

Evaluation of FAO's country programme in Armenia

2016-2020

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**Evaluation of FAO's
country programme
in Armenia
2016-2020**

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Acronyms and abbreviations

AMR	Antimicrobial Resistance
CPF	Country Programming Framework
ENPARD	European Neighbourhood Programme for Agriculture and Rural Development for Armenia
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
M&E	Monitoring and evaluation
POP	Persistent Organic Pollutant
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme

Executive summary

Introduction

- 1 The Republic of Armenia is a landlocked country with limited natural resources, covering an area of 29 800 km² and with an estimated population of 2.97 million (2018).
- 2 The agricultural sector is fundamental for the country's economy. In fact, agriculture represents the main economic source in rural areas and significantly contributes to the country's gross domestic product (GDP), employing about 30 percent of the working population (2018 estimates), nearly 51 percent of whom are female farmers. However, women are still in a vulnerable position as most of them only work seasonally and informally.
- 3 The purpose of the this country programme evaluation (CPE) for 2016-2020 is to provide feedback to better orient the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations' (FAO's) programme, to contribute towards the impact and resonance of the next Country Programming Framework (CPF), and to contribute to learning at corporate, regional and country levels by drawing lessons and making recommendations that will be useful for FAO's future engagement in Armenia.
- 4 The CPE examines four priority areas and covers cross-cutting issues such as gender, governance, climate change adaptation and nutrition. Its specific objectives are to:
 - i. assess the strategic relevance of FAO's interventions in responding to country needs;
 - ii. assess FAO's contributions to results in areas identified in the CPF priority areas;
 - iii. identify lessons learned as well as enabling and limiting factors for results;
 - iv. identify gaps in FAO's country programming and potential areas of future work.

Main findings

- 5 FAO's programme and its contributions towards development results in Armenia are well-aligned with the national and local development priorities, policies and programmes. The Organization's technical expertise was unique in the areas of food safety, antimicrobial resistance (AMR), genetic resources management and sustainable development of the grape industry and livestock sector.
- 6 FAO's normative values were generally well-integrated into its interventions. The programme addressed aspects related to rural poverty, gender and vulnerable populations including youth, where appropriate. Yet, effects of these interventions were not well-documented.
- 7 FAO has made contributions towards promoting sustainable use of natural resources, disaster risk reduction and management, but despite its high relevance, the programme only partially achieved its intended objectives. The cost of inputs, managerial complexities and slow institutionalization of outcomes in national strategies and plans limited replicability.
- 8 FAO contributed to positive results in improving animal health, plant protection and phytosanitary systems. The related projects contributed towards strengthening capacity building and awareness raising among stakeholders and the general public.
- 9 Interventions related to creating the basis for sustainable grape production in the country were successful, but full national commitment and ownership is necessary to ensure establishment of institutional framework and operational support to sustain the results achieved.
- 10 Food and nutrition security faced challenges of limited national ownership and adoption of pilot initiatives.





- 11 Flexibility in terms of project focus was very useful as it allowed the Organization to continue project implementation in a very challenging context.
- 12 Sustainability has been affected by many factors, particularly the continuing changes in the development context, lack of resources and capacities of national institutions to continue or replicate best practices and results achieved. In many cases, resources were not available to support continuation of these activities and scaling up often depended on finding new donors. Structural changes in the national Government and high rates of turnover and mobility of government staff have limited the potential for effective implementation of newly adopted policies and national plans.
- 13 Gender equality was addressed as much as possible.
- 14 In accordance with the CPF, the programme contributed to strengthening policy and legal frameworks and social protection systems to eradicate hunger, food insecurity, malnutrition and rural poverty. This primarily involved strengthening the capacities of Government and other stakeholders to develop sectoral and cross-sectoral policy frameworks and programmes.
- 15 Climate change adaptation was also integrated in selected FAO programmatic interventions.

Conclusions and recommendations

- 16 The FAO programme in Armenia is well aligned with national priorities and is perceived as highly relevant. Effectiveness and sustainability in propriety areas varied substantially due to significant changes in development context and limited capacities and resources of key stakeholders and beneficiaries in adopting proposed policies, practices and approaches. Future programmes should continue building upon the main national priorities, while being contextually responsive and adaptive to development changes and challenges.
- 17 FAO focused on provision of highly specialized technical expertise towards the development of national policies, institutions, and also offering innovative approaches and solutions. The Organization should continue offering its advisory services and technical support in thematic areas within its competence, focusing on longer term sustainability of results achieved and taking into consideration vulnerability of food and agriculture systems to climate change.
- 18 Despite relatively limited financial resources allocated, FAO managed to effectively contribute to key strategic areas. However, the next CPF should be supported by more vigorous resource mobilization efforts to enable the Country Office to offer sufficient level of technical and programmatic support in areas where FAO has clear comparative advantages, and in FAO's responses to the new demands and expectations in the context of the upcoming United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF) for the period 2021-2025.
- 19 The programme has experienced multiple challenges and constraints that affected efficiency and sustainability. FAO needs to establish a risk management system to systematically monitor development changes and identify potential risks and issues that may affect programme results. Monitoring results, combined with periodic review of development context, should be used systematically to address potential risks and constraints and inform timely adjustments to the programme management approaches.
- 20 Effective partnerships with multiple stakeholders have been developed, including national government institutions, donors and funding partners, private sector, civil society organizations and academia. FAO should build upon past collaborative experiences and identify new possible areas for expanding partnerships and increasing potential for joint actions and resource mobilization.

Recommendation 1. FAO programme in Armenia should keep focusing on thematic areas of support reflecting its comparative advantages and capacities to ensure continuity of support, sustainability of results achieved, and availability of specialized technical support in responding to national priorities.

Recommendation 2. In view of increasing vulnerability of food and agriculture systems to climate change, FAO needs to consider opportunities for intensifying its support towards improved management of natural resources, increased efficiency, productivity, and adaptive capacity and resilience of agriculture and rural communities to climate change.

Recommendation 3. FAO should use lessons learned from past interventions and pilot initiatives to address the issue of limited sustainability of programmatic achievements, and to increase effectiveness and efficiency of its advisory support and technical assistance.

Recommendation 4. FAO Country Office should intensify its partnership development and resource mobilization efforts in the context of upcoming new United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework, focusing on key priority areas and based on lessons learned from the previous cycle.





1. Introduction

1.1 Purpose of the evaluation

- 1 The Country Programming Framework (CPF) is the principal instrument that defines the development priorities for collaboration between the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and the Government; CPFs are a means for FAO to be accountable to the Government, non-government partners and resource partners in the country, as well as all Member Nations. The purpose of the country programme evaluation (CPE) of the Republic of Armenia is to provide feedback to better orient FAO's programme, to contribute towards the impact and resonance of the next CPF. It seeks to contribute to learning at corporate, regional and country levels by drawing lessons and making recommendations that will be useful for FAO's future engagement in the country. Besides providing lessons specifically on FAO's work in Armenia, the evaluation will also enrich FAO's synthesis of findings and guidance for its country level support.
- 2 The specific objectives of the CPE are to:
 - i. assess the strategic relevance of FAO's interventions in responding to country needs;
 - ii. assess FAO's contributions to results in areas identified in the CPF priority areas;
 - iii. identify lessons learned as well as enabling and limiting factors for results;
 - iv. identify gaps in FAO's country programming and potential areas of future work.

1.2 Scope and objective of the evaluation

- 3 This evaluation aims at assessing the totality of FAO assistance provided to the country, irrespective of the source of funding. This includes activities funded through the regular programme as well as extra-budgetary resources; national, regional and global projects and initiatives; emergency and development interventions. The evaluation is focused on assessing FAO's contributions to development results in the priority areas defined in the CPF.
- 4 The current CPF covers the period from 2016 to 2020, and this evaluation is timed to feed into the preparation of a new Country Programming Framework, which is to be formulated from 2020 in consultation with relevant national stakeholders. The evaluation examines the four CPF priority areas and also covers the cross-cutting issues such as gender, governance, climate change adaptation and nutrition.

1.3 Methodology

- 5 The evaluation used a mix of quantitative and qualitative methods taking into consideration resources available. Two national experts have been assigned to lead analysis of results pertaining to the Priority Areas of the Country Programming Framework. The team conducted structured focus group discussions and key informant interviews with beneficiaries, national and local government representatives, United Nations agency representatives, funding partners and other key stakeholders. The team also interviewed FAO staff at headquarters, Regional Office for Europe and Central Asia (REU), Country Office representation and project teams.

1.4 Limitations

- 6 The evaluation relied on qualitative sources such as stakeholder perceptions, observations and programme activity reports. The field level analysis was undertaken by consultants based in Armenia to the extent possible in the context of movement restrictions related to the COVID-19 pandemic. Owing to the difficulties in accessing some project sites, the team arranged phone/Skype interviews with key stakeholders and staff responsible for related programme activities, and relied on monitoring data available.

1.5 Structure of the report

- 7 Following this introduction, Chapter 2 presents the background and development context of the project. Chapter 3 focuses on FAO's strategic positioning, while FAO's contributions are presented in Chapter 4. Lastly, conclusions and recommendations are presented in Chapter 5.



Ապահովության ոգիով և սնուցման բարելավում

Պարենային համակարգերում սոցիալական պաշտպանության սնուցման եւ գյուղատնտեսական միջամտությունների մտահոգության կապերի ապահովում



Գյուղատնտեսության հետ կապված դպրոցական սնունդ և սնուցում



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Ներառական տնտեսական համակարգի խթանում՝ միգրանտների ընտանիքների և տարածաշրջանային հարամաշնորհների միջոցով



Կովի Բուրգեր + Ֆիլ Յուլ



Պունիկ



Չիպս



Ձեթ



Տրեխ



Կանոնաչափ



Բրինձ + ոսպ



Լավաշ



Միս



Կարմիր



Երակ

Կարմուխ



2. Background and development context

2.1 Context

- 8 Armenia is a landlocked country with limited natural resources, covering an area of 29 800 km² and an estimated population of 2.97 million (2018). The greatest part of Armenia is mountainous (about 1 800 meters above sea level), while one-third is pastureland. The diversity landscapes and ecosystems in Armenia, along with relief peculiarities, vertical zonation and ten landscape-climatic zones contribute to the formation of rich and unique plants diversity. Armenia is a globally significant centre of origin of agrobiodiversity. The great specific and intraspecific composition of plant in Armenia is also conditioned by the country's location in the intersection of important provinces of formation of flora and fauna of the region. Consequently, on the small territory of the country there are about 3 800 species of vascular plants with notable level of endemism (3.8 percent of total flora). Armenia is ranked among first-place countries in the world by the density of high vascular plants, with about 107 species per 1 000 km².
- 9 Plant genetic resources for food and agriculture are represented in the Republic by different crop species of economic value, crop wild relatives, traditional farmer's varieties and wild food plants. At present, the agricultural sector remains essential for the country's economy. Agriculture is the main source of economic activity in rural areas and significantly contributes to gross domestic product (GDP). It produces 13.7 percent of GDP and employs about 30 percent of the working population (2018 estimates), nearly 51 percent of whom are female farmers.





