



Food and Agriculture
Organization of the United
Nations

Office of Evaluation

Evaluation of FAO cooperation with Armenia

Terms of Reference

August 2012

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>

The designations employed and the presentation of material in this information product do not imply the expression of any opinion whatsoever on the part of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) concerning the legal or development status of any country, territory, city or area or of its authorities, or concerning the delimitation of its frontiers or boundaries. The mention of specific companies or products of manufacturers, whether or not these have been patented, does not imply that these have been endorsed or recommended by FAO in preference to others of a similar nature that are not mentioned.

The views expressed in this information product are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the views or policies of FAO.

© FAO 2013

FAO encourages the use, reproduction and dissemination of material in this information product. Except where otherwise indicated, material may be copied, downloaded and printed for private study, research and teaching purposes, or for use in non-commercial products or services, provided that appropriate acknowledgement of FAO as the source and copyright holder is given and that FAO's endorsement of users' views, products or services is not implied in any way.

All requests for translation and adaptation rights, and for resale and other commercial use rights should be made via www.fao.org/contact-us/licence-request or addressed to copyright@fao.org.

For further information on this report, please contact:

Director, OED
Viale delle Terme di Caracalla 1, 00153
Rome, Italy
Email: evaluation@fao.org

The designations employed and the presentation of material in this information product do not imply the expression of any opinion whatsoever on the part of FAO concerning the legal or development status of any country, territory, city or area or of its authorities, or concerning the delimitation of its frontiers or boundaries. The mention of specific companies or products of manufacturers, whether or not these have been patented, does not imply that these have been endorsed or recommended by FAO in preference to others of a similar nature that are not mentioned.

Table of Contents

Acronyms	4
1 Background	5
2 Brief overview of Armenia	5
3 FAO in Armenia	8
4 FAO main products and delivery in Armenia.....	9
4.1 Regular Programme budget and normative products	9
4.2 Field Programme	9
5 Purpose of the evaluation	10
6 Evaluation framework	11
6.1 Scope	11
6.2 Criteria	11
6.3 Evaluation issues and questions	13
7 Evaluation methodology.....	16
7.1 Approach and methods	16
7.2 The evaluation report.....	18
7.3 Quality assurance mechanism and responsibilities	18
7.4 Foreseeable limitations and constraints.....	19
8 Organization of the evaluation.....	19
8.1 Composition and profile of the evaluation team	19
8.2 Organizational aspects and time schedule	20

Acronyms

AFAOR	Assistant FAO Representative
CPF	FAO's Country Programming Framework
E & R	Emergency and Rehabilitation
EU	European Union
FAOR	FAO Representative
FPMIS	Field Programme Management Information System
HQ	FAO Headquarters
IFIs	International Financial Institutions
LIFDCs	Low Income Food Deficit Countries
LTU	Lead Technical Unit
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
OED	FAO Office of Evaluation
PC	FAO Programme Committee
PWB	Programme of Work and Budget
REU	FAO's Regional Office for Europe and Central Asia
SRC	Sub-regional Coordinator
TCD	Technical Cooperation for Development
TCE	Emergency and Rehabilitation Division
TCI	FAO Investment Centre
TCP	Technical Cooperation Programme projects
UNCT	United Nations Country Team
UNDAF	United Nations Development Assistance Framework
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNEG	United Nations Evaluation Group
WFP	World Food Programme

1 Background

1. Since 2005, country evaluations have been part of the evaluation programme of FAO, in response to a specific request by the Programme Committee that followed the General Assembly Resolution 59/250 of 2004 on the Triennial comprehensive policy review of operational activities for development of the United Nations system (TCPR).

2. Such evaluations cover all FAO activities in the country, including national projects from all funding sources, national participation in regional projects, use made of normative outputs and the work carried out by the FAO Representation. Synthesis reports, covering two or more evaluations in similar types of countries, are submitted to the PC. So far, four of such synthesis reports have been submitted to the PC covering LIFDCs, post-conflict and transition countries, major emergency and rehabilitation programmes, and large, rapidly-developing countries. The Programme Committee (PC) at its October 2011 session requested the Office of Evaluation (OED) to conduct evaluations of FAO's cooperation in middle income countries.

3. In consideration of the planned Evaluation of FAO's Regional and Sub-regional Offices for Europe and Central Asia, it was decided to select a country in the region to be evaluated, to allow for an in-depth analysis of the Organization's achievements, strengths and weaknesses in the Region, also in terms of decentralization process. OED applies a set of socio-economic criteria relevant to FAO's mandate, programme size and institutional arrangements to determine a short list of eligible countries for evaluation. The country in the Europe and Central Asia region that best met the criteria above, as well as avoiding duplication with any past or on-going evaluations, was Armenia. The two evaluations will be closely coordinated by OED and to the maximum extent possible, the findings from the evaluation in Armenia will be integrated in the final report of the broader Evaluation.

