

Thematic evaluation series

Evaluation of FAO's role and work on antimicrobial resistance (AMR)

Management response

FOOD AND AGRICULTURE ORGANIZATION OF THE UNITED NATIONS
Rome, 2021

Executive Summary

Management welcomes the Evaluation of FAO's role and work on Antimicrobial Resistance (AMR). The Evaluation confirms the important role of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) in addressing AMR in the food and agriculture sectors, which has been reconfirmed through the United Nations General Assembly, partner organizations at all levels, and FAO Members. Management also appreciates that the Evaluation was conducted during an exceptionally challenging period when restrictions imposed by the COVID-19 pandemic have limited full engagement with all AMR team members, especially those allocated in decentralized offices. Notwithstanding, the Evaluation provides an in-depth analysis of FAO's role and work on AMR from six perspectives: relevance, coherence, effectiveness, partnerships, efficiency, and sustainability. It describes well the comparative advantage, potential and challenges for FAO to further address AMR in its work.

The Evaluation well elaborates the leadership that FAO has been providing on tackling AMR from the One Health approach, in collaboration with the World Health Organization (WHO) and the World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE), through the Tripartite agreement. The development of FAO Action Plans (2016-2020 and 2021-2025) demonstrates FAO continuous commitment in supporting Members to address AMR in food and agriculture, which provides the clear linkage to Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The Evaluation reconfirmed the importance of FAO's role and the approach to AMR, which is well recognised by international society. Management recognizes the importance of engaging with all the sectors in food and agriculture, strengthening FAO's capacities in the behavioural sciences and expanding its efforts on AMR in all geographical locations. FAO's engagement on AMR is fully embedded in the new Strategic Framework 2022-31, including under a dedicated Programme Priority Area on One Health.

The Evaluation reconfirmed the coherence of FAO's work on AMR with other key organizations at global and regional level. Management appreciates that the Evaluation identified FAO's comparative advantage, which includes the ability to deliver broad AMR programmes with natural and social science expertise across key sectors associated with food and agriculture. FAO's strong global, regional and country presence ensures its ability to influence policy change. In addition, increasing partnerships with the scientific community have been recognized as fundamental for generating, promoting and sharing knowledge on AMR and antimicrobial use (AMU). Management will further encourage the partnership and the linkage with scientific community at all levels.

Management appreciates that the Evaluation accurately describes the current situation of the FAO AMR Working Group (AMR WG) highlighting aspects such as the participation through voluntary basis, that significantly undermines the effectiveness of FAO's work on AMR. The AMR WG has produced numerous valuable guidelines, tools and case studies, among others, which assist Members to effectively develop and implement their National Action Plans on AMR, in line with the September 2016 UNGA declaration. Management recognizes the need for more effective internal coordination of FAO's work on AMR, which is expected to be achieved through the newly established Joint FAO/WHO Centre (CODEX Food Standards and Zoonotic Diseases) (CJW), thus contributing to maximize FAO's comparative advantage.

The Evaluation recognized FAO's increasing efforts to strengthen partnerships, which lays the foundation for a One Health approach to AMR. The establishment of the Tripartite Joint Secretariat on AMR and the AMR Multi-Partner Trust Fund (MPTF) have been viewed as good examples for stronger collaboration on implementing multisectoral and multidisciplinary

interventions at global, regional and country levels. Management takes note of the suggestion to also strengthen communication.

Management also highlights that further efforts to broaden FAO's network with stakeholders and strengthen the One Health approach to AMR, as well as further promote FAO's leadership and visibility are being made through the three global governance structures which have been established, or are being established by FAO, WHO and OIE, namely the One Health Global Leaders Group on AMR (launched in November 2020); the Independent Panel on Evidence for Action against AMR (which completed public consultation on its Terms of Reference); and the Partnership Platform on AMR.

Management appreciates the Evaluation's concerns about the sustainability of the AMR investment, recognizing that investment on AMR could also benefit other critical areas in the countries. Engaging with national stakeholders and mobilizing resources at country level will be a priority for the AMR WG to ensure countries' commitment. The establishment of One Health platforms at country level, for example, could also be used for zoonotic diseases, prevention and control. Management expects that with the establishment of the Tripartite Integrated Surveillance System on AMR/AMU, more evidence could be generated for raising awareness at country level and generate buy-in from national governments.

All recommendations are accepted. Detailed comments on the specific recommendations are provided in the Matrix.

