



Food and Agriculture
Organization of the United
Nations

Office of Evaluation

Evaluation of FAO's Regional and Sub-regional Offices for Latin America and the Caribbean

Final report

Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations

Office of Evaluation (OED)

This report is available in electronic format at: <http://www.fao.org/evaluation>

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Acknowledgements

The Evaluation Team would like to thank everyone and all of the organisations who offered their support in the preparation of this Evaluation. In particular, we would like to thank all those who participated in the interviews and answered the various questionnaires used. The Evaluation Team would like to give special thanks to the Regional Office for Latin America and the Caribbean, to its Management and to the team designated as counterpart for the evaluation, who participated in all stages of the process.

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List of acronyms and abbreviations

ADG/RR	Assistant Director-General/Regional Representative
ALADI	Latin American Integration Association
AOS	Administrative and Operational Support
BH	Budget Holder
CAC	Central American Agricultural Council
CARICOM	Caribbean Community
CCLAC	Coordinating Committee for Latin America and the Caribbean
CGIAR	Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research
CIO	Information Technology Division
COPESCAALC	Commission for Inland Fisheries and Aquaculture of Latin America and the Caribbean
CPF	Country Programming Framework
CSAP	Procurement Service
DAC	Development Assistance Committee
DO	Decentralised Office
E&R	Emergency and Rehabilitation
ECLAC	Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean
EP	Emergency Projects
ESW	Gender, Equality and Rural Employment Division
ET	Evaluation Team
EU	European Union
FAO Rep	FAO Representative in the country
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations
FAOR	FAO Representation
FNS	Food and Nutrition Security
FODEPAL	Global technical cooperation project for economic and agrarian policy formation and rural development
FP	Field Programme
FPMIS	Field Programme Management Information System
GCP	Government Cooperative Programme
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GEF	Global Environment Facility
GRMS	Global Resource Management System
GRULAC	Group of Latin American and Caribbean Countries in the United Nations
GS	General Services Employees
IEE	Independent External Evaluation of FAO
IFAD	International Fund for Agricultural Development
IICA	Inter-American Institute for Agricultural Cooperation
IT	Information Technology
LAC	Latin America and the Caribbean
LACFC	Latin American and Caribbean Forestry Commission
LARC	Regional Conference for Latin America and the Caribbean
LDAC	Commission on Livestock Development for Latin America and the Caribbean
LTO	Lead Technical Officer
LTU	Lead Technical Unit
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
MTP	Medium Term Plan (of FAO)
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
NMTPF	National Medium Term Priority Framework
NSHR	Non Staff Human Resources
OCHA	Office (of the United Nations) for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
ODG	Office of the Director General

OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
OED	Office of Evaluation
OSD	Office of Support to Decentralisation
OSP	Office of Strategy, Planning and Resources Management
OU	Operational Unit
PS	Professional Staff (of FAO)
PSA	Personal Services Agreement
PSC	Project Servicing Costs
RLC	Regional Office for Latin America and the Caribbean
RP	Regular Programme
RR	Regional Representative
SERU	Sub-Regional Emergency Response Units
SIMER	Results based Evaluation and Monitoring System
SLC	FAO Sub-regional Office for the Caribbean
SLM	FAO Sub-regional Office for Central America
SLS	FAO Sub-regional Office for South America
SO	Strategic Objective
SRC	Sub-regional Coordinator
SSC	Shared Service Centre
TCD	Technical Cooperation for Development
TCE	Emergency and Rehabilitation Division
TCP	Technical Cooperation Programme
TO	Technical Officer
UCER	Emergency and Rehabilitation Project Coordination Units
UN	United Nations
UNCT	United Nations Country Team
UNDAF	United Nations Development Assistance Framework
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNISDR	United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction
UNJP	United Nations Joint Programme
UN	United Nations Organisation
USD	United States Dollar
UTF	Unilateral Trust Fund
WECAFC	Western Central Atlantic Fishery Commission
WHO	World Health Organisation

Executive summary

Background

1 At its 106th session in April 2011, the FAO Programme Committee (PC) received the report and the management response to the Evaluation of FAO's regional and subregional offices for the Near East. The PC appreciated the quality of the report, considered it to be a significant evaluation and recommended that similar evaluations be developed for other regions.

2 The programme of work for evaluations in the period 2012-14 took into account the recommendations of the PC. The evaluation of Europe was completed in December 2012 and presented at the 113th session of the Programme Committee in March 2013, while the report for Africa was presented at the 114th session of the Programme Committee in November 2013. The evaluations for Latin America and the Caribbean, and for Asia and the Pacific, were carried out in 2013.

3 All parties involved were fully aware that the evaluation would be carried out in a period of substantial changes and transition for FAO, which were also related to the process of decentralization. Nevertheless, it was felt that evaluation would provide additional and more in-depth proof of the decentralization challenges in Latin America and the Caribbean (ALC), identify useful lessons and result in recommendations for implementing the FAO decentralization policy in the region.

4 The FAO Office of Evaluation (OED) has been responsible for coordinating and managing the evaluation. The evaluation team, led by an independent external consultant, also included other external consultants as well as OED officials. OED ensured the overall quality of the report by submitting the draft report to an internal peer-review process.

Objectives

5 The objective of evaluation was to provide FAO and Member countries with an independent assessment of:

- the progress made by the Organization in implementing corporate decisions to decentralize its functions and roles in the Region; and
- the results of FAO's decentralization policies and procedures on corporate delivery to its Members in the Region.

6 The terms of reference established the period 2004-2012 as the time frame for evaluating the decentralization actions undertaken since the previous evaluation in 2004. However, considering that the region's decentralization processes mainly took off from January 2010 onwards, the terms of reference suggested focusing on recent years (including the decisions taken by the FAO Council in June 2012 on the Structure and Functioning of the Decentralized Offices). The discussion of the terms of reference for the Evaluation was taking place during implementation of a restructuring of the operations and duties of the Division for Emergency Operations and Rehabilitation (TCE). OED therefore decided not to include Haiti or Colombia in its field visits. This is why the Evaluation did not include a

detailed analysis of the decentralization of the work of the Division for Emergency Operations and Rehabilitation.

7 The decentralized structures analysed include the FAO Regional Office for Latin America and the Caribbean (RLC) in Santiago, Chile; the FAO Subregional Office for the Caribbean (SLC) in Bridgetown, Barbados; the FAO Subregional Office for Mesoamerica (SLM) in Panama City, Panama; fully-fledged FAO Representations (FAOR), FAO Representations with a Technical Officer/Representative and multiple-accredited FAO Representations and National Correspondents. All of these decentralized structures are referred to in this document as Decentralized Offices (DOs).

8 Given the strengthened role of Regional Conferences resulting from FAO reform and the decentralization process, FAO governance in the region was also analysed, as well as the readiness and capacity of DOs to tackle the strategic and programme priorities of the Regional Conference for Latin America and the Caribbean (LARC).

9 Furthermore, the evaluation has been carried out at the same time as discussions, approval and implementation of the new FAO Strategic Framework and its new 2014-17 Medium-Term Plan. This has dramatically shifted the Organization's focus towards the five Strategic Objectives by generating different institutional designs and operational frameworks. The evaluation has attempted to incorporate the new institutional environment in terms of assessing the potential, threats and opportunities of the decentralization process.

10 Lastly, with an eye towards the future, the evaluation has analysed FAO capacity to establish strategic partnerships to increase its effectiveness in the region and mobilize national, regional and international resources to ensure a sustained presence in the region.

Methodology

11 The evaluation subjects were tackled using a series of quantitative and qualitative methods and tools, including the following:

- Desk study and analysis of policies, strategies, circulars, bulletins and any other relevant document aimed at strengthening the FAO network and processes and procedures for FAO work in countries;
- Desk study and analysis of thematic and country evaluations and relevant projects relating to the region that have been implemented during the period in question;
- Use of audit reports produced by the FAO Office of the Inspector General to identify recurring themes that affect the work and impact achieved in countries;
- Semi-structured individual and group interviews with interested parties within and outside FAO, standardized using checklists and interview protocols specific to each type of party interviewed;
- Country visits and reports (for internal team use);
- Analysis of a sample of projects in countries visited and of the pilot initiative related to SO1;
- Analysis of CPFs approved by governments in accordance with a shared evaluation matrix;
- Analysis of downloaded web statistics and quotes from a sample of regional publications;
- Questionnaire sent to Member States to gather more opinions than those obtained on visits;

- Questionnaire to FAO staff at Headquarters, RLC, SLC, SLM and in countries to gather more opinions than those obtained on visits; and,
- Questionnaire for non-governmental organizations and other relevant civil-society actors.

12 Taking into account the principle of subsidiarity, the evaluation has analysed the comparative advantage of the various levels of the Organization (Headquarters, RLC, SLC, SLM, FAOR) in terms of responding to the expectations, requests and priorities of Member States. In this context, the subject of Delegated Authority has been tackled by analysing the transfer of duties and responsibilities to identify possible bottlenecks, overlap of functions and areas of ambiguity, as well as complex decision-making processes. The decentralized process of setting priorities using the Country Programming Framework (CPF) has also received special attention in the evaluation, with an analysis of the twenty-five (25) CPFs already approved by governments at the time of the evaluation.

13 The human resources of the DOs (size and organization chart, technical skill mix) have been analysed to evaluate their suitability for tackling corporate needs and priorities, as well as future challenges resulting from the new strategic and institutional framework.

14 A small sample of national initiatives (known as key projects) was analysed in practically all countries visited, in order to provide the evaluation team with a glimpse into a few initiatives and see the results of FAO work in the field. The criteria for selecting key projects were: relevance for country, intervention sector (with priority given to food security and family farming), balance amongst different type of projects (such as Technical Cooperation Programme, Cooperation Programme involving FAO and national/regional governments and so on), recently completed projects and those that had not yet been evaluated. In accordance with the request from subregional and regional offices, the pilot initiative related to SO1, “Contribute to the eradication of hunger, food insecurity and malnutrition”, was evaluated in the three countries concerned (Antigua and Barbuda, Ecuador and Nicaragua).

15 The evaluation has focused on the effectiveness and cost efficiency of the region’s thirty-six (36) decentralized offices (33 country offices, two subregional offices and one regional office), through the identification of effectiveness and efficiency indicators and their trajectories throughout the 2004-2012 period. The methodology is valid, consistent and is used in other multilateral, bilateral and civil-society organizations. The indicators do, however, have limitations, as they do not provide specific information on particular countries or contexts. They have the potential to be considered as inputs for the Senior Management’s decision-making process.

Main findings and conclusions

16 As previously stated, the evaluation aimed to answer the following two questions: 1) what progress has the Organization made in implementing the corporate decisions to decentralize its duties and roles in Latin America and the Caribbean; 2) in what way has this progress (or lack thereof) impacted the Organization’s effectiveness and efficiency in the region.

17 Analysis has focused on the period 2008-2012, with a clear inflection point identified in 2010 (the Evaluation has involved building a database with over 5,000 data entries for the period 2004-2012).

18 In Latin America and the Caribbean, the Organization achieved decentralization by means of the following measures: a) progressive transfer of oversight for Country Offices to the RLC in Chile, and of the oversight for Regional and Subregional Offices to the Regional Representative; b) 2007 formal opening of the SLM in Panama, which actually scaled up its operations in 2010; c) establishment of Multidisciplinary Teams in Santiago (discontinued in 2012), Barbados and Panama; d) establishment of country-level strategic planning processes through the CPF; e) increased delegation of authority to Decentralized Offices, including the management of the Technical Cooperation Programme, Field Programme, letters of agreement, procurement and management of human resources; f) assignment of a governance function to LARC in the orientation of priorities and work in the region from 2010.

19 Advances in each of these processes have taken place at different speeds, and the level of implementation varies from case to case. However, the Organization has made progress in implementing the corporate decisions to decentralize its duties and roles in the region.

20 The Evaluation Team considers that the Country, Subregional and Regional Offices now have the authority to define priorities and mobilize resources at a level close to member countries. Decentralization established roles and responsibilities for the three types of Decentralized Offices. However, these roles are ambiguous, there is some overlap and they have not been efficiently communicated. This hinders clear distinctions between the method and purpose of the actions of each level of decentralization.

21 In terms of delegation of authority for technical support, most main Technical Officers were from Headquarters. Headquarters is also the Operational Unit for a significant proportion of the budget allocation.

22 The delegation of authority did not involve increased resources. In percentage terms, the Regular Programme's resources in the region have remained the same since 2010. Decentralization remains incomplete in terms of bringing the process of defining priorities and mobilizing resources closer to the country level.

23 As for estimating the effect of decentralization on the Organization's cost efficiency and effectiveness in the region, the Evaluation found few indicators available for analysis, and an absence of suitable data for carrying out estimates. The lack of suitable financial information shows that such data are not regularly used by Senior Management in decision-making. As stated in the Report, the database created for the period 2004-12 made it possible to analyse total annual expenditure (disbursements), including the Regular Programme and Field Programme, for each of the existing 36 units of analysis (33 Country Offices, 1 Regional Office and 2 Subregional Offices). For the same period and the same units of analysis, information was also consolidated on the functional use of financial disbursements (by type of expenditure including spending on professionals, spending on general services staff and other expenditure). This information was used to define and estimate two effectiveness indicators and three cost efficiency indicators to measure FAO performance in the region.

24 On the basis of the data analysed, the team found a clear increase in the effectiveness of the operations of the region's Offices between 2008 and 2012, according to the indicators used. The Organization significantly increased its presence and activities in the region during

that time. There was a substantial rise in the mobilization of extra-budgetary resources (Field Programme) per dollar allocated under the Regular Programme. Increased expenditure (disbursements) on the part of decentralized units reflects the widespread perception of the Organization's increased presence in the region. Greater mobilization of resources on the part of decentralized units is also an indicator of effective use of resources made available. Renewed commitment to voluntary contributions, particularly from the region's countries that have not traditionally been donors, shows that the Organization is providing relevant and efficient solutions to the region's development problems. The perceived rise in effectiveness is mainly due to increased activities of the Field Programme. This increase is mostly attributable to the mobilization of non-regular funding from bilateral donors (including a significant share from the region's countries). The dynamism of the programme and the presence in Mesoamerica is vital for this development and for the total figures for the period. FAO is closer to the reality and priorities of the region's countries and their governments. The Organization's interventions are becoming more relevant and appreciated by member countries.

25 The efficiency analysis shows no significant gains for the 2008-12 period, as efficiency remained mainly unchanged in comparison with the longer 2004-12 period. In many of the units studied, there appears to be an overweight of administrative costs that has no relation with the scale of professional and technical assistance and knowledge generation that are at the heart of FAO actions. In the short term, the Organization should concentrate its actions on this area. This is the sphere where the impact of remedial measures is likely to yield the fastest results.

26 During the Evaluation, the impression has been one of unclear roles, responsibilities and reporting lines of the various decentralized bodies and their staff. An immediate clarification for the region should yield rapid results. Lack of clarity in the reporting chain between Country Office, Subregional Office, Regional Office and Headquarters (in terms of administrative processes, contributions and specialized technical interactions) has caused major efficiency losses. There are undoubtedly areas in which Headquarters could be much more aggressive in its policy to decentralize responsibilities and implementation to decentralized units (recruitment, emergencies, donor negotiation and technical endorsement of projects).

27 There appears to be an imbalanced distribution of human, administrative and professional resources among the three subregions. This does not reflect the different levels of dynamism of the country programmes in each subregion. In some cases, the distribution of countries in each of the three subregions is questionable, as it does not reflect cultural links in terms of language, tradition or work synergies within the United Nations System.

28 The skill mix of Technical Officers has remained largely unchanged in the evaluation period (2004-12). It is difficult to see how this reflects the needs of countries and Country Offices, and it also bears little relation to the requirements of the FAO Strategic Objectives that have been in force since 2013.

29 The CPF is an important instrument of decentralization and has made a significant contribution to consolidating and expanding the Organization's presence in the region. Its role as a central tool for the work carried out in countries and for dialogue with governments should be emphasized. CPFs are useful for defining FAO's technical assistance priorities with member countries. They are in keeping with regional priorities, and most comply well

with the requirements of the CPF drafting guidelines. FAO should make more explicit use of CPFs in its corporate planning, monitoring and evaluation processes.

30 The Technical Cooperation Programme (TCP) represents just under 10% of Field Programme expenditure in the region. The Evaluation found that the decentralization policy has not truly succeeded in bringing decisions and responsibilities down to country programme level, in accordance with the decentralization of CPFs. Large parts of the decision-making process were delegated to RLC from 2010 while some are still with departments at Headquarters. The approval process is confusing, slow and has generated widespread unease among Country Offices. However, the most striking weakness is that the Regional management has not managed to establish a clear, transparent, accepted and streamlined mechanism to allocate resources from the TCP. The Evaluation studied the link between allocations and socio-economic variables that should be in line with FAO priorities. The results were disappointing, as there was no correlation between socio-economic criteria that are important to FAO (such as food insecurity and rural poverty rates in the region) and the allocation of funds.

31 The use of integrated portfolio-management criteria, principles and indicators could make a sizeable contribution to improving the effectiveness and cost efficiency of FAO activities in the region. Given the relative importance of the Field Programme, there should be accounting routines to monitor its costs and ensure that its interventions are self-financing. This is without compromising an integrated portfolio management that harnesses synergies between the Regular Programme and the Field Programme.

32 The current management of funds obtained under Administrative and Operational Support (AOS) requires an in-depth review. Inexplicably, it is managed and accounted for as part of the Regular Programme, despite being generated by the Field Programme. The appropriation criteria across the various FAO bodies are confusing, inequitable and lack transparency, so it has become a structural disincentive for fundraising. The AOS could become an important part of consolidating a sustainability mechanism for the Field Programme, for instance in the form of a Reserve Fund.

33 The Evaluation Team analysed 10 specific projects in the 13 countries visited. It was established that Field Programme activities are a good reflection of the eleven priorities defined by the FAO Council for the period 2004-2012, with an emphasis on projects aimed at aspects of food security and actions to increase food supply based on family farming. There is no doubt that the five new Strategic Objectives and the Country Programming Frameworks will influence the FAO areas of involvement in the region.

34 The projects analysed are relevant for countries and interact well with national entities and local partners. This is more diluted at the national level, as the vast majority of Country Offices concentrate their actions and relations around the Ministries of Agriculture. Project design is simple and applied to the problems they seek to resolve. Most projects aim to increase food supply through well-known strategies. There were few interventions aimed at facilitating access to food by vulnerable groups (increasing food demand). There are doubts about the ability of some projects to make an impact at the national and regional levels, given their limited coverage. Questions have also been raised about the future sustainability of several projects.

35 In terms of the production and dissemination of FAO normative products, these are spread out among Headquarters, the Regional Office and a few Country Offices. No mechanism or tool was found to monitor the quantity, quality and level of use of FAO products and services in the region. The online download frequency of these documents is relatively low. The Regional Office has designed a widely used Results-based Monitoring and Evaluation System able to classify information according to the Logical Framework of projects and budgetary allocation. Its use is, however, limited to a few Offices and it lacks important components that would enable it to capitalize on successful experiences in the region.

36 As for the role of Technical Officers, their number has increased since 2008 and they have been redistributed as result of the creation of the SLM. The composition of Multidisciplinary Teams is weighted towards food production (including forestry production and fisheries). In practice, Technical Officers do not operate as multidisciplinary teams.

37 The Evaluation Team evaluated gender equity in the selected interventions. The projects reviewed work with women or with groups including many women. However, no efforts were detected at the institutional or project-design level to create the conditions enabling women to take advantage of their involvement by adapting project actions to the other roles carried out by women.

38 The Evaluation Team observed considerable imbalance between the number of women working in the Organization and the posts they occupy. The gender gap in the rural world appears to be reflected in the structure of the Organization.

39 The United Nations System appreciates FAO participation in joint planning instruments, mechanisms and bodies. However, knowledge of the Country Programming Framework is very limited. It was observed that there are no United Nations System Resident Coordinators coming originally from FAO in the region. It is suggested that FAO considers explicitly and more pro-actively promoting the inclusion of FAO staff in the group of candidates applying for posts of Resident Coordinator for the United Nations System in the region. This would increase the value added for the United Nations System at the country level and would help to incorporate a systemic UN view into FAO work in the region.

Recommendations

40 As stated in previous chapters, the Evaluation focused on developing a limited number of effectiveness and cost efficiency indicators. The indicators are valid, consistent and comparable. They are also used by other international organizations. They do, however, have limitations in terms of not covering national specificities or including methodological aspects discussed in the Evaluation. The decision-making process by FAO Senior Management should include the recommendations presented as inputs, to be completed with an analysis of particular aspects or conditions when it is required. The recommendations are presented with suggested measures that could of course be replaced by alternative combinations thereof.

Recommendation 1: FAO Senior Management at Headquarters and the Regional Office

FAO Senior Management at Headquarters and the RLC should consolidate FAO presence in the region. In order to do so, it should adopt new working models to adapt to the financial reality and the Organization's requirements to provide efficient and effective services to member countries in Latin America and the Caribbean.

Suggested measures:

Given the performance of Country Representations and the Regional and Subregional Offices in terms of the combined cost effectiveness and efficiency indicators in this Report, we recommend:

1. Transferring Cuba and the Dominican Republic from the Caribbean Subregion to the Mesoamerica Subregion. The former displays a weak performance in terms of effectiveness and efficiency. Overburdening the SLC with the task of managing different languages does not seem appropriate. Mesoamerica shows positive indicators that suggest it was right to open the Subregional Office in Panama. This change in reporting lines may help to improve effectiveness and efficiency indicators in the region. There are signs that Senior Management is considering some of these measures. Their immediate implementation would be a positive step. Senior Management could also evaluate the status and reporting lines of Haiti.
2. The increased responsibilities in Mesoamerica, the good performance of almost all the Subregion's Offices and the significant volume of operations form the basis for the recommendation to rebalance the location of Technical Officers in Santiago, Chile, and in Panama. FAO could make clear gains in effectiveness and efficiency by transferring Technical Officers from Santiago to Panama. Naturally, these measures could be strengthened by transferring Technical Officers from Rome to Panama.
3. The arrangement of Representations being managed by designated Technical Officers should be discontinued. This model provides no effectiveness or efficiency gains. The governments of the countries involved do not value this model.
4. For those units that remained in the same unfavourable position in the 2008-2012 period, plus those with a poorer evaluation, RLC should consider establishing multiple-accreditation systems, with a view to managing the portfolios of two or more countries. This recommendation could be applied to the following three groups of countries: Caribbean countries; Costa Rica; and Argentina, Chile and Uruguay in South America.
5. The aggregate technical profile of the current staff of Technical Officers in the region and subregions should be defined to manage the five new Strategic Objectives effectively and efficiently within the region. The strengthening of the Subregional Office for Mesoamerica should also be prioritized in the short term. The posts of Technical Officers still respond to the working priorities from 2004-2012. The opinion canvassed by the Evaluation about the technical support function of these Officers - and the speed, relevance and ubiquity of the services - was negative overall. Senior Management of FAO and RLC should restructure technical services and teams, in terms of specializations and geographical location. These teams should consider adopting truly multidisciplinary working arrangements and structures.
6. It is recommended that RLC and TCE strengthen the presence of Disaster Risk Management Officers in Central America and the Caribbean.

7. OSD, in collaboration with FAO Legal and Ethics Office (LEG), should review the existing Host Agreement arrangements at country level and formulate a plan to update them or sign new agreements where necessary in a reasonable time frame.

Recommendation 2: FAO Senior Management at Headquarters and the Regional Office

The Evaluation Team recommends that FAO senior management quickly implement an exhaustive process to clarify the scope of decentralization among its staff in the region, including on the roles and responsibilities between the three layers existing in ALC (regional, sub-regional and country) and HQ.

Suggested measures:

1. Emphasizing and clarifying the roles of the three levels of decentralized office (regional, subregional and national) and the subsidiarity criteria among them. This process should include a clarification of the role of Technical Officers that highlights their main function of supporting the implementation of FAO programmes in countries and providing advice at that level.
2. There is also a recommendation to clarify the approval process for Technical Cooperation Programmes and to eliminate redundant steps.
3. Improving communication and enhancing training on FAO contractual arrangements in Country Offices.

Recommendation 3: FAO Senior Management at Headquarters, the Regional Office and Country level

FAO Senior Management at Headquarters and the Regional Office should strengthen the use of Country Programming Frameworks (CPF) as the main instrument for establishing working arrangements and priorities in countries.

Suggested measures:

1. It is recommended that the Office of Support to Decentralization (OSD) and the RLC introduce an online digital platform for the drafting of CPFs, with a view to: a) making the provision of technical inputs by Technical Officers easier and more transparent; b) strengthening corporate information and keeping CPFs up to date; c) ensuring the use of CPF drafting guidelines, including maximum length, inclusion of monitoring targets and indicators, and an annual work plan.
2. Country Representatives must prioritize: 1) defining indicators, targets and baselines for the level of expected results; 2) establishing mechanisms for providing progress reports to governments; 3) integrating a portfolio-management approach to generate synergies and complementarities; 4) estimating needs in terms of mobilization of resources and the actions needed to obtain them.
3. Country Representations should develop short-term plans to disseminate their Country Programming Frameworks among the United Nations System Country Team, other donors and multilateral agencies in the country and wider sectors within host governments.
4. The Evaluation recommends that the RLC and Country Representatives ensure their future CPF drafting processes involve governmental counterparts other than those from

Ministries of Agriculture, as well as non-governmental partners (in accordance with the Organization's new strategies for the private sector and civil society).

5. It is recommended that OSD and the RLC institutionalize CPFs as the framework for establishing the work priorities of the entire Organization in the relevant countries. These CPFs should be formally authorized (with party signatures and validity period) in order to operate within a country. They should be respected by all FAO bodies and levels, including multidisciplinary teams, the RLC and Subregional Offices.
6. It is recommended that, as coordinators of the Multidisciplinary Teams, the regional management and subregional Directors should ensure that regional and subregional projects respond to and support the work streams agreed in the CPFs, and check that they match the new Strategic Objectives (SO). The variety of the CPFs should be reflected in regional and subregional projects, without the need to force the incorporation of countries or a uniform treatment thereof.

Recommendation 4: FAO Senior Management at Headquarters and at the Regional Office

FAO Senior Management at the Headquarters and at the Regional Office should consolidate the regional sphere as the priority intermediary between country-level and global priority-setting and planning, as well as adopting some efficiency measures as part of their processes.

Suggested measures:

1. This Evaluation found no grounds for recommending prioritizing areas and resources at the subregional level.
2. It is recommended that RLC and OSD consider options for a more efficient organization of the Regional Conference, for the Organization and for member countries. In this context, priority should be given to disseminating the new strategic framework among member country governments (including Ministries of Agriculture and other ministerial bodies).

Recommendation 5: FAO Senior Management at Headquarters and at the Regional Office

It is recommended that FAO manage the Field Programme with strict effectiveness and efficiency criteria.

Suggested measures:

1. RLC, with support from the South-South and Resource Mobilization Division (TCS) and the Office of Strategy, Planning and Resource Management (OSP), should monitor the Field Programme with explicit portfolio-management criteria and appropriate and up-to-date financial information. The Field Programme must have its own accounts, without prejudice to an integrated portfolio management. Its costs should be completely funded by the Programme itself. As recommended by many internal audits, this Evaluation supports the creation of a "Reserve Fund" in order to provide sustainability, a predictable time frame, innovation potential and to hedge against temporary funding shortfalls for field presence.
2. The Evaluation recommends that RLC establish clear and transparent criteria for distributing regional allocations under Technical Cooperation Programmes. A substantial

proportion should be subject to an automatic preliminary allocation according to variables relevant to FAO operations in the region (the Evaluation considered per capita gross national income, Atlas methodology, extreme poverty rates and undernutrition rates).

3. It is recommended that the RLC establish an advisory board made up of regional FAO representatives to advise on issues relating to the allocation of resources under regional and subregional Technical Cooperation Programmes.

Recommendation 6: FAO Senior Management at Headquarters and at the Regional Office

FAO should improve the operational and financial management of the Regular Programme and Field Programme in the region.

Suggested measures:

1. RLC, with support from OSP, should collect relevant financial information for ongoing monitoring of the progress of operations and portfolio management. Information on expenditure (disbursements) by year, unit of analysis, source of funds and use thereof is vital for regular evaluations of the effectiveness and cost efficiency of the portfolio. This Evaluation made considerable efforts to compile the first database for 2004-2012 and to develop a few indicators for assessing the effectiveness and efficiency of the portfolio management. FAO could benefit from adopting, adding to, continuing and stepping up such endeavours in the short and medium term.
2. Management of information on Administrative and Operational Support (AOS) should be dramatically restructured as soon as possible. This Evaluation recommends that AOS obtained from field operation support should be clearly and transparently recorded as part of the Field Programme, then rapidly and regularly allocated and under no circumstances retained at Headquarters. The Evaluation recommends that AOS collected should be distributed as follows: a) 60% to the unit responsible for the mobilization of funding; b) 20% to RLC; and c) 20% for Headquarters in Rome. AOS distributed according to the criteria of this recommendation should help to consolidate the “Reserve Fund” described in suggested measure 5.1.
3. It is recommended that the RLC establish a results-monitoring function associated with regional priorities and those of the CPFs. The region is the most appropriate level for this function.
4. It is recommended that FAO maintain a support structure for the Global Resource Management System (GRMS) at RLC and the development of all modules, with a view to helping improve efficiency in regional operations.
5. Given the growing importance of the Field Programme in Latin America and the Caribbean, and the fact that it is increasingly funded by contributions from the region’s own countries, RLC, with the support of TCS, should develop an institutional resource-mobilization strategy that includes assigning specialized officers for the strategy and the close involvement of Country Representatives. An integrated approach to the role of FAO in South-South cooperation should be devised in this context. The mobilization of resources should be included as a strategic sector in CPFs and in the recruitment of Country Representatives and Technical Officers in the region.

Recommendation 7: FAO Senior Management at the Regional Office

It is recommended that Regional Management improve the design and implementation of field projects, as well as the implementing mechanisms to ensure improved management of knowledge and normative products generated by decentralized offices.

Suggested measures:

1. In terms of the specific projects evaluated, it is recommended that the heads of Multidisciplinary Teams and Country Representatives ensure a design guaranteed to have an impact on policy at the local or national level. As far as the pilot project developed as part of Strategic Objective 1 is concerned, it is recommended that RLC carry out an exhaustive evaluation of the design, processes and results before implementing it at the regional level.
2. As for the production and dissemination of normative products, it is recommended that RLC centralizes the material available on a website, informs potential users and includes a counter of searches and downloads to monitor usage. The information strategy should use adverts and summaries that appeal directly to the target audience. The communications strategy should define target populations and diversify the channels used.
3. In order to improve knowledge management, it is recommended that RLC incorporate systematized experiences into the monitoring and evaluation system that has been developed.
4. As far as project-level activities are concerned, Regional Management, Country Representatives and Technical Officers should guarantee the conditions for combining the active participation of women with the responsibilities they bear in everyday life and the social roles they perform. The sustainability of actions for women is linked to combining them with their family roles and the operational division of labour.
5. It is recommended that RLC, with support from LEG, review the potential of technical commissions and defines a strategy to define their future work and role in such intergovernmental forums.

Recommendation 8: FAO Senior Management at Headquarters and at the Regional Office

FAO should immediately produce an action plan for eliminating existing gender inequality, including goals, targets, time frames and resources. There should be a substantial increase in the number of women among Country Representatives, and women should also reach higher salary brackets (given that they have the required skills).

1 Introduction

1.1 Background of the evaluation

1. At its 106th session in April 2011, the FAO Programme Committee (PC) received the report and management response to the evaluation of FAO's Regional and Sub-regional Offices for the Near East. The PC valued the quality of the report, found it to be an important evaluation and recommended that similar evaluations should take place in the other regions.

2. The evaluation work plan for the 2012-2014 period took the PC's recommendations into account. The Europe evaluation was completed in December 2012 and was discussed in the PC's 113th session in March 2013, whereas the Africa report was discussed in the PC's 114th session in November 2013. The evaluations of Latin America and the Caribbean, and that of Asia and the Pacific took place in 2013.

3. All parties concerned were fully aware that the evaluation would be carried out during a period of transition and substantial changes for FAO that were also related to the decentralisation process. Nevertheless, it was considered that the evaluation would provide additional and more in-depth evidence of challenges facing decentralisation in Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC), as well as identify useful lessons and provide recommendations to apply to the implementation of the new FAO decentralisation policy in the region.

4. The FAO Office of Evaluation (OED) coordinated and managed the evaluation³. The evaluation team, led by an external independent consultant, included another external consultant as well as OED officials⁴. OED also guaranteed the general quality of the report by subjecting the draft report to an internal peer review process.

5. The final report on this evaluation will be discussed, together with the management response, at the Programme Committee's 115th session, which will take place in May 2014, and it will be distributed at the 33rd session of the FAO Regional Conference for Latin America and the Caribbean for information purposes. The draft report was distributed amongst FAO's interested parties to gather comments and remarks, to be included by the team where relevant.

1.2 Report structure

6. The document is structured into the following chapters:

- Chapter 1 - Introduction: details the background and logic of the evaluation.
- Chapter 2 - Aim and methodology of the evaluation: details the aim, scope and methodology of the evaluation, main constraints and limitations.
- Chapter 3 - FAO's presence in Latin America and the Caribbean: details FAO's institutional organisation and current governance in the region.
- Chapter 4 - Situation and perspectives of the rural production sector in LAC: succinctly details some of the most significant trends for FAO in the region's agro-rural sector.
- Chapter 5 - Decentralisation of FAO throughout the period subject to evaluation: highlights the main decentralisation measures and analyses the delegation of authority in the management of projects, in the process of formulating and approving the Technical Cooperation Programme (TCP), in the administrative and operational procedures and in human resources management.

³ See Appendix 1 - Terms of Reference.

⁴ See Appendix 2 - Profile of the evaluation team members.

- Chapter 6 - Cost-effectiveness and efficiency: defines indicators to evaluate the organisation's effectiveness and efficiency in the region and the main trends throughout the evaluation period.
- Chapter 7 - Establishment of priorities: analyses the corporate framework for establishing and planning priorities (Country Programming Framework), its process of formulation and national appropriation, as well as its alignment with the FAO strategic frameworks and priorities.
- Chapter 8 - Human resources: analyses the amount and type of human resources currently existing in the decentralised offices (DO) and their suitability (skills, staffing structure, gender analysis) to meet the region's corporate needs.
- Chapter 9 - The work of FAO in the region - normative products and programme: provides an overview of FAO's main areas of work, as well as of the key evaluated projects; analyses the corporate management and production of the normative products, as well as the management of knowledge and the mechanisms of interaction between the field programmes and public policies.
- Chapter 10 - Partnerships and resources mobilization: provides an appraisal of the existing associations and analyses the opportunities and conditions for the mobilisation of resources.
- Chapter 11 - Conclusions
- Chapter 12 - Recommendations

7. For ease of reading, the majority of the chapters contain their own conclusions and recommendations, which are summarised and consolidated in Chapter 11 and in Chapter 12 respectively.

8. The report also includes several appendices, as detailed below:

- Appendix 1 Terms of reference for the evaluation
- Appendix 2 Profile of the evaluation team members
- Appendix 3 List of people interviewed
- Appendix 4 Outline of the main methodological tools used in the evaluation
- Appendix 5 Member countries questionnaire
- Appendix 6 FAO employee questionnaire
- Appendix 7 Associated and key interested parties questionnaire
- Appendix 8 FAO employee questionnaire analysis
- Appendix 9 FAO decentralised offices in LAC
- Appendix 10 FAO office models in LAC
- Appendix 11 Contributions made by family farming in some countries of the region
- Appendix 12 Disbursements of funds by donor countries, 2004-2012
- Appendix 13 Total disbursements in LAC, 2004-2012
- Appendix 14 Multiplier, 2004-2012
- Appendix 15 Efficiency indicator 1, 2004-2012
- Appendix 16 Efficiency indicator 2, 2004-2012
- Appendix 17 Efficiency and effectiveness indicators 3
- Appendix 18 Effectiveness and efficiency - classification of units of analysis
- Appendix 19 Effectiveness and efficiency in LAC, 2008-2012
- Appendix 20 CPF evaluation instrument
- Appendix 21 Summary of CPF analysis
- Appendix 22 Regular Programme disbursements by type of expense
- Appendix 23 Level of income, malnutrition and disbursements in Special Attention Countries
- Appendix 24 TCP disbursements per country, special attention country
- Appendix 25 Total number of people working in LAC, 11 November 2013
- Appendix 26 Total number of participants in each type of training per year
- Appendix 27 Number of participants in training per type of contract, 2007-2012
- Appendix 28 Number of online training participants, 2012
- Appendix 29 List of the main reports by OED reviewed by the team
- Appendix 30 Projects evaluated and reports prepared by the mission
- Appendix 31 Offices in LAC with gender focal points

2 Aim and methodology of the evaluation

2.1 Aim and scope of the evaluation

9. The evaluation aimed to provide FAO and Member Countries with an independent review of:

- i. the progress made in the region by the Organisation in implementing corporate decisions to decentralise its functions and roles; and
- ii. the results of FAO's decentralisation policies and procedures on corporate delivery for its Members in the region.

