

Country Programme Evaluation Series

12/2021

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

Follow-up report

Evaluation of the FAO Regional Office for Latin America and the Caribbean 2017–2020 – Follow-up report

03/2024

Evaluation recommendation	Management response Accepted, Partially accepted or Rejected	Management plan			
		Actions to be taken, and/or comments about partial acceptance or rejection	Description of actions actually taken, or reasons for actions not taken	MAR score	Impact of, or changes resulted from taken actions

<p>Recommendation 1. RLC must continue to reflect on the conceptualization of the Regional Initiatives in order to adapt them to changing contexts in the region.</p>	<p>Accepted</p>	<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"> 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. 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. 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. 	<p>The Regional Priorities are aligned to the Strategic Framework 2022–2031, the MTP 2022–2025 and the PWB 2022–2023. Under each Regional Initiative, the regional areas of emphasis are aligned to the PPAs and SDG targets. The Regional Initiative for the biennium 2022–2023 were endorsed by the Regional Conference – LARC 37).</p> <p>For the biennium 2024–2025, FAO has outlined the Regional Priorities after a series of consultations, dialogue processes and inputs collected from Member States and partners, in line with the FAO Strategic framework 2022–2031. The Regional Consultations took place in August 2023 with the participation of Member countries and non-state actors. During the 3 days of consultation, 587 connections were registered, that is, an average of 194 connections per day, from 29 countries. There was the participation of 2 ministers, 7 vice ministers, 42 authorities and 33 guests from connected non-state organizations – including academia, civil society, parliamentary fronts and private sector – and which resulted in 40 interventions and 50 written comments.</p> <p>The programme of work 2024–2025 considers four Regional Priorities which are aligned with the four better and the 20 PPAS, to be subsequently submitted to the Regional Conference in March 2024.</p> <p>The RLC programme continues 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.</p>	<p>Excellent</p>	
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			<p>CEPAL, FAO and PAHO launched the document “Hacia la seguridad alimentaria y nutricional sostenible en América Latina y el Caribe en respuesta a la crisis alimentaria global” to promote an integrative and multisectoral response in the region. This document serves as the baseline for updating food and nutritional policies and programmes.</p> <p>Regional Overview of Food Security and Nutrition – Latin America and the Caribbean 2022. Regional Overview present the regional food security and nutrition situation, including trends of undernourishment, food insecurity and all forms of malnutrition, together with other indicators that could help the understanding of the causes of hunger and malnutrition.</p> <p>Regional Overview of Food Security and Nutrition 2023 in Latin America and the Caribbean - Statistics and Trends: This report provides updated data and trends in food and nutritional security. The report includes key indicators related to hunger, food insecurity, all forms of malnutrition, as well as the cost and affordability of a healthy diet.</p>		
<p>Recommendation 2.</p> <p>RLC must promote interaction between the Regional Initiatives in the debate over the demands of member countries and technical assistance, which will help enhance a strategic programmatic view of the Regional Initiatives.</p>	Accepted	<p>Management proposes the following actions:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 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. ii. Full implementation of RLC's programmatic approach, including inter alia: promoting integrated 	<p>The Regional Office has promoted interaction with the Regional Initiatives to deliver technical assistance to Members, under the programmatic approach. As expressed in recommendation 1, the programme of work is fully aligned to the Strategic Framework and localized to the demands of the region. The programme integrated the 20 PPAs in 3 Regional Initiatives to ensure coordination and interaction in the technical debate and response to countries.</p> <p>The programmatic approach has been integrated into the work programme implementation and deepened in the region with the launch of a series of initiatives focussed on</p>	Excellent	

