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## FINANCE COMMITTEE

**Hundred and Forty-eighth Session**

**Rome, 18 - 22 March 2013**

**Follow-up to the Evaluation of FAO's Regional Office for the Near East and  
Subregional Office for North Africa**

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- The Evaluation of FAO's Regional and Subregional Offices in the Near East was presented to the 139<sup>th</sup> session of the Finance Committee (30 May – 1 June 2011). The Committee appreciated the quality of the Evaluation and requested the Secretariat to share the status of follow-up action on the implementation of the recommendations which fall under the purview of the Committee at a future session.
- As part of FAO's renewed vision of the structure and functioning of FAO's decentralized offices, a document summarising decentralization issues in the Near East, including proposed follow-up actions for the recommendations of the Evaluation, was prepared and presented to the 31<sup>st</sup> FAO Regional Conference for the Near East in May 2012 (NERC/12/3 Rev.1). Most of the Evaluation recommendations have been addressed in document CL 144/15 *Structure and functioning of the decentralized offices network*, which was supported by the 144<sup>th</sup> Council in June 2012 and is the main reference document for FAO's decentralization policy.
- In line with the FAO's policy on evaluations, this report provides an update on the status of implementation of the actions set out in the Management Response. It summarises progress achieved over the last two years describing key actions implemented.
- Significant progress has been made on the action items in the Management Response and there are positive indicators of improvement. Further progress is expected during 2013-15 on issues related to: the decentralized offices structure in the Near East; strengthening capacities in the country offices; advancing the ongoing process of integrating development, rehabilitation and emergency operations; and promoting and operationalising the Near East and North Africa Solidarity Trust Fund.

## GUIDANCE SOUGHT FROM THE FINANCE COMMITTEE

- The Finance Committee is invited to take note of the information provided in this document.

### Introduction

1. The Evaluation of FAO's Regional and Subregional Offices for the Near East<sup>1</sup> was presented to the 139<sup>th</sup> session of the Finance Committee (30 May – 1 June 2011).
2. In the Management Response,<sup>2</sup> the Secretariat welcomed the Evaluation and accepted 9 of the 12 recommendations, partially accepted one and considered that 2 of the recommendations were addressed to FAO's membership.
3. The recommendations of this Evaluation were addressed taking into account the relevant recommendations resulting from previous evaluations on country programming (2010), operational capacity in emergencies (2010), and activities on capacity development in Africa (2010).
4. An interdepartmental task force was set up in 2011 to follow up on the implementation of the Near East Evaluation recommendations. The task force outlined the actions needed to address the recommendations through: (i) planning, priority setting and resource mobilization; (ii) structure and capacity strengthening of the decentralized offices network in the region; (iii) staffing and skill mix; and (iv) effectiveness of regional technical commissions and networks. The document *Decentralization issues, including the coverage of the Near East Office and the plan of action for the implementation of the recommendations of the Evaluation of FAO's Regional and Subregional Offices in the Near East*<sup>3</sup> summarising decentralization issues in the Near East, including follow-up on the recommendations of the Evaluation was presented to the 31<sup>st</sup> FAO Regional Conference for the Near East in May 2012.
5. Taking into account the feedback on decentralization issues from the Regional Conferences, the 144<sup>th</sup> session of the Council supported the thrust of document CL 144/15 *Structure and functioning of decentralized offices network* as the main reference document for FAO's decentralization policy.
6. This report provides an update on the implementation of the Evaluation recommendations in terms of achievements, challenges and the way forward.

### Achievements

7. The corporate decentralization policy has greatly facilitated follow-up to the Evaluation recommendations. As outlined in the Management Response, the main recommendations of the Evaluation have required actions at four levels: country, subregional, regional and general. Detailed responses to each recommendation are found in the matrix table and following are highlights of key actions undertaken.
8. **At country level (recommendations 1 to 3).** Strengthened Country Programming Frameworks (CPFs) are considered a key element of the decentralization process and the most important action addressed in response to the Evaluation. Following the new CPF guidelines, CPFs have been prepared for 16 out of the 19 countries of the region and another three are planned for 2013. In addition, access of countries to FAO's technical expertise has been improved in the region by completing the establishment of the Subregional Office for the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) States and Yemen (SNG) and strengthening the staffing of the Subregional Office for North Africa (SNE).
9. **At subregional level (recommendations 4 and 5).** In line with the decentralization policy, efforts have been exerted to make the two subregional offices in the Near East more field-oriented; subregional priority frameworks have been developed for the subregions; and the Subregional Multidisciplinary Team for Oriental Near East was merged into the Regional Office (RNE) in compliance with the Evaluation's recommendation that "a maximum of two FAO decentralized offices per country should be allowed".