10. The terms of reference established 2004-2012 as the period of evaluation, to assess the decentralisation actions implemented since the decentralization evaluation in 2004. However, taking into account that the decentralisation processes in the region mainly gathered momentum from January 2010 onwards, the terms of reference are focused on the latter years, including the decisions made by the FAO Council in June 2012 on the Structure and Functioning of the Decentralised Offices. The discussion about the terms of reference of the Evaluation took place while the operations and duties of the Emergency Operations and Rehabilitation Division (TCE) were being restructured. OED therefore decided not to include Haiti or Colombia in the field visits. As a result, the Evaluation did not perform a detailed analysis of the decentralisation of Emergency and Rehabilitation work.

11. The decentralised structures analysed include the FAO Regional Office for Latin America and the Caribbean (RLC) located in Santiago, Chile; the FAO Sub-regional Office for the Caribbean (SLC) located in Bridgetown, Barbados; the FAO Sub-Regional Office for Central America (SLM) located in Panama City, Panama; the fully fledged Representations (FAOR), the FAO Representations with a Technical Officer/Representative and FAO Representations with multiple accreditation and national correspondents. The group of these decentralised structures are referred to herein as Decentralised Offices (DO).

12. Taking into account the strengthened role of the Regional Conferences resulting from the reform of FAO and from the decentralisation process, FAO's governance in the region was also assessed, as well as the preparation and ability of the DOs to address the strategic and programmed priorities of the Regional Conference for Latin America and the Caribbean (LARC).

13. In addition, the evaluation took place at the same time as the discussions, approval and implementation of FAO's new Strategic Framework and Medium Term Plan (MTP) 2014-17. This has radically shifted the Organisation's focus towards five strategic objectives (SO), generating various operational frameworks and institutional designs. The evaluation has tried to incorporate the new institutional environment in terms of evaluating potential, threats and opportunities concerning the decentralisation process.

14. Lastly, with a view to the future, the evaluation analysed FAO's ability to establish strategic partnerships to increase its efficiency in the region and mobilise national, regional and international resources to guarantee the sustainability of its presence in the region.

2.2 Methods and tools

15. The evaluation method adopted by the team is in conformity with the general terms of reference for the evaluation (Appendix 1). To make it easier to compare across regions, plans were made to use a series of qualitative and quantitative tools previously utilised in the evaluations of the decentralised offices in the Near East, Europe, Central Asia and Africa, adapting them as necessary.

16. The evaluation team adhered to the rules and standards of the United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG) and adopted a participatory approach. It searched for and shared opinions with a vast range of interested parties, in order to evaluate FAO's role and work from different perspectives. These parties included clients and users of FAO products and services; national and international members and FAO staff with different duties and levels of responsibility. Consulting the interested parties was a key aspect of the evaluation.

17. OED began the preparatory phase for the evaluation of FAO's Regional and Sub-regional Offices for Latin America and the Caribbean in February 2013. Following on from this, an initial mission was carried out from April-May 2013 and an extensive consultation was held with FAO staff at headquarters, the RLC, SLC and SLM. Some FAO representatives in the region were also consulted and a meeting was held in Rome with members of the GRULAC (Group of Latin American and Caribbean Countries in the United Nations). The terms of reference were drafted on the basis of these consultations and distributed across the Headquarters as well as all of the decentralised offices in the region, for review and feedback before they were finalised in June.

18. Between July and October, the evaluation team carried out missions in the Caribbean, Central America and South America to gather information and analyse the decentralisation process in the region with interested parties internal and external to FAO (see **Table 1**). The missions enabled the whole team⁵ to meet approximately 500 people, belonging to the following groups:⁶

- Governments and FAO Member Countries, which were consulted during visits to the countries, through a questionnaire and through the Group of Latin American and Caribbean Countries (GRULAC);
- FAO employees, including the Management in the region and at the Headquarters, staff and non-staff who work in the region's different locations, including the RLC, SLC, SLM and the Country Offices, performing technical, administrative and operational duties. An online survey was also conducted; and,
- Interested parties external to FAO at a national and regional level, including United Nations Agencies and Bodies, regional and sub-regional economic integration Bodies (CARICOM, CAC, ALADI)⁷ and the Inter-American Institute for Agricultural Cooperation (IICA). In some countries, parliamentarians involved in the Parliamentary Front against Hunger were also interviewed. At a local level, during the evaluation of FAO projects on site, NGOs and civil society Organisations were interviewed as well as local authorities.

Table 1. Decentralised offices visited by the Evaluation Team

Missions and dates	Decentralised offices visited (in chronological order)
<i>Preparatory mission from 20/04/2013 to 04/05/2013</i>	Sub-regional Office for the Caribbean in Barbados (SLC); Sub-regional Office for Central America in Panama (SLM); Regional Office for Latin America and the Caribbean in Chile (RLC)
<i>Country visits from 05/07/2013 to 09/08/2013</i>	Guyana, Barbados (including the SLC), Antigua and Barbuda, Panama (including the SLM), Costa Rica, Guatemala, Mexico, Nicaragua
<i>Country visits from 02/09/2013 to 06/09/2013</i>	Ecuador
<i>Country visits from 28/09/2013 to 18/10/2013</i>	Chile (including the RLC), Bolivia, Uruguay, Paraguay

⁵ In order to reach a higher number of countries, the team (5 people) divided, in some cases, into sub-groups of 2-3 members.

⁶ The full list of parties interviewed is detailed in Appendix 3.

⁷ CARICOM (Caribbean Community), CAC (Central American Agricultural Council), ALADI (Latin American Integration Association).

19. As stated in the terms of reference for the evaluation, the main criteria for the selection of countries to visit were as follows:

- Balanced coverage of the three sub-regions: the Caribbean, Central America and South America;
- Coverage of the different types of FAO presence across countries (fully fledged representations, offices with an Out-posted Technical Officer (OTO)/Representative, countries with a national correspondent and multiple accreditation);
- Coverage of different types of countries in relation to selected indicators;⁸
- The profile - size and type - of the FAO portfolio in the country;
- The presence of the pilot initiatives related to Strategic Objective 1 (SO1).

20. Through meetings with the different interested parties, the evaluation team was able to gather information, empirical evidence and opinions about the range of topics related to the decentralisation of FAO. The preliminary findings, at country and sub-regional level, were shared and analysed with the head of each office at the end of each visit. A final meeting also took place in October with the RLC to discuss the preliminary findings of the mission. In November, discussion sessions were held with RLC Management, Management in Rome, with GRULAC, and with the Office of Evaluation.

21. To address the evaluation topics, a series of quantitative and qualitative methods and tools were used (see Appendix 4). These included:

- Desk review and analysis of policies, strategies, circulars, bulletins and any other relevant documents aimed at strengthening the FAO network and the processes and procedures for FAO's work in the countries;
- Desk review and analysis of the thematic evaluations, country evaluations and relevant projects, related to the region and completed during the period analysed;
- Use of audit reports prepared by the FAO Office of the Inspector General to identify recurring issues affecting work and its impact on the countries;
- Semi-structured group and individual interviews with interested parties external and internal to FAO, harmonised through verification lists and interview protocols specific to each type of interested party interviewed;
- Country visits and country reports (for internal use by the team);
- Evaluations of the key projects in the countries visited and of the pilot initiative related to SO1;
- Analysis of the CPF approved by the governments in accordance with a common evaluation matrix;
- Analysis of citations and web statistics from the internet (downloads) of a sample of normative products (publications) from the region;
- Survey of Member Countries to obtain a higher number of opinions than those gained from the country visits (see Appendix 5);
- Questionnaires for FAO employees at the Headquarters, RLC, SLC, SLM, and in the countries to obtain more opinions than those gained from the country visits (see Appendix 6);
- Questionnaire for NGOs and other relevant and associated civil society organisations (see Appendix 7).

22. Bearing in mind the Subsidiarity Principle, the evaluation assessed the comparative advantage of the different levels of the Organisation (Headquarters, RLC, SLC, SLM, FAOR) in responding to the expectations, requests and priorities of the Member Countries. Within this context,

⁸ The indicators were the size of the country and its population, the Human Development Index (HDI), level of income, food security, poverty and rural poverty amongst others.

the matter of Delegation of Authority was addressed, and the transfer of duties and responsibilities was assessed to identify possible bottlenecks, duplication of duties and areas of ambiguity, as well as complicated decision-making processes. The decentralised process of establishing priorities through the Country Programming Framework (CPF) also received special attention in the evaluation, which analysed the (25) CPFs already approved by the governments at the time of the evaluation.

23. The human resources of the DO (size and staffing structures, technical skills mix) were assessed to evaluate their suitability for addressing corporate priorities and needs, as well as the future challenges resulting from the new strategic and institutional framework.

24. A small sample of national initiatives, called key projects was analysed in practically all of the countries visited to give the evaluation team an idea of some initiatives and to understand the results of FAO's work from a field perspective. The criteria for selecting key projects were: relevance for the country, sector of intervention (giving priority to food security and family farming), equilibrium between types of projects (e.g. TCP, FAO/Government Cooperation Programme, national, regional, etc.), and projects completed recently that have not yet been evaluated. On request of the sub-regional and regional offices, the pilot initiative related to SO1 - "To contribute to the eradication of hunger, food insecurity and malnutrition" - was assessed in the three countries fostering it (Antigua and Barbuda, Ecuador and Nicaragua).

25. The evaluation focused on analysing the cost-effectiveness and efficiency of the region's thirty-six (36) decentralised offices (33 offices in the countries, two sub-regional offices and one regional office) through the identification of effectiveness and efficiency indicators, and their trends throughout 2004-2012. The methodology and results of this analysis are detailed and analysed in Chapter 6. The method is valid and consistent and is used in other multilateral, bilateral and civil society organisations. However, they have limitations and do not cover specific details at country level or in particular contexts. As such it has the potential to be considered an input in the decision-making process of FAO Management.

2.3 Constraints and limitations

26. The terms of reference stipulated that the evaluation would have to assess a "changing baseline" and provide recommendations in a context of strategic and institutional change. In fact, despite having used substantive data available in the corporate systems FPMIS and ORACLE,⁹ relating to the entire evaluation period (2004-2012), the work focused on the most recent years for two main reasons. The first reason is that the decentralisation measures in the region mainly took place from 2008 onwards, and particularly from 2010. The second reason is that the people interviewed refer essentially to recent years when they talk about topics related to decentralisation, whether due to the aforementioned reason or due to their short time working for FAO. Consequently, the evaluation focused particularly on the 2008-2012 period and identified a clear turning point in 2010.

27. While the institution and its human resources have been working throughout the period under evaluation with two strategic frameworks,¹⁰ in 2010 the Regional Conference on the one hand, and in 2012 the new Directorate General on the other identified new strategic objectives and priorities for the Organisation. The evaluation missions found that the Decentralised Offices in general took on the challenge of the Organisation's institutional and strategic changes and, consequently, the

⁹ FPMIS: Field Programme Management Information System; ORACLE is FAO's financial management system.

¹⁰ The first strategic Framework of FAO was drafted in 1999 for the 2000-2015. In 2009, a new strategic Framework was drafted for the 2010-2019 period.

evaluation addresses and analyses what this challenge means for the region and provides recommendations to such end.

28. The evaluation encountered problems gathering series of data (2004-2012) relating to the Organisation's financial delivery (Regular Programme and Field Programme) by year and assessment unit (the thirty-three countries, the two sub-regional offices and the regional office). It was even more difficult to compile and add data about employees (staff and non-staff, general and professional services) expenditures, in order to build effectiveness and efficiency indicators throughout the evaluation period. The two data sets included in the analyses come from different databases. Whereas the former is gathered based on a combination of ORACLE and FPMIS, the latter is sourced entirely from the ORACLE system. Unfortunately, there is no link between the two databases and the figures do not completely coincide. Despite these constraints, the analysis of the cost-effectiveness and efficiency was made and is detailed in Chapter 6.

29. Due to the distribution of information sources (Headquarters, RLC, countries) and the inconsistency of the data provided by such (see Chapter 9.3), the use of FAO normative products was difficult to analyse.

30. The rate of response to the questionnaire for Member Countries, essentially the Government counterparts, was very low, with 17 questionnaires received from 11 countries (only a third of the countries where FAO has offices responded), which means the questionnaire cannot be used as a statistical source of data. However, the opinions expressed in the questionnaires, together with those gathered during the interviews with representatives of the governments during the country visits, were extremely important to the evaluation.

31. The rate of responses to the questionnaire geared towards organisations associated with FAO and external interested parties (civil society, NGOs, academic institutions, private sector) was very low (12%) - only 11 responses were received out of the 87 surveys sent. In addition, the evaluation team encountered a very low number of organisations of this type during its country visits. The topics related to the associations are detailed in Chapter 10.

32. The FAO employee questionnaire was sent by OED to all employees working in the region, including professionals, general services, consultants and holders of a Personal Service Agreement (PSA), with a valid contract who started at least 6 months prior to the questionnaire. Following these criteria, the mailing list prepared using the Global Resource Management System (GRMS) in June 2013 included 461 people to whom the questionnaire was delivered personally. However, this figure turned out to be much lower than the actual number of employees in the Organisation in the region (see chapter 8). A total of 254 completed questionnaires were received from the region, in other words 55% of the initial number of addressees but only 17.5% of the total employees working for FAO in the region at the time. The OED encouraged the addressees to resend the questionnaire to colleagues not on the list. This measure increased the number of addressees but led to the loss of the "n" total of the questionnaire. 34 questionnaires received from the Headquarters were added to the 254 questionnaires received from the region, resulting in a total of 288 questionnaires. Consequently, the analysis of the responses considered 288 as the total, and the results, which cannot be extrapolated to the whole population, were used as indicator of trends. Appendix 8 summarises the main results of the questionnaire.

3 Institutional organisation of FAO in the region

3.1 FAO Decentralised Offices

33. FAO has a consolidated presence in the region. The Regional Office in Santiago opened in 1952, while many of the FAO Representations in the other countries were opened in the 70s and 80s. The Sub-regional Office for the Caribbean was opened in Barbados in 1996 and the Sub-regional Office for Central America, in Panama, was opened in 2007. However, the SLM welcomed its first Coordinator in 2008 and began its operations in 2010, as demonstrated by the disbursement figures.

34. In June 2013, when the evaluation ToR had been finalised, the FAO structure in the region was composed of 36 offices (see Appendix 9), specifically:

- A Regional Office for Latin America and the Caribbean (RLC) located in Santiago, Chile, led by an Assistant Director-General/Regional Representative, with the overall responsibility for the Region. The Assistant Representative of the RLC is accredited as FAO Representative for Chile;
- The Sub-regional Office for the Caribbean (SLC), located in Bridgetown, Barbados, led by a Sub-regional Coordinator, also accredited as FAO Representative for Barbados and, through the multiple accreditation scheme, representing FAO in Antigua and Barbuda, Dominica, Grenada, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines. The SLC is in charge of the general coordination of the Caribbean countries including the Eastern Caribbean States, the Bahamas, Belize, Guyana, Haiti, Jamaica, Suriname, Trinidad and Tobago.
- The Sub-regional Office for Central America (SLM), located in Panama City, Panama, with a Sub-regional Coordinator also accredited as a Representative in Panama. The SLM is in charge of the coordination of Costa Rica, Cuba,¹¹ El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama and the Dominican Republic;
- Eighteen fully fledged FAO Representations (FAOR);
- Three FAO Representations with an Out-posted Technical Officer (OTO)/Representative in Argentina, Guatemala and Paraguay, of which only one (Paraguay) is covered by a OTO/Representative;
- Nine national correspondents under the multiple accreditation scheme in Antigua and Barbuda, the Bahamas, Belize, Dominica, Grenada, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Suriname.

35. The nature of the FAO representation offices in Guatemala and Guyana is ambiguous. The Guatemala office has been considered a representation with a OTO/Representative for years. The Council called for “the role of the Guatemala FAOR to be financed and added to the currently existing emergency coordinator role”¹². In fact, it was an employee in a field staff post, and not a technical officer, who was in charge of the representation in July 2013. In November 2013, at the time of writing this report, the Office in Guatemala had the status of fully fledged Representation and the new representative is due to reach the country in January 2014.

36. The Guyana office is officially a fully-fledged Representation, according to the agreement with the host country signed in 2007, while the FAO representative in the country in 2013, appointed in 2009, is in fact an TO out-posted from the Barbados Sub-regional Office.

37. It is worth mentioning that in November 2013, the office in Paraguay had also been promoted to fully fledged Representation.

¹¹ For technical matters, Cuba reports to the Sub-regional Office for the Caribbean for strategic aspects of FAO intervention in the Region.

¹² CL 144/15 (June 2012).

38. In accordance with their staffing, three FAO Representations belong to the A model (13 employees), four to the B model (11 employees), five to the C model (8 employees), six to the D model (6 employees), three to the E model (3 employees), nine to the F model (1 national correspondent), and three to the representation model covered by a OTO (see Appendix 10).

39. After a period of prolonged vacancies in some of the region's countries, in November 2013 there were no vacancies in any of the DOs, excluding the OTO/Argentina Representative (where the Representation's National Programme Officer is in charge) and the Guatemala Representative, expected in January 2014.

40. The RLC also hosts the Organisation's Shared Service Centre (SSC) for Latin America and the Caribbean, which is a management support unit created in 2008 to provide support to FAO staff and non-staff employees in the region. Whereas the SSC hub in Budapest supports Headquarters, Europe, Africa, the Near East and North Africa, the Santiago SSC, like its equivalent in Bangkok, was created to adapt to the different time zones.

3.2 FAO governance in the region

41. FAO Regional Conferences are government bodies that provide a forum for consultation on all matters related to the Organisation's mandate in the region, for the formulation and coherence of regional positions on global policies and regulations, to identify regional priorities and problems, guide the work carried out by the Organisation in the region and to review its performance. The Regional Conferences report to the Programme and Finance Committees for matters related to the programme and the budget, and to the Conference, through the Council, for policy and normative matters.

42. The first Regional Conference for Latin America and the Caribbean (LARC) took place in Quito in 1949. Since 1954, the LARC have taken place biannually. The 32nd LARC took place in Argentina in 2012. The evaluation notes that in said conferences there was a growing number of participating member countries, which increased from 29 to 32 between 2010 and 2012. The participants stem mainly from Ministries of Agriculture and from the respective embassies. International and intergovernmental organisations also participated as observers.

43. The duties of the regional conferences have been extended as a result of the Independent External Evaluation of FAO (IEE), to become a fundamental part of the FAO government structure and provide general guidance for the Organisation's work in the region. The FAO Regional Office performs the duties of Secretariat for the LARC. The next regional conference (the 33rd) will take place in May 2014 in Santiago, Chile.

44. As regards the role of Technical Secretariat of the LARC, the RLC sufficiently supported the logistics and biannual organisation of said Conference. There is a manual that the RLC, like other regional offices, follows for organising logistics which contains established activity and liaison protocols to implement in the run-up to, during and after the completion of the FAO Regional Conferences¹³. The evaluation highlights two aspects contained in the manual that can be subject to review in order to improve the organisation of the LARC:

- i. The proposed agenda and the documents must be authorised by the Office of the Director General (ODG), the OSD and technical departments at the Headquarters. The evaluation considers that having to involve the OSD and technical departments to authorise all of the

¹³ See the Office of Support to Decentralisation (OSD) Regional Conferences Manual at <http://coin.fao.org/coin-static/cms/media/8/13626540517790/rcmanual.pdf>

technical documents that are provided for input to the LARC is inefficient. In addition, said regulation limits the autonomy and the role of the RLC as the main supplier of inputs to the LARC.

- ii. The invitation to the member countries is sent to the Ministries of Agriculture and Foreign Affairs only. The FAO mandate and its new strategic framework is more extensive than the scope of activity of these bodies.

45. The LARC Secretariat work is financed with budgetary resources from the regular programme which are independently assigned to the RLC Work Programme and that are specifically geared towards the organisational activities of the event and the translation of documents. In addition, the RLC assigned the LARC Secretariat work to a (level P5) senior officer and to a (level G4) administrative assistant. The workload appears to have intensified in the framework of the 33rd LARC in May 2014. The evaluation was informed of the intense tasks of consultation, distribution and assurance programmed with member countries in order that the results of the conference lead to the alignment of regional priorities and the new FAO strategic framework.

46. In addition, there are Regional Technical Commissions that operate as statutory bodies of FAO, conceived as intergovernmental fora for the collaboration and exchange of information and services on specific matters. Some of them are also organised in the sub-regions (for example the Forestry Commission). There are also working groups in various areas. The list includes the following bodies:

- Western Central Atlantic Fishery Commission (WECAFC), established in 1973 under Article VI, with Secretariat at the SLC in Barbados.
- The Commission for Inland Fisheries and Aquaculture of Latin America and the Caribbean (COPESCAALC), established in 1976 under Art. VI, with Secretariat at the RLC in Chile; a high number of working groups are coordinated either by WECAFC or COPESCAALC.
- The Latin American and Caribbean Forestry Commission (LACFC) established in 1948 under art. VI, with Secretariat at the RLC in Chile.
- The Commission on Livestock Development for Latin America and the Caribbean (CODEGALAC), established in 1987 under art. VI, with Secretariat at the RLC in Chile;
- The Caribbean Plant Protection Commission, established in 1967 under Article VI, with Secretariat at the SLC in Barbados;
- The Regional Coordinating Committee for CODEX Alimentarius for Latin America and the Caribbean (CCLAC), with a number of Working Groups on the main food products;
- FAO/WHO Coordinating Committee for Latin America and the Caribbean, which works in the framework of the CCLAC and manages the FAO/WHO Trust Fund to support the implementation of the Codex.

47. The duties and dynamism of the different bodies vary depending on the sector and the geographical area (sub-region, region) but can also depend on the interest of the Technical Officer in charge of providing them with technical assistance and management. Similarly, a risk of overlapping was detected with the Regional and Sub-regional Agricultural Councils of the Ministries of Agriculture, for example the Central American Agricultural Council (CAC) and the South American Agricultural Council (CAS).¹⁴

¹⁴ At Government level the discussions held do not always tally up with agreements made at the different levels (Council, Regional Conference, Regional Commissions, CAC, CPFs).

4 Situation and perspectives of the rural production sector in LAC

48. This chapter succinctly details some of the main challenges faced by FAO in Latin America and the Caribbean.

49. An ECLAC document from 2013 stated that “*Latin America is today an eminently urban region of middle income that hides vast heterogeneity and inequality*”¹⁵. Throughout the region, OECD countries coexist with low HDI countries, strong emerging economies coexist with heavily indebted poor countries and with countries that have specific weaknesses, such as the small island countries of the Caribbean. There is also heterogeneity within countries, in the form of unequal income, access and opportunities and territorial inequalities. The region has the worst income distribution in the world, with an average Gini Index of 50.5 from 1970-2000, compared to the 40.6 of Asia and the 30.1 of Eastern Europe for the same period¹⁶. Production opportunities are unequal and reflect education, gender, demographic, geographical and ethnic inequalities.

50. While recent figures show both poverty and destitution at the lowest rates ever; according to ECLAC, the number of people living in poverty is an estimated 167 million in 2012 (29% of the total population), while 66 million people (11.5% of the population) are destitute and lack sufficient income for adequate nourishment. According to FAO, 8.3% of the population “does not receive the daily intake of calories required for a healthy life”.¹⁷

51. Poverty is higher in the rural areas of the region (50% of the rural population), as is extreme poverty (29% of the rural population)¹⁸. Poverty and undernourishment amongst the rural population are particularly high in Central America, but also in Bolivia and Paraguay, as well as in other upper-middle-income countries like Colombia, Ecuador and Peru. Even two large economies like Brazil and Mexico show high levels of rural poverty (36% and 43%, respectively).

4.1 The rural sector

52. The rural sector in LAC underwent significant changes in recent years when the international trade conditions and the macroeconomic stabilisation and organisation policies began operating. Both the contribution of the sector as well as its own composition registered changes that are reflected in participation in export by a high number of countries in the region, an increase in internal consumption capacity, a reduction of rural poverty, changes in the composition of rural family income, vast access to greater physical mobility and to communications, greater territorial integration (urban-rural interrelations) and stronger institutional architecture (formal and informal).¹⁹

53. However, there is a huge difference between large-scale commercial agriculture and what is known as family farming. In general, it relates to technological differences, to the scale of operations, to access to production factors and to markets, as well as to management and the capacity for directing agri-businesses.

¹⁵ Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), March 2013, “Conference on Sustainable Development in Latin America and the Caribbean: follow-up to the United Nations agenda beyond 2015 and to Rio+20” (preliminary version).

¹⁶ UNDP, Regional Human Development Report for Latin America and the Caribbean 2010.

¹⁷ *Panorama de la Seguridad Alimentaria y Nutricional en América Latina y el Caribe* 2012, RLC FAO/Chile.

¹⁸ ECLAC, *Magnitud de la pobreza y la Indigencia, 1990-2011* (ECLACSTAT, 2012).

¹⁹ *Panel Independiente sobre agricultura para el desarrollo rural*, PIADAL. Piñeiro, M (editor) et al. 2013. *Agricultura y desarrollo en América Latina: gobernanza y políticas públicas*. Teseo. Buenos Aires, Argentina.

54. In the last five years, LAC's rural sector has faced unusual situations that have had, and can have, substantial repercussions. These include the volatility of the prices of agricultural products and production inputs (in 2012 global commerce registered its lowest level in 30 years), the financial crisis in the northern countries which are the traditional purchasers of agricultural products from LAC, the variable weather conditions that affected production, the revaluation of many local currencies and the uncertainty surrounding the growth of emerging countries of commercial importance to the region. The combination of these factors seems to have affected GDP growth in the last two years and led to a reduction in the Real Agricultural Added Value. Restrictions have furthermore been introduced in the sale of products - mainly to protect national production.

55. Despite the trends outlined, the rural production sector in LAC continues to be a net exporter of food, with growth in production exceeding that of its population. This exporter solvency is concentrated in the countries of the South, but some exports have been recovered in Central America and the Caribbean, several of which - together with the Andean countries - continue to depend on imports for internal consumption. Intraregional agri-food exports continue to be low and represent just 15.9% of all of LAC's agri-food exports.²⁰

56. When comparing the relative growth of agricultural production in the last decade with the decade before that, ECLAC-FAO-IICA²¹ distinguishes four groups of countries: a) countries that in the last twenty years maintain average annual growth of over 2% (United States of America, Canada, Argentina, the Dominican Republic, Brazil, Costa Rica and Panama); b) countries that have made a quantitative jump in productivity: going from annual rates of under 2%, and even below 0 rates, to growth rates exceeding 2% in the last decade (Venezuela, Chile, Mexico, El Salvador, Nicaragua, Honduras, Colombia and Ecuador); c) countries whose growth rates remain below 2% in the last twenty years (Dominica, Grenada, Suriname, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Belize and Jamaica); and d) countries where the agricultural exports have practically disappeared and depend increasingly on agricultural imports (St. Lucia, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Trinidad and Tobago).

57. Despite its heterogeneity, this sub-sector maintains great potential both in terms of the production of food as well as the generation of employment, and has the capacity to contribute towards exports and supply the growth of internal demand. It is estimated that in this sub-sector there are close to 17 million units, with a population of around 60 million people. Close to 57% of the production units are located in South America. Estimates indicate that family farming represents more than 75% of the production units in Latin America.²²

4.2 Family farming

58. The importance of family farming in a number of Latin American countries is detailed in Appendix 11. The contribution made by this sub-sector is particularly clear in sector-specific employment and in the proportion of the livestock farms in several countries. In addition, it is worth mentioning that in many countries, family farming is responsible for a significant proportion of the production of food for internal consumption. In Brazil, for example, family farms produce 67% of beans, 84% of yucca, 49% of maize and 52% of milk. In Colombia, they provide over 30% of annual crop production. In Ecuador they produce 64% of potatoes, 85% of onions, 70% of maize, 85% of sweet corn and 83% of sheep meat. In Bolivia, family farms produce 70% of maize and of rice and

²⁰ On the basis of the same source cited in the footnote on page 19.

²¹ ECLAC-FAO-IICA. *Perspectivas de la agricultura y del desarrollo rural en las Américas: una mirada hacia América Latina y el Caribe 2014*. San José, Costa Rica.

²² Op. Cit. ECLAC-FAO-IICA.

almost all of the potatoes and yucca. In Chile, they produce 45% of vegetables for internal consumption, 43% of maize, wheat and rice and 40% of meat and milk.²³

59. Being a sub-sector that faces limitations in production, it is considered that - in general, it uses the production factors efficiently and sustainably. It uses labour - its most abundant factor - more and better, and has a high impact on redistribution and the reduction of poverty. According to the World Bank, the growth of the agricultural sector has more of an impact on the reduction of poverty than any other sector. Estimates by the World Bank indicate that the growth of the agricultural GDP in Latin America is 2.7 times more effective in reducing poverty than GDP growth generated in other sectors. According to the aforementioned study, 1% growth in agricultural GDP would generate increases of over 6.1% and 3.9% in spending on the two poorest deciles of the population - an impact four times greater than that produced by a 1% increase in non-agricultural GDP.²⁴

60. Alternatives to strengthen family farming and reduce the gaps with large-scale family farming and other sectors of the economy have been discussed in LAC over several decades. According to the OECD,²⁵ the main challenges are related to the low quality of education, the high informal nature of employment, the insufficient and low regulation of the infrastructure systems, and the high barriers to competition and investment by domestic and foreign companies. More detailed analyses champion stability in macroeconomic policies and particular advances in the commercial, sector-specific, environmental and social policies including an agenda for the construction of a new agricultural governance.²⁶

61. Some agencies (ECLAC-FAO-IICA)²⁷ suggest that the public policies should be geared towards establishing conditions appropriate to the development of new non-agricultural or agricultural sector production activities of higher added value, to generate employment. They also suggest the generation of skills amongst the rural population to facilitate their insertion in these new production activities, the promotion of segments of family farming that offer greater productivity, feasibility and potential from an economic, social and environmental perspective, including amongst homes linked to subsistence agriculture. It is worth adding participatory and inclusive institutional development to these points.

²³ Schejtman, Alexander. 2008. Alcances sobre la agricultura familiar. Diálogo Rural Iberoamericano, San Salvador. Documento de Trabajo N°21. Programa Dinámicas Territoriales Rurales. Rimisp. Santiago, Chile.

²⁴ World Bank 2008. World development report: Agriculture for development. General overview. Washington, D.C.

²⁵ OECD. 2013. Agricultural Policy Monitoring and Evaluation 2013. OECD Countries and Emerging Economies.

²⁶ Op. Cit. PIADAL, 2013.

²⁷ Op. cit. ECLAC-FAO-IICA.

5 FAO decentralisation policies from 2004-2012

5.1 Background

62. Ten years after the decentralisation process began, an independent evaluation of such process was carried out in 2004. The second phase of the Organisation's decentralisation process began in 2005 when the Director-General presented proposals to the Conference regarding an extensive reform process aiming to increase the Organisation's ability to provide services in the countries and sub-regions. The document mentioned "the unavoidable need to increase the efficacy of FAO's decentralised network to fulfil the needs of the Member Countries and guarantee more efficient use of the human resources to such end".²⁸

63. From 2005 to 2007, FAO carried out an Independent External Evaluation (IEE), which analysed the topic of decentralisation in relation to different aspects of the organisation's operation. The Immediate Action Plan (IPA) - which resulted from the IEE - included actions related to the decentralisation and the Conference, in 2009, and called for a medium and long-term vision with regard to the structure and operation of the network of decentralised offices, as well as a consultation process with the Regional Conferences. A subsequent document called for "a strong network with an ability to respond focussed on the country offices, that provides rapid and effective services through a variety of experts available at FAO, in the Member Countries and partners".²⁹

64. In May 2012, the new Director-General proposed a new strategic framework to the Organisation's governing bodies, in addition to a new structure and manners of operation of the network of decentralised offices. The proposal was analysed by the FAO Council which approved a document that establishes the three main objectives of decentralisation:³⁰

- i. improve performance, results and the impact of all of FAO's work at country level;
- ii. reduce fragmentation and increase integration across all aspects of FAO's work, irrespective of the source of funding, between the decentralised offices and Headquarters, between normative and global knowledge products and their actions in the field, and throughout the transition from emergency activities to those of rehabilitation and development.
- iii. foster links to national and regional institutions, other international bodies that form part of the United Nations or not, the private sector, universities, research bodies, and civil society.

65. The following three "key topics" were identified to achieve the aforementioned objectives:³¹

- improvements in the planning and establishment of priorities with a view to the countries and regions intervening to a greater extent;
- a more flexible network of decentralised offices based on a new balance between the regional offices, sub-regional technical hubs and countries; and,
- an integrated model for the implementation of programmes that involves improvements in the management of human resources in the interests of strengthening performance, accountability and impact in the countries.

²⁸ FAO reform: a vision for the twenty-first century, 2005, C 2005/INF/19.

²⁹ Visión de la Estructura y el Funcionamiento de las Oficinas Descentralizadas, 2011, CL 141/15, 2011.

³⁰ Structure and operation of the decentralised office network, June 2012, CL 144/15.

³¹ CL 144/15.

5.2 *Main decentralisation measures in the region*

66. Following its decentralisation policies and strategies, the Organisation has progressively been taking different decentralisation measures. The evaluation found that, as regards the region of Latin America and the Caribbean, efforts were made to achieve decentralisation mainly through:

- transferring the main supervision of the country offices to the regional offices,³² in other words, to the RLC in 2010 and the subsequent establishment of the Network of FAOR Offices (FAOR Network) in the RLC;
- The formal opening of the Sub-regional Office for Central America (SLM) in Panama in 2007,³³ and the arrival of its first Coordinator in 2008. To all intents and purposes, the SLM began its operations in 2010, as can be observed from the financial figures compiled;
- the transfer of responsibility for supervising the technical officers of the regional and sub-regional offices, from their technical departments/divisions in the Headquarters to the Regional Representative and the Sub-regional Coordinators respectively, albeit while maintaining functional ties with their departments in the Headquarters;
- the establishment of Multidisciplinary Teams (MDT) in the sub-regional offices: in 2008 three MDT were established in the SLS (Sub-regional Office for South America, in Santiago), the SLC (Barbados) and the SLM (Panama). One of them, the SLS, stopped operating in 2012 and its duties were absorbed by the RLC;
- the establishment of decentralised planning processes, specifically through the instrument known as the Country Programming Framework (CPF) which replaced the previous instrument, the National Medium Term Priority Framework (NMTPF);
- the delegation of the identification, formulation and implementation of the Technical Cooperation Programme (TCP) projects to the DOs in 2010;
- the increase in the delegation of authority to the DOs in field programme planning, approval, implementation and monitoring matters, including greater authority in the implementation of letters of agreement, in procurement and in human resources management;
- the assignment of a duty of governance to the FAO Regional Conferences in the orientation of the regional priorities and the work of the Organisation in the respective regions. In the case of Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC), this was put into practice in the Regional Conference of Panama (2010) and in that of Buenos Aires (2012).

67. The most important of these measures are analysed and evaluated throughout this report.³⁴

5.3 *Delegation of authority*

68. The Delegation of Authority³⁵ is one of the key instruments of the decentralisation process. It is an instrument for improving the performance of the organisation by speeding up decision-making and processes. It also reinforces the internal control system, making attempts to clarify roles and responsibilities in the chain of the decision-making processes and in the delivery of the Organisation's mandate.

³² Previously located in the Office for the Coordination of Normative, Operational and Decentralised Activities (OCD), now named the Office of Support to Decentralisation (OSD).

³³ Council Report CL 132/REP.

³⁴ As regards the emergency and rehabilitation operations, the responsibility for such transferred to the RLC in June 2012. The transfer of the RLC to the SLM and SLC was expected to take place in 2013.

³⁵ Defined in the FAO Administrative Manual, MS 109 "the authority conferred by the Director-General upon the Organisation's civil servants with regard to administrative, budgetary, financial and human resources matters".