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		<p>responses across Regional Initiative areas through regional TCP projects; further enhancing the coordination and implementation roles of the Regional Initiatives; strengthening the multidisciplinary technical networks, called clusters, to foster knowledge management; and promoting joint programme implementation dialogue at the country level.</p>	<p>improving prioritization, efficiency, and quality in the technical assistance of the FAO to its Member States. The initiatives are related to the creation of Project Clusters, implementation of programmatic TCPs, designation of Lead Technical Consultants with LTO functions, the launch of a tool to monitor the quality of technical assistance, creation of the Network of Project Managers, capacity strengthening on the programmatic approach, within the frame of an integrated support from the Programme, Development and Office Support Streams, and the Support Services. The technical note about the Programmatic Approach was updated in 2023.</p> <p>With the introduction of the Strategic Framework 2022–2031, RLC conducted a portfolio review (number of projects) aligned to each PPA in connection with the clusters defined in 2021 as well as the 2022–2023 biennium work plan. As a result, RLC proposed using the PPA structure, as one or grouped PPAs, as the Project Clusters for the region. In 2023, with the on-going debate about the programme of work for the biennium 2024–2025, four regional priorities are proposed to integrate a coordinated and multidisciplinary response to countries.</p>		
<p>Recommendation 3. RLC must promote actions that result in the ownership of Regional Initiatives by countries.</p>	<p>Accepted</p>	<p>Management proposes the following actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Enhance consultation with Members in the design of the regional programme. ii. Ensure that all new CPFs are fully aligned with the Strategic 	<p>Considering the recommendation, from the Regional Office, through the Regional Planning Team, a process of methodological and technical support has been developed and implemented for the formulation of all the CPFs of the region, which starts from pre-formulation, moving for formulation, quality assurance and final approval of the ADG.</p> <p>This regional formulation/review process involves, from pre-formulation and during formulation, the technical</p>	<p>Excellent</p>	

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		<p>Framework and MTP and the UNSDCF.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>iv. Organize subregional reviews of the relationships between CPF and Regional Initiatives.</p> <p>v. Strengthen the country-level monitoring, reporting and communication of significant results and achievements of the Regional Initiatives.</p> <p>vi. f) Promote regular meetings with country offices to monitor programme implementation in order to update the needs from Country Offices and enhance the Regional Initiatives as entry points for technical assistance from the region.</p>	<p>teams of the Regional Initiatives, of the cross-cutting themes, of resource mobilization, of field program, and of strategy and planning, among others, allowing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. establish alignment and contribution to the SDGs; ii. ensure correct alignment to the FAO Strategic Framework and its Programme Priority Areas (PPAs); iii. define the alignment and contribution to the Regional Initiatives and their themes; and iv. prepare adequate resource mobilization for programme financing. <p>As a result of these actions, 100% of the CPFs formulated after the new FAO Strategic Framework 2022–2031 came into effect are aligned with it. The previous CPFs are in any way aligned with the Strategic Framework 2022–2031 through the PPAs in the Work Plan.</p> <p>Parallel to the CPF formulation process, a monitoring and technical support strategy has been developed for the country offices for the implementation of their CPFs, linked to the corporate planning process (biennial Work Plan), where the Regional Initiatives are the guarantors to deliver technical assistance to the countries.</p> <p>The progress of the expected results of the CPFs and Work Plans is also monitored on a semiannual basis, and reports are obtained annually on the results achieved.</p> <p>CPFs are periodically reviewed by the Regional Initiative 1 team, which makes recommendations to the countries.</p>		

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<p>Recommendation 4. RLC must strengthen its resource mobilization strategy to continue adapting projects based on the strategic vision of the Regional Initiatives and to encourage a more active participation of member countries.</p>	Accepted	<p>Management proposes the following actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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. ii. Training on resource mobilization will be provided to different groups of Country Offices, in accordance with their specific needs. 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. 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. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. A new regional strategy has been adopted to provide the country offices and regional units the tools to improve resource mobilization. ii. Training has constantly been provided in coordination with the headquarter units and for each call of proposals some specific meetings are being hold to exchange experiences between countries and technical units. 	Excellent	

