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Acronyms

ADG/RR	Assistant Director-General/Regional Representative
AFAORep	Assistant FAO Representative
AGAH	FAO Animal Health Service
AGAL	FAO Livestock Information, Sector Analysis and Policy Branch
AGAP	FAO Animal Production Service
AOS	Administrative and Operational Support
AP	Agricultural Policy
APH	Animal Production and Health
ASF	African swine fever
ASMCs	Agricultural Support <i>Marz</i> Centres
ASRC	Agricultural Support Republican Center
BH	Budget Holder
CACFish	Central Asian and Caucasus Regional Fisheries and Aquaculture Commission
CD	Capacity Development
CO	Country Office
COIN	Country Office Information Network
CPF	FAO's Country Programming Framework
DOs	Decentralized Offices
DRR	Deputy Regional Representative
E & R	Emergency and Rehabilitation
EC	European Commission
ECA	FAO European Commission for Agriculture
EFC	European Forestry Commission
ENPARD	European Neighbourhood Partnership for Agriculture and Rural Development
ENP-East Area	European Neighbourhood Partnership for Agriculture and Rural Development in Eastern European countries
ERC	FAO Regional Conference for Europe
ERG	FAO European Regional Group
ESW	FAO Gender, Equity and Rural Employment Division
EU	European Union
EUFMD	European Commission for the Control of Foot-and-Mouth Disease
FAORep	FAO Representative
FMD	Foot-and-mouth disease
FPMIS	Field Programme Management Information System
GaD	Gender and Development
GCP	Government Cooperative Programme
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GIS	Geographic Information System
GRMS	General Resource Management System (new ORACLE)
HPAI	Highly pathogenic avian influenza
HQ	FAO Headquarters
HR	Human Resources
IUCN	World Conservation Union
LIFDCs	Low Income Food Deficit Countries
LTO	Lead Technical Officer
LTU	Lead Technical Unit

MC	Member Country/ies
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
NMTPF	National Medium Term Priority Framework
NSHR	Non Staff Human Resources
OCD	FAO Office for Coordination and Decentralization Activities
OED	FAO Office of Evaluation
OIE	World Organisation for Animal Health
OSD	FAO Office of Support to Decentralization (muted from OCD)
OSP	FAO Office of Strategy, Planning and Resources Management
PC	FAO Programme Committee
PPP	Public-Private Partnership
PPR	Peste des petits ruminants
PSC	Project Servicing Costs
PWB	Programme of Work and Budget
RA	Republic of Armenia
RB	Regular Budget
REU	FAO's Regional Office for Europe and Central Asia
REU-SEC	FAO's Regional and Sub-regional Offices for Europe and Central Asia
RM	Resource Mobilization
RO	Regional Office
RP	Regular Programme
SEC	Sub-regional Office for Central Asia
SEU	Sub-regional Office for Central and Eastern Europe
SEU/REU	abbreviation used to indicate work by SEU and REU, prior to the merging of the two offices
SF	Strategic Framework
SNCO	State Non-Commercial Organization
SRC	Sub-regional Coordinator
SRO	Sub-regional Office
SSC	Shared Service Centre
TAD	Trans-boundary Animal Disease
TCD	Technical Cooperation for Development
TCE	Emergency and Rehabilitation Division
TCEO	FAO Emergency Operations Service
TCI	FAO Investment Centre
TCP	Project funded through the FAO Technical Cooperation Programme
TF	Trust Fund
UNCT	United Nations Country Team
UNDAF	United Nations Development Assistance Framework
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNEG	United Nations Evaluation Group
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
UNRC	United Nations Resident Coordinator
USDA	United States Department of Agriculture
VAT	Value Added Tax
WFP	World Food Programme

Executive Summary

Background

ES1. Country evaluations cover all FAO activities in the country, including national projects from all funding sources, national participation in regional, interregional and global projects, use made of normative outputs and the work carried out by the FAO Representation. Synthesis reports, covering evaluations in similar types of countries, are submitted to the Programme Committee for review. The Programme Committee at its October 2011 session requested the Office of Evaluation (OED) to extend the coverage of this type of evaluations, by focusing on middle income countries.

ES2. In consideration of the planned Evaluation of FAO's Regional and Sub-regional Offices for Europe and Central Asia¹ (REU-SEC evaluation), it was decided to select a country in this Region that would allow an in-depth analysis of the Organization's achievements, strengths and weaknesses also in terms of the decentralization process. The Republic of Armenia (henceforth called Armenia or RA) was selected, as it ranked first against OED's selection criteria that include both socio-economic and FAO's programme-related indicators.

ES3. The Evaluation of FAO's cooperation with the Republic of Armenia and the REU-SEC evaluation were closely coordinated and 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.

Purpose and scope of the evaluation

ES4. Like all other FAO country evaluations, also the Evaluation of FAO's cooperation with the Republic of Armenia was forward-looking and aimed at identifying areas for improvement and lessons to enhance the relevance and effectiveness of FAO's work in the country in the future. Its main purposes were:

- i. to improve the relevance, design, implementation, results and impact of FAO cooperation with Armenia;
- ii. to provide accountability to the Government of Armenia and to other FAO Members about FAO performance and its comparative advantage in providing assistance and services to the country;²
- 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.

¹ The Evaluation of FAO's Regional and Sub-regional Offices for Europe and Central Asia was completed in December 2012.

² 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

ES5. An additional objective was to assist the Government and partners in Armenia in better exploiting areas of comparative advantage of FAO, taking into account the specific current arrangement for FAO's presence in the country.

ES6. The Evaluation encompassed the totality of FAO's cooperation with Armenia since 1993. However, the analysis was focused on the effectiveness and impact of FAO's work in the period 2004-2012, due to availability of information. Also, in consideration of the common framework with the REU-SEC evaluation, specific attention was given to the effects of corporate decentralization policies and decisions on the efficiency and effectiveness of delivery at country level.

National context

ES7. Armenia is a land-poor country and a 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. Since 1990, the entire country has experienced more frequent and widespread droughts with a negative impact on agriculture.

ES8. Nonetheless, agriculture is one of the main economic sectors in Armenia, and in particular, the main occupation and the biggest employer in the rural areas, with 44.4% of rural people engaged in it. In this respect, analysts and observers consider that the country has a considerable potential for expanding its food production and improving its negative balance in food trade, with food imports four times larger than food exports.

ES9. Several UN agencies and bilateral resource partners collaborate with Armenia, including the European Union, the US Department of Agriculture and the World Bank, among others. The UN has developed so far two UNDAF, both strongly focused on governance, social and economic equity and sustainable environmental management. FAO is an active member of the UN Country Team.

Key findings

FAO's presence

ES10. Armenia became a member of FAO in November 1993. In 2003, an exchange of letters established FAO as a non-resident agency in Armenia, through a multi-accredited FAO Representation. The role of FAO Representative was assigned to the Sub-regional Coordinator (SRC) for Central and Eastern Europe sitting in the Sub-regional Office for Central and Eastern Europe (SEU): each SRC appointed so far has carried out, on average, three missions per year to Armenia.

ES11. The first Assistant FAO Representative/Programme in Armenia took office in 2004; the incumbent Assistant FAOR assumed her position in April 2010. The Ministry of Agriculture made available adequate space for FAO country office in the premises of the Ministry itself, in Yerevan.

ES12. In 2012, due to vacant posts in REU, a staff member from the Field Programme Unit in REU was informally nominated 'alternate FAO Representative' and given the responsibility of coordinating, managing and supervising the work of the Organization in

Armenia. By the time of the Evaluation's mission to the country in September 2012, no effects of the 'alternate' set-up were visible yet. This appeared to be a good pragmatic solution that, in the view of the Evaluation, should however only be considered as a temporary arrangement.

ES13. As part of its mandate, the Evaluation assessed in detail FAO staffing in the country. The country office included the Assistant FAO Representative, an Administrative Assistant and a driver. In addition, as of September 2012 there were six Non Staff Human Resources, recruited by and working for the management of the field programme. Their contractual conditions were rather diverse from each other, despite very similar functions and roles, as well as from those of similar UN staff working for other agencies in the country. The Evaluation reached the conclusion that this situation negatively affected FAO's performance in the country.

ES14. Overall, FAO national staff appeared competent and able to carry out the duties assigned. Nevertheless, some stakeholders considered there was room and need for strengthening the long-term technical and operational capacity of the office.

ES15. The Assistant FAORep had only been given responsibility to manage the Regular Programme allotment of the Organization in the country. The management of the field programme remained the responsibility of the different Budget Holders and Lead Technical Officers in HQ and REU, under the coordination responsibility of the FAO Representative. Although this followed corporate decisions made in previous years, the Evaluation could observe in 2012 more pragmatic solutions being adopted, that had contributed to more effective and efficient delivery in other countries. The arrangement was all the more inadequate at a time when the Organization was focusing on the integration of all sources of funding to deliver better products.

ES16. Overall, and despite the praiseworthy personal efforts of all FAO staff in Armenia, the virtually inexistent delegation of authority by the REU Field Programme Unit to the country office and the rigid division of responsibility between Regular Programme and Field Programme management, compounded with the limited role played by the multi-accredited FAO Representative, led to performance short of potential. Another consequence was the absence of effective management of the FAO programme in Armenia in terms of strategic guidance, coordination and advocacy.

ES17. The introduction of GRMS, planned for the first half of 2013, will bring considerable improvements, provided the system is adapted to the typology of offices like Armenia, with a non-resident FAO Representative. Adequate and tailored capacity development will be necessary to ensure that staff in the office and projects will be able to make the best use of the new system.

ES18. Another step would be the re-organization of internal roles and responsibilities among FAO staff, including increased delegation of authority to the Assistant FAO Representative and review of the different post levels, to meet actual work requirements and to be harmonized with similar posts in other UN agencies in the country.

The Host Country Agreement

ES19. At the time of the Evaluation, FAO was accredited in Armenia as a non-resident agency, a status that did not grant it the standard coverage of the United Nations Convention of Privileges and Immunities. This had consequences on the corporate delivery in the country, ranging from a matter of image to very practical issues in financial and field programme management terms. FAO was not exempt from the Value Added Tax (VAT) and other taxes levied on financial transactions; also, it was unable to have its own imprest account and had to use the UNDP-managed Agency Service Request/ Inter Office Voucher (ASR/IOV) mechanism for any payment. This mechanism not only had a real cost, but also entailed up to 5-6 months of delay in appearing in the Organization's books, with all well-known consequences.

FAO's programme

ES20. The country has been the recipient of the largest portfolio in the Region over the period under evaluation, after Tajikistan. Assistance has been provided through FAO and resource partners resources in a range of technical sectors. The field programme appeared to be largely demand-driven. Overall efficiency of FAO in the country has decreased over time, when assessed by the ratio Regular Programme/Field Programme resources.

ES21. During the period January 2004 and December 2012, FAO support to Armenia was delivered through 45 projects, including national, regional, interregional and global. The total budget was USD 74,614,662, 12% of which was delivered through 18 national projects. Agricultural policy and information systems and plant production and protection received greater attention; animal health and production became a large sector in FAO's work in the country, also through larger regional and global initiatives related to transboundary animal diseases (TADs). Forestry, formerly one of the sectors receiving greater attention, received less support during the evaluation period. Each sector is assessed in detail in the evaluation report.

ES22. In January 2012, after approximately two years of preparation, the Minister of Agriculture of Armenia and the FAO Representative co-signed the Country Programming Framework (CPF). The CPF defined seven priority areas for FAO in Armenia, each containing Proposal initiatives, mostly corresponding to projects. The Evaluation noted a high level of satisfaction with the CPF among MoA senior management, in particular for its breadth and perceived flexibility.

ES23. Overall, the CPF appeared to be rather broad, missing focus and synergy development, and very ambitious. Further, the CPF lacked a results matrix at outcome level, as requested in the guidelines, and a clear link between these and UNDAF outcomes. For the CPF to be implemented, it will require a further effort of prioritization on a biennial basis, across and within sectors, to help in maximising the use of scarce financial resources.

Modalities of FAO's delivery

ES24. The Evaluation assessed five national projects in detail, against standard evaluation criteria. To a large extent, all of them were relevant to and met national needs and requests. Relevance and Capacity Development both scored as fully adequate. However, national

projects suffered greatly from poor implementation, which in turn negatively affected results and most other criteria scored below adequate or poor. Further, there were few potentially positive examples of sustainable interventions, but overall hardly any FAO project had developed exit strategies.

ES25. The regional, inter-regional and global projects tended to be better designed and more efficient in implementation. They also appeared effective in fostering collaboration and knowledge-exchange across national institutions in different countries, a particularly significant achievement in the Region. Equally, some projects pursued collaboration across national institutions, for example in the case of food security information systems and brucellosis control. This bodes well for the future sustainability of their results, in terms of coordinated actions in the case of common threats such as transboundary pests and diseases, as well as communication and exchange across informal networks of professionals and institutions, at national and regional level. At the same time, the impacts of such projects per se were more difficult to track and comment upon.

ES26. The Evaluation also analysed the use of the TCP Facilities: these funds were typically disbursed to formulate TCPs, in response to Government requests. Overall, the use of TCPFs was broadly relevant, although there was some evidence that to some extent, the requests were not assessed critically in terms of relevance and usefulness.

ES27. The Evaluation came to the conclusion that the field programme suffered from the limited presence of a FAO Representative. Specific weaknesses were:

- limited dialogue with senior government staff on a number of policy issues which contributed to the lack of, or limited uptake of some project results, that had not been well timed to seize the appropriate political momentum;
- limited coherence and poor evidence of collaboration, let alone development of synergies, across the various projects and programmes; and
- low efficiency in the implementation of two main donor-funded national projects.

ES28. The Evaluation identified 53 normative and knowledge products of relevance to Armenia, that were issued or organized independently from the projects discussed above. The list includes six meetings and workshops, four Briefs, one flagship publication, manuals, guidelines and reports. Participants in regional and international meetings were very appreciative of the opportunity to be exposed to different ideas and views, and develop networks. To some extent, these events contributed also to developing capacities among Government staff.

ES29. Among the publications, six were focused exclusively on Armenia whereas all others, were also relevant to the country with a sub-regional or regional focus. The normative products focused on Armenia scored similarly to the regional average: positive scoring for relevance, acceptable for technical quality; poor for gender mainstreaming, and average for all other criteria.

ES30. A major weakness around normative and knowledge was dissemination. Beyond the senior managers in the MoA or in the institutions working very closely with FAO, very few among the stakeholders met by the Evaluation were aware of the existence of these products or knew where to look for them. Major factors in this were both the poor dissemination capacity from HQ and REU to the country office, and limited initiative at country level to

reach out to key partners outside the Government. The lower levels of uptake and impact were also influenced by the language, as most products were published only in English.

Capacity development

ES31. Capacity development was considered adequate and good in most initiatives, including those funded through Regular Programme resources. Virtually all FAO interventions have contributed to develop individual and institutional national capacities through:

- carrying out CD events for large numbers of Government staff through almost all interventions;
- facilitating participation of Government staff in regional and international events on various topic, including statistics, Codex Alimentarius, International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources, etc;
- recruiting national consultants to implement projects; 50% of the consultants recruited in last six years were national experts.

ES32. Although difficult to measure, participants stated great appreciation for support received. There was evidence of uptake, albeit at different speeds, and of changed practices and attitudes through some initiatives: e.g. in ASF, brucellosis, FMD; forest nursery; improved diagnostic methods in animal health and pesticide residue monitoring (upcoming).

ES33. This, in the view of the Evaluation, was a very positive result. Armenia has a reasonable institutional set-up and sufficient, albeit not huge financial resources for running them. In such a context, the capacity of national staff is a key factor in the development and implementation of effective policies and strategies. In this, FAO has contributed to better governance, albeit more work remains to be done, in particular in terms of strengthening institutions and fostering an enabling environment in the different areas of intervention.

Delivery of core functions

ES34. The assessment of FAO's delivery of its core functions facilitates describing the performance of the Organization at an aggregate level of analysis as it allows visualizing what the areas of strengths and weaknesses are, and where the corporate comparative advantage lies. Box A below synthesises the Evaluation's assessment.

Box A. Evaluation's assessment of FAO's performance in delivering its core functions in Armenia

N.	Core function	Evaluation's assessment
<i>a</i>	<i>Monitoring and assessment of long-term and medium-term trends and perspectives</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work in this core function mainly focused on Food Security Information Systems and related information on crop forecasts, and the national Food Balance Sheet. Although there are some areas for improvement on dissemination strategy and use, the programme appears to be producing useful outputs.
<i>b</i>	<i>Assembly and provision of information, knowledge and statistics</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Armenia is making some use of these FAO core functions. Consistent evidence is available on the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • use of FAO statistical data and statistical methods and tools, namely for the agricultural census and for enhancing the quality of sex-disaggregated data in national statistics; • use of FAO publications, methods and tools in animal health, food safety, forestry.
<i>c</i>	<i>Development of international instruments, norms and standards</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participation of Armenia in FAO statutory bodies such as Codex Alimentarius, Central Asia and Caucasus Commission for inland fisheries and aquaculture; International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources; etc.
<i>d</i>	<i>Policy and strategy options and advice</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This organizational core function was carried out exclusively through projects and programmes, in the form of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Draft strategy proposals on land consolidation, mountain development, biosecurity, GMOs, African swine fever; brucellosis; • Contributions to national processes of policy development, e.g. the support to the Food Security Concept Note; • In general well appreciated; although in some cases it is too early to say as proposals were only recently completed, it appears that adoption and follow-up by Government has been rather uneven.
<i>e</i>	<i>Technical support to promote technology transfer and build capacity</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Great majority of FAO interventions with a strong technical content and technology transfer, including equipments. This applies to animal health, forestry, agro-meteorology, crop production and protection. In some cases, focus was on methods and approaches, e.g. for land consolidation and mountain development. • Virtually all FAO interventions have contributed to develop individual and institutional national capacity through: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • carrying out CD events for large numbers of Government staff through almost all interventions; • by facilitating participation of Government staff in regional and international events on various topics, including statistics, Codex Alimentarius, International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources, etc.; • by recruiting national consultants to implement projects; 50% of the consultants recruited in last six years were national experts.
<i>f</i>	<i>Advocacy and communication</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • FAO is a reliable assistant of MoA on technical matters but did not play any advocacy role in support of its global goals of reducing food insecurity and poverty through agriculture and rural development. • Although FAO-Armenia, also supported by the UNCT, reaches out to the national media on a regular basis including on global FAO mandate, a number of institutions met expressed a wish for FAO to be more visible and inclusive, in particular beyond the boundaries of MoA. • FAO in Armenia does not appear as being very active in national discussion fora on agriculture and rural development and is not perceived as an advocate in favour of Food security and poverty alleviation outside MoA
<i>g</i>	<i>Inter-disciplinarity and innovation</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No examples of inter-disciplinarity were found. Projects rather focused on specific technical areas, with no attempts at integrating a multi-disciplinary approach to agricultural and rural development. • Elements of innovation were contained in the land consolidation project,

		by proposing a new approach to tackle the land-fragmentation challenge.
h	<i>Partnerships and alliances</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In some cases, FAO is facilitating partnerships among national institutions by enhancing the enabling environment: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • in animal health, collaboration between MoA and MoH; • in Food Security Information Systems, exchange of information and data between MoA, Hydrological Institute, National Statistics Office; • Virtual extension network. • Similarly, FAO is facilitating regional cooperation at the technical level on a number of themes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Surveillance and control of transboundary animal diseases; • Surveillance and control of migratory pests (locusts); • Seed improvement; • Biosafety and bio-security; • Food Security Information Systems. • In terms of collaboration with the UN agencies, FAO participated in development activities only through the Telefood programme

Source: Evaluation

Contribution to MDGs 1, 3 and 7 and FAO global goals

Food security and poverty reduction

ES35. FAO's work in Armenia during the period under evaluation, including both the field programme and the more limited activities funded through the Regular Programme, has been largely focused on transfer of technology and capacity development in specific sectors. Projects, even those with ambitions of improving food security and reducing poverty, were not strategically designed on achieving these goals; nor have social inclusion and human-rights based approaches been sufficiently mainstreamed into the Organization's work.

ES36. The Evaluation was unable to find evidence of significant contribution to FAO's Global Goal of Food Security and to the Millennium Development Goal 1, if any at all. For example, in the forestry nursery project, poverty of household was not a criterion for selection of workers from communities concerned. In the case of the slaughterhouse development project, the approach proposed will likely result in social exclusion of the poor sectors of population from safe meat products. In these case, the absence of both inter-disciplinary perspective and pursuit of synergies and dialogue with stakeholders other than the Government, were also contributing factors to the limited achievements in this domain.

Gender equality

ES37. Armenia is a State party to the Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), has approved the Optional Protocol to the CEDAW and the Convention on the Political Rights of Women and has also joined the European Social Charter. Thus, the Government of Armenia has made gender a priority in its agenda and in February 2010, the first Gender Policy Concept Paper was approved by the Armenian Prime Minister. This document defines gender strategies of the country's policy and refers to the equal rights and opportunities for men and women in all spheres of social life.

ES38. The Evaluation identified some good examples of gender equality promotion within FAO's work in Armenia, namely the support provided to the integration of sex-disaggregated

indicators in the work of the National Statistics Service and the TCP project on land consolidation and the Brucellosis control project. No other initiative paid any attention to gender equality concerns in design and implementation.

ES39. The majority of FAO staff in Armenia were women, including the Assistant FAO Representative and two project coordinators. The office had appointed a Gender Focal Point, who was a member of the UNCT Working Group on gender and took part in relevant trainings organized by the UN with other partners in the country. However, there was no evidence of follow-up. Furthermore, across all FAO staff in the country, both at junior and senior levels, mainstreaming gender equality did not appear to be a theme that fell within the mandate of the Organization, or to be an issue at national level either.

ES40. Overall, FAO initiatives in Armenia did not contribute to improving gender equality and to the country's efforts in achieving MDG 3. However, the work on integration of sex-disaggregated data in the national statistics, is likely to bear positive results in the medium to long term.

Environmental sustainability

ES41. Through the projects in the Forestry and Plant protection and Production sectors, FAO contributed to some extent, to the achievement of MDG 7. This was mainly through capacity development of government staff, supporting the public consultation mechanism for the existing legislation and conservation of the agriculture biodiversity, the latter through both field projects and knowledge products.

ES42. In the long term, FAO's work on pesticide control and residue monitoring may bring positive effects in terms of protection of the natural resource base. However, the Evaluation noted a number of missed opportunities in terms of advocacy, synergies and collaboration with other institutions and civil society organisations.

Recommendations

ES43. The most pressing issues in respect to FAO's presence in the Armenia that in the view of the Evaluation required urgent and careful attention are addressed in Recommendations 1 to 3 below. These issues also contributed to the formulation of recommendations in the Evaluation of FAO's Regional and Sub-regional offices for Europe and Central Asia. In particular, Recommendation 3 of the REU/SEC evaluation focused on the need for one multiple-accredited FAO Representative exclusively for Armenia and Georgia and should guide the Organization's response to Recommendation 2 below.

Recommendation 1: To the Government of Armenia and FAO, on the status of the organization

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.

Recommendation 2: To FAO, on FAO Representative in Armenia

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 fulfil 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..

Recommendation 3: To FAO, on its operational set-up in Armenia

FAO should revise the operational set-up of FAO in Armenia in terms of roles and responsibilities as follows:

- a) Bringing all projects under the operational responsibility of the Assistant FAO Representative;
- b) Through AOS resources originating from the national projects, or direct costs charged to project budgets, recruit 2 support staff for operations and administration;
- 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.

ES44. The Evaluation also assessed the relevance and usefulness of the first FAO-Republic of Armenia Country Programming Framework for the period 2012-2015. The CPF fully meets the expectations of the Ministry of Agriculture and contributes to filling gaps and complement activities supported by other donors. By being very ambitious and broad, it will require further planning exercises on a biennial basis, to ensure focus and effective action. The CPF also lacks to some extent, the perspectives and support of other institutions: this could be a lesson learnt for the future. Recommendation 4 focuses on these aspects.

Recommendation 4: To the Government of Armenia and FAO, on prioritizing within the CPF

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.

ES45. At the time of the Evaluation, two major projects were still lagging behind schedule, due to a number of difficulties. In the last quarter of 2012, improvements were reported. Nevertheless, the Evaluation wishes to stress the importance of focusing attention and efforts on their completion, through Recommendation 5.

Recommendation 5: To FAO, on on-going projects in Armenia

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).

1 Introduction

1.1 Evaluation 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, interregional and global projects, use made of normative outputs and the work carried out by the FAO Representation. Synthesis reports, covering evaluations in similar types of countries, are submitted to the PC for review. So far, four 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 at its October 2011 session requested the Office of Evaluation (OED) to extend the coverage by conducting evaluations in middle income countries.

3. In consideration of the planned Evaluation of FAO's Regional and Sub-regional Offices for Europe and Central Asia³ (REU-SEC evaluation), it was decided to select a country in this Region that would allow an in-depth analysis of the Organization's achievements, strengths and weaknesses also in terms of the 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 was the Republic of Armenia (henceforth called Armenia or RA).

4. The Evaluation of FAO's Cooperation with the Republic of Armenia and the Evaluation of FAO's Regional and Sub-regional offices for Europe and Central Asia were closely coordinated: the team leader and some team members participated in both evaluations and the same team in OED provided the management support. 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.

1.2 Structure of the report

5. Chapters 1 and 2 of the report describe the context of the evaluation, its purpose, as stated in the Terms of Reference (ToR) of the Evaluation, as well as the methodology that was followed and limitations the evaluation team incurred in carrying out its work.

6. Chapter 3 describes briefly the overall national political context, and Chapter 4 the mandate of the United Nations in Armenia as expressed in the United Nations Development

³ The Evaluation of FAO's Regional and Sub-regional Offices for Europe and Central Asia was completed in December 2012.

Frameworks (UNDAF) and the activities of some major donors with Armenia in the areas of FAO's mandate, during the period under evaluation.

7. Chapter 5 describes the structure and performance of the FAO Office in Armenia, while Chapter 6 describes FAO's field programme and Country Programming Framework (CPF).

8. Chapters 7 to 10 describe and analyze FAO's activities and performance in Armenia by sector. These are: Agricultural policy; Animal production and health; Food quality and safety; Forestry, Plant production and protection. A description of FAO's contribution to each of its Core Functions by sector is also included. The analysis is carried out against the standard evaluation criteria. These chapters also include the analysis of the use made by Armenia of FAO's normative and knowledge products.

9. Chapter 11 analyzes FAO's delivery mechanism in Armenia: the field programme, the normative products, the fulfilment of the core functions of the Organization. Chapter 12 contains overall analytical conclusions emerging from the overall evaluative work, in particular in relation to FAO's Global Goals and the MDGs. Last, Chapter 12, includes overall conclusions and recommendations for enhancement of the cooperation between Armenia and FAO.

10. The report also includes several Annexes, namely:

- Annex 1, Evaluation Terms of Reference
- Annex 2, Profile of evaluation team members
- Annex 3, Evaluation tools
- Annex 4, List of institutions and stakeholders met during the evaluation process
- Annex 5, Inventory of the field programme in Armenia
- Annex 6, Inventory of FAO normative products for Armenia
- Annex 7, Assessment of key projects
- Annex 8, Government of Armenia legislations and decrees in areas relevant to FAO's mandate

2 Purpose and methodology

2.1 Evaluation purpose and scope

11. The Evaluation, like all other FAO country evaluations, was forward-looking and aimed at identifying areas for improvement and drawing lessons to enhance the relevance and effectiveness of FAO cooperation with Armenia in the future.

12. The terms of reference defined its main purposes as follows:

- i. to improve the relevance, design, implementation, results and impact of FAO cooperation with Armenia;
- ii. to provide accountability to the Government of Armenia and to other FAO Members about FAO performance and its comparative advantage in providing assistance and services to the country;⁴
- 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.

