

August 2010



منظمة الأغذية  
والزراعة  
للأمم المتحدة

联合国  
粮食及  
农业组织

Food  
and  
Agriculture  
Organization  
of  
the  
United  
Nations

Organisation  
des  
Nations  
Unies  
pour  
l'alimentation  
et  
l'agriculture

Продовольственная и  
сельскохозяйственная  
организация  
Объединенных  
Наций

Organización  
de las  
Naciones  
Unidas  
para la  
Agricultura  
y la  
Alimentación

## PROGRAMME COMMITTEE

**Hundred and Fourth Session**

**Rome, 25 – 29 October 2010**

**EVALUATION OF FAO's ACTIVITIES ON CAPACITY  
DEVELOPMENT IN AFRICA**

**MANAGEMENT RESPONSE**

### A. OVERALL RESPONSE TO THE EVALUATION

1. FAO management welcomes this Evaluation of FAO's capacity development (CD) activities in Africa, which was requested by the Programme Committee at its October 2008 session. The Evaluation acknowledges the complexity of the subject, explores the challenges, and identifies possible ways forward, recognizing that FAO units concerned are the best qualified to address the specifics. Capacity Development is a Core Function of the Organization, and its successful implementation lies at the heart of the impact and sustainability of the Organization's work.
2. FAO management appreciates the evaluation process and methodology. The report is the result of an intensive process, during which the evaluation team maintained a dialogue with a wide-range of units at headquarters and in decentralized offices (DOs) in Africa.
3. The timing of the evaluation is most welcome as it coincides with the finalization of the corporate Strategy on CD. There is a high degree of convergence between the findings, conclusions and recommendations of the Evaluation and the content of the CD Strategy, and both propose forward-looking actions for FAO. The clear difference between these two documents is that the CD Strategy treats CD at a global-level without distinguishing regions. Management notes that most of the findings, conclusions and recommendations of the Evaluation of FAO's CD activities in Africa are considered applicable to the whole Organization. Specifically, Recommendations 1 to 7 apply to FAO's CD activities globally whereas Recommendations 8 and 9 are specific to Africa.
4. The Evaluation describes a conceptual framework for CD which is very much in line with that used in the Corporate Strategy. Importantly, CD is recognized as a multidimensional endeavour encompassing work at policy, organizational and individual levels, which is a fundamental concept with many implications for FAO's work. In line with the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness and the Accra Agenda for Change, the Evaluation calls upon FAO to develop endogenous capacity at higher levels in the policy and organizational dimensions by supporting nationally-led processes.

5. The findings of this Evaluation are also broadly compatible with Management's overall *Towards a New Vision for the Decentralized Offices Network*<sup>1</sup>, which is to "Have in place a DOs network that provides, efficiently and effectively, high quality policy advice and technical services to Members, to help build national capacities to achieve food security and promote agriculture and rural development [...]"<sup>2</sup>. They are also in line with the Declaration of the 2009 World Summit on Food Security in which FAO's Members stated "We commit to building capacity, focusing on integrated actions addressing policy, institutions and people, with a special emphasis on smallholders and women farmers. We particularly stress the importance for developing countries of strengthening institutional capacity to develop and implement effective evidence-based policies that ensure access to food, address malnutrition and enable smallholders to access technologies, inputs, capital goods, credit and markets. We will, as appropriate, strengthen the capacity of farmers and the capacity of farmers' organizations."<sup>2</sup>

6. In the changes and actions resulting from the Evaluation, the Secretariat will actively continue to benchmark its approach to evolving CD practices in other UN agencies.

## **B. IMPLEMENTATION CHALLENGES**

7. Management fully accepts six of the nine recommendations in the Evaluation and partially accepts three. Many of the topics included in the recommendations have been reviewed by the Interdepartmental Working Group (IDWG) on CD led by the Office of Knowledge Exchange, Research and Extension (OEK), and many of them are included in the corporate Strategy on CD and its associated Implementation Plan. The recommendations will contribute to the ongoing organizational change process and will involve: (i) strengthening of decentralized offices in Africa; (ii) changes in CD programming and uptake of a series of new CD tools and practices; (iii) changes in partnerships; (iv) changes of post descriptions and performance evaluation of FAO staff and consultants; (v) staff training on CD; and (vi) improved distribution and uptake of products in Africa.

