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de las
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para la
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y la
Alimentación

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EVALUATION OF FAO'S ACTIVITIES ON CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT IN AFRICA

1. This cover page provides the background and key issues for the attention and guidance of the Committee on the attached *Evaluation of FAO's Activities on Capacity Development in Africa and the Management Response*.

Background

2. The Paris Declaration and Accra Agenda for Action recognised that limited capacity is one of the major constraints to development in Africa and highlighted the need for development assistance to be better coordinated and led by Africans. Capacity Development (CD) is part of the core mandate of FAO, as explicitly recognised in the Strategic Framework 2010-2019.

3. At its October 2008 session, the FAO Programme Committee selected FAO's Capacity Development Activities in Africa as one of the priority areas for evaluation. The Evaluation was conducted by an independent external team between June and December 2009, using a mix of tools to draw evidence, including six country case studies. The Evaluation was expected to serve as a vehicle for accountability and learning, as well as to assist in validating and refining the FAO Corporate Strategy on Capacity Development.

Key Issues in Evaluation Report

- Overall, FAO needs to raise the profile and understanding of CD in the Organization. CD needs to be the focus of most, if not all, of FAO activities including assembly and provision of information, support to international instruments, norms and standards, policy advice, advocacy, the formation and dissemination of knowledge products, technology development and transfer, and networking.
- FAO's CD performance in Africa has been mixed. Most interventions are relevant, many have been effective, but few have been sustainable. The Evaluation noted a number of successes, principally where FAO had engaged continuously over time and across all three dimensions (individual, organization and enabling environment), most obviously in plant protection, statistics and increasingly in transboundary animal diseases.
- While FAO CD work only occasionally targeted organizations, much of the most effective work the Evaluation team members saw in the countries visited, involved just these cases of enhancing capacities of local, national and regional organizations, mainly in the public sector.
- There is very little emphasis given to sustainability and too much given to immediate results and outputs. This is evident in the project timeframes and modalities; the lack of understanding by FAO staff of the importance of process in CD; the lack of focus on institutionalising CD activities and building political will to sustain them; and also to the limited motivation and opportunity for follow-up and for monitoring and evaluation by FAO staff responsible for the CD work.

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- FAO produces much valuable knowledge relevant to CD, but its uptake in Africa is limited, mainly because the region is constrained by poor communications infrastructure. Additional investment, and partnering, is required to ensure wider access to FAO's normative products.
- The regional and subregional offices need their capacities strengthened, more resources and better links to expertise in headquarters in order to lead capacity development in Africa. Where additional resources are not available, it may be necessary for FAO to reduce the number of projects and programmes in selected areas. FAO should also work more in partnerships to share some of the costs and to increase its outreach. It should continue to move away from direct implementation to more facilitation and mentoring of local implementers.

Management Response

4. FAO management appreciated the evaluation process and methodology and fully accepts six of the nine recommendations and partially accepts three. Many of the topics included in the recommendations have been reviewed by the Interdepartmental Working Group (IDWG) on CD led by the Office of Knowledge Exchange, Research and Extension (OEK), and many of them are included in the Corporate Strategy on CD and its associated Implementation Plan.

5. The recommendations will contribute to the ongoing organizational change process and will involve actions to:

- i. strengthen decentralized offices in Africa;
- ii. change CD programming and uptake of a series of new CD tools and practices;
- iii. change CD partnerships;
- iv. change post descriptions and include CD in performance evaluation of FAO staff and consultants;
- v. train staff on CD; and
- vi. improve distribution and uptake of products in Africa.

6. It is recognized that allocation or redirection of resources will be required to ensure implementation of all the recommendations, and that a phased approach will need to be adopted over the coming years. The potential resource implications will be quantified for possible consideration in the preparation of the Programme of Work and Budget 2012-13.

7. To ensure the change process needed for improving FAO's work on CD in Africa, and more widely, its compatibility with the ongoing Organizational change and available resources, Management will give priority to activities which can be addressed quickly, while allowing more time for the recommendations requiring further analysis or sequenced implementation. Management will integrate evaluation follow-up actions into the ongoing IPA change process where relevant, to ensure synergy with the organizational reform. The action table will be further refined as funding and priorities are defined over the coming years.

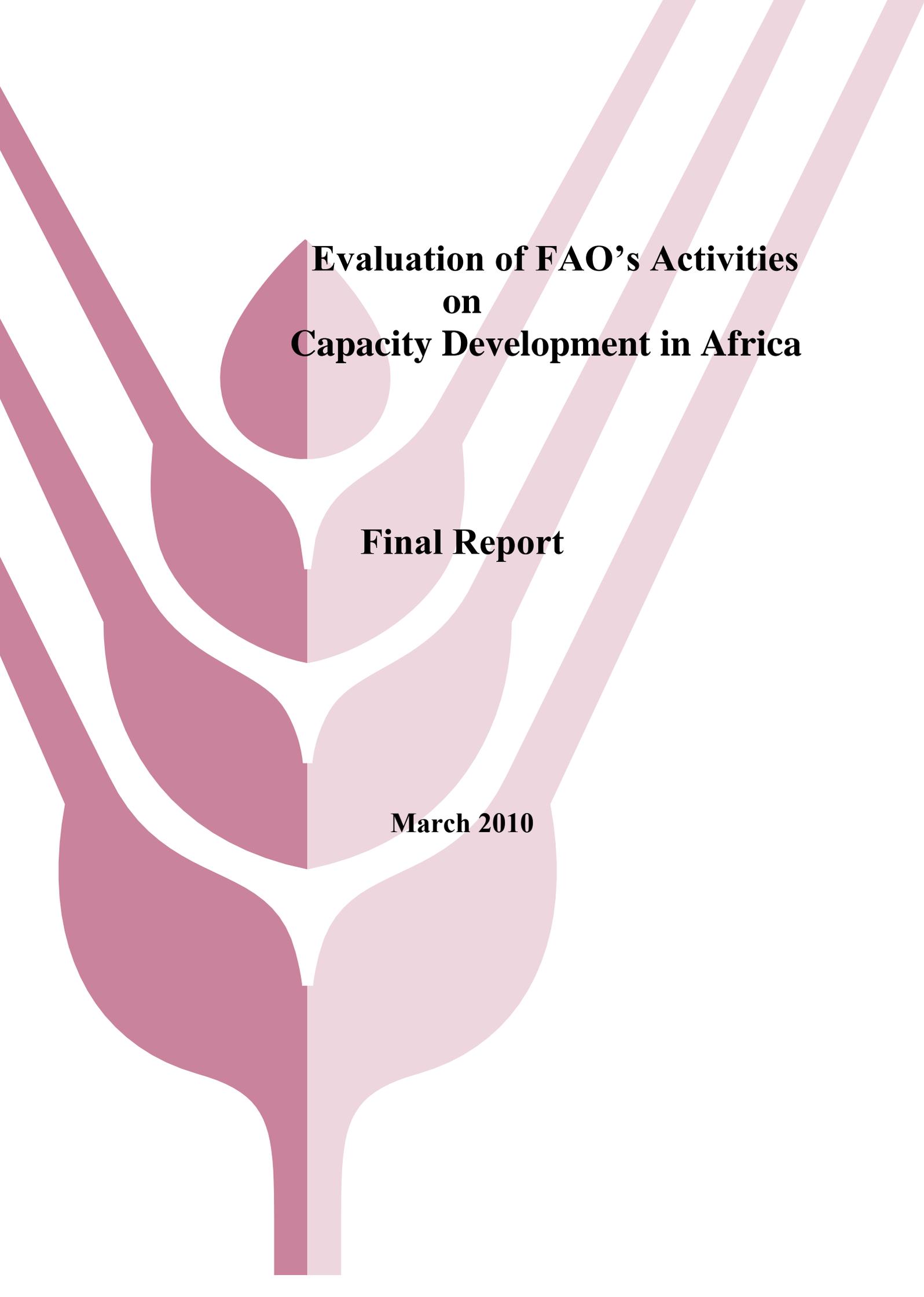
Guidance sought

8. The Programme Committee may wish to provide its views and guidance on the key issues in the Evaluation report and the proposed follow-up actions by Management.

Queries on the substantive content of this document may be addressed to:

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A large, stylized graphic of a plant with multiple leaves, rendered in two shades of maroon. The leaves are arranged in a symmetrical, upward-pointing pattern, with the central stem and leaves being a darker shade and the outer leaves being a lighter shade. The graphic is positioned on the left side of the page, with the text centered over it.

**Evaluation of FAO's Activities
on
Capacity Development in Africa**

Final Report

March 2010

Table of Contents

	Pages
I. Introduction	1
II. Capacity Development: What is it?	1
III. The Changing Environment	2
A. INTERNATIONAL COMMITMENT TO MORE COORDINATED AND DEMAND-DRIVEN DEVELOPMENT	2
B. AGRICULTURE AND CD ARE HIGH ON THE INTERNATIONAL AGENDA	3
C. ADVANCEMENTS IN COMMUNICATIONS	3
D. CHANGES AT COUNTRY LEVEL	3
IV. CD in the Context of FAO's New Strategic Framework and Reform	3
V. Evaluation Scope, Methodology, Focus and Limitations	5
A. SCOPE	5
B. METHODOLOGY	5
C. FOCUS AND LIMITATIONS	7
VI. Overview of FAO's CD Work in Africa	7
VII. Findings	11
A. RELEVANCE OF FAO'S WORK	12
<i>Priorities as defined in National Medium-Term Priority Frameworks</i>	13
<i>Country priorities for CD according to interlocutors</i>	13
<i>Coordination with other CD initiatives</i>	14
<i>Relevance of FAO's work from the perspective of the three CD dimensions</i>	14
B. DESIGN, APPROACH AND MODALITIES	17
<i>Overall findings</i>	18
<i>Taking into account the context and identification of needs at the individual, organisation and institutional levels</i>	18
<i>Participation of beneficiaries/stakeholders in the design</i>	19
<i>Modalities of CD interventions</i>	20

<i>Strategic selection of participants, facilitators and implementing agents</i>	20
<i>Ensuring the institutionalisation of interventions</i>	22
<i>Project length, follow-up and exit strategy</i>	22
C. EFFECTIVENESS	23
<i>Overall findings</i>	23
<i>The policy/enabling environment</i>	24
<i>Organisations</i>	25
<i>Individuals</i>	27
D. IMPACT	28
<i>Overall findings</i>	28
E. SUSTAINABILITY AND FOLLOW-UP OF CD ACTIVITIES	30
<i>Overall findings</i>	30
<i>Longer time-frame, follow-up and continued engagement</i>	30
<i>Institutionalisation of results and processes</i>	32
<i>Developing capacity at the decentralized/local level</i>	32
<i>Encouraging networking</i>	32
<i>Facilitating government commitment</i>	33
F. GENDER	33
<i>Overall findings</i>	33
G. PARTNERSHIPS	34
<i>Overall findings</i>	35
<i>African inter-governmental organisations</i>	35
<i>UN agencies</i>	36
<i>National and regional research organisations and universities</i>	37
<i>Civil Society and the private sector</i>	38
VIII. FAO's Normative CD Products	38
A. APPROACH	39
B. RELEVANCE TO THE NEEDS	39
C. DESIGN AND PRODUCTION QUALITY	40
D. GENDER	40
E. ACCESS AND FORMATS	41
F. CAPACITY BUILDING PORTAL	42
G. USE OF NORMATIVE CD PRODUCTS	42
IX. FAO's Ability to Deliver CD	43
A. OVERALL FINDINGS	43
B. UNDERSTANDING CD AND FAO'S ROLE IN IT	43
C. INSTITUTIONAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE ARRANGEMENTS TO DELIVER CD	44

<i>Regional and Sub-regional Offices</i>	44
<i>Country offices</i>	46
D. PROJECT MODALITIES	46
X. Conclusions	47
<i>General overview</i>	47
<i>Specific conclusions leading to recommendations</i>	49
XI. Recommendations	53
A. MAINSTREAMING CD	53
B. SUSTAINABILITY AND EFFECTIVENESS OF FAO CD INITIATIVES	54
C. DEVELOPING CAPACITY FOR POLICY ANALYSIS, FORMULATION AND IMPLEMENTATION	55
D. DOCUMENTING AND PROMOTING SUCCESSFUL INNOVATIONS	55
E. ACCESS TO KNOWLEDGE AS A KEY COMPONENT OF CAPACITY	56
F. INCREASED INVESTMENT IN FAO CAPACITY IN AFRICA	56

List of Annexes

- Annex 1: Terms of Reference
- Annex 2: Evaluation Methodology
- Annex 3: The Team
- Annex 4: The Expert Review Panel
- Annex 5: List of People Met
- Annex 6: List of Key Documents Consulted
- Annex 7: Overview of FAO's CD Activities in Africa
- Annex 8: Assessment of FAO's Normative Products Related to CD in Africa
- Annex 9: Meta-evaluation of Country, Programme and Project Evaluations
- Annex 10: Country Reports
 - a. Kenya
 - b. Malawi
 - c. Tanzania
 - d. Uganda
 - e. Ghana
 - f. Burkina Faso
- Annex 11: Beneficiary Assessment Reports
 - a. Kenya
 - b. Malawi
 - c. Tanzania
 - d. Uganda
 - e. Ghana
 - f. Burkina Faso

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Acronyms

ACP	African, Caribbean and Pacific Group of States
AGP	FAO Plant Production and Protection Division
AGPT	Assemblée générale de projet de territoire
AGRA	Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa
ANAFE	African Network for Agriculture, Agro-forestry and Natural Resources Education
ANSA	Food Security and Nutrition Association of Mozambique
ARENET	Agriculture Research Extension Network
ASARECA	Association for Strengthening Agricultural Research in Eastern and Central Africa
CCA	Common Country Assessment
CAADP	Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme
CA-SARD	Conservation Agriculture for Sustainable Agriculture and Rural Development
CBO	Community-based Organisation
CCRF	Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries
CD	Capacity Development
CILSS	<i>Comité permanent inter-états de lutte contre la sécheresse dans le Sahel</i>
COMIFAC	Central African Forest Commission
CORAF	<i>Conseil Ouest et Centre africain pour la recherche et le développement agricoles</i>
COREP	<i>Comité régional des pêches du Golfe de Guinée</i>
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
DAC	Development Assistance Committee
EC	European Commission
ECDPM	European Centre for Development Policy Management
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States
EMPRES	Emergency Prevention System for Transboundary Animal and Plant Pests and Diseases
ESWD	FAO Gender, Equity and Rural Employment Division
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
FAOR	FAO Representative
FARA	Forum for Agricultural Research in Africa
FFS	Farmers' Field School
FNPP	FAO/Netherlands Partnership Programme
FPMIS	Field Programme Management Information System
FSA	Fish Stocks Agreement
FSIA	Food Security Information for Action
FSIS	Food Security Information System
GAINS	Ghana Agricultural Information Network System
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GIPD	<i>Gestion intégrée de la production et des déprédateurs</i>
GIS	Geographic Information System
GMO	Genetically Modified Organism
GTZ	<i>Deutsche Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit</i>

HDI	Human Development Index
HIV/AIDS	Human Immunodeficiency Virus/Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome
HQ	Headquarters
HR	Human Resources
ICRAF	World Agro-forestry Centre
ICT	Information Communication Technology
IDP	Internally Displaced People
IDWG	Inter-departmental Working Group
IEE	Independent External Evaluation
ILO	International Labour Organisation
ILUA	Integrated Land Use Assessment
IPC	Integrated Food Security Phase Classification
IPPC	International Plant Protection Convention
IT	Information Technology
ITPGR	International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources
JFFLS	Junior Farmer Field and Life School
JP	Joint Programme
KAINET	Kenya Agricultural Information Network
KCEF	Outreach and Capacity Building Branch [FAO]
KEPHIS	Kenya Plant Health Inspection Services
KIPRA	Kenya Institute for Policy, Research and Analysis
LinKS	Gender Biodiversity and Local Knowledge Systems for Food Security
LVFO	Lake Victoria Fisheries Organisation
MAAIF	Ministry of Agriculture, Animal Industries and Fisheries
MAC	Market Access Company
MDG	Millennium Development Goal
MoA	Ministry of Agriculture
NARO	National Agricultural Research Organisation
NBI	Nile Basin Initiative
NEPAD	New Partnership for Africa's Development
NFMA	National Forest Monitoring and Assessment
NGO	Non-governmental Organisation
NMTPF	National Medium-term Priority Framework
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
OFZ	Onchocerciasis-freed Zone
Prods-PAIA	Integrated Production Systems-Priority Area for Inter-disciplinary Action
RAF	Regional Office for Africa
ROPPA	<i>Réseau des organisations paysannes et de producteurs agricoles de l'Afrique de l'Ouest</i>
RUFORUM	Regional University Forum for Capacity Building in Agriculture
SADC	Southern African Development Community
SEAGA	Socio-economic and Gender Analysis Programme
SFC	Sub-regional Office for Central Africa
SFE	Sub-regional Office for Eastern Africa
SFS	Sub-regional Office for Southern Africa
SFW	Sub-regional Office for West Africa

SIFSIA	Sudan Institutional Capacity Programme: Food Security Information for Action
SRO	Sub-regional Office
SSA	Sub-Saharan Africa
SSC	South-South Cooperation
TA	Technical Assistance
TAD	Transboundary Animal Disease
TCE	Emergency and Rehabilitation Division
TCP	Technical Cooperation Programme
TO	Technical Officer
ToR	Terms of Reference
UEMOA	Union économique et monétaire ouest-africaine
UN	United Nations
UNAIDS	The Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS
UNCLOS	United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea
UNDAF	United Nations Development Assistance Framework
UN DaO	UN Delivery as One
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNIDO	United Nations Industrial Development Organisation
UNIFEM	United Nations Development Fund for Women
WFP	World Food Programme

Executive Summary

Introduction

i. The Paris Declaration and Accra Agenda for Action recognised that limited capacity is one of the major constraints to development in Africa and highlighted the need for development assistance to be better coordinated and led by Africans. This requires a change in approach to development and emphasises the importance of capacity development in particular.

ii. At its October 2008 session, the FAO Programme Committee selected “FAO’s work on Capacity Development in Africa” as one of the priority areas for evaluation. The evaluation was conducted from June to December 2009, using a mix of tools to draw evidence. It carried out an in-depth analysis of FAO’s capacity development work in six case-study countries: Burkina Faso, Ghana, Kenya, Malawi, Tanzania and Uganda. It also completed an inventory of CD activities at country level, covering the 48 countries of Sub-Sahara Africa. It finally drew evidence from a review of selected FAO normative products, available records on projects and programmes, and a meta-synthesis of past evaluations, including country evaluations of FAO’s work in Congo DRC, Sudan, Sierra Leone and Mozambique.

iii. This evaluation serves as a vehicle for accountability and learning by providing an evidence-based analysis of the current status of FAO’s work in the area of CD in Africa. The evaluation is forward-looking and formative and provides guidance and recommendations to improve the work of the Organization on capacity development.

Overview of FAO CD activities in Africa

iv. FAO CD activities permeate nearly all the work FAO does. FAO is recognized as an important source of knowledge, and about half of the field projects (including within the Emergency Programme) FAO carried out in the period 2000-2008 included a significant component of CD.

v. FAO’s work has been more heavily focused on individuals (75%), and primarily on transferring technical skills. Some projects have rather specifically targeted organisational capacity (23%) or the enabling environment (27%). FAO is increasingly being called on to assist countries in setting the agenda for agriculture, fisheries and forestry and in liaising with donors. The Organization has significantly assisted governments in developing food policies, and aligning plant protection, food safety, transboundary animal diseases, fisheries and forestry regulations and policies with international norms and conventions. Only in very few cases, where FAO had a consistent and continuous engagement over time, did FAO intervention address all three CD dimensions.

Core Findings and Conclusions

vi. Capacity development (CD) is the process whereby individuals, groups, private and public sector organisations all enhance their systems, resources, skills and knowledge to better address development.

vii. Capacity Development (CD) is part of the core mandate of FAO, as explicitly recognised in the Strategic Framework 2010-2019. In line with the Organization's mandate, FAO CD focus is on food security, rural poverty reduction and sustainable natural resource management. FAO has been active in CD across Departments and Divisions. Yet, interpretation of CD and recognition of its role varied throughout the Organization, with many equating CD with the one-off training of individuals. CD is a process and requires improving the functioning of the individuals and organisations. To be effective, CD also needs to address the enabling environment (policies, norms, values, legislation) to ensure there are incentives for improving capacity to address these issues and to be adaptable to changing circumstances.

viii. FAO's CD performance in Africa has been mixed. Most interventions are relevant, many have been effective, but few have been sustainable. The Evaluation noted a number of successes, principally where FAO had engaged continuously over time and across all three dimensions, most obviously in plant protection, statistics and increasingly in transboundary animal diseases. This continuous engagement over a long period, across dimensions, allows for the building of a critical mass of skills, institutional memory and the policies, norms, values and structures to support the work in those areas. FAO has also achieved widely recognised success in integrating CD into pilot projects testing new technologies using effective CD approaches such as Farmer Field Schools. There have also been some good examples of policy assistance which has effectively and sustainably strengthened policy analysis and implementation capacity in Burkina Faso, Mozambique and Zanzibar among others.

ix. Several factors contributed to the effectiveness:

- adequate participatory planning, needs and context assessment;
- appropriate consideration of the enabling environment, including institutional linkages and challenges;
- long-term planning and involvement with appropriate follow-up;
- the use of national consultants with strong FAO back-up; and
- engagement across time with successive projects.

x. However, despite many effective and relevant interventions, the Evaluation found that FAO CD activities are, for the most part, unsustainable. There is very little emphasis given to sustainability and too much given to immediate results and outputs. This is evident in the project timeframes and modalities; the lack of understanding by FAO staff of the importance of process to CD; lack of focus on institutionalising CD activities and building the political will to sustain them; and also to the limited motivation and opportunity for follow-up and for monitoring and evaluation by FAO staff.

Capacity Development Dimensions

xi. While FAO CD work seldom targeted organisations, much of the most effective work the evaluation team members saw in the countries visited involved the enhanced capacities of local, national and regional organisations, mainly in the public sector.

xii. With regard to CD targeting individuals, the country field visits and beneficiary assessments found strong appreciation of the FFS approach which is being taken up by donors, development agencies and governments but the evaluation found that the principles are sometimes poorly understood. The evaluation felt that FAO should make a more concerted effort

to document key principles of its successful approaches and make these available to a wide range of audiences.

xiii. Stakeholders in several countries called on FAO to shift emphasis from policy development to policy implementation; to enhance capacities at the national and district levels and translate policies into action. In many cases, this requires better inter-departmental linkages, between national and local government and with other stakeholders. Some FAO projects specifically addressed these linkages but far greater emphasis needs to be given to them and to policy analysis and implementation. FAO can work with partners to help strengthen capacity on the frontline, particularly important in the increasing number of countries emphasising decentralisation.

Approach to CD and soft skills' development

xiv. The country case studies and the meta-synthesis of evaluations reflected the demand for more CD of business, financial and marketing skills. They also underscore the importance of soft skills such as confidence, negotiating skills, teamwork, creativity, adaptability, leadership and trust. These are often best developed through using a participative approach to CD, emphasising process in delivering specific skills training.

xv. FAO has provided little support to strengthening farmers' lobbying efforts for services so essential to building farmers' voice. In contrast, FAO's efforts to facilitate the participation of Africans at regional and international fora, workshops and other exchanges to strengthen their knowledge and build their confidence, has been important to developing soft skills and sustaining capacity. However, FAO interventions often fail to devote sufficient attention and resources to building the political will necessary to consolidate and sustain CD. This emphasises the importance of strengthening FAO country offices and devoting significantly more resources and attention to engaging with policy-makers.

xvi. FAO produces much valuable and relevant knowledge as an important contribution to CD but its uptake and use in Africa is limited. Africa is constrained by poor communications infrastructure which means that additional investment, or partnering, is required to ensure wider access to FAO's normative products. This may also involve the more selective production of materials in order to ensure that resources are available for effective distribution. There is no point in producing materials which do not reach their intended audience.