13. An additional objective was to assist the Government and partners in Armenia in better exploiting areas of comparative advantage of FAO, taking into account the specific current arrangement for FAO's presence in the country, i.e. non-resident FAO Representative.

14. The Evaluation focused on the analysis of the effectiveness and impact of the totality of FAO's cooperation in Armenia since FAO started working in the country. However, taking into consideration the availability of information, attention was concentrated on the period 2004-2012. Also, in consideration of the linkages with the Evaluation of FAO's Regional and Sub-regional Offices for Europe and Central Asia, this country evaluation paid specific attention to the efficiency and effectiveness of FAO's work in the perspective of corporate decentralization policies and decisions.

15. The evaluation included 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 comprised 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 Regular Programme Budget. In this context, the collaboration with and the role of FAO Commissions and Working Parties will also be analysed.

⁴ 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

2.2 Methodology

16. The Terms of Reference established the methodology of the Evaluation, which was based on the evaluation framework.⁵ The evaluation used a wide range of quantitative and qualitative 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.⁶ Insofar as relevant and possible, the views of participants in FAO's initiatives were gathered and analysed along lines of gender, age and social differences.

17. The internationally accepted evaluation criteria and the United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG) Norms and Standards informed the evaluation process; independence and rigour of analysis were maintained throughout it. Also, particular attention was given to cross-cutting issues: gender mainstreaming, social inclusion, and capacity development.

18. Triangulation by the Evaluation team members of information gathered from stakeholders and through different tools underpinned the analysis and validation of evidence gathered. In addition, the team members applied their own professional technical judgment and knowledge in the assessment of, for example, the quality of normative, project and process outputs. Independence and rigour of analysis informed the whole evaluation process.⁷

19. The Evaluation adopted a participatory approach and consulted extensively with FAO stakeholders. During the evaluation process, the team consulted with approximately 120 stakeholders.⁸ The views of FAO staff on their own work, institutional set-up, achievements and challenges were canvassed extensively throughout the whole evaluation process; draft ToR and report were circulated and staff's comments and suggestions were taken into account as appropriate. Equally, the views of FAO Members, clients and users of FAO products and services, and partners of the Organization were sought extensively through interviews, field visits, questionnaire surveys, phone interviews and meetings. Stakeholders included:

- 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.

20. Through a search in the corporate Field Programme Management Information System (FPMIS), the Evaluation compiled an inventory of all national, regional, interregional and global projects that included Armenia since it joined the Organization.⁹ The Evaluation

⁵ See Evaluation Terms of Reference, Annex 1

⁶ See Evaluation tools, Annex 4

⁷ See Team member profiles, Annex 2

⁸ See List of institutions and stakeholders met, Annex 3

⁹ See Annex 5. This list did not include Telefood projects, which are funded through private contributions, have a ceiling of USD 10,000 and aim at improving the livelihoods of poor women and men agricultural producers. OED does not include these projects in its evaluations any longer.

focused its in-depth assessment on projects operational in the period 2006-2012, although in some cases, namely the agricultural policy and the forestry sectors, the assessment included also earlier initiatives as they represented meaningful contributions to the specific sector. The portfolio was analyzed in terms of thematic areas as well as the types of projects.

21. A search of the REU Web site and the FAO Document Repository resulted in a list of 53 publications produced in and for Armenia or its Region. The Evaluation assessed a sample of these, in particular in the two technical areas of focus.¹⁰ In addition, large numbers of policy documents, project documents, progress reports, governing body reports and technical papers by FAO and other organizations were reviewed.

22. In consideration of time and resources available for the evaluation, a sample of five Key Projects were 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 were given priority to facilitate data collection). Separate reports were prepared for each of the Key projects.¹¹

23. The evaluation drew its conclusions and recommendations based on the evidence found and on its independent assessment, of the relevance, efficiency, effectiveness and impact 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.

24. The preparatory phase took place from May to September: it included a preliminary mission in June 2012 to the country, meetings with FAO staff in HQ and REU working in the country and mapped FAO activities in Armenia. The main output of this phase was the Terms of Reference for the Evaluation, which were circulated to all stakeholders for comments and suggestions before finalizing.

25. The main evaluation mission took place in September 2012 and the team presented its preliminary overall results and recommendations in a debriefing session with the AFAOR, key Government personnel and partner representatives.

26. OED ensured the management of the Evaluation, including the identification and recruitment of the Evaluation team. Each team member received individual terms of reference, indicating areas of technical expertise and specific evaluation issues, as well as background material.¹² Extensive communication among team members took place throughout the whole process.

27. The final draft report was circulated among FAO stakeholders for comments and suggestions, which were incorporated, as appropriate, by the team into this final report. FAO will prepare its Management Response to the final evaluation report, in which it will express

¹⁰ See Annex 6, List of FAO normative products for Armenia.

¹¹ See Annex 7, Key projects

¹² This included: Background information on FAO and its decentralization process; notes on the evaluation function in FAO; UNEG Norms and Standards, Code of Conduct, and evaluation methodology; the inventory of FAO normative products, as well as electronic versions of each, if available; the inventory of projects implemented by FAO since 2006; project documents and other available documentation on FPMIS for all the projects and all key projects; evaluation reports for projects and relevant themes and programs already evaluated.

its overall judgment of the evaluation process and report and accept, partially accepts or reject each recommendation.

2.3 *Constraints and limitations*

28. The evaluation was prepared and carried out under strong time-constraints as it was conducted within the broader framework of the Evaluation of FAO's Regional and Sub-regional Offices for Europe and Central Asia: the team, at times, reduced the breadth of the planned scope to ensure a better quality analysis of a more focused sample of activities.

29. As for other country evaluations, this exercise did not have a Country Programming Framework covering the period under evaluation, against which to assess FAO's strategies and performance. The Core functions were the closest proxy available to assess the Organization's work at aggregate level, whereas for each project, respective log-frames were used.

30. Equally, the evaluation attempted 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 had to make on-the-spot decisions, based on availability of data and information, about the level of assessment that was most cost-effective to pursue.

31. The Terms of Reference included the handling of operations for the European Regional Conference in Yerevan in 2010, as an issue to be assessed. While staff in the FAO country office was available and knowledgeable, there had been significant turnover in the UNDP office, which made a further analysis of this difficult.

3 The national context in the period 2006-2012

3.1 *Profile of Armenia*

32. Armenia is a landlocked mountainous country with a land surface of 29,800 sq. km, in the North-East of the Armenian Highlands at the boundary of the Caucasus and Western Asia. It borders with Georgia, Azerbaijan, Turkey and Iran. Armenia has almost all kinds of climate, from arid subtropical to cold high mountainous. Box 1 contains the map of the country.

Box 1. Map of Armenia



33. Armenia is a presidential representative republic. The President is Head of State and Head of Government. Executive power is exercised by the Government, and the legislative power by both the Government and the Parliament. The Government's stated aim is to build a Western-style parliamentary democracy. The new constitution in 2005 increased the power of the legislative branch, but the executive branch still retains considerably greater power than in most European countries.

34. Armenia has 915 communities in 10 *marzes* (provinces) plus Yerevan, the capital. The chief executive in each of the 10 *marzes* is the *marzpet*, appointed by the central government. Within each province are communities (*hamaynk*). The capital, Yerevan, also has the status of a community (since 2009). The current population is estimated at 2,871,000.¹³ A significant part of the Armenian people live abroad, where they emigrated through successive waves. The larger communities of Armenians live in the Russian Federation, in France and in the United States of America. It is estimated that 700,000-1,300,000 people left the country since 1991, including a significant number of highly-trained professionals. This had a serious impact on the country's social and cultural capital. Migrants left the country for a variety of reasons including lack of jobs, obstacles to doing business, and insufficient opportunities for the future.¹⁴ Further, there is a substantial seasonal migration: annually, about 60,000 labour migrants go to seek jobs in Russia, mainly in construction.¹⁵ Internal migration from the regions to Yerevan is also important.

¹³ Armenia National Statistical Service, 2011

¹⁴ UNDP Armenia, 2009: NHDR. Migration and Human Development: Opportunities and Challenges

¹⁵ ILO (2009): "Migration and Development: Armenia Country Study"

35. Since its independence, Armenia has maintained a policy of complementarity by pursuing friendly relations with Iran, Russia, and the West, including the United States of America and the European Union and its Members. The Republic is a member of the United Nations and a long list of international institutions, including those with a specific regional mandate. The historical events in the last century have created tense relations with two of its immediate neighbours, Azerbaijan and Turkey, thus increasing Armenia's isolation, with closed borders with them and an economic embargo by Azerbaijan.¹⁶ Among others, these factors have had a negative impact on Armenia's foreign trade and economic development.

36. Until independence in 1991, Armenia's economy was based largely on industry, but highly dependent on resources from other parts of the Soviet Union. Agriculture accounted for 20% of net material product and 10% of employment before the breakup of the Soviet Union.¹⁷ In 1994, after the downturn of the previous biennium when the economy shrank by more than 50%, the economy started growing uninterruptedly at two-digit levels, until 2008.

37. During this period, Armenia grew to join the group of middle-income countries: in 2008, the Gross Domestic Product per capita was USD 5,809,¹⁸ more than double the 2002 level. Over four years, poverty incidence dropped from 34.6% to 23.5%; the share of agriculture declined from 26% of GDP in 2006 to 16% in 2008. The adoption of the First Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper in 2003 had been a contributing factor. Encouraged by these positive developments, in 2008 the Government adopted the Second Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper, also called Sustainable Development Strategy (SDC), but its implementation was halted by the global financial crisis of 2008-2009.

38. The financial crisis at the end of the first decade of the century had a very strong impact on the Armenian economy, with a decline of 14.1% of the GDP, the second sharpest in the CIS after Ukraine. The agriculture sector also suffered, due to unfavourable weather. By 2010, Armenia had moved from being a low- indebted country to a medium-indebted country.¹⁹ Despite important efforts by the Government to mitigate the social impact of the crisis, there was a drop in living standards: by 2010, 35.8% of the population was poor and 21.3% was very poor. Since 2010, the economy resumed its upward trends: in 2011 growth was 4.6% and agriculture grew at 14.1%.

39. Other issues related to the poverty profile include:²⁰

- pockets of poverty: while in 2004-2008, in most of the *marzes* the poverty incidence was not significantly different from the national average, starting in 2009 significant differences started to arise, with Shirak, Kotayk, Gegharkunik, and Lori being the poorest ones. Poverty incidence also varies greatly within a given *marz* with persisting pockets of poverty;

¹⁶ The United Nations in Armenia, including FAO, have no mandate for Nagorno-Karabakh.

¹⁷ <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/5275.htm>

¹⁸ Purchasing Power Parity (PPP) adjusted

¹⁹ According to the IMF projections, public debt would reach 50% of GDP by the end of 2012 and subsequently decrease at stable rates

²⁰ Sources: the "Social Snapshot and Poverty in Armenia", from National Statistics Service of the Republic of Armenia, "Social Snapshot and Poverty in Armenia", Statistical-Analytical Reports, Main Findings of Integrated Living Conditions Surveys from 2004, 2006, 2009, 2011, www.arstats.am; Economic Development and Research Center database, www.edrc.am; Government of Armenia "Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper", 2003, and "Sustainable Development Program" 2008.

- inequality: the consumption inequality decreased to 0.260 in 2004 and then increased to 0.272 in 2008; by 2010, both inequality indicators measured by the Gini coefficient were on the rise, but income inequality was higher;
- social exclusion: this is a major problem for the vulnerable population, including the disabled and people living with HIV and AIDS (PLWHA);²¹
- gender dimension of poverty: while the living standards of women and men in Armenia were almost equal throughout the Evaluation period, the poverty incidence was higher for families headed by women, by 4-5%. Within female-headed households, those with children are more likely to be poor compared to the national average. High poverty among those families may be explained by a number of factors including lack of, or low wage, employment and/or the absent spouse not supporting the family.

40. According to the FAO 2010 Nutrition country profile for Armenia, although food supply and consumption statistics indicate that the dietary energy supply was low and not meeting the population's energy requirements, there was a very high number of overweight and obese 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.

41. At the same time, in the 2011 Human Development Index Report, Armenia ranked 87 out of 187 countries, within the medium human development category, albeit slightly below the regional average. The Inequality Index and the Gender Inequality Index locate Armenia in a better position than the regional average. Indicators like life expectancy at birth, and improved access to water resources in rural areas, were also improving steadily.

3.2 *The agricultural sector*

42. Armenia is a land-poor country. The usable agricultural lands make up 71.3% of the country's total area, with arable lands making up only 15.2%. Furthermore, according to the National Statistics Service, around 33% of arable lands are not used, although some observers estimate the figure to be higher. Per capita, Armenia has 0.7 hectares of usable lands and 0.14 hectares of arable lands. It is also a 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. 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 a negative impact on agriculture.²²

²¹ UNDAF 2010-2015

²² Government, Ministry of Nature Protection with support from UNDP/GEF: "Second National Communication under the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change", 2010

43. Agriculture is one of the main economic sectors in Armenia, the main occupation and the biggest employer in the rural areas, with 44.4% of rural people engaged in it.²³ The agriculture farming sector's share in GDP was 16.1%; together with the agro-food sector, it reached 26%. Crop production accounts for 62.3% of the sector, and livestock management 37.7%. In 1990, it was 49.4% and 50.6% respectively. The level of food self-sufficiency totals 60%: specifically, this is fairly low in wheat, the staple food, at 38%; poultry meat stands at 20%, pork at 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.

44. Observers and analysts consider that the country has a considerable potential for expanding its food production and improving its negative balance in food trade, with food imports four times larger than food exports. For example, Armenian agricultural products enjoy a certain degree of competitiveness in overseas markets, due to their good quality, and are exported to a large number of countries. At the same time, difficulties are due both to the requirements of product conformity with strict regulations and to effective market protection policies in destination countries. The uncertainty about foreign ownership of land in Armenia may also be a factor, reducing the potential level of investment from abroad.²⁴

45. More than 80% of the crops are produced on irrigated lands, including potatoes, tobacco, fruit and sugar beet. However, as a result of poor land use, approximately 80% of plots are characterized by desertification and various levels of degradation. About 35,000 ha are out of use because of primary and secondary salinization and 15,000 ha because of water-logging (underground water at 1-2 m depth).

46. Agriculture policy is the responsibility of the Ministry of Agriculture (MoA), which includes the central administration and provincial-level inspection staff. In addition, each province has an agricultural department. MoA is responsible for seven research centres covering the main agriculture sectors and issues, such as: agriculture and plant protection; agro-chemistry and reclamation; cattle breeding and veterinary matters; fruit growing and wine making; vegetable-gourds; and industrial crops. The Academy of Agriculture of Armenia and the Armenian State Agrarian University plus other governmental and private educational and research institutions provide technical training and research facilities.

47. Armenia was the first country in the former Soviet Union to embark on a land privatization process in 1991: 864 collective and state farms were dismantled and about 321,000 private farms created. By 2006 the number of private farms had increased to about 340,000, as more public land was privatized by open tender.²⁵

48. In 2002, the absence of an overall strategy for agriculture development was acknowledged to be Armenia's most serious agriculture policy problem. Since then, a series of strategies were developed and approved:

- the Strategy for Sustainable Development of the Agriculture Sector, issued in revised versions in 2002, 2004, 2006, 2008,

²³ The source for all information and figures in this paragraph was the FAO-Republic of Armenia Country Programming Framework, 2012.

²⁴ Article 31 of the Constitution states that foreign citizens and persons without citizenship shall not have the right to own land except in cases prescribed by law. Non-Armenian citizens can however lease land.

²⁵ World Trade Organization, Trade Policy Review, n. 228, Geneva, 2010.

- the Strategy of Rural Community Development developed in 2008;
- the National Strategy for Sustainable Use and Development of Farm Animal Genetic Resources developed in 2008: it was not formally adopted but it has been used by the MoA in its strategy of importing cattle from European countries, as well as in the draft policy document on “artificial insemination policy”, which is expected to be ratified by the Government of Armenia in the near future;
- the 2010-2020 Sustainable Strategy Programme for Agricultural and Rural Development, adopted in November 2010; and
- the Government Programme for 2012-2017 that was passed in June 2012: it, *inter alia*, stresses the need for an integrated view of the village and agriculture.

49. The 2010-2020 Sustainable Strategy Programme for Agricultural and Rural Development aims at overcoming the results of the financial crisis and, by formulating anti-crisis mechanisms, contributing to the modernization of the agro-food system and raising its competitiveness; expanding the use of arable land and improving yields by consolidating lands, modernizing technology, and upgrading infrastructure; and enhancing the quality and capacity of food processing and marketing. The strategy also targets a new agriculture insurance system and new finance instruments. The MoA was working on the revision of the Agriculture and Rural Development Strategy for 2010-2020 at the time of the Evaluation.

50. A number of structural problems however still persist. According to various international organisations,²⁶ these are:

- Farm size and fragmentation: average farm size is about 1.4 ha but varies between 0.62 ha in the irrigated Ararat *Marz* to 3.8 ha in the extensive crop and livestock raising Syunik *Marz* - and fragmentation: about 1,200,000 parcels of land shared among the 340,000 farms;
- Limited access to financing: loan terms, e.g. collateral, maturities and interest rates, do not match farmers' capacity, leading to reliance on cash and volatile remittances;
- Outdated equipment: 95% of farm equipment is considered obsolete;
- High dependence on imported fertilizer, feeds, and fuel, while the country has limited transport capacity, by road and rail through and to Georgia and Iran;
- Low food safety standards, which constrain exports;
- Lack of agricultural risks insurance system.

51. The Government has been supporting farmers, including for the purchase of subsidized diesel and fertilizers, and also plans to continue subsidising agricultural loans and distributing to farmers high-quality wheat seeds purchased in Russia and Ukraine. More recently, the Government has taken active steps also to support cooperatives in agriculture, given the small farm sizes and with the aim of achieving greater economies of scale.

52. Since Armenia joined the WTO, it has also been implementing the WTO Agreement and working to meet the established commitments, which include: i) introducing value-added tax (VAT) on agricultural products on the domestic market, for certain categories of farmers; ii) no subsidies to agricultural exporters; and iii) no domestic support in terms of current aggregate measurement to agricultural producers. Also, Armenia grants considerable access

²⁶ International Monetary Fund June, IMF Country Report No. 12/153, May 31, 2012; WTO, *ibid*; Economist Intelligence Unit, 2012.

to the agricultural products of its trade partners and has not applied any non-tariff measures, except in the food safety, sanitary and phyto-sanitary areas.

53. Another set of challenges stem from the state of the natural resource base. The extensive industrial and agricultural development as well as increased population density during the Soviet period resulted in significant environmental damage. Lake Sevan, which held much of the country's freshwater reserves, became polluted and significantly shrunk due to the use of water for irrigation and electricity generation. The years of independence brought their own challenges: the energy crisis of the beginning of the 1990s had a disastrous impact on forests; illegal fishing and hunting have reduced the fauna, a lack of infrastructure and poor enforcement of laws have resulted in heavy pollution of rivers and lakes, etc. Armenia continues to face problems with respect to air, water, and soil pollution, and threatened ecosystems, with significant current and potential economic consequences. Moreover, Armenia is characterized by vulnerable ecosystems, arid climate, desertification processes and frequent natural disasters, which make the country more vulnerable to the impacts of climate change and environmental degradation.

54. The Government has passed several laws and decrees, which define policies in areas relevant to climate change mitigation and environmental protection. Some of the key ones are listed in Annex 8. In more recent years, some progress has been recorded, in particular with the increased water level in Lake Sevan and forests now covering around 11% of the territory: although this is still lower than the pre-crisis level, and of poorer quality, these improvements can be partly credited to the collaboration between environmental NGOs and the Government.

4 The UN and other partners in Armenia

4.1 FAO within the United Nations in Armenia

55. The Republic of Armenia became a member of the United Nations in 1992. By the end of that year, the first UN Office was established in Yerevan, in what became the UN House in 1998. As of 2012, a total of 13 United Nations Agencies, Programmes and Funds were represented in the UN Country Team (UNCT), including:

- resident Agencies: United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), World Health Organization (WHO);
- non-resident Agencies: Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS), International Labour Organization (ILO), United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO);
- the Department for Public Information, Department for Safety and Security; and
- the Office for High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR).

56. The first United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) was prepared in 2003-2004, for the period 2005-2009. Its areas of cooperation were:

- Poverty and Economic equity: this also included the Ministry of Agriculture among the national institutions involved and rural communities among the intended beneficiaries;
- Social equity;
- Democratic governance; and
- Environmental governance.

57. FAO was among the contributing agencies as a donor, for the Environmental governance area. At that time, on-going national projects included mountain area development, inputs distribution for emergency and rehabilitation, plant protection and land consolidation.

58. The second UNDAF, for the period 2010-2015, was prepared in 2008-09. Its outcomes, or strategic areas of focus for development cooperation, are as follows:

- Outcome 1: Inclusive and sustainable growth is promoted by reducing disparities and expanding economic opportunities for vulnerable groups.
- Outcome 2: Democratic governance is strengthened by improving accountability, promoting institutional and capacity development and expanding people's participation.
- Outcome 3: Access and quality of social services is improved especially for vulnerable groups.
- Outcome 4: Environment and disaster risk reduction is integrated into national and local development frameworks.

59. The greatest focus of UNDAF discourse is on social inclusion, and most of resources were assigned to Outcome 1. The Framework also mentions agriculture in relation to economic development, environment and disaster risk reduction, and gives attention to rural areas. FAO is one of the UN contributing agencies to a number of Agency Outcomes and outputs: these include regulatory frameworks for Small and Medium Enterprise Development, improved production standards, nutrition and income-generating policies, strategies and practices for vulnerable groups, Private Public Partnerships, innovative and environmentally sustainable technologies and capacity development for disaster risk management.

60. Besides the contribution to the UNDAF, FAO is an active member of the United Nations Country Team: the AFAORep regularly attends in the meetings and activities; staff contribute to the UN Communication Group; the FAO Gender Focal Point participates in the UNCT gender equality training and activities. Overall, the UN Resident Coordinator and other UNCT members, were highly appreciative of the collaboration with FAO-Armenia and of FAO's role in the implementation of the UNDAF, in particular for Outcome 1. Further, one Telefood initiative was jointly developed and implemented with UNDP and WFP.

4.2 Other major partners in the agriculture sector in Armenia

61. Other major donors and non-governmental organizations active in the country during the period under evaluation, in the areas of FAO's competence, are described below.

62. The European Union is a major key partner of the Republic of Armenia. Relations developed fast under the EU Neighbourhood Policy, and accelerated recently, in accordance

with the political decision of euro-integration and preparation for the Armenia Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Agreement (DCFTA). A high level EU Advisory Group to the Government of Armenia was set up, to work on harmonisation of the legislation. Its focus is on a number of areas of FAO's interest, including, for example, food safety standards and sanitary and phyto-sanitary regulations. The legislative work was accompanied by the implementation of institutional reforms, the re-equipping of laboratories, and development of human resources.

63. The US Department of Agriculture has been for many years, one of the main supporters of agriculture in Armenia. It had numerous projects, including:

- Farm Credit Armenia (FCArm): this provides accessible loans and other financial services to farmers, agribusinesses and small and medium enterprises (SMEs) in rural areas;
- USDA Center for Agribusiness and Rural Development (CARD), that works on a number of topics and programmes, namely
 - Private Sector Competitiveness Project, aimed at increasing competitiveness of both modernized and subsistence-level farmers;
 - Value Chain Development, aimed at building the competitiveness of the private food and agricultural sectors with better knowledge utilization and addressing needed innovation implementation;
 - Technical Assistance to Support Armenia Food Safety System: providing basic food safety government/ industry training; strengthening in-country regulatory compliance; disseminating science-based food safety information;
- Collaborative Biological Engagement Project (CBEP): promoting interdisciplinary collaborations and communications in human and animal health;
- Animal Health Management in Cross Border Areas of Georgia and Armenia, aimed at enhancing capacities of local veterinarians, and improving cooperation mechanisms between veterinary practitioners and relevant agencies in cross border areas.

64. The World Bank has also been a major player in the agricultural sector. Among its major interventions, was the support to the development and rehabilitation of the irrigation infra-structure in the country. Another important initiative is the Rural Enterprise and Small-Scale Commercial Agriculture Development (RESCAD) Project, which aims at supporting the development of small rural businesses, community economic development, strengthening the seed and sapling market and strengthening the agricultural extension system. The Community Agricultural Resource Management and Competitiveness Project targeted mountainous and pre-mountainous communities in six *marzes* and aimed at improving productivity and sustainability of pasture/livestock livelihood systems.

65. GIZ was also working in Armenia, through a Sustainable Management of Biodiversity programme for the South Caucasus. Priority areas in Armenia are Tavush and Syunik Provinces. The objective is the implementation of schemes for the sustainable management of biodiversity by government, private sector and civil society actors.

66. IFAD has been active in Armenia since 1995 supporting financial services for people in rural areas. The North-West Agricultural Service Project fostered development of key sectors such as crops and livestock and local irrigation systems, in particular by strengthening water users' associations. The 'Agricultural Services Project' invested in support for irrigation and seed development, and for local groups and associations. The

objective of the 'Rural Areas Development Programme' is to stimulate sustained growth of rural enterprises by delivering an interrelated package of business development training and financing. The programme has two components: support for the fruits and nuts sector and support to rural infrastructure.

67. ACIDI/VOCA (Agricultural Cooperative Development International/Volunteers in Overseas Cooperative Assistance), has been very active in Armenia implementing various projects to support agricultural development (most notably, the Farmer-to-Farmer programme). The recently completed activity was the Water-to-Market project under the MCC Armenia compact, introducing innovative growing techniques to increase smallholder incomes.

68. UNDP Armenia through its Community Programme supported vulnerable communities with various projects including those in agriculture. In the environmental sector, UNDP with GEF funding assists the Ministry for Environmental Protection in implementing its obligations under the Climate Change Convention (currently under the Third National Communication framework). Some of its key activities are the following:

- the "Adaptation to Climate Change Impacts in Mountain Forest Ecosystems of Armenia" project, in cooperation with WWF-Armenia, which aims at: i) develop the enabling environment for integrating climate change risks into the management of forest ecosystems; ii) integrating pilot adaptation measures in forest and protected area management in the Syunik region to enhance the adaptive capacity of mountain forest ecosystems; and iii) capacity building for adaptive management;
- the Small Grants Programme, aiming at climate change mitigation, which provides small grants in the following areas: conservation of biodiversity; protection of international waters; reduction of the impact of harmful chemicals (POPs); prevention of land degradation; generation of sustainable livelihoods and community.

69. OSCE, based on the comprehensive concept of co-operation and security, supported the Government in its efforts to set up and operate Public Environmental Information Centres (Aarhus Centres), thus contributing to the implementation of the UNECE Convention on Access to Information, Public Participation in Decision-making and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters (Aarhus Convention).

70. There were a number of Non Governmental Organizations that support the development of agriculture in Armenia, including, C.O.A.F. (The Children of Armenia Fund), Fund for Development of Villages and Agricultural Businesses, International Centre for Studies on Agricultural Business and Education, Horizon Foundation, etc. Equally, several NGOs are active in the environmental sector and have been increasingly active and vocal, registering a number of successful cases of bringing important environmental questions to public attention and prompting swift action by the Government. NGOs active in the areas close to FAO mandate are: WWF Armenia (biodiversity), Armenian Tree Project (ATP) and Armenian Forests NGO (forestry), Armenian Women for Health and Healthy Environment (POPS), Association for Sustainable Human Development (policy).