4. The draft Terms of Reference were prepared by OED based on the findings of the preparatory phase, and were circulated to Armenian and FAO stakeholders for comments and suggestions. This is the final version, that integrates comments from stakeholders and from OED internal peer-reviewers.

2 Brief overview of Armenia

5. The Republic of Armenia lies in the North-East of the Armenian Highland at the turn of Caucasus and Western Asia. It borders with Georgia, Azerbaijan, Turkey and Iran. Its territory is 29,800 square kilometres and current population estimate is 2,871,000 (Armenia National Statistical Service, 2011 est.). Armenia is ethnically the most homogenous state of all former Soviet Union: ethnic minorities in Armenia constitute only about 2 percent of the population. Kurds, Greeks, Jews, Russians and Assyrians are the main minorities, but these are mostly well integrated into society.

6. Armenia has 915 communities in 10 marzes (provinces) plus Yerevan. The chief executive in each of 10 marzes is the marzpet, appointed by the government of Armenia. Within each province are communities (hamaynk). Each community is self-governing and consists of one or more settlements (bnakavayr). Settlements are classified as either towns

(kaghak) or villages (gyugh). The capital, Yerevan, also has the status of a community (since 2009). Additionally, Yerevan is divided into twelve semi-autonomous districts.

Box 1. Map of Armenia



7. In the 2011 Human Development Index Report, Armenia ranked 86 out of 187 countries, within the group of the high human development category, although slightly below the regional average, 0.71 versus 0.75. The Inequality Index and the Gender Inequality Index locate Armenia in a better position than the regional average. The World Bank in 2011 classified the Republic of Armenia as lower middle income country, with a poverty head count ratio at national poverty line of 35.8%. Although slightly higher than in 2008 and 2009, this was a good improvement over the 48.3 measured in 2001. Other indicators like life expectancy at birth, and improved access to water resources in rural areas, were also improving steadily.

8. According to the FAO 2010 Nutrition country profile for Armenia, although food supply and consumption statistics indicate that the dietary energy supply was low, not meeting population energy requirements, there was a very high prevalence of overweight and obesity among adults. This discrepancy could be explained by the fact that a substantial proportion of production was self-consumed by farmer households and did not appear in supply statistics. The diet is rich in carbohydrates as cereals, starchy roots and sweeteners provide more than two thirds of the energy. The food diversification index remains low. While consumption of meat and fish is low, that of milk and eggs as well as fruit and vegetables, is substantial.

9. Armenia is a landlocked country, with a huge variability of climatic conditions. Summers tend to be hot and winters cold, with an annual rainfall varying between 300 mm in the low-lying Arat plains to about 600 mm in the remainder of the country. About 40% of the country is not suitable for agriculture. It is a very high risk country for farming due to its geographical location, strongly marked vertical zonality, fragmented mountainous terrain, active anthropogenic processes, scarcity of land and inadequate soil moisture.

10. The risk of agricultural activities increases due to scarcity of land (0.14 hectares of arable land per person). In addition, as a result of the non-rational use of land resources, around 80% of land plots are affected by desertification processes and various levels of land degradation. According to the assessment, land degradation in the country for about 50% of land types is due to erosion, 20% - swamping, 30% - mudflows and floods, 17% -hail, 3% - landslides and 0.5% - rock fall, which have consequences on the yields of land and accumulation of carbon in the soil. The forecasted climate change will further worsen the situation.

11. Droughts and late spring frosts mostly threaten Ararat and Armavir marzes, while hail is most dangerous in Shirak, Aragatsotn and Armavir marzes. Droughts in the arid regions of Armenia generally occur each summer beginning in mid-June. Since 1990, the entire country has experienced more frequent and widespread droughts with negative impact on agriculture. The severe drought of May-June 2008 caused extensive losses in agricultural production (USD about 50% of land types is due to erosion, 20% - swamping, 30% - mudflows and floods, 17% -hail, 3% - landslides and 0.5% - rock fall, which have consequences on the yields of land and accumulation of carbon in the soil. 2010 was a bad year for farming, resulting in a 14.5 percent decline in production.

12. World Bank data indicate that in 2011 agriculture contribution to the GDP was 21%. The area suitable for agriculture comprises 1.75 million hectares of which 35% is arable agricultural land and very dependent on irrigation. The remainder is grasslands and pastures and perennial plantations. The main crops are cereals, with wheat occupying 90% of the cultivated area, followed by potatoes, vegetables, legume and oil seed crops. Livestock include cattle, pigs, and some sheep and poultry. Armenia has about 350 registered fish farms, the total water surface of which comprises 2,677 ha, with 5.5 thousand tons of yearly fish farming output.

