

Programme Evaluation Series

Evaluation of the Flexible Multi-Partner Mechanism (FMM)

Annex 1. Terms of reference

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1. Background and context of the mechanism

1. The Flexible Multi-Partner Mechanism (FMM) was established in 2010 as a corporate funding mechanism for partners willing to contribute to the Food and Agriculture Organizations of the United Nations (FAO) programme of work through un-earmarked or lightly earmarked funds. In the current phase, the FMM departed from the common project-based approach in favour of a programmatic approach to strengthen FAO's Strategic Framework and Medium-Term Plan (MTP) through contributions to the Strategic Objectives.
2. The first resource partners to provide funds to the FMM were Sweden and the Netherlands. The mechanism attracted additional contributions from Flanders (in 2011 and 2013), the Kingdom of Belgium (in 2013), and Switzerland (in 2016). The total contribution from 2010 to 2017 amounted to about USD 75 million, of which USD 47 million was received for the phase (2014–2017). However, following the revamping of the FMM in 2018, FMM membership increased from four in 2014–17 to eight resource partners in the current phase (2018–21), including Norway, France, Flanders and Italy. Commitments for the current phase amount to approximately USD 41 million as of 2020, with new contributions in the pipeline.
3. In 2015, the FMM underwent an independent evaluation covering the period from 2010, the year of the FMM establishment, to 2015. The evaluation highlighted key areas for improvements to strengthen the FMM governance system, resource allocation criteria, partnership strategy, resource mobilization, operation and reporting system. The FMM resource partners also requested enhancement of the FMM in line with the evaluation recommendations, particularly those related to the governance of the mechanism and accountability systems.
4. In 2018, building on findings of the 2015 evaluation and subsequent discussions with resource partners, the FMM underwent profound changes and adopted **five strategic shifts** to improve its effectiveness and efficiency. The five strategic shifts were intended as fundamental to accountability and transparency and holding the key to expanding the overall FMM financial portfolio as well as increasing the number and diversity of partners.
5. The characteristics of revamped FMM are:
 - i. **Responsive governance for effective decision-making processes**
6. The renewed FMM has put in place a governance structure consisting of an Executive Committee, Advisory Group (resource partners) and Coordination. The Executive Committee, composed of two Deputy Directors-General (DDGs) and the Director of Resource Mobilization and Private Sector Partnerships Division (PSR) as secretary, is responsible for final review and decision on programme, sub-programme proposals, and recommending resource allocation based on established criteria. Regional Assistant Directors-General (ADGs) and Strategic Programme Leaders (SPLs) are co-opted on ad hoc basis for strategic, programmatic and technical oversight. Approvals are shared with the FMM Advisory Group composed of FMM resource partners (voluntary basis) for information. The Advisory Group guides the Executive Committee on overall direction of governance, management and implementation from resource partners perspective, helps identify new opportunities for resource mobilization, emerging issues for future programme and sub programmes. It also provides feedback on annual reports. FMM Coordination is facilitated by PSR under the leadership of the PSR Director. A full time FMM Senior Coordinator is supported by Partnerships and Fund Liaison, Marketing, Outreach and Reporting, and the Business Development units.

The evaluation will assess the operationalization of the above arrangements, note what has worked well or improved, and challenges if any arising from the same.

7. FMM programming and resource allocations are proposed at the Strategic Objective (SO) and Organizational Outcome levels. However, unlike the previous phase which did not have explicit FMM priority thematic areas for programming, the renewed FMM, in consultation with resource partners and Strategic Programmes, has prioritized six programme areas considered important to achieving SDGs and FAO's MTP 2018–2021: i) evidence-based policy, global instruments and knowledge products; ii) climate change (especially climate-smart agricultural approaches, and nationally determined contributions [NDCs]); iii) generational gaps, gender and decent rural employment (focusing on women empowerment and gender equality, youth employment and child labour issues); iv) migration and fragility; v) resilient and sustainable food systems; and vi) oceans and Blue Growth (fisheries and aquaculture). Final decision on allocating FMM resources among SO and FMM programmes and sub programmes is done by the European Commission (EC).

The evaluation will assess the process and rationale for prioritising these six specific programme areas, and their relative importance, in view of the next FMM phase and new corporate Strategic Framework.

ii. Criteria for resource allocation

8. A major aspect of accountability in FMM is the use of unambiguous criteria and transparent processes in allocating resources for programmes and sub-programmes. The former FMM phase had a number of inadequacies in this regard. The governance document of the renewed FMM provides clear guidance for resource allocation criteria: innovation and potential for transformative change in areas of FAO comparative advantage; critically underfunded FAO priorities without duplicating other fund sources; global and regional priorities, and among countries, preferably low-income developing countries (LIDC), fragile, and small island developing States (SIDS). Proposals demonstrating potential for concrete, innovative and scalable results will receive high priority, while discouraging 'piloting' projects that could be funded from other extrabudgetary resources. Cross-sectoral integrated work, cross-cutting areas and partnerships are the supplementing criteria for allocation. Countries at risk of being off target of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) will receive special attention. While resource partners can earmark priority programmes and regions, the choice of countries in sub-programmes is made by the Strategic Programmes (SPs) in consultation with region, subject to EC approval. Proposals need to demonstrate clear contributions to the achievement of the Strategic Framework besides alignment with Country Programming Frameworks (CPFs). Clear engagement with relevant technical units and/or regions is required at the concept note development stage. Engagement with countries would be mandatory at full 'Project Document (ProDoc)' development.

The evaluation will assess the processes used to [solicit, shortlist and approve] applications for FMM funding. This will also include the interactions of the FMM with the former Business Development Task Force set up by PSR to help prepare a catalogue of proposals, through the Strategic Programmes (now disbanded).

9. The renewed FMM makes a clear distinction that the delivery units are not standalone projects, but programmes having their own unified results chains linked to the Strategic Framework. However, being cross-sectoral, they entail participation by several technical units, coordinated by Lead Technical Units for each programme.

