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	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	Продовольствен ная и сельскохозяйств енная организация Объединенных	Organización de las Naciones Unidas para la Agricultura y la Alimentación
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JOINT MEETING

Hundred and Sixth Session of the Programme Committee and Hundred and Thirty-eighth Session of the Finance Committee

Rome, 23 March 2011

Progress on implementation of the Technical Cooperation Programme (TCP)

Executive Summary

- As of 15 January 2011, 415 TCP projects for a total value of USD 114.5 million have been approved against the 2008-09 net appropriation of USD 103.5 million. Expenditures against this appropriation had reached USD 80.3 million representing 78 percent of the appropriation
- As of 15 January 2011, 224 projects for a value of USD 58.2 million had been approved against the 2010-11 TCP appropriation of USD 106.6 million, representing 55 percent of the appropriation.
- The Secretariat is continuing to take measures to inform stakeholders of the changes to the TCP management, including through letters to concerned government counterparts, training material and the TCP Web site. Work has been initiated to learn lessons from the first year of decentralization to further streamline procedures and to strengthen the quality assurance mechanisms.
- The importance of monitoring the results of the TCP is recognized and efforts are on-going to strengthen the ability to better monitor and report on results achieved during the implementation of field projects, including the TCP. However, as the most significant results of TCP projects tend to become measurable only after the closure of the project, a mechanism is required to allow for collection and analysis of information on these results.

Suggested action by the Joint Meeting

- The Committees are invited to note the progress on the implementation of the TCP against the 2008-09 and 2010-11 appropriations in the context of decentralization.
- The Committees are also invited to agree that 0.4 percent of the TCP appropriation be earmarked to facilitate reporting by decentralized offices on TCP results occurring after the closure of projects.

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I. TCP approvals and expenditures against the 2008-09 appropriation

1. As of 15 January 2011, 415 TCP projects have been approved against the 2008-09 net appropriation of USD 103.5 million, for a total value of USD 114.5 million. The 10 percent over-programming aims to ensure the full expenditure of the appropriation taking into account that the average expenditure rate of TCP projects has historically been around 85-90 percent of their approved budgets.

2. Expenditures against the 2008-09 appropriation had reached USD 80.3 million on 15 January 2011 representing 78 percent of the total appropriation (*Table 1*). The average monthly expenditure rate against this appropriation was USD 1.6 million in 2008, USD 2.5 million in 2009 and USD 2.6 million in 2010. An average monthly expenditure rate of USD 1.93 million from January to December 2011 will ensure the full expenditure of the appropriation by the end of 2011.

Table 1: TCP approvals and expenditures against the 2008-09 appropriation as per 15 January 2011

	Approval	Expenditure
	USD (thousands)	USD (thousands)
Development Support	56 258	30 428
Emergency Assistance	7 769	6 698
TCP Facility	22 515	17 269
ISFP (Input supply/technical assistance)	27 971	25 923
Total	114 228	80 318

II. TCP approvals and expenditures against the 2010-11 appropriation

3. As of 15 January 2011, a total of 224 projects for a value of USD 58.2 million had been approved against the 2010-11 TCP appropriation, representing 55 percent of the appropriation of USD 106.6 million. At the same date, 11 percent of the value of approved budgets had been expended (*Table 2*).

Table 2: TCP approvals and expenditures against the 2010-11 appropriation as per 15 January 2011

	Approval	Expenditure
	USD (thousands)	USD (thousands)
Development Support	41 759	3 002
Emergency Assistance	6 674	904
TCP Facility	9 807	2 332
Total	58 240	6 238

4. The overall level of approval of 55 percent as of 15 January of the second year of the current biennium compares favourably with the approval levels at the same time against the previous biennia appropriations as follows: 2006-07 biennium, 50 percent; 2008-09, 73 percent (31 percent for ISFP projects and 42 percent for all other projects). The 2010-11 appropriation is expected to be over-programmed by less than five percent as an increased level of authority of budget holders over the allocated project resources is expected to lead to a high level of expenditure against approved budgets.

5. The distribution of TCP approvals by region is shown in *Table 3*, along with the percent of regional allocation approved.

Table 3: Distribution of TCP approvals against the 2010-11 regional, interregional and emergency allocations as per 15 January 2011

Region	Approvals	Regional allocation	Percent of allocation approved
	USD (thousands)		
Africa	20 815	35 027	59
Asia and Pacific	11 027	21 016	52
Latin America and the Caribbean	9 235	15 763	59
Europe and Central Asia	4 404	8 703	51
Near East and North Africa	5 151	6 962	74
Interregional	935	3 197	30
Emergencies	6 674	15 986	42
Total	58 240	106 574	55

6. The approval level of emergency projects is below the global average. Should this trend continue into the second half of 2011, the resources not required for emergency interventions will be gradually reallocated for development projects in order to commit the entire appropriation before the end of the biennium. In this regard, the decentralized offices have been encouraged to continue preparing project proposals so that projects may be ready for approval in the second half of the year in case uncommitted resources should become available. Should such resources not materialize, the pending projects will be approved during the first months of 2012.