13. Forest and other wooded land make up only 14% of the land area of Armenia at around 351,000 ha, of which only 21% (ca. 70 000 ha) are of significance for wood production. The balance of 263,000 ha has protective, social or recreational functions. Forest area per capita is only 0.11 ha. Most of the forest is classified as natural and unavailable for wood supply, more for economic reasons than for conservation and protection. Commercial forestry activities, including wood harvesting, are limited in Armenia, but the collection of fuelwood, fruits, aromatic and medicinal herbs and fodder are important to the population. A logging ban has been in place in Armenia since 1996. All forests in Armenia are State-owned, and about one third of the total forest area is in the protected areas. Although there are only limited formal commercial forestry operations in Armenia, the forest estate is being managed in an unsustainable manner, with alarming rates of deforestation and forest degradation, particularly in Oak forest ecosystems.

14. Armenia was the first former Soviet republic to embark on a sustained programme of land reform, beginning in 1991. By late 1993 nearly 90% of agricultural land had been

transferred to private ownership, a process that boosted agricultural output by about 15%. However, the small size of private farms, of which there are around 390,000, but whose average size amounts to just above 30 ha of agricultural land has been a structural constraint on the development of the sector.

15. The level of food self-sufficiency (data from Ministry of Agriculture of Armenia) totals 60%. Specifically, the level of self-sufficiency appears to be fairly low in wheat (38%), which is the staple food; poultry meat (20%), pork (51%) and beef (78%). Butter and vegetable oil are almost entirely imported. The country, however, approaches self-sufficiency in potatoes, vegetables, fruits, eggs and milk although these products are also imported.

16. Underlying weaknesses in agriculture, according to a recent IMF report, are as follows:

- Limited access to financing. Loan terms (collateral, maturities, interest rates) do not match farmers' capacity, leading to reliance on cash and volatile remittances.
- Fragmentation. 97% of output is produced by household farms, averaging 1.1 hectares of arable land, a tenth of the EU average.
- Outdated equipment. 95% of farm equipment is considered obsolete.
- Limited arable and irrigated land. Just 47% of land is arable and one-third of arable land is unused. Just two-thirds of irrigable land is irrigated.
- High dependence on imported fertilizer, feeds, and fuel.
- Limited transport capacity. With borders with Turkey and Azerbaijan closed, limited road and rail access to Georgia and Iran is a constraint.
- Low food safety standards. Standards are below international levels, constraining exports.

17. The Government of Armenia has passed several laws and Government decrees, as well as strategies and programmes, in the agricultural and related sectors. These include the Armenian Government's "Draft Strategy on Sustainable Development of Armenia's Agriculture" (2004); the Strategy on Food Safety Policy (2005) and the updated version of the "Strategy on Sustainable Development of Armenia's Agriculture" (2006). In November 2010, the 2010-2020 Strategy of Sustainable Development of Armenia's agriculture was approved by the Government of Armenia. One of the pending areas is the lack of effective legislation to form farmers' cooperatives. Another is the lack of integration of consequences of climate change into the sectoral development strategies. A detailed analysis of the national context and related policies, including on agriculture, is to be found in Annex 1.

3 FAO in Armenia

18. Armenia became a member of FAO in November 1993. The first project became operationally active in 1994, however a more extensive field programme began to develop in the late 1990s/early 2000s. In November 2003, a host country agreement was signed with the Government of Armenia establishing a FAO Representative Office in Armenia, physically located in the premises of the Ministry of Agriculture. An Assistant FAOR took office in 2004, while the role of FAO Representative, through a multiple-accreditation model, was assigned to the Sub-regional Coordinator (SRC) for Eastern Europe. The incumbent Assistant FAOR assumed her position in April 2010.

19. With the establishment of the non-resident FAO Representation, the FAO programme grew and over the period under evaluation (2004-2012) work was conducted in the following sectors: agricultural policy; animal production and health; food safety, pesticide management and plant quarantine; food security information systems; forestry; land tenure; and sustainable agriculture and plant genetic resources. FAO is a member of the UNCT and has conducted some joint initiatives with UNDP and WFP in particular.

20. In 2010, the Organization began the formulation process for a Country Programming Framework for Armenia. The formulation of the Country Programme Framework (CPF) involved both a review of national priorities for food, agriculture, forestry and fishery practices and the examination of national priorities based on major ongoing and planned programmes. Relevant units of the Ministry of Agriculture, other national institutions as well as development partners were consulted in the process. The CPF document, signed in January 2012, establishes FAO's in Armenia from 2012 to 2015.

