



Food and Agriculture  
Organization of the  
United Nations



OFFICE OF EVALUATION

Evaluation of FAO's Programme in

# West Bank and Gaza Strip

2011-2015

August 2017



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West Bank and Gaza Strip  
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## Acronyms and Abbreviations

AAP	Accountability to Affected Populations
AECID	Spanish Agency for International Development Cooperation
AOS	Administrative and Operational Support
APIS	Agricultural Projects Information System
CBOs	Community-based Organizations
CD	Capacity Development
CFS	Committee on World Food Security
COGAT	Coordination of Government Activities in the Territories
CPF	Country Programming Framework
CSO	Civil Society Organization
DaLA	Damage, Loss and Needs Assessment
DPM	Deputy Programme Manager
DRM	Disaster Risk Management
DRR	Disaster Risk Reduction
EU	European Union
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
FSS	Food Security Sector
GAP	Good Agricultural Practices
GCP	Government Cooperative Programme
GDI	Gender Development Index
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
HCT	Humanitarian Country Team
HNO	Humanitarian Needs Overview
HRP	Humanitarian Response Plan
HVC	High Value Crops
IFI	International Financial Institution
IMF	International Monetary Fund
IP	Implementing Partner
ISF	Israeli Security Forces
LACS	Local Aid Coordination Secretariat
LbL-i	Livestock Based Livelihoods Support Programme – institutional component
LoA	Letter of Agreement
LRRD	Linking Relief, Rehabilitation and Development
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MoA	Ministry of Agriculture
MoH	Ministry of Health
NAIS	National Animal Identification System
NENA	North East and North Africa
NGO	Non-governmental Organization
OCHA	United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs

OSD	Office of Support to Decentralized Offices
OSRO	Office for Special Relief Operations
PA	Palestinian Authority
PADRRIF	Palestinian Agriculture Disaster Risk Reduction and Insurance Fund
PAPP	Programme of Assistance to the Palestinian People
PCBS	Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics
PF	Programme Framework
PNTD	Participatory and Negotiated Territorial Development
PoA	Plan of Action
PSC	Project Support Cost
PVCA	Participatory Vulnerability and Capacity Assessment
RBM	Results-based Management
RI	Regional Initiative
RIMA	Resilience Index Measurement Analysis
RNE	Regional Office for the Near East and North Africa
SEFSec	Socio-economic and Food Security survey
SF	Strategic Framework
SFERA	Special Fund for Emergency and Rehabilitation Activities
SO	Strategic Objective
SPS	Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures
SWOT	Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunity and Threats
TCE	Emergency and Rehabilitation Division
TCP	Technical Cooperation Programme
UNDAF	United Nations Development Assistance Framework
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNRWA	United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East
UNSCO	United Nations Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process
WBGS	West Bank and Gaza Strip
WFP	World Food Programme
WHO	World Health Organization
WSI	Regional Initiative on Water Scarcity
YMCA	World Alliance of Young Men's Christian Associations



## Executive Summary

### Introduction

- 1 The purpose of this evaluation was to review the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations' (FAO's) programme in the West Bank and Gaza Strip (WBGS), and to better align it with the needs of the Palestinian government as well as affected populations. The evaluation also aimed to enhance the impact of FAO's contributions to achieve the Global Goals of FAO's members: i) eradication of hunger, food insecurity and malnutrition; ii) elimination of poverty and the driving forward of economic and social progress for all; and iii) sustainable management and utilization of natural resources at the country level.
- 2 The overall objective of this evaluation was to assess FAO's work in WBGS over 2011 to 2015, identifying lessons learned, good practices, causes of success and failure, gaps in FAO's programming and potential areas of future work. The specific objectives of the evaluation were to assess i) FAO's strategic relevance in the WBGS, and ii) contributions made by FAO towards sustainable socio-economic growth and food security as well as the resilience of small-scale farmers, herders and fisher people in the WBGS.
- 3 The evaluation aimed to provide accountability to governmental and non-governmental partners, resource partners, communities in WBGS, as well as all member countries. The evaluation reviewed the design and implementation of FAO's programme in WBGS in order to draw lessons and provide advice to FAO and its main partners as they continue to respond to the crisis in WBGS.
- 4 The evaluation covered *the entire programme implemented by FAO in the West Bank and Gaza Strip between 2011 and 2015*, including activities funded through trust funds and FAO's own resources. The evaluation's framework of analysis was based on the goals of the two programming documents, the *Plan of Action* 2011-2013 and the *Programme Framework* 2014-2016.
- 5 The evaluation was carried out within the scope of FAO's Strategic Objectives (SOs), particularly SO2 "Make agriculture, forestry and fisheries more productive and sustainable", SO4 "Enable inclusive and efficient agricultural and food systems" and SO5 "Increase the resilience of livelihoods to threats and crises". The evaluation paid particular attention to strategic alignment with these SOs, endeavouring to draw lessons benefiting the work of the Organization toward these objectives.
- 6 The *Evaluation of FAO's Contribution to Crisis-related Transition*<sup>1</sup> was used as a frame of reference, as the findings and recommendations were relevant to the WBGS context. In particular, the evaluation's theoretical framework, theory of change and conceptual definitions were adopted and referred to in framing this evaluation and developing its methodology.

### Methodology

- 7 The evaluation was managed by the Office of Evaluation and carried out by a team of four people comprising a range of sectoral expertise. The majority of the external team members were Palestinian or of Palestinian origin and Arabic speakers. The team visited WBGS and Israel between 15 February and 15 April 2016. As well as holding interviews and reviewing documents in Jerusalem, the team visited ten governorates in the West Bank and five in the Gaza Strip.
- 8 Project sites were selected in consultation with the WBGS office aiming at relevance and geographic variety. Semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions (FGDs) were

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1 *The evaluation of FAO's contribution to crisis-related transition: linking relief, rehabilitation and development* was carried out over the first three quarters of 2014 and included the West Bank and Gaza Strip as one of the case studies.

undertaken with beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries, implementing partners (IPs) and local authorities to understand their views.

- 9 The following areas of work were identified as particularly relevant during the preparatory phase of the evaluation: cash transfers and vulnerable livelihoods, access to markets, and land and water resource management. FAO's contributions were considered through the lens of these three areas.
- 10 The evaluation team analysed the WBGS programme based on the following evaluation questions (and the related sub-questions):
  - a. Considering FAO's mandate and Strategic Framework (SF), was the Organization's strategy relevant and effective in the WBGS?
  - b. How did FAO position itself in the context of the protracted crisis in WBGS? What are the challenges and opportunities for FAO as a technical agency in this context, and to what extent has it addressed and taken advantage of them?
  - c. To what extent has the programme addressed the humanitarian and development needs of Palestinians and their communities through agriculture, and helped them move toward sustainable socio-economic growth, resilience and food security? What were the impacts of FAO's work on livelihoods, institutional capacities and cross-cutting areas of work?

## Context

- 11 WBGS faces a protracted crisis due to the occupation, characterized by access restrictions to water and land and to domestic and external markets, recurrent conflict, longstanding economic food access crisis, the breakdown of livelihoods and insufficient institutional capacity to respond. The viability of agricultural livelihoods, furthermore, is constrained by specific and different vulnerabilities and risks in the West Bank (e.g. settler violence, land confiscation, restriction of movement and access to land and water, problems tied to administration of Area C) and the Gaza Strip (e.g. blockade, high dependency on food imports, access to land in the Seam Zone and to the sea, high dependency on relief aid, high price volatility, erratic restrictions to entry and export of goods). The evaluation therefore assessed FAO's work both in the West Bank and in the Gaza Strip, considering the different challenges faced by the population in the two areas.

## Findings

Assessment of FAO's strategic positioning in WBGS

### Strategic relevance and effectiveness

#### *Findings on FAO WBGS strategic frameworks*

- FAO WBGS strategic frameworks increasingly shifted toward a more developmental focus, bridging the humanitarian/development divide through a resilience approach.
- This was a natural evolution of FAO WBGS' work and relevant to this context, as is the value chain approach at the basis of the Programme Framework (PF), though the potential of adopting a market-centred focus was not fully exploited.
- The longer timeframe and broader aims of some projects indicated an evolution towards a more programmatic approach, though overall the portfolio continues to be project led, mainly due to high reliance on voluntary project funding.
- The design of the programme had some weaknesses; for example, the causal chains between projects, activities and the overall framework were not well defined, and the logframe lacked clarity on a number of fronts.
- Building national capacity and supporting policy and normative work was aligned with FAO's mandate and relevant and appropriate to the United Nations' support to a two-state solution.

### *Findings on FAO's analytical approach*

- Both programming documents under review were supported by a situation analysis which demonstrates attention to the context; FAO's overarching analysis at national and governorate level was well-constructed and based on a wide range of exercises.
- FAO developed a framework to work through value chains that was relevant to the context and appropriate to FAO's work and resilience-building aim.
- When looking at specific project needs assessments, no context analysis or analyses of risks, cash injections, markets, protection or natural resources were undertaken at community and household levels. Though such analyses could all greatly benefit FAO's programming, neither FAO headquarters nor donors provided funding to undertake assessments or build baselines prior to project design.
- As FAO's portfolio shifts towards development, its future work supporting food security information systems will also need to shift away from its current annual emergency focus, to more comprehensive systems, and further research, technical support and financial commitments in order to cover a wide range of agricultural data and information systems.
- Any future work advocating and supporting improved food security information must wait for the development of the Palestinian Authority's (PA's) new National Policy Agenda 2017-2022 as well as the final endorsement and adoption of the Socio-economic and Food Security (SEFSec) methodology by Palestinian authorities.

### *Findings on linking relief, rehabilitation and development*

- FAO's focus on resilience as a way of linking relief, rehabilitation and development was constructive and clearly reflected conceptually in its strategies and policy guidance, but not in the design of activities.
- In practice, there was limited integration of humanitarian and development in FAO's value chain approach, whose rationale is grounded in an analysis of the business environment and not enough on the humanitarian challenges the context presents.
- While projects claimed to be implementing resilience-building activities, these were often focused on asset building rather than addressing the underlying issues that create, perpetuate or increase the vulnerability of the targeted population (e.g. progressive erosion of natural resources or reduction of access to resources and labour, commodity or service markets).
- There was a coordination gap at operational level between FAO's humanitarian and development activities, and a lack of harmonization between the Food Security Sector (FSS) and the Agricultural Working Group's aims and activities.
- Though crisis modifiers were not systematically integrated into the programme, by scaling up or modifying interventions at field level, FAO demonstrated an ability to respond to emergencies.

### *Findings on alignment with FAO's corporate Strategic Framework*

- The Programme Framework has fully incorporated the current reviewed Strategic Framework 2013-2023 in its strategy, and both programming documents in the period under review are clearly linked to the corporate objective of enhancing resilience, aligning with the previous Strategic Objective I and current Strategic Objective 5. There were also some links with SO2, 3 and 4.
- FAO's Strategic Framework was considered a useful tool by staff for thinking strategically about FAO's overall mandate, but not necessarily conducive to better programming.

### *Findings on partnership and coordination*

- FAO's collaboration with the Palestinian Authority intensified over the years through strategic and operational work with different ministries, and became increasingly focused on institutional capacity development.
- FAO's presence and leadership in multiple coordination fora and technical working groups was widely praised by all stakeholders. The donor community recognized FAO's technical role and appreciates its ability to collaborate with the government counterparts.

- Notwithstanding solid partnerships with key actors, FAO displays weaknesses when partnering with local non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and community-based organizations (CBOs), whose work is mostly limited to service provision regulated through Letters of Agreement (LoAs).

#### *Findings on Decentralization*

- As a focus country, WBGS was supported in implementing activities in line with the Regional Initiatives (RIs), providing otherwise difficulty to access seed funds.
- The country support process seems to have improved over the two years of its implementation, with a broader range of SOs supporting the office, and a higher number of requests of support being met.

#### **Positioning in the context of a protracted crisis**

##### *Findings on the special status of the office*

- Not being a Representation at the diplomatic and administrative level had various consequences for the office, including not benefitting from FAO's annual regular budget allocation and being fully funded through the projects it implements.
- Some efforts were made by the Office of Support to Decentralized Offices in 2014 to clarify key issues, however the potential for FAO's work could be seriously affected by the reduction in programme delivery.
- The capacity of retaining qualified core staff and the consistently high level of the Head of Office has raised the reputation of the office. The need to be efficient and effective in order to survive seems to have been at least partly the reason behind the office's high standards over time.
- Presently the office relies on emergency work to cover its running costs, and on a share of project budget reserved for administrative and operational costs. The sustainability of this model is questionable.
- The difficulties of access for staff travelling between the WB and the GS are a serious constraint to joint work, and have the effect of isolating the office in the Gaza Strip.

##### *Findings on technical work in the political context*

- FAO WBGS has been involved in development cooperation, humanitarian response and (indirectly) political engagement in the peace process, using its comparative advantage to reinforce the state-building agenda.
- FAO has addressed protection mostly by supporting livelihoods and enhancing resilience in order to help people confront the consequences of the conflict and prepare them for its peaceful resolution.
- FAO's credibility and its status give it a leverage to participate in a number of negotiations by adopting a technical angle.

#### **Assessment of FAO's contribution to addressing humanitarian and development needs in WBGS**

##### *Findings on targeting*

- FAO used SEFSec data and Resilience Index Measurement Analysis (RIMA) to consider the socio-economic characteristics of its target population; however, it gave insufficient attention to shock exposure at household level, though this would be a good proxy measure of household resilience.
- Overall efforts were made to improve transparency and enhance FAO's approach to targeting, though little community consultation was carried out regarding targeting criteria.



- Inclusion and exclusion errors in targeting limited the involvement of communities in the identification and definition of targeting criteria.

#### *Findings on relevance*

- FAO's agriculture and livelihood-related activities were found to be relevant or very relevant to local needs; however, the design of activities usually was not based on context-specific analysis, but rather on the implicit knowledge of FAO staff.
- Livelihood interventions were predominantly focused on expanding beneficiaries' asset-base, with limited attention to supporting intangible processes and resources such as removing market constraints and protection threats, two key elements to address vulnerability in WBGS.
- Where activities were less relevant, this was linked to some recurrent weaknesses of design.

#### *Findings on effectiveness and timeliness*

- By restoring or increasing access to assets and key resources and household-level food production, most activities had positive effects. The food produced was used predominantly for household consumption, with important gains on dietary quality and diversity and ability to save.
- Greater access to assets and food production enhanced some beneficiaries' ability to sell surplus production.
- FAO's activities in support of agriculture were also perceived as carrying political significance by maintaining the presence of Palestinian farmers on their land, reducing the risk of confiscation and settlers' attacks, and contributing to resistance to the occupation.
- Trainings provided as part of the interventions received mixed feedback. Implementation was sometimes slow when several departments and actors were involved, but overall FAO's response to shocks was found to be effective and timely.
- Three recurrent factors were found to limit the effectiveness of FAO's livelihood interventions: when quantities of inputs were too small to make a difference; when inputs were of a different and lesser quality than had been promised; and when coverage was too limited to ensure a positive outcome.

#### *Findings on policy support and capacity development*

- FAO's engagement with the enabling environment dimension of capacity development was widely appreciated and instrumental in responding to country requests for policy assistance. FAO's assistance to policies and regulatory frameworks on plant protection and food safety was very relevant and helped to develop the ability to export products, protect agriculture and adapt to the increasing sophistication of consumer demands.
- FAO also fostered coordination in defining cross-disciplinary policies and programmes (SPS), and government's involvement in the management of transboundary resources, for example on pest and animal diseases.
- Less evident was the development of local capacity for policy analysis, formulation and implementation, affecting the sustainability and impact of developed capacities. Efforts to develop the capacity of national NGOs, CBOs and public institutions is limited, though their involvement could enhance sustainability and create multiplier effects at the community level.
- The physical and institutional constraints of the Palestinian Authority, together with the lack of preliminary beneficiary consultations and assessment of their needs by FAO, have limited ownership and undermined sustainability of some capacity development activities; sometimes this led FAO to emphasize achieving outputs rather than intervening on processes that would instead ensure local ownership and sustainability.
- Most technical trainings designed to transfer technologies and promote good agricultural practices (GAPs) were relevant and effectively delivered.

## Cross-cutting issues

### *Findings on monitoring and evaluation (M&E)*

- Overall, the assessment of project and programme contributions to impact was hindered by lack of monitoring of progress toward outcomes and of availability of disaggregated data. This was also a consequence of limited resources and dedicated staff capacities within the office.
- No reference to earlier recommendations was found in project proposals and action plans, and there seem to be no systems in place to ensure that lessons are learned and mistakes are capitalized upon. However FAO is presently developing a system to monitor its activities.

### *Findings on gender*

- While the evaluation found that FAO staff made efforts to incorporate gender aspects in FAO's operations, gender issues received little attention in project development and strategic documents.
- The current method of targeting women as beneficiaries is not adequate, and does not equate to gender programming. Instead programme designs need to be informed by an understanding of women's specific vulnerabilities and coping strategies in the WBGS.

### *Findings on accountability to affected populations (AAP)*

- The WBGS office did not fulfil FAO's corporate commitments on accountability to affected populations, though there has been progress on the transparency of selection processes, and some lessons arising after community consultations have been incorporated in programming.
- Recently the office has made a series of commitments to mainstream AAP throughout the project cycle. These have not been implemented yet, but the new AAP framework appears to have some conceptual weaknesses.

### *Findings on environmental sustainability*

- FAO's work presents several examples of efforts to use resources sustainably, especially through knowledge sharing and training at household level, training on Good Agricultural Practices and in some instances by reducing the use of chemicals and overuse of freshwater. Most of the High Value Crops (HVC) farming, though, involves conventional fertilizer and pesticide use.
- Considering that the major challenge to environmental sustainability is the over-exploitation, depletion and salinization of water sources, recycled wastewater is key to resilience, and FAO should continue its work in this area. This includes at the more strategic and systemic institutional and policy level to regulate resource use and ensure efficiency of production and sustainability.

## Conclusions

In answering the evaluation questions these conclusions consider what worked well in the WBGS programme, what the gaps were and what was innovative for FAO.

### **Conclusion 1. On FAO's strategic positioning and reputation**

- FAO was effective despite the difficult operating context and highly sensitive political situation.
- An innovative emerging trait of the WBGS programme and a lesson for FAO corporate is to address resilience by working through value chains on accessing markets.

- FAO's strategy to adopt a technical approach to advocacy was appreciated by resource partners and elevated FAO's standing among United Nations agencies. FAO's role in coordination fora and as a leader in the sector was widely acknowledged and valued.
- NGOs and IPs would like to play a greater role when working with FAO, and to be engaged in a more equal partnership.

### **Conclusion 2. On translating FAO's position programmatically**

- Though much work has been done to strengthen continuity and coherence at the programmatic level, the programme's overall structure was not reflected when translated into projects and activities. The resilience approach at the core of the programme needs to translate into projects addressing livelihoods and asset distribution. Moreover, there is a coordination gap between FAO's developmental and humanitarian activities.
- The use of value chains as the basis for programming offers an opportunity to bridge the gap between humanitarian and development activities.
- Analyses remain generic and this undermines the resilience aim and effective integration of humanitarian and development activities and goals. For example, the differences between the West Bank and the Gaza Strip were not always accounted for in the design of projects that target both areas.
- The weak link between programming documents and project activities was partly related to the unclear corporate definition (until now) of the primary goals of FAO's programming documents; this issue should be partially solved by the new Country Programming Framework (CPF) format that WBGS is about to adopt.

### **Conclusion 3. On policy support**

- Supporting Palestinian Authority institutions to develop policies is a small but important and growing area of FAO's portfolio in the WBGS. Considering the context, FAO's assistance was found to be effective and greatly appreciated by national authorities. The implications of this work are: i) improved policies and normative frameworks have the potential to immediately ease access or open outlets for the constrained Palestinian economy; ii) a better policy environment builds the PA's credibility in negotiations with local and international partners, as well as with the Israeli authorities; and iii) it strengthens the Palestinian position and its authority with regard to future advancement and the peace process.
- The current status of the office as a non-Representation affects FAO's capacity to perform its core functions, including normative work, policy development and support to information systems, as these very often fall outside the scope of project activities.

### **Conclusion 4. On community level assistance:**

- At the community level, FAO's work is focused mainly on asset building and land and water rehabilitation, as opposed to other more nuanced interventions to enhance household resilience by targeting specific needs and vulnerabilities. This has provided households and communities with critical assets to enhance their agricultural production. However, more attention should be paid to the implications of the activities on beneficiaries (e.g. risks or trade-offs for beneficiaries and the indirect effects of distributed assets).
- More could be done to factor in risk and protection at the community level, and to protect and support livelihoods.
- FAO's programming documents should consider how the activities will affect women's inclusion and empowerment, particularly in relation to women's ownership and access to natural resources, and their position in the agricultural sector.

## Recommendations

### Recommendation 1. On strategic positioning in WBGS

#### a. General

FAO should build on its successful and well recognized strategic positioning in the WBGS, while trying to improve in the areas suggested below.

#### b. Strategic Framework

Considering FAO's mandate and technical expertise, market access and value chains were appropriate strategic frameworks to address resilience. In developing related strategies, however, more clarity is needed regarding livelihood promotion and protection objectives, which should be suited to the context and target group.

Strategic alignment with Strategic Objectives should be reviewed in light of the local context, national priorities and available funding resources.

#### c. Doing technical work in a crisis context

FAO should endeavour to better understand the causes of livelihood vulnerability, and the multiple links between livelihoods and protection. One way for FAO to strengthen its focus on protection is to coordinate with other organizations working on protection issues.

#### d. Coordination and consistency between humanitarian and development work

FAO should continue to play a role in coordinating and bridging development and humanitarian work. The link between humanitarian and development work should be mainstreamed in all activities and coordination efforts, including programme formulation, implementation, and food security sector and working group coordination.

### Recommendation 2. On programming

#### a. General

Though the office is to be commended for its ongoing efforts to adopt an increasingly programmatic and harmonized approach, more systematic integration is recommended among analysis, programming and M&E. In a context of declining resources, it is vital to increase efficiency by promoting synergies between projects and activities. However, this requires dedicated resources, and donors need to be more open to supporting activities whose benefits extend beyond the projects they fund directly.

#### b. Analysis

More attention is needed to ensure that the design and implementation of project activities i) are logically and technically sound; ii) are based on a solid analysis of the context (social, economic, political); and iii) includes access to the necessary technical and financial resources for preliminary assessments and studies.

#### c. Policy support

FAO should support and advocate for the institutional capacities needed to translate policy into action. These capacities include enhanced coordination among institutions and with external actors, and improved abilities to generate, manage and use information.

#### d. Access to markets

FAO should address the imbalance between producers and traders. Local markets should be supported in order to reduce farmers' post-harvest losses and encourage the marketing of higher quality Palestinian produce. Working at the consumer end of the value chain through sensitization and awareness campaigns would enhance the competitiveness of local high quality production.

**e. Community level assistance and cash transfers**

FAO should better clarify and communicate the rationale for its choice of assistance modalities (cash or in-kind) and make explicit the alignment with the overall objective of resilience building. The relevance and appropriateness of conditional cash transfers should be better analysed and communicated, and FAO should optimize its partnerships with other agencies involved in cash-based activities.

**f. M&E**

The lack of project and programme baselines and endlines has limited FAO's ability to measure the effectiveness of interventions at household level. Moreover, improved monitoring and gender-sensitive analyses of interventions would help to improve women's inclusion and empowerment.

**Recommendation 3. On support to the office in view of its special status**

**a. General**

FAO corporate should consider how best to support the WBGs office by facilitating the necessary financial and technical resources. Resources should be made available in support of functions that are not project-specific, particularly M&E, accountability, needs assessments, programme formulation, project development and communication.

**b. Financial support**

As long as FAO WBGs is expected to bear the duties and responsibilities of a Representation, headquarters should provide the resources needed to carry out the office's duties. The general principle should be full cost recovery for any action that the office is required to undertake.

**c. Technical support**

A strong case can be made for headquarters (rather than the Regional Office for the Near East and North Africa - RNE) to provide technical support to FAO WBGs: only headquarters possesses the technical skills necessary to assist in drafting legislative frameworks, as well as for general strategic actions (assessments, evaluations, capacity building, M&E, communications, assessments and studies). Furthermore, the nationality of many officers in RNE does not allow them to travel through Israel.

**Recommendation 4. On partnerships**

**a. General**

FAO corporate should create simpler and more actionable legal instruments for establishing partnerships. This would also respond to donors' (and NGOs') frequent demands for more equal partnerships.

More systematic guidance from headquarters is recommended to improve capacity to negotiate with governments and build trusting partnerships with resource partners.

**b. Palestinian Government**

Governmental entities need to be fully committed and involved in order for their partnership with FAO to be effective. FAO should ensure that the CPF is a fully nationally owned process to guarantee its uptake.

To ensure the sustainability of its technical assistance, FAO should improve the Palestinian Government's capacities in technical innovations, rural finance, nutrition sensitive agro-food systems and safe agriculture. FAO should also enhance the Ministry of Agriculture's (MoA's) capacity to support the preparedness of farmers in responding to seasonal challenges.

**c. United Nations agencies**

Better and more complementary collaboration with United Nations agencies should be sought i) by partnering with the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) and the World Food Programme (WFP) on cash-based interventions; ii) where FAO could add value by facilitating a better match between supply and demand (e.g. by intensifying efforts to link farmers' cooperatives and retailers accepting food vouchers); iii) with the International Labour Organization on activities involving labour force and the labour market; iv) with the World Health Organization (WHO) on sanitary and phytosanitary measures (human/animal health interfaces) and coordinating on activities undertaken with the Ministry of Health (MoH) (see above); v) with the United Nations Industrial Development Organization on facilitating synergies on activities involving the food industry and in regard to laboratory development; and vi) with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) on its livelihood portfolio.

**d. NGOs/IPs/CBOs**

In partnering with NGOs and CSOs, FAO should clarify the respective roles and responsibilities of each organization, and use the appropriate contractual instruments. FAO should strive to create synergies based on value added skills and capabilities, rather than working in competition, and to build partners' capacities rather than consider them only as implementers.

**e. Private sector**

Considering FAO's market-focused strategy and its work on value chains, FAO should clarify different actors it engages with, and find ways to regulate the conditions of partnership.