The evaluation will assess the benefits, added value and implications on transaction costs of a separate results framework (theory of change [TOC], results-chain, and risk analysis) for the renewed FMM, considering it aims to support the achievement of FAO Strategic Framework. This will also reflect United Nations (UN) Standard practices on Results Framework for Funding Pooled Mechanisms.

iii. Integrated monitoring and reporting

10. Monitoring arrangements: The previous FMM phase did not have any specific monitoring requirements for the FMM and drew from the monitoring mechanisms of the Strategic Programmes led by the Office of Strategy, Programme and Budget (OSP). However, the renewed FMM, which has its own results chain nested within the Strategic Framework, requires Strategic Programmes to jointly carry out the planning, monitoring and reporting, and identify how the contributions have made a difference in achieving the expected results, and reflect the principles of FMM. The FMM results are also to feed into the existing corporate results-based management framework. Periodic review meetings with the Strategic Programmes were also outlined to discuss FMM implementation challenges and follow up actions, including re-allocation of unspent resources between and within programmes/sub-programmes.
11. Reporting: Reporting was stated as one of the challenges in the previous FMM, there was insufficient clarity on the scope and level of detail in reporting, as the FMM was to support the Strategic Framework and was to draw from the corporate biennial and quadrennial reports. FMM reports (compiled by PSR) were very concise and in a prescribed template and had very limited qualitative narratives. In the absence of FMM specific indicators and reporting requirements, the reporting (done by PSR, drawing from technical reports and informal conversations with implementing units) could not sufficiently identify FMM contributions to FAO corporate results or outcomes emerging from FMM interventions. The renewed FMM has increased reporting requirements, which include: two FMM specific main reports every year- annual report narrative, and financial report. Annual reports and a quadrennial narrative report (four-year period coinciding with the MTP) will be prepared by the lead implementing unit, and respective programme delivery teams, coordinated and consolidated by the FMM Coordination unit. This narrative report will provide an assessment of progress/ achievement of expected outputs, and progress towards corporate outcomes indicated under the FMM. Further, the reports are required to be produced by the implementing units and consolidated and finalized by PSR.

iv. Enhanced visibility and marketing

12. The governance document outlines elements of visibility and outreach and refers to allocations within each trust fund to cover costs for the same. An FMM website, appropriate social media tools and event-based visibility opportunities are included among the promotional venues.

v. Financial management

13. Traceability, accountability and visibility of FMM resources is a key feature of the renewed FMM design. The key elements are i) the creation of separate Baby account for each resource partner through which funds are managed; ii) FMM Multi Donor Trust Fund accounts were established for the six programme areas aligned to the four-year Medium Term Programme cycle, and introduction of qualifiers in the Field Programme Management Information System (FPMIS) for FMM programmes and corresponding SOs; and iii) qualifiers for sub-programmes, in terms of symbols and project entity/numbers.

1.1 Theory of change and results framework

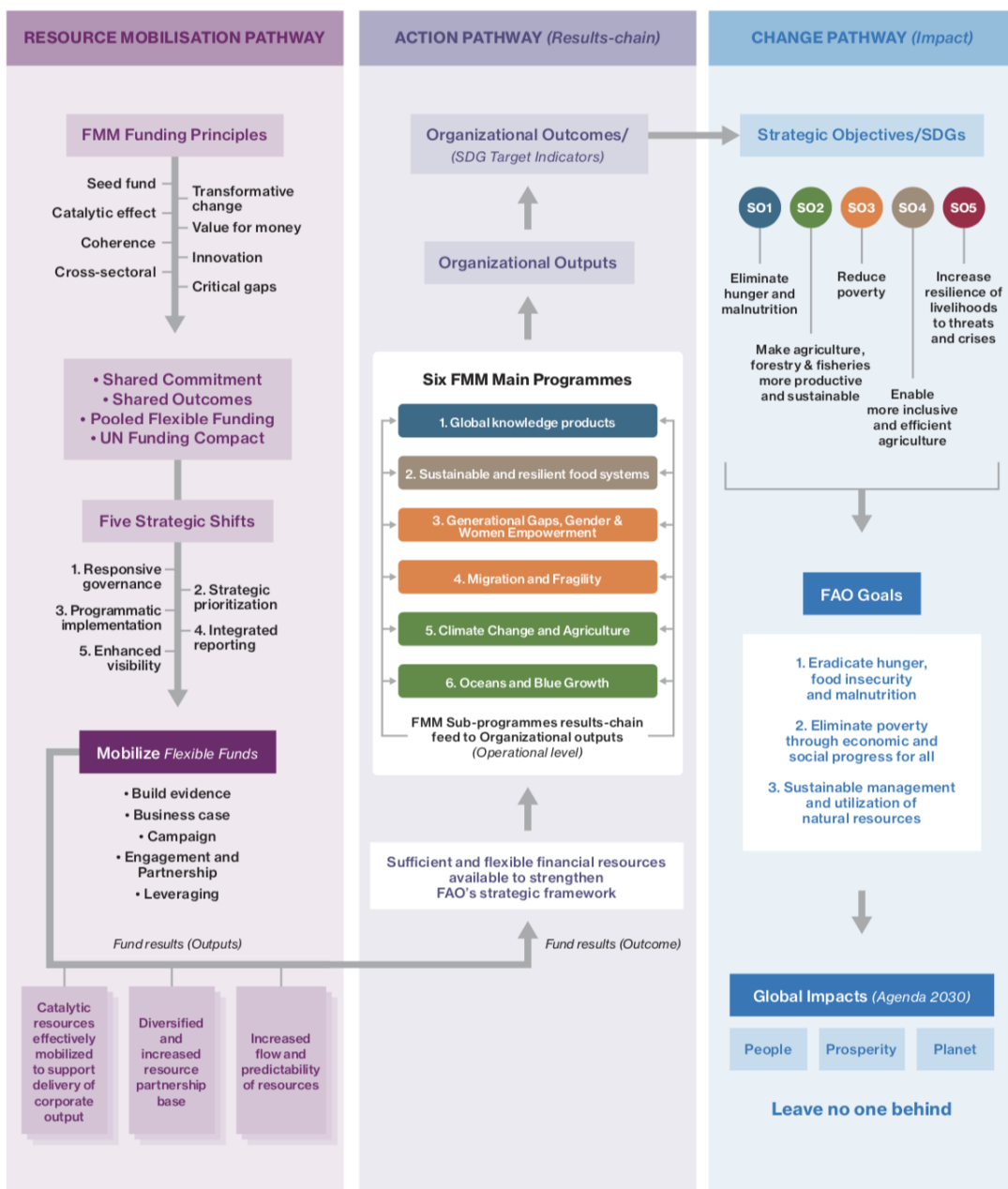
14. A significant change in the new FMM is that it has its own theory of change and results framework, unlike the previous phases. This makes the new FMM more of a results-oriented mechanism than merely a pass-through funding modality to support achievement of FAO's strategic objectives. Having its own TOC and results framework distinguishes FMM from other Multi Donor Trust Funds in FAO and is making it a standard UN funding mechanism with robust management, fiduciary and result framework. The FMM management explains the basis as follows:

Until recently, the FMM did not have a theory of change and dedicated results-based management framework. Consequently, the results-chain of individual projects have been loosely linked to the Strategic Framework of FAO. Reporting has been a challenge due to a mismatch between FMM project results and corporate results, and the contribution of individual projects to the thematic priorities. Resources partners would like to see where their support has contributed to the corporate results-chain, and to what extent actual delivery matches with planned actions.¹

15. The FMM TOC has three components: resource mobilization pathway, action pathway (results chain) – linking FMM programmes and FAO's corporate Strategic Framework, and change pathway (impact) reflecting the FMM influence translating to change at level of FAO SOs as per the FAO MTP, with link to global impacts in terms of 2030 Agenda and its relevant SDGs.

¹ Para 4, Theory of Change and Results Framework

Figure 1. The Flexible Multi-Partner Mechanism theory of change



16. The evaluation notes that the TOC was finalized recently (August 2020), whereas several subprograms are already under implementation, and thus did not have the opportunity to draw from the FMM theory of change. However, the first version of the TOC was developed in 2018 at the start of the FMM revamping process, which was shared with resource partners and SPs. The latest version has built on the TOC earlier proposed by the evaluation report (results-chain approach), and has integrated major improvement in the last three years based on the strategic fit, fund level and programme results-chain, six programmes and the high-level results (SOs, SDGs, and link to Agenda 2030).
17. The TOC statement is based on the following assumptions, that if:
 - i. increased pooled and flexible (less-earmarked) funds are available, in the adequate volume and quality, and are channelled through an efficient mechanism, to complement, catalyse and leverage other financial and non-financial resources, it will help strengthen

- FAO's Strategic Framework and enhance the deployment of the Organization's full capacity, accelerate transformative impacts and delivery of the SDG targets;
- ii. increased share of flexible pooled funding is applied in a more programmatic, harmonised and integrated manner, it will reduce transaction costs, fragmentation and duplication, and increase value for money;
 - iii. effective structures for responsive governance and decision-making, strategic prioritisation of fundable areas and programmatic implementation are put at the centre of delivering on flexible funding, FAO's Strategic Objectives will contribute more effectively to the achievement of the SDGs; and
 - iv. both FAO and the Member countries fulfil their shared responsibilities on the UN Reform in the context of UN Financing Compact, in particular, by increasing flexible funding, it will accelerate provision and effective deployment of development solutions—capacity development, policies, financial resources and leverage partnership that can effectively address sustainable development challenges by 2030.

The evaluation will assess the FMM performance and prospect for achieving impact based on the three pathways with an approach that will be outlined in the inception report.

18. The FAO's organizational structure has undergone major changes over the last months to reflect the current Management's vision of the organization mandate and role to play to effectively respond to member countries' needs and priorities. The changes have mainly targeted the headquarters' organigramme, while the decentralized offices structure remains the same as of now. In the new structure, the Director-General (DG) and his core leadership team, consisting of the three DDGs, the Chief Economist and the Chief Scientist are at the center top of the organigramme. The ADGs are no longer responsible for managing departments as was the case in the previous structure, and would focus on specific assignments given by the DG in key areas of the Organization's mandate. These assignments could change over time depending on the priorities and would include supporting policy and strategy, high-level events, senior-level diplomatic engagements, and resource mobilization.
19. Other important change in the new structure is the disbandment of Strategic Programme Management teams, which were established in the 2016–17 Programme of Work and Budget (PWB) for each Strategic Objective, and the creation of additional Offices to give greater importance to their related themes. These offices include: Office of Emergencies and Resilience, Office of Innovation, Office of Small Island Developing States (SIDS), Least Developed Countries (LDCs) and Landlocked Developing Countries (LLDCs), and the Office of SDGs.
20. Furthermore, FAO has launched the Hand-in-Hand Initiative (HIHI) in October 2019, which is presented by the Organization as *"an evidence-based, country-led and country-owned initiative to accelerate agricultural transformation and sustainable rural development to eradicate poverty (Sustainable Development Goal 1 (SDG1)) and end hunger and all forms of malnutrition (SDG 2). The initiative adopts a robust match-making approach that proactively brings together beneficiary countries with donors, private sector organizations, international financial institutions, research institutions, and civil society organizations to mobilize means of implementation that support accelerated action. HIHI prioritizes countries and territories within countries where poverty and hunger are most concentrated or where national capacities are most limited owing to history, conflict or natural disasters. It also introduces a framework for monitoring and impact analysis"*.²

² Progress Report on the Hand-in-Hand Initiative, PC June 2020, <http://www.fao.org/3/nc857en/nc857en.pdf>

21. In the last progress report presented to the Programme Committee in June 2020, it was reported that 14 countries have confirmed their participation in the initiative, including: Burkina Faso, Ecuador, Ethiopia, Haiti, Kiribati, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Mali, Nepal, Pakistan, Papua New Guinea, the Solomon Islands, Tajikistan, Tuvalu, Yemen and Zimbabwe), and another 20 countries, including middle-income countries with large populations or high levels of rural poverty, have expressed interest in participating in HIHI as either beneficiaries or both beneficiaries and donors.