4 FAO main products and delivery in Armenia

4.1 *Regular Programme budget and normative products*

21. The FAO Representation in Armenia consists of three posts, an Assistant FAOR (Programme), an Administrative Clerk and a Driver covered by FAO's Regular Programme. Current costs are USD 142,346 per year. In addition, the approved allotment for 2012 to cover costs such as consultants, travel, training and other expenses was USD 17,131.

22. During the preparatory phase, information found on RP-funded activities and normative products of relevance to the country were as follows:

- Armenia was the subject, with Azerbaijan and Georgia, of the FAO flagship publication "Gardens of Biodiversity", a thorough assessment of the agriculture and food biodiversity in the Caucasus. Other missions and activities seem to be always related to projects.
- Participation in FAO work in support of the implementation of the Rotterdam Convention, by hosting and by attending meetings and Capacity Development events;
- Participation into the Working part for Women in Agriculture of the European Conference on Agriculture;
- A list of normative products by FAO relevant to the country was compiled and is contained in Annex 4. It comprises of Guidelines and Manuals; Reports; Briefs; and proceedings from Meetings, Conferences and Workshops. A few, in sectors such as Forestry, Fisheries and Food Security Information Systems are specific to the country, while the most of them have a regional and sub-regional focus, at times including case studies on Armenia. A sample of these will be assessed in terms of relevance, technical quality and actual and potential uptake and impact.

4.2 *Field Programme*

23. During the period of focus of the evaluation there were 47 FAO projects with a total budget of USD 66,511,195 (see Box 2 below). Of these 26 were TCP projects and 21 from voluntary contributions. The programme was dominantly Technical Cooperation for Development with 39 TCD projects, however the period included 8 Emergency and Rehabilitation (E&R) initiatives. Of these projects 18 (39%) were national projects, predominantly TCPs, 15 (33%) were regional, 8 (15%) inter-regional and 6 (13%) were global.

Box 2. FAO's field programme in Armenia 2004-2012

	Number of projects	Total Budget (USD)	% of number of projects	% of total budget	Average budget (USD)
TCP	26	7,571,879	53.3%	11.4%	291,226
Voluntary Contributions	21	58,939,316	44.7%	88.6%	2,806,634
TOTAL	46	63,511,195			
Emergency & Rehabilitation and Technical Cooperation for Development					
	Number of projects	Total Budget	% of number of projects	% of total budget	Average budget (USD)
E&R	8	23,355,504	17%	35.1%	2,919,438
TCD	39	43,155,691	83%	64.9%	1,106,556

Source: FPMIS elaborated by OED

24. A closer look at the project portfolio reveals that the two largest sectors both in terms of budget and number of projects are Plant Production and Protection, with a special focus on pesticides and locust control, and Animal Health and Production, with greater focus on disease control. The next largest areas of work are food security information systems and food safety.

5 Purpose of the evaluation

25. The Evaluation will be forward-looking: it will identify areas for improvement and draw lessons to enhance the relevance and effectiveness of FAO cooperation with Armenia in the future. It will also assist the Government and partners in Armenia in better exploiting areas of comparative advantage of FAO, taking into account the specific current arrangement of FAO's presence in the country, i.e. non-resident FAO Representative.

26. The main purposes of the Evaluation are:
- to improve the relevance, design, implementation, results and impact of FAO cooperation with Armenia;
 - to provide accountability to the Government of the Republic of Armenia and to other FAO Members about FAO performance and its comparative advantage in providing assistance and services to the country;¹

¹ Comparative advantage is herewith defined as the relative efficiency and effectiveness of FAO's units and processes in delivering high quality and relevant support and assistance to the Member Countries.

- iii. to identify the factors affecting the relevance and impact of FAO cooperation at country level;
- iv. to contribute, insofar as appropriate, to the findings and conclusions of the broader Evaluation of FAO's Regional and Sub-regional Offices for Europe and Central Asia.

27. The Evaluation will aim at identifying lessons and formulate recommendations tackling key bottlenecks, for improving FAO's performance and impact in the delivery of assistance and support to Armenia, as well as for more general application.

6 Evaluation framework

6.1 Scope

28. The focus of the Evaluation is a determination of the effectiveness and impact of the totality of FAO cooperation in Armenia since FAO started working in the country. However, based on previous OED experience, data and reliable information for projects and activities older than 6 years is almost never available. Thus, the evaluation will concentrate its attention on the period 2006-2012.

29. The evaluation will include all activities in direct support to the country across all FAO's modalities of delivery at country level, independently from source of funds and origins of the technical, administrative and operational support. This will comprise of projects and programmes funded by voluntary contributions, both for Emergency and Rehabilitation (E&R) and Technical Cooperation for Development (TCD) initiatives at national, regional, inter-regional and global projects, as well as activities funded through the corporate Net Appropriation. In this context, the collaboration with and the role of FAO Commissions and Working Parties will also be analysed.