# 1. Introduction

## 1.1 Background and purpose

- 1 The decision to undertake an independent evaluation of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO's) Programme in the West Bank and Gaza Strip (WBGs)<sup>2</sup> over 2011 to 2015 was taken, in cooperation with the Strategic Objective (SO) 5 management team, on the basis of the following considerations: i) the relative size of the programme; ii) the WBGs office's commitment to improve integration of monitoring and evaluation (M&E) into its activities, in order to provide accountability to national stakeholders and member countries; iii) donors' requests for evidence of results; iv) the fact that the programme has been a precursor in working at the edge between humanitarian and development programming, and that resilience has been a long-standing focus of FAO's interventions in the country, and can therefore provide important lessons for FAO's future corporate approach to building resilience and for the operationalization of FAO's Strategic Objective 5, "Increase the resilience of livelihoods to threats and crises".
- 2 The purpose of the evaluation is to provide inputs to better orient FAO's programme in the WBGs, and specifically to improve its relevance to the needs of the Palestinian Government and affected populations. The evaluation also aims to enhance the impact of FAO's contributions to achieve the Global Goals of FAO's Members: i) eradication of hunger, food insecurity and malnutrition; ii) elimination of poverty and the driving forward of economic and social progress for all; and iii) sustainable management and utilization of natural resources at the country level.<sup>3</sup>
- 3 The evaluation aims to provide **accountability** to governmental and non-governmental partners, resource partners, communities in WBGs, as well as all member countries. The evaluation reviewed the design and implementation of FAO's programme in WBGs in order to **draw lessons** and provide advice to FAO and its main partners as they continue to respond to the crisis in WBGs.
- 4 Besides drawing lessons on FAO's work in the WBGs, the evaluation seeks to contribute to a better overall understanding of FAO's modalities and capacity to respond in complex emergencies. In particular, the question of whether FAO was able to respond effectively to needs through an emergency programme with a strong development component aims to inform FAO's strategic choices regarding its engagement in protracted crises.
- 5 The **main audience** for the evaluation are FAO WBGs office management, its staff, and the support teams at all levels of the Organization who will benefit from the evaluation's findings and recommendations. Other important users of the evaluation are the Regional Office for the Near East and North Africa (RNE) and FAO as a whole, including the SP5 management team, divisions at headquarters, and other country offices and programmes in contexts of protracted and complex crises that will benefit and build on lessons learned and good practices. Further users of the evaluation will be FAO's partners within the broader development community, including the Palestinian Authority (PA), resource partners, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), implementing partners (IPs) and other UN agencies, in particular those with whom strategic interventions were identified in the context of the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) for the State of Palestine and the Humanitarian Response Plan (HRP). Although not a target group for the evaluation report itself, the evaluation also aspires to provide accountability with respect to communities and in particular vulnerable groups in WBGs that FAO has sought to assist.

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2 While acknowledging that FAO officially uses West Bank and Gaza Strip to refer to its work in this area, this report will also occasionally use the alternative occupied Palestinian territories, especially when referring to the political and institutional entity.

3 See Annex 1 for FAO's vision and Global Goals of Members.



## 1.2 Scope and Objectives

### 1.2.1 Scope

- 6 The evaluation covered *the entire programme implemented by FAO in the West Bank and Gaza Strip between 2011 and 2015*, including activities funded through trust funds and FAO's own resources such as the Regional Initiatives (RIs) and backstopped by headquarters and RNE.
- 7 The framework of analysis was based on the goals and purposes of the two programming documents, the *Plan of Action* (PoA) 2011-2013 and the *Programme Framework* (PF) 2014-2016. It focused on one side on continuity and overlapping activities between the two, and on the other on establishing whether the evolution of the strategy in terms of a) analysis b) response frameworks and activities, and c) targeting criteria, had a significant (positive or negative) effect on relevance, effectiveness, sustainability and impact of the programme over time. Given the short timeframe over which the PF had been in place at the time of the evaluation, all initiatives implemented over the past five years were assessed. However, a greater emphasis was placed on assessing preliminary progress towards the objectives defined in the PF, given that it corresponds to FAO's present strategy.
- 8 The evaluation was carried out within the scope of FAO's *Strategic Objectives* (SO). In particular, the objectives and activities carried out by FAO in WBGS are relevant to SO2 "Make agriculture, forestry and fisheries more productive and sustainable", SO4 "Enable inclusive and efficient agricultural and food systems", and SO5 "Increase the resilience of livelihoods to threats and crises", and the evaluation paid particular attention to strategic alignment with these SOs, endeavouring to draw lessons benefiting the work of the Organization towards these objectives.
- 9 Contributions provided by FAO as part of its *core functions* (see Annex 1 for FAO's core functions), often by their nature not necessarily delivered as part of specific projects, were also covered by this evaluation. Specifically, the evaluation focused on the core functions of *policy dialogue; developing capacity for information and monitoring systems; coordination and partnership; and advocacy*.<sup>4</sup> These are particularly relevant to the context and FAO in the WBGS has been historically committed to these areas of work. On the other hand, the assessment of this aspect of FAO's work in WBGS was driven by the particular status of the office as a "non-Representation" with no core funding for this kind of activities, and the need to understand how this gap reflects on the functioning of the office.
- 10 The *Evaluation of FAO's Contribution to Crisis-related Transition*<sup>5</sup> was used as a frame of reference, seeing the relevance of its findings and recommendations to the context of the West Bank and Gaza Strip. In particular, the evaluation's theoretical framework, theory of change and conceptual definitions were adopted and referred to in framing this evaluation and developing its methodology.
- 11 Furthermore, in formulating the evaluation questions a purposeful effort was made to consider the three main recommendations of the Transition Evaluation and markedly the need for FAO:
  - 1 To respond first and foremost to the needs of the poor, the food insecure and the vulnerable, measuring its effectiveness in crisis contexts in terms of impact on these affected populations;
  - 2 While advocating for recognition of its comparative advantage in overcoming the humanitarian-development divide, to also press resource partners to overcome such divide;

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4 FAO's work in this area is particularly interesting to assess in relation to its capacity to intervene in protracted political crises.

5 The *evaluation of FAO's contribution to crisis-related transition: linking relief, rehabilitation and development* was carried out over the first three quarters of 2014 and included the West Bank and Gaza Strip as one of the case studies.



- 3 To adopt as a paramount concern in working in conflict or conflict-prone situations, the relationship of food security and agriculture (including tenure, employment and income) to conflict and potential conflict management/resolution.<sup>6</sup>
- 12 The whole WBGS faces a protracted crisis due to the occupation, characterized by access restrictions to water and land and to domestic and external markets, recurrent conflict, a long-standing economic food-access crisis, the breakdown of livelihoods and insufficient institutional capacity to respond. The viability of agricultural livelihoods, furthermore, is constrained by specific and different vulnerabilities and risks in the *West Bank* (e.g. settler violence, land confiscation, restriction of movement and access to land and water, problems tied to administration of Area C) and the Gaza Strip (e.g. blockade, high dependency on food imports, access to land in the Seam Zone and to the sea, high dependency on relief aid, high price volatility, erratic restrictions to entry and export of goods). The evaluation therefore assessed FAO's work both in the West Bank and in the Gaza Strip, considering the different challenges faced by the population in the two areas.

### 1.2.2 Objectives

- 13 The *overall objective* of this evaluation was to assess FAO's work in WBGS over 2011 to 2015, identifying lessons learned, including good practices as well as causes of success and failure, gaps in FAO's programming and potential areas of future work. The evaluation is geared towards providing strategic recommendations to improve FAO's programme in WBGS, and any lessons that can be extended to other situations of protracted political crisis and to the Strategic Objective of building resilience.
- 14 The specific objectives of the evaluation of FAO's programme in WBGS are twofold: on one hand FAO's *strategic relevance* in the WBGS. In particular, the evaluation assessed the relevance and effectiveness of FAO's strategy in terms of its programming documents, its analytical approach, the relevance and connectedness of its emergency and development projects, its alignment to the corporate Strategic Framework (SF), its effectiveness in partnering and coordination, and in the way it is affected by FAO's decentralization process.
- 15 The programme in WBGS has been gradually shifting from a purely humanitarian focus to an increasingly developmental one. In view of this shift and of the specificity of the context in which FAO operates, strategic relevance was also assessed in terms of FAO's capacity to position itself in the context of a protracted political crisis such as this one. This included analysing how contextual factors are reflected on FAO's office structure and ways of working, whether FAO's technical work has an impact on the political context, and what FAO's role and its comparative advantage are, as well as its capacity to deliver vis-à-vis the operating environment.
- 16 On the other hand, the evaluation assessed *contributions* made by FAO towards sustainable socio-economic growth and food security as well as the resilience of small-scale farmers, herders and fisher people in the WBGS. *Resilience building* has been a long-standing focus of the programme, and in fact, in some ways the WBGS office has been piloting FAO's approach to resilience since the beginning of the 2000s. The evaluation will base its analysis of resilience building in WBGS on FAO's own definition, while adopting a slightly broader view (see Box 3 in section 4.1.1). The evaluation aimed to assess progress in addressing both development and humanitarian needs of Palestinian communities and individuals and the impact of FAO's work on livelihoods and institutional capacity, and on cross-cutting areas such as gender and environmental sustainability.

### 1.3 Main evaluation questions

- 17 On the basis of the above scope and objectives, the Terms of References identified three overarching questions with a set of sub-questions to guide the evaluation.

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6 FAO 2014, *Evaluation of FAO's contribution to crisis-related transition. Linking relief, rehabilitation and development. Final Report*.

- a. Considering its mandate and its Strategic Framework, is FAO's strategy relevant and effective in the WBGs?
  - b. How does FAO position itself in the context of the protracted crisis in WBGs? What are the challenges and opportunities for FAO as a technical agency in this context, and to what extent has it addressed and taken advantage of them?
  - c. To what extent has the programme made progress in addressing the humanitarian and developmental needs of Palestinians and their communities through agriculture, going towards sustainable socio-economic growth, resilience and food security? What have been the impacts of FAO's work on livelihoods, institutional capacities, and cross-cutting areas of work?
- 18 These questions were further refined by the team at different stages of the in-country investigation phase, considering new issues and angles emerging during the inquiry and specific questions arising from each of the three research areas at the centre of the evaluation. The full evaluation matrix is provided in Appendix 3.

## 1.4 Methodology

- 19 The evaluation was managed by the Office of Evaluation and carried out by a team of four people comprising a range of sectoral expertise and divided into three sub-teams, as detailed below. The majority of the external team members were Palestinian or of Palestinian origin and speakers of Arabic. The team visited WBGs and Israel between 15 February and 15 April 2016. As well as holding interviews and reviewing documents in Jerusalem, they visited ten Governorates in the West Bank and five in the Gaza Strip (see Table of project visits in Appendix 6).
- 20 Teamwork was organized under three sub-teams working in relative autonomy to carry out in-depth studies around the three areas detailed above. These studies provided evidence and complemented the strategic analysis of FAO's overall programme. Fieldwork was conducted by the sub-team members to meet direct beneficiaries and assess the relevance and effectiveness of interventions in these areas, as well as any positive and negative intended and unintended results at individual and community level. Project sites were selected in consultation with the WBGs office aiming at relevance and geographic variety. Semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions with beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries, implementing partners and local authorities were undertaken to collect their views.
- 21 The following areas of work were identified as particularly relevant during the preparatory phase on the basis of: a) their strategic relevance vis-à-vis the context and FAO's mandate and Strategic Framework; b) the number of projects in the WBGs portfolio and the volume of dedicated funding; c) indications from FAO staff managing or supporting the office; and d) their potential for expansion:
- Cash transfers and vulnerable livelihoods
  - Access to markets
  - Land and water resource management

FAO's contributions were considered through the lens of these three areas. Their strategic relevance to the context and the programme is detailed below.

- 22 Over the period covered by the evaluation, FAO implemented different interventions through **cash assistance for livelihood support**, a modality of conditional cash transfers piloted by FAO in the WBGs which implies a vertically integrated approach, where beneficiaries are responsible for constructing their own household or community asset and then using it and maintaining it after the completion of the project.<sup>7</sup> Furthermore, during the inception mission **cash transfers** were mentioned by FAO management as a key area in which FAO could invest more in the future. Another related area of FAO's work identified as a focus for the evaluation is assistance **targeting vulnerable small-scale farmers, herders and fisher people**. Such focus is in line with FAO's overall mandate and with SO5,

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<sup>7</sup> FAO (2015) *Conditional cash assistance to build resilience against water scarcity in the West Bank*.

and is particularly relevant seeing the general conditions of the Palestinian population and the vulnerability of specific groups in WBGS, such as herders in Area C, farmers with plots in the Seam Zone and fisher people who cannot access the sea. The evaluation sought to understand each of these two areas separately, as well as the intersections between them.

- 23 Another priority area for FAO involves enhancing **access to markets**. The evaluation chose to focus on this area on the basis of the conceptual frame of the PF, built following a value chain model in order to address exposure to shocks as well as the decline in agricultural productivity that characterizes the Palestinian context. Such a model aims to assist beneficiaries targeted by FAO's humanitarian and development interventions to preserve their productive assets and access to inputs while regaining their productive capacity, boosting their competitiveness and adding value to their production. This area of work is tied to FAO's SO4.
- 24 **Land and water resource management** are central concerns in the WBGS, seeing the frequency of land confiscation and evictions by the Israeli authorities, and considering that access to and control of land and water is at the heart of the Arab-Israeli conflict. As shown by the analysis of the country portfolio these areas, central to FAO's mandate both in terms of sustainable natural resource management and of ensuring land and water for sustainable agriculture, have partially been covered by FAO's work in the past, but there is much scope for further engagement. This area of work is linked to FAO's SO2. Primary and secondary data were collected as evidence to assess strategic relevance and contribution:
  - A desk review of the literature, including project documents, past evaluations and reviews, and other relevant literature from FAO and other organizations. In particular, the two programming documents for the period under evaluation, the Plan of Action 2011-2013 and the Programme Framework 2014-2016 were reviewed to assess whether the analytical framework and design of the FAO programme were based on a preliminary analysis of the context and of the gaps and needs of the population and other relevant actors.
  - Stakeholders were mapped with the support of the WBGS office to provide information in relation to the evaluation questions. Protocols for interviews were developed by the team and refined over the course of the missions. Key informant and group interviews were carried out in different locations including:
    - FAO staff in Jerusalem, Ramallah and Gaza Strip
    - Ministry of Agriculture (MoA) (central and decentralized, both in the West Bank and in the Gaza Strip), Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics (PCBS), Ag sector WG, Palestinian Water Authority, Ministry of Social Affairs
    - Israeli technical counterparts, including the Director of Veterinary Services of the Israeli Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development and the former head of administration in the Gaza Strip
    - Staff of donor agencies (13), Local Aid Coordination Secretariat (LACS), Food Security Sector (FSS)
    - Staff of UN agencies and International Financial Institutions (IFIs) (17)
    - 13 implementing partners both in Ramallah and in the Gaza Strip
    - 89 focus group discussion (FGD) with beneficiaries in 15 governorates.
  - Field visits to 55 FAO and four non-FAO project sites.
- 25 Two team workshops were organized at the beginning and towards the end of the main mission. Initially to brainstorm on the evaluation framework, discuss the evaluation matrix, and coordinate overlaps between the areas of sub teams' work both in theoretical and operational terms; at the end to discuss initial findings and emerging conclusions and review the matrix together in light of sub-team fieldwork and of a preliminary analysis. At the end of the second workshop, a Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT) analysis session was conducted with national FAO staff to engage them in a discussion on emerging topics of relevance to the evaluation, and triangulate initial findings.
- 26 In consultation with managers in the WBGS, and on the basis of team discussions and document reviews, the team developed a Theory of Change for the WBGS programme

2011-2015 for a better and consolidated understanding of both programming documents being evaluated (see Appendix 7).

- 27 The Office of Evaluation management team visited the Regional Office in Cairo between 9 and 11 May to gain an in-depth understanding of the support provided to the WBGS office and of any issues related to the regional perspective, including the WBGS office's participation in Regional Initiatives and the impact of being a "non-Representation" office for the Regional Office.
- 28 The final evaluation of the institutional level component of the European Union (EU) project: "Support livestock-based livelihoods of the vulnerable populations in the occupied Palestinian territory" (OSRO/GAZ/201/EC), carried out between July and October 2016 under the same Office of Evaluation management team as the WBGS programme evaluation, was framed to partly incorporate some of the questions related to the overall evaluation, and some of its findings fed into this report.
- 29 A workshop was held in Jerusalem with the FAO WBGS team in March 2017 to discuss some main issues emerging from the report, and jointly develop draft recommendations.<sup>8</sup>

## 1.5 Constraints and challenges

- 30 Geographically, the area under evaluation constitutes a fragmented territory for which access is under strict control by the Israeli Security Forces (ISF) and subject to unpredictable closures and heightened restrictions, making the logistics of the visits to FAO project sites quite complex. Furthermore, access to and movement between the Gaza Strip, the West Bank and East Jerusalem for Palestinians depends on what kind of ID and permit they are given by the Israeli authorities, and this constrained mobility and access to some project sites for the Palestinian team members.
- 31 The low-intensity but continuous conflict and the general regime of insecurity affected the planning of the evaluation in a number of ways, such as having to forgo any visits to Hebron or Bethlehem and in general meet the paramount security concerns and comply with security regulations. It had a bearing on fieldwork, for example when a focus group was held in a community in Southern West Bank where the ISF had just demolished some houses, an event which clearly was reflected in the interviewees' state of mind and coloured their responses.
- 32 The sensitivities incurred in carrying out an evaluation in such a frayed political context cannot be understated. When a conflict has been so emotionally charged for so many people and for such a long time, and so much is at stake politically and symbolically, language becomes charged with meaning and the very choice of which words to use becomes highly sensitive. This invites more than the usual caution, and inevitably affected the framing of this evaluation and the way this report is written. This evaluation acknowledges these complex political issues, and while hoping to contribute to the debate, it will not address them upfront.
- 33 Seeing that the evaluation period was covered by two different programming documents, and that the evaluation had to assess what were ultimately two frameworks which only partly overlapped, the team could not rely on a single logframe with clear outcome and impact indicators for its assessment. Furthermore, no baseline data existed for either framework against which to measure progress, also due to the absence of regularly produced agricultural statistics, a prerequisite to establish baselines.
- 34 For logistical and financial reasons the evaluation team relied on purely qualitative data, so though the fieldwork findings of this evaluation have been validated through triangulation and can be considered robust, they will shed more light on causal chains than on generalizable and replicable findings, usually the outcome of more qualitative research.

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<sup>8</sup> See Annex 6 with list of participants.

## 2. Context

### 2.1 Historical background and humanitarian context: operating at the intersection of humanitarian and development needs

**Table 1:** WBGS socio-economic data<sup>9</sup>

<b>Population (in 2016)</b>	
Total WBGS and EJ	4.7 million <sup>10</sup>
West Bank	2.9 million
East Jerusalem	0.4 million
Gaza Strip	1.8 million
Refugees in Palestine (2015)	42% <sup>11</sup>
Refugees in WB	26.3% of WB pop.
Refugees in GS	67.7% of GS pop.
Population 0-19 years old (WBGS)	50%
Rural population	16.6%
<b>Unemployment rate</b>	25.9%
Unemployment rate in WB	17.3%
Unemployment rate in GS	41.0
<b>Female unemployment rate</b>	39.2%
<b>Female Labour Force Participation rate</b> <sup>12</sup>	19.1%
<b>Agricultural employment rate</b> (% of total employment)	7.3%
<b>Wage Employees in Agriculture (2014)</b> (% of total agricultural employment)	Males: 39.1% Females: 4.0%
<b>Unpaid Family Members in Agriculture (2014)</b> (% of total agricultural employment)	Males: 18.8% Females: 63.5%

Source: PCBS 2015

- 35 The current situation in the Palestinian territories is grounded in the failure to come to an agreement over sovereignty and the political government of the area after 1948, at the end of the British mandate in Palestine. The Arab States' rejection in 1947 of the UN proposed Partition Plan to create two independent States with economic union, shortly followed by the proclamation of the State of Israel and the occupation by the Arab States of the Arab portion of the partition plan, led to a full scale war between the newly formed Israeli entity and the Arab countries.
- 36 What came to be known as the first Arab-Israeli war resulted in the destruction of hundreds of Palestinian villages and the displacement of an estimated 700 000 Palestinians from their homes and lands. It created a Palestinian diaspora and refugee community in surrounding countries amounting to around 4.9 million people in 2010, more than the total Palestinian population living in WBGS at the time.<sup>13</sup> Israel later occupied the West Bank, East Jerusalem

<sup>9</sup> All data refer to 2015 unless otherwise stated.

<sup>10</sup> Palestinian population worldwide is calculated as 12.4 million.

<sup>11</sup> UNRWA records indicate that 5.59 million Palestinian refugees registered at the beginning of 2015, 42.8% of Palestinians worldwide (UNRWA). Around 28.7% refugees live in 58 refugee camps: 10 in Jordan, 9 in Syria, 12 in Lebanon, 19 in the West Bank, and 8 in the Gaza Strip. These estimates represent a minimum number, given the presence of non-registered refugees, the non-inclusion of the refugees who were displaced between 1949 and the 1967 wars and the non-refugees who left or were forced to leave as a result of the 1967 war.

<sup>12</sup> The labour force participation rate is defined as the percentage of the population that is either employed or unemployed (that is, either working or actively seeking work).

<sup>13</sup> Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics portal [http://www.pcbs.gov.ps/Portals/\\_Rainbow/Documents/PalDis-POPUL-2010E.htm](http://www.pcbs.gov.ps/Portals/_Rainbow/Documents/PalDis-POPUL-2010E.htm)

and the Gaza Strip in 1967. The UN position in response to the war was articulated under Resolution 242 affirming the need for withdrawal of the Israeli armed forces and acknowledging the sovereignty and territorial integrity of every State in the area and their right to live in peace. These two tenets, known as "land for peace", were at the basis of subsequent bilateral peace agreements between Israel and neighbouring countries.

- 37 The First Palestinian Intifada began in 1987 and ended with the 1993 Oslo Peace Accords establishing the Palestinian Authority as an interim body to run the Gaza Strip and parts of the West Bank (but not East Jerusalem) pending an agreed permanent solution to the conflict, foreseen in 1998. As part of the Oslo Accords, the West Bank was divided in three areas designated as A, B and C. The large majority of the population lives in Areas A and B, and is severely constrained in its movements and restricted in its economic potential and livelihoods, while Area C, fully under Israeli control, constitutes two thirds of the agricultural land in the West Bank,<sup>14</sup> hence its crucial importance for food security and livelihoods of all Palestinians.

**Table 2:** West Bank areas following Oslo Accords

	% population	% land	Israeli/PA control
Area A	53%	18.3%	Full civil and security control by the PA
Area B	41%	18.8%	Full civil control by the PA and joint PA-Israeli security control
Area C	5.8%	62.9%	Full Israeli control over security, planning and construction

Source: EU (2011)<sup>15</sup>

- 38 The initial negotiations on a final status agreement were interrupted, which resulted in the Israeli Civil Administration<sup>16</sup> not handing over its authority over Areas B and C.<sup>17</sup> The lack of a final peaceful solution and tensions around holy sites in Jerusalem triggered the Second Intifada (2000-2006), at the end of which Israel withdrew from the Gaza Strip, while maintaining control over sea, land and air borders, and continuing to build the West Bank separation barrier and new settlements within the West Bank. An agreement between Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) to regulate economic and trade relations, the Protocol on Economic Relations, also called Paris Protocol, was signed in April 1994.<sup>18</sup>
- 39 The victory in the Palestinian 2006 legislative elections by Hamas, led the United States of America to suspend aid to the Palestinian Authority, followed by the European Union. After significant infighting between Fatah and Hamas, in June 2007 the latter took control of the Gaza Strip forming a de facto government, while the former declared an emergency government in the West Bank. Israel reacted by imposing an air sea and land blockade on Gaza and temporarily suspend transfer of taxes to the PA on one side,<sup>19</sup> while opening formal contacts with the emergency government on the other, while the Quartet, formed by representatives of the United Nations, the European Union, the United States of America and the Russian Federation,<sup>20</sup> called for reviewing all financial commitments against the principles of non-violence, recognition of Israel and acceptance of previous agreements and obligations. The political division between Fatah and Hamas has not yet been resolved, though different attempts to form a unity government have been ongoing.
- 40 2014 again witnessed a sharp increase in the severity of humanitarian needs in the Gaza Strip, as well as heightened tension and intensified clashes across the West Bank. The Israeli

14 UNCTAD (2015), The Besieged Palestinian Agricultural Sector, New York and Geneva

15 EU (2011), EU Heads of Missions report: Area C and Palestinian State-Building.

16 The Civil Administration is part of a larger entity known as Coordination of Government Activities in the Territories (COGAT), which is a unit of the Ministry of Defense of Israel.

17 The Israeli-Palestinian Joint Water Committee, supposedly an interim organ to manage water and sewage, though not regularly functional throughout the period, is also still in existence. Its work was interrupted mainly due to Israeli rejection of water projects in Area C and to the Palestinian refusal to agree on connecting settlements to water projects in the West Bank. Recently the PA announced it has reached an agreement to reactivate the committee.

18 <http://mfa.gov.il/MFA/ForeignPolicy/Peace/Guide/Pages/Gaza-Jericho%20Agreement%20Annex%20IV%20-%20Economic%20Protocol.aspx>

19 Transfer of tax revenue has presently been resumed.

20 <http://www.quartetrep.org/page.php?id=4e3e7y320487Y4e3e7>



military operation “Protective Edge” affected the agricultural livelihoods of 32 000 farming households and 8 000 agricultural wage labourers in Gaza Strip, with heavy damage to assets causing shortages and high food prices, which in turn increased the severity of food insecurity. In the West Bank, restrictions on trade and access to land and water led to a lack of economic access to food, lower purchasing power and unemployment, and overall erosion of livelihoods and potential for economic development, all of which had a particularly heavy toll on the more vulnerable segments of the population. To this date, reconstruction efforts are falling short and recovery in the Gaza Strip is still awaiting the support that had been pledged.



**Figure 1:** West Bank (as of February 2005)

Source: FAO 2016

- 41 The post-Oslo peace process has stalled up to the present, notwithstanding various recent attempts to reanimate it, including towards the end of 2016, a conference in Paris and calls to resume negotiations in speeches by the UN Secretary-General and the US Secretary of State. In the meantime, the blockade persists in Gaza, its effects worsened by the closure of illegal tunnels which allowed for the smuggling of goods from Egypt. There is presently widespread international consensus that the continuous expansion of Israeli settlements in the WB and East Jerusalem<sup>21</sup> greatly undermines the prospects of the peace process and of a two-state solution.<sup>22</sup> Not only do settlements occupy land in the West Bank which according to the Oslo Accords should eventually be part of a Palestinian state: a further, more indirect, consequence is that the fear of settler attacks prevents farmers from cultivating their plots, leaving space for further land requisition in favour of settlers, allegedly on the basis of the Ottoman Land Code.<sup>23</sup>

21 At the end of 2014 the population in Israeli settlements in the West Bank and East Jerusalem was approximately 570 700, and had been growing at a steady rate, with an average growth rate of 14 600 people per year between 2002 and 2014. Secretary-General's 2016 report *Israeli settlements in the Occupied Palestinian Territories, including East Jerusalem, and the Occupied Syrian Golan*, A/HRC/31/43. Furthermore, at the beginning of 2017 the Knesset passed a controversial “regularisation bill” providing justification for constructions of settlements in the WBGS, and de facto legitimizing their existence.