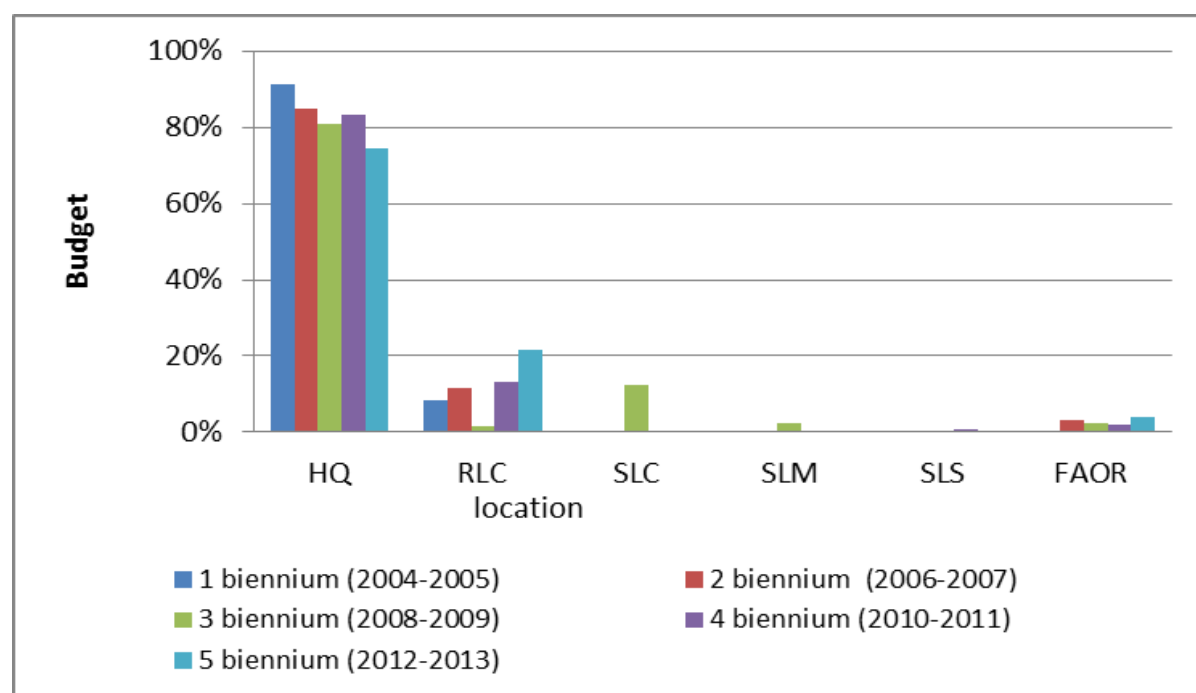
69. The evaluation team found that FAO staff and non-staff employees did not have enough knowledge about the important reforms the Organisation is making, including decentralisation itself. It is possible that the communication and information provided to the DOs was insufficient and that there was a lack of appropriate spaces for information and discussion with and amongst employees. The interviews held throughout the field visits found that the implementation of the GRMS was seen as the most important decentralisation measure, although it was highlighted that it was only a decentralisation of processes and not an increase in authority or in the ability to make decisions for the Decentralised Offices, particularly at country level.

5.3.1 *Decentralisation and allocation of budgets by Principal Technical Units, Chief Technical Support Officers and Operational Units*

70. The location of the Lead Technical Unit (LTU)³⁶, of the Lead Technical Officer (LTO)³⁷ and of the Operational Unit (OU)/Budget Holder (BH)³⁸ can be considered an important indicator of decentralisation and of the delegation of authority.

71. As can be observed in Figure 1, in the majority of cases the technical units of the Headquarters continue to assume the role of LTU, although a constant reduction of this duty in favour of the region is being registered. This is essentially due to the increase in funding from the Unilateral Trust Fund (UTF projects) and from the regional projects that have their LTU in the RLC. The LTUs are not very present at the sub-regional and country levels (FAOR). At country level, the Representations have the responsibility of LTU when dealing with TCP facility projects.

Figure 1. Percentage budgetary allocation by LTU



Source: Evaluation Team based on FPMIS data

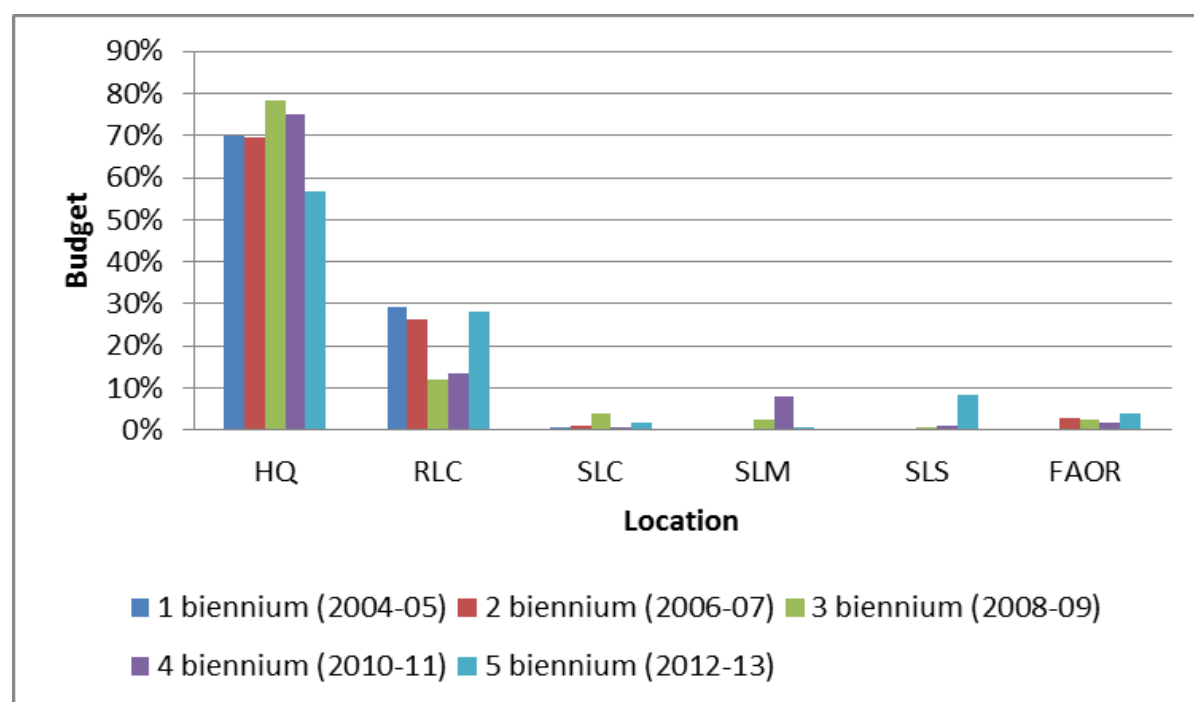
³⁶ The Lead Technical Unit (LTU) is responsible for general technical supervision throughout the project cycle.

³⁷ The Lead Technical Officer (LTO) is the Technical Officer of reference for the project, with abilities to ensure the technical assistance required by the LTU.

³⁸ The Operating Unit is the office in charge of the execution of the operations of the project and often includes the Budget Holder, in other words, the person responsible for the management of the project, including the budget.

72. In accordance with the subsidiarity principle, the LTOs should be located as close as possible to the location where the projects take place. However, as illustrated by Figure 2, the vast majority of the LTOs are located at Headquarters, although this trend changed in the 2012-13 biennium. The RLC assumes the rest of the LTO. Despite its proximity to the projects, the decentralisation of the LTOs to the sub-regional offices is still very far from reaching substantial levels. Similarly, the existence of the LTO in Country Offices (FAOR) is related only to the implementation of the TCP. The FAO Rep can have a role as a TO in their area of competence.

Figure 2. Percentage budgetary allocation by LTO

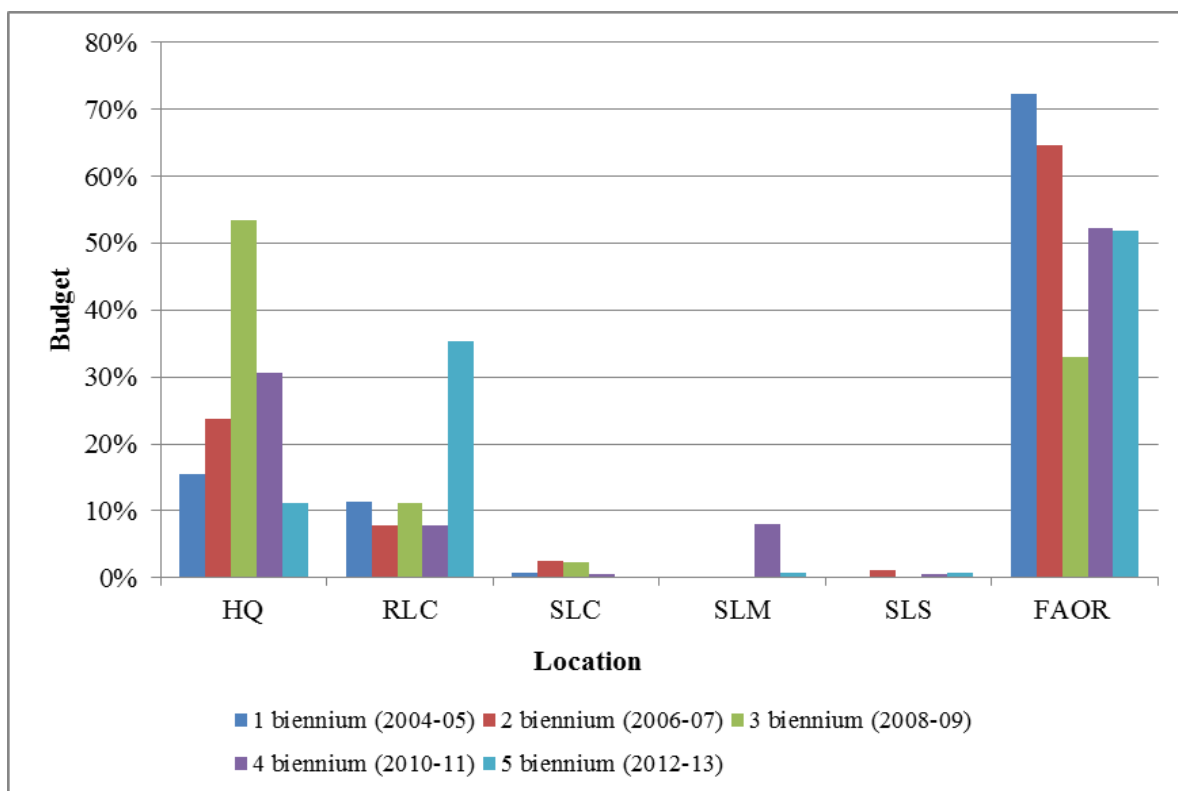


Source: Evaluation Team based on FPMIS data

73. The Headquarters have been the Operational Unit for a substantial part of the budgetary allocation to the region in the last ten years (see Figure 3.), due mainly to global FAO/Government Cooperation Projects (for example, funded by the European Union, the Global Environment Facility (GEF) and the projects with multilateral funding) and, particularly for the 2008-09 biennium, to the Emergency and Rehabilitation projects (E&R) operated from Rome at that time.

74. In the 2012-13 biennium, the budget managed from Headquarters has reduced significantly while the RLC has become the OU/BH of a substantial portion of the budget, due to the increase in regional projects. In the 2010-11 and 2012-13 biennia only 50% of the total budget for the field operations assigned to the region was allocated to the Country Offices (FAOR). Taking into account that in the 2004-05 biennium this allocation exceeded 70%, the reduction is surprisingly negative in terms of decentralisation. The Sub-regional offices continue to be secondary agents as Operational Units.

Figure 3. Percentage budgetary allocation by Operational Unit



Source: Evaluation Team based on FPMIS data

5.3.2 *Decentralisation and reporting lines*

75. The main reporting lines were clearly established on the Director-General Bulletin (DGB 2010/4) and on the April 2011 Circular on Responsibilities and Relationships. In addition, it was noted that the FAO Administrative Manual, mainly sections 117 and 118 which describes the responsibilities and roles of the decentralised offices, is not entirely up-to-date.

76. As mentioned under point 5.2 above, the primary reporting line of the Technical Officers and General Services Staff is to the Heads of the Offices where they perform their duties: employees of the Country Offices report to the Country Representative, Sub-regional Officers to the Sub-regional Coordinator and the Regional Officers to the Regional Representative. The primary reporting line of both FAO Representatives in the countries and of Sub-regional Coordinators is to the Regional Representative.

77. The primary reporting lines are not the only relationships existing between FAO employees, given that there are formal functional relationships, both vertical as well as horizontal, amongst Technical Officers located in the different Decentralised Offices and at Headquarters, and personal relationships that also play an important role in the general operation of the Organisation. One would not think that the overlapping of these different types of relationships and of communication lines would create substantial problems. However, it has created a sense of confusion.

78. The evaluation noted that there is a certain ambiguity in the duty of the Sub-regional Offices and, consequently, in the relationship between the FAO Representations and these Offices. Although there is no hierarchical relationship between FAO Representatives and the Sub-regional Coordinator, the latter exercises “*leadership in FAO’s response to the sub-regional priorities in close collaboration*

with the sub-regional bodies”,³⁹ and “*supervises the planning and implementation of the assistance that the Sub-regional Technical Officers and FAO Representatives provide to the FAO Projects and Programmes at country and sub-regional level*”. This is a contradictory institutional framework that can generate inefficiencies, duplications, misunderstandings and - at times – even conflicts, as found during a high number of the interviews conducted.

79. As regards to the Sub-regional Technical Officers, it is clear that their primary reporting line is to the Sub-regional Coordinator. However, it is not clear what their relationship would be with the FAO Representatives in the countries of the sub-region and with the FAO's counterparts in the countries themselves that may need their support. There are extreme cases of Technical Officers who report directly to the Ministries of the country and not to the Representatives. There are also Representatives that do not address the Sub-regional Office to ask for technical assistance.

5.3.3 Delegation of authority and administrative procedures

80. Since 2010, Headquarters' responsibility for a series of coordination and supervision duties in the administrative, financial and general management affairs of the DOs has been transferred, specifically from the Office of Support to Decentralisation (OSD) to the Regional Office. In particular, the supervision and evaluation of the Representations' performance, the planning and allocation of financial resources, the monitoring of the respective disbursements, the management of positions in the Representation (including the opening of vacancies), the recruitment of National Professional Officers and the planning of employee training programmes, as well as the functioning of the corporate operating systems have been transferred to the Regional Office. Headquarters has produced a manual to support the regional offices in exercising these new duties.

81. The Regional Office assumed a very extensive delegation of authority from 2011 through the implementation of the FAOR Network of offices in order to support and improve the general operation of the FAO offices in the region's countries.

82. In all of the visited countries, the appraisal of the function of the Office's Network was very positive. It is perceived as a fast and efficient support instrument for the different management problems in the Representations with evident and multiple comparative advantages over the previous situation in which each problem had to be handled with the Headquarters in Rome.

83. It should be pointed out that the coordination and management of the field activities, including the budget management for projects was decentralised to the FAO Representations in the countries from 2000 onwards. This contributed in creating a wealth of experience and knowledge about administrative and financial procedures in the Decentralised Offices, particularly through the Assistant Representatives (Administrative and Programme) and the General Services employees.

84. The attribution of new responsibilities that have taken place in recent years has benefited from the implemented capacity in the DOs. However, there is a perception in the DOs that decentralisation has not always translated into a greater delegation of authority to the Country Offices as regards to the administrative and management procedures, limiting itself, to transferring the delivery of operations that were previously performed at Headquarters or in the Regional Office. The concern that the decentralisation will translate into a new centralisation at a regional level was also observed.

³⁹ JM 2011 2/3 and Circular on Responsibilities and Relationships, April 2011

85. Since 2010 the delegation of authority to the FAO Country Representations has increased for procurement and for letters of agreement, from 25,000 USD to 100,000 USD.⁴⁰ At the same time, the delegation of authority for procurement and Letters of Agreement was increased (up to 150,000 USD) for the Sub-regional Offices and (up to 200,000 USD) for the Regional Office. In general, the evaluation observed that these limits are sufficient for the needs of the Decentralised Offices, including RLC. In the event of exceeding the limit FAO Procurement Service (CSAP), in Headquarters, should be consulted directly. It should be highlighted that the established limit is often exceeded in the Emergency area and that, so far, FAO's Emergency Operations and Rehabilitation Division (TCE) has managed to expedite these processes.

86. The increase in the delegation of authority for the Letters of Agreement with the same procurement limits is an important tool for the decentralisation given the extensive use of this instrument in the implementation of projects. The analysis of the audits in the region shows that the use of the Letters frequently involves problems relating to the lack of awareness of or infringement of the rules to be followed on the matter. The evaluation observed that the use of the Letters of Agreement is unequal, varied and, in some cases, excessively flexible in the interpretation of the existing rules (as is the case in Nicaragua, for example). In recent years, the Regional Office has organised trainings on procurement and Letters of Agreement, involving employees from the entire region.

5.3.4 Delegation of authority and management of personnel

87. An important aspect of the decentralisation has been the delegation of authority to the Decentralised Offices for the selection and, in some cases, recruitment of their own staff. Since 2008 FAO Representatives have been authorised to recruit national employees for a fixed period of time financed by voluntary contributions (Field Programme) using different types of contracts for the non-staff human resources (NSHR). The high number of types of contracts leads to confusion, lack of awareness and arbitrariness on the matter, like it has been repeatedly pointed out by the audits in the region. The result is a failure to apply the most relevant types of contract for each situation. This matter needs to be urgently reorganised.

88. FAO Representatives are also involved in the selection of national staff funded by the Regular Programme. The selection process is fully managed at a local level, but the final approval is formally granted by the Regional Office, in the case of General Services, and by the Headquarters, in the case of Professionals. The process of selecting and recruiting Professionals is delayed beyond an acceptable period given that - according to information provided by the Regional Office - the recruitment process, on average, takes over 200 days from the time the vacancy is announced to when it is communicated to the person selected. The time that passes between the selection of the person and their definitive incorporation also has to be added to this period.

89. Since 2010 the Regional Office and the Sub-regional Coordinators have been involved in the recruitment of FAO Representatives and of professional employees for the sub-region, and they are responsible for hiring General Services staff for their own office.

5.3.5 Delegation of authority in the Technical Cooperation Programme (TCP)

90. The Technical Cooperation Programme (TCP), funded by the FAO Regular Programme, is seen as an important instrument of decentralisation since it is driven by the demands of the Member Countries and responds to the problems identified by the national agents.

⁴⁰ Section 502 and 502 of the FAO Administrative Manual.

91. Since 2010, the procedures for preparing and approving TCP projects have been decentralised “to the lowest possible level of the FAO decentralised structure”⁴¹. The Regional Representative (RR) is authorised to approve the regional projects, the Sub-regional Coordinator (SRC) can approve sub-regional projects and the FAO Representative can approve national projects.

92. The TCP preparation process, despite being coordinated at a decentralised level (by the Representative in the case of the national TCPs), involves Headquarters, which indicates what the Lead Technical Unit and the Lead Technical Officer responsible for the Project ought to be, as well as the Regional Office, which handles the TCP funds and provides information about their availability. The technical approval of the project is the responsibility of the LTU and the LTO. The formal approval, in the case of national TCPs, is from the Representative itself, but an additional endorsement is required from the Review Panel Committee (Peer Committee), put together ad-hoc and located in the office immediately superior to the Office presenting the project, for example at a sub-regional level in the case of national projects. Table 2 shows the responsible parties for the approval and peer review.

Table 2. Approval and peer review of the Technical Cooperation Programme

Type of TCP	Approval	Peer review
<i>Regional TCP</i>	ADG/RR	Headquarters
<i>Sub-regional TCP</i>	SLC, SLM	RLC
	ADG/RR (for South America)	Headquarters for South America
<i>National TCP</i>	Country Representative	SLM, SLC, RLC
<i>TCP facility</i>	Country Representative	<100,000 USD: nobody
		Between 100,000 and 200,000 USD: diagram above

Source: Evaluation Team

93. There are therefore several levels of approval of the national TCPs:

1. The Lead Technical Officer, appointed by the Lead Technical Unit, technically approves the project;
2. The TCP Coordinator (Budget Holder/FAO Representative) operationally approves the project;
3. The Review Panel Committee endorses the prior technical and operational approvals, ensuring that the project complies with the TCP criteria.
4. The Regional Representative assigns the funds required for the implementation of the project (provided that there are funds available).

94. The TCPs represent an important instrument in the framework of FAO's technical assistance to Member Countries and are, in general, seen in a positive way by all agents. However, both in the Representations and counterparts, the excessive bureaucratic nature of the processes has been brought

⁴¹ Chapter 1 of the TCP Manual, field programme circular (No. FPC 2009/03) December 2009.

into discussion as have the substantial differences in approval times - sometimes very fast while on other occasions excessively long - and the scarce autonomy of the Representations and Governments in decision-making.

95. There are perceptions of excessive discretion about how the formulation and approval process takes place. Adding to this the scarce transparency of the allocation of TCP funds at a regional level (see chapter 7) reinforces the general impression of a process that has not yet achieved the simplicity, agility and transparency required to be an instrument for FAO's effective and efficient decentralisation of technical cooperation. On many occasions, the TCP Facility instrument is preferred for its greater agility and speed, despite its budgetary limits.

96. The evaluation has gathered very positive comments and opinions about the Technical Cooperation Programme Facility (TCP Facility). The aim of this Facility is to provide immediate support to local programmes and strengthen the Field Programme's development processes. The limit for projects within this Facility is 200,000 USD per country, sub-region or region, and by biennium. However, for amounts below 100,000 USD (see Table 2) it becomes a much more agile instrument that is highly valued by the Country Representatives.

97. In December 2012, the Council approved a series of measures to improve the TCP: a) CPFs will be the basis to determine funding priorities, in line with the new SOs; b) the role and responsibilities of the DOs will increase; c) procedures will be simplified and harmonised.

5.3.6 Information technology

98. A network of information technology specialists has been established in Latin America and the Caribbean, where each Office has a consultant, in the majority funded by the FAO network, which provides services to the Representations and, in some countries, to the Field Programme teams outside of the office. These consultants have standard terms of reference prepared by the information technology (IT) team in the RLC - they report administratively to the Assistant Representative for Administration and technically to the IT team in RLC, where they are evaluated every six months.

99. At the sub-regional level there are also IT Consultants that respond to the IT team in RLC. At the regional level, prior to 2010, the IT team reported to the Information Technology Division (CIO) at Headquarters and later began reporting to the Administration Officer in the Regional Office. In RLC, this team is quite independent and autonomous and its operation will have to be monitored.

5.3.7 Global Resource Management System

100. The Global Resource Management System (GRMS) was introduced in LAC between November 2012 and June 2013. It is therefore one of the latest FAO decentralisation measures and that is how it is perceived in the region. It makes it possible to perform duties that were delegated but for which there were no tools. The initial perception is that it has empowered the decentralised offices, particularly at country level, given that the Country Offices can now initiate and conclude processes within their margin of authority without having to ask the Regional Office for support, for example when recruiting local employees.

101. The GRMS implementation process is very recent and its use and understanding amongst the Decentralised Offices is very diverse. It is too early to know what effects or impact this new tool will have on the overall decentralisation process. However, it is worth mentioning some aspects that have been observed. Despite having an increased initial workload at the moment, employees are happy with the new instrument but they feel that they have not been appropriately trained on how to use it.

102. The subsequent GRMS implementation phase also concerns users, since there seems to be no long-term plans to establish a robust help-desk system. On average, there have been over 200 monthly requests for online assistance (known as "tickets") in the region since the GRMS was implemented, and they only represent a fraction of the enquiries since the rest are received through Skype, by e-mail or over telephone. Another important aspect is that, at the Representations' level, the system does not allow you to extract certain information and reports, which was possible before with the FAS system, as in the case of the "committed funds" of the projects.

5.4 Conclusions

103. The Evaluation Team concludes that the Regional, Sub-regional and Country Offices in LAC now have the authority to define priorities and mobilise resources at a level close to the member countries.

104. The decentralisation process established roles and responsibilities for the three levels of Decentralised Offices: Regional Office, Sub-regional Office and Country Office. However, these roles are ambiguous; in some cases they are duplicated and have not been communicated efficiently. This contributes in making it harder to clearly differentiate the mandate and purpose of each of these three levels. There are attitudes and rules that reproduce ex-ante control mechanisms, from Headquarters or from the RLC, that limit the Organisation's efficient and quick operation at country level. The FAO Representatives do not have full authority to become the main decision-makers and provide a quick service. At the other extreme, the accountability and performance evaluation mechanisms are still weak.

105. As regards to the delegation of authority in terms of technical support, in the majority of the cases, Headquarters' technical units continue to assume the role of Lead Technical Units (LTU). In accordance with the subsidiarity principle, the Lead Technical Officers (LTO) should be located as close as possible to the location where the projects take place. However, the vast majority of the LTOs are at Headquarters. Headquarters has also been the Operational Unit (OU) for a substantial part of the budgetary allocation to the region. The Sub-regional offices continue to be secondary agents as Operational Units.

106. The delegation of responsibilities was not accompanied with more resources. The Regular Programme's resources in the region have been at a standstill since 2010 (as can be seen in Figure 4, further on). In terms of bringing the process of defining priorities and mobilising resources to a level that is closest to the countries, decentralisation is still an unfinished process in Latin America and the Caribbean.

107. The delegation of authority for procurement and Letters of Agreement is sufficient to cover the needs of the offices although there is still a certain unawareness of the administrative rules in this area. There is concern in the case of emergencies when the procurement exceeds the limit of delegation of authority as these must be agile and quick, and the need to refer to Headquarters can delay the processes.

108. The increase in the delegation of authority in the area of human resources to the decentralised offices has not been accompanied by enough training and support.

109. The TCP approval process is complex and limits the delegation of authority granted to the TCP Coordinator. There are several levels of approval and endorsement, and responsibilities are duplicated throughout the process. As can be seen in Chapter 7, the lack of explicit criteria for the allocation of TCP resources leads to additional limitations on the effectiveness and efficiency of the organisation at country level.

110. In the current context, where meetings are held and assistance is offered through conference calls, information and communication technologies are essential. Decentralisation should strengthen skills to better serve the particular needs of each Decentralised Office.

111. The GRMS is one of the latest decentralisation measures that has empowered the decentralised offices, particularly country offices. The system was fully implemented in July 2013 and not all of the active modules have been implemented in all of the regions yet. The use and knowledge on the handling of this system varies from one office to another.

5.5 Recommendations

112. The Evaluation Team recommends that RLC Management implements an assertive and comprehensive process to clarify the scope of the decentralisation amongst all its employees as soon as possible. In particular, we suggest highlighting and clarifying the roles of the three levels of Decentralised Offices (regional, sub-regional and country) and the subsidiarity criteria between them.

113. This process of clarification of the roles of the three levels of Decentralised Offices should include an explanation of the role of the Technical Officers, highlighting their essential role of supporting the implementation of FAO's programmes in the countries and of advice at that level. RLC Management, in agreement with the FAO Management at HQ, should strive to place, in the majority of cases, the Lead Technical Units, the Lead Technical Officers and the Operational Units as close as possible to where the projects are undertaken.

114. The Evaluation Team recommends that RLC Management improve communication and strengthen training about the types of FAO contracts in the country offices.

115. Clarify the process of approval of the Technical Cooperation Programmes and eliminate redundant steps.

116. In addition, maintaining a structure of support for the GRMS in the RLC and continuing to develop all of its modules is recommended.

6 **FAO presence in Latin America and the Caribbean: Cost effectiveness and efficiency**

117. This chapter includes an analysis of the cost-effectiveness and efficiency of FAO's performance in the Latin American and Caribbean region from 2004-2012.⁴² The Evaluation's emphasis has been on estimating and analysing the cost-effectiveness and efficiency of FAO's presence in Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC) as a result of having adopted the organisation's decentralisation policies and measures in the aforementioned period. Although the causal link is not unique or exclusive, the evaluation team assumed that the decentralisation measures adopted, which are expressed in a delegation of responsibilities and of authority, were effective if they resulted in a greater delivery of resources by means of the decentralised structures in LAC. These structures sufficiently account for the organisation's presence in a country/sub-region/region. Exercising authority translates into an effective decentralised presence if the ability to make disbursements and, consequently, to deliver is increased. The analysis uses the annual disbursements made by the decentralised offices in the LAC region as a main indicator⁴³.

118. It is important to clarify possible methodological queries. The Evaluation does not set out to measure impact. It is not about estimating the consequences of FAO's interventions in the region on variables such as hunger, malnutrition, poverty, or the behaviour of the agricultural sector. To do this, methodological tools would be needed that make it possible to estimate interactions, control through specific variables, resolve attribution problems, integrate quality considerations and aggregate regionally. The evaluation period and the team composition would also have to be different. Furthermore, it is not certain that the task would be successful. Definitions of objectives and measurable goals, indicators and baselines are missing. Alternatively, the Evaluation has placed itself at the level of products/results of the decentralisation process in the region. The most elementary of the Decentralised Office products is turning the Regular Programme allocations and the Field Programme approvals resulting from such process into disbursements, with a view to make an effective use of the Organisation's limited resources.

119. The evaluation prepared estimates of effectiveness and efficiency at this level. In terms of effectiveness, the disbursements, the modalities and the extent to which the organisation has mobilised resources for the field programme was analysed. The multiplier concept was developed (as detailed further on) given that the Field Programme is central to maintaining the current levels of presence and accounts for 75-80% of the total disbursements in the region. The origin of these resources, largely from the region's Governments, is determined by demand and by the evaluation of the relevance and effectiveness that these sources of funding hold for FAO. FAO also offers knowledge, regulations and advice on public policies. Given the time available, the composition of the evaluation team, the lack of indicators and baselines, and the aggregation problems across a high number of countries, the work focussed on disbursements as it was possible to consolidate a database for these. The relationships between disbursements and staff (of all categories) and between spending on professional services (given that FAO offers knowledge, regulations and advice) and administrative services are internationally used measures of efficiency.

120. The indicators developed by the Evaluation are also used by other multilateral, bilateral and non-governmental organisations. In this regard, they are valid, consistent and contribute towards establishing trends and comparisons that may be of interest to both FAO HQ and the Regional

⁴² In accordance with the OECD/DAC glossary of key terms in evaluation and results based management, effectiveness is the extent to which the development intervention's objectives were achieved, or are expected to be achieved, taking into account their relative importance. Efficiency is the measure of how economically resources/inputs (funds, time, etc.) are converted to results.

⁴³ Annual payment includes disbursements made between 1 January and 31 December of one year. In the case of FAO a tax year is calculated as 13 months.

Management. Naturally they have their limitations and do not cover all aspects that may be required. The Evaluation's recommendations must be interpreted taking these limitations into account. Decisions by the Management must incorporate considerations specific to the countries and individual contexts. In this regard, this Evaluation contributes with specific inputs for that decision-making process. However, it does not delve into individual contexts or countries.

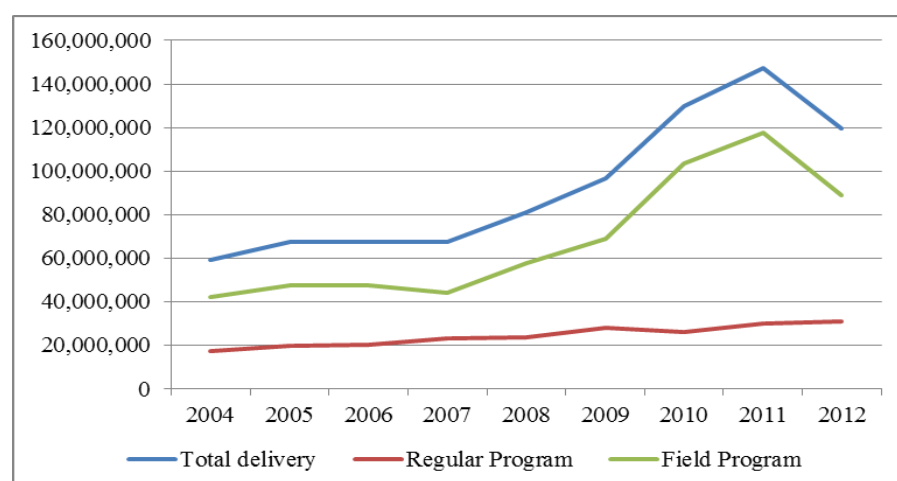
121. The Evaluation Team (ET) consolidated a database for 2004-2012, with the following information: a) annual disbursements, for all types of sources of funding, including "Regular Programme" (RP)⁴⁴ and "Field Programme" (FP); b) functional use of the funds by type of expense, including "expenditure on professionals", "expenditure on general services employees" and "others". The weight of the analysis is focussed on 2008-2012, given that 2010 was defined as the central period for the most important decentralisation measures relevant to this evaluation. Narrowing the period in this way enables a "before and after" type of analysis.⁴⁵

122. The two series come from different databases. Whereas the former is gathered based on a combination of ORACLE and FPMIS, the latter is sourced entirely from the ORACLE system. Unfortunately, the synchronisation between both databases is not automatic and as such the figures do not entirely coincide. However, given the restrictions shown with the availability of information in the Organisation, they are considered adequate for the purpose of this analysis. The analysis is broken down into 36 "units of analysis": 33 FAO representations in countries, 1 regional office and 2 sub-regional offices. The regional and sub-regional offices are not fully comparable with the country offices. In future and to strengthen the inputs for decision-making, we would have to consider adapting the indicators prepared in this Evaluation to FAO's complex presence on the field.

6.1 Effectiveness

123. Figure 4 shows the evolution of the total disbursements during the analysis period, broken down into Regular Programme and Field Programme. There is a substantial increase in FAO's disbursements in the region, represented by the 47% increase in total disbursements between 2008 and 2012.

Figure 4. FAO total disbursements in Latin America and the Caribbean, 2004-2012 in USD



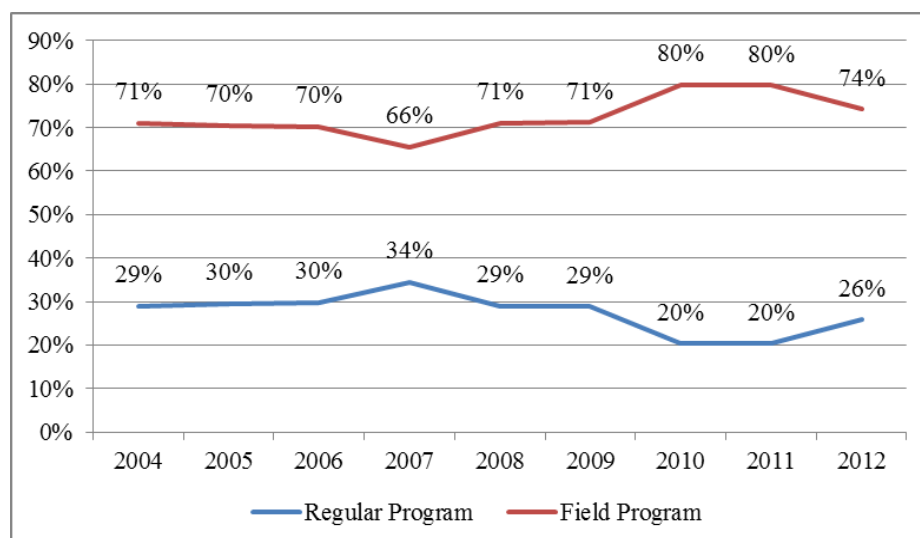
⁴⁴ FAO also uses the concept of "Net Appropriations". The Regular Programme is used in this report given that the analysis focuses on disbursements and not on allocations (programmed amounts).

⁴⁵ The selection of a specific base year has an effect on the trends. The Uruguay Office believes that the selection of 2008 is detrimental to the performance analysis of such.

Source: Evaluation Team with ORACLE and FPMIS data

124. The most dynamic component in that increase are the FP delivery figures, which increased by 53% from 2008-2012. The RP on the other hand increased by 31% in the same period. Whereas the FP increased from 71% in 2008 to 74% in 2012, the RP reduced from 29% to 26% of total disbursements in the same period (see Figure 5). These changes were even more marked between 2008 and 2011 and seem to have halted due to the reduction in the pace of growth of the total disbursements in 2012.