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<sup>1</sup> PC 106/5 – FC 138/22

<sup>2</sup> PC 106/5 – FC 138-22 Sup.1

<sup>3</sup> NERC/12/3 Rev.1

10. *At the regional level (recommendations 6 and 7).* In line with decentralization policy, the Regional Office serves as the operational hub providing overall strategic coordination, administrative and managerial support to the decentralized offices in the region, including the most efficient use of staff and resources, and the ADG/Regional Representative is responsible for the FAOR network.

11. Regional priorities in the Near East have been revised and approved by the 31<sup>st</sup> Regional Conference for the Near East (NERC). The Regional Priority Framework (RPF) for the Near East will be updated in early 2013 on the basis of the reviewed Strategic Framework and new Medium Term Plan, and in light of the recommendations of 31<sup>st</sup> NERC and the recently formulated CPFs.

12. The technical skills and resources in the Regional Office have been strengthened and additional professional posts have been established in 2012 in the areas of strategy and planning, partnership development, gender and human resources. Further refinements of the skill mix along regional priorities is planned for 2013, including by creating a new technical position in the area of range management. In addition, the technical expertise in the Regional Office has been organized and streamlined into four thematic groups in order to build synergies between technical areas in a highly collaborative and interdisciplinary manner.

13. *General recommendations (recommendations 8 to 12).* The most important are those relating to emergencies activities and the regional trust fund. As part of the ongoing process of integrating development, rehabilitation and emergency operations, budget holder responsibilities have been transferred to all countries in the region, except Sudan (expected in March 2013) and Syria. On the regional trust fund, the 31<sup>st</sup> NERC endorsed a proposal to establish a regional trust fund to advance food security in the region. A more elaborate concept of the proposal termed the “Near East and North Africa Solidarity Trust Fund” was communicated by the Director-General to Ministers of Agriculture in the region in December 2012.

14. The implemented recommendations have produced some results and there are positive indicators of improvement, including increased and improved dialogue between Members in the region and FAO; progressive use of the Regional Priority Framework as a reference document for FAO in the Near East; and the increased leadership role on food and agriculture issues FAO is assuming in the region.

15. In response to the recommendation of the Programme Committee at its 106<sup>th</sup> session, the NERC decentralization paper for the Near East provided a brief on the current membership coverage between Council, the Regional Office for the Near East and the Regional Conference for the Near East. Delegates to the 31<sup>st</sup> session of NERC noted that the current coverage has some merits and can create opportunities for fostering inter-regional cooperation and thus recommended that the current membership remain unchanged at present.

## **I. Challenges and way forward**

16. Recognizing the close linkages between the follow-up to this Evaluation and the ongoing decentralization process, Management considers that further progress in the implementation of the recommendations made by this Evaluation, particularly those of long-term nature, depends critically on: (i) synergy with ongoing transformational change processes; (ii) the implementation of the Medium Term Plan 2014-17 and the Programme of Work and Budget 2014-15; and (iii) the support that countries in the region will provide to the Near East and North Africa Solidarity Trust Fund.

17. The following are areas where further progress is expected within 2013-15: (i) strengthening the capacities and performance of the country offices; (ii) promoting and operationalising the Solidarity Trust Fund for the Near East; and (iii) advancing the ongoing process of integrating development, rehabilitation and emergency operations.

18. Management will continue to implement follow-up actions on the Evaluation recommendations, building on transformational changes, including the decentralization policy comprising: (i) updating the regional and subregional priorities to accommodate country priorities as reflected in CPFs and aligning them with the new Strategic Objectives and Action Plans; (ii) further refinement of the technical skill mix across the region along these priorities; and (iii) strengthening

capacities and streamlining of technical and operational teams in line with the new Strategic Objectives.

