

FOOD AND AGRICULTURE ORGANIZATION

IMPROVING QUALITY IN TCI

TCI Quality System as an enabler for applying
FAO knowledge to investment, and better
knowledge sharing and learning

16 December 2011



Outline

- Background
- Progress in putting in place the Q system
 - Main lessons learned
 - Suggestions for strengthening the Q system
- Quality, knowledge sharing and learning
 - Critical knowledge for FAO TCI work
 - Key KM assets: people, processes, processes...
 - Quality system as an enabler for applying FAO knowledge, and for knowledge sharing and learning

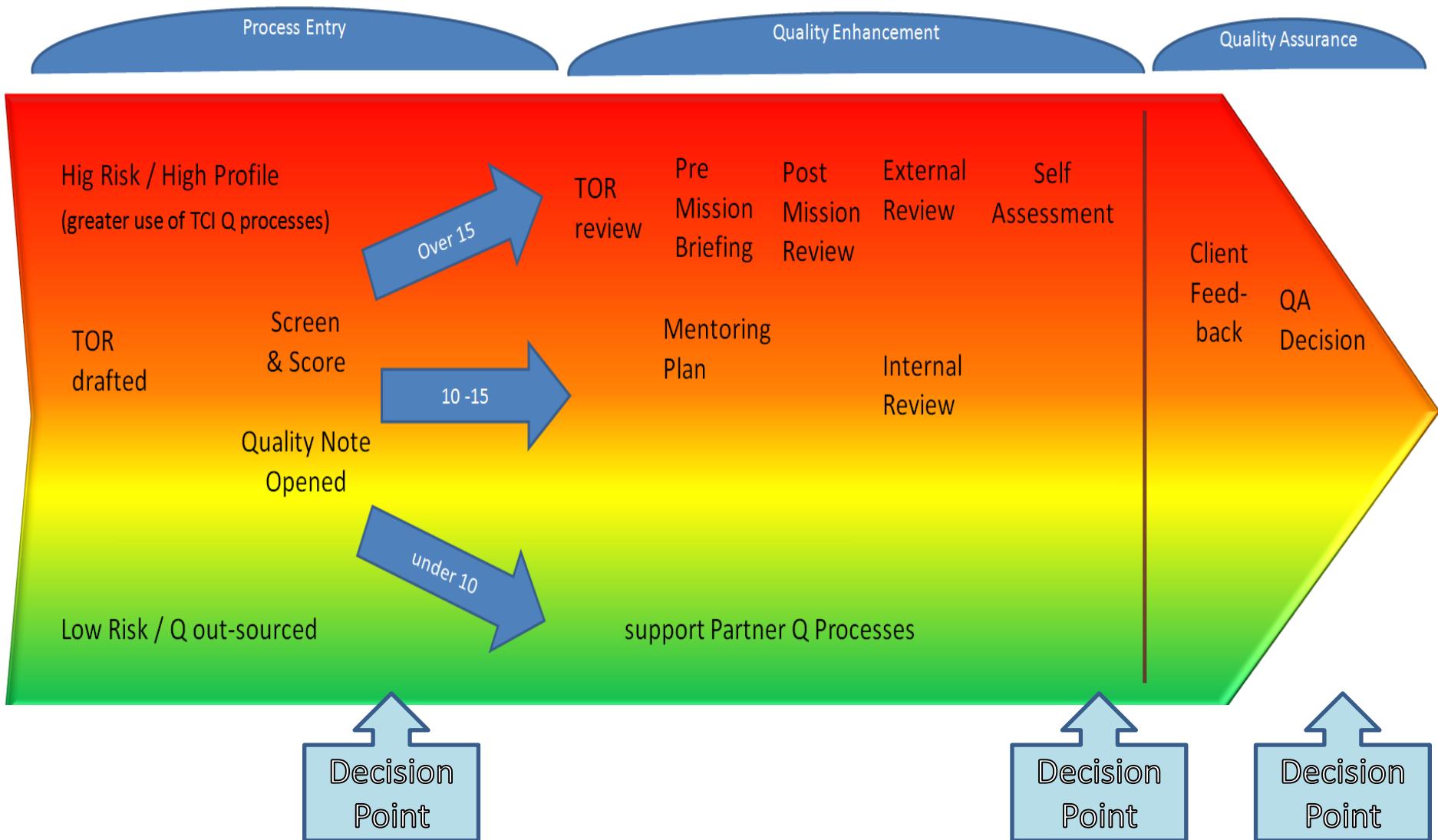
Key milestones

- Context:
 - Strong collaborative and partnership culture in TCI
 - Changes in TCI business model and in Q function
- ID-2009
- 2010: Quality focus group; partner survey; Q pilots; design of Q approach
- Implementation:
 - Memo from Director 16 March 2011
 - TCIA: January 2011
 - TCIN: March-April 2011
 - TCIO: May 2011 (a few assignments in February)
- Stock-taking (July-September 2011)