Figure 5. Delivery of FAO's Regular Programme and Field Programme in LAC, in % of total disbursements

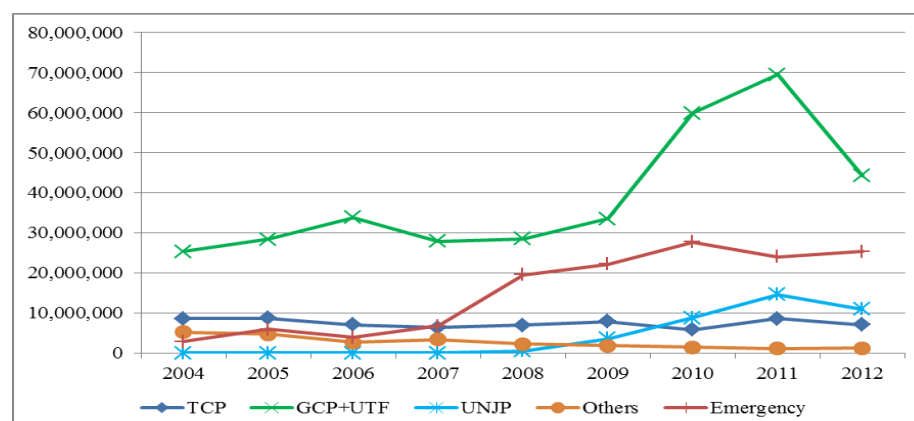


Source: Evaluation Team with ORACLE and FPMIS data

125. The first conclusion of this analysis is that there is a significant increase (43%) in FAO's disbursements in the region between the period immediately prior and subsequent to the decentralisation measures. The main reason is the expansion of the FP, as a result of an approximation of the organisation, through its units in the region, to the governments and priorities of public policies and investments in Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC).

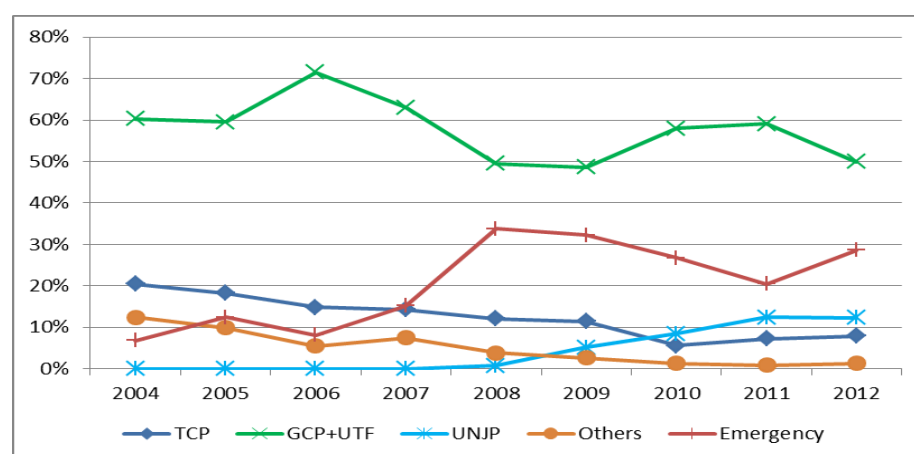
126. The expansion of the FP is fundamentally based on growth in the delivery of funds from Unilateral Trust Funds and the FAO/Government Cooperation Programme, which together increased by 55% from 2008 to 2012 (with an even higher peak in 2011) and that represent over 50% of the Field Programme funding. Figure 6 shows the full evolution of the different sources of funding for Field Programme projects and Figure 7 shows the participation of those sources of funding in terms of percentages. From 2004-2012, 300 million USD were delivered from bilateral donor funds, 75% of which took place from 2008-2012, representing - in this latter period - 52% of the field programme (see Appendix 12). It is worth highlighting that a third of the bilateral funds paid between 2008 and 2012 (76.5 million USD) come from countries within the LAC region. These resources are fundamentally guided by considerations of demand in the countries providing them. These countries can freely choose public bodies of the national governments, other international organisations or private sector and non-governmental bodies for the implementation and delivery of these funds. Selecting FAO for the implementation of these activities shows that the organisation responds effectively to the existing demand. This development in the FP is closely related to FAO's alignment with the priorities of the governments in the region and to the increased relevance of the operations. This is something that was repeatedly corroborated in interviews with representatives of the governments surveyed.

Figure 6. Field Programme delivery by source of fund, in USD



Source: Evaluation Team with ORACLE and FPMIS data

Figure 7. Field Programme delivery by source of fund, in % of the total disbursements



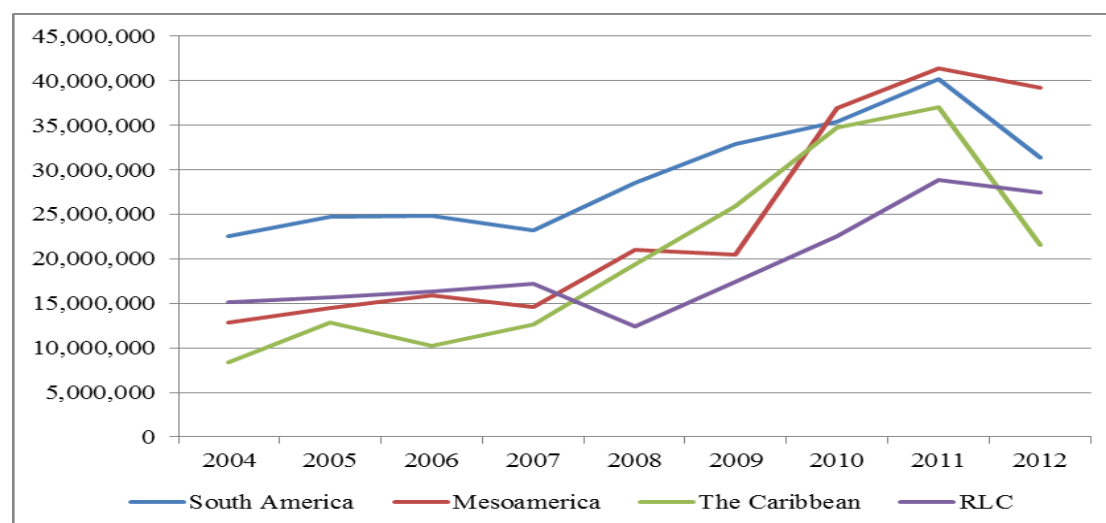
Source: Evaluation Team with ORACLE and FPMIS data

127. The Technical Cooperation Projects (TCP) and the Emergency Projects (EP) maintained their relative participations in the disbursements from 2008-12, at levels of 10% and 30% respectively.

128. One of the most important decentralisation measures, as explained above, in chapter 2 was the creation of the Sub-regional Office for Central America (SLM).

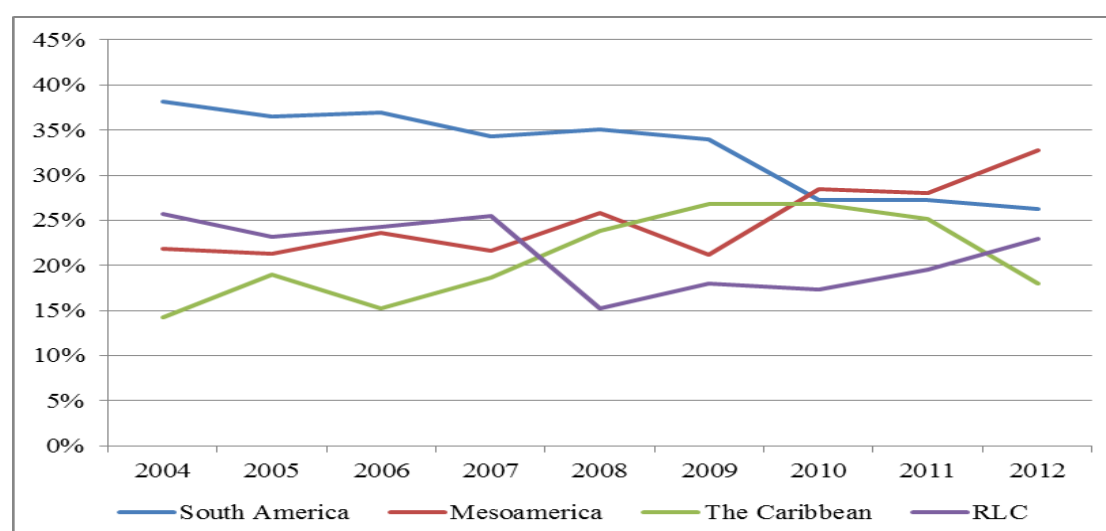
Figure 8 shows the evolution of the total disbursements by sub-region, and Figure 9 shows the evolution of the relative importance of the three sub-regions in LAC.

Figure 8. Total FAO disbursements in LAC in USD, by sub-region



Source: Evaluation Team with ORACLE and FPMIS data

Figure 9. Total FAO disbursements in LAC, by sub-region, as a % of total disbursements



Source: Evaluation Team with ORACLE and FPMIS data

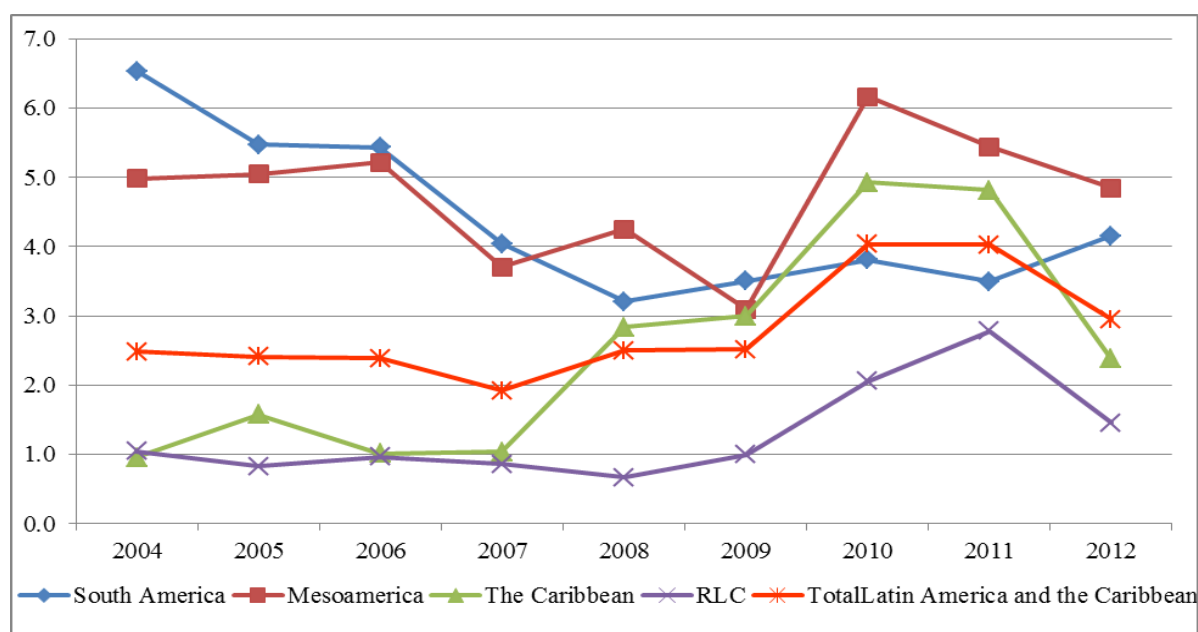
129. Central America, which represented 21.8% of the total disbursements in 2004, increased its participation to 25.8% in 2008 and to 32.8% in 2012. Once again, a significant change in the relative importance of the sub-regions is partially explained as being a result of a specific decentralisation measure. Appendix 13 shows the importance of the field programme in the evolution of the total disbursements by sub-region, and confirms the aforementioned finding about the dynamic role of such as a consequence of decentralisation.

130. The same graphs also show the evolution of the Regional Office for Latin America and the Caribbean (RLC). Another important decentralisation measure in 2010 was the empowering of RLC as the highest authority for decisions concerning the region, which has meant that the country offices now report directly to the ADG/RR in Santiago, Chile. The RLC disbursements increased by 121.6% from 2008 to 2012 and their relative importance in the total disbursements increased from 15.2% to 22.9%.

131. The Caribbean sub-region decreased its participation in the total disbursements between 2008 and 2012 from 23.8% to 18% and its disbursements increased by only 11.3% during that period.

132. In order to take a more in-depth look at the analysis of effectiveness, the multiplier concept was used. Such summarises the relationship (ratio) between the Field Programme and the Regular Programme, and expresses the FP's ability to mobilise resources against each RP dollar. The ability to mobilise resources through the decentralised structures is an additional measure of effectiveness in the decentralisation process. In a situation like that of Latin America and the Caribbean, where the donor countries are leaving the region, the mobilisation of resources is a proxy indicator of a relevant and effective presence. An increase in voluntary contributions, particularly from the region's countries, indicates that FAO provides pertinent and flexible solutions to the development problems in the region's countries, while strengthening its decentralised presence (see paragraph 115 above). The responses received from the government representatives during the interviews held in the countries visited clearly supported this explanation. Figure 10 summarises the total and sub-regional evolution. Appendix 14 shows detailed information for the 36 units of analysis.

Figure 10. Multiplier: Field Programme to Regular Programme ratio



Source: Evaluation Team with ORACLE and FPMIS data

133. The total multiplier of FAO's presence in LAC was 2.9 from 2004-2012, and 3.2 from 2008-2012. This report uses the 3.2 multiplier as a level of reference for comparative and longitudinal analyses of the different units of analysis.

134. On the basis of the multiplier, it was found that FAO's effectiveness in LAC increased in keeping with the decentralisation measures implemented from 2008-2012. Central America and South America display multipliers that are higher than the regional total. The Caribbean and RLC are below the regional total. In the case of the Caribbean, the multiplier level in 2012 is even below that reached in 2008. The analysis shows a loss of effectiveness for the Caribbean and RLC.

135. With the aim of simplifying subsequent analyses, the 36 units have been categorised into three large groups: a) units with a low multiplier, whose figures for 2008-2012 are below 3; b) units with a medium multiplier, whose values for the 2008-2012 period range from 3 to 6; and c) units with a high multiplier, whose figures during the period are over 6. This information will be detailed further on in

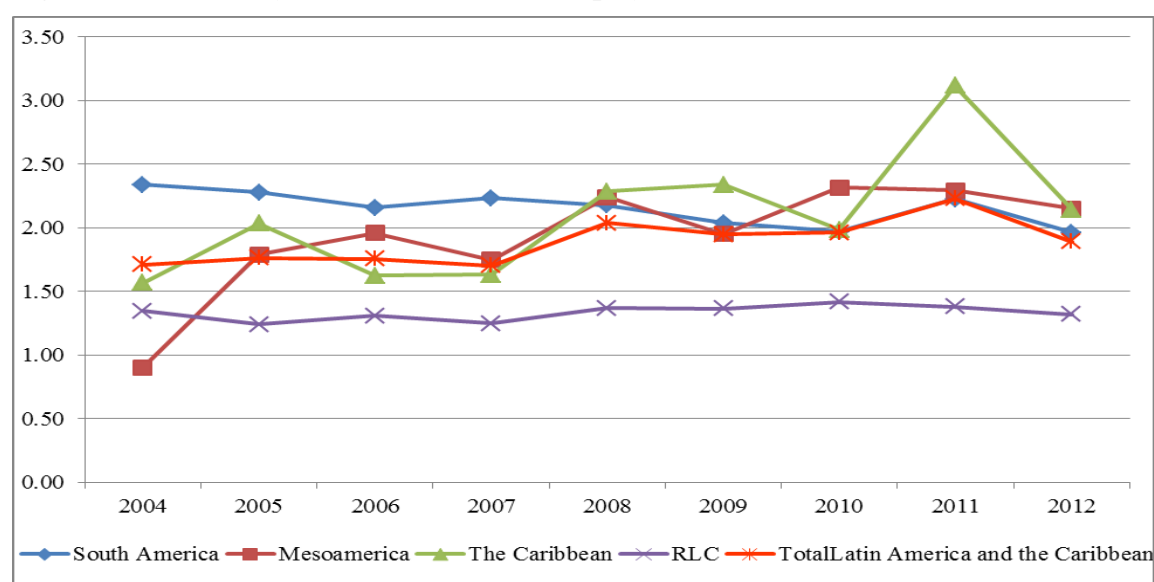
136. Table 3.

6.2 Efficiency

137. Two cost-efficiency indicators were prepared from the information available on the functional use of funds (see above): a) the ratio between disbursements and the total expenditure on professional staff as well as general services staff, called "Efficiency 1"; and b) the ratio between expenditure on professionals and on general services staff, called "Efficiency 2". The former gives an approximate idea of the cost-efficiency of the expenditure per unit of staff used to strengthen the organisation's presence in the region (measured by disbursements). The latter shows the administrative cost of providing professional services in the region.

138. It was not possible to use information available about the number and classification of positions per unit of analysis due to FAO's information systems being deficient in this respect.⁴⁶ Positions assigned to the different units of analysis often remain vacant and there is no consistent information about the recruitment of employees in terms of people/month, which makes it difficult to prepare aggregate measures. It was thus decided to use financial information about disbursements for professionals and general services in the different contractual categories, in order to arrive to aggregated and comparative concepts between the different units of analysis.

Figure 11. Efficiency 1: disbursements on employees (P+GS)



Source: Evaluation Team with ORACLE data

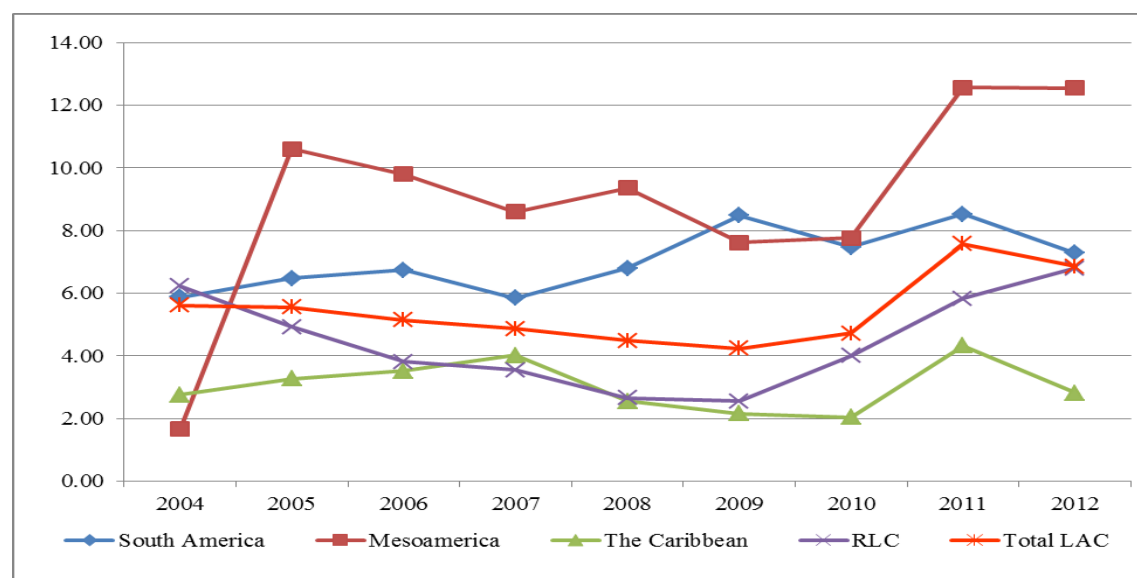
139. Figure 11 The Evaluation took the Efficiency 1 figure of 2.02 as a reference point for the comparative and longitudinal analysis of the units. The following groups were established: a) Low Efficiency 1, with figures below 2; b) Medium Efficiency 1, with figures equal to or greater than 2 and less than 3; and c) High Efficiency 1, with figures equal to or greater than 3.

140. The Efficiency 2 indicator is summarised in Figure 12. From 2004-12 the figure for the entire region reached 5.41 and from 2008-2012 it reached 5.49. Behaviour amongst sub-regions from 2008-2012 shows Efficiency 2 indicators that are above the regional total for Central America and

⁴⁶ Until the Global Resource Management System (GRMS) was implemented it was impossible to determine the exact number of people who worked for FAO. The only information available was the number of positions. But this cannot be added, as explained above.

South America. The Caribbean and the RLC are below the figures for the entire region. However, a consistent trend towards improvement can be observed for the RLC. Taking the Efficiency 2 figure of 5.49, three groups of observation units were established: a) Low Efficiency 2, with figures below 6; b) Medium Efficiency 2, with figures equal to or greater than six and less than 11; c) High Efficiency 2, with figures equal to or greater than 11. Appendix 16 shows detailed information for the 36 units of analysis.

Figure 12. Efficiency 2: Professional/General Services ratio



Source: Evaluation Team with ORACLE data

141. Having analysed the Efficiency 1 and Efficiency 2 figures for the 2008-2012 period it was possible to conclude that there were no significant gains in efficiency as regards the total 2004-2012 period and that the increases for both were slight.

142. The Efficiency 1 and Efficiency 2 indicators were summarised in a new indicator called Efficiency 3, which is detailed in Appendix 17, with the corresponding distribution of units of analysis into 3 groups: a) Low Efficiency 3; b) Medium Efficiency 3; c) High Efficiency 3.

143. The Evaluation noted that FAO does not follow separate accounting for the Regular Programme and the Field Programme respectively. Projects funded by the FP sometimes do not cover their costs, which are partly funded by RP resources. This is undoubtedly affecting the efficiency of the region's activities. Cases were repeatedly found of subsidies spread across the two major areas of work and funding, making it difficult to prepare alert indicators to monitor the sustainability of the different programmes.⁴⁷ The FP would undoubtedly benefit from separate accounting, with the requirement to cover all of its own operating costs plus an administrative fee. This does not detract from the fact that the Organisation must strengthen the integrated portfolio management of all of its projects. Furthermore, the creation of an "operation, innovation and risk fund" ("Reserve Fund") could contribute towards the sustainability of such and to establishing medium-term expansion policies. This is of particular significance given the huge importance of the FP in total disbursements in the region (75-80%). These funds are subject to frequently recurring negotiations. They are affected by changes in authorities and economic situations. They determine the contractual conditions of a significant proportion of FAO staff. A Reserve Fund can create bridges between contractual periods

⁴⁷ In several cases, it was found that funds from the Regular Programme are used to fund the costs of the Field Programme or staff funded by the Regular Programme to perform tasks within projects funded by the Field Programme.

and can also fund innovations that enable FAO to maintain its appeal as a development partner. Several multilateral organisations, even within the United Nations System, and non-governmental organisations currently use this type of fund dynamically and efficiently. Appropriate management of the Administrative and Operational Support (AOS) could contribute to this and constitute "seed capital" in the implementation of this fund (see point 6.4 below about AOS).

6.3 FAO effectiveness and efficiency in Latin America and the Caribbean

144. The Evaluation combined the cost-effectiveness and efficiency analyses presented above to reach an integrated appreciation of the organisation's presence in LAC.

145. Table 3 summarises the information gathered. Appendix 18 shows the figures for each indicator used for each unit of analysis.

Table 3. Cost-effectiveness and efficiency in LAC, 2008-12

Effectiveness	Efficiency 3		
	Low	Medium	High
Low	Barbados RLC Costa Rica Trinidad & Guyana Tobago SLC Uruguay SLM Venezuela	Cuba	
Medium	Chile Dominican Republic Jamaica Paraguay Peru	Antigua & Barbuda Argentina Bolivia Mexico	Ecuador El Salvador St. Vincent & Grenadines
High	Brazil	Colombia Dominica Haiti Panama St. Kitts and Nevis	Bahamas Nicaragua Belize St. Lucia Grenada Suriname Guatemala Honduras

Source: Evaluation Team

The Figure makes it possible to identify the following groups of units of analysis: a) those that show high multiplier figures (effectiveness) and efficiency, essentially in the south-east of

146. Table 3; b) those that show low multiplier/effectiveness and efficiency levels, in the north-west quadrant of

147. Table 3; and c) a group with intermediate figures in both indicators. All countries showing good performance are highlighted in green. The units of analysis showing poor performance are highlighted in red. The number of units with intermediate values is limited and they are highlighted in yellow.

148. The majority of the Central American sub-region country offices and several of the Caribbean country offices with multiple accreditation appear in the group with good performance. Decentralisation undoubtedly strengthened the performance of both sub-groups. No field visits were made to countries with multiple accreditation but the estimated indicators are consistent. The Sub-regional Office for the Caribbean argued emphatically over this point.

149. The offices located in the region's largest countries⁴⁸ appear in the intermediate group, with an indication of concern for the low efficiency of the operations in Brazil.

150. The regional and sub-regional offices, several country offices in the Caribbean, and five country offices in South America and Costa Rica appear in the group with low performance. There is no doubt that FAO must take measures to mainly improve the efficiency of these units. Discussing the type of presence in these units has to be made a priority. As explained above (paragraph 122), comparing the Regional and Sub-regional Offices with the Country Offices requires a more in-depth consideration of the indicators used.

151. The evaluation team also performed a comparative analysis over time of the situation of the units of analysis in 2008 and in 2012. This estimation can be found in the tables in Appendix 19. The analysis is summarised below in Table 4, where the units of analysis are grouped together into two large categories: a) those that during the period of analysis remain the same but in a favourable situation, as well as those that improve their evaluation, in green; b) those that during the same period remain the same but in an unfavourable situation, as well as those whose evaluation worsens, in red.

152. RLC Management must monitor the group b) units closely and consider specific measures to improve their performance. In addition, the adoption of tools such as those presented for ongoing monitoring could create an early alert system that has an impact on the performance of the region in terms of effectiveness and efficiency.

Table 4. Evolution of Effectiveness and efficiency in LAC, 2008-12

Same Good		Same Bad	
Bahamas	Panama	Barbados	RLC
Belize	St. Lucia	Chile	Peru
Colombia		Costa Rica	SLC
Grenada		Cuba	SLM
Guatemala		Dominican Republic	Trinidad & Tobago
Nicaragua		Jamaica	Venezuela
Improving		Worsening	
Argentina		Antigua & Barbuda	
Bolivia		Brazil	
Ecuador		Dominica	
El Salvador		Guyana	
Honduras		Haiti	
Mexico		St. Kitts & Nevis	
Paraguay		St. Vincent	
Suriname		Uruguay	

Source: Evaluation Team

153. The analysis makes it possible to identify an improvement in effectiveness and efficiency in the units of analysis of Argentina, Bolivia and Mexico. For its part, the unit in Brazil shows deterioration based on this indicator.

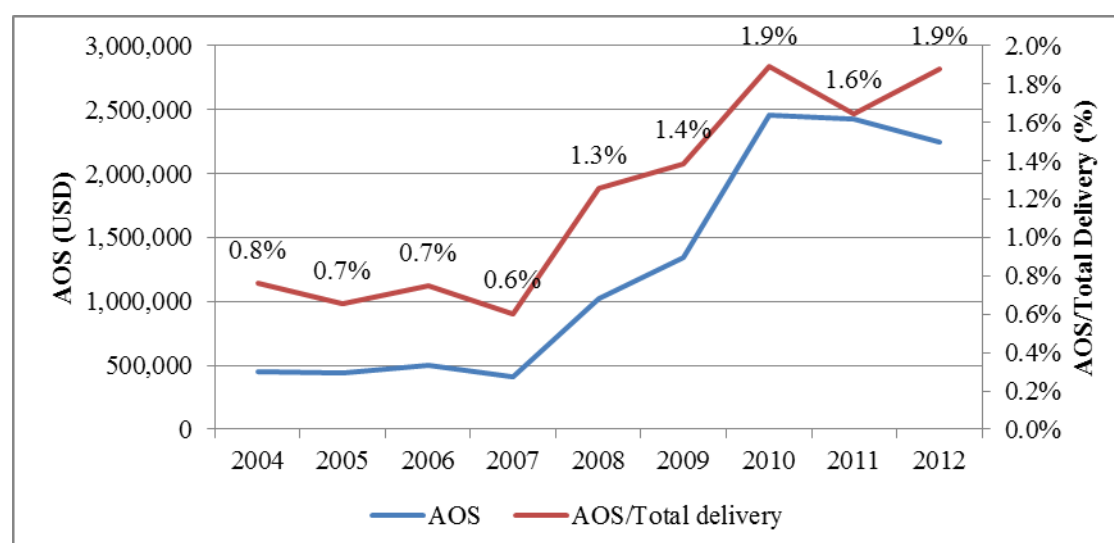
⁴⁸ Measured by the size of their economies, in terms of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) or GDP per capita, and population.

6.4 The management of resources obtained by Administrative and Operational Support (AOS)

154. At FAO, the policy for recovering Project Servicing Costs (PSC) and Administrative and Operational Support (AOS) is established by the Organisation's Finance Committee. Alongside the delivery of the Field Programme, FAO collects PSC, which is a fee for the recovery of costs incurred for servicing the projects. This rate depends on the source of the project's funds, on the specific negotiations on this type of rate with any type of fund, and on the effects of the project design on different categories of general costs.⁴⁹ The PSC management policy establishes that a variable percentage of such remains with the units responsible for the execution of the projects, the remainder is retained by Headquarters to cover indirect costs generated by the Field Programme. Since 2004, the percentage of AOS for the operational units has generally gone from 19% to 50%, however there are several exceptions.

155. The Evaluation found that the availability of information at the level of Decentralised Offices about rules and mechanisms of operation and distribution of the AOS is limited and confusing. Conceptually the AOS are generated by the Field Programme and should be grouped together and managed within this framework. However, the AOS amounts assigned to the units of analysis are registered amongst the "Net Appropriations and Regular Programme Disbursements". This way, they affect the measurement of the effectiveness and efficiency of the country offices, distorting the performance evaluation that may be determined for a specific operating unit. After enormous efforts, this Evaluation managed to estimate the AOS amounts, which were appropriated within the RP, for the 2004-12 period, for the 36 units of analysis. Figure 13 shows the information gathered.

Figure 13. Administrative and Operational Support (AOS)



Source: Evaluation Team with ORACLE data

156. In the 2004-12 period a total of 11.2 million dollars - constituting 1.4% of the total disbursements in the period - was assigned to the units under observation. Analysing the annual evolution, the percentage of AOS assigned increased from 0.6% of the total disbursements in 2007 to 1.9% in 2012. In relation to the total Field Programme disbursements, this percentage went from 0.9%

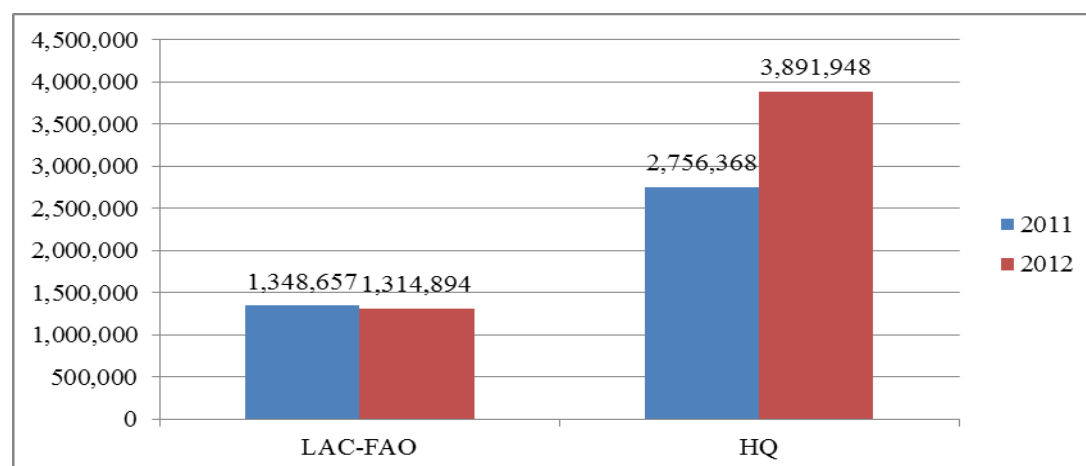
⁴⁹ A highly complex description of this can be found in the FPMIS, "Conditions for AOS Determination", Note about "Project Support Costs and Administrative and Operational Support, fees and refunds" and Policy about fees obtained.

in 2007 to 2.5% in 2012. This demonstrates the growing and successful efforts made in mobilising resources and disbursements in the region.

157. Despite the Evaluation Team's huge efforts, it was not possible to obtain exact figures for the AOS amounts generated in Latin America and the Caribbean which were appropriated by the Headquarters during the period under analysis. During the visit to the RLC, thanks to the efforts of the Santiago Office, it was possible to estimate the funds appropriated by the Headquarters in 2011 and 2012, resulting only from Technical Cooperation Projects (which do not include Emergencies).

158. Figure 14 summarises this information.

Figure 14. Distribution of AOS generated in Latin America and the Caribbean.



Source: RLC

159. For each dollar of AOS assigned to the region, the Headquarters appropriated 2.04 dollars in 2011 and 2.95 dollars in 2012. The proportion of AOS that the Headquarters appropriates seems disproportionate and to the detriment of the field units' effectiveness, efficiency and resource mobilisation incentives. In addition, it exceeds the indicative percentage of 38%.⁵⁰ The criteria according to which the AOS generated by Technical Cooperation Projects are divided between the field units and the Headquarters are also unclear. During the visit to 13 countries and to 3 regional and sub-regional offices, those interviewed unanimously mentioned a deep sense of unease with the lack of transparency in the handling of the AOS, the delays in the allocation of resources that makes efficient management of resources impossible and the recurring problem of cancelling remaining balances at the end of the budgetary year that could not be implemented in the field.⁵¹

160. When estimating the effectiveness and efficiency indicators, this evaluation estimated the corresponding figures subtracting the AOS amounts from the Regular Programme and adding it to the Field Programme, therefore correctly reflecting the nature of the activities.

⁵⁰ See percentages indicative of the recovery of the Project Servicing Costs that should be distributed between the Headquarters and Offices that provide the Administrative and Operational Support in the explanatory note "Project Support Costs and Administrative and Operational Support, fees and refunds", issued in 2012 by the Strategy, Planning and Human Resources Office of the FAO Headquarters in Rome.

⁵¹ It was impossible to estimate amounts of resources that were cancelled and retained by the Headquarters as a result of these delays.

161. If an accounting system is implemented that ensures the self-financing of the Field Programme and a possible creation of a Reserve Fund, the AOS should contribute to the constitution of such Fund.⁵²

6.5 Conclusions

162. The evaluation has developed and estimated cost-effectiveness and efficiency indicators. It was not possible to find pre-established indicators within FAO. It would appear that they are beginning to be developed within the framework of a “traffic-light” system showing the performance of the country representations. The indicators prepared and estimated by this evaluation have limitations and must be considered preliminary and, as their name suggests, indicative (see paragraph 119 above). Nevertheless, such cover 36 units of analysis over 9 years (324 observations), enable the establishment of averages and trends, which in turn operate as points of reference, and enable fruitful comparisons of units and different points in time.⁵³ They constitute a basis for developing a set of organisational performance indicators.

163. Since 2010, the effects of the decentralisation process have been positive. FAO's presence in the region, a measure of effectiveness estimated by the volume of its activities, increased dramatically. Total disbursements increased by 47% from 2008 to 2012.

164. This substantial increase has resulted from the expansion of the Field Programme, an effect related to the decentralisation of activities, the fine-tuning of the Organisation's priorities and their synchronisation with the governments' priorities, as well as the work on strengthening presence at country level. The Field Programme increased by 53% from 2008 to 2012.

165. The increase in the FP was in turn led by the substantial increase in disbursements from the Unilateral Trust Funds and the FAO/Government Cooperation Programme which increased by 55% from 2008 to 2012. These funds increased as a direct result of the mobilisation of resources regionally and the incentives created by the decentralisation and the empowering of the field units. From 2008-2012 USD 227 million were mobilised from bilateral donors which constituted 75% of the FP. A third of the bilateral funds mobilised from 2008-12 came from countries in Latin America and the Caribbean.

166. The effectiveness indicator developed by the evaluation known as the "multiplier" increased until reaching a figure of 3.2 for the 2008-12 period. For each dollar received from the Regular Programme, the presence in LAC managed to mobilise 3.2 dollars of extra-budgetary resources.

167. One of the main decentralisation measures in the region is the creation of the Sub-regional Office for Central America in Panama. This measure has also had successful results. The sub-region's participation in the total disbursements increased by 7% from 2008-2012. The sub-region's multiplier exceeds the total multiplier for LAC. As will be analysed below, with the exception of Costa Rica, the sub-region's countries show very good performance in terms of effectiveness and efficiency, considered jointly, from 2008 to 2012.

⁵² The Reserve Fund could be monitored as a good indicator of performance. For example, the part of the expenses on the Field Programme that such Fund could primarily "ensure" could be selected. For example, the amount of contracts or salaries funded within the FP could be taken into consideration and the number of months/person hired under such contracts being covered by the Reserve Fund could be calculated. Maintaining a threshold of 12 months could be established as an appropriate indicator for evaluating the performance of the units of analysis and their Management.

