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منظمة
الاغذية والزراعة
للأمم المتحدة

PROGRAMME COMMITTEE

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Office of Evaluation - Strategy and Action Plan 2017-18

Executive Summary

- The 120th session of the Programme Committee held in November 2016, in discussing the Evaluation of FAO's evaluation function and accompanying Management Observations, requested that the Office of Evaluation (OED) develop a strategy and an action plan 2017-19 to enhance evaluation learning and accountability.
- This document presents OED's Strategy and Action plan to enhance evaluation learning and accountability for discussion at the 121st session of the Programme Committee in March 2017.

Guidance sought

- The Committee is invited to provide any comments and guidance on the Strategy and Action plan.

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I. Introduction

1. The findings of the independent Evaluation of FAO's evaluation function were presented and discussed in the 120th session of the Programme Committee in November 2016. The evaluation highlighted significant progress made by the FAO Office of Evaluation (OED) during the last biennium to improve the usefulness of evaluation. It noted that there was scope for improving evaluation learning and accountability, recommending the development of OED's strategy and action plan to address the quality and utility of its evaluations and further enhance their independence and credibility.
2. The Programme Committee welcomed the report and requested that an action plan and timeline to implement the agreed recommendations are submitted to the present session of the Committee. This document presents the proposed OED Strategy and Action plan accordingly.
3. The proposed Strategy and Action Plan builds upon and further complements the ongoing OED Agenda 2016-2017 that sets out the following intended outcomes: (i) Improved evaluation relevance from enhanced ownership by, and engagement with stakeholders; (ii) OED evaluations conducted in a high-quality and consistent manner, and supported by sound evidence on results; and (iii) enhanced use and accessibility of OED evaluations at global, national and local levels.

II. Purpose of the Strategy

4. The purpose of this Strategy is to further strengthen the FAO evaluation system and contribute to organizational learning and achievement of strategic results by producing high-quality evaluation evidence. The Strategy provides a framework for strengthening the evaluation function, enhancing accountability for results, further improving quality and utility of evaluations and fostering organizational learning from evaluations. This Strategy is guided by the recommendations of the Evaluation of FAO's evaluation function, the requests from Member States, and FAO's results-based management approaches. The Strategy will be focusing on the two main pillars:

- **Pillar 1: Enhancing accountability and learning from FAO evaluations.** OED will review and update its guidance, toolkits, and related business processes to enhance methodological rigor and quality of evaluations. These revisions will aim at ensuring compliance with updated United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG) norms and standards, and enhancing use of quantitative data in evaluations. OED is currently implementing measures to develop evaluation supervisory systems to enhance quality and utility of evaluations. OED will also enhance the accessibility and use of evaluations at global and country levels, improving its approaches for communication and dissemination of evaluation results, and enhancing evaluation utility and organizational learning. In addition, an evaluation community of practice will be created involving evaluation staff in national governments and institutions, and evaluation practitioners in programme countries. This platform will aim at facilitating communication of evaluation findings, better sharing of relevant experiences and knowledge, and supporting evaluation capacity development as the basis for alignment of OED evaluations with national processes for the achievement of relevant national goals and SDGs.
- **Pillar 2: Supporting greater integration of gender considerations in FAO evaluations.** OED will integrate gender considerations in all evaluations, as well as update its 2016 gender assessment framework, and develop guidelines with context-based methodologies for integrating gender dimension in its evaluations. As a first step, the applicability of the current gender assessment framework to different types of evaluations on various subject matters will be tested, and the current pro-forma approach should be made more context-specific. The lessons learnt from this stage will feed into the development of new guidelines that are hence more relevant and applicable to evaluations of FAO programmes and projects.

III. Implementation and monitoring of the Strategy

5. The Strategy will be operationalized through implementation of an Action Plan (Annex 1) which proposes concrete actions, indicators, targets and timeframes, and baselines. OED will have a lead role in implementing the Strategy, in coordination with relevant FAO units.

6. OED will report to the Programme Committee in 2019, as well as in the biennial Programme Evaluation Report (PER) 2019.

Annex 1. Action Plan in support of implementing the OED Strategy

Pillar 1: Enhancing accountability and learning from FAO evaluations			
Action	Indicator	Target and timeframe	Baseline (2016)
Revise guidance materials for thematic, country and project evaluations for use by OED staff and evaluators (Rec. 1)	- Guidance materials revised to reflect state-of-the-art and appropriate methodologies, including emphasis on the use of quantitative data collection tools - Staff training is provided on new methodologies, quantitative data collection protocols and tools - OED evaluations are conducted applying the revised guidance materials	100% of evaluations are conducted applying the revised guidance (by end-2019)	5/40 (12.5%) of evaluations apply revised guidance
Institute evaluation supervisory system to enhance quality and utility of evaluations (Rec. 1.i; 1.v)	Guidelines for the new evaluation supervisory system are developed and applied	100% evaluation supervisory function is applied in all evaluations (by end-2017)	10/100 % (new evaluation supervisory function was defined and tested, and being rolled out for all evaluations)
Set-up a comprehensive quality assurance system for evaluations (Rec. 1.iv; 1.viii)	- Quality checklists are updated on the basis of new UNEG norms and standards - Quality control is systematically undertaken by the evaluation supervisors at design and final draft stages of OED evaluations	100% of evaluations are subject to comprehensive quality assurance (by end-2018)	35/40 (90%) of evaluations are subject to quality assurance
OED is fully staffed (Rec. 1.i)	OED posts are filled by end 2017	100% of staff posts filled (by end-2017)	8/10 (80%) of staff posts filled
Establish a system for analyzing and reporting on common evaluation findings (Rec. 1.iii)	Mechanism to systematically collect and analyze evaluation findings and identify recurrent issues and lessons learned is in place	Biennial Programme Evaluation Reports highlight synthesis on recurrent issues and lessons learned from evaluations (starting from the PER 2015-2016 issued in 2017)	0/1 (0%) Biennial Programme Evaluation Report 2013-2014 focused on findings from individual evaluations

Establish community of practice for relevant national counterparts and evaluation practitioners (Rec. 1; 5)	Evaluation community of practice is established to support evaluation capacity development as the basis for alignment of OED evaluations with national processes for the achievement of relevant national goals and SDGs	Evaluation community of practice is established with participation in 20 countries from at least 3 regions (by end-2018)	0/20 (0%) countries
Pillar 2: Supporting greater integration of gender considerations in FAO evaluations			
Action	Indicator	Target and timeframe	Baseline (2016)
Develop new guidelines with context-based methodologies for integrating gender dimension in evaluations (Rec. 1.viii)	Guidelines with context-based methodologies for integrating gender dimension in evaluations are developed and tested on the basis of 2016 gender assessment framework	The new guidelines and methodologies are developed (by end-2017)	Gender assessment framework developed (November 2016)
Application of new guidelines in thematic, country and project evaluations (Rec. 1.viii)	The new guidelines are applied to all types of evaluations	100% of evaluations apply the new guidelines (by end-2018)	8/28 (29%): While all 28 evaluations conducted in 2015 included gender analysis, the full framework was used in 8 evaluations among them