Women are over-represented in seasonal and precarious employment and 82.1 percent of all women working in agriculture do so informally. This informality, which leads to a reduced access to social protection schemes, along with limited access to land and other agricultural assets compared with men, leave women in a vulnerable situation.

- 10 Farm structure in Armenia, like in many other countries in the region are dominated by a large number of small-scale farms with fragmented land holdings. According to 2014 census data, the 317 346 family farms, which contribute more than 97 percent of the total agricultural output, comprise 99.86 percent of all active agricultural holdings. Forty-five percent of farms have three or more land plots, and 20 percent of farms have five or more plots. Smallholders constitute the vast majority in the country, representing around 95 percent of all farms and produce the major part of gross agricultural product, around 97 percent.
- 11 According to national data, the level of self-sufficiency in the country in terms of most relevant food products is around 64 percent. This percentage mainly corresponds to potatoes, fruits, grapes, vegetables, lamb, eggs and fish. Wheat, legumes, oil, and other types of meat are still on a low level of self-sufficiency. Armenia relies heavily on grain imports, especially cereals. The livestock sector is dominated by cattle and small ruminants and it is based on traditional husbandry systems; few animals per herd and close association of different animal species, which makes it extremely difficult to control animal diseases.
- 12 The targeted development of agriculture will contribute to an increase in food sufficiency and an improvement in living standards for the entire nation. Viticulture and fruit growing are the priority sub-sectors of Armenian agriculture. Armenians have always favoured viticulture. The fame of Armenian “sun-flavoured” cognacs (brandy) and wines is largely attributable to the special quality of Armenian grape varieties. Furthermore, the agro-ecological conditions, the geographical position of the country and the multipurpose use of vegetables have led to a great diversity of vegetable varieties.

2.2 FAO programme

- 13 The Republic of Armenia became a FAO Member Nation on 8 November 1993. The FAO Representation Office in Armenia was founded in September 2004. Since becoming a FAO Member, Armenia has received FAO's support in implementing various development and emergency projects, aimed at increasing agricultural productivity and improving the country's food security. The FAO Country Programming Framework for 2016-2020 sets out three government priority areas to guide FAO partnership with and support to the Government of Armenia, bringing together innovative international best practices and global standards with national and regional expertise for five years. The CPF was prepared following consultation and agreement with the Ministry of Agriculture, other national institutions (Ministry of Health, Ministry of Emergency Situations, Ministry of Territorial Administration and Infrastructure, Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Sport), United Nations agencies, international development partners, civil society, academic institutions, research centres and private sector stakeholders.



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3. Assessment of FAO's strategic positioning

3.1 Strategic relevance

Finding 1. FAO's programme and its contributions towards development results in Armenia are well-aligned with the national and local development priorities, policies and programmes.

- 14 The Government of Armenia adopted a set of documents that articulate the country's national and agricultural development priorities, including issues of poverty reduction, food security and nutrition. These include the Armenian Government's "Sustainable Agricultural Development Strategy for the period 2010-2020" (2010); the Strategy on Food Safety Policy (2005); Sustainable Development Programme (SDP) for 2009-2021; Cattle Breeding Programme for 2007-2015; Food Security Concept (2011); Land Consolidation Concept (2011); Food Safety Strategy 2010-2015; the Sustainable Agriculture Development Strategy for the period 2010-2020 (SADS); the Draft Sustainable Agriculture and Rural Development Strategy for the period 2015-2025; the Sustainable School Feeding Development Strategy and Action Plan (2013); and the recently adopted Strategy on the Main Directions Ensuring Economic Development in Agricultural Sector of the Republic of Armenia for 2020-2030.
- 15 The second CPF for the period 2016-2020 was developed by taking into account the priorities set forth in these strategic documents, and aiming to contribute to the achievement of their key objectives. The design of the FAO country programme and related interventions were based on thorough analysis of the context and issues, and involved consultation stages with various levels of government and other national stakeholders to discuss their needs for assistance and possibilities for synergies for drafting the national components of the regional project.
- 16 FAO has also been offering innovative approaches and its technical expertise in relevant thematic areas to effectively build on the national policies and strategies. Examples include the pilot projects implemented within the framework of the "Developing Capacity for Strengthening Food Security and Nutrition in Selected Countries of the Caucasus and Central Asia" project which used FAO's competitive capacities to build upon existing policy instruments. The pilot project to improve food and nutrition in schools directly contributed to implementation of the Sustainable School Feeding Development Strategy.
- 17 The pilot Cash+ programme was also built on already existent institutional instruments towards realizing improved Food Security and Nutrition objectives. In Armenia, social assistance is one of the few available tools to protect those who do not benefit from opportunities created by economic growth in the short- or medium-term. One of the priorities of social assistance policies in Armenia is to support productive inclusion ('activation') of beneficiary households of the family benefit programme (a cash transfer intervention for households with children).
- 18 Recognizing the importance of the winemaking sector for the country's economy, the Government of Armenia incorporated the improvement of the winemaking industry into its Development Strategy. Responding to this priority, FAO has implemented programmes such as the Grape Genetic Resources Conservation and Sustainable Use in Armenia and the "Technical assistance for grape phylloxera-resistant planting material production" projects which were in line with and supported realization of the Sustainable Agriculture Development Strategy. The SADS established preservation of plant genetic resources and winemaking as priorities. The Strategy also prioritized development of plant production; increased land-use efficiency; zonal specialization and rational distribution of production; and improvement of research educational and extension systems.
- 19 Similarly, the "Alternative utilization of water resources in Armenia in the field of fish production" project aimed to eliminate the challenges identified in the Armenia

Development Strategy for 2014-2025 (ADS). This involved reduction of associated environmental risks parallel to the government's efforts to enhanced economic growth. In particular, overexploitation of water resources due to rapid development of subsectors using underground water needs to be prevented or significantly reduced. The Government of Armenia urgently needed to find a solution to reduce water utilization while maintaining fish production yields.

- 20 Through the "European Neighbourhood Programme for Agriculture and Rural Development (ENPARD)" project FAO has supported the Ministry of Agriculture in developing a sound monitoring and evaluation (M&E) system aimed towards establishment of effective monitoring, evaluation and coordination platform. The capacity building activities included: review and development of new M&E strategy, training of the Agricultural Programmes Monitoring and Analyses Department (DMA) staff on design of questionnaires for data collection, field surveys, data analysis, reporting. Per request of the Ministry of Agriculture, rapid analysis/assessment of meat value chain has been carried out as a case study. A web-based donor coordination platform was established as a supplementary tool for DMA and a number of working documents (action plan, intervention logic, M&E plans, etc.) were developed with the support of international expert to ensure smooth operation of the M&E system.
- 21 Livestock is one of the leading agricultural branches and represents more than 50 percent of the country's gross agricultural product. National Policy in the livestock sector was framed by the Sustainable Agriculture Development Strategy and Cattle Breeding Programme for 2007-2015, which highlight the importance of livestock productivity development, breed improvement, conservation and development of indigenous breeds, enhancement of animal health services, and increased productivity throughout the country. FAO, through its project "Improving Feed Supply and Enhancing Processing in the Armenian Dairy Sector", has provided multifaceted support to the livestock sector in Armenia, including assistance towards formulation of an investment strategy and road map for dairy sector, focusing on livestock and feed supply productivity, and attracting local and foreign investments to improve the sector performance. The breeding development plan has been elaborated to address the conservation and genetic development of the Caucasian Brown Cattle breed through the regional project implemented in Armenia, Georgia and Ukraine.

Finding 2. FAO's programme interventions have effectively contributed to Armenia's efforts in implementing international agreements and related commitments.

- 22 This included FAO's support towards meeting strategic commitments in achievement of the 2030 Agenda, where Governments are expected to take ownership and establish national frameworks for the achievement of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) guided by over 230 indicators, out of which FAO is proposed custodian agency for 21 SDG indicators. FAO support included awareness raising workshop and technical support in strengthening national capacities for the implementation and monitoring of the SDGs.
- 23 FAO has also provided support towards implementation of sector-specific international commitments such as the Stockholm Convention (an environmental treaty aimed at elimination or restriction of the production and use of Persistent Organic Pollutant, POPs). The Government of Armenia signed and ratified this Convention in 2005 committing to eliminate and clean up the legacy of obsolete POPs and pesticides/chemicals stockpiles in the country by 2025. Similarly, the programme followed the steps taken by the Government of Armenia towards integration of disaster risk reduction into development policies and programmes, most notably in the commitment to the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030, and contribute to the achievement of goals and objectives of the Improving School Seismic Safety 2015-2030 Programme and National Child Protection Strategy 2017-2021.
- 24 The FAO regional project launched in 2018 aimed at reducing the advance of antimicrobial resistance (AMR) in food and agriculture in six recipient countries, including Armenia, funded by the Russian Federation. The project supports the engagement of the food

and agriculture sector in the implementation and improvement of national action plans on AMR. Focus areas include, among others, regulatory platforms and legislation; national laboratories that collect and use data on antimicrobial resistance; multi-sectoral coordination; advocacy on the risks for humans, food, animals, plants and the environment. FAO assisted the Republic of Armenia in complying with the commitment to set-up national capacities for risk assessment, management and communication in the field of food safety that are in line with globally accepted best practices and principles, as well as the World Trade Organization (WTO) and Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU) trading requirements.

3.2 Comparative advantage

Finding 3. Although FAO did not have a significant role in a broad range of thematic areas, due to limited volume of its financial contributions, the comparative advantage and relevance of FAO's technical expertise offered was unparalleled and unique in specific technical areas, particularly in areas of food safety, AMR, genetic resources management and sustainable development of the grape industry and livestock sector.