8. It is recognized that allocation or redirection of resources will be required to ensure implementation of all recommendations, and that a phased approach will need to be adopted over the coming years. The potential resource implications will be quantified for possible consideration in the preparation of the Programme of Work and Budget 2012-13 under the eleven Strategic Objectives and Functional Objective X (Organizational Result 2 - Effective and coherent delivery of FAO core functions and enabling services across Organizational Results).

9. To ensure the change process needed for improving FAO's work on CD in Africa, and more widely, its compatibility with the ongoing organizational change and available resources, Management will give priority to activities which can be addressed quickly, while allowing more time for the recommendations requiring further analysis or sequenced implementation. Management will integrate Evaluation follow-up actions into the ongoing IPA change process, where relevant, to ensure synergy with the organizational reform. The action table will be further refined as funding and priorities are defined over the coming years.

10. Management acknowledges that the follow-up to the Evaluation of FAO's activities on CD in Africa also needs to be viewed in the context of the follow-up to the recommendations of the Evaluation on country programming<sup>3</sup>. The latter Evaluation acknowledges that country programming involves an 'intelligent dialogue with government authorities' and a mapping of the governments' priority areas with FAO's high-level technical assistance and CD support. It acknowledges that in the new development environment, countries are increasingly expected to implement their own programmes. The Evaluation on CD in Africa calls for improved CD assessment during the country planning process. Management will address follow-up to these two Evaluations jointly where relevant.

11. Progress in enhancing FAO's CD approach will also require a new focus by member countries on capacity development, particularly in areas where FAO's competence is strong - such as in the

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<sup>1</sup> As presented to the Regional Conferences in 2010, e.g. ARC/10/2 Add.1

<sup>2</sup> WSFS 2009/2 para. 19

<sup>3</sup> PC 104/4

fields of global public goods and policy regulatory frameworks. This change in focus should be reflected in NMTPFs and regional and subregional areas of priority action, with a shift to a longer-term involvement in CD. Management welcomes the suggestion to better define FAO's role in capacity development and to include this topic in forthcoming programming documents.

### C. PROPOSED FOLLOW-UP ACTIONS

12. The main recommendations from the Evaluation require action in six areas as set out below. Detailed responses to each recommendation are found in action table.

13. Strengthening of decentralized offices in Africa. These offices will strengthen their approaches to CD through NMTPFs, regional and subregional priority frameworks. The Benchmarking and Performance-based Reporting System, under development through the IPA project on Decentralization, will also ensure positive incentives for CD work of decentralized offices. Technical officers' competence in CD approaches and tools will be strengthened through a staff development programme mentioned in paragraph 16. These changes are reflected in Recommendation 9.

14. Changes in CD programming and uptake of a series of new CD tools and practices. Management will improve FAO's role in CD in member countries by developing tools and enhancing FAO programming and project standards, to ensure that better practices are adopted. For example, adequate capacity needs assessment and context analysis will be carried out, local systems, strengths and gaps will be given greater consideration in programme and project design, interventions will focus on strengthening the capacity of national counterparts in policy formulation, investment planning, policy implementation, and evaluation. As highlighted by the Evaluation, the 'after-project' vision and long-term approaches will be addressed in revised programming and project policies and procedures. Arising from these changes, management will ensure that FAO staff and partners have a common understanding of CD. These changes are reflected in Recommendations 1.1-1.3, 3, 4, 6 and 7.3-7.4. They are already foreseen in the Implementation Plan derived from the corporate Strategy on CD.

15. Changes in CD partnerships. Management will ensure that the corporate Strategy and Guidelines on Partnerships are disseminated to staff so that Decentralized Offices will be in a position to foster partnerships and alliances to complement FAO's work at country-level and to cover other sectors where FAO is not directly involved. These changes are reflected in Recommendation 5 and 7.1-7.2 and should be integrated in the IPA project on Partnerships. They are already foreseen in the Implementation Plan derived from the corporate Strategy on CD.