7. The average time required for the processing of requests for TCP development assistance received by the Organization after the implementation of the decentralization is 3.5 months (it is recalled that the average time was six months before the TCP decentralization). It is also noteworthy that 72 percent of the projects approved in 2010 had begun implementation within the first three

months of the approval as compared to 58 percent of the projects approved in the 2008-09 biennium. The delegation of authority over the TCP to the decentralized offices thus appears to have had a positive impact also on the delays in implementation.

8. The expenditure of approved projects by region, interregional and emergencies against the 2010-11 appropriation as at 15 January 2011 is presented in *Table 4*.

Table 4: Distribution of TCP expenditure against the 2010-11 regional, interregional and emergency allocations as per 15 January 2011

Region	Expenditure USD (thousands)	Percent of approved projects	Percent of allocation
Africa	2 050	10	6
Asia and Pacific	1 557	14	7
Latin America and the Caribbean	551	6	3
Europe and Central Asia	546	12	6
Near East and North Africa	428	8	6
Interregional	201	22	6
Emergencies	905	14	6
Total	6 238	11	6

9. The distribution of approvals by Strategic/Functional Objective on 15 January 2011 was the following (*Table 5*):

Table 5: Approvals by Strategic/Functional Objective against the 2010-2011 appropriation as per 15 January 2011

Strategic/ Functional Objective	Topic	Number of projects*	Budget USD (thousand)
A	Crop production	52	12 954
B	Livestock production	28	6 239
C	Fisheries and aquaculture	33	5 341
D	Food safety	10	1 525
E	Forestry	23	5 216
F	Natural resources	41	6 779
G	Markets	30	3 542
H	Food security	45	5 797
I	Emergencies	17	5 976
K	Gender	0	0
L	Investment	19	2 881
X	Effective collaboration	20	1 990
Total		318	59 240

* The information includes TCP Facility components and the total number of projects does not therefore match the number indicated in paragraph 3 above.

III. Implementation of the decentralization of the TCP management

A. Information to member countries and capacity of FAO's decentralized offices

10. As requested by the Joint Meeting at their last session on 27 October 2010¹, the Secretariat has taken various measures to inform member countries about the decentralization of the management of the Programme:

- the heads of FAO's decentralized offices who constitute the focal points for the dialogue between national government counterparts and FAO on all matters related to TCP at country level have been requested to officially communicate the relevant changes on the TCP procedures, in particular as concerns the submission of requests for support under the Programme;
- information/training material is being prepared to allow all decentralized offices to fully brief government counterparts and other stakeholders on the modalities for accessing the TCP and the TCP criteria;
- the TCP Web site has been updated to reflect the latest changes and further updating is ongoing, in particular on expanding its "Frequently Asked Questions" section;
- a brochure will be prepared to guide national stakeholders on the use of the TCP, explaining the purpose of the Programme, the modalities for requesting assistance and the TCP criteria.

11. The Joint Meeting recommended during their last session that "*the Secretariat ensure that all decentralized offices have sufficient, cost-effective capacities to ensure that the countries they cover can benefit fully from the TCP*". In this regard, it is recalled that in addition to the TCP Manual issued in January 2010 and containing detailed guidance on the entire TCP formulation and implementation cycle, training was provided to all decentralized offices in 2009, supplemented in 2010 by specific training and briefings of some regional and subregional staff dealing with the TCP approval process. Posts have been established and filled in all regional offices (except in RAF, where a consultant is complementing existing staff pending finalization of the recruitment process) to support the decentralization and to provide assistance to the other decentralized offices of the regions. These decentralized TCP Officers and their support staff are reinforced by the TCP staff at headquarters located in the Policy and Programme Development Support Division (TCS) who provide the help desk of last resort.

12. The decentralization of the TCP management has been effective for nearly 15 months and, as concluded in *Section II* above, the first year has been positive if measured against quantitative indicators such as approval levels and the time lag between receipt of a request for assistance and approval.

13. To learn lessons of a more qualitative nature, the Secretariat has initiated a review of the quality of projects approved in the decentralized context in order to ascertain whether the TCP criteria and other rules continue to be respected and whether the quality assurance mechanisms introduced are effective.

14. In parallel to this exercise, decentralized and headquarters officers with significant interaction with the TCP during 2010 have been requested to provide information on their experiences with the management of the decentralized TCP and their recommendations for how the TCP procedures could be further clarified and simplified.

15. On the basis of the review of project quality and the feedback from officers on the first year of decentralization, the TCP Manual will be revised to take account of the experiences and recommendations and the quality assurance mechanisms will be modified and strengthened, if required. The above initiatives will also serve to identify any needs for further training of decentralized or headquarters staff or of counterparts, or for additional tools or templates.