71. Lastly, there are two farmers' Unions, the National Union of Farmers and the Armenian Union of Farmers. In addition there are also several sectoral associations, like poultry producers, producers of fish products, bee-keepers, etc. There is also the Federation

of Agricultural Associations (FAA), which unites agricultural cooperatives, and three Unions of Consumer Protection, active in the field of monitoring food safety standards.

5 The FAO Office in Armenia

5.1 FAO's presence in Armenia

72. Armenia became a member of FAO in November 1993, one of the first countries of the former Soviet Union to join. In 2003, an exchange of letters took place between FAO and the Republic of Armenia, establishing FAO as a non-resident agency in Armenia, through a multi-accredited FAO Representation. The role of FAO Representative was assigned to the Sub-regional Coordinator (SRC)²⁷ for Central and Eastern Europe sitting in SEU, and the Organization committed to equip an Office, well located in the premises of the Ministry of Agriculture in Yerevan. The responsibility of Budget Holder (BH) at the time, was maintained in the Regional Office for Europe and Central Asia (REU) in Rome, assigned to a senior officer.

73. When REU was moved to Budapest in 2007, the role of SRC and Deputy Regional Representative were merged: the Vacancy Announcement for the post did not mention any function or role as multiple-accredited FAO Representative to any country.²⁸ However, the role of multiple-accredited FAO Representative to the three countries moved automatically with the post. The BH responsibility was then assigned to the SRC/DRR or to a SEU/REU senior officer.

74. Between late 2003 and late 2006, technical assistance was largely provided from FAO HQ; when REU moved to Budapest in 2007, technical backstopping was shared between HQ and SEU/REU, as discussed in Section 6.2 below.

75. The first Assistant FAO Representative/Programme in Armenia took office in 2004; the incumbent Assistant FAOR assumed her position in April 2010, after having worked for FAO as national consultant for several years. The multiple-accredited FAO Representative carried out, on average, three missions per year to Armenia.

76. In early 2012, the Deputy Regional Representative for Europe and Central Asia retired and the post, including for the multiple-accredited FAO Representative, remained vacant until November of the same year. During this period, also due to travel limitations of the Assistant Director-General/Regional Representative, certain REU staff members were informally nominated as 'alternate FAO Representative' and given the responsibility of coordinating, managing and supervising the work of the Organization in each of the countries under multiple-accreditation. In the case of Armenia, the appointee was a staff member from the Field Programme Unit. This clearly entailed a certain degree of re-shuffling of tasks in REU, which was well absorbed overall.

²⁷ The SRC was also FAO Representative for Georgia and Moldova, in addition to all other tasks

²⁸ The VA however contained the task of 'developing contacts and partnerships' with national government in countries with no accredited FAO Representative.

77. The appointment of an 'Alternate FAOREp' was a good pragmatic solution to an unexpected situation of unforeseeable duration, which however, in the view of the Evaluation, should only be considered as temporary. Furthermore, this happened after a long period of limited effective presence by the previous FAO Representative in the country, which had contributed to a rather unsatisfactory performance of some important projects. Thus, by the time of the Evaluation, no effects of the new arrangement were visible yet.

78. Senior officers of the Ministry of Agriculture, the official institution for FAO within the Government of Armenia, expressed full satisfaction with the model of multiple-accreditation and did not wish any modification to the current arrangement. The concerns they expressed, on the contrary, were exclusively related to the capacity of SEU/REU and HQ to provide enough and adequate technical and operational support to the country, directly or through the Representation.

5.2 Budget and staffing

79. The costs of the FAO Representation in Armenia are covered through the Regular Budget allocations to REU for the Decentralized Offices Network in Europe and Central Asia. The total budget of the FAO Representation in Armenia amounts to approximately USD 142,000 per year: this comprises the fully costed salaries, including pension fund and medical coverage for the three national staff, as well as running costs, including travel, training and other expenses. For the biennium 2012-2013, the approved allotment for running costs was USD 28,693, thus a rather limited amount. However, this appeared adequate to meet the needs of the Office.

80. The staffing of the FAO Representation comprises the following human resources:

- An Assistant FAO Representative (Programme), a N2 level Regular Budget post;
- An Administrative Assistant, a G5 level Regular Budget post;
- A driver.

81. The Office is also assigned a multiple-accredited FAO Representative. Although the Evaluation did not find any job description for this post, it assumed that the appointed person has primary responsibility for the development and management of the field programme in Armenia, assisted in this by the Multidisciplinary Team in REU, the Assistant FAO Representative in Armenia and the technical divisions in Headquarters. He/she should also be the Budget Holder for all national projects and visit the country three to four times per year.

82. In addition, as of September 2012 six Non Staff Human Resources worked for FAO in Armenia, for the management of the field programme. Their functions varied from National Project Coordinator to Administrative and Finance Clerk. However, the titles and contracts, a mix of Personal Service Agreements (PSA) and National Project Personnel (NPP), differed and did not meet the principle of 'equal function, equal contract/pay'. The different situations as of September 2012 are shown in Box 2 below.

N

Box 2. Situation of individual contracts²⁹

Title	Project	Contract type	ToR type
<i>National Project Coordinator</i>	GCP/ARM	NPP (MS 375)	Consultant/ PSA (MS 319)
<i>Country Coordinator</i>	GCP/GLO	NPP	NPP
<i>ADM Asst/Fin Clerk</i>	GCP/ARM	NPP	NPP
<i>Project Assistant</i>	TCP/ARM	NPP	NPP
<i>National Project Coordinator</i>	GCP/ARM	NPP ³⁰	NPP
<i>Project Assistant</i>	TCP/ARM	NPP	Not available

Source: Evaluation, information as of September 2012

83. During the meetings held by the Evaluation Mission with project staff, several issues related to Human Resources management emerged. First and foremost, national project staff appeared to be insufficiently aware of the conditions contained in Manual Section (MS) 375, that govern their contracts, in particular with respect to contract duration, health coverage, internal travel, service interruption, etc. They were however well aware, that their conditions of employment were substantially less favourable than those of their peer in all other UN agencies. They also considered that FAO was not paying any attention to local conditions, assessment of professional competence, seniority and inadequacy of remuneration. The Evaluation conducted a careful analysis of each case and reached the conclusion that the situation affected negatively the corporate performance in the country;³¹ these findings contributed to inform Recommendation 5 of the REU/SEC evaluation.³²

84. The AFAORep, the Administrative Assistant and other FAO national staff attended a number of training sessions, organized in Yerevan, REU, SEC or elsewhere. Although these were well appreciated, they did not seem adequate to develop administrative and operations capacity that would allow greater autonomy of the Office. The Evaluation considered that 'generalist' training on the whole spectrum of corporate administration, operations and finance procedures would be absolutely necessary to ensure full functionality of the Office, in view of the planned GRMS deployment by mid-2013.

85. Overall, FAO national staff appeared competent and able to carry out the duties assigned. Nevertheless, some stakeholders considered there was room and need for strengthening the long-term technical and operational capacity of the office. A key step to improve this situation would be the re-organization of internal roles and responsibilities of FAO staff and review of the different post levels. This should include the increased delegation of authority to the Assistant FAO Representative, to meet actual work requirements among which the degree of responsibility and capacity for independent judgment required in the context of non-resident FAO Representative, as well as to be harmonized with similar posts in other UN agencies in the country.

²⁹ Project symbols have been removed to protect the privacy of concerned staff.

³⁰ At the time of the Evaluation, the contract for the incumbent on this post was not made available to the team. The information on the type of contract was provided by REU in March 2013.

³¹ As immediate follow-up, in late September 2012, the Evaluation shared its findings with responsible REU staff, in consideration of the confidentiality of the issues at stake. The Evaluation had no evidence, by the time of writing this report, that any action had been taken to address these problems.

³² Recommendation 5: CSH, REU, SEC and SSC should undertake a comprehensive analysis of the adequacy of the system of NSHR contractual arrangements in general and as applied in the country offices of the region, analyzing conditions and procedures and improving the quality of information and communication. This approach should contribute to an overall review of the NPP modality, including its coverage by MS 375.

5.3 Management and administration of the FAO Representation

86. The modality of management and administration of FAO's work in Armenia, at the time of the Evaluation, appeared to be rather unique in the Organization, being applied only to Armenia and probably Georgia.³³ The Assistant FAOREp had only been given responsibility to manage the Regular Programme allotment of the Organization in the country, corresponding to approximately USD 14,000 per year. The management of the field programme remained the responsibility of the different Budget Holders and Lead Technical Officers in HQ and REU, under the coordination responsibility of the FAO Representative. The Evaluation could not identify whose decision this had been. This was all the more inadequate at a time when the Organization has been making far-reaching decisions on the integration of all sources of funding to deliver better products.

87. This set-up might have worked if the FAO Representative had been pro-actively and more frequently present either through more visits to the country or through closer and sustained interaction with the Representation and the project. This was not the case, possibly also linked to the excessive work-load that the role of Sub-regional Coordinator and FAO Representative in three countries entailed. This resulted in the absence of evidence of effective management of the FAO programme in Armenia from the point of view of strategic guidance, coordination and advocacy, as per the standard mandate of an FAO Representative.

88. A further aggravating factor was the 'centralized' management of the field programme by REU Field Programme Unit, which limited a more efficient and effective use of resources at country level. Although this followed corporate decisions made in previous years, the Evaluation could observe in 2012 more pragmatic solutions being adopted, that were contributing to more effective and efficient delivery in other countries.

89. Like any other FAO country office until the deployment of GRMS to country offices in mid-2013, FAO Armenia did not have access to the corporate Field Accounting System (FAS) and Atlas for travel. However, a number of tasks could have been delegated to the country office, in respect of the subsidiarity principle. This did not happen: for example, FAO-Armenia staff was not granted access to the FAO Field Programme Management Information System (FPMIS) Data WareHouse reports, for operations that could have been delegated, considering their professional role and competence, as had been done in other countries in the Region.

90. In this 'restrained' context, the FAO office in Armenia appeared to be well managed by the AFAOREp and to have developed very good relations with the Ministry of Agriculture, at all levels of seniority; and with the UNCT and a number of other partners in the country. Staff coped well with the difficulties stemming from being managed at a distance, with limited and non-structured support from REU on institutional matters, use of corporate operations and information instruments, and in general, with no delegation of authority for administration, finance and operations.

³³ In Moldova, until end of 2012 there was only a National Correspondent, hence the whole programme had to be managed, administratively and financially, by SEU/REU.

91. Since the AFAORep had no operational or administrative responsibility for Voluntary funded projects, project staff have been running projects to the best of their capacity and within the limitations caused by the absence of an official coordinating figure and the lack of access to the corporate systems, even for basic information. This situation inevitably led to each project being structured and handled in a different manner, following instructions and guidance from different persons in REU and HQ. Furthermore, the diversity of contracts and terms of reference was not conducive to a rational use of the human resources currently available: each project had to do everything, with clear duplication of tasks, overloading for FAO and UNDP and consequent delays.

92. This imposed 'dichotomy' notwithstanding, and despite the fact that from a formal point of view Programme and Projects Groups in Armenia were separated realities, the AFAORep was able to develop a working practice of monthly meetings and personal relationships that allowed some level of collaboration and coordination. The AFAOR was regularly consulted on issues of common interest and in case of emerging issues.

93. Overall, however, and despite the praiseworthy personal efforts of all FAO staff in Armenia, the Evaluation's assessment was that the quality of representativeness and structure of the Organization in the country was inadequate to ensure effective and efficient delivery.

5.4 Operational Tools for Administrative Management

5.4.1 The Host Country Agreement

94. One of the problems that emerged during the Evaluation was the absence of accreditation of FAO in Armenia, which also had consequences on the corporate delivery in the country. This stemmed from the fact that the exchange of letters in 2003 between the Government of Armenia and FAO Director-General did not grant to FAO the standard coverage of the United Nations Convention of Privileges and Immunities, as Armenia had not adhered by the time of the Evaluation to the Convention.

95. Thus, despite the exchange of letters being in principle an internationally accepted legal instrument that should ensure the required status and juridical personality of any agency, in Armenia this was not enough. Although reportedly actions were taken since September 2012 and the Government was expected to sign the Convention by end of the year, at the time of finalizing this report, there was no sign of progress.

96. Other agencies, e.g. UNDP and WFP, had solved the problem and become accredited by virtue of separate agreements, defined 'Basic Standard Agreement' signed in 1995 and 2000 respectively, so as to be considered juridical persons. FAO had not taken such action; a contributing factor appeared to be a poor information flow between REU and HQ on this matter.

97. The negative consequences of this situation ranged from a matter of image, to very practical issues in financial and field programme management terms. For example, FAO was not exempt from the Value Added Tax (VAT) and other taxes levied on financial transactions. Furthermore, FAO-Armenia was unable to have its own imprest account and in order to make any payment, it had to use the UNDP-managed Agency Service Request/ Inter Office Voucher (ASR/IOV) mechanism, by which the local UNDP acts as a paying officer on

behalf of FAO. This mechanism not only had a real cost,³⁴ but it also entailed up to 5-6 months of delay in appearing in the Organization's books, with all well-known consequences. In the period 2008-mid 2012, FAO-Armenia received 218 ASR/IO, the second highest number for REU after Kosovo.

5.4.2 Operational Systems

98. As already mentioned above, the set of systems and instruments available until mid-2013 to any FAO country office, Armenia included, was inadequate to cover operational requirements of both office and projects. The limited accessibility to certain functionalities forced office and project staff to develop and use shadow budget/financial monitoring systems. The inability to operate with their own financial instruments conveyed additional problems of monitoring and control.

99. The introduction of GRMS, planned for the first half of 2013, should bring considerable improvements, provided the system is adapted to the typology of offices like Armenia, with a non-resident FAO Representative. Adequate and tailored capacity development will be necessary to ensure that staff in the office and projects will be able to make the best use of the new system.

100. The absence of an imprest account in Armenia was also due to a long-standing rule in FAO, that prevented delegation of authority to national staff for this type of financial instrument. In 2012, a new general policy was being formulated, that should facilitate the establishment of imprest accounts also for country offices like Armenia.

101. Last, the Evaluation noted that the REU management style of the field programme led to 'concentrating' the allocation of the Administrative and Operational Support (AOS) resources there, rather than distributing these resources to the FAO Office in Armenia, where large parts of the projects are executed in any case.³⁵

5.5 Conclusions

102. FAO, and the Evaluation fully respect the decision of the Government of Armenia not to have a fully-fledged Representation in the country. Nevertheless, and despite the fact that the country office showed a good level of performance, the current Organizational set-up for Armenia requires a number of changes to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of corporate delivery.

103. A number of weaknesses were due to the low levels of delegation at corporate level, some of which should be resolved through the deployment of GRMS in 2013. However, a number of issues appeared to be linked to how REU implemented and operated within the model of multiple accreditation. Decisions such as the artificial separation between the

³⁴ The UNDP 2011 Universal Price List (UPL) indicates USD 27 as the average cost of Payment Process Service.

³⁵ AOS are the share of the Programme Support Cost (PSC) to cover costs incurred by the BH for direct project operation. FAO has a policy governing the recovery of PSC from voluntary-funded initiatives and the distribution of AOS. The matter is discussed in detail in the Evaluation of FAO's Regional and Sub-regional Offices for Europe and Central Asia

Regular Programme and the field programme, and the absence of effective leadership in the management and coordination of the field programme, have led to duplication of roles and tasks, waste of resources, and missed opportunities in delivery. Last, the Organization did not identify solutions to rather important issues such as the absence of an adequate Host Country Agreement.

104. On the other hand, staff in the FAO Representation have worked to the best of their capacity in more difficult conditions than fully-fledged Representations, due to the absence of a person officially responsible for coordination and harmonization of the whole range of corporate work in the country, as well as in terms of access to information and support from both REU and HQ.

105. The most pressing issues that in the view of the Evaluation required urgent and careful attention were the following:

- a. Negotiation of a Host Country Agreement that provides a juridical personality to FAO;
- b. Review and re-definition of roles and responsibilities of FAO staff in the country, to allow coordination and integration of work from all sources of funding;
- c. Strengthen the presence of the FAO Representative to Armenia, through more frequent and longer visits and more sustained follow-up when not in the country.

106. The evidence and issues discussed above were also used to support recommendations included in the REU-SEC evaluation.

6 FAO programme in Armenia

6.1 FAO field programme in Armenia

107. Although the Evaluation focused on the period after the arrival of the first Assistant FAORep in 2004, a short overview of the FAO programme in Armenia until then was considered useful to provide an idea of how the Organization's work in the country has evolved over time. Armenia joined FAO in November 1993 and the first project, a TCP, became operational in July 1994. Until 2003, FAO in-country activities were limited to two TCPs starting per year. From 2003 onwards, the country also became involved in regional and interregional projects.³⁶

108. Over the first period, July 1994 - December 2003, FAO conducted 15 projects with a total budget of USD 4,021,955. Of these, 12 were national, 2 regional and 1 interregional. The main thematic sectors were as follows:

- forestry: 3 projects, with a total budget of USD 427,159;
- emergency and rehabilitation: 6 national projects with a total budget of USD 1,469,392;
- agricultural policy and information systems: 3 projects, of which one national (USD 349,608), one regional and one interregional;

³⁶ Details about the field programme are to be found in Annex 5

- food security and nutrition and food safety and quality, with two national projects, with a total budget of USD 268,995; and
- one regional project on animal health and production.

109. FAO's project activities have increased over time both in scale and scope. Even in terms of thematic coverage, the areas receiving greater attention started to shift, in particular away from emergency and rehabilitation interventions.

110. Until December 2003 the distribution of operational and technical responsibility for projects operational in Armenia was as follows:

- the 6 emergency projects, 2 national and one interregional projects, were operated from HQ;
- the other 6 projects were operated from REU/SEU;
- the 3 projects operational prior to August 2000 did not have designated LTOs;
- the 6 projects operated from REU/SEU between August 2000 and December 2003 had: LTOs in HQ for 2 national and 1 interregional project; LTO in REU/SEU for 1 national and 2 regional projects.

111. The Evaluation examined the field programme between January 2004 and December 2012 in greater detail. During this period, FAO support to Armenia was delivered through 45 projects, including national, regional, interregional and global. The total budget was USD 74,614,662, 12% of which was delivered through 18 national projects. The number and share of budget by typology of project is shown in Box 3 below.

Box 3. Number and share of typology of projects in Armenia 2004-2012³⁷

Typology of project	Number of projects	Budget in USD	Share of total budget
National	18	9,319,047	12%
Regional	13	11,010,703	15%
Interregional	5	6,361,054	9%
Global	9	47,923,853	64%
Total	45	74,614,662	100%

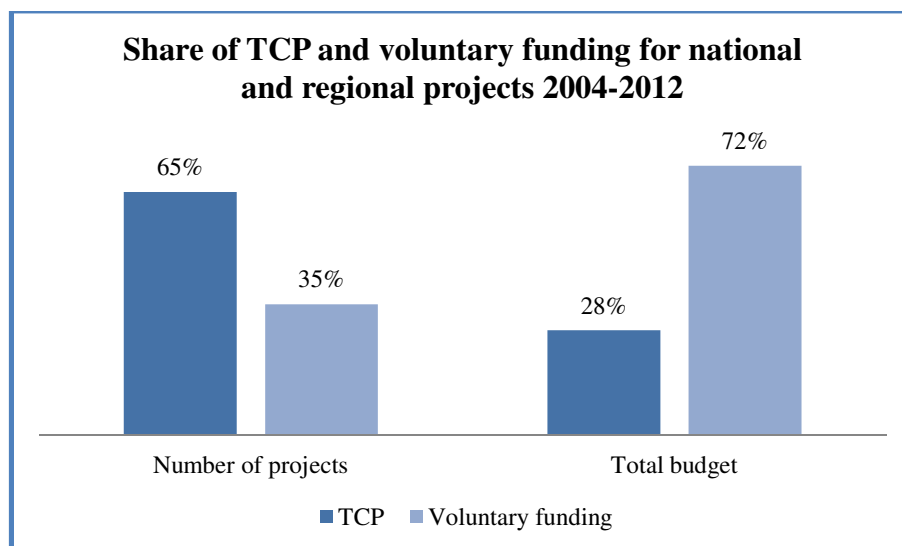
Source: FPMIS elaborated by Evaluation

112. The portfolio from 2004-2012 comprised 22 TCPs, of which 14 were national, 6 regional and 2 interregional. In total, TCPs accounted for USD 6,879,681, with 2 national and one regional being emergency projects, with a total budget of USD 1,359,548. The remaining 23 projects were funded through voluntary funding, for a total budget of USD 67,634,301. Of these, 9 were emergency projects and absorbed USD 36,833,555.

113. Among the 31 national and regional projects covering Armenia during the period, the share of the TCP in relation to voluntary funding was inverted depending on whether one considers number of projects or total budget. As shown in Box 4 below, in terms of numbers of projects, 65% were TCPs and 35% donor-funded; in budgetary terms 72% were donor-funded and 28% were FAO's TCP funds.

³⁷ In the case of regional, interregional and global projects the budget figures are project totals. Although activities in Armenia were funded by shares of these totals, due to the difficulties in determining the exact amounts for Armenia, the total figures were used.

Box 4. Share of TCP and Voluntary Funding for national and regional projects in Armenia 2004-2012



Source: FPMIS elaborated by Evaluation

114. The Evaluation examined the source of technical backstopping, more specifically the Lead Technical Officer, and the location from where project operations were being handled for all projects. In this analysis the emergency projects were excluded, as the operations were exclusively handled from HQ and in all but one case did not have a Lead Technical Officer designated in FPMIS. Therefore the analysis below will consider the cases of the 35 non-emergency projects: 16 national, 12 regional, 7 interregional and global. Overall, distribution was as follows:

- In the case of national projects, the LTOs were in Headquarters for 7 cases and REU/SEU in 9;
- in the case of regional projects, the LTOs were in REU/SEU for 10 and in Headquarters for 2;
- by default, all interregional and global projects had their LTOs in HQ;
- overall, 28 of the projects had their operations conducted from REU/SEU, the only ones whose operations were conducted from HQ were the 7 interregional and global projects.

115. Overall, of the 35 projects, 19 had their LTO in REU/SEU and 16 in HQ. The assignment distribution of LTO responsibility was defined by the availability of technical expertise in REU/SEU: whenever possible, all national and regional projects were technically backstopped by regional technical officers.

116. The main donor in terms of number of projects was FAO through 22 TCPs and TCP-Facilities: the latter are funds available to the FAO Representative for carrying out initiatives of limited scope and size, such as studies and analysis on specific issues, or project formulation. Since 2006, four TCP Facilities were approved in Armenia, for a total amount of USD 662,000.

117. When considering contributions in budgetary terms by type of project, the major donors varied. The European Union was the largest single donor, through regional and global projects, whereas Greece was the largest donor through national projects.

118. The main thematic areas covered by projects since 2004 were as follows:

- animal production and health: 14 projects with a total budget of USD 39,1 million;
- agricultural policy and information systems: 10 projects with a total budget of USD 18,7 million;
- plant production and protection: 8 projects with a total budget of USD 2,9 million;
- food safety and nutrition: 3 projects with a total budget of USD 2,5 million; and
- forestry, two projects, total budget USD 0,9 million.

119. During this period other FAO projects were implemented in the sectors of pesticide management and emergency and rehabilitation; budgets involved were smaller and results less tangible at national level.

120. In terms of total delivery, i.e. actual disbursement of the technical cooperation for development and emergency and rehabilitation initiatives at country level, this decreased progressively from USD 1.2 million in 2008 to USD 0.68 million in 2012, with a yearly average of USD 0.88 million. This implied a decrease in the ratio between office cost/delivery over time.

6.2 FAO Country Programming Framework 2012-2015

121. In 2010, FAO began the formulation process for a Country Programming Framework (CPF) for Armenia. This 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. The CPF document, co-signed in January 2012 by the Minister of Agriculture of Armenia and the FAO Representative, *“indicates the broad commitment of FAO, subject to the availability of required funding, to assist the Government of Armenia in its efforts to achieve national development objectives as described in the Programme for Sustainable Agriculture Development in Armenia as well as the Localized Millennium Development Goals. It supplements and contributes to the strategic objectives of the UN common system as expressed in the UN Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) 2010–2015 for Armenia.”*

122. A team from REU was responsible for developing the CPF, with the support of a national consultant who contributed to the review of FAO's programme and analysis of the national priorities. The process included discussions with the Government, a four-day workshop to discuss priority areas, drafting and finalization of the actual document. An advanced version was then revised in 2011 by the Minister of Agriculture, to take into account the priorities of the newly elected Government.

123. The national institutions that participated in the formulation of the CPF were: the Ministry of Agriculture, the Ministry of Health, Hayantar SNCO of the Ministry of Agriculture, Hrazdan Forestry enterprise branch of Hayantar SNCO, State Food Safety Service, Republican Veterinary Anti-Epidemic and Diagnostic Centre of the Ministry of Agriculture (Central Laboratory), and the Scientific Centr3 for Farming SNCO. Consultation

on the CPF also took place with members of the UN Country Team concerned with the agricultural sector.

124. The CPF defined seven Priority areas for FAO in Armenia, each containing Proposal initiatives, basically corresponding to projects. These are compiled together in Box 5 below, and commented by the Evaluation. Operational priorities for the implementation of the CPF were also defined, focusing on partnerships, capacity development and resource mobilization.

Box 5. FAO-Armenia CPF priority areas, proposal initiatives and comments by the Evaluation

N.	Priority area	Proposal initiatives, title	Evaluation comment
<i>i</i>	<i>Policies and instruments to support rural development and regional economic integration</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Capacity building to reduce poverty through creation of non-farming jobs and services in rural areas; b) Climate change risk management according to the specifications of each area 	This is undoubtedly a very important area of work in the country and also contributes to UNDAF Outcome 1; however, FAO's comparative advantage in these topics is not strong. If pursued, this should be carried out through extensive partnerships with other UN, national and international stakeholders.
<i>ii</i>	<i>Animal health and production</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> c) Assistance for prevention and control of major transboundary animal diseases and brucellosis; d) Assistance in development of animal identification and registration system; e) Rehabilitation of artificial insemination services for the development of the livestock sector; 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> c) Highly relevant and needed; d) It is relevant and FAO has comparative advantage; e) More debatable from the point of view of relevance. A number of initiatives are already being funded, including by UNDP through community development programmes and CARD.
<i>iii</i>	<i>Crop production and plant protection</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> f) Support to apricot genetic resource conservation and utilization g) Development of the vegetable seed breeding and production system h) Technical assistance to development of organic farming in Armenia i) Improving management of migratory and other locusts j) Support to genetic resource conservation and utilization of grapes k) Technical assistance for mole control 	All relevant initiatives in which FAO has acknowledged comparative advantage and no other donors are working. Attention should be devoted to ensuring sustained financial resources, in particular for initiatives on tree crops genetic resources.
<i>iv</i>	<i>Food safety and consumer protection</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> l) Implementation of mechanisms for contaminants monitoring in the food chain 	Relevant topic. However, interventions should also be focused on the sustainable use of chemicals, including veterinary medicines, in agriculture and livestock. There seems to be some degree of overlap with on-going initiatives by USDA/CARD
<i>v</i>	<i>Forestry</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> m) Support to State registration of forests and 	Initiatives proposed in both sectors appear to be relevant; FAO has a strong

		the establishment of a State Forest Cadastre n) National Forest Programme (NFP) o) Assistance in development of forest monitoring	comparative advantage and no other donors appeared to have on-going initiatives in either sectors.
vi	Development of Fisheries and Aquaculture	p) Certification of aquaculture production for export	
vii	Agricultural Statistics	q) Technical assistance for the Agricultural Census (including implementation of a Pilot census)	This appeared as a highly relevant and priority intervention, which would be a vital input into many Government agriculture and rural development policies and strategies. Collaboration with USDA should be pursued, given its on-going work on the same issue.