*Guidance sought from the Finance Committee*

19. The follow-up report is for the information of the Committee.

**Management response matrix to the FAO's Regional Office for the Near East and Subregional Office for North Africa**

Evaluation Recommendation	Action Agreed	Comments on actions taken, including reasons for actions not taken	Impact (changes) of actions taken in terms of programme, policies and/or procedures
<b>At Country Level</b>			
<p><b>Rec 1:</b> FAORs should be given the necessary tools and resources to become the face of FAO at country level. To this end, FAORs capacity should be strengthened by:</p> <p><b>1a.</b> Facilitating FAORs access to FAO technical expertise by locating this capacity as close as possible to the countries (i.e. at sub-regional level).</p>	<p><b>1a.</b> Pursue IPA action 3.83 also in the Management Plan-NE</p>	<p>The Subregional office for the GCC States and Yemen (SNG) has been established and becomes fully operational with the filling of its 6 professional technical posts. In the Subregional Office for North Africa (SNE) a Plant Protection and Crop Production has been added, and the NPO Administration post converted into a Communication post.</p>	<p>FAORs access to FAO's technical expertise has been significantly improved.</p>
<p><b>1b.</b> Increasing non-staff resources at the disposal of FAORs; they should be commensurate to the needs identified by FAORs at the work-planning stage, and differently from the TCP Facility, they should be allocated in full at the beginning of the biennium without any precondition.</p>	<p><b>1b.</b> Consider during adjustment and/or implementation of PWB 2012-13</p>	<p>The FAORs are operating within the further adjusted PWB for 2012-13 with resources allotted and monitoring by the Regional Office. Support cost reimbursements have been adjusted to reflect new operational responsibilities for emergency projects.</p>	<p>Limited pending implementation of new ways of working in 2014-15.</p>
<p><b>1c.</b> Addressing long-standing personnel issues (including staff development and career prospects) and revising job profiles and competencies of national staff in order to improve staff morale and better align FAORs manpower to their enhanced mandate. This should include the introduction of a mobility and rotation scheme (see recommendation 9b)</p>	<p><b>1c.</b> Address personnel issues in FAORs on a continuous basis</p>	<p>Job titles at RNE and in several representations have been changed and job profiles are being updated in consultation with OHR. FAO rotation policy is voluntary.</p>	<p>Better delivery in terms of quality and timing of products at the level of technical and operational programmes in addition to improved working environment.</p>
<p><b>1d.</b> Recruiting a third NPO to address the increased workload related to strategic planning, partnerships and resource mobilisation at country level giving priority to most needy countries and those with large FAO programmes.</p>	<p><b>1d.</b> Prepare budget proposals and Management Plan-NE</p>	<p>In line with the corporate policy on decentralization, a third NPO may be considered depending on the size of the field programme and related reimbursements for administrative and operational support services in LDCs countries (Mauritania, Sudan and Yemen).</p>	<p>Improved financial and programme monitoring and expected better internal reporting and to donors.</p>

Evaluation Recommendation	Action Agreed	Comments on actions taken, including reasons for actions not taken	Impact (changes) of actions taken in terms of programme, policies and/or procedures
		The newly established Planning and Partnerships post will assist the FAORs in these functions	
<b>1e.</b> Expediting the development and rolling out of Web-based financial tools (for Oracle access) and the required ICT infrastructure	<b>1e.</b> Pursue IPA Project 11b	GRMS rollout to RNE and Lebanon has been completed. Rollout to the country offices is scheduled from Feb to May 2013.	
<b>Rec 2:</b> Reinforce the position of the FAO Rep as chief FAO officer for any activity undertaken in the country, including:	Partially Accepted		
<b>2a.</b> Assigning FAO Reps a leadership role in developing CPFs. The CPFs should be prepared with an expanded stakeholder base and ideally have a 4-5 year horizon. In preparing the CPFs, the FAO Reps should involve key Government stakeholders beyond line Ministries (including Ministries of Planning and Finance) as well as non Government partners such as donors and civil society organizations. As recommended by the Strategic Evaluation of FAO's Country Programming, the scope of the CPFs should be expanded to cover all FAO activities, including emergency and rehabilitation work. The CPFs would progressively serve as an entry point for establishing/strengthening strategic partnerships with donors, development agencies and UN system led initiatives.	<b>2a.</b> Prepare CPF guidelines	FAORs have a leadership role in the development of CPFs and CPFs have been formulated for 16 out of 19 countries for 2012-2013.	Countries' priorities and FAO's assistance better defined.
<b>2b.</b> Expanding the delegations of authority to FAO Reps for receiving funds, carrying out local procurement, signing of letters of agreement and approving field projects at least to the highest level of other UN specialized and technical agencies in the region.	<b>2b.</b> Prepare FPM Pursue IPA Project 9	FAO revised Manual Section 507, "Letters of Agreement", as well Manual Section 502 "Procurement of Goods, Works and Services" to integrate best procurement practices and to empower decentralized offices while maintaining due accountability and internal control.	Delegation of authority for Letters of Agreement and procurement is now commensurate with country office capacity. More autonomy and strengthened accountability for country offices.