25 In the food and agricultural sector, Armenia benefits from significant support from the European Union and different international donor organizations and development partners such as the World Bank, United States Agency for International Development (USAID), Austrian Development Agency (ADA), Swiss Development Cooperation (SDC), German Government through the German Corporation for International Cooperation GmbH (GIZ) and KfW, FAO, United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO), International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), and Eurasian Development Bank (EDB), mostly in the form of loans. The main goals of these donor programmes are:¹

- i. improving productivity and sustainability of livestock and dairy sectors;
- ii. increasing the marketed production from selected livestock and high value agri-food value chains;
- iii. increasing sustainability and quality of veterinary services;
- iv. upgrading and enhancing the national plant pest surveillance and phytosanitary certification systems;
- v. modernization and reconstruction of Armenia's irrigation systems, as well as the development of institutional capacities of water consuming units;
- vi. raising the quality of life and income level of the local population through increase of efficiency of agricultural production process;
- vii. assist the introduction of agriculture insurance scheme;
- viii. rangeland management and mountain ecosystem rehabilitation through ecosystem-based adaptation practices;
- ix. institutional development of Water Users Associations (WUA);
- x. construction and upgrade of rural water supply systems to provide households with safe drinking water, as well as with water for livestock and staple food production;
- xi. stimulating sustained growth of rural enterprises by delivering an interrelated package of business development training and financing;
- xii. improved sustainable pasture management by developing methodological guidelines on rehabilitation and melioration of degraded pastures (GIZ Integrated Biodiversity Management, South Caucasus (IBiS) in close cooperation with SDC and World Bank CARMAC);
- xiii. setting up a pasture management platform (improved information sharing and coordination) on pasture management-related activities with all actors and stakeholders in the field of pasture management (donors, international organizations, national non-governmental organizations (NGOs), ministries and others);
- xiv. improvement of the grape and wine quality and better access to new markets;

¹ Development partners' joint analysis of the situation in Armenia; endorsed Armenia development coordination thematic groups (draft, May 2018).

- xv. development of short-term and long-term vocational educational programmes for viticulture and wine production;
 - xvi. support to the development of vineyard cadastre system and capacity building of Vine and Wine Foundation;
 - xvii. introduction of disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation measures at field level.
- 26 According to most recent data, in 2018 Armenia received a total of USD 139.09 million in net official development assistance (ODA). FAO was not a main development partner in the country, providing about USD 350 000 or 0.25 percent of the total ODA disbursements in Armenia.² FAO's own aid monitor reveals that FAO in terms of financial contributions does not have a comparative advantage in Armenia with respect to the other implementing agencies.³
- 27 Nevertheless, FAO has its own niche and leading role in terms of rendering advice on policy development and piloting, and implementing programmatic interventions in technical areas requiring specialized technical capacities and knowledge. FAO played a significant role in policy advocacy, development of strategies, national plans and guidelines, and capacity development, which were complemented by downstream activities in support of policy implementation. Highly unique interventions that were based on the distinctive technical capacity within FAO and combined policy development, capacity development and policy implementation components included projects such as the "Grape Genetic Resources Conservation and Sustainable Use in Armenia" and the "Technical assistance for grape phylloxera-resistant planting material production". These pioneering projects were pivotal for improving the national capacity towards sustainable management of grape genetic resources in order to ensure a solid grape industry.
- 28 Other examples of such interventions that combine all cycles of policy work including unique downstream activities included the "Developing Capacity for Strengthening Food Security and Nutrition in Selected Countries of the Caucasus and Central Asia" project. This regional programme aimed at supporting national efforts in achieving SDG2 in Armenia, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan. The project integrated food security and nutrition governance, nutrition-sensitive social protection and nutrition education into a comprehensive food and nutrition security approach. At the global level, the project promoted participation of stakeholders from the Caucasus and Central Asia in international policy dialogues. At the regional level, the project brought together good practices and instruments for capacity development, policy dialogue and learning about food security and nutrition strategies, including nutrition-sensitive social protection and school meals programmes. At the national level, the project unequally operationalized the linkages between social protection, nutrition and agricultural interventions across food systems through pilot projects.
- 29 FAO is also viewed as a long-standing partner to the Ministry of Agriculture, playing a central role in the agricultural sector and its contributions to building the capacities of the technical staff, assisting in the development of policies, laws and regulations, and providing technically sound knowledge and best practices. In discussion with the Ministry senior staff and others, it was stated that FAO is recognized for its high-level policy advice, strategic planning, programme design and implementation. Especially, during ENPARD project implementation a number of key documents were elaborated related to land consolidation, national policies on plant protection and seed production, agricultural insurance scheme, FAO has effectively led projects and facilitated working groups related to animal health improvement, phytosanitary control and certification, food safety and AMR.
- 30 Partner United Nations agencies have also appreciated FAO's specialized technical expertise and responsiveness. According to UNDP evaluation of the Support to Comprehensive Agricultural Census project: "...Regional expert interventions provided by FAO appeared to be timely and used at times when needed to advance census-related activity, capacity development and data compilation, verification and reporting. The modalities developed were highly effective as the results of the census, as well as the satisfaction of the main counterparts and their willingness to further collaborate".

² Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) statistics available at <https://stats.oecd.org/>

³ The FAO Comparative Advantage is an objective output based on a series of calculations performed on data reported by resource partners to the OECD-DAC. Available at <http://www.fao.org/aid-monitor/identify/fao-comparative-advantage/en/>

3.3 Normative values

Finding 4. FAO's normative values were generally well-integrated into its interventions. The programme addressed aspects related to rural poverty, gender and vulnerable populations including youth, where appropriate. Yet, effects of these interventions in addressing normative values were not well-documented.

- 31 FAO has taken into account United Nations normative values and principles, addressing issues of equity and needs of vulnerable communities and localities. FAO has implemented targeted interventions, which were based on needs assessments and focused on the needs of the most vulnerable (e.g. communities with highest need of support). While detailed gender analysis was often not undertaken, in most cases this was due to the fact that gender issues were not inherent in selected interventions.
- 32 Potential and actual effects of the interventions on normative values were not documented in most cases. Programme documents have not explicitly and systematically referred to normative values particularly at the design stage of interventions. Except for capacity development, which was often the main aim of programmatic interventions, other normative values were not well-addressed in the design of programmes. Most of the progress reports have not sufficiently specified project contributions towards addressing normative values.

3.4 Partnership and coordination

Finding 5. The programme benefited from a wide range of partnerships including public-private partnerships that were intended to maximize the development effectiveness of aid resources through mobilizing joint resources, harmonizing programmes, procedures and practices.

- 33 The 2016-2020 CPF envisaged forging partnerships with broad range of partners (civil society organizations (CSOs), private sector, academia and research institutions, etc.). This strategy is in alignment with the joint efforts of the Government of Armenia and development partners for enhanced coordination and aid effectiveness. Moreover, the country programme promoted regional cooperation between and among countries in the region, through South-South cooperation (SSC) and triangular cooperation (TrC) initiatives.
- 34 FAO partnered with the Center for Agribusiness and Rural Development (CARD), an Armenian foundation that provides assistance to farmers and agribusinesses. Since December 2017, the CARD Foundation, with FAO's support, has carried out several research projects to assess the dairy sector in Armenia and Georgia, in collaboration with the Georgian Farmers' Association (GFA). These studies have helped to identify gaps in the dairy production value chains and propose improvement mechanisms. In 2018, FAO and CARD have organized a business-to-business (B2B) event in Tbilisi for more than 50 farmers, veterinarians and agricultural input suppliers from Georgia, Armenia and other countries, to discuss market linkages and opportunities for regional cooperation (FAO, 2019). This was followed by the study tour to Armenia in May 2019 for Georgian and Moldavian participants, focused on enhancing exchange of knowledge and experience among farmers and veterinarians operating in dairy sector.
- 35 In the framework of the "Developing Capacity for Strengthening Food Security and Nutrition in Selected Countries of the Caucasus and Central Asia" project, FAO partnered with leading organizations such as the World Food Programme (WFP), the WFP Centre of Excellence, "Global Child Nutrition Foundation (GCNF)" and the "Pastoral Community Development" project to produce technical guidance to governments in the form of a



resource framework for home grown school meals. They joined efforts and their expertise to produce one common guidance framework to support government policymaking. In Armenia specifically there was a fruitful partnership framework developed with various local partners such as the local International Center for Agribusiness Research and Education (ICARE) and the Armenian National Institute of Health (ISTC) which supported with development and delivery of training programmes.

- 36 Active collaboration and effective use of complementarities were evident in the framework of implementing the “Improving capacities to eliminate and prevent recurrence of obsolete pesticides as a model for tackling unused hazardous chemicals in the former Soviet Union” project. FAO’s intervention have developed partnerships and networks by collaborating with other projects and initiatives in the region. NGO partners: Green Cross, Milieukontakt and the International HCH & Pesticides Association (IHPA) Forum were highly active in the region regarding pesticide and POPs management. All were partners to the FAO Global Environment Facility (GEF) project in Eastern Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia (EECCA) countries and had a proven track record on mobilization of funds and implementation of activities. All partners brought in significant experience and co-finance budget to the programme along with an established network of partners at national level who supported programme implementation.
- 37 FAO was proactive in searching for relevant and suitable partners. Initial activities in various projects such as the “Support to the implementation of the Regional Initiative on Empowering Smallholders and Family Farms” involved identification of key players, such as government institutions, universities, research institutions, civil society organizations, international development partners and other stakeholders at national and regional levels. Similarly, under the “Strategies for Food Loss and Waste Reduction” project, Output Two of the project set out to create interactive partnerships, promote and moderate discussions in the regional partner network, to share information and collaborate in action.

