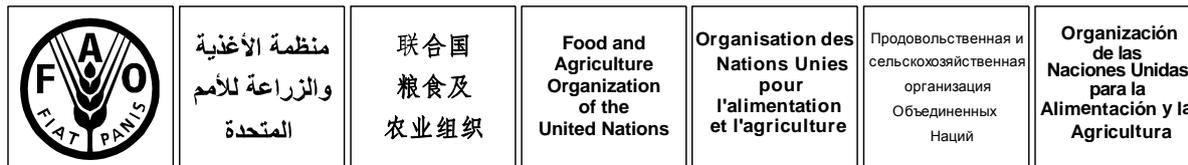


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COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE

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Progress on the FAO Water Platform

I. Background

1. Following the recommendation by the "Evaluation of FAO's Role and Work related to Water"¹, the endorsement of the Programme Committee in April 2010, and the approval by the Council at its 139th Session (May 2010), FAO was requested to establish a Water Platform with the overall goal of serving as an internal coordination mechanism to better address water-related issues across the Strategic Objectives and Organizational structure.
2. The immediate objectives of the Platform are:
 - improving FAO's operational effectiveness in planning and implementation of normative and field programmes;
 - developing FAO's strategic vision and approach to water-related issues to guide activities within and outside the Organization.
3. The process leading to the establishment of the FAO Water Platform comprised a series of steps including (i) consultative meetings with Decentralized Offices and headquarters units to prepare an internal document addressing objectives, terms of reference, mid-term work programme, governance and implementation of the water platform, (ii) streamlining the Platform's priority actions during the Programme of Work and Budget (PWB) 2010-11, and (iii) developing an Organizational Output within the PWB 2012-13.

II. Governance of the FAO-Water Platform

4. The Chairman of the FAO Water Platform is the Assistant Director-General of the Natural Resources Management and Environment Department, with a dedicated Platform Secretary provided by the Land and Water Division to ensure coordination, support and effective communication across operational units. All units for which water constitutes an important aspect of their work are de facto members of the Platform and have already designated their focal points to it. Depending on specific demands, ad hoc task forces (or task teams) may be established.

¹ PC 103/9

5. The Platform operates through regular exchange and joint decision-making meetings among FAO units and regional senior staff with strong responsibilities for water work.
6. An internal chart to clearly specify the roles of the units involved in the platform, the linkage mechanisms and working procedures, is under preparation.

III. Actions during the Biennium 2010-11

7. Within the biennium 2010-11, the Platform activation was assured by reallocation of existing regular programme resources of the Land and Water Division. The main activities carried out are summarized below:
 - a) Three-hundred-sixty degree in-House communication to reach consensus on the “internal” document, serving as a reference framework to operationalize the Platform.
 - b) Assessment of the main FAO products related to water with the objective of aligning the normative program with application needs in the field.
 - c) Preparation of a first outline of a "Vision" document for water within and outside the Organization.
 - d) Preparation, jointly with UN-Water, of a background document on global monitoring and early warning system on water in agriculture.
 - e) Support to the Integrated Food Security Support Service (TCSF) in the preparation of water control technologies², increased technical support for the implementation of FAO emergency programme and provision of coordinated support for the European Union Food Facility.
 - f) Support to the Gender, Equity and Rural Employment Division (ESW) in the preparation of the “Passport to Mainstreaming Gender in Water Programmes: Key questions for interventions in the agricultural sector”³ developed for field staff, Non-governmental Organizations and local government employees.
 - g) Activation of a training program for FAO Staff (in headquarters and Decentralized Offices) on main normative products and tools relevant for field application.
 - h) Development of a strategic Partnership with the International Water Management Institute (IWMI) to implement a long-term Consortium Research Project on “Water, Soil and Ecosystem”.
 - i) Development of the Programme for the PWB 2012-13, including possible components for the Impact Focus Area: Scarcity of Land and Water Resources (IFA WALs).

IV. Work Programme for the Biennium 2012-13

8. The PWB 2012-13 foresees a dedicated professional and one support staff to provide the Platform Secretariat. The Platform’s activities have been planned, with inputs from headquarters and Decentralized Offices, as an Organizational Output under Strategic Objective F. The programme of work is geared towards addressing the constraints and gaps identified so far and the improvement of the Platform’s operational effectiveness, as highlighted below:
 - a) The Vision document within and outside the Organization is expected to be ready by the end of 2012.
 - b) Main existing normative products, as identified during the previous biennium, will be updated and re-packaged where needed and disseminated for uptake by key FAO staff (in headquarters and in Decentralized Offices).
 - c) Main new normative products, as identified during the previous biennium, will be considered for development, depending on the priority of the field programme.
 - d) Demand-driven training-programme addressed to key FAO staff and consultants will be developed to accelerate the use of basic FAO normative products.

² FAO. 2011. *Review of Water Control Technologies in the FAO Programmes for Food Security*.

³ Current finalization of document by ESW.

- e) Improve and harmonize procedures to enhance the corporate approach to project/programme development and implementation and the coordination between headquarters and Decentralized Offices.
- f) Provide more visibility of FAO's role and work on water by participation to major international events of the biennium, such as the 6th World Water Forum, the World Water Day, and the World Water Week, all related to the theme "Water and Food Security".
- g) Promote further synergies and collaborations among the three Rome-based UN Agencies (FAO, World Food Programme (WFP) and International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD)).
- h) Develop an intranet component of the Platform to improve communication between headquarters and Decentralized Offices.
- i) Support for the formulation of Country Priority Frameworks as they pertain to water.

V. The Way Forward

9. The Platform's roadmap for future work is geared towards reaching a coordination level that exploits the Organizations knowledge and field experience on water for the provision of up-to-date services to its member countries. This will build upon three pillars.

10. The first pillar is the strategic vision for water itself which will assist priority setting, the formulation of outputs and the establishment of teams for joint implementation as needed. The second pillar comprises the improvement of the Platform's operational procedures which will also provide an important visibility for FAO to be seen as 'one' and will assist building stronger partnerships with other water stakeholders. The third pillar is facilitation of extra-budgetary resources mobilization for implementation of the strategic vision for water