FAO capacities to address CD and Partnerships

xvii. The Evaluation found that the Regional and Sub-regional Offices need their own capacities strengthened, more resources and better connectivity to expertise in headquarters in order to lead capacity development in Africa. At country level, FAO lacks the capacity to take its expected role in the many committees established to determine priorities, co-ordinate donor activity and facilitate interactions between government and donors and with other stakeholders. The Evaluation considers that FAO will lose both relevance and opportunities unless it is able to significantly strengthen effective capacity in Africa.

xviii. In the spirit of the Accra Agenda for Action and to help address capacity constraints in implementing projects and in dealing with the emerging needs of decentralised systems, FAO should strengthen endogenous capacity, and be encouraged to partner more effectively. Setting priorities for CD within a strategic framework such as the NMTPF should take into account the context of the country, FAO's own comparative advantage to address national needs and the potential for partnering with local, regional and international agencies, including universities and research institutes.

xix. FAO has limited resources and needs to take the cost implications of investing in CD into consideration. Where the necessary resources cannot be made available for CD, the Evaluation considers that it may be necessary for FAO to reduce the number of projects and programmes to ensure that it has the human and financial resources to make sustainable CD interventions in selected areas. FAO can also work more in partnerships to share some of the costs involved in implementation and to increase its outreach.

Recommendations

xx. This Evaluation found that the more successful modalities for CD intervention were where the emphasis was on the way FAO engaged rather than on the production of outputs. The Evaluation has distilled the factors that have led to sustainable and effective CD and to the changing climate for development. It has highlighted the challenges confronting FAO as a result of increased in-country collaboration and decision-making by donors, as well as the implications of increased decentralisation and commercialisation. FAO needs to take these into consideration when making decisions on resource allocation, establishing priorities and strategies and motivating staff to ensure that it can be at the forefront of strengthening sustainable capacity to deliver on the MDGs.

xxi. The new CD strategy recognises that FAO needs to work more systematically across the three dimensions of CD helping facilitate nationally-led processes and the endogenous strengthening of existing capacities in the countries where it works. This involves a major shift in FAO's approach to CD giving more emphasis to process, partnering and to the enabling environment. The Evaluation provides some recommendations to strengthen this change which are summarized below and detailed in the main report:

Recommendation 1: It is recommended that the Interdepartmental Working Group (IDWG) on Capacity Building take steps to ensure that FAO staff and partners have a common conceptual understanding of CD and FAO's role in it.

Recommendation 2: It is recommended that senior management, under the guidance of the IDWG, incorporate CD into the mandates, work programmes and post descriptions of all relevant programming staff.

Recommendation 3: It is recommended that senior management, with the guidance of the IDWG, review and, where necessary, revise FAO's systems to improve the effectiveness and sustainability of CD initiatives.

Recommendation 4: It is recommended that the IDWG develop, and senior management, implement, guidelines for projects and programmes that emphasise effective CD practices, such as participatory approaches that build ownership, sustainability and partnerships.

Recommendation 5: It is recommended that FAO senior management ensure that staff, in particular those in decentralized offices and FAO Representatives, place increased emphasis on partnerships in their CD activities in Africa.

Recommendation 6: It is recommended that FAO staff, in particular FAO Representatives, place increased emphasis on facilitating the development of national capacity for policy analysis and implementation

Recommendation 7: It is recommended that FAO staff give priority to, and improve, the documentation and dissemination of successful CD initiatives, methods and normative products.

Recommendation 8: It is recommended that FAO senior management take immediate steps to improve the distribution and uptake of FAO's products for CD in Africa.

Recommendation 9: It is recommended that FAO invest more heavily in the capacity of its decentralized offices in Africa to engage significantly in developing capacities for the agriculture, forestry and fisheries sectors and to respond to emerging demands of African member countries.

Introduction

1. Capacity development (CD) is at the core of the mandate of the Food and Agricultural Organization of the United Nations (FAO). Yet, no comprehensive assessment of FAO's work in this area has ever been undertaken. At its October 2008 session, the FAO Programme Committee selected the "FAO's work on Capacity Development in Africa" as one of the priority areas for evaluation.
2. The purpose of the evaluation is to serve as a vehicle for accountability and learning by providing an evidence-based analysis of the current status of FAO's work in the area of CD in Africa. The evaluation is forward-looking and formative and provides guidance and recommendations to improve the work of the Organization on CD in Africa, and perhaps other regions, in the future.
3. Furthermore, the evaluation is expected to assist in validating and refining the FAO Corporate Strategy on Capacity Building and defining the parameters for its implementation.
4. The evaluation is addressed to FAO member countries through the Programme Committee, Senior Management and FAO staff working on CD as well as to clients of FAO's capacity CD products and services, in particular in Africa.
5. The evaluation was carried out from June to December 2009 by a team led by Prof. Kay Muir-Leresche.

Capacity Development: What is it?

6. Reduced to its essentials, CD empowers people and organisations to be able to adapt to change and to have the confidence and skills to hold themselves and outside agencies accountable, and to improve their enabling environment. CD improves ability to:
 - decide, act, commit;
 - respond to stimuli (adapt and renew);
 - deliver and engage (produce outputs); and
 - develop, use, maintain and improve relationships, both internally and externally.
7. The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development/Development Assistance Committee's (OECD/DAC) Network on Governance and the European Centre for Development Policy Management (ECDPM) are among a number of agencies involved in researching what constitutes good practices in CD. Stiles (2009) reviews the literature and he notes that "there is no single best method of capacity development; much depends on the development circumstances and context. In most situations, a combination of methods will be needed to achieve desired results. Those engaged in strengthening capacities must also pay close attention to process: how the methods and tools are applied is equally as important as the methods and tools selected. The development community has learned that organisational capacity cannot be transferred in a linear process through technical assistance and training; it must be developed over time with a variety of interventions and with experimentation to find the best combinations of methods and tools."
8. For this evaluation, as outlined in the terms of reference (ToR), the following definition of CD is used:

Box 1: Definition of CD

CD is understood as the process whereby individuals, groups, private and public sector organisations all enhance their systems, resources and knowledge as reflected in their improved abilities to perform functions and solve problems, in order to better address hunger, poverty reduction and sustainable natural resource management objectives.

9. This definition makes explicit that CD is directed at empowering beneficiaries to address food security, improve livelihoods and ensure that systems of resource use are sustainable. It acknowledges that the evaluation will take into account all of FAO's CD initiatives and not only those directed at government agencies, and it highlights the fact that the focus of CD is to improve African rural development effectiveness.

10. CD engages all FAO departments, involves relationships, cuts across sectors and disciplines, and is a process within a system and not a discrete activity or set of initiatives. For CD to be effective, the process of engagement is as, or more, important than the outputs produced.

11. As indicated above, developing effective capacity is a process and it involves all three dimensions: individuals, organisations and the environment. The evaluation considers FAO's activities in relation to all three dimensions.

12. The enabling environment relates to political commitment and vision; norms, values and institutions; policy, legal and economic frameworks; institutional relations; sector strategies and overall resources; the general development level (health, literacy, etc), and financial resources. This evaluation focuses on interventions that are directed towards improving incentives, policies, legislation, regulations and accountability for sustainable development, food security and poverty reduction. FAO assists countries both to enhance the enabling environment for agriculture and to become more effective in formulating and implementing policies.

13. The organisation dimension relates to political and administrative bodies (government agencies, political parties, international and regional bodies), technical bodies (inspectorates, laboratories, research, extension), economic and social bodies (enterprises, commerce chambers, consumer groups, producer associations, CBOs, universities). Interventions designed for the organisation dimension are usually associated with improving the organisational system rather than individual competencies. This can involve the setting-up of veterinary laboratories, information systems, development of restructuring plans, etc.

14. The individual dimension relates to improving the ability of individuals of all ages and providing them with knowledge and a skill set (both technical and soft) that improves their ability to contribute and that enhances the effectiveness of any group or organisation they are associated with.

15. Each dimension relates closely to the other in an embedded system where the whole is the sum of the parts. It is possible to take one of the parts and change it but for success and sustainability, the changes need to be linked to, supported and reinforced through all dimensions. The emphasis is on building the capacity of the system at country level.

The Changing Environment

16. On field visits in Africa, the evaluation team witnessed new approaches to development assistance, opportunities created by new technology and the changing nature of structures, policies and capacities in the countries visited. These trends, which are briefly outlined below, are important to the context of CD and underpin many of the evaluation's recommendations.

B. International Commitment to More Coordinated and Demand-driven Development

17. The Paris Declaration and the Accra Agenda for Action called on development partners to provide a more coordinated approach to assistance in close cooperation with governments and with specific efforts to enhance endogenous capacity. The evaluation found that many of the donors in the countries they visited are committed to this approach. Increasingly, programme priorities and funding arrangements are discussed at multi-donor and government fora within the country which requires strong country presence for effective participation.

C. Agriculture and CD are high on the International Agenda

18. Over the past several decades, development assistance in Africa has focused largely on non-agricultural areas. This now appears to be changing, as more development practitioners recognise the importance of agriculture, forestry and fisheries in relation to economic growth and the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and climate change mitigation. As a result, agriculture and natural resource management are now given more prominence in development assistance.

D. Advancements in Communications

19. Technological advancements in communications provide new opportunities for accelerated development. The evaluation team noted that policy-makers, senior technocrats, scientists, research institutes and universities in Africa have access to the Internet. However, in many places, poor connectivity and the high cost of access restrict Internet use, making off-line access important. Some farmers' organisations use e-mail to communicate with representatives who access the Internet from cafés or government offices when travelling in remote parts of the country. Cellular telephones have made access to market information and financial transactions viable for many, especially in remote communities. Coverage is, however, limited and not all people can afford regular access. There is a real danger that the digital divide could increase inequities both within and between countries.

E. Changes at Country Level

20. The evaluation team noted increased emphasis on decentralisation in all countries visited, especially Uganda, Tanzania and Ghana. Capacity constraints at decentralised levels are affecting the ability to implement policies and programmes and to institutionalise innovations. Innovative mechanisms are required to enhance capacity at the frontlines to ensure that policies and strategies once developed at the centre are effectively implemented in rural areas.

21. The evaluation noted a strong emphasis on the commercialisation of agriculture and renewable resource production systems. National development strategies called for more emphasis on market links, inputs, processing, storage and finance. However, increased commercialisation could take the spotlight away from sustainable food systems, nutrition, poverty alleviation and services for marginalised groups. In addition, many of the countries emphasised irrigation as a way to reduce the effects of climate change, intensify production and ease land pressure.

22. Although capacity constraints in Africa are severe, the evaluation found advanced skills available in some of the countries visited. Endogenous capacity can be further enhanced by employing local and regional organisations as contractors. CD interventions should be differentiated to fit needs; some countries may require CD support at high levels while others may not.

CD in the Context of FAO's New Strategic Framework and Reform

23. The Director-General's Reform Proposals (2005) highlighted "Capacity Building" as one of the main areas of priority for member countries. The Independent External Evaluation (IEE) Report (2007) noted "Capacity Building" as a major theme for reform and advised the Organization to develop a corporate strategy to "take full account of countries' capacities, needs and partnerships opportunities" (Recommendation 3.24). FAO began work on a capacity development strategy in 2008 under the guidance of the then Outreach and Capacity Building Branch (KCEF) with inputs from an Inter-Departmental Working Group (IDWG).¹

¹ A review of FAO's draft CD strategy appears in Section IX.

24. The Organization has frequently stated the importance of CD work across its technical areas. It has made CD a priority for extra-budgetary resources, and has emphasised the need for staff to take maximum advantage of partnerships and networking opportunities in areas where FAO has the expertise and the comparative advantage. Yet, the Organization recognizes that a shift in the way FAO provides CD is needed - from the Organization being an implementer of supply-driven CD to the Organization being a facilitator of demand-driven CD.

25. In order to adapt to the changing architecture of development cooperation, FAO recognises that it needs to adjust the way it operates and has taken steps to do so. In response to the reforms proposed in the IEE Report (2007), the FAO Immediate Plan of Action for the biennium 2010-11 focuses on four key themes:

- Managing for results through the definition of a results framework that comprises FAO's vision, three Global Goals and eleven Strategic Objectives, together with the related means of actions;
- *Functioning as One*, including assigning a stronger role to Regional Offices in decision-making and investing in the capacities of decentralized offices to operate with the same corporate tools and facilities as headquarters (HQ);
- *Introducing a performance management system* and reviewing human resources (HR) policies; and
- *Reforming the administration*, which includes establishing a joint procurement unit for the three Rome-based agencies.

26. CD is one of the eight core functions in the new FAO Strategic Framework (2010-19), under the heading "Technical support to promote technology transfer and build capacity." This covers both technical and functional capacities² in all three CD dimensions, in order to facilitate the alignment of internal processes for the "new CD approaches [to be] fully institutionalised within existing systems and procedures."

27. The New Strategic Framework mentions CD with reference mainly to the following three key areas:

- Policy assistance work (especially on food security and nutrition), which includes not only CD for policy formulation, implementation and monitoring, but also institutional strengthening/restructuring and identification of Members' priorities for the development of programmes;
- *Trade-related CD*, to assist countries in the definition of strategies and policies to facilitate the response of the private sector to new market demands and opportunities. In addition, the Framework underlines the importance of building the smallholder farmers' capacities along the value chain, to lift their productivity and move out of subsistence into market-oriented farming; and
- *Access to, and analysis and management of, data and statistics*, which includes strengthening countries' capacities to collect, compile, analyse and disseminate relevant and timely data, and facilitating access to FAO's information products and services.

Evaluation Scope, Methodology, Focus and Limitations

F. Scope

28. As described in the ToR (Annex 1), the evaluation focuses on Africa and more particularly on Sub-Saharan Africa, where the needs are considered the greatest and where many countries lag behind with respect to the attainment of the MDGs. Capacity-related constraints arising from a combination of individual, organisational and institutional/societal factors have

² Technical capacities are defined as the capacities 'to carry out the tasks required to intensify production in a sustainable manner, manage resources and eventually improve food security.' Functional capacities are rather linked to "the areas of policy, knowledge, partnering and implementation/delivery".

often been identified as major hindrances to Africa's development. This is particularly true in agriculture, which accounts for a large share of the gross domestic product (GDP) at regional and country levels, and where the "huge paucity of trained personnel"³ and the weak state of organisations and institutions are key factors contributing to the sector's poor performance. The evaluation includes CD initiatives undertaken since 2000, in order to assess the long-term processes involved in producing results.

29. Given the breadth of CD as described earlier and the diversity of FAO's CD activities, the evaluation team defined the scope of the evaluation to include:

- FAO initiatives at the country or regional level established specifically to enhance capacity as well as those that contribute to CD as part of other project or programme objectives. For these initiatives, CD is an explicit and substantial component of the product or the service. Global projects and international initiatives are also taken into account to the extent that they cover African countries in a significant manner; and
- only those normative products which were adapted or developed at the country/regional level through a pedagogical approach. General knowledge-sharing events, such as conferences and seminars, and materials, such as technical papers and communication and information products (for example, data bases), were not assessed.

G. Methodology

30. The evaluation methodology is detailed in Annex 2.

31. The evaluation began with an inception phase from March to June 2009 with the objective of refining the scope of the evaluation, clarifying the analytical frameworks, developing the methodological tools and providing details on organisational aspects of the evaluation.

32. During the inception phase, the team prepared and used as a reference tool an evaluation matrix, which included questions to be addressed and indicators. The evaluation drew on various methodologies to assess the results and the processes followed in FAO's CD activities, including: logic models; participatory and systems approaches; and benchmarking against good practices and lessons.

33. The evaluation used a mix of tools, including:

- an inventory of CD activities at country level, covering the 48 countries of Sub-Saharan Africa. The evaluation team developed the inventory starting with a review of the countries' portfolios using FAO's Field Programme Management Information System (FPMIS). These reviews were complemented by requests to divisions, interviews with staff and the country case studies. The team used the inventory to prepare the overview which is included in Annex 7;
- *meta-synthesis of evaluations*, the objective of which was to review, aggregate and synthesize the findings and recommendations on CD of 33 selected country project and programme evaluations carried out by the FAO Evaluation Service since 2003. The full report is included as Annex 9;
- *country case studies and complementary field visits*: The country case studies and field visits constitute the backbone of the evaluation. The objective of the case studies was to provide a comprehensive assessment of the relevance and effectiveness of CD activities in six countries in Africa. The evaluation team selected the countries on the basis of well-defined criteria outlined in the Inception Report. The countries were: Burkina Faso and Ghana in West Africa; and Uganda, Kenya, Malawi and Tanzania in East and Southern Africa. The country case studies were carried out in two phases. In the first phase, local experts with support from the core team completed the field work. Their main task was to collect information on a selected number of CD activities in the field through

³ Independent External Evaluation of FAO, 2007, page 166.

participatory workshops, focus discussions, surveys and interviews with the beneficiaries of CD activities and other stakeholders. The second phase of the country case studies was part of the core team's field visits of about a week to each of the six selected countries. By interviewing a much wider group of stakeholders, the team supplemented the beneficiary analyses. The team consulted partnering agencies, existing and potential partners, as well as bilateral and multilateral agencies. Team members prepared comprehensive country reports (Annex 10) to serve as the basis for general findings. A list of all persons met is provided in Annex 5. The beneficiary assessments are provided in Annex 11;

- *additional field visits*: In addition to the six countries visited and with a view to assessing FAO's institutional arrangements and capacity to provide technical support to countries, the core team visited FAO's Regional Office for Africa (RAF) in Ghana, Sub-regional Office for Eastern Africa (SFE) in Ethiopia, Sub-regional Office for West Africa (SFW) in Ghana, Sub-regional Office for Central Africa (SFC) in Gabon and Sub-regional Office for Southern Africa (SFS) in Zimbabwe; and
 - *assessment of normative CD products*: A purposive sample of thirty-one normative products including guidelines, manuals, compact discs (CDs) and e-learning tools, was assessed with regard to the quality and relevance of their content and, where appropriate, for their effectiveness in the field, including their accessibility to the targeted audience, their relevance to the objectives and the country contexts, their ability to be interactive and their potential to remain relevant over time or to adapt to change. The full report appears in Annex 8.
34. In total, the evaluators interviewed 410 people: 89 FAO staff at HQ, 40 at the Regional and Sub-regional Offices, 27 staff in African countries and 254 stakeholders/partners involved in FAO CD activities.⁴
35. Two initiatives facilitated the analysis of findings and report writing:
- team discussions held after the field visits had ended in November 2009, during which findings from the different evaluation tools were triangulated and refined; and
 - presentation and discussion of preliminary results to HQ and regional staff.
36. The evaluators balanced the opinions expressed in interviews with evidence gathered in documents and used triangulation to validate their major findings. In making judgements, team members also drew from their personal experience, as well as from established good practices in capacity development effectiveness.
37. Finally, in February 2010, a Peer Review Panel⁵ provided feedback on the technical soundness of the conclusions and recommendations of the evaluation.

H. Focus and Limitations

38. The evaluation dealt with the following broad questions as outlined in the ToR:
- Is FAO's approach towards CD in line with emerging good practices? Does it promote greater ownership of partner countries?
 - Do the CD initiatives respond to articulated or implicit demand and in what way do they contribute to poverty reduction?
 - What are the strengths and weaknesses of FAO's work on CD?
 - Has the Organization focused its work where it has a comparative advantage in CD support?

⁴ The complete list appears in Annex 5.

⁵ Members of the Panel are presented together with their report in Annex 4.

- Has it worked effectively with national institutions and in partnership with other agencies?
- What should the role(s) of FAO on CD be in the future?
- How does the FAO corporate strategy on capacity building reflect the above concerns?

39. With regard to the latter, the final document was not available to the team at the time of writing this report. However, the team reviewed draft versions of the strategy and, while not providing an in-depth analysis, the team referred to the strategy in the Section IX of the report, dealing with FAO's concept and approach to CD, as well as in the Sections X and XI on conclusions and recommendations.

40. There are many limitations to the evaluation; the most challenging relates to the representativeness of the information collected against an area of work that cuts across nearly all FAO's programmes. In this respect, the evaluation made general conclusions, drew from multiple lines of evidence, used many examples to support its findings and employed a wide variety of evaluation tools.

Overview of FAO's CD Work in Africa

41. This section provides an overview of CD found in the documents pertaining to all FAO field projects (national, regional and international, excluding TeleFood) implemented in Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) since 2004⁶. The overview covers some 3,000 projects, excluding those with a budget of less than US\$1 million between 2004 and 2009. It also excludes normative CD activities usually carried out by HQ but which are not reflected in projects in Africa. The overview assesses the extent to which CD activities deal with each of the three dimensions of CD (individual, organisation, and the enabling environment), their geographical coverage and how they relate to a number of indices. The projects deal with the technical and functional capacities that FAO has developed through software (for example, technical assistance, training, workshops, knowledge and information sharing), hardware (for example, provision of agricultural inputs, infrastructure and equipment, including IT facilities and laboratories) and, to a much lesser extent, financial assistance.⁷ The following is a summary of the full report which appears in Annex 7.

42. The analysis found that about half⁸ of FAO's in-country projects had a strong CD component:⁹

- of these, three quarters focused on developing the capacities of individuals¹⁰ through technical training, workshops, study tours and demonstration sessions;
- twenty-three percent included the enhancement of organisational capacities¹¹ through restructuring, establishment of units and committees and the development/strengthening of information management systems;
- twenty-seven percent dealt with the enabling environment by either closely working with national governments on defining policies and programmes or by creating or

⁶ The Overview draws its information from FPMIS with the focus on field projects. Therefore, it does not include CD work carried out at headquarters and/or not reflected in projects.

⁷ The evaluation considered hardware and financial assistance support as an integral part of CD activities only when provided in conjunction with software components.

⁸ In Mozambique, Zimbabwe, Sierra Leone, Gambia, Senegal, South Africa and Malawi, some 60% of projects had a strong CD focus.

⁹ The evaluation identified CD content in relation to each project's immediate objectives, activities and target dimension(s). Members of the evaluation team assessed the degree of CD focus on a scale of 1 (minimum) to 5 (maximum). Those with a level greater than 3 were deemed to have a "strong CD component."

¹⁰ Primarily the capacities of government officials or farmers, including Farmers' Field Schools (FFS).