Source: FAO-Armenia CPF; Evaluation team

125. The Evaluation noted a high level of satisfaction with the CPF among MoA senior management, for its breadth and perceived flexibility. The MoA matrix of donor activity showed how FAO's on-going initiatives contribute to tackle gaps or complement interventions by other donors; in this, the agreement reached through the CPF on FAO's next round of commitments, allows the Ministry to focus discussions with other donors on other topics and areas for support.

126. Participating institutions were FAO's main key partners. Still, in consideration of the attention given in the CPF operational priorities to partnerships, more partners could have been included in the formulation of the CPF itself, to broaden the analysis and diversity of perspectives about the issues at stake. Indeed outside the MoA, other institutions including UN agencies or NGOs, expressed their concern that the process had not been inclusive enough and that it resulted into a missed opportunity for developing stronger ties and partnerships at the technical level.

127. Overall, the CPF appeared to be still rather broad, missing focus and synergy development and very ambitious. Further, the CPF lacked a results matrix at outcome level, as requested in the guidelines, and a clear link between these and UNDAF outcomes. For the CPF to be implemented, it will require a further effort of prioritization on a biennial basis, across and within sectors, to help in maximising the use of scarce financial resources.³⁸ The Evaluation was also somewhat concerned by the stress on CPF flexibility: this might become a weakness and undermine the usefulness of the whole process, if new priorities emerge too frequently and divert attention and resources from the agreed areas of collaboration.

128. Furthermore, the CPF calls for an effective Resource Mobilization Strategy. So far, resources seem to have been secured for the brucellosis control thanks to networking and partnering with Swiss Development Cooperation (SDC). Other priority on-going and proposed initiatives that will require sustained efforts by both FAO and the Government of

³⁸ The Evaluation was informed, at the time of finalizing the report, that REU and MoA had already prioritized, within the current CPF, focus areas for the period 2013-2014 and that a revised CPF 2013-2015 is being prepared.

Armenia to mobilize resources are the Agricultural Census, the Apricot project and FMD. Some UN sister agencies in Armenia already developed a solid experience in resource mobilization, which could usefully inspire FAO and MoA work on this aspect.³⁹

129. Last, while the CPF seems to be aligned with the Agricultural Sustainable Development Strategy (2010-2020), linkages to issues of poverty, social inclusion and gender are lacking, especially given that the CPF is stated to be FAO's contribution to the UNDAF. This is discussed further in Section 11.

6.3 Conclusions

130. The Republic of Armenia has been the second largest recipient of FAO's support in the Europe and Central Asia Region over the period since 2004, after Tajikistan. The field programme has been largely demand-driven for national projects and its focus shifted over time, supported also by an increase in donor interest. Overall efficiency of FAO in the country has decreased over time, when assessed by the ratio Regular Programme/Field Programme resources.

131. Agricultural policy and information systems and plant production and protection received greater attention; animal health and production became a large sector in FAO's work in the country, also through larger regional and global initiatives related to transboundary animal diseases (TADs). Forestry, formerly one of the sectors receiving greater attention, received less support during the evaluation period.

132. The first FAO-Republic of Armenia Country Programming Framework for the period 2012-2015 fully meets the expectations of the Ministry of Agriculture and contributes to filling gaps and complement activities supported by other donors. By being very ambitious and broad, it will require further planning exercise on a biennial basis, to ensure focus and effective action. The CPF also lacks to some extent, the perspectives and support of other institutions: this could be a lesson learnt for the future.

³⁹ A joint resources mobilization and fund management strategy of the UNCT was planned for 2013. It was then postponed to 2013 and FAO will participate.

7 Agricultural policy

133. This Evaluation, like the Evaluation of FAO's Regional and Sub-regional Offices for Europe and Central Asia, included under the heading Agricultural Policy initiatives in a number of sub-sectors, namely: policy and information systems for agriculture, food security and nutrition; agriculture and rural development, agriculture marketing and trade; statistics and policy dialogue and exchange among Member Countries. These topics fall within the mandate of approximately 13 divisions in FAO.⁴⁰

7.1 National context and key problems

134. The 1996 Rome Declaration on World Food Security and Plan of Action states that food security is achieved, when all people at all times, have physical, social and economic access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food which meets their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life.

135. The national legislation in Armenia on food security and the Food Security Concept Note of the Government are based on the following components of food security:

- physical and economic availability of safe food of sufficient quantity for all groups of society;
- presence of an autonomous national food security system;
- reliability of the national food security system, resistant to internal and external threats; and
- stable development of national food security system.

136. National statistics, in Box 6 below, show that the incidence of extreme poverty increased in 2009, and although it declined in 2010, in the urban areas the level was still higher than in 2008.

Box 6. Poverty statistics in Armenia

	2008	2009	2010
<i>Poverty incidence</i>	27.6	34.1	35.8
<i>of which extreme poverty incidence (very poor population)</i>	1.6	3.6	3.0
<i>Poverty incidence in urban settlement</i>	27.6	33.7	35.7
<i>of which extreme poverty incidence (very poor population)</i>	1.9	4.6	4.1
<i>Poverty incidence in rural settlement</i>	27.5	34.9	36.0
<i>of which extreme poverty incidence (very poor population)</i>	1.2	1.7	1.1

Source: National Statistics Service

137. The main objective of the Government policy in this context is to ensure food security of the population through the development of an efficient agro-food sector. The main

⁴⁰ Over the period under evaluation, divisions in FAO have changed name and institutional location, which makes an accurate tracing of each of them rather complex. Hence the approximation in the number of units.

problems affecting the agricultural sector have been discussed in Section 3 above, together with the main national policies and strategies.

138. However, the direct governmental support to agriculture has been less than required: observers and experts estimated that during the period 2008-2010, budgetary allocations to agriculture reached 0.32% of GDP, and this represented around 60% of the requirements.⁴¹ For example, the allocation of funds for vaccination of livestock decreased by 30% and the programme on subsidization of agricultural farms implemented in most vulnerable areas with the objective of supporting the poorest farmers, was virtually suspended.

139. The international financial crisis has been one of the main factor behind this underfunding; however, while the support levels (subsidized fuel, fertilizers, etc) increased somewhat in 2011, needs still remain quite large.⁴² For example, during the last 20 years the level of self-sufficiency on average has been 58.5%, whereas it declined since. The self-sufficiency in staple food production is shown in Box 7.

Box 7. The level of self-sufficiency of staple food production (%)

Food products	2004-2009 average	2010
<i>Wheat</i>	38,0	33,7
<i>Potato</i>	100,0	100,6
<i>Fruit and vegetable</i>	100,6	98,2
<i>Berries</i>	93,2	80,8
<i>Grapes</i>	99,3	101,1
<i>Lentils</i>	56,6	41,7
<i>Vegetable oil</i>	4,3	4,1
<i>Sugar</i>	2,4	24,6
<i>Eggs</i>	101,4	99,2
<i>Milk (excluding butter)</i>	98,1	97,2
<i>Beef (pure weight)</i>	77,7	84,8
<i>Pork (pure weight)</i>	50,6	39,9
<i>Lamb and goat meat (pure weight)</i>	107,3	100,0
<i>Chicken (pure weight)</i>	20,4	12,3
Total self sufficiency level, calculated by energetic value	58,5	47,3

Source: Food Security and Poverty, 2004-2011, National Statistic Service of RA

7.2 Projects and other activities

140. The first inter-regional project involving Armenia in this broad sector started in 2000 and focused on food security monitoring. The total financial resources made available through national projects were USD 824,197, with two TCP and three TCP Facilities, 8% of the national portfolio. In addition, Armenia took part in seven regional, inter-regional and global projects in this sector, representing a total portfolio of USD 20.4 million.⁴³ Box 8 lists all FAO interventions in this sector.

⁴¹ Samvel Avetisyan, "Food Security and Sustainability, Policies and Institutional Environment Armenia Situation Analysis Input paper for ECFS vision workshop and needs assessment", Armenian State Agrarian University

⁴² Ibid.

⁴³ The scope of the in-depth analysis of the field programme in this sector was expanded to include all projects.

Box 8. FAO Agricultural policy projects in Armenia, 2000-2012

Project	Funding source	Budget USD	Start, end
<i>GCPS/INT/814/EC, Intensified Monitoring Of Food Security In The Five Cis Low-Income Food Deficit Countries (formerly GCPS/RER/012/EC)</i>	European Commission	1,186,093	August 2000-December 2004
<i>TCP/RER/2901, Institutional Strengthening to Facilitate Intra- and Inter-regional Agricultural Trade of the BSEC Member States</i>	FAO	305,789	February 2003-October 2004
<i>TCP/ARM/3004, Support to the Preparation and Implementation of Land Consolidation and Improved Land Management Schemes</i>	FAO	268,449	August 2004-December 2006
<i>TCP/ARM/3101, TCP Facility, Elaboration of Rural Development Strategy</i>	FAO	31,748	March 2006- February 2009
<i>TCP/ARM/3101, TCP Facility, Elaboration of National breeding policy and strategy formulation</i>	FAO	68,000	March 2006- February 2009
<i>GCP /GLO/162/EC, EC/FAO Food Security Programme Phases I & II (Year 2 and 3) - Account 3 - Main Programme + Account 2 - Facility for Consultancy Service + Account 1 - Facility for Global Donor Platform Rural Development</i>	European Commission	13,135,823	April 2004-April 2009
<i>GCP /GLO/275/EC, EC/FAO Programme on information systems to improve food security decision-making in the ENP-East Area - DCI-FOOD 2009/223-068</i>	European Commission	4,518,071	January 2010 – June 2013
<i>GCP /RER/032-036/HUN, Informal Consultation on Priorities for FAO Assistance in Europe and Central Asia Region</i>	Hungary	85,000	March-July 2007; February-May 2011
<i>TCP/RER/3303, Support to the design of immediate country-level actions in response to the current high food prices in Europe and Central Asia</i>	FAO	163,000	May-December 2011
<i>TCP/ARM/3401 BABY02, Preparatory Assistance for the First Agricultural Census</i>	FAO	56,000	June-November 2012
<i>GCP /RER/041/EC, Assistance to assess the agriculture and rural development sector in the Eastern Neighbourhood Partner countries</i>	European Commission	367,647	July-December 2012
<i>TCP/ARM/3402, Support to the Development of Open Air Food Retail Markets in Armenia</i>	FAO	400,000	July 2012-August 2013

Source: FPMIS, elaborated by Evaluation

141. The Evaluation could only assess a few of the initiatives listed above, due to lack of information for the earlier ones, as well as for several of the regional, inter-regional and global ones. Furthermore, the projects that started in mid-2012 were at an early stage by the time of the mission to Armenia, and no meaningful assessment was possible. Nevertheless, the Evaluation findings were as follows:

- the Government of Armenia had given very high priority to the open-market TCP, as a pilot experience to serve as a model to be up-scaled to the whole country, as well as to get support to develop a project document for the for the implementation of the national general agricultural census;

- FAO's performance in carrying out the EC-funded initiative in the context of the European Neighbourhood Programme for Agriculture and Rural Development (ENPARD) was well appreciated by the EC itself, half-way through its implementation; one of the final outputs was planned to be an assessment of the key national strategic issues in the agricultural and rural development sector, that will inform the dialogue between the Government and the EC on the allocation of resources from the ENPARD instrument.

Support to agricultural policy

142. During the period under evaluation, FAO supported Armenia in the development of some of the national strategies for the agricultural and rural development sector, through the TCP Facility TCP/ARM/3101. These were

- the national Strategy of Rural Community Development developed in 2008; according to the MoA, the strategy was then used for the revision of the Strategy of Sustainable Agricultural Development.
- the National Strategy for Sustainable Use and Development of Farm Animal Genetic Resources also developed in 2008; this was not formally adopted but has been used by the MoA in its strategy of importing cattle from European countries, as well as in the draft policy document on Artificial insemination policy, which is expected to be ratified by the Government in the near future.

TCP/ARM/3004, Support to the Preparation and Implementation of Land Consolidation and Improved Land Management Schemes

143. This TCP is discussed in detail in Annex 7, Key projects. It was implemented with the State Cadastre Committee of the Republic of Armenia and its aim was to contribute to a viable and sustainable agriculture structure and strengthen rural and regional development. Specific objectives included:

- addressing the necessary preconditions for land consolidation/improved land management;
- elaborating appropriate mechanisms, tools and instruments for its implementation; and
- designing and developing the necessary legal, organizational, institutional, technical and managerial framework for land consolidation and improved land management schemes.

144. The project results were expected to be used as a model for local and national decision and policy-makers in the development of sustainable land management practices. In the pilot location called Nor-Ernka, approximately 188 transactions were registered as part of the project, out of a total number of 206. This shows the need for legislation that provides for a simpler land consolidation process.

145. Stakeholders considered that project staff had been successful in winning the trust and cooperation of the villagers, one of the key initial challenges. However the Area Development plan per se, developed with project support and submitted to the State Cadastre and the Government, was never approved or used. The Plan encompassed measures aimed at changing categories of the land, and their respective uses and management schemes, which, if approved could have magnified the project results.

146. Based on the Nor-Erzinka experience, the team developed and submitted a draft strategy on 'Land consolidation and Improved Land Management' to the State Cadastre Committee, followed by a Concept Paper, which was developed based on the request of the Committee itself. These documents proposed an articulate and complex endeavour, a reflection of the scale of the needed reforms, which had no follow-up, most probably because of both the institutional changes required for its implementation, and its financial implications.

147. Overall, the project was considered a very positive initiative and its main output of good quality and value. Indeed, the Ministry of Agriculture developed later on the 'Strategy for the enlargement of farms', which was adopted in November 2011: this includes also some of the measures aimed at land consolidation stemming from the TCP experience.

GCP/GLO/275/EC EC/FAO Programme on information systems to improve food security decision-making in the ENP-East Area

148. The programme, still on-going at the time of writing this report, covers four countries, namely Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia and Moldova.⁴⁴ The current phase is a continuation and expansion of an earlier and larger global program (GCP /GLO/162/EC), the aim of which was to enhance national capacity in generating, analyzing, communicating and mainstreaming reliable food security-related information into food security related policies and programmes. The new program (2009-2012) was to be different in:

- being more demand driven,
- involving FAO Policy Assistance Division in mainstreaming the use of indicators in Government policies,
- increasing emphasis on the field level vs. central level to ensure data analysis and application and engaging governments and other partner institutions in building consensus and ownership around priorities for improving information.

149. Four main areas of intervention were identified as priorities for the Programme in Armenia, in close consultation with in-country stakeholders, building on the experience and achievements of the previous programme:

- a. Food security indicators: this entailed improving the relevance and quality of food security-related data and information, in consultation with users, in particular the Food Security and Poverty Bulletin and the Food Balance Sheet (FBS), published by the National Statistics Service of the Republic of Armenia;
- b. Agro-meteorological forecasting: support to improve long-term agro-meteorological forecasting and the dissemination of information to Marz Regional Support Centres (MRSC) of the Ministry of Agriculture (MoA). Assistance was provided to the Armenia State Hydro-meteorological and Monitoring Service, to improve the methodology used to produce forecasts; in this context, the Country Coordination team decided to cancel the establishment of a Global Information and Early Warning System (GIEWS) Workstation, due to inadequacy of the national IT capacity;
- c. Analyses and assessments using food security information: limited contribution, due to time constraints linked to the tight political agenda, to the preparation of the Food

⁴⁴ The programme was evaluated in 2012 in all four countries; the report is available at http://typo3.fao.org/fileadmin/user_upload/oed/docs/1_GCPGLO275EC_2012_ER.pdf

Security Concept Paper of the Government, within the context of the 'National Security Strategy of the Republic of Armenia';

- d. TV Programme: support to the MoA to improve the dialogue between the Ministry of Agriculture and stakeholders on current food security-related policies and programmes through the 'Agriculture Hour'; so far, this area did not make any progress due to lack of clear objectives and modality of implementation.

150. The Evaluation found extensive evidence of high satisfaction among stakeholders on the Programme's results of areas a) and b). Of particular importance appear to be the progress made in communication and collaboration across institutions on food-security indicators; the extensive capacity development for several institutions involved; the production of the Bulletin.

151. One weakness was identified in the utilization of the crop production forecasts that would warrant a more articulate dissemination strategy. The project managers agreed that the "demand" side was the weaker point of the project and that this could be the focus of a potential follow-up project.

152. Further, while the project from the onset wanted to be responsive to the local needs, significant changes in its plan of work took place, but it was not entirely clear how these reflected the long-term priorities of the country as opposed to the short-term needs of the partner agencies. The TV programme was an example.

Normative products

153. In the Agricultural policy sector, the Evaluation identified 28 normative/knowledge products, of relevance to Armenia, including publications, conferences and meetings, during the period under evaluation. Of these, only two were specific to the country, namely:

- Price Monitoring and Analysis Country Brief: Armenia
- Food Security and Agriculture Highlights – Armenia

154. Both are Information Briefs series, issued on a quarterly basis by the EC/FAO programme on Food Security Information Systems.

155. Another initiative in support of the work in statistics, in the area of sex-disaggregated data collection and analysis, is discussed in Section 13.2.

7.3 Sector level analysis

Relevance

156. All FAO projects assessed in this area have been relevant to Armenia, covering some of the main challenges, identified by the Government and third parties, e.g. the UNDAF and the Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper 2:

- small and fragmented land-holdings by farmers;
- improvement of food security related information; and
- support to policy and strategy development.

157. The projects started in 2012 show also a good level of relevance, in particular the initiatives linked to ENPARD and to the general agricultural census.

158. The Food Security Information Briefs were considered relevant by addressees, who assessed them as handy and easy-to-use reference, albeit too brief to be used as reference material for more in-depth policy work. For the latter purpose, they would refer to the statistical bulletin on Food Security and Poverty.

Efficiency

159. In this specific sector of intervention, the Evaluation found no evidence of inefficiencies in implementation and support.

Effectiveness

160. The effectiveness of FAO interventions in this sector varied, across projects and within the same initiative as well. For example, the Land Consolidation project was effective in terms of testing an approach for land consolidation, but there was no broader uptake of the model and experience; equally, the draft Concept for Land consolidation was ultimately not adopted by the Government in its entirety. While the financial constraints of the Government was one of the factors, made more acute by the financial crisis at the time, other factors included:

- the project was designed in an environment where other necessary building blocks for such a reform were missing, pointing to a weak appraisal at the start, as acknowledged by many;
- lack of strong commitment on behalf of the Government; and
- the short duration of the TCP format was an additional complicating factor

161. The EC/FAO Programme on information systems to improve food security decision-making was effective in setting up an Inter-Agency Working Group to facilitate project implementation and uptake of its products, as well as develop collaboration mechanisms among institutions. This was also assessed as very positive by participants. Furthermore, the products developed were adopted and/or are in use, including the “Food Security Concept Paper”. Limitations in this case relate to the limited diffusion and hence knowledge of the quarterly Briefs, which affect their overall use. On this, several stakeholders suggested that FAO should do more in terms of popularising the knowledge about its normative products among the wider audience, e.g. students, wider circles of civil servants, resource partners, etc.

162. The projects facilitating participation of Government representatives in the informal consultations on regional priorities, were useful in so far as they permitted the contribution of Government representatives to FAO's governance mechanism; however, some participants expressed guarded views about the usefulness of these consultations, and suggested that discussions among smaller groups of countries might be more effective to agree on the corporate priorities for the sub-region.

Impact and sustainability

163. The impacts of the projects on the policy-making process was significant, despite the lack of adoption of several concept papers, because important lessons were learnt as a result

of the projects which were utilized in other strategies and in the shared evidence available and knowledge about agriculture and rural development in Armenia.

164. FAO's support to the National Statistics Service with food security information has been very important, opening up opportunities for further deepening and improving the coverage of agricultural and food security related statistical data. The same is true for the Agro-Meteorological Service, which has now drastically improved its forecasting capacities and is ready to move its operations into a new quality category.

165. As for the impact on the ultimate beneficiaries, this occurred in the pilot community selected by the Land Consolidation TCP, but not beyond. On-going initiatives have a potential for impact, e.g. through the implementation of the Action Plan of the 'Food Security Strategy', and through a more effective distribution of the Agro Meteorological Bulletin, but it was too soon to arrive to any conclusions.

166. The fact that a number of the Concept Papers developed with FAO's support were not adopted by the Government has affected negatively the sustainability of the achievements, with the Land Consolidation Strategy as a prime example.⁴⁵ On the other hand, the results of the EC/FAO Programme on information systems to improve food security decision-making are promising in this regard, as deliverables produced with the support of the project are embedded in the work of the state agencies concerned. Also, the 'Food Security Concept Paper' was adopted together with an Action Plan.

FAO comparative advantage

167. Participants in FAO's activities in this sector had a high regard for the quality of FAO's technical advice received: the Organization has served as an important source of knowledge and information on agricultural policy and strategies and on food security information. FAO has also facilitated and brokered important regional and international experience exchange and networks, e.g. among the National Statistics Services in the region.

168. On the other hand, the Organization could have taken better advantage of its status and clout to promote more inclusive and participatory processes of policy making, by involving other non-governmental stakeholders.

169. The Organization still has a role to play in this sector: gaps in project implementation remain gaps in institutional capacity as no alternative partners have emerged in the mean time. For example, the Ministry of Emergency Situations in 2012 took the first steps to establish an Early Warning System: the lack of a GIEWS Workstation, which could not be established due to factors outside the project's control, will be a significant obstacle in this endeavour.

⁴⁵ FAO has continued to keep Armenian technical specialists involved in technical meetings on land consolidation even after the completion of the TCP project in 2007. This has helped to provide some level of capacity development to Armenia even without the existence of follow-up work in that country. For example, Armenian specialists participated in the meetings such as those of June 2008, November 2010, and February 2012; information is available at: <http://www.fao.org/europe/activities/land-tenure/landconscee/en/>

Contribution to FAO Core Functions

170. FAO's work in Armenia in the Agricultural policy sector in the period under evaluation contributed effectively to fulfil most of the corporate core functions, as discussed in Box 9 below.

Box 9. Performance of FAO Core Functions in this sector

N.	Core function	Activities
<i>a</i>	<i>Monitoring and assessment of long-term and medium-term trends and perspectives</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EC-FAO Food Security Information Systems, support to the National Statistics Service.
<i>b</i>	<i>Assembly and provision of information, knowledge and statistics</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EC-FAO Food Security Information Systems, support to the National Statistics Service.
<i>c</i>	<i>Development of international instruments, norms and standards</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adoption and integration of the Codex Alimentarius standards and institutional set-up.
<i>d</i>	<i>Policy and strategy options and advice</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A number of policy papers and strategies were developed with FAO support. However not all of these were fully adopted. • FAO has been a neutral advisor on technical areas and policy issues, in particular in support to the Ministry of Agriculture, State Cadastre, National Statistics Service, and the Ministry of Emergency Situations (Agro-meteorological Service).
<i>e</i>	<i>Technical support to promote technology transfer and build capacity</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Technical support (5 testing stations) to Armhydromet helped to increase the quality of their work in their respective areas. • Extensive capacity development of government staff on food security information systems, e.g. Food Balance Sheet.
<i>f</i>	<i>Advocacy and communication</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • World Food Day Celebration in cooperation with the Ministry of Agriculture, State Agrarian University of Armenia, UN Agencies, NGOs, agriculture related organizations. • Overall limited outreach and mostly for specialists.
<i>g</i>	<i>Inter-disciplinarity and innovation</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Very limited inter-disciplinarity; • Innovative work carried out in the area of the Food Security Information systems and on Land tenure
<i>h</i>	<i>Partnerships and alliances</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Partnerships among the national participating agencies (statistics agencies, hydrometeorological services) were promoted through the EC-FAO project in the countries covered by the regions, Moldova in particular.

Source: Evaluation

7.4 Conclusions

171. Despite the limited number and size of FAO's interventions in this sector, the Evaluation heard extensive appreciation about the quality of the agricultural policy support provided by FAO. The evidence and analysis showed that the projects were relevant, efficient and effective, albeit the latter not at the planned scale. Project design and shortfalls in advocacy efforts to promote governmental uptake of FAO's products were among the contributing factors to limited impact and sustainability at the policy and livelihoods level.

172. Capacity development initiatives were highly appreciated by participants; to some extent, FAO also proposed innovative approaches in terms of strategies, mechanisms of institutional collaboration and data-analysis and dissemination. More remains to be done, in particular in terms of improved inclusiveness in policy making and diffusion of information.

173. One area that the project could expand is enhancing the “demand” side of the EU-FAO project, putting the deliverables and impressive results into better use; as well as expanding the “supply” side with the Agricultural Census. Since the development of agricultural cooperatives is declared now a priority for Armenia, one other potential area for FAO is supporting the Government in that, through policy advice

8 Animal production and health

8.1 National context and key problems

174. Following independence in 1991, the Republic of Armenia moved from a centrally-planned economic system to a more privatised, free-market approach. This change was associated with reduction in State control of veterinary services, livestock production, breeding, pasture land and animal slaughter. National mass vaccination campaigns stopped for diseases such as brucellosis. Livestock ownership shifted from predominantly large, State farms to mainly private holdings with much smaller herds and flocks. Meat became sourced mostly from unauthorised informal slaughter at farms and homesteads, rather than through official abattoirs. Concurrently, Armenia increasingly aligned its legislation and production practices with European Union standards and aimed to increase exports of processed livestock products.

175. The incursion of transboundary animal diseases (TADs) into Armenia was and is a constant risk, as is the risk of spread of TADs from Armenia to neighbouring countries. In this respect, the geo-politics in the region do not favour TAD control efforts. Infectious animal disease has been a key challenge during the period under evaluation, i.e. 2006-2012: African swine fever (ASF), highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI), brucellosis and foot-and-mouth disease (FMD) have been of particular concern.

176. ASF appeared in Georgia in 2007 and spread to Armenia where it gravely impacted rural forest pig-grazing practices, in which contact can occur between domestic pigs and wild boars and, thus, with the ASF virus. Zoonoses (animal-borne diseases that affect humans), such as brucellosis, have high prevalence in parts of the country.

177. HPAI has been and remains a global threat that concerns RA and all countries in the region. No H5N1 HPAI outbreaks have been reported in RA, though it shares borders with countries where outbreaks have been confirmed. FMD is considered endemic in parts of eastern Turkey and there is reported serological evidence for persistent infection in RA; it is conjectured that new FMD virus strains from the area around Pakistan spread north-west through the region. From the western European perspective, control of FMD in and around Armenia is important to reduce the risk of FMD incursion into Europe.

178. Livestock constitute an important part of rural household's income and food security. Besides the challenge of TADs, RA's many new private livestock owners require assistance to improve animal production. For example, there are needs in the sector in animal nutrition, breeding/genetic resource conservation and developing producer associations.

179. The Animal Production and Health (APH) sector features prominently in both the Agricultural Sustainable Development Strategy-2006 and in the 2010 - 2020 Sustainable Agricultural Development Strategy of the Government of the Republic of Armenia. The overall objectives and main tasks of the livestock component in these strategies are shown in Box 10 and 11 below.

180. The Government's second strategy notes the importance of livestock and gives a projection that animal populations will increase, stating "Farmers will increase the number of heads of cattle, sheep, goats and pigs, because, even at low profitability, these provide stable employment, alleviate seasonality of cash flows, and [are] highly liquid assets, meanwhile meeting their own needs for fresh and processed livestock products". The strategies emphasise food security and commercial system development, including support to producer organisations, and the strategies include animal nutrition development.

Box 10. Animal Production and Health in the Agricultural Sustainable Development Strategy

Overall objective:

To promote sustainable agricultural development, increase food security level and income of rural population through creation of favourable environment for the entities operating in the agriculture sector.

