

**Country Programme Evaluation Series**

# **Evaluation of the FAO Regional Office for Latin America and the Caribbean (2017–2020)**

**Management Response**

The FAO Regional Office for Latin America and the Caribbean (RLC) accepts the Evaluation Report without reservations and wishes to add some elements to contextualize the findings.

The Regional Office welcomes the generally-positive findings and conclusions, as well as the recommendations that will help us address shortcomings and take advantage of emerging opportunities.

The Regional Leadership Team (RLT) will use this evaluation report as an important guide for work plans of the next biennium.

The RLT appreciates the positive assessment of the Regional Initiatives (RIs) and agrees with the need to strengthen their synergy as well as their interaction in the countries. In this regard, it agrees with the enhancement of the role of clusters and with the recommendation to develop a comprehensive narrative that favors a better alignment between RIs and planning at the country level.

RLC recognizes that it must continue to make progress in diversifying and strengthening partnerships with different types of actors, including the private sector, in order to mobilize new resources, investments and skills.

In order to improve the quality and effectiveness of our work in the region, it is necessary to continue strengthening the monitoring of actions, the measurement of their results and the adoption of lessons learned from the different evaluation processes. It is especially important to promote results-oriented monitoring and evaluation, and to simplify those oriented to operational follow-up.

Likewise, the recommendation on the design of an explicit regional strategy for scaling-up FAO's actions is particularly noteworthy. The Regional Office agrees with the need to systematically identify and analyze such cases, to identify and share with the countries the best routes for scaling-up, taking subregional and national specificities into consideration.

The design of a strategy to use the results and lessons learned from the evaluations is also a particularly important recommendation that will be implemented in coordination with OED, taking advantage of the decentralization of project evaluations.

The recommendations related to the mainstreaming of the gender approach and the inclusion of indigenous, afro-descendant and tribal groups are very pertinent.

Similarly, recommendations related to the COVID-19 response and recovery will be given special attention, seeking a balance between the support to the national and subregional Offices in their response, and the need to respond flexibly to the additional workloads and efforts that teams are making to fulfill their responsibilities.

It is important to highlight that the evaluation was focused on analyzing the Regional Initiatives and their relationship with the subregions and countries. RLC considers that, in future, it would be important to complete this work along with a review of other important work domains of the Regional Office, such as the work of i) the Field Programme and the Network Units (now brought together under the new Country Office Development and Support Stream); ii) the different teams that are now part of the Support Services Stream (e.g. Human Resources, Logistics and Finance, Information Technologies); and iii) the newly established Strategic Analysis and Innovation Stream. The work of these Streams and their respective teams is a critical component of the work of the Regional Office in support of the Country Offices and, ultimately, of the Member Countries.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Although this is not part of this evaluation, it is interesting to note that, since February 2021, the Regional Office has been implementing a major process of organizational restructuring.

Topics of interest for future evaluations may also include inter alia: i) the situation of the multi-country offices (paragraphs 27 and 33 of the main text); ii) the risks arising from the significant increase in extra-budgetary contributions; and iii) the results of the ongoing regional restructuring.

Lastly, it is necessary to clarify some specific points of the report: i) Regional Initiative 3 works in various areas and does not specifically focus on non-agricultural spaces, as the executive summary (paragraph 10) seems to convey; and ii) the “dependence on TCP projects” is evaluated in the Report, solely based on the number of projects involved and not on the associated budget, which limits the analysis (paragraph 24 of the summary, paragraphs 114 and 131 of the main text).