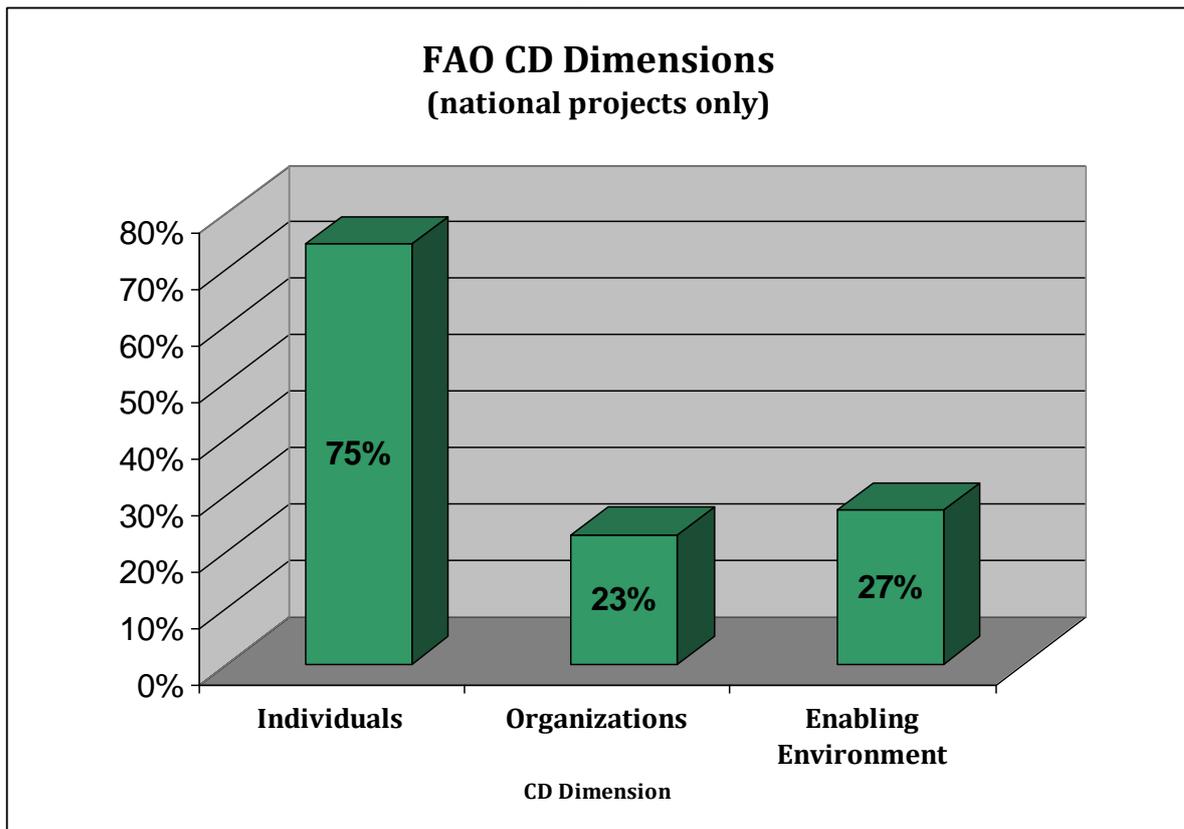
¹¹ The capacities of government departments and agencies and, to a lesser extent, farmers' associations and small businesses.

strengthening institutional linkages among stakeholders, including decentralized government units, non-government organisations (NGOs) and the private sector. This share would have been significantly higher had the evaluators included support provided through regional projects, such as those in which FAO plays a key role with respect to the dissemination/implementation of international norms and standards and where it acts as an honest broker in the governance of transboundary issues and the management of natural resources; and

- at the national level, most CD interventions targeted only one dimension, with thirty percent targeting two dimensions and only four percent targeting all three dimensions. The analysis is focussed on individual, national projects separately whereas an analysis of projects over time is more likely to reflect activities across the dimensions.¹²

¹² This is reflected later in the report where findings show that over time FAO intervened across all three dimensions for many of its most effective and sustainable interventions: Kephis, Nile Basin Initiative, forestry, fisheries and in statistics.

Figure 1



43. Amongst national projects, 47 percent included some CD targeting government departments and agencies¹³ and 42 percent targeted farmers and community-based organisations (CBOs), in particular through the establishment of FFS. Only 11 percent of FAO interventions included strengthening the private sector and these primarily provided training and facilitation of institutional linkages to small business enterprises and agri-business processing units.

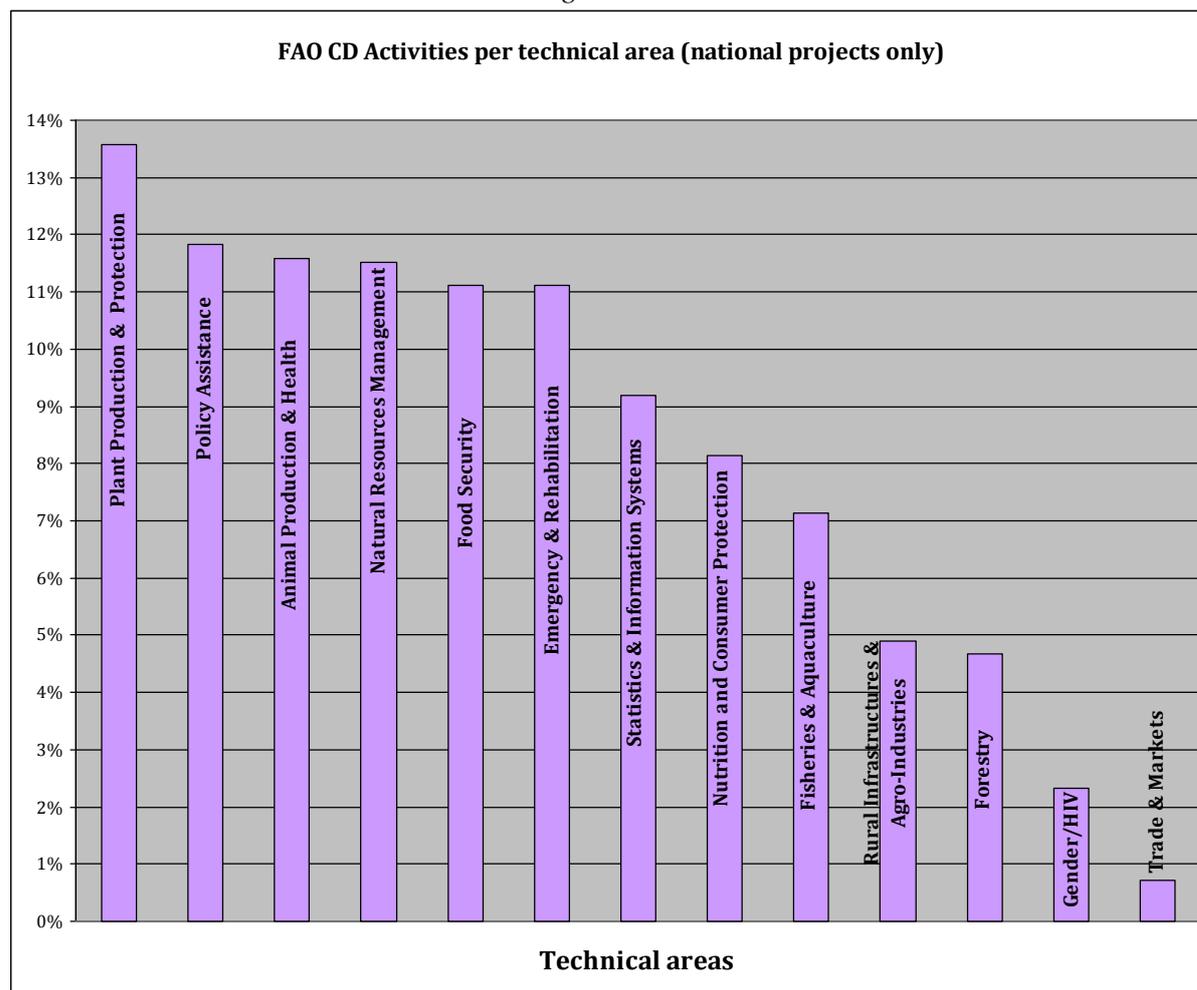
44. FAO's CD activities cut across all of the Organization's technical areas. As Figure 2 indicates, CD efforts at the national level are concentrated in plant production and protection, land and water management, animal health and production, food security, information management systems and statistics. Policy assistance, including that pertaining to food security, forestry, fisheries and other technical areas, represents 12 percent of all FAO's CD work in countries. The CD component of emergency and rehabilitation interventions is also significant¹⁴. At 1 percent, "markets and trade" is the area where FAO has put the least effort into developing capacities. Relatively few country forestry projects have focused on CD¹⁵, this may be explained by the fact that much of FAO's forestry work is done through global support programmes and on a regional basis. Rural infrastructure and agro-industries are concentrated in just a few countries such as Ghana, South Africa and Zambia. Few projects dealt specifically with gender and HIV/Aids.

¹³ Including regional organisations, laboratories and national research centres.

¹⁴ This includes many FFSs for internally displaced people (IDPs) in seed distribution, resettlement and livelihoods programmes, as well as initiatives to improve the enabling environment, including FAO's leadership role in agricultural sector recovery and in co-ordinating government and development partners efforts.

¹⁵ There are some CD activities in the work relating to the national forest monitoring and assessments in Angola, Cameroon, Comoros, Congo, the Gambia, Mozambique and Tanzania and the integrated land use assessment in Kenya and Zambia.

Figure 2



45. When the national data are aggregated, the findings across sub-regions are similar, except in Southern Africa where FAO's CD work is focussed more on the public sector (57%) than in West Africa (38%). The share of CD interventions on forest management in Central Africa is in line with the SSA regional average of 3 percent¹⁶ which is low given the extent of forest resources. Only 3 percent of the projects on statistics and information management were found in West Africa, well below the SSA average. This small share included activities in Niger, Burkina Faso, Gambia and Liberia, with no projects in a number of West African countries¹⁷.

46. As shown in Table 1 below, FAO CD activities are proportionately higher in East and West Africa regions where under-nourishment and the human development index are high.

¹⁶ This figure does not include two regional CD projects, one with the Central African Forest Commission (COMIFAC) and the other aimed at enhancing food security through training on non-forest wood products.

¹⁷ This does not include regional and inter-regional projects such as the EC/FAO Food Information for Action project and Early Warning Information System project (GTFS/INT/928/ITA) which covers Benin, Burkina Faso, Guinea-Bissau, Côte d'Ivoire, Mali, Niger, Senegal and Togo.

Table 1: FAO CD Focus by Sub-region and Main Indicators of Needs

Sub-region	CD focus in national projects (% of total CD in Africa)	HDI (2009)	Under-nourishment (% of population 2002-04)	Agriculture (% of GDP 2006)
Central	18%	148.6	36.2	21.9
East	30.7%	161.6	42.3	31.1
South	22.9%	146.8	31.9	21.6
West	28.4%	165.1	24.9	37.0

47. Table 1 masks FAO's under-investment in CD in some Central African countries, since most of its CD activities in that region are concentrated in the Democratic Republic of Congo. The Overview (Annex 7) shows relatively fewer CD projects for some countries with high levels of undernourishment in West and Central Africa including Chad, Togo, Central African Republic, Rwanda and Guinea-Bissau.

48. The Overview also highlights inequities in the distribution of CD activity across "conflict and post-conflict" countries. The Democratic Republic of Congo, Sudan, Somalia and Mozambique have a relatively high concentration of CD projects, whereas others in similar situations, such as Angola, Côte d'Ivoire, Chad and Rwanda, have far less.

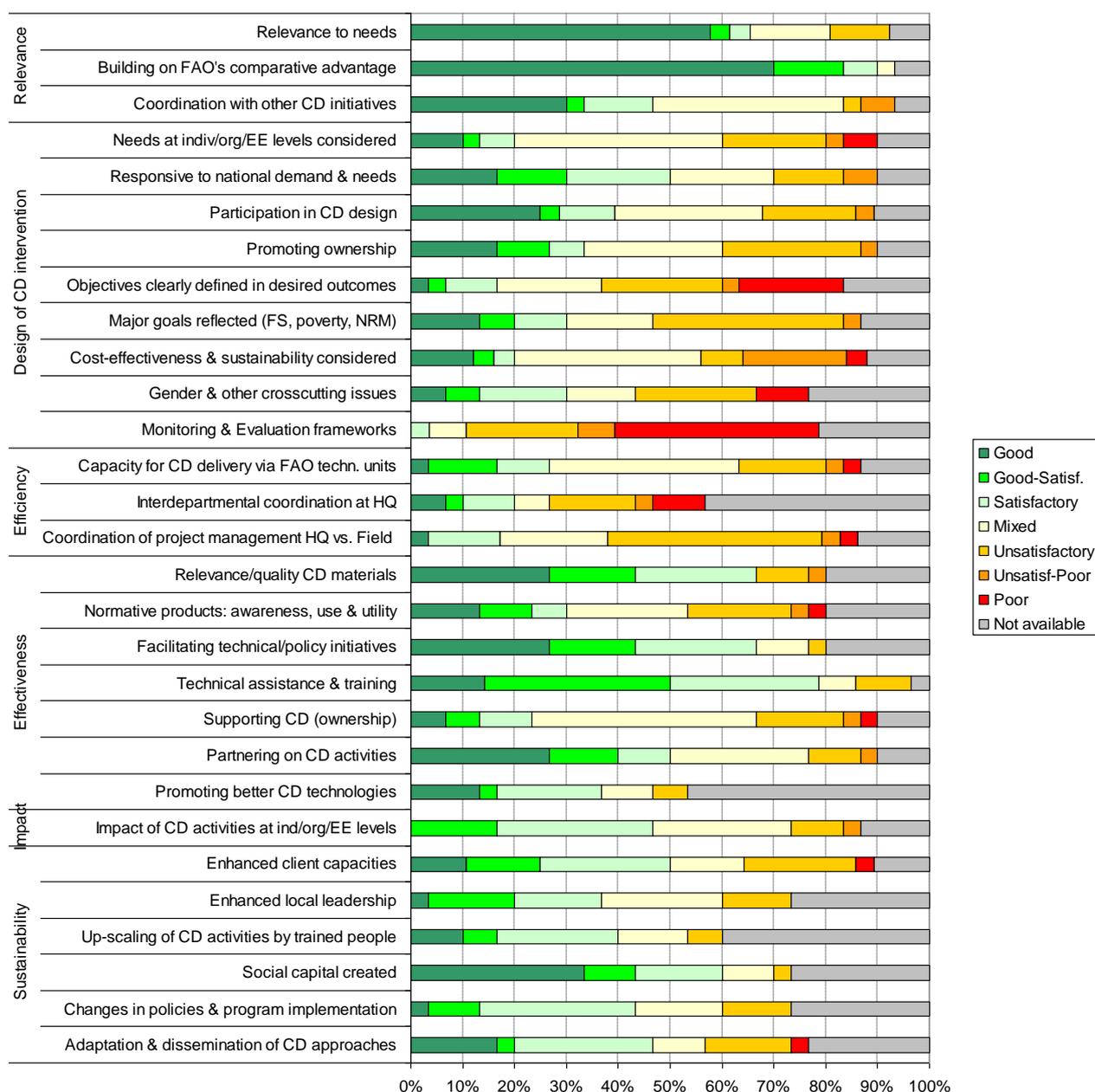
Findings

49. The findings presented below take into account the evaluation questions outlined in the methodology section using the following criteria: relevance, design, effectiveness, sustainability, impact, gender, partnerships and FAO's own capacity to deliver CD. The findings from the evaluation of normative products are presented separately thereafter.

50. The meta-evaluation (Annex 9) synthesized the strengths and weaknesses in CD in the past evaluations. A summary of findings is illustrated in Figure 3 which shows:

- good/satisfactory scores in three areas: quality/relevance of types/formats of CD materials, facilitation of technical/policy initiatives and the provision of technical assistance and training;
- mixed scores in the following areas: awareness/use/utility of normative products, partnerships for developing and enhancing the capacities of individuals and organisations to deliver CD and gender and other cross-cutting issues; and
- unsatisfactory or poor scores in relation to the provision of effective follow-up, support to ownership of CD interventions and monitoring and evaluation frameworks.

Figure 3: FAO's CD Performance (as evidenced in evaluation reports)



51. The country case studies showed similar results. Many interventions in all three dimensions of CD were well implemented with good short-term outcomes, but very few had sustained their momentum long enough to show lasting results in the form of strengthened enabling environments, more effective organisational behaviour and the application of individual skills over time.

I. Relevance of FAO's Work

52. The analysis of CD activities presented in the overview¹⁸ shows that FAO has intervened to varying degrees in all sectors relevant to its mandate. The country case-studies indicated that FAO is, for the most part, aligned with country and community needs. The meta-evaluation

¹⁸ See Annex 7.

confirmed that about 70 percent of FAO's projects reflected country priorities, despite a dearth of proper needs assessments.

53. The vast majority of interventions at field level, including activities carried out in technical areas and in relation to FAO's role as an "honest broker", appear to have capitalized on the Organization's comparative advantages. There were, however, instances in which stakeholders blamed FAO for having taken a "recipe" approach, with a standard package of planned and implemented CD interventions and little attention given to local needs or contexts, thus reducing the potential for ownership and sustainability.¹⁹

Priorities as defined in National Medium-Term Priority Frameworks

54. The evaluation found that National Medium-Term Priority Frameworks (NMTPFs) were generally aligned with country national priorities as expressed in national development plans and United Nations Development Assistance Frameworks (UNDAFs). In most case-study countries, NMTPFs were in place or planned and appeared to have been driven by the national agricultural framework policies and formulated with the participation of the government. FAO staff, and FAO Representatives in particular, acknowledged the importance of NMTPFs for planning CD interventions in accordance with national priorities.

55. However, none of the documents reviewed incorporated an analysis of CD needs or set clear priorities to pursue in relation to CD. Instead, most established general areas of intervention, leaving the evaluators to conclude that FAO appears to respond more to short-term, *ad hoc* country requests than to long-term, mutually established CD goals and priorities. Interviews with government officials and the country evaluations confirmed that FAO has yet to use the NMTPFs as a strategic approach to its interventions. The evaluation suggests that this may not occur until FAO in country offices are strengthened so that they are able to be proactive in pointing out to governments unidentified needs and emerging issues.

56. Notwithstanding the importance of setting priorities for CD, the evaluation acknowledges that FAO needs to be flexible and ready to respond to urgent needs, such as those related to the control of diseases and pests. Despite funding constraints, the evaluation team found evidence that many of FAO's CD interventions were timely and relevant in supporting CD related to contingent needs, as in the Technical Cooperation Programme (TCP) project on banana wilt disease in Uganda.

Country priorities for CD according to interlocutors

57. Evidence from the beneficiary assessments and the country visits confirmed that FAO's CD interventions have been relevant to perceived needs. For the most part, FAO has responded well to country needs as expressed in various national policy documents analysed in the country reports (Annex 10). Interlocutors identified many capacity gaps where they considered FAO well suited to provide more assistance. These included the prevention and control of Transboundary Animal Diseases (TADs), irrigation and water management, data management and agriculture statistics, and the commercialisation of agricultural products addressing the full value chain.

58. Stakeholders also identified climate change, HIV/Aids and gender as important areas where FAO should be more involved. The evaluation team suggests that FAO ought to assess its potential role and comparative advantage in developing capacities in these cross-cutting areas and, when implementing projects, consider partnering with organisations that specialize in them.²⁰

59. The evaluation team's interactions at the sub-regional offices brought to light another issue worthy of FAO's attention - large land leases to foreigners. Government officials need to

¹⁹ Projects which aim to introduce Food Security Information Systems, in countries where the promotion of HQ-led analytical tools was perceived by country partners as too supply-driven, constitute a good example in this sense.

²⁰ For more details, see Section VII.G on Partnerships.

ensure that compensatory mechanisms, for surrounding communities in particular, are included in the land deals and that sound environmental practices are respected. Some require CD assistance in formulating new policies.

60. Many interlocutors, including the private sector and CBOs, said that it was important for FAO to support the development of soft skills relevant to individual and organisational effectiveness. The country visits and the meta-synthesis noted many requests for training in such areas as ICT, participatory research, policy analysis and strategic planning, budgeting, marketing and management along with technical skills. Communication and writing skills were also frequently identified, along with soft skills related to leadership, creativity, negotiation, advocacy and motivation. In fact, many CD interventions fail because they have not taken into account soft skills. The process and modality of engagement can help to develop these skills, as will partnering to incorporate specialist input where required.

Coordination with other CD initiatives

61. The meta-evaluation found that FAO coordinated its CD activities with other CD initiatives of national governments and/or development partners in only half the cases reviewed. Similar findings were reflected in the country case studies, confirming that FAO sometimes collaborates with governments and partners in other CD efforts, but inconsistently. The evaluation team found some notable successes, particularly in the area of food security information. For example, the final evaluation of the EC/FAO Food Security Information for Action (FSIA) Programme highlights links to food security information systems, and thereby to local capacities, resources and action plans, thus potentially enhancing the sustainability of the programme's outcomes. The complementary CD initiatives of *Deutsche Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit* (GTZ) conducted through FAO's food security policy support in Mozambique provide an example of successful CD coordination.

Relevance of FAO's work from the perspective of the three CD dimensions

a) *The enabling environment dimension*

62. With the increased emphasis on country-led decisions on development needs, many interlocutors perceive FAO as particularly well placed to facilitate decision-making groups related to agriculture, forestry and fisheries. In some of the countries visited, the evaluation team noted that FAO is under-utilizing what is acknowledged as its comparative advantage as honest broker, facilitator and expert adviser to the national working groups, donors and UN clusters on development. One exception was Zimbabwe, where the team found FAO successfully playing this role in FAO's Emergency Programme, raising the profile of, and respect for, FAO amongst a wide range of stakeholders.

63. From evidence gathered, FAO has been instrumental in responding to country requests for policy assistance, particularly with respect to integrating food security issues into national agricultural and development policies. Examples include:

- Burkina Faso, where FAO's CD activities under PCA Norway²¹ are aimed at improving capacities and providing technical assistance in the analysis of poverty and food security impacts and formulation of agricultural and rural development policies;
- Kenya, where FAO worked with the government to develop the National Food and Nutrition Policy; and
- Tanzania, where FAO has been active in supporting the National Irrigation Policy and Transitional Strategy and in assisting with CD for the National Strategy for Growth and Reduction of Poverty.

64. The relevance of FAO's assistance on policies and regulatory frameworks on plant protection and food safety, essentially the International Plant Protection Convention (IPPC) and

²¹ PCA Norway Strategy A1 Objective 1: Inclusion of Food Security Objectives, Policies, Programmes and Monitoring Mechanisms in PRSPS and Other Policy (FNOP/INT/109/NOR).

Codex, emerged quite prominently in the course of the interviews with government representatives. FAO support in these areas was much needed and appreciated, having contributed to increasing the countries' ability to export products, protect agriculture and adapt to the increasing sophistication of urban consumer demands. The evaluation found evidence of relevant work in many countries in FAO support to policies and regulatory frameworks for fisheries and forestry. In particular, FAO's contribution to the creation²² of national fora for policy dialogue within the framework of the National Forest Programme Facility and the National Forest Monitoring and Assessment (NFMA) and Integrated Land Use Assessment (ILUA) processes were particularly appreciated in that they involved numerous actors, including Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) working on forest management, some at sub-national levels. The evaluation found that while FAO contributed directly to policy development in the past, more recently its work has focussed on facilitation, coordination and the setting of norms, including through the FAO Emergency Programme. This work has also helped develop relevant soft skills and assisted countries to graduate from humanitarian aid to development assistance.

65. However, weak capacity on the part of governments to implement policies once they are developed severely hampers FAO from achieving sustainable results in the policy/enabling environment dimension. Stakeholders in several countries called on FAO to shift emphasis from policy development to policy implementation, claiming that the Organization has not done enough to enhance capacities at the national level to translate policies into action. However, this would require more inter-departmental linkages and assistance to governments to engage with other actors. FAO's track record here has been mixed, with positive examples from its work on statistics in Burkina Faso and its support to the Food Security Steering Groups in Kenya, and negative examples from its forest decentralization initiatives in Burkina Faso and its work on statistics in Malawi.

66. Responding to the demand for CD interventions on policy implementation requires development actors to strengthen weak capacity at local and provincial levels, as most countries decentralise government services. An evaluation of FAO's cooperation in the Democratic Republic of Congo reinforced this point, as follows:

*The ongoing decentralization process at the provincial level sets a challenge and, at the same time, represents an opportunity for FAO. There is a great need to assist governance and provincial public institutions. Support to capacity building provided by FAO, which concentrated on central services, would have gained efficiency by conforming to the decentralization process with stronger synergy. In that sense, the extreme weakness of provincial services of agriculture, forestry and fishery constitutes an area where FAO will have an important role to play.*²³

67. A number of interlocutors thought that FAO could do more to assist in developing capacity at local levels by leveraging frontline partnerships such as those it developed when implementing FFSS. The evaluation met with a number of producer organisations that expressed interest in bridging the capacity gap between central and local levels, thus enabling FAO to remain relevant as decentralisation proceeds.