Livestock Production Development, Main Tasks:

Support to inter-correlation of livestock sub-sectors and their rational operation;

Implementation of pedigree breeding development complex measures;

Improvement of animal health sector and increase of efficiency of veterinary activities;

Development of fodder system;

Support to commercial livestock production organisations;

Ensuring conservation of agricultural animals genetic diversity;

Source: Republic of Armenia, Ministry of Agriculture 2006

Box 11. Animal Production and Health in the 2010 - 2020 Sustainable Agricultural Development Strategy of the Republic of Armenia

Strategy goal

The main goal of the agrarian sector development strategy is to promote industrialization of agriculture in the country and increase the food security level, and shape favourable conditions for promoting export-oriented productions through reducing the consequence of the financial and economic crisis and putting in place anti-crisis mechanisms.

Livestock Development, Strategy Objectives:

a) Assistance to efficient combination and rational distribution of livestock branches;

b) Implementation of complex actions toward pedigree development;

c) Improved veterinary system and enhanced effectiveness of veterinary actions;

d) Development of feed base for livestock;

e) Support of development of livestock commercial organizations;

f) Ensuring the preservation of genetic diversity of farm animal breeds.

Source: Republic of Armenia, Ministry of Agriculture 2010

181. Last, the APH sector was not explicitly prioritised in the UNDAF, which emphasised social inclusion. The extent to which FAO integrated this approach in this sector is discussed below.

8.2 Projects and other activities

182. In FAO's project portfolio in Armenia, Animal Production and Health is one of the two largest sectors, the other being Plant Production and Protection. The total portfolio of national projects during the period under evaluation amounted to USD 3.1 million, with four projects, representing 26% of all national projects since 1994. In addition, the country participated in three regional, three inter-regional and two global initiatives, all these focusing on transboundary animal diseases (TAD), with one exception focused on bee-keeping.. A TCP Facility⁴⁶ was used to finance a suite of initiatives that included proposal writing and complementary activities for grey cattle breeding, ASF and brucellosis control. Overall, funds were used adequately to fill gaps in on-going work, or start supporting new initiatives. The list of projects and some details are included in Box 12 below.

Box 12. FAO Animal Production and Health projects in Armenia, 2004-2012

Project	Funding source	Budget USD	Start, end
<i>TCP/ARM/3101 TCP Facility</i>	FAO	145,972 ⁴⁷	March 2006 - February 2009
<i>GCP /ARM/001/ITA Assistance to Brucellosis Control in Armenia (Phase I)</i>	Italy	1,069,999	May 2007 – December 2011
<i>TCP/ARM/3102, TCP/ARM/3205 Emergency Assistance for the Control of African Swine Fever (ASF), Phases I& II</i>	FAO	499,359	February 2008- November 2010
<i>GCP /ARM/004/GRE Support for Abattoir development in Armenia</i>	Greece	1,622,000	March 2009 - August 2013
<i>OSRO/INT/602/USA Establishment and Operation of an FAO/OIE Crisis Management Centre (CMC) for Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI) and other Transboundary Animal Diseases (TADs)</i>	USA	3,792,984	October 2006 - September 2013
<i>TCP/RER/3004 Emergency assistance for early detection and prevention of avian influenza in the Eastern Europe and Caucasus regions</i>	FAO	361,623	November 2005 - October 2007
<i>TCP/RER/3001 Strengthening transboundary animal disease diagnosis, surveillance and control capacities</i>	FAO	210,064	December 2004 - July 2006
<i>OSRO/INT/603/USA Support FAO's Global Avian Influenza and Eradication Programme (International Coordination AI Control)</i>	USA	1,000,000	July 2006 - June 2010
<i>MTF/INT/003/EEC Strengthening FMD surveillance and control in the Trans-Caucasian countries to assist progression on the West Eurasia FMD Progressive Control Pathway</i>	EC	17,718,792	January 1982- September 2013
<i>TCP/RER/2904 Support to the Promotion of</i>	FAO	14,919	November 2003-

⁴⁶ A TCP Facility are funds available to the FAO Representation in the country, to finance various small-size activities.

⁴⁷ The total budget of the TCPF was USD 182,273; the value in the table was the budget of the Animal Health component.

<i>Beekeeping - Advance Allocation</i>			February 2004
<i>OSRO/GLO/604/UK Support to the "Avian Influenza Response Programme" through the "Special Fund for Emergency and Rehabilitation Activities (SFERA)"</i>	UK	6,943,655	March 2007 - March 2010
<i>OSRO/GLO/702/CAN Contribution of the Government of Canada to FAO's Global Programme for Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza Control and Eradication in Support of Africa and other Regions</i>	Canada	9,923,369	March 2007 – March 2011

Source: FPMIS, adapted by Evaluation team

183. The APH sector is one of the priorities in the FAO-Armenia Country Programming Framework 2012-2015, within which a number of APH initiatives have been identified, see Box 13 below. In the animal health subsector, these include continuation and development of FAO's animal disease control work, both for TADs such as FMD and for zoonoses such as brucellosis.

184. In the animal production subsector, there is currently a project concerned with abattoir development but, in the past, FAO has been less involved with non-veterinary Government livestock-sector priority areas such as breed improvement and fodder/pasture development. However, the CPF includes genetic improvement, with specific reference to artificial insemination services. The Government seeks assistance with breed improvement in future.

185. The CPF's TAD and genetic improvement components are consistent with both the 2006 and the 2010 to 2020 Government strategies. The CPF covers neither animal nutrition nor support to livestock producer organisations, but it introduces another priority, that is, animal registration and identification.

Box 13. Animal Production and Health proposed initiatives, within the FAO-Republic of Armenia Country Programming Framework 2012-2015

a) Assistance for prevention and control of major TADs b) Assistance for controlling brucellosis c) Assistance for the development of an animal identification and registration system d) Rehabilitation of artificial insemination services for the development of the livestock sector

Source: FAO

186. Each project, or cluster of projects, is described in a synthetic manner below.

8.2.1 Animal production projects

GCP /ARM/004/GRE Support for Abattoir development in Armenia

187. This project, analysed in detail in Annex 7, aimed at demonstrating safe, hygienic meat production in selected *marzes*. The medium-term objective was to enable the livestock development institutions (both private and public) to effectively improve the safety and quality of meat and meat products. There were three immediate objectives:

- i. Set up four model *marz* level slaughterhouses;
- ii. Develop the capacity of national institutions to undertake activities related to sustainable meat sector development;

- iii. Develop and institutionalize the skills, capacities and procedures used in all aspects of meat sector development.

188. The need to improve the slaughter conditions widely found in Armenia was clear given the unacceptable levels of poor hygiene, putting the consumer at risk of disease. Although proper slaughterhouses exist, most slaughter was 'informal' and unregulated, performed by farmers and householders themselves. Some old slaughterhouses required investment for both structural improvement and new meat processing equipment.

189. The concept underpinning the project is Public-Private Partnership (PPP). FAO's roles included providing technical assistance to the authorities for drafting the legal PPP agreements, procuring equipment and providing training in improved slaughter practice.

190. Implementation had been difficult and delayed due to, among others: i) renegotiating with the Government the number of slaughter facilities to be strengthened; ii) replacing key personnel such as the National Legal Consultant and the Project Coordinator; and iii) drafting and agreeing the terms of the contract for private partners.⁴⁸ The project secured an 18-month no-cost extension until August 2013.

191. Under the guidance of the replacement Project Coordinator, progress was being made with signature of PPP agreements, which then took place in December 2012. Thus, time was short for completion of necessary building works by private partners, which could be held up by severe weather conditions in the 2012-13 winter. There was also limited time for completing the project's equipment procurement and training. However, a concerted effort was being made to complete all project activities before its EOD.⁴⁹

192. It was too early in the project cycle to assess whether meat and meat products produced by improved slaughterhouses will enable a viable and sustainable business model. There will be a premium charged to the consumer for more hygienic meat, which may make it less available to poorer members of society. The number of slaughterhouses involved is too small to cover the country's needs and it was noted that the Government was planning to develop community, open-air slaughter points as a pragmatic short-term way to improve meat hygiene in places not covered by the project.

TCP/RER/2904 Support to the Promotion of Beekeeping - Advance Allocation

193. This regional TCP concerned four countries: Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia and Turkey. The project's purpose was to assess the scope for project proposals meeting TCP criteria and, if appropriate, to formulate project documents on the development of the beekeeping sector as part of integrated farming systems. The approved budget was USD 22,000, and delivery was USD 14,919; funds were used for travel, honorarium and expenses. In the Project Document, the stated plan was for an FAO expert to spend four days in Armenia out of 18 days total for all four countries including two days report writing. The project was active for four months from November 2003 to February 2004.

⁴⁸ The drafting and approval of the model of PPP was a particularly lengthy process due to gaps in the national legislative framework.

⁴⁹ At the time of writing this report, FAO was making efforts to extend the project to ensure successful completion.

8.2.2 National Animal Health projects

TCP/ARM/3102, TCP/ARM/3205 Emergency Assistance for the Control of African Swine Fever (ASF), Phases I & II

194. These two project phases were designed to improve knowledge of the spatial distribution and ecology of African swine fever (ASF) in Armenia, to increase capacity to control it and to reduce its spread. In the period covered by this Evaluation, ASF emerged in Georgia and first appeared in Armenia in 2007. Pig production is important in Armenia, particularly for poorer, rural households. Whereas some pigs are confined on relatively large holdings, the majority are maintained on smaller units with management systems that include free-range scavenging. Particularly in forested areas, scavenging provides potential for domestic pigs to make direct contact with wild boar or indirect contact with virus-carrying ticks that parasitize them.

195. ASF is a highly contagious virus infection. It may cause 100% mortality. No effective vaccines exist, nor drugs to treat it. Following diagnosis, control methods include strict movement control and 'stamping out' by culling the infected herd. Therefore, the disease has significant socio-economic effects.

196. When ASF first occurred in 2007, FAO HQ responded quickly by fielding two missions to Armenia.⁵⁰ One mission was funded by the TCP Facility and one was through the Crisis Management Centre (CMC), though it is not clear to the Evaluation if any of the regional/global projects supporting the CMC, particularly for HPAI work – see below, were involved with the CMC ASF mission to Armenia: according to the TCP Appraisal Note, the September mission was funded by the TCP Facility.⁵¹

197. Following the emergency missions, TCP/ARM/3102 and TCP/ARM/3205 were implemented as first and second phase TCP projects with the common project objective, "To enhance the monitoring and disease control surveillance system for ASF in Armenia, which should lead to stopping the disease spreading in non-affected areas of the country or to neighbouring countries." The projects aimed to: i) improve the diagnostic capacity by providing emergency equipment for sampling and testing pigs and shipping biological material from suspected cases of ASF to the central laboratory; ii) strengthen epidemiological capacity; iii) upgrade the biosecurity level in back yards and commercial systems; and iv) develop a strategic disease control plan, a contingency plan and a communication strategy

198. FAO's response to ASF was efficient and effective both internationally and within Armenia. Internationally, FAO's normative products were excellent: FAO's Emergency Prevention System (EMPRES) published an edition of EMPRES Watch to update and alert on the ASF situation in the region and the AGA website provided comprehensive information efficiently. The FAO manual "Preparation of African Swine Fever Contingency Plans" was translated into Armenian and proved very useful.

⁵⁰ CMC Mission 10-21 September 2007; EMPRES Mission, 15-19 October 2007

⁵¹ Appraisal Note, Armenia, TCP Request (7-XI-ARM-209) "Emergency Assistance for the Control of African Swine Fever (ASF)", 18 January 2008.

199. FAO provided specific technical assistance to Armenia for formulating a national ASF response plan, legislation, laboratory diagnosis, ASF epidemiology and outbreak reporting, public awareness-raising, field veterinarian training, controlling disease outbreaks, and biosecurity. The projects' objective was achieved. The technical inputs and capacity building that FAO provided were undoubtedly timely and extremely relevant, enabling the country to deal with this serious disease with which it had no experience before 2007. The longer term impact is the establishment of a knowledge base within the veterinary service to deal with ASF and the technical capacity to diagnose and respond. Public awareness of the disease has been raised and farmers are aware of the risk associated with free-grazing pigs in forests.

GCP /ARM/001/ITA Assistance to Brucellosis Control in Armenia (Phase I)

200. This project, analysed in detail in Annex 7, aimed at strengthening self-support in local communities through improved livestock production and reduction of brucellosis infection in livestock and humans, reducing the drain on family assets spent for medical treatment, preventing income losses from brucellosis in livestock and strengthening Government's capacity to respond to community health concerns.

201. The objective of this project was "To strengthen self-support in local communities through improved livestock production and reduction of brucellosis infection in livestock and humans, reduce the drain on family assets spent for medical treatment, prevent income losses from brucellosis in livestock and strengthen Government's capacity to respond to community health concerns." Its Specific Objectives were: i) build technical and managerial capacity in order to fully understand the extent and distribution of brucellosis disease in animals and humans in the country; and (ii) test internationally recognized control methods.

202. The project successfully conducted serological surveillance for brucellosis and demonstrated where in RA most disease was present. It then successfully piloted a control strategy. The project utilised a 'One-Health' approach, both by bringing together the Ministry of Agriculture and the Ministry of Health at national disease control strategy level and by providing training to veterinary and health workers at field level in Syunik *marz*.

203. The project was intended to be the first phase. However, broader economic issues constrained the Government of Italy from funding a second phase despite the donor's satisfaction with progress in this first phase project. At the time of the Evaluation, encouraging discussions between FAO and another bilateral donor were taking place in Armenia.⁵²

8.2.3 Transboundary Animal Health projects

Foot-and-Mouth Disease projects

⁵² At the time of finalizing the report, a project agreement with the Swiss Development Cooperation had been signed for GCP/ARM/005/SWI - "Technical and institutional support to veterinary services in Armenia", to start in March 2013.

204. The initiative 'Strengthening FMD Surveillance and Control in the Trans-Caucasian Countries to Assist Progression on the West Eurasia FMD Progressive Control Pathway-MTF/INT/003/EE' is an inter-regional project. The Project Document defines participating countries, among which Armenia, as *"the member countries of EUFMD and other countries where the situation of FMD creates a direct or indirect threat of introduction of the disease into one or more of the member countries of EUFMD in Europe"*.

205. The project objectives are: i) to prevent or at least minimise the risk of reintroduction of FMD in European member countries of EUFMD; ii) to contribute to the strengthening of the measures for prevention of FMD in EUFMD member countries; iii) to help the country concerned to eradicate FMD in the shortest delay possible and with minimal costs for the member countries of EUFMD and for the Commission, should the disease be introduced into an EUFMD member country in Europe; and iv) to assist where necessary and possible in support of the project objectives, EUFMD member countries not free of FMD in their national control measures.

206. To achieve these objectives, the project has four key activities, which are: i) reinforcement of surveillance and co-ordination of disease control at regional level; ii) provision of FMD vaccines and organisation of emergency vaccination campaigns; iii) diagnosis, surveillance, prompt reporting and effective control of FMD; and iv) organisation of meetings, workshops, seminars as appropriate.

207. Few documents relating to this project were available to the Evaluation from the FAO system. A technical mission took place that was concerned with epidemiological surveillance, specifically with the FAO TADInfo program: training on-site was provided by the Reporting Officer.⁵³ Numerous events were organised including technical missions to Armenia, workshops, laboratory training, field sero-surveillance and simulation exercises: regional in Georgia in 2012; national in Armenia, Tavush *marz* in 2009. ELISA test kits were provided for laboratory diagnosis and assistance was given to establish a serum bank.

208. Of particular importance for Armenia was FAO's provision of FMD vaccine. A buffer zone was established and FMD vaccine was provided by the EU with coverage of most cattle and many small ruminants in international border regions. Whilst there was serological evidence of circulating virus, outbreaks were not reported and this was considered to be due to vaccination coverage. Vaccine was provided 2009-2011 but in 2012 provision was dependent on surveillance results. 250 thousand doses were provided in spring 2012, but by summer the authorities apparently did not know with certainty if more would be provided. This caused concern that there could be a breakdown of herd immunity. FAO could perhaps have assisted the RA authorities with better planning for vaccination coverage after project inputs stopped.

209. The project was relevant to Armenia's needs. The capacity building has strengthened laboratory diagnosis and the epidemiology training and simulation exercises have improved readiness for disease. The vaccination programme is credited by the national veterinary authorities for keeping the country free from FMD outbreaks, despite presence of the disease in the region. The project also helped establish links between veterinarians in RA and neighbouring countries that enabled an informal early warning system of disease suspicions.

⁵³ Back-to-Office Report, Akiko Kamata, Animal Health Officer (Infectious Disease Analysis and Early Warning), AGAH, Armenia (Yerevan), 26 – 31 March 2007.

Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza projects

210. H5N1 HPAI has not been reported in Armenia. FAO assisted with preparedness through three regional/global HPAI projects, namely:

- OSRO/INT/603/USA Support to FAO's Global Avian Influenza and Eradication Programme (International Coordination AI Control),
- OSRO/GLO/604/UK Support to the "Avian Influenza Response Programme" through the "Special Fund for Emergency and Rehabilitation Activities (SFERA)", and
- OSRO/GLO/702/CAN Contribution of the Government of Canada to FAO's Global Programme for Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza Control and Eradication in Support of Africa and other Regions.

211. FAO provided laboratory equipment, personal protection equipment and various training. Some specific activities from reports of the above projects are highlighted below (where reports have been seen by the Evaluation). Other agencies, such as World Bank and USAID, were also active in RA in HPAI prevention.

212. Project OSRO/INT/603/USA aimed to i) strengthen country-level capacity to rapidly detect H5N1 cases in animals; and ii) improve country-level outbreak response capacity, such as, coordination with human surveillance, epidemiological investigations using standard protocols, and active identification of suspect H5N1 cases among animals. The project's geographical coverage was Republic of Armenia, Republic of Azerbaijan, Republic of Georgia, Islamic Republic of Iran, Iraq, Syrian Arab Republic, and Republic of Turkey. The project was active for four years from mid-2006 to mid-2010.

213. Multiple donors contributed to SFERA, FAO's Special Fund for Emergency and Rehabilitation Activities for HPAI operations. The UK contribution to SFERA under project OSRO/GLO/604/UK was around USD 6.9 million out of a total from ten donors in 2007 of USD 40.1 million, representing almost 21 percent of FAO's total funding portfolio for HPAI activities.⁵⁴

214. The UK project helped support FAO's work in the prevention and control of HPAI, at global and regional level, including regional ECTAD Units. In the Europe and Central Asia Region, it supported the Emergency Centre for Transboundary Animal Disease (ECTAD) at headquarters and country-specific activities in Eastern Europe and the Caucasus countries, for HPAI preparedness and response. A regional workshop entitled, 'Key role played by the Black and Caspian Sea countries in the early detection and management of HPAI and other transboundary animal diseases (TADs) in wildlife and livestock disease interface' brought MoA representatives together to address the wildlife and livestock disease interface in countries surrounding the Black and Caspian Sea. RA was one of 11 countries that participated, the others being Azerbaijan, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Iran, Moldova, Romania, Russia, Turkey, Turkmenistan and Ukraine.⁵⁵

⁵⁴ Global Programme for the Prevention and Control of Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza, Report, ECTAD 2007.

⁵⁵ Final Report OSRO/GLO/604/UK, FAO July 2010.

215. Under SFERA, FAO provided basic emergency equipment to upgrade existing laboratory facilities and to enhance preparedness and response capacity in Armenia and national consultants supported HPAI activities. In 2008 a workshop on HPAI epidemiology was held in Yerevan and attended by 20 veterinarians from various Armenian institutions.⁵⁶

216. Armenia was also one of 38 recipient countries of project OSRO/GLO/702/CAN, active from 2007 to 2011. The project aimed to assist affected and at-risk countries in Africa and other regions in order to develop and implement robust and effective strategies for the prevention and control of HPAI and, thus, prevent serious losses to poultry raisers and rural economies as well as safeguard human health and safety. Most project activities were in Africa, but the project included the Middle East, Central Europe and Central Asia. In Armenia in 2008, a contract was signed with a local NGO for implementing wildlife surveillance. Also under this project in 2008, a training-of-trainers course was implemented for eight national veterinary epidemiologists.

8.2.4 Normative products

217. Some regional normative products are particularly relevant for TAD control, such as, 'Preparation of ASF Contingency Plans or *Brucella melitensis* in Eurasia and the Middle East – Technical Meeting Proceedings'. The list of Europe and Central Asia region APH normative products does not include any that specifically concern RA.

8.2.5 Other activities

218. Projects have organised many training events, including a Value Chain Workshop (2010) and an FMD Simulation Exercise (2012). Armenian representatives have contributed to regional events, such as, '*Brucella melitensis* in Eurasia and the Middle East', FAO Technical Meeting, Rome, 2009.

8.3 Sector level analysis

Relevance

219. Key national needs in the APH sector are TAD and zoonosis control, livestock production improvement including animal nutrition especially for newer, private farms, animal genetic resource conservation and improvement, support for producer associations and better hygiene for animal origin food products. The FAO APH programme primarily covered animal disease control, responding very well to the national needs in this subsector. This was highly appreciated by the Government of Armenia and very relevant. The abattoir project addresses the real need for improved hygiene in meat production.

220. However, in the period under evaluation, FAO had done less in the APH sector to address the needs for animal nutrition, breeding/genetic resource conservation and developing producer associations, although the CPF does include animal genetic improvement (artificial insemination) in its plan for 2012-2015. The UNDAF emphasises

⁵⁶ BTOR, Vittorio Guberti, Consultant, Eastern Europe and Caucasus, AGAH, Armenia (Yerevan), 28 July to 2 August 2008.

social inclusion in Armenia. The Government 'Sustainable Agricultural Development Strategy 2010 – 2020' notes livestock's contribution to farmer employment, financial stability and nutrition. To date, the FAO APH sector has not shown evidence of clearly connecting its livestock projects with poverty alleviation, even though livestock are important to the poor in Armenian society as a source of nutrition and income.

Efficiency

221. In most of the projects evaluated, FAO has responded in a timely manner with high quality technical support. For example, ASF appeared for the first time in Armenia in 2007 and neither the veterinary service nor the farmers knew how to respond. The Crisis Management Centre for Animal Health rapidly deployed a mission. This was quickly followed by TCPs which provided the necessary capacity building for veterinary control and public awareness for prevention.

222. By contrast, the ongoing project for abattoir development has not been implemented efficiently to date. Delays are attributable to lack of agreement with the Government on the scope of the project in terms of number of slaughter facilities to be supported, staff changes, a slow process of agreeing public-private partnership contracts and delays due to inherent issues with the project design. In 2012 a private partner expressed doubt that FAO would fulfil its commitment to supply equipment. Government stakeholders shared their concern with the Evaluation that the project abattoirs had not yet been completed.

223. FAO successfully introduced a system of brucellosis control in Armenia that is based on targeted vaccination rather than test-and-slaughter. This has the potential to reduce Government expenditures in the long term by obviating the need to compensate farmers for culling animals that test positive.

Effectiveness

224. The animal health projects have generally been very successful and provide clear evidence of uptake of FAO's recommended strategies and methods, such as:

- Brucellosis control by vaccination;
- Disease contingency planning;
- Maintenance of regional FMD buffer zone.

225. Significant outcomes included:

- Capacity building of Government technical personnel, in particular:
 - Enhanced laboratory diagnostic capacity for TADs (HPAI, ASF, brucellosis and FMD);
 - Enhanced disease response and control capacity for TADs;
- Public awareness, communication and behaviour change, including:
 - Acceptance of vaccination as an effective control method for brucellosis control;
 - Change from traditional forest pig grazing practice to prevent ASF;
 - Awareness of hygienic meat production and transport practices;
- Effective disease control established;
- Maintenance of buffer zone for FMD through targeted vaccination in at-risk zones;
- ASF control strategy;
- ASF controlled and response capability enhanced;

- HPAI prevention and response capacity enhanced,
- Brucellosis control through vaccination demonstrated and accepted by the authorities and public;
- Building partnerships, such as:
 - Between the MoA and the Ministry of Health for brucellosis control with joint veterinary and medical activities from central government to field level;
 - With veterinarians in other countries in the Region resulting in informal early warning of TADs, such as FMD.

226. As part of a regional project, the FMD project added value to the Government's own FMD control programme; it was also considered by the authorities to have kept the country free from outbreaks of the disease while the vaccination has been carried out from 2004 to 2012.

227. Regarding FAO normative products, there was evidence that stakeholders used the FAO website as a source of technical information in the animal health field. Uptake of four printed documents was assessed and one of them was known and said to be useful, that is, the ASF publication. However, stakeholders would have used the normative products more if they were available in Russian.

Impact and sustainability

228. The animal health projects have demonstrated clear impact on livestock owners in rural communities by raising their awareness and effectively controlling these diseases. However, there is need to do more to define 'exit strategies' and ensure sustainability.

229. The FMD project appears to be halting the provision of vaccine abruptly, with uncertainty on the part of the veterinary authorities about whether supplies would continue through 2012 or not. There is concern within the senior government staff, about the country's susceptibility to new outbreaks as the national herd immunity declines following the cessation of provision of vaccine by FAO in 2012.

230. There is concern that the abattoir project's outcomes will not be sustainable because there is uncertainty that the general public will agree to the extra expense of using the abattoirs. This concern follows recognition that i) a similar USDA-supported project implemented some years ago has not been completely sustainable, partly because of the lack of enforcement of regulations requiring that the facilities are used; and ii) the business may not be able to successfully compete with the informal slaughter sector. At the time of the Evaluation, almost all slaughter was done informally, not in abattoirs, although the Project Document stated that for the business to be viable, legislation must be enforced to ensure that the slaughter facilities are used. This may obstruct the sustainability of the whole initiative.

231. Last, in relation to FAO's contribution to the UNDAF in Armenia, the evaluation was unable to find much evidence of prioritising social inclusion in the animal health projects in Armenia to date though, partly, this reflects the major focus on the technical priorities of disease control and prevention. It could be argued that a likely outcome of the abattoir project is more expensive meat that will be less accessible to the poor than meat produced by informal means before the project. Animal products are important sources of income and nutrition for poor, rural households and more should be done to target them.

FAO comparative advantage

232. In the animal health field, FAO has been perceived as a valuable source of knowledge and information, both thanks to its normative products and to the technical assistance provided. FAO has widely recognised technical excellence in the Animal Health subsector that made it the appropriate agency to provide technical assistance and build the capacity of the State Veterinary Service. An additional advantage has been FAO's capacity to enable access to international funding sources, for example, with the Government of Italy for the brucellosis project Phase I and current negotiations with a bilateral resource partner, for the proposed Phase II.

233. FAO's role as a facilitator of regional policy initiatives has been important in, for example, i) the FMD West Eurasia FMD Progressive Control Pathway and ii) the CACFISH commission, to which the Head of the Veterinary and Animal Breeding Department has been elected Vice-Chair.

Contribution to FAO Core Functions

234. FAO's work in the APH sector in Armenia has helped fulfil some of the Organisation's core functions. Most of the contributions come from project work with animal diseases, but the abattoir project also contributed to two core functions, namely c) and f). Core function a) is a core activity at FAO HQ though RA may contribute by providing data. Box 14 shows in detail how FAO activities in this sector contributed to the different core functions.