¹ CL 140/9

B. Gender

16. At its last session, the Joint Committees commented on the absence of TCP projects approved under the 2010-11 appropriation contributing to Strategic Objective K “Gender”. As shown in *Table 5* above, this situation has not changed since October 2010.

17. However, although no projects have yet been requested in the current biennium for assistance under SO K, gender mainstreaming is a TCP criterion² for approval and all projects are appraised against their gender sensitivity. All approved projects are qualified for their level of attention to gender issues as illustrated in *Table 6* below for the past and the current biennium.

Table 6: Number of approved projects by gender qualifier in 2008-09 and 2010-11 biennium (excluding TCP Facilities)

Qualifier	Definition	2008-09	2010-11*
Gender equality focus	Project aims to promote gender equality in the agricultural/rural sector. It addresses gender gaps, forms of discrimination or inequalities.	3	8
Gender-mainstreamed	Project has another primary objective, but gender issues are visibly addressed throughout the project cycle and are reflected in the project outputs, activities, implementation strategy or methodology.	97	45
Gender affirmative action	Project is targeted specifically at improving the situation of disadvantaged rural or urban women to reduce gender gaps.	6	4
Gender Neutral	Project has no direct significant impact (positive or negative) on gender-specific needs and interests of men and women.	180	66

* as at 31 December 2010

18. In addition, as gender is a cross-cutting priority of the Organization, a gender sensitive approach is expected on the part of the Project Task Forces charged with implementing TCP projects, regardless of the gender qualifier found to be the most appropriate at the moment of approval. The support to a gender sensitive implementation of TCP (and other field projects) is however hampered by the abolishment of the post of Gender Officer in all decentralized offices except the Regional Office for Africa due to funding cuts during the reform. An on-going Evaluation of “FAO's role and work related to gender and development” includes TCP projects in its scope and is expected to provide guidance on how to strengthen the respect for the criterion on gender during TCP project formulation and implementation, if required.

C. Results

19. At their last session in October 2010, the Joint Meeting requested that information on the results of TCP projects be included in relevant reports to the governing bodies. The main report containing information on the results of the TCP will continue to be the Programme Implementation Report (PIR). This document is complemented and informed by the thematic and country evaluations

² TCP Criterion 9 reads: TCP-supported assistance must be gender-sensitive in identification, design and implementation in line with the Organization's Gender Plan for Action.

undertaken by the Office of Evaluation (OED)³ and which include a representative sample of TCP projects. Furthermore, ad hoc reports and documents also serve to provide information on the results of FAO, including most recently the “the Global Synthesis on the Beneficiary Satisfaction and Impact Assessment of ISFP TCP Projects” published in 2010 by the ISFP Secretariat.

20. It is recognized, however, that constraints exist in the ability of the Secretariat to report consistently on the results and catalytic effect of TCP projects on a project-by-project basis. One of these constraints is related to the nature of the Programme as it would be prohibitively costly and complex to undertake a systematic evaluation of all the projects funded by the Programme in a specific biennium, given the number of projects and the spectrum of technical fields covered, and to repeat such an evaluation at regular intervals.

21. To resolve this constraint, the Secretariat is looking back on the experience of 2008 when a questionnaire aimed at collecting information on TCP project outputs (such as numbers of people trained, strategies developed, and demonstration sites established) and outcomes (such as increased yields, reduced post harvest losses, and adoption of legislation) was piloted and the conclusions reflected in the 2006-07 PIR. The initiative was not further pursued due to the imperative of preparing the decentralization of the TCP, but some interesting insights were gained on how information can be collected for improved monitoring and reporting.

22. However, the experience of 2008 demonstrated that the circulation of a questionnaire is not sufficient. Indeed, the size and duration of TCP projects create a constraint as the outcomes/results are likely to be significant and measurable only after the closure of the projects. Thus, whereas monitoring and reporting on the outputs achieved during the lifetime of the projects has been undertaken and will be further strengthened through the ongoing work on the updating and revision of the project cycle and related support tools, the outcome/result created by the outputs of TCP projects can, in most cases, only be meaningfully assessed some time after the project itself has ended. However, when this assessment should take place, no human or financial resources are available to carry out this task.

23. The Secretariat is therefore suggesting that 0.4 percent of the TCP appropriation of each biennium (approximately USD 430 000) be earmarked to support the assessment by the decentralized offices of the post-closure results of projects in the 145 countries that receive TCP assistance. Such a measure would allow decentralized offices to recruit a consultant for a short duration to gather the information from the national stakeholders, to undertake a field visit to review developments since project closure, and other initiatives that would facilitate an adequate collection of data. It is also felt that the availability of even a small amount of financial resources would constitute a powerful incentive for decentralized offices to contribute actively and regularly to the reporting on the TCP results.

³ An amount equivalent to 0.5 percent of the biennial TCP appropriation is transferred to OED as a contribution to the cost of these evaluations.