2. Flexible Multi-Partner Mechanism financial portfolio

2.1 Overview of Flexible Multi-Partner Mechanism portfolio 2014–May 2018

22. The FMM portfolio for 2014–2017 (with extension till May 2018) comprised 32 projects organized around four of FAO's Strategic Objectives (SOs), namely, SO1, SO2, SO3 and SO4. These implemented work in over 70 countries.

2.1.1 Budget allocations

23. SO4 received the largest portion of FMM funds (33 percent), and also accounted for the largest number of projects in the FMM portfolio. SO1 received the smallest portion of FMM funds (14 percent), and had three projects. However, the average size of the project budgets in SO1 was the highest among the SOs.

Strategic Objective	USD value and (% of total)	Number of projects	Average value (USD) per project
SO1: Eradicating hunger, food insecurity and malnutrition	6.7 million (14 percent)	3	2.2 million
SO2: Increase provision of goods and services from agriculture, forestry and fisheries in a sustainable manner	10.6 million (23 percent)	9	1.2 million
SO3 : Reduce rural poverty	14.3 million (30 percent)	8	1.8 million
SO4: Enable inclusive and efficient agricultural and food systems	15.5 million (33 percent)	12	1.3 million
Total		32*	

*includes evaluation of FMM.

- i. nearly half of the 2014–2017 portfolio (15 projects) had budgets of less than USD 1 million, and these were distributed almost equally across Strategic Objectives 2, 3 and 4.
- ii. one-third of projects (11) with budgets of USD 1 million up to USD 2 million;
- iii. there were four projects with budgets over USD 2 million up to USD 4 million;
- iv. one project over USD 4 million (in SO3 – started in 2013); and
- v. one project over USD 6 million (in SO4 – started in 2013).

2.1.2 Brief description of Strategic Objectives portfolios

SO1 portfolio

24. Projects under SO1 were aimed at improved capacities of governments in monitoring trends in food security and nutrition, monitoring and evaluation of policies, programmes and legislation relevant to food security and nutrition, for informed decision-making. (Food security monitoring for SDGs and Voices of the Hungry). SO1 included capacity strengthening in application of the VGGT. The SDG monitoring projects were designed for global reach – 140 countries. The Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land, Fisheries and Forests (VGGT) project covered 20 countries, mainly in the Africa region, with a small number of countries from the Asia-Pacific region and the Latin America and Caribbean region.

SO2 portfolio

25. Projects under SO2 focused on climate-smart agriculture. The three largest projects were “Restoration of degraded land” (USD 3 million), “Scaling up climate-smart agriculture” (USD 1.9 million), and the “Blue Growth Initiative” (USD 1.85 million). Projects focused on implementation of innovative practices, policies and legislative frameworks at country level. The coverage was across a narrower range of countries than SO1 projects. The “Blue Growth Initiative” supported SIDS (e.g. Cabo Verde, Madagascar, Seychelles, Sao Tome and Principe, and Barbados), while “Scaling up climate-smart agriculture” supported Malawi and Zambia. “Restoration of degraded land” supported Cambodia, Guatemala, Lebanon, Peru, the Philippines and Rwanda, as well as regional and global actions.
26. Other projects in the SO2 portfolio included development of a globally applicable approach and methodology for an agricultural component to National Adaptation Plan, with implementation support to Malawi, and regional level support for climate change officers to link countries’ efforts in regional initiatives; climate-smart agro-forestry in Guatemala and Honduras; and strengthening integrated farming approaches for food security, nutrition and biodiversity in Burkina Faso and Mali.

SO3 portfolio

27. SO3 had two large projects:
 - i. “Decent Rural Youth Employment” (USD 4.9 million), with implementation at global, regional (Regional Office for Africa [RAF] and Regional Office for Latin America and the Caribbean [RLC]) and country level (Guatemala, Senegal and Uganda).
 - ii. “Dimitra Project: Rural Poverty Reduction” (through strengthening rural institutions, empowerment of poor people, and capacity building and policy advice on gender [USD 3.6 million]), with implementation at the global, regional and country levels (Central African Republic, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Mali, the Niger and Senegal).
28. Other projects in excess of USD 1 million:
 - i. “Expansion of social protection coverage to the rural poor” (USD 1.4 million) – policy advice, capacity development and advocacy for strengthening social protection systems for the rural poor.
 - ii. “Rural poverty reduction through job creation in small ruminant value chains in Ethiopian Highlands” (USD 1.4 million) - support to improve access of rural poor producers and households to appropriate technologies and knowledge, inputs and markets.
29. Smaller projects in the SO3 portfolio include “Strengthening Forest and Farm Producer Organizations”; “Decent on- and off-farm work for youth in migration prone areas of Senegal”; and “Support to the Agricultural Service and Digital Inclusion in Africa (ASDIA) project”.

SO4 portfolio

30. The largest project in the SO4 portfolio (and the 2014–2017 portfolio) is the “Agribusinesses and agri-food chains project” (USD 6.54 million) with its two components: “Food loss and waste reduction” and “Enabling women to benefit more equally from agri-food value chains”. The project involves generation of knowledge products, policy and advocacy tools. The component dealing with gender-sensitive value chains has a country level component implemented in Burkina Faso, Côte d’Ivoire, Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Morocco, Rwanda and Tunisia.