6.2 Criteria

30. The Evaluation will assess the performance of FAO with the goal of enhancing support and delivery to Armenia against the internationally accepted evaluation criteria, namely:

- Relevance;
- Efficiency,
- Effectiveness;
- Impact; and
- Sustainability, including environmental sustainability.

31. Additional criteria taken into account throughout the Evaluation will be:

- the promotion of gender mainstreaming for gender equality;
- social inclusion;
- capacity development;
- development of partnerships and alliances.

6.3 *Evaluation issues and questions*

32. The Evaluation will examine the key issues and questions below. During the course of the exercise, the Evaluation team should feel free to identify other issues of importance that require to be addressed.

1) Relevance of FAO's work

33. The main task of the Evaluation under this heading will be to determine whether the actions taken by FAO were consistent with the country needs and policies during the period under assessment. This will include the analysis of the process, if any, for the identification of the programme. Issues and questions to be explored will be:

- A. The strategy and priority setting mechanisms for FAO's programme in Armenia until 2012 (types and nature of dialogue on priorities and programmes; modality and inclusiveness of the consultation process; roles of key actors);
- B. The relevance and efficiency of the NMTPF/CPF preparation and the added value that it is likely to bring to planning FAO's work when compared with the previous planning system;
- C. Extent to which the activities of FAO in the evaluation period reflect the Organization's priorities, as defined in FAO's Strategic Frameworks 2000-2015 and 2010-19 and as defined by the Regional Conferences for Europe;
- D. Extent to which the activities of FAO in the evaluation period met country and Government's development needs, requests and policies, at State and local levels.
- E. Links, coherence and synergies between FAO cooperation programme with national planning exercises, policies and debates around these;
- F. Links, coherence and synergies between FAO cooperation programme with UNDAF and major donors' programmes;
- G. Cases of Government's requests to FAO for support which went unmet, and why.
- H. Perspectives and areas of focus for future work of FAO in Armenia;

2) Efficiency of FAO's work

34. The main task of the Evaluation under this heading will be to determine whether FAO's work was carried out in an efficient and timely manner at country level in Armenia. Issues and questions to be explored will be:

- I. Extent and quality of the technical, operational and other support provided by FAO to respond in a timely manner to agreed priorities and to requests by the Government;
- J. Efficiency and cost-effectiveness of FAO in service delivery to Armenia;
- K. Efficiency and effectiveness of TCP and other projects/programmes formulation, approval and implementation processes;
- L. Effects of FAO's decentralization process on the efficiency of FAO's work in Armenia;

3) Roles and functions of FAO

35. FAO's core functions at global level are, since 2010, defined as follows in Box 3 below.

Box 3. FAO core functions

- Monitoring and assessment of long-term and medium-term trends and perspectives
- Assembly and provision of information, knowledge and statistics
- Development of international instruments, norms and standards
- Policy and strategy options and advice
- Technical support to promote technology transfer and build capacity
- Advocacy and communication
- Inter-disciplinarity and innovation
- Partnerships and alliances

36. The Evaluation will assess at aggregate and sector-specific level, FAO's performance in Armenia in fulfilling its organizational roles and the requests and needs of the country. This assessment will be based on stakeholders' perceptions and evidence available of the results of FAO's work in relation to its different core functions. Specific issues will include the following:

- M. Extent and quality of FAO as a source of knowledge and information in its areas of work;
- N. Visibility and effectiveness of FAO and of the FAOR advocacy role in the areas of its mandate, including in the media;
- O. Awareness, knowledge and qualitative assessment of FAO's normative products and technical assistance;
- P. Assessment of FAO's performance and effectiveness as a neutral advisor on technical areas and policy issues within its mandate;
- Q. Assessment of FAO's role in providing technical legitimacy to national organizations and in facilitating access to national and international funding sources;
- R. Assessment of FAO as a facilitator of national, international and regional technical and policy initiatives;

4) *Performance of the FAO Representation*

37. The FAO Representation is the main vehicle of visibility for the Organization in a country. It is thus important to assess the work done by the Representation and to identify any area where improvement in performance can be realized. Lessons learnt through this analysis were often important for the function of all FAO country offices. Given the current model of multiply-accredited non-resident FAO Representation with a resident AFAOR in Armenia, this assessment will be particularly important for the Organization's work in the Region.