16. Staff development in CD. Management foresees the development of a learning framework for FAO staff and consultants on enhancing CD approaches in FAO programming. A learning needs assessment has been carried out in FAO, and learning solutions are being developed. FAO technical officers will be given opportunities to learn new CD tools and approaches and to ensure that CD is given a higher profile in their work. These changes are reflected in Recommendations 1.4-1.5 and 9.2 and should be integrated in the IPA project on Decentralization, in particular regarding the role of FAO at country, subregional and regional level. They are already foreseen in the Implementation Plan derived from the corporate Strategy on CD.

17. Changes of post descriptions and performance evaluation of FAO staff and consultants. Management foresees the systematic inclusion of CD into the duties and PEMS of all relevant technical officers throughout the Organization. Standardized post descriptions and vacancy announcements will be developed and utilized for technical positions involving CD. The FAO competency framework will reflect skills and qualities needed to enhance CD at country level. These changes are reflected in Recommendation 2 and will be reflected in the IPA project on Human Resources. They are already foreseen in the Implementation Plan derived from the corporate Strategy on CD.

18. Improved distribution and update of products in Africa. Management will ensure that guidelines are issued so that key products are adequately distributed and disseminated to partners and document centres in Africa. These changes are reflected in Recommendation 8.

Evaluation Recommendation	Management <b>Accepted, partially accepted or rejected</b> and COMMENT on the Recommendation	Management – Action to be taken			
		Action	Responsible Unit	Timeframe	Further funding required (Y or N)
<b>Recommendation 1</b> It is recommended that the Inter-departmental Working Group (IDWG) on Capacity Building take steps to ensure that FAO staff and partners have a common conceptual understanding of CD and FAO's role in it.	<b>Partially Accepted</b> Management accepts the main recommendation. The following subsidiary action is for the attention of governing bodies:  Reassess the role of the Programme Committee, Regional Conferences and FAO's governing bodies in providing political oversight over the CD agenda.  This recommendation will be reflected in the IPA project on Decentralization with regards to the CD role of staff in decentralized offices.  Funding will need to be identified for the delivery of training in decentralized offices.	1.1 Though awareness raising activities, clarify for staff throughout the Organization what is meant by CD and what approach FAO will take.  1.2 Disseminate the corporate strategy widely within the Organization.  1.3 Provide short, jargon-free briefs outlining the key principles and examples of how these can be applied.	OEK with input from IDWG	by early 2011	N
		1.4 Based on a needs assessment, design a training programme tailored to fortify FAO's competencies in CD.  1.5 Provide training in CD for staff and non-staff, especially those in decentralized offices.	OEK	by end 2012	Y (training)
<b>Recommendation 2</b> It is recommended that senior management, under the guidance of the IDWG, incorporate CD into the mandates, work programmes and post descriptions of all relevant programming staff.	<b>Accepted</b>  This recommendation will be reflected in the IPA project on Human Resources.	2.1 Issue guidelines so that CD is systematically included in the duties and PEMS of all relevant technical officers.	CSH with the assistance of OEK	by end 2011	N
		2.2 Ensure that the minimum levels of CD field experience is a requirement for posts in regional and subregional offices by ensuring it is adequately described in job descriptions and vacancy announcements.	CSH with the assistance of OEK		
		2.3 Ensure that competencies required for good CD are fully reflected in FAO's competency framework.	CSH with support of OEK	by end 2013	N

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		2.4 Review the Circular on Responsibilities and Relationships to include new emphasis on CD.	OSD	by end 2010	N
<b>Recommendation 3</b> It is recommended that senior management, with the guidance of the IDWG, review and, where necessary, revise FAO systems to improve the effectiveness and sustainability of CD initiatives.	<b>Partially accepted</b> Management accepts the main recommendation and most subsidiary actions.  Management accepts that FAO systems and procedures need to be revised to improve the effectiveness and sustainability of CD initiatives.  As regards TCP, a revised set of TCP criteria which include building of local capacity and alignment with the NMTPF as two of the ten criteria for project approval were endorsed by Members in June 2009 as part of the IPA on TCP reform and decentralization. The key role of NMTPF in country programming will ensure that demand-driven TCP supports national priorities; management sees no requirement for further reform of the TCP nature, purpose and criteria and hence, the subsidiary action related to TCP is not accepted.	Actions for this Recommendation are largely taken up under Recommendation 4.  3.1 Ensure that FAO's policies and procedures allow for medium/long-term CD programming, addressing issues such as design, duration, scale, and modalities in all projects and programmes.	ADG/TC	by end 2011	N
		3.2 Ensure that FAO's decentralized planning and programming processes, especially NMTPFs and (sub)regional priority areas, give due consideration to CD.	ADG/RRs with support of OSP and OEK	early 2012 and henceforth during Regional Conference preparation cycle	N