31. Other projects in the SO4 with relatively smaller budgets:
- i. “Global initiative on food loss and waste reduction” (USD 1.5 million): gathering data on food loss and waste (FLW), developing guidelines, strategies and policies to address FLW in countries (Cameroon, Zambia, Zimbabwe, Lao People’s Democratic Republic, Myanmar, Colombia, Dominican Republic, Jamaica, Egypt and Morocco).
 - ii. “Inclusive value chain development in support of sustainable intensification in Africa” (USD 1.35 million) supporting Benin, Cameroon, Chad, Côte d’Ivoire, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Ghana, Kenya, Mali, Mozambique, Rwanda and Zambia – agribusiness training courses, regional training on agricultural value chain finance, appraisals to guide African governments on design, implementation and monitoring of public-private partnerships in agriculture.
 - iii. “Developing sustainable food systems for urban areas” (USD 1 million) in Kenya, Bangladesh and Peru: development and testing of rapid assessment tool, establishing food systems multi-stakeholder platforms and development of comprehensive food systems plans at city level, supporting institutions to use new tools for improving urban food systems for sustainability and inclusiveness.

2.2 Overview of current FMM portfolio 2018–2021

32. The FMM portfolio was restructured in 2018 as part of a comprehensive overhaul of the FMM. One of the major changes to the portfolio was the adoption of a programmatic approach. The FMM Framework is organized around the six priority programmes mentioned earlier, each with a number of sub-programmes:
- i. evidence-based policy, global instruments and knowledge products;
 - ii. resilient and sustainable food systems;
 - iii. migration and fragility;
 - iv. generational gaps, women empowerment and decent rural employment;
 - v. climate change and agriculture; and
 - vi. oceans and Blue Growth.
33. FMM portfolio has a total of 24 sub-programmes. Each sub-programme contributes to one or more FAO Strategic Objective. For example, Sub-programme 1.1: Leveraging global instruments and knowledge products contributes to SO1, while Sub-programme 1.2: Nutrition sensitive agriculture and social protection contributes to SO1, SO2 and SO3.
34. For the new phase of the FMM, commitments of USD 41 million were mobilized, and of this, USD 28.5 million was allocated to 17 sub-programmes (12 in 2019 and five in 2020), while seven have not yet been funded. Additional sub-programmes are in the pipeline.
35. Programme 5: Climate change and agriculture is clearly a priority, receiving 37 percent of the allocated funds, followed by Programme 2: Resilient and sustainable food systems (26 percent of allocated funds). In the case of Programme 6: Oceans and Blue Growth, no sub-programmes have received funding allocations. Programme 3: Migration and fragility has only received an allocation for one of its three sub-programmes.

Programme	Number of sub-programmes funded	Allocation (USD million)	Percentage of total allocation (rounded upwards)
1	4	5	18%
2	4	7.5	26%
3	1	1	4%
4	3	4.5	16%
5	5	10.5	37%
6	0	0	0%
TOTAL	17	28.5	100%

36. The budget allocation per sub-programme ranges from USD 1 million to USD 3 million over two to three years, with most sub-programmes most commonly receiving USD 1 million. When looking at the number of implementation countries for several of the sub-programmes, the allocations are somewhat small. For example, sub-programme 2.1: Sustainable, resilient and inclusive food systems received an allocation of USD 2 million to cover activities in ten countries (Barbados, Egypt, Eswatini, Jamaica, Kyrgyzstan, Palestine, Suriname, Tanzania, Uganda and Uzbekistan) across different regions.
37. Sub-programme duration is in most instances two years to three years. In the case of Sub-programmes that received their funding allocation in 2020, the implementation period is less than two years, unless they continue beyond 2021. This is in contrast to the previous phase of the FMM where projects were implemented over a period of three to five years.

3. Purpose and scope of the evaluation

38. An evaluation of the current FMM phase (2018–2021) has been foreseen in the FMM Governance Document. The purpose of the Evaluation is to inform FMM's main stakeholders (resource partners, FAO Senior Management, PSR and the FMM Coordination, and other actors) about the FMM's overall performance and contribution towards FAO's Strategic Objectives and the SDGs. It aims also to generate lessons and recommendations with the objective to inform the design of the next FMM phase (2022–2025).
39. The evaluation will cover all FMM funded activities in the current phase, to February 2021. However, given the short implementation history of the present phase, an assessment of results for the present phase is not feasible. Therefore, assessment of results will be based on the previous phase, and focus on added value, catalytic effect and comparative advantage of FMM resources to achieving FAO's organizational outputs and outcomes. The evaluation will look for concrete examples of key elements outlined as principles of FMM such as leveraging and catalytic effect, partnership, capacity development, policy support, global knowledge products, etc.
40. The assessment of present phase will be more from the perspective of strategic positioning, especially the implications of the five strategic shifts undertaken by FMM and the state of their operationalization. Strategic positioning for the purposes of the evaluation will be based on the three outcome pathways of the FMM theory of change. The evaluation shall seek to identify the benefits of FMM flexibility for FAO's strategic framework programming, the catalytic effects aimed by the FMM in terms of global knowledge products, innovative practices, and financing leverage, and clear qualitative and substantive narratives linking the FMM programme results to the Strategic Framework results chains.
41. The formulation of the next phase of FMM will need to take into account three important developments:
 - i. Need for COVID-19 response mechanisms: Exploit FMM as a suitable mechanism for channelling and managing the development component of the newly created FAO's COVID-19 Response and Recover Programme, based on the seven identified priority areas.
 - ii. The new FAO Strategic Framework, which may or may not have the five SOs as the pillars but replace them with a number of thematic priority areas. Here, evaluation will mainly focus on how the next FMM phase (2022–2025) can align with the new Strategic Framework, and new thematic areas that might be considered.
 - iii. The new FAO Organigramme, which does not have Strategic Programme Teams, and will require FMM to reconfigure implementation arrangements with Technical Units. This will include examining the effectiveness, or otherwise, of engaging through an intermediary arrangement (such as the SPs or any new arrangement that may replace SPs in the near future).
42. The evaluation will assess to what extent the present design and modalities are suitable to incorporate these developments and propose adjustments as may be necessary.