- 38 The team implementing the “Global Initiative on Food Loss and Waste Reduction” project has also been actively pursuing partnerships with a wide range of public and private sector stakeholders. The project established the Save Food partner network which is expected to continue operating after project closure. The project allowed FAO to create a regional approach where it was possible to learn from the experience of each country and exchange information between stakeholders. Among lessons learned were the Northern Macedonian experience with adoption of legislative changes, similar experience in Moldova. Activities and projects were developed and implemented by, or in close collaboration with, partners. The project created opportunities for private parties from the food processing and packaging industry to provide expertise, training and equipment, and receiving opportunities to engage their business.
- 39 Partnerships with the private sector were also established towards effective implementation of the alternative utilization of water resources in Armenia in the framework of fish production project. A local fish-farm where a pilot project was implemented joined the partnership and benefited from the project. The private counterpart ensured financing for construction and maintenance costs of the model system, while FAO financed purchase of small equipment investments for demonstration purposes only (e.g. aerators or pumps). FAO successfully managed the institutional arrangements of the partnership. At the request of FAO, a public-private partnership agreement was developed and signed by the Ministry of Agriculture of the Republic of Armenia and a local fish-farm. The agreement served as a base to clarify responsibilities of all parties.
- 40 FAO has also partnered with other United Nations agencies, particularly with UNDP in implementing joint GEF-funded projects, and in supporting the first agricultural census in 2014-2016. Another example of successful partnerships has been the “Enhancing Human Security and Building Resilient Society in Disadvantaged Communities of Armenia” project which involved an unprecedented level of cooperation amongst United Nations agencies in the country as six United Nations agencies partnered together to realize this project. Moreover, partnerships with other organizations such as ACBA-Credit Agricole bank were pursued in this project.



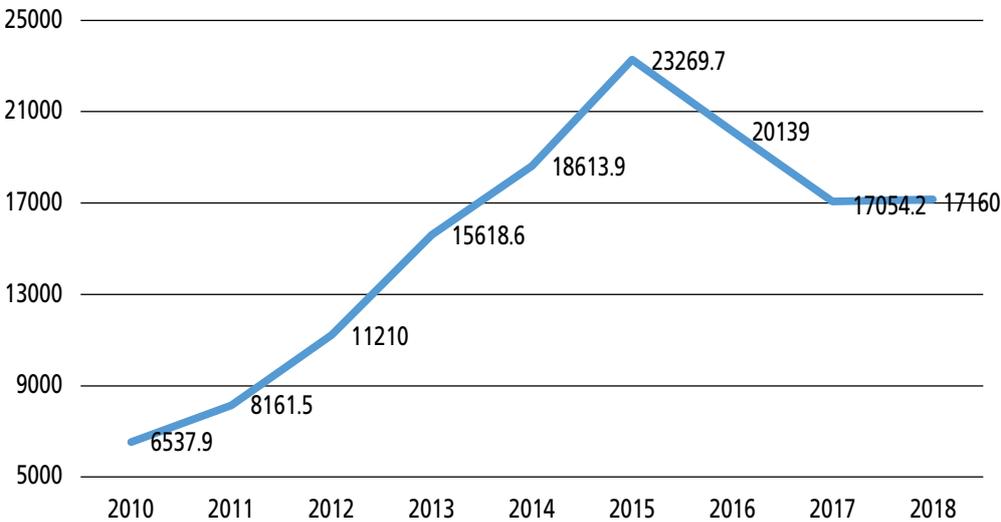
4. Assessment of FAO's contributions

4.1 Priority Area 1. Sustainable use of natural resources, disaster risk reduction and management

Finding 6. FAOs support was highly responsive to the contextual developments in Armenia. FAO has made contributions towards promoting sustainable use of natural resources, disaster risk reduction and management. The replication of results and adoption of newly introduced practices were, however, limited.

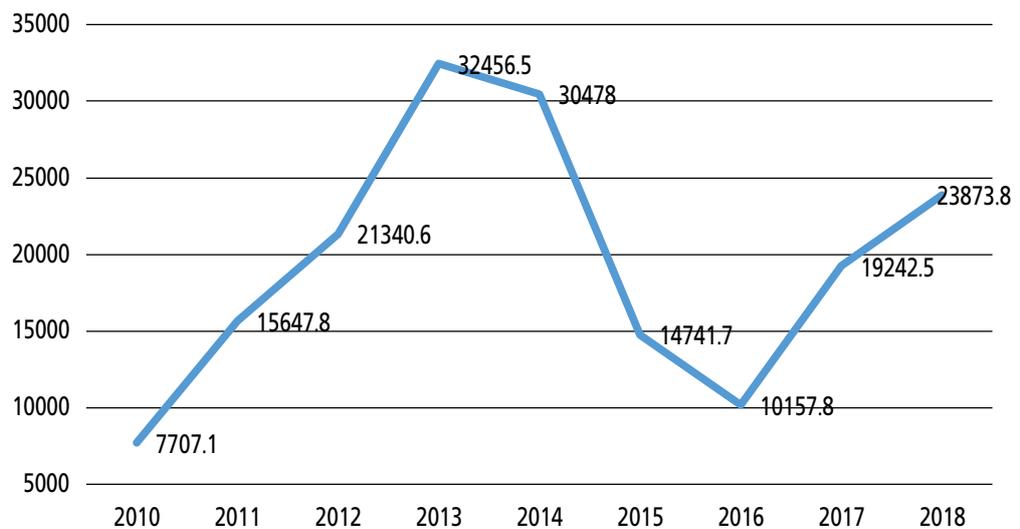
- 41 FAO support to sustainable use of natural resources, disaster risk reduction and management was provided in line with CPF Outcomes 1.1 and 1.3 through Outputs 1.1.1 and 1.3.3.
- 42 The project that contributed to Outcome 1.1, in line with Output 1.1.1 aimed to increase productivity in aquaculture through introduction of best practices of sustainable use of water. Development of fisheries and aquaculture was also one of the priority areas in CPF 2012-2015. In the previous CPF exploitation of the underground water resources which offered excellent water quality to produce trout, sturgeon and carps was considered an opportunity for increased production in the sector. Yet, the CPF for 2016-2020 identified overutilization of underground water, resulting from the uncontrolled opening and operation of water wells, particularly by fisheries as one of Armenia's priority problems in the sector. This points to a clear change of circumstances in the sector and prioritization of sustainable use of natural resources.
- 43 The aquaculture sector expanded strongly over the past decade (Figure 1), with production rising until 2015. The growth of the sector was also reflected in fish exports where the vast majority of the sector's exports was destined to Russia. This dependency on the Russian market subsequently resulted in a massive shock as a result of the financial crisis in Russia during 2014–2015 and consequent sharp devaluation of the Russian Ruble (RUB) beginning in the second half of 2014 which strongly impacted fish exports along with other factors such as growth in production costs.

Figure 1 • Fishing and fish breeding, tonnes



Source: RA NSS

Figure 2 • Exports of fish and other aquatic invertebrates, USD 1 000



Source: RA NSS

- 44 The number of fish farms reduced from 300 to 198 in 2016 and according to a World Bank study a growing number of existing aquaculture producers are willing to sell their operations as growing costs - associated with tighter environmental regulations which require use of new water and environment saving technologies - bring down profit margin. The relevance of FAOs project in this area was high as access to water became one of the most critical factors for future sector development and investment (World Bank, 2018.). The Government of Armenia therefore sought solutions to enable a reduction in the amount of water used for fish production while maintaining production levels.
- 45 This was also the case with FAO's support through the "Alternative utilization of water resources in Armenia in the field of fish production" project. Although the project was very relevant and had a valuable demonstrative effect, the relatively large amount of the investment required along with the long payback time reduced the likelihood for replication of its results. The provided input resulted in water-saving and increased productivity of the farm. Yet, fish farmers reportedly did not have sufficient funds available to invest and to reduce the cost price of the fish considering the fierce market competition. Henceforth, they are more likely to invest in alternative technologies that also help increase production while at the same time being cheaper to acquire and maintain.
- 46 At field level, FAO supported establishment of 29 demonstration fields to disseminate good agricultural technologies and practices, including conservation agriculture (no-till technology), use of drought-resistant varieties, anti-hail nets, drip irrigation systems, integrated pest management (IPM) and disaster risk reduction management (DRRM). FAO promoted sustainable development, good agricultural practices, climate change adaptation and mitigation within ENPARD project through theoretical and on-field trainings, workshops, pruning technics demonstration videos and comprehensive cultivation guidelines of the most popular fruits and vegetables. Printed copies of tomato, potato, apple, apricot and grape production GAP manuals were distributed to the state and private extension centres, research centres and educational institutions, farmers and other stakeholders involved in those value chain development. A joint workshop on introduction of anti-hail and advanced irrigation technologies organized with UNDP disaster risk reduction for local farmers and representatives of regional authorities. Based on project results the Government launched a subsidy programme to promote anti-hail and drip irrigation in the country.
- 47 In Priority Area One, FAO also aimed to contribute to the realization of CPF Outcome 1.3 (Improved resilience in responding to climate change, crises and disasters) through

implementation of the "Improving capacities to eliminate and prevent recurrence of obsolete pesticides as a model for tackling unused hazardous chemicals from Soviet Union" project.

- 48 The project intended to address issues related to the inherited stockpiles of POPs containing obsolete pesticides accumulated in Armenia from Soviet times, with the biggest concentration in Nubarashen burial site (landfill). Based and motivated by both global and regional context analysis and national consultations it was agreed to carry out disposal and life-cycle activities in Armenia which involved:
 - i. **Disposal activities:** Inventory and EMP of national obsolete pesticide and safeguarding of approximately 150 metric tonnes, disposal of safeguarded stocks and 115 tonnes of contaminated soil and building materials.
 - i. **Life-cycle activities:** Review of national legislation and policy, review of life-cycle, promotion of alternatives to highly hazardous pesticide (HHPs), development of national awareness strategy
- 49 Despite the fact that the project failed to consistently realize all the results envisaged, key project outputs for Armenia including the inventory of national obsolete pesticides were completed and the environmental management plan was finalized.
- 50 Based on the concept note on land consolidation prepared under the extension of the ENPARD project, FAO facilitated the formulation of a subsequent donor-funded land consolidation project proposal and in 2019 launched a project supporting the Ministry of Economy (Ministry of Agriculture was merged with the Ministry of Economy) of the Republic of Armenia in addressing the problem of abandoned agricultural land.

Finding 7. Despite its high relevance, the programme has only partially achieved its intended objectives and results with regard to sustainable management of natural resources and disaster risk reduction. Hampering factors involved limited replicability due to the cost of inputs, managerial complexities and slow institutionalization of outcomes in national strategies and plans. Practical utilization and application of disaster risk reduction approaches and tools remains a challenge and requires continued longer term support to achieve sustainable results.