22 As exemplified by UN Security Council Resolution 2334 adopted on 23 December 2016, and the subsequent speeches by Secretary-General Ban Ki Moon, and US Secretary of State John Kerry.

23 Since 1967 Israel has adopted a policy of declaring big tracts of territory in the West Bank state land and assigning it to settlements on the basis of its interpretation of the Ottoman Code inherited as occupying power from the previous administration. To turn previously otherwise designated land into state land, the Israeli Civil Administration referred to several rules: the farmer must prove cultivation of at least one half of the total area of a parcel in order to acquire rights on the land; cessation of cultivation for several years nullified people's right on the land, even if it had been cultivated by the family for decades; and public land assigned for specific community use could be converted to state ownership. This interpretation of the rules contradicted the Ottoman Code as interpreted and applied by previous administrations, and as such has been contested as inconsistent with international law, B'Tselem 2012.

- 42 Ultimately, the protracted protection crisis suffered in the WBGS is determined by Israeli economic and political measures imposing severe restrictions on movement and access to land and other resources, a situation with humanitarian consequences driven by insufficient respect for international law on all sides. Agricultural productivity has declined as a result of restricted access to land and water resources among other factors (World Bank 2013, UNCTAD 2015). In Gaza Strip, the now seven-year-old blockade crippled economic activity sending poverty rates soaring, and 35 percent of agricultural land cannot be accessed safely and is largely uncultivated, at an opportunity cost of an estimated USD 50.2 million annually.<sup>24</sup> The No-Go and High Risk Access Restricted Areas amount to 17 percent of the Gaza Strip directly affecting the livelihood of an estimated 178 000 people, or 12 percent of the population in Gaza Strip.<sup>25</sup> It is estimated that the total potential value added from lifting Israel's restrictions on Palestinian production in Area C would amount to USD 3.4 billion, or 35 percent of Palestinian gross domestic product (GDP) in 2011 (Niksic, Nasser Eddin and Cali, 2014:5). Major infrastructure passing through Area C cannot be constructed without Israeli authorization, and gas and oil reserves in the Gaza Strip and in the West Bank are not accessible due to a lack of legal access.
- 43 The presence of international actors and the UN architecture itself are marked by the Arab-Israeli question and the effort to oversee and advance the Middle East peace process, including supporting Palestinian state-building. To this end, the *Local Aid Coordination Secretariat*<sup>26</sup>, established under the Ad Hoc Liaison Committee,<sup>27</sup> supports the local aid coordination structure to ensure development effectiveness through donor cooperation and coordination, in line with the Palestinian Authority's priorities and the Paris Declaration. The *Quartet* was established in 2001 after the outbreak of the Second Intifada in recognition of the need of a mediation structure in the face of escalating conflict, while the *Office of the Quartet Representative* is dedicated to promote projects and policy issues to realize economic growth.
- 44 The UN's mission in Palestine is to support development cooperation, humanitarian response and political engagement in the peace process (see Annex 2). While all UN structures cooperate to achieve these goals, two agencies were created to meet specific challenges: the *United Nations Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process (UNSCO)* was established in the wake of the Oslo conference to enhance the UN's involvement in the peace process by strengthening UN cooperation and boosting development assistance; and the *United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA)*, created in 1949, carries out direct relief and works programmes for Palestinian refugees,<sup>28</sup> a mandate continuously renewed in the absence of a solution to the refugee problem. Furthermore, since 2001 the *United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA)* has been present to support international efforts to address the humanitarian situation through a coordinated and effective response.
- 45 This crowded arena, which also includes a large number of local and international NGOs, together with the complex political scenario in which aid agencies operate, has a bearing on the peculiarities of the political economy of aid in WBGS: some critics, for instance, consider development projects to distract from claiming redress of infringed Palestinian rights, while on the other hand humanitarian interventions are denounced for not tackling underlying causes and perpetuating a short-term emergency approach to a decade-long crisis,<sup>29</sup> while a concrete risk exists of donors over-emphasising protection by humanitarian agencies to substitute for their own state level political action to address and stop human rights violations.<sup>30</sup> On the other hand, growing concerns about the reliance of vulnerable populations on emergency assistance drive the wish on behalf of donors

24 OCHA and WFP. Aug 2010. "Between the Fence and a Hard Place," UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs Affairs / World Food Program occupied Palestinian territory. <https://www.ochaopt.org/content/between-fence-and-hard-place>

25 OCHA and WHO, 2010.

26 <http://www.lacs.ps/article.aspx?id=1>

27 <http://www.lacs.ps/article.aspx?id=6>

28 UN (2007), *The Question of Palestine and the United Nations*.

29 Al-Shabaka (2014), *Donor Complicity in Israel's violation of Palestinian Rights*.

30 This has been recognized as one of eight operational dilemmas for humanitarian programmes operating protectively in highly contested, dangerous and deeply politicized conditions, see Slim, H., Bonwick, A. (2005) *Protection: An ALNAP guide for humanitarian agencies*, ODI.



to offer Palestinians more sustainable solutions.<sup>31</sup> Advances in technical cooperation may sometimes be hindered by the political stance of some Palestinian actors who refuse technical collaboration with Israelis, seen as a normalization of relations and therefore acceptance of the status quo. In general, aid is perceived by some as depoliticizing the conflict, as well as detracting from Israel's obligations as an occupying power responsible to protect Palestinian civilians and meet their basic needs under International Humanitarian and Human Rights Law.<sup>32</sup>

- 46 It is hard not to acknowledge that the stalled peace process, the continued occupation, the limited sovereignty of the State of Palestine, and its reliance on funding from donors, who on their side are also driven by their own national interest, represent a concrete obstacle to the State's ability to exercise its full functions as a national government, depriving it of most policy tools and curtailing the drive towards a more developmental approach. This is particularly true in Area C, the Gaza Strip, East Jerusalem and in respect to the refugee population, where it is difficult to envisage a greater involvement of the Palestinian Authority since its authority has not increased over the years. Though efforts are underway to support the PA in its state building efforts, including developing its economy and assuming its full role as a duty bearer towards the Palestinian population, unless advances are made in the peace process a substantial reduction in the presence of external actors seem unlikely in the short term.

### Box 1: Livelihoods and protection

Section III of the Fourth Geneva Convention, to which Israel is party, establishes obligations on occupying powers and provisions protecting civilians in territories under occupation. Though primary responsibility to protect civilians lies with States as signatories to international human rights, humanitarian and refugee legal frameworks, agencies operating in a context of repeated rights and human rights violation, and where the crisis itself is first and foremost a protection crisis, should develop programming that alongside providing assistance, protects people from such violations and ensures that assistance does not inadvertently expose them to these threats. This involves a twofold protection challenge: the *strategic* political task to get the responsible authorities to ensure respect for human rights, and the *tactical* task of working with people at risk to meet their practical protection needs amidst continuing abuses. In practical terms it means working according to a principle of complementarity among agencies to stop, prevent or alleviate the worst effects of abuses (*responsive action*), to assist and support people who are recovering from abuses (*remedial action*), and to consolidate political, social, cultural and institutional norms conducive to protection (*environment-building action*).

Multiple protection threats faced by communities force them to balance the risks they face and to make difficult choices, exacerbating those factors that make people increasingly unable to deal with shocks without compromising their long-term prospects. Incorporating a protection lens within livelihood analysis allows a better understanding of the causes of vulnerability and the multiple links between them. Furthermore, a more up front engagement with protection threats enables a more appropriate response to tackle vulnerability. Present efforts by different agencies to incorporate protection activities in livelihoods interventions in WBGS include research and advocacy on the impact of the barrier, 'buy local' campaigns to stimulate markets, fair trade programmes, and advocacy to ensure that products from settlements in the West Bank are clearly labelled. Such efforts are regarded as critical by farmers to maintain their livelihoods and stay on their land (O' Callaghan et al).

Sources: Slim, H., Bonwick, A. (2005) *Protection: An ALNAP guide for humanitarian agencies*, ODI and O' Callaghan, S. et al (2009), *Losing ground: Protection and livelihoods in the Occupied Palestinian Territories*, ODI.

31 The United Nations Medium-Term Response Plan and the Palestinian National Development Plan in 2011 have been important steps to address this, and have urged humanitarian organizations to become more strategic in their provision of relief assistance, drawing a clearer line between emergency programmes and recovery and development interventions and removing the latter projects from the CAP.

32 Dittli, R. (2011) *International assistance in Gaza: aiding fragmentation or unity? A view from inside Gaza*, Swiss Peace. Wildeman, J, Marshall, S., "By misdiagnosing Israel-Palestine, donor aid harms Palestinians", *Open Democracy*, 21 May 2014.

## 2.2 Agriculture, natural resources and climate change

- 47 In the Gaza Strip and the sub-humid parts of the West Bank land is prevalingly used for agriculture and horticulture, while rangeland for small ruminants dominates the semi-arid parts of the WB. Olive production occupies an important cultural place within the rural economy, and the olive oil sector is still one of the strongest in the West Bank. In Gaza Strip, horticulture used to be dominated by citrus production, but due to difficult access to land, decreasing quality and increasing salinity of groundwater, citrus is now often replaced by sturdier olive and palm trees, more resistant to brackish water. In the eastern and southern parts of the WB potentially high value livestock production is another backbone of the rural economy. 1.2 million dunums,<sup>33</sup> or 21 percent of the total area of the WBGS, 90 percent of which is in the West Bank, is estimated to be cultivated. Only 19 percent of the cultivated land is irrigated, while the rest is rain fed. Rangeland amounts to 2 million dunums, though the area available for grazing is only 621 000 dunums.<sup>34</sup>
- 48 Though agriculture is a key pillar of the economy, its contribution to GDP in the West Bank is declining, from 14 percent in the mid-1990s, to 4.5 percent by 2014. In the meanwhile, the number of Palestinians employed in the sector more than doubled between 1995 and 2006 (World Bank 2013). Agriculture supports food security, provides employment for 7.3 percent of the labour force and accounts for around 20 percent of exports, with olives, olive oil, vegetables and cut flowers as the main products exported.<sup>35</sup> Agriculture is also a major contributor to the protection of land from confiscation and settlement. Moreover, it contributes directly to the improvement and preservation of the environment, and it plays an important role as a supplier of inputs to various industries and as a consumer of inputs and services from other sectors (MoA, 2014).
- 49 The occupation has multiple and profound consequences on rural livelihoods. In the West Bank the fragmentation of land due to the division in areas A, B and C and the barrier, as well as movement restrictions including those regulated by the permit regime and closure policies all combine to limit the population's access to land and water, with clear impact on farming and livestock rearing. Mobility restrictions are calculated to render an estimated 50 percent of agricultural land inaccessible, hindering household and commercial production and decreasing jobs in this sector. Barrier zones surrounding the external boundaries of some settlements cover approximately 5 000 dunums, half of which encompass agricultural land privately owned by Palestinians who, when seeking to access their land, need to have permits and coordinate their time of entry with the Israeli authorities.<sup>36</sup> Israel's closure policies also harm farmers in more subtle ways: for example, Israelis open gates close to the wall letting landowners, but no other family member, in to harvest olive trees. However, olive harvesting is a long and heavy work and sometimes the landowner is an old man who cannot manage on his own, so the bulk of the harvest is lost. In Gaza Strip, besides the effects of the recurrent conflicts and the land-restricted areas detailed above, other obstacles to a viable agriculture include the fact that certain fertilizers are part of a list of "dual use items" and their import in Gaza Strip is severely restricted. The imposed fishing limit, which fluctuates between three and nine nautical miles,<sup>37</sup> means that more than 3 000 fishermen do not have access to 85 percent of the maritime areas agreed in the Oslo Accords, with the result that fish catch has decreased dramatically over the years also as a consequence of depletion of stocks. In 2012, overall land and sea restrictions affected 178 000 people, 12 percent of Gazans, and resulted in annual estimated losses of USD 76.7 million from agricultural production and fishing.<sup>38</sup>
- 50 Israel utilizes discriminatory policies such as planning and zoning policies<sup>39</sup> and has been in control of all aquifers in the Palestinian mountains since 1967. Though aquifers ought to be

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33 10 dunum = one hectare.

34 MoA, 2014. National Agricultural Sector Strategy 2014-2016: "Resilience and Development", Ministry of Agriculture, Ramallah.

35 UNCTAD 2015.

36 Note by the Secretary-General on the economic and social repercussions of the Israeli occupation, A/70/82-E/2015/13, 8 May 2015.

37 The Oslo Accords established a limit of around 20 nautical miles.

38 UN (2012) Gaza in 2020. A liveable place? A report by the UNCT in the occupied Palestinian territory.

39 Note by the Secretary-General on the economic and social repercussions of the Israeli occupation, A/70/82-E/2015/13, 8 May 2015.

a shared resource according to international law,<sup>40</sup> Mekorot, the Israeli Water Company, uses at least 80 percent of these groundwater resources and sells back the remaining 20 to 15 percent to the Palestinian Water Authority.<sup>41</sup> The Oslo Accords (1995, Annex 3, Article 40) giving Israel control of approximately 80 percent of the water reserves in the West Bank was intended as an interim arrangement, however the allocation largely still stands despite the demographic, socio-economic and natural changes affecting the supply and demand for water since its signature. In the West Bank, the 520 000 Israeli settlers use approximately six times the amount of water than the 2.6 million Palestinians.<sup>42</sup> In Gaza Strip, the yearly sustainable yield from the only freshwater source available is about two times less than required, and the population has resorted to over-extraction, resulting in marked progressive deterioration in the quality of the water supply, already contaminated by decades of sewage infiltration.<sup>43</sup>

- 51 The southern and eastern countries of the Mediterranean Basin form one of the world's most water-scarce regions, highly vulnerable to climate change: climate models predict a hotter, drier and less predictable climate and significant rainfall decline in winter, and more frequent extreme rainfall events.<sup>44</sup> Water resources are already under severe pressure and food insecurity risks further increasing as a consequence of climate change. Mounting rural-urban migration flows to the main cities in the West Bank, Ramallah, Hebron and Nablus are likely to create additional pressure on the urban environment and service sector while increasing social tensions.

**Table 3:** Summary of land use in the WBGs

Type of Land Cover	West Bank		Gaza Strip		WBGs	
	Area (km <sup>2</sup> )	Percent	Area (km <sup>2</sup> )	Percent	Area (km <sup>2</sup> )	Percent
Total area	5 661	100	363	100	6 024	100
Cultivated and arable land	2 361	41.7	197.9	54.5	2 559	42.5
Pastures	753.7	13.3	0	0	753.3	13.3
Forest and wooded land	78.9	1.4			78.9	1.4
Land with special vegetation cover	213.8	3.8	7.6	2.1	221.4	3.7
Open land without or with insignificant vegetation cover	1 693.6	29.9	71.4	19.7	1 765	29.3
Palestinian built-up land	314.2	5.6	82.3	22.7	396.5	6.6
Built-up land in Israeli occupation sites including wall	244.3	4.3	0		244.3	4.3

Source: PCBS, 2008/FAO 2016

## 2.3 Poverty, vulnerability and food insecurity

- 52 Overall poverty remains high, with marginal improvements over the last ten years (see Table 4), the main cause of livelihood vulnerability being the highly volatile and insecure environment due to the many consequences of the occupation. While the Palestinian population has been collectively exposed to the effects of the prolonged crisis, a range of interconnected drivers including physical (related to age, disabilities, chronic illnesses),

40 Amnesty International. 2009. "Troubled Waters: Palestinians Denied Fair Access to Water," Amnesty International, Israel- Occupied Palestinian Territories.

41 Ma'an Development Centre, 2014. Farming the Forbidden Land: Israeli Land and Resource Annexation in Area C. Ma'an Development Centre, Ramallah.

42 Oxfam International, 2013. "20 Facts: 20 Years Since the Oslo Accords," <https://www.oxfam.org/sites/www.oxfam.org/files/oxfam-oslo-20-factsheet.pdf>; Emergency Water, Sanitation and Hygiene group (EWASH) and Al-Haq. Sep 2011. "Joint Parallel Report submitted by the Emergency Water, Sanitation and Hygiene group (EWASH) and Al-Haq to the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights on the occasion of the consideration of the Third Periodic Report of Israel."; Amnesty International. 2009. "Troubled Waters: Palestinians Denied Fair Access to Water," Amnesty International, Israel- Occupied Palestinian Territories.

43 Amnesty International, 2009.

44 Brown and Crawford, 2009.

socio-cultural (related to gender and family size), economic and livelihood-related (such as employment status, livelihood basis), spatial or geographical (e.g. residence in refugee camps, H2 in Hebron,<sup>45</sup> Area C, Seam Zone) underpin risk exposure and vulnerability in this context.

**Table 4:** Poverty in WBGS

	2006	2007	2009	2010	2011
Population below national poverty line	30.8%	31.2%	26.2%	25.7%	25.8%

Source: World Bank

- 53 In Gaza Strip, unemployment rates have soared from less than 10 percent in the early 1990s to over 40 percent in 2015.<sup>46</sup> Overall, industry generates 14 percent of the gross domestic product and employs 12.3 percent of the workforce, while nearly 23 percent of the workforce is employed in the public sector, including public administration and security forces, which generate 13.5 percent of the GDP (UNCTAD 2009); the International Monetary Fund estimates that the Palestinian Authority's wage bill alone is equivalent to over 27 percent of the GDP. It is estimated that one million new jobs will be needed to bring unemployment figures down to 10 percent by 2030.<sup>47</sup>
- 54 Unemployment and food insecurity in the WBGS are closely related. Moreover, since 1994 the cost of living and consumption has risen, while the average income has barely increased. The compounded effect of unemployment and decreasing purchasing power means that food insecurity usually results from inaccessibility to food i.e. the inability to purchase it, rather than the lack of food availability. This is especially true for poorer families, who are most affected by high unemployment and low economic performance. According to the annual food security survey,<sup>48</sup> in 2013 food insecurity rates in Gaza Strip were 57 percent, and in the whole of the territory one third of the households were estimated to be food insecure. Almost 870 000 Palestine refugees depend on food aid from the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East.<sup>49</sup> In Gaza Strip too, food insecurity is due to a lack of economic access, further exacerbated during the 2014 conflict, when up to 71 percent of the population in Gaza Strip became food insecure as prices of basic foodstuffs soared, people were unable to meet their basic needs, and UNRWA ended up having to support the entire population of refugees in the Gaza Strip.<sup>50</sup>

## 2.4 Gender

- 55 In addition to the consequences of continued Israeli occupation, women are disadvantaged by limited employment opportunities, the socio-cultural norms prevailing in Palestinian society, and the inadequate provision of social protection. The 2016 Humanitarian Needs Overview (HNO) identified these as key determinants of access to resources, opportunities and resilience, their absence resulting in a range of gender-based vulnerabilities (OCHA, 2016). Female-headed households represent 10 percent of the total households, one third of which are food insecure, as compared to one fourth of male-headed ones (SEFSec 2013-

45 In 1997, the Hebron Protocol divided the city into two administrative areas: H1, which came under full control of the PA, and H2, under Israeli control. H2 includes the Old City, once a vibrant commercial centre and several settlements located both within and outside the city centre (e.g. Kiryat Arba). There are around 40 000 Palestinians living in H2 in close proximity to several hundred settlements. A harsh combination of violence and confrontation between Israeli and Palestinians living in H2, and systematic restrictions on freedom of movement imposed on Palestinians have drastically reduced livelihood opportunities for the thousands of Palestinians living in the area. (see [https://www.ochaopt.org/sites/default/files/ocha\\_opt\\_hebron\\_h2\\_factsheet\\_november\\_2013\\_english.pdf](https://www.ochaopt.org/sites/default/files/ocha_opt_hebron_h2_factsheet_november_2013_english.pdf) and O'Callaghan et al., 2009)

46 World Bank 2016 and PCBS 2015.

47 The Portland Trust, 2013.

48 The survey was carried out by the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics, FAO, the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East, and WFP and published in June 2014.

49 UN General Assembly, Economic and Social Council, Note by the Secretary-General on "Economic and Social repercussions of the Israeli occupation on the living conditions of the Palestinian people in the Occupied Palestinian Territories", 8 May 2015.

50 ibidem

14), a starker difference in the WB.<sup>51</sup> In 2013, 68.7 percent of the male labour force was active, while women's labour force participation rate was 16 percent - less than a quarter of men's - and women's median daily wage was only 84 percent of men's.<sup>52</sup>

- 56 The Gender Development Index (GDI)<sup>53</sup> for women living in the WBGS is of 0.607 in contrast with 0.706 for males, resulting in a GDI value of 0.860, which places the State of Palestine 113th out of 188 nations.<sup>54</sup> The data concerning command over economic resources reveal that women fare considerably worse than men - with a gross national income per capita amounting to USD 1 580 for women and USD 7 726 for men.<sup>55</sup>

## 2.5 Development frameworks and response plans

### 2.5.1 Government policies for the agricultural sector

- 57 After decades, the agricultural sector has recently come back as a priority among decision makers in the WBGS: the National Development Plan 2014-2016 saw a 7 percent increase in the agriculture budget, while over 2011 to 2013 donors allocated approximately USD 100 million per year to agriculture.<sup>56</sup>
- 58 The latest Agricultural Sector Strategy 2014-2016 identified the following main challenges to agricultural resources: the Israeli occupation; deterioration and ineffective use of agricultural resources, including land and water; a weak institutional framework, an incomplete legal framework, and weak enforcement of existing laws and regulations; deterioration of rangelands and biodiversity; and inadequate response capacity to disasters, climate change and desertification.
- 59 Accordingly, the Ministry of Agriculture developed the following *strategic objectives for the agricultural sector*: 1) Ensure farmers' resilience and attachment to their land, while fulfilling the contribution of the agriculture sector in providing requirements for development of the State of Palestine; 2) Efficient and sustainable management of natural resources; 3) Enhanced agricultural production, productivity and competitiveness, as well as enhanced contribution of agriculture to food security; 4) The agriculture sector has effective and efficient capacities, institutional frameworks, legal environment, infrastructure and agricultural services.

### 2.5.2 International development and response frameworks

- 60 Following UN resolution 67/19 of November 2012 recognizing Palestine as a non-member State with observer status, UN Agencies in Palestine developed the first-ever United Nations Development Assistance Framework. Finalized and approved in 2013, FAO's mandate focuses primarily on the first, fifth and sixth priority areas: economic empowerment, livelihoods, food security and decent work; social protection; urban development, natural resource management and infrastructure (with an emphasis on natural resource management).

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51 25% as compared to 15% of male-headed households. PCBS & FSS, Summary of Preliminary Results of SEFSec 2013-14.

52 ILO website ([www.ilo.org/beirut/projects/WCMS\\_224205/lang-en/index.htm](http://www.ilo.org/beirut/projects/WCMS_224205/lang-en/index.htm)) Accessed on 12.05.2016.

53 In 2014 the office responsible for the Human Development Report introduced the GDI, as a new measure is based on the sex-disaggregated Human Development Index and is defined as a ratio of the female to the male HDI. It is to be noted that the Gender Inequality Index by UNDP or the World Economic Forum Global Gender Gap measures the inequalities in WBGS. The GDI measures three basic dimensions of human development: health (measured by female and male life expectancy at birth), education (measured by female and male expected years of schooling for children and mean years for adults aged 25 years and older), and command over economic resources (measured by female and male estimated GNI per capita).

54 UNDP, State of Palestine Briefing note for countries on the 2015 Human Development Report ([http://hdr.undp.org/sites/all/themes/hdr\\_theme/country-notes/PSE.pdf](http://hdr.undp.org/sites/all/themes/hdr_theme/country-notes/PSE.pdf)) last accessed on 12 May 2016.

55 <http://hdr.undp.org/en/composite/GDI>

56 However, it should be acknowledged that, as also observed in the UNCTAD report of 2015, "the various resource and access constraints have prevented the Palestinian National Authority from providing adequate support to the besieged agricultural sector."

- 61 The Strategic Response Plan for Palestine for 2015 required USD 705 million, targeted 4.5 million people, and comprised six strategic objectives. Food security is one of six clusters<sup>57</sup> within the Humanitarian Response Plan. In 2016 the food security sector<sup>58</sup> aimed to address food security by (i) restoring and enhancing the productive capacity of households to protect their livelihoods and increase their resilience; (ii) meeting basic food needs of food insecure households while sourcing food locally thereby reinforcing Palestine's economy and food production; (iii) improving coordination and information sharing for preparedness, advocacy and synergies in implementation (OCHA, 2016).

Funds per type reported as received in 2015 Q4	FSS funds received	% on tot FSS funds received	% of funds on target request
Food Assistance	USD 161 511 711	83%	88%
Livelihood Support	USD 12 706 991	6%	22%
CfW	USD 21 515 144	11%	27%
Total	USD 195 733 846		60%

**Figure 2:** Funding of FSS projects under the HRP 2015

- 62 A yearly analysis by the FSS of the status of projects under HRP 2015 showed that the level of funding for the sector had only reached 60 percent of the total amount requested, and support to livelihoods particularly underfunded, with a considerable 78 percent of unmet funds. These figures are interesting when set against the widespread consensus among international actors that assistance should increasingly move towards resilience building, and therefore be characterized by longer-term forms of support, and seem to be revealing of a gap between intentions and hard facts.

57 The wording sector rather than cluster was preferred to indicate the inclusion of more developmental activities and actors besides the humanitarian ones traditionally associated with the Cluster system.

58 These are: 1) Enhanced protection by promoting respect for International Humanitarian Law (IHL) and International Human Rights Law (IHRL); 2) Respond to immediate needs following shocks and enhance resilience of those at risk of forcible displacement; 3) Respond to food insecurity and promote resilient livelihoods; 4) Ensure access to essential services for people in areas with restricted access; 5) Enhance national capacity to provide coordination and preparedness for coordinated response to emergencies; 6) Ensure transitional solutions for IDPs and those vulnerable to displacement in Gaza, towards a durable solution.