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		Trust Fund Projects up to USD 200,000 can be approved by the FAO Representative. Proposals to increase this to USD 500,000 are under consideration. As guided by governing bodies, this will be accompanied with an effective accountability framework that is consistent across the Organization, with internal controls strengthened, as necessary.	
2c. Introducing a specific training module for newly appointed FAO Reps to enhance their capacity to lead country programming processes.	2c. Implement training plan	Several training modules were developed and rolled out on a demand-basis in the context of the Effective Country Programming (ECP) learning programme which covers the four main components of FAO country programming: 1) the Country Programming Framework; 2) resource mobilization; 3) Country Work Plan (CWP); and 4) the project cycle.	FAORs leadership and strategic planning capacities.
2d. Revising the competencies required for future FAO Reps giving special emphasis to strategic planning and programming skills and experience.	2d. Pursue IPA Project 14	The competency profiles of all FAO positions (including those of FAORs) are being revised in the context of development and implementation of a new FAO corporate competency framework.	The number of FAORs with appropriate competencies and prior - and FAO's - experience with strategic programming is increasing.
2e. In view of the different skills required, FAO Reps should only perform functions related to their representational mandate vis-à-vis their country (or countries) of accreditation	2e. Prepare Management Plan-NE	This has been partially accepted taking into account the ongoing decentralization process.	
<p><b>Rec 3:</b> Streamline FAO field presence:</p> <p><b>3a.</b> In order to avoid confusions in their roles and responsibilities vis-à-vis the host country and FAORs in the region and/or sub-region, a maximum of two FAO decentralized offices per country should be allowed.</p>	3a. Prepare Management Plan-NE	The Multidisciplinary Team for Oriental Near East (MDT-SNO) has been merged with the Regional Office in Cairo (RNE).	Strengthened technical capacity of RNE.

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<b>3b.</b> The OTO scheme should be phased out in the Near East Region in view of its limited effectiveness and the significant reduction in regional and sub-regional technical capacity resulting from its high use.	<b>3b.</b> Prepare Management Plan-NE	OTO is to be assessed and more effective forms of FAO presence considered.	Country coverage modalities become closer aligned with the needs, capacity to contribute and South-South cooperation interests of concerned countries.
<b>3c.</b> FAO should make greater use of alternative field presence arrangements such as multiple accreditations (with the assistance of a NPO in the host country) or, as in the case of Iraq, through the appointment of Programme Coordinators as FAO Reprs.	<b>3c.</b> Prepare Management Plan-NE		Country coverage modalities become closer aligned with the needs, capacity to contribute and South-South cooperation interests of concerned countries.
<b>At Subregional level</b>			
<b>Rec 4:</b> Subregional Offices should effectively become the “First Port of Call” for FAORs and strictly act as technical hubs. In this capacity they should:			
<b>4a.</b> Be field oriented and equipped to allow for timely technical support to FAORs and subregion-wide counterparts.	<b>4a.</b> Prepare Management Plan-NE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- TCP guidelines reaffirm the principle that SROs are the first port of call.</li> <li>- Non staff resources for SNE and ex-SNO have been increased.</li> <li>- SNE SMT delivered 39 technical missions to the member countries in 2012.</li> <li>- SNG fully operational and delivered 30 technical missions in support of countries in 2012.</li> </ul>	More responsive country offices.
<b>4b.</b> Be consulted before FAORs request Regional or HQ technical assistance. Once the request has been discussed at sub-regional level, a joint request could be addressed to other technical units at HQ and/or RNE.	<b>4b.</b> Review FPM	The revised FAO Circular on Responsibilities and Relationships establishes the subsidiary principle for the provision of FAO’s technical support services.	More coherent and effective use of available technical expertise.