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<p>Recommendation 5. RLC must develop actions to improve project implementation in order to increase the effectiveness of FAO support.</p>	Accepted	<p>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:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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 headquarters units in project implementation in the region. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Field programme team built a capacity development process with country offices to appropriate elaboration of project documents, with clear outcomes, outputs, and indicators that facilitate the project monitoring toward the logical framework. ii. Knowledge exchange is under implementation through regular meetings with AFAORs, webinars, virtual training sessions, capacity net, peer to peer exchange and the network of project managers. iii. Missions to country offices where GCF projects are to be initiated were evaluated and appropriate actions including direct support during the initial phase of the project were organized: human resources contractual plans, procurement plans, operation and administration team, monitoring tools are now in place in key country offices. iv. On track project monitoring tool project component is now under implementation and training is provided to project monitoring personnel for the appropriate use of it. v. For appropriate guidance to country office the CODS is now working on standardized set of outcomes, outputs, and indicators associated to the PPAs and Four Betters toward an appropriate programme planning approach. vi. Coordination with headquarters resulted in more fluent communication for the improvement of project cycle, new role of LTOs, environmental and social safeguards, role of project managers are under discussion. 	Good	

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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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. 			
<p>Recommendation 6.</p> <p>RLC must define a strategy for scaling up actions that will ensure FAO's actions have a greater impact.</p>	Accepted	<p>The Regional Office's Strategic Analysis and Innovation Stream will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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 headquarters teams. iii. A regional programme of capacity development in support of scaling 	<p>The first approach is to establish a strong programme monitoring system integrating project, programme and CPFs. This process is under construction, it requires time to define process, and systematize.</p>	Advancing	

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		up will be designed and implemented.			
<p>Recommendation 7. RLC must develop a holistic strategy for using monitoring and evaluation results to facilitate the development of evidence-based projects.</p>	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.	<p>RLC is implementing a Knowledge Management Unit, In this sense, that have implemented instances of knowledge exchange, information management mechanisms; processes for the dissemination of Knowledge Management products and tools; established a course on methodologies, tools and basic concepts of Knowledge Management; and made progress in the development of a regional strategy with the objective of scaling and incorporating the countries, creating a collaboration network.</p> <p>The unit developed 2 series of a knowledge Fair, called FAO Innovates and then FAO Transforms showcasing good practices and results with resources partners.</p> <p>Also, a repository of documents to disseminate data and strategic information about programme implementation.</p> <p>Lastly, the unit implemented a capacity development programme course "Knowledge management: concepts, methodologies and tools": Self-paced course designed in collaboration with the Public Policy Capacity Development Centre and upload on FAOCapacity platform.</p> <p>Published in two languages (EN and SP).</p> <p>1 770 people enrolled and 488 people who completed the course.</p>	Good	

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<p>Recommendation 8.</p> <p>RLC must strengthen its strategy for mainstreaming gender equality when designing and implementing projects.</p>	<p>Accepted</p>	<p>The Regional Office will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Design and disseminate a regional gender toolkit for the project cycle, as well as a project checklist that includes gender-related actions. 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. iii. Provide mentoring and support to the national and subregional focal points. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Design and disseminate a regional gender toolkit for the project cycle, as well as a project checklist that includes gender-related actions. ii. The Gender Regional Team developed and published the guide “Step it up with equality. Key elements for gender mainstreaming in FAO projects”, which provides a set of questions, answers, means, and tools for FAO personnel and partners to mainstream gender issues as part of the shared commitment to gender equality and women's empowerment, considering the major United Nations goals for human development and social justice. The guide focuses on each phase of the project cycle, defining the steps and tools to facilitate gender mainstreaming. It also includes a gender mainstreaming checklist, an FAO catalogue of literature and tools on gender, a mechanism for systematizing good practices, and a portfolio of actions and examples on gender mainstreaming. <p>The guide presents a gender mainstreaming checklist for FAO’s programmes and projects, that constitutes a common understanding of the regional gender mainstreaming standards, and facilitates to project formulators, safeguards teams and the Gender Regional Team the review of concept notes and PRODOCs, ensuring that the review of the projects in FPMIS is a well understood process. The guide also constitutes the main content for the gender capacity building regional plan. The Guide (available in Spanish, English and French) can be found in: https://www.fao.org/documents/card/es/c/CB3234EN</p>	<p>Excellent</p>	