38. The Evaluation will assess whether the FAOR was suitably equipped to deliver the services and programme as required by the Government and by the Organization and identify the obstacles to improve its efficiency and effectiveness. In particular, it will analyze:

- S. the Representation workloads on technical, managerial, operational and administrative issues and its costs;
- T. whether the Representation staffing profile (competencies and job profiles) is appropriate for the tasks expected from it;
- U. the adequacy of FAOR financial resources to carry out its mandate;
- V. the adequacy of operational mechanisms and tools available to the FAOR to carry out its mandate, including in emergency and rehabilitation work;

- W. how the FAO Representation establishes its priority work areas, including time devoted to the development of new initiatives;
- X. the adequacy of the FAOR monitoring system of its work programme; and
- Y. the handling of the operations for the Regional Conference for Europe (ERC) held in Yerevan in 2010;

23. This part of the assessment will be based on the analysis of data available on workload and costs and on stakeholders' perceptions; in particular, the UN Resident Coordinator's office will be asked to assess FAO's capacities in relation to other specialized agencies in Armenia.

5) Coordination and partnerships;

39. The Evaluation will seek to establish whether partnership building was strategic and efficient for creating complementarities and synergy among development assistance programmes, ensuring sustainability and coherence of the FAO cooperation and enhancing resource mobilization. Positive examples and missed opportunities should be presented to illustrate the conclusions.

40. In particular, the Evaluation will assess the extent to which FAO participation in the UN Country Team has resulted in any shifts in emphasis and concrete actions such as UN joint or coordinated field activities at institutional level and/or district/community level, and adjustments, if any, in FAO policy, programming and operational approach. It will also examine relations with the wider donor community and influence on their priorities and modalities of action.

41. Some of the specific evaluation questions in this area will be:

- Z. Extent to which FAO participates in the UN Country Team (UNCT) and possible contributions to the implementation of UN reform at country level;
- AA. Extent to which FAO's participation in the UNCT has enhanced the impact of UN activities in the country and created opportunities for new partnerships;
- BB. Extent of FAO's partnership with other national organizations in the country: what forms and how partnerships affected FAO's relevance, efficiency and effectiveness;

6) Effectiveness and impact of FAO's work

42. FAO's activities in the country during the period under evaluation fall within the following sectors:

- Agricultural policy;
- Animal health and production;
- Food Safety, pesticide management and plant quarantine;
- Food Security Information Systems;
- Forestry;
- Land Tenure;
- Sustainable Agriculture and Plant Genetic Resources.

43. The assessment of the effectiveness and impact of FAO's work will be conducted at the aggregate, sectoral and specific activities level, through the analysis of results, including

outputs, outcomes and impact if possible, of major initiatives or groups of related activities. Main questions and issues relevant to the whole programme of work and to all the sectors are:

- CC. Extent to which FAO's activities in Armenia contributed to the implementation of the national development plans and to policies implementation or formulation
- DD. Extent to which FAO's activities in Armenia contributed to the implementation at country level of the MDGs in general, and MDG goals 1 and 7 in particular;
- EE. Extent and level of adoption and appropriation by the Government at central and State level and by civil society organizations of FAO's strategies, methodologies and tools promoted by FAO in the different areas of intervention;
- FF. Extent of the utilization, results and impact of FAO's normative products;
- GG. Effectiveness of FAO national and regional projects in providing assistance, developing capacities and adding value to the Government's own programmes;
- HH. Relevance, effectiveness and impact of work on the intended ultimate beneficiaries, particularly in rural areas;
- II. Extent to which FAO projects in the country have a clear exit strategies aiming at the sustainability of their results and impact;
- JJ. Extent to which there were synergies and subsequent improved results, among FAO activities in the country, between FAO Regular Programme and activities at country level and between FAO national and regional/sub-regional activities in Armenia;
- KK. Extent to which cross-cutting issues such as environment, gender, social inclusion and capacity development were included in FAO's activities in Armenia;
- LL. FAO's contribution to the development of new structures of public/private partnerships with State/local bodies and community based institutions, such as producer companies for delivery and resource raising activities;
- MM. Effectiveness and impact of FAO/TCI contributions to planning, technical support and management of development projects financed by IFIs.

7 Evaluation methodology

7.1 Approach and methods

44. The Evaluation will adhere to the UNEG Norms and Standards, will be forward-looking and adopt a participatory approach, seeking and sharing opinions with stakeholders at different points in time and assessing FAO's role and work also from the point of view of clients and users of its products and services, as well as of its partners.

45. The evaluation will use a wide range of tools and methods, including stakeholder consultation through semi-structured interviews with the help of checklists; desk studies to gather all relevant background information; and field visits. Insofar as relevant and possible, the views of participants in FAO's initiatives will be gathered and analysed along lines of gender, age and social differences.

