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## PROGRAMME COMMITTEE

### Hundred and Twelfth Session

Rome, 5-9 November 2012

### UPDATE ON THE INDICATIVE ROLLING WORK PLAN OF STRATEGIC AND PROGRAMME EVALUATION 2012-2014

#### Executive Summary

- An Indicative rolling work plan of strategic and programme Evaluation (PC 108/4) was presented to the Programme Committee in October 2011. At the time, the Committee did not assign priorities for the full period covered by the document (2012-2014) and therefore requested that another rolling work plan be submitted for consideration at its autumn session in 2012, to take stock of the work completed since its last review and advise on priority for evaluations suggested to be initiated in 2013 and 2014, including emergency and rehabilitation evaluations.
- This document also lists the evaluations that will be completed and discussed by the Programme Committee as of November 2012, and the ongoing evaluations planned to be presented in 2013.
- The document further proposes that in the interests of efficiency and cost savings, the Committee receive in future only Executive Summaries of evaluation documents it considers. The full reports, including annexes, will continue to be publically available on the FAO Evaluation Web site.

#### Action requested by the Programme Committee

- The Committee is invited to provide its views on priority topics for major evaluations and approve the Plan of work of the Office of Evaluation for the period 2013-2014. The Committee may suggest additional subjects it considers important for this or future time periods.
- The Committee is also requested to endorse the proposal to receive only Executive Summaries of evaluation reports for its discussions.

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### *Introduction*

1. At its 108<sup>th</sup> session in October 2011, the Programme Committee considered the rolling work plan for the Office of Evaluation for the period 2012-2014<sup>1</sup>. The Programme Committee decided on the Evaluations to be initiated in 2012 and two (covering FAO's regional and subregional offices in Latin America and the Caribbean and Asia and the Pacific) to commence in 2013. However, as the additional evaluations indicated in the Programme Committee report (see Annex I)<sup>2</sup> to start in 2013 are beyond the number that can be produced within resources available, the Committee wished to revisit the priorities for these evaluations at the 112th Session.
2. Since the presentation of the rolling work plan last year, the following Evaluations which were either under way or identified as high-priority for initiation in 2012-13, have been completed and will have been presented for discussion to the Committee by the time of its November session:
  - 1) Evaluation of FAO's work in tenure, rights and access to land and other natural resources (PC 110/4);
  - 2) Evaluation of FAO's role and work in food and agriculture policy (PC 110/5);
  - 3) Evaluation of FAO's response to the 2010 floods in Pakistan (PC 110/6);
  - 4) Evaluation of FAO's role and work in forestry (PC 112/3);
  - 5) Evaluation of FAO's support to the implementation of the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries (PC 112/4).
3. A report on country evaluations has also been presented and discussed by the Committee: FAO's effectiveness at country level: A synthesis of evaluations in countries with major emergency and rehabilitation programmes (Ethiopia, Zimbabwe and Haiti) (PC 110/7).
4. Besides those mentioned above, the following Evaluations are currently being implemented and will be reported to the Programme Committee at its March and October 2013 sessions.
  - a) Evaluation of FAO's role and work in investment for food security (March 2013);
  - b) Evaluation of FAO's Regional and Subregional Offices for Europe and Central Asia (March 2013);
  - c) Evaluation of FAO's work in disaster risk reduction in Asia and the Pacific and Latin America and the Caribbean (October 2013);
  - d) Evaluation of FAO's Regional and Subregional Offices for Africa (October 2013).

## **A. PROPOSED PROGRAMME OF EVALUATIONS**

### *Criteria for selecting Evaluations*

5. The present list reflects the discussion that took place at the 108<sup>th</sup> session: evaluations proposed at the time that were not retained by the Committee as priorities have been excluded. This list has been subsequently reviewed with senior management in FAO, as well as by the FAO Evaluation Committee (Internal).
6. At the 108<sup>th</sup> session, the Committee assigned the highest priority to completing evaluations of FAO's decentralized structures, following the consultative methodology used in the Evaluation for the Near East and reviewed by the Committee at its 106<sup>th</sup> session in March 2011. The cycle will be completed with evaluations of the decentralized structures in Latin America and the Caribbean and Asia and the Pacific, which the Committee decided would be initiated in 2013 and would be the primary focus of the work programme.
7. Besides the two Evaluations of decentralized structures already approved, the Office of Evaluation could also initiate from 2013 one or both of the following evaluations on topics that were supported by the Programme Committee in its review of the work plan last year. The topics under Emergency and Rehabilitation Evaluations could also be undertaken.

