²¹ <http://www.fao.org/3/a-at887e.pdf>

²² E-learning courses have been developed on End child labour in agriculture, and Promoting productive employment and decent work in rural areas

²³ <http://www.fao.org/rural-employment/resources/publications/en/>

²⁴ <http://www.fao.org/rural-employment/policies/en/>

²⁵ <http://www.fao.org/rural-employment/toolbox/en/>

²⁶ <http://www.fao.org/rural-employment/resources/publications/en/>

²⁷ More than 50 relevant FAO publications are available on the SPIAC-B website <http://www.oit.org/newyork/issues-at-work/social-protection/social-protection-inter-agency-cooperation-board>

²⁸ E.g. Position Paper on Social Protection in Humanitarian, Fragile and Protracted Contexts with IDS and SP5; Guidance materials: Framework for Action: Strengthening Coherence between Social Protection and Agriculture and Diagnostic Tool; Guidance note on Social Protection in Protracted Crises; Social protection and resilience in the Sahel: FAO's approach; Diagnostic of Access and reach of Social Protection for Fisher folk; PtoP methodological tools, etc.

- Enhanced access of the rural poor to productive employment and decent work opportunities, particularly among youth and women (3.2);
- Enhanced access of the rural poor to social protection systems (3.3); and
- Strengthened capacities to design, implement and evaluate gender equitable multi-sectoral policies, strategies and programmes to contribute to the achievement of SDG 1 (3.4).

30. According to the Medium Term Plan, “FAO’s contribution to reducing rural poverty will focus on support to broad, multi-sectoral pro-poor policies and strategies at country and regional level that target the diverse spectrum of livelihoods. This requires broadening FAO’s engagement beyond traditional partners in Ministries of Agriculture, as well as efforts to embed FAO’s technical work within the processes of rural poverty reduction policies at country level”. Hence, the need for a new outcome (3.4) that supports a more multisectoral pro-poor approach to tackle poverty, as poverty is multidimensional. The MTP and other corporate documents²⁹ also underscore that FAO is well-positioned to support countries in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), and is in the process of introducing a revised monitoring system that includes a selected set of SDG targets and indicators. Besides the restructuring of the result framework, FAO proposes a theory of change to achieve rural poverty reduction anchored in inclusive structural transformation and growth (Box 2).

BOX 2. SP3 THEORY OF CHANGE TO ACHIEVE RURAL POVERTY REDUCTION (2018-21)

Given the multiple pathways out of poverty and multiple conditioning factors, a broad, multi-sectoral approach to poverty, with differentiated strategies, is necessary for successful rural poverty reduction and addressing the root causes of migration. This set of policies should foster inclusive structural transformation and growth, enabling the poor to actively participate in and significantly benefit from economic activity. A broad approach would have the following key dimensions:

- Adopt and implement a comprehensive set of policies and strategies for rural poverty reduction at territorial, country and regional levels with the goal of poverty reduction and equality of opportunities.
- Address structural constraints faced by poor rural agricultural households in terms of increasing their access to, and control over, natural resources and other assets over time; ability to manage risks; increasing productivity, profitability and sustainable management of natural resources; and linking small-scale agricultural households to markets and food systems.
- Create decent off-farm employment for the poor in agriculture and/or the rural non-farm (RNF) economy, including fostering rural entrepreneurship and development of necessary occupational skills.
- Build and scale-up social protection systems.
- Build rural infrastructure, especially in energy, transport, water and sanitation.
- Build human capital, in particular access to basic social services such as health and education, as well as occupational skills and organization capacity
- Strengthen rural institutions and dialogue for rural poverty reduction: Enhance the capacities of local government, institutions, and organizations to plan and implement development policies and participate in policy decision-making.
- Mechanisms to ensure the empowerment of the poor for increased political participation, knowledge and protection of their rights is fundamental for them to benefit from the development process.

Source: (FAO, 2016b) p. 32

31. The evaluation has considered the 2018-21 formulation of SP3’s theory of change and the SDG-based monitoring framework in its analyses.

²⁹ FAO and the 17 Sustainable Development Goals. Available at <http://www.fao.org/3/a-i4997e.pdf>

III. Assessment of Strategic Programme 3

32. The main findings of the evaluation are presented below, grouped by evaluation question.

III.1 **Strategic Relevance:** *Is FAO's approach to rural poverty reduction under the revised Strategic Framework architecture appropriate?*

Finding 1. *The SP3 approach is relevant and has an overall sound intervention logic. There has been a progressive evolution and refinement of the SP3 approach, based on the concept of 'inclusive rural transformation'. This evolution reflects due consideration of key challenges and the emergence of new themes relevant for rural poverty reduction. These revisions have strengthened FAO's comparative advantages in rural poverty reduction and enabled a more focused support to member countries in non-traditional areas for FAO such as social protection and decent rural employment.*

III.1.1 Rationale for the chosen approach to rural poverty reduction

33. SP3 contributions to multi-sectoral analysis and design of policies, especially in the areas of access and empowerment, decent rural employment and social protection, has the potential to reinforce the comparative advantages of FAO in rural poverty reduction. The theory of change (Box 2) aims to promote a multisectoral approach to poverty, with differentiated strategies based on the concept of 'rural transformation'. The central idea is that there are multiple pathways out of rural poverty given the diversity of profiles of rural households in terms of their productive potential and capacity to invest in agriculture and other sectors. Based on these profiles, the pathways out of poverty can be multiple, including for instance through intensification or diversification of agriculture; combining agriculture with other supplementing wage incomes; or exit to other forms of wage- or self-employment, while also creating appropriate safety nets. This approach is endorsed from findings of several authoritative studies of rural transformation.³⁰³¹ Some countries have achieved major reductions of poverty through the analysis and application of multiple pathways (see Box 3).

BOX 3. THE SIGNIFICANCE OF SUPPLEMENTARY WAGE INCOME ON RURAL POVERTY REDUCTION

Since 1990, Bangladesh has achieved remarkable reductions in poverty, food insecurity and malnutrition. Economic growth has been accompanied by a decline in poverty and hunger. The proportion of the population living on less than 1.25 dollars a day fell from 72 percent in 1992 to about 50 percent in 2005 and then to 43 percent in 2010. These reductions were made possible by sharp increases in the real wages of agricultural day labourers, the growth in demand for (largely female) labour from the textile industry, remittances, better access to improved sanitation facilities, improvements in female literacy and better access to assets on the part of women. The first two factors increased household incomes and made it possible for the poorest households to increase their food consumption; the third, together with the other factors, led to better food utilization and thus reduced malnutrition for children as well as adults. Despite these achievements, however, formidable challenges remain. The task is to consolidate the successes achieved and extend them so that Bangladesh can succeed in eliminating hunger over the medium term. *Source: Bangladesh Country Programming Framework 2014-2018*³²

³⁰ ADB Eco Series Paper 363 'Does Agriculture Matter?'; IFAD Rural Development Report 2016.