68. FAO has been active in developing platforms for information management in some African countries. Stakeholders have appreciated these efforts, particularly the facilitation of exchanges between agencies and the improved flow of information resulting from them. The evaluation team was impressed with the Ghana Agricultural Information Network System (GAINS) and the Kenya Agricultural Information Network (KAINET) which stakeholders widely acclaimed for linking research, extension, farmers and implementing agencies and for facilitating

²² In Ghana, Burkina Faso and other countries.

²³ Evaluation de la coopération de la FAO en République démocratique du Congo (2003-07), 2008, page 7.

effective information exchange and partnering.²⁴ They also praised the Rural Knowledge Networks in East Africa for their innovation in linking farmers, small traders and service providers to market information. Interlocutors found such initiatives highly relevant and they would like to scale them up.

b) *The organisational dimension*

69. FAO has assisted governments to strengthen their organisational capacities. It has been particularly active in all the case study countries with respect to government institutions supporting plant protection and transboundary animal diseases (through the set up and strengthening of laboratories as well), food safety, statistics and information management.

70. Much of FAO's work along this dimension has concentrated on data and information management across a wide range of technical areas, from food security to animal health, fisheries, agriculture statistics, and so on, all of which developing partners and donors recognise as important. Although FAO's work in data collection and analysis responds to crucial information needs, most interlocutors told the evaluators that FAO needed to be more involved in facilitating communication among ministries and departments involved and in establishing effective information-sharing mechanisms across sectors.

71. FAO has also embarked upon a few relevant and highly appreciated interventions on organizational restructuring. For example, in Kenya, FAO assisted the government in establishing departments for agribusiness and agricultural policy to better serve commercial interests and marginalised communities.

72. At the regional level, FAO has played a limited, but highly relevant, role in developing the capacity of technical organisations such as the *Comité régional des pêches du Golfe de Guinée* (COREP), Central African Forest Commission (COMIFAC), International Institute for Water and Environmental Engineering, Lake Victoria Fisheries Organisation, and the Nile River Basin Initiative, which are critically important to Africa's development. The much needed support to the establishment and development of the Emergency Prevention System for Transboundary Animal and Plant Pests and Diseases (EMPRES) in the Western Region is a good example of FAO's relevance in the organizational dimension of CD.

73. The evaluators encountered wide-spread appreciation for FAO efforts in Burkina Faso, Niger and Senegal to strengthen the capacity of producer organisations to engage in policy deliberations. Similar types of interventions were deemed extremely relevant in other countries the evaluation team visited, among them Ghana, Uganda, Kenya and Tanzania, where there are strong producer and distributor organisations. Some stakeholders also suggested that FAO should help FFS groups have more voice and be better networked and linked to markets, services and the policy and advocacy initiatives of established producer organisations.

c) *The individual dimension*

74. The evaluation team found it more difficult to assess the relevance of FAO's work aimed at developing the capacities of individuals due to the large number of interlocutors and project beneficiaries and to the largely anecdotal nature of the available information. However, the team found sufficient information in the beneficiary assessments and the country visits to conclude that FAO's contribution to the enhancement of technical knowledge and competences of individuals was, for the most part, relevant and valuable. The evaluation considers that it is important for FAO to continue engaging in these field activities, both to provide practical experience to its normative work and, more importantly, to develop the capacity of countries to test the appropriateness of new approaches and technologies to meet their needs.

²⁴ In Uganda, a similar experience with the setting up of ARENET was at the end less positive, not in terms of links created and appreciated by stakeholders, but due to flaws in project design relating to communications and the website.

75. However, as pointed out earlier, while the development of technical competencies appears to have relevance, FAO has paid little attention to developing the “soft skills” that are likely to significantly influence performance in the organisational and policy/enabling environment dimensions. To highlight one example: fish farmers in Ghana, while showing sincere appreciation for the training they received on tilapia aquaculture techniques, nevertheless expressed concern that they lacked the skills and organisational capabilities to conduct their work in this field in a business-like manner.

J. Design, Approach and Modalities

76. The Evaluation assessed the design, approach and modalities of CD activities against internationally recognised good practices as defined in the Evaluation Inception Report and outlined in Box 2.

Box 2: Good Practices in the Design of CD Interventions²⁵

- **Understanding context:** The initial context analysis and problem definition, identifying sources of change, delivery, learning and sharing of experiences, is critical to effective CD;
- **Needs assessment:** CD activities should be based on comprehensive capacity needs assessment, including not only individual CD needs but also organisational and institutional analysis that considers both formal and informal aspects and incentive structures related to the context in which the CD efforts are focused.
- **Local partners:** In the implementation phase, CD providers should give priority to local/regional suppliers of CD services, build endogenous capacity for CD, and ensure that such suppliers have sufficient time to learn and understand the context so that the approach and instruments used are appropriate.
- **Advocacy and convening role:** It is important to contribute to CD by playing a neutral convening role, facilitating partnerships between governments, NGOs and donors and advocating for all stakeholders to fulfil CD commitments.
- **CD in high-level planning processes:** Advocating for CD within CCA and UNDAF processes and identifying and exploiting organisational reform and strategy revision opportunities are considered good practices that ensure training and human capacity formation are fully integrated as specific high-level development objectives.
- **Flexible approaches should be applied:** Modalities of CD interventions should be combined and adapted to the context in the design and implementation of CD interventions.
- **CD in fragile states:** CD for government should be maintained as an important objective in fragile states, balanced with CD of non-state actors in ways that reinforce the development of public sector capacity in the longer term while avoiding a “centralizing effect.”
- **Monitoring and evaluation of CD:** It is important to examine results as well as impact levels – measuring benefits for individuals, the Organization and final beneficiaries.
- **Partnerships:** Contractual arrangements are as conducive to CD as collaborative and collegiate partnerships where reciprocal learning occurs, decision-making authority is shared or handed over and there are higher levels of partner ownership.

Software

- Of the various training modalities, peer learning/training is highlighted as good practice; peers are well trusted (this is key for skills transfer) and have come from relevant institutional settings.
- Knowledge and information-sharing are key to promoting broad-based CD, particularly when technology broadens and improves access to public goods. Project staff should play a facilitating role, avoiding substitution (filling in for gaps in capacity) and resisting the temptation to assume leadership of the CD initiative.

Hardware

- Investment in IT in particular is one of the most effective ways of boosting capacity. Ample examples exist to demonstrate that new technologies can be lower in cost than old technologies.

²⁵ These practices are based on a literature review carried out for the evaluation.

Overall findings

77. FAO's CD efforts have been more successful when projects have been designed with a good understanding of the local physical and social conditions of the project, and a clear understanding of existing capacities and capacity gaps.

78. The evaluation confirmed the great importance of the process by which projects are implemented²⁶. Promising cases were found where projects were designed with an emphasis on process as much as on output. Emphasis on process enables the development of soft skills to accompany the transfer of technical skills.²⁷

79. The evaluation found that the design of FAO's CD initiatives was generally poor and lacking a clear assessment of needs. All design-related issues except one (responsiveness to stakeholders' demand) scored unsatisfactory or poor in 50-70 percent of the projects scrutinized in the meta-synthesis. Areas of particular weakness included: design of appropriate monitoring and evaluation frameworks; translation of objectives into clear desired outcomes; cost-effectiveness and sustainability considerations; and the extent to which CD initiatives took into account the needs of all three dimensions of CD. Evidence from the case study countries was mixed, with a number of the beneficiary assessments praising FAO for a participatory approach to design but failing to pay adequate attention to the development context.

Taking into account the context and identification of needs at the individual, organisation and institutional levels

80. The meta-synthesis found that FAO failed to systematically undertake proper needs assessments before planning CD interventions. As was clearly pointed out in the Mid-term Evaluation of the Sudan Institutional Capacity Programme: Food Security Information for Action (SIFSIA)²⁸ in 2009, "Future training activities should be preceded by a clearer assessment of individual as well as institutional and organisational capacity building needs, and a strategy developed for addressing them all".

81. When the design of a CD intervention does not begin with a proper assessment of the needs, time, physical constraints and institutional framework, there is less likelihood of success, as the Beneficiary Assessment of the Acacia Operation project in Kenya demonstrates. There, the outputs were of poor quality and outcomes were marginal, largely because the design failed to adequately consider the above-mentioned factors and because of limited participation. Implementers needed to pay much more attention to the context. For example, the project failed to consider the weak capacity of the beneficiaries, the difficulties inherent in developing the capacities of migrant pastoralists, as well as the challenges of implementing and monitoring field activities involving nomadic peoples in remote areas. The Beneficiary Assessment also found that project implementers needed to deal more effectively with certification and marketing issues.

82. Poor needs identification across the three dimensions of CD was one of the weakest design factors that emerged from the meta-evaluation. A number of project evaluations noted that weak needs assessments contributed to missed opportunities for more strategic targeting of CD, ineffective project implementation and lack of sustainable results. One-off training, targeting

²⁶ Process was specifically recognised as important by counterparts in the Obsolete Stockpiles programme in the Tanzania beneficiary assessment because it provided them with exposure to a range of skills and knowledge and helped raise local leadership awareness of the issues.

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²⁸ Mid-term Evaluation of the Sudan Institutional Capacity Programme: Food Security Information for Action (SIFSIA) South Programme, 2009, page 28.

government officials was found to be of limited impact, especially in a complex arena such as international trade, even when FAO included the application of knowledge to policy planning and implementation in the training package, as it did in various programmes in Kenya, Malawi and Tanzania.

83. The country case studies also demonstrated poor results when CD activities were implemented as a “standard package” with insufficient attention paid to the context and to the three dimensions of CD. The introduction of CountryStat in Malawi and of IPC tools in Kenya are examples of projects where FAO should have given more consideration to institutional linkages in the design and planning stage, particularly with respect to government organisations, notably the relationship between the Ministry of Agriculture (MoA) and the National Institute of Statistics, and between central and decentralized levels.

Participation of beneficiaries/stakeholders in the design

84. OECD/DAC and the UN community recognise that the participation of beneficiaries in the design of projects can help build ownership, encourage better understanding of the context and ensure that resources are deployed to their best advantage. The complex Onchocerciasis-free Zone (OFZ) project²⁹ in Ghana and Burkina Faso (which required an interdisciplinary approach, the development of soft skills for cross-border planning and the involvement of a range of diverse agencies), the joint UN initiative in Northwestern Tanzania³⁰ and the Nerica rice project³¹ in Uganda demonstrate why strong participation in the design and implementation of CD projects is important to their success.

85. Beneficiaries in the Nerica rice project were involved in setting the project goals and in implementation. As a result, they were able to clearly recall the objectives and CD activities when questioned by the evaluation team. The participants in these FFSs continue to recruit and train new members. The project also engaged extension workers and government officials as implementing partners and thus built capacity to scale out to new areas. Representatives from the Ministry of Agriculture, Animal Industries and Fisheries (MAAIF) expressed the need for more initiatives that link them with farmers and with new technology.³²

86. In the case of the project, *Assistance préparatoire au recensement général de l'agriculture et de l'élevage*,³³ the full involvement of national counterparts in the design helped redirect the focus of the intervention towards CD areas and to modalities more appropriate to local needs.

87. Beneficiaries not being adequately consulted in the design and planning phase has led to disagreements and undermined the sustainability of results. For example, in the *Projet d'intensification agricole par la maîtrise de l'eau dans les Régions du Centre-Sud et du Centre-Ouest*³⁴, the training was not carried out as planned because staff, who were not involved in the design and planning of the project, had different assignments. Said one trainer, “We learn just like that, that the selected trainees had to leave for an entire month.”³⁵ Similarly, a project³⁶ designed

²⁹ Socio-economic Development Programme for the Transborder Onchocerciasis-free Zone of Burkina Faso and Ghana (GCP/RAF/376/BEL)

³⁰ Strengthening Human Security through Sustainable Human Development in Northwestern Tanzania (UNTS/URT/002/UNJ)

³¹ Dissemination of NERICA and Improved Rice Production Systems to Reduce Poverty and Food Deficit in Uganda (GCP/UGA/035/JPN)

³² Extract from the Beneficiary Assessment of the GCP/UGA/035/JPN project.

³³ TCP/BKF/3102.

³⁴ GCP/BKF/049/SPA.

³⁵ Extract from the Beneficiary Assessment of the project.

to improve food security in cross-border districts of Burundi, Rwanda and Uganda in support of the modernization of agriculture under the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) framework, featured inadequate consultation with local authorities and agriculture staff in its design. As a result, implementing staff had to negotiate at length with farmers on the use of an outside agency (instead of a local cooperative) to manage the store, and many participants complained that the project wasted resources on a potato warehouse that was much smaller than required. The beneficiary assessment of the Livestock/Wildlife integration project in Tanzania³⁷ featured similar evidence. Offices provided under the project were unused and field activities had limited impact, in part as a result of inadequate participation during the project design process.

88. With respect to the design of policy support activities, it appears that beneficiaries have seldom been included in the design, even in cases where participatory implementation has subsequently been adopted. Too often, policy assistance has emphasized outputs rather than the processes required to ensure effective ownership and outcomes.

Modalities of CD interventions

89. FAO used a range of modalities including workshops, peer training, short courses with local, regional or international trainers and a range of practical exposure ranging from international engagements to Farmers' Field Schools with either or both farmer facilitators and extension workers. Overall, hands-on and practical exposure were recognised as the most effective mode for developing skills, as in the initiative to transfer practical skills to orphans and disadvantaged groups in Malawi.³⁸

90. With regard to CD targeting farmers, the country field visits and beneficiary assessments found strong appreciation of the FFS approach and farmer-to-farmer experience sharing as the best method to develop the capacities of farmers, provided they received sufficient backstopping and support from implementing agencies and extension agents. The evaluation team found that facilitation and participative approaches enhancing individuals' soft skills were more effective than sole formal training with technical assistance. This highlights the importance of process over output. The project "Strengthening the Organisational Capacity of Fish Farmer Groups in Ghana"³⁹ is one among many that demonstrated the importance of practical training for the immediate application of knowledge and skills, as well as the frequent need to accompany such training with initiatives to strengthen management and organisational capacities. Without the latter, the beneficiaries, in the case of the above Fish Farmer Group project, were unable to scale up and move beyond subsistence farming.

Strategic selection of participants, facilitators and implementing agents

91. CD interventions need to carefully identify beneficiaries (individuals and/or organisations), facilitators and implementing agents. In order to achieve CD objectives, programmes and projects must involve the right people at the right time, in the right combination. Selection strategies may vary depending on the CD objectives.

92. Many of the projects reviewed for the evaluation used inclusive criteria to select participants, while others paid insufficient attention to gender when selecting participants. For example, a training programme for the small-scale dairy sector in Ghana⁴⁰ selected participants

³⁶ Improvement of food security in cross-border districts of Burundi, Rwanda and Uganda, in support of the modernization of agriculture under NEPAD framework (GTFS/RAF/391/ITA).

³⁷ Novel forms of livestock and wildlife integration adjacent to protected areas in Africa (GCP/URT/124/UBG).

³⁸ Protecting and Improving Food and Nutrition Security of Orphans and HIV/AIDS Affected Children (GCP/RAF/388/GER).

³⁹ TCP/GHA/2904.

⁴⁰ Training Programme for the Small-scale Dairy Sector (TCP/GHA/0167).

who were too far from markets to benefit from the training. Implementers should have selected closer participants or provided additional support to the dairy farmers from regions far from markets. The Conservation Agriculture for Sustainable Agriculture for Rural Development initiative in Kenya underscores the importance of selecting relevant trainers and participants: “The beneficiaries considered that it would have been more sustainable if the facilitators trained were local farmers [trained extension agents had been transferred] and if local garage owners had also received training in tool fabrication services rather than only Ministry of Agriculture officials.”⁴¹

93. The beneficiary assessments and the meta-evaluation found farmers and local facilitators to be the most successful in carrying out CD in field projects in many instances. In some cases, the use of farmers as facilitators was considered more effective than the use of extension agents. In others, the integration of extension agents was found to be important to sustainability as in Uganda in Nerica Rice project⁴² where locally recruited extension agents were available.

94. Back-up support from either an extension service or implementing agency is often needed towards the end of a project in order to ensure that capacities once developed are institutionalised. There is a need to ground the projects in the agencies that will be in a position to provide post-project support. This was a shortcoming of the Prods-PAIA conservation agriculture initiative in Burkina Faso, despite its significant success in a range of technical innovations including introducing a technology brought from pastoralists in the North and the use of the same pastoralists to engage with farmers in the South.

95. The selection of facilitators and trainers for policy interventions did not emerge as an issue, although the evaluation team noted that using staff from the organisation/government agency as facilitators created space for individuals to apply their new skills. The use of senior staff also creates greater institutional will for the changes. As stated in the evaluation of the EC/FAO Food Security Information for Action Programme: “Better results were obtained in countries where the national institutions concerned with food security were strongly committed. This indicates that when higher-level department representatives engage in the programme, there is greater potential for enhanced performance and an increased level of benefits through training and capacity building activities.”⁴³ This was particularly evident when national facilitator/trainers are included as counterparts to employed outsiders.

96. The evaluation found a clear demand for the use of locals. They also noted that in many countries, there is useful local capacity that needs the chance to gain experience and so foster endogenous capacity. FAO is doing this in many instances and has had some good experiences. As the country case studies in Appendix 10 show, in some cases there was not sufficient mentoring by FAO staff and implementers were not given access to FAO normative products.

97. In quite a few cases, particularly in Uganda and Kenya, stakeholders criticised FAO for having followed a standardised approach to the selection of implementers and facilitators, thus not always making the best choice or creating the best fit with local needs. Projects appear to not always have been designed to develop the capacity of the local CD implementers. There were a number of exceptions, including the CD support FAO provided to Nutrition projects in Malawi using Bunda College and to the Food Security and Nutrition Association (ANSA) of Mozambique as attested in the recent evaluation of the EC/FAO Joint Evaluation: Food Security Information for Action Programme.

⁴¹ Extract from the Beneficiary Assessment of the project “Supporting Conservation Agriculture for Sustainable Agriculture and Rural Development (CA for SARD)” (GCP/RAF/413/GER).

⁴² Agriculture and Rural Development through Innovative Rice-based Farming Systems for Food Security and Poverty Reduction in Uganda (GCP/UGA/035/JPN).

⁴³ EC/FAO Joint Evaluation: Food Security Information for Action Programme, 2009, page 32.

98. The use of South-South Cooperation (SSC) as a mechanism for implementing CD was not much in evidence. The evaluation found that SSC was highly appreciated on paper and probably effective when trainers had the right technical skills, as well as cultural acclimatisation and ongoing mentoring. Yet, in the few instances where the evaluation team came across SSC, the results were disappointing. It appeared that language and cultural barriers often hampered effective engagement. For example, in Ghana, only one of the original team of Chinese trainers stayed on, was reasonably effective and remained to the end of contract. In Central Africa, the SSC also experienced poor results.

Ensuring the institutionalisation of interventions

99. The support to national and local institutions that provide a legal framework or that have a normative function is of paramount importance to the effectiveness and sustainability of CD initiatives. But strengthening appropriate institutions is not easy. The evaluation found some examples of effective institutionalisation, such as the Conservation Agriculture for Sustainable Agriculture and Rural Development (CA-SARD) initiative in Tanzania, the OFZ project in Ghana and Burkina Faso and the EMPRES programme. These projects were designed to ensure that the agencies that would need to continue to provide services at the end of the project were involved in project design and closely consulted throughout the implementation process. The institutions themselves were also strengthened as part of the project. The importance of linking projects into systems that provide ongoing support has been clearly highlighted in the country reports (Annex 10).

100. The process of selecting the right organisations to strengthen can be problematic. The evaluation team found instances where FAO should have taken more care to assess institutional relationships when selecting regional and national organisations to strengthen. Such was the case in CountryStat in Malawi (and, to a lesser extent, a number of other countries), where the Ministry of Agriculture and other government institutions often had little incentive to cooperate. In the project on the promotion of organic Karité Butter⁴⁴, the Ministry of Trade in Burkina Faso, which is in charge of promoting exports, was not involved in project planning or linked in to the project afterwards. This sullied relationships and jeopardized the sustainability of the initiative. The evaluation team noted that FAO has not always recognised the factors that help or hinder successful relationships among institutions, including those that affect relatively simple tasks, such as the sharing of information.

Project length, follow-up and exit strategy

101. Effective CD interventions often take a great deal of time, particularly when dealing with organisational and institutional capacities and factors in the enabling environment that support or impede performance.

102. The evaluation team found many examples, in particular TCPs, where timelines were too short to achieve sustainable capacity. In many cases, there were some good results but there was too little time to achieve all the objectives and some components had to be abandoned. In others, there was not sufficient interaction to consolidate gains.⁴⁵ For example, the forest decentralization project in Burkina Faso⁴⁶, the *Programme pour le développement de la pêche* and the OFZ project ended before results were fully realized.

⁴⁴ Increasing incomes of small farmers through exports of organic and fair trade tropical products (GCP/RAF/404/GER).

⁴⁵ Appui à la préparation d'un plan de réforme institutionnelle et juridique pour la décentralisation dans le secteur forestier (TCP/BKF/2904).

⁴⁶ Appui à la préparation d'un plan de réforme institutionnelle et juridique pour la décentralisation dans le secteur forestier (TCP/BKF/2904).

103. A widely expressed frustration is captured in the following statement voiced to the evaluation team by one project participant: “*Mwatisiya m’malele mwana akungobadwa.*” (“You have left us hanging immediately after the birth of the child.”)⁴⁷. This suggests that where FAO cannot extend the length of its involvement, it must work with others who can continue “to nurse the child.”

104. The evaluation team found that project designs seldom included strategies for follow-up and exit, which further compromised the achievement of sustainable results. As noted in the evaluation of the EC/FAO Food Security Information for Action, FAO should “develop sound hand-over strategies from the beginning to ensure the sustainability of programme activities, including periodic and continuous assessment of progress made in various capacity development activities”⁴⁸.

K. Effectiveness

Overall findings

105. In assessing effectiveness, the evaluation attempted to identify what capacities have been strengthened and where. The evaluation found some successful projects with solid CD activities across FAO’s broad mandate, and in all three CD dimensions. In particular, the evaluation team was positively impressed by the results achieved when developing the capacities of:

- farmers, including youth and pastoral people within the framework of Farmers’ Field Schools, with respect to production techniques and good practices;
- government officials, on the understanding and application of international conventions; and
- government and government-affiliated organisations involved with plant protection and food safety, statistics and data management.

106. Many factors contributed to the effectiveness of CD interventions, including relevance, timing and especially, institutional anchorage, which FAO accomplished through:

- adequate planning and needs assessment;
- appropriate consideration of the enabling environment, including institutional linkages and challenges;
- long-term planning and involvement, to the extent possible, with appropriate follow-up (either through re-training or advice); and
- use of national consultants with strong FAO back-up.

107. The following sections highlight examples of achievements and issues according to the dimension they most concentrated on. The effectiveness of CD activities within each dimension is explored below. This should not detract from one of the evaluation’s main findings, which is that FAO CD efforts have been most effective when the Organization has intervened over time, through a series of projects, across all three CD dimensions. FAO has been effective in all three dimensions in different situations. It has focussed more on the individual but has been effective, in some instances, in both developing capacity for policy formulation and in improving the effectiveness of organisations. There were also too many instances where FAO did not take into account other CD dimensions and this affected the results of CD interventions.