### 3. FAO in WBGS

#### 3.1 The WBGS Office

- 63 The FAO office was established in 2002 under the umbrella of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP).<sup>59</sup> At the time it was an Emergency and Rehabilitation Coordination Unit and functioned as a central provider of food security information and technical agricultural advice for the humanitarian community, with a primary focus on food and agricultural threats and livelihoods emergencies. FAO's collaboration with the Palestinian Government was formalized in May 2009 through a Memorandum of Understanding and later, in 2014, through a Letter of Intent with the Palestinian Ministry of Agriculture. Given that Palestine is not an FAO member country, the office is not a full representation, and does not receive any core funding, but rather runs its operations entirely on the basis of extra-budgetary resources.<sup>60</sup>
- 64 In 2014, the current Head of Office and Senior Emergency and Rehabilitation Coordinator, Mr. Cyril Fiorillo, succeeded Mr. Cyril Ferrand, who had been covering the position since 2010. FAO operates out of a main office situated in Jerusalem, and two sub-offices respectively in Ramallah (West Bank), and in Gaza City (Gaza Strip). As of 31 December 2015, FAO employees, mainly Non Staff Human Resources, comprised 35 nationals and 10 internationals, 24 based in Jerusalem, 13 in Ramallah and 8 in Gaza City.
- 65 Over the past years the WBGS Coordination Office has been assuming increasing responsibility in local (UN and Palestinian Government related) as well as global (mainly FAO related) processes in terms of liaising, planning and reporting. The decentralization of budget-holder responsibility, completed in 2013, was accompanied by the ability to tap into up to 40 percent or more Administrative and Operational Support (AOS) resources.<sup>61</sup> This enabled funding of the Head of Office/Senior Emergency Coordinator position mainly from AOS earnings, which in turn reduced the pressure on project budgets to finance human resources from direct project costs, and improved the office's position when negotiating budgets with resource partners and government.
- 66 Meanwhile, the number of non-project specific activities the office is asked to perform to comply with corporate procedures has grown, with increasing time absorbed by the strategic planning, monitoring and reporting process over the course of 2015. For the coming biennium the office is also expected to adopt the standard Country Programming Framework (CPF) approach. As noted in the 2015 Annual Report,<sup>62</sup> this calls for due consideration to the financial sources to cover the time required for activities involving costs not directly attributable to any specific project (e.g. strategic planning, monitoring and reporting), to allow a significant reallocation of project staff time toward non project-specific tasks.
- 67 Until 2013, globally the budget holder for all emergency operations was the Emergency and Rehabilitation Division (TCE) at FAO headquarters which, in the case of WBGS, meant TCE was the budget holder for the whole programme. Since then FAO decentralized budget holder responsibility, and emergency and development programmes have been integrated at the country level under the purview of the FAO Head of Office, while the Regional Office has become the first port of call for technical assistance to country offices in the region.

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59 FAO conducts its activities in the WBGS under the umbrella of the UNDP Programme of Assistance to the Palestinian People established by the United Nations General Assembly Resolution 33/147 of 20 December 1978. UNDP/PAPP serves as an umbrella organization for most of the UN agencies in the WBGS with the exception of UNRWA, UNSCO and UNESCO. The relationship is regulated by a Memorandum of Understanding between FAO and UNDP with regards to the cost recovery of Services at the Programme Country Level dated 27 June 2003. FAO's relationship with UNDP is confirmed by UNDP's Certification Letter dated 14 November 2012 and FAO's Legal Counsel's Certification Letter dated 8 October 2010.

60 Extra-budgetary resources are provided by member countries to fund specific FAO projects.

61 These constitute charges for administrative and operational services which are a necessary and inherent part of any project the Organization agrees to execute, but which, because of their nature, cannot be readily or directly identified and therefore charged to the project itself.

62 Annual Report January-December 2015 WBGS.

### 3.2 FAO's programme in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, 2011-2015

- 68 Before 2010, FAO's activities in WBGs were delivered through single projects, rather than based on a programme or a strategy. Over time the need to be more effective and increase donor confidence in the programme, however, led FAO to shift from predominantly relief-driven intervention to a programmatic/strategic approach, and eventually to the design of the first FAO programme for WBGs, the **Plan of Action** 2011-2013. The aim of such an approach was on one hand to be clear and transparent about the overall intention of the programme, and on the other to focus beyond the output level on impacts and outcomes, considering also that donors were more interested in effectiveness in the longer-term and at a more structural level.
- 69 The two WBGs programming documents developed in the period under evaluation were designed to be in alignment with FAO's corporate Strategic Frameworks<sup>63</sup> as well as with the national policies. FAO's interventions in both humanitarian and development sectors are all framed in coordination and alignment with the Occupied Palestinian Territory Humanitarian Response Plan and the United Nations Development Assistance Framework respectively. The first UNDAF for the State of Palestine was initially envisaged to cover 2014-2016, and then extended to 2017.

#### 3.2.1 The Plan of Action (2011-2013)

- 70 The **Plan of Action** represented a first shift in strategy from predominantly relief-driven project interventions to a more programmatic approach centred on disaster risk management (DRM), balancing emergency response (36% of the portfolio), with enhancing local capacity for preparedness (27%) and transition to development (37%). The PoA was based on an in-depth contextual analysis, which was itself the outcome of a literature review and a comprehensive consultative process with actors engaged in the agricultural sector. The 36-month programme was meant to go beyond the conventional short-term response interventions, and it cross-referenced fundamental sectoral and development-oriented strategic documents, including the National Development Plan 2010/13; the Palestinian Agriculture Sector Strategy "A Shared Vision" 2011/13; and the FAO Regional Priority Framework for the Near East 2009/12.
- 71 The PoA was designed under an overarching food security conceptual framework, with its overall goal of "Improved food security" articulated into two outcomes: 1) "Higher economic access to food" and 2) "Improved food utilization". The work plan to implement the PoA was divided into six programme components, two for each outcome, centred on household food production, purchasing power, domestic food quality and nutrition and food safety, plus two stand-alone components corresponding to FAO's core functions of capacity development and coordination.

#### 3.2.2 The Programme Framework (2014-2016)

- 72 The programme moved further toward developmental activities and goals with the **Programme Framework** 2014-2016, which adopted a dual track approach and aimed to address both humanitarian and developmental needs of the Palestinians by facilitating a greater economic access to food and assisting the development of a viable agriculture sector.
- 73 The overall goal of the PF, "sustainable socio-economic growth, resilience and food security for the Palestinian people" is based on a broader framework than the strictly food security framework at the basis of the PoA, reflecting the aim to move to a more developmental approach, as also illustrated by the inclusion of "growth" and "resilience" as part of the goal.

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63 The PoA was aligned to FAO's SF for 2010-2019 and the PF to the Reviewed SF 2013-2023.



**Box 2: FAO WBGS programme frameworks**

**Plan of Action Response Plan**

*Overall goal: Improved food security*

*Outcome 1: Higher economic access to food*

Output 1. Improved household-level food production

Output 2. Higher incomes and strengthened purchasing power

*Outcome 2: Improved food utilization*

Output 3. Higher domestic food quality and nutrition

Output 4. More adequate food safety

*Stand-alone programme components*

Output 5. Institutional capacity development

Output 6. Operational coordination and evidence-based, food security-related information management

**Programme Framework Response Framework<sup>64</sup>**

*Overall goal: sustainable socio-economic growth, resilience and food security for the Palestinian people*

RESTORE, STRENGTHEN, PROTECT

*Component 1. Provide time-critical assistance to protect and restore agricultural livelihoods*

Result 1.1. Access to livelihood assets and resources restored or increased

Result 1.2 Improved food access and nutrition in urban and peri-urban settings

Result 1.3 Livelihood assets and resources protected

DEVELOP, ENABLE, ENHANCE

*Component 2. Increased productivity, competitiveness and employment in the agricultural sector*

Result 2.1 Capacity of local/national organizations and institutions and community-level initiatives developed

Result 2.2 Sectoral strategies, frameworks and policies more enabled

Result 2.3 Agricultural productivity, quality, market potential and income enhanced

COORDINATE, INFORM

*Cross-cutting components*

a) Coordination. Ensure response in the Food Security Sector is more efficient, effective, targeted and partnership-based

b) Information collection, analysis, monitoring and sharing. Ensure response in the Food Security Sector is evidence based.

### 3.3 Overview of FAO's field programme delivery

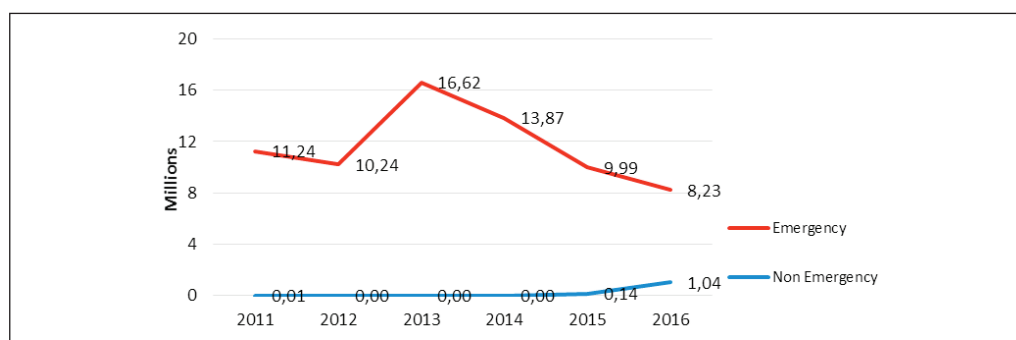
- 74 Over 2011-2015, FAO's portfolio with the WBGS as a recipient country<sup>65</sup> amounted to 44 country-dedicated, 4 interregional/global, and 1 regional projects,<sup>66</sup> for a Total Budget of USD 89 million and Total Actual Expenditure of about USD 71 million. The figure below

64 A list of specific activities is identified for each result in the Programme Framework (see FAO 2014, Programme Framework for the West Bank and Gaza Strip, pp.46-48). The results matrix was revised in the Programme Framework 2014-17 addendum, where the result chain is more adapted to FAO standard terminology (impact, outcome, outputs). However, this revision did not fall under the evaluation period, and will therefore not be considered in the present report.

65 Palestine is not universally recognized as a country/state, and is not an FAO Member State. However, the classification used by FAO to differentiate projects' geographic coverage (Country, Regional, Interregional and Global) does not allow an exception for the specific case of WBGS, therefore the term country will be used in this analysis (as it is in FAO's information system) to indicate projects located in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. The evaluation only considered global and regional projects that were rated as important by the Regional Office.

66 Projects with Entry On Duty date (EOD) prior to 2011 and Not To Exceed date (NTE) from 2011 onwards, were included to capture relevant activities. The count includes two projects that were not implemented. The interregional project GCPA/INT/028/SWE is used to fund an Associate Professional Officer (APO), who provides support to the FAO Coordination Office for the West Bank and Gaza Strip, examining and analysing different agricultural cropping systems and patterns in terms of water use and management, and define gaps and good practices. This project was not considered by the evaluation.

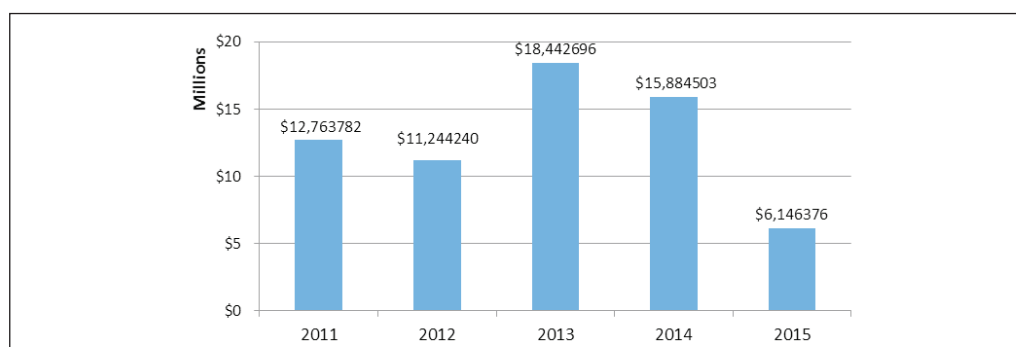
illustrates FAO WBGs field programme delivery from 2011 to 2015, based on FAO's internal classification of projects as emergency or non-emergency.<sup>67</sup> Interventions have primarily been classified as emergency and are equivalent to the total delivery throughout the evaluated period (2011-2015), while overall technical (non-emergency) delivery is almost none, and equivalent to zero in 2012, 2013 and 2014.



**Figure 3: Total field programme delivery per year (USD)**

Source: FPMIS – Feb 2017

- 75 Overall delivery increased between 2012 and 2013, reaching more than USD 16 million. After a slight decrease between 2011 and 2012, the spike in delivery in 2013 was due to the launch of three of the ten biggest projects of the 2011-2015 portfolio. Despite a decrease of about USD 3 million, the total delivery in the WBGs for 2014 is still high compared to the average delivery within the considered timeframe. A USD 3.5 million decrease in the total delivery between 2014 and 2015 could be related to the closure of nine emergency projects. The same period saw the beginning of six new longer-term projects, four of which classified as technical cooperation. Although the evaluation covers the 2011-2015 timeframe, figures regarding 2016 are included in the Table as evidence of the significant shift towards more developmental projects in parallel with the emergency work at the heart of the Programme (see section 4.1.1).
- 76 Overall only five country projects were categorized as technical cooperation, and part of the field programme in 2011 and 2015 only. However, two observations should be made: first, in the context of WBGs, there is a dearth of funding available for development as such for all agencies, and therefore all agencies draw overwhelmingly on emergency funds. Second, most FAO projects funded with emergency funds are in fact developmental in their activities and objectives (something that will be analysed further on in this report).



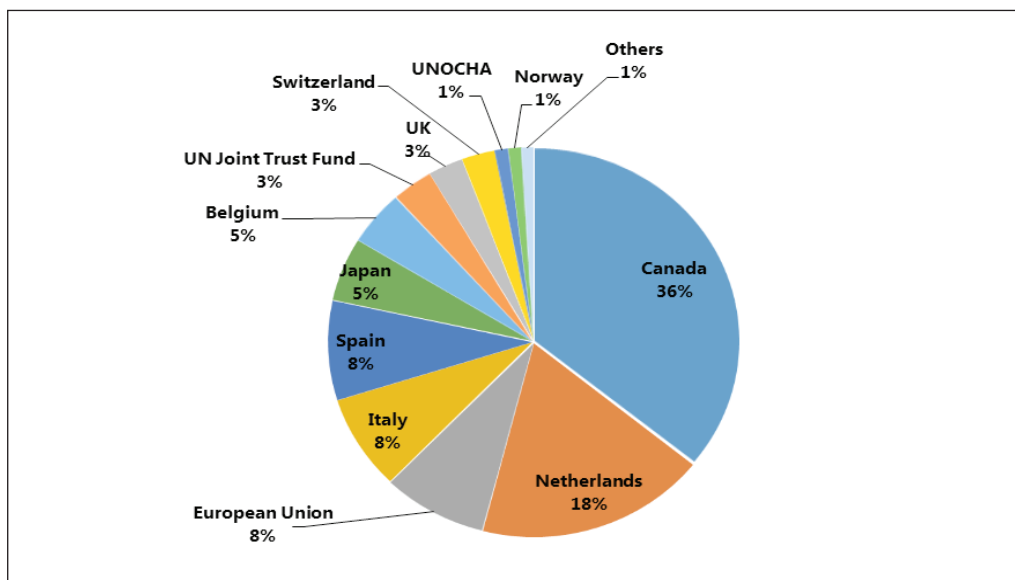
**Figure 4: Resources mobilized by year (2011-2015)<sup>68</sup>**

Source: FPMIS – Feb 2017

<sup>67</sup> The source of all information provided and analysed here is FAO's Field Programme Management Information System (FPMIS), an information system used to track, store, update, and access information on projects FAO undertakes in various countries. The total field programme delivery only refers to country projects.

<sup>68</sup> Figure 2 depicts the total budget by year (from 2011 to 2015), in terms of projects launched each year of the evaluated period. Project budgets are grouped according to the year in which the project was declared 'Operationally Active' to identify the concentration of projects launched in a specific year. Projects that started before 2011 are not reflected in the graph. A more detailed table is available in Appendix 4.

- 77 2013 and 2014 figure as the most successful years in terms of resources mobilized due to the launch of the two biggest projects of the portfolio,<sup>69</sup> amounting to more than USD 9 million each: a project on High Value Crops (HVC) funded by the Netherlands (OSRO/GAZ/207/NET), initiated in January 2013, and a Canada-funded project supporting farming and herding livelihoods through inputs provision and enhanced water availability (OSRO/GAZ/401/CAN), which started in April 2014. On the other hand, in 2015, only seven projects were launched, and the funds mobilized during the year dropped to about USD 6.1 million.



**Figure 5:** Donor contribution to country projects' portfolio (2011-2015)

Source: FPMIS – Feb 2017

- 78 As shown in Figure 4, Canada (six projects) and the Netherlands (five projects) represent the most important donors for this portfolio. Though the number of projects they fund is almost equal, Canada's contributions, above USD 26 million, is almost double the almost USD 14 million provided by the Dutch. The European Union is the third donor, with two projects, followed by Italy and Spain, each contributing 8 percent of the overall budget analysed.
- 79 The Figure below provides an indication of the number of small budget activities versus more substantial projects, corresponding to longer term and more structural interventions. The portfolio presents a certain balance between small projects (16 projects of less than USD 500 000) and bigger projects (12 projects of USD 3 to 9 million) with eight projects in the middle range, (USD 1 to 2 million). The five largest projects amount to a total of USD 32 700 266, 45 percent of the budget throughout the evaluation period. Among these large projects, one is funded by the Netherlands,<sup>70</sup> two by Canada,<sup>71</sup> one by the European Union<sup>72</sup> and one by Japan.<sup>73</sup>

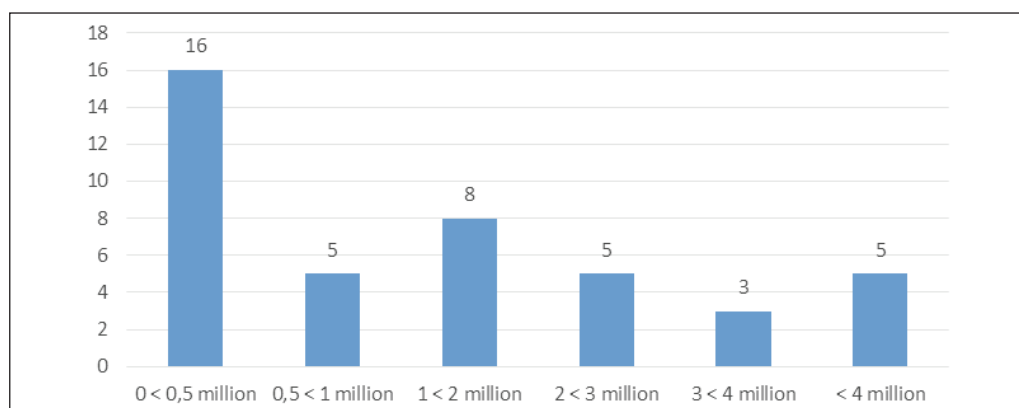
69 Based on data downloaded from FAO Field Programme Management Information System (FPMIS) in November 2015.

70 OSRO/GAZ/207/NET "Market oriented and sustainable high value crops sector development in the West Bank and Gaza Strip".

71 OSRO/GAZ/401/CAN "Prepare and respond to shocks affecting low resilience farmers and herders in West Bank and Gaza Strip" and OSRO/GAZ/202/CAN "Protection of farmer livelihoods (West Bank)".

72 OSRO/GAZ/201/EC "Support to livestock based livelihoods of vulnerable population in the West Bank and Gaza Strip (The institutional level component of the Food Security Thematic Programme [FSTP])".

73 OSRO/GAZ/301/JPN "Emergency protection of Palestinian-owned assets and contribution to building resilient livelihoods".



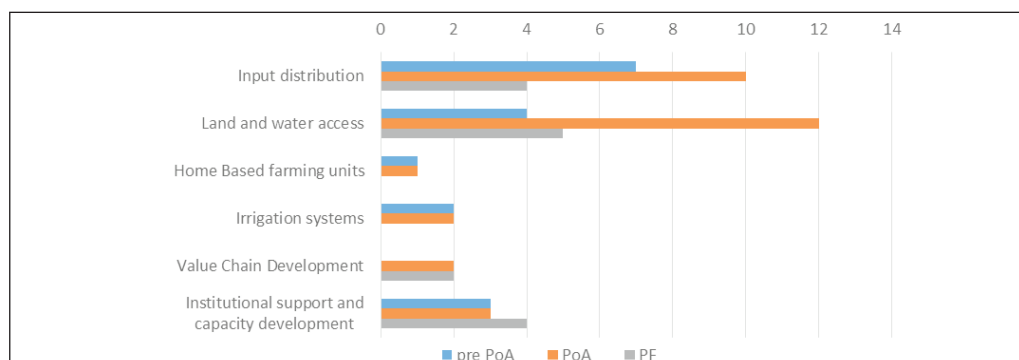
**Figure 6:** Number of projects by budget size (USD)

Source: FPMIS – Feb 2017

80 Given the challenge of harmonizing and combining data and information according to the two strategies and their relative logframes and structures, the evaluation analysed the portfolio by clustering activities according to the key areas of work covered by FAO during the considered timeframe as follows:

- a. **Input distribution:** emergency activities involving in-kind input distribution, e.g drought tolerant seeds, shed rehabilitation and winterization, fodder distribution, traps against red palm weevil, water tanks and organic fertilizer.
- b. **Land and water access:** cistern rehabilitation for livestock and farming uses and land rehabilitation (including through conditional cash assistance modality).
- c. **Home-based farming units:** activities pertaining to urban and peri-urban backyard vegetables and animal units.
- d. **Irrigation systems:** irrigation systems rehabilitation, including wells rehabilitation and conveyance systems rehabilitation.
- e. **Value chain development:** any activity to improve production quality and post-harvest capacities.
- f. **Institutional support and capacity development:** improving capacity to formulate, implement, coordinate, monitor and evaluate policies and frameworks.

81 Although it is not always possible to disaggregate and identify the specific budget dedicated to each of these areas of work, it is still interesting to see how and whether the focus of projects activities have evolved throughout the years. The Figure below provides an overview of the frequency of FAO's activities in these areas in projects implemented at country level during each programming period covered by this evaluation: projects started before the Plan of Action and still ongoing in 2011, projects under the PoA and those under the Programme Framework.<sup>74</sup>



**Figure 7:** FAO's programming focus<sup>75</sup> between 2011 and 2015

Source: Project documents and final reports

<sup>74</sup> All data presented and analysed in this report refer to the first half of the PF cycle (2014-2015) exclusively.

<sup>75</sup> Projects have been classified according to their main activities, however no project exclusively focuses on a single activity, and a measure of capacity development is included in all projects.

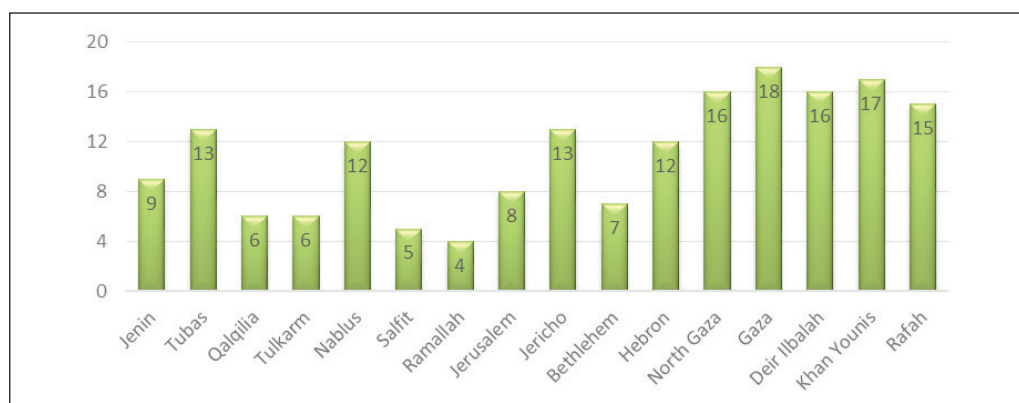
- 82 It is evident that input distribution and land and water rehabilitation have been and still are at the heart of FAO's programme, while the focus on capacity development and institutional support is growing (the same is true for value chain development through a very important project just started in 2016 and not included in our analysis). The concentration of PF projects activities in these areas is directly related to the two emergency-oriented and developmental outcomes of the programme itself. On a side note, the appearance of an overall reduced occurrence of activities under the PF compared to the PoA is also linked to the fact that projects are now fewer in numbers but longer in terms of years.

**Table 5:** Beneficiary households per main livelihood activity

GAZA STRIP				WEST BANK			
Activity			Tot. beneficiary HH (approx.)	Activity			Tot. beneficiary HH (approx.)
OUTCOME 1	ARTIFICIAL INSEMINATION	cows	200	ARTIFICIAL INSEMINATION	sheep		1690
	red palm weevil		1150	red palm weevil			450
	Vet service		1123	Vet service			1976
				CISTERNS	rehab		1053
					built		1091
	DISTRIBUTION	home gardens	1950	DISTRIBUTION	home gardens		1207
		agri inputs	1015		agri inputs		3640
		fodder	1992		fodder		4285
		rooftop gardens and aquaculture	881		drought tolerant seeds		8245
		chicken	1323		sheep		665
		goat	100		beehive		1131
		rabbits	1175		milking		721
		sheep	544	DEMO FARMS			26
OUTCOME 2	LAND REHAB		1593	LAND REHAB			7361
	WWT unit		289	WWT unit			17
	GROUNDWELLS and irrigation networks		529	GROUNDWELLS and irrigation networks			1891
	Water reservoir		375	Water reservoir			85
				HYDROPONIC			1150
	JFFLS	facilitators	16	JFFLS	facilitators		69
		students	240		students		960
	Global GAP		16	Global GAP			400

Source Project documents and final reports

- 83 A desk review of project documents and final reports yielded a list of the most important activities implemented in the West Bank and in the Gaza Strip together with an estimate of the number of households that have reportedly benefitted. The table above represents an attempt to link the activities that have been and keep being at the heart of FAO's work to the present outcomes of the Programme Framework. Together with the map in Appendix 5 and the figure below it can provide a more in-depth overview of FAO's coverage and focus of work at field level.



**Figure 8: Locations of FAO's projects**

Source: Project documents and final reports

### 3.4 Regional Projects

- 84 WBGS is a recipient country for one regional, two inter-regional<sup>76</sup> and two global projects. The ten-year Regional Integrated Pest Management Programme in the Near East GTFS/REM/070/ITA had a consistent budget of USD 8.6 million in total. Each of the ten countries targeted by the project, including WBGS, received about 10 percent of the overall budget. With a budget just under USD 400 000, the one-year inter-regional project GCP/INT/041/EC was funded by the European Union and implemented between 2012 and 2013 to establish scientific and institutional cooperation to Support Responsible Fisheries in the Eastern Mediterranean. SFER/GLO/101/MUL BABY24 is classified as global, due to its funding under the Special Fund for Emergency and Rehabilitation Activities (SFERA),<sup>77</sup> but is actually entirely dedicated to the WBGS. With a budget of USD 70 000, it was used to develop aquaculture, water reuse in agriculture and to support the development of the Palestinian Agriculture Disaster Risk Reduction and Insurance Fund (PADRRIF). The budget holder is not in the WBGS, and it resembles a TCP facility<sup>78</sup> more than an actual project. The second global project, GCP /INT/229/NET, "Monitoring water productivity by Remote Sensing as a tool to assess possibilities to reduce water productivity gap" is ongoing (2015-2019) and USD 2.7 million out of an almost 10 million total budget have been already released. It is strictly related to the Regional Initiative on water scarcity, and since activities have just begun it is too early to assess any impact at this stage.

