



Food and Agriculture  
Organization of the United  
Nations

## Office of Evaluation

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### Evaluation of FAO's cooperation with the Republic of Armenia

#### Management response

## Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations

### Office of Evaluation (OED)

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## **A. General response**

FAO management welcomes this Evaluation, which assesses FAO's cooperation with the Republic of Armenia. To a large extent, the findings from the evaluation in Armenia were also integrated in the final report of the REU-SEC evaluation, finalized at the end of 2012.

Management endorses the Evaluation process and methodology and appreciates its forward-looking approach in focusing on the impacts of the on-going reform for a country office without a resident FAO Representative who is also accredited to two additional countries and is also the Deputy Regional Representative.

The Evaluation, starting in early 2012, was carried out at a time of important discussions and transformational changes in FAO's approach to decentralization thus providing in-depth evidence and input to the process insofar as it impacted the country. During most of this process the position of the FAOR was vacant.

This Management Response was prepared under the leadership of FAOR for Armenia/Deputy Regional Representative for Europe and Central Asia, in close collaboration with many other concerned units.

The Evaluation Report contains five recommendations. Management accepts all recommendations.

## **B. Context of the management response and Implementation challenges**

The Evaluation provides constructive ideas on strengthening FAO's cooperation with the Republic of Armenia. While Management agrees with the main Evaluation findings and recommendations, implementation will be conditioned by changes related to the new project cycle and changes to the Field Programme Manual, the Director-General's bulletin on travel and the introduction of GRMS at the country level.

Recommendation 1 deals with the status of the Organization in Armenia and places strong importance in having standard basic agreements in place for any FAO operations to take place in country. Clearly, such a situation is advocated by FAO as the best solution to ensure the privileges and immunities for staff and the safeguarding of operations. Such agreements are in the end up to individual member countries to grant. This Evaluation however, is an encouragement to take the issue of the status of the Organization up with the Armenian Government.

Recommendation 2 deals with the presence of the FAOR in the country. However, given multiple responsibilities of the FAOR a better alternative would be to share this responsibility with an alternate FAOR, who is also the budget holder of the projects in Armenia. The two work as a team to ensure appropriate coverage.

The operational set-up in the country, Recommendation 3 refers, is under review with the aim to strengthen the operational set-up. A re-delegation of authority under MS 502 and MS 507, in an amount of 10,000 USD, to the AFAOR has already been granted by CSAD. Further

changes regarding the level of delegation of authority to the AFAORs may be required. The number of additional support staff will be subject to the AOS resources available as the cost of a G5 at standard rate for the European Region is about 3 times that of an equivalent National Project Personnel.

Recommendation 4 is being addressed with the operationalization of the CPF for the period 2013-2015 increasing the focus by defining six national priorities to guide FAO partnership and support with the Government of Armenia from 2013-2015. It should be noted that there is a funding gap to address these priorities.

Recommendation 5 refers to the two Government Cooperation project funded by Greece. An additional request for a one year no-cost extension has been submitted to the donor in order to achieve functioning of two fully operational laboratories and five abattoirs with well trained staff. Full attention by the Lead Technical Officers and the Budget Holder will be essential particularly for the procurement of the equipment which has been and will be ordered and the construction of the pesticide laboratory and the abattoirs.

#### **D. Proposed follow-up actions**

Management believes that the recommendations of the Evaluation provide a good basis for defining a consensual agenda for change for FAO's cooperation with Armenia. The FAOR, AFAOR, alternate FAOR, Technical Officers in REU and Headquarters and project staff are working closely with the Government of Armenia on the follow-up actions.

Management response to the Evaluation of Evaluation of FAO's Cooperation with the Republic of Armenia					Date
Evaluation Recommendation	Management response Accepted, partially accepted or rejected and comment on the Recommendation	Management plan			Further funding required (Y or N)
		Action to be taken	Responsible unit	Timeframe	
<p><b>Recommendation 1 - To the Government of Armenia and FAO, on the status of the Organization</b></p> <p>The Republic of Armenia and FAO should urgently act for the Organization to become a fully accredited specialized agency of the UN in Armenia, to allow smoother and more efficient performance of the Organization in the country.</p>	Accepted.	FAO Representative will raise this issue with the Armenian Government during his next mission	REU/Gov/LEG	end 2013	No
<p><b>Recommendation 2 - To FAO, on FAO Representative in Armenia</b></p> <p>FAO should urgently revise the job-description of the non-resident FAO Representative for Armenia, who should be able to visit the country at least six to eight weeks per year and fulfill his/her mandate by providing strategic guidance for the work of the Organization in the country, effectively developing and coordinating the field programme, participating in UNCT meetings and carrying out advocacy and communication activities.</p>	Accepted.	REU agrees that more physical presence is required by the FAOR. However, given multiple responsibilities of the FAOR a better alternative would be to share this responsibility with the alternate FAOR and the two work as a team to ensure appropriate coverage. Emphasis will be given to increased coordination of the field programme and UNCT liaison	REU	on-going	Yes

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<p><b>Recommendation 3 - To FAO, on its operational set-up in Armenia</b></p> <p>FAO should revise the operational set-up of FAO in Armenia in terms of roles and responsibilities as follows:</p> <p>a) Bringing all projects under the operational responsibility of the Assistant FAO Representative;</p> <p>b) Through AOS resources originating from the national projects, or direct costs charged to project budgets, recruit 2 support staff for operations and administration;</p> <p>c) Enhance the technical competence of the office, through better focused and specialized profiles and terms of reference of project coordinators, in support of the priority areas of the Country Programming Framework.</p>	Accepted.	The operation set-up will be developed by REU and FAO Armenia. Review of operational capacities has been initiated. Workflow within GRMS is under definition and operational responsibility will be provided to the office in a phased approach. To strengthen the operational capacity of country office, a re-delegation of authority under MS 502 and MS 507, in an amount of 10,000 USD, to the AFAOR has been granted CSAD. The number of additional support staff will be subject to the AOS resources available.	REU/OSD	end 2013	Yes
<p><b>Recommendation 4 - To the Government of Armenia and FAO, on prioritizing within the CPF</b></p> <p>Based on a realistic assessment of resources available and on committed engagement for resources mobilization, the Government and FAO should agree on ranking priorities within the current CPF, so as to focus efforts for the period 2013-2014. In early 2015, a revision of the CPF should lead to priority setting for additional two years, after which the CPF should be revised in depth. A greater range of stakeholders should also be involved in the CPF monitoring and implementation.</p>	Accepted.	REU and MoA have already prioritized, within the current CPF, on which areas to focus efforts for the period 2013-2014. The CPF signed in January 2012 has been reviewed on the basis of the new requirements for CPFs end of 2012 with an increased focus for the period 2013-2015 setting out six national priorities areas to guide FAO partnership and support with the Government of Armenia from 2013-2015.	AFAOR/REU	Jun-13	Yes to fund the priority projects

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<b>Recommendation 5 - To FAO, on on-going projects in Armenia</b>  FAO must urgently devote the required attention and resources to the successful completion of the projects for Pesticide residue monitoring and quality control (GCP/ARM/003/GRE) and Abattoir development (GCP/ARM/004/GRE).	Accepted.	An additional one year no-cost extension has been submitted to the donor in order to achieve functioning of two fully operational laboratories and five abattoirs with well trained staff. Full attention by the Lead Technical Officers and the Budget Holder will be essential particularly for the procurement of the equipment and the construction of the pesticide laboratory and the abattoirs.	AGS/AGP/REU	31-Aug-14	No