³¹ FAO working paper on Rural Transformation (September 2016). Available at <http://www.fao.org/3/a-bp128e.pdf>

³² Bangladesh Country Programming Framework (2014-2018). Available at <http://www.fao.org/3/a-i4236e.pdf>

34. The evaluation team noted that in the countries visited public policies existed to address issues relating to access and empowerment of rural poor, social protection and employment. However, FAO and its traditional counterparts from the rural and agricultural sector were not always involved in their implementation. In some countries, policies existed but were not sufficiently adapted to the agricultural and rural settings or lacked strong national commitment for their implementation. SP3 focus on these themes is thus considered highly appropriate in order to enhance awareness of the importance of these themes and ultimately contribute to a multi-sectoral response for rural poverty alleviation.

III.2 **Programme design: Are FAO interventions and delivery mechanisms adequate?**

III.2.1 Intervention logic

Finding 2. *Building on its long-standing strengths, SP3's work to enhance and ensure equitable access, decent rural employment and social protection has demonstrated their appropriateness in several contexts. However, interventions could not always build on a multi-sectoral approach.*

35. The evaluation found many examples when SP3 has been able to build on FAO's traditional strengths - strong domain knowledge, institutional relationships and field networks in the agriculture sector, and used that to promote rural employment and/or social protection. Some instruments and initiatives (see Table 1) have been (re)designed to promote the "transformational agenda" of SP3 seeking sustainable changes at national policy levels, often in partnership with other development actors. These include for instance the work on rural youth employment, evidence generation on social protection (through the Production to Protection project), and institution building for the empowerment of vulnerable groups (through the Forest and Farm Facility, among others) as well as several cross-sectoral initiatives in areas such as agriculture and social protection³³, social protection, child labour and livelihood support³⁴, etc.

36. Although the elements that encompass the intervention logic (i.e. access and empowerment, decent rural employment and social protection) have been designed with the intention of establishing such linkages and synergies at programming stage, there have been limited opportunities to implement a multi-sectoral approach for poverty reduction at the country level. Given the initial stages of FAO's programme on rural poverty reduction, there has been considerable effort in developing the knowledge base, showcasing and promoting the new themes. The new results framework (December 2016) has included a fourth outcome with a greater emphasis on strengthening capacities toward the design of gender-equitable multi-sectoral policies. The evaluation considers this focus an important element in strengthening multi-sectoral programme design especially at country level.

³³ e.g. The Social Cash Transfer Programme and the Farm Input Subsidy Programme in Malawi. Available at: <http://www.fao.org/3/a-i6810e.pdf>

³⁴ e.g. in Lebanon and Senegal.

III.2.2 Regional initiatives

Finding 3: *Regional initiatives have had a mixed performance in translating the Strategic framework's intervention logic into concrete SP3-related initiatives. They have provided flexible and innovative support to engage with regional partners and field test SP3 concepts but have shown limitations to provide context-specific and multi-sectoral support to countries.*

37. Regions, despite their diversity, have some common SP3-relevant challenges: inequities of wealth, class and gender; access to land; high rural poverty, etc. Some regions also face special problems of unemployment, conflict and migration that affect rural development. As a result, regional initiatives have potential as a complementing delivery mechanism to support and complement country level work. The three regional initiatives in Latin America, Europe and Central Asia and Near East were designed around the needs and challenges of small holders and family farmers, the main constituencies for applying inclusive approaches, and together, had a spread of 29 countries. They were formulated in close alignment with priorities emerging from the FAO Regional Conferences as well as core focus areas in the revised Strategic Framework.

38. The evaluation found that many countries had great appreciation of the RIs. This was higher in regions where the RIs have supported countries in translating the 'SO' thinking into concrete regional and national policy initiatives, which in Latin America resulted for instance in the development of the CELAC's Plan for Food and Nutrition Security and Eradication of Hunger 2025 (see Box 5 below)³⁵ the creation of the Frente Parlamentario Contra el Hambre³⁶ and support to public policy and legal framework development³⁷. Also, they have been seen as important platforms to facilitate exchange of best practices, and build shared understanding on important FAO tools and concepts such as the Voluntary Guidelines in Land Tenure (particularly in Europe and Central Asia but also in Africa and Latin America) and Small-scale farmers' typology in the Near East and North Africa.

Box 5. CELAC Plan for Food and Nutrition Security and Eradication of Hunger 2025

FAO has supported the development of Plan CELAC 2025 and has successfully used it as an umbrella and a mechanism through which the Organization could foster the achievement of SO3 related outcomes. The plan includes three lines of action relevant to SO3. The first focuses on Conditional Cash Transfer (CCT) programmes with a view to seeking universal coverage of the poor, extreme poor and the most vulnerable populations and encourage south-south cooperation and promote the exchange of experience in the area of CCTs. Supporting these linkages was seen by many stakeholders as the area where FAO could be better placed to contribute to the achievement of Outcome 3.3, initially through a mixture of capacity development, awareness raising, policy advice and south-south cooperation. At the national level, uptake of this work was variable but in general interpreted as positive by governments who are keen to develop "graduation" programmes. The second line of action refers to the labour market. This includes the promotion of youth employment in rural areas and the strengthening of training and agricultural education at higher education levels. So far, the focus of FAO has been more around the development of knowledge products and regional projects on rural youth employment and migration.

³⁶ <http://parlamentarioscontraelhambre.org>

³⁷ FAO support of CELAC initiatives (including through south-south cooperation and the Parliamentarian Front) has led to the development of actions plans on family farming and rural development in 33 countries

Finally, the third line of action comprises all policies and programmes that aim to support family farming including financing, insurance, rural extension, promoting organizations (cooperatives), market access, access to strategic inputs (quality seeds, fertilizers, etc.), technological innovation. It also highlights training and continuous extension services for family farmers. This line of action is clearly linked to Outcome 3.1 and has been the one more easily internalized both at regional and national levels since it is the outcome for which FAO is clearly identified as leading agency. Most of the regional and national projects in Latin America reviewed by the team directly related to SO3 fall under this category.

Source: evaluation team, based on SP3 data and field validation

39. On the other hand, several interviewees noted RIs gave low priority to piloting instruments for new themes (decent work and social protection), which arguably had the greatest need for awareness raising and concept testing in the field. Also, RIs had “regional” agendas, which did not always coincide with country demands and thus made them less useful to support “national” agendas. In this regard, although the rationale for having RIs in Asia and Africa do exist (based on rural poverty levels or regional commitments), the lack of SP3-related RIs in these regions did not likely affect programme delivery as much as interest and demand for SP3 themes at country level did. Thus, while the RIs have demonstrated concrete benefits and found to be particularly adequate to undertake “regionalized” work, their advantage over loose assemblages of multi-country projects targeting context-specific issues in topics with high demand (e.g. youth employment in Africa, inclusive social protection programmes for indigenous groups, etc.) was not always evident.