<sup>76</sup> One of the two inter-regional projects is in fact not relevant for this analysis: GCPA/INT/028/SWE is used to fund an Associate Professional Officer (APO), who provides support to the FAO Office.

<sup>77</sup> FAO Special Fund for Emergency and Rehabilitation Activities provides FAO with a means of taking rapid action in emergency situations. It enables FAO to participate in inter-UN agency needs assessments missions following a crisis, to establish rapidly an emergency coordination unit for agricultural assistance and to prepare a programme framework. Essential, SFERA enables FAO to quickly and efficiently: initiate operations; establish surge capacity and reinforce existing operational capacity at field level; deploy assessment and programme formulation missions; and develop and implement a programmatic response in specific large-scale emergencies.

<sup>78</sup> See section 4.2.1 and note 116.

## 4. Assessment of FAO's strategic positioning in WBGs

### 4.1 Strategic relevance and effectiveness

#### 4.1.1 Relevance and appropriateness of FAO WBGs strategic frameworks

##### Findings on FAO WBGs strategic frameworks

- FAO WBGs strategic frameworks increasingly shifted towards a more developmental focus, bridging the humanitarian/development divide through a resilience approach.
- This is a natural evolution of FAO WBGs' work and relevant to this context, as is the value chain approach at the basis of the Programme Framework, though the potential of adopting a market-centred focus is not fully exploited.
- The longer timeframe and broader aims of some projects indicate the evolution towards a more programmatic approach, though overall the portfolio continues to be project led, mainly due to high reliance on voluntary project funding.
- The design of the programme has some weaknesses, for example the causal chains between projects, activities and the overall framework are not well defined, and the logframe lacks clarity on a number of fronts.
- Building national capacity and supporting policy and normative work is aligned with FAO's mandate and relevant and appropriate to the UN's support to a two-state solution.

85 In assessing the relevance and appropriateness of FAO's strategic frameworks it is important first of all to retrace their evolution and to highlight some of their defining characteristics. The first programming document, the Plan of Action, was developed in 2011 under the aegis of the Emergency Division, Plans of Action being the standard tool used by TCE to draw up country plans for Strategic Objective 1, TCE's main strategic and operational framework at the time<sup>79</sup> and for activities framed around Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR).

86 The blueprint for the 2014/16 PF is the Country Programming Framework, FAO's tool for country-level strategic prioritization and overall medium-term country-level programming. Though the CPF format was not a requirement for the WBGs office, and indeed the word "Country" was dropped from the document's name, the format was consistent with the adoption of FAO's corporate Strategic Framework in the Regional Office for the Near East and North Africa, and aligned with FAO's corporate programming and budgeting cycles and formats. The PF has resilience and development growth "at the heart of FAO's strategy", and is based on a value chain model to achieve the goal of "sustainable socio-economic growth, resilience and food security for the Palestinian people through agriculture". When compared to the PoA, the PF is more clearly aligned to the two UN guiding frameworks, as its first component reflects the HPC, and the second component the UNDAF.

87 The shift in strategic focus, from a more emergency-oriented programme centred on adaptation to shocks and DRR, to a greater role of the development and market-based component was intended to bridge the humanitarian/development divide by envisaging two parallel streams within one single programme, while at the same time clarifying to donors whether they were contributing to UNDAF or to the humanitarian appeal, in order to avoid duplication and provide clarity, transparency and accountability of funding streams. A further driver for this evolution is linked to a changing donor environment and the effort to find more sustainable responses to needs in the WBGs. Furthermore, at the time of drafting the PF, the Office of the Quartet Representative was developing a huge economic plan for Palestine that included an economic growth stream for agriculture and building the PF around a value chain approach was also functional to accessing this potential funding, though, as will be argued further on, there are intrinsic reasons for FAO to adopt this lens in the WBGs context.

79 See FAO Strategic Framework 2010-2019 [http://www.fao.org/uploads/media/C2009K5864EnglishStrategicFr\\_1.pdf](http://www.fao.org/uploads/media/C2009K5864EnglishStrategicFr_1.pdf)



- 88 There are strong arguments for bridging humanitarian and development actions through what may be described as a resilience approach. Such an approach not only corresponds to a global effort to find more sustainable solutions particularly in situation of protracted crisis, also reflected in FAO's adoption of resilience as one of its corporate strategic objectives. According to the evaluation's definition (see box 3 below), in many ways resilience as an overall framework is a relevant lens in a stalling political crisis such as this one, exposing households to a high risk environment, and where there is a wide consensus on the need to curb reliance on external aid delivered mostly through in-kind assistance and to reinforce national and individual capacities and agency.
- 89 In this sense it is remarkable that FAO WBGs adopted a resilience outlook through a value chain approach not just in compliance with the new corporate framework and its Strategic Objective 5, but rather as a natural evolution of the way the office had been working for a long time: with close attention to the context and the capacity to coordinate with both development and humanitarian actors and to act on both fronts, not to mention its long-standing engagement with FAO's corporate work on resilience measurement. Furthermore, for FAO to be working towards development implies supporting national institutions linked to the agricultural and food security sectors. Strengthening governmental capacity in view of assisting the government gain an increasingly central and independent role is in line with the UN's support of a two-state solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and therefore appropriate for FAO's role as an agency working under the UN umbrella.

### Box 3: Resilience

The concept of resilience has become increasingly popular in international development and humanitarian debates. Calls for resilience building have at their core the idea of enhancing capacity at different levels - systems, nations, communities, households, and individuals - to cope with risks and shocks arising from climate, food prices, macroeconomic shocks, protracted violence and so on, without compromising future options. Resilience - and the key concepts associated with it including vulnerability, risk, shocks and adaptive capacity - is also increasingly seen as a useful paradigm for bridging the long-standing divide between emergency response and development assistance, while addressing the root causes, rather than only the consequences, of recurrent crises.

FAO defines resilience as *"the ability to prevent disasters and crises as well as to anticipate, absorb, accommodate or recover from them in a timely, efficient and sustainable manner. This includes protecting, restoring and improving livelihoods systems in the face of threats that impact agriculture, nutrition, food security and food safety."* While the evaluation has based its analysis of resilience building in the WBGs on such definition, it adopted a broader view by also considering the interplay between the different and interconnected forces and levels (institutional, community, household, individual). In assessing FAO's work on resilience, the evaluation looked at whether FAO's strategy and actions also focused on the underlying processes that drive a lack of resilience rather than only addressing its proximate causes. If lack of resilience may be viewed as the risk not to be able to withstand both present and potential future shocks and stresses, this risk should be minimized not just by building *"an immediate set of assets, but rather a long-term capacity, a future ability to cope with future possible problems"*.<sup>80</sup>

This concept of resilience emphasizes a focus on reducing people's vulnerability and enhancing peoples' agency, their ability to make and follow through on their own plans in relation to socio-economic security. The actual capacity to reach the aims of "reducing vulnerability" and "enhancing agency" when programming for resilience depends on the specific programme components and actions, and whether they are based on a contextual analysis and on how they interact with the context and with each other.

- 90 Several factors limit the sustainability of agencies' activities in this context, including limited sovereignty, isolation, restricted access to natural resources and markets and low negotiating power of Palestinians. FAO addresses these factors through a programme designed to enhance access to markets and increase competitiveness through products' value addition, partnership building with the private sector and farmer cooperatives, according to a model more geared towards resilience, while working for the rehabilitation of the supply side of the value chain during the frequent crisis spikes.

80 A. Pain and Levine, S. (2012) A conceptual analysis of livelihoods and resilience: addressing the 'insecurity of agency', HPG Working Paper, London: ODI.

- 91 However, there is a limit in a programme grounded in “the ideal value chain, integrated and able to perform even if the political situation remains unchanged”:<sup>81</sup> functioning value chains are inextricably linked in many ways to the occupation and the uncertain and uneven control on markets resulting from it. FAO's market approach, on the other hand, does not seem to consider the effects of crises on markets in general while aiming to enhance market access, and it is unclear whether and how the programme is also preoccupied with their *inclusiveness*. In other words, whether enhancing market access is explicitly aimed at supporting different livelihood systems and marginalized households within them.
- 92 Examples of more developmental-oriented steps taken over the two programming periods to add value to agricultural products, increase food safety and improve Palestinian farmers' access to international markets through a value chain approach<sup>82</sup> include enhancing the capacities of the Palestinian Authority to create a master document for Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures (SPS)<sup>83</sup> and to establish a law on a National Animal Identification System (NAIS),<sup>84</sup> while strengthening farmers' capacities to be more productive and competitive.<sup>85</sup> The timeframe of these projects (three years) and the increased importance of capacity development activities indicate an effort to achieve a unified programmatic objective by tackling different levels and issues through individual projects. Until now, there has been limited capacity to translate such effort into a consistent programmatic approach throughout FAO's portfolio, which has continued to be project-led, mainly due to the office's high reliance on project funding.
- 93 Overall the conceptual frameworks used and the stated goals, outcomes and outputs are coherent and relevant. However, the causal chain between projects and activities and the overall framework is not so clear. Greater clarity on causality would help frame a detailed response option analysis bridging these different levels and helping guide the choice of response. To a certain extent when nearly identical projects are being proposed and implemented under different guiding frameworks targeting different beneficiaries, as was sometimes found to be the case,<sup>86</sup> the exercise seems more about retrofitting activities to a framework than the result of a well thought out process for achieving the desired results.
- 94 The design of the logframe in the Programme Framework<sup>87</sup> is problematic on a number of counts: the logframe does not specify to what level the baseline data for outcome and impact refer to, though if, as it seems, the data are aggregated at national level, it is unclear how they relate to FAO's beneficiaries, which are located in specific geographical areas. Furthermore, the indicators for Programme Component A: “assistance provided to protect and restore agricultural livelihoods threatened or affected by shocks” are all at the policy level, while the main indicators for this component should refer to the household level considering the livelihood focus.<sup>88</sup>

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81 FAO PF page 18

82 The global value chain is regulated by a number of formal and informal institutions operating at various scales. Formal regulation typically occurs through a number of state policies and legislation which, in some cases, have been influenced by international food standards or pressures. In a broad sense, formal regulations such as sanitary and phytosanitary measures have been introduced to prevent the transmission of potentially harmful pests, diseases and biomaterials to crops across national boundaries and to protect national agricultural industries and the environment, sometimes by restricting trade. Food regulations, particularly phytosanitary regulations, have contributed to trade barriers.

83 OSRO/GAZ/402/NET.

84 OSRO/GAZ/201/EC.

85 OSRO/GAZ/207/NET.

86 This was the case for example of projects rehabilitating cisterns which were carried out under the two different frameworks under the evaluation, with no changes in rationale, implementation modality or complementary activities to reflect a change from a focus on DRM to one on value chains.

87 PF pp.38-39.

88 This was noted during the midterm review of the PF and was addressed by a revision of the result matrix, with SMART indicators and qualifiers as well as baseline data. A new logframe was being developed and approved while the present report was being drafted.

#### 4.1.2 Relevance and appropriateness of FAO's analytical approach

##### Findings on FAO's analytical approach

- Both programming documents under review are supported by a situation analysis which demonstrates attention to the context, and FAO's overarching analysis at national and governorate level is well-constructed and based on a wide range of exercises.
- FAO developed a framework to work through value chains that is relevant to the context and appropriate to FAO's work and resilience-building aim.
- When looking at specific projects needs assessments, no context analysis or analyses of risks, cash injections, markets, protection and natural resources were undertaken at community and household levels. Though such analyses could all greatly benefit FAO's programming, neither FAO headquarters nor donors provide funding to undertake assessments or build baselines prior to project design.
- As FAO's portfolio shifts towards development, its future work supporting food security information systems will also need to shift away from its current annual emergency focus, to more comprehensive systems, and further research, technical support and financial commitments in order to cover a wide range of agricultural data and information systems.
- Any future work advocating and supporting improved food security information must wait for the development of the Palestinian Authority's new National Policy Agenda 2017-2022 as well as the final endorsement and adoption of the Socio-economic and Food Security (SEFSec) survey methodology by Palestinian authorities.

- 95 It is commendable that a concrete attempt was made to base both the food security and the market based strategies of the Plan of Action and Programme Framework respectively on a situation analysis, seeing that context-specificity is often a weakness in FAO's programming. The food security framework guiding the analysis in the Plan of Action proved to be a strong tool to frame the whole FAO programme through a clear definition of objectives and the relations between them. Furthermore, the three pillars of access, production and utilization of food are good entry points to capture the issues to be addressed through FAO's actions. This is unsurprising, seeing that the food security framework as an analytical tool provides both an explanation for causality and clarifies means and entry points to response. By contrast, the development and humanitarian situation analyses underlying the strategy in the PF are less well articulated and the links between the two are not developed.
- 96 In view of organizing the 2014/16 PF along a value chain model, a framework was developed (see annex 5) to map FAO's activities against the main value chain steps of supply, processing, aggregation and distribution, and market demand. An interesting effort was made to frame these steps as a link between emergency response and development interventions. This framework captures activities in the agriculture and food security sectors under a single umbrella from emergency to development and, most importantly, in doing so it clarifies the processes and mechanisms that FAO aims to modify. As pointed out by the former Head of Office, conceptualizing interventions along the agricultural value chain is an appropriate way for FAO to work towards building resilience. If, as mentioned, resilience is considered a future capacity to cope with adversity, and building it implies influencing processes rather than just increasing the asset base of beneficiaries, a comprehensive way for FAO to do so is precisely by improving the single steps of the value chain to enhance access to markets as illustrated in the Value Chain Analysis framework. However, while this framework has proved to be a very useful analytical tool, no evidence has been found by the evaluation team that it incorporates dynamic changes and specifically those which arise due to the fragile environment of the WBGS. Without looking at power relations or undertaking vulnerability and risk analysis, value chain modelling is not enough to bridge the humanitarian-development gap, particularly in a protracted crisis such as this one.
- 97 FAO uses a wide range of analyses at national and governorate level to guide its work. On the *humanitarian* side, the Humanitarian Needs Overview (HNO) coordinated by the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) uses

joint analyses to promote “a shared understanding of the impact and evolution of a crisis with the humanitarian country team”<sup>89</sup> and details strategic objectives and priority areas by sector. On the **development** side, a Common Country Assessment coordinated by UNSCO has been initiated since 2016, defining development needs and forming the foundation for drafting the UNDAF. Both form the backbone of FAO's humanitarian and development programme analysis.

**Box 4: FAO's Resilience Index Measurement and Analysis (RIMA)**

FAO has since 2008 been working on measuring the resilience capacity of people to food insecurity and the effectiveness of resilience strengthening interventions. RIMA is “an innovative quantitative approach that allows explaining why and how some households cope with shocks and stressors better than others do”. RIMA –II is the revised methodology developed in 2015. RIMA-II measures resilience both directly and indirectly, and should ultimately translate into a more comprehensive estimation of resilience and sounder policy recommendations. It estimates household resilience to food insecurity with a comprehensive pack, which includes both direct and indirect measures: direct measure suits descriptive purposes; indirect measure provides causal inference; shocks are considered exogenous and included into a regression model for estimating their impact on food security and resilience; food security indicators are the outcome of resilience and are not included in the resilience estimation model.

FAO RIMA-II Brochure, 2015

- 98 Concerning **food security** analysis, the SEFSec surveys collect data on the living conditions of Palestinian households by periodically monitoring key socio-economic and food security indicators. A preliminary report analysing this data is produced, and this data and analysis are quoted in FAO's programme frameworks and project documents to ground interventions and activities, though as mentioned above, they are not directly useful to build baselines for livelihood activities, as they only refer to governorate level and above.
- 99 In addition, in 2011/12 FAO developed Livelihood Baseline Profiles for WBGS using SEFSec data from the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics and FAO's own data sources. The profiles provide details about the characteristics of (i) urban and peri-urban; (ii) mixed farming and herding; (iii) farming; and (iv) herding livelihoods, the differences between the West Bank and Gaza Strip, the main risks they are subject to, their seasonal calendars, and their coping strategies. This analysis guides FAO's programme frameworks, though FAO staff admitted that as a costly and time-consuming exercise it is only undertaken every four/five years. Furthermore, its use has been erratic, and since livelihood profiles have not been updated, project documents now more simply refer to low, medium and high resilient groups.
- 100 It is important to note that documents and staff often quoted RIMA as an analytical tool, but this evaluation was unable to see what RIMA analysis actually involves, since documents were elusive, reference to it erratic and interviews and the SWOT analysis indicate that there is scarce knowledge of RIMA among FAO staff. The Programme Framework claims to have “created a comprehensive analytical tool from which to construct its programming”, however the evaluation found no evidence of RIMA having been used as an analytical tool at field level. It is too early to gauge the effects of RIMA-II, tested in the West Bank and Gaza Strip in 2015 and whose findings supposedly will widen and enrich the scope of analysis that feeds FAO future programming.

89 [http://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/hno2015\\_factsheet\\_final\\_november\\_2014.pdf](http://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/hno2015_factsheet_final_november_2014.pdf)

**Box 5: Support to Food Security Information Systems**

The scope of a common and harmonized framework of information for food and nutrition security is outlined under FAO's SO1.<sup>90</sup> Activities under this framework (see box 2) fall within the Organization's core competencies. For FAO WBGS this type of work has concentrated under Programme Component 6 "Operational coordination and evidence-based, food security-related information management" of the 2011-2013 Plan of Action, and under the cross-cutting components of the 2014-2016 PF, even though many of the activities are part of Component 2 "Develop the capacity and enable the environment of the agriculture sector for increased productivity, competitiveness and employment." During the evaluation period, the main activities carried out were FAO's contribution to the SEFSec surveys through work on the RIMA, and the Agricultural Projects Information System (APIS).

Through its support to the SEFSec surveys, FAO has been supporting the Food Security Sector in its ability to collect and analyse relevant food security data, statistics and information. The SEFSec survey is an annual joint effort between PCBS and UNRWA, the World Food Programme (WFP) and FAO, since 2014 working under the umbrella of the FSS. Prior to that, FAO, jointly with WFP and later UNRWA, directly supported implementation of SEFSec including technical assistance to put in place measurement methodology in consultation with other partners. The survey identifies changes in the living conditions of Palestinian households by periodically monitoring key socio-economic and food security indicators. Since 2009, SEFSec has consistently been utilized by the FSS as a tool for assessing trends on food security and providing data on vulnerable areas and groups.

At first, the SEFSec methodology was based on a two-pronged analysis that measured consumption and income poverty on one hand, and socio-economic clustering on the other. When a private consultancy firm was commissioned to study a revision of the methodology, this was not deemed satisfactory, and FAO's Economic and Social Development Department (ESA) department was asked to step in on the basis of their work on the RIMA (see Box 4). The aim of the revised SEFSec methodology, resulting from a dialogue among all local partners and a HCT working group co-lead by FAO and involving all stakeholders, was to reflect the multi-dimensional drivers of food insecurity in Palestine: poverty, food deprivation, and lack of resilience. Different partners gave positive feedback on FAO's technical contributions to the SEFSec, and FAO's strategic role in raising the profile of the resilience agenda in WBGS by including the resilience pillar was praised. However, there was some discussion with WFP, the other sector- lead agency, on the opportunity of adding this pillar.

Currently PCBS' role in the SEFSec is mainly to collect data for the surveys and coordinate with different line ministries, while in measurements of food insecurity FAO's contribution is essential in providing technical assistance. The SEFSec reports remain very much an exercise led by UN agencies working under the FSS with data collected by PCBS, and with external partners contracted for the analysis. PCBS is supposed to eventually take the lead in the actual analysis of the food security data, though it remained unclear when this will actually happen. Efforts are underway to ensure the new methodology is adopted nationally, as a first step towards PCBS playing a leading role in both collection and analysis of food security. It is not proving to be an easy process, however, and some have argued that the new methodology does not fully apply to the context of the WBGS, a criticism that is summarized in the comment, repeatedly heard, "we are not Somalia". This response seems tied to awareness that the methodology was initially tested in African countries,<sup>91</sup> and is not necessarily based on a full understanding of its complexity and how it has been adapted to Palestine. FAO's role in supporting the revision of the SEFSec methodology was considered very positive and an important milestone, introducing indicators tied to access to services, and moving away from measuring food insecurity through food availability exclusively.

90 'Help eliminate hunger, food insecurity and malnutrition'.

91 RIMA has been tested in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, Kenya, Sudan, Somalia, South Sudan, Ethiopia, Uganda, Niger, Burkina Faso, Tanzania, Malawi and Nigeria. Apart from WBGS, the other 11 countries are in Africa.

The Agricultural Projects Information System (APIS) was established by the Applied Research Institute -Jerusalem (ARIJ) in 2004, with funding from the Spanish Agency for International Development Cooperation (AECID), and it was taken over by FAO in 2009 based on request from AECID and the Ministry of Agriculture. In 2011, it was fully transferred to the MoA, and intended to be used as a coordination tool by the FSS. Its aim was to compile information concerning agriculture, including relevant information on organizations involved in agricultural activities in the WGBS. Data on the APIS website stop at 2011, though the pages also state that they are currently being revitalized, and that "FAO considers APIS an integral part of its ongoing mission in the WGBS and will exert every effort in order to have it sustainably active and continuously updated and used".<sup>92</sup> According to FAO staff, the MoA did not do the job of promoting APIS well among the members, and at the same time, APIS members - mostly NGOs - considered APIS a control tool in the hands of the MoA. There was a general agreement that work in this area should be followed up, together with the strengthening of agricultural statistics within PCBS. The MoA has established a new Sector M&E system, and FAO (through FSS) plans to support integrating APIS into that system. The need for FAO to continue its support to the Palestinian Authority to administer the APIS database is detailed in both the Plan of Action and the Programme Framework; the limited results achieved since 2012, however, highlight FAO's dependency on donor funding in an area that actually falls under FAO's core mandate, as well as the need for national counterparts to be fully committed in order to move forwards.

FAO has been working closely with national institutions on a number of initiatives to enhance the MoA's capacities in establishing early warning mechanisms to monitor and prevent natural hazards, such as streamlining data collection systems for rapid Damage, Loss and Needs Assessment (DaLA) for the agriculture sector, establishing the Palestinian Agriculture Disaster Risk Reduction and Insurance Fund (PADRRIF) to deal with agricultural risk management, and the animal identification system set up in the West Bank and Gaza Strip (see note on DRR., section 4.1.3). A market monitoring system was also developed for the MoA General Directorate of Marketing, to act as an early warning tool for market related crises.

- 101 Implicit sources of knowledge also indirectly inform programming: these include the knowledge accessed through FAO's strong links with the Ministry of Agriculture, and the implicit analysis of the political context undertaken by FAO staff, as emerged during discussions with the evaluation team and during the SWOT analysis. While use of staff's experience and knowledge is in principle desirable, in practice it should be incorporated in FAO's whole way of working and be less ad hoc than it is at present.
- 102 Though FAO's overarching analysis at national and governorate level is well-constructed and grounded, at the community level and when looking at specific projects, limited evidence appeared to back FAO's choice of activities and locations. Ultimately, projects were not designed on the basis of preliminary assessments of needs or risks, and at none of the field sites visited by the evaluation team was a more detailed analysis at community level carried out. Undertaking a macro level analysis exclusively is particularly inadequate when interventions are implemented at household level, and this shortcoming often resulted in the provision of the same kind and quantity of inputs for all beneficiaries, regardless of their situation.
- 103 It should however be recognized that usually neither FAO nor donors provide funding to undertake assessments or build baselines prior to project design. Though recently some funds have been invested for assessments,<sup>93</sup> none of these address the lack of tools and resources to gain a better understanding of the situation at community level.
- 104 In particular, FAO's decision to frame its strategy along a *value chain model* is sustained by a *developmental context analysis* describing the unfavourable business environment and its consequences on the agricultural sector, and a *humanitarian analysis* describing the shocks the sector is subject to. The rationale for this strategic choice would have been clearer if the link between the two analyses had been explicated in terms of identification of needs across the value chain, and if the Programme Framework had articulated how the response framework addresses those needs.

<sup>92</sup> [http://www.apis.ps/about.php?menu\\_name=about](http://www.apis.ps/about.php?menu_name=about)

<sup>93</sup> Some examples are an assessment of trade bans and trade relations funded by EST, a study commissioned under the Regional Initiative on Small Scale Family Farming on public service delivery capacity to cooperatives, and a study on the capacity of small and medium sized enterprises (SME) to engage in agribusiness.



- 105 Similarly, a system analysis of the Palestinian **market** backs the adoption of a value chain approach. No preliminary assessments of specific markets were conducted, nor were pre-existing analyses used, though understanding how markets normally operate is a precondition to support them to function better and to allow a more equitable, effective and sustainable access to markets and resources, particularly for marginalized farmers. Understanding the functionality of market systems before crisis peaks, such as the war in the Gaza Strip or winter storms, would also contribute to enhance the design and implementation of FAO's response to crises through a market-based approach, making it more rapid and appropriate. In sum, listing projects across a value chain does not create a value chain model by default, and a more detailed understanding of how markets work is needed to fully take advantage of the adoption of this approach.
- 106 A more articulated understanding of **risks** for all components of an agricultural value chain at different levels would be more aligned with the aim of developing a resilience-building strategy explicitly focusing on market-oriented approaches, rather than focused on business as usual supply-led livelihoods activities. Value chains, elements of these, and the actors that operate within them are vulnerable in different ways according to the intensity of exposure and the kind of risks they are exposed to. Therefore, analyses should be broken down to understand the vulnerabilities for each value chain. Furthermore, a value chain analysis should include an understanding of the position of different actors along the value chain and of the quality of their interactions in exchanging information or resources, whether they are bound by a formal or informal contractual relationship and ultimately of the power relations between them. For example, several fieldwork discussions indicated the significant constraints to marketing faced by producers, and an imbalance in the bargaining power of traders and producers, with the latter having very little or no ability to negotiate prices was a commonly reported problem for beneficiaries of FAO's humanitarian interventions.
- 107 Adequate analysis explaining the appropriateness of **cash-based responses** in the local contexts where FAO is operating was also missing, notwithstanding the recent focus on cash transfers as a modality of assistance, a shift, which seemed to have been based on technical considerations rather than on context-specific assessments. Importantly, market assessments, critical to understanding whether food insecurity hinged on problems of accessibility or availability, had not informed the choice of conditional cash as a transfer modality.
- 108 A lens to help contextualize the various **protection** threats that people experience is vital for a detailed livelihood analysis and in particular to understand the interwoven nature of protection and livelihoods (see box 1). Nonetheless, analysis appeared weak in its attention to risks that beneficiaries are exposed to at community level. FAO project activities would greatly benefit from the incorporation of a protection analysis aimed at gaining a more holistic understanding of the underlying causes of vulnerability for livelihood systems and households, and of how these vulnerabilities in WBGS are gendered. In assessing protection needs as well as other issues highlighted above, not all analysis needs to be carried out directly by FAO. It could depend instead on FAO's capacity to liaise with and tap into other actors' strengths and markedly non-governmental organizations and community-based organizations (CBOs) with which it could establish a more constructive partnership to this end, as also discussed later in the section on partnership. Instead, relations with protection partners appeared to be badly organized, and interviewed organizations that FAO considered focal points on protection issues on its own projects were surprised to learn FAO regarded them as such.
- 109 The team found that FAO WBGS does not always make use of global **natural resource** assessment tools or methodologies to inform its understanding of land and water issues, and its other tools or methodologies do not include a natural resource element. The impacts of water-related projects (e.g. cisterns) are assessed solely on the basis of the value or price of water. For example, the only assessment related to cistern construction made available to the evaluation team was a one-off exercise carried out to estimate the value of water stored in cisterns<sup>94</sup> (see box 18, section 5.1.3). Though this was a useful exercise to understand the economic impact of the interventions on households, it should be complemented with a broader assessment to understand other relevant factors related

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94 FAO Water Value in the Cisterns, no date.



to water issues, such as impacts on agricultural practice and productivity, environmental sustainability and the non-economic value of water.

