

CALL FOR EXPRESSION OF INTEREST

Process Evaluation of National Medium-Term Priority Frameworks (NMTPF) and Priority Setting at Country Level

Team Leader

Background

The 2004 evaluation of decentralization considered how FAO could better address country needs and concluded there was a need to better match FAO's work to the priorities of countries. The evaluation noted that this can only be done through sustained dialogue at national level and accordingly recommended the establishment of four-year rolling FAO national priority frameworks, to be developed with government and, as appropriate, donors, supported as necessary by FAO technical and policy inputs. This was reinforced in the 2007 evaluation of the Technical Cooperation Programme, which made a similar recommendation with respect to providing guidance for setting priority areas for assistance.

FAO began the roll-out of National Medium-Term Priority Frameworks (NMTPF) on a pilot basis in 2005 but progressed slowly. Work on NMTPF preparation accelerated during 2007-08 with some 32 countries now having NMTPFs completed, 45 at various stages of preparation, and another 28 countries planning to start. Latin America and the Caribbean has the largest number of completed NMTPFs (14), followed by Africa (10), while Asia and the Pacific and Africa have the most under preparation. Thus, FAO has embarked on the process of preparing the frameworks on a large scale. However, since doubts were raised about their quality and utility, based on the analysis by the Independent External Evaluation of FAO (2007) and observations in the Synthesis of Country Evaluations (May 2008)¹, the FAO Programme Committee (PC) requested that a process evaluation, examining the Plans developed so far, should be a priority evaluation activity. Such an evaluation was proposed as part of the FAO evaluation rolling work plan for 2009-10, and was endorsed by the PC at its 100th session in September 2008.

The FAO Evaluation Service is now initiating a Process Evaluation of National Medium-Term Priority Frameworks and Priority Setting at Country Level. The main purpose of the evaluation will be to assess the actual and likely role of the NMTPF in improving the relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, sustainability and impact of FAO's work at country level and in improving upstream and downstream linkages, relevance and coherence in the agency's new strategic planning and results-based management initiatives, from global to country level.

The FAO Evaluation Service is seeking a Team Leader to conduct this evaluation. S/he will work in close collaboration with the Evaluation Officer responsible for this evaluation in the Evaluation Service and FAO staff concerned. The evaluation team leader will participate in the whole evaluation process starting as early as possible, including the preparatory phase. S/he should be a senior expert in agriculture and rural development with significant experience in strategic planning. The Team Leader should not have been involved in the design or implementation of FAO NMTPFs in recent years and will be required to sign a conflict of interest declaration.

¹ PC 99/3 (b), May 2008

Essential Qualifications

- Post graduate degree in social sciences, economics, agriculture or related areas;
- At least 15 years of experience at international level working for development agencies;
- Extensive and proven experience in strategic planning and programming at country and agency levels;
- Extensive and proven experience as a team leader;
- Excellent writing skills in English and good verbal communication skills.

Desirable Qualifications

- Previous experience conducting/taking part in independent evaluations;
- Previous experience in the fields of agricultural and rural development;
- Knowledge of the UN system and FAO structure and its organizational/institutional mechanisms.

Evaluation Time Schedule

The consultancy will take place in three phases:

- 1st phase: Preparatory phase (tentatively 3/4 weeks – mid-September/October 2009)
 - Preparation of and consultation on terms of reference for evaluation; initiate search for evaluation team members.
 - Draft and consult on questionnaires; develop criteria for country visit selection and preliminary identification of countries.
 - Initiate logistics for regional meetings and country visits.
- 2nd phase: Conduct of the evaluation field work (tentatively 6-8 weeks between October and December 2009)
 - Conduct interviews at Headquarters, Regional and Sub-regional Offices, hold regional meetings and visit a sample of regional and country offices;
- 3rd phase: Report drafting and final consultation with stakeholders (tentatively 5 weeks, January-February 2010)
 - Prepare a comprehensive evaluation report;
 - Present the report to stakeholders.

Application Process

Interested candidates should send their application by **Monday, 31 August 2009**, to the email address NMTPF-evaluation@fao.org. Please specify “Process Evaluation of National Medium-Term Priority Frameworks (NMTPF) and Priority Setting at Country Level” in the email subject line. Applications should be composed of the candidate’s FAO Personal History Form (available at http://www.fao.org/VA/vac_en.htm) and of a detailed Curriculum Vitae, and should include:

- Information on sex, age and nationality;
- Expected daily fee rate (exclusive of expenses);²
- Availability between September – December 2009 and in the first half of 2010.

Only those applicants being considered for appointment will be contacted

² Candidates will be required to provide evidence of rates for previous employment.