⁵³ Given the number of variables and indicators analysed, the basis of information prepared for this evaluation contains over 5,000 items of data. The database is available for consultation in the OED.

168. Decentralisation empowered the role and work of the Regional Office for Latin America and the Caribbean (RLC) from 2010 onwards. The RLC disbursements increased by 121.6% from 2008 to 2012 and their participation in the total disbursements in the region increased from 15.2% to 22.9% in the same period.

169. It is important to note the evolution of the statistical figures. Trends from 2008-2012 show a favourable evolution. However, there is a substantial decrease in several of the variables analysed in 2012. The preliminary interpretation is that performance in 2012 was affected by the gap between two Administrations in the RLC. If the decreases in 2012 become new downward trends, it could seriously affect FAO's presence in Latin America and the Caribbean. *RLC Management should in the short-term endeavour to closely monitor effectiveness and efficiency indicators in order to act decisively and as quickly as possible.*

170. The efficiency analysis shows that there were no significant gains from 2008-12 compared to the 2004-12 period. Given the different behaviour during the period of the Net Appropriations and of the Field Programme it is worth separating the analyses of the respective efficiency of each of them.

171. The general performance evaluation on the units of analysis was performed by combining the effectiveness and efficiency indicators. The performance in its entirety was estimated for 2008-12. A longitudinal analysis was also completed, comparing 2008 and 2012, which made it possible to determine the evolution of different units of analysis and their transition between the different low, medium and high categories. The good overall performance of the Central American countries was observed, with the exception of Costa Rica. This is important given the extent of strengthening of decentralisation in this sub-region.

172. The majority of the countries administered under the multiple accreditation system, all of which are in the Caribbean, display positive performance indicators. It is important to emphasise that the low levels of the Regular Programme and of total disbursements in these countries places them in a particular situation.

173. The largest countries in the region in terms of the size of their economies and of their population appear at intermediate positions although there is cause for concern with the loss of efficiency of the operations in Brazil.

174. There is a group of units of analysis with low performance, and in many cases, in a process of deterioration. These include, firstly the RLC and the Sub-regional Offices for Central America and the Caribbean.⁵⁴ Several of the Caribbean countries show worrying performance, particularly Barbados, Cuba, Guyana, Jamaica, the Dominican Republic, Trinidad and Tobago. Lastly, a group of Latin American countries also shows low performance and seems to have stalled at low levels during the period of analysis (Chile, Peru and Venezuela). The evolution of the majority of the countries with low performance during the period gives the sensation that the negative trends are fundamentally determined by losses in efficiency. They are countries where the administrative costs are extremely high in relation to the total annual disbursements, as seen in Appendices 15 and 16.

⁵⁴ It is important to take into account that the effectiveness indicators are perhaps not entirely appropriate for analysing the performance of these three Offices. The variable "disbursement" may not correctly reflect part of their performance.

6.6 Recommendations

175. It is recommended that the RLC gather relevant financial information to be able to monitor the pace of the operations and the management of the portfolio on a permanent basis in LAC. Information about the disbursements, in the year, per unit of analysis, per source of funds, and the use of such is fundamental for evaluating the effectiveness and efficiency of the portfolio at regular intervals. This evaluation made a huge effort to compile an initial database for the 2004-2012 period and to develop some indicators that make it possible to evaluate the effectiveness and efficiency of portfolio management. RLC Management can benefit from adopting, complementing, continuing and strengthening this work as soon as possible.

176. It is recommended that the RLC professionalise the duty of mobilisation of resources in the region, both at the level of its Management, of its country representatives and of its Technical Officers. In order to maintain the level of presence and effectiveness achieved until now, there is no other alternative than to prioritise the mobilisation of resources, particularly within the same region. The mobilisation of resources has been successful but has not been systematically institutionalised in the region. This generic role must be an integral part of the terms of reference for future recruitment. The analyses and interviews do not indicate that any other substantial source of funding is probable for the region in the medium-term.

177. In future, FAO must aim to maintain its level of presence in the region - this is an express wish of the Management in the region, of the governments interviewed and of the United Nations System (see point 10.2 below). However, this presence must adopt new models of working. It is assumed that FAO does not plan to increase its supply of professional and managerial human resources in the region, given the budgetary constraints faced and the extensive presence of middle income countries in the region.⁵⁵ Given the performance of the countries in terms of the combined effectiveness and efficiency indicators stated above, and after consideration by the Management in LAC of the specific details of countries, their socio-economic and political situations, and a discussion with Governments, it is recommended that:

- a. FAO should transfer Cuba and the Dominican Republic from the Caribbean Sub-region to the Central America Sub-region. SLC shows weak performance in terms of effectiveness and efficiency. Overloading SLC with the task of managing different languages does not seem appropriate. Central America shows positive indicators in several aspects that make it possible to consider the opening of the Sub-regional Office in Panama a wise decision. This change in lines of report can contribute towards improving the effectiveness and efficiency indicators in the region. Information has been received that the Management is considering these measures. The immediate implementation of such would be positive. The Management could also evaluate the Haiti Office's status and line of report.
- b. This increase in responsibilities in Central America, the good performance of almost all offices in the Sub-region and the importance of the volume of operations form the foundations for recommending redefining the balance regarding the location of Technical Officers in Santiago, Chile, and in Panama respectively. FAO could make real gains from transferring Technical Officers from Santiago to Panama. Naturally, these measures could be strengthened by transferring Technical Officers from Rome to Panama. This would add

⁵⁵ This evaluation adopts the definition of middle income country used by other United Nations bodies and by the World Bank, in other words, a Gross Domestic Product, measured using the Atlas methodology. Any countries with a Gross Domestic Product (Atlas) of between USD 1,036 and USD 12,615 (low middle incomes between USD 1,036 and USD 4,085; high middle incomes between USD 4,086 and USD 12,615) are considered middle income countries. Following this definition, the only country in the region that falls within the low income category is Haiti.

- fundamental support to the sub-regional programme that increased respectively from 2008-2012.
- c. It is recommended that FAO discontinue Offices under the management of Out-posted Technical Officers. This evaluation did not find any advantages in terms of the effectiveness and efficiency of this model. In contrast, it was possible to verify the deterioration of the technical services provided by the Technical Officers in charge of Country Offices and the enormous workload that such represents. The Governments of the countries in that situation do not seem to value this model either. This was confirmed during the visit to Guatemala, Guyana and Paraguay. As regards Argentina, it was possible to hold extensive discussions with the OTO and with the current Representative in Uruguay, who has been visiting the country regularly.
 - d. As regards some of the units of analysis that appear in a disadvantageous situation in Table 4, "those that during the 2008-12 period remain the same, but in an unfavourable situation, in addition to those that worsen in their evaluation", RLC Management should consider establishing multiple accreditation systems for these in order to administer the portfolios of two or more countries. The establishment of these systems could be administered from the Regional Office, from one of the Sub-regional Offices or from a Country Office showing comparative advantage and good performance indicators. A measure of this type would improve the efficiency indicators, by streamlining the use of administrative resources. Three groups of countries could be achieved by this recommendation: the countries of the Caribbean; Costa Rica; Chile, Argentina and Uruguay, in South America. Naturally, the Management would explore the possibility of the governments involved contributing additional funding in order to make a possible broad presence sustainable. Specific considerations regarding the countries and their socio-economic and political situations must form part of the decision.

178. The Field Programme must be administered with strict effectiveness and efficiency criteria. At present the financial information available does not favour close monitoring of this programme. The monitoring is not performed with portfolio management criteria either.⁵⁶ It is essential to have separate accounts for the Field Programme while at the same time maintaining the integrated portfolio management approach. The costs generated by such should be fully financed within the same Programme. The subsidies currently provided by the Regular Programme ("Net Appropriations") must be discontinued.⁵⁷ This Evaluation recommends that RLC Management establish a "Reserve Fund" with the aim of providing sustainability, a reasonable horizon of predictability, possibilities for innovation, and coverage for the risk of temporary reductions in funding for field presence. For the set-up of this type of Fund, alternatives as well as the accumulated experience of other multilateral organisations should be taken into account.

179. The management of and information about Administrative and Operational Support (AOS) should be profoundly restructured as soon as possible. This recommendation is geared to both the Headquarters in Rome as well as to RLC Management. The AOS does not correspond conceptually to the Regular Programme and, consequently, should not be recorded within such. It is a typical result of the activities within the Field Programme and that is where it should be entered. The criteria and percentages that are appropriated for the Headquarters are not very clear and questionable from the perspective of effectiveness and equality within the organisation. This Evaluation recommends that

⁵⁶ In simplified terms, a portfolio is a collection of two or more projects grouped together to guarantee effective and efficient work that contributes towards achieving the organisation's strategic objectives. Managing the portfolio involves the identification, prioritisation, approval, management and control of projects to achieve the strategic objectives. It is essential for making decisions and for balancing risks and benefits and requires the definition of variables and indicators that enable their evaluation.

⁵⁷ This does not refer to the manner in which the RP and the FP respectively are reported at corporate level, but to the need for project negotiations within the FP to sufficiently take into account the costs for delivering such, considering all of the necessary inputs and an appropriate margin for covering administration costs.

the AOS gathered as a result of the field operations be distributed in the following proportions: a) 60% to the unit that is responsible for mobilising the funds; b) 20% to RLC; c) 20% to the Headquarters in Rome. These funds must be recorded in a clear and transparent manner, quickly assigned at regular intervals and under no circumstances be retained by Headquarters. The routines that have been created seriously violate the incentives to mobilise resources and, consequently, to maintain a significant presence in regions such as LAC, where the Field Programme is of central importance to the future of activities. The AOS distributed according to the criteria of this recommendation should act as a seed in the consolidation of the Reserve Fund proposed above.

7 Priority setting

7.1 Country Programming Framework

180. Until 2005, FAO lacked a mechanism for defining the medium-term priorities of Technical Assistance with the Governments. In 2006, FAO prepared the "Guidelines for FAO Representatives for the preparation of the National Medium Term Priority Framework". On the basis of such, all Representations had to prepare an NMTPF together with the national Government which identified FAO's and the Government's priorities for a period of four or five years. However, not all Country Offices complied with this policy. At the end of 2009, 24 countries in the LAC region had a NMTPF.⁵⁸

181. From 2010, the Country Programming Frameworks (CPF) were established as the instrument for determining the priority areas for FAO cooperation with the member countries, and the FAO Representatives at country level (FAO Rep) are responsible for leading their preparation. In addition, the FAO Reps are authorised to sign the CPF with the government of the respective member country, once endorsement is obtained from the Assistant Director-General/Regional Representative (ADG/RR). For their part, the Technical Officers of the Regional and Sub-regional Offices are responsible for providing technical and policy-related support during the CPF preparation process, and for providing advice on finding opportunities for the mobilisation of resources.

182. The most recent corporate information about the number of CPFs in the LAC Region, according to the latest corporate report on the state of the CPFs issued in October 2013⁵⁹ estimates that there are 30 out of a possible 33 CPFs in the Latin America and Caribbean region. The evaluation found 25⁶⁰ signed by the respective Government, 14 of which were also endorsed by the ADG/RR. Five CPFs⁶¹ are not endorsed by anybody external or internal to FAO and are used as working papers. Lastly, three CPFs⁶² are in the process of preparation. It is worth noting that during the evaluation discrepancies were found between the actual state of the CPFs in the region and the information recorded on the FAO's corporate databases, mainly between the Office of Support to Decentralisation (OSD), and RLC.⁶³

183. The institutionalisation of the CPF as a framework that formalises FAO's operations, particularly in the face of possible changes in the country's institutional context, is an institutional area of improvement that should be recognised and prioritised.

184. The evaluation performed a desk review of the CPFs prepared in the region, using an instrument detailed in Appendix 20. In addition to this, an in-depth analysis was carried out on the quality and process of preparation of the CPFs in those countries that were visited during the field work.

⁵⁸ Strategic evaluation of FAO Country Programming, July 2010, OED.

⁵⁹ See OSD, CPF Preparation Status, updated on 31 October 2013.

⁶⁰ Argentina, Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, El Salvador, Guatemala, Guyana, Haiti, Jamaica, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, the Dominican Republic, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Trinidad and Tobago, Uruguay and Venezuela.

⁶¹ Antigua and Barbuda, Dominica, Grenada, St. Vincent & Grenadines and Suriname.

⁶² Ecuador, Honduras and Mexico.

⁶³ These figures have been changing throughout the evaluation work. RLC reported that at the end of January 2014, there were 32 possible CPFs, 26 of which are signed by the respective governments, and 16 of these were endorsed by the ADG/RR. Two CPFs are in the process of preparation. Ecuador's CPF went from being in the process of preparation to being signed by the government.

185. The desk review found that the CPFs were good instruments for defining priorities. The majority comply with the elements required in the Guidelines for the Preparation of the CPFs to a large degree, particularly with regard to the definition of priorities in multi-sectoral areas, the alignment with the regional and global priorities, as well as the availability of [priority and results] matrices. Notwithstanding the foregoing, the CPFs show significant areas for improvement, particularly in terms of the elements required to implement the CPFs properly: solid frameworks for monitoring them and management of a portfolio of initiatives required for fulfilling priorities. In addition, gender mainstreaming constitutes a general area for improvement in the revised CPFs (see Appendix 21).

186. The evaluation performed an in-depth analysis of the CPFs in the countries visited,⁶⁴ and found the following considerations about their strengths and areas for improvement:

- a. It was found that the CPFs are appropriate instruments for the definition of FAO's technical assistance priorities with the member countries. A definition of priority areas was found in said documents in different sectors related to FAO's mandate, based on an analysis of the situations that need to be dealt with for developing the respective countries, and taking into account FAO's comparative advantages. The governmental counterparts with which FAO formulated the CPFs value the instrument highly as a means to negotiate areas of collaboration.
- b. The CPFs are aligned with the regional priorities, and there are cases such as those of Bolivia and Guatemala in which said regional priorities offered a framework for greater focus at country level.
- c. The CPFs have an appropriate framework of objectives, which defines the results expected, and products and services planned that are aligned with the priority areas established. However, it was found that on many occasions, the proposal of results was very ambitious.
- d. There are deficiencies in the definition of indicators, goals and baselines, which are more evident in terms of expected results. This leads to there still not being monitoring frameworks appropriate for the measurement and reporting of progress in the fulfilment of the CPFs. It is important to highlight the good practice observed in Guyana where FAO implemented an accountability seminar with different national agents that serves not only to adjust the CPFs and define work plans but also to report advances. This is very well received and valued by the government, ensuring appropriation by the national agents. Ad hoc monitoring duties have been established in Bolivia, Guatemala and Nicaragua that are still in their early stages.
- e. The CPFs are ideal instruments for assisting in the task of mobilising resources but these require decentralised offices to reinforce their skills in terms of building partnerships and mobilising resources.
- f. An additional area of improvement is the annual programming of the work resulting from the priority areas identified. The evaluation understands that this is a second step subsequent to that of prioritising.
- g. The CPFs do not have FAO portfolio management in the respective countries. In other words, they manage the set of projects in order to contribute towards the achievement of the results expected in the CPFs. Ideas or lists of projects in progress related to the priority topics were found in each CPF. FAO's challenge should be to stop managing said projects individually and move towards a type of handling that clearly identifies and considers: synergies, common indicators, and complementary activities between the projects.

⁶⁴ This represents 10 out of 25 CPFs signed by governments. The analysis is also detailed in Appendix 21. In accordance with RLC, at the end of January 2014, 10 of 26 CPFs had been signed by the respective governments.

187. In addition, it was found that the CPF preparation process in the countries empowered the FAO Representatives at country level, reaffirming their role as the Organisation's main decision-makers. During the interviews performed, it was found that the CPFs offer the necessary situations for FAO Representatives to guide and direct the technical assistance work that results from different FAO bodies, at headquarters and at a decentralised level. The challenge that the evaluation identified was the actual institutionalisation of the CPFs as the only and main mechanism for determining the relevance of the work performed by FAO - by the Headquarters and all levels of the decentralised offices - in the country.

188. In general, the evaluation found that the preparation of the CPFs was performed in a consultative manner, making it possible to consolidate FAO's proximity to the needs of the member country governments. Different levels of involvement and participation of government counterparts were also recorded in the prioritisation exercise. In some cases, such as Bolivia, Guatemala, Guyana and Nicaragua, the governments expressed satisfaction with the consultative process and FAO's flexibility in adjusting its programming framework to national plans and strategies.

189. The consultative process for the prioritisation was performed mainly with FAO's long-standing counterparts: the Ministries of Agriculture. The evaluation found a good degree of appropriation of the instrument and of the priority areas identified therein. In Bolivia, Guatemala, Guyana, Nicaragua and Uruguay it was found that FAO achieved the active participation of embassies and other government bodies, such as: Ministries of Planning, Family Welfare, Education, Health and Natural Resources; and in the case of Uruguay, the Uruguayan Agency for International Cooperation. FAO's relationship with Ministries of Finance/Treasury, who are important agents for the definition of priorities in the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean, is non-existent. All of the foregoing emphasises the challenge the Organisation faces of ensuring that the priorities of the different government bodies are aligned with its mandate.

190. Unfortunately, FAO's relationship with Ministries of Finance/Treasury, who are important agents for the definition of priorities in the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean, is non-existent. All of the foregoing emphasises the challenge the Organisation faces of ensuring that the priorities of the different government bodies are aligned with its mandate. Notwithstanding the foregoing, FAO's dialogue with other governmental counterparts has to be strengthened. Within an institutional context such as that of Latin America and the Caribbean, negotiating priorities with Ministries of Agriculture involves facing considerable limitations, particularly for Organisations such as FAO whose scope of activity exceeds the competences of said Ministries.

191. Knowledge of the CPF amongst the agencies of the United Nations (UN) system, as well as the participation of these in the formulation of these documents was varied. There are countries such as Antigua and Barbuda, Barbados, Mexico, Nicaragua and Paraguay where there is no indication of participation or of knowledge of the CPFs by other UN agencies. In addition, in countries such as Bolivia, Guatemala, Guyana and Uruguay the United Nations agencies stated that they had knowledge of the content.

192. The evaluation found that there was a general perception amongst the Country Offices that RLC Technical Officers and the two Sub-regional Offices offered very limited participation and technical inputs. This view was also confirmed by the TOs. Their limited participation can be explained by a combination of factors such as the speed of the CPF preparation process and the workload involved in their technical assistance activities. The evaluation determined, in the countries visited, that the support given by regional and sub-regional bodies is limited to the appointment of the policy officers as regional focal points that provided guidance and methodological support during the formulation process. The evaluation team believes that the CPF formulation process would benefit from establishing mechanisms and systems that make the contributions of the TOs transparent, which would contribute towards increasing the volume, frequency and quality of such.

7.2 Definition of priorities and the allocation of FAO resources

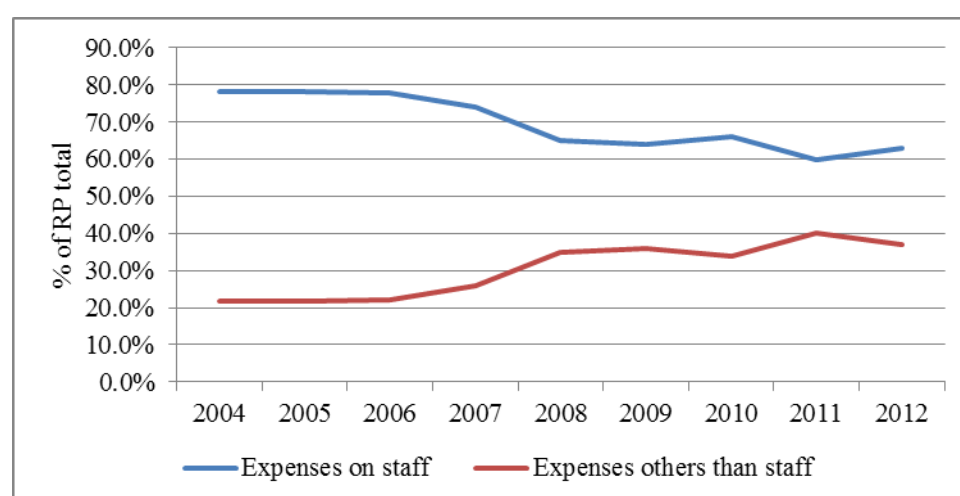
7.2.1 FAO Regular Programme resources

193. The evaluation analysed the distribution of the resources delivered by FAO's decentralised offices in the LAC region, in order to detect the existence of prioritisation criteria in the allocation of resources from 2004-2012. FAO has its own resources from the Regular Programme which are allocated in part for funding the programme of work of the regional, sub-regional and country offices. Another part of these resources is assigned to the Technical Cooperation Programme (TCP) projects which constitute the main instruments that are fully controlled by the Organisation to attend to the requests for technical assistance from the member countries.

194. As from 2010 the FAO Regional Offices acquired the responsibility to handle the resources of the Regular Programme that should cover expenses not corresponding to employees.⁶⁵ In particular within the RLC, a body was created known as the FAOR Network, which since 2010 has guided the representations in the planning and use of resources geared towards covering expenses not corresponding to employees.

195. In the period of evaluation, the resources that do not correspond to employee expenses represent a third of the total regular programme resources that the decentralised offices obtained; the remainder are geared towards the payment of employee salaries (see Figure 15 and Appendix 22). The allocation of the Regular Programme to the decentralised offices is heavily influenced by the size of the office in terms of its active employees.

Figure 15. Delivery of the Regular Programme (RP), by type of expense and percentage of the RP total.



Source: Evaluation Team

196. During the interviews, it was found that the allocation of Regular Programme resources follows inertial behaviour, based on historical allocations. In other words there were no other criteria for determining the allocation corresponding to each decentralised office than the following: i) the amount of employee expenses and ii) the requirements of previous years required to cover the

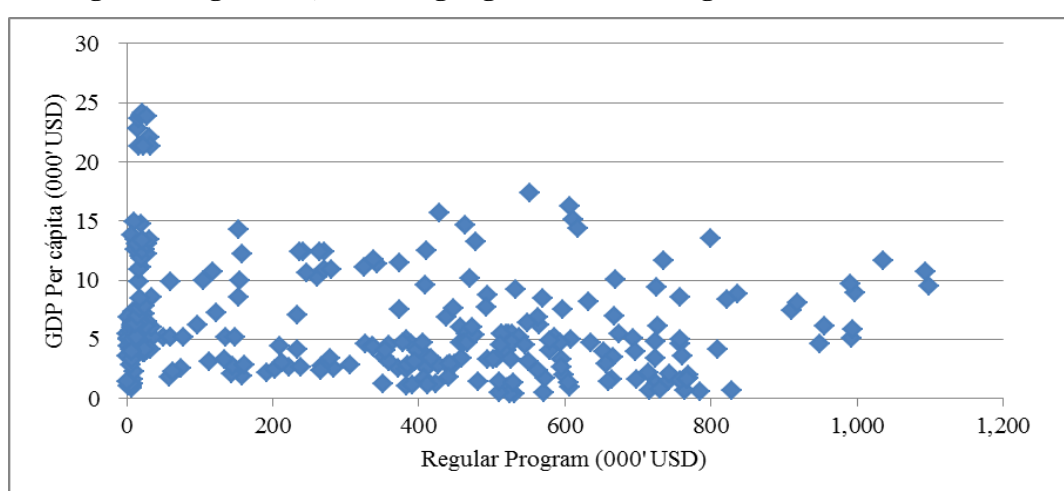
⁶⁵ These are also known as "non staff resources" in the day to day administrative vocabulary at FAO, and include the following items of expenses: 5013 Consultants, 5014 Contracts, 5020 Locally contracted work, 5021 Travel, 5023 Training, 5024 and 5025 procurement, 5026 hospitality expenses, 5027 technical support services, 5028-5040-5050 general operating expenses, 5029 support expenses.

expenses not corresponding to employees. This was the case prior and subsequent to the decentralisation measure adopted in 2010.

197. Given the absence of resource allocation criteria, the evaluation used three socio-economic criteria considered relevant to the FAO mandate: i) Gross Domestic Product per capita (Atlas method); ii) prevalence of malnutrition or chronic hunger measured by FAO; and iii) extreme poverty of the countries measured by the World Bank with a poverty line of USD 1.25 daily. In order to perform a more detailed analysis, the correlation between said socio-economic criteria and the regular programme resources of the 33 units of analysis from 2004-2012 was assessed.⁶⁶

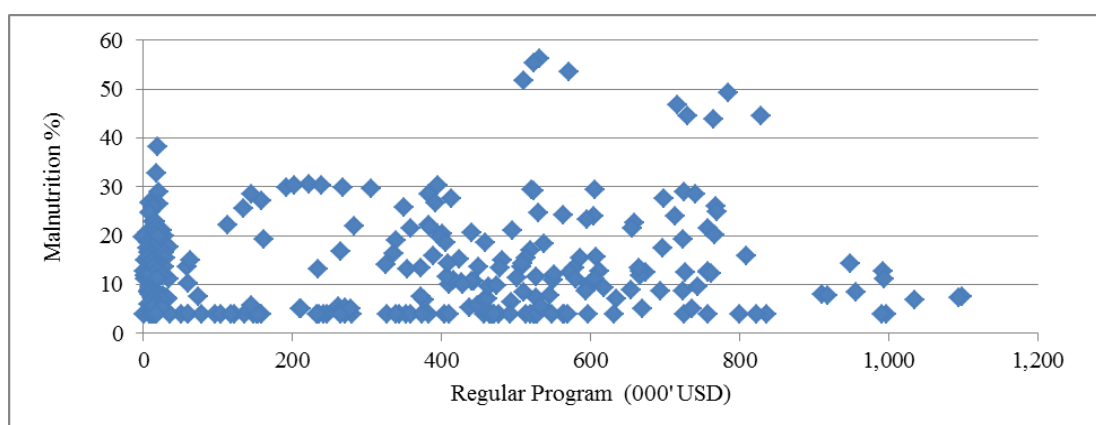
198. The analysis shows that there is no correlation between the regular programme resources and the aforementioned criteria (see Figure 16, 17 and 18).⁶⁷

Figure 16. Relationship between Gross Domestic Product (GDP) per capita and allocation of the Regular Programme, excluding regional and sub-regional offices.



Source: Evaluation Team

Figure 17. Relationship between malnutrition and the allocation of the Regular Programme, excluding regional and sub-regional offices.

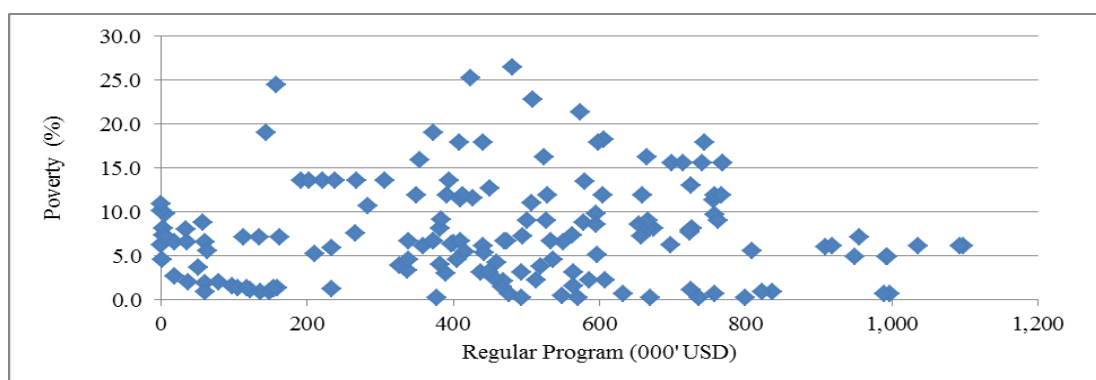


Source: Evaluation Team

⁶⁶ The regional and sub-regional offices were excluded from this analysis.

⁶⁷ The correlation coefficients between the regular programme resources and the criteria adopted are: -0.2 as regards product per capita; 0.1 as regards malnutrition; and 0.04 as regards poverty.

Figure 18. Relationship between poverty and the allocation of the Regular Programme, excluding regional and sub-regional offices.



Source: Evaluation Team

7.2.2 *Analysis of the TCP*

199. The decentralisation of the TCPs was also implemented in 2010 establishing that the regional allocation of the TCPs would remain under the authority of the ADG/RR of each region. In other words, the RLC acquired full responsibility for the allocation of the TCP resources to the LAC region. The Organisation's governing bodies established that in the 2010-2011 and 2012-2013 biennia, the LAC Region should receive 18% of the total TCP amount assigned to the regions, excluding emergencies.⁶⁸

200. In addition, the interviews revealed that the allocation of TCP resources followed the prioritisation set forth in the Manual⁶⁹. This document states that *“Every four years, during discussions about the Medium Term Plan, the governing bodies decide on the share of the TCP allocation available to each region. The decision is based on the following aspects: i) the number of countries in a region (particularly less advanced countries); ii) the need to assign a minimum amount of resources to all entitled countries; iii) the effective use of the regional allocation in the two preceding biennia; and iv) any other consideration the governing bodies may deem relevant”*.

201. Since 2010, RLC has been delegated the authority to manage these resources and their distribution between the different decentralised offices in the region. During the interviews held, the evaluation team investigated which criteria were used for distributing such allocations. The response obtained was that the distribution of these resources between the different units of analysis has followed the instructions in the TCP manual.⁷⁰

202. During visits to country offices, the evaluation found strong claims about the management of the regional allocation of the TCPs between the decentralised offices at country and sub-regional level not being very transparent. Different stakeholders stated that the allocation criteria were unclear, and that there were serious complications in the TCP approval process. There was a perception that the RLC was benefiting from the ambiguity of how the resources from the regional allocation of TCPs are distributed.

⁶⁸ For the 2010-11 and 2012-13 biennia, the governing bodies decided that the allocation of the TCP for national, sub-regional and regional projects that are not of an emergency nature would indicatively be used by the countries of the regions as follows: Africa: 40 %; Asia and the Pacific: 24 %; Latin America and the Caribbean: 18 %; Europe and Central Asia: 10 %; and the Near East: 8 %, MTP 2010-2014, C2009/15.

⁶⁹ TCP manual available at www.fao.org/tc/tcp/docs/TCP%20Manual%20Spanish%20Final.doc.

⁷⁰ See duties and responsibilities of the Regional Representative in the TCP Manual, page 11.

203. The different actors involved in the authorisation of the TCP resources at RLC level signalled the existence of criteria that are detailed in the list of special attention countries included in Appendix 1 of the TCP manual. The list includes 20 Latin American and Caribbean countries that are considered "special attention". The countries included have different levels of income and of malnutrition (see Table 4 and Appendix 23). The inclusion on this list of all of the countries of the sub-region of the Caribbean is noteworthy. Only two Central American and two South American countries are included. With the exception of Haiti, the Caribbean countries included in the list are of a middle-high income. The evaluation notes the exclusion of Guatemala from this list, a low-middle income country that has one of the highest rates of malnutrition in the region.

Table 4. Levels of income and malnutrition of the special attention countries according to the TCP manual

Country	Income level	Malnutrition (% malnourished people)
Antigua and Barbuda	High income	26
Bahamas	High income	7
Barbados	High income	5
Belize	Medium-high income	7
Bolivia	Low-medium income	28
Cuba	Medium-high income	< 5
Dominica	Medium-high income	< 5
Dominican Republic	Medium-high income	17
Grenada	Medium-high income	23
Guyana	Low-medium income	8
Haiti	Low income	50
Honduras	Low-medium income	12
Jamaica	Medium-high income	8
Nicaragua	Low-medium income	25
Paraguay	Low-medium income	16
Saint Kitts & Nevis	High income	18
Saint Lucia	Medium-high income	13
St Vincent & Grenadines	Medium-high income	< 5
Suriname	Medium-high income	14

Source: TCP Manual, World Bank income group categorisation, and FAO malnutrition indicator

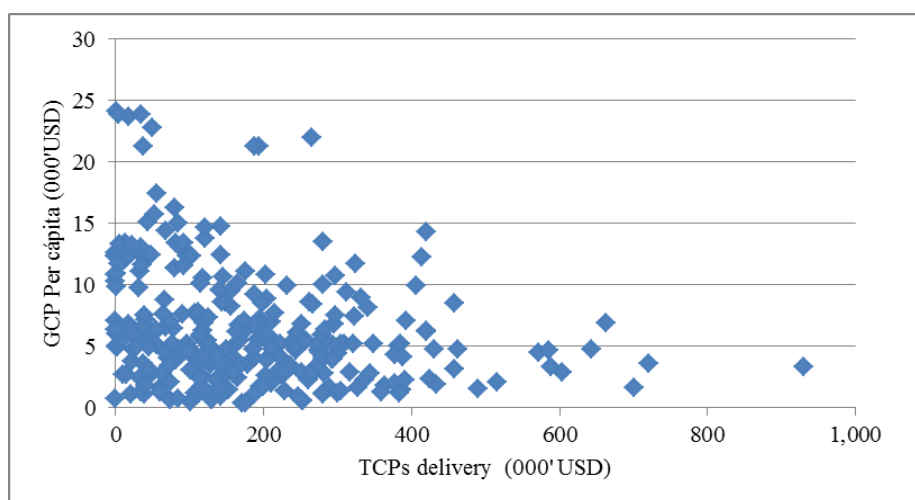
204. To take an in-depth look at the analysis, the evaluation assessed the correlation between the TCP resources of the 33 units of analysis⁷¹ and the three socio-economic criteria that the evaluation assumed as relevant as regards the Organisation's mandate (see Section 6.8). No indication whatsoever was found of a correlation between the observations obtained for the whole 2004-2012 period⁷² (see

⁷¹ Excluding Regional and Sub-regional Offices.

⁷² The coefficients calculated are: -0.25 as regards product per capita; -0.03 as regards malnutrition; and -0.08 as regards poverty.

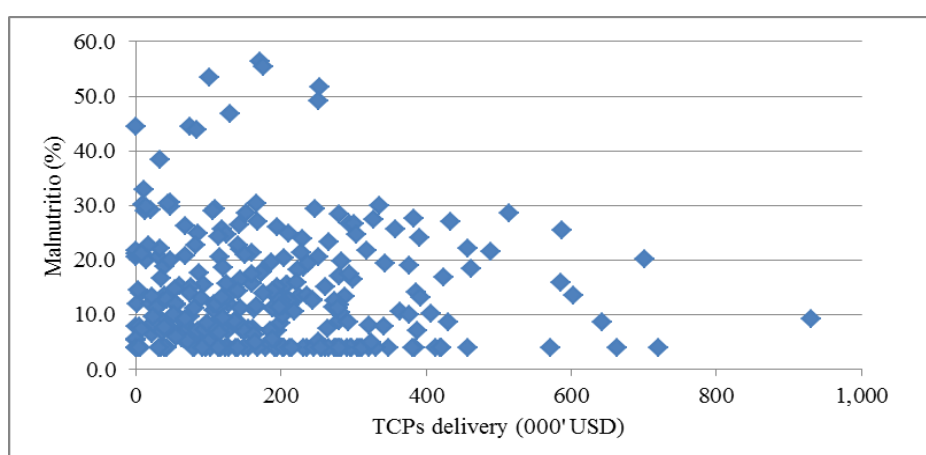
Figure 19, 20 and 21).

Figure 19. Relationship between GDP per capita (USD) and TCP, excluding regional and sub-regional offices



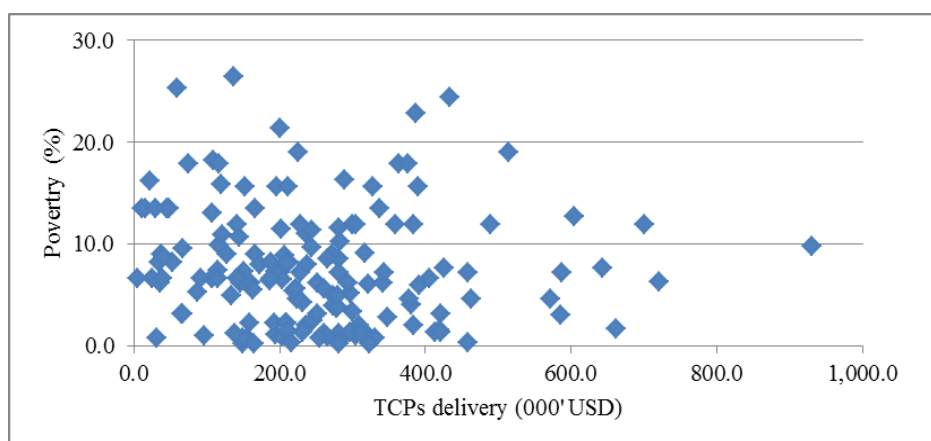
Source: Evaluation Team

Figure 20. Relationship between malnutrition and TCPs, excluding regional and sub-regional offices



Source: Evaluation Team

Figure 21. Relationship between poverty and TCPs, excluding regional and sub-regional offices



Source: Evaluation Team

205. Appendix 24 includes information about the TCP disbursements for each of the 36 units of analysis. From 2004-2012 it was found that the Country Offices individually obtained 1 - 5% of the resources delivered in TCPs; but the majority (27 units of analysis) obtained 1 - 3%. The same occurred from 2010-2012 when the country offices obtained 0.2 - 7%, but the majority (25 units of analysis) obtained 1 - 3% again. It is also observed that the RLC had 17% of the regional allocation of TCPs between 2004 and 2012, and 13% between 2010 and 2012. This proportion is far above any other unit of analysis. Equally, the evaluation analysed the proportion of resources obtained by the priority countries defined by the TCP manual. This sub-group obtained 37.5% of the allocation of TCPs between 2004 and 2012 and 42.4% between 2010 and 2012.