- 110 A recent FAO report on **land tenure, planning and management** in the WBGS (FAO, 2015) provides an accurate snapshot of current land tenure practices and policies, and of land use, planning and management. In providing a wide range of information, and in-depth analyses, as well as recommendations for action, it has great potential as a tool to improve policy and planning in the WBGS. On the other hand, the lack of disaggregated analysis of land tenure arrangements between land/water owners and sharecroppers weakens its use for programme development or operations, e.g. beneficiary selection. A practical example of a useful tool in this regard is the Participatory and Negotiated Territorial Development (PNTD) approach. Developed by FAO and used in Mozambique and more recently planned for Somalia, the PNTD consists of an open process of diagnosis at the community level to understand existing relationships, institutions and mechanisms governing access to and use of land and resources, production and tenure systems in a given context (FAO, 2005). Talks were underway with FAO's Land and Water Division to find new entry points to work on land use and governance, and a preliminary mission was carried out, but so far it has been difficult to identify ownership on these issues within the Palestinian Authority and this initiative was not followed up on.

**Box 6:** Instances of lack of preliminary analysis affecting project implementation

- Some beneficiaries of project OSRO/GAZ/807/ITA in the Gaza Strip complained the packages of inputs they received contained plastic sheets whose characteristics and quality were unsuitable to protect their crops from adverse weather conditions. In such cases, the distributed inputs proved useless to achieve the expected outcome of rehabilitating production base and small infrastructures.
- Some beneficiaries complained that drought tolerant seeds were distributed without preliminary analysis to understand which groups were most affected by droughts, and a finding emerging from many FGDs was that drought tolerant seeds were distributed to farms practicing protected irrigation and intensive animal rearing rather than those practicing open field rain-fed agriculture and grazing, which were the most affected by droughts.
- Dripping pipes whose characteristics according to some interviewees did not fit their farming needs were distributed to avocado farmers participating in the Dutch funded high value crops project.

### 4.1.3 Linking relief, rehabilitation and development

**Findings on LRRD**

- FAO's focus on resilience as a way of linking relief, rehabilitation and development is constructive and clearly reflected conceptually in its strategies and policy guidance, but not in the design of activities.
- In practice, there is limited integration of humanitarian and development in FAO's value chain approach, whose rationale is grounded in an analysis of the business environment and not enough on the humanitarian challenges the context presents.
- Risk reduction being the objective of some projects in their own right, and more developmental objectives included in some humanitarian interventions, indicate an attention to LRRD. However, while projects claim to be implementing resilience-building activities, these were too frequently focused on asset building rather than on tackling key processes that create/perpetuate/increase the vulnerability of the targeted population, such as progressive erosion of natural resources or reduction of access to resources and (labour, commodity, service) markets. On the other hand, elements of capacity development as part of humanitarian interventions denote an attention to longer-term, resilience-building aims in a complex environment.
- A coordination gap at operational level between FAO's humanitarian and development activities is also mirrored in the lack of harmonization between the Food Security Sector and the Agriculture Working Group's aims and activities.
- Though crisis modifiers were not systematically integrated in the programme, by scaling up or modifying interventions at field level, FAO demonstrated an ability to respond to emergencies.

- 111 Making the two-way link between immediate humanitarian objectives and medium and long-term development objectives corresponds to the capacity to respond to crises with a "good transition approach"<sup>95</sup> as defined in the report of the evaluation of FAO's contribution to crisis-related transition. According to the Theory of Change developed by the transition evaluation, a transition approach would allow FAO to better respond to chronic, protracted and complex crises such as the one in the WBGs by addressing the underlying causes of vulnerability, while still responding to new shocks and maintaining response capacity. On the basis of the recommendations of the transition evaluation, this evaluation looked into FAO's ability to include humanitarian principles, concerns and activities when doing development work in WBGs,<sup>96</sup> while at the same time planning for a longer timeframe when responding to crises, in which conditions this may be done and if any trade-offs are involved.<sup>97</sup> If a "good transition approach" seems particularly relevant in the context of the WBGs to find sustainable solutions through developmental actions, all actors also need to be cognizant of the volatility of the situation due to the political context and how it reflects from the national level, to communities and households, calling for protection measures as well as preparedness to sudden surges in humanitarian needs.
- 112 The evaluation found that the strategic objective of addressing humanitarian and development needs was constrained by the limited integration of these two streams, both conceptually and practically. In particular, FAO's value chain approach focused exclusively on addressing the unfavourable business environment, delinking it from the humanitarian situation, which was not explicitly addressed, and this led to a fragmented approach and ultimately resulted in vacuums in programming. For example, many projects enhancing farmers' access to markets are based on agribusiness, but fail to incorporate in their design the limitations and levels of risk farmers are subjected to in this context.
- 113 As mentioned in section 4.1.1 the shift to integrate a more developmental approach in FAO's programme was evident with the adoption of the Programme Framework. Although there is a clear rationale for this, some caution should be exercised, as shifting too far or too rapidly away from humanitarian preoccupations and failing to adequately fund humanitarian activities may involve some risks when the conditions under which Palestinians live and markedly the lack of the rule of law expose them to arbitrary attacks and other unpredictable events negatively affecting their livelihoods, as also emerged during the fieldwork for this evaluation. As mentioned, in this context protection is paramount to guarantee the effectiveness of any intervention to build sustainable livelihoods. A programme based on a developmental framework exclusively would come at the expense of the recognition of protection needs, weakening the appropriateness of the approach. More in general, until the political conditions change, the effects of the occupation and particularly the volatility it creates will always inevitably impact on any development intervention. However, this can be mitigated by a strong analysis of the risk environment and of needs, and with contingency planning factored into the programme at different levels.
- 114 Taking into account the context of great insecurity, uncertainty and volatility, the evaluation assessed how risk mitigation and reduction were integrated in the programme, and whether measures were taken to minimize potential risks incurred during implementation. A matrix for risk monitoring and response flowing from the risk analysis is very similar in both the Plan of Action and the Programme Framework, and remains quite generic, not being grounded in either framework. Nonetheless, the risk analysis matrices are useful to go through programmatic and contextual risks that may affect the situation in the region and therefore the FAO programme in WBGs. Furthermore, the risk analysis in the PF refers to FAO's delivery, not to potential risks affecting beneficiaries, an understanding which is also missing in project design; there is little consideration of the risks beneficiaries incur by

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95 FAO 2014, *Evaluation of FAO's contribution to crisis-related transition. Linking relief, rehabilitation and development. Final Report*.

96 As also pointed out in a recent review of humanitarian principles in evaluation commissioned by UNEG (2016), evaluations can play a significant role in understanding how humanitarian principles are currently applied, supporting their application and analysis and assessing the results of doing so. This evaluation adopts a broad definition, and while not referring to them directly, has considered the principles of humanity, neutrality and independence in assessing FAO's work in WBGs.

97 FAO 2014.

default, and if and how FAO's intervention may mitigate or on the contrary inadvertently heighten risks. One project proposal that factors in risk in order to calculate the financial burden of losses is the support to the PADRRIF and the insurance and compensation scheme.

- 115 On the other hand, in some instances risk mitigation and reduction were objectives of the projects in their own right. Such examples include construction of animal sheds and distribution of drought resistant seeds for preparedness to adverse climatic conditions, the distribution of quality emergency fodder in the aftermath of the 2014 conflict in the Gaza Strip, critical for the rapid recovery of herds, and some complementary activities to assist setting up of the national insurance and compensation fund (PADRRIF). The tagging of all the livestock, set up to comply with international standards and build a national animal identification system, potentially also has the positive effect of facilitating systematic outreach to herders in case of emergency distribution of fodder and provision of other veterinary services during a humanitarian crisis (see box 7 below). Such system is also important in the monitoring and prevention of transboundary animal and plant pests and diseases. The SPS programme, improving plant protection, food safety and animal health, is another example of an initiative aiming to address and mitigate risks.

**Box 7: FAO WBGs' work on Disaster Risk Reduction/Management**

Recognizing the WBGs context as "a chronic emergency with recurring crises",<sup>98</sup> the Plan of Action highlighted the importance of understanding the relationship between preparedness, response and transition phases as circular rather than linear. In turn, the PoA and related interventions were articulated along a Disaster Risk Management model to bring the focus beyond conventional short-term emergency responses to include attention on enhancing local capacity for preparedness and transition to development. A 2013 policy brief on DRR noted that at the operational level, FAO WBGs' work, which at the time was guided by the PoA and its related DRM approach, sought to address the main drivers of risk for herders and farmers, including water scarcity (through rainwater harvesting cisterns, reservoirs, grey waste water treatment units) and fluctuations in input prices (through rangeland rehabilitation activities, establishment of model farms, promotion of crop diversification higher value crops, emergency vaccination campaigns).<sup>99</sup>

The Programme Framework highlights a number of activities that draw on DRM approaches and are designed "to mitigate environmental and naturally occurring risks".<sup>100</sup> These include integrating environmental conservation and good practices in natural resource management, addressing animal and plant pests and diseases such as red palm weevil, foot and mouth disease, development of a sector-wide mapping and response tool to better understand the patterns of climatic shocks and address their impact on farmers and herders.

FAO WBGs staff interviewed for this evaluation was of the view that, while DRR is not systematically mainstreamed in project design and implementation, attention to and implementation of activities such as water conservation (e.g. through the construction or rehabilitation of cisterns) are an indication that elements of DRR such as preparedness and risk mitigation nonetheless regularly feature in project activities. That said, programme and project documents reviewed do not elaborate on the role that such interventions may have in the different phases of the DRM model (e.g. preparedness, response, transition phases) and, critically, how and why those specific interventions are best placed to mitigate the risks that targeted beneficiaries are exposed to in the different phases.

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98 FAO (2011) Plan of Action. West Bank and Gaza Strip 2011-2013, p. 26.

99 FAO (2013) FAO Disaster Risk Reduction Brief. West Bank and Gaza Strip [http://www.preventionweb.net/files/33680\\_fao.pdf](http://www.preventionweb.net/files/33680_fao.pdf)

100 FAO (2014) 2014-2016 Programme Framework. West Bank and Gaza Strip, p. 40.

Some of the findings of the fieldwork also point to the recognition by staff and FAO implementing partners (IPs) of a gap in the area of *preparedness*. Following the emergency fodder distribution in Gaza<sup>101</sup> targeting livestock-holders through blanket coverage in the immediate aftermath of the 2014 Gaza Strip war, it turned out that there were less heads of livestock in the Gaza Strip than initially thought. This pointed to the importance of having an animal tagging system in place, such as the one which has been implemented through the LbL-i project as part of broader preparedness measures in the quite likely event of escalation of violence in the Gaza Strip. Referring to the importance of developing an animal tagging system also to improve effectiveness and timeliness of response, both FAO staff and beneficiaries concurred that "if a conflict [in GS] erupts again then FAO and other actors know how many animals are out there and this allows us to plan better". While this finding is pertinent to livestock related emergency response in the Gaza Strip, it may be indicative of the need to take preliminary stock of the situation in some areas both in the WB and the GS, and for other livelihood groups (e.g. communities affected by settlers violence, demolitions etc.) that are constantly under threat, to see how preparedness activities can best be strengthened making response more effective.

- 116 The population in Area C suffers from Israeli imposed limitations to movement and access to land and natural resources that affect the preservation of their agricultural livelihoods and their productive capacity, as well as raising protection issues. FAO, like many other agencies in Area C, responds through emergency projects, which are part of the Humanitarian Response Plan. While granting immediate access to food as well as protection (see section 4.2.2), some of these initiatives in Area C also ensure that Palestinians are able to continue raising their animals and cultivating their land, counteracting the erosion of their livelihoods due to the occupation with a longer-term developmental goal. FAO also supports vulnerable herders in Area C and Eastern Slopes by developing their capacity and assisting them to establish cooperatives.<sup>102</sup> The introduction of longer-term capacity building components as part of a humanitarian activity delivering assets and rehabilitating agricultural infrastructures indicate the will to adopt a resilience-building approach in a complex context, which is under Israeli authority and where settler and ISF violence is rampant.
- 117 Until 2014 the person who was in charge of the agriculture stream of humanitarian coordination also gave an important contribution in designing the humanitarian components of FAO's projects and programme, as well as ensuring technical advisory contributions for emergencies in agriculture to both FAO management and other UN agencies and the Humanitarian Country Team (HCT). The fact itself of having a "middleman of emergencies in agriculture" allowed FAO to bridge its technical work in emergencies with other less technical, and more advocacy-oriented work carried out in the food security area. Furthermore, investing in the function of liaising with the HCT meant that there was constant and fruitful coordination and exchange of information, which allowed concrete integration of FAO's development and emergency approaches. When the person covering this role departed, she was not replaced, partly because some of her functions were taken over by the newly established Food Security Sector coordinator. However, strategic communication of information with humanitarian actors had ensured a stronger link with FAO's development work in agriculture than is currently the case, indirectly weakening FAO's role in LRRD. A gap continues to exist between humanitarian FSS activities and coordination of development stakeholders through the Agriculture Sector Working Group. As also pointed out by the present FSS coordinator, addressing this gap would better harmonize emergency and development interventions and, incidentally, would also respond to one of the recommendations of the transition evaluation. Remarkably, the livelihood stream of the FSS for 2015 is the most underfunded by donors, who ostensibly widely support a shift towards more developmental programming in the WBGs, but do not seem to follow through at least in the way they allot their resources to the FSS (see 2.6.2).

101 OSRO/GAZ/401/CAN.

102 OSRO/GAZ/807/ITA.

- 118 According to Mosel and Levine, flexibility is one of the principles that are the basis of good LRRD programmes.<sup>103</sup> An example of how flexibility can be incorporated into a programme is by introducing "crisis modifiers" – i.e. components in a programme that are already pre-agreed with the donor and that stipulate that if conditions in implementation change, the programme can quickly change accordingly.<sup>104</sup> From what the team observed, FAO WBGS programme does not incorporate any crisis modifiers or programmatic contingency plans. During the evaluation period, the only contingency plan that FAO had adopted was that of the FSS - and this was considered "not very developed" by partner stakeholders due to weak funding for it. The evaluation however notes that a new FSS sector contingency plan was being developed while the evaluation was underway.
- 119 Despite the lack of a contingency plan at the field level, this evaluation has observed an ability to respond to emergencies, by either scaling up or modifying interventions. Positive feedback was provided when discussing the blanket distribution of fodder under project OSRO/GAZ/401/CAN. This was not originally planned under this project, but in the aftermath of the 2014 Gaza war the FAO team was able to adjust activities to reallocate funds between the WB and the GS - in agreement with the donors. Land rehabilitation activities were also newly introduced after the war in Gaza under the Dutch-funded HVC project. Less positive was the feedback from Susia, where FAO distributed plastic sheeting in response to the Alexa winter storm which were too small for the sheds they were destined for. Donors interviewed thought FAO was capable of expanding capacity and responding to shock if needed - FAO was described as "quite nimble on the ground". Similarly, FAO staff considered their relations with specific donors constructive, especially with regard to donor responsiveness, flexibility and speed in budgeting resources when they were needed, and in response to sudden peaks in humanitarian need.

#### 4.1.4 Alignment to FAO's corporate Strategic Framework

##### Findings on alignment with FAO's corporate Strategic Framework

- The Programme Framework has fully incorporated the current reviewed Strategic Framework 2013-2023 in its strategy, and both programming documents in the period under review are clearly linked to the corporate objective of enhancing resilience, aligning with the previous Strategic Objective I and current Strategic Objective 5. There are also some links with SO2, 3 and 4.
- FAO's Strategic Framework is considered a useful tool by staff for thinking strategically about FAO's overall mandate, but not necessarily conducive to better programming.

- 120 In its logical framework, FAO's PF refers to two of FAO's current Strategic Objectives, SO2 and SO5, and two Organizational Outcomes. The PF also broadly outlines the synergies of the programme with all five SOs. The Plan of Action, by contrast, does not clearly align to the first version of the SOs of FAO's Strategic Framework 2010-2019, making a general reference to FAO's new vision and framework.<sup>105</sup> In the PoA's rationale, however, there is a clear linkage with SO5, which is not surprising seeing that the office started as an emanation of FAO's Emergency division and that the PoA was closely linked to SOI the predecessor of SO5.
- 121 The evaluation team found that the Programme Framework closely correlated with SO5,<sup>106</sup> as indicated in the logframe, with resilience at the core of FAO WBGS' work, resulting in activities and projects contributing to the resilience-building objective. Much of what is

103 The other four principles are: (i) risk taking and openness to learning; (ii) working with local institutions; (iii) joint analysis/ planning and learning at country level; and (iv) realistic programming. These are covered in different parts of the report. Irina Mosel and Simone Levine, Remaking the case for linking relief, rehabilitation and development, HPG Commissioned Report, ODI, March 2014.

104 For different mechanisms to institutionalise and operationalise resilience see for example the working document prepared by Mercy Corps "Summary of existing donor activities around institutionalising resilience" [https://www.mercycorps.org/sites/default/files/Ann\\_Vaughan\\_IFPRI\\_Resilience.pdf](https://www.mercycorps.org/sites/default/files/Ann_Vaughan_IFPRI_Resilience.pdf)

105 Alignment between country programmes and corporate framework was not mandatory at the time the PoA was drafted.

106 Increase the resilience of livelihoods to threats and crises.

classified under SO5 within the programme corresponds in fact to delivery of inputs,<sup>107</sup> however, as argued elsewhere in this report, this kind of activity can at best be considered resilience building if coupled with other components. Other important outcomes related to SO5 include the results of a number of institutional support activities. Perhaps the most remarkable among the institutional activities correlated with SO5 is the long-standing effort to produce resilience measurements in close collaboration with the Agricultural and Development Economics Division (ESA) in Rome. This translated in development of the RIMA and the resilience marker, a strand of work that was integrated into the new SEFSEC methodology for measuring national food security and furthered FAO's collaboration with PCBS. Other activities related to SO5 include FAO's support to the National Agriculture Sector Strategy 2014-16 "Resilience and Development" and to the PADDRIF.

- 122 FAO WBGs' work on markets, also at the core of the Programme Framework and mainly focused on developing the agriculture sector's capacity and increasing productivity, is directly aligned to SO2.<sup>108</sup> Less explicitly, by targeting low resilient farmers and herders and therefore facilitating the inclusiveness of the economically vulnerable and disadvantaged groups, the PF also aligns with SO3<sup>109</sup> and, by improving access to markets, with SO4.<sup>110</sup>
- 123 However, the team found that the second part of SO2, which states that agricultural development is to be developed "in a sustainable manner" does not seem to be pursued consistently by FAO, in particular regarding water resources for agriculture. This was poignantly illustrated by a water expert interviewed in the Gaza Strip who referred to the findings of a recent report issued by the PWA<sup>111</sup> according to which in 2013-2014, agricultural activities in the Gaza Strip used 95 MCM, with an increase of 9.5 percent in water use for agriculture since 2012. The sustainability of such extraction levels in the context of the well-known fragility of aquifers in the Strip coupled with the prohibition to drill new wells by the Ministry of Agriculture was indicated by the same expert as questionable. FAO considers the problem mainly in terms of water demand management (making more efficient use of water extracted and promoting a shift to more salinity tolerant and less water consuming production) and is planning to promote the reuse of treated wastewater. However more could be done to mitigate these problems: to avoid the risk of worsening the situation attention to issues of water sustainability should be central to any FAO intervention supporting agricultural development in the Gaza Strip, while this is not always true (for example in some activities related to the high value crops projects).
- 124 A comment repeatedly heard among staff, and that this evaluation concurs with, is that FAO's Strategic Framework is a useful tool for thinking strategically about the FAO mandate overall but it is not necessarily conducive to better programming, as Strategic Objectives in practice overlap and projects often fell under more than one strategic objective making the job of assigning their various components to single SOs requested by headquarters to respond to the corporate Results-based Management (RBM) framework quite difficult and time consuming. Staff felt at times that the office was just catching up with the changes in the SF without much thought and with little time to plan. The top-down process of developing the Strategic Framework, they felt, did not involve staff, and requests to fall in line with it and to produce other information updates arrived with extremely tight deadlines and left the team little time to digest the large structural and conceptual changes taking place at FAO headquarters. As a result, the need to follow the SF sometimes meant retrofitting current projects to the new framework, rather than the framework being a useful tool for staff to carry out a thorough exercise in thinking things through. The top-down process is also reflected in the fact that the SF does not mention direct delivery and operations, which makes matching the expected results in the RBM framework with all the activities implemented in the WBGs very difficult.

107 Seeing that asset distribution is often done as part of broader projects, its share of the programme is difficult to quantify, however it could be estimated approximately as of 25% of the total budget.

108 Increase and improve provision of goods and services in a sustainable manner.

109 Reduce rural poverty.

110 Enable more inclusive and efficient agricultural systems.

111 The interviewee did not however mention exactly which report they were talking about.



#### 4.1.5 Partnership and coordination

##### Findings on partnership and coordination

- FAO's collaboration with the Palestinian Authority intensified over the years through strategic and operational work with different ministries, increasingly on institutional capacity development.
- FAO's presence and leadership in multiple coordination fora and technical working groups is widely praised by all stakeholders. Over the years FAO has undertaken many actions to foster a true partnership relation with donors. The donor community recognizes FAO's technical role and appreciates its ability to collaborate with the Palestinian Authority in the West Bank and Gaza Strip as well as with the Israeli authorities and the Coordinator of the Israeli Coordination of Government Activities in the Territories (COGAT).
- Notwithstanding solid partnerships with key actors, FAO displays weaknesses when partnering with local NGOs and CBOs, whose work is mostly limited to service provision regulated through Letters of Agreement (LoAs).
- On the other hand, under the HVC project, FAO WBGS created a consortium based on an equal footing with a national organization. This unprecedented arrangement was seminal to the establishment of the new manual section "Operational Partners Implementation Modality" (OPIM) defining corporate rules and procedures for this type of partnership.

125 Through its presence in multiple coordination fora<sup>112</sup> and participation in dialogue with various ministries – including agriculture, women's affairs, labour and health – donors, NGOs, the private sector and other UN agencies, FAO maintains strong channels of communication<sup>113</sup> with all relevant stakeholders.

126 Though Palestine is not a member country, FAO's main interlocutors remain national institutions, and principally *the Palestinian Authority and the Ministry of Agriculture*. The relationship has intensified over the years, especially since the Programme Framework, increasingly dedicated to institutional support (around USD 11 million over 2013 to 16), where previous interaction had been a narrower and based on project implementation. This helps explain statements by government officials, who described FAO occasionally as a competitor for funds and at other times as a key partner in strengthening the capacity of the agricultural sector, according to the period of their engagement with the FAO office. FAO maintains multiple linkages at the operational and strategic level with the MoA, collaborating with ministry directors and field offices throughout the project cycle. For example, all new MoA proposals for donors involve joint planning with FAO, and FAO is closely involved in drafting the agricultural strategy.

127 This strong collaboration was seen as providing critical capacity to the MoA by a wide range of stakeholders and considered in a very positive light by the Ministry itself. It was suggested that it went some way towards explaining FAO's technical expertise and its value added when working at field level. At the same time some concerns were raised by partners over potential conflict of interest seeing FAO is simultaneously adviser on national policies, programme adviser and implementer of agricultural projects. A different opinion was expressed by a UN officer who thought FAO's relationship with the MoA was remarkable in its freedom and for not being "highjacked or antagonized". By contrast, it emerged from interviews that FAO's relations with other Palestinian ministries and agencies are limited to specific activities.<sup>114</sup>

112 These include: OCHA and HCT meetings, the Ad Hoc Liaison Committee with donors, the Association of International Development Agencies, the Local Development Forum, as well as the various Sectors and Working Groups.

113 Through the above coordination fora, as well as with Palestinian stakeholders and institutional representatives, and COGAT and other Israeli entities.

114 These include EQA (climate change), PSI (quality standards, SPS), MoH (SPS), MoNE (SPS) and MoL (agricultural cooperatives).



**Box 8:** FAO's strategic position on partnerships

FAO's corporate strategy defines partnerships as the cooperation and collaboration between FAO units and external parties in joint or coordinated action for a common purpose. A partnership therefore involves a relationship where all parties contribute to the output and the achievement of the objectives rather than a purely financial relationship. The existence of mutual will among the partners to pursue a common goal is considered a necessary condition for the success of a partnership.

This strategic importance placed on partnerships at corporate level is reflected programmatically in the Programme Framework for 2014-2016, where partnerships with governmental officials, development partners, civil society and the private sector are said to be "at the heart of FAO's strategic approach in the WBGs," and to be developed through a "true partnership model" – an approach based "on the premise that organizations could accomplish more by focusing on the quality of their relationships. Though seemingly obvious in principle, the popular paradigm regarding partnerships is still driven by a financial relationship (entailing power and control) and a binary (either/or, right/wrong) mentality." This focus on partnerships was also important under the Plan of Action 2011-2013.