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		3.3 Review the inclusion of CD initiatives in the results-based framework, taking into account the long-term nature of CD.	Strategic Objective Leaders	during every PWB preparation cycle	N
<b>Recommendation 4</b> It is recommended that the IDWG develop, and senior management implement, guidelines for projects and programmes that emphasise effective CD practices, such as participatory approaches that build ownership, sustainability and partnerships.	<b>Accepted</b>	4.1 Ensure that the enhanced CD approach is given adequate priority and attention, and accordingly is implemented in FAO programmes and projects and reflected in FAO's Strategic Framework. Specifically, ensure that staff are aware of the importance of and adhere to the revised programme and project guidelines.	DDO and DDK	ongoing	N
		4.2 As one of the five strategic and cross-cutting principles of UN country programming under the UNDAF, CD needs to be considered by FAO as an essential component in order to guarantee an inclusive approach to UN Common Country Programming. This will be achieved by: Mainstreaming CD in the project cycle by amending the Field Programme Manual, monitoring guidelines and other project standards.	TCDM with support of OEK	by end 2010	N
		4.3 As part of ongoing TCDM activities and as envisaged in the Implementation Plan of the corporate Strategy on CD, develop guidelines and tools for projects and specific CD guidance to supplement the Organization's results-based programming guidelines so that FAO staff and collaborators: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• conduct capacity needs assessments in programme and project design;</li> <li>• understand organizational and institutional context;</li> </ul>	OEK with support of OSP, TCDM and IDWG	by end 2011	N

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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>encourage beneficiary and other stakeholders to participate in the design and implementation of projects;</li> <li>encourage interdisciplinary and internally coordinated approaches;</li> <li>use implementation strategies that systematically make maximum use of local experts and institutions; and</li> <li>provide mentoring, monitoring, evaluation and exit strategies that take into account the iterative nature of CD.</li> </ul>			
		4.4 Ensure that Corporate Country Programming guidelines include the planning of long-term mutually established CD goals and priorities, addressing capacity strengths and gaps, so that national actors can plan and lead their CD activities.	TCS with input from OEK	by end 2012	N
		4.5 Ensure that FAO projects adhere to CD guidelines for projects.	PPRC process	ongoing starting in mid-2011	N.
		4.6 Develop and provide guidelines to mainstream gender aspects in all stages of project and programme design, implementation and monitoring and evaluation.	ESW	from 2011	N
<b>Recommendation 5</b> It is recommended that FAO senior management ensure that staff, in particular those in decentralized offices and FAO Representatives, place increased emphasis on partnerships in their CD activities in Africa.	<b>Accepted</b>  This recommendation will be reflected in the IPA project on Partnerships.	5.1 Disseminate the corporate Strategy on Partnerships to staff as well as guidance on assessing partnerships.	OCE with support from OSD and OEK	by end 2013	N

Evaluation Recommendation	Management <b>Accepted, partially accepted or rejected</b> and COMMENT on the Recommendation	Management – Action to be taken			
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<b>Recommendation 6</b> It is recommended that FAO staff place increased emphasis on facilitating the development of national capacity for policy analysis and implementation.	<b>Accepted</b>	6.1 Further develop guidelines, communication pieces and learning solutions to ensure that country counterparts are closely involved in the activities carried out under FAO policy projects and are provided with opportunities to improve analytical skills, thereby expanding on the Policy Learning Programme and incorporate such recommendations in the Country Programming Guidelines. The guidelines will reflect: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• that all policy assistance projects include provision for sufficient follow-up and include CD for developing investment and operational plans to implement policies;</li> <li>• that CD experience and competencies are in the terms of reference of any consultant hired to provide policy support in countries;</li> <li>• that means should be identified, including through partnerships with local actors, whenever possible, to support CD at subnational level in countries that are decentralizing.</li> </ul>	TCS	end 2011	N
		6.2 Further develop systems and mechanisms for country, regional and headquarters staff to identify and anticipate emerging policy needs.	TCS	by end 2012	Y