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Evaluation Recommendation	Management response <b>Accepted,</b> <b>Partially Accepted</b> or <b>Rejected</b>	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><b>Recommendation 1.</b></p> <p>RLC must continue to reflect on the conceptualization of the RIs in order to adapt them to changing contexts in the region.</p>	<b>Accepted</b>	<p>Updates on the Regional Initiatives are regularly considered by the Regional Conference. Management proposes the following actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. In preparation for LARC37, review the Regional Priorities to align them with the new Strategic Framework 2022-2031, the Medium Term Plan 2022-25, and the Programme of Work and Budget 2022-23, taking into consideration the continuing effects of the COVID-19 pandemic in the region, the subregions and countries.</li> <li>ii. Enhance the quality of consultations with Members and other partners and stakeholders, through which the programme is developed and subsequently submitted to the Regional Conference.</li> <li>iii. Continue strengthening knowledge and strategic analysis products such as the regional flagship publications, the 2030 Food, Agriculture and Rural Development Series, and collaborative publications with external partners as key mechanisms for ensuring continued relevance within changing contexts in the region.</li> </ul>	RLC Programme Stream and Strategic Analysis; Innovation Stream; Subregional Offices Stream	End of 2022	No
<p><b>Recommendation 2.</b></p> <p>RLC must promote interaction between the RIs in the debate over the demands of member countries and technical assistance, which will help enhance a strategic programmatic view of the RIs.</p>	<b>Accepted</b>	<p>Management proposes the following actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Developing an integrated programmatic proposal, including the three Regional Initiatives and the COVID-19 response, for submission to the Regional Conference for its consideration.</li> <li>ii. Full implementation of RLC’s programmatic approach, including inter alia: promoting integrated responses across RI areas through regional TCP projects; further enhancing the</li> </ul>	RLC Programme Stream	End of 2022	No

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		coordination and implementation roles of the RIs; strengthening the multidisciplinary technical networks, called clusters, to foster knowledge management; and promoting joint programme implementation dialogue at the country level.			
<b>Recommendation 3.</b>  RLC must promote actions that result in the ownership of RIs by countries.	<b>Accepted</b>	Management proposes the following actions: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Enhance consultation with Members in the design of the regional programme.</li> <li>ii. Ensure that all new CPFs are fully aligned with the Strategic Framework and MTP and the UNSDCF.</li> <li>iii. Conduct reviews of ongoing CPFs to identify potential misalignments with the new Strategic Framework and MTP and define specific action plans to correct these issues.</li> <li>iv. Organize subregional reviews of the relationships between CPF and RIs.</li> <li>v. Strengthen the country-level monitoring, reporting and communication of significant results and achievements of the RIs.</li> <li>vi. f) Promote regular meetings with country offices to monitor programme implementation in order to update the needs from COs and enhance the RIs as entry points for technical assistance from the region.</li> </ol>	RLC Programme Stream ; Subregional Offices Stream	End of 2022	No
<b>Recommendation 4.</b>  RLC must strengthen its resource mobilization strategy to continue adapting projects based on the strategic vision of the RIs and to encourage a more active participation of member countries.	<b>Accepted</b>	Management proposes the following actions: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Within a general framework, the 2022-23 Regional Resource Mobilization Strategy will contain specific guidelines for different broad categories of technical assistance, projects and resource partners.</li> <li>ii. Training on resource mobilization will be provided to different groups of CO, in accordance with their specific needs.</li> </ol>	RLC Programme Stream; Strategic Analysis and Innovation Stream	End of 2022	No

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		iii. The Strategic Analysis and Innovation Stream will issue periodic updates of resource partners, resource mobilization opportunities, and reports on progress made in resource mobilization. iv. d) FAO cannot “lobby” large funds, but RLC will engage with Member countries and other partners, including resource partners, to identify and address specific needs of different groups of countries.			
<b>Recommendation 5.</b>  RLC must develop actions to improve project implementation in order to increase the effectiveness of FAO support.	<b>Accepted</b>	The efficient and effective implementation of a rapidly-increasing project portfolio, within a context of a constant regular programme, is definitely one of the key concerns of the Regional Office. A number of actions have been taken to promote innovation on our business model, to do more with the same resources, with high technical standards, and with impact on the ground. The Regional Office will, inter alia:  i. Continue the work of the “Rapid Growth Support Team” to build the capacities of Country Offices before they have to start implementing large projects. ii. Maintain and, to the extent possible, strengthen the capacity development, learning and knowledge management activities carried out by the Country Office Capacity Development and Support Stream. iii. Improve the communication, dialogue and collaborative work between the Country Offices, subregional offices and the regional Country Office Capacity Development and Support Stream; And involve HQ units in project implementation in the region.	Country Office Development and Support Stream; Subregional Offices Stream.	End of 2022	No