206. This reinforces the findings that there is a lack of clear criteria for allocating TCP resources. The TCP distribution criteria are not adapted to proper prioritisation and rather lead to the dispersion of resources. It also reinforces the perception found at country and sub-regional offices that RLC has benefited from the TCP criteria for resource allocation. This evaluation believes that the criteria established in the Manual are far from adequate for the prioritisation and disperse the resources from the regional allocation of TCPs.

7.3 Definition of regional priorities and the role of the Regional Conference

207. In 2010 measures were established to create an accurate definition of regional priorities. On the one hand, Regional Conferences became fully fledged FAO governing bodies and a forum for the discussion and definition of regional priorities. The RLC, in its capacity as regional office, also acquired the responsibility for offering logistical and technical support in its capacity as Secretariat of the Regional Conference for Latin America and the Caribbean (LARC). In addition, in the same year RLC gained the authority and responsibility for leading the response to the priorities defined in the LARC, and assumed authority over the regional technical officers and over the coordination of the decentralised office network in Latin America and the Caribbean.

208. In the last two LARC (31st and 32nd), the following priority areas were identified and confirmed:

- Food and nutrition security
- Climate change and environmental sustainability
- Family farming
- Agricultural health and food safety

209. Three cross-cutting themes were also defined, namely: gender, rural youth and indigenous peoples.

210. The evaluation noted that the definition of the regional priority areas for the 31st and 32nd LARC followed a process to identify priorities at a sub-regional level that did not find any significant characteristics or differences. As a matter of fact, in the last LARC the regional consultations only highlighted the areas that should be emphasised in terms of the attention they receive in each sub-region.

211. The evaluation found three documents for the definition of strategic frameworks prepared for consideration at the 32nd LARC and corresponding to the sub-regions of Central America, the Caribbean and South America. These documents are of good quality given that they contain an identification of priorities based on an analysis of the challenges faced in terms of information. These also contain an analysis of sub-regional priorities. The evaluation team believes that the exercise of establishing priorities at a sub-regional level involves high costs in terms of the time and effort it requires of the technical staff at the regional and sub-regional offices, deviating them from their technical assistance activities. In addition, the evaluation team believes that there are serious limitations for the implementation of sub-regional priorities in the sense that these are not accompanied by an allocation of resources, and consequently their definition has no follow-up.

212. Between 2011 and 2012 a *modus operandi* was consolidated for regional prioritisation based on the drafting of a background document⁷³ resulting from a combination of the elements provided by the sub-regional consultations and the recommendations of the Regional Technical Commissions. These Commissions are statutory bodies and play an advisory role to the Regional Conference on matters related to three sectors that FAO historically deals with: livestock, forests, fisheries and aquaculture. The evaluation found that three Commissions provided useful elements for regional prioritisation: Latin American and Caribbean Forestry Commission (LACFC); Commission on Livestock Development for Latin America and the Caribbean (LDAC); and Commission for Inland Fisheries and Aquaculture of Latin America and the Caribbean (COPESCAALC).

213. RLC used the regional areas of priority to establish five expected results⁷⁴. These were approved in the 32nd LARC as part of the Programme of Work and Budget (PWB) for the region in 2012/13 and are:

- a) The strengthening of the ability of governments, parliaments and civil society to develop legislation, public policies and institutions for food and nutrition security.
- b) The sustainable management of natural resources in the region's countries and the strengthening of national and regional skills to face emerging environmental challenges, mainly global climate change.
- c) Institutional frameworks and reinforced skills for family farming in the region's countries.
- d) The improvement of the health status of countries and of the regional programmes for the control and eradication of plagues and diseases and food safety.
- e) The consolidation of FAO's reform and decentralisation in the region and a growing inclusion of gender equality in the Organisation's projects and actions.

214. The regional priorities defined in the last two LARC have been a reference point for the work of the decentralised offices in the region and served to structure the RLC. In this office, four priority work groups were established to attend to the regional priority areas defined and the work of said employees has been guided by the focus of each priority area. Even when focal points were designated in the sub-regional offices, the structuring of the work groups by priority area did not achieve real inclusion and appropriation of sub-regional and country office employees. Technical officers at a sub-regional level highlighted that one of the factors that could contribute to such is that the leaders of the priority groups were found exclusively in the RLC.

215. The four regional priority areas established by the LARC since 2010 are well aligned with FAO's 2010-2019 strategic framework. The process of alignment with the revised 2010-2019 strategic framework is still in progress. During the interviews many FAO staff, at a regional and sub-regional level, presented explanations as to how the priority areas are compatible with the new Strategic Objectives (SO). In simplified terms, the relationships detailed in

216. Table 5 can be inferred from this.

Table 5. Main relationship between LAC regional priorities and revised FAO Strategic Objectives

1. Food and nutrition security	→ SO 1 To help eliminate hunger, food and nutrition insecurity
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⁷³ LARC/12/5 “Áreas de acción prioritarias para América Latina y El Caribe para el Medio Término (2014-2017), teniendo en cuenta el resumen de las recomendaciones de las comisiones técnicas regionales”

⁷⁴ See FAO activities in the region in 2010-11 and the 2012-13 Programme of Work and Budget at <http://www.fao.org/docrep/meeting/024/md238s.pdf>

2. Climate change and environmental sustainability	→ SO 5 To make livelihoods more resilient in the face of catastrophes
3. Family farming	→ SO 3 To reduce rural poverty
4. Agricultural health and food safety	→ SO 2 <u>To make agriculture, forestry and fishing more productive and sustainable</u> → SO 4 <u>To build efficient and inclusive food and agricultural systems</u>

Source: Evaluation Team

217. This alignment does not yet have the analytical support that establishes how the priority areas relate conceptually to one another and contribute towards fulfilling the new SOs. Furthermore, there is currently no analysis as to how the region's challenges, which were identified previously in the LARC, are expressed in the ranges of results outlined by the SO. This evaluation believes that such an exercise is necessary and urgent and that, in addition, it should be based on a sound analysis of the challenges arising for FAO in the region of Latin America and the Caribbean when addressing the matters proposed in the new SO at a global level.

218. At present the structuring of the RLC into priority working groups for each of the regional priorities seems to have been replaced by the organisation of focal points for the new SOs at a regional and sub-regional level. The evaluation identified that there was an almost inertial transition from the working groups for each regional priority area to the focal points and groups of employees working on each SO. This implies that the work performed under the priority areas continues to be carried out, now under the name of one of the SOs. Furthermore, the definition of focal points and working groups per SO is the result of the affinity of the technical officers with the new topics proposed. It is not the result of the establishment of working groups based on an analysis of the challenges involved in approaching the new topics proposed by FAO's general strategic framework in Latin America and the Caribbean.

7.4 Conclusions

219. The implementation of the CPFs as an instrument for defining priorities was a wise measure in terms of FAO's decentralisation. The CPFs have established themselves as ideal instruments for the participatory identification and negotiation of the priorities at the level closest to the member countries. The preparation of the CPFs in Latin America and the Caribbean has had the positive result of reinforcing the role of FAO Representatives at country level as the Organisation's main decision-makers. Said role should institutionalise itself in order to consolidate the CPFs as the central instrument for defining priorities. Given all of the foregoing, the decision to implement the CPFs has reinforced the subsidiarity principle and consequently benefited FAO's decentralisation.

220. The flexible and participatory nature of the process of creating the CPFs is highly valued by the governmental counterparts. At the same time, expectations have been raised in the governments in terms of finding out what advances have been accomplished in each country. These should be satisfied by following-up and reporting, at least to those bodies that actively participated in the preparation of the CPFs.

221. The CPF documents prepared to date are generally of good quality and satisfactorily fulfil the requirements established in the CPF preparation guides. However, there are areas for improvement related to the establishment of appropriate monitoring frameworks; annual work programmes that enable the estimation of resources required annually for each result expected; the establishment and subsequent use of portfolio management approaches; and the inclusion of gender matters.

222. The roles defined for the formulation of the CPFs are general and ambiguous. This led to different levels of involvement by those responsible for preparing the CPFs in the region. The most active agents were undoubtedly the FAO Representatives at country level, who in many cases had support from domestic consultants for the preparation of the CPFs with methodological orientation from RLC. In addition, they faced limited support and technical advice from the Technical Officers that FAO has in its regional and sub-regional multidisciplinary teams.

223. As regards the allocation of FAO's regular programme resources on the basis of priorities, the evaluation concludes that there are no clear criteria for their allocation. The criteria for the allocation of Regular Programme resources are inertial and mainly respond to the size of the offices in terms of employees.

224. The criteria governing the distribution of the regional allocation of the TCP's resources are inadequate and lead to a distribution of the resources amongst country offices and to a concentration of such at a regional level. This lack of clear and adequate criteria for the distribution of TCP resources is affecting the relationship between the different levels of the decentralised offices in Latin America and the Caribbean. This gap, combined with country offices facing greater dependence on the TCPs to alleviate the reduction in extra-budgetary resources from bilateral donor countries, encourages increased competition for the scarce resources in a context where the rules of the game are unclear. In turn this leads to informal dealings between actors involved in the process of approving the TCPs who operate with non-transparent rules. The foregoing does not contribute towards the proper operation of the network of decentralised offices.

225. The evaluation compared the allocations for 2004-12 against the Gross Domestic Product per capita (Atlas methodology), the rate of extreme poverty and the rate of malnutrition and found that such had no influence on the allocations. These indicators could provide an adequate reference framework so that in future clear criteria are established, particularly in the case of the TCP resources. This would also include the allocations for regional interventions.

226. As regards the definition of priorities at a regional level, the evaluation concludes that the decisions made in 2010 by LARC, as governing body of FAO at a regional level, and the delegation of authority to the RLC to prioritise at a regional level, were appropriate in terms of FAO's decentralisation process. Said decisions have empowered RLC to define regional priority areas that have been approved and confirmed in the last two regional conferences. These priorities have not only provided the right framework for the work of the decentralised offices in Latin America and the Caribbean, they have also resulted in an internal restructuring of RLC to fulfil said priorities.

227. Defining the regional priorities illustrates the consolidation of LARC as an adequate space for consultation, discussion and definition of topics that have to be dealt with as a priority in the region. It also illustrates a process that can result in priorities and results aligned with FAO's 2010-19 global framework that serve as a reference for the preparation of country priorities in the CPFs. In particular, the need to establish and clarify mechanisms for liaison between the different levels of prioritisation and planning was identified.

228. The evaluation also concludes that, faced with no clear guidance on the alignment of the planning levels, the changes in FAO's general strategic framework and the definition of the guides for its implementation disrupted the process that was taking place across the region. It is clear that FAO has to take this revised Strategic Framework and look towards the future to work on its adaptation both within the Organisation as well as with the member countries in Latin America and the Caribbean. This involves acknowledging and offering spaces for the participation of actors at the level of the decentralised offices, with clear relationship rules that respect the subsidiarity principles reinforced by the decisions made in 2010.

229. As regards the work of the Secretariat of the LARC it is concluded that RLC carried out adequate support work but that there are areas for improvement in the bylaws that govern this work. Its focus could have positive effects on the results of the LARC. Particularly noteworthy is the need to review aspects that limit the RLC's autonomy in its support work and the provision of technical inputs to the LARC. In addition, it is worth noting the importance of extending the range of government bodies from the member countries invited to the LARC so that such can be fuelled by the relevant opinions regarding the Organisation's mandate and the scope of activity outlined by the new Strategic Framework. There are areas for improvement as regards efficiency resulting from the time that the countries should gear towards participating in the LARC.

7.5 Recommendations

For OSD and RLC

230. A system should be implemented on an online platform, which accompanies the preparation of the CPFs, in order to attend to the following elements:

- a) To facilitate the provision of technical inputs that the Technical Officers should provide during the preparation of the CPFs and make it more transparent.
- b) To strengthen the corporate information and keep the status of the CPFs in the region up to date, as well as establish an archive of the signed documents.
- c) To ensure the implementation of the guidelines for preparing the CPFs, particularly establishing document extension limits; requiring the complete inclusion of indicators and goals for monitoring; and the preparation of the annual work plan.

For FAO Reps in Latin America and the Caribbean

231. Priority should be given to the following elements of the CPFs:

- a) Definition of indicators, goals, and baselines particularly for the levels of results expected. This would make it possible to build an adequate monitoring framework and report internally to FAO, but also to the member countries.
- b) Establishing mechanisms for reporting the progress made in terms of the results of the CPFs to the Governments. Good practises are in place that have already been mentioned herein.
- c) Integrate a portfolio management approach, in order that the FAO's projects and activities are structured around the CPFs, generating synergies and complementary actions based on shared result-oriented indicators and goals.
- d) Perform a detailed analysis of the need to mobilise resources within the framework of the annual programmes, in order to estimate the resources required to achieve the result expected.
- e) Include government counterparts other than the Ministries of Agriculture in future CPF preparation processes.

For FAO and RLC regarding the CPFs

232. It is recommended that the CPFs be institutionalised as the framework that establishes the work priorities of the whole organisation in the countries. The CPFs should have formal validity (signature of the parties and period of fulfilment) to be able to operate in a country. This requires adequate planning of the renewal of the CPF or the limited extension of such.

233. In addition, it is recommended that the CPFs be appropriated and used in the decision-making for and planning of all of FAO's levels' and bodies' work programmes, including the work programmes of the multidisciplinary teams in RLC and sub-regional offices.

For RLC

234. Establish clear and transparent criteria to distribute the regional allocations corresponding to the Technical Cooperation Programme. A substantial part of such should follow an automatic preliminary allocation in accordance with relevant variations for FAO's operations in the region. We suggest taking into account the criteria analysed in this evaluation, namely: Gross Domestic Product per capita (Atlas methodology), the rate of extreme poverty and the rate of malnutrition. If complemented, the set of criteria could serve as an adequate reference framework which should be validated with the agents involved at country office level.

235. Establish an advisory council composed of the FAO Representatives in the region that has the power to comment on discussions about the proportion of resources geared towards regional TCPs.

For RLC and OSD

236. Align the regional priorities with FAO's new strategic framework as quickly as possible, taking into account the particular characteristics of the Latin American and Caribbean region. To such end, the following actions should be taken into consideration:

- a) Conclude the consultations and distribution of FAO's new strategic framework with the member countries and in the fora that the RLC organises, as quickly as possible.
- b) Extend the participation of the governments of the LARC countries, beyond the Ministries of Agriculture and Foreign Affairs that conventionally attend. This would involve increasing the flexibility of the Regional Conferences Manual prepared by OSD.

237. Evaluate alternatives to organise the Regional Conference more efficiently, both for the Organisation and for the member countries, taking the following options into account.

- a) Redefine the work of the Technical Secretariat of the Conference in such a way that attention is not diverted from the technical support activities of the senior TOs.
- b) Modify the requirement established in the Manual of Regional Conferences that the input documents have to be authorised by the Headquarters' technical departments, without detracting from the fact that the decentralised offices can consult them.

For RLC

238. Establish a system to monitor the results associated with the regional priorities and the priorities of the CPFs. The regional level is the most adequate space for the establishment of this system given that it is from here that links could be formed between the indicators of regional results and those defined in the CPFs.

8 Human resources

8.1 Human resources in the region's Decentralised Offices

239. The most recent data⁷⁵ from the FAO Human Resources Services Centre (HRSC) report that there are 1,674 people working in the region's DOs. As shown in Table 6, 72% of FAO employees in the region are "non-staff".

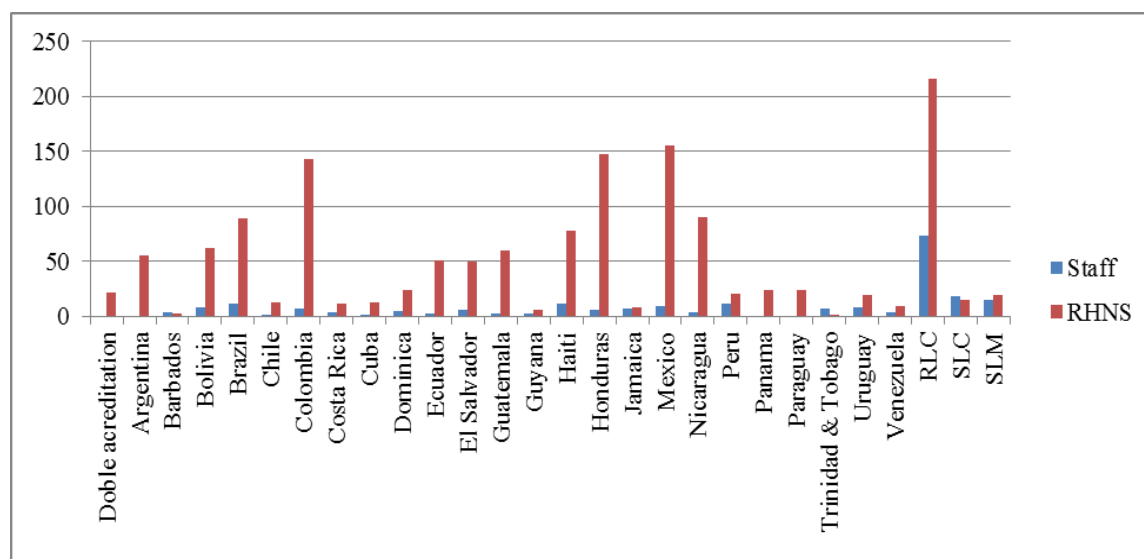
Table 6. Distribution of LAC employees, in percentages.

Offices	Staff	Non-staff	Total
Country	10%	90%	100%
Regional	26%	74%	100%
Sub-regional	49%	51%	100%
Total in LAC	28%	72%	100%

Source: Evaluation Team with data from HRSC, 11 November 2013

240. Figure 22 and Appendix 25 show the distribution of employees in the region's DOs. In almost all of them, with very few exceptions, the number of non-staff human resources (NSHR) is substantially higher than that of staff employees.

Figure 22. Total number of people working in the Decentralised Offices



Source: Evaluation Team with data from HRSC, 11 November 2013

241. From 2004-2012 total disbursements in the region, including the Regular Programme and the Field Programme, increased by 47% (see chapter 6). The decentralisation measures implemented gave greater responsibilities to the Decentralised Offices, particularly from 2010. These include increased delegation of authority to the Country Representative, including the Emergency projects, and, more recently, the introduction of the Global Resource Management System (GRMS). However, neither the number of positions nor the budgets of the country offices have reflected this increase in responsibilities and in work. The number of staff positions for the country offices in the region has remained at 133 since 2004 (see Table 7).

⁷⁵ 11 November 2013

Table 7. Human Resources in LAC: Number of positions budgeted in the Regular Programme, by type of office and type of position

DO	2004-05			2006-07			2008-09			2010-11			2012-13		
	P	GS	Total	P	GS	T	P	GS	T	P	GS	T	P	GS	Total
RLC	33	51	84	31	46	77	19	45	64	23	47	70	39	42	81
SLC	11	9	20	10	9	19	10	9	19	9	9	18	11	10	21
SLM			0			0	11	5	16	10	5	15	13	5	18
SLS			0			0	11	2	13	10	2	12			0
FAOR	41	92	133	56	90	146	49	84	133	49	84	133	45	88	133
Total in LAC	85	152	237	97	145	242	100	145	245	101	147	248	108	145	253

Source: Evaluation team with data from PIREs, August 2013

242. The limitation in the number of positions has contributed to the increased workload of administrative staff, an assumption of administrative duties and responsibilities by technical staff, and a considerable increase in the number of non-staff employees exercising permanent work with temporary contracts.

243. Table 7 shows the positions in the different types of offices categorised by area of work. At present, RLC has more general services than professional positions - 52% compared to 48% - although the difference between both has reduced since 2004. This is also the case in the Caribbean (SLC). In Central America (SLM), since its founding, the number of general services employee positions was much lower than the number of professional employee positions, reaching just 28% of the total.

8.2 Competencies and skills in the region

244. In the 2004 evaluation of FAO decentralisation, a recommendation was made to create multidisciplinary teams in the regional and sub-regional offices to provide technical assistance closer to the country offices, with the aim of obtaining a better understanding of the local situations. In 2008 the Multidisciplinary Teams (MDT) were formally created in the Sub-regional Offices. Table 8 provides information about the technical positions in the region budgeted in the Regular Programme, grouped by areas of work. The number of technical officer positions increased from 33 to 39 between 2004 and 2013. The Technical Officers in LAC are based in the Regional Office (RLC) and in the two Sub-regional offices. In particular, growth was noted in Central America as a result of the creation of the Sub-regional office in Panama (SLM). The idea is to form multidisciplinary teams with the ability to offer technical responses to the requirements and work agreements with the countries, which are initially dealt with from the corresponding sub-regional office, while the South American countries are dealt with from the RLC. The sub-regional or regional initiatives or projects normally have technical responsibility assigned to members of these teams.

Table 8. Distribution of technical positions by area (number of positions)

Area	2004/05	2006/07	2008/09	2010/11	2012/13
<i>Agri-business/markets</i>	2	2	2	2	2
<i>Communication</i>	0	0	0	1	1
Extension	2	1	0	0	0
Fisheries and aquaculture	3	3	4	4	3
Safety	0	0	1	1	1
Food systems	1	1	1	1	0
Forestry	3	3	5	5	5
Gender	1	1	0	0	0
Investment	0	0	2	2	2
Knowledge/information	0	0	1	1	2
Land/Water/Natural resources	3	2	4	4	4
Climate change	0	0	0	0	1
Agricultural produce/plant health	3	3	3	3	2
Policies	8	7	4	4	6
Statistics	1	1	1	1	1
Livestock/animal health	2	2	4	4	4
Food and nutrition security	1	1	0	0	3
Others	3	2	1	2	2
Total	33	29	33	35	39

Source: Evaluation team with data from PIRES, August 2013

245. The technical positions correspond in general to the traditional areas of FAO work relating to the FAO's 11 Strategic Objectives defined for 2010-2019. Maintaining the traditional technical positions, in principle the same that existed since 2004, the RLC began to organise itself to respond, as from 2010, to the four priority areas defined by the Regional Conference, as already mentioned, creating four teams/work groups. The analysis of the thematic composition shows that specialists in food production and security (including aquaculture, fishing and forestry production) predominate. There are substantial gaps, such as for example, the existence of only one Food Safety position in the Regional Office, when the matter represents one of the priority areas identified by LARC. Other significant cases are the area of Food Security where, until the 2012-2013 biennium there were no experts in the Regional Office, and the Environment and Climate Change area - another priority area where there are no experts. The same applies to the position of senior officer for gender, which is discussed in more detail further on in the report.

246. There are other key areas for the region and within the FAO mandate that are not reflected in the configuration of technical teams. For example, in the interviews held with FAO's governmental counterparts and with country office staff, some key topics arose in Central America and the Caribbean, such as the area of Agricultural Policies, Food Security and Agricultural Statistics. However, FAO does not have a sufficient technical team in the region to provide assistance in these sectors. There is only one technical officer in the area of statistics in the Regional Office, after years of the position remaining vacant. The position of policy officer in the SLM has been vacant for two years and there is no position with such characteristics in the SLC. When comparing the structure of teams of specialists in other multilateral organisations, with teams of senior advisers in the governments of the region and with that which can be discerned from the definition of the new strategic objectives, there are several types of skills that are not present amongst the region's Technical Officers. To name a few, there are no specialists in macroeconomic policy, fiscal policy, international trade, exchange rate policy, education, nutrition, the management of micro-data and

household surveys, modern poverty and inequality analysis techniques, environmental and natural resources economics, modern methods of econometric estimation and estimation of cause and effect mechanisms. In general, social sciences - particularly economics, sociology, anthropology, and political science - are scarcely represented.

247. As regards the Emergency and Rehabilitation (E&R) sector, up until 2012 there was no specialist in the region's structure because the technical officers of the Headquarters' Emergency Operations and Rehabilitation Division (TCE) were in Colombia and in Panama (SLM) and reported directly to the Headquarters. In June 2012, the responsibility for emergencies and rehabilitation was formally transferred to Santiago. An emergency operations officer that TCE had located in Colombia was transferred to Chile and integrated into the RLC's multidisciplinary team. The decentralisation of emergencies from Santiago to Central America and South America was expected to take place in 2013. Decentralisation to Representations in the Caribbean took place in the first quarter of 2013. At the time of the evaluation there was no Emergency Officer in SLC. In SLM there was an Operations Officer and a Junior Officer in charge of the matter. There was also an Emergencies Officer in Haiti.

248. The implementation and placement of positions in the E&R sector is an important topic, above all in Central America and the Caribbean. These regions are highly vulnerable, with limited local capacity to mobilise funds, implement rapid responses and strengthen the prevention of disasters and resilience. It should be highlighted that Panama has the Regional Office of the United Nations for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) and the United Nations Regional Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNISDR) as well as the main international donors for emergencies, in such a manner that it would be relevant to analyse the relevance of having the Main FAO Office for Disaster in the Sub-regional Office in Panama. There are two countries in South America (Bolivia and Colombia) where the Emergency Division developed a lot of capacity at a local level, with Emergency and Rehabilitation Project Coordination Units (UCER). In these countries the high local capacity that is in place, with national consultants, means that the support required from the technical officer in the RLC is low and more periodic.

249. In November 2013, the RLC's organisational structure fulfilled FAO's five new strategic objectives approved by the Conference in June 2013. This new structure, like the previous, has conformed to the existing positions, creating a complex system in which the technical officer can belong to several strategic objectives. Without a doubt the implementation of the new Strategic Objectives will require at least one expert for each of them, so that they can coordinate the work within the respective group and with the others, in order to develop a truly multidisciplinary project.

250. During the interviews, the Evaluation Team found that multidisciplinary work is limited. It is minimal in the Sub-regional Office of the Caribbean and only embryonic efforts have been made in the SLM. The high turnover of Sub-regional Coordinators - three in six years - with long vacant periods has not helped coordination within these teams. The greatest effort was observed in the RLC. The greatest obstacle when it comes to working in a multidisciplinary fashion is the lack of leadership and the confusion of roles. In the Sub-regional Offices, the role of technically coordinating the multidisciplinary team to attend to the countries under their jurisdiction corresponds to the Sub-regional Coordinator. In the RLC, the roles are less defined although the Technical Officers must report to the Regional Representative.

8.3 Training of employees from the decentralised offices

251. For effective and efficient implementation of the decentralisation measures and a progressive empowerment of the decentralised offices, training human resources is essential. Since 2007 FAO has been making a considerable effort to increase the skills of its employees. The total number of trained people is 228 (see Table 9), some of which have received different training

throughout the years, with a total of 678 participants (see Appendix 26). 84% of participants in training were staff and only 16% were non-staff (see Appendix 27).

Table 9. Number of people trained by type of contract and type of office in the 2007-2012 period

DO	Non-staff	Staff	General total
FAOR	17	94	111
RLC	15	70	85
Sub-regional Offices	4	28	32
SLC	1	12	13
SLM	2	10	12
SLS	1	6	7
General total	36	192	228

Source: Evaluation Team with data from the Learning, Performance and Development Branch (CSPL) from the Headquarters' Human Resources Unit, August 2013.

252. Employees have also been trained in the handling of the new Global Resource Management System (GRMS) but exact information is not available.

253. During the interviews held in the country visits there was strong demand for more training. In effect, in 95% of the audits performed in the region in the period of analysis it was concluded that there is little training and little knowledge about administrative procedures.

254. The Evaluation observed that, in general, the initial training and induction to the work of FAO and to its rules, procedures and policies are poor. Each office or unit seeks its own solutions. The standardisation in these matters by the RLC will undoubtedly contribute to increased efficiency.

255. During the interviews, FAO staff highlighted the e-learning platform implemented by the organisation as a tool with great promise. In 2012, at a regional level, there were 278 participants in different online courses (see Appendix 28). It was also shown that it is an under-used tool and that the courses offered are very basic and do not fully respond to needs.

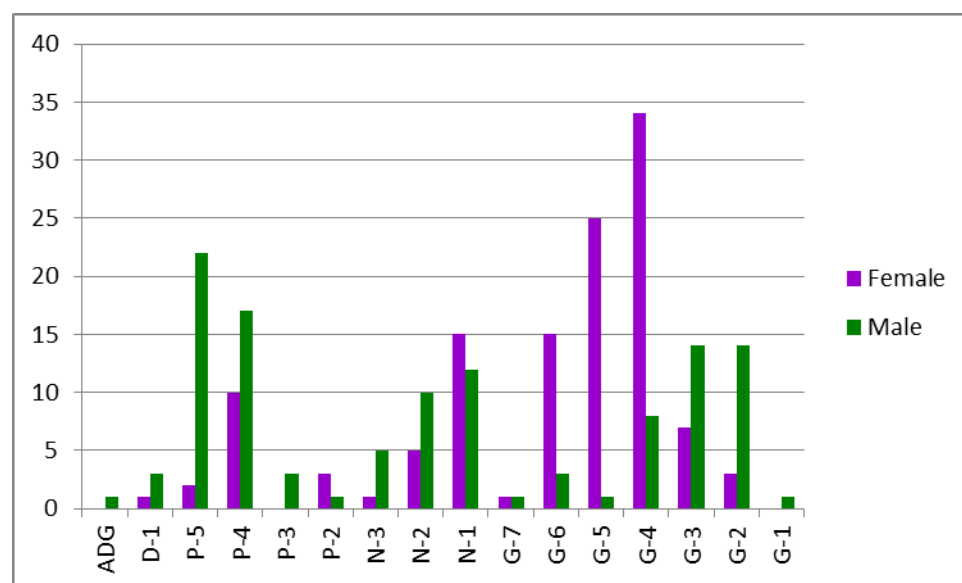
8.4 FAO gender balance in LAC

256. below details information about the distribution of FAO employees by gender in the region. 51% of people working in the region are women. The majority of them hold general services positions: 67% of the General Services (GS) positions are occupied by women. On the other hand, the majority of the technical positions (67%) are held by men.

257. Within the professional positions held by women, a clear disadvantage can be observed in terms of the salary category of such. There are only four female Country Representatives⁷⁶ and two of them are P-4, occupying positions at P-5 level at the time of the evaluation.

⁷⁶ Chile, Guyana, Honduras, Mexico

Figure 23. Distribution of positions in LAC by gender



Source: Evaluation Team with data from HRSC, 11 November 2011

8.5 Conclusions

258. The evaluation team found an imbalance between the responsibilities delegated to the decentralised offices and the resources and capacities for exercising them. The increase in responsibilities has not been matched by an increase in resources.

259. The technical officers do not respond adequately to FAO's general strategic objectives or to the regional priority areas established by the Regional Conference. The majority of Technical Officers are based in the RLC. An imbalance is observed in the provision of such in Central America and the Caribbean. The emergency and rehabilitation division has a limited presence in Central America and the Caribbean (see paragraph 242 above), and there are several other areas, including that of gender, that are not represented by any official in the region.

260. In the last biennium, although still limited, the Organisation improved the training available to its employees. Training employees is an incentive and a key tool for effective decentralisation, as it empowers the individuals who have to implement the process. The training is particularly geared towards FAO staff employees. This leaves a substantial percentage of people who hold temporary contracts - although they work on an ongoing basis and in key positions with key knowledge for the work of the offices - without access to such.

261. There is great inequality between the number of women working in the organisation and the positions they access. Women in FAO are scarcely recognised for their abilities, and the gender gap that can be found particularly in the rural environment seems to be reflected in the organisation's structure.

8.6 Recommendations

For RLC regarding human resources

262. In terms of human resources, it is recommended that RLC Management:
- Review the composition of the Multidisciplinary Teams to align them more with FAO's new Strategic Objectives;

- b) Act immediately to reduce gender inequality amongst professionals, including that relating to the level of positions occupied by women, and where possible, develop a plan of action with objectives, goals, deadlines and resources;
- c) Strengthen the Sub-regional Office for Central America in the short term;
- d) Strengthen the presence of the emergency division in Central America and the Caribbean;

For RLC regarding multidisciplinary work

263. RLC Management should establish clear lines of reporting and promote multidisciplinary work in order to contribute towards the increased effectiveness and efficiency of the presence and operations in Latin America and the Caribbean.

9 **FAO work in the region and gender equality**

264. This chapter analyses the main subject areas of FAO's activities in LAC, the main links between the decentralisation process and the development of the institution's technical activities, some characteristics of the projects and initiatives in different regions of the continent. A general analysis is performed of the results of the normative materials that FAO produces and that are inserted in the criteria for the organisation's management of knowledge in the region. The analysis includes some tools for the development of skills. Lastly, institutional efforts made to promote gender equality are discussed.

9.1 *Major areas of FAO collaboration in LAC*

265. FAO's assistance to MCs in the last decade has covered several agricultural sectors and rural development in the region. On the basis of the documents and reports analysed and the interviews conducted, this assistance can be summarised as follows:

- Launching, consolidation and expansion of the Special Programme for Food Security (SPFS) that has been running since 1997/1998 in Central America, the Andean region, Paraguay and the Caribbean countries, with a special emphasis on Haiti. Since 2000, direct funding from some governments has made it possible to expand the programme to Mexico, the Dominican Republic, Venezuela, Colombia and Brazil. Since 2006, FAO has provided technical support to the secretariat of the regional Hunger Free Latin America and the Caribbean (HFLAC) Initiative, which has become the strategic and operational framework for guaranteeing food and nutritional security especially for the most vulnerable sectors of society, and for incorporating the human rights perspective (right to food) into national strategies and policies, with a view to eradicating hunger from the continent by 2025.
- Support for the adoption of public policies enabling access to and management of natural and productive resources by rural populations, enhancing the role of decentralised government structures to manage social, economic and environmental policies and plans, and supporting the establishment of public-private participatory structures in rural areas. In this context, FAO has, amongst others, supported the rural development agencies established by the Government of Mexico in defining the Food Security Programme, and the Colombian Social Action/Food Security Network in implementing food security plans in rural municipalities. The International Conference on Agrarian Reform and Rural Development (ICARRD) organised in Porto Alegre (2006) represented an important opportunity for the public institutions and civil society of MCs to exchange and learn about rural and territorial development.
- Support for tackling rural poverty, which has been particularly alarming since 2008, in the aftermath of the global financial and economic crisis and the food crisis caused by soaring food prices. In this context, FAO has supported the region's policy agenda for assisting family farming. The vast majority of FAO field projects has addressed small farmers, in order to increase their staple food production, to improve their incomes through rural microenterprise and value-chain setting, to strengthen their capacities through renewed extension services and farmers field schools.
- Planning and implementation of sustainable forest management, with interventions in all of the region's countries, regarding normative aspects and field projects. FAO has started supporting countries in the implementation of the UN-REDD Programme 2 within the framework of the United Nations Convention on Climate Change for reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation. National forestry inventories are regularly updated by MCs with FAO's technical assistance, and voluntary guidelines for the responsible management of planted forests have been prepared with the participation of the countries, including civil society organisations and indigenous peoples.
- Prevention and control of transboundary animal diseases (TAD), in particular through regional and sub-regional initiatives, including early warning mechanisms, rapid response capacity and

surveillance systems at national, sub-regional and regional levels. Global emergencies arising from highly pathogenic avian influenza H5N1 and 2009 pandemic influenza A (H1N1) have been activated and technical cooperation has been provided to MCs to cope with prevalent diseases, such as foot and mouth disease and the classical swine fever. From a normative perspective, FAO has supported the establishment of sub-regional coordination mechanisms, the review of legal frameworks and the capacity-building of countries' veterinary services.