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<b>Recommendation 7</b> It is recommended that FAO staff give priority to, and improve, the documentation and dissemination of successful CD initiatives, methods and normative products.	<b>Accepted</b>	7.1 Document, showcase and disseminate successful case studies widely to development partners (government agencies, universities and research organizations, NGOs and community-based organizations.	OEK	by end 2012	N
		7.2 Document and disseminate the core principles of FAO CD approaches, in particular those which are or could be taken-up widely by other agencies.			
		7.3 Consult stakeholders and carry out field analyses to ascertain factors either raising or lowering the quality of FFS when scaling up/scaling out.	AGP	end 2012	Y
		7.4 In collaboration with other divisions and field projects implementing FFS, produce guidelines on planning, design, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of FFS, with documentation from field examples, with a view to strengthening existing local, national, regional and global FFS networks, and ensure high standards and sustainability in large scale programmes.			

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		Action	Responsible Unit	Timeframe	Further funding required (Y or N)
<p><b>Recommendation 8</b> It is recommended that FAO senior management take immediate steps to improve the distribution and uptake of FAO's products for CD in Africa.</p>	<p><b>Partially Accepted</b> Management accepts the main recommendation and most subsidiary actions.</p> <p>This recommendation applies primarily to Africa.</p> <p>Management accepts in broad terms that access to FAO's products in Africa needs to be improved, but this recommendation can only be partially accepted. Distribution of print and digital products was addressed in the recent reform, and it is recognized as being a complex problem. Greater accessibility of print products is supported in principle, but major constraints exist in that mail distribution costs are high and many copies of products do not reach their intended destination. With regard to the subsidiary action on "creation and strengthening of library facilities in decentralized offices", Management policy formulated in 2008 reduced such facilities to small document centres given: (a) the lack of staff to manage large facilities; (b) the onsite availability in all offices of the Organization's document repository in digital format; and (c) the lack of public access to FAO premises.</p>	<p>8.1 Develop guidelines to ensure that the distribution of key products is effective by requiring that headquarters divisions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop communication and distribution plans for key products focusing, where relevant, on African audiences, including stakeholders in CD;</li> <li>• Connect to partner networks that will assist in the distribution and dissemination of FAO products;</li> <li>• Track the distribution and use of materials where possible;</li> <li>• Overcome or compensate for restrictions on Internet access in many parts of Africa by targeted dissemination of printed or digital formats such as CD-ROMs.</li> </ul>	OEK	from 2011	N

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<b>Recommendation 9</b> It is recommended that FAO invest more heavily in the capacity of its decentralized offices in Africa to engage significantly in developing capacities for the agriculture, forestry and fisheries sectors and to respond to emerging demands of African member countries.	<b>Accepted</b>  This recommendation applies primarily to Africa.  This recommendation will be reflected in the IPA project on Decentralization.	9.1 As part of the preparation and implementation of the PWB, give due attention to allocating human and financial resources necessary to enable decentralized offices in Africa to incorporate CD concerns. For decentralized technical officers, this could include orientation, training, retooling, and greater exposure to headquarters activities and to current trends in officers' fields, and motivation and incentives to ensure that CD is given a higher profile in their work.	Regional offices, OSD and OSP	during every PWB preparation cycle	Y
		9.2 Ensure more systematic partnering with regional and local CD institutions, to fill gaps and complement expertise available in decentralized offices.	ADG/RRs with support of OEK	by end 2012	N
		9.3 When engaging in South-South exchanges, ensure that profiles and skills reflect a thorough knowledge of the African context as well as some CD knowledge and experience.	TCSF with support of OEK	ongoing from 2011	N
		9.4 When using volunteers, ensure that their profiles and skills reflect a thorough knowledge of the African context, as well as some CD knowledge and experience.	Decentralized offices with support of OEK and CSH	ongoing from 2011	N