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<sup>1</sup> PC 108/4

<sup>2</sup> CL 143/7

8. FAO's work on sustainable intensification of crop production (including smallholder agriculture and biotechnology): the shifts in the structure of crop production over the past decade largely resulting from changes in diet will be reinforced by the continuing growth of food demand, putting pressure for intensification, diversification, enhanced resource use efficiency and, overall, the production of more food on limited resources in a more sustainable way. It is timely to evaluate in a comprehensive manner FAO's traditional area of work against these challenges. The last Evaluation of FAO's work in crop production was carried out in 2003.<sup>3</sup> In reviewing the proposed evaluation work programme in 2012, the Programme Committee endorsed this evaluation and requested a focus in particular on smallholder agriculture and biotechnology.

9. FAO's work and role on food quality and safety: no in-depth Evaluation has taken place since 2002 on FAO's assistance to national governments to establish institutions capable of ensuring national food safety and quality policies and regulations. This is, however, an important area of work of the Organization for which there is growing demand from member countries due to potential risks and greater concerns of the public at large. The Evaluation will assess the work of FAO on food quality and safety, with a specific focus on Capacity Development.

*Emergency and rehabilitation evaluations that could be initiated in 2013*

10. **Evaluation of FAO's work in post-crisis transition: looking at how FAO improves transition means going beyond FAO's work in emergencies.** As the technical agency for food and agriculture, FAO's mandate straddles the divide between emergency and development work, with a duty to provide its expertise to assist vulnerable populations, which are increasingly at risk worldwide. To this end, the agency has adopted a "twin track" approach to ensure immediate hunger relief interventions while planning longer-term agricultural development. Transition, for the purpose of this evaluation, will be defined as the processes of: a) institutional capacity building and stabilisation, with the ultimate objective of national take-over of programmes; b) shifting from supply-led to demand-driven systems of service delivery within a broader vision of supporting rural livelihoods and transferring accountability; and c) moving from interventions based on humanitarian principles, needs and planning tools, to more developmental processes and actors. The evaluation will examine the suitability and usefulness of the tools and approaches developed by FAO for supporting effective transitioning post crisis. This evaluation, originally planned to start in 2012, has been rescheduled to 2013 due to precedence given to a country evaluation for Somalia.

11. **Evaluation of FAO's work in Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) in Africa.** This evaluation is part of a series on FAO's work on disaster risk reduction, the first ones having been carried out for Latin America and Asia. In most parts of Africa, countries face recurrent disasters, including drought, locust upsurges and floods. This results in a high-level of food insecurity, but in recent years some parts of Africa have received less attention than others. The Evaluation will assess the relevance, priorities, roles and impacts of FAO's work in Africa and the extent to which FAO integrates disaster risk reduction concerns in its cooperation with countries. The Evaluation will also examine internal arrangements, as well as partnerships with other regional organizations.

*Proposed evaluations that could be initiated from 2014*

12. It is suggested that the Committee should prioritize 3-4 topics from the list below for evaluations to begin in 2014. The topics under Emergency and Rehabilitation Evaluations could also be undertaken.

13. **FAO's work on climate change adaptation and mitigation.** This topic was suggested by the Programme Committee at its 100<sup>th</sup> session. While FAO has been involved in issues relating to climate change in the past, it is only in the context of the Strategic Framework 2010-2019 and Medium Term Plan 2010-13 that the Organization has structured its work on climate change. In June 2011, FAO launched FAO-Adapt, an Organization-wide framework programme that provides general guidance and introduces principles, as well as priority themes, actions and implementation support to FAO's activities for adaptation to climate change and mitigation. Furthermore, the results of the Copenhagen

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<sup>3</sup> PC 90/3 a)

Climate Change Conference in December 2009 and Rio+20 in 2012 have changed the context in which FAO undertakes its work in that area. While it had previously been proposed to initiate this evaluation in 2013, the important commitments taken on by FAO at Rio+20 and the need to accumulate a sufficient evidence base to draw conclusions suggests that this evaluation would be most useful and informative if begun slightly later, i.e. in 2014.