Principles

- Products delivered should meet minimum standards
- All assignments should be screened (upstream) for relevance and risks
- All assignment should receive feedback from Partner
- Most critical assignments should receive the highest QE/QA efforts
- Q Process should lead to learning
- Q managed along subsidiarity principle: task, service and division levels

Quality Process Diagram



Assignment scoring by risk area

Criteria (*)	TCIA	TCIN	TCIO	TCI
1. Investment (or strategic) Value 2. Type of Agency Partnering with TCI 3. Level of TCI influence in the investment 4. Level of innovation, learning 5. Complexity rating 6. New country / type of work 7. Quantity of Staff 8. Experience and type of staff 9. Level of local co-preparation 10. Strength of external quality control	1.31	0.59	1.32	● 0.94
	0.27	0.10	0.23	0.17 ●
	1.35	0.61	0.68	● 0.80
	1.35	0.71	0.67	● 0.84
	1.08	0.29	0.75	0.59
	0.47	0.05	0.33	0.22 ●
	1.22	0.45	0.58	0.66 ●
	0.57	0.17	0.33	0.30
	1.02	0.57	0.74	0.71
	0.73	0.40	0.63	0.53
Total (**)	9.37	3.94	6.26	5.77

Total: 381 assignments of which 233 have been scored

* Average scores (*minimum is 0 – maximum is 2*)

**Average scores differ very slightly as a few assignments were not given detailed scores by criterion

Assignment scoring by partner

	Total No. of assignments	Scored assignments		Number of scored assignments			Av. score	Rank
		Total No.	%	score <10	score 10 to 15	score>=15		
WB	226	150	66	130	19	1	6.0	4
IFAD	46	24	52	20	4	0	6.0	3
FAO	74	32	43	21	11	0	5.8	5
AfDB	6	3	50	2	1	0	10.7	2
EBRD	22	22	100	22	0	0	3.6	7
IaDB	1	1	100	0	1	0	13.0	1
Other	6	1	17	1	0	0	5.0	6
Total	381	233	61	196	36	1	5.8	

Lessons Learned

- **Consensus:** we need to improve quality through QE/QA system and increased knowledge sharing and learning
- **Positive feedback** from staff extensively involved in Q improvement (scoring system, team interaction, contribution to client Q systems, learning, mentoring)
- Q system also perceived as too **mechanical**: need to minimize bureaucracy and maximize interaction
- Implementation is **incomplete**: system to be functional from entry to completion
- Scoring system sometimes **not rigorous enough to identify risks**
- Interactions are **fragmented** – need to work as teams, including country teams, to broaden knowledge, maximize collaboration and learning

Lessons Learned (continued)

- Q system to be adapted to **type of work** (upstream, investment, CD)
- Management and staff to **show leadership**
- Incentives are needed to encourage staff to participate
- Provide more **support**: budget (recognized Q work in **MIS** and time sheets), guidance (templates, reports)
- Work on other **quality drivers** e.g. recruiting high-quality staff/consultants, especially for ‘body shopping’
- Seek and provide **feedback** from partners more systematically

Streamlining Q process

- Structured system by type of assignment (Upstream, Investment, CD)
- Scoring criteria to be more rigorously applied – managers to apply stronger Q efforts as needed
- Better planning ((revised) Q Note)
- Arms-length Q process (proxy) for individual consultants (body shopping!) with potential link to i-recruitment
- Measurement at Completion to enable assessment at portfolio level and Q improvement:
 - (i) timeliness, (ii) technical quality; and (iii) innovation, knowledge sharing and learning
 - self-rating and partner feedback
- Repeat Partner Survey every two years

Fostering team work, collaboration and learning

- Assignment Review Teams (ART) to support throughout assignment:
 - Composed of e.g. TCI colleagues, technical dept's, external partners
 - Two-way learning
 - Applying FAO's knowledge to investments
- ART should respond to TL's needs
- Simple templates for reviews and feedback
- Critical meetings including debriefing at return from field and at completion
- Encourage mentoring: incentive for mentors and mentorees
- Maximizing inter-personal interaction (as opposed to emails and paper)
- Link to Thematic networks/groups and IT platforms
- Regular distillation of LL and learning
- Systematic provision of thematic and operational guidance material to staff and consultants

Leadership and management

- Service: better organization, space for substance, incentives
 - Role of Focal Points
 - Role of GS
 - Regular Q meetings (SC, FP, TLs, TCID)
 - PEMS to recognize Q and efforts in support to Q
- Division:
 - Budget and resources for reviewers, QA, etc.
 - MIS amended to reflect Q steps (Y/N, Q score, ASR, rating) and to enable progress measurement and portfolio assessment
 - Improved support (templates, guidance material, reporting)
 - Q meetings
- Developing enabling IT platforms, using TC intranet (including collaborative tools...)