4. Evaluation objectives and questions

43. The main objectives of the evaluation are to:
- i. Assess the strategic positioning of the FMM in the context of an evolving FAO and the 2030 Agenda, and UN Funding Compact.
 - ii. Assess the improvements of the FMM from the last evaluation.
 - iii. Assess the mechanism's contributions under each SO as well as the sustainability prospects of the results achieved.
 - iv. Identify key enablers and constraints to the achievement of the mechanism's objectives.
 - v. Draw forward-looking recommendations to enhance the mechanism's performance and inform the design of its future phase. This will include a reflection on the proposed new FAO's Strategic Framework and advise on possible alignments or adjustments of FMM programmes to these in the next phase (2022–2025).
44. Based on the above, the specific focus of the evaluation will be on four elements:
- i. FMM strategic positioning (robustness of the FMM TOC and results framework, relevance, value addition and complementarity).
 - ii. Effectiveness of the implementation modalities as enablers of operational effectiveness (processes for operational efficiency, governance, marketing and resource mobilization, results monitoring, reporting and communications).
 - iii. Potential for catalytic effect and transformational impacts (results effectiveness, sustainability and scalability).
 - iv. Enablers and constraints: Factors that have contributed to the performance of the FMM in previous and present phases, and what can be improved in the next phase.
 - v. Forward looking perspectives: Flexibility and adaptability of FMM design and operational arrangements to incorporate changes to FAO Strategic Framework and architecture, emerging frontier issues and unplanned scenarios (COVID-19 for instance).
45. In making the assessments, the evaluation will specifically focus on the nature and implications of the changes introduced in the renewed FMM in comparison to the previous FMM cycles, including how previously identified challenges have been addressed, to appreciate their significance and potential contributions to results effectiveness and sustainable impacts. Given the early stages of implementation of the renewed FMM, assessment of catalytic and transformational impacts will be done only for the projects of the previous cycle.

4.1 Key evaluation questions

46. Based on the above lines of enquiry, an initial list of evaluation questions has been prepared.

How is the FMM strategically positioned in the context of an evolving FAO and the 2030 Agenda, and in the context of the UN Funding Compact?

- i. What are the distinctive FMM features that facilitate the attainment of FAO's corporate strategic objectives and the 2030 Agenda, and in the context of the UN Funding Compact?
- ii. Is there clear articulation of the value and benefits of FMM flexible funding mechanism? Is FMM prioritizing based on the set of criteria defined in the Governance Document? (e.g.

transformative impact, scalability, catalytic effect, critical gaps and underfunded, priorities with high potential for impacts, etc)?

- iii. Are the FMM contribution pathways to various SOs, SDGs and other goals clearly formulated?
- iv. How do FMM's features differ from other flexible funding modalities in FAO such as the Africa Solidarity Trust Fund (ASTF) and the Special Fund for Emergency and Rehabilitation Activities (SFERA)?
- v. Is the FMM portfolio sufficiently programmatic? Have programmes and sub programmes been designed with commensurate and predictable funding over a realistic medium-term horizon? Are the enlisted outcomes realistic within the intended scale and duration of subprogrammes?
- vi. To what extent is FMM contributing to fostering multidisciplinary approaches?

How effective are the current FMM implementation arrangements and the strategic shifts to support programme delivery for impacts?

- i. Has the formulation of the FMM TOC, programme results chains and log frames been an adequately consulted process? Have SPs, technical units, country offices and resource partners been consulted duly in their formulation?
- ii. Are there clearly outlined processes and procedures for FMM implementation and accountability arrangements?
- iii. Are FMM processes for resource allocations transparent and based on clear criteria? Are the selection processes documented?
- iv. Is there sufficient awareness and understanding of FMM within FAO units, decentralized offices and key resource partners?
- v. Are the FMM processes simplified, non-duplicating and entail low transaction costs for resource partners? For FAO implementing units and partners?
- vi. What are the processes and mechanisms in place for quality assurance of programme proposals, reviews and monitoring? Does FMM coordination have adequate resources and staffing for the same?
- vii. Are the FMM's processes for monitoring, reporting, communications and visibility clearly formulated? Are they adequately resourced?
- viii. Has FMM formulated and pursued a dedicated resource mobilization strategy to diversify resource partnerships? What has been the response? Does FMM have resource mobilization targets and processes for pipeline management?
- ix. Has the new FMM resulted in expansion of the resource partnerships? Has it led to enhanced levels of funding in the aggregate? Has it led to renewals/increased contributions by individual resource partners compared to previous cycles?

What are FMM's key contributions to attaining FAO's Strategic Objectives, impacts, scalability and sustainability?

- i. How does the FMM facilitate transformative changes in the chosen programme areas?
- ii. Are the catalytic and transformative elements of FMM subprogrammes well identified and articulated and reported?
- iii. To what extent has the FMM contributed to gender equality and women empowerment in beneficiary countries?

- iv. What are the main successes and failings in programmes implemented in the previous phase compared to the new phase? What results would not have happened without the FMM? What lessons do they provide in terms of value for money, synergies, catalytic effects and effectiveness of FMM modalities?

What have been the enablers and constraints to the achievement of FMM objectives, in the following dimensions?

- i. funding arrangements: Critical threshold of funding to have catalytic effect, predictable funding for the MTP cycle, alignment of disbursement cycles with programming cycles, and light earmarking;
- ii. portfolio quality: number, average duration and budgets of subprogrammes, reflecting programmatic approaches and reduction in fragmentation;
- iii. coordination, monitoring and reporting quality;
- iv. accountability and governance arrangements; and
- v. resource mobilization, marketing, promotion and visibility.

How effective are the governance mechanisms introduced in the renewed FMM?