46. The evaluation will adopt a participatory approach whenever possible, seeking and sharing opinions with stakeholders at different points in time. Stakeholders will include:

- FAO staff in HQ and at the Regional Office for Europe and Central Asia (REU) who have been involved with support to FAO activities in Armenia (projects and other);

- FAO Representation staff;
- FAO project staff;
- Government staff at decision-making and at implementation level;
- UNCT members;
- Donors;
- NGOs and civil society organisations, and ultimate beneficiaries as relevant.

47. Triangulation by the Evaluation team members of information gathered from stakeholders and through different tools will underpin the analysis and validation of evidence gathered. In addition, the team members will apply their own technical judgment in the assessment of, for example, the quality of normative, project and process outputs. Independence and rigour of analysis will inform the whole evaluation process.

48. In consideration of time and resources available for the evaluation, a sample of six Key Projects will be assessed. These were selected based on the following criteria: thematic coverage, to ensure assessment of most areas of FAO's work in the country; budget size, and time frame (more recent ones will be given priority to facilitate data collection). Separate reports will be prepared for each of the Key projects, following a standard OED outline.

49. The Evaluation team will also assess a sample of FAO normative products of relevance to Armenia, assessed in terms of relevance, technical quality and actual and potential uptake and impact.

50. The evaluation will draw its conclusions and recommendations based on the evidence found and on its independent assessment, of the relevance, efficiency, effectiveness and impact if any of FAO cooperation with Armenia as a whole, in each area of focus and on key services provided by FAO, including capacity building, applying and sharing knowledge, partnership building and resource mobilization.

51. At the beginning of the mission, an internal briefing session will allow all team members to have access to information on FAO as a global organization, on evaluation methods and approaches and on respective tasks in the mission. A team briefing will also be organized by the FAO Representation, to inform team members of the overall programme of FAO in Armenia and discussion of the FAO Representation's expectations from the Evaluation.

52. At the end of the mission, the team will give its preliminary overall results and recommendations in a debriefing session with the AFAOR, key Government personnel and partner representatives. This will be the main occasion to obtain feedback from stakeholders, although the final draft report will also be circulated for comments and suggestions in due time.

53. The following outputs will be prepared by the Office of Evaluation as background material for the evaluation team:

- Evaluation tools, including checklists, Key projects report outline, country evaluation report outline;
- Short overview of FAO support to Armenia since inception and key events of the last 6 years that are relevant to UN, FAO, and donor cooperation;
- The FAO programme for the period 2006-2012 including:
 - individual project documents and reports;

- tables showing projects by area of focus indicating basic information on their development and/or immediate objectives, starting and end dates, budget and outcomes to the possible extent;
 - tables by sector listing all FAO normative outputs and those considered of relevance for Armenia;
 - missions to Armenia by FAO staff for backstopping and other purposes.
-
- Background documentation on Armenian social, economic and legislative issues of relevance to the work of FAO;
 - Donors and UN country strategies and evaluations;
 - Other documents that may be of interest.

54. Previous evaluation reports by FAO in Armenia will also be included and will provide key inputs in the assessment of relevant areas of work.

55. In preparation for the mission, the FAO Representation will collaborate with OED in identifying FAO's interlocutors and partners within and outside the Government, including civil society entities, universities etc., indicating the type and object of the relationship.

7.2 *The evaluation report*

56. The evaluation report will illustrate the evidence found in response to the evaluation issues and questions and the Evaluation's assessment of FAO's performance against the evaluation criteria defined above. The report will focus on findings, conclusions and recommendations. It will include an executive summary. Supporting data and analysis should be annexed to the report when considered important to complement the main report and for future reference.

57. The structure of the report should facilitate linkages between the body of evidence, analysis and formulation of recommendations. These will have to be evidence-based, relevant, focused, clearly formulated and actionable and should be addressed to the different stakeholders.

58. The Team Leader and the Evaluation Team will agree on the outline of the report early in the evaluation process and the report will be prepared in English, following the basic standards for OED evaluation reports.

7.3 *Quality assurance mechanism and responsibilities*

59. The OED November 2011 Quality Assurance Framework will apply to this evaluation: two peer-reviewers from within the Office will revise the draft ToR, the final ToR and the draft report, using the relevant check-lists for assessing their technical quality.

60. The Evaluation Team is responsible vis-à-vis FAO Office of Evaluation for the technical and substantive contents of the evaluation. The Evaluation Team Leader will be responsible for the quality of the substantive contents of the report; nevertheless, OED through the peer-review mechanism will retain the responsibility for ensuring the overall quality of the report in terms of comprehensiveness of the evidence gathered, robustness of

the analysis, coherence, logic and clarity of the links between evidence and conclusions and recommendations.

61. FAO will prepare its Management Response to the final evaluation report, in which it will express its overall judgment of the evaluation process and report and accept, partially accepts or reject each recommendation. For accepted recommendations, responsibilities and timetable for implementation will also be indicated; for rejected recommendations, a justification should be provided.