The policy/enabling environment

108. FAO has engaged widely with governments in developing policies across most areas of its mandate and its contribution to policy formulation and adoption has been widely appreciated. While many projects have produced useful policy documents, less evident to the evaluation team was the development of local capacity for policy analysis, formulation and implementation. In its

⁴⁷ Beneficiary Assessment, Malawi.

⁴⁸ EC/FAO Joint Evaluation: Food Security Information for Action Programme, 2009, page 7.

policy assistance work, there has been a tendency for FAO to focus on outputs rather than processes that ensure local ownership and sustainable capacity development.

109. The evaluation team determined that CD is often not considered an integral part of FAO policy assistance. For example, CD objectives are frequently absent from policy assistance plans and from the terms of reference of policy experts. This issue came to light in interviews with FAO staff in Malawi and Ethiopia. The evaluation team did, however, find examples in Zanzibar and Mozambique where close cooperation with counterparts resulted in the effective transfer of policy development skills to local officials.

Box 3: Influencing Policy Processes

The FNPP-supported engagement to integrate food security concepts into national agricultural policies is an excellent example of what FAO can achieve in CD. In Mozambique and Zanzibar, the project carefully assessed the context, problems and opportunities. Policy assistance did not rely exclusively on short-term visits by experts but rather involved local counterparts, local consultants and ongoing support from FAO experts over time. The project emphasized developing the capabilities of those involved in the process and measured results in broader terms than policy outputs. The project recognized the importance of building political will, taking into account a variety of human factors, the need for ownership and the necessity of developing the soft skills of staff engaged in CD. The project established trust and developed stable relationships through a participative approach targeting key stakeholders, including those responsible for implementation in the districts. To the extent possible, the project built in follow-up assistance. Lessons have been documented in several publications and shared in print and electronically on FAO's EasyPol website.

110. FAO has, in a few cases, played an important role in developing enabling environments by fostering coordination among government ministries and departments in defining cross-disciplinary policies and programmes, various national stakeholders including NGOs working in a defined sector and governments involved in the management of transboundary resources.

111. The evaluation team found good examples in this respect, including the following:

- in Kenya, where FAO established working groups representing a broad range of stakeholders to work on developing a Food Security Policy;
- in Uganda, where FAO provided leadership for the National Food Security cluster;
- In Ghana, where the Organization helped establish the National Forum for Forest Resources Management, as well as broad-based multi-stakeholder steering committees in the ten administrative regions of the country;
- in Tanzania, where FAO's Joint Programme on wealth creation, employment and economic empowerment has strengthened dialogue on agribusiness between the Ministry of Agriculture and the Ministry of Industry and Trade; and
- in regional initiatives, where FAO facilitated dialogue and the formulation of policies on the prevention and control of transboundary animal diseases (TADs) and on water management, as in the Nile basin, Lake Victoria Lower Kagera River and elsewhere.

112. Yet, the evaluation found many examples where FAO missed opportunities to play a coordinating and facilitating role, owing mainly to a lack of human resources in-country and, in some cases, weak project design and planning.

113. FAO has been particularly effective in developing the capacities of government officials to understand and apply international regulatory frameworks,⁴⁹ such as the International Plant Protection Convention (IPPC), the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources (ITPGR), Codex Alimentarius, and international conventions pertaining to forestry and fisheries sectors. Most of the concerned interlocutors met in the country visits expressed great appreciation of

⁴⁹ Most of FAO programmes relating to these international frameworks include capacity development activities, generally on two aspects: (i) increasing members' effective participation to regional and international debates and negotiations and (ii) strengthening countries' capacity to comply with and implement these regulatory frameworks.

FAO's work in this area. In particular, many claimed that FAO's support for their participation in international fora was useful in building their confidence to negotiate and increasing their attentiveness to international issues of relevance to their countries. They also indicated that international exposure and regional exchanges helped them legitimise international instruments and provided fertile grounds for advocacy and government support.

114. Box 4 provides a clear example of how activities designed to affect the enabling environment led to successful CD achievements.

Box 4: The CD Potential of Regulatory Frameworks - Example from the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries

“The information obtained in the fisheries focus area indicates a strong and growing awareness at national level of the value and usefulness of international soft law. On the one hand, **the international nature of the soft-law development process has allowed countries collectively to achieve results which each would otherwise have struggled with individually** (such as practical implementation of the fisheries elements of UNCLOS [UN Convention on the Law of the Sea] or commitments of the FSA [Fish Stocks Agreement]). Their experience in **developing and using international soft law has helped national fisheries officials get accustomed to a single body of terminology and concepts**. In essence, no matter what language or dialect they speak, they all speak “Fisheries.” Finally, soft law enables the development of more soft law. For example, the problems of artisanal fisheries are the same all over the world. **Through the linkages developed in negotiating and using the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries and other soft international instruments, many countries are able to establish partnerships to find means to address this common concern.**”⁵⁰

Organisations

115. While most FAO CD work did not target organisations, much of the most effective work the evaluation team members saw in the countries visited involved the enhanced capacities of local, national and regional organisations, mainly in the public sector. This was done through organisational restructuring, the introduction of data management systems, the provision of equipment and tools (for example, in national laboratories⁵¹), training and other interventions.

116. Some of the most successful examples the evaluation team encountered included:

a) Government organisations

- Assistance on restructuring the Kenya Ministry of Agriculture and establishing the Agribusiness and Policy Units. This was done in cooperation with the Kenya Institute for Policy, Research and Analysis (KIPRA), thus contributing to enhancing local capacities as well as ensuring greater relevance and likely sustainability.
- Introduction of new tools and techniques for statistical data gathering and analysis in Burkina Faso, Niger, Uganda and Tanzania, especially as part of the assistance to the organisation of the national census. In Uganda, this also successfully combined with the introduction of CountryStat.
- Development of the Kenya Plant Health Inspection Services (KEPHIS) as a centre of excellence. KEPHIS has now become an active and self-sustaining organisation, servicing the private and public sectors and the region (see Box 5).
- Support to the Nile Basin Initiative, which involves the governments of nine riparian countries and a wide range of international donors. Support included the development of information products that integrate technical water resources and water use data with other demographic, socio-economic and environmental data, which were assembled using geographic information system (GIS) technology.

⁵⁰ Extract from: Evaluation of FAO Corporate Strategic Objective B1, page 24.

⁵¹ The evaluation is aware of many examples of successful CD interventions in the field of animal health, including the setting up of national laboratories for the prevention and control of TADs in Sebeta (Ethiopia). For more details, please refer to the II Real Time Evaluation of FAO's Work on HPAI.

- Long-term support and advice to the Lake Victoria Fisheries Organisation on drafting a Regional Plan of Action and on the harmonization of data collection tools; and
- Long-standing assistance to the *Comité permanent inter-états de lutte contre la sécheresse dans le Sahel* (CILSS) in the field of food security and early warning information systems for which the organisation is now a reference in the region.

Box 5: Organisational CD: The Example of KEPHIS

FAO has supported KEPHIS consistently over time and continues to maintain close links; KEPHIS has become a centre of excellence in the region. Through FAO's assistance in training trainers and in developing manuals, the Institute now has a critical mass of staff, maintains strong ties with ministries and other stakeholders, and works on plant safety nationally, regionally and internationally. With FAO assistance, KEPHIS is now able to monitor pesticide residues and set standards. Through an FAO 'focal point', KEPHIS scientists have been able to source direct assistance and advice. FAO played an important role in assisting KEPHIS with the revision of legislation and mentoring the development of new legislation. FAO support has also been important in helping KEPHIS obtain funding for research and in providing national guidance to the debate on genetically modified organisms (GMOs). FAO provided training to four government institutions involved in GMO regulation and the monitoring of biosafety measures and regulations. It also helped equip a laboratory to test for the presence of GMOs in imported commodities.

b) Non-governmental and private sector organisations

- Enhancement of the production and organisational management capacities of the Tulaga dairy cooperative in Kenya⁵² as well as their capacities in governance and social cohesion, through the development and use of an open-source licensed Business Management Software for Producer Organisations. This resulted in much more efficient payment systems and higher milk yields and incomes as well as increased membership;
- Strengthening the capacities of the *Réseau des organisations paysannes et de producteurs agricoles de l'Afrique de l'Ouest* (ROPPA) in Burkina Faso, providing training on a number of agriculture-related issues, supporting the set-up of new producer and service provider unions, and enhancing the links among member organisations and their partners;
- Other smaller interventions in support of national/regional farmers' organisations and cooperatives as in Ghana, Kenya and Uganda, as well as the Eastern Africa Farmers' Federation. FAO successfully contributed to the development of management and advocacy skills, and facilitated attendance of farmers at international fora; and
- Support to a few private agribusiness units, for instance, Weija Agriculture Development Ltd in Ghana and to farmers' groups, such as the *Productrices de beurre de karité au Burkina Faso*. FAO enhanced their marketing and trade capacities, including elements of organisational management.

117. In general, the evaluation found that FAO is not providing much support to national producer and distribution organisations. FAO could engage more proactively with these organisations to implement projects. This would create multiplier effects at the community level. The evaluation team visited a number of dynamic producer organisations⁵³ with strong links throughout the countryside that advocate farmer-friendly policies and services. Some appear to be well-placed to assist in scaling up successful pilot projects, although most still require additional CD and backstopping during the implementation process to further develop their capacity. The FAO country offices did not appear to be well linked to organisations outside of government.

⁵² Computerisation of Agricultural Cooperatives and Emerging Producer Associations in Kenya (TCP/KEN/2907). For more details, see Annex 10 - Kenya Beneficiary Assessment and sourceforge.net/projects/coopworks.

⁵³ For example, the Farmer and Fisherman's Award Winners Association in Ghana, Uganda National Farmers Federation, Kenya National Federation of Agricultural Producers and the Federation of Associations of Ghanaian Exporters.

They have limited capacity to engage even at government level which is FAO's primary entry point.

Individuals

118. As highlighted in the Overview, a large majority of FAO CD projects aim at developing the capacities of individuals, mainly government staff and/or farmers and farmers' groups. The evaluation team found most technical training designed to transfer technologies and promote good agricultural practices to be relevant and effectively delivered.

119. The evaluation found the FFS approach to have been the most effective in transferring technologies and establishing groups. The FFS model has been widely recognised as a good practice and it has been applied in many countries.

120. Increasingly, the FFS approach is applied successfully in rehabilitation programmes, working with young farmers through the Junior Farmers' Field and Life School, as in Malawi, Uganda, Mozambique, Sudan School, and more recently with agro-pastoral communities in the semi-arid, northern regions of Kenya and Ethiopia. In Uganda, FFSs were also engaged in response to an outbreak of plant disease (see Box 6), providing a rapid and effective response to a contingent problem.

Box 6: CD in Response to Emergencies

Banana wilt emerged in the 1990s as a devastating disease of the staple food of many Ugandans and one for which there was no immediate solution. A dedicated team of national specialists at the National Agricultural Research Organisation (NARO), in collaboration with FAO and international scientists, developed a practical and effective control programme. The challenge then was to train extension agents and farmers in this new technology. FAO and the NARO scientists used FFS to disseminate the information and to promote the adoption of the new control methods. Today, banana wilt has been reduced to a problem of manageable dimensions and the new control methods are widely understood, adopted and practised. This is a testament to successful CD and partnering.

121. Stakeholders widely appreciated FAO's initiatives on conservation agriculture using FFS in Tanzania, Kenya and Zimbabwe. A project in Burkina Faso, which included such innovative practices as live fencing, indigenous legumes and silage preparation, generated additional revenues. Twelve regional chambers of agriculture and members of the *Confédération paysanne du Faso* are now upscaling the project together with other national and international partners, including research institutes such as the World Agro-forestry Centre (ICRAF), CORAF, the Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa (AGRA) and the Forum for Agricultural Research in Africa (FARA) among others.

122. The evaluators took note of several initiatives focussed on agro-processing and marketing which aimed to link farmers and producers to the markets by looking more comprehensively at the value chain. Among those highlighted in the country case studies are:

- the sericulture and silk processing development project in Ghana⁵⁴ which provided new skills and methods to small-scale farmers for the production of cocoons and to silk industries for the production of raw silk, silk yarns and silk fabrics. The project also established sales linkages to the local and foreign silk markets;
- the organic and fair trade regional projects in Ghana and Burkina Faso,⁵⁵ which trained small producers in harvesting and inspection for organic agriculture and fair trade, and facilitated partnerships between farmers' groups and importers; and
- the Rural Knowledge Network pilot project for East Africa,⁵⁶ which set up market access companies and developed networks and learning platforms with them.

⁵⁴ TCP/GHA/2902.

⁵⁵ Increasing incomes of small farmers through exports of organic and fair trade tropical products (GCP/RAF/404/GER).

123. Despite such encouraging outcomes, the evaluation found processing and distribution lacked the necessary focus and resources. Most of the national policy documents and interlocutors emphasised the importance of FAO taking into account all aspects along the full value chain.⁵⁷ There was strong demand for assistance throughout Africa according to the SFE technical expert.

124. The evaluators interviewed many people, including internally displaced people (IDP) preoccupied primarily with food security and nutrition, who expressed their appreciation for FAO's efforts to link farmers to markets. The evaluation team noted the cases of the sweet potato sales to southern Sudan and of the young animals' sales in Uganda as related success stories.

125. The beneficiary assessments show clearly that farmers consider the acquisition or enhancement of business, management, financial and related soft skills as having changed their lives for the better. The assessments underscore the importance to effectiveness of such attributes as confidence, negotiating skills, teamwork and trust.

126. Although many of FAO's CD projects in Africa have enhanced the capacities of individuals, the evaluation found most achievements limited in scale and often lacking the critical mass necessary for significant change. Most of FAO's CD initiatives targeted at individuals are not scaled up. When FAO has strengthened local institutions, facilitated their access to resources, and widely replicated that experience, as it has done in a number of IDP-targeted projects in Uganda, it has often been more effective and had a more sustainable impact. But this has not been the pattern with the majority of FAO's CD interventions. Even with FFSs, one of FAO's most effective CD field interventions, the evaluation team found evidence of some farmers' groups and networks that were disbanded once the project ended.

L. Impact

Overall findings

127. It is generally acknowledged by the development community that it is difficult to assess programme impact, especially programmes that are focused on CD. Impact cannot be assessed until long after a programme has ended and attribution is extremely challenging because there are usually many factors that affect impact beyond the programme itself. Furthermore, recent research on measuring CD underscores the difficulties associated with ascribing impact to specific interventions and suggests alternatively that development agencies focus on processes and include measures of engagement and outcomes.⁵⁸ What needs to be taken into consideration is the extent to which the capacities of individuals, organisations and the society have been strengthened to contribute more effectively to sustainable livelihoods and improved food security. In the developing world, these capacities include the ability to participate in debates, to advocate for resources and to partner with, rather than be the clients of, development agencies.

128. Many of the evaluation reports included in the meta-synthesis highlighted the difficulty in assessing impacts. Most projects lacked capacity needs assessments and few had adequate baseline data or benchmark indicators to assess performance. Where impact was assessed, it usually correlated positively with good practices, such as integrating CD into the planning phase, building in measures to ensure sustainability, and forging successful partnerships.

129. During their field visits, members of the evaluation team noted examples of positive impact of CD activities for individuals, among them FFS projects, conservation agriculture initiatives, rural information networks linking farmers to the markets, and a project focused on the computerisation of a dairy cooperative in Kenya.

⁵⁶ GCP/RAF/401/IFA.

⁵⁷ See Annex 10, Country Reports.

⁵⁸ Morgan, P. (2006). *The Concept of Capacity* – Maastricht: European Centre for Development Policy Management.

130. The case studies confirm one of the findings of the Sustainable Fisheries Livelihoods Programme evaluation,⁵⁹ that is, that the most visible impact of CD activities has been increased production and income for primary beneficiaries. For example, the establishment of FFSs in the *Programme sous-régional de formation participative en gestion intégrée de la production et des déprédateurs* (GIPD)⁶⁰ in Burkina Faso resulted in increases in crop production ranging from 20 to 200 percent.⁶¹ Similarly, in Ghana, the introduction of techniques to protect crops and reduce damage from elephants contributed to raising agriculture production by 70 percent as well as generating new income from the commercialisation of chilli, which was used to keep the animals away.⁶²

Box 7: Impact of FAO CD - Example from a Project in Uganda

I have never known I could use the small spaces I have at home to raise vegetables. With the training I got from CESVI/FAO, my chicken droppings, goat pellets and cow dung will not go to waste anymore because they are food to vegetables that I will grow in the micro-gardens. I will hardly go to the market now to buy onions, tomatoes, cabbages and eggplants, because I have realised I can keep a small garden here and maintain it wet regardless of the rains since this can be watered.

Aldo, 60 years old, Ugandan farmer, beneficiary of the
Livelihoods Support for Pastoralists and Agro-pastoralists in the
Karamoja Region

131. The AGPT reports from West Africa highlight positive impact from CD support:

*Each project, as planned, has contributed to strengthening the Farmers' Organisations and NGOs, facilitated the dialogue among them, set their structures up, refined their vision and enabled them to defend their own interests and effectively operate within the socio-economic context.*⁶³

132. Despite good performance generally, some FFSs have had less impact than expected because they lacked links to local support systems, networking and follow-up. The beneficiary assessments echoed this finding, pointing to the need for more emphasis on scaling up, stronger linkages and a better understanding of country contexts on the part of those designing and implementing FFS projects.⁶⁴

133. In the area of organisational strengthening, there are several examples where FAO has contributed to sustainable, national centres of excellence, such as KEPHIS in Kenya and the veterinary laboratory in Sebeta, Ethiopia. The Lake Victoria Fisheries Organisation is an example of where FAO has contributed to forming a sustainable regional organisation.

134. FAO's track record with respect to policy development is also mixed. Although FAO assistance has resulted in countries adopting new agricultural policies or adapting old ones, the evaluation team found little evidence of these policies having been implemented. Notable exceptions include FAO's work with respect to Codex Alimentarius, the International Plant Protection Convention (IPPC) and some international agreements pertaining to forestry and fisheries. Where the team found evidence of impact, they also found recurrent training, long timelines, sound needs assessments and a great deal of follow-up.

⁵⁹ "There is evidence to indicate that SFLP interventions have had an impact on target local communities (e.g. local organisations) and on many individuals in them. This is arguably the level where SFLP has had the most visible impact on the primary beneficiaries."

⁶⁰ GCP/RAF/009/NET.

⁶¹ Evidence from the Beneficiary Assessment (see Annex 10).

⁶² Ensuring Farmers' Livelihoods and Food Security around Kakum Conservation Area (TCP/GHA/2905).

⁶³ Evaluation tripartite de l'axe thématique « Approche participative et gestion de terroirs » du Programme de coopération FAO-Belgique pour la période 2004-2007, page 37.

⁶⁴ Extract from the Malawi Country Report, which the evaluation team found to be mostly true elsewhere in the region.

M. Sustainability and Follow-up of CD Activities

Overall findings

135. Sustainability begins with sound design and implementation processes that reflect many of the effective practices outlined earlier. The evaluation team found that FAO projects in Africa generally give sustainability short shrift. Examples of this include an absence of an after-project vision in the design of CD interventions, a bias toward short-term, output-oriented projects and a dearth of motivation for FAO staff, consultants and implementing partners to ensure sustainability. The meta-evaluation showed that sustainability scored low (see Figure 3) and remains among the most serious challenges for FAO's CD interventions.

136. As already mentioned in previous sections, projects seldom take a long-term approach, infrequently address all three CD dimensions and rarely take into account that CD is an iterative process that requires constant adjustment and follow through. The most successful and sustainable of the interventions were those that provided: inter-disciplinary support across all three CD dimensions over time; on-going links with, and access to, FAO expertise; and activities anchored in local or national institutions.

Longer time-frame, follow-up and continued engagement

137. CD is a process and can rarely be achieved within the framework or timeframe of a single project. The case study countries and many evaluations, including those of FAO work in statistics, demonstrate the importance of a long-term approach to CD with ongoing engagement. The long run sustainability of capacity building projects is put at risk due to limited follow-up. Given the longer gestation periods associated with CD efforts, such as an agricultural census, the short time-frame of TCP projects limits sustainability. The auto-evaluation also found that project length affected sustainability and that project results remain an important issue in many countries.⁶⁵

Box 8: Beneficiaries' Perspectives on Sustainability

Projects like this one are like marriage. When you just get married, sometimes you do not know each other very well. But with time, you tend to understand each other better. Similarly, in this project, by the time we thought things were being understood, you say "we are going". In this way, you leave us in suspense and lost!

Farmer in Malawi⁶⁶

There is a great possibility that half of our farmers will fall back to the old ways ... It takes three farming seasons and projects need an introduction time, then implementation, then weaning and then closure.

Farmer in Tanzania⁶⁷

138. The meta-evaluation showed that training generally lacked proper follow-up and mentoring support to ensure that new-found skills and knowledge were applied on the job and reflected in improved individual and organisational performance. The meta-evaluation showed that continued engagement and follow-up are usually essential to address institutional issues, including those related to mandate, incentives, norms, regulations and tenure, and to achieve

⁶⁵ Auto-Evaluation of FAO Activities in Technical Support Services to Member Nations and the Field Programme (Programme Entity 222S1) and FAO/World Bank/USDA Initiative for Agricultural Statistics in Africa (Programme Entity 222A2), 2006, page 13.

⁶⁶ Beneficiary Assessment Report – Malawi - Project Small-scale Industry Development Enhancing Food Security and Developing Sustainable Rural Livelihoods (GCPS/MLW/030/NOR)- Farmer, Chilembwe Section, Mpilisi EPA.

⁶⁷ Beneficiary Assessment Report – Tanzania: A Joint UN Response for Northwestern (UNTS/URT/002/HSF) Tanzania - Farmer Field and Life School Beneficiary.

sustainable results. The mid-term evaluation of an institutional capacity development programme in Sudan supports these findings:

*... The training of individuals should be linked to particular outputs and expectations of performance within their respective ministries, attention should be given to follow-up support and mentoring, and there needs to be closer monitoring of the impact of investment in training ... Large numbers of staff have benefited, but more follow-up is needed to address institutional and organisational issues and to provide continued on-the-job support so that trainees are able to apply their skills.*⁶⁸

139. Most FAO CD activities are implemented through projects. The Organization has insufficient capacity to work beyond project frameworks. Where there was evidence of post-project follow-up, the evaluation found that this was frequently due to personal commitment on the part of FAO staff who often had to use resources from other projects. There were, however, some examples where FAO has engaged consistently, across the dimensions, through a series of projects over many years to enhance national and regional organisations, such as the Lake Victoria Fisheries Organisation, Tanzania Bureau of Statistics and KEPHIS. Where this has occurred, the evaluation found that it had often resulted in markedly improved organisational performance, increased confidence and, in some cases, the ability to provide services to other African countries.

Institutionalisation of results and processes

140. The evaluation team found evidence of sustainability where projects had developed exit strategies, built ownership of stakeholders early on and fostered institutional commitment. Developing the skills of individuals or groups will not necessarily lead to sustainable results unless these skills are put to use in organisations that allow for continued change and adaptation, and provide incentives for their use. Many of the most successful CD interventions featured links to national or local institutions that provided ongoing support and the impetus for continued change. The following are noteworthy examples of partnering involving government institutions, CSOs and the private sector:

- the Tulaga dairy cooperative project in Kenya⁶⁹ involved a software and cell phone company to improve banking services. The companies continued to provide support after the project ended; and
- the Beach Management Units on Lake Victoria have been closely linked to the Lake Victoria Fishery Organisation (LVFO), providing them with continued support, although the organisation needs to advocate for additional resources to provide backstopping.