Box 14. Performance of FAO Core Functions in this sector

N.	Core function	Activities
<i>a</i>	<i>Monitoring and assessment of long-term and medium-term trends and perspectives</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Republic of Armenia provides data to FAO
<i>b</i>	<i>Assembly and provision of information, knowledge and statistics</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Normative products have been important and useful for disease control strategy development. Early warning of TADs such as FMD
<i>c</i>	<i>Development of international instruments, norms and standards</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Codex Alimentarius is referred to in the abattoir Project Document. ASF contingency plan document.
<i>d</i>	<i>Policy and strategy options and advice</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Good level of performance through brucellosis and ASF control
<i>e</i>	<i>Technical support to promote technology transfer and build capacity</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Significant capacity building for veterinary workers in field and laboratory.
<i>f</i>	<i>Advocacy and communication</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fair contribution through work on TADs
<i>g</i>	<i>Inter-disciplinarity and innovation</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The brucellosis strategy contributed to inter-disciplinarity by bringing together the health and veterinary sectors to jointly agree control of this disease that affects both humans and animals
<i>h</i>	<i>Partnerships and alliances</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> With veterinarians in other country, which provides informal disease early-warning. Between the MoA and the MoH (brucellosis control). With the NGO 'Consumer Rights Organisation' for

		provision of communication materials. • Good relations in-country with UNDP, which provides technical specifications and vendor lists for procurements.
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Source: Evaluation

8.4 Conclusions and recommendations

235. Most of the work in the APH sector has been concerned with animal disease prevention and control. These animal health projects have generally been very successfully implemented: efficient, effective and relevant. FAO has performed well in applying in RA technical expertise that was built elsewhere, for example, with brucellosis control methods developed in Central Asia or with implementation of FMD initiatives under EUFMD.

236. Less work has been done by FAO in RA in the animal production sector. There is nothing to show in RA from the small beekeeping project preparation mission. The abattoir project is ongoing and, therefore, it is early to evaluate its contribution. Overall, there has been rather low involvement with animal production. Although animal disease control contributes both to animal productivity improvement and to human zoonotic disease prevention, the sector programme could have done more to help improve animal nutrition, to improve animal genetic resources, and to support producer associations with a view to the benefits for the nutrition and income of the poor, rural farming households.

237. The UN system in RA emphasises social inclusion in its work, but this does not seem to be integrated into the design and implementation of FAO's APH programme. Women are key stakeholders in rural animal production, but are not specifically targeted in the APH projects. It is recommended that FAO pays more attention to social inclusion and gender issues in its future work in the sector.

9 Food quality and safety

9.1 National context and key problems

238. Food quality and safety are important components of the national agricultural policy of Armenia and the Sustainable Agricultural Development Strategy 2010-2020 identified food safety and consumer protection as one of the priorities. Currently, more than 50% of the national food requirements are met through imports, which in a context of rising food prices on the world market and dependency of Armenia on limited transport routes, make the country quite vulnerable to external threats. In addition, a number of internal factors, such as mountainous relief, natural and climatic conditions, low technical equipment, the pattern of numerous and fragmented farms, are obstacles to rapid improvements in the safety and quality of national agricultural products.

239. As a landlocked country, Armenia shares the pest and disease complexes of the region. It maintains a list of a number of crop pests and diseases that it seeks to restrict through internal quarantine. Distributions of these organisms are mapped, and the plant protection service regulates the movement of plant materials from those areas to other parts

of the country. Plant diseases and pest outbreaks are reported, but the data do not appear to be regularly collated and analyzed on a nationwide scale.

240. Also, food safety and food quality standards become increasingly relevant to the competitiveness of Armenia's agriculture and agro-industry. Meeting food safety standards will strengthen the competitiveness of Armenia's agricultural sector.

241. Armenia has been a member of the Codex Alimentarius since 1994. The formal Codex Contact Point (CCP) was set up in the Ministry of Agriculture in 2007. The National Codex Committee was created in 2012 and brings together representatives of all concerned line ministries and institutions, as well as the Agrarian University and three Non Governmental Organisations.

242. The legislative framework for the regulation of food safety matters in Armenia is provided by the 2006 Law on "Food Safety" which has been developed based on the European Council Regulation 178/2002. Furthermore, other sub-legislative acts have been adopted, including the Government decree on maximum residues level of veterinary drugs in products of animal origin. These efforts are focused on bringing food safety standards and practices in compliance with EU and WTO requirements in order to increase the country's capacity for international food trade.⁵⁷ A Strategy for Food Safety Policy was approved in 2005, while in December 2010, Armenia established a unified food safety agency and in November 2011, the Government adopted the new Food Safety Strategy and related Action Plan.

243. As of 2012, a number of achievements were notable:

- The establishment of the State Food Safety and Veterinary Service of the Ministry of Agriculture (SFSVS): this was a milestone in the long-term programme to improve food safety and quality in the country and showed the commitment of the Government; the SFSVS plays an important role in monitoring risk related to food contamination and certification of products; it is responsible for food safety and quality, veterinary and phytosanitary control;
- establishment of the Codex Contact Point (CCP) to implement correctly Codex standards in the country;
- establishment of a Food Safety Unit in the Central Veterinary Laboratory (CVL) through funds provided by Government for restoring infrastructures and by Greek Cooperation to purchase laboratory equipment and supplies for conducting pesticide residues analysis in food.

244. The responsibilities of the Ministry of Health in food inspection have also been incorporated as an amendment of Chapter 7 in the Food Law. The Health Inspectorate has inspectors working as Epidemiologists and Hygienists. This service collects information on food-borne disease incidence in the country, however a mechanism has not yet been established to facilitate the transfer of information to the Food Safety Veterinary State Inspectorate (FSVSI) and consequent actions to prevent risks for consumers.

245. Some of the outstanding problems were identified as follows:

⁵⁷ FAO-Republic of Armenia Country Programming Framework, 2012-2015

- ensuring the implementation of the requirements of the National Strategy for Food Safety and Food Control;
- certification and accreditation of food laboratories;
- minimum coordination among government agencies toward improvement of food control management activities and standard development;
- there is essentially no real cooperation or collaboration between the MoA and Ministry of Health (MoH) regarding food safety in general but it is vital for the development and sustainable implementation of quality food safety system;
- there are no laws/protocols regulating the quantities of the additives. Of the existing regulations, one by the MoH lists providing the permitted food additives and the second by the MoA lists the forbidden additives;
- preparation of national standard on food additives;
- provision of information on the standards and feedback to the experts from MoA and MoH, other interested governmental agencies and representatives of the private sector and consumers;

246. Some donors are providing support to the Government to improve food safety and quality standards; among these are the EU, FAO, the International Finance Corporation with funds from Austria, USDA, and the World Bank.

9.2 Projects and other activities

247. Food safety and consumer protection has been one of the areas of FAO's support to Armenia since the country became a member of Codex Alimentarius in 1994. A TCP in the late 1990s contributed to strengthen the food control services, set-up the Codex Focal Point office and draft the national Food Law, approved in 2002. Recent and on-going projects are described and discussed below.

248. The sector is also one of the priority areas of the FAO-Republic of Armenia Country Programming Framework. One activity was proposed under this area, to support the implementation of mechanisms for contaminants monitoring in the food chain. At the same time, a new TCP on a model open-air market in Yerevan approved in mid-2012, should also provide a 'real-life' example for improving the conditions of handling fresh-food across the country, with direct impact on food safety and quality.

249. During the period under evaluation, FAO implemented one regional TCP project, involving Armenia and Georgia, and a national project funded by Greece. The budget of the national projects represented 18% of the national portfolio. Key data for both projects are in Box 15 below.

Box 15. FAO Food safety and quality projects in Armenia

Project	Funding source	Budget USD	Start, end
<i>TCP/RER/3003, TCP/RER/3201, Food safety capacity building, Phases I and II</i>	FAO	298,156	May 2006 – September 2009
<i>GCP /ARM/003/GRE, Support for pesticide quality control and residue monitoring in Armenia</i>	Greece	2,000,000	March 2009 – August 2013

Source: FPMIS, elaborated by the Evaluation

TCP/RER/3003+3201 "Food safety capacity building"

250. This regional TCP was designed to improve the national capacity in both Armenia and Georgia, on the application of the Hazard Analysis Critical Control Point (HACCP) system that had been developed in the mean time and become a key element of international regulation of food safety and quality.

251. The immediate objectives of the regional TCP were to strengthen the priority components for strategic planning and coordination of food control activities, harmonization of food standards, inspection programmes and laboratory networks, and quality assurance programmes in agro-processing sectors.

252. The Project contributed by training and developing the capacities of Government staff in all concerned services and units, as well as of private sector stakeholders, in a wide range of topics. Other major achievements included:

- Update of the national list of approved additives in accordance with the EU approved list;
- Revised National Food Control Strategy Document and action plan; the purpose of this strategy was to assist national authorities in working together to strengthen the identified weaknesses in the current food control system (main components of the food control system or the food control management, food inspection services, food laboratory services, food legislation and standards, and information, communication and training) in order to plan progressive improvements in the short and medium term.

253. The TCP also developed a programme for the establishment of a Training Centre in Yerevan with the scope of supporting better capacity building needs in the country, reducing costs, avoiding overlaps and better coordinating resources for training using national and international specialists in different areas. Eventually, the Centre was not established.

254. Overall, the project was considered highly relevant and effective by national stakeholders. Its technical recommendations were also carried out. The impact at the institutional level of the initiative was also evident, in terms of improvement of the food safety and quality control system, and the strengthening of the Veterinary and Food Laboratory.

GCP/ARM/003/GRE, Support for pesticide quality control and residue monitoring in Armenia

255. This project is discussed in detail in Annex 7, Key projects. The project was approved in February 2009, upon a request by Government to the Government of Greece. The thrust of the initiative was highly relevant for the country, as both pesticide import control and residue monitoring are key elements of the food safety and quality system. The absence of proper laboratories to determine the quality of imported pesticides, as well as of detecting pesticide residues in crops, was thus a major threat to food safety and consumers' protection.

256. The project has suffered serious delays and problems during its implementation, mainly stemming from superficial design, poor coordination and management by FAO and changes in Government's decisions at both institutional and logistics level. By late 2012, progress was registered in terms of the capacity development programme and identification of the final location of the planned laboratories.

257. The project should be completed by August 2013; it is possible that results will be achieved when also toxicology laboratory will also have been set up and both will be operating at full capacity. One of the conditions for the sustainability of the project will be for the government to provide the appropriate resources. On the other hand, the project was designed to tackle only some 'downstream' aspects of the production chain and more efforts will be required to ensure appropriate use of pesticides by producers.

Codex Focal Point

258. The National Codex Focal Point was very appreciative of the collaboration with the Codex Alimentarius Committee and the support received from FAO for the establishment and running of the Focal Point's role and functions and the national committee. In particular, the national representatives have been participating in Codex meetings with the support of the Codex Trust Fund. As of 2013, the Government will need to make funds available for this, which may constitute a problem. The set-up of the national committee, however, was a positive indicator of Government's interest in the topic.

259. An issue raised was the limited availability of Codex documents in Russian, which hampers the active participation of national experts in Codex Committees.

9.3 Sector level analysis

Relevance

260. The focus of FAO projects on capacity development, formulation of strategies and the development of infrastructures, as well as the support to the country from the Codex Alimentarius Trust Fund, were all components that required attention to achieve an effective food safety and quality system. Thus, FAO's work in this sector so far has been relevant to meet the national needs and requirements in tackling the existing gaps in food quality and safety sector.

261. There are some doubts however, that the selected initiatives were the most relevant and strategic to rapidly improve food safety and quality for national consumers, as no attention was given so far to the upstream steps in agricultural production, i.e. capacity development of farmers in the use of pesticides and other chemicals.

Efficiency

262. Efficiency of implementation appeared good in the case of the TCP. This however was not the case for the Greek-funded GCP, which suffered huge delays also due to FAO's shortcomings in the overall management and coordination of the initiative.

263. The Evaluation found no evidence of coordination and collaboration between FAO projects and initiatives in the same sector supported by other donors. In the case of the pesticide control laboratory, there was almost an overlap between initiatives by FAO and the World Bank, which led to further delays in FAO's project.

Effectiveness

264. The TCP on 'Food safety capacity building' was considered by national stakeholders, including senior managers of relevant units, as a very important initiative in developing the national capacity on food safety issues. A weakness was that participants in workshops did not cover a wide spectrum of institutions.

265. The project also contributed to establishing a strategy for food safety and food control, including a national standard on food additives, to better orient the food industry and define specific regulations to produce foods in line with criteria adopted at international level. FAO assistance was considered to be timely and competent.

266. The main objectives of the "Support for pesticide quality control and residue monitoring" project were not achieved yet, but some progress was visible. The Food Safety Unit had been established in the Central Veterinary Laboratory (CVL) through funds provided by the Government also for infrastructures, and complemented by the Greek funds through FAO to purchase laboratory equipment and supplies for conducting pesticide residues analysis in food. On the other hand, the training programme of specialists in laboratory techniques was proving very cost-effective and the relationship established with the concerned Chinese institutions appeared sustainable.

Impact and sustainability

267. The 'Food safety capacity building' TCP helped strengthen the coordination of food control activities, and the development of food standards, inspection programmes and laboratory networks, as well as quality assurance programmes in agro-processing sectors. The establishment of the Food Safety Unit was considered an important start for a long term programme, showing the commitment of the Government to the sectoral goals.

268. The sustainability of the Greek-funded project was in doubt at the time of writing, as the Government did not appear to have sufficient resources to maintain such labs. It was not possible to say whether their activity will be enough to effectively control pesticide quality and pesticide residues and whether these will bring about an improvement in the safety and quality of agricultural produce. The sustainability and impact of the project will need to be estimated as well by the mechanisms which have to be established to provide feedback to farmers about pesticide residues and toxicology.

269. The knowledge and use of normative products was limited to a narrow circle of specialists, also due to linguistic obstacles, while potentially a larger circle of stakeholders could have benefitted. FAO may also have missed some opportunities in terms of coordination and collaboration with other resource partners in the same sector, to develop synergies and enhance sustainability and impact of its own interventions.

FAO comparative advantage

270. FAO provided the necessary and competent technical assistance, organized workshops for exchanging knowledge, information and experience in different areas, provided direct funding and facilitated access to other international sources of funding. In this, it proved to have a solid comparative advantage.

271. On the other hand, the problems and delays attached to the Greek-funded project raised several doubts about FAO's capacity to implement complex infrastructural projects. The implementation appeared further hampered by shortcomings in the support provided by the multiple-accredited FAO Representative, within her responsibilities as 'project manager'. This also affected, most likely, the potential collaboration with other partners.

Contribution to FAO Core Functions

272. Work by FAO in the food safety and quality sector contributed to fulfil some of FAO's core functions, as shown in Box 16 below. Good performance was noted for Core functions d) and f), about policy and technical assistance and capacity development, but less positive in relation to advocacy and communication and partnerships and alliances.

Box 16. Performance of FAO Core Functions in this sector

N.	Core function	Activities
<i>a</i>	<i>Monitoring and assessment of long-term and medium-term trends and perspectives</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Not applicable.
<i>b</i>	<i>Assembly and provision of information, knowledge and statistics</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A database of pesticide available in Armenia has been compiled and will be linked to advice to farmers within the scope of GCP/ARM/003/GRE.
<i>c</i>	<i>Development of international instruments, norms and standards</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support to the Codex Focal Point and establishment of a National Codex Committee.
<i>d</i>	<i>Policy and strategy options and advice</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> FAO provided support to the development of National Food Control Strategy Document and action plan, food legislation and standards etc.
<i>e</i>	<i>Technical support to promote technology transfer and build capacity</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Extensive training activities and capacity development took place through projects and Codex Alimentarius.
<i>f</i>	<i>Advocacy and communication</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No evidence available.
<i>g</i>	<i>Inter-disciplinarity and innovation</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No evidence available.
<i>h</i>	<i>Partnerships and alliances</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Partnerships among the participating agencies as well as between the countries (Armenia, Georgia) covered by the region were promoted through FAO project. However, opportunities may have been missed at national level, to develop partnerships with other stakeholders in the sector.

Source: Evaluation

9.4 Conclusions

273. FAO has supported, and still is supporting Armenia towards the development of the food safety and quality system; in doing so, it met an expressed and recognized need and priority of the Government. Results have been positive in terms of capacity development and support to strategy and policy development.

274. Implementation problems have severely hampered a major initiative and there may have been missed opportunities in terms of partnerships and synergies with other resource partners in the sector: these seem to have also been partly related to the model of presence in the country, through the multiple-accredited FAO Representation scheme, and limited time devoted by the previous incumbent to the country.

275. The sector is part of the FAO-Armenia CPF, with two initiatives. Neither tackles the issue of capacities of agricultural producers, to improve the safety and quality of their products. This appears as an important gap, in consideration of the immediate impact this would have on producers' and consumers' health, and of FAO's knowledge and experience in Integrated Pest Management and Farmer Field Schools, internationally acknowledged as areas where the Organization has a comparative advantage.

276. At the legislative level, while the elaboration of a national standard on food additives has been considered a priority to better orient the food industry and the definition of specific regulations to produce foods in line with criteria adopted at international level for food additives. However, nothing has been done yet. The Government should seek support from its partners, to elaborate a general standard on food additives for all foods, taking into account the condition and priority of the national food industry and international guidelines and standards on the use of food additives. The standard proposed should be well harmonized with Codex Standard and EU requirements.

10 Forestry

10.1 National context and key problems

277. Two centuries ago forests covered around 35% of Armenia's territory. The economic and energy crisis of the 1990s exacerbated the process of deforestation, which had started in the Soviet era. As a result of the pressure put on forest resources the forest area decreased by about 4,000 ha annually. Large scale illegal logging resulted also in the loss of valued species (e.g. oak, beech, pine) and alteration to valueless species (e.g. hornbeam). Box 17 below illustrates the status of the forest cover in the country, as per the Forest Resource Assessment.

Box 17. Armenia forest cover

FRA 2010 categories	Area (1000 hectares)			
	1990	2000	2005	2010
<i>Forest*</i>	335	333	332	331
<i>Other wooded land</i>	41	52	58	63
<i>...of which with tree cover</i>	n.d	n.d	n.d	n.d

<i>Inland water bodies</i>	160	160	160	160
<i>Total</i>	2,980	2	980	2

Source: Forest Resource Assessment 2010, Armenia country report, FAO 2012

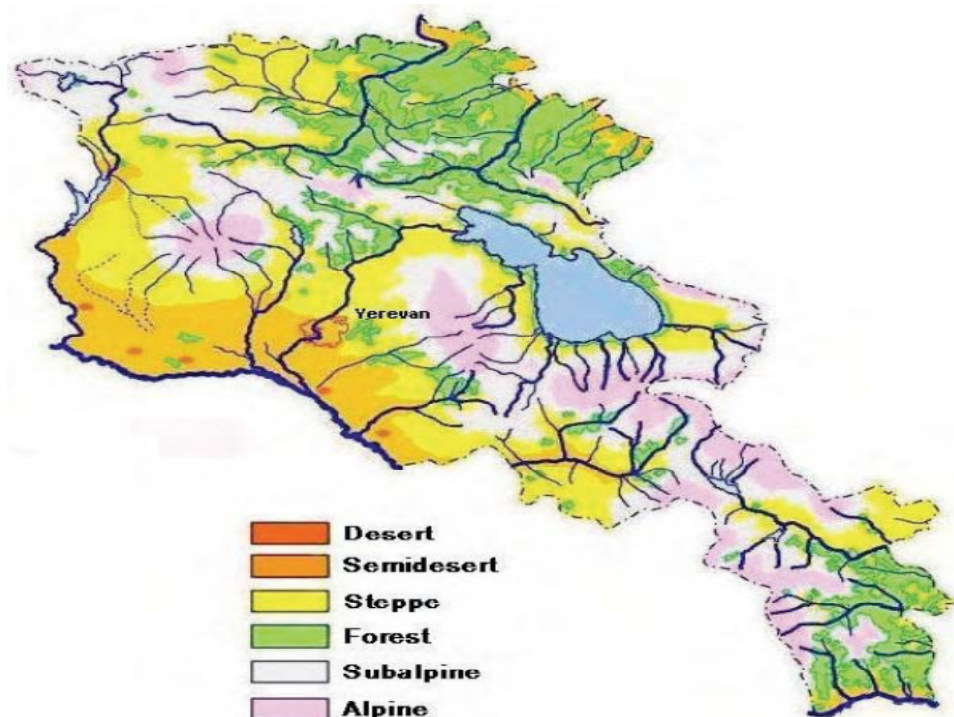
278. Starting around 2000-2002, the Government initiated a process of significant institutional and legal reforms in the forestry sector. Several political documents and legal framework for the forest sector were adopted, including: the National Forest Policy and Strategy Paper of the Republic of Armenia (2004), the New Forest Code (2005); the National Forest Programme of the Republic of Armenia (2005); and the Action Plan for Mitigating Actions to Help Address Problems Associated with Illegal Logging (2004).

279. In parallel, since 2000, several codes and laws were developed on a range of environmental- and natural resources related issues; this included the preparation of the first and second National Environmental Action Programs (NEAP, 1998 and 2008).⁵⁸ The 2008 NEAP highlighted the sustainable use and protection of forest ecosystems in the interest of biodiversity conservation, and also underlines the importance of corresponding measures that would support forest adaptation to climate change impacts. The National Forest Policy and Strategy Paper has the objective of ensuring the restoration of the degraded forest ecosystems, their sustainable use and further development of the useful properties of the forests.

280. These efforts produced some results: 21,500 hectares underwent reforestation and afforestation activities during 1998-2006, including 16,100 hectares during the period 2004-2006. According to the Land Balance data of 2006, forests covered around 10.4% of the country's; recent estimates show that around 12% is covered with forests. Several important developments are in progress, including the establishment of a new trans-boundary national park and new protected areas in Southern Armenia; implementing pilot projects for community forest management plans; and taking several positive steps to curtail illegal logging activities, including the establishment of the Forest State Monitoring Centre (FSMC), a separate entity from the Armenian Forestry Service (HayAntar). Armenia remains a forest-poor country, with forests growing mainly on steep slopes in mountain ranges at 550-2400 m above sea-level, unevenly distributed and vulnerable to climate change, as shown in Box 18.

⁵⁸ Ministry of Nature Protection of the Republic of Armenia: "Second National Communication on Climate Change", under the UN FCC, Yerevan (2010)

Box 18. Main ecosystems of Armenia



Source: Second National Communication on Climate Change, Republic of Armenia

281. Some of the key problems in the sector are:

- implement the Forest Code and Forest Management Plans (FMPs) based on reliable data;
- update the forest inventory, the latest one being from 1998;
- increase supply of forest products to meet demand for fuel-wood and commercial production;
- revise the status of HayAntar and the mechanisms for income generation and price-setting;
- improve protection of natural preserves and further curtailment of illegal logging;
- enforce the application of grazing norms and rules in grass systems used as pastures and grasslands;
- conduct regular forest phyto-sanitary control studies and measures;
- establish a monitoring system of changes in natural ecosystems;
- establish and enforce regulatory measures, e.g. tax exemption measures, regulating import/export, introducing a system of Payment for Ecosystem Services, etc;
- improve the system of Environmental Impact Assessments (EIAs) for the development of mining projects in ecologically sensitive areas;
- enhance the eco-tourism and non-wood forest product sectors, implement forest certification and chain of custody tracking procedures; and
- engage communities in the sustainable management of forests through Forest Enterprises.

282. Along with other measures, intensive afforestation and reforestation efforts were and are required to promote forest regeneration to meet the Government target to increase the forest cover to 20% of total land by 2020.

10.2 Projects and other activities

283. The first FAO-Armenia project on the forestry sector was implemented in 1994-1997, a TCP in two phases titled Forestry Sector Development. At the core of that intervention were the fuel-wood crisis, and the need for both a forestry sector strategy and identification of investment opportunities to support the sustainable management of the forest resources. Activities carried out by international and national consultants, included institutional and staff capacity development, review of the legislative framework, forest resource assessment, among others. Once this TCP was over, no other activities in the sector were carried out until 2003, when a small TCP focused on Sustainable Management of Oak Production Forest was implemented, although deforestation and status of the existing forest cover were still major issues.

284. Since 2004,⁵⁹ FAO implemented two projects, both national TCPs, one focused on mountain development and the second in support of reforestation. In addition, FAO provide support to the country through the National Forest Programme Facility.

285. The total budget of the two TCPs was USD 939,423, less than 10% of the national portfolio.⁶⁰ Still, among the countries in the region, Armenia received the fourth largest portfolio in the Forestry sector, after Albania, Kosovo and Serbia. Virtually no regional or global initiatives were implemented in Europe and Central Asia in Forestry. Box 19 below lists the interventions.

Box 19. FAO Forestry projects in Armenia

Project	Funding source	Budget USD	Start, end
<i>TCP/ARM/3001, Sustainable Mountain Development</i>	FAO	327,423	March 2004-February 2006
<i>TCP/ARM/3203, TCP/ARM/3303 Afforestation and Reforestation in the Republic of Armenia, Phases I & II</i>	FAO	399,372	November 2009-December 2012
<i>National Forest Programme Facility</i>	Multilateral	Not available	January 2005-March 2013

Source: FPMIS, elaborated by the Evaluation

TCP/ARM/3203, TCP/ARM/3303, Afforestation and Reforestation in the Republic of Armenia

286. This project is assessed in detail in Annex 7, Key projects. The initiative was and still is highly relevant for the country. Progress towards achieving the goals of the 'National Forest Programme' was hampered by multiple challenges including those linked to the supply of a broad variety of plantation material and seeds of different species, in sufficient quantity and quality. State nurseries of "HayAntar" are financed out of the state budget and partly via

⁵⁹ The scope of the in-depth analysis of the field programme in this sector was expanded to include initiatives started in 2004.

⁶⁰ Budget resources through the National Forest Programme Facility were not available

income from wood production: one particular challenge was and is to move towards commercial production of plants and seedlings.

287. The initiative was structured into two major parts: i) development of forest seed and plant production with an emphasis on nurseries; and ii) development of plantations (respectively natural regeneration) and implementing corresponding care measures. The major achievements at the time of the Evaluation were as follows:

- the afforestation and reforestation methods used in HayAntar were analysed and demand forecasts for plants and seeds were prepared;
- the institutional set-up of the nurseries, using Hrazdan Forest Enterprise as an example, was analyzed and recommendations were produced; these, in particular, call for commercialization of the operations as the only sustainable solution;
- 10 pilot seed collection stands and 6 pilot stands on plantations, natural regeneration and care measures in plantations installed;
- rehabilitation and equipment of the pilot nursery of Hrazdan Forest Enterprise in progress;
- capacities developed of nursery and HayAntar staff in seed and plant production as well as plantations and natural regenerations.

288. The project suffered implementation delays, among which was also FAO's inability to re-assign the project upon retirement of the responsible LTU officer. In addition, there was a lack of broad-based involvement of civil society and other stakeholders in the project, e.g. in the training workshops (of which there was 1 instead of the planned 6) and failure to establish a Steering Committee. The design of the project was somewhat narrow, falling short of the potential to affect the broad policy agenda in forestry management.

289. By the time of the Evaluation, it was too early to judge its impact and sustainability. Evidence showed that key pending issues for achievement of results were the approval and implementation of recommendations about the commercialization of the nursery operations, including changes in the institutional set up of the nurseries, and investments in the nursery.

National Forest Programme (NFPs)

290. In the 1990s, the Intergovernmental Panel on Forests (IPF) provided a setting for countries to debate and formally recognize the importance of a comprehensive forest policy framework for achieving sustainable forest management (SFM). Through the IPF, countries agreed on a common approach known as National Forest Programmes (NFPs), and adopted a set of principles designed to guide NFP development and implementation. FAO hosts and manages a multi-lateral fund, titled National Forest Programme Facility, to support partner countries through grants, in their efforts to comply with the IPF's approach.⁶¹

291. The partnership between the FAO NFP Facility and Armenia was approved in January 2005 after stakeholder consultations in November 2004. Under this partnership, the NFP Facility was to work with Armenia to advance its NFP process by focusing on the following 3 priorities: (i) developing the forestry sector legal and regulatory frameworks; (ii) supporting the development of practical education and training in the forestry sector; and (iii) raising public awareness about forestry related issues so as to promote informed stakeholder

⁶¹ <http://www.fao.org/forestry/nfp/74076/en/>

participation in policy development. Organisations and recipients of the grants are described below:

- NFP 2007: a Multi-Stakeholders Steering Committee within the bounds of partnership between FAO NFP Facility and “HayAntar” SNCO was established in August 2005; a set of regulations were drafted in a consultative manner; a number of NGOs were part of the Steering Committee, and also carried out public outreach, consultation and training activities and produced recommendations for the revision of the draft regulations;
- NFP 2011: on June, 2011 an Agreement was signed between FAO NFP Facility and “HayAntar” SNCO in support of coordinating the Partnership between Armenia and the Facility and validating the regulatory legal framework for the sector.