7.4 *Foreseeable limitations and constraints*

62. As outlined above, the incumbent Assistant FAOR assumed her position in the fall of 2009. While institutional memory of FAO's cooperation with Armenia is to a large part accessible, the Evaluation will have to work within the limits of available and retrievable information.

63. Likewise for other country evaluations, also this exercise will not have a Country Programming Framework against which to assess FAO's strategies and performance. The Core functions will be the closest proxy available to assess the Organization's work at aggregate level, whereas for each project, respective log-frames will be used.

64. The evaluation was prepared and will be carried out under strong time-constraints: the team may need to reduce the breadth of the planned scope to ensure a better quality analysis of a more focused sample of activities.

65. Equally, the evaluation will strive to assess actual and potential impact of FAO's work in Armenia for intended and non-intended beneficiaries. However, the analysis at the level of impact is complex and time consuming and the team will need to make on-the-spot decisions, based on availability of data and information, about the level of assessment it will be more cost-effective pursuing.

8 Organization of the evaluation

8.1 *Composition and profile of the evaluation team*

66. The Evaluation will be led by a Team Leader who will work as part of a team of independent consultants, with the managerial, administrative and logistics support by OED. In this particular case, the Team Leader of the Evaluation of FAO's Regional and Sub-regional Offices for Europe and Central Asia will also take on the same role for this exercise. Some key experts from the broader evaluation will also serve as members of the Evaluation Team for the country evaluation in Armenia, in addition to national experts. Gender equity and geographical balance will be pursued in the team composition to ensure diversity of perspectives. Specific ToR will be prepared for each team member.

67. All team members will have considerable professional experience, with specific focus in the Region, at country or sub-regional level; they will have no previous direct

involvement in the formulation, implementation or backstopping of FAO's work in Armenia during the period under evaluation. All will sign the Declaration of Interest form of the FAO Office of Evaluation

68. The areas of specialization that emerged as relevant and important to assess FAO's work in Armenia in an adequate manner are:

- Crop protection and production;
- Animal health and production;
- Policy development in agriculture, food security and natural resources management;
- Gender and social inclusion;
- Administration and management.

69. The Evaluation team will consist of five persons, as follows:

- Evaluation Team Leader, UN and regional expert (international);
- A policy and development specialist with large experience in the rural sector (national);
- An agricultural development expert, with wide experience in agricultural research and food security issues (national);
- An animal production and health expert, with wide experience in animal health and development policy issues (international);
- An expert on FAO administration, management and finance procedures (international).

70. FAO Office of Evaluation will assist the Evaluation Team with the following resources:

- the Evaluation Manager, who will provide information and guidance on issues relating to FAO structure, working mechanisms and procedures, project and programme management and evaluation methodology and who will be a full-time member of the Evaluation team with particular responsibility for gender mainstreaming, project and programme management;
- an Evaluation Analyst, with competence on FAO's work and procedures.

8.2 *Organizational aspects and time schedule*

71. OED carried out the preparatory phase in the period January-June 2012. During this, visits were carried out to REU/SEU and Armenia, and meetings were held in HQ, to define the scope of the evaluation and identify the key evaluation questions. The final output of the evaluability assessment was the overall Terms of Reference for the Evaluation including the evaluation methodology.

72. OED identified and recruited the Team Leader and team members for the evaluation and organized the work of the team. Some of the team members were selected and recruited for both regional and Armenia evaluations. The work of the two teams will be organized in a coordinated manner by OED.

73. OED will compile background documentation on Armenia, based on FAO databases and other sources. This will also include detailed information on FAO's work in Armenia, funded through all sources and provided from all locations. Thematic and strategic and

project evaluations conducted in the past, their Management Responses and Follow-up reports will also be canvassed for evidence and assessment of FAO's performance in Armenia.

74. Individual Terms of Reference will be prepared for each team member, indicating specific areas of work and evaluation issues to be assessed. OED will organize an internal briefing session for the Evaluation Team, to allow all team members to have access to information on FAO as a global organization, on evaluation methods and approaches and on their respective tasks in the team.

75. The evaluation work will be organized following the timetable below. The detailed work-schedule will be defined and agreed by mid-August 2012.

- May-June 2012: Evaluability Assessment;
- June 2012: Preparatory mission to Armenia
- July/August 2012: circulation for comments of the draft ToR and finalisation
- September 2012: country mission to Armenia
- December 2012: preparation of the advanced draft report;
- Early January 2013: circulation of the final draft report for comments and suggestions;
- Early February 2013: finalization of the evaluation report;
- Early March 2013: preparation by FAO stakeholders of the Management Response to the evaluation.