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Evaluation Recommendation	Management response Accepted, Partially Accepted or Rejected	Management plan			Further funding required (Y or N)
		Actions to be taken, and/or comments about partial acceptance or rejection	Responsible unit	Time frame	
<p>Recommendation 1.</p> <p>FAO should prioritize its work in a long-term strategy on AMR that recognizes the seriousness of the threat and is fully integrated into the Organization's Strategic Framework. The strategy should articulate FAO's long-term role on AMR and that of its Divisions and Offices, its approach at the country level and be based on analyses of its comparative advantages and AMR risks along the associated value chains, while identifying key partnerships and stakeholders at all levels. It further needs to be underpinned by a theory of change that clarifies linkages between its activities and expected goals. It should consider how FAO intends to engage on issues of One</p>	Accepted	<p>The 128th Session of the Programme Committee advised that in accordance with the guidance provided by the 127th Session, FAO should elaborate and Action Plan on AMR and not a Strategy. The draft FAO Action Plan 2021–2025 has been developed including some elements, e.g. a Monitoring and Evaluation framework with outcome and impact indicators or a theory of change. These indicators will be specific to each area of work. They will be designed to monitor both, the level implementation achieved, and whether it has been achieved under a one health approach. The development and implementation of these indicators will follow the adoption of the new AMR indicator to be included in FAO's results framework.</p> <p>The FAO AMR indicator to be included in FAO's Results Framework 2020–2021 will be presented at 130th Programme Committee. It will measure FAO's support to countries in developing and implementing their National Action Plans in the food, and agriculture sectors.</p> <p>AMR issues will be addressed under the proposed Programme Priority Area on One Health. This will contribute to give more coherence and corporate relevance to FAO's work on AMR, while fully incorporating it into FAO's Theory of Change.</p>	DDG-Semedo/CJW/NSA/ESF/NSL/NSP/LEG/NFI/OSP	End 2021	N

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Health and gender based on relevant analyses and be complemented by outcome-based indicators of performance. The strategy should define targets and indicators to measure progress towards achievements.					
Recommendation 2. Reducing the global threat of AMR is a substantial task and FAO has the mandate to cover food and agriculture sectors, which infers strong leadership and advocacy at all levels. In order to achieve this, FAO should consolidate its work on AMR through a strong programmatic approach with a central coordination and management structure that is supported by dedicated core funding in the allocation of the next	Accepted	<p>The newly established CJW will provide "One Health" central coordination and managerial role to the work on AMR. This work is delivered across the Organization by different Divisions. The various natural science areas affecting AMR are nested within these Divisions, which also manage their own AMR areas of work, therefore, providing their unique scientific expertise. CJW will ensure that FAO's work is science-based and coordinated under the One Health approach and maintain a seamless communication with the Tripartite organizations.</p> <p>CJW has initiated a review of the AMR WG. It will ensure that the contributions of all relevant technical areas of expertise happen in a collaborative and coordinated manner. The new Terms of Reference (TORs) are being developed and expected to be ready by the end of March 2021.</p> <p>Furthermore, the effective implementation of the FAO Action Plan on AMR will be incorporated into the AMR WG members' TORs, as well as into their Performance Evaluation (PEMS). This is expected to be in place by the end of 2021.</p>	DDG-Semedo/CJW/NSA/ESF/NSL/NSP/LEG/NFI/OSP	End of 2021	N

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biennium. The multidisciplinary approach should be further strengthened, fully taking into account all of FAO's core technical areas and their linkages with AMR. This would provide FAO with greater visibility in its role on AMR and indicate its commitment to AMR risk reduction.					
Recommendation 3. FAO should sustain and strengthen its scientific approach to its work on AMR at all levels through increased engagement of the AMR-WG, enhancing the role of its Reference Centres in support of the work on AMR in particular at the country level, and	Accepted	A FAO AMR network of reference centres has been established to strengthen the scientific expertise held within FAO's divisions involved in AMR. Seven reference centers are already designated and actively engaged in FAO's AMR work at global, regional and country level. ¹ They are developing knowledge materials, e-learning courses, and supporting AMR/AMU surveillance activities. Various mechanisms have also been implemented to strengthen this collaboration, such as bi-monthly teleconferences and an annual meeting. Currently FAO is examining other reference centers that could be designated by the end of 2021, expanding significantly the current geographic coverage.	DDG-Semedo/Chief Scientist/CJW	End of 2021	N

¹ <http://www.fao.org/antimicrobial-resistance/resources/reference-centres/en/>

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through widening its scientific collaboration.		Under the overall coordination for the scientific approach of the Chief Scientist, the CJW will widen collaboration with the scientific community to identify and address research gaps.			
Recommendation 4. The Organization should consider innovative approaches to advance its focus areas that acknowledge existing resource and socio-economic constraints that hinder behaviour change across value chains and commitment to combat the threat of AMR.	Accepted	<p>While the effectiveness of the four focus areas of FAO's Action Plan 2016–2020 is recognized, FAO will ensure that lessons learnt during the 2016–2020 period are applied and have been embedded in the new proposed Action Plan. As a result, FAO now proposes five focus areas to include the need to generate behavioural changes that can lead to AMR reduction. AMU becomes a focus area on its own, and governance expands its remit to introduce the economic argument in the combat of AMR with a strong link on sustainability.</p> <p>FAO has also gone a step further in data collection and capacity building. It is adding to its current work the establishment of the FAO AMR/AMU data platform, a global database that will support the agriculture sector in analysing and sharing data currently generated, as well as to join the existing databases. The latter will be complemented with a MPTF global project to establish a Tripartite Integrated Surveillance System for AMR/AMU (TISSA) in 2021 and 2022.</p> <p>Activities such as the AMU survey, initiated and designed by the FAO Regional Office for Europe and Central Asia in 2020, proposing a promising methodology for understanding the socio-economic constraints that hinder the change of bad practices, or the Farm Field Schools initiative being piloted in Africa, are examples of how FAO develops innovation while delivering its AMR work.</p> <p>By September 2021, FAO will deliver workshop across regions including lessons learnt to promote innovative methodologies for addressing AMR.</p>	DDG-Semedo/CJW/NSA/ESF/NSL/NSP/LEG/NFI/OIN	End of 2021/2022	N