292. Based on the information received from HayAntar, the follow-up Regulations, which were covered by NFP 2007 and NFP 2011 grants, were approved or are under review by the Government.

TCP/ARM/3001: Sustainable Mountain Development

293. The main objective of the TCP on ‘Sustainable Mountain Development’ was to assist the Government in its efforts to implement sustainable development in its mountain areas. The project activities were carried out at two levels with the following specific objectives:

- a. At the national level: i) review and update the state of knowledge, the institutional structure and the activities related to sustainable mountain development in Armenia; ii) formulate a comprehensive national strategy for sustainable mountain development through a participatory, inter-disciplinary and multi-stakeholder process; and iii) formulate a follow up investment programme for sustainable mountain development; and
- b. At community level: i) establish two pilot and demonstration sites for building capacity on sustainable mountain development and ii) experimenting with approaches to improve the livelihoods of people living in the mountains, as well as the local institutional structures, while also field-testing the national strategy.

294. The Strategy on Sustainable Mountain Development was not adopted, as it did not appear to be any longer one of the priorities of the Government at the time it was finalized. The component aimed at implementing a comprehensive Investment programme (IP) on sustainable mountain development was also not successful. Overall the project suffered from the scarce human resources committed to it, as well as lack of political support.

Normative Products

295. FAO issued/implemented 12 normative and knowledge products, including publications and events, of relevance to Armenia. Of these, the following were specifically focused on the country:

- Urban and peri-urban forestry and greening in West and Central Asia – Workshop, 2006; this led to a publication with the same title;
- Wildlife issues and development prospects in West and Central Asia - Thematic study for the Forestry Outlook Study for Asia, 2006;

- Assessing the access to forest resources for improving livelihoods in West and Central Asia countries, 2006;
- The status and trends of forests and forestry in West Asia: Sub-regional report of the Forestry Outlook Study for West and Central Asia, 2008;
- Changing Role of Public Forestry Institutions in Central Asian and Caucasus Countries, 2010; and
- Global Forest Resource Assessment, Armenia country report, FAO 2012.

10.3 Sector level analysis

Relevance

296. Overall, the relevance of FAO's interventions focused on the forest management aspects of the sector was and is high given the persisting challenges in the forestry sector. The increased forest coverage and improved management, if and when achieved through direct afforestation activities and improved legislative framework, will ultimately benefit the whole country, and rural population first and foremost.

297. The relevance and interest of the Afforestation project for the Government was confirmed by its own contribution with additional funds, corresponding to around 40% of the initial budget.

298. The Sustainable Mountain Development project was also relevant, in that 90% of the country is a mountainous territory and the task of achieving sustainable development there requires specific policy tools and support. However, the initiative was somewhat premature, since the needed parallel measures and regulatory tools were not present when it was launched and the policy environment was not favourable to pursue the strategy that was developed.

Efficiency

299. In this sector of work, FAO's performance was rather poor. The 'Afforestation and Reforestation' project suffered from delays from the start and response from FAO at that point in time was inadequate. After its actual start the project again suffered from additional delays: the procedural complexities of the Organization were largely at the heart of these problems, although some were also caused by the Armenian side due to frequent changes in the Government. The project had to be extended twice, and although these were no-cost extensions, related transaction and sunk costs affect overall performance.

300. The implementation of the Sustainable Mountain Development Project also suffered from many inefficiencies, stemming from the inadequate management, lack of human resources and government commitment.

301. As for the NFP, the review of the project descriptions highlighted cases of duplication and hence raised questions about the cost effectiveness. Also, despite the inclusiveness of the stakeholder consultation process, during implementation there was a lack

of coordination and synergies with other existing projects and initiatives, especially with high-profile and priority ones, related to climate change mitigation.

Effectiveness

302. With the “Afforestation and Reforestation” project, FAO was contributing to the implementation of the Government “National Forest Programme”. The project raised the technical capacity of HayAntar nurseries and the knowledge and skills’ base. The study tours and the involvement of well qualified international consultants have also helped to build the knowledge base and skills. However, the target figure for the trained professionals had not been reached in the last quarter of the project’s life. Also, the technical solutions developed by the FAO consultants had been taken on board, but the endorsement of the recommendations related to the commercialization of the operations of the nurseries was still pending.

303. NPF contributed to the development of Government plans via public hearings of draft regulations. Its main benefit, as a country-driven mechanism, resided in its potential catalytic role for improving governance of the forest sector through enhancing the voices of stakeholders by increasing participation and potentially improving transparency and accountability. The participation of the NGOs in the development of the legal framework has been undoubtedly a positive development. However, the contribution to the development and implementation of government plans does not necessarily imply that the projects were fully effective in terms of bringing up the desired change. In particular, the initiatives had a somewhat narrow vision failing to place the tasks into a broader policy change agenda.

304. As mentioned earlier the main objectives of the “Sustainable Mountain Development” project were not achieved, although the final report of the project mentioned some progress at one of the pilot sites.

305. The use of FAO’s normative and knowledge products was high among the scientists and sectoral specialists, but not among the potentially broader communities, of, for example, civil servants, CSOs, students. The general feedback was that FAO should be more proactive in raising awareness about these and other normative products, through public outreach strategies.

306. Further, while there is no doubt about the quality of these publications, their effectiveness is in question in terms of the uptake of the recommendations made in these publications. There was no evidence for example of any change in the trends in urban and peri-urban forestry and greening influenced by the recommendations of the FAO’s research reports, or in accessing forest resources for improving the livelihoods. What seems to be missing is an “Uptake Strategy”, i.e. an advocacy and follow-up mechanism, whereby the government should reflect upon measures suggested.

Impact and sustainability

307. The positive effects of the Afforestation project were mostly in terms of capacity development of a restricted number of individuals in HayAntar and in the rehabilitation of the nursery to produce seedlings. Beyond these tangible results, at the time of the Evaluation, impact and sustainability looked weak. This was true for the both the strategic and

institutional level, as a number of open questions remained on the status and mandate of HayAntar, and the community level.

308. A number of agreements existed with potential buyers of the seedlings, for example the Armenian Copper Company for the reforestation of Teghut forest, but in general, the key to the financial sustainability of the Hrazdan nursery as a commercial business venture is a regular seedlings market at the regional and national level. The Evaluation found no evidence of the existence of a strategy, or a road-map, in this sense.

309. Further, the project missed a number of opportunities, e.g. developing synergies with other projects in the forestry and related sectors, e.g. climate change and collaborating with Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) and communities, which could have enhanced the chances of impact and sustainability.

310. To be successful, the sector needs reorganization, effectively addressing the issues with HayAntar status, funding and operations, supply of firewood and illegal logging, as well as developing and adoption of a number of important pieces of legislation, including Payment for Environmental Services, ensuring linkages with measures to address climate change.

FAO comparative advantage

311. FAO's technical knowledge has undoubtedly served its positive role in terms of providing high quality technical advice and publications. However, the knowledge about their existence was only among the narrow specialists, while potentially a larger circle of stakeholders could have benefitted from it.

312. With the "Afforestation and Reforestation" project staff of HayAntar had the opportunity to learn from the experience of management of nurseries in Austria and the Czech Republic and FAO has been the facilitator for this. At the same time, the assistance was expected to pave the way to strengthened international partnerships, e.g. with UNEP and IUCN in the framework of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests.⁶² There was no evidence that this had happened. Also, as mentioned, the focus of the NPF Facility grants was too narrow, falling short of a potentially wider spectrum of cooperation with other international initiatives, such as UN-REDD and FLEGT.⁶³

313. The inefficiencies in implementation and the lack of results from the Sustainable Mountain Development project undermined the overall performance of the Organization: these findings should be attentively analysed by REU and the Forestry Department, as an opportunity to learn lessons for improved performance at country level in the region.

Contribution to FAO Core Functions

314. Similarly to other sectors, FAO's fulfilment of its core functions through the work in the forestry sector was quite mixed, partly because efficiency issues in implementation and

⁶² <http://www.fao.org/forestry/site/cpf/en>

⁶³ UN-REDD: United Nations Collaborative Programme on Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation in Developing Countries; FLEGT: Forest Law Enforcement, Governance and Trade Action Plan of the European Union

lack of a stronger presence in the country, undermined overall performance and potential impacts. Box 20 below shows the main activities contributing to each core function.

Box 20. Performance of FAO Core Functions in this sector

N.	Core function	Activities
<i>a</i>	<i>Monitoring and assessment of long-term and medium-term trends and perspectives</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Armenia country report for the Global Forest Resource Assessment, 2010.
<i>b</i>	<i>Assembly and provision of information, knowledge and statistics</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Some normative and knowledge products.
<i>c</i>	<i>Development of international instruments, norms and standards</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Not applicable.
<i>d</i>	<i>Policy and strategy options and advice</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support provided to the development and revision of forestry regulations through NFP Facility grants.
<i>e</i>	<i>Technical support to promote technology transfer and build capacity</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Capacity development on technical issues was strong through the Afforestation TCP. Quality of the technical advice provided was high and highly appreciated by beneficiaries.
<i>f</i>	<i>Advocacy and communication</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The lack of strong presence on the ground of higher level FAO representative has meant that the advocacy role of FAO has not been strong, including on the uptake of messages stemming from normative/knowledge products. Equally, there is room for improving on communication.
<i>g</i>	<i>Inter-disciplinarity and innovation</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The projects fall short of effectively addressing interdisciplinary links, including those of environmental protection, climate change and local governance.
<i>h</i>	<i>Partnerships and alliances</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Partnership development, in particular with NGOs, happened only under the NFP; other opportunities were missed

Source: Evaluation

10.4 Conclusions

315. FAO activities in the period of 2006-2012 met the country and Government's development needs, requests and policies to some extent:

- development of the technical capacity and knowledge base of HayAntar to improve its activities related to afforestation and reforestation;
- based on the example of Hrazdan Nursery, an analysis of the financial operations of nurseries was conducted and a strong case was made for the commercialization of these operations as the only sustainable option.
- through NFP, the regulatory field governing forestry sector in Armenia was improved.

316. Efficiency was rather low, as well as effectiveness and impacts: while too early to assess impact, there was no evidence pointing to promising concrete steps aimed at implementing the recommendations stemming from the main intervention and no support was provided to the implementation of the existing legislation.

317. The limited uptake of normative and knowledge products also constrained results of this modality of support and the lack of a resident FAO Representative in the country hampered coordination and collaboration initiatives, let alone any advocacy work.

318. Some of the potential areas where FAO could support Armenia in the forestry sector include:

- i. development of a strategic vision and action plan to guide forest policy and investments;
- ii. improvement of market functionality so that market prices reflect costs of production, wider economic value of the forest resource, including environmental and social services, and consumer willingness to pay; FAO could help HayAntar to develop a framework to support market prices;
- iii. strengthening the institutional capacity of Hayantar, through a resident or visiting advisor, upon the condition of strong commitment by the Government;
- iv. development of the framework for Community forest management; and
- v. strengthening country-level capacities related to forest resources assessment and data management in order to improve the forest information base and sector planning and monitoring capacity.

11 Plant production and protection and agricultural research, extension and biotechnologies⁶⁴

11.1 National context and key problems

319. According to the Strategy for the Sustainable Development of Agriculture for 2010-2020 one of the main priorities was to be plant production and plant protection development, which include:

- implementation of leading agro-technical technologies;
- development of selection and seed breeding systems;
- the improvement of phyto-sanitary conditions and preservation of crop genetic diversity.

320. Seed production in Armenia is one of the most important branches of the plant production sector and as food security became a main priority, it has been given even more emphasis, with increasing self-sufficiency in grain production being a main tenet.

321. Grain productivity in Armenia was low, mainly due to:

- Use of low quality, non-certified seeds;
- absence of crop rotation and monoculture in many places;
- inadequate fertilization of sowing areas, both in quantity and quality; and
- obsolete machinery used for harvesting; this has lead to 30% lower yields.

322. Plant protection is an important link in the chain of effective and safe agricultural production. Due to its geographical position, Armenia shares the pest and diseases of the Region. It maintains a list of a number of crop pests and diseases that it seeks to restrict through internal quarantine. Distributions of these organisms are mapped, and the Plant

⁶⁴ The Evaluation team decided to report on the sectors of Plant production and protection and Agricultural research, extension and biotechnologies in the same section, in consideration of the fact that work was largely carried out with the same Armenian institutions.

Protection Service and Plant Quarantine Service, detect, monitor and regulate the movement of plant materials across the country, including quarantine.

323. The Plant Quarantine and Farming State Inspectorate is responsible for enforcing control through inspections. The Service has regional subdivisions in all *marzes* and in all border points, including a specialized fumigation group and quarantine laboratory in Yerevan. The Service also implements research and laboratory activities to prevent the transport of dangerous organisms and plants.

324. Locusts and grasshoppers are the most important threat to agriculture in the Caucasus and Central Asia. During infestations and outbreaks, the three main locust species, namely the Migratory, the Italian and the Moroccan, attack cereal crops, sunflowers, vineyards, vegetables, orchards and rangelands and cause severe damage to agricultural, economic and social levels. They jeopardize food security and livelihood across the Region and in adjacent areas of Afghanistan and Russian Federation. The most affected populations are the communities living in the rural areas, whose health and environment can moreover suffer from negative impacts of locusts control operations.

325. Other factors affecting the plant production and protection sector are listed below:

- lack of tools and equipment for maintaining and cultivating nurseries;
- lack of instruments and insufficient supplies for laboratory certification tests on seeds;
- lack of post-harvest processing equipment;
- weak systems and limited human capacity for pest control, particularly in ecologically sensitive areas.

326. Last, the development and improvement of agricultural advisory and extension linkages through information exchange between research centers, service providers and farmers plays a key role in the effective management and development of the agricultural sector.

11.2 Projects and other activities

327. The first FAO project in the area of plant production and protection was initiated in 2004, on locust control. Earlier emergency projects had dealt with distribution of seeds and other inputs, but had not contributed to development of resilience and more sustainable approaches. Since 2004, FAO funded five national TCPs, one regional and one interregional TCP, the latter again on locusts, as well as a regional Austrian-funded GCP with a targeted component on seed breeding in Armenia. Key date for these projects can be found in Box 21 below. The most recent project, a TCP on vegetable seed breeding, was launched at the time of the Evaluation.

Box 21. FAO plant production and protection projects in Armenia, 2006-2012

Project	Funding source	Budget USD	Start, end
<i>TCP/ARM/3002, Strengthening of the Locust Control Capabilities</i>	FAO	312,101	February 2004 – September 2005
<i>TCP/ARM/3003 – Rodent Control in Armenia</i>	FAO	224,906	April 2004 – December 2005
<i>TCP/RER/3102 & 3207- Capacity building</i>	FAO	463,586	November 2007 –

<i>in agricultural biotechnologies and biosafety (Armenia, Georgia, Moldova), Phases I & II</i>			December 2011
<i>TCP/ARM/3103 & 3204 - Establishment of a virtual extension and research information and communication network, Phases I & II</i>	FAO	256,600	August 2008 – December 2009
<i>TCP/INT/3202- Improving management of migratory and other locusts in the Caucasus and Central Asia</i>	FAO	309,595	April 2009 – March 2011
<i>GCP /RER/026/AUS - Increasing resilience of small scale farmers to the impacts of soaring food prices by improving capacity and institutional environment for seed production and the use of irrigation technologies</i>	Austria	606,594*	September 2009 – September 2013
<i>TCP/ARM/3302 - Support for the Establishment of Apricot Collection Orchards for the Purpose of Genetic Fund Preservation</i>	FAO	355,000	July 2011 – June 2013
<i>TCP/ARM/3403, Support to the Development of the Vegetable Seed Breeding and Production System in Armenia</i>	FAO	459,000	July 2012 – March 2014

Source: FPMIS, elaborated by Evaluation; *: Armenia component only

328. The total portfolio of the national projects in this sector represented 17% of the total portfolio of national projects.

GCP /RER/026/AUS - Increasing resilience of small scale farmers to the impacts of soaring food prices by improving capacity and institutional environment for seed production and the use of irrigation technologies

329. This Austrian-funded regional GCP funded different activities in each of the participating countries. In the case of Armenia, the support was directed at strengthening the capacity of the Ministry of Agriculture, the breeding stations and the national regulatory agencies and improving access to certified seeds for small scale farmers.

330. The original outputs that were required and needed to be performed to achieve this objective were as follows:

- preparation and adoption of a national seed programme involving relevant national stakeholders;
- improvement of the infrastructure for seed production at Gyumri Breeding Station; and
- purchase and testing of laboratory equipment and the provision of on-the-job training in seed production technology to selected national seed regulatory agencies.
-

331. Some activities planned within the project framework were changed as they had already been included in the Seed Breeding Development Project implemented by the Government of Armenia, approved on 29 July 2010. In addition to the tasks performed in the framework of that project, the need to improve the technical capacities of seed breeding entities was also suggested. Major achievements included:

- Methodological Guide for seed breeders was developed and printed;
- Purchasing of seed processing equipment;
- National Seed Agency equipped with laboratory equipment.

332. The project was considered important, timely and useful by stakeholders in the country. However, it suffered from a number of delays and a few activities appeared to be duplications of previous interventions: these included the gene bank at Gyumry Breeding station, when one already existed in the country, and training on crop inspection, carried out by a previous project. The latter was could have been useful as refresher course for participants, but was carried out too early to be effective.

TCP/ARM/3003 Rodent Control in Armenia

333. The main objective of the project was to reduce grain losses in the field and in storage, through development of effective systems of rodent control and development of human resources in rodent pest management among officials of the agriculture department as well as the farming community. The specific objectives included:

- developing locally appropriate integrated management measures against rodent pests in wheat, barley and orchard crops;
- refining rodent surveillance technology in the country and devising appropriate reporting systems for the timely monitoring of rodent populations;
- developing bait stations to avoid the exposure of poisoned bait to non-target animals;
- minimizing the use of rodenticides in order to avoid risks to non-target species and impact on the environment;
- eliminating indiscriminate rodenticide bait application and adopt agronomic practices to reduce the application of chemicals;
- involving the whole community in long-term relief from the rodent menace to cereal and orchard crops in order to ensure food security;
- involving the farming community in the adoption of rodent control measures, empowering them to increase income through the enhanced productivity of wheat and barley;
- including rodent management measures in the overall framework of community integrated pest management (IPM) being initiated in the country.

334. The results of the project included the designing of a rodent management system, training of specialists, training and field exercise of 300 trainers of farmers, field-based extension trials, field trainings for the community level in each *marz*, an action plan designed for Farmer Field School activities and their organization in Syunik *marz*, and three workshops. A number of guidelines and manuals were produced during the project as well as a study tour to India organized.

TCP/ARM/3103 + 3204 Establishment of a virtual extension and research information and communication network

335. The project's development objective was to improve, through strengthened research and development extension linkages, the agricultural advisory services provided to resource poor farmers, in support of rural livelihoods and development. The project aimed at establishing a virtual research and communication network between the Agricultural Support Republican Center (ASRC), the Agricultural Support *Marz* Centres (ASMCs) of three *marzes*, the Armenian State Agrarian University, the Scientific Centre of Biotechnology and the Scientific Centre of Vegetables and Technical Crops.

336. During implementation, the project set out to do more work than planned, as it was recognized that for the system to function properly, full coverage would be required. As a result, Web sites were developed for the ASMCs in all *marzes*, a platform for all stakeholders was developed, preliminary guidelines for users were published and even the existing websites of the University and the MoA were improved.

337. Stakeholders met by the evaluation commended the quality of the support provided by FAO. Sustainability and continuity of project results was ensured by the way the project was designed, through focal points in each participating organization or centre. At the time of writing, the network was operational at national and regional levels, however it would be desirable to extend it also to the community level.

TCP/ARM/3302 Apricot Genetic Resources Conservation and Utilization in Armenia

338. The main objectives of the project included:

- strengthening the foundations of a solid apricot industry;
- collecting and preserving apricot genetic resources and introducing suitable varieties and rootstocks;
- developing and using appropriate technology for fruit and planting materials production.

339. At the time of the Evaluation the project was still on-going. There had been some delays due both to technical reasons and to issues in the support provided by FAO. Nevertheless, the project had established a nursery to provide seedling materials for a collection orchard. It was further planned to plant the collection orchard in early December in the Ararat Valley. It was too early to judge about the project's results and impact.

TCP/INT/3202 Improving Migratory and other locusts management in Caucasus and Central Asia

340. The project covered Armenia as well as Afghanistan, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan. It was built upon a previous TCP (TCP/RAS/0167), during which contacts were established. The strategic long term objective was to reduce the occurrence and intensity of locust outbreaks in Caucasus and Central Asia, thus preventing damage to crops and rangeland as well as related impact on food security and livelihood of the most vulnerable rural communities. The specific objective of the project included improving national and regional locust management in Caucasus and Central Asia through regional cooperation and capacity-building.

341. This was a challenge as national capacities needed to be strengthened as they were often still insufficient to adequately address locust issues, although the situation was highly variable from one country to another. However, only a regional approach would allow for successful locust management: locusts move, and even if a country has the capacity to carry out appropriate control operations on its national territory, it would not be protected from locust infestations arriving from neighbouring countries. When a country faces locust infestations or outbreaks, it is more than likely that neighbouring countries will have or had to deal with similar situations. Thus, locust issues can only be dealt with in a sustainable way through collaboration across neighbouring countries.

342. The project provided equipment and technical assistance, including on-the-spot training. Activities included: the gathering and analysis of information on locust management in all countries and the level of cooperation desired; the facilitation of information sharing; the provision of technical assistance in accordance with specific country requests; and enhancing the visibility of locust issues and management in the Region. Regional cooperation was started through the recruitment of a national consultant in each participating country to collect information and generate bulletins thereby allowing for: a national focal point in each country; technical assistance through FAO to each focal point; and the development of a network of focal points during the duration of the project.

343. Several points which could contribute to sustainability are worth mentioning. Good knowledge on locusts now exists in Caucasian and Central Asian countries, as well as good basic competence of technical staff. Therefore, future interventions will need to focus on updating, harmonizing and disseminating knowledge, possibly introducing the latest available techniques for survey and control operations, and fostering further technical exchanges and common activities between countries.

11.3 Sector level analysis

Relevance

344. FAO's work in the plant production and protection sector was found to be relevant and in some cases even highly relevant to the needs of the country. Agricultural production systems are particularly vital to the viability of the republics of the Caucasus and Central Asia, which increasingly rely on agriculture. Their stability is prone to disturbances by several external pressures. In the case of locusts, the Organization responded with effective prevention and control methods, which were highly appreciated even years later. Of particular relevance in tackling this issue was the regional approach taken. FAO's response to the issue of grain losses in the field and in storage, through development of effective systems of rodent control and development of human resources in rodent pest management among officials was also relevant and appreciated.

345. The grain crop seed breeding sector in Armenia should always be at the center of the Government's attention and should receive continuous support. It is very important establishing sustainable grounds for seed breeding development, for the production of high quality seeds, for improving the certification system, and for increasing the efficiency of all links in the seed production value chain, as well as for increasing profits. The state should provide subsidies to all spheres of seed breeding (nurseries, production of pre-basic seeds and multiplication of high reproduction seeds) in order to increase the efficiency of the sector and to make it more profitable. Here FAO took into account the existing gaps of the sector and provided support in improving the Government's capacity.

346. After the collapse of the Soviet Union, many valuable varieties of apricot in the country had been lost. Considering the vertical zonality of Armenia, the successful implementation of the project would allow for an apricot harvest from May until October. It will also be very important from an economic point of view, since apricots are one of the main export products.

347. The absence of proper agricultural extension infrastructure, websites and networks in collaboration and also lack in feedback between researchers, advisors and farmers was a serious problem for conducting effective agriculture. The Organization, through assisting in the development of a virtual extension network contributed to developing these linkages.

348. In the area of biosafety and biotechnology, due to Armenia's rich agro bio diversity, the multi-disciplinary approach, involving technical staff in GMO detection, university teachers, scientists and policy makers, to the issue was very relevant for the country. Taking into account the threat of proliferation of GMOs and the interest of the region in the development of cooperation in agricultural biotechnology and bio-safety especially emphasizes the importance of the project to increase the capacity at different levels. The importance of jointly developing a regional agricultural biotechnology strategy was evident.

Efficiency

349. The efficiency of FAO's work in the sector varied. In some cases implementation was timely and efficient, as in the case of the locust control initiatives: measures and methods introduced worked well and quickly, reducing the threat which has since not returned. Monitoring systems were put into place which still generate and receive information from neighboring countries.

350. Other projects however suffered from delays, in particular as a result of lack of responsiveness of an FAO staff member, or delays in procuring equipment that resulted eventually in duplication of efforts.

Effectiveness

351. Work in the plant production and protection sector was, overall, effective. The interventions on locust control and rodent control were effective, and so far no further assistance has been required. In the case of locust control, regional cooperation was fostered starting with information exchange. Particular attention was dedicated to a regular flow of information with FAO and other relevant stakeholders and to effective dialogue and close coordination with national authorities.

352. The regional dimension also played an important role in the support on bio-safety and biotechnology. The project not only involved a number of stakeholders at national level, but also ensured the participation in several workshops in Armenia, Moldova and Georgia, highly commended by interlocutors, and the development of a regional agricultural biotechnology strategy. The workshops were seen as an opportunity to exchange information and advanced experience among countries in the Region.

353. The virtual extension network was in place, focal points remained in each of the institutes and centers involved and there were plans to extend the reach of the network to farmer-level. However, this was still at the conceptual stage at the time of the evaluation. Equally, the final results of the Apricot project had not been achieved yet. Nevertheless, progress had been made.

354. Last, as already stated, in the case of the Austrian-funded seed development project, duplication of work already done in the sector, undermined the overall effectiveness of FAO's interventions in the sector.

Impact and sustainability

355. Both impact and sustainability of FAO's work in this sector varied depending on the intervention. While the capacity to respond to threats such as locusts, deal with complex issues such as GMOs and a virtual research and information network were established, in other areas the sustainability, in particular, was unclear or too early to tell, as was the case for the project on apricot genetic resources.

356. More specifically, the regional approach to managing the locusts threat, in particular through the regular exchange of information has allowed Armenia and other countries in the Region, to achieve an increased preparedness. Nevertheless, a possible future outbreak would require further assistance.

357. Sustainability and impact of the Austrian-funded project can be seen through a significant increase the production capacity of certified seeds. This will affect the increase in farm productivity and the quality of agricultural products.

358. The virtual research information and communication network was in place and worked on Regional level. Sustainability was ensured through a focal point system in each institution. Furthermore, the continuation and maintenance of the system was ensured by including the upkeep of the network, among the responsibilities of the focal point in the Agricultural Support Republican Center (ASRC). At present, the Armenian authorities would like to continue using this structure. Plans were to develop M-Farmer (mobile farmer), through which farmers could use their mobiles phones to ask for advice and assistance. This would be a good step towards extending information to the community level.

359. Under the Rodent Control project the concept of farmer field schools in Armenia as a tool for advising farmers and transferring knowledge to the field was introduced. The Plant Protection Department should continue the activities initiated under the project, along with the necessary follow-up. In order to do this, a technical adviser on plant protection, able to facilitate and integrate the restructuring of the existing plant protection service, should be appointed. This would improve coordination with universities and facilitate the transfer of research findings to farmers.