III.2.3 Country programming frameworks

Finding 4: *Country Offices have started to include elements of SP3, which is reflected in an increasing number of country programmes contributing to SP3. However, understanding and reporting of SP3 concepts was sometimes inadequate.*

40. Since 2014, there has been a major rise in country-level activities under the new themes of social protection and decent rural employment, which now extend to over 30 countries. This has been accompanied by a steady rise in CPF coverage of SP3 new themes. In 2016 alone, social protection has been included as a focus area or output in 11 countries. Rapid expansion in the new areas of work has been a mark of success, but in some of the countries visited it has also raised questions about prioritization and the quality of programme and project design. In the countries visited, most CPFs had direct correspondence with relevant SP3 outcomes and outputs. Understandably, coverage had tended to be mostly around Outcome 1, which is traditional FAO terrain besides also direct priorities of FAO’s main counterpart (Ministry of Agriculture). It was also noted that incorrect tagging has tended to under-report SP3 results, as several projects tagged to other SOs have made useful contributions to rural poverty reduction. For instance, in Kenya, although only one youth employment project was directly linked to SP3, several projects³⁸ address livelihoods and income enhancement of women and youth. Similar situations were reported in almost all the countries visited by the team.

³⁸ The US\$ 50 million IFAD “Kenya Cereals Enhancement Project”, for which FAO provides technical assistance through a US\$ 2 million project, addresses access to finance; workloads and wages, child labour, etc. but is not tagged to SP3.

III.2.4 Design of SP3 programmes and projects

Finding 5. *FAO has strengthened its guidance for programme and project design by including SP3 relevant elements such as gender equality and decent work as important dimensions to be considered. Nevertheless, poverty analysis remains inadequate in programmes and project design, in part due to lack of baselines and disaggregated data.*

41. As part of the implementation of FAO's Strategic Framework, FAO has reinforced the formulation and screening process of programmes and projects. This has included, among others, the launch of FAO's environmental and social management guidelines at FAO³⁹ (March 2015), the updating of the FAO project cycle guide (August 2015) and the systematic review of project proposals by the relevant SP management team. Decent work (EES7) and gender equality (EES8) are social standards reflected in FAO's guidelines, which are considered in the project cycle.

42. Given that SP3 places a special emphasis on the excluded and marginalized groups and multiple pathways out of poverty, a strong analysis of rural poverty is a pre-requisite for effective programme and project design. In the CPFs and SP3-tagged projects reviewed by the team, such an analysis was often inadequate and/or based on limited information. FAO Country Offices do not always carry out specific poverty analyses to inform project interventions, although in some documents distinctions between interventions aimed at the 'vulnerable' are made⁴⁰. The review of a sample of SP3 projects approved between May 2015 and December 2016 found that only 58 percent were based on some form of poverty analysis.

43. The limited analysis undertaken makes it difficult to answer whether SP3 interventions are effectively targeting the extreme poor. Also, the absence of baselines impedes effective monitoring of results in terms of expansion of access, coverage and livelihood opportunities, which is a chief aim of SP3. It is important however to point out that this is a challenge affecting not only FAO but also several key partners including IFAD. The 2016 Annual Report on Results and Impact of IFAD Operations noted that the evaluations carried out in 2015 "found that poverty analyses conducted at design do not sufficiently capture the differences among groups of poor rural people. As a result, project activities often do not reach all target beneficiaries, in particular the poorest of the poor and other marginalized groups that are the most difficult to reach."⁴¹

44. A major challenge to undertake poverty analysis is that age and gender-disaggregated data on employment, social protection, tenure issues, etc. is often not available for rural areas. FAO, under SP3, has partnered with IFAD and the World Bank on important initiatives to develop a Rural Livelihoods Information System (RuLiS) to assist in evidence-based policy making, programming with a more effective targeting of the rural poor and marginalized groups, besides monitoring SDG indicators on small holder incomes (2.3.1 and 2.3.2). RuLiS presently has data for 30-40 countries and plans to ramp up to 100 countries over three years. It is hoped that once it is rolled out (end 2017), it

³⁹ <http://www.fao.org/3/a-i4413e.pdf>

⁴⁰ The 4 CPF outcomes in Zambia CPF 2013-2015 have been designed to enable a transition of beneficiaries from the most vulnerable (targeted through Outcome 4) through improved resource management (Outcome 3) and agricultural capacities to engagement with the commercial sector (in Outcome 2).

⁴¹ <https://www.ifad.org/documents/10180/569bcea7-a84a-4d38-867f-89b3bb98e0e4>

could, together with other FAO and partners tools and instruments, be used for improving multisectoral analysis, programme design and results monitoring.

III.2.5 Mainstreaming rural poverty reduction

Finding 6. *There has been a concerted effort to mainstream selected SP3 themes across FAO. However, there remain gaps in applying these. The SDGs provide an opportunity to strengthen rural poverty-related programming across the Organization.*

45. There have been good examples of mainstreaming some elements of SP3 across FAO's work. This has been most advanced on decent rural employment, which has resulted in FAO's recognition as the UN agency, other than ILO, which has progressed the most in mainstreaming productive employment and decent work⁴², as well as on gender issues. There has been work on decent employment and social protection in technical areas such as fisheries⁴³ and plant protection⁴⁴. Joint work has also started within SP3⁴⁵ and with other SPs including SP5 (on shock responsive social protection, climate change, migration and resilience⁴⁶), SP1 (on nutrition sensitive social protection and on the linkages between social protection, food security and nutrition) and SP4 (on inclusive value chains). Specific tools have been developed to support FAO programmes in mainstreaming child labour concerns and other aspects of decent rural employment.⁴⁷ Furthermore, the efforts to leverage the institutional relationships of FAO's Investment Centre with the international financing organizations and governments present opportunities to introduce and operationalize SP3 priorities into national investment programmes and projects.

46. Given the already strong connection between the Strategic Framework and the SDGs, the planned adoption of a new monitoring framework based on SDGs targets and indicators is an opportunity to further mainstream poverty elements into the work of the Organization, for instance by elaborating the result chain of SP3 and other SPs along the lines of selected SDGs (see example below).