- i. Are there common understanding and expectations of what flexibility means to all Resource Partners, and implementing units?
- ii. Are there common understanding and expectations among all resource partners (RPs) of how resources are contributed, allocated, utilized and accounted for?
- iii. Are RPs following agreed governance framework and FMM procedures? Is there any communication gap on both sides?
- iv. How can FMM governance regulate possible influence from a single RP, or a non-contributing RP, from influencing the FMM decisions and processes?
- v. Is there a merit in introducing *ex officio* and *full membership* concept to the FMM governance? Should there be a minimum contribution for full membership?
- vi. Are implementing units keeping to what was planned and reporting same? When changes are necessary, is FMM coordination properly consulted?
- vii. What measures are in place to check, avoid or recover budget overspending and re-allocate underspent budget by sub-programmes?
- viii. What measures are in place to ensure timely financial closures of funded FMM subprogrammes?

How adaptive is the FMM to significant developments especially COVID-19 response strategies, changes in FAO's organigramme and potential new elements of the new Strategic Framework currently under formulation?

- i. How is FMM adapting to the disruptions posed by COVID-19 in the implementation of the current phase? What adjustments to programming are foreseen?
- ii. How is FMM adjusting to the vacuum left by the dismantling of the SP teams which played a role in coordinating implementation and facilitating cross-sectoral collaboration developments with technical units? What changes to technical implementation arrangements are being considered?
- iii. How is the FMM structured to incorporate potentially new elements in FAO's new Strategic Framework presently under discussion? How will these changes influence FMM results chain and reporting?

5. Methodology

47. The evaluation will adhere to the United Nations Evaluations Group (UNEG) Norms & Standards and will adopt a consultative and transparent approach with internal and external stakeholders throughout the process. Triangulation of evidence will underpin its validation and analysis and will support conclusions and recommendations.
48. The evaluation questions listed under section 4 will guide the assessment. The evaluation team will prepare an inception report which will include an evaluation matrix (including evaluation sub-questions, methods for data collection, and source of data for each question) to be contextualized according to the countries, interventions, and stakeholders involved.
49. In answering all evaluation questions, the evaluation will rely on multiple sources of primary and secondary data for data collection, and use mixed-methods approach for data analysis, triangulation and validation. Sources of data and methods of collection will include interviews; document review; synthesis of evidence from relevant evaluations; survey and in-depth country studies.
50. Interviews: to be conducted with FAO personnel (at headquarters and country-level), representatives of the resource partners, government officials, and development partners. The interviewees will be identified by the evaluation team based on the document review, and together with the evaluation counterparts during the evaluation process. Protocols for interviews will be developed by the evaluation team prior to the evaluation data collection phase.
51. Document review: the evaluation will review i) key corporate and global documents including the FAO strategic framework, relevant donors' strategy documents, regional and national development plans, and ii) the FMM specific documents, including the governance document, Narrative report, annual progress reports, past evaluations, relevant FMM publications, expenditure and budget reports, etc.
52. Survey: the evaluation team will develop and administer an online survey targeted at implementing technical units and resource partners, to collect their views on the design, implementation and reporting modalities as well as on resource mobilisation efforts.
53. In-person missions: to complement the methods mentioned above, the evaluation team will focus on a number beneficiary countries across three regions, i.e. Africa, Asia and Latin America, to gather country-level evidence and provide an in-depth assessment of outcomes and achievements, mainly from the previous phase. In fact, assessments of results for the present phase of FMM are not feasible in view of the early stages of implementation of various sub programmes. Funding for the new FMM came in only during 2019, and most projects have had only about one year of implementation. Furthermore, field activities were suspended since May 2020 due to the COVID-19.
54. The following criteria has been taken into consideration in the country selection:
 - i. information-rich cases to illustrate the results of the FMM-related work, as shown by volume on activities and following the initial analysis conducted by the evaluation team;
 - ii. diversity of topics/themes covered by the FMM interventions; and
 - iii. geographical distribution to ensure coverage of all the regions.

55. More specifically, the evaluation will dedicate the field missions to projects that have not been evaluated, and proposes an initial list of interventions, of which a further selection shall be made by the evaluation team based on feasibility of field missions:
- i. climate-smart agriculture
 - ii. Blue Growth
 - iii. AMR in aquaculture
 - iv. agribusiness and value chains (Tanzania, Suriname, Bangladesh)
 - v. food loss and waste
 - vi. small ruminants value chains
 - vii. youth enterprise
56. Projects such as DIMITRA, Forest & Farm Facility (FFF), VGGT and Voices of the Hungry/ FIES which have been already evaluated shall be covered mainly through desk reviews.
57. With regards to the current phase, the evaluation proposes assessments of the log frame and results chains, and linkages and synergies with other major FAO programmes under the same thematic priorities the following sub-programmes are of specific interest:
- i. 1.1. Leveraging global instruments and knowledge products (USD 2 million);
 - ii. 2.2. Feeding urbanization: building prosperous small cities and towns (USD 1.5 million);
 - iii. 3.1. Strengthening capacity to harness positive effects of migration (USD 1 million);
 - iv. 3.2. Resilient landscape and territorial development to address migration (USD 1 million);
 - v. 4.1. Transforming future face of agriculture: promoting socio-economic inclusion (USD 1.5 million);
 - vi. 4.3. Gender equality and women empowerment in food and agriculture (USD 2 million);
 - vii. 5.2.2. Strengthening coordination and partnerships for scaling up conservation agriculture in Southern Africa (USD 3 million);
 - viii. 5.4. Promoting coherence between disaster risk reduction, climate action and social protection in Sub-Saharan Africa (USD 3 million); and
 - ix. 5.5. Scaling up implementation of the Gender Action Plan (GAP) in Agriculture and the Koronivia Joint Work on Agriculture (KJWA) under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) (USD 1 million).
58. These have been selected on the basis of representation across programmes and regions, being on the higher end of the financial scale within the portfolio, and specific elements in the concept note that have transformative potential.
59. Based on the above, the following countries have been preliminarily identified for in-depth analysis:
- i. Africa:³ Senegal, Uganda, Niger, Malawi, Zambia, Ethiopia, Kenya, Cabo Verde;
 - ii. Asia: Nepal, the Philippines, Viet Nam; and
 - iii. Latin America: Guatemala.