- 51 In developing national capacities for disaster risk reduction and management, FAO supported preparation of the country-specific guideline and methodology for disaster needs assessments in the agriculture sector based on international standards. Under ENPARD (GCP/ARM/006/EC) FAO provided capacity building support (trainings and training of trainers, TOTs) to various national stakeholders at marz and community levels aiming at improving the skills of the relevant officials for evaluating needs following disasters in the agricultural sector, calculating the losses and damages in accordance with the methodology. The post-disaster needs assessment (PDNA) software for the assessment of damages and losses was developed in the framework of the FAO ENPARD project. The purpose of this software was to provide a uniform tool and methodology for the Government of Armenia for the assessment of damages and losses, as well as post-disaster needs in the agricultural sector. While this is a positive outcome for the integration of DRRM into national level planning in agriculture, the evaluation found that there was limited awareness of the methodology and software application at the marz or community levels or if the trainers had spread the training further after project closure.
- 52 With regard to interventions promoting good agricultural practices, conservation agriculture, integrated pest management and DRRM, the evaluation field visits confirmed continued great interest from farmers, yet with limited evidence of adoption of good practices in disaster risk reduction, application of methods for sustainable use of resources. While beneficiary farmers reported increased yields and high-quality products as a result of using certain resilient agricultural techniques promoted by FAO, there was limited sustained adoption of the techniques, with majority reporting that the application of methods was

not affordable due to expensive materials. The Government of Armenia recently launched a subsidy programme for loans aimed at promoting the application of drip irrigation systems and anti-hail nets in Armenia. The results achieved from ENPARD demonstration fields, among others, served as the basis for this programme, with the government support programme set to encourage farmers to replicate good practices.

- 53 Challenges regarding varying ownership levels were also encountered with the Strategies for "Food Loss and Waste Reduction" project. The project assisted Armenia with developing and a national strategy for food loss and waste reduction, tailored to the specific needs of the country and aligned with existing national strategies and policies on agricultural development, food security, climate change mitigation. FAO assessed the food loss and waste situation in the selected food supply chains, interviewed farmers, processors and retailers involved to understand the causes and impacts of these losses. The results of the study were used to raise awareness on preparing the strategy. Nevertheless, the strategy has not been adopted yet which is a precondition for project effectiveness in terms of realization of project impact.
- 54 The evaluation found that the intervention addressing removal of obsolete pesticides encountered issues with regard to the modality of the intervention, the institutional and partnership structure, and the financial, technical and operational procedures, that impeded achievement of the project's results and objectives. There were delays caused by diverse and complex institutional and legal arrangements in other participating countries. A number of no cost extensions were approved throughout the duration of the project owing to a number of factors such as:
- i. Difficulties with identifying suitable national consultants in Tajikistan at the time of project launch, leading to project implementation being behind schedule in Tajikistan.
 - ii. Underestimation of the required time to review the eight comprehensive reports produced under the project. Given the number of coinciding projects that were being carried out or prepared at the time, the lead technical officer was unable to manage the workload.
 - iii. Upon review of the final draft country reports, additional comments were raised on gender, social protection, decent work and poverty reduction, which had not been adequately addressed. The subsequent revisions delayed the finalization of the reports.
 - iv. Three significant activities were cancelled due to emerged budgetary constraints, including disposal of obsolete stocks in Armenia, construction of a central storage facility in Kyrgyzstan, and a pilot project on pesticide containers.
 - v. The project failed to manage the risk of currency exchange rate fluctuations which caused budgetary issues that eventually resulted in cancelation of the mentioned outputs. The risk of currency exchange rate fluctuations was foreseen during the project design stage and described in the project documents. Nevertheless, currency fluctuations severely affected project delivery.



- 55 In fisheries development project, an important factor constraining the sustainability and efficiency of the provided inputs was related to relative high costs of the provided inputs compared to other alternatives for increased production and the relatively small size of existing operations of fish farms. It was noted by stakeholders and other sectoral studies that the initial investment in modern intensive fish breeding technologies often does not generate a high return on investment as the economies of scale would not be sufficient.

4.2 Priority Area 2. Animal health, plant protection, and food safety and quality

Finding 8. FAO contributed to positive results in improving animal health, plant protection and phytosanitary systems, by leveraging limited projects resources to reach maximum impact. The related projects contributed towards strengthening capacity building and awareness raising among stakeholders and general public.

- 56 FAO support to animal health, plant protection, and food safety and quality was provided through Outputs 2, 1.3, 2.2.2 and 2.2.3 of the CPF Outcome 2.
- 57 Project technical and institutional support to veterinary services in Armenia (GCP/ARM/005/SWI) financed by the SDC has supported capacity building of public and private vets on prevention and control of brucellosis in Armenia. A total of 45 veterinarians completed comprehensive trainings and four vaccination campaigns implemented in 109 communities of Syunik marz. Another short training was provided to ten veterinarians as an emergency response to the outbreak of brucellosis in Kotayk marz. The National Action Plan for the Prevention and Control of Brucellosis in Armenia has been developed and submitted to the Government for approval. The zoonotic disease public awareness raising campaigns were implemented in eight marzer, including Yerevan. As a result of the campaigns, 670 peer trainers gained knowledge on the main aspects of prevention and control of zoonotic diseases (particularly brucellosis) for further dissemination.
- 58 The “Strengthening Capacities of the National Phytosanitary Control Services in 4 Eastern European countries” project aimed at revising national policies on plant and seed production strategies and introducing environmentally friendly practices. Pushing for a more systemic approach, the project supported development of a National Programme on Plant Protection (NPPP), including integrated pest management. The NPPP has been developed in a participatory manner by involving many national stakeholders, including representatives from the Ministry of Agriculture, Ministry of Nature Protection, Ministry of Healthcare, State Service for Food Safety (SSFS), Armenian National Agrarian University (ANAU) and the NGO Armenian Women for Health and Healthy Environment. Along with capacity building activities, a detailed phytosanitary map was developed to inspect and monitor outbreaks, including phylloxera, which is complementary to FAO's other activities. Good identification system in place is crucial, however the private sector is responsible for the control of the situation mainly represented by smallholder substance farmers having limited knowledge on agricultural activities and willingness to learn.
- 59 Through another pilot project “Support for the Enhancement of National Plant Pest Surveillance and Phytosanitary Certification Systems”, FAO continued strengthening capacities of National Plant Protection Organizations (NPPOs) to better address the pest risk challenges in agro-production with regard to national and international trade of plant commodities, thus to facilitate economic development and reduce poverty. The project presents a good example of follow-up intervention to ensure long-term sustainability of implemented activities.
- 60 This project supported development of the capacities of the NPPOs of the recipient countries by offering trainings to their staff on the organization and conduct of surveillance activities and phytosanitary certification according to International Standards for Phytosanitary Measures (ISPMs), detection and identification of pests through laboratory

diagnostics, and pest control in integrated pest management systems. The phytosanitary inspection system, including infrastructure and staff capacity, has considerably improved at all levels and allowed for fast, accurate and effective disease identification. However, low salary affects motivation of staff working in the field and laboratories, but there is a low turnover rate caused by narrow specialization and limited job opportunities in other sectors. Regional projects have greater impact versus country and establish a solid network for experience exchange and knowledge transfer between experts during and after the projects.

Finding 9. Flexibility of FAO and the project management allowed to overcome frequent governmental structural changes and developed innovative approaches to achieve long-lasting sustaining results.

- 61 The results of the project Strengthening food safety and animal health capacities in risk assessment and management will serve as basis for establishing the rating system: improvement of the online registration of farmer-based organizations (FBOs), better understanding of risk prioritization and risk categorization of the foods, improvement of the inspection capacities, and improvement of the understanding of FBOs on good hygienic practice (GHP) and Hazard Analysis Critical Control Point (HACCP). Project objectives based on results of the Technical Cooperation Programme (TCP) facility that FAO and SSFS (presently Food Safety Inspection Body, FSIB) recently collaborated. The ongoing project will develop standard operating procedures (SOPs) for expert staff responsible for food safety control and monitoring without specifying institution or department to make project interventions sustainable despite changes in food safety infrastructure.
- 62 Antimicrobial resistance is a global health priority due to its high negative impacts on human and animal health, food safety and sustainable development of the agriculture sector. Through the regional project "Reducing the advance of AMR in food and agriculture" (GCP /RER/057/RUS) FAO supported to address the following critical objectives:
- i. improvement and implementation of national action plans on antimicrobial resistance;
 - ii. review of regulatory platforms and legislation;
 - iii. capacity strengthening of national laboratories and improve practices to minimize the need for and use of antimicrobials and transmission of AMR along the food chain;
 - iv. facilitation of multi-sectoral coordination and strategic advocacy on the risks related to AMR for humans, food, animals, plants and the environment.
- 63 The evaluation found that current activities of the project focused more on public health, while issue of AMR in Armenia related more to agriculture sector, such as lack of good animal husbandry practices application among farmers (e.g. overuse of antibiotics).

Finding 10. FAO has contributed to creating the basis for sustainable grape production in Armenia. While related interventions were perceived to be successful, full national commitment and ownership is necessary to ensure establishment of institutional framework and operational support to sustain the results achieved.

- 64 FAO support to animal health, plant protection, and food safety and quality was aligned with both CPFs for 2012-2015 and 2016-2020. The support provided by FAO in this area involved the proposed FAO assistance in the field of plant production and protection as described in the CPF 2012-2015, and contributed to Output 1.1.1 of CPF 2016-2020.
- 65 The first FAO initiative in this area was the "Grape Genetic Resource Conservation and Utilization in Armenia" (GGRCU) project which started in 2015. This initiative was followed by the "Technical Assistance for Grape Phylloxera-resistant Certified Planting Material Production" (TAGP) project which built on the results of the previous project.

- 66 In the framework of the GGRCU initiative, due to FAO's support, i) grape collection vineyards were established for the purpose of genetic resources preservation; ii) a mother vineyard was founded to provide assistance in the production of grape-planting materials; and iii) demonstration vineyards were established with modern grape-growing technologies.
- 67 In the framework of the subsequent TAGP project which built on the results of the predecessor GGRCU project, FAO delivered:
- i. capacity building activities aimed at national certification services for the introduction of a certification system for grape-planting material production and recommendations for improvement of current legislation related to the wine industry and plant protection;
 - ii. workshops and trainings to enhance the capacities of phytosanitary services to control phylloxera and other pests;
 - iii. support to the Government in establishing a nursery for the production of grape phylloxera-resistant planting materials.
- 68 Through these activities FAO contributed to the creation of a basis for sustainable (phylloxera free) grape production in Armenia. Nevertheless, input effectiveness will depend on the follow-up and ownership of the Government of the Republic of Armenia of project results. For example, the provided recommendations for establishment of a certification system for phylloxera-resistant planting materials still need to be adopted and the certification system will only be effective once this actually happens. The created outputs such as the collection, rootstock and demonstration vineyards need support from the Government to make these sustainable. The Government has funded the u-Vine and Wine Foundation of Armenia, which organizes the management of the nursery and mother vineyard for propagation of phylloxera-resistant planting material.