⁴² Evaluation of mainstreaming of full and productive employment and decent work by the United Nations system organizations (2015). Available at: https://www.unjui.org/en/reports-notes/JIU%20Products/JIU_REP_2015_1_English.pdf

⁴³ Examples include: raising awareness and endorsement of decent work principles at the COFI, human rights in fisheries – Indonesia; social protection in fisheries in Mediterranean, Cambodia and Thailand; inclusion of child labour and broader decent work concerns in the Voluntary Guidelines for Securing Sustainable Small-Scale Fisheries Available at: <http://www.fao.org/3/a-i4356e.pdf>

⁴⁴ Examples include protection of children from pesticides in Malawi, Niger, Mali and Cambodia and the integration of child labour concerns in the FAO WHO International Code of Conduct on Pesticides Management.

⁴⁵ SP3 teams on social protection and decent employment have worked in child labour and social protection in Lebanon, with the support of the regional initiative in RNE. They have produced a document on access to social protection for rural farmers and on options to expand social protection including decent work in Zambia and Mali.

⁴⁶ E.g. a position paper on SP for the WHS (<http://www.fao.org/3/a-i5656e.pdf>) and the Guidance on SP in protracted crises under the CFS Framework for Action (<http://www.fao.org/resilience/resources/resources-detail/en/c/461427/>)

⁴⁷ For example, the *Handbook for monitoring and evaluation of child labour in agriculture*, to support measurement of the impacts of agricultural and food security programmes on child labour in agriculture available at: <http://www.fao.org/3/a-i4630e.pdf> as well as guidance material on *Incorporating decent rural employment in the strategic planning for agricultural development*, available at: <http://www.fao.org/3/a-i5471e.pdf>

BOX 6. SP3 AND THE SDGs

The SDGs and their indicators provide a unifying canvas and language for all development agencies to direct their contributions in line with their mandate and competencies. For example, the SDG 1 goal of eradication of poverty at the US\$ 1.90 (PPP) per person per day would from an SP3 perspective translate into the elimination of extreme poverty in rural areas. Doubling of smallholder and producer productivity and incomes and establishing social protection floors are already targets of SDG1 and SDG2, respectively. Similarly, target 8.5 'By 2030, achieve full and productive employment and decent work for all women and men, including for young people and persons with disabilities, and equal pay for work of equal value' sets a sub target for 'rural unemployment rate by age, sex and persons with disabilities' and provides the basis for equitable access, women empowerment and youth employment initiatives. Likewise, target 8b.1 "Total government spending on social protection and employment programmes as percentage of national budgets and GDP" could be customized to probe for penetration of social protection and employment programmes benefiting rural areas. Furthermore, youth development is an agreed cross-cutting issue in the 2030 Agenda as well as gender equality (SDG5). Target 8.7 on eliminating child and forced labour could also be translated to agriculture.

Source: evaluation team, based on SDG and SP3 data

III.2.6 Capacities in decentralized offices

Finding 7. *FAO has developed several learning products and programmes to raise awareness and support programme implementation. Skills and capacities of decentralized offices for "internalizing" and following up on SP3 themes are however limited and need to be strengthened to effectively engage on and improve programming around SP3 interventions.*

47. SP3 has recognized the need to build capacity of staff at decentralized levels. Several learning courses and products have been developed, in partnership with ILO, UNICEF and others, to enhance support for the implementation of SP3. The evaluation found varying degrees of understanding and skills at country level to work on SP3 themes. In general, more capacities were found on topics related to access and empowerment issues. This was often due to the presence of project staff besides long-standing technical expertise at headquarters, regional or sub-regional levels. Expertise on social protection and decent rural employment was often lacking in country offices. This has created challenges in the country staff's engagement with counterparts in these areas.

48. Given the mix of projects under prospecting, formulation and implementation and the time lags among them, there is a case to use the available technical resource pool (including short-term field experts) to support formulation of activities in some countries and implementation in others. There are opportunities to create thematic teams, drawn from countries where work is ongoing, to backstop other projects and formulation efforts. This approach is likely the most feasible way to support/build capacities in flagship countries particularly for the new themes and create clusters of expertise around themes. In the medium-term, however, there is need for a broader capacity development strategy around the SPs for key country-level actors to develop adequate levels of competency for programme design and liaison on SP3 themes.

III.3 Communication: Is there a common understanding of the intervention logic?

Finding 8. *FAO has identified comparative advantages and instruments to promote the SP3 approach. Greater differentiation and a more effective communication of FAO comparative advantages to internal and external stakeholders is however needed.*

49. As noted in Table 1, FAO has identified clear areas of work and contributions it can make to rural poverty reduction through the application of the SP3 approach. At the country level, the evaluation found varying degrees of understanding and appreciation among stakeholders of the SP3 approach, including the new themes of decent employment and social protection. Among FAO staff and government counterparts, there was a high degree of awareness about FAO's long-standing offerings on access and empowerment. This was not always the case in relation to decent rural employment or social protection, where some stakeholders (particularly national counterparts and donors at decentralized levels) were generally unaware of SP3 areas of work and instruments.

50. In some countries, the concepts of rural poverty reduction, decent rural employment and social protection were not readily understood as FAO core areas by traditional government partners. There was also insufficient understanding of FAO's comparative advantages especially in decent rural employment and social protection, and differentiating FAO's contributions from those of other agencies that have been working on these areas for a longer time. The nature of FAO's interventions, being mostly in the policy space and relatively recent, have made the transition more difficult. The challenges of country offices in effectively communicating and engaging on these themes has also contributed to this gap.

51. As for the SP3 themes' rationale for rural poverty reduction, some interviewees in the countries argued that poverty reduction is/should be the aim of all the SPs, not just SP3. Others interpreted SP3 as the sum and substance of the SF's interventions toward rural poverty reduction, thus releasing the other SPs from specifically prioritising 'poverty reduction' in their interventions. These impressions, although not widespread, reflect some of the challenges to communicating the logic and programmatic contents under SP3 and its linkages with the SPs.

III.4 Partnerships: Is FAO leveraging partnerships appropriately?

Finding 9. *FAO has built a string of useful partnerships in SP3 themes. Some of these partnerships have the potential to deepen with the growing importance of the issues and challenges identified for priority action by the SDGs.*

52. FAO works with a broad variety of partners in the design and implementation of SP3 programmes and projects. They include government counterparts, civil society (including smallholder and small-scale food producer organizations and cooperatives), the private sector, donors, academia and UN sister agencies. The review of SP3-tagged projects showed that almost all of the interventions started in the past year and half have been designed in collaboration with the above partners (especially Government counterparts, civil society and UN agencies).