14. **Technical Cooperation Programme (TCP).** the TCP was last subject to an in-depth review in 2004-05. The Programme Committee, at its 93<sup>rd</sup> session in May 2005, stated that the Programme should be independently evaluated every six to eight years. As part of the Immediate Plan of Action (IPA), TCP resources have been allocated to the regions under the authority of regional representatives, except for amounts retained at headquarters for emergency and inter-regional projects. It would be opportune to carry out the Evaluation of TCP after the new arrangements have been in place for a certain amount of time. In addition, processes were put in place only in mid-2012 to carry out ex-post assessments of TCP projects and it would be useful for the evaluation to examine these as well. Therefore, it is proposed that this evaluation should not begin earlier than 2014.

15. **FAO's work on genetic resources.** The sustainable use of plant and animal genetic resources to meet the growing and changing food demand while ensuring biological diversity are interlinked challenges. The work of the Organization in this area contributes to several Strategic Objectives, in particular Strategic Objectives A, B and C, and reflects the multidimensional nature of genetic resources. The Evaluation will assess the work on policies and capacity development with respect to the management of forest, plant, animal and aquatic genetic resources, as well as to the conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity for food and agriculture.

16. **FAO's role in the dissemination of knowledge on food, agriculture and natural resources.** As stated in the IEE, "FAO's principal task is to work to ensure that the world's knowledge of food and agriculture is available to those who need it when they need it and in a form which they can access and use". Following the recommendation of the IEE, FAO adopted an integrated approach to the generation, management, sharing, communication and transfer of knowledge and information related to food, agriculture and natural resources. The evaluation will assess these multiple roles of FAO with respect to knowledge. Given the cross-sectoral nature of the topic, the evaluation will also look at the effectiveness of the institutional arrangements put into place to perform these roles. Because knowledge dissemination is a topic covered in thematic and country evaluations, this particular exercise would largely be a meta-evaluation, deriving lessons from previous evaluations and supplemented as appropriate by additional studies that may be necessary. It is believed that such an approach would be more cost-effective.

*Emergency and Rehabilitation Evaluations that could be initiated in 2014*

17. **Joint WFP/FAO Evaluation of the joint food security cluster.** With a view to improving coordination of food security responses in humanitarian crises, the United Nations food agencies — FAO and WFP — have launched a food security platform in April 2011. Food security clusters are already helping to coordinate food security responses in more than 25 countries worldwide that have been affected by large-scale natural disasters, conflicts or protracted crises. The food security cluster, led by the two organizations, provides support to country-level food security initiatives on tools and guidance for better coordination; filling gaps in human resources in acute emergency situations; capacity building and training; knowledge management; as well as advocacy on food security responses in both countries affected by emergencies and at the global level. The Offices of Evaluation of the two agencies have agreed to jointly evaluate this joint initiative and assess the results achieved by greater coordination in food security. Taking into account the time needed to build experience and evidence, it is proposed to start this Evaluation in late 2013 or perhaps early 2014.

18. **FAO's capacity and effectiveness with respect to assessments, targeting, monitoring systems and accountability to affected populations in emergency and disaster risk management work.** In the humanitarian space, a range of tools, principles, standards and approaches are used to strengthen the people-centered focus: needs and livelihoods assessments, targeting, monitoring systems and accountability to affected populations constitute some of the important elements of improving performance and learning. It will also look at how FAO implements and uses a range of

tools and frameworks in its work at the global, regional and country level to ultimately improve the impact and quality of its interventions. To the extent possible, the evaluation will also reflect on how these issues have been addressed in the new decentralized structure for E&R activities.

### *Country evaluations*

19. As was noted above, a synthesis report on evaluations of FAO's work in countries with major emergency and rehabilitation programmes (Ethiopia, Zimbabwe, Haiti) was presented to the Committee in May 2012. As recommended by the Committee, country evaluations are now being carried out in middle-income countries. One in Sri Lanka has been completed, while country evaluations in Armenia and Viet Nam are presently ongoing and scheduled for completion in early 2013. An additional evaluation in an upper-middle income country will be carried out in 2013. A report drawing overall lessons from all country evaluations completed to date will be presented to the Programme Committee at its spring 2014 session. With this report, proposals will be made on how to conduct country evaluations in the future, taking into account developments in the planning and implementation experience in utilizing country planning frameworks developed to that time.