- Support for institutional development in the area of food quality and safety, by preparing and implementing higher standards at country level in risk analysis, designing policies and strategies for food safety control systems, and control systems for agrifood enterprises, to comply with international regulations on the application of sanitary and phytosanitary norms and procedures.
- Support for the development of small scale fisheries and aquaculture initiatives, both through the regional fisheries bodies and networks, and across technical and normative issues regarding aquaculture, a growing sector in the region.
- Since 2010 FAO's Emergency Operations and Rehabilitation Division has shifted the main focus of its work in the region. It has gone from distributing inputs in the aftermath of natural disasters to building and consolidating national and regional emergency and rehabilitation units, to risk management capacity-building and to the establishment of early warning systems. FAO's presence in Haiti has increased significantly, but extensive emergency operations have also taken place in Central America, the Caribbean Islands, Colombia, Peru and Bolivia.

266. FAO's 2010-2019 Strategic Framework, approved in 2009,⁷⁷ confirmed 11 strategic objectives. Within this context and as already mentioned previously, four priorities were defined in the 32nd FAO Regional Conference for LAC (LARC):

- Food and nutrition security (FNS);
- Climate change and environmental sustainability;
- Family farming;
- Agricultural health and food safety.

267. The budgetary allocations in the field programme for 2004-2012, in one way or another reflect the objectives and their priorities, as shown in Table 10. Food security receives the highest percentage of the allocations (35% of the total), with the forestry area (13%) and distribution of inputs in emergencies (12%) the next in the rankings, albeit quite a distance behind.

Table 10. Main areas of collaboration, according to budgetary allocation in the 2004-2012 Field Programme

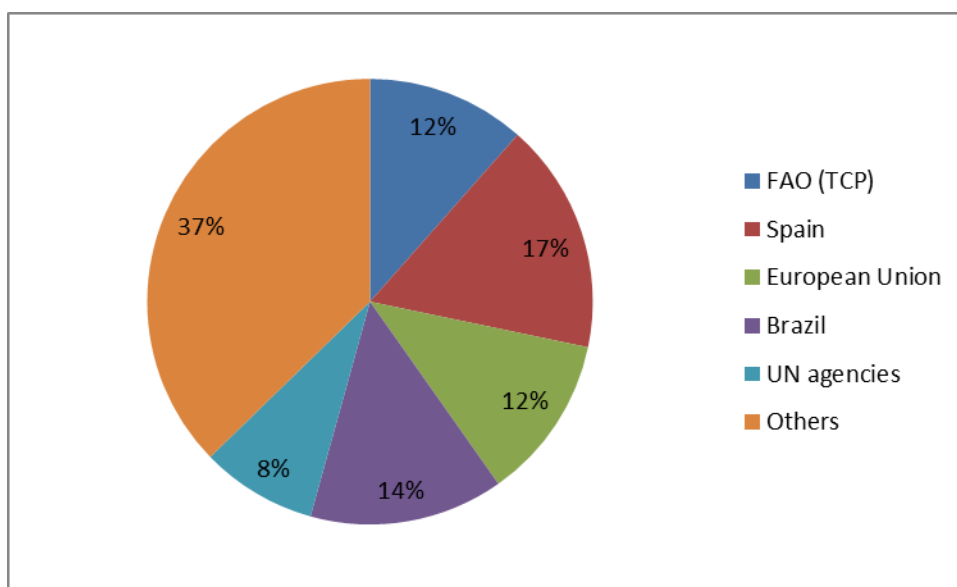
Areas of collaboration	% of budgetary allocation
Food and nutrition security	35
Forestry	13
Distribution of inputs in emergencies	12
Rural development/land tenure	10
Land & water, natural resources and climate change	8
Agricultural policy and information systems	8
Others	14

⁷⁷ FAO. 2009. Strategic Framework 2010-2019. Conference C 2009/3

Source: Evaluation Team with FPMIS data

268. Figure 24 summarises the sources of the resources. Funding for the Technical Cooperation Programme only represents 12% of the total budget for the delivery of projects in the priority areas from 2004-2012. 42% of the budget in this period was supplied by Spain, Brazil and the European Union. A substantial proportion of the budget (37%) is from smaller donations and from money provided by the very member countries in which FAO delivers its projects.

Figure 24. Total budget for the 2004-2012 Field Programme in LAC, according to funding source



Source: Evaluation Team with FPMIS data

269. Several evaluations were performed during the period of analysis (see Appendix 29) which highlighted important advances in the development of skills at several levels, including the agricultural communities in several emergency programmes. However, some doubts are also mentioned about the sustainability of the emergency projects, the lack of evidence of impacts as well as the thematic and geographical dispersion of the projects and the difficulty for some projects to serve as a model or to be replicated at other levels. An important point highlighted in several of the evaluations is the absence of an explicit strategy for stimulating risk management to promote FNS⁷⁸. Risk management is incorporated into SO5 (particularly in 003), which explicitly states “the need to reduce risks and promote the preparation of and mechanisms for recovery, in order to guarantee the utmost synergies between humanitarian, development and investment efforts, while fostering the ability to take care of all risk and crisis management measures as well as the corresponding transitions”⁷⁹.

270. In some cases it is suggested that FAO should promote improved governance through policies, strategies and legislation, and an increase in awareness and knowledge of risk management, instead of specific on-site interventions, which is work that corresponds to the government or NGOs. It has been highlighted that there is a lack of evidence about FAO's contributions to the creation or

⁷⁸ Comments about evaluations of projects completed in LAC refer to the following documents produced by FAO's Office of Evaluation: 2011. Evaluation of FAO Cooperation with Brazil 2002-2010; 2013. Evaluation of FAO's role and work in reducing the risk of disasters in Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean.

⁷⁹ FAO. Revised Strategic Framework. Conference. 38 period of sessions. Rome, 14-22 June 2013. <http://www.fao.org/docrep/meeting/027/mg015s.pdf>

strengthening of early warning systems. It has also been mentioned that the effects of FAO's interventions are limited given their narrow scope (local projects with an emphasis and focus on activities for recovering livelihoods, to which limited risk management activities are added). It is also mentioned that no consolidated gender focus has been detected in FAO's interventions, although its inclusion has been observed in some projects.

271. The Director-General's Medium Term Plan for 2014-2017⁸⁰ incorporates a new focus defined by the Council which establishes five strategic objectives (SO5) that include all of the institutional activities:

- SO1: To contribute to the eradication of hunger, food insecurity and malnutrition
- SO2: To increase and improve the provision of goods and services from agriculture, forestry and fisheries in a sustainable manner
- SO3: To reduce rural poverty
- SO4: To enable more inclusive and efficient agricultural and food systems at local, national and international levels
- SO5: To increase the resilience of livelihoods against threats and crises

272. The implementation of these SOs has started with pilot initiatives. The RLC is responsible for implementing a SO1 pilot project, for which it has established three pilot case study countries that will be specifically analysed in the following section.

9.2 Lessons learned from some reviewed initiatives and projects

273. As part of the work of this Evaluation, seven key projects in seven countries as well as the three cases of the Specific Objective 1 Initiative implemented in LAC - the institution's pilot region - were reviewed. National projects (TCP and Emergency), sub-regional and regional projects, as well as the aforementioned pilot initiative were reviewed. They were selected by mutual agreement with several of the regional and sub-regional bodies during the discussion about the terms of reference in this evaluation. Appendix 30 details the list of these projects and the evaluation reports available about such.

274. It involved a review of objectives (including an assessment of the fulfilment of such), the main activities performed, the effectiveness of skills development, the effectiveness of the direct working relationships, some sustainability criteria and the gender perspective, as a cross-cutting component. In all cases, field visits were made and interviews conducted with some of the agents at each point of work. The information received from the officials directly involved was not of the same detail in each case. Consequently, it was not truly speaking an evaluation, nor was enough information available to estimate some effectiveness and efficiency indicators. The results of these assessments is summarised in Table 11 in a format produced by OED for the purposes of making comparisons between regions.

Table 11. Classification of the projects selected and the SO1 initiative

Evaluation criteria	Countries and ranking											
	SO1 initiative				GUY	BAR	NIC	GUA	PAN	CHI	BOL	Average
	A&B	NIC	ECU	Average								
<i>Relevance</i>	2	4	6	4	5	5	5	6	5	2	6	4.9

⁸⁰ MTP 2014-17 and PWB 2014-15, FAO, 2013.

<i>Design</i>	2	4	5	4	3	2	3	5	5	4	3	3.6
<i>Efficiency/ implementation process</i>	2	4	5	4	3	3	3	5	4	4	4	3.7
<i>Effects/ results</i>	N.A.	3	4	3	N.A.	2	3	5	4	4	5	3.8
<i>Effectiveness of skills development</i>	3	3	4	3	N.A.	3	4	4	4	2	3	3.3
<i>Effectiveness of the associations</i>	N.A.	5	6	5	N.A.	2	5	5	N.A.	5	3	4
<i>Gender mainstreaming</i>	2	1	1	1	1	2	1	1	1	1	5	1.7
<i>Sustainability</i>	N.A.	4	5	4	N.A.	N.A.	4	4	2	3	2	3

Source: Evaluation Team; Ranking from a scale of 1 to 6, where 1 is very weak and 6 excellent. "N.A." stands for "not available".

275. Generally speaking, the projects and the initiative are relevant for the needs of the countries in which they operate, with the exception of Antigua and Barbuda where the figures used to justify the presence of the SO1 Initiative are contested and rejected by the authorities of the Ministry of Health and of the Ministry of Finance.

276. The links to and work with institutions, rural organisations, local authorities and third sector organisations are effective, especially at a local level. This situation is not similar to the national level in which there is a focus of work, in general, in the Ministries of Agriculture and the multiplicity of partners and alliances found at a local level is lost. This table highlights an almost constant absence of work at sub-national levels, despite the specific characteristics and presence of informal institutions at that level, where specificity and territorial homogeneity would facilitate the design of common FNS strategies.

277. With a couple of exceptions, the design of the projects is simple and corresponds to the problems that the FAO activities try to help to solve. The fundamental questions are: when, how and at what level should FAO implement projects and initiatives to establish its support for the definition of public policies. These questions become more relevant when dealing with activities that are already being implemented in a lot of LAC countries (for example, kitchen and school gardens, different tests, plant and animal health controls). Access to food (increase in the current demand for food), on the other hand, could very well be the most critical aspect of the application of the FNS policies in some countries and in various strata of the societies of such.

278. The contribution to the effectiveness of the development of skills at different levels is subject to the same questions, given that an institutional influence on public policies and the application of the decisions at the appropriate levels is sought. Several projects working at a local level raise doubts about their contribution to the development of skills at higher levels, particularly in terms of reaching policy decision-makers.

279. The efficiency of the implementation of projects and the SO1 initiative shows low performance, whether because of the limited coverage reached within the objective population, because of the potential impact on the conditions of the population selected or because of the very design of some projects.

280. There are certain doubts about the sustainability of the actions or of the impact that some of the field work can have in the selected countries, precisely because of the absence of institutionalisation in some cases, the limited association with policy decisions, in other cases, or a marked action at a local level that does not distinguish itself from the actions of government bodies or of the third sector that work on the implementation of strategies, programmes and projects which are already institutionalised.

281. At the request of the RLC and SLC, the evaluation team analysed and made field visits to the Regional Pilot Initiative of the Strategic Objective (SO1), in the three countries where the pilot operates: Antigua and Barbuda, Nicaragua and Ecuador. It is expected that the pilot initiatives developed will lead to learning and developing skills to learn to improve the multidisciplinary work between the different FAO units, their decentralised offices and counterparts, in terms of the formulation and implementation of public policies and of government systems in relation to FNS.

282. This initiative's activities are involved in the work plans to strengthen the synergies of the actions of FAO's Field Programme, as part of the Hunger Free Latin America and the Caribbean Initiative. Comments about this initiative detail the field observations in the countries selected, interviews with a significant number of actors, information obtained from FAO officials and the perception of those involved in the field projects.

283. Given the extensive differences in the political, institutional, socioeconomic and preparation conditions of the FNS policy framework and of the Hunger Free Latin America and the Caribbean Initiative in the three countries selected, the plans of action for each are different. In such conditions, the field results are more similar to case studies, with an emphasis on work at different levels: national governments, local governments and relatively dispersed efforts in the parliamentary institutions of the countries and in the region.

284. From this perspective, the individual analysis of each pilot can, certainly, serve as a learning experience, taking into account that due to relating to specific cases the generalisation of such experiences is limited. It will also be difficult to generalise the lessons on management, monitoring, evaluation and communication expected and the standardisation of experiences with the pilot projects. However, the pilot is a relevant lesson about working in a decentralised manner at a regional level in one of the new FAO strategic areas (SO1), which RLC Senior Management considers valuable.

285. Taking these considerations into account, we suggest reviewing the design of the project should there be plans to continue or repeat the experience of this initiative elsewhere and, in any event, we suggest performing an evaluation of the results and process of this initiative in the three pilot sites.

9.3 Production and dissemination of FAO's normative products

286. FAO produces documents which are scientific or technical guides, or that serve as globally applicable references, with the aim of delivering these to member countries and to the international community. This is in order to establish common standards and methods to be widely applied. These products often include rules geared towards policies, databases and systems of information for global application as well as studies, reports and information that is used for the production of such normative products.

287. In order to understand the distribution of these types of products, this Evaluation tried to establish a reference to the frequency with which that material was used, through digital consultations and the downloads of these documents in one of the major search engines (Google). When performing the searches, documents produced by the countries, the Regional Office and the technical departments at Headquarters were found. 368 publications from the region were detected that were registered on

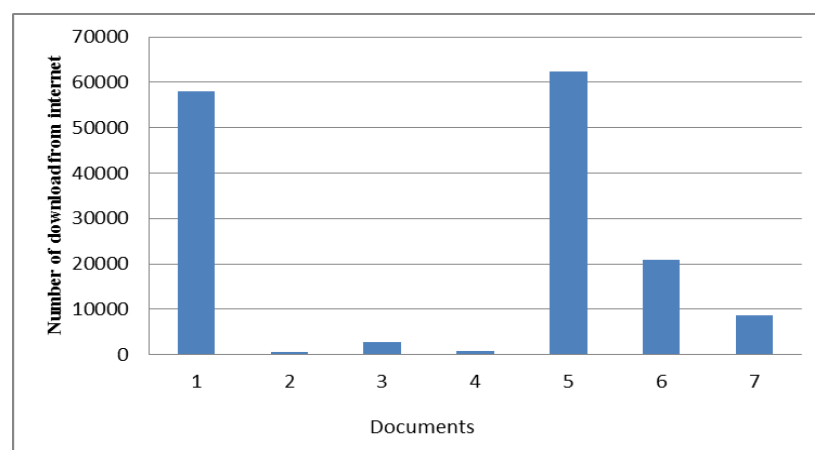
RLC's website along with 511 thematic publications registered on the website of the Headquarters in Rome. The products registered on one site cannot be accessed from the other and there are documents from countries that the regional office and Headquarters are unaware of, and that are not recorded. This situation is not very consistent with FAO's definition as an institution of knowledge.

288. OED selected 16 normative publications or products that seemed to have a more general value in the region, as a sample for performing an analysis of the frequency of downloads. The analysis generated unexpected results: just seven of these publications are registered on RLC's website, another seven are on the Headquarters' website and two of the products - corresponding to the two sub-regional products - could not be found. Getting data on downloads from the Headquarters was not possible due to a breakdown in the system. These results are not very auspicious in terms of the organisation of material to be distributed in support of the member countries' knowledge.

As shown in

289. Figure 25, only three of the seven products identified on the regional office's website register over 20,000 internet downloads, measured between 15 May and 30 September 2013. In fact, only the documents "The Outlook for Agriculture and Rural Development in the Americas: A Perspective on Latin America and the Caribbean, RLC 2012-2013" and "*Panorama de la Seguridad Alimentaria y Nutricional en América Latina y el Caribe, FAO 2012*" were downloaded over 12,000 times per month, on average.

Figure 25. Sample of normative products of the RLC region



Source: Review of statistics on documents downloaded on Google. 2013⁸¹

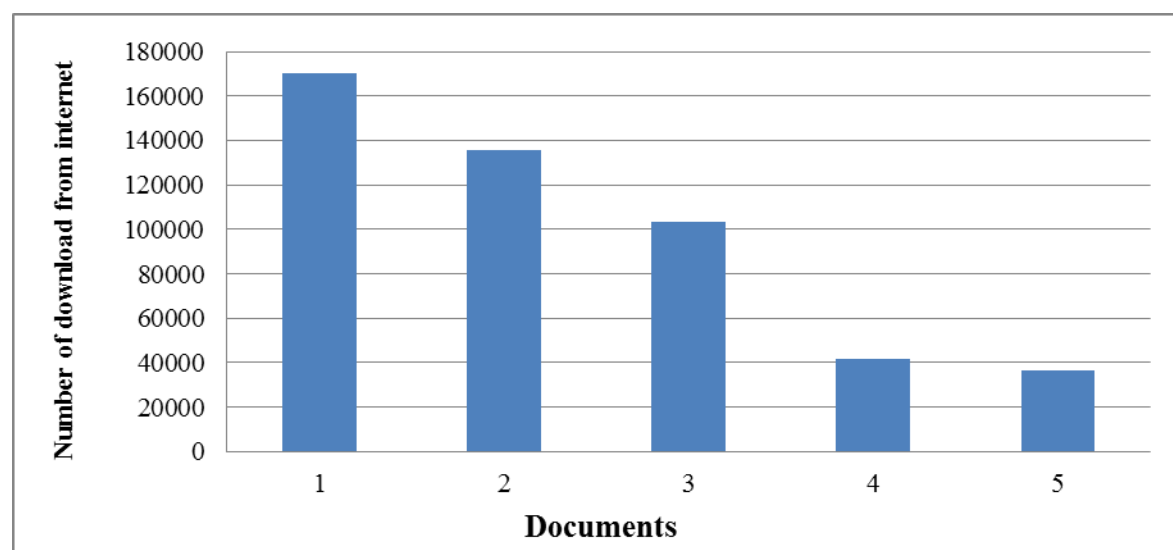
290. The low levels of consultation of these normative products confirms the information obtained through the many interviews performed during the visits to the offices of the countries selected for this evaluation. With the exception of the Ministries of Agriculture and of entities closest to academic work, the response about the knowledge and use of the normative products was practically "nil".

⁸¹ Document 1: Perspectivas de agricultura y del desarrollo rural en las Américas: una mirada hacia América Latina y el Caribe, RLC 2012-2013; Document 2: Políticas de mercado de trabajo y pobreza rural en América Latina, RLC, 2010 (VOLUME I); Document 3: Políticas de mercado de trabajo y pobreza rural en América Latina, RLC, 2012 (VOLUME II); Document 4: Panorama de la Seguridad Alimentaria y Nutricional en América Latina y el Caribe, FAO 2011; Document 5: Panorama de la Seguridad Alimentaria y Nutricional en América Latina y el Caribe, FAO 2012; Document 6: Family farming newsletter, RLC 2012; Document 7: Family farming newsletter, RLC 2013

291. In accordance with the interviews during the field visits, for those in charge of managing the publications in RLC, there are publications of a specific technical nature that differ from those known as normative products, which are for more general consultation in the region. In addition, it is interesting to compare the figures in

292. Figure 26, corresponding to the five documents that are downloaded from the RLC website the most, in the same period that the seven normative products that were analysed (15 May to 30 September 2013). Substantial differences can be observed here: the three first ones are downloaded 100,000 - 160,000 times in the period consulted. These publications are of a more specific technical nature than those selected as being for 'more general consultation'.

Figure 26. Most noteworthy documents based on the web traffic of RLC



Source: Review of web traffic statistics on documents downloaded. 2013⁸²

293. The websites of the country offices, currently managed directly by the country offices themselves, are going to be "centralised" through a window on the RLC's website. Although the measure can be justified in the interests of a greater harmonisation of the profile and a single and more secure platform, the countries are concerned that this change could affect the visibility of FAO's activities in the countries as well as the circulation of information between FAO's interested parties at a national level.

9.4 Management of knowledge

294. The management of knowledge refers to the creation of information and its transformation into knowledge through analysis, incorporation of experiences and the systematic organisation of such, to form a body of knowledge that is, institutionally, part of the organisational capital. The members of the institution in question learn and implement this knowledge in order to generate new information that improves it, in a virtuous spiral, whose objective is to improve the institution's performance. For FAO "the management of knowledge is based on the idea that the most valuable resource an organisation has is the knowledge its employees have. Consequently, the extent to which

⁸² Document 1: Bio-preparados para el manejo sostenible de plagas y enfermedades en la agricultura urbana y periurbana. IPES/FAO 2010; Document 2: Captación y almacenamiento de agua de lluvia. Opciones técnicas para la agricultura familiar en América Latina y el Caribe. FAO 2013; Document 3: Producción Artesanal de Semillas de Hortalizas para la Huerta Familiar. Manual Técnico. FAO 2011; Document 4: Estado de las Áreas Marinas y Costeras Protegidas en América Latina. FAO 2012; Document 5: Dinámicas del mercado de la tierra en América Latina y el Caribe: concentración y extranjerización. FAO 2012.

an organisation functions well, will depend - amongst other factors - on the efficacy with which its employees can create new knowledge, share the knowledge with the whole organisation, and put that knowledge towards better results”⁸³.

295. RLC has developed instruments that contribute towards establishing a knowledge base grounded on the institutional experiences and work in the region. The idea was to gather knowledge about the actions performed in the territories and integrate them, in order to establish the basis for managing such knowledge. These instruments include the standardisation of experiences and the creation of a set of products that would make it possible to give greater visibility to the field work performed specifically by the projects related to the FAO Spain fund, recovering the impact on public policies at a local, departmental and national level for the region's countries.

296. The standardisation documents contain an organised description of the experiences,⁸⁴ both of the process of planning and execution as well as of the lessons, development of skills and of the context in which each experience takes place. However, there is no critical analysis of the process by the agents of such, which reduces learning, and leaves the vision of efficiency, findings and better practises that can be incorporated into other experiences of the same type to the standardisations.

297. In addition to the method for standardising experiences, there are other tools that try to adapt the information of the projects to the decision-makers and the public in general. These products include the normative documents, publications about results and experiences, standardisation files, videos and bulletins, which can be found on the Regional Office's website as well as on other sites that some of the Decentralised Offices have.

298. An RLC initiative developed in 2010 within the framework of the FAO-Spain Fund programme is the Results based Evaluation and Monitoring System (SIMER),⁸⁵ an instrument created with the aim of establishing a mechanism for monitoring and evaluating these projects. It is a tool for evaluating the projects by results, based on the internal consistency of the project established through the Logical Framework matrix. This methodology has the advantage of integrating the current and financial dimension of the projects as well as the advance of the Annual Operating Plan of each project. The SIMER is widely used in the region at the moment. Over 120 projects have been using the system to date and, at present, 57 projects, in 10 countries are updating their information on this platform.

299. This tool aims to serve as a basis for learning so that the institution develops a culture of monitoring and evaluation, which it seems did not exist before the establishment of SIMER. A detailed Methodological Manual has also been prepared that makes it possible to monitor the logical framework matrix, the combination of the activities with their associated budget as well as the development of monitoring and evaluation indicators that point to processes and results.

300. Regardless of the advantages of SIMER and the spaces for improving its ability to compare indicators and integrate itself with the standardisation of experiences, the member countries, through the Council, have ordered and initiated a process for developing a monitoring and evaluation

⁸³ Knowledge forum. Thematic Knowledge Networks Community. ABC of Knowledge Management. 19.01.2012. <http://www.fao.org/knowledge/doc-details-es/es/c/120428/?type=resources>

⁸⁴ Colombia. Family vegetable gardens: Food security experience within the framework of the municipal public policy. Honduras. Support for the improvement of family income through urban vegetable gardens. <http://www.rlc.fao.org/es/proyectos/plataforma-experiencias-territoriales/huertos-urbanos-honduras/>

⁸⁵ FAO. 2012. Methodological Manual of the Results based Evaluation and Monitoring System for projects managed by FAO-SIMER. SIMER methodology. FAO RLC field programme. FAO-Spain programme.

framework that corresponds to a results-based model,⁸⁶ designed to incorporate the five strategic objectives and to measure the results and the corporate performance at a global, regional and country level. This model tries to link up three levels of results: strategic objectives, organisational products and results and indicators for each of the levels which include this framework. This Monitoring and Evaluation framework would be universally applied in the organisation replacing other instruments being used. There is obviously a concern, at a regional level, that the current experiences and skills are not sufficiently valued in the new corporate model.

301. In the area of communication, a quick review indicates that in recent years, the RLC has designed communication strategies for activities, programmes and specific needs, such as the Spain-FAO Programme in the region in 2011,⁸⁷ the eradication of foot and mouth disease, the programme for education about food and nutrition to promote food and nutrition security as part of the Hunger-Free Latin America initiative, as well as the strategy for the project on evaluation and reinforcement of the bovine spongiform encephalopathy prevention system and of the feed quality control system.

302. Since the implementation of the Spain-FAO Programme, coordination efforts have been made from the Regional Office to manage to establish a single channel of circulation that enables the delivery of coherent information which responds to the Regional Office's communication objectives. As from the second half of 2011, a process began to restructure the website and the institutional bulletin, with the aim of adapting them to the RLC's technical criteria, gearing their content and usability towards the new requirements.

9.5 Development of skills as a component of the Field Programme

303. Traditionally, the development of skills has been an integral part of the activities, as is common in the United Nations System. In the majority of cases, skills development plans have been included in the institutional projects and programmes on all levels that FAO operates at. This has been particularly true in circumstances where a country is facing a challenge of new changes in agriculture and food, which involve developing its abilities in terms of public policies.

304. Using the broad experience of FODEPAL - global technical cooperation project for economic and agrarian policy formation and rural development - since the start of the decade, in 2008 the Public Policy Training Unit was established, transforming the lessons into best practices. This unit is specialised in distance training (e-learning) and in semi-attendance training. By its own introduction, its added value is to integrate all of the knowledge generated and gathered by the FAO field programme and deliver innovative training solutions, while taking the requirements of the countries into account.

305. Its training activities are geared towards all relevant agents involved in the implementation of public policies relating to the agricultural, forestry and fishery sector of the region's countries. The training applies to professionals or technicians from the public or academic sector or from civil society organisations, as well as all FAO employees. Courses with a tutor, as well as semi-attendance and self-taught courses are offered.

⁸⁶ FAO COUNCIL. 2013. Hundred and Forty-eighth Session. Rome, 2 - 6 December. Adjustments to the Programme of Work and Budget 2014-15.

⁸⁷ Other actions geared towards specific programmes are detailed in the document on Communication for Development in the face of the challenge of Climate Change, Natural Resources Management, Risk Management and Food Security, for which a virtual consultation was conducted to identify needs, promote strategies and alliances to strengthen communication initiatives and services for development in support of natural resources and risk management, adaptation to climate change and food security in the rural areas of Latin America.

306. Since its establishment, over 10,000 people have been trained across 154 courses in all of the region's countries. From the outset, this area of training received financial support from the Spanish Agency for International Development Cooperation, which recognises the importance of strengthening institutional and human skills, as detailed in its different strategic plans up to 2012.

307. The Public Policy Training Unit subscribes to and is governed by the principles of the Institutional Strategy for the Strengthening of FAO's Skills. As it is an initiative that forms part of the Field Programme, it offers training in the topics developed with this programme.⁸⁸

308. The evaluation had no instrument for gathering feedback from Public Policy Training Unit users, who are mainly government officials from the region's countries. Interviews with employees of the official counterpart institutions gave the impression that it was not a tool used generally and that basically only the people who have had the opportunity to make direct use of the learning system are aware of it.

9.6 Gender equality

309. Although expressed in different ways, there is similarity in the criteria for gender equality as regards the idea of equality between men and women in the control and use of society's goods and services. This represents abolishing the discrimination between both sexes and ensuring that no privilege is given to a particular gender. In FAO's case, the expected result also includes the strengthening of skills in countries to formulate, implement, monitor and evaluate policies, strategies, programmes and investments that generate equal opportunities for men and women in agriculture and food security.

310. In order to therefore effectively implement gender equality, two specific and fundamental situations are required: equal opportunities and the creation of a series of defined conditions that make it possible to take advantage of such opportunities. In this regard, gender equality refers to the impartial treatment of men and women, according to their respective needs, whether with equal treatment or with different treatment that is considered equivalent in terms of rights, benefits, obligations and opportunities. Within the scope of development, the aim of achieving gender equality often requires the incorporation of specific measures to compensate the historical and social disadvantages that women face. This means that the incorporation of the concept corresponds to a reduction in the differences between men and women to access opportunities for development, and that the work of achieving equality between both becomes an integral part of the organisation's strategy, policies and activities.

311. The incorporation of gender aspects also requires evaluating the consequences for men and women of the measures planned in all sectors, including legislation, and ensuring that the concerns and experiences of both men and women are fully taken into account when designing, delivering, supervising and evaluating all of the development activities. The aim is to prepare activities that break the barriers that stop men and women having equal access to the resources and services they need to improve their livelihoods. Consequently, the many roles that women play in the family and in production roles are a crucial part of these considerations.

⁸⁸ An offer has been put together for the second half of 2013 which includes the socioeconomic and gender analysis [ASEG in Spanish] and fight against hunger; food security, rural poverty and social protection in Latin America and the Caribbean; improving the productivity and quality of aquaculture production, current challenges and future trends; evaluative monitoring of projects using the results-based management approaches [EGR in Spanish] and logical framework approaches [EML in Spanish] through the SIMER; urban and suburban agriculture as a tool for food security and municipal development.

312. The evaluation team found that in the work of the FAO Field Programme, there is more concern for incorporating women into the project implementation activities than for establishing the conditions for women to benefit from the possibilities presented in the projects they participate in. In particular there is a lack of adaptation of times, movements, shared responsibilities, division of work, access and management of resources, amongst other factors, to enable women to participate in the production projects and maintain the roles they usually play within the family, especially the reproductive role.

313. Gender mainstreaming incorporated into the SO1 initiative and projects was evaluated. During the field visits in several countries it was found that a lot of the work was performed with groups of women or that women represented a significant proportion of the direct agents. However, with the exception of Bolivia - attributable more to the organisation of the women than to the efforts of the project - the FAO teams on site have not taken any actions to adapt the activities, the production practices or the field activities to the gender conditions and to the other roles that women play in rural families. In many cases other members of the family did not participate in the production activities and no action was observed that could contribute towards strengthening the gender focus within and outside of the project in progress. Generally speaking, several projects were found with women but these had a very restricted perspective and sense of gender.

314. The topic of gender is gaining strength and taking on a certain dynamic in the region's Decentralised Offices. At present, there is a system of Gender Focal Points in 18 decentralised offices (see Appendix 31). The majority of the Focal Points are not gender specialists but must dedicate at least 20% of their time to gender matters. It is observed that when they do so, it is normally in addition to their full-time responsibilities. The Gender, Equity and Rural Employment Division (ESW) at the Headquarters provides help on specific matters and also organises training. There is no support for that network at a regional level given that the position of Gender Office in the RLC has been vacant since its creation in 2012.

9.7 Conclusions

315. As regards the major areas of FAO collaboration in LAC:

- FAO's Field Programme's activities in LAC generally reflect the 11 priorities defined by the FAO Council for the 2004-12 period well, with an emphasis on projects geared towards FNS and mainly towards activities for increasing the supply of food produced by family farming in LAC.
- The significant changes that generate the definition of the five strategic objectives adopted by FAO and that should be fully incorporated from 2014, will substantially affect FAO's areas of collaboration with the region's countries. In addition, the agreements between offices and governments through the CPFs will also have a specific effect on the areas of collaboration with the countries when taking these strategic objectives into account.

316. As regards the lessons learned from some reviewed initiatives and projects:

- Generally speaking, with the exception of Antigua and Barbuda, the projects are relevant for the countries and achieve good interaction with national entities and other associated bodies at a local level, which is diluted at a national level given that the offices concentrate their actions and relations with the Ministries of Agriculture. Other national ministries and institutions participate in Bolivia. The absence of the regional levels in the implementation of projects is notorious.
- In general, the design of the projects is simple and applies to the problems that they attempt to resolve.
- There are still doubts about the validity of the focus and the level of action of the projects. Within the area of FNS there is an emphasis on increasing the food supply through recognised strategies

(for example, kitchen and school gardens, seed multiplication) rather than projects that enable greater access to sufficient food by the most vulnerable (increase in demand).

- There are doubts as to the ability of some projects to make an impact because of their coverage and a certain tendency towards integrating the work with that of the national entities in some countries (for example, the SOI pilot project). In addition, in some countries the lack of institutionalisation of their approaches and methods of work raises doubts about the sustainability of several projects once FAO stops intervening directly.

317. As regards the production and dissemination of FAO's normative products:

- The normative products are distributed between the websites of the Headquarters, RLC and possibly some country offices. The same occurs with the institutional publications, in general, of all types. Its evaluation is therefore difficult and limited.
- Of a sample selected by OED, it was found that the frequency at which these documents are downloaded from the internet is quite low. This situation corroborates the information gathered from the interviews in the countries visited.
- There are specific thematic products produced by RLC that are more frequently consulted and downloaded from the regional website. There is no information available about the use of other publications that may exist on the websites of some country offices.

318. As regards the management of knowledge, communication and coordination:

- RLC has designed instruments to generate organised information about the field work experiences (method of standardisation of experiences, SIMER, publications, videos, etc.). SIMER stands out because of its extensive application and ability to organise information according to the Logical Framework of the projects and their budgetary allocation.
- With the incorporation of the new strategic objectives, Headquarters is preparing a monitoring and evaluation system that seems to be devised for universal application across the institution. This new system would replace SIMER when it is completed. In this manner, there would be a shift from monitoring the projects' operating plans to monitoring the projects' results.
- The communication created by RLC has been designed for specific programmes, projects and actions that generally culminate in technical publications. More recently, an information bulletin was created and efforts are being made to unify external communications, with greater emphasis on the media.

319. As regards the development of skills as a component of the Field Programme:

- The Public Policy Training Unit specialising in distance learning (e-learning) and in semi-attendance training was created in 2008. It is aimed at relevant agents involved in the implementation of public policies relating to the agricultural, forestry and fishery sector of the countries. These agents can be from the public or academic sector or from civil society organisations, as well as all FAO employees.
- The mission did not have access to the information or instruments that enable an evaluation of this unit that states it has trained over 10,000 employees in the region. The interviews conducted in the countries visited revealed that there was no extensive knowledge about the unit's existence or activities.⁸⁹

320. As regards gender equality:

⁸⁹ FAOR in Honduras stated that the prices of the courses posed difficulties.

- Several of the field projects that the mission visited work with women-only groups or groups with a high proportion of women.
- However, no institutional efforts or efforts in the designs of the projects were detected for creating the conditions required to generate equal opportunities for men and women in the rural economic activities.

9.8 Recommendations

321. As regards the major areas of FAO collaboration in LAC:

- The restructuring of the Multidisciplinary Teams to manage the new Strategic Objectives should receive prompt attention. The distribution of the Technical Officers across Santiago, Panama and Barbados should pay attention to the growing importance of the Central American sub-region.

322. As regards the responsibilities and decentralisation in the implementation of the Field Programme:

- It seems very pertinent to establish and raise awareness of the lines of technical assistance for the projects, in order to reduce the current discretion in the intervention of the LTOs.
- The regional and sub-regional projects should be a response to the lines agreed in the CPFs, within the recently adopted strategic objectives. The regional and sub-regional projects should not enforce the incorporation of countries or uniformity in the handling or methods of work. In fact, the differentiation detailed in the CPFs needs to incorporate flexibility in these matters.

323. As regards the lessons learned from some reviewed initiatives and projects:

- It is recommended that an evaluation take place of the conditions of the countries and the four FNS components,⁹⁰ to establish the emphases of the projects in said components. Definitions about this approach should be equally reflected in each CPF agreed with the countries.
- It is also recommended that the work strategy is reviewed to ensure that the field projects are located at the right levels and with the right capacity for impact. The projects are instruments for demonstrating or proving that an impact can be made, and that regional and national policies and decisions can be reached. This is a perspective that must be guaranteed in the design of different initiatives.
- As regards the SO1 initiative's pilot sites, if a decision is made to replicate them, it is important to review the design to fulfil the purpose of learning. The design, processes and results must be formally evaluated.

For RLC and FAO, as regards the production and dissemination of the normative products

324. We recommend gathering the technical and normative products and publications together on an institutional website and informing the potential users. It would also be very useful to include a meter to count the number of views and downloads in order to monitor the use of these documents.

325. In order to disseminate and increase the consultation and use of these documents, one must develop and design an information strategy that is different to that based on mentions in the media, in order to keep members of the targeted audience informed about these documents. Announcements and abstracts that reach the target audience directly are examples of this action.