53. The evaluation noted an increasing appreciation of FAO's potential role in social protection and decent rural employment, and recognition of its enduring role in facilitating access and empowerment of vulnerable groups. In some countries, FAO's efforts to broaden dialogue with a range of non-traditional partners, including ministries of labour, social affairs and finance, have helped it establishing as a relevant actor in all SP3 themes. This is illustrated by FAO's inclusion in regional (e.g. at CELAC, ECOWAS and AU levels) and national policy debates, inter-agency national thematic working groups and participation in joint programmes with other UN agencies, especially, ILO, UN Women, UNICEF, IFAD and WFP as well as in a myriad of joint activities. FAO has in recent years also stepped up its efforts to strategically engage with civil society organizations representing farmers and other vulnerable groups. Below are some examples of such collaboration:

- Access and Empowerment initiative: FAO has long-standing collaborations with UN and other development partners. Specifically, it is part of a joint programme with UN Women, IFAD and WFP on the economic empowerment of rural women⁴⁸ and supports several projects undertaken by IFAD and other UN agencies. Recently, it has entered into a global partnership with the World Bank and IFAD to bridge the huge gaps in data and statistics on rural livelihoods (i.e., RuLis).
- Decent Rural Employment: FAO is a member of several global initiatives (such as the Global Migration Group, Global Initiative on Decent Jobs for Youth, UN Inter Agency Network on Youth Development) and has initiated important anchor partnerships with key players, especially ILO, IFAD, and regional institutions, such as NEPAD and AfDB in Africa. This has been limited to Africa and the Caribbean, but has the potential to grow in other regions as well.
- Social protection: FAO has developed a strong partnership with UNICEF largely based around the PtoP initiative, and has long-standing collaborations with WFP through the Purchase from Africans for Africa Programme (PAA) and other initiatives⁴⁹. FAO also has collaborations with partners such as World Bank, ILO and IFPRI.
- Engagement with civil society and producer organizations: FAO has proactively engaged with civil society, including cooperatives and producer organizations, to support small agricultural producers and marginalized groups such as young people and women. FAO has formalized its collaboration with India's Self Employed Women's Association⁵⁰ and We Effect⁵¹ to boost rural development and reduce poverty via local initiatives focused on empowering rural women and youth.

54. At the regional level, and largely thanks to the Regional Initiatives and inter-country programmes linked to SP3, there is an increasing awareness and appreciation of FAO's work and value addition among regional processes and actors such as the Community of Latin America and Caribbean States in Latin America; the African Union and the New Partnership for African Development in Africa; and the Arab Maghreb Union in North Africa. Among all the partnerships, the ones with IFAD, ILO and UNICEF are flagships for SP3 (see Box 7).

⁴⁸ There is collaboration between FAO and UN Women through a Joint Programme on "Accelerating Progress towards the Economic Empowerment of Rural Women" which is implemented together with IFAD and WFP in Ethiopia, Guatemala, Kyrgyzstan, Liberia, Nepal, Niger and Rwanda.

⁴⁹ There is also close collaboration between FAO and WFP on the Home Grown School Feeding Programme and on Nutrition Sensitive Social Protection in Zambia and social protection work in Lesotho.

⁵⁰ <http://www.fao.org/news/story/en/item/433019/icode/>

⁵¹ <http://www.fao.org/partnerships/cooperatives/news/news-article/en/c/327687/>

BOX 7. STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS WITH ILO, IFAD AND UNICEF

ILO is FAO's main thematic partner in Decent Rural Employment. A sizeable partnership has been built and the evaluation received positive mutual perceptions of the partnership both at headquarters and in the field. There have been several joint programmes especially in Africa - Zambia, Malawi, Tanzania and Nigeria, to cite a few. At the regional level, the NEPAD-ILO-FAO partnership linked to the CAADP framework is an example of cooperation based on confluence of thematic expertise. There has also been a continuing trend of partnering/contributing to knowledge products, guidance materials and publications based on the Memorandum of Understanding signed by the two agencies⁵². ILO and FAO are also members of important global networks and platforms, notably the YOUTH – UNSWAP, Global Initiative for Decent Jobs for Youth, the Inter Agency Network on Youth Development (IANYD) among others. ILO staff interviewed by the evaluation team considers FAO a strong partner with the right entry points to reach out to new constituencies – farmer/youth organizations, cooperatives, etc.

IFAD has been a steady partner and resource provider for FAO programmes especially in the areas of Access and Empowerment and Decent Rural Employment. IFAD's 'Invest in the Future' policy, formulated in 2011 is rooted in the simultaneous recognition of the 'aging of agriculture' while at the same time, alarming levels of youth unemployment in rural areas. Accordingly, IFAD has begun supporting government interventions to specifically prioritize youth involvement in agriculture, with an aim of 'feeding the future', and develop new global products to support such involvement. FAO, together with IFAD and ILO, has done a study on promoting decent and productive employment of young people in rural areas. They have also set up, together with the World Bank, the Rural Livelihoods Information System, and started to collaborate in several field projects such as the Youth Caribe and Procasur in Latin America and the UN joint Programme on Rural Women Economic empowerment together with UN Women and WFP.

UNICEF is a major thematic partner in Social Protection. This partnership, especially through the joint implementation of impact evaluations of national cash transfer programmes in Sub-Saharan Africa, joint policy work at country level, and participation in global thematic networks, has helped enhance FAO's visibility at global and country levels, and address some of the capacity challenges at country level, working in partnership with country-level UNICEF offices.

55. At country level, FAO's work in general was widely appreciated by government counterparts. Following a gradual reduction of international aid, it was noted that UN agencies had become more prone to competition. In this regard, interviewees from several institutions emphasised the need to more extensively communicate FAO's differentiated role with WFP particularly in the area of social protection, while enhancing knowledge sharing and coordination across the UN system. While further efforts should be made at all levels to ensure a fuller leverage, it would be very helpful if decentralized offices could proactively map the demand from Ministries (other than agriculture) related to poverty reduction as well as identify potential partners (including international financing institutions and non-traditional donors from the private sector) that could be targeted for awareness raising.

III.4.1 Resource mobilization

Finding 10. *Despite having identified its value-addition, FAO faces corporate challenges in resource mobilization especially on social protection and decent rural employment.*

56. While donor support has been relatively forthcoming for the long-standing areas of work, there has been low donor support for the new themes. Decent rural employment has fared somewhat better, mainly due to the wave of interest and urgency around youth employment. However, even in this area resource mobilization has proved difficult. Some reasons for FAO's inability to raise resources for new themes include incorrect targeting of institutional entry points at donors, and the lack of a coordinated

⁵² http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---dgreports/---jur/documents/genericdocument/wcms_434511.pdf

outreach strategy on SP3 themes. This is underpinned by the perception among some donors that FAO is not a major player in the rural poverty agenda.

57. FAO could also explore additional opportunities for south-south cooperation, especially in the Asia and Pacific region. The Organization has experience developing such programmes in Latin America and the Caribbean in support of SP3, such as those implemented through the Brazilian-funded Latin America Hunger Zero and the Mexican-funded “Mesoamerica Sin Hambre” Initiatives, and has been promoting south-south cooperation including with civil society, cooperatives and other non-state actors. These programmes have also reached out to other regions for instance through the multi-country “Purchase from Africans for Africa” project, which draws on Brazilian experience on Home Grown School Feeding and support some of the SP3-tagged work in Africa.