Enabling working environment

- For staff and partners to deliver to their best, more and better
- Improving working processes
- Developing staff capacities and skills
- Incentives to encourage staff leadership, positive attitudes and behaviors
- Fostering a supportive culture (values, space for creativity and dialogue, innovation and leaning)

Next steps

- Implement a full-fledged system in next Biennium

Critical Knowledge for Investment Centre

- Mandate: “increase efficacy and flow of investments to ARD and make investments more effective for rural people, resulting in sustained food security and reduced poverty.”
- TCI is not a research or an academic unit, most critical knowledge is imbedded in **development practice and owned by many stakeholders**
- TCI’s role is also **to bring FAO’s knowledge to bear on each step of the investment process** - from the technical and normative departments, and from other countries)
- Critical knowledge is embedded in FAO and its programs, partners, NGOs, knowledge institutions, farmers and their organizations, private sector, donors, staff and consultants

The nature of TCI critical knowledge

- o “Knowledge is the familiarity gained through experience.”
- o “It is not about creating an encyclopedia that captures everything that anybody knew. Rather, it is about keeping track of those who know the recipe and nurturing the culture and the technology that will get them talking”

- Tacit and not fully codified
- Fragmented and not integrated
- Not easily accessible
- The focus is more on the connectivity than the capture
- Need to **share and mobilize knowledge** to be able to perceive it.

Value of knowledge sharing and learning

- Increased Organisational Effectiveness
 - Faster response times
 - Better quality decisions and solutions
 - ‘Continuous innovation’ through shared learnings, ideas and insights
 - Faster replication of best knowledge and innovations
- Reduced Costs
 - ‘not reinventing the wheel’ – shared good practices/best knowledge
 - less repeating of same mistakes
 - time to locate the right information/people
 - time to solve problems
- People Development
 - Faster learning and competence development
 - More creativity
 - Better use of scarce resources
 - Break down silos

Knowledge assets

- People: Professional and General Service in TCI, in TC, in larger FAO, DOs, consultants, country partners...
- Stakeholders' and their assets (knowledge tend to be poor people's major wealth)
- Networks and partnerships, social capital
- Projects and programmes experience
- Guidance and policies (distillation of good practice and knowledge to guide action)
- Processes & systems
- IT platforms: Internet, Intranet, wiki, etc.

Knowledge Networks/Groups

- Environment/Climate Change (ECC)
 - Narrative: Disaster Risk Reduction
 - Focal Persons: David Colbert and Hans Thiel
 - Contact: TCI-ClimateChange@fao.org – focal points: David Colbert (TCIN) and Hans Thiel (TCIO)
- Economists Group:
 - Includes Financial and Economic Analysis
 - Focal Persons: Thomas Muenzel, Marc Fantinet, Theo Boditsis
 - Contact: TCI-Economists-List@fao.org
 - IT Platform: wiki - <https://faoun.pbworks.com>
- Monitoring and Evaluation
 - Focal Persons: Jim Hancock, Nuno Santos, Maria Dodson
 - IT Platform: wiki - <https://faoun.pbworks.com>
- Transitional Programming
 - Focal Person: Alex Jones (TCID) – email: Alexander.Jones@fao.org
- Matching Grants study/group?
 - Focal Persons: Frank Hollinger and Michael Marx

Knowledge Products

- Mostly documents:
 - ASRs, BTOs, Aide-memoires, contributions to main report, reports
 - Upstream:
 - Sectoral studies
 - Policy and strategy papers
 - Investment projects: identification, preparation, design, PADs, evaluation
 - CD: guidance, training material,
 - Lessons Learned
 - Publications
- Other: maps, photos, videos

Current situation

- Work fragmentation:
 - Countries
 - Partners
 - Venture- and assignment-driven
 - Thematic areas: too many focuses
- Disconnects
 - Silos: Departments, units, DOs
 - Business model: many individual missions
 - Limited country focus
 - High transaction costs

Enabling knowledge application, sharing and learning

- Identification of opportunities for innovation and learning
- Assignment Review Teams:
 - Bring in knowledge from other units
 - Apply knowledge
 - Learn when as task team member or as reviewer
 - Two-way link to Thematic Networks Groups
- Regular distillation of knowledge:
 - Lessons Learned
 - Good Practice
 - Identification of knowledge issues
- Mentoring
- Culture of collaboration, reflection, knowledge sharing and learning

TCI Quality System contributes to making TCI more effective by helping to **bring FAO's knowledge to bear on the investment process, and to share knowledge and learn.**

It will help TCI learn **systematically and collectively** from FAO experience and from the knowledge of its partners (governments, country partners, rural people and their organizations, DPs)

... to deliver high quality services including **new ways** to strengthen food security and influence policies.



“QE/QA system should be adapted to TCI’s needs, it should be light, flexible and fun (!), resulting in constant learning and knowledge sharing”

“it should be perceived as supportive, not controlling”

TCI Quality Focus Group



“When an old man dies, it’s like a library that burns” Amadou Hampate Ba

“Knowledge grows when you share it, and in this, it is like love”

African Proverb