20. One of FAO's largest emergency and rehabilitation programmes is in Somalia. Because of the size and visibility of this programme and the considerable accountability requirements, the Office of Evaluation was requested by the Technical Cooperation Department to carry out this evaluation as a matter of priority in 2012, utilizing the Emergency and Rehabilitation Evaluation Trust Fund. An evaluation of FAO's work in Afghanistan was carried out in 2003 and reported to the Programme Committee<sup>4</sup> as part of an examination of FAO's work in that country and emergency and rehabilitation activities in southern Africa. Since then, FAO has continued a large-scale E&R programme in Afghanistan. Conditions permitting, another evaluation in Afghanistan would be desirable in 2013-14, also funded through the E&R Trust Fund.

### **B. Translation and presentation of evaluation reports**

21. The volume of evaluation-related documentation presented to the Programme Committee has substantially increased in recent years, from some 102,000 words in 2007 to over 440,000 words in 2012. Most of this increase can be attributed to the length of evaluation reports, due to the breadth and complexity of the topics covered in recent years, and also to the need to present a complete evidence base from which conclusions and recommendations are drawn. While evaluation reports contain a wealth of information, the increase in the volume of report documentation has meant that FAO management and Members of the Programme Committee, who are charged with reviewing all the material, have had to contend with a larger workload. Equally important, the cost of translating the evaluation reports has increased along with the length of the documents.

22. The Office of Evaluation is aware of the desirability to limit the length of evaluation reports, but this must be matched with the necessity to present the required information and conform to international best practices for evaluation, including full elaboration of the evaluation methodology, limitations on the evaluation, presentation of comparable data across evaluations, etc. Furthermore, and particularly in times of budgetary stringency, all opportunities to conserve financial resources must be considered.

23. Accordingly, it is proposed that in future only the Executive Summaries of evaluation reports would be fully translated in the languages of the Organization, with the entire report available on the FAO Evaluation Web site in the original language. The Office of Evaluation would ensure the quality and comprehensiveness of the summaries so that they enable the required consideration and discussion by the Programme Committee. Since the savings to be realized depends entirely on the length of the documents and this is variable, it is difficult to accurately estimate the level of savings that would be realized in the future. However, based on the cost of translating evaluation reports produced for the Programme Committee in 2011 and 2012 and assuming an 80 percent reduction in the number of words to be translated for major evaluation reports, the annual cost savings would have been in the order of USD 130,000 – 250,000 over the two years.

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<sup>4</sup> PC 92/6b)

*Action requested from the Programme Committee*

24. The Committee is invited to provide its views on priority topics for major evaluations and approve the Plan of work of the Office of Evaluation for the period 2013-2014, with the next review of the rolling work plan to take place at the Programme Committee's spring session in 2014, as well as indicate which emergency and rehabilitation evaluations it wishes to review in the framework of the Committee's sessions. The Committee may suggest additional subjects it considers important for this or future time periods.

25. The Committee is also requested to endorse the proposal that in future, it will receive only comprehensive Executive Summaries of evaluation reports it considers

**Annex I (extract from CL 143/7 Report of the 108th Session of the Programme Committee)***Indicative rolling work plan of strategic and programme evaluation 2012-2014 (PC 108/4)*

The Committee placed highest priority on Evaluation of decentralized structures at regional level and decided that such Evaluations should follow the same methodology and have the same title as the evaluation done previously in the Near East region. These Evaluations should include a focus on how the work of the regional and subregional structures is integrated into FAO and with other UN organizations. The Committee decided the following plan of Evaluations:

Source of Funding	Year to Start		
	2012	2013	2014
Net Appropriation	Evaluation of FAO's Regional and Subregional Offices for Europe and Central Asia	Evaluation of FAO's Regional and Subregional Offices in Latin America and the Caribbean	Evaluation of FAO's role in the dissemination of knowledge on food, agriculture and natural resources
	Evaluation of FAO's Regional and Subregional Offices for Africa	Evaluation of FAO's Regional and Subregional Offices in Asia and the Pacific	
	FAO's support to investment in agriculture	FAO's work on climate change adaptation	
		Technical Cooperation Programme	
		Capacity Development on Food Safety	
	FAO's work on genetic resources		
		FAO's work on sustainable intensification of crop production (including smallholder agriculture and biotechnology)	
Emergency and Rehabilitation Trust Fund	FAO's work in disaster risk management in Asia and the Pacific and Latin America and the Caribbean	Joint WFP-FAO Evaluation of the food security cluster	
	Sustainable options/tools for recovery	FAO's work in natural disaster-prone countries – the Sahel and the Horn of Africa	
Mixed Funding - Country Evaluations - Middle-income countries (at least one upper-middle)	Sri Lanka	To be decided	
	To be decided	To be decided	