⁹⁰ These four components are: (i) food availability; (ii) access to food; (iii) nutritional quality and (iv) stability in availability and access. See: Stamulis, K. and A. Zezza. 2003. A Conceptual Framework for National Agricultural, Rural Development, and Food Security Strategies and Policies. ESA Working Paper No. 03-17. www.fao.org/es/esa.

326. As regards the management of knowledge, communication and coordination:

- The methodology for standardising experiences should be integrated into the existing monitoring and evaluation system (SIMER) to strengthen the creation of knowledge on the basis of the analysis of periodic indicators.
- Actions to unify communications and establish lines of work require the definition of target audiences for the institution and the establishment of communication channels.

For RLC and FAO in LAC, as regards gender equality

327. It is recommended that the gender perspective be more extensively incorporated into FAO's activities. In addition to ensuring the active incorporation of women, the right conditions have to be created so that they can combine that participation and the responsibilities they have to take on, with the rest of the activities they generally perform in the roles they play. The sustainability of the activities with women is related to the consolidation of their family roles and the operational division of work.

10 Partnerships and resource mobilization

328. In 2012, the FAO Council⁹¹ asked for "greater and more creative use of partnerships with national and regional institutions, other international bodies, of the United Nations, or outside of the UN system, the private sector, the universities and research organisations and civil society". Consequently, the evaluation carefully analysed the quantity and quality of the partnerships existing between FAO and other institutions in the region.

10.1 Government Partners

329. FAO is widely recognised by governments as a reliable partner and neutral agent. The Ministries of Agriculture are FAO's main governmental counterparts and partners in all countries. This results from the Organisation's mandate and history although the complexity and diversity of the problems related to food security, sustainable agriculture and rural poverty require more extensive and multi-sector associations. In fact, the number of projects and programmes implemented with other governmental partners, such as the Ministry for Environmental Affairs, Health, Social Affairs and Education, amongst others, is increasing. In addition, in all of the region's countries the local governments are increasingly empowered to develop social and economic programmes at decentralised levels, and become potential strong partners for relevant FAO field activities, for example, in the scope of food security or the sustainable management of natural resources.

330. Without a doubt, in Latin America and the Caribbean, the country priorities are closely linked to the design and implementation of the economic policy. The Ministries of Finance/Treasury and the Central Banks are those ultimately responsible for these policies and for the fiscal allocations in the region. FAO will have to establish regular channels for access to these bodies, particularly with the new Strategic Objectives.

331. The Ministries for External Affairs - through their Secretariats/Sub-Secretariats/Departments/Offices for multilateral cooperation - are often the official counterparts that provide the institutional and strategic frameworks for FAO cooperation. In addition, there is an increase in the number of National Agencies for International Cooperation that play an important role in the organisation of cooperation programmes and in establishing South-South cooperation programmes with other countries (see point 10.6 below). In both cases, their importance as FAO partners is going to increase.

332. The organisations of the United Nations System tend to enter into Host Country Agreements to make their activities in the host countries official.⁹² During the visits to the selected countries, fragmented information was gathered about FAO's situation in this regard. There is a definitive lack of a regional global overview about what the situation is. There seemed to be a wide range of alternatives and documents that regulate the presence of the Country Representations. Undoubtedly some long-standing ones that can hardly reflect the current situations of FAO's programmes in the region. OSD is making efforts to standardise and update this area.

10.2 UN agencies and bodies

333. FAO's participation in the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) and in the United Nations Country Team (UNCT) is good and valued by UN partners. In practically

⁹¹ "Estructura y funcionamiento de la red de oficinas descentralizadas" CL 144/15.

⁹² It is undoubtedly the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) that has the highest number and the most long-standing of these agreements.

all countries, the CPFs are in line with the UNDAF and follow the same calendar, although the partners do not know the document well, or are entirely unaware of it. FAO's Country Representations need to actively raise awareness of their CPFs and the transfer of such to the other organisations of the United Nations.

334. FAO's participation in the UN Joint Projects (UNJP) has been active and valued in all of the countries that have implemented these types of programmes. FAO has been an important agent in the pilot programme "Delivering as One" carried out in Uruguay, although the reduction of the international cooperation with the country makes the sustainability of the programme in the near future difficult. The pilot programme does not seem to have established the foundations for a UN system presence that is unified and sustainable over time.

335. The Evaluation noted that there were no Resident Coordinators from the United Nations System in the region that were from FAO.

336. FAO - through the RLC - and the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) have a long-standing collaborative relationship which is currently focused on the joint realisation of regional fora, studies and publications about topics related to agricultural development, food prices and climate change. For the ECLAC it is important to have counterparts and alliances with other agencies of the United Nations system on regional topics, and the shared location in Santiago, Chile, of the ECLAC Headquarters and the RLC was key to generating such synergies. The signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between FAO and the Regional Economic Commissions in April 2013 seems to have resulted from the good outcomes of the work performed by FAO in conjunction with the ECLAC in Latin America and the Caribbean. In addition, the ECLAC's perception is that the MoU broadens the potential areas of joint work by incorporating topics related to FAO's new strategic objectives.

10.3 Regional organisations and institutions

337. In general, the evaluation found that FAO's association with the regional institutions is weak, at a strategic as well as a programming level. The Caribbean Community (CARICOM) is FAO's only regional institution counterpart for a regional programme relating to food security. Collaborations have been registered with the Latin American Integration Association (ALADI) for the organisation of seminars and publications related to agricultural commerce.

338. Cooperation with the Inter-American Institute for Agricultural Cooperation (IICA) is reasonable but there is not much evidence of joint actions. The only tangible exception is the CPF in Paraguay where the two organisations have put their respective projects under the same strategic framework.

339. The evaluation carefully analysed the cooperation between FAO and the IICA, due to the existence of a general agreement ("Letter of Understanding for a Strategic Alliance between FAO and the IICA") signed in 2012 between the two organisations and the temporary merging of the activities of FAO and the IICA in Paraguay as a pilot initiative. Both the OTO/FAO Representative and the IICA Representative in Paraguay collaborated on promoting joint work, and agreed upon a joint programming framework approved by the Government. Both stated that a joint institutional/operating plan for the country offices depended on the Management of both organisations. The Ministry of Agriculture stated that it did not approve this option.

10.4 Civil society organisations and representatives

340. Although, on occasion, the NGOs are partners in some field activities, there are very few strategic alliances with national NGOs in the countries visited. The questionnaire sent to 87 NGOs⁹³ received an extremely low number of responses, despite the considerable participation of members of civil society organisations in the last regional conference in 2012 (around 65 people from various countries).

341. In three countries visited (Bolivia, Guatemala, Mexico), the team met with parliamentarians involved in the Parliamentary Front against Hunger who highlighted FAO's role in the mobilisation of the fronts.

342. Overall it seems that the associations with civil society organisations need to be re-considered at a regional and national level.

10.5 Academic institutions and research centres

343. In the countries visited, in general, the mission found very few collaborations with academic institutions, driven mainly by the personal initiative of a technical officer in specific topics.

344. The cooperation with the research centres of the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR)⁹⁴ including the International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI) in the region is practically non-existent.

10.6 Mobilisation of resources

345. Chapter 6 above (see 6.1 Effectiveness, and Appendix 12) identifies the sources of funding for the Field Programme in LAC, which are important and varied. From 2008 to 2012, USD 76.5 million from countries within the LAC region were mobilised - a third of the funds mobilised from bilateral donors during the period. As shown in chapter 3, over 50% of the Field Programme disbursements come from Unilateral Trust Funds and the FAO/Government Cooperation Programme. Overall they increased by 55% from 2008 to 2012.

346. At present there are eight countries in the region - Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Cuba, Mexico, Venezuela and Uruguay - with active South-South cooperation policies inside and outside of the region. Institutional structures have been established⁹⁵ and the allocation of funds has grown rapidly in recent years.⁹⁶

347. The Management for Latin America and the Caribbean manages a contribution fund from Brazil for this work, the importance of which has been significant during the 2004-12 period. During

⁹³ The NGOs that participated in the last Regional Conference (2012) as well as others named by the Country Office (FAOR) as FAO partners.

⁹⁴ The CGIAR is an international organisation which works across a network of 15 research centres, three of which are located in the region: the International Centre for Tropical Agriculture (CIAT) in Colombia, the International Maize and Wheat Improvement Centre (CIMMYT) in Mexico and the International Potato Centre (CIP) in Peru. The International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI), with Headquarters in Washington, is also part of the group.

⁹⁵ The majority of times through the International Cooperation Agencies/Secretariats/Sub-Secretariats, in general, situated in the field of International Relations Ministries.

⁹⁶ Until now it has been impossible to estimate a figure for the cooperation coming from these countries using criteria established by OECD/DAC for traditional donors. However, there are several studies, which indicate growing activities in this area. See: SEGIB, Informe de Cooperación Sur-Sur, Madrid, 2009, 2010, 2011, 2012.

this period, Brazil has contributed almost USD 55 million (18% of the total contributions from bilateral donors to the Field Programme during that period), therefore becoming the second source of FP funding, after Spain.

348. During the evaluation, it was observed that there was a lack of a structured policy for mobilising funds in the region. This work should be prioritised and all of the Decentralised Offices should be encouraged to participate in the efforts. The sudden drop in contributions from Spain should constitute an early warning for future complications.

10.7 Conclusions

349. The main point of entry to the Governments in Latin America and the Caribbean are the Ministries of Agriculture. The challenges of the organisation's new Strategic Objectives should promote diversification of the channels of contact with the host country governments.

350. The United Nations System in the region values FAO's participation in the joint planning instruments and bodies. However, knowledge of the Country Programming Framework is very limited. The Country Representatives should actively raise awareness of these documents and the implementation of such. There are no Resident Coordinators from the United Nations System in the region that were from FAO.

351. Strategic alliances with civil society organisations at a regional and national level are limited. Interesting experiences were observed at a local level.

352. Work with research centres and academic institutions, as well as with the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research, and particularly the International Food Policy Research Institute, is almost non-existent. Strengthening these links would contribute added value to FAO in its work with the new Strategic Objectives.

353. There is no consolidated policy for the mobilisation of resources within the region. Given the importance of mobilising funding for the Field Programme, RLC Senior Management should consider strengthening this work.

10.8 Recommendations

For RLC

354. RLC Management for Latin America and the Caribbean should prepare a plan to extend the region's network of government interlocutors beyond the Ministries of Agriculture and Livestock, in order to work on the five Strategic Objectives.

For FAO, LEG and OSD

355. Through its Legal Office (LEG), the Headquarters in Rome should review the existing types of Headquarters Agreements and prepare a plan of action for updating such, or agree upon new ones where necessary within a reasonable period of time.

356. The Country Representations should develop short-term plans to raise awareness of their Country Programming Frameworks within the Country Team of the United Nations System, amongst other multilateral agencies and donors in the countries and amongst extensive sectors of the host governments.

357. It is recommended that the Management in Rome and RLC Management in LAC make an institutional and structured effort to incorporate FAO employees into the group of candidates for Resident Coordinator positions of the United Nations System in the region.

For RLC

358. Given the growing importance of the Field Programme in Latin America and the Caribbean and the growing funding of such based on contributions from the region's countries, the RLC should develop an institutional strategy for mobilising resources, which includes the assignment of official(s) specialised in such and with extensive participation of the Country Representatives. An integrated approach to FAO's role in the South-South cooperation should take shape in this context. The mobilisation of resources should be included as a strategic sector in the CPFs and in the recruitment of Country Representatives and Technical Officers in the region.

11 Conclusions

359. The Evaluation focussed on answering two questions: 1) what progress has FAO made in the implementation of the corporate decisions to decentralise its duties and roles in Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC); 2) how has that progress (or the absence of such) influenced the Organisation's effectiveness and efficiency in the region.

360. The analysis focussed on the 2008-2012 period and identified a turning point in 2010. This decision was extensively supported by the vast majority of the employees interviewed during the field visits.

361. In LAC, the Organisation fulfilled the decentralisation measures by the following means: a) transferring the supervision of the Country Offices to the Regional Office in Santiago (RLC) and transferring the supervision of the Technical Officers of the Regional and Sub-regional Offices to the Regional Representative; b) the formal opening of the Sub-regional Office for Central America (SLM) in Panama, in 2007, which in fact began its operations on a significant scale in 2010; c) the establishment of Multidisciplinary Teams in Santiago (discontinued in 2012), Barbados and Panama; d) the establishment of decentralised planning processes, through the Country Programming Framework (CPF); e) increased delegation of authority to the Decentralised Offices (DO) including the Technical Cooperation Programme (TCP), Field Programme, Letters of Agreement, acquisitions, and management of human resources; and f) the assignment of a governance role to the Regional Conference for Latin America and the Caribbean (LARC) in the orientation of the priorities and work in the region, from 2010.

362. Progress in each of these processes has taken place at different speeds and the degree of implementation varies from one to another. However, the Organisation has made progress in the implementation of the corporate decisions to decentralise its duties and roles in LAC.

363. The Evaluation Team concludes that the Regional, Sub-regional and Country Offices in LAC now have the authority to define priorities and mobilise resources at a level close to the member countries. The decentralisation process established roles and responsibilities for the three levels of Decentralised Offices: Regional Office, Sub-regional Office and Country Office. However, these roles are ambiguous - in some cases they are duplicated and have not been communicated efficiently. This contributes towards making it difficult to clearly differentiate between each of the three levels' manner and purpose of acting.

364. There are still rules and attitudes that reproduce control mechanisms, from Headquarters or from the RLC, ex ante that limit the Organisation's efficient and quick operation at country level. The Country Representatives do not have all of the power to be the main decision-makers and provide a quick service. At the other extreme, the accountability and performance evaluation mechanisms are still weak.

365. As regards the delegation of authority for technical support, in the majority of the cases, the Headquarters' technical units continue to assume the role of Lead Technical Units (LTU). The majority of the Lead Technical Officers (LTO) are at the Headquarters. The Headquarters also constitute the Operational Unit for a substantial part of the budgetary allocation, while the Sub-regional Offices continue to be secondary agents.

366. The delegation of authority was not accompanied by more resources. The Regular Programme's resources in the region have been at a standstill since 2010. Decentralisation is still an unfinished process in terms of bringing the process of defining priorities and mobilising resources to a level that is closest to the countries.

367. The delegation of authority for procurement and Letters of Agreement is sufficient to cover the needs of the Offices although there is a certain unawareness of the administrative rules. In the field of human resources, this delegation was not accompanied by sufficient training and support. The contractual conditions of the non-staff human resources compromise the effectiveness and efficiency of the decentralisation measures by causing high turnover.

368. The process for approving the Technical Cooperation Programme is unclear and limits the authority granted to the TCP Coordinator. There are several levels of approval and endorsement, and responsibilities are duplicated throughout the process.

369. The implementation of the Global Resource Management System (GRMS) has empowered the decentralised Offices, particularly the Country Offices.

370. The Evaluation developed and estimated cost-effectiveness and efficiency indicators.⁹⁷ The indicators have their limits, which are discussed in chapter 6, but they are valid, consistent and comparable. Several multilateral, bilateral and non-governmental organisations use similar indicators. They provide information about 36 units of analysis. The decentralisation process in the region is a relatively successful story in terms of effectiveness. The Organisation's presence in the region measured by the total disbursements - which, as will be shown, are an indicator of its presence in LAC - increased by 47% from 2008 to 2012.

371. This very substantial increase was led by the Field Programme's (FP) expansion and greater capacity for delivery. Several reasons have contributed to this: the opening of the SLM in Panama, the decentralisation of activities, the fine-tuning of the Organisation's priorities and their synchronisation with the governments' priorities, as well as the work on strengthening the presence at country level. The Field Programme increased by 53% from 2008 to 2012.

372. The increase in the Field Programme was in turn led by the substantial increase in the Unilateral Trust Funds and of the FAO/Government Cooperation Programme disbursements, which increased by 55% from 2008 to 2012. The increase in these funds was a direct result of the mobilisation of resources at a regional level and responds to the incentives created by the decentralisation process and to the empowerment of the field units as was corroborated in the field interviews with the Regional and Sub-regional Divisions and with the government representatives in the countries visited. From 2008-2012 USD 227 million were mobilised from bilateral donors, which constituted 75% of the FP. A third of these resources came from countries in Latin America and the Caribbean.

373. The Evaluation developed an effectiveness indicator called a "multiplier" which was estimated for 36 units of analysis from 2004-2012. Such indicator increased until reaching a figure of 3.2 for the 2008-2012 period. For each dollar of Net Appropriations received, the presence in LAC managed to mobilise 3.2 dollars of extra-budgetary resources.

374. One of the main decentralisation measures in the region is the creation of the Sub-regional Office for Central America (SLM) in Panama. This measure has also had successful results. The sub-region's participation in the total disbursements increased by 7% from 2008-2012. The sub-region's multiplier exceeds the total multiplier for LAC. With the exception of Costa Rica, the sub-region's countries show very good performance in terms of effectiveness and efficiency, considered jointly, from 2008 to 2012. Without a doubt the close work with relatively small countries (as regards the size of their economies and populations) where international cooperation still had a presence until 2011, strengthened the work of the Country Offices. The visits to Guatemala, Nicaragua and Panama gave reliable proof of this development. Once the Sub-regional Office is up and running it is to be expected

⁹⁷ A database containing over 5,000 pieces of data, which covers the period from 2004-2012 was created.

that if such is sufficiently empowered, in terms of resources and of technical employees, this virtuous circle will be able to continue.

375. Decentralisation empowered the role and work of the Regional Office for Latin America and the Caribbean (RLC) from 2010 onwards. The RLC disbursements increased by 121.6% from 2008 to 2012 and their participation in the total disbursements in the region increased from 15.2% to 22.9% in the same period.

376. The efficiency analysis shows that there were no significant gains from 2008-2012 compared to the 2004-2012 period. In terms of efficiency, the results show stagnation during the period. The administrative weight of handling the programmes does not show significant improvements (reductions) from 2008-2012.

377. The general performance evaluation on the units of analysis was reviewed by combining the effectiveness and efficiency indicators. The performance in its entirety was estimated for 2008-2012. A longitudinal analysis was also completed, comparing 2008 and 2012, which made it possible to determine the evolution of different units of analysis and their transition between the low, medium and high categories. The good overall performance of the Central American countries was observed, with the exception of Costa Rica. This is important given the strengthening of decentralisation in this sub-region.

378. A majority of the countries administered under the multiple accreditation system, all of which are in the Caribbean, display positive performance indicators. However, no field visits were made in this respect.

379. The largest countries in the region in terms of the size of their economies and of their population appear at intermediate positions although there is cause for concern with the loss of efficiency of the operations in Brazil.

380. A group of units of analysis was found to have low performance, and in many cases, were in a process of deterioration. These include, firstly the RLC and the Sub-regional Offices for Central America and the Caribbean. Several of the Caribbean countries show worrying performance. A group of Latin American countries also shows low performance and seems to have stalled at low levels during the period analysed. The evolution of the majority of the countries with low performance during the period gives the sensation that the negative trends are fundamentally determined by losses in efficiency.

381. The Headquarters in Rome handles the Administrative and Operational Support (AOS) within the Regular Programme when such is generated by the Field Programme. The appropriation criteria between different FAO bodies are confusing, not very transparent and unequal.

382. The implementation of the Country Programming Frameworks (CPF) as an instrument for defining priorities was a wise measure from the perspective of decentralisation. The CPFs were established as ideal documents for identifying and negotiating priorities. They strengthened the role of the FAO representative at country level and the subsidiarity principle. The CPFs are highly valued by the governmental counterparts. The documents are of good quality and satisfactorily fulfil the preparation guides.

383. There are areas for improvement related to the establishment of appropriate monitoring frameworks, annual work programmes that enable the estimation of resources required annually for each result expected, the establishment and use of portfolio management approaches, and the inclusion of gender matters. The roles defined for the formulation of the CPFs are general and ambiguous. They receive limited technical advice and support from the Technical Officers.

384. The allocation of Regular Programme resources follows inertial criteria and responds to the size of the offices in terms of employees. The criteria governing the distribution of the allocation of the Technical Cooperation Programme (TCP) resources within the Region are inadequate and lead to a distribution of the resources amongst country offices and to a concentration of such at a regional level. All of this affects the relationship between the different levels of the Decentralised Offices in LAC. The evaluation compared the allocations for the 2004-2012 period with the Gross Domestic Product per capita (Atlas methodology), the rate of extreme poverty and the rate of malnutrition without finding any traces to show that such had an influence on the allocations.

385. As regards the definition of priorities at a regional level, the Evaluation concludes that the decisions made in 2010 (the Regional Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean, LARC, as governing body of FAO at a regional level and the delegation of authority to the RLC to prioritise at a regional level) were appropriate in terms of the process of decentralisation.

386. The changes in FAO's overall strategic framework with the definition of five Strategic Objectives (SSO) and the definition of guides for their implementation disrupted the process that was taking place across the region. It is important to acknowledge and offer spaces for the participation of agents at the level of the Decentralised Offices, with clear relationship rules that respect the subsidiarity principles that were reinforced by the decisions made in 2010.

387. As regards the structure of human resources in the region, the Evaluation Team found an imbalance between the responsibilities delegated to the Decentralised Offices and the resources and capacities for exercising them. The increase in responsibilities has not been matched by an increase in resources.

388. The Technical Officer positions do not respond adequately to FAO's general strategic objectives or to the regional priority areas established by the Regional Conference. The majority of Technical Officers are based in the RLC while an imbalance is observed in the provision of such in Central America and the Caribbean.

389. The emergency division does not have sufficient presence in Central America and the Caribbean.

390. The training offered to employees has improved in the last biennium. However, it is still limited. The training is particularly geared towards FAO staff employees but it leaves a substantial percentage of people who hold temporary contracts - although they work on an ongoing basis and in key positions with key knowledge for the work of the offices - without access to such.

391. As regards FAO's areas of collaboration in LAC, it was found that the Field Programme's activities reflect the eleven priorities defined by the FAO Council for the 2004-2012 period well, with an emphasis on projects geared towards food security aspects and towards activities for increasing the supply of food produced by family farming. However, both the priority given to the Country Programming Frameworks and the definition of the five new Strategic Objectives (SSO) will substantially affect the FAO's areas of collaboration with the region's countries.

392. As regards the specific projects evaluated they are, generally speaking, relevant for the countries and achieve good interaction with national entities and other associated bodies at a local level. This is diluted at a national level given that the Offices concentrate their actions and relations with the Ministries of Agriculture. There is a notorious absence of the regional levels in the implementation of projects at country level. The design of the projects is simple and applied to the problems that they attempt to resolve. The majority of them are geared towards increasing the supply of food through recognised strategies. This contributes towards resolving problems related to food security. In contrast, there were few interventions geared towards facilitating access to food for vulnerable groups (increasing the demand for food). It is also worth asking when and at what level

projects that have a political influence on the priority areas of Strategic Objective 1 will be implemented. Doubts are raised about the ability of some projects to make an impact nationally and regionally given the limited coverage of such and their integration in the already existing work of national entities. Several of these projects raise doubts with regard to their future sustainability once FAO's direct intervention ends. It would appear that there are certain exceptions in some Caribbean countries (Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Grenada, Trinidad and Tobago).

393. As regards the production and distribution of FAO's normative products, such are scattered amongst the websites of the Headquarters, RLC and some country offices. The frequency at which these documents are downloaded from the internet is quite low. This was corroborated in the information gathered during the country visits.

394. As regards the management of knowledge and communication networks, the RLC has designed instruments to generate organised information about the fieldwork experiences. The Results based Evaluation and Monitoring System (SIMER) stands out because of its extensive application and ability to organise information according to the Logical Framework of the projects and their budgetary allocation. An information bulletin was created recently and efforts are being made to unify external communications, with an emphasis on the media.

395. As regards the role of Technical Officers (TO) their number increased compared to 2008 and they were redistributed based on the creation of the Sub-regional Office for Central America (SLM). This contrasts with their decrease in the Sub-regional Office for the Caribbean (SLC). The composition of the Multidisciplinary Teams is predominantly geared towards the production of food, including forestry and fishery production. In practise, the Technical Officers do not operate as multidisciplinary teams. The technical networks operate to a significant extent based on personal initiatives and specific activities.

396. The Evaluation Team evaluated the gender equality of the interventions selected. The field projects visited work with women-only groups or groups that extensively represent women. However, no institutional efforts were detected - not even in the design of the projects to create the conditions required so that the women could take advantage of that participation within a system of adapting the projects' activities to the other roles that women perform.

397. The Evaluation Team found great inequality between the number of women working in the organisation and the positions they access. Women in FAO are scarcely recognised for their abilities, and the gender gap that can be found particularly in the rural environment seems to be reflected in the organisation's structure.

398. The Evaluation Team analysed the associations established in the region and the resource mobilisation policy. The main point of entry to the Governments in Latin America and the Caribbean are the Ministries of Agriculture. The challenges of the organisation's new Strategic Objectives should promote diversification of the channels of contact with the host country Governments.

399. The United Nations System in the region appreciates FAO's participation in the joint planning instruments and bodies. However, knowledge of the Country Programming Framework is very limited. The Country Representatives should actively raise awareness of these documents and the implementation of such. It was noted that there were no Resident Coordinators from the United Nations System in the region that were from FAO. It is suggested that FAO should consider explicitly and more proactively promoting the incorporation of FAO employees into the group of candidates for Resident Coordinator positions in the United Nations System in the region. This would lead to added value for the United Nations System at country level and contribute towards incorporating a systematic vision of the FAO's work in the region.

12 Recommendations

400. As stated in previous chapters, the Evaluation focused on developing a limited number of effectiveness and cost efficiency indicators. The indicators are valid, consistent and comparable. They are also used by other international organizations. They do, however, have limitations in terms of not covering national specificities or including methodological aspects discussed in the Evaluation. The decision-making process by FAO Senior Management should include the recommendations presented as inputs, to be completed with an analysis of particular aspects or conditions when it is required. The recommendations are presented with suggested measures that could of course be replaced by alternative combinations thereof.

Recommendation 1: FAO Senior Management at Headquarters and the Regional Office

FAO Senior Management at Headquarters and the RLC should consolidate FAO presence in the region. In order to do so, it should adopt new working models to adapt to the financial reality and the Organization's requirements to provide efficient and effective services to member countries in Latin America and the Caribbean.

Suggested measures:

Given the performance of Country Representations and the Regional and Subregional Offices in terms of the combined cost effectiveness and efficiency indicators in this Report, we recommend:

1. Transferring Cuba and the Dominican Republic from the Caribbean Subregion to the Mesoamerica Subregion. The former displays a weak performance in terms of effectiveness and efficiency. Overburdening the SLC with the task of managing different languages does not seem appropriate. Mesoamerica shows positive indicators that suggest it was right to open the Subregional Office in Panama. This change in reporting lines may help to improve effectiveness and efficiency indicators in the region. There are signs that Senior Management is considering some of these measures. Their immediate implementation would be a positive step. Senior Management could also evaluate the status and reporting lines of Haiti.
2. The increased responsibilities in Mesoamerica, the good performance of almost all the Subregion's Offices and the significant volume of operations form the basis for the recommendation to rebalance the location of Technical Officers in Santiago, Chile, and in Panama. FAO could make clear gains in effectiveness and efficiency by transferring Technical Officers from Santiago to Panama. Naturally, these measures could be strengthened by transferring Technical Officers from Rome to Panama.
3. The arrangement of Representations being managed by designated Technical Officers should be discontinued. This model provides no effectiveness or efficiency gains. The governments of the countries involved do not value this model.
4. For those units that remained in the same unfavourable position in the 2008-2012 period, plus those with a poorer evaluation, RLC should consider establishing multiple-accreditation systems, with a view to managing the portfolios of two or more countries. This recommendation could be applied to the following three groups of countries: Caribbean countries; Costa Rica; and Argentina, Chile and Uruguay in South America.
5. The aggregate technical profile of the current staff of Technical Officers in the region and subregions should be defined to manage the five new Strategic Objectives effectively and efficiently within the region. The strengthening of the Subregional Office for Mesoamerica should also be prioritized in the short term. The posts of Technical Officers still respond to the working priorities from 2004-2012. The opinion canvassed by the Evaluation about the technical support function of these Officers - and the speed, relevance and ubiquity of the services - was negative overall. Senior Management of FAO and RLC should restructure technical services and teams, in

terms of specializations and geographical location. These teams should consider adopting truly multidisciplinary working arrangements and structures.

6. It is recommended that RLC and TCE strengthen the presence of Disaster Risk Management Officers in Central America and the Caribbean.
7. OSD, in collaboration with FAO Legal and Ethics Office (LEG), should review the existing Host Agreement arrangements at country level and formulate a plan to update them or sign new agreements where necessary in a reasonable time frame.

Recommendation 2: FAO Senior Management at Headquarters and the Regional Office

The Evaluation Team recommends that FAO senior management quickly implement an exhaustive process to clarify the scope of decentralization among its staff in the region, including on the roles and responsibilities between the three layers existing in ALC (regional, sub-regional and country) and HQ.

Suggested measures:

1. Emphasizing and clarifying the roles of the three levels of decentralized office (regional, subregional and national) and the subsidiarity criteria among them. This process should include a clarification of the role of Technical Officers that highlights their main function of supporting the implementation of FAO programmes in countries and providing advice at that level.
2. There is also a recommendation to clarify the approval process for Technical Cooperation Programmes and to eliminate redundant steps.
3. Improving communication and enhancing training on FAO contractual arrangements in Country Offices.

Recommendation 3: FAO Senior Management at Headquarters, the Regional Office and Country level

FAO Senior Management at Headquarters and the Regional Office should strengthen the use of Country Programming Frameworks (CPF) as the main instrument for establishing working arrangements and priorities in countries.

Suggested measures:

1. It is recommended that the Office of Support to Decentralization (OSD) and the RLC introduce an online digital platform for the drafting of CPFs, with a view to: a) making the provision of technical inputs by Technical Officers easier and more transparent; b) strengthening corporate information and keeping CPFs up to date; c) ensuring the use of CPF drafting guidelines, including maximum length, inclusion of monitoring targets and indicators, and an annual work plan.
2. Country Representatives must prioritize: 1) defining indicators, targets and baselines for the level of expected results; 2) establishing mechanisms for providing progress reports to governments; 3) integrating a portfolio-management approach to generate synergies and complementarities; 4) estimating needs in terms of mobilization of resources and the actions needed to obtain them.
3. Country Representations should develop short-term plans to disseminate their Country Programming Frameworks among the United Nations System Country Team, other donors and multilateral agencies in the country and wider sectors within host governments.
4. The Evaluation recommends that the RLC and Country Representatives ensure their future CPF drafting processes involve governmental counterparts other than those from Ministries of Agriculture, as well as non-governmental partners (in accordance with the Organization's new strategies for the private sector and civil society).
5. It is recommended that OSD and the RLC institutionalize CPFs as the framework for establishing the work priorities of the entire Organization in the relevant countries. These CPFs should be formally authorized (with party signatures and validity period) in order to operate within a

country. They should be respected by all FAO bodies and levels, including multidisciplinary teams, the RLC and Subregional Offices.

6. It is recommended that, as coordinators of the Multidisciplinary Teams, the regional management and subregional Directors should ensure that regional and subregional projects respond to and support the work streams agreed in the CPFs, and check that they match the new Strategic Objectives (SO). The variety of the CPFs should be reflected in regional and subregional projects, without the need to force the incorporation of countries or a uniform treatment thereof.

Recommendation 4: FAO Senior Management at Headquarters and at the Regional Office

FAO Senior Management at the Headquarters and at the Regional Office should consolidate the regional sphere as the priority intermediary between country-level and global priority-setting and planning, as well as adopting some efficiency measures as part of their processes.

Suggested measures:

1. This Evaluation found no grounds for recommending prioritizing areas and resources at the subregional level.
2. It is recommended that RLC and OSD consider options for a more efficient organization of the Regional Conference, for the Organization and for member countries. In this context, priority should be given to disseminating the new strategic framework among member country governments (including Ministries of Agriculture and other ministerial bodies).

Recommendation 5: FAO Senior Management at Headquarters and at the Regional Office

It is recommended that FAO manage the Field Programme with strict effectiveness and efficiency criteria.

Suggested measures:

1. RLC, with support from the South-South and Resource Mobilization Division (TCS) and the Office of Strategy, Planning and Resource Management (OSP), should monitor the Field Programme with explicit portfolio-management criteria and appropriate and up-to-date financial information. The Field Programme must have its own accounts, without prejudice to an integrated portfolio management. Its costs should be completely funded by the Programme itself. As recommended by many internal audits, this Evaluation supports the creation of a “Reserve Fund” in order to provide sustainability, a predictable time frame, innovation potential and to hedge against temporary funding shortfalls for field presence.
2. The Evaluation recommends that RLC establish clear and transparent criteria for distributing regional allocations under Technical Cooperation Programmes. A substantial proportion should be subject to an automatic preliminary allocation according to variables relevant to FAO operations in the region (the Evaluation considered per capita gross national income, Atlas methodology, extreme poverty rates and undernutrition rates).
3. It is recommended that the RLC establish an advisory board made up of regional FAO representatives to advise on issues relating to the allocation of resources under regional and subregional Technical Cooperation Programmes.

Recommendation 6: FAO Senior Management at Headquarters and at the Regional Office

FAO should improve the operational and financial management of the Regular Programme and Field Programme in the region.

Suggested measures:

1. RLC, with support from OSP, should collect relevant financial information for ongoing monitoring of the progress of operations and portfolio management. Information on expenditure (disbursements) by year, unit of analysis, source of funds and use thereof is vital for regular evaluations of the effectiveness and cost efficiency of the portfolio. This Evaluation made considerable efforts to compile the first database for 2004-2012 and to develop a few indicators for assessing the effectiveness and efficiency of the portfolio management. FAO could benefit from adopting, adding to, continuing and stepping up such endeavours in the short and medium term.
2. Management of information on Administrative and Operational Support (AOS) should be dramatically restructured as soon as possible. This Evaluation recommends that AOS obtained from field operation support should be clearly and transparently recorded as part of the Field Programme, then rapidly and regularly allocated and under no circumstances retained at Headquarters. The Evaluation recommends that AOS collected should be distributed as follows: a) 60% to the unit responsible for the mobilization of funding; b) 20% to RLC; and c) 20% for Headquarters in Rome. AOS distributed according to the criteria of this recommendation should help to consolidate the "Reserve Fund" described in suggested measure 5.1.
3. It is recommended that the RLC establish a results-monitoring function associated with regional priorities and those of the CPFs. The region is the most appropriate level for this function.
4. It is recommended that FAO maintain a support structure for the Global Resource Management System (GRMS) at RLC and the development of all modules, with a view to helping improve efficiency in regional operations.
5. Given the growing importance of the Field Programme in Latin America and the Caribbean, and the fact that it is increasingly funded by contributions from the region's own countries, RLC, with the support of TCS, should develop an institutional resource-mobilization strategy that includes assigning specialized officers for the strategy and the close involvement of Country Representatives. An integrated approach to the role of FAO in South-South cooperation should be devised in this context. The mobilization of resources should be included as a strategic sector in CPFs and in the recruitment of Country Representatives and Technical Officers in the region.

Recommendation 7: FAO Senior Management at the Regional Office

It is recommended that Regional Management improve the design and implementation of field projects, as well as the implementing mechanisms to ensure improved management of knowledge and normative products generated by decentralized offices.

Suggested measures:

1. In terms of the specific projects evaluated, it is recommended that the heads of Multidisciplinary Teams and Country Representatives ensure a design guaranteed to have an impact on policy at the local or national level. As far as the pilot project developed as part of Strategic Objective 1 is concerned, it is recommended that RLC carry out an exhaustive evaluation of the design, processes and results before implementing it at the regional level.
2. As for the production and dissemination of normative products, it is recommended that RLC centralizes the material available on a website, informs potential users and includes a counter of searches and downloads to monitor usage. The information strategy should use adverts and summaries that appeal directly to the target audience. The communications strategy should define target populations and diversify the channels used.
3. In order to improve knowledge management, it is recommended that RLC incorporate systematized experiences into the monitoring and evaluation system that has been developed.
4. As far as project-level activities are concerned, Regional Management, Country Representatives and Technical Officers should guarantee the conditions for combining the active participation of women with the responsibilities they bear in everyday life and the social roles they perform. The

sustainability of actions for women is linked to combining them with their family roles and the operational division of labour.

5. It is recommended that RLC, with support from LEG, review the potential of technical commissions and defines a strategy to define their future work and role in such intergovernmental forums.

Recommendation 8: FAO Senior Management at Headquarters and at the Regional Office

FAO should immediately produce an action plan for eliminating existing gender inequality, including goals, targets, time frames and resources. There should be a substantial increase in the number of women among Country Representatives, and women should also reach higher salary brackets (given that they have the required skills).
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