141. The evaluation found that most of these partnerships were an effective first step, but that few have been sufficiently institutionalised. Generally, FAO needs to ensure that CD results and processes are anchored in institutions that have the capacity to back up and scale up.

Developing capacity at the decentralized/local level

142. Increased emphasis on decentralisation of implementation highlights the urgency to fill critical capacity gaps at local levels. The evaluation team found a significant lack of local capacity and weak institutional linkages at local levels in the countries visited. Although many field projects helped form farmer groups, many of these groups remain vulnerable without programmes to strengthen local government authorities responsible for providing services to them. The evaluation team heard many calls for CD to strengthen local institutions, particularly with respect

⁶⁸ Sudan Institutional Capacity Programme: Food Security Information for Action (SIFSIA) – OSRO/SUD/620/MUL/EC – Mid-Term Evaluation of the SIFSIA Programme – June 2009, page 14.

⁶⁹ Computerisation of Agricultural Cooperatives and Emerging Producer Associations in Kenya (TCP/KEN/2907) but there were problems with little follow-up with the Ministry of Cooperatives, thus limiting scale-out potential.

to management systems and the development of soft skills. These demands were most vocal in relation to complex local initiatives such as public-private partnerships.

143. Developing capacity at the local level for information management and policy formation and implementation is essential to the sustainability of FAO interventions at national levels. If there is poor information from local levels and insufficient capacity to implement policies, then it is unlikely that the best efforts at the national level will be sustainable. The evaluation found little evidence of the ‘trickle-down’ effect to district levels resulting from FAO’s information and policy initiatives at higher levels. FAO’s work on food security policy in Mozambique and Zanzibar were notable exceptions.

Encouraging networking

144. The evaluators note that many of the most sustainable projects reviewed were those that were linked on a continuous basis to networks for ongoing professional development and retooling. Although some field projects have helped replicate farmers’ groups, diversify crops and strengthen marketing, these gains were often limited unless the groups had on-going access to services and support. FAO has provided little support to strengthening farmers’ lobbying efforts for services and has provided few incentives to ensure sustainability.

145. In contrast, FAO’s efforts to facilitate the participation of Africans at regional and international fora, workshops and other exchanges to strengthen their knowledge and build their confidence, has been important to sustaining capacity. Many beneficiaries underscored the lasting benefits of opportunities provided by FAO to develop their confidence, enhance their communication and negotiation skills and exchange ideas. Such exposure helped some individuals influence the informal enabling environment. This was evident, for instance, in the Nile River Basin Initiative and in plant protection interventions in all the case study countries referred to earlier.

Facilitating government commitment

146. The sustainability of projects often depends on the recipient government’s commitment to follow up and provide sufficient resources. The evaluation team’s country visits highlighted the need for greater capacity on the part of government officials to advocate for the resources required to scale up and follow through.

147. However, the evaluation team found that FAO interventions in Africa fail to devote sufficient attention and resources to building the political will necessary to bring about and sustain change. More active engagement of the FAO Representatives with governments, civil society and the private sector is needed to develop the required enabling environment, which includes motivation, incentives and will in order to expand sustainable capacities once developed.

N. Gender

148. Strong efforts are required to: effectively mainstream gender equality into agricultural projects; deal with the many gender-related underlying causes of poverty and food insecurity; and ensure that gender analysis is featured prominently in policy decision-making. At HQ, FAO has taken steps in recent years to give greater prominence to gender in its corporate strategies. For example, the Gender and Development Plans of Action for the periods 2002-2007 and 2008-2013 acknowledge the importance of promoting gender equality. The inclusion of a gender-specific goal⁷⁰ among FAO’s 11 strategic objectives has the potential to pave the way for gender mainstreaming. The Gender, Equity and Rural Employment Division (ESWD) recently developed a guide to gender mainstreaming within FAO’s New Strategic Framework⁷¹ and Africa is a priority for gender-focussed interventions of ESWD, representing 37 of the top 50 countries of

⁷⁰ Gender equity in access to resources, goods, services and decision-making in the rural areas.

⁷¹ Gender Equity in Agriculture and Rural Development, FAO, 2009.

focus for the division. Furthermore, the Division, through the FAO Regional Office for Africa, supported Ministries of Agriculture in selected African countries to elaborate sector-specific Gender and *Agricultural* Development strategic policy and planning documents in follow-up to the 1995 Beijing Conference on Women.

Overall findings

149. FAO's CD work on gender in Africa is carried out mainly through: i) specific field projects that deal with gender issues; ii) support to the National Institutes of Statistics on collection and analysis of gender-disaggregated statistics; iii) integration of gender concerns into land and water management policies in Lusophone countries; and iv) the diffusion and capacity development training based on gender analysis tools produced by the Socio-economic and Gender Analysis Programme (SEAGA). In addition, the Gender Biodiversity and Local Knowledge Systems for Food Security (LinKS) project and the Dimitra initiative have worked along the individual and the policy/enabling environment dimensions to strengthen the capacities of government officials and rural populations on gender-related concerns. Capacity building activities were also organized in Africa (and Asia), under the Project on Gender Analysis in Farmers' Water Management in support of the Special Programme for Food Security (SPFS).

150. Most staff interviewed by members of the evaluation team appeared to recognise the need to consider the gender dimensions of their work. A few initiatives in the field, such as many of the FFS projects, have tried to ensure gender representation in projects. However, for the most part, CD projects in Africa pay lip-service attention to gender and do not fully understand the gender dimensions of interventions.⁷² Gender considerations did not score satisfactorily in many of the evaluations analysed as part of the meta-synthesis. The beneficiary assessments and the interviews the evaluation team carried out in the field confirmed a shallow understanding of gender equality and its important role in relation to Africa's successful development. An indicator of this weak understanding was that many people interviewed in the field believed that they had fulfilled FAO's expectations with respect to gender by ensuring that women participated in project activities in numbers equalling or approximating men. Those responsible for CD interventions, including those carried out through normative work, generally viewed gender as a stand-alone set of activities and not as a cross-cutting concern. Only eight of the more than thirty normative products reviewed contained references to the gender dimensions of the subject-matter (see Section VIII of this report). As noted in the evaluation of the *Approche participative et gestion de terroirs*⁷³, the lack of attention to gender equality has serious consequences leading to methodological and operational gaps in each of the activities.

151. FAO partners and FAO staff recognize that FAO does not have the exclusive expertise on gender *per se*, but has a comparative advantage on mainstreaming gender into agriculture, among other things by establishing links among the Ministry of Agriculture and other key stakeholders working on gender. Gender is an area that requires FAO's urgent attention. Where it has insufficient expertise, there are opportunities for partnering as the Organization has successfully done in Uganda (see the next section on partnerships). FAO should do much more sensitising of its own staff on the meaning of gender equality, its importance and on practical ways of integrating it into CD initiatives. In the context of the One UN Initiative, FAO also has to communicate what its added value is in terms of mainstreaming gender in the agricultural sector and food security initiatives. The outcomes and recommendations from the forthcoming gender audit to be carried out with UNIFEM will probably contribute to the formulation of a corporate capacity development strategy for gender mainstreaming in FAO activities.

⁷² For example, women are called to meetings when they have other responsibilities, as in the example where training was planned for women in a fishing project at Lake Victoria. The training coincided with the time when women help send men out on the boats, and so few participated.

⁷³ Evaluation de l'Axe thématique "Approche participative et gestion des terroirs" du Programme de coopération FAO-Belgique pour la période 2004-07.

152. To institutionalise gender mainstreaming and enhance gender results across the Organization, FAO has appointed a gender focal point in each division at HQ and has, in parallel, carried out CD activities for FAO Representatives in Africa and Assistant Representatives in West Africa, and emergency coordinators and project managers in Somalia, Sudan and Kenya. CD workshops on gender mainstreaming in emergency and rehabilitation programmes were also organised with TCE in selected countries in Southern Africa. With only one dedicated staff member at the Regional Office for Africa (RAF)⁷⁴, the Organization's field capacity is severely limited. Clearly greater resources, more partnering and more training on gender mainstreaming to staff in HQ and in the field are needed in order to achieve FAO's gender-related objective. The IEE raised this same issue.

O. Partnerships

153. FAO expertise is required to enhance capacity in a wide range of areas and across all CD dimensions. As clearly pointed out in FAO's draft "Corporate Strategy for CD", it is important that FAO engages more in partnerships in order to adequately cover this broad spectrum of CD work and, at the same time, focus on its areas of comparative advantage.

154. For the purpose of this evaluation, partnership means "cooperation and collaboration between FAO and external parties in joint or coordinated action for a common purpose."⁷⁵ Contractual relationships for implementation are not considered to be partnerships, in that they do not include significant resource sharing. The evaluation focused on FAO's partnerships for CD at regional and country levels. The evaluation does not address general issues relating to corporate institutional partnerships.

Overall findings

155. In FAO, where partnerships have been established, they are most often a result of individual rather than institutional relationships. Exceptions are the Delivery as One (DaO) countries where FAO is formally required to partner.

156. Where FAO is engaged in partnerships, the Organization may not be fully exploiting its benefits and it is sometimes perceived as not fulfilling its partnership role, according to reports received by the evaluation team in the field. The Organization has often been blamed for its slow decision-making processes, as well as for its complex and inappropriate financial and contractual arrangements. In a few cases, the evaluation team heard complaints that FAO did not always acknowledge the capacities of its partners and involve them in planning and decision-making.

157. FAO needs partnerships in order to fulfil its obligations to develop endogenous capacity under the Paris Declaration, to meet its requirements under the One-UN reforms and to leverage additional resources.

158. The report next provides an analysis of the types of partnerships common to FAO in its CD work in Africa.

African inter-governmental organisations

159. FAO has worked quite extensively with African regional and sub-regional political and economic integration organisations, yet it has done so more by providing policy, technical and financial support than by partnering. A few examples are:

- support to the NEPAD Secretariat (advisory services) and close collaboration on the development of the Comprehensive Africa Agricultural Development Programme (CAADP);

⁷⁴ In Uganda and Malawi, FAO hired two consultants to work on gender-specific projects. While this has been much appreciated, it raises concerns about sustainability.

⁷⁵ Thematic Evaluation of FAO Partnerships and Alliances, FAO PBEE, 2006, page 7.

- institutional strengthening of the Central African Forest Commission (COMIFAC) and assistance to the *Comité régional des pêches du Golfe de Guinée* (COREP) in developing its strategic plan and programme of action;
- support to the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) to set up a food security monitoring and evaluation mechanism; and
- assistance to the South African Development Community (SADC) on policy development and the creation of a data management system for seeds.

160. In each of the above examples, FAO's support has been primarily directed at producing outputs rather than at engaging in processes aimed at enhancing organisational capacity and partnership.

161. The evaluation team observed more collaborative and durable relationships on technical matters with regional organisations such as the CILSS and AFRISTAT. FAO has also provided CD support in nutrition, pesticide use safety and early warning and food security information systems. Under an EC-sponsored programme, FAO is working collaboratively with the CILSS to develop regional food security frameworks and to undertake joint assessment missions.

162. FAO has also helped establish and strengthen regional institutional arrangements to deal with trans-border resource management issues. FAO's support to the NBI is a good example.⁷⁶ This collaborative arrangement has produced analyses of outstanding quality and accessibility, which now inform regional policies and programmes. It also contributed to enhancing skills which are being used to develop an innovative and carefully formulated national water policy in Uganda.

163. Many of these regional organisations, including ones with overlapping mandates such as ECOWAS and the *Union économique et monétaire ouest-africaine* (UEMOA) require ongoing FAO technical, facilitative and financial support. Despite the difficulties inherent in working with regional organisations, opportunities remain for more authentic partnering that fully exploit these organisations' convening power and political mandates.

UN agencies

164. In the countries visited, members of the evaluation team found few concrete partnerships between FAO and other UN organisations, except in Tanzania and, to a lesser extent, Uganda and Malawi. In Malawi, they found considerable scope for more partnerships under UN DaO, despite FAO's limited capacity for engagement there. The Evaluation found that there is only limited capacity in most countries for FAO to be well represented on the many coordinating committees.

165. FAO's cooperation efforts in Tanzania date back to 2005, when the project "Strengthening Human Security through Sustainable Human Development in North Western Tanzania" began. FAO, the United Nations Industrial Development Organisation (UNIDO), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the World Food Programme (WFP) have since worked together on household food security, on livelihood and poverty concerns of small-scale farmers in refugee villages and on FFS programmes and training to improve agricultural methods and entrepreneurial skills.

166. In the context of UN DaO - Tanzania being one of the eight pilot countries⁷⁷ - the collaboration entered an important new phase in 2007-2008. FAO is now involved, to varying degrees, in six Joint Programmes (JPs), all concerned with CD. The JP1 entitled "Wealth Creation, Employment and Economic Empowerment" is particularly noteworthy. Despite some

⁷⁶ The Nile Basin Initiative Secretariat is hosted in Entebbe (Uganda) and serves nine riparian countries, namely Congo, DRC, Egypt, Ethiopia, Kenya, Rwanda, Sudan, Tanzania and Uganda. The Secretariat was established to provide the analytical capacity for the development, allocation, management and protection of Nile water resources. More detail is available in the Uganda Country Report in Annex 10.

⁷⁷ Together with Rwanda, Mozambique and Cape Verde in Africa.

initial delays, the UN partners involved, primarily UNIDO and the International Labour Organization (ILO), agree that the programme presents great potential to increase synergies based on each agency's comparative advantage. They acknowledge that the agencies still work in parallel rather than together but maintain that significant improvement has come about from having established a common framework and divisions of labour. The experience helped FAO reduce some of its transaction costs, such as those related to mobilizing resources. It has also been advantageous in other ways, such as helping FAO to work at sub-national levels, complementing FAO's technical inputs with more holistic programming, linking horizontally along the value chain, and enabling each agency to specialise in its area of comparative advantage. However, such coordinated programming requires a high level of in-country expertise in order to participate fully and to partner effectively. Furthermore, it is complex, with diverse programming cycles, varying decision-making procedures at country-level and sometimes incompatible systems for monitoring and information sharing.

167. In Malawi, FAO participates in five UNDAF cluster groups and chairs the one on Sustainable Economic Growth and Food and Nutrition Security. The Organization plays an active and well-appreciated role on gender and HIV/AIDS issues in partnership with other UN agencies and, in 2009, has for the first time received resources from the One UN Fund to promote the use of fruit trees under a joint project with WFP. However, delays in transferring the funds seriously hamper the project's implementation and undermine FAO's capacity to participate as a reliable partner. Interviews with donors and partners confirmed that FAO has insufficient resources in the country to adequately take part in working groups and effectively partner in such joint programmes.

168. In Uganda, stakeholders appreciated the collaboration between FAO and other UN agencies involved in a project to counter gender-based violence. Among other things, the project has allowed FAO to identify the impact of GBV on food security and livelihoods and bring to the UN Joint project an important livelihood perspective for capacity development through the FFS and JFFLS approach.

169. Overall, partnerships with UN agencies are poor when not tied to formal mechanisms, as UN DaO and joint programmes are. Limited collaboration with the UN limits the reach of FAO's CD interventions and its work in technical areas where the Organization has insufficient resources and capacities. Despite agriculture having a prominent role in UNDAF and UN DaO programmes, FAO's weak capacity in many African countries is a serious constraint. It often prevents the Organization from fully participating in planning and decision-making and, at times, from taking a lead role when it is appropriate and expected.

National and regional research organisations and universities

170. The evaluation team found that FAO has missed many opportunities to partner with national, regional and university organisations and networks on CD initiatives. This was evident in the meta-synthesis⁷⁸ and from visits to institutions such as the Forum for Agricultural Research in Africa (FARA), Association for Strengthening Agricultural Research in Eastern and Central Africa (ASARECA), African Network for Agriculture, Agroforestry and Natural Resources Education (ANAFE) and Regional University Forum for Capacity Building in Agriculture (RUFORUM). People interviewed were keen to partner with FAO in areas of training, technical input, post-graduate studies and research. Many felt that partnerships would in turn provide FAO with effective platforms to disseminate its knowledge and apply its expertise.

⁷⁸ The evaluation of FAO's Activities in Fisheries Exploitation and Utilization highlighted the potential to network with training and capacity building institutions. The evaluation proposed a "twinning process" (see note below) whereby a "senior" centre of excellence (institutions with internationally-recognised training capabilities) is paired with another institution in a long-term cooperative arrangement to jointly prepare selected training materials and to train trainers.

171. There are opportunities for FAO to “twin”⁷⁹ with these organisations and others and to assist them in their efforts to link research institutes and universities more closely to rural people and their development issues. FAO could also help them adapt curricula, instructional methods and information systems to take advantage of modern technologies and advancements in learning⁸⁰.

172. SFE has made an innovative effort to provide opportunities for students and lecturers on sabbatical and exchange to carry out research on topics of mutual interest. The collaboration between FAO and graduate students and lecturers provides an excellent opportunity to develop the capacities of African researchers, to enhance networking and to apply the results of agricultural research. The Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa (AGRA) indicated an interest in working with FAO on some of the post-graduate programmes it sponsors.

173. It is important to note that the quality of human resources in research centres and universities varies considerably across Africa, with the best quality found in East, West and Southern Africa. This suggests that FAO could play an important role in strengthening agricultural research capacity in Central Africa, utilising the organisations from other regions wherever possible.

Civil Society and the private sector

174. The evaluation team found FAO’s record of partnerships with civil society and the private sector thin with many missed opportunities. The team believes FAO should consider partnering more with farmers’ organisations and other CSOs, especially in West and East Africa, where capacities are growing but where support is still required. Involving these organisations in service delivery may require large initial investment, but such involvement has the potential for greater sustainability. Given the scarcity of FAO resources in-country, such partnerships could help FAO reach the decentralised and local levels more effectively.

175. Many of those interviewed in the countries the evaluation team visited said that CSOs have networks reaching into remote regions and that they provide opportunities for linking farmers to markets and to national policy making organs. In addition, they said that emerging regional federations of farmers’ associations could assist in disseminating FAO materials and information on appropriate technologies, effective practices and international conventions to farmers.

176. As well, engaging in partnerships with international NGOs provides opportunities for FAO to reach out more widely and to engage in mutual learning and exchange. The Dimitra project is a good example of partnerships promoting exchanges among ten African organisations.

177. FAO appears to have had little experience partnering with the private sector, especially small business enterprises. The evaluators found a few exceptions in the country case studies. In Ghana, for example, FAO has partnered with an organic processing company. In East Africa, it developed a relationship with the Rural Knowledge Networks, which links farmers and rural traders. However, in this latter example, FAO has had limited success in identifying gaps in

⁷⁹ Twinning is perceived and practiced by aid organizations in a variety of ways. The World Bank, for example, defines twinning as a “process that pairs an organisational entity in a developing country with a similar but more mature entity in another country.”[The World Bank Handbook on Technical Assistance, 1993] The Bank recognizes the method as one of its four primary technical assistance delivery modes, along with long-term advisors, short-term advisors, and training. It uses twinning to transfer relevant operational knowledge between two organizations similar in function and structure. The EC has employed numerous twinning projects since 1998 to facilitate the accession process for countries that wish to join the European Union (EU). EU experts may be seconded to participate in a twinning arrangement for over a year and may be expected to participate in short-term missions, training and technical supports.

⁸⁰ Many universities are embarking on new, more inter-disciplinary, practical degrees, such as a regional Master in research methods organized by RUFORUM and Jomo Kenyatta Agricultural University of Technology. FAO could provide these organisations with knowledge materials, assist with teaching, arrange joint workshops or module courses, and engage students in field work.

relation to market access companies, even though other aspects of the project have been reasonably successful.

178. Others than these, however, the Evaluation has not had the chance to see any relevant instance of partnership between FAO and the private sector. In fact, the case-study countries show that FAO is currently more assisting, rather than partnering with, small traders and processors.

FAO's Normative CD Products

179. One of FAO's four main areas of activity is "putting information within reach" in order to aid development. FAO plays a normative role by setting international standards, promoting these standards and establishing guidelines and effective practices in matters pertaining to its mandate. Its professional staff collect, analyze and disseminate a vast amount of normative data. Much of this work goes beyond the scope of this evaluation. However, the evaluation included an assessment of the normative CD products from the perspective of African users⁸¹. This section draws essentially from this assessment and complements this information with findings gathered during the field visits. The assessment, which appears in full in Annex 8, is based on a sample of 31 normative CD products, produced between 2000 and 2008. It focused largely on issues of relevance, quality and use.

P. Approach

180. The bulk of FAO's normative CD products stems from discrete projects that donors support with extra-budgetary assistance. Some of these are one-off initiatives with little follow-up after the product has been produced and distributed. Some products are, however, more programmatic in nature, in that they are part of a more comprehensive CD initiative that sometimes involves multiple-year funding and multiple interventions. For example, the Sustainable Agriculture and Rural Development Initiative, which links resources, expertise, knowledge and technologies to the needs of rural communities and disadvantaged groups, produced an excellent web-based series of concise, practical solutions to technical problems as part of a larger program of technical assistance involving government and non-governmental organisations and institutions.

181. Many of FAO's technical products feature experts talking to experts or experts talking to farmers. Although often justified, lessons from the development community suggest that reversing the power balance so that experts respond to questions put to them by farmers and/or farmers speak directly to other farmers, can help to bring about behavioural change. This, FAO has done through its exemplary FFS model in Africa and elsewhere, but lessons from these projects need to be collated into generic guidelines for establishing and institutionalizing FFS. The Nutrition and Consumer Protection Division appears to be following a similar pedagogical model in *Les bonnes pratiques d'hygiène dans la préparation et la vente des aliments de rue en Afrique*, which emphasizes two-way dialogue between trainers and street vendors as a means of encouraging the hygienic handling of food.

Q. Relevance to the Needs

182. The assessment found that most materials produced for CD are based on needs identified in the field and/or at international fora. Most, but not all, appear to be relevant to the target countries' development priorities. However, no formal mechanisms exist at headquarters to align FAO's normative products to the priorities of African countries, as formalized in NMTPFs and/or

⁸¹ The evaluation's inception report clarifies the normative CD products covered as follows: "only those which have been adapted or developed at country/regional level through a pedagogical approach will be considered (i.e. the simple existence of such material at country/regional level will not be assessed). Particular attention will be given to activities and products, including global ones, which target Sub-Saharan African countries, and/or are important in terms of their potential use and impact in the Region." [page 2]

other strategic documents. Most divisions emphasize the need for a strong field presence in order to understand the needs and demands and to develop relevant products. There did not appear to be close partnering with national research organisations and universities to complement field presence and provide local knowledge.

183. The assessment found that information in several of the products reviewed is available from other sources, including, on occasion, other UN agencies and other documents produced by FAO. Duplication suggests the need for greater collaboration both internally and externally. The assessment also found one incidence where the impetus for a normative product was primarily driven by the staff's own personal academic goal rather than responding to the priority needs of a country. Although such cases appear to be few, they are cause for concern, given the many unmet capacity needs in the field.

184. Many of the Organization's normative products are geared to experts and to specialized institutions. The evaluation suggests that there are significant capacity gaps at the community level and within municipal governments in Africa that are not well served by FAO. In Mali, for example, local representatives reported that the terms used in some FAO instructional manuals were too advanced for frontline staff and that some topics were too difficult for trainers to handle. It would appear that more CD materials need to be adapted to local conditions and replicated in local African languages, particularly where literacy levels are low among farmer groups, as in many Sub-Saharan countries. Furthermore, few of FAO's CD materials deal with the "soft" side of development, with matters pertaining to organisational culture and the formal and informal systems of incentives and rewards that often shape the behaviour of individuals in organisations.