³ This is an initial shortlist which can be finalized jointly with the FMM coordination team.

6. Evaluation team composition and profile

60. The core evaluation team will consist of two international consultants and will work under the guidance and with support from the FAO Office of Evaluation (OED) Evaluation Manager. Due to travel restriction, the evaluation will also rely on national consultants,⁴ guided by the core team, to conduct country missions. The evaluation team as a whole will have expertise in the following subject matters:
- i. evaluation of complex development programmes;
 - ii. food and nutrition security;
 - iii. policy support; and
 - iv. gender and social inclusion.
61. The evaluation team will have had no previous involvement in the formulation, implementation or backstopping of the FMM funded projects. All will sign the Declaration of Interest form of OED. To the extent possible, the evaluation team will be balanced in terms of geographical and gender representation to ensure diversity and complementarity of perspectives.

⁴ The required expertise and number of national consultants will be determined at the end of inception phase, once the country selection has been finalized.

7. Roles and responsibilities

62. **FAO budget holder**, the FMM coordination team is responsible for initiating the evaluation process and supporting the evaluation team during its work. They are required to participate in meetings with the team, make available information and documentation as necessary, and comment on the draft final terms of reference and report. Involvement of different members of the project Task Force will depend on respective roles and participation in the project.
63. The budget holder is also responsible for leading and coordinating the preparation of the FAO Management Response and the Follow-up Report to the evaluation. OED guidelines for the Management Response and the Follow-up Report provide necessary details on this process.
64. **FAO Office of Evaluation (OED)**, in particular the Evaluation Manager, is responsible for initiating the recruitment process, the identification of the consultants and the organization of the team's work. The Evaluation Manager, in collaboration with the Evaluation Team Leader, responsible for developing the first and final drafts terms of reference (TORs) with inputs from the FMM coordination team.
65. The Evaluation Manager will brief the project team on the evaluation process and will engage with them throughout this process. Moreover, the Evaluation Manager will review the first and final draft reports for quality assurance purposes in terms of presentation, compliance with the TORs and timely delivery, quality, clarity and soundness of evidence provided and of the analysis supporting conclusions and recommendations in the evaluation report.
66. OED has also a responsibility in following up with the budget holder for the timely preparation of the management response and the follow-up to the management response.
67. The evaluation team is responsible for developing the inception report and for further developing and applying the evaluation methodology, for conducting the evaluation, and for producing the evaluation report. All team members, including the Evaluation Team Leader, will participate in briefing and debriefing meetings, discussions, field visits (if they take place), and will contribute to the evaluation with written inputs for the final draft and final report. The evaluation team will agree on the outline of the report early in the evaluation process, based on the template provided by OED. The evaluation team will also be free to expand the scope, criteria, questions and issues listed above, as well as develop its own evaluation tools and framework, within time and resources available and based on discussions with the Evaluation Manager, consult with the budget holder and the FMM coordination team where necessary. The evaluation team is fully responsible for its report which may not reflect the views of the Governments or FAO. An evaluation report is not subject to technical clearance by FAO although OED is responsible for quality assurance of all evaluation reports.
68. The evaluation team will maintain close liaison with OED and the FMM coordination team. Although the mission is free to discuss with the authorities concerned anything relevant to its assignment, it is not authorized to make any commitment on behalf of the Government of the pilot countries involved, the donor or FAO.
69. The Evaluation Team Leader is responsible for guiding and coordinating the evaluation team members in their specific work, discussing their findings, conclusions and recommendations and preparing the final draft and the final report, consolidating the inputs from the team members with his own. In collaboration with the Evaluation Manager, the Evaluation Team Leader will finalize the report and ensure the received comments are incorporated, as deemed necessary.

8. Limitations

70. The FMM has a large portfolio in terms of geographical scope and number of interventions. Because of time, capacity and budget constraints, this evaluation cannot cover all individual interventions, nor can country missions be conducted to all countries. The evaluation team therefore had to make informed decisions selecting a limited number of countries for case studies, based on sound criteria as outlined in the methodology section. Moreover, in the other countries, the evaluation team will ensure that information is collected through appropriate data collection methods.

9. Evaluation products (deliverables)

71. The evaluation will produce the following deliverables:

- i. Evaluation inception report, including an evaluation matrix, a template for the interview protocols, and an outline of the country reports.
- ii. Country reports based on the agreed template.
- iii. Evaluation findings to be presented to various stakeholders.
- iv. Draft evaluation report - OED will review the zero draft of the evaluation report to ensure it meets OED's quality standards and criteria, before circulating it to the coordination team and stakeholders for comments; suggestions will be incorporated as deemed appropriate by the evaluation team before finalisation.
- v. Final evaluation report: should include an executive summary and illustrate the evidence found that responds to the evaluation questions listed in the TOR. The report will be prepared in English, with numbered paragraphs, following the OED template for report writing. Supporting data and analysis should be annexed to the report when considered important to complement the main report. Translations in other languages of the Organization, if required, will be FAO's responsibility.

10. Evaluation timeframe

72. The evaluation will be conducted between June 2020 and July 2021. The evaluation findings will be presented to the relevant stakeholders in April 2021. The country missions will be carried out between December 2020 and February 2021 and the first draft of the report will be produced by May 2021.

Task	Dates
Launch of the evaluation	June 2020
Team identification and recruitment	July – August 2020
Inception mission	September 2020
TOR finalization	November 2020
Preparation of the country missions	November 2020
Conducting the country missions	December 2020 – February 2021
Presentation of findings	April 2021
First draft of the evaluation report	May 2021
Finalisation of the evaluation report	July 2021

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