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<b>4c.</b> Support the preparation of CPFs in coordination with RNE. The CPFs will eventually serve as inputs to identify common sub-regional priorities and prepare SRPFs. <sup>4</sup>	<b>4c.</b> Revise CPF guidelines	SROs took the lead or are involved in all the TCPs prepared in the region.	CPFs provide a base for revising subregional and regional priorities.
<b>4d.</b> Lead FAO's response to sub-regional priorities. In this regard, the holding of sub-regional meetings, with the participation of National Representatives, FAO Reps, Assistant FAO Reps, staff from RNE and HQ, and sub-regional partners as a minimum every year would be instrumental to discuss the content of the SRPF and the sub-regional work plans. The ultimate objective of such meetings would be to improve communication, build partnerships and steer synergies within and outside FAO, which are prerequisites for effective resource mobilisation.	<b>4d.</b> Organize subregional meetings	Meetings have been organized for subregional MDT, and for the region as a whole, with the participation of all FAORs and their assistants and representatives of RNE and headquarters.	Better coordination of work programmes at subregional level. Team building.
<b>Rec 5:</b> In order to perform the above functions, the SROs should become Sub- regional Multi-disciplinary Technical Teams (SMTs) with no administrative functions vis-à-vis the FAOR.			
<b>5a.</b> SMTs skills-mix should progressively reflect sub-regional priorities identified in the SRPFs. As the CPFs, the SRPF should be reviewed periodically.	<b>5a.</b> Undertake SRPF. Make skills-mix proposals in preparing PWB 14-15 during 2013 (SNG, SNO) and if possible during 2011 for SNE	Technical skill mix in SNE has been revised in 2010-2011 to partially reflect sub-regional priorities. SNO was merged in RNE for a better skill mix across the region. SNG skill Mix base reflects the subregion main needs. Further revision in skill mix of Subregional offices is envisaged during the operational planning phase for PWB 2014-15.	Programmes in the SNE and SNG have been better aligned to subregional priorities.

<sup>4</sup> Subregional Priority Frameworks (SRPFs).

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<p><b>5b.</b> A Senior Expert (preferably on Policy) should be appointed as Sub-regional Multi-Disciplinary Team Leader (SMTL). In addition to the expert's technical role, as part of the SMT, the SMTL would be responsible for the organization and supervision of SMTs activities. S/he should not carry any other non-technical function (such as also being FAORep for the host country).</p>	<p><b>5b.</b> Undertake SRPF and related skills-mix review in relation to each PWB cycle</p>	<p>Subregional Multidisciplinary Teams are lead by the SRC.</p>	
<b>At Regional Level</b>			
<p><b>Rec 6:</b> Under the IPA process, RNE is receiving greater responsibilities and decision making authority. This decentralization process should not stop at regional level but continue to percolate down to sub-regional and country levels. This will allow RNE to focus in the future on "upstream" work (i.e., region-wide common priorities), placing responsibility for "downstream" work on the SMTs and FAORs (i.e. subregion-wide and country- level priorities). The role of RNE should thus evolve to reflect the orientation mentioned above. Its new mandate would include the following attributions:</p>			
<p><b>6a.</b> RNE should be responsible for coordinating, supervising and evaluating the work of SMTs and FAORs. This will include managing the financial and human resources available to decentralized offices in the region irrespective of the funding source. RNE should then have the capacity and authority to reallocate these funds based on relative sub-regional and country demands and needs.</p>	<p><b>6a.</b> Prepare Management Plan-NE</p>	<p>In line with decentralization policy, the Regional Office serves as the operational hub of the region, providing overall administrative and managerial support to the decentralized regional offices network, as well as providing strategic coordination, including the most efficient use of staff and resources. The ADG/Regional Representative is responsible for the FAOR network in their region. The ADG/RR is now fully involved in the selection of FAO Representatives and is responsible for the performance evaluation of the FAORs and their offices.</p>	<p>Streamlined follow up actions at the regional level, with enhanced accountability.</p>