III.5 Effectiveness and sustainability: Is the SP3 strategy bearing signs of results? Are the results sustainable?

Finding 11. *SP3 has helped to raise FAO profile and offerings in areas relevant for rural poverty reduction, and started to contribute to major policy changes. However, sustainable progress is impeded by limited application of SP3 theory into contextualized interventions in country programming.*

58. In a relatively short span of time, SP3 has begun raising FAO’s profile in areas outside its traditional domains. There is evidence of success in articulating a more multidisciplinary response to poverty issues, breaking ground with new government counterparts (Ministries of Labour, Social Development, etc.) and demonstrating FAO’s potential to contribute to rural poverty reduction through engagement in these domains. SP3 interventions in Guatemala, Malawi, Nigeria, Senegal, Zambia and Lesotho come across as leading examples in this regard (see table 2).

TABLE 2. SP3 CONTRIBUTIONS IN SELECTED THEMES

Theme	Some examples	Description
Access and Empowerment	Rural institution building (Guatemala) Good governance of land tenure (Malawi)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In Guatemala, FFF supported the formulation of the Probosque Law, mandating that, for the next 30 years, 1 percent of revenues in the national budget be distributed to forest producers. It is estimated that 7.5 million people in 1.5 million families will benefit from the law, 30 percent of which are women. In Malawi FAO has been active in advocacy and policy dialogue using the VGGT guidelines as entry point. This has led to a new land bill that once implemented could empower millions of rural dwellers.
Youth Employment	Nigeria, Senegal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> FAO is supporting the formulation and implementation of national programmes for youth employment in agriculture potentially creating over 750,000 jobs in Nigeria and 100,000 in Senegal.
Social protection	Zambia, Lesotho, Malawi	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> FAO is recognized by the contributions it has made to improve the design of social protection programmes, policies, investment plans, programmes and budgetary allocations to ensure greater coherence and synergies between agriculture and social protection.

Source: evaluation team, based in SP3 data and field validation

59. FAO country staff, and particularly FAORs, noted that for SP3 to be more effective it should present concrete offerings, rooted in evidence from projects and research, which help in addressing specific challenges at country level, and avoid the use of small-scale pilots. The evaluation team noted that some SP3 initiatives used pilot projects and studies as entry points in themes such as international labour standards, child labour, rural women's economic empowerment, social protection, etc. Some projects, such as the PtoP were designed with a clear theory of change. However, not all projects have been designed for maximum learning and upscale, and thus have suffered from lack of follow-up and diminishing capacities.

60. The evaluation team notes that SP3 has already embraced a more focused approach, and particularly so on social protection. In this regard, SP3 could ramp up work in countries that have already shown traction and promise in order to consolidate the achieved results. Adopting a focused effort in a limited number of countries to demonstrate the effectiveness of the approach could be based on inequality levels; incidence of extreme poverty; national commitment to policies and programmes related to SP3 issues; SP3 inclusion in CPFs; presence of SP3-related interventions, country office staff trained and assisted for policy and project formulation and implementation.

III.6 Gender equality

***Finding 12.** SP3 has duly considered gender equality in their results frameworks and work-plans, and has made a wide array of contributions at global and country levels, especially relating to enhancing equal access to decent employment, income and productive resources. More could be done to better understand the effects of SP3-related interventions in gender equality.*

61. As mandated by the FAO corporate gender policy minimum standards, all SPs are required to incorporate gender analysis into their results frameworks, work-plans and interventions to ensure that they contribute to the five FAO gender equality objectives: all women and men have equal participation as decision-makers in rural institutions and in shaping laws, policies and programmes (objective 1), equal access to and control over decent employment and income, land and other productive resources (objective 2), equal access to goods and services for agricultural development and to markets (objective 3), and that women's work burden is reduced by 20 percent through improved technologies, services and infrastructure (objective 4) and the share of total agricultural aid committed to projects related to women and gender equality is increased to 30 percent (objective 5). The SP3 result framework and work-plans have a strong alignment with the first four gender policy objectives, and in particular with objective 2 (equal access to employment, income and productive resources), towards which at least 7 (out of 10) outputs are meant to contribute.

TABLE 3. SP3 OUTPUTS CONTRIBUTING TO FAO GENDER EQUALITY POLICY OBJECTIVES

Objective vs SP3 Output	3.1.1	3.1.2	3.1.3	3.1.4	3.1.5	3.2.1	3.2.2	3.2.3	3.3.1	3.3.2
Decision-making (1)										
Employment, income and productive resources (2)										
Good, services and markets (3)										
Improved technologies, services and infrastructure (4)										

Source: evaluation team, based on SP3 documentation

62. FAO, under SP3, has developed several databases, guidelines and learning products, which serve as a basis for policy support and technical advice at country level and in mainstreaming gender equality throughout SP3-tagged interventions⁵³. This work support the implementation of several minimum standards relevant for SP3. This include the minimum standards that requires sex-disaggregated data in FAO databases (MS1), the conduct of related capacity building programmes (MS2) and the incorporation of gender analysis in Strategic Programmes (MS3). The table below provide some examples of knowledge products that illustrate SP3 contributions.

TABLE 4. EXAMPLES OF GLOBAL PRODUCTS AND THEIR CONTRIBUTION TO GENDER EQUALITY

Product type	Description	Example of application
Databases and generation of sex-disaggregated data	A database (Gender and Land Rights database ⁵⁴) and a toolkit (agri-gender statistics toolkit ⁵⁵) were developed to facilitate access to, and production of, sex-disaggregated data for policy/programme design	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The gender and land rights database makes available sex-disaggregated data on land tenure in over 80 countries (2016). The Agri-gender statistics toolkit has been adopted by national statistical offices in Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan, among others, to develop gender statistics in agriculture (2016).
Technical guidelines	Guidelines such as the Gender in Agricultural Policies Analysis Tool ⁵⁶ (GAPo) were developed to support adequate consideration of gender equality in policies and programmes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> GAPo has been used in Ghana to analyse the country's national development policies (2015)

Source: evaluation team, based on SP3 data and field validation

⁵³ See complete list of resources at <http://www.fao.org/gender/gender-home/gender-resources/gender-toolkits/en>

⁵⁴ <http://www.fao.org/gender-landrights-database/en/>

⁵⁵ <http://www.fao.org/3/a-i5769e.pdf>

⁵⁶ <http://www.fao.org/3/a-i6274e.pdf>

63. The evaluation also reviewed the status of the Country Gender Assessments (MS5) and their application in SP3-linked country programmes. In the countries visited that already had a CGA, the evaluation found a general appreciation for the CGAs but given that most projects were formulated well-before the CGAs it could not assess their actual use. With regards to the inclusion of gender analysis in SP3 projects (MS7), the evaluation found low levels of gender analysis in a random sample of SP3 related projects (33%). This echoes the findings of the field missions, and noted that it may reflect a transition period in the application of the new guidance and institutional mechanisms.