Finding 11. Despite its high relevance and achievements, the programme has encountered constraints related to structural changes affecting implementing entities, and delays in procurement of key inputs.

- 69 Implementation of the projects faced various challenges. This included procurement challenges along with replacement of the National Project Coordinator and structural changes (merging ministries) that took place during project implementation. Despite these constraints, project continuity was ensured by clearly documenting discussions results and previously reached agreements, for subsequent use by decision makers. Delays in procurement of advocacy materials and equipment significantly affected implementation of GGRCU. Reportedly, the procurement tender in the framework of this project was repeated seven times in order to find a suitable supplier.

4.3 Priority Area 3. Food and nutrition security and poverty reduction

Finding 12. FAO's contributions towards achieving the expected results in the area of food and nutrition security faced challenges of limited national ownership and adoption of pilot initiatives.

- 70 With the aim to promote sustainable rural development through an integrated approach, two policy options were piloted in the framework of the "Developing Capacity for Strengthening Food Security and Nutrition in Selected Countries of the Caucasus and Central Asia" project. These pilots set out to operationalize the linkages between social protection, nutrition and agricultural interventions. The first pilot, the "School Food and Nutrition Program linked to the Agricultural Sector", aimed to connect schools and farmers, and to build their capacities. In the context of the national school feeding programme, greenhouses were established to facilitate vocational education in agriculture and nutrition, and to improve students' diets.

- 71 Through the second pilot project - "Strengthening Food Systems for Nutrition Sensitive Social Protection" (Cash+) - FAO aimed to link social protection programmes to livelihood support and sustainable agricultural practices. The goal in this regard was to enhance the productive capacity of rural households receiving family benefits, and to address unemployment and promote access to nutritious food. By addressing the underlying drivers of malnutrition, the project aims to maximize rural development outcomes. The project had a catalytic effect and its social component will go for replication. However, replication of the pilot educational projects in the schools are not clear.
- 72 FAO's efforts to promote food and nutrition security through productivity improvement of dairy value chain have been instrumental. The FAO project "Improving Feed Supply and Enhancing Processing in the Armenian Dairy Sector" (TCP/ARM/3605) aimed to identify gaps and improve dairy value chain performance by increasing productivity at all levels and attract investments by developing an investor road map for the sector. However, due to frequent changes of the Government's developing priorities, the institutionalization and replication of project results has not been achieved. While the project was complementary with other FAO activities in this sector, such as dual-purpose breeds conservation, strengthening animal health capacities, the investment road map has not been promoted by the government as a sector improvement tool due to the changes in the overall strategy and re-prioritization of subsectors.

Finding 13. FAO closely monitored the changing context and adopted its programme accordingly. Flexibility in terms of project focus was very useful as it allowed the Organization to continue project implementation in a very challenging context.

- 73 Implementation of the "Developing Capacity for Strengthening Food Security and Nutrition in Selected Countries of the Caucasus and Central Asia" project has been affected by significant challenges related to the changes in the development context. 2018 was marked as a year of political crisis, unprecedented in Armenia's 27 years of independence. The year started with changing the state governance structure from presidential to parliamentary and was then followed by a revolution. Elections were held and resulted in the appointment of the opposition leader; a new Government was formed. The political situation did not stabilize completely and changes in the government administrative structure are still ongoing. Throughout the project three Ministers of Agriculture and three Ministers of Labour and Social Affairs, Health and Education have been changed. The project organized the meetings with all newly appointed Ministers and Deputy Ministers to present the project goal and objectives, as well as implementation challenges. These changes mostly affected implementation of Outputs 1 and 2 in Armenia. Consequently, FAO adjusted its operations to the changing context and emphasis was laid on pilot projects as compared to policy work, which has not been effectively implemented, taking into account the rapidly changing context. The pilot projects were used to consider how proposed changes could be institutionalized, such as in the case of active labour programme, whereby the Government used the project approach to demonstrate successful cases.
- 74 There were delays in implementation due to the extended period of time between the formulation and the approval of the project document (from April to September 2016), and the time taken between the inception missions to three focus countries and the feedback and final agreement from all parts at country and regional level (from mid-May to the end of August 2016). In the case of Armenia, all legal aspects were dealt with through the signature of the country agreement, and continuous meetings and Skype conferences with the relevant line ministries took place in order to answer their queries. Adjustments were made to project activities to align these with the needs expressed by the line ministries. The project was fully operational since the 1 May 2016. Despite delays on the approval of the project document at country level, major programmatic outputs have been achieved or are in progress. FAO closely collaborated with the Ministry of Agriculture and provided appreciated support to build its capacity to meet various challenges, including nationalization of the 2030 Agenda and effectively contribute to the implementation and monitoring of the SDGs at country level.

4.4 Sustainability of results

Finding 14. The sustainability of FAO's programmes has been affected by many factors, particularly the continuing changes in the development context, lack of resources and capacities of national institutions to continue or replicate best practices and results achieved. In many cases, resources were not available to support continuation of these activities and scaling up often depended on finding new donors. Structural changes in the national Government and high rates of turnover and mobility of government staff have limited the potential for effective implementation of newly adopted policies and national plans, impeding sustainability of results achieved.

- 75 Sustainability of FAO programme results and activities has been affected by many factors, including institutional transformations, changes in the development context, and political developments, among which the transition to a parliamentary system in 2016-2018. There are several projects where FAO has supported the development and revision of action plans, policies, national programmes and strategies, but there has been limited capacity by the Government to implement them (e.g. the "National Programme on Plant Protection, National Brucellosis Control Programme, Breeding Development Plan of the Caucasian Brown cattle breed") in view of continued structural transformations and changes in the country development context. In some instances, in view of the newly revised national strategies and policies, relevance of the results and outputs produced through FAO pilot interventions has been reduced.



- 76 Taking into account continued changes in the development context, limited resources and capacities of government institutions, FAO strived to ensure that pilot projects are interlinked and complement each other to ensure sustainability. For example, capacity building activities undertaken through the "Strengthening capacities of the national phytosanitary control services in 4 Eastern European countries" project were complemented by training activities taken on by phylloxera-related projects implemented by FAO to identify diseases and their types with high accuracy. Policy note on land consolidation developed during the ENPARD project has laid foundation for further interventions, including the new project on "Land abandonment and introduction of a land consolidation instrument in Armenia" by the Government jointly with FAO.
- 77 The sustainability of interventions at local level strongly depends on communities and farmers' decision to carry further and replicate best practices introduced by the projects. For instance, based on beneficiaries' perceptions, interventions to promote conservation agriculture and drip irrigation (as part of ENPARD project) have good prospects for achievement of multiple facets of sustainability. The evaluation team found that the majority of direct beneficiaries would continue with the adoption of the introduced innovative practices, while farmers not directly involved in the project may replicate the intervention on their own due to the achieved higher yields and reduced production cost.
- 78 Duration of many agricultural projects is usually up to three years, which is another impediment for sustainability. According to farmers, in order to achieve some tangible results and provide a good model for replication, longer support for dairy, livestock or horticulture value chains is required to achieve long-lasting sustainability.

Finding 15. Likelihood for continuation of intervention's net benefits is limited. FAO often provides pioneering technical assistance which needs to be embedded in Government strategic policy and practice in order to be sustainable. However, this is not always happening and limits sustainability of programme benefits.

- 79 Successes regarding sustainability include programmes such as the "Developing Capacity for Strengthening Food Security and Nutrition in Selected Countries of the Caucasus and Central Asia". Project results were partially sustainable, where replication of the social component of the project took place through the national active labour project. Discussions are still ongoing on possible replication of the educational component project. Sustainability of the pilots in the schools is questionable, and ownership of results at school level varies. Some schools have higher ownership than others to care for the greenhouses. However, there is a 100 percent utilization score. This is also related to factors such as the administrative capacity at the schools.
- 80 A sustainable communication system was established, including the knowledge and practices introduced by the project. The project had a specific output dedicated to increasing awareness and dissemination of information on new technologies. Increased awareness of farmers on these approaches are aimed to foster replication and upscale project activities.
- 81 Yet, sometimes outputs were not institutionalized and stayed on paper, which resulted in loss of relevance of project activities and sustainability of outcomes. Some of the outputs developed in the framework of the "Improving capacities to eliminate and prevent recurrence of obsolete pesticides as a model for tackling unused hazardous chemicals in the former Soviet Union" project were not realized as the project failed to carry out the envisaged disposal activities. Comprehensive inventories of obsolete stocks were developed, but along with the summary report prepared based on pesticide management status and needs assessment it was not officially endorsed and disposal activities were not realized. The conducted inventory is no longer valid as the waste was left unprotected and replacements occurred.

- 82 Ensuring sustainability is often placed on the Government which does not always come through as expected. In the framework of the "Grape Genetic Resources Conservation and Sustainable Use in Armenia" project, the mother and demonstration vineyards provide a basis for the production of phylloxera-free propagation materials for the future development of fruit and grape production in the country, as well as for grape genetic resource conservation and sustainable use. In this regard, the importance of ensuring sustainability of these outputs through the state budget is crucial as funds to support activities related to the maintenance of these vineyards should be ensured by the Government. Yet, government ownership with regard to the created output could be better. Ownership levels and management of produced outputs can also vary depending on changes in the Government (administration).

Finding 16. Long-term viability and competitiveness of results achieved needs to be studied more carefully, particularly with regard to innovation and model/demonstrative outputs.

- 83 Although provided inputs such as equipment can be highly beneficial, competitiveness of delivered inputs particularly in the private sector is closely linked to sustainability and duplication. In this regard, the input delivered in the framework of the "Alternative Utilization of Water Resources in Armenia in the Field of Fish Production" was effective as the fish farm increased its production due to the applied new technology; however, as the system is relatively energy-intensive, the rising cost of fish may jeopardize sustainability of the input. Moreover, the project expected a rapid uptake of the new technology throughout the Ararat valley. Again, this is not very likely due to other less resource intensive technologies that can increase productivity and yet require lower capital and operational costs.
- 84 Through the regional project "Conservation and development of dual-purpose cattle breeds in Eastern Europe" (TCP/RER/3604) FAO supported participating countries in conserving and developing locally adapted breeds. The breeding development plan, addressing the conservation and genetic development of the Caucasian brown cattle breed as well as the non-genetic aspects of breed development was formulated based on a solid assessment of the existing situation of genetic resources and their production systems. Support and development of genetic resources contributed to the National Strategy for Sustainable Use and Development of Farm Animal Genetic Resources prepared with assistance from TCP/ARM/3101. Access to Caucasian brown cattle breed, with better resistance to local environment and better quality can significantly improve livelihood of smallholder livestock farmers and conserve the breed. Similar interventions require longer support and allocation of resources, both from the Government and implementing agencies to achieve sustainable and catalytic results.