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			<p>iii. 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. The workshops were carried out with translation into English and France.</p> <p>The Regional Gender Team annually develops and implements a gender awareness and training plan, which includes actions focused on gender focal points, actions for staff in general, and others open to FAO counterparts in the Region. The details of these plans, and the number of people who participated in them, can be reviewed in the attached documents.</p> <p>Total of participants during 2021, 2022 and 2023: 8 141</p> <p>iv. Provide mentoring and support to the national and subregional focal points.</p> <p>v. The Regional Gender Team provides mentoring to Gender Focal Points, focusing on those new to their roles.</p>		

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			<p>Between the years 2021 to 2023, mentoring was carried out for the following new gender focal points:</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Country Office</th> <th>Number of new PFGs who received mentoring</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Chile</td> <td>2</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Ecuador</td> <td>2</td> </tr> <tr> <td>El Salvador</td> <td>2</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Guatemala</td> <td>2</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Haití</td> <td>1</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Nicaragua</td> <td>2</td> </tr> <tr> <td>SLC</td> <td>1</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Uruguay</td> <td>2</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Total</td> <td>14</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>Additionally, at least four annual meetings have been held with the gender focal points to provide guidance regarding their main tasks in relation to planning and monitoring, and the mainstreaming of programs and projects.</p> <p>It should be noted that the gender focal points directly request and receive specific guidance from the Regional Gender Team regarding gender methodologies, specific challenges of national projects and the application of the standards of the FAO Gender Equality Policy 2020–2030.</p>	Country Office	Number of new PFGs who received mentoring	Chile	2	Ecuador	2	El Salvador	2	Guatemala	2	Haití	1	Nicaragua	2	SLC	1	Uruguay	2	Total	14		
Country Office	Number of new PFGs who received mentoring																								
Chile	2																								
Ecuador	2																								
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<p>Recommendation 9.</p> <p>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.</p>	<p>Accepted</p>	<p>The Regional Office will:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 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. ii. Strengthen focal points network. iii. Develop monitoring mechanisms to ensure that the existing resources within the Regional Initiatives and FAO projects are benefitting indigenous peoples: a baseline will be formulated, based on a sample of projects, and progress will be monitored periodically. 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. 	<p>The FAO regional launched in December 2021, a regional strategy for collaboration with Indigenous Peoples and People of African descent which is currently under implementation. This document was done in consultation with multiple Indigenous Peoples Organizations across the region.</p> <p>Available here: https://www.fao.org/documents/card/en/c/CB7823EN</p> <p>Based on this active strategy RLC promotes systematic capacity development of national focal points, as well as project managers, and other key stakeholders regarding the right to Free Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC) to ensure that all projects and initiatives respect and promote the collective and individual rights on Indigenous Peoples and their collective territories.</p> <p>Available here: https://www.fao.org/in-action/capacitacion-politicas-publicas/cursos/ver/fr/c/1397095/</p> <p>In addition, to further support access to climate and environmental financing by indigenous peoples and people of African descent RLC continues to advocate with governmental authorities and IDBs the important contributions of Indigenous Peoples territorial management practices through evidence-based policy advice.</p> <p>Available here: https://www.fao.org/americas/publicaciones-audio-video/forest-gov-by-indigenous/en/ https://www.fao.org/americas/eventos/ver/en/c/1644823/</p>	<p>Excellent</p>	

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<p>Recommendation 10.</p> <p>RLC must carry out actions that maintain support for Country Offices 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>	Accepted	<p>The Regional Office will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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. 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 headquarters and the UN System. iii. Review the Country Offices' functional structures and work closely with the Offices towards the establishment of sustainable core teams. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Innovative tools, for cross-Country Office monitoring capacity strengthening are in place (OnTrack) as well as an App to manage technical sheets to reduce workload and improve efficiency in procurement processes (SMARTS). ii. Virtual practices for efficiency were implemented in country offices and continue to be used. This includes the Capacity for sharing experiences among country offices, the TEAM channel for direct communication, virtual meetings, and training courses. iii. Joint missions were carried out to country offices to support internal capacity self-assessments as well as functional structure analysis to define the more appropriate considering the national context and portfolio to be implemented (during the last 12 months: Perú, Bolivia and Jamaica. Mission to Venezuela is planned for December). 	Good	

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