64. Finally, the evaluation reviewed the share of SP3-tagged projects that have women-specific targeted interventions (MS14) and found that about half (47%) addressed gender equality in a systematic or dedicated way⁵⁷. In the case of TCPs (MS15), the percentage of projects tagged either G2a or G2b was 45%. In doing this mapping, the team noted that the identification of an appropriate gender marker has improved overtime (virtually all the SP3-related projects approved in 2016 had a gender marker) and encourage FAO to continue its quality assurance efforts to ensure that the markers given, and the interventions included are accurate and impactful.

65. **Country-level contributions by core function.** The evaluation team did a mapping of country-level contributions to gender equality from SP3-tagged interventions in the period 2015-16 according to the core functions listed in the FAO gender equality policy. The mapping shows that FAO, through SP3-related interventions, supported enhanced gender equality at community level in 72 countries, provided gender-inclusive policy advice in 42 countries, and supported collection and analysis of sex-disaggregated data in 27 countries. Among the activities that were highlighted at community level appear the work through the Dimitra clubs, especially in Niger, Senegal and Ghana. In the areas of policy support, an example validated by the evaluation team was the work with the Ministry of Women and the Women Secretariat of the Presidency of the Republic of Paraguay, which led to the elaboration of the "National Law on Public policies for Rural Women (Law 5446) approved in July 2015.

66. **Country-level contributions by gender equality objective.** The analysis by objectives shows that 49 percent of SP3-related interventions supported objective 2 (equal access to decent employment, income and productive resources), whereas objective 4 (reduction of women's work burden through improved technologies, services and infrastructure) was with 15 percent the least supported. The latter coincides with the findings of the analysis of ongoing SP3 projects, which found that about 43% of the projects were in support of objective 3, followed by 38% of the projects contributing to objective 2. Only 3 percent were designed to contribute to objective 4.

67. There are several possible reasons for the relatively low reporting against objective 4 of SP3-tagged projects, starting with the fact that such work might have been reported under another SP (for instance, SP2 does work in water and irrigation management and agricultural practices in general that seek to increase the efficiency of the farming system) or just be more difficult to report since it requires some analysis of the activity's contribution to the reduction of women's work burden. Given that SP3 includes several areas of work that could influence the reduction of women's work burden in the agricultural sector (objective 4), FAO could consider undertaking a more in-depth analysis of the reasons behind the limited reporting. More importantly, and building on the efforts to enhance gender mainstreaming in country programmes and projects, there is a need to analyse what type of

⁵⁷ Projects tagged as "G2a" are considered to address gender equality in a systematic way; projects tagged as "G2b" address gender equality or women empowerment as its focus. It is assumed that these type of projects would have dedicated women-specific targeted interventions. Projects that lacked a marker were included but not classified.

interventions can lead to greater equality gains in order to provide more impactful guidance to country programme and project designers.

IV. Conclusions and Recommendations

68. The analysis in the preceding sections examined several aspects of FAO Strategic Programme 3. Drawing from the evaluation findings, this chapter presents key conclusions and recommendations.

Conclusion 1. FAO has made a commendable start in formulating multi-sectoral approaches, including embarking on new themes, to address rural poverty reduction. The programme logic is sound and has helped FAO create a space for itself in new areas such as decent rural employment and social protection. FAO needs to consolidate the progress achieved to fully demonstrate the efficacy of the SP3 approach in rural poverty reduction.

Recommendation 1. FAO should identify a limited number of countries where conditions are right to achieve significant results through a multi-sectoral approach to poverty reduction to demonstrate the effectiveness of the approach.

69. Considering that the reviewed Strategic Framework has been under implementation for only about three years, FAO has made a commendable beginning in sectors which are relatively new to the organization – such as decent employment and social development – and very relevant for effective rural poverty reduction. The early success in these themes has been a result of contextualizing them to agriculture and rural settings, which are traditional FAO strongholds. Even though there are still some gaps in understanding among stakeholders of FAO's role, FAO has built credibility within international and national circles and with some of the leading UN agencies operating in all the core areas of SP3: Access and Empowerment (IFAD, UN Women), Decent Work (ILO) and Social Protection (UNICEF).

70. Within the existing resource profiles and constraints of FAO, there is a need to balance the need to address a growing number of requests with the need to demonstrate concrete results. A track record of results in a sample of promising countries will substantiate SP3 theory of change and the case for diversified pathways to rural transformation, and reinforce FAO's strategic position in the international arena. This does not necessarily imply that technical assistance to other countries must be denied. Rather, there is potential to better utilize the available skill pools in the countries that are implementing projects for example to backstop country offices in proximate areas.

71. There are several opportunities for promoting multi-sectoral responses for specific segments of the rural poor; for instance, creating jobs for the rural youth and addressing the root causes of distress migration in Africa and the Near East are areas that among others require a comprehensive approach involving on and off-farm solutions, rural finance and entrepreneurship. Ensuring inclusive social development of indigenous groups in Latin America is another area that require harnessing the expertise (and the lessons learnt) in a wide range of domains, including access to appropriate knowledge and technologies, social protection and off-farm employment. Finally, effective implementation of (rural development) policy reforms in accession countries in Europe or of land legislation and tenure in Africa (and virtually elsewhere) are other examples. FAO will need the full

engagement of its decentralized offices and build their capacities to effectively promote a multi-sectoral approach at country level.

Conclusion 2. FAO is committed to enhance its contributions to rural poverty reduction, which originates from SP3 and cross-SP contributions to the SO3 goal. FAO is planning to include SDG targets and indicators in all the SPs for better alignment and monitoring. Greater consideration of poverty analysis and the inclusion of pro-poor approaches in the theory of change and work-plans of the SPs, CPFs and projects could facilitate the achievement of SDG targets.

Recommendation 2. FAO should ensure that poverty analysis is conducted in programme countries, and based on such an analysis, pro-poor approaches with theories of change are built into the design of country programmes and projects.

72. FAO has recognized the need to sharpen the focus of the Strategic Objectives and Outcomes, including through their contributions to relevant SDG targets and indicators. A sharper alignment of all the SPs around specific SDG targets will assist FAO in concrete formulation of CPFs to support countries in setting and achieving their national targets linked to the SDGs. Due consideration of poverty analyses and clear identification of pro-poor approaches in the design of country programmes and projects will pave the way for a more targeted response. This does not mean to undertake specific poverty analyses for every country programme or project, but to ensure that programme and project managers include pro-poor approaches that are based in a solid theory of change.