4.5 Cross-cutting issues

4.5.1 Gender

Finding 17. Gender equality was addressed as much as possible. FAO implemented both projects that contributed to women empowerment directly and that had a very narrow technical scope and were gender neutral.

- 85 The FAO Policy on Gender Equality was adopted in 2013 and outlines the mandatory steps to be taken to achieve gender equality in all FAO technical cooperation programmes. This suggests that at the organizational level equity and gender balance should be mainstreamed across all organizational priorities and interventions.
- 86 Gender empowerment concerns were mainstreamed throughout FAO programme components as much as relevant. Some of the projects often had a very specific (technical) focus and were considered gender neutral. New project proposals normally undergo

a review by the gender experts of the FAO Regional Centre in Budapest, who assess the degree of gender mainstreaming. FAO Country Office made efforts to ensure that men and women have equal access to capacity building opportunities and the needs, priorities and constraints of both women and men were taken into consideration. Project designs have also promoted women and men's equitable access to and control over productive resources and services.

- 87 FAO had implemented projects that worked with local communities, for example projects that had direct social and economic aspects such as the "Developing Capacity for Strengthening Food Security and Nutrition in Selected Countries of the Caucasus and Central Asia". Within the framework of project implementation, specific criteria were set for selection of beneficiaries which involved women/families with two children, etc. This project also aimed to contribute to gender equality and women empowerment indirectly, and as a result of the improved policy and legislative environment in the target countries.
- 88 Relevant projects with regard to gender equality also included the "Support to the implementation of the Regional Initiative on Empowering Smallholders and Family Farms". Since rural women and rural men are not homogeneous groups, disaggregated analyses (using social determinants other than gender) were also applied. The country studies were therefore both gender-sensitive and gender-responsive, with the FAO Regional Office for Europe and Central Asia (REU) gender and social protection team being involved in the gender mainstreaming of all country studies and also participating in some of the workshops. Gender aspects were taken into consideration throughout the entire project cycle, with gender mainstreaming requirements respecting the FAO Policy on Gender Equality, the FAO regional gender equality strategy for Europe and Central Asia and the regional action plan for 2016-2017, the Technical Cooperation Programme (TCP) manual and the FAO Environmental and Social Standards.
- 89 Similarly, the "Grape Genetic Resources Conservation and Sustainable Use in Armenia" project took into account that women are equal partners in viticulture operations, and the capacity building activities within the project framework were gender-sensitive in targeting the main users of different technologies.
- 90 Training provided in the framework of the ENPARD activities for extension and advisory services had a gender-sensitive approach. Additionally, gender specific trainings were delivered to project beneficiaries. Recommendations and strategies prepared during project implementation ensured gender equality.
- 91 Through the "Technical and institutional support to veterinary services in Armenia" project, a gender study was conducted among livestock farmers, service providers and market players. Gender-disaggregated data was collected and used during project interventions (e.g. strategy, trainings, awareness raising campaigns). Another survey with a focus on gender-related aspects was carried out in the framework of "Improving Feed Supply and Enhancing Processing in the Armenian Dairy Sector" aimed to draw conclusions on issues that affected men and women differently. The findings and recommendations were included in the road map guide.

4.5.2 Governance

Finding 18. FAO has supported the development of policies and strategies that lead to enhancing governance across the agricultural sector.

- 92 The evaluation team found that governance-related issues, including development of legal and institutional framework, recommendations on effective operational model were addressed through projects related to CPF Priority Area 1.2.

- 93 Under CPF Priority Area 1 FAO supported the Ministry of Agriculture and its structures to improve governance for agricultural and rural development through policy and regulatory support, development of financial instruments and insurance schemes, and support towards strengthening institutional capacities of the Ministry and its branches. Several legal and institutional instruments have been elaborated for governance support, including the agricultural cooperatives law, National Programme on Plant protection, seed production and certification regulation, Land Consolidation Programme, Effective and efficient extension services provision model. FAO has also contributed to improved inter-ministerial coordination, and coordination of development assistance in food and agriculture sectors through donor coordination platform.
- 94 Under CPF Priority Area 2 The “National Action Plan for the Prevention and Control of Brucellosis in Armenia” was developed for effective management and prevention of zoonotic diseases transmitted from cattle and ruminants. Through another project FAO supported capacity strengthening of the National Phytosanitary Control Services, revision of seed and plant polices, development of the National Programme on Plant Protection. “Reducing the advance of Antimicrobial Resistance (AMR) in food and agriculture” project will improve the national action plans on AMR, review regulatory platform and improve practices to minimize transmission of AMR in food chain.

4.5.3 Nutrition

Finding 19. In accordance with the CPF, the programme contributed to strengthening policy and legal frameworks and social protection systems to eradicate hunger, food insecurity, malnutrition and rural poverty. This primarily involved strengthening the capacities of Government and other stakeholders to develop sectoral and cross-sectoral policy frameworks and programmes for food security and nutrition.

- 95 During the evaluation period Armenia continued to face many challenges in the area of nutrition. This was due to factors such as poverty and high levels of subsistence farming with low agricultural yields among large parts of the rural population. According to WFP assessment, nearly 6 percent of the population (approximately 180 000 people) consumed an inadequate number of calories needed to maintain an active and healthy lifestyle and were undernourished. About 16 percent of households (approximately 480 000 people) are food insecure, and significant differences between the availability of food and the actual food consumption of the population indicated limited financial accessibility of nutritious foods for most of the population (WFP, 2018). Low yields and incomes on small farms also contributed to widespread deficiencies in nutrition while the country relied on imports of staple food (T. Lines, 2019).
- 96 Taking the above-mentioned into account, FAO's programme set out to address nutrition-specific considerations through support to policy development process, and data collection that would support policy formation and monitoring processes. In this regard, FAO supported efforts that shed light on the issues faced by smallholder and family farms development through programmes such as the “Support to the Implementation of the Regional Initiative on Empowering Smallholders and Family Farms”. Prior to this initiative, participating countries were lacking relevant policy documents, regulations and sufficient data pertaining to the capacities, needs and issues of smallholders and family farmers. In the project framework, key stakeholders were identified and country level studies were successfully conducted in each of the participating countries which shed light on the needs and constraints of smallholders and family farmers.
- 97 With FAO's support, the Government of Armenia developed “The Strategy of the Main Directions Ensuring Economic Development in Agricultural Sector of the Republic of Armenia for 2020-2030”. The Strategy outlines the key priorities of the agricultural policy of the Republic of Armenia, defines the scope of priority issues, as well as the action plan for the implementation of the Strategy for 2020-2022 (Action Plan 2020-2022 available at

https://mineconomy.am/media/10032/MijocarumneriTsragir_Angleren.pdf). FAO also supported development of the "Strategy for Food Loss and Waste Reduction", although the Strategy has yet to be adopted by the Government of Armenia.

- 98 FAO similarly supported the Government of Armenia with creation of mechanisms for monitoring food security policy implementation. The support to the Ministry of Agriculture in SDGs implementation and monitoring aimed to enhancing awareness and capacities of the Ministry and other relevant national stakeholders in line with the principle of the 2030 Agenda to broad partnerships for more focused, participated and coordinated action on SDGs implementation and monitoring. In this regard FAO, through the "Enhancing regional capacities to design and implement nutrition-sensitive social protection program to reduce food insecurity and malnutrition" and "Developing capacity for strengthening food security and nutrition in selected countries of the Caucasus and Central Asia", supported development of an M&E framework and carried out the corresponding assessment to support policy and programmes such as the "cash plus" pilots.

4.5.4 Climate change

Finding 20. While FAO is not a leader in supporting climate change interventions in Armenia, climate change adaptation was integrated in selected FAO programmatic interventions.

- 99 FAO supported Armenia with climate change adaptation and addressing pressing issues in this regard, although these interventions did not have a catalytic effect in the country. The programme contributed to climate change adaptation through pilot interventions promoting sustainable agricultural and food production approaches.
- 100 FAO's support has responded to pressing needs in the country through its "Alternative utilization of water resources in Armenia in the field of fish production" project. West and central regions of Armenia, and particularly the Ararat valley are most affected by climate change and expected to experience higher warming than the rest of the country (Republic of Armenia, 2009). Also, the biggest reductions in precipitation are predicted for Yerevan and the Ararat valley – 30 percent less precipitation in 2100 (SEI, 2009). About 40 percent of Armenia's agricultural goods are produced in the Ararat valley. Over the last several years, water consumers in the valley, including local farms and the growing fish industry, have lowered the water quantity to the point that 32 communities who previously had access to flowing water must now pump water from the ground. Water supply stress in the region increases as the demand is rising while supply shrinks.
- 101 FAO has also assisted national institutions in developing institutional capacities for applying climate-conscious practices. Among others this involved lessening the contribution to climate change and the pressure on national food systems through the Strategies for Food Loss and Waste Reduction. Through the "Developing Capacity for Strengthening Food Security and Nutrition in Selected Countries of the Caucasus and Central Asia" project next to pilot projects that promoted sustainable food production, school children from various rural communities learned about climate change and its impact on food production.
- 102 FAO's support was effective in demonstrating the potential benefits of good agricultural practices to farmers. As part of the "Enhancing human security and building resilient society in disadvantaged communities of Armenia", a joint project involving six United Nations agencies (FAO, UNDP, United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), WFP, International Organization for Migration (IOM) and UNIDO) FAO set out to promote agricultural development in target regions, thereby contributing to poverty reduction in rural areas. Pilot demonstrations of a sustainable integrated crop production and management system have been introduced to increase agricultural productivity and strengthen resilience of local communities to climate change.