- 128 At field level, the Ministry of Agriculture is often part of the administration of local committees and FAO typically relies on the capacities of local MoA staff to coordinate and implement its projects. This makes the quality of the relationship quite variable and contingent on personal relations and on the specific individuals involved. The uneven perception of the quality of the MoA's work tends to reflect on FAO itself, at times in a negative way.
- 129 Relations with the MoA in the Gaza Strip are more limited to issues of technical coordination, also due to the ban on working with the de facto government at political level, however technical relations do exist and have been described as constructive. FAO has certainly been catalytic in working on projects, which required intense involvement of the ministerial counterpart both in the West Bank and in the Gaza Strip, and Government representatives have expressed great appreciation of this. In any case, FAO's capacity as a UN agency to negotiate and interact to a variable degree with three governmental entities, the Palestinian Authority, technical staff from the de facto government and Israeli authorities, and COGAT in particular, was widely perceived by donors as a strong comparative advantage of FAO vis-à-vis for example NGOs, something that this evaluation concurs with, as explained in more detail in other sections of this report.
- 130 Though many donors<sup>115</sup> expressed their preference to work with and through FAO rather than local NGOs for its more reliable and solid administrative, financial and reporting capacities, the effectiveness of its systems as well as, crucially, the above mentioned ability to liaise with governmental entities, they also remarked on its higher overheads and staff costs, which make it less competitive at least financially when it comes to implementation of projects with a strong field presence. In general, donors consulted were positive concerning their relationship with FAO, and very favourable in their judgement and supportive of the FAO team whose high standards they considered crucial to the good work of the office. FAO's clout influenced donors' willingness to be involved in negotiations with COGAT, ensured that Area C was kept on the agenda, and in the Gaza Strip its standing as a multilateral neutral broker made it easier to engage in negotiations with Israeli authorities on crucial issues such as the fishing limits or farming in the buffer zone (see section 4.4.2). In addition, donors corroborated the view that FAO has a strong focus on accountability, both through regular updates and briefs prepared for individual donors, and through more informal but regular sharing of information, and were positive regarding its responsiveness. Similarly, FAO staff considered their relations with specific donors constructive, especially with regard to donor responsiveness, flexibility and speed in budgeting resources when they were needed, and in response to sudden peaks in humanitarian need such as those mentioned in section 4.1.3. Overall, donors were actively and willingly involved in FAO's programming through different means, thus fostering a relationship that was more geared towards a true partnership rather than one based only on financial engagement.

<sup>115</sup> "Under the "true partnership" framework established in 2011, FAO's relationship with its donors extends beyond funding to one that is based on mutual understanding and knowledge sharing. FAO's approach to donor relations emphasizes the power of long-term partnerships, maintains a focus on results measurement and efficiency, and provides appropriate visibility to donor partners" Programme Framework 2014-2016, p.34.

- 131 FAO is praised by *local implementing partners* for its professionalism and the good and regular communication it establishes, but they also often complain of its overheads, and especially larger Palestinian NGOs crucially view FAO as competing with them for donor funds and Ministry of Agriculture support. The evaluation team found that the quality of the relationship with NGOs was mixed and, as in the case of relationships with the MoA, often dependent on personal interactions, and that FAO generally invests very little time and resources in developing the capacity of its partners and other local NGOs. This is also acknowledged by staff, despite the claims made in FAO's corporate strategy and in the Programme Framework. It is worth noting that the PF does not refer to local and international NGOs, aside from a generic mention of civil society,<sup>116</sup> which is particularly worrying when, on the other hand, the PF estimates a dramatic reduction in access to be highly probable,<sup>117</sup> making "cooperating with local partners who are already based in the targeted areas" necessary,<sup>118</sup> presumably based on pre-established and long-standing relations with local partners. An important exception to this general trend is the consortium created under the HVC project, an interesting and commendable example of donor pressure pushing FAO to find a solution and ultimately change its corporate rules "from the bottom up", in other words being driven by the needs and experience of a decentralized office. Unfortunately, FAO's manual sections for partnerships and service providers, contrary to FAO's corporate stance, are not conducive to the establishment of partnerships on an equal footing with local NGOs. Paradoxically, Manual Section 701, which was triggered by the need to establish the above mentioned consortium (see also box 9), has made it more difficult to articulate relationships such as the one experimented under the HVC project.

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116 Programme Framework 2014-2016, p.34.

117 The Programme Framework 2014-2016, Annex III, p.43 explains that "despite statistics showing a lower number of security checkpoints in the West Bank, continued settlement expansion, demolitions of agricultural assets and infrastructure, settler violence, restrictions on movement and the separation barrier continue to further restrict access to land", while "the blockade of Gaza and ongoing incursions continue to limit access to land and sea for livelihood activities".

118 Programme Framework 2014-2016, p.42.

**Box 9: FAO WBGs' contractual arrangements with implementing partners**

In working with civil society (CSOs) and other actors, FAO WBGs limited its partnerships to one out of the six areas of collaboration identified by its strategy for partnerships with civil society i.e. joint use of resources in emergency situations.<sup>119</sup> To that effect, the most prevailing administrative tool is the Letter of Agreement, which in fact reflects a service provision function on behalf of the CSO/NGO, rather than a partnership relationship, as defined by FAO itself.<sup>120</sup>

In the Gaza Strip LoAs for smaller NGOs and CBOs were seen as both a hindrance and a deterrent. FAO staff in the Gaza Strip admitted that due to slow and bureaucratic procedural constraints, local organizations and especially small CBOs sometimes ended up working pro bono and without a LoA, with the hope of establishing a more formal partnership in the future. LoAs are not very friendly for small NGOs, as they demand a great amount of detail however small the sum involved, and a lot of legalistic information which, while important, is intimidating and requires experience and time to be collected and entered.

FAO staff acknowledged that this affected implementation too: at times local CBOs and NGOs possess the best local knowledge, and in an ideal arrangement staff would have preferred working with them. However, in some cases this would mean developing separate LoAs with each organization, so time and logistical constraints sometimes led staff to seek a single blanket LoA with a larger partner covering numerous geographical areas, even if that partner had less developed local ties and understanding.

FAO's modus operandi of having one standard LoA template thus has a seriously detrimental effect on its ability to establish formal partnerships at field level. In building its partnerships with local NGOs and CBOs, FAO seems more affected by its own internal procedures than by identified needs at field level. This in turn raises questions concerning the extent to which FAO undertakes a proper selection process of the implementing partners, develops their capacities, and strengthens its accountability to affected populations

One case where FAO created a consortium with a CSO in Palestine taking the form of a proper partnership was with the Union of Agricultural Work Committees, Mount of Olives company and the Palestinian Businesswomen's Association under the HVC project. FAO did not contemplate this kind of partnership agreement before the Dutch donor requested it as a *conditio sine qua non* to obtain funding for the project. Thanks to a strong effort and collaboration between FAO WBGs and relevant divisions at headquarters, a new manual section named "**Operational Partners Implementation Modality (OPIM)**" (FAO Manual, Section 701) was introduced defining all rules and procedures applying to this type of partnership agreement/modality. Though in theory this new instrument was poised to constitute an important step for the organization as a whole, in practice it involves high transaction costs and has ended up making the process more bureaucratic still.

- 132 FAO generally has good relations and collaborates to various degrees with the other UN agencies. The UN Country Team worked together to prepare Palestine's first UNDAF, but otherwise interagency working groups organized under the development coordination umbrella are underperforming, and opportunities for joint work are mostly under the humanitarian coordination system. Different interviewees have commented favourably on FAO's work in resilience, and consider FAO a leader on the issue of resilience analysis and measurements among UN agencies.
- 133 In the past relations with UNDP were not easy as there was little acknowledgement of FAO's specific role and mandate. Though there is still no joint planning or fundraising, presently FAO can count on a very good reputation, its normative standards and guidelines are employed, and it is considered a potential partner on UNDP's big livelihood portfolio. On the other hand, with another UN technical agency such as the World Health Organisation there has been some collaboration with good synergies on common areas

119 The six areas of collaboration are: field level programs; knowledge sharing and capacity development; policy dialogue; joint use of resources in emergency situations; FAO normative activities; advocacy and communication. (FAO strategy for partnerships with civil society organizations. ISBN 978-92-5-107932-4 FAO, 2013FAO).

120 The scope of LoAs is generally limited to contracting services from non-commercial entities. LoAs entail a transfer of resources from FAO to a registered non-profit organization in exchange for pre-defined services and are governed by Section 507 of FAO Administrative Manual under the overall responsibility of the Procurement Service (CSAP) and technical units.

of work, such as transboundary animal diseases and food safety with the Sanitary and Phytosanitary measures project (see also 5.2). FAO's capacity to tactfully engage with OCHA and UNSCO on humanitarian and political agendas respectively, as mentioned in 4.2.2, was highly appreciated too. As also mentioned in section 4.2.2, FAO made technical contributions to World Bank reports, and markedly on the study on Area C and the future of the Palestinian economy.

- 134 According to former staff, past FAO and WFP collaboration was excellent, based on mutual respect, with much willingness to engage and some joint work including monitoring and analyses. However present staff point out that there are no areas of joint work between the two agencies apart from the work on the SEFSec, nor is there a clear vision or discussions regarding possible collaboration in the future. The recent evaluation of WFP's country portfolio 2011-2015 also remarked that "there was much shared thematic work, but little practical collaboration at the operational level and still less real synergy or multiplier effects." There is however good potential for joint work in the area of market based interventions, seeing FAO's adoption of a value chain approach and WFP's use of vouchers, where FAO could fill in a gap in farmers' capacities to market their products, by providing technical support to farmers to improve agribusiness and different value chains.
- 135 At the end of 2012, following the recommendations of a joint FAO/WFP mission the **Food Security Sector** was created by merging three humanitarian clusters, namely Agriculture, Food Assistance and Cash Assistance, led respectively by FAO, WFP and UNRWA, which successively became working groups under the food security umbrella. The food security coordination mechanism, co-led by FAO and WFP, was defined as a sector rather than a cluster to keep it open to working in a more developmental sense, though up to now there has been no coordination with the LACS Agriculture Sector Working Group coordinating donors, as would be expected to ensure greater integration of emergency and development oriented work and, as pointed out by the present FSS coordinator, to be more coherent with the resilience building approach which should imply links at every level, including coordination.
- 136 Though formally no FSS coordinator was appointed until May 2014, this role was covered by an FAO staff member who was already working on coordinating the former Agriculture cluster as well as taking care of FAO's more emergency related work (see also 4.2.2). Efforts were made by FAO at the time to play a neutral brokering role, and this involved at times staying out of the fray and not competing for funds from emergency appeals in order to gain agencies' trust. All the same, the FSS was associated with FAO, and more so than with WFP, mainly because FAO's interventions are more diverse, as are its partners, and due to its stronger ties with the Ministry of Agriculture and effective engagement in different coordination fora, as well as its investment in policy support and dialogue at national level. Information shared by the FSS is considered vital by partners, and FAO's technical contribution to the SEFSec is valued and respected. In general FAO's role is seen as constructive and leading, and the MoA in the Gaza Strip, seeing its weak capacity, particularly appreciates its coordinating function.
- 137 FAO contributes to aid effectiveness through LACS, which brings together development partners to support the Palestinian Authority to achieve its development goals and priorities. In particular, as co-chair and technical adviser to the Agriculture Sector Working Group, FAO worked to promote complementarity between development actors' interventions and alignment to the Government's Agricultural Development Strategy. It also helped align donor interests with agricultural sector strategic priorities. FAO is also a member of the Social Protection Sector Working Group, the Private Sector Development Working Group and the Environment Sector Working Group. This coordination role is an important part of FAO's assistance to the government and widely appreciated both by the MoA and by donors.

#### 4.1.6 Decentralization

##### Findings on Decentralization

- As a focus country, WBGs has been supported in implementing activities in line with the Regional Initiatives, providing otherwise difficult to access seed funds.
- On one hand, the country support process seems to have improved over the two years of its implementation, with a broader range of SOs supporting the office, and a higher number of requests of support being met.
- On the other hand, procedures are heavy and not always clear, reporting requirements weigh on staff, and ultimately being a focus country seems to entail many duties and few advantages to the office in Jerusalem.
- A good example of direct support was the SPS programme, which involved different technical divisions, was rolled out without support from the Regional Office or headquarters, and was considered an extremely satisfactory experience by all parties. On this basis and also in view of the difficulties for nationals from the region to travel to the WBGs, a case could be made for more technical support being provided directly from the technical divisions.

138 Until 2014, before FAO's integration of emergency and development activities and the decentralization of its operations to regional and country offices, backstopping to what at the time was an Emergency Coordination Office was provided by technical officers from FAO headquarters via TCE focal points. The Regional Office at the time provided ad hoc assistance in response to specific requests, as it did for example to develop national treated wastewater standards in response to a request from the Ministry of Agriculture, or with a mission to support the Gaza Strip appeal during the conflict in 2014.

139 A new country support process, in place since the adoption of the reviewed Strategic Framework, aims to better and more systematically assist countries within the renewed decentralized organizational structure. Regional Initiatives have been developed as delivery mechanisms to enhance the focus and impact of work on specific SOs, particularly at country level. The status of focus country<sup>121</sup> within the RI delivery system should be particularly relevant for WBGs, as RIs can provide seed funds to develop concept notes and proposals, which are otherwise difficult to access for this office.

140 The West Bank and Gaza Strip has been a focus of the RI on resilience since 2014, and in the biennium 2016-2017 it also became one for the Regional Initiatives on Water Scarcity (WSI) and small-scale agriculture. Though the WBGs office has not yet received any resources through the WSI, if it were to prioritize water sustainability issues, this Regional Initiative could become an important resource, providing ready access to experience and expertise from other North East and North Africa (NENA) countries. Due to the concentration of FAO strategic activities in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, the country is presently considered a country under close observation by the organization, and this should entail more targeted and consistent support, though it is not clear what form this would take, and it risks increasing reporting requirements.

141 A number of requests were formulated through the country support process, and at the time of writing, towards the end of 2016, requests for activities contributing to eleven SO outputs had been advanced by the office in Jerusalem. Activities related to three of these outputs have been completed, including support to project proposal on capacity development of PADRRIF, stakeholder consultations to define programming areas/ interventions for DRR/M and climate change adaptation, and development and piloting of the resilience marker. Activities are ongoing for five further outputs, including supporting

<sup>121</sup> A focus country is the selected country for active observation and coordination support within a certain Regional Initiative. Focus countries were selected on the basis that they: present a challenge related to an SP and demonstrate political will to address it so that FAO can be engaged to make a meaningful difference in the biennium; have a significant portfolio of ongoing FAO work with validated expected results for the biennium; require close coordination of FAO's work including timely and continued technical support and monitoring at country level from concerned SO teams; provide the opportunity for cross-SP collaboration with important opportunities for synergies.

the Ministry of Agriculture in developing the next Agriculture Sector Strategy, formulation of capacity development for agricultural cooperatives, support to develop full assessment of trade bans and trade relations between Israel and the Palestinian Authority, formulation of a project document on the use of treated wastewater for agriculture, formulation of innovative humanitarian programming in protracted crises. The three remaining requests have not yet been responded to. This amounts to a remarkable improvement compared to the response to the twelve requests of 2015 when six did not materialize, and only one was partially completed that year, while the remaining six were carried over to 2016.

**Box 10:** Regional Initiatives for FAO's Near East and North Africa Region

- i. *"Near East and North Africa's Water Scarcity Initiative" (SO2)*; came into effect in 2014, with the objective of supporting NENA countries to address problems of water for agriculture.
- ii. *"Small-scale Agriculture for Inclusive Development in the Near East and North Africa" (SO3)*;
- iii. *"Building Resilience for Food Security and Nutrition in the Near East and North Africa" (SO5)*.

- 142 Interviewed FAO staff and Palestinian Government officers were not clear regarding the benefits deriving from the status of focus country, while on the other hand complaining of the costs it entailed in terms of reporting which, as also recognized by staff in the Regional Office, are considerable. On one hand this contrasts with the perception of staff in RNE who feel they are offering substantial support, something that seems to be confirmed by the data (box 11). This mismatch may be at least in part explained by the fact that the support provided by RNE was at more strategic level, while WBGS staff perceive the relationship with Cairo as offering few opportunities for personal development and capacity building. It is true that due to its non-member country status there are no regular programme resources for staff to travel for trainings and other workshops, and when opportunities do arise the benefits are not widely shared among staff. It is also worth mentioning that funds for SO5 have greatly decreased in the second part of the biennium, reducing the WBGS staff participation in regional activities that had been partly funded through SO5. More importantly, what was supposed to be an agile mechanism to respond to emerging country needs has been transformed into a procedural demanding process, affecting its timelines and effectiveness.
- 143 A good example of direct support was the SPS programme in all its components. This involved many different technical divisions at headquarters (Food Safety and Quality, the Legal and Ethics Office, the Animal Production and Health Division, and the International Plant Protection Convention secretariat) contributing to the drafting of the legislation on SPS and later to its implementation. A contact with the technical divisions was established directly by the office in Jerusalem, and the collaboration was extremely fruitful and mutually satisfactory according to all parties involved. Officers felt they were dealing with a very efficient office, working to high technical standards, and this made them confident that their contributions were effectively addressing the needs of the Palestinian Authority. As one interviewed officer put it, "their quality standards are so high, that you also want to be on the same level". This direct collaboration should be flagged as a model of how country teams and headquarters can work together on projects.
- 144 On the basis of the SPS experience, a strong case can be made for more technical support to FAO WBGS being provided from headquarters rather than the Regional Office, the main reason being that strong and specialized technical skills are necessary for the kind of support to assist in drafting legislative frameworks, and these are not presently available in the Regional Office. Furthermore, the nationality of many officers in RNE does not allow them to travel through Israel. At the same time, finding Arabic speakers as needed in WBGS who are not nationals of Arabic countries and therefore able to travel freely, is something of a challenge. An alternative would be to rely more on staff in the WBGS office and develop their capacity.



**Box 11:** Assistance provided through the country support mechanisms 2015/16 – some figures

- Eighteen requests of assistance to headquarters or the Regional Office were formulated by FAO WBGS and channelled through the country support mechanism
- As a consequence, ten activities have been completed or are ongoing
- As part of these activities, nine supporting staff members from headquarters or RNE were mobilized, undertaking a total of 11 missions to WBGS
- Overall USD 411 000 were disbursed through the country support mechanism for activities in WBGS over 2015/16
- Over the entire period, 66 percent of the funds disbursed were channelled through SP5, 17 percent through SP3, 17 percent through SFERA
- In 2015 all support came from SP5, while in 2016 SP1, SP3 and SP4 also provided support

## 4.2 Positioning in the context of a protracted crisis

### 4.2.1 Special status of the FAO WBGS office

#### Findings on the special status of the office

- Not being a Representation at diplomatic and administrative level has various consequences for the office, including not benefitting from FAO's annual regular budget allocation and being fully funded through the projects it implements.
- Some efforts were made by the Office of Support to Decentralized Offices (OSD) in 2014 to clarify key issues, however the potential for FAO's work could be seriously affected by the reduction in programme delivery.
- The capacity of retaining qualified core staff and the consistently high level of the Head of Office has raised the reputation of the office. The need to be efficient and effective in order to survive seems to have been at least partly the reason behind the office's high standards over time.
- Presently the office relies on emergency work to cover its running costs, and on a share of project budget reserved to Administrative and Operational Costs which has been shrinking over recent years. The sustainability of this model is questionable, and in shifting towards a more programmatic approach in an increasingly competitive environment for donor resources, other options need to be explored to avoid affecting the office's ability to contribute effectively in this complex environment.
- The difficulties of access for staff travelling between the WB and the GS are a serious constraint to joint work, and have the effect of isolating the office in the Gaza Strip.

145 The FAO Coordination Office in the WBGS is not an official FAO Representation at diplomatic and administrative level seeing that, as mentioned, Palestine is not an FAO member country. As a result, the office does not benefit from FAO's annual allocation from FAO'S regular budget to fully-fledged FAO Representations, usually in the form of the salary of the FAO Representative and one or two National Professional Officers and, depending on the volume and complexity of the work carried out, sometimes covering other support staff and office running costs as well.

146 The FAO WBGS office is therefore fully funded from the projects it implements including, from 2013, a share of the AOS generated by those same projects. This lack of Regular Programme funding affects the office and its status, in several ways:

- i. FAO's normative work in WBGS very often falls outside the scope of project activities and burdens staff with additional responsibilities that are not budgeted, even though they are part of FAO's core mandate. This includes support provided to national authorities through technical and policy guidance, for example in developing and rolling out the National Strategy for the Agriculture Sector 2014-2016, or supporting the annual Socio-economic and Food Security surveys.



- ii. The office is not eligible for Technical Cooperation Programme funding, a source of internal FAO funding at the disposal only of member countries often used for project formulation at the inception stage.<sup>122</sup> The lack of access to TCP funds hampers and affects the potential development of the FAO WBGS programme in key areas of FAO's mandate. At the same time, the office is requested to provide support for the implementation of regional and global TCP or trust fund projects that operate in the WBGS.
- iii. As Palestine is not a member country, WBGS does not appear under FAO's corporate country website page<sup>123</sup> that details key information on member and associate countries and the corresponding FAO offices. This lack of visibility is further compounded by the lack of funds to cover the salary of the communications officer who is supposed to develop the country programme website<sup>124</sup> and to improve overall online presence in addition to supporting a number of other FAO corporate communications activities. Nor does FAO WBGS currently appear under FAO's webpage on worldwide offices under "Who We Are" that details FAO's different offices around the world.<sup>125</sup> Furthermore, the webpage dedicated to the Regional Office for Near East and North Africa does not include WBGS under its programmes and projects.<sup>126</sup> This lack of visibility affects FAO's positioning at a programmatic level, as most activities currently highlighted online refer to the emergency programme and do not reflect the gradual shift to a more developmental focus.

- 147 Within RNE, FAO WBGS suffers from limited visibility not least because Palestine in practice is not considered a full member of the region, as a regional officer pointed out. While the office is referenced as a good case to learn from and is often invited to participate at RNE events, as mentioned this requires an extra effort as travel costs for staff from this office are not covered by the RP.

#### Box 12: FAO experience in countries with no Representation

Within FAO, the WBGS office is not unique, and there have previously been similar cases of countries in protracted crisis where FAO began operating without a Representation: in Timor-Leste, FAO operated an office from 1999, and only in 2012, when it had become a sovereign country and as a response to Government request to focus more on development activities, did FAO establish its Representation Office; South Sudan is another similar case: it became an independent state in 2011, and by 2014 FAO had set up a proper FAO Representation, but in the interim FAO ran an Emergency and Rehabilitation Coordination Unit office based in Juba for years, while the FAO Representation was in Khartoum. Both Timor-Leste and South Sudan began as ERCU offices reporting to TCE. Once they became a Representation, roles and responsibilities changed and they began reporting to the Office of Support to Decentralized Offices<sup>127</sup> (OSD). The challenges for FAO in WBGS are therefore not unique, and have been faced by other countries before. But unlike the cases of Timor-Leste and South Sudan, the recent FAO decentralization process means the FAO WBGS office no longer reports to TCE but to OSD, and is expected to work to implement FAO's mandate and its Strategic Framework, like any other FAO Representation.

- 148 In addition, as previously mentioned, FAO WBGS is currently operating under the UNDP Programme of Assistance to the Palestinian People (PAPP) umbrella so personnel contracts and administration procedures need to go through UNDP. These are services for which FAO pays a fee based on a UNDP table of costs that adds an additional layer of expenses to all field operations.
- 149 In 2014, efforts were made by OSD to clarify a number of key issues, "considering the very special nature of the office and of the FAO activities in WBGS," including revising reporting lines with headquarters and the Regional Office, in line with FAO's decentralization process and following reporting lines of Representations, and the use of AOS resources generated from projects operated by the office to cover the cost of the Head of Office (see 3.1).

122 The TCP Facility "aims to provide urgent, local programming support activities and to strengthen field programme development processes".

123 <http://www.fao.org/countryprofiles/en/> (last accessed on 19 November 2016).

124 Expected to be online in 2017.

125 <http://www.fao.org/about/who-we-are/worldwide-offices/en/> (last accessed on 19 November 2016).

126 <http://www.fao.org/neareast/programmes-and-projects/en/> (last accessed on 20 November 2016).

127 OSD is responsible for all FAO Representations around the world.

- 150 The FAO programme delivery in WBGs increased in 2011 and 2012 when FAO WBGs was still linked to TCE. Having reached its zenith in 2013 and with a decline over the last couple of years, the potential for FAO to work in WBGs could be seriously affected. FAO's field programme delivery has gone from 16.6 million in 2013, to 13.8 million in 2014, to 10.1 million in 2015. This has repercussions for the potential AOS earned by the FAO office and therefore its ability to cover its most basic personnel costs, that of its Head of Office: for 2014 the AOS earned was USD 446 141, while in 2015 it went down to USD 361 000.
- 151 FAO as a knowledge organization depends on its capacity to attract, retain and develop staff. When the FAO WBGs office was set up in 2002, a favourable funding environment allowed for the competitive recruitment of a team of national and international staff with the right skill mix. In the competitive hiring environment of WBGs, the possibility of retaining qualified core staff as well as the consistently high level of the Heads of Office is not a given, and it raised the reputation of the office both with donors and at headquarters. A testament to the quality of the team is how departments at headquarters, such as TCI and EST, anticipated funds for preliminary missions of technical staff to prepare project proposals trusting that the WBGs team would be able to follow through and fundraise to cover these investment costs.

**Box 13:** FAO's Project Support Cost (PSC) mechanism

The standard PSC is 13 percent of the budget of a Government Cooperative Programme (GCP), and 10 percent of a project funded under the Emergency and Rehabilitation Trust Fund (OSRO). Under this arrangement, the country office usually receives 6 percent as Administrative and Operational Support resources of the GCP budget and 4 percent of the budget of OSRO projects.

In WBGs over 2011 to 2017, 28 percent of projects have been affected by a reduced PSC (-10 percent for GCP projects and -7 percent for OSRO projects), a growing trend, considering that only one project was affected by this reduction in 2011, three in 2012, five in 2013, six in 2014 and seven in 2015.

Non-standard PSCs rates therefore have important implications for field offices' resources and their capacity to carry out activities, which are not funded directly by projects. Such non-standard rates can be as low as 7 percent of the project's overall budget, in which case only 1 percent goes to the field office as AOS, even though it is the main implementer.

- 152 The need to be efficient and prove effective in order to survive has been flagged as a reason for the consistently high standards of the office over time. As the office is currently structured, there is a reliance on emergency work to cover its running costs, as these act as FAO's 'bread and butter'. The worrying trend of donors increasingly requesting an exception to the standard percentage of a project's budget allocated to the Project Support Cost and the increasing competition for scarce donor resources result in a shrinking share of PSC being allotted as AOS to FAO country offices, and this is proving to be unsustainable (see box 13). For FAO WBGs, a key implication of these new arrangements is that it is unable to offer competitive packages to all staff. The unstable contractual arrangements and limited career paths, while understandable in FAO WBGs' current financial situation, affect staff morale as well as its capacity to undertake more technical work. FAO is presently effective in implementing projects, but as it moves to a more programmatic and developmental approach and lower PSCs are accepted, the current arrangement runs the risk of adversely affecting its ability to contribute effectively in this complex environment.
- 153 The evaluation team is aware that any change in the status of the office is an extremely delicate political decision that is well beyond the remit of an evaluation such as this one. Nevertheless, efforts are needed to find alternative ways to support the office. A positive example is the way in which, in order to comply with UN Minimum Operating Security Standards and Minimum Operating Residential Security Standards of the FAO WBGs office and international team, the Security Office at headquarters has supported security-related costs. Other efforts will be needed as FAO's role in WBGs continues to move away from emergency response towards a role that increasingly aims to assist the Palestinian Authority in developing policies and programmes, as per FAO's mandate.
- 154 FAO staff highlighted the office set up and travel restrictions as a key issue that affected the efficiency and effectiveness of the office, notwithstanding the attempt to reduce these

limitations through regular videoconferences. For example, current travel limits imposed by Israeli authorities, especially with the Gaza Strip, hamper team movement between offices and the possibility for the team to all meet together. Travel records show that in 2014/16 nine staff members from the Jerusalem office spent in all 124 days in Gaza Strip over 20 months, often clustered around a few months with big gaps in between, with project managers and technical advisers spending more time and longer periods, while management totalled less than one visit every two months on average. Even though travel from Gaza to Jerusalem over the same period was more frequent and visits lasted longer, overall this has meant that FAO staff in Gaza has at times felt excluded from key operational and programmatic discussions.