FAO comparative advantage

360. FAO has a clear comparative advantage in working in the plant production and protection sector. This is especially true for locust control, bio-safety and biotechnologies, where the regional dimension fostered through FAO brought an added value which single national level interventions would lack. Also, with Armenia's status as a lower middle income country, FAO through its own funds, the TCP, supported relevant interventions for which no other resource partners were available.

361. Although the Organization has an expertise in the seed sector, this was not used in the best possible way when activities were duplicated through the Austrian-funded project.

Although greatly appreciated, in an environment of limited funding, the Evaluation believes that targeting gaps not yet filled would have been more useful as the seed sector remains important in Armenia.

Contribution to FAO Core Functions

362. FAO's work in the sector covered all core functions except for a and b. Emphasis was placed on core functions d, policy options and advice, and e, technical support. Specific examples of the Organization's work by core function can be seen in Box 22 below.

Box 22. Performance of FAO Core Functions in this sector

N.	Core function	Activities
<i>a</i>	<i>Monitoring and assessment of long-term and medium-term trends and perspectives</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No activities specific to the sector
<i>b</i>	<i>Assembly and provision of information, knowledge and statistics</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No activities specific to the sector
<i>c</i>	<i>Development of international instruments, norms and standards</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Attendance and data input to convention on plant genetic resources
<i>d</i>	<i>Policy and strategy options and advice</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> development of virtual extension network with access to data; a number of policy papers and strategies were developed with FAO support.
<i>e</i>	<i>Technical support to promote technology transfer and build capacity</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Locust and rodent control methods introduced and ministry staff trained; Locust updates and bulletins shared among countries in the region; Trainings in seed breeding and seed identification; Development of manuals (rodent control, seed identification etc.)
<i>f</i>	<i>Advocacy and communication</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> FAO Representation organized substantive and instructive events in the framework of the annual Agro forum Cooperation with FAO has contributed to preparation of national personnel and development of partnership with other international organizations. Overall, limited public awareness
<i>g</i>	<i>Inter-disciplinarity and innovation</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Interdisciplinary linkages were to some extent promoted through the FAO "Capacity building in agricultural biotechnologies and biosafety" and "Establishment of a virtual extension and research information and communication network" projects, but could have been stronger.
<i>h</i>	<i>Partnerships and alliances</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Partnerships among the participating agencies as well as between the countries were promoted through project activities; Greater linkages with civil society were not fostered.

Source: Evaluation

11.4 Conclusions and recommendations

363. Overall, FAO with its programme in the plant production and protection sector responded to the needs of the country. A number of interventions in a wide variety of subjects

were conducted during the evaluation period. In the frame of FAO's cooperation with the Government and other state organizations, timely and competent technical assistance was provided, as well as the organization of workshops for the exchange knowledge, information and experience in different areas.

364. All interventions were relevant, some more than others and some responding to more emergent needs, such as locusts. The government and other stakeholders respected FAO's expertise in the sector and were greatly appreciative of FAO's support, through training, the provision of equipment etc. Particular value was added through the encouragement of regional solutions to problems in the sector, especially given the otherwise problematic relationship with neighbouring countries. Implementation was mostly satisfactory, with some delays caused through FAOs internal issues. Manuals and guidelines developed and provided during projects, were still known and appreciated by those involved in project activities. However, more efforts in dissemination of knowledge and materials would be desirable, which, however, could also be fostered within government institutions themselves.

365. In future, duplications should be avoided and where possible links with civil society fostered. Room for further support and assistance remains in areas such as: further development of the extension network to the community level; gap-filling in other areas of the seed sector; and should the need occur in the future, while capacities have been developed, in the case of a possible locust threat, further assistance may be required.

12 Modalities of FAO's delivery

12.1 The field programme

366. This section analyses the overall performance of the field programme in Armenia, over the period under evaluation. Details about the size of the portfolio, sectoral focus and details on projects, are to be found in Section 6 above and in Annex 5.

367. National projects, or nationally focused components of regional and global projects, were implemented in all sectors of intervention. The Evaluation assessed in detail five national projects, against its standard evaluation criteria. Results are shown in Box 23 below, where the scoring for projects in Armenia is compared to the scoring of 18 projects in the Region Europe and Central Asia.

Box 23. Average qualitative assessment of five projects in Armenia and 18 projects in the Region Europe and Central Asia

Evaluation criteria	Armenia, five projects, score *	REU-SEC region, 18 projects, score*
<i>Relevance</i>	4.6	5.1
<i>Design</i>	3.8	4.4
<i>Implementation process/efficiency</i>	3.0	3.9
<i>Results/effects</i>	3.0	3.9
<i>Effectiveness of capacity development</i>	4.0	4.3
<i>Effectiveness of partnerships</i>	3.4	3.8
<i>Gender mainstreaming (all criteria)</i>	2.2	2.7

Sustainability	2.7**	4.0
Impact (actual or potential)	3.3**	4.3

*: 1=very poor; 2=poor; 3=inadequate; 4=adequate; 5=good; 6=excellent; NA: not possible to assess/Not

Applicable

** : average of three projects

368. To a large extent, all national projects were relevant to and met national needs and requests. Relevance and Capacity Development both scored as fully adequate. However, national projects suffered greatly from poor implementation, which in turn negatively affected results and most other criteria scored below adequate or poor. Further, there were few ascertained and potentially positive examples of sustainable interventions, but hardly any FAO project had developed exit strategies.

369. In this respect, in the view of a number of stakeholders, the FAO office in Armenia suffered from a too limited presence of technical staff who could make technically informed decisions on projects. This appeared a legitimate concern, albeit difficult to solve when taking into account the dispersion of the field programme over very different technical sectors in recent years. The finalization of the CPF in early 2012 should facilitate meeting this request.

370. The analysis contained some on-going projects: for two of them, scoring on sustainability and impact was not possible. As discussed in the sections above, the prospects for these two projects to perform positively against these criteria were not very high.

371. The Evaluation also analysed the use of the TCP Facilities: these funds were typically disbursed to formulate TCPs, in response to Government's requests. Overall, use of TCPF was broadly relevant, although there was some evidence that to some extent, the requests were not assessed critically in terms of relevance and usefulness.

372. The regional, inter-regional and global projects tended to be better designed and more efficient in implementation; they also appeared effective in fostering collaboration and knowledge-exchange across national institutions in different countries, and this was a particularly significant achievement in the region. Equally, some projects pursued collaboration across national institutions, for example in the case of food security information systems and brucellosis control. This bodes well for the future sustainability of their results, in terms of coordinated actions in the case of common threats such as transboundary pests and diseases, as well as communication and exchange across informal networks of professionals and institutions, at national and regional level. At the same time, the impacts of such projects per se were more difficult to track and comment upon.

373. In light of the above, the absence of a FAO Representative with clear mandate and time to devote to the work in Armenia appeared to be the primary cause for the low efficiency and effectiveness of the national field programme. Although some responsibility rested also with the Government in the case of the location of the laboratories foreseen by one of the Greek funded-projects, in all other cases of poor efficiency, there was little doubt that this was due to lack of management capacity within FAO's arrangements for Armenia, which eventually affected results, sustainability and impacts. Regional and other projects performed better because they were managed by a Budget Holder and Lead Technical Officer, sitting in REU or HQ, but whose roles and responsibilities were clear-cut, whereas this was not the case for the national projects.

374. Also, the absence of a FAO Representative able to dialogue with senior government staff on a number of policy issues, contributed to the lack of, or limited uptake of some project results, that had not been well timed to seize the appropriate political momentum. This appeared to be the case for the TCPs on mountain development and land consolidation. Although the Evaluation recognizes that this was to a large extent outside FAO's control, the Organization was not able to put in place adequate mechanisms for advocacy and follow-up on the results of its own initiatives.

375. Furthermore, as discussed earlier in the report, not only was the field programme managed separately and independently from the Regular Programme funded activities, but most initiatives within the field programme were managed in isolation as well. The responsibility for ensuring coherence and collaboration across the various initiatives rested with the FAO Representative: for a number of reasons, including the limited time spent in the country by all appointees, this did not happen and each project followed its own path. The immediate consequence was poor evidence of collaboration, let alone development of synergies, across the various projects.

12.2 Normative and knowledge products

376. The term 'normative and knowledge products' includes publications and public events that FAO issues or organizes as part of its knowledge management mandate. The Evaluation identified 53 normative and knowledge products of relevance to Armenia, that were issued or organized independently from the projects discussed above. The list includes 6 meetings and workshops, four Briefs, one flagship publication, manuals, guidelines and reports. Of these, six were focused exclusively on Armenia whereas all others, were also relevant to the country with a sub-regional or regional focus.

377. The products tackled different topics, ranging across all main FAO sectors. More than half of the products, 31, were issued by HQ, including half of the meetings; SEU/REU was responsible for issuing or managing 14 products and the remaining eight were jointly produced.

378. The Evaluation assessed 25 of the identified publications, against standard evaluation criteria and six-point scale; Box 24 below shows the scoring of the products for Armenia as well as for those products assessed for the REU-SEC evaluation. Overall, normative products focused on Armenia scored similarly to the regional average: positive scoring for relevance, acceptable for technical quality; poor for gender mainstreaming, and average for all other criteria. The lower levels of uptake and impact were also influenced by the language, as most products were issued in English.

Box 24. Average qualitative assessment of 25 Armenia-relevant and of 28 Europe and Central Asia relevant FAO normative products

Criteria / group of products	Relevance to the Region/country (1-6)	Technical quality (1-6)	Outcome (actual or potential uptake and use, 1-6)	Impact (actual or potential evidence of lasting changes from use, 1-6)	Integration of environmental sustainability concepts (1-6)	Gender mainstreaming (1-6)	Integration of social inclusion and poverty alleviation issues (1-6)

Armenia focus	5.1	4.0	3.6	3.3	3.2	2.4	3.5
Europe and Central Asia	4.6	4.4	4.3	4.0	3.3	2.6	3.8

Source: Evaluation

379. The flagship publication deserves separate mention: in 2010, the FAO Agricultural Department published ‘Gardens of Biodiversity: Conservation of genetic resources and their use in traditional food production systems by small farmers of the Southern Caucasus’, a thoroughly documented advocacy work in support of the agricultural biodiversity in the Southern Caucasus. The book, which contains hundreds of photographs, was seen in the offices of senior managers in Governments, although some partner agencies had not received it. One interlocutor said “What I like about this book is that it does not talk about countries, but about the Caucasus and its people”. The Evaluation team scored it as good in terms of relevance and above satisfactory for most other criteria, excluding integration of gender equality and social inclusion concerns.

380. Overall, participants in regional and international meetings were very appreciative of the opportunity to be exposed to different ideas and views, and develop networks. To some extent, these events contributed also to developing capacities (see section below) among Government staff.

381. A major issue with FAO's normative and knowledge products was dissemination. Beyond the senior managers in the MoA or in the institutions working very closely with FAO, very few among the stakeholders met by the Evaluation were aware of the existence of these products or knew where to look for them. Major factors in this were both the poor dissemination capacity from HQ and REU to the country office, and limited initiative at country level to reach out to key partners outside the Government.

12.3 Capacity development

382. Capacity development was considered adequate and good in most initiatives, including those funded through Regular Programme resources. Virtually all FAO interventions have contributed to develop individual and institutional national capacity through:

- carrying out CD events for large numbers of Government staff through almost all interventions;
- facilitating participation of Government staff in regional and international events on various topic, including statistics, Codex Alimentarius, International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources, etc.
- recruiting national consultants to implement projects; 50% of the consultants recruited in last six years were national experts.

383. Although difficult to measure, participants stated great appreciation for support received. There was evidence of uptake, albeit at different speeds, and of changed practices and attitudes through some initiatives: e.g. in ASF, brucellosis, FMD; forest nursery; improved diagnostic methods in animal health and pesticide residue monitoring (upcoming).

384. This, in the view of the Evaluation, was a very positive result: Armenia has a reasonable institutional set-up and sufficient, albeit not huge financial resources for running them. In such a context, the capacity of national staff is a key factor in the development and implementation of effective policies and strategies. In this, FAO has contributed to better governance, albeit more work remains to be done, in particular in terms of strengthening institutions and fostering an enabling environment in the different areas of intervention.

12.4 Delivery of core functions

385. The assessment of FAO's delivery of its core functions facilitates describing the performance of the Organization at an aggregate level of analysis as it allows visualizing what are the areas of strengths and weaknesses, and where the corporate comparative advantage lies.

386. FAO's work in Armenia contributed positively to most functions, as shown in Box 25. The functions where it proved to be less effective were inter-disciplinarity and innovation, and advocacy and communication.

387. With respect to the latter, the Evaluation found that FAO is a reliable assistant of MoA on technical matters but did not play any advocacy role in support of its global goals of reducing food insecurity and poverty through agriculture and rural development. Also, although FAO-Armenia in collaboration with the UN Communication Group, reaches out to the national media on a regular basis including on the global FAO mandate, a number of institutions met expressed a wish for FAO to be more visible and inclusive, in particular beyond the boundaries of MoA. Further, FAO in Armenia did not appear as being very active in national discussion fora on agriculture and rural development and is not perceived as an advocate in favour of food security and poverty alleviation outside MoA.

Box 25. Evaluation's assessment of FAO's performance in delivering its core functions in Armenia

N.	Core function	Evaluation's assessment
<i>a</i>	<i>Monitoring and assessment of long-term and medium-term trends and perspectives</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work in this core function mainly focused on Food Security Information Systems and related information on crop forecasts, and the national Food Balance Sheet. Although there are some areas for improvement on dissemination strategy and use, the programme appears to be producing useful outputs.
<i>b</i>	<i>Assembly and provision of information, knowledge and statistics</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Armenia is making some use of these FAO core functions. Consistent evidence is available on the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> use of FAO statistical data and statistical methods and tools, namely for the agricultural census and for enhancing the quality of sex-disaggregated data in national statistics; use of FAO publications, methods and tools in animal health, food safety, forestry.
<i>c</i>	<i>Development of international instruments, norms and standards</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Participation of Armenia in FAO statutory bodies such as Codex Alimentarius, Central Asia and Caucasus Commission for inland fisheries and aquaculture; International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources; etc.
<i>d</i>	<i>Policy and strategy options and advice</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This organizational core function was carried out exclusively through projects and programmes, in the form of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Draft strategy proposals on land consolidation, mountain development, biosecurity, GMOs, African swine fever; brucellosis;

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Contributions to national processes of policy development, e.g. the support to the Food Security Concept Note; In general well appreciated; although in some cases it is too early to say as proposals were only recently completed, it appears that adoption and follow-up by Government has been rather uneven.
<i>e</i>	Technical support to promote technology transfer and build capacity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Great majority of FAO interventions with a strong technical content and technology transfer, including equipments. This applies to animal health, forestry, agro-meteorology, crop production and protection. In some cases, focus was on methods and approaches, e.g. for land consolidation and mountain development. Virtually all FAO interventions have contributed to develop individual and institutional national capacity through: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> carrying out CD events for large numbers of Government staff through almost all interventions; by facilitating participation of Government staff in regional and international events on various topics, including statistics, Codex Alimentarius, International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources, etc. by recruiting national consultants to implement projects; 50% of the consultants recruited in last six years were national experts
<i>f</i>	Advocacy and communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> FAO is a reliable assistant of MoA on technical matters but did not play any advocacy role in support of its global goals of reducing food insecurity and poverty through agriculture and rural development. Although FAO-Armenia, also supported by the UNCT, reaches out to the national media on a regular basis including on global FAO mandate, a number of institutions met expressed a wish for FAO to be more visible and inclusive, in particular beyond the boundaries of MoA. FAO in Armenia does not appear as being very active in national discussion fora on agriculture and rural development; its action as an advocate in favour of Food security and poverty alleviation was not very visible beyond MoA and UNCT.
<i>g</i>	Inter-disciplinarity and innovation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No examples of inter-disciplinarity so far. Projects rather focused on specific technical areas, with no attempts at integrating a multi-disciplinary approach to agricultural and rural development. Elements of innovation were contained in the land consolidation project, by proposing a new approach to tackle the land-fragmentation challenge.
<i>h</i>	Partnerships and alliances	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In some cases, FAO is facilitating partnerships among national institutions by enhancing the enabling environment: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> in animal health, collaboration between MoA and MoH; in Food Security Information Systems, exchange of information and data between MoA, Hydrological Institute, National Statistics Office; Virtual extension network. Similarly, FAO is facilitating regional cooperation at the technical level on a number of themes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Surveillance and control of transboundary animal diseases; Surveillance and control of migratory pests (locusts); Seed improvement; Biosafety and bio-security; Food Security Information Systems. In terms of collaboration with the UN agencies, FAO participated in development activities only through the Telefood programme

Source: Evaluation

13 Contribution to MDGs 1, 3 and 7 and FAO global goals

13.1 Food security and poverty reduction

388. FAO's work in Armenia during the period under evaluation, including both the field programme and the more limited activities funded through the Regular programme, has been largely focused on transfer of technology and capacity development in specific sectors. Projects, even those with ambitions of improving food security and reducing poverty, were not strategically designed on achieving these goals; nor have social inclusion and human-rights based approaches been sufficiently mainstreamed into the Organization's work.

389. The Evaluation was unable to find evidence of significant contribution to FAO's Global Goal of Food Security and to the Millennium Development Goal 1, Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger, if any at all. For example, in the forestry nursery project, poverty of household was not a criterion for selection of workers from communities concerned; in the case of the slaughterhouse development project, the approach proposed will likely result in social exclusion of the poor sectors of population from safe meat products. In these case, the absence of both inter-disciplinary perspective and pursuit of synergies and dialogue with stakeholders other than the Government, were also contributing factors to the limited achievements in this domain.

13.2 Gender equality

390. Armenia is a State party to the Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), has approved the Optional Protocol to the CEDAW and the Convention on the Political Rights of Women and has also joined the European Social Charter. Thus, the Government of Armenia has made gender a priority in its agenda and in February 2010, the first Gender Policy Concept Paper was approved by the Armenian Prime Minister. This document defines gender strategies of the country's policy and refers to the equal rights and opportunities for men and women in all spheres of social life.

391. The government has shown its commitment by requesting several ministries including Agriculture, Health care, Economy, Education, Labour and Social Affairs, Territorial administration and others to submit 2011-2015 Gender Policy Action Plans that will be implemented in their respective areas. The Government of Armenia's attention to gender was also reflected in the two UNDAF for Armenia, which highlight issues of poverty, social inclusion and gender as priority areas of concern for the country.

392. The Evaluation identified some good examples of gender equality promotion within FAO's work in Armenia. The first was the support provided to the integration of sex-disaggregated indicators in the work of the National Statistics Service. Staff from the NSS and MoA also attended a number of meetings tackling gender and statistics, including the expert consultation organized in the framework of the Working Party on Women and the Family in Rural Development in FAO HQ in early 2012, on gender and statistics.

393. A second positive example of intervention where women benefitted largely of FAO's support was the project on land consolidation. The project, among other objectives, also envisioned "*strengthening the existing institutional and organizational framework and*

the role of local/regional actors and stakeholders including the private sector and CSOs with a special emphasis on women". In the Armenian villages currently the majority of residents are women due to large scale seasonal migration: thus the project de-facto worked extensively with women-heads of households. A more structured process of targeting women's NGOs was however lacking.

394. The third case was the Brucellosis control project: Men, women and children care for livestock and there were no adverse gender-related elements in the project design. Care was taken to brief female staff to avoid handling vaccines if pregnant. Women were actively involved with awareness campaigns, which aimed to specifically target women. Furthermore, it was stated that Telefood initiatives benefit women: this may have been the case, also because several of these dealt with distribution of small animals for household food security; however the number of people reached through these projects is usually very limited, as is their sustainability.

395. In one project, opportunities emerged for women to be employed as field labourers; and in several of the laboratories established in the context of FAO projects, a majority of employees are women. Also, in a number of cases, Government female junior and senior staff attended FAO training events and collaborate directly with FAO projects. However, this was not the result of a strategic approach or intention to contribute to gender equality at national level.

396. Besides those mentioned, no other FAO initiative in Armenia, be it project or normative and knowledge product, paid any attention to gender equality concerns in design and implementation. The average scoring of the five Key projects assessed in detail, was 2.2, i.e. poor, for gender equality and social inclusion. This was similar to the average for the 18 Key projects assessed in the Europe and Central Asia region, which reached 2.7, still less than inadequate.

397. The majority of FAO staff in Armenia are women, including the Assistant FAO Representative and two project coordinators. The office has appointed a Gender Focal Point, who is a member of the UNCT Working Group on gender and took part in relevant trainings organized by the UN with other partners in the country. However, there was no evidence of any follow-up. Nor, across all FAO staff in the country, both at junior and senior levels, did mainstreaming gender equality appear as a concern to be taken into account in the work of the Organization.

398. In conclusion, overall FAO initiatives in Armenia did not contribute to improving gender equality and to the country's efforts in achieving MDG 3. However, the work on integration of sex-disaggregated data in the national statistics, is likely to bear positive results in the medium to long term.

13.3 Environmental sustainability

399. Through the projects in the Forestry and Plant protection and Production sectors, FAO contributed to some extent, to the achievement of MDG 7: Ensure Environmental Sustainability. This was mainly through capacity development of government staff, supporting the public consultation mechanism for the existing legislation and conservation of the agriculture biodiversity, the latter through both field projects and knowledge products.

400. In the long term, FAO's work on pesticide control and residue monitoring may eventually bring positive effects in terms of protection of the natural resource base. However, the Evaluation noted a number of missed opportunities in terms of advocacy, synergies and collaboration with other institutions and civil society organisations.

14 Overall conclusions and recommendations

401. Overall, FAO's support to the country has been highly relevant to tackle country needs and requests from the Government, building on its comparative advantage in a number of technical areas. The Government of Armenia considers FAO as a close technical advisor.

402. Interventions in the sectors of animal health, forestry, plant genetic resources and plant protection, and agricultural policy, have met key needs and in some cases can play a catalytic role in agricultural development and natural resources management in the country. Other projects have been less relevant or partial duplications of other interventions.

403. Efficiency of FAO's work has been rather uneven, with both positive and negative examples. The former included the immediate response to requests on African swine fever and locust outbreaks; the latter, projects in the sector of food safety and quality and forestry have suffered huge delays during implementation. A factor of further delays was the absence of an FAO imprest account, due to the Organization's institutional status in the country: although UNDP has been extremely helpful and willing to facilitate, the necessary passage through it for any disbursement slowed down and increased costs of operations.

404. The analysis of FAO's delivery against the other standard evaluation criteria resulted in mixed assessment across the sectors and initiatives. Regional and global interventions appeared to be better designed and followed-up, than national projects. In general, sustainability was limited and uptake by the Government of policies and strategies was not consistent. Most interventions scored poorly on the integration of poverty eradication, food security, gender equality and social inclusion goals, with a few notable exceptions.

405. As also pointed out by the Ministry of Agriculture, the Evaluation confirmed that the country office and staff in the FAO Representation work to the best of their capacity. However, the institutional set-up of FAO in Armenia was not the most conducive for an efficient and effective delivery. At the same time, more technical expertise in the FAO office appeared to be desirable, in the areas of focus of the Country Programming Framework.

406. While FAO was a reliable assistant of the MoA on technical matters, it did not play a large advocacy role in support of its global goals of reducing food insecurity and poverty through agriculture and rural development. Also, although FAO-Armenia in collaboration with the UN Communication Group, reaches out to the national media on a regular basis including on global FAO mandate, a number of institutions met expressed a wish for FAO to be more visible and inclusive, in particular beyond the boundaries of the MoA.

407. There is little doubt that the low levels of delegation at country level, some of which should be resolved through the deployment of GRMS in 2013, were a major cause of limited efficiency of FAO in the country. However, the main reasons behind weak delivery appeared

to stem from the model of multi-accredited FAO Representative in Europe and Central Asia: the abnormal work-load accumulated through the roles of Sub-Regional Coordinator/Deputy Regional Representative and FAO representative in three countries, cannot be efficient under any circumstance.

408. Furthermore, decisions such as the artificial separation between the Regular Programme and the field programme, the limited approach towards empowerment of the country office, and the absence of effective leadership in the management and coordination of the field programme, have led to duplication of roles and tasks, waste of resources, and missed opportunities in delivery. Last, the Organization did not identify solutions to rather important issues such as the absence of an adequate Host Country Agreement.

409. This whole set of circumstances resulted in an inefficient business model in terms of delegation of authority and organization and coordination of the office. In this respect, some increase in the presence and management efforts by the multiple accredited FAO representative, together with a more rational use of AOS and national human resources, independently from source of funding, in a country-programme perspective, could improve the overall efficiency and performance of the Organization in the country.

410. The most pressing issues in respect to FAO's presence in the Armenia that in the view of the Evaluation required urgent and careful attention are addressed in Recommendations 1 to 3 below. These issues also contributed to formulate recommendations in the Evaluation of FAO's Regional and Sub-regional offices for Europe and Central Asia. In particular, Recommendation 3 of the REU/SEC evaluation focused on the need for one multiple-accredited FAO Representative exclusively for Armenia and Georgia and should guide the Organization's response to Recommendation 2 below.⁶⁵

Recommendation 1: To the Government of Armenia and FAO, on the status of the organization

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.

Recommendation 2: To FAO, on FAO Representative in Armenia

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 fulfil 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.

⁶⁵ Evaluation of FAO's Regional and Sub-regional offices for Europe and Central Asia, Recommendation 3, item a): a non-resident FAO Representative be appointed with multiple-accreditation to Armenia and Georgia; the Assistant FAO Representatives at country level should be delegated enough authority to manage the whole programme, represent FAO within the UN, make decisions or facilitate rapid decision-making;

Recommendation 3: To FAO, on its operational set-up in Armenia

FAO should revise the operational set-up of FAO in Armenia in terms of roles and responsibilities as follows:

- a) Bringing all projects under the operational responsibility of the Assistant FAO Representative;
- b) Through AOS resources originating from the national projects, or direct costs charged to project budgets, recruit 2 support staff for operations and administration;
- 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.

411. The Evaluation also assessed the relevance and usefulness of the first FAO-Republic of Armenia Country Programming Framework for the period 2012-2015. The CPF fully meets the expectations of the Ministry of Agriculture and contributes to filling gaps and complement activities supported by other donors. By being very ambitious and broad, it will require further planning exercises on a biennial basis, to ensure focus and effective action. The CPF also lacks to some extent, the perspectives and support of other institutions: this could be a lesson learnt for the future. The Evaluation welcomed the information received at the time of finalizing the report, that focus areas for 2013-2014 had already been identified and a revised version of the CPF was under preparation. Recommendation 4 focuses exactly on these aspects.

Recommendation 4: To the Government of Armenia and FAO, on prioritizing within the CPF

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.

412. At the time of the Evaluation, two major projects were still lagging behind schedule, due to a number of difficulties. In the last quarter of 2012, improvements were reported and were sustained at the time of finalizing this report. Nevertheless, the Evaluation wished to stress the importance of focusing attention and efforts on their completion, through Recommendation 5.

Recommendation 5: To FAO, on on-going projects in Armenia

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).

Annexes

- Annex 1.** Evaluation Terms of Reference
- Annex 2.** Profile of evaluation team members
- Annex 3.** Evaluation tools
- Annex 4.** List of institutions and stakeholders met during the evaluation process
- Annex 5.** Inventory of the field programme in Armenia
- Annex 6.** Inventory of FAO normative products for Armenia
- Annex 7.** Assessment of key projects
- Annex 8.** Republic of Armenia's legislations and decrees in areas relevant to FAO's mandate