- 103 Through the ENPARD project FAO raised awareness on the impact of climate change on soil degradation and fertility in Armenia and introduced a package of practical actions aimed at the introduction and promotion of best practices in sustainable soil management. Efforts such as the workshop on "Climate change impact on soil degradation and fertility conservation agriculture for climate change adaptation and mitigation" organized as part of the ENPARD Technical Assistance to the Ministry of Agriculture raised awareness of the Ministry and assisted in developing institutional capacity on the impact of climate change on soil degradation and fertility in Armenia.
- 104 Activities to raise awareness on climate change were provided through the report "The impact of climate change in RA on soil degradation and fertility" and validation workshop, where the results of finding were presented. Additionally, climate change subject was included in capacity building trainings organized for the Marz Agricultural Support Centers (MASC). Demo farms were established to demonstrate mitigation measures on climate change such as anti-hail and drip-irrigation systems, as well conservation agriculture. FAO, in collaboration with WFP have also organized a series of events in the schools, through which school children learned about the negative impact of climate change and possible mitigation measures, food security and malnutrition issues.



5. Conclusions and recommendations

5.1 Conclusions

Conclusion 1. The FAO programme in Armenia is well aligned with national priorities and is perceived as highly relevant by key stakeholders and partners. While sound contributions have been made by FAO in all priority areas of its programme, their effectiveness and sustainability varied substantially due to significant changes in development context and limited capacities and resources of key stakeholders and beneficiaries in adopting proposed policies, practices and approaches. Future programmes should continue building upon the main national priorities, while being contextually responsive and adaptive to development changes and challenges.

Conclusion 2. FAO has effectively used its comparative advantages, focusing on provision of highly specialized technical expertise towards the development of national policies, institutions and also offering innovative approaches and solutions. FAO should continue offering its advisory services and technical support in thematic areas within its competence, adjusting these to emerging needs and changing development context, focusing on longer term sustainability of results achieved and taking into consideration vulnerability of food and agriculture systems to climate change. With regard to the latter, FAO should consider enhancing its support in developing national capacities for sustainable management of natural resources and making the agricultural sector more resilient to climate-induced risks.

Conclusion 3. Despite relatively limited financial resources allocated to its country programme, FAO managed to effectively contribute to key strategic areas identified in the CPF and UNDAF. The new programme, however, needs to be supported by more vigorous resource mobilization efforts to enable the Country Office to offer sufficient level of technical and programmatic support in areas where FAO has clear comparative advantages, and in FAO's responses to the new demands and expectations in the context of the upcoming United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF) for the period 2021-2025.

Conclusion 4. FAO programme has experienced multiple challenges and constraints that affected efficiency and sustainability of its interventions. FAO needs to establish a risk management system to systematically monitor development changes and identify potential risks and issues that may affect programme results. Such system should be based on technical assessments of sector-specific interventions and continuous monitoring of projects to evaluate progress achieved and possible constraints. Monitoring results, combined with periodic review of development context, should be used systematically to address potential risks and constraints and inform timely adjustments to the programme management approaches.

Conclusion 5. FAO Country Programme has developed effective partnerships with multiple stakeholders, including national government institutions, donors and funding partners, private sector, civil society organizations and academia. These stakeholders appreciated FAO's contributions towards

development of policies based on its technical expertise and knowledge. Considering potential for enhanced collaboration in priority areas of its programming framework, including through joint activities within the context of upcoming United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework, FAO should build upon past collaborative experiences and identify new possible areas for expanding partnerships and increasing potential for joint actions and resource mobilization.

5.2 Recommendations

Recommendation 1. FAO programme in Armenia should keep focusing on thematic areas of support reflecting its comparative advantages and capacities to ensure continuity of support, sustainability of results achieved, and availability of specialized technical support in responding to national priorities.

105 Building upon past results and experiences, FAO programme should continue rendering support in key priority areas, such as sustainable use of natural resources; animal health, plant protection and food safety, genetic resources management; and developing policy frameworks, plans and programmes for food and nutrition security and poverty reduction. In view of the current epidemiological situation in the country and the region, FAO should continue its support towards national efforts in addressing high prevalence of animal zoonotic diseases and pests, prevention of infectious animal diseases and developing capacities for improved animal health services, and management of antimicrobials and use of veterinary drugs. In the area of plant protection, FAO should intensify its efforts to promote integrated pest management and sustainable agricultural practices. Continued FAO support in these priority areas needs to be built upon and further enhanced through identification of new opportunities and constraints, based on FAO's comparative advantages in leading sector-specific analyses and assessments. In the development of new programme cycle, FAO should consider investing in sector-specific assessments to identify strategic areas of its engagement within the framework of the new United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework.

Recommendation 2. In view of increasing vulnerability of food and agriculture systems to climate change, FAO needs to consider opportunities for intensifying its support towards improved management of natural resources, increased efficiency, productivity, and adaptive capacity and resilience of agriculture and rural communities to climate change.

106 The increasing magnitude and recurrence of climate-related events and anticipated environmental and economic impact demand stronger and more extensive collaboration among all potential key stakeholders in ensuring sustainable management of agricultural sector and natural resources. FAO should build upon lessons learned from its ongoing interventions promoting climate change adaptation; it should also consider exploring opportunities for more extensive cooperation and engagement with a range of relevant organizations and partners. In view of rather limited successes in integrating climate change in its past and ongoing interventions, FAO should enhance its partnerships with other United Nations agencies and actors, taking advantage of complementarities and synergies from potential collaboration among various stakeholders in promoting climate change adaptation in agriculture, forestry and livestock sectors, sustainable use and management of natural resource. In pursuing increased emphasis on climate change adaptation, FAO should consider focusing its future programmes on sustainable land and forest management, promotion of good agricultural practices, improved crop varieties, optimization management of water resources, and disaster risk reduction approaches.

Recommendation 3. FAO should use lessons learned from past interventions and pilot initiatives to address the issue of limited sustainability of programmatic achievements, and to increase effectiveness and efficiency of its advisory support and technical assistance.

- 107 FAO Office should enhance its monitoring function to ensure that knowledge generated by the programmes is qualitatively analysed and used for the continuous refinement of programmes towards better results. Robust monitoring function should focus on detailed assessment of success factors and best practices stemming from programmes and pilot initiatives. Information and data obtained from periodic monitoring should be systematically assessed by FAO and its partners to identify issues, constraints and risks that impede effective achievement of results, and to make timely adjustments to programme implementation, and/or addressing possible risks and limitations.

Recommendation 4. FAO Country Office should intensify its partnership development and resource mobilization efforts in the context of upcoming new United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework, focusing on key priority areas and based on lessons learned from the previous cycle.

- 108 In view of potential opportunities offered by the process of developing new UNSDCF, which calls for active cooperation among different actors, the FAO Country Office should undertake more active resource mobilization and partnership development efforts in identifying potential synergies, emerging opportunities. Development of strategic partnerships should also be complemented by the development of project proposals for possible funding from global funding mechanisms (e.g. the GEF, Green Climate Fund (GCF) and other development funds). These efforts should build upon existing partnerships and should be complemented by mapping all potential partners, and active communication and outreach activities in exploring areas of collaboration and interest of potential partners. The Country Office should seek specialized support and guidance on partnership development efforts and development of global funding proposals from the regional partnership officer and FAO headquarters.

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Appendix 1. People interviewed

Last name	First name	Institution/Agency	Role
Government			
Aleqyan	Ara	SSFS	Deputy head of Phytosanitary inspection
Gevorgyan	Arman	Veterinary-Sanitary and Phytosanitary Services Center, SNCO	Director
Harutyunyan	Armen	Ministry of Agriculture	Former deputy minister of agriculture
Hovhannisyan	Ashot	Ministry of Agriculture	Animal Husbandry Expert, former head of Ministry of Agriculture animal husbandry department
Nikoyan	Arthur	SSFS	Head of Phytosanitary inspection
Panosyan	Ira	Ministry of Economy	Head of the Department of Agriculture Programs Elaboration, Resource Use and Cooperative Development
Petrosyan	Garnik	Ministry of Agriculture	Former deputy minister of agriculture
Shirvanyan	Ashkhen	Ministry of Economy	Head of Food Safety Division
Stepanyan	Tatul	Marz Administration	Deputy governor of Tavush marz
FAO			
Alexandrova-Stefanova	Nevena	FAO	UN FAO Agricultural Extension Officer (Systems)
Amirkhanyan	Vahan	FAO	Agricultural Expert
Annette	Myriam	FAO	Consultant, Global Initiative on Food Loss and Waste Reduction
Ayvazyan	Viktoriya	FAO	National Consultant on Agriculture and Rural Development
Beglaryan	Zaruhi	FAO	National Projects Coordinator
Fakavā	Viliani T	FAO	Plant Production & Protection Officer
Nasoyan	Gayane	FAO	FAO Representative in Armenia
Nersisyan	Avetik	FAO	Plant Production and Protection Officer, FAO REU Hungary, Standards Setting Unit Lead
Papyan	Sofya	FAO	Strategic Programme Officer at FAO
Sahakyan	Meri	FAO	Programme/Projects Assistant,
van Otterdijk	Robert	FAO	Agro-Industry Officer
Zadayan	Meruzhan	FAO	National Consultant
Development partners			
Barseghyan	Ara	ARNAP Foundation	Acting Director
Dajunts	Gayane	MPG	Head of Research department
Gharagyozyan	Misak	ANAU	Head of Marketing and Development division
Grigoryan	Arthur	ICARE	Director
Makaryan	Robert	ANAU	Vice-Rector for Academic Affairs, Former deputy minister of agriculture

Last name	First name	Institution/Agency	Role
Manasyan	Heghine	CRRC	Director
Melyan	Gayane	Agrobiotechnology Scientific Center, Branch of ANAU	Director
Mkrtchyan	Gagik	Armenian Technology Group Foundation	Director
Navasardyan	Aram	MPG	Founding Director
Pipoyan	Davit	Information Analytical Center for Risk Assessment of Food Chain	Head of the Center
Sardaryan	Gagik	CARD	Director
Tadevosyan	Lusine	ICARE	Research Director
Urutyunyan	Vardan	Armenian National Agrarian University	Rector
Beneficiaries			
Harutyunyan	Edik	Grape farmer	Grape farmer, Armavir
Marandyan	Galust	Bigama Frut LLC	Owner
Martirosyan	Felix	Grape farmer	Grape farmer, Armavir
Mkrtchyan	Vahe	Fruit orchard, Aragatsotn	Farmer
Sargsyan	Vahan	Grape farmer	Grape farmer, Ararat

Annexes

Annex 1. Terms of Reference
<http://www.fao.org/3/cb0991en/cb0991en.pdf>

Office of Evaluation
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