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<b>6b.</b> RNE should be responsible for organising the backstopping and monitoring of CPFs and SRPFs formulation as well as for quality assurance of these processes.	<b>6b.</b> Prepare CMPNE	The CPF guide issued in July 2012 gives the authority to the ROs on streamlining the whole process, including quality assurance.	Improved coordination of technical work across the region.
<b>6c.</b> RNE should continue to lead the preparation of the RPF-NE. The CPFs and SRPFs should progressively form the basis for the formulation of the RPF-NE. The RPFs would progressively serve as an entry point for establishing/strengthening strategic partnerships with donors, regional organizations and with UN system led initiatives.	<b>6c.</b> Prepare RPF-NE	The regional priorities have been revised on the basis of newly formulated SRPFs and CPFs in the region and they were endorsed by 31 <sup>st</sup> NERC. The RPF will be further revised in light of the newly formulated CPFs and reviewed Strategic Framework.	Focus of FAO's work on areas of its Strategic Objectives that can contribute most to addressing country or (sub)regional priorities.
<b>Rec 7:</b> RNE should be subject to a re- engineering process as part of the reshuffling of FAO institutional set-up in the region.			
<b>7a.</b> RNE should build and/or maintain the expertise and resources required to establish and manage Functional Technical Networks that would mobilize knowledge and encourage specialization around priority topics selected from among those identified in the RPF-NE. FAO expertise available at all levels (FAORs, SMTs and HQ) would be associated to these Networks as appropriate, under the coordination of RNE. The constitution of these networks, which will have a time-bound scope, resources and mandate – will improve the efficiency of internal working arrangements and help FAO functioning as one in the provision of technical assistance to the region.	<b>7a.</b> Adopt Revised Circular on Responsibilities and Relationships	RNE has initiated the process for establishing region-wide thematic groups through the set-up of 4 technical teams in RNE: i) economic, social and policy assistance; ii) natural resources and climate change; iii) agriculture and food chain; and iv) programme coordination. The corporate discussion on technical networks linked to the introduction of the reviewed Strategic Framework in 2014 is ongoing.	Improved knowledge and information exchange between FAO's country, (sub)regional and headquarters offices.
<b>7b.</b> RNE skills-mix should reflect the new technical, operational and administrative functions assigned to the office.	<b>7b.</b> Undertake skills-mix review	The RNE technical skill mix has been strengthened, with the merger of SNO into RNE, 4 new positions (1 planning officer, 2 emergency officers and 1 HR officer) have been established to support RNE operations and administrative capacities.	Greater fit between assistance needs/priorities and FAO's technical capacities.

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7c. The assistance of a management expert should be sought to support the ongoing and future change management processes.	7c. Identify and recruit external change management support	The assessment was done by FAO staff.	Improved organizational performance.
<b>General Recommendations</b>			
<p><b>Rec 8:</b> Coverage and denomination of field offices in the Near East should be clarified</p> <p><b>8a.</b> Confusion due to the disparity between NERC and RNE coverage needs to be resolved as NERC is now part of FAO Governing Bodies and there is a risk that differential membership may affect priority setting and planning for regional activities. Being a matter that is eminently political, the evaluation team recommends that concerned FAO Member Countries should urgently take an initiative to address this issue.</p>	8a. Raise the issue with Chair of the Near East Regional Group	NERC-31 has decided that the current membership coverage of NERC should remain unchanged.	No change.
8b. The evaluation team also recommends renaming RNE as “Regional Office for the Near East and North Africa”. Likewise, SMTs should also be renamed to adopt historical definitions of the groups of countries served: Maghreb instead of North Africa (SNA); Mashreq instead of Oriental Near East (SNM); and Khalij instead of Gulf Cooperation Countries and Yemen (SNK).	8b. Include proposal in Management Plan- NE	This issue is addressed in paragraph 44 of the RNE decentralization paper.	
Rec 9: Administration and management of financial and human resources across the region should be improved.			
9a. The type of, funding for and time allocated to administrative actions should be reviewed with the view of streamlining administrative transactions. In reviewing administration, the findings of the SSC review mission (planned for January 2011) and the need to strengthen the planning and human resource function at regional level should be taken into account.	9a. Follow-up SSC review	The SSC review has been overtaken by recent events such as decentralization of many headquarters functions and the launch of GRMS. An HR officer position has been established in RNE. A review of RNE internal administrative structure and processes was carried out to support and strengthen the decentralization process and a professional HR business partner for the region is under recruitment.	Improved organizational performance.