R. Design and Production Quality

185. Access is first about users being able to understand, internalize and apply the information they receive in ways that make sense within their own cultural and organisational contexts. Many of FAO's normative products are, from a pedagogical perspective, exceptionally well produced. All e-learning products reviewed, for example, featured self-assessments, individualized learning pathways, tutorials, checklists and links to related learning resources. Some CD-ROM products, such as the Land and Water Digital Media Series, fail, however, to exploit the medium's interactive learning potential. Some print materials are gold standards. Fire Management, Voluntary Guidelines, Principles and Strategic Actions were among the best reviewed, and Negotiation and Mediation Techniques for Natural Resource Management serves as a model for how to structure and design a manual for effective CD.

186. Many materials examined for the evaluation were designed with input from user groups, which is good practice. Some benefited from rigorous field testing, a practice that FAO should encourage for all instructional materials. Relatively few materials assessed were developed with FAO interdepartmental collaboration, confirming again FAO's insufficient inter-disciplinary approach to conducting CD work.

187. Although most of FAO's normative CD products have been produced in multiple languages, resources are needed to translate more of them into local languages in order to reach a wider spectrum of Africans.

S. Gender

188. Insufficient attention to gender is a serious weakness in many of FAO's normative products aimed at CD in Africa. FAO provides the instructional designers of e-learning materials with guidelines on gender equality, but not its instructional writers. Gender analysis is not carried out consistently at the design stage and there does not appear to be the kind of rigorous check on the content and images for gender sensitivity that one would expect of an organisation committed to gender mainstreaming.

189. Yet, the FAO's ESWD has developed some specific gender analysis methods and tools, mainly within the framework of SEAGA and the Sustainable Livelihoods Programme, to integrate socio-economic and gender issues at different levels and within a variety of technical areas. Handbooks are available for programming and policy interventions at institutional and field levels (communities, households and individuals). Handbooks are also available for technical sub-sectors, such as statistics⁸², microfinance, irrigation, emergency and rehabilitation programmes, livestock, household resources management and so on. The LinKS project on gender, biodiversity and local knowledge systems for food security has supported the development of post-graduate training materials for universities and a manual for facilitators on participatory approaches to local knowledge and bio-diversity management for food security.⁸³

190. The visits of the evaluation team to the case study countries revealed little evidence of a wide distribution and use of the above and other gender-specific CD tools. It seems that significantly more effort could be made to raise awareness and strengthen the distribution of these materials, as the discussion at the Ministry of Gender in Uganda suggested.⁸⁴ This could help ensure that gender equality considerations are more consistently integrated into CD planning and implementation.

T. Access and Formats

191. Print is by far the most prevalent format for FAO's normative products. The Organization distributes hard copies, often through its Regional Offices and partner institutions. However, the team found these very poorly distributed in Africa and difficult for many potential users to access. Increasingly, FAO makes its products available online and on compact disk (CD-ROM). Most materials are free to download from the Internet, but some CD-ROMs, such as those for the Codex Alimentarius Programme and the Land and Water Digital Media Series, must be purchased at a cost that is prohibitively expensive for most Africans.

192. The distribution of, and access to, FAO's normative products is weak in Africa. This was a consistent finding of the beneficiary assessments and field visits. Many local libraries and FAO offices have inadequate supplies of FAO's most important materials. Most FAO resource libraries in the field have been closed, and locally engaged consultants and contractors have often had to produce new materials without reference to existing materials. Such was the case, for example, with soil and irrigation learning resources in Zimbabwe.

193. Although FAO's use of the Internet significantly extends the reach of its products, the Internet is not without its drawbacks, particularly for Africans, for whom Internet access and bandwidth are often limited. FAO staff have taken measures to compensate for Africa's Internet connectivity and bandwidth constraints⁸⁵. They have, for example, made CD-ROMs of many normative products available for free or at low cost and they have prepared materials that take minimal bandwidth and that can be downloaded in sections and printed according to the needs of users. Yet, according to some FAO staff, even printing from CD-ROMs is problematic in parts of Africa, as reliable photocopiers are often in short supply. A staff member in the field noted that by moving away from print, FAO was effectively transferring the cost of knowledge access to those most in need and least able to afford it.

194. Access difficulties persist even when users have reliable high speed Internet connections and plenty of bandwidth. For example, there is so much information on FAO's website that it can

⁸² Cooperation between ESS, ESWD and RAF have involved a series of joint publication of manuals and guidelines on gender and statistics.

⁸³ More recently, the Regional Offices have launched a toolkit for the collection and analysis of sex-disaggregated data at the request from the African Commission on Agricultural Statistics (AFCAS).

⁸⁴ Staff that were unaware of much of FAO's work on gender.

⁸⁵ Connectivity issues remain a significant barrier for the 93% of Africans who have no Internet access (www.internetworldstats.com, June 2009).

be challenging for users to find the information they are seeking. There is no site map accessible from FAO's home page and some of FAO's search engines, such as that of the Capacity Building Portal, fail to turn up many of the Organization's best-known normative products.

195. A general concern, which applies to FAO and many other organisations that put most of their written materials online, is that they fail to adapt them for Internet use, which forces many readers to download and print the materials for study offline.

196. Increasingly, FAO staff are turning to distance and e-learning for CD. Among the available self-learning courses are those in the IMark series, Food Security Information for Action series and Codex E-learning series. IMark, which has 135,000 registered users worldwide, appears to be particularly cost-effective. However, there appears to have been limited integration of FAO e-learning activities. They are expensive to develop and to run and need to be closely evaluated to assess their effectiveness as a CD intervention for Africa. It appeared that a general weakness of many of FAO's e-learning courses is that few incorporate tutors and/or local peer learning groups, which may, in part, explain why many who enrol fail to complete the courses.

197. FAO makes limited use of some "old" formats, such as radio, and it has yet to fully embrace new digital technologies such as video streaming, which, again, may only be applicable in certain environments. In the field visits, there was a call for mobile village video training sessions along the lines of the old-fashioned mobile film evenings.

U. Capacity Building Portal

198. FAO's Capacity Building Portal is a one-stop gateway to FAO's CD resources. It provides access to FAO's published learning materials, to a series of good practices and case studies in the Capacity Building Good Practices Case Studies Series⁸⁶ and to FAO's learning services. It also features links to FAO's e-learning resources. Despite its potential as a convenient platform for all FAO CD products, the portal, which is still under development, needs considerably more work to fulfil its mandate. For example, the portal's search engine malfunctions and many of FAO's best CD resources are on separate sites, requiring users to click numerous times in order to reach the information they seek. In order for the portal to be more comprehensive and search efforts less time-consuming, the website should be linked to the document repository of FAO's David Lubin Library.

199. The portal could benefit from featuring links to some of the best international research and networks on CD, such as the research of the European Centre for Development Policy Management (www.ecdpm.org) and the network Capacity.org (www.capacity.org/). The portal might also be enhanced through partnerships with African CD organisations and networks, such as FARA, ASARECA, ANAFE and RUFORUM.

V. Use of Normative CD Products

200. The utility and impact of FAO's normative products for CD are difficult to determine because the Organization collects little data on use and does little evaluation of the same. Evaluation team visits to case-study countries noted that the distribution and uptake of FAO's products are weak. Few interlocutors knew how to access FAO materials and even fewer spent time surfing for information. In other cases, the use of FAO's materials may be limited for reasons related to the enabling environment, such as limited incentives, lack of certification associated with training courses and, in particular, lack of follow-up on the part of FAO.

201. High cost, poor connectivity and low bandwidth limit uptake. However, increasingly, many more stakeholders have access to e-mail. Most interlocutors indicated that they would welcome being part of dedicated list-serves that provide abstracts and other files for reading off-

⁸⁶ The Series is available on the CB Portal. It is an inter-departmental effort to document FAO good practices on capacity development and analysis of the critical success factors.

line. Several research organisations, universities and government departments indicated a willingness to identify participants for target lists and to host or facilitate such services.⁸⁷ Most indicated that the best use of materials occurred when the products were introduced at workshops with regular contact and updating thereafter.

202. Although the number of products examined was small, the evaluation gathered sufficient evidence to conclude that the quality of FAO's products varies considerably. Some set the gold standard; others leave room for improvement, most often in relation to incorporating gender concerns. The volume of materials produced over the past seven or eight years likely outstrips that of all other UN organisations. While this is commendable, the evaluation suggests the need for greater emphasis on distribution and consistency in quality. There is no point in producing materials which cannot be physically or cognitively accessed.

203. There are major gaps in the distribution and uptake of normative CD products in Africa. FAO relies too much on Internet distribution, when access and bandwidth are problematic in much of Africa. The Organization needs to take into account the reality of the African context. It needs to employ other means of distribution and invest more in face-to-face CD on the ground with a variety of partners who have more effective reach through their membership. Distribution of printed materials is costly, but a range of appropriate local partners can considerably reduce those costs.

FAO's Ability to Deliver CD

W. Overall Findings

204. The evaluation found that FAO has insufficient capacity in Africa to engage meaningfully in the increasingly country-focussed decisions on CD.

205. The evaluation found that the constraints on capacity arise from a number of factors, including the following:

- the increasing demand on country offices to coordinate development assistance and to support governments' lead role;⁸⁸
- the different understandings of CD across the Organization and of FAO's role in it;
- inadequate institutional and administrative arrangements, including insufficient horizontal and vertical coordination within the Organization and difficulties in accessing FAO technical expertise and knowledge products;
- inadequate human resources to meet demands and weak operational capacities, especially in Regional and Sub-regional Offices and country offices; and
- inappropriate timeframes and regulations governing projects.

X. Understanding CD and FAO's Role in It

206. CD is a core function of FAO but discussions with interlocutors indicated that CD is not yet well integrated into all its work; nor is it considered a core function by all. The Paris Declaration and Accra Agenda for Action call on development agencies to facilitate nationally-led processes and the strengthening of endogenous capacities. This involves a change in FAO's understanding of, and approach to, CD. The evaluation team found that few FAO staff understood CD as a multidimensional concept. The meta-synthesis indicated a tendency on the part of many to equate CD with skill enhancement, to the exclusion of the wider organisational context and enabling environment. The consequences of this narrow understanding are highlighted in a recent evaluation as follows:

⁸⁷ The FANPANR Climate Change listserv was cited as an excellent example.

⁸⁸ As outlined in the section on changing environment, there are many clusters and working groups that FAO is expected to participate in and a number where its leadership is expected.

[...] a number of training efforts were performed in a void as the trainees did not return to a work place where they could put their new skills to use. It has taken some time to recognise the importance of capacity building (in terms of training and hardware) at state level, but the necessary corrections have now been put in place.⁸⁹

207. This lack of clarity over what constitutes CD was also evident from the inconsistent use of CD terminology in documents and reports. In some instances, FAO staff used CD interchangeably with training.

208. FAO's new strategy on CD recognises that FAO needs to work more systematically across the three dimensions of CD. FAO also needs to provide a clearer perspective for staff on how to enhance soft skills, strengthen organisational effectiveness and influence the enabling environment. It needs to clarify that technical staff are not required to become experts in these fields, but rather to understand how these skills can be developed by the mode of approach used, and, when it is appropriate, to partner to achieve the best effects.

209. The new strategy provides a way forward but needs to be clearly interpreted for non-specialists in CD and disseminated throughout the Organization. Interviews conducted for the evaluation proved that FAO should more systematically involve staff from HQ and the field in fine-tuning the strategy and disseminating it widely. Ongoing consultations by FAO's Outreach and Capacity Building branch (KCEF) are a step in the right direction but need to be taken further to ensure ownership and use of the strategy.

210. Many interlocutors requested that FAO clarify its approach to CD and that FAO officers, particularly those in Regional, Sub-regional and country offices, be given new tools and clear direction as to how CD should be incorporated into their programmes.

211. The evaluation team found that FAO staff have received little recognition for their work in CD. Furthermore, some expressed concern regarding how CD will work and can be accounted for in FAO's new results-based framework. Because CD is a process and produces few immediately measurable outputs, there is a risk that CD work will be marginalised if these aspects of CD are not taken into account.

212. Of the 40 post descriptions the evaluation team reviewed, only 19 included CD among the duties of technical officers. None, except the description for Investment Officers in the Sub-regional Offices, indicated CD experience as a selection criterion. Nor did CD experience appear to feature prominently in the ToRs of consultants.

Y. Institutional and Administrative Arrangements to Deliver CD

213. FAO country offices are at the forefront of FAO's delivery of CD. The Sub-regional Offices are the first port of call for providing support to country offices in delivering CD efficiently and effectively.

214. Strengthening decentralization is a major component of FAO reform.⁹⁰ The Regional Office (RAF), working with Sub-regional Offices, is progressively taking on new responsibilities. The decentralized offices will be expected to play a greater role in strategic planning and priority-setting at corporate and strategic levels and to support the development of NMTPFs and the identification of sub-regional priorities.

⁸⁹ Mid-Term Evaluation of the Sudan Institutional Capacity programme: Food Security Information for Action (SIFSIA) – OSRO/SUD/620/MUL – June 2009.

⁹⁰ Sub-regional Offices for Eastern Africa (SFE), Central Africa (SFC) and West Africa (SFW) have only recently been established and their staffing is incomplete.

215. The evaluation team visited FAO's Regional and Sub-regional Offices for Africa and attempted to assess their ability to perform their enhanced roles against the above background.

Regional and Sub-regional Offices

216. Over the period of the evaluation, the RAF and the SFW have suffered from either none or high turnover in leadership. It is only in 2009 that the heads of these offices have been appointed. With eight vacant professional posts, it may be difficult for the RAF and the SFW to respond to increasing demands. In these offices, the evaluation noted little focus on CD and problems with staff morale, motivation and working conditions. There appeared to be little cohesion among work teams and officers were individually responsible for achieving their work objectives. There did not seem to be a commitment to CD nor to an understanding of the important role technical officers (TOs) have in this regard. With a few notable exceptions, these officers viewed their role primarily as responding to requests from countries to provide specific technical advice.

217. The physical infrastructure in the Regional and Sub-regional Offices is not conducive to team work. It appeared that neither the Country Office in Ghana nor the SFW were benefiting from being located with the RAF. There was little contact between SFW and regional TOs, with some exceptions. Most regional TOs appeared to be more involved with initiatives outside Ghana and outside SFW. The evaluation team speculated as to whether SFW might be more appropriately located in Dakar, along with many of the other UN and Regional Offices.

218. Many TOs felt disconnected from their parent technical divisions. There were notable exceptions, including the Plant Production and Protection Division (AGP) which had actively engaged its field officers in developing their strategy on CD, soliciting their input and providing them with regular feedback on technical and administrative issues. In the Regional and most Sub-regional Offices, new staff are seldom given an orientation and links into headquarters are unclear and often depend on personal relationships. One TO indicated that he kept links with HQ active by designing projects to cover costs of HQ staff expertise. The poor linkages, and in particular the lack of clear focal points, was highlighted when some Emergency Programme officers indicated that they had so few entry points to FAO expertise and knowledge products that they often turned to other agencies for help. This also highlighted the problems of access to expertise and knowledge raised by non-FAO stakeholders. Regional and sub-regional officers felt isolated from new developments in their fields and from the retooling opportunities available to HQ staff. Some felt that they had insufficient exposure and training on emerging and cross-cutting issues.

219. The evaluation found that the standard mix of technical skills at the Sub-regional Offices was not well matched with available resources and needs. Some SRO managers raised this concern. For example, SFC requires more support on forestry and environment issues with less on livestock; SFS indicated the need for an emphasis on policy and food security. The evaluation team noted that the Immediate Plan of Action provides for a review of the initial round of skill mix in the context of the Programme of Work and Budget for 2010-2011. Officers considered it important to provide more access to skills related to interdisciplinary and holistic approaches, with more emphasis on the cross-cutting and emerging skills. There was an expressed need for staff training to work in multidisciplinary teams. Some considered it important for TOs to have more field experience and to be sensitized to the importance of assessing capacity needs when providing TA.

220. At both sub-regional and country levels, there needs to be much closer liaison between the emergency and regular programmes, especially in SFS. Good effort was being made in SFE for One-FAO with the regular programme and the emergency unit collaborating in the delivery of services. The evaluation found that SFE was set up to engender a multi-disciplinary team approach and that managers were taking active measures, like those at SFC, to motivate and train their staff.

221. The evaluation found little acknowledgement of the important role of knowledge dissemination as part of CD. Only SFE was seriously engaged in efforts to ensure its leadership in making FAO's normative products widely available and accessible. This was also true at the country level except in Zimbabwe.⁹¹ Most offices did not appear to have a strategy for communication and many had closed their library.⁹²

Country offices

222. The evaluation found inadequate capacity to fulfil the demands required of FAO, even in countries with strong representation, as in Tanzania. This is a major constraint in the countries where UN agencies have to engage with government in a common effort.

223. FAO country offices have insufficient HR capacity to engage effectively in intensive policy dialogue. While countries draw on the capacity of the Regional and Sub-regional Offices, many staff in country offices noted that expertise was not always available. They stressed the need to have senior experts from FAO available at the country level to engage in the policy dialogue.

224. The evaluation noted that the situation for taking up that role was better in those countries where there is an active Emergency Programme that provides additional human and financial resources. The strong coordination role of TCE in Zimbabwe has gained it widespread recognition amongst the donor community and development partners. It is an excellent example of how FAO can provide platforms for effective engagement, enhancing the capacity in the enabling environment to deliver services under difficult circumstances. In Zimbabwe, FAO plays an active networking and leadership role in strengthening the capacity of civil society, the public service and the private sector through the Agricultural Working Group. In Uganda, TCE and the FAOR collaborate closely, and the Organization is active in, and well-respected for, its role in leading the Food Security Cluster and in working with other UN agencies and partners. However, as the office and development partners noted, FAO is constrained by a lack of capacity to fully represent the Organization in every important forum.

225. Even where FAO is active, partners perceive the FAOR as having limited decision-making power. In some of the countries where the FAOR was either too busy, or did not have the requisite profile⁹³ to take the lead, the assistant FAOR was sometimes not the appropriate person to assume this role.

226. The evaluation team noted the lack of FAO capacity in all the countries visited. In some countries, FAO is only marginally represented in multidonor groups and is not assuming a leadership role to the extent that it should.⁹⁴ Given the increasing tendency for decisions to be taken in-country, this is likely to have negative repercussions.

Z. Project Modalities

227. Most CD activities at the country level are carried out through projects.

228. As noted earlier, the timeframe of projects is usually too short to achieve CD objectives. The inadequate time available for projects, particularly if logistics create delays, was one of the issues most highlighted by implementing partners and beneficiaries (Annex 11). The ability to deliver CD is severely impacted when there is inadequate time for projects. The process of

⁹¹ In Zimbabwe, the monthly newsletter distributed widely by FAO was an excellent mechanism for bringing attention to new normative products.

⁹² There were few documents after 2003 available in any of the libraries visited with the exception of the SFE. Where the library had been relocated to a government institution or university, no effort had been made to ensure that there was a continuous flow of information and a capacity to manage the collection.

⁹³ A good understanding of FAO and of Africa.

⁹⁴ Malawi was particularly challenged in this respect and given its experimental engagement in One-UN, the strong presence of donors in the country, and the lack of capacity within the country, FAO's lack of presence is keenly felt.

engagement is particularly important to both the effectiveness and sustainability of interventions. Those preparing project proposals frequently overstate what can be reasonably achieved in the allotted time in order to meet the criteria for acceptance. Project implementation is often stalled owing to delays in financial and administrative procedures, further reducing the time available for implementation. CD cannot be rushed. It requires time-consuming participatory engagement.

229. Some of the administrative restrictions on TCPs pose problems for CD. Of particular concern were the TCP restrictions that limit follow-up. As indicated earlier, insufficient follow-up was often the main reason for weak or unsustainable results. Furthermore, the common ceiling for all TCP projects fails to account for disparities with respect to the size of the country, its population, infrastructure and institutional circumstances, all of which affects project design and implementation processes.⁹⁵

230. Implementing partners operating on very short Letters of Agreement are at a particular disadvantage with respect to CD initiatives. It is impossible to retain staff in situations where, for example, there may be a 2-to-5-month delay in obtaining subsequent agreements. Partners in Uganda complained of this regulation and its deleterious effects.

231. The evaluators found that CD as a component requirement of TCP projects was too often restricted to the training of individuals, to the neglect of other equally or more important dimensions of capacity.

Conclusions

General overview

232. The Evaluation has dealt with CD, a subject-matter that is high on the Agenda for Africa and is widely acknowledged as critically important for the achievement of the three Global Goals and the MDGs. The evaluation began with ambitious terms of reference – to assess FAO's performance in Africa with respect to the relevance, efficiency, effectiveness and sustainability of its CD initiatives, and to answer a number of challenging questions regarding the Organization's approach to CD. Although the evaluation cannot be definitive in all aspects of its mandate, it has gathered sufficient information to form conclusions about FAO's performance in Africa and to suggest ways to guide the Organization's future CD work.

233. The Evaluation found FAO's CD performance in Africa has been mixed. Most interventions are relevant, many have been effective, but few have been sustainable. In general, they have been of high quality and have exploited FAO's comparative advantages with respect to its technical competence and its role as an honest broker. While the evaluation has documented some reports of operational delays, FAO's CD initiatives in Africa have, as a whole, been reasonably efficient.

234. The Evaluation noted a number of successes, principally where FAO had engaged continuously over time and across all three dimensions, most obviously in plant protection, statistics and increasingly in TADs. This continuous engagement over a long period, across dimensions, allowed for the building of a critical mass of skills, institutional memory and the policies, norms, values and structures to support the work. FAO has also achieved widely recognised success in integrating CD into its pilot projects testing new technologies using effective CD approaches such as FFS. In a few countries, FAO also showed strong leadership in national agricultural policy and development agenda as a facilitator between government, donors, the private sector and civil society organisations. There have also been some good examples of policy assistance which has effectively and sustainably strengthened policy analysis and implementation capacity in Burkina Faso, Mozambique and Zanzibar among others.

⁹⁵ It was pointed out that the ceiling is the same for Nigeria and for Cape Verde Islands.

235. However, despite many effective and relevant interventions, the Evaluation found that FAO CD activities are, for the most part, unsustainable. There is very little emphasis given to sustainability and too much given to immediate results and outputs. This is evident in the project timeframes and modalities; the lack of understanding by FAO staff of the importance of process to CD; lack of focus on institutionalising CD activities and building political will to sustain them; and also to the limited motivation and opportunity for follow-up and for monitoring and evaluation by FAO staff.

236. Although the Evaluation noted some stellar examples of FAO's CD initiatives at the organisational and policy/enabling environment levels, the bulk of its efforts have been directed at individuals, contrary to lessons from the development community which stress the need for attention at all three levels and, in particular, to the formal and informal systems, norms and values that shape individual and organisational behaviour. Consistent with this, the Evaluation concludes that much of FAO's most effective CD work in Africa has occurred when the Organization has intervened over a long period of time and across all three capacity dimensions.

237. FAO produces much valuable and relevant knowledge as an important contribution to CD but its uptake and use in Africa is limited. Africa is constrained by poor communications infrastructure, which means that additional investment, or partnering, is required to ensure wider access to FAO's normative products. This may also involve the more selective production of materials in order to ensure that resources are available for effective distribution. There is no point in producing materials which do not reach their intended audience.

238. The Evaluation found that the Regional and Sub-regional Offices need their own capacities strengthened, more resources and better connectivity to expertise in headquarters in order to lead capacity development in Africa. At country level, FAO lacks the capacity to take its expected role in the many committees established to determine priorities, coordinate donor activity and to facilitate interactions between government and donors and with other stakeholders. The Evaluation considers that FAO will lose both relevance and opportunities unless it is able to significantly strengthen effective capacity in Africa.