73. Also, as part of this process FAO could develop explicit impact pathways and milestones (i.e. to be achieved in 2019 and 2021) for SP contributions to the SDGs. In building up impact pathways, FAO should identify specific cross-SP contributions to SOs and then to SDGs. This will pave the way for long-term results-based programming and resource mobilization, partnerships with relevant agencies and become entry points for future engagement at country level. It will also help set up a clear line of sight linking the time line of the Strategic Framework with the SDGs.

Conclusion 3. FAO has invested in building strong technical capacities and in developing tailored learning products and programmes for decentralized offices and national counterparts in every SP3 theme. At the country level, capacities are sometimes inadequate to promote and manage SP3 interventions. The sustainable impact of SP3 will in large part depend on building such capacities.

Recommendation 3. FAO should develop a capacity development programme for country offices around SP3 themes that is based on a targeted skill-needs analysis, and clearly identify ways and monitor how the targeted officials, such as FAORs and programme managers, apply such capacity in programme design and resource mobilization.

74. FAO has invested in building strong technical capacities in thematic teams at headquarters, based on skill-gap analysis, and in developing tailored learning products and programmes for decentralized offices and national counterparts in every SP3 theme. Nevertheless, consolidating and scaling up the SP3 agenda requires a widening of the skills-base especially in country offices. SP3 could

conduct a more systematic and targeted skill-needs analysis to inform the development of a long-term capacity-building programme. Such a programme could make good use of the available resources, and be structured around appropriate competency frameworks to facilitate their application and monitoring.

75. For instance, FAO country representatives, and staff engaged in policy dialogue, require a basic level of understanding of key SP3 concepts, while technical staff may need more tailored professional development. Specialist staff cannot be placed in every country, but there are some good examples of staff from neighboring countries supporting each other. Also, FAORs play a major role in building/enhancing appreciation among national counterparts and donors' decentralized offices so their immersion and proactive engagement in SP3 themes is essential. For this to happen, their own understanding and capacities need to be developed through appropriate orientation.

Conclusion 4. In spite of demonstrating the relevance and appropriateness of the SP3 approach, FAO has not been very successful in mobilizing extra-budgetary resources for SP3 themes.

Recommendation 4. FAO should develop a customized resource mobilization strategy that includes global, regional and country level dimensions and considers the identification of new funding streams within donor institutions more relevant to SP3.

76. While so far FAO has been able to gain the acceptance of key technical partner and regional entities, there are still distances to be bridged with donors and a diversity of national government counterparts and international financing institutions to establish due recognition of its potential to engender poverty reduction impacts in agriculture and rural settings. In large measure, this has been due to challenges in effectively communicating FAO's specific offerings and showcasing the encouraging initial results from countries that have begun engaging with FAO in SP3 themes among potential resource partners.

77. The strategy would need to differentiate among the different entry points and realities at global, regional and country levels. At global level, there is a need to identify new funding streams within donor institutions more relevant to SP3 themes, and prepare effective communication pitches with the close involvement of SP teams. These could build on the present successes or focus on areas where transformational potential exists through a multi-sectorial approach. Equally important is to evolve decentralized thematic resource mobilization plans at regional and country levels to engage with the increasingly decentralized structures of key donors, especially around the CPFs that prioritize SP3 themes. In this regard, the number of similar requests in the areas of youth employment, migration, EU policy reform, indigenous people and tenure access creates opportunities for multi-country support mechanisms instead of exclusive country-level support. There are opportunities for FAO to work with donors and financial institutions to develop such types of grant facilities, and further explore strategic partnerships and south-south cooperation arrangements in support of such an approach.

Conclusion 5. FAO has established strategic collaborations with several key development partners at global, regional and country levels based on demonstration of FAO value-addition in SP3 areas. However, there is a recurrent need to engage in broad collaboration at country level and reinforce communication on FAO's distinct contributions towards rural poverty reduction and the SDGs.

Recommendation 5. FAO should deepen its collaboration with strategic partners to achieve scale and concrete results around relevant SDGs.

78. FAO has an impressive track-record of collaboration at different levels in the area of rural poverty reduction. Proactive engagement with global and regional partners and civil society organizations have been key for the success of several SP3 initiatives. The collaboration with UNICEF, IFAD, ILO, WFP and UN Women through a series of joint initiatives, programmes and projects has been of particular significance. Furthermore, the work with regional partners such as the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States and the African Union's New Partnership for Africa Development have well positioned the Organization. Most of these partnerships have been around specific themes. There are opportunities to further strengthen these relationships to achieve scale, especially by leveraging the potential of working together for SDGs.

79. At country level, decentralized offices should consider mapping the demand from ministries (other than agriculture) related to poverty reduction and the identification of potential partners to address such demand (including from international financing institutions and non-traditional donors).

Conclusion 6. FAO has a well-designed programme and structure to address gender equality in SP3 and a broad knowledge base, which have resulted in meeting relevant minimum standards and making large contributions to gender equality particularly in the domain of equal access by men and women to income, labour and productive resources. Further analysis and identification of transformational interventions would help increase such contributions.

Recommendation 6: FAO should identify SP3-related approaches that have the greatest potential for impact on gender equality, and ensure that these are duly considered during the design and implementation of SP3 interventions.

80. In recent times, FAO has taken steps to strengthen gender mainstreaming throughout the SPs and the related delivery mechanism (Regional Initiatives, CPFs and projects). SP3 in particular has identified several areas of work that may contribute to greater gender equality, while the gender team in ESP has developed a broad range of products and guidance to support gender mainstreaming throughout FAO. The evaluation mapped a broad range of contributions made by SP3-related interventions at institutional and community levels, especially in the domain of equal access by men and women to income, labor and productive resources. It also identified some gaps in gender analysis at project design level (Minimum standard 7), which may reflect a transition period in the application of the new guidance, as well as relatively limited contributions in the domain of appropriate technologies to reduce women's work burden in agriculture, although guidance exists. Building on the knowledge base and the mapping of contributions available, FAO should identify selected approaches that will have the greatest potential for impact at policy, institutional or community levels on gender inequality.

The full report and annexes of this evaluation are available on the Office of Evaluation's Website:

<http://www.fao.org/evaluation>

List of Appendices

Appendix 1. Evaluation process

Appendix 2. List of references used

Appendix 3. List of people contacted

Appendix 4. Evaluation methodology

Appendix 5. Results framework of Strategic Programme 3

List of Annexes

Annex 1. Evaluability assessment

Annex 2. Terms of Reference

Annex 3. Review of progress on Access and empowerment

Annex 4. Review of progress on Decent rural employment

Annex 5. Review of progress on Social protection

Annex 6. Mapping of Strategic Programme 3 contributions to gender equality