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<p><b>9b.</b> A mobility and rotation scheme for technical experts within the region, with HQ as well as with other regions should be introduced as soon as possible. Simultaneously, an ambitious training programme to up-grade staff skills (to enhance current performance and allow staff to perform new responsibilities) and a drive to enhance cultural diversity and gender equity of staff across the region should be pursued.</p>	<p><b>9b.</b> Finalize mobility policy (CSH). Apply mobility policy in Near East region and implement RNE staff development programme (RNE).</p>	<p>FAO currently applies a voluntary mobility policy. A revised policy on corporate staff mobility has been developed and is going through the clearance process. Staff development plans have been prepared since 2010. Professional staff at RNE and in the whole region have access to management and leadership programmes.</p>	
<p><b>Rec 10:</b> FAO Technical work in the region should be rationalized and increasingly focus on regional, sub-regional and country priorities endorsed by Member Countries.</p> <p><b>10a.</b> Regional technical commissions and networks have been valuable as forums for information exchange and in some cases also for prioritization and mobilization of resources. Some have however been neither very active nor well attended lately and a majority of them have faced financing difficulties. The evaluation team recommends launching a review of the effectiveness of these regional bodies in order to rationalize their numbers. Criteria for deciding their future existence should include the extent of Members' participation and commitment to funding follow-up activities as well as their alignment to priority areas identified in the RPF-NE.</p>	<p><b>10a.</b> Prepare Management Plan-NE</p>	<p>RNE made an initial assessment of technical commissions in the Near East in 2011. As a result, the Land and Water Commission has been revisited and a new statute for the Commission was agreed in 2012. The 31<sup>st</sup> NERC recommended the establishment of a new regional commission on genetic resources.</p>	
<p><b>10b.</b> Regional and sub-regional workshops and meetings as well as related publications should have strong linkages with priority areas agreed at regional and sub-regional levels. Efforts should be made to gather feedback from users of FAO technical information to increase the relevance and visibility of the normative work conducted by FAO in the region.</p>	<p><b>10b.</b> Prepare Management Plan-NE</p>	<p>The focus of workshops, meetings and publications on agreed regional and subregional priorities was sustained through work planning processes during 2012-13. RNE is reviewing its normative work to align it with the regional priorities.</p>	<p>More focused FAO's intervention at country, subregional and regional level.</p>

<b>Evaluation Recommendation</b>	<b>Action Agreed</b>	<b>Comments on actions taken, including reasons for actions not taken</b>	<b>Impact (changes) of actions taken in terms of programme, policies and/or procedures</b>
<p><b>10c.</b> Following the strengthening of SMTs and the enhanced coordination of technical work within the region, field missions to Near East countries should increasingly be conducted by sub-regional staff (and consultants) who will have better knowledge of the local situation and be closer to the field than their peers at HQ.</p>	<p><b>10c.</b> Prepare Management Plan-NE</p>	<p>Addressed by RNE decentralization paper (paragraphs 13 b.1, b.3, b.4).</p>	<p>More focused FAO's intervention at country, subregional and regional level.</p>
<p><b>10d.</b> Regional and sub-regional projects should focus on common issues and priorities of supranational concern. The Regional Trust Fund (see recommendation 12) will be instrumental in funding new initiatives linked to the RPF-NE.</p>	<p><b>10d.</b> Prepare Management Plan-NE</p>	<p>The subregional and the regional TCPs are in line with the subregional and regional priorities and checked against the Organizational Results (ORs).</p>	<p>More focused FAO's intervention at country, subregional and regional level.</p>
<p><b>10e.</b> As indicated earlier, technical expertise (at regional and sub-regional level) on key programme and cross-cutting areas for the region, particularly in the areas of natural resources management, policy and gender, should be revised in order to align the FAO regional skills mix to the priority areas endorsed by Member Countries.</p>	<p><b>10e.</b> Prepare Management Plan-NE</p>	<p>The skill mix in the regional and subregional offices has been revised to ensure coverage of the regional and subregional priorities (see also point 7.b above).</p>	<p>Greater fit between assistance needs/priorities and FAO's technical capacities.</p>

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<p><b>10f.</b> Given the positive result of RNE-TCI collaboration in the finalisation of the RPF-NE, it is recommended that cooperation between RNE and TCI continue and be expanded to FAORs and SMTs particularly for the formulation of CPFs and SRPFs, and vice-versa, to encourage Regional and Sub-regional officers to participate more in TCI activities within the region. Besides, TCI experts who are in close contact with International Financing Institutions involved in the agricultural sector could become a good entry point for partnership building and resource mobilization at country and sub-regional levels. If a budget allocation is provided to RNE to cover CPFs formulation cost (as recommended by the Strategic Evaluation of Country Programming), it could be used for that purpose.</p>	<p><b>10f.</b> Prepare CPF guidelines</p>	<p>RNE is collaborating with TCI and FO for the reforestation programme in Lebanon. RNE is collaborating with TCI in the context of the SO2 water scarcity regional initiative and the collaboration will expand further with the outposting of a TCI position to RNE during 2013.</p>	<p>Better fit between assistance needs and priorities and FAO's technical expertise.</p>
<p><b>Rec 11:</b> Structural issues affecting the efficiency and effectiveness of technical work should be urgently addressed. Of particular interest are issues related to the implementation of FAO emergency field programme. In 2010, TCE issued a new strategy which calls for the decentralization of responsibilities for emergency operations. Taking into account the spirit of this strategy, the evaluation recommends the following:</p> <p><b>11a.</b> RNE and TCE should put in place necessary instruments to strengthen information exchange, communication and advocacy for emergency (and non- emergency) programs implemented in the Near East. As done in other regions, this should include the holding of regular meetings and the fielding of a liaison and communication officer based in the region.</p>	<p><b>11a.</b> Organize regional meetings</p>	<p>This recommendation has been overtaken by the decentralization and integration of emergency and development activities. Budget holder responsibilities of emergency operations have been decentralized to country offices and the Regional Office is in charge of overseeing all emergency and development operations in the region. RNE and TCE are cooperating on many fronts, including capacity building, joint support mission, and assessment missions to support country offices.</p>	<p>Greater synergy between development and emergency operations.</p>