239. To help address capacity constraints in implementing projects and in dealing with the emerging needs of decentralised systems, FAO needs to strengthen endogenous capacity, and be encouraged to partner more effectively. Setting priorities for CD within a strategic framework such as the NMTPF should take into account the context of the country, FAO's own comparative advantage to address national needs and the potential for partnering with local, regional and international agencies.

240. Furthermore, FAO has limited resources and needs to take the cost implications into consideration when taking on board a more sustainable and effective approach to capacity development. If enhancing Africa's capacity to improve sustainable livelihoods is the core function of the Organization, then it is important that due recognition be given to CD in budgeting, staff work programmes and assessments. Where additional resources are not available, the Evaluation considers that it may be necessary for FAO to reduce the number of projects and programmes to ensure that it has the human and financial resources to make sustainable CD interventions in selected areas. FAO can also work more in partnerships to share some of the costs involved in implementation and to increase its outreach. It can continue to move away from direct implementation to more facilitation and mentoring of local implementers. FAO is under increasing pressure to address new areas. Many of these are cross-cutting and require more interdisciplinary and holistic approaches. For some, existing staff can be retooled (climate change, land leases, soft skills, etc.); for others, some additional investment and partnering will be necessary (addressing the full value chain, gender, etc.) and for still others, working closely with partners is the most relevant option (management and accounting skills, CD for the frontline, etc.).

241. This Evaluation has shown that the more successful modalities for CD intervention are where the emphasis is on the way FAO has engaged rather than on the production of outputs. The

Evaluation has distilled the factors that have led to sustainable and effective CD and to the changing climate for development. It has highlighted the challenges confronting FAO as a result of the Accra Agenda for Action, increased in-country collaboration and decision-making by donors, as well as implications of increased decentralisation and commercialisation. FAO needs to take these under advisement when making decisions on resource allocation, establishing priorities and strategies and motivating staff so that it can be at the forefront of strengthening capacity to deliver on the MDGs.

242. In order to achieve the critical mass needed to strengthen the capacity of African organisations and institutions to develop more effective agricultural and natural resource management systems that keep pace with rapidly changing technology, climate change and the vagaries of international markets, FAO, along with other development agencies, has to invest more and change its approach to CD and be accountable for it.

Specific conclusions leading to recommendations

Mainstreaming CD (*Recommendations 1 and 2*)

243. Capacity Development is a core function of the Organization and is recognised as a key constraint to effective development in Africa by the international community. The Strategic Framework 2010-2019 includes CD as a core function and some of the organisational results outlined in the Strategic Objectives include CD. The Evaluation considers that CD needs greater prominence in the FAO Strategic Framework. The title of Core Function (e) should be worded to reflect that CD is more than the transfer of technology. In addition, CD should be more clearly articulated within the organisational results of all the Strategic Objectives. The Evaluation notes the need for FAO to address the potential contradictions in a result-based performance system that relies heavily on outputs in a specified timeframe, while CD is a process reflecting engagement over time. The Evaluation considers that greater recognition needs to be given to the importance of including capacity strengthening into all FAO work in Africa. Given the importance of CD, it may be appropriate to review whether the FAO Programme Committee, the Regional Conferences and the FAO Governing Bodies are sufficiently involved in providing political oversight over FAO's CD agenda.

244. Furthermore, it is important that there is a common understanding of what capacity development means. The Evaluation found that there is no common vision and definition for capacity development within the Organization. The Organization's new CD strategy articulates the main issues. Yet, it will entail a great deal of work to raise awareness and implement the measures required to ensure that CD is integral to FAO's work throughout Africa.

245. Given the differing interpretations of what constitutes capacity development across the Organization, as well as differing perspectives on the role of FAO in developing capacity, it is important that the new Capacity Development Strategy be widely shared and debated and a common understanding accepted. The Evaluation found that many staff recognise the importance of capacity development as central to FAO's mandate, but that for most staff, this means developing individual capacities through training. A better understanding of what constitutes good practice for CD, of how to enhance soft skills, of organisational strengthening and of how to influence the enabling environment is required.

246. Overall, FAO needs to raise the profile and understanding of CD in the Organization. CD needs to be the focus of most, if not all, of FAO activities including assembly and provision of information, support to international instruments, norms and standards, policy advice, advocacy, the formation and dissemination of knowledge products, technology development and transfer, and networking. This does not mean that all activities should have a specific training component, but rather that all activities and products take into account engagement in ways that best strengthen the capacity of clients. At country level, CD needs to be explicitly incorporated into the NMTPF so that there is a more consistent, relevant and coordinated approach to capacity development within each country.

The Effectiveness and Sustainability of Initiatives (*Recommendations 2, 3 and 4*)

247. This evaluation shows that FAO needs to continue to emphasise participative CD modalities. Lessons from this evaluation highlighted that the following principles need to be more consistently incorporated into the FAO approach to CD: with regard to individual training, engaging the employer organisations early in project design to ensure strategies for using the new skills of the trainees; using a participative approach with beneficiaries so that they are actively engaged in design and implementation; continuously interacting with implementing agencies and ensuring adequate participation of stakeholders all along the process; using local implementers where possible (even though it may initially require additional resources); learning by doing; facilitating and mentoring rather than simply transferring skills; emphasising soft skills by providing opportunities to participate in and take responsibility for the projects; provide opportunities to exchange ideas and developing networks; and, finally and most importantly, following up on the interventions through on-going engagement, support and the provision of active contact points.

248. These were all shown to contribute to more effective and sustainable capacity development. FAO staff need to recognise the importance of the process rather than outputs in strengthening capacity and be prepared to invest a significant proportion of resources in the process. They need to be encouraged and motivated to incorporate these and other recognised good practices more systematically into their approaches. At the same time, they need to be encouraged to form partnerships with other agencies to address areas for which they have less relative advantage.

249. The Evaluation has also noted common shortcomings hampering effectiveness, namely: weak CD needs assessments; lack of baseline and monitoring data; limited access/reference to many of FAO's excellent normative products; weak integration of gender concerns; and insufficient attention to documenting and disseminating successful interventions and lessons.

250. The Evaluation has also found numerous challenges for FAO in achieving more sustainable CD initiatives. The most common among them relate to: the lack of motivation for staff to design projects using modalities that emphasise the process of learning and developing capacities, which is time-consuming even for FAO staff to plan; project timeframes that do not take into account the iterative nature of effective CD; cumbersome project administrative procedures; difficulties in overcoming the weak ownership of CD interventions at the local level and/or lack of political will at national level; and a lack of follow-up and follow-through to ensure that capacities once developed are utilized, institutionalised, scaled out and sustained.

251. Addressing the inadequacy of the current project modalities (especially under the TCP) to enable more long-term and sustainable CD work requires restructuring and a reform of the TCP and PPRC⁹⁶ criteria. Addressing the other issues requires providing staff with guidance on how to engage in project activities in ways that encourage effective and sustainable CD and with the motivation/incentives to follow up their activities.

Partnerships (*Recommendation 5*)

252. The Evaluation noted that the CD environment in Africa is dynamic and variegated, while FAO's approach to CD has often been uniform and overly prescriptive. As more skilled individuals and organisations emerge in Africa, FAO's role needs to shift from implementing CD directly on its own to supporting CD in partnership with others, as stipulated in the new CD strategy. The need for a strengthened partnership approach is underscored by the fact that there are many new capacity demands in Africa, such as those related to management, marketing and advocacy. There are also capacity demands created at sub-national levels, as a result of government decentralization and in areas that affect agriculture and food security but for which FAO has neither the mandate nor the capacity to take the lead.

⁹⁶ FAO Programme and Project Review Committee.

253. Also changing is the way development organisations do their business. As more and more CD is planned and coordinated under multi-donor and One UN mechanisms, FAO will face some difficult choices owing to its limited capacity in many African countries. As the new CD strategy suggests, it will need to strengthen its own capacities, find niches based on its distinct comparative advantages and make a concerted effort to partner with others.

254. The Evaluation has provided evidence of the need for, and efficacy of, partnerships for CD. FAO needs to partner with **regional organisations** to leverage their platform and to assist them in developing their capacity. Partnering requires high up-front transaction costs in which staff may initially be reluctant to invest, since they are under pressure to produce results over the short term. However, these costs are an investment in CD for Africa and in more effective future partnerships for FAO.

255. To address severe capacity constraints at the local level and complementing FAO's work in a holistic approach and for policy implementation in countries that are decentralization and given that FAO has limited capacity for engaging on the frontline, strengthening capacity of **local implementing partners** is particularly important.

256. FAO is currently working with a number of private companies and NGOs to implement projects and is using local consultants. The Evaluation found that closer liaison and mentoring and a move towards greater partnering would help to further strengthen endogenous capacity. In some countries, there were a range of national farmers', commodity, traders' or exporters' associations which have wide reach and the potential and desire to partner with FAO. The Evaluation considered this to be an area which FAO should pursue more vigorously.

257. The Evaluation endorses the IEE recommendation of much closer collaboration by FAO with **universities and national and regional research institutes**. FAO should investigate how it could more effectively partner with these institutions. There are interesting opportunities to be explored such as partially seconding faculty to serve on FAO-led projects and committees to provide a more structured, reliable and institutionalised access to these human resources than the current system of *ad hoc* consultancies. These institutions, together with various CSOs (including national farmers associations) could also be useful partners in the dissemination of FAO normative products and FAO could provide lectures from visiting technical staff to universities.

Developing Capacity for Policy Analysis, Formulation and Implementation (*Recommendation 6*)

258. FAO was found to have been effective in assisting countries in policy formulation but less successful in enhancing local capacities to analyse and formulate policies. It is important that policy assistance incorporate CD specifically as its main objective to ensure that countries become more effective at developing their own policies. There was also a strongly identified need for FAO to provide much more CD for policy implementation. This involves more interaction at the frontline where capacities are weak and calls for the identification/mapping of all the stakeholders (and their CD needs) involved in the implementation.

259. FAO is engaged in ensuring that policies address the MDGs and improve sustainable livelihoods. The Evaluation found that most FAO policy assistance was taking this into account with its focus on food security policies. At the same time, FAO should assist countries to anticipate change and analyze the implications of new trends. The Evaluation recognized that, in the changing landscape, FAO also needs to develop capacity for policy formulation across the value chain, on climate change mitigation, irrigation (with policies that are sustainable and relevant to smallholders), and help countries ensure that externalities and local communities are considered when determining land leases.

Documenting successful innovation and better dissemination of knowledge products (*Recommendations 7 and 8*)

260. The widespread calls by outside agencies for documentation on FFS led the Evaluation to conclude that it is important for FAO to document successful innovations. If initiatives are to be

scaled-up by other agencies, it is particularly important that the principles be clearly articulated in a set of generic guidelines to avoid distortion of the concept. These guidelines should demonstrate the principles through examples that show the broad range of applicability and the importance of flexibility. CountrySTAT, Rural Knowledge Networks, Computerization for Cooperatives, Conservation Agriculture, the mapping and analytical techniques developed for the Nile Basin Initiative are other examples. The Evaluation also found that providing exposure to success stories is important to build political will, indirectly assist beneficiaries to access further funding, and increase opportunities for partnerships and scaling up.

261. The Evaluation noted serious shortcomings with regard to the access and use of FAO's normative products in Africa. A much more effective dissemination and communication strategy needs to be developed to ensure that significantly more focus is given to making the normative products available to a wide range of African stakeholders. FAO currently makes limited effort to track readership and use. Investing heavily in producing normative products is wasted unless it reaches the target audiences. FAO also needs to ensure that its knowledge products are used in FAO interventions, workshops and trainings by providing consultants with access.

262. While knowledge dissemination is costly, it is as important as the generation of normative products. To reduce some of the distribution costs FAO needs to partner with universities, government, private sector and NGOs, research and documentation centres which can make available both hard and soft copies of their normative products. It can also work with these agencies to use list-serves to provide their members with information on new materials and offer options to order copies by email that enable off-line downloads for those with limited internet access.

Increased Investment in FAO Capacity in Africa (*Recommendation 9*)

263. The Evaluation found that there was a significant lack of capacity in most of the country, Sub-regional and Regional Offices. The Evaluation noted that the lack of human and financial resources and the limited authority of the decentralised officers impede their ability to effectively develop capacity in Africa. The Evaluation noted that there is an urgent need to ensure that FAO staff in Africa are strengthened in number, are much better linked to headquarters, that they are better motivated and better prepared, and that they receive regular training and retooling to ensure that they can be at the forefront of their fields in developing capacities in Africa. In addition to investment in training, motivating and reinforcing links with HQ, the Evaluation found that greater cognisance of sub-regional capacity constraints should be considered in the allocation of Technical Officers. There was a call to ensure that every office had one or more TOs with skills in cross-cutting and inter-disciplinary approaches to assist in the development of the multi-disciplinary teams.

264. In the country offices, as outlined in the Findings, the capacity is mixed but in all cases the skills and resources were not adequate for the important role FAO has in developing capacity to address the intractable poverty and agricultural development issues. There are significant demands in some countries from both governments and development partners for FAO to play a greater role in facilitating coordination working groups. FAO has been successful in participating actively in some, primarily those where FAO Offices have the additional manpower, motivation and resources that come with Emergency work. FAO needs to recognise the situation and put in place a strategy that takes into account its financial and human resource constraints but which will assure FAO, at least in some countries, the visibility and funding opportunities that sustained engagement can bring.

265. Capacity development is a process and the country offices will be required to assist in the continued engagement of projects with FAO even after project completion. They will need to be active in providing links between stakeholders and FAO expertise and they will need to be involved in anticipating the changes required in CD for that country. This means that to be effective, country offices need to be significantly strengthened. Resources are limited and so it may be appropriate for human and financial resource to be more concentrated in fewer countries.

266. One suggestion is that FAO be selective in strengthening country offices where it is most needed with respect to food security and poverty indicators and where agriculture, forestry and fisheries play an important role in the economy. In addition, FAO needs to take into consideration the opportunities and responsibilities in countries working towards One UN.

267. Strategies to supplement human resources at country level need to ensure that they do not undermine local capacity. The SFE approach of using seconded nationals to primarily address issues within the host country, and spend only a limited time on regional issues, is a good strategy to strengthen capacity of the host country, SFE and the individuals concerned. It is also important that all supplementary volunteers have an understanding of the context they are working in. The evaluation found only limited, and relatively unsuccessful, south-south engagement. The Evaluation did see potential for improving human resources within countries and the region through much closer engagement of FAO with national and regional universities and research institutes, as outlined above under Partnerships.

268. There was strong feedback through national plans and interviews for FAO to provide more CD on marketing, value addition and trade. The countries are emphasizing commercialization. FAO will need to consider its comparative advantage and priorities and develop a strategy with partners that will address the emerging CD needs of African countries.

269. Finally, it is important for the African offices to be directly involved in setting the priorities for CD. It is suggested that the Regional Conferences play a role in examining and building consensus on CD priorities. These could then be fed into the country discussions and NMTPFs which would also be aligned with the UNDAF process in the country. The Regional Conferences could then be more involved in providing oversight to FAO's CD Agenda.

270. The recommendations which follow are forward-looking and aimed at assisting FAO towards the realization of its new CD strategy. They are also intended to complement the Agenda for Corporate Action 2009-2011 as proposed in FAO's new CD strategy and are in line with the general direction of the IPA-driven reform agenda.

Recommendations

AA. Mainstreaming CD

271. **Recommendation 1:** It is recommended that the Inter-departmental Working Group (IDWG) on Capacity Building take steps to ensure that FAO staff and partners have a common conceptual understanding of CD and FAO's role in it. This will, *inter alia*, require the IDWG to:

- clarify for staff throughout the Organization what is meant by CD and what approach FAO will take in developing, monitoring and evaluating it;
- reassess the role of the Programme Committee, the Regional Conferences and the FAO's Governing Bodies in providing political oversight over the CD agenda;
- disseminate the corporate strategy widely within the Organization;
- provide short, jargon-free briefs outlining the key principles and examples of how these can be applied in the three CD dimensions, in particular, with respect to improving soft skills, strengthening organisations, enhancing the enabling environment and contributing to improving functional capacities;
- provide training in CD for all staff, especially those on the frontline in decentralized offices; and
- develop strategies in all sectors for CD based on needs assessments that include actionable guidelines.

272. **Recommendation 2:** It is recommended that senior management, under the guidance of the IDWG, incorporate CD into the mandates, work programmes and post descriptions of all relevant programming staff.

273. Suggested in the implementation of this recommendation are:

- the systematic inclusion of CD into the duties of all relevant technical officers throughout the Organization. CD should be included in their work programmes and performance appraisals;
- minimum levels of CD field experience and training to provide CD services as a requirement for posts in Regional and Sub-regional Offices;
- the provision of incentives to encourage staff to engage in, and learn from, CD through advocacy and the incorporation of CD into responsibilities, work programmes and performance appraisals;
- the requirement for staff to dedicate time to follow up on CD initiatives after projects end in order to institutionalise and upscale their benefits wherever possible; and
- the establishment and promotion of networks and CD contact points so that FAO staff in the field and other stakeholders can more easily access FAO's CD expertise and knowledge.

BB. Sustainability and Effectiveness of FAO CD Initiatives

274. **Recommendation 3:** It is recommended that senior management, with the guidance of the IDWG, review and, where necessary, revise FAO systems to improve the effectiveness and sustainability of CD initiatives.

275. Bearing in mind the need for flexibility as each CD situation is different, this recommendation would entail:

- ensuring, wherever possible, that the right resources - people, funding and administrative supports - are in place to allow for CD engagement for long periods of time until needed changes are institutionalised and successful pilot initiatives are scaled out;
- ensuring that FAO's work modalities and projects are sufficiently flexible to allow for iterative CD programming featuring experimentation, monitoring and learning; this could involve restructuring TCP limitations, modalities and criteria - for example, increasing the funding ceilings for CD work in larger countries; changing TCP rules so that TCPs can be used for follow-up, and ensuring that there is adequate follow-up to all TCPs;
- ensuring the application of sound monitoring, evaluation and reporting practices in a way that enables them to form a part of the CD and that encourages an adaptive management approach and experimentation; and
- reviewing the results-based framework, taking into account the long-term nature of CD and the need to provide for an iterative process.⁹⁷

276. **Recommendation 4:** It is recommended that the IDWG develop, and senior management implement, guidelines for projects and programmes that emphasise effective CD practices, such as participatory approaches that build ownership, sustainability and partnerships.

277. The guidelines should, for example, cover the following critical elements:

- conducting capacity needs assessments as a first step in project design;
- understanding the organisational and institutional context, including the various factors in the enabling environment that may influence individual and organisational behaviour;
- systematic consideration for gender aspects in all stages of project and programme design and implementation, not limiting it to the equal participation of women into project activities;
- encouraging beneficiary and other stakeholders to participate in the design and implementation of projects, particularly those agencies responsible for post-project support;
- encouraging interdisciplinary and internally coordinated approaches to the design and implementation of CD projects and programmes;

⁹⁷ "Improving the Results of Learning for Capacity Building" has some useful proposals for more CD relevant assessment systems <http://capacitydevelopment.ning.com/page/presentations-from-june-2009>

- using implementation strategies that systematically make maximum use of local experts and institutions, e.g. farmers' associations, universities and research institutes;⁹⁸ and
- providing mentoring, monitoring, evaluation and exit strategies that take into account the iterative nature of successful CD.

278. **Recommendation 5:** It is recommended that FAO senior management ensure that staff, in particular those in decentralized offices and FAO Representatives, place increased emphasis on partnerships in their CD activities in Africa.

279. Implementing this recommendation could entail:

- recognising and budgeting for the transaction costs of establishing these partnerships;
- developing guidelines to provide staff with more information on opportunities and mechanisms for partnering; and
- carrying out sub-regional and country assessments of the opportunities for partnering at all levels.

CC. Developing Capacity for Policy Analysis, Formulation and Implementation

280. Although FAO has generally been effective assisting African countries with policy formulation, it has been less successful strengthening local capacities for policy analysis and implementation.

281. **Recommendation 6:** It is recommended that FAO staff place increased emphasis on facilitating the development of national capacity for policy analysis and implementation.

282. Implementing this recommendation could entail:

- ensuring that counterparts are closely involved in policy formulation and are provided with opportunities to improve analytical skills. CD should be in the terms of reference of any consultants hired to provide policy support in countries to ensure that they do not only focus on producing policy outputs;
- ensuring that all policy assistance includes sufficient follow-up and includes advocacy for implementation and CD for developing operational plans to implement policies and strategies;
- finding ways, including through partnerships with local actors, to support CD at sub-national level in countries that are decentralizing; and
- facilitating mechanisms for country, regional and HQ staff to identify and anticipate emerging policy needs.

DD. Documenting and Promoting Successful Innovations

283. **Recommendation 7:** It is recommended that FAO staff give priority to, and improve, the documentation and dissemination of successful CD initiatives, methods and normative products.

284. Implementing this recommendation should include:

- documenting, showcasing and disseminating successful case studies widely to development partners, government agencies, national producer and distributor organisations, universities and research organisations, NGOs and CBOs;
- documenting and disseminating the core principles of FAO CD approaches; in particular those which are, or could be, taken up widely by other agencies. Generic guidelines should be made available in different formats relevant for a range of audiences;

⁹⁸ FAO needs to build up its database of relevant institutions and individuals and engage with those that have some skills and potential to be effective partners.

- establishing an independent review of FFS which is becoming a hallmark of FAO CD product with a view to perhaps establishing a centre of excellence to provide support for FFS initiatives and ensure high standards; and
- encouraging more inter-departmental, collaborative learning and active participation in regional and international CD networks.

EE. Access to Knowledge as a Key Component of Capacity

285. **Recommendation 8:** It is recommended that FAO senior management take immediate steps to improve the distribution and uptake of FAO's products for CD in Africa.

286. Possible steps include:

- developing communication and distribution plans for key products tailored to varied African contexts;
- overcoming or compensating for connectivity problems in many parts of Africa by providing alternative access for low bandwidth and by disseminating CD-ROM and printed materials;
- ensuring that all divisions and the central distribution centre provide materials to partners and document centres in Africa;
- systematically tracking the distribution and use of materials;
- making FAO's normative products available to stakeholders, including outside organisations, consultants and service providers;
- strengthening library services in decentralized offices, including the establishment of libraries in all the Regional and Sub-regional Offices and in country offices partnering with institutions, such as research institutes and universities that have dissemination capacities; and
- promoting networks that will assist in the distribution and dissemination of FAO products.

FF. Increased Investment in FAO Capacity in Africa

287. **Recommendation 9:** It is recommended that FAO invest more heavily in the capacity of its decentralized offices in Africa to engage significantly in developing capacities for the agriculture, forestry and fisheries sectors and to respond to emerging demands of African member countries.

288. Implementing this recommendation could entail:

- a capacity needs assessment in each Region at the Regional Conferences and then in the sub-regions, to assist in developing a locally relevant CD strategy and priorities for the NMTPF and to inform the allocation of the correct mix of skills to each office;
- ensuring that the necessary human and financial resources accompany the decentralization of the TCP approval process to enable the African offices to incorporate CD concerns;
- more systematic partnering with regional and local CD institutions, such as research institutions and universities to fill up gaps, complement expertise available in decentralized offices and further enhance partner capacity;
- the use of the SFE host-country model with seconded officers: an approach that largely deploys the officers in the host country so that FAO does not deplete scarce skills in the host country, but still benefits from additional human resources;
- careful selection if engaging in south-south exchanges and using volunteers to ensure that their profiles and skills reflect a thorough knowledge of the African context as well as some CD knowledge and experience; and
- development of a plan to increase the capacity of FAO field officers. This should include orientation, training, retooling, greater exposure to HQ activities and to current trends in

officers' fields, and motivation and incentives to ensure that CD is given a higher profile in their work. A strong focal point on CD in HQ.