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		iv. Improve the monitoring of project implementation and respond in a timely manner in support of Country Offices, if and when problems arise. v. Continue implementing and developing the programmatic approach in order to have efficiency gains and improve the quality and timeliness of technical support to projects and Country Offices. vi. Continue collaborating with teams in Headquarters, to support in the streamlining of procedures related to the project cycle, to HR, and to administration and logistics.			
<b>Recommendation 6.</b>  RLC must define a strategy for scaling up actions that will ensure FAO's actions have a greater impact.	Accepted	The Regional Office's Strategic Analysis and Innovation Stream will: i. Document the scaling-up processes in a sample of projects and conduct a systematic analysis of when, why and how the scaling up of FAO projects occurs. ii. Develop a strategy to support the scaling up efforts and process, in collaboration with the Programme Stream, the Subregional Offices, the Country Offices, and HQ teams. iii. A regional programme of capacity development in support of scaling up will be designed and implemented.	Strategic Analysis and Innovation Stream, with support of Programme and subregional offices Streams	End of 2022	Yes  Include resources to finance capacity building program for scaling up (action c)
<b>Recommendation 7.</b>  RLC must develop a holistic strategy for using monitoring and evaluation results to facilitate the development of evidence-based projects.	Accepted	Through dialogue and in coordination with OED and PSS, the Regional Office will develop a strategy and the corresponding systems and tools to capture, organize and increase the use of monitoring and evaluation results and lessons learned, in the design of new projects.	Strategic Analysis and Innovation Stream; Country Office and Support Stream	End of 2022	No

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<b>Recommendation 8.</b>  RLC must strengthen its strategy for mainstreaming gender equality when designing and implementing projects.	Accepted	The Regional Office will: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Design and disseminate a regional gender toolkit for the project cycle, as well as a project checklist that includes gender-related actions.</li> <li>ii. Conduct capacity building that addresses the gender-related actions that need to be carried out in the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation phases of projects.</li> <li>iii. Provide mentoring and support to the national and subregional focal points.</li> </ol>	RLC Programme Stream	End of 2022	Yes  Include resources to finance the implementation of the Regional capacity building program (action b)
<b>Recommendation 9.</b>  RLC must take action to streamline and strengthen the strategy for including indigenous, Afro-descent and tribal groups in order to comply with the principle of leaving no one behind.	Accepted	The Regional Office will: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Launch a regional strategy to guide its work with Indigenous and Tribal Peoples, aligned with the new strategic framework as well as the priorities identified in the Regional Conference; the preparation of the strategy will be done in consultation with indigenous peoples' organizations across the region.</li> <li>ii. Strengthen focal points network.</li> <li>iii. Develop monitoring mechanisms to ensure that the existing resources within the RIs and FAO projects are benefitting indigenous peoples: a baseline will be formulated, based on a sample of projects, and progress will be monitored periodically.</li> <li>iv. Enhance resource mobilization that takes into consideration the role of indigenous peoples in mitigating and adapting to climate change, conserving biological and cultural diversity and forest governance, while reducing poverty and food insecurity, and preventing social conflicts.</li> </ol>	RLC Programme Stream	2 years	Yes  Include resources to finance the implementation of the regional strategy as well as capacity building efforts (action b)



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<p><b>Recommendation 10.</b></p> <p>RLC must carry out actions that maintain support for COs and Subregional Offices in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic while acknowledging the additional workload and efforts being made by staff to fulfil their responsibilities.</p>	<b>Accepted</b>	<p>The Regional Office will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Develop a strategy with the corresponding systems and tools, for cross-Country Office capacity strengthening to promote innovation in business models and practices, to reduce workload while improving effectiveness.</li> <li>ii. Reduce the number and frequency of requests to Country Offices for information and reports, from the Regional and Subregional Offices, while advocating for similar actions from HQ and the UN System.</li> <li>iii. Review the Country Offices’ functional structures and work closely with the Offices towards the establishment of sustainable core teams.</li> </ul>	Country Office Development and Support Stream	End of 2022	No

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