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<p><b>11b.</b> In coordination with TCE, Regional and Sub-regional experts should be more involved in backstopping and monitoring of emergency operations undertaken in the Near East. Staff work plans should reflect this activity.</p>	<p><b>11b.</b> RNE to prepare workplan. Strategy Team I to provide guidance</p>	<p>The TC/OSD guidelines regarding the provision of technical support in the context of the integration of emergency and development activities are being finalized. The guidelines are based on the subsidiarity principle for the provision of technical services and establish the principle of project task forces headed by the FAOR.</p>	<p>Greater synergy between development and emergency operations.</p>
<p><b>11c.</b> The conditions for out-posting the coordination of regional, sub-regional and country emergency programs should be built as soon as possible.</p>	<p><b>11c.</b> Undertake Review of operational decentralization of emergencies</p>	<p>Ongoing decentralization of TCE envisages the transfer from headquarters to RNE of two TCE officers in early 2013. Also, subject to the availability of funds, the position of Deputy FAOR in charge of emergency programme for countries with major emergency operations was recommended.</p>	<p>Greater synergy between development and emergency operations.</p>
<p><b>11d.</b> In coordination with TCE, budget holder responsibility for emergency and rehabilitation activities identified in the CPFs should be progressively transferred to FAORs.</p>	<p><b>11d.</b> Membership to address this issue in context of Vision on Decentralization</p>	<p>Transfer of operational and budget holder responsibilities for emergency projects from TCE to FAO offices took place in November 2012 for Lebanon, Yemen, Mauritania, West Bank and Gaza Strip; the FAO Iraq Office based in Amman and SNE. For Sudan, the transfer is scheduled for June 2013. Given the security situation in Syria, the transfer will take place at a later date.</p>	<p>Enhanced response to country priorities/field programme requests and the building for larger and integrated interventions.</p>
<p><b>11e.</b> Following the development of the RPF-NE, SRPFs and CPFs, administrative procedures (including those listed in the TCP Manual) that limit the full and unrestrictive alignment of FAO financial resources allocated to the region (including TCP) to priority areas of work agreed at regional, sub-regional and country levels should be streamlined.</p>	<p><b>11e.</b> To be addressed in governing bodies ongoing dialogue on TCP matters. Results to be included in Management Plan-NE</p>	<p>With the transfer of the management of TCP resources to the Regional Office, the allocation of TCP resources is now guided more by country and regional priorities as outlined in the CPFs and the RPF.</p>	<p>Appreciated and visible outcomes through coordinated allocation of resources at regional level.</p>

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<p><b>Rec 12:</b> The evaluation team is aware that FAO does not have the resources required to implement the re-shuffling outlined above without the support from Member Countries. Based on the example of the IPA trust fund and recent regional cooperative programmes in other FAO regions, the evaluation team recommends the establishment of a dedicated Regional Trust Fund to support the reshuffling of FAO institutional set-up in the Near East and allow the establishment of a regional structure able to implement collaborative programmes agreed at regional (RPF), sub-regional (SRPFs) and country (CPFs) levels. Possible uses of the trust fund include supporting staff training across the region, carrying out analyses on the main regional, sub-regional and country priorities, supplementing resources available for priority areas of work, etc.</p>	<p>12. Prepare Management Plan-NE</p>	<p>The 31<sup>st</sup> NERC recommended the establishment of a regional trust fund to address regional priorities and called upon FAO to assist in developing a proposal for this fund taking into account countries' needs and recent developments in the region. A concept of the proposal - the Near East and North Africa Solidarity Trust Fund - was communicated by the Director-General to Ministers of Agriculture in the region in December 2012.</p>	<p>Relevant follow-up actions, including direct interaction with member countries, are being undertaken to ensure the development and implementation of regional/subregional programmes which address priority issues.</p>