#### 4.2.2 Technical work in the political context of WBGS

##### Findings on technical work in the political context

- FAO WBGS has been involved in development cooperation, humanitarian response and, indirectly, political engagement in the peace process, using its comparative advantage to play a key role by reinforcing the state-building agenda and interacting with different sides to assist the Palestinian people.
- FAO has addressed protection mostly by supporting livelihoods and enhancing resilience in order to help people confront the consequences of the conflict and preparing them for its peaceful resolution.
- FAO's credibility and its status give it a leverage to participate in a number of negotiations adopting a technical angle. The capacity and attitude of the Officer in Charge were pivotal to FAO's indirect engagement with political issues.
- Though FAO has been exceptionally brave and cautious in understanding the context and working within the given limits, there is still space for improvement, incorporating protection more explicitly and more strategically in its programme in order to reduce the effects of risks and protection threats in its areas of work and according to its mandate.

155 In May 2016, FAO convened Nobel Peace Laureates for an alliance for food security and peace, acknowledging that through strong political commitment and deepened technical understanding it is possible to address food insecurity, reducing the potential for conflict and instability. As stated in the Committee on World Food Security's (CFS's) Framework for Action for Food Security and Nutrition in Protracted Crises, these "require special attention, and (...) appropriate responses for these contexts differ from those required in short-term crises or in non-crisis development contexts".<sup>128</sup> While each one of these settings has its own specificity, some learning is possible by looking at successes and failures across cases, even if the underlying causes of the crisis in WBGS, briefly outlined in section 2.1, are longstanding and complex, and might seem hardly comparable with other situations. On the other hand, FAO has been engaging more or less directly with all three objectives of the UN's mission in Palestine: development cooperation, humanitarian response and political engagement in the peace process (see annex 2). This capacity to be involved across what are usually different and separate areas of work and to relate to a range of actors and communities of practice is quite unusual for an FAO office, and worth examining. This section of this report is therefore dedicated to such analysis, in view of any learning opportunities for FAO as an organization working in protracted crisis contexts.

156 In alignment with the Humanitarian Country Team and its advocacy strategy of reducing humanitarian needs and enhancing respect for international law, FAO addresses protection from breaches of rights and human rights mainly through the tactical task of working with people at risk to meet their practical protection needs, while it only indirectly engages with the *strategic* political task to get the responsible authorities to ensure respect for human rights (see box 1 on protection frameworks). While the inherently political nature of the occupation means that it will only be overcome through political negotiations, its consequences are inextricably entwined with the livelihoods of the Palestinians living in the West Bank and in the Gaza Strip. So though most of FAO's work will not directly address the root causes of the humanitarian crisis, supporting livelihoods and enhancing resilience has the potential to help people better confront its consequences while possibly

128 CFS 2015.

preparing them for the day when a solution will be found through other means. Lastly, the fact that FAO's areas of work are at the very heart of the conflict has twofold and to some extent contradictory consequences: while on one hand this may limit its effectiveness, on the other hand, under certain circumstances, it constitutes an entry point to better assist the Palestinian people, provided FAO works in synergy with other actors with a political mandate or who are directly engaged in advocacy work. This places FAO in a unique position to contribute indirectly to advocacy work on issues such as water, demolition of agricultural infrastructures, access to land or livestock based livelihoods.

**Box 14:** Principles for action for improving food security and nutrition in protracted crises

**CFS Framework for action for food security and nutrition in protracted crises**

*Addressing critical manifestations and building resilience*

1. Meet immediate humanitarian needs and build resilient livelihoods
2. Focus on nutritional needs

*Adapting to specific challenges*

3. Reach affected populations
4. Protect those affected by or at risk of protracted crises
5. Empower women and girls, promote gender equality and encourage gender sensitivity
6. Ensure and support comprehensive evidence-based analysis
7. Strengthen country ownership, participation, coordination and stakeholder buy-in, and accountability
8. Promote effective financing

*Contributing to resolving underlying causes of food security and undernutrition in protracted crises*

9. Contribute to peacebuilding through food security and nutrition
10. Manage natural resources sustainably and reduce disaster risks

157 According to interviewed staff from UNSCO and OCHA, two UN agencies with a political and/or humanitarian mandate in Palestine, FAO has been savvy and strategic in using its comparative advantage to play a key role in this complex environment by supporting work towards the Palestinian state-building agenda and interacting with different sides to assist the Palestinian people. FAO is well respected thanks to the competency and engagement of its staff and management, and the fact of being considered efficient and effective by donors further amplifies its standing and credibility with government counterparts. It has an edge in difficult negotiations where its status as an intergovernmental organization gives it leverage with all parties and its technical entry point is considered in some ways more acceptable than a rights-based approach, while its long-standing commitment with communities has helped ensure that they would respect their part of any deal. Examples of instances where technical arguments were functional to push the political agenda are the negotiations FAO was involved in to extend the fishing limits in the Gaza Strip on the basis of arguments relating to food security, employment and sustainability,<sup>129</sup> but also on other complex issues such as the demolition of productive assets, obtaining permission for reclaiming farming of agricultural land in the buffer zone in the Gaza Strip and constructing a cage farms in the sea of Gaza.

158 A frequent comment was that both Heads of Office have been very pragmatic and realistic, "doing their homework" and using hard facts to keep delicate and controversial but crucial conflict-induced challenges on the agenda. This has been critical for the successful engagement in negotiations and indirect engagement with political issues, though it emerged that work of this kind was done more in the past, and apparently more strategically. This seems due to a combination of factors, including an overall reduction of the humanitarian space and decreasing international attention towards the Middle East peace process in favour of other conflict areas of global concern. A reason specific to FAO is the more explicit choice in the past to engage with humanitarian and political aspects of the crisis, as also demonstrated by greater investment in human resources, with a person dedicated to liaising the humanitarian and the development sides of FAO's work (see 4.1.3), and explicit mention of FAO's protection role in the political context in the Plan of Action.

<sup>129</sup> The arguments made by FAO to lift the fishing limits in Gaza are also summarized in FAO's contribution to the 2012 UNCT report *Gaza in 2020: A liveable place?*

On the other hand, engaging in advocacy activities may also be financially problematic for FAO: as with other activities tied to core functions, such as contribution to national agricultural statistics (see annex 1), advocacy is not covered by regular programme funding and most donors are unwilling to fund activities of this kind, somewhat paradoxically seeing that these activities play a particularly important role in WBGS, and that FAO is still accountable overall to member countries in performing them.

- 159 It is by now a widely shared opinion based on documented evidence<sup>130</sup> that the occupation and the expansion of settlements are currently undermining the feasibility of the two-state solution and putting the prospect of a peaceful solution of the conflict at risk.<sup>131</sup> Working in Area C of the West Bank, an area that is indispensable for the future of a Palestinian State, is politically significant in itself, as it affirms the Palestinian's presence in the face of expanding settlements as well as addressing real needs. FAO's standing enables it to interact with the Palestinian Authority and with COGAT and implement some agricultural activities in Area C. FAO also contributed to the WB report on economic development in Area C,<sup>132</sup> which while not adopting an explicitly political stance, made a strong case regarding economic losses incurred because of Israeli restrictions, and how lifting these restrictions could contribute significantly towards a viable and peaceful solution to the present conflict.
- 160 In many ways Israeli authorities' decisions overrule demand and supply in determining the functioning of markets and Palestinians' access to them, and in some instances Israeli producers (e.g. of strawberries) unduly influence markets. When possible, FAO attempts to reduce the impact of this interference by facilitating meetings with the Ministry of Agriculture and COGAT in Israel. FAO used its technical expertise to address the problem through a situation assessment in the first half of 2016 on the legal grounds of trade bans for meat and dairy products with inputs from the Trade and Market Division and missions from headquarters which garnered much donor interest, though no follow-up has been decided as of now. Notwithstanding the Oslo Accords, the movement of goods and commodities between the West Bank and East Jerusalem is subjected to many restrictions by the Israeli Government on the grounds of presumed insufficient safety standards. Assisting the Palestinian Authority to reinforce its regulatory frameworks and other systems for food traceability as FAO is doing with its SPS programme and NAIS (see also 5.2.1.), is also a way to strengthen the Palestinian position vis-à-vis this argument, besides contributing to develop institutional capacity in view of the independence of the Palestinian State, as envisaged by the Oslo roadmap.
- 161 In its Plan of Action 2011-2013 FAO committed, as part of the UN Humanitarian Country Team, to continue monitoring the political situation and periodically review developments in line with programme objectives.<sup>133</sup> By participating in the Advocacy Working Group of the HCT and liaising with OCHA, FAO engages in "soft advocacy", providing information on technical issues to other actors whose role is direct advocacy. Examples of this kind of work are the estimates of income lost through settlements and limited use of water sources for a coming OCHA publication on the humanitarian impact of settlement expansion,<sup>134</sup> a technical assessment of losses in the olive industry<sup>135</sup>, and, following a request from ECHO, costing the effects of the ban on fertilizers in the Gaza Strip. FAO has an absolute comparative advantage over other actors in putting together figures on the economic value of occupation-related issues, and in the past at least the office maintained a relevant capacity to do so. Another example of this kind of work is the cost benefit analysis on water

130 See for example the Secretary-General's 2016 report *Israeli settlements in the Occupied Palestinian Territories, including East Jerusalem and the Occupied Syrian Golan*, A/HRC/31/43, OCHA's forthcoming publication *The humanitarian impact of informal settlement expansion*, B'Tselem's two reports *Land grab: Israel's settlement policy in the West Bank (2002)* and *Under the guise of legality: Israel's declaration of state land in the West Bank (2012)*, as well as the already mentioned statements to the Security Council in December 2016 by COGAT.

131 By 2013 only, Israel had officially confiscated more than 1 000 km<sup>2</sup> of Palestinian owned land comprising 20 percent of the West Bank (including East Jerusalem), mostly for the use of settlements. *Economic and social repercussions of the Israeli occupation on the living conditions of the Palestinian people in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and the Arab population in the occupied Syrian Golan*, Note by the Secretary-General, A/70/82-E/2015/13, § 44.

132 World Bank (2013).

133 "Although FAO has limited mandate to conduct political advocacy, it contributes to policy level initiatives to protect Palestinians from further reduction in access to land, sea and livelihood resources (e.g. water and agricultural inputs) owing to the political situation, through its participation in the HCT Advocacy Working Group" (FAO 2014, p.28).

134 OCHA (2017) *The humanitarian impact of informal settlement expansion*.

135 Food Security Sector (2013) *The olive industry in the occupied Palestinian territory*.

use and restrictions to its access, which had various outcomes.<sup>136</sup> Through UNSCO and FAO headquarters, the office also provides technical information for a number of UN reports to the Secretary-General, various UN bodies and the Ad Hoc Liaison Committee on the situation in Palestine.

- 162 This way of working in which FAO contributes technical inputs to make arguments for advocacy actors reinforces good relationships with partners because it fulfils FAO's mandate, provides a useful and much needed service, and is not in competition with others since it responds specifically to the Organization's role. In this constrained environment, many interviewed stakeholders considered that the office in WBGS has been exceptionally brave and cautious at the same time. It has exercised a capacity to understand the situation by taking into account political, social and economic factors while working within the given limits and assessing them, conscious of the degree of risks that could be taken on a case to case basis. There is however still space for improvement, and while continuing to work according to its mandate and a principle of complementarity with other agencies and within the limits of its capacities, FAO could incorporate protection more explicitly and more strategically in its programme in order to reduce the effects of risks and protection threats especially in its livelihood supporting activities at household and community level. This would be a further means to support the UN's position on Palestine. As mentioned elsewhere in this report, this would include ensuring that activities do not expose beneficiaries by being more aware of protection threats, and more systematically undertaking risk analyses in collaboration with other protection actors (see also 5.1 and box 1).

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<sup>136</sup> One of these was the publication by FAO in 2013 of the brochure Improving water availability and management for Agriculture. See also section 5.2 on the outcomes triggered by FAO's work on water in agriculture during that period.



## 5. Assessment of FAO's contribution to addressing humanitarian and development needs in WBGS

### 5.1 Livelihood Activities

#### 5.1.1 Targeting

##### Findings on targeting

- In programmatic terms, FAO uses SEFSec data and RIMA to consider the socio-economic characteristics of its target population, but on the other hand gives insufficient attention to shock exposure at household level, though this would be a good proxy measure of household resilience.
- Overall efforts were made to improve transparency and enhance FAO's approach to targeting, though little community consultation was carried out regarding targeting criteria. Candidates' eligibility is rated according to scored application forms, denoting an effort to reach the most vulnerable, but little use is made of RIMA analysis at community level.
- Inclusion and exclusion errors found in a number of projects that were the focus of this evaluation are linked to dissonance between the overarching objective and the population groups that interventions claim to be targeting, and limited involvement of communities in the identification and definition of targeting criteria.

163 In *programmatic terms*, there was a shift during the evaluation period from targeting according to food security and socio-economic status to resilience ranking. The Plan of Action aimed to target small-scale and medium-scale farmers, herders and fishers whose food insecurity or vulnerability were defined on the basis of SEFSec data using the classification criteria developed for the RIMA which gives weighted values to six components.<sup>137</sup> FAO used this methodology to determine the total number of food insecure or vulnerable farmer and herder households in the WBGS, and then derive an estimate of the number of households it aimed to target for each group,<sup>138</sup> as well as their socio-economic profiles. The same methodology was used to highlight gendered vulnerabilities and thus the importance of targeting female-headed households. The analysis in the Plan of Action, however, provided no geographical indications to guide FAO's actual targeting on the ground.

164 The Programme Framework's targeting strategy is based on households' resilience status (low, medium, high), defined according to the Livelihood Baseline Profiling, which again relies on SEFSec data and RIMA profiles. The PF provides a description of the salient socio-economic characteristics of targeted groups as well as the estimated number of beneficiary households to be reached by FAO for each group.<sup>139</sup> Livelihood Baseline Profiling was used to rank governorates according to high, medium and low resilience levels but, since the data was not disaggregated, this methodology was not reflected in project documents or in the way communities and beneficiary households were actually selected by FAO. Ultimately, both documents reflect a thorough effort on the part of FAO to consider the socio-economic composition of its target groups and, for the PF, how these groups are distributed throughout the governorates in WBGS. On the other hand, though the number of shocks households are exposed to contribute to the aggregate resilience ranking of livelihood types, insufficient attention is given to the intensity and nature of the shocks faced by individual households and to their consequences, though this would provide a relevant proxy measure for targeting according to household resilience.

137 The RIMA components of resilience are (i) productive assets, (ii) income and access to food, (iii) access to social safety nets, (iv) access to basic services, (v) adaptive capacity, and (vi) levels of stability in the household.

138 FAO's target groups are therefore divided into farming, herding or mixed livelihoods households who are either food insecure or vulnerable for a total of 12 potential target groups. It should be noted that the two categories in fact refer to the same indicators, while varying in terms of scale, with food insecurity considered a more severe and vulnerability a less severe form of poverty according to compounded economic and socio economic variables.

139 The targeted population is identified as low resilience farmers and herders and urban poor for component 1 of the PF and medium and high resilience farmers and herders for component 2.



- 165 Operationally, *geographical selection* of targeted sites is based on a combination of the HNO/HRP definition of vulnerable localities within Area C, East Jerusalem and Gaza Strip,<sup>140</sup> a set of priorities identified by the UNDAF, and SEFSec data on community characteristics. The inclusion of HNO and UNDAF criteria reflects an effort to harmonize community targeting among the various actors, and avoid duplication. To this end, FAO also coordinates with the MoA to agree on its project sites. Nonetheless, cases emerged of communities that appeared to be inherited from previous project phases rather than newly selected on the basis of lessons learned and actual needs. Some communities involved in project 207/NET, for instance were targeted in a precursor project also funded by the Netherlands, and implemented by PARC. While this may have been appropriate, no preliminary analysis seems to have been undertaken to understand the links between impact of the previous project and targeted cooperatives, to understand which of them actually merited further support.
- 166 In some cases, the rationale behind targeting is to maximize risk reduction, rather than agricultural development. For example, in selecting locations for cistern rehabilitation FAO seems at least in some cases to have prioritized villages under specific threats, such as proximity to the separation barrier or settlements, rather than on the basis of the potential to develop agricultural production. This is appropriate, especially for more vulnerable communities in Area C, but it also underscores the need to clearly distinguish between the more productive and protective aims of FAO WBGs' work, according to the circumstances.
- 167 In order to *select beneficiary households*, candidates' application forms providing both technical (e.g. size of land) and socio-economic information are rated according to a scoring system to determine eligibility.<sup>141</sup> This system was also introduced to ensure that households with socio-economic vulnerabilities who do not necessarily meet technical criteria are included too. This is a positive development, which clearly denotes an effort to reach the most vulnerable. Throughout its selection process, FAO collaborates with other actors such as the Ministry of Agriculture, local authorities and sometimes implementing partners and communities. Though the extent of such collaboration and the form it takes vary according to the project, together with the aforementioned systematization of the application forms, it improves transparency and enhances FAO's approach to targeting. On the other hand, staff possess a subtle understanding of vulnerability and local contexts that is not fully exploited to design projects. This is a missed opportunity, and in the end livelihood groups and drivers of vulnerability are described in a generic and formulaic way in project documents, without reflecting local characteristics. Ultimately, this translates in beneficiary selection criteria not always being consistent or tailored to the project's scope.

#### Box 15: Beneficiary selection through application forms

The WBGs programme adopts an approach to targeting that is quite innovative for FAO. Existing local committees or committees formed jointly by the FAO project manager, implementing partners, MoA representatives and representatives of the community undertake initial beneficiary selection at the locality or community level. These targeting bodies advertise the programmes in their communities, screen applications and shortlist applicants believed to be eligible for support according to pre-established eligibility criteria. Implementing partners then verify these nominations by auditing applications for completeness and eligibility against intervention-specific selection criteria on the basis of applicants' self-reported data. Both FAO and IP staff further verify eligibility through individual visits to nominated households.

- 168 For example, a recurrent finding from interviews and focus group discussions is that in many projects beneficiaries are selected according to the amount of land farmed, irrespective of whether it is owned or rented. Yet land ownership can be a significant

<sup>140</sup> These are based in part on Vulnerability Profile Project (VPP), a tool managed by OCHA in WBGs including information on a range of humanitarian indicators for Palestinian communities living in Area C, including physical protection, access to land and livelihoods, water and sanitation, education and health. See <http://data.ochaopt.org/vpp.aspx>

<sup>141</sup> Socio-economic indicators such as number of family members, female headed households, number of children with disabilities, etc. are assigned different weights which add up to the overall scoring.

factor in project effectiveness, especially when local investment is required to realize project benefits, as when a well or water reservoir is constructed, but farmers are expected to provide pipelines, as in the ITA/807 project. Land and water resource projects appear to be most effective when farmers own the land, or at least where good relations between landowner and farmer create an interest for the latter to invest in such ancillary support, though these considerations were not found to be paramount in the selection of beneficiaries for FAO projects related to land and water.

**Box 16:** Importance of land tenure arrangements to ensure relevance

In Zubeidat, landownership follows well-established and long-standing sharecropping arrangements, more so than in other communities in the Jordan Valley. The 207/NET project's interventions (irrigation pipes) were well received by sharecropping farmers and used to expand cultivation of the land, also through agreements that beneficiaries reached with landowners, with whom they typically enjoyed a good, collaborative relationship. Interventions appear less successful where relations with land or well-owners were more strained: in al-Jiftlik, Jericho Governorate, for example, the provision of irrigation pipes to sharecropping farmers to rehabilitate agricultural lands as part of project 207/NET was deemed not useful or appropriate by a number of beneficiaries. One male beneficiary for example explained that he was not consulted before project implementation and that he would have preferred to receive fertilizer rather than irrigation pipes as agricultural support from FAO. He viewed irrigation pipes as a long-term investment in the land, something that he was not interested in as a sharecropper, and felt that such investment would ultimately benefit the landowner, not himself. He indicated that he had sold the irrigation pipes shortly after receiving them through the project.

169 Especially in relation to the humanitarian or vulnerability reducing component of FAO's activities, some inclusion errors - of middle class, less vulnerable households - and exclusion errors - of eligible vulnerable households - were found during the fieldwork carried out for this evaluation. The two main reasons for this seem to be a mismatch between the objective of enhancing agricultural productivity and the population group that interventions claim to be targeting, and limited involvement of communities in the definition of targeting criteria. In different cases households who were landless, land-poor, who did not own livestock, and/or whose members were unemployed and under-employed, were widely considered to be the most vulnerable and in dire need of assistance, but by not meeting a targeting criteria, typically tied to asset ownership, they did not qualify for participation in FAO projects. Except in the village of Jayyous, where targeting criteria were amended following discussions with the community, there were also frequent mentions by a wide range of respondents that activities and targeting criteria "*were decided by the project*" and "*came ready-made*". Limited or no community consultation was already evidenced by the midterm review of the Plan of Action (FAO 2012) where surveyed participants pointed to the need for more involvement with communities to understand their needs. In terms of targeting vulnerable members of the community hired under the cash transfer interventions, the lack of monitoring of the recruitment of these casual labourers and of the benefits they reaped somewhat weakened the rationale for the adoption by FAO WBS of CT as a modality.

170 A manual for beneficiary selection in WBS is currently under development, but besides this, the evaluation acknowledges that the problem of accurate and well defined targeting at community level in FAO projects is not unique to FAO WBS, and has been found to be problematic by other evaluations in a wide range of settings, such as Somalia, Lao PDR and Burkina Faso. This indicates that the issue of clarifying targeting criteria and their implications needs to be confronted at corporate level too. For example, a key question for FAO, not specific to this setting, is whether landless households should and can be targeted, and if they were, what kind of specific assistance they would require.

## 5.1.2 Relevance

### Findings on relevance

- On the whole, FAO's agriculture and livelihood-related activities were found to be relevant or very relevant to local needs, though their design was mostly not based on explicit context-specific analysis, but rather on the implicit knowledge of FAO staff.
- Livelihood interventions were predominantly focused on expanding beneficiaries' asset-base, with limited attention to supporting intangible processes and resources such as removing market constraints and protection threats, two key elements to tackle vulnerability in WBGS.
- Where activities were less relevant, this was linked to some recurrent weaknesses of design, such as lack of community involvement, short project life, lack of complementary activities and of investments after the end of the project, and not enough learning from past experiences.

- 171 Project activities were aligned and relevant to both strategies though, as already pointed out, the relevance of activities seems to have been based on the implicit knowledge and experience of FAO staff rather than on an explicit context-specific analysis grounded in evidence. The question remains of whether the adoption of "resilience and economic growth" at the "heart of FAO's [current] strategy", as stated in the Programme Framework, has actually resulted in a paradigm shift in terms of how projects and related activities are selected, planned and implemented. In particular, a business as usual approach centred on asset building has dominated the choice of interventions at the cost of a more innovative focus on intangible processes and resources. Such focus might have led, for example, to a greater attention to *existing marketing constraints and protection threats* in the design and implementation of FAO's projects, two important obstacles for Palestinians, as emerged during interviews with beneficiaries and other stakeholders, and key elements of the enabling environment to tackle vulnerabilities in this context.
- 172 On the other hand, many of FAO's agriculture and livelihoods-related activities were found to be overall relevant or very relevant to beneficiaries' needs (see box 15). Previous experience and knowledge of the context were critical to correctly identify people's short-term needs. At the same time relying solely on staff's knowledge detracted from gaining a more in-depth understanding of the context through other means to address a wider variety of issues and design more holistic, sustainable and appropriate interventions with the potential to reduce vulnerability on the long term.
- 173 In some cases FAO activities were less relevant to context and needs, and this seemed to be linked to recurrent weaknesses identified in design: lack of community involvement in planning, affecting ownership and appropriateness of the activity; a limited time frame to achieve what were sometimes complex aims, for example addressing social cohesion; failure to plan complementary activities to reach the full potential of interventions;<sup>142</sup> the inability or unwillingness on behalf of beneficiaries to invest after the end of the project; little learning from previous experiences incorporated in design of projects.
- 174 Two questions stand out as not having been directly considered in designing projects, lessening the relevance of FAO's actions. In the first place, in many locations visited by the evaluation team, households and communities were exposed to different protection threats that significantly undermined people's livelihoods and resilience. These included, for example, being subjected to settler violence in Qusra, or restrictions to freedom of movement and to access to land for households in the village of Susia, due to the proximity to a military training area. While a number of FAO's interventions supporting livelihoods and agriculture (e.g. cistern construction, irrigation systems) carry important protection benefits for households and communities by virtue of retaining and expanding their access to land through cultivation, more engagement up front with protection threats, possibly in collaboration with other actors, would have increased the relevance of FAO's interventions to the context and its capacity to tackle vulnerabilities.

<sup>142</sup> Failure to include other complementary activities was found to reduce relevance of various kinds of interventions for different reasons, including distribution of veterinary kits, land rehabilitation, rehabilitation of water infrastructures, enhancing market access through the Global GAP.

- 175 In the second place, the relevance of some interventions in the area of enhancing access to markets is weakened by some structural constraints which go unaddressed in the design of projects. An example is the HVC project, which aimed to improve competitiveness on national and export markets by enhancing capacities of small and medium producers to raise the quality of their products. Some activities of this project, such as compliance with international standards and the introduction of cash crops are clearly more geared towards the export market, at least on the short term, while some other activities target the internal market (e.g. establishing of local chain of Good Agricultural Practices (GAP) selling points, capacity development of extension services), and others still are aimed at both (e.g. promotional campaigns, farmer capacity development and cooperatives' business plans).
- 176 Though the export-oriented component has proven to have important benefits (see section 5.1.3 on effectiveness), it also faces several structural obstacles, such as difficulties in reducing production costs affecting competitiveness on external markets, or the consequences of the political environment and of Israeli control on borders and access and the high risks they involve. On the other hand, creating competitiveness of high quality produce in the local market is a longer-term process, subordinate to an expanded volume of the offer which will lower prices and widen the demand base. As such, presently the sale of high quality products remains a niche market for medium-high income Palestinian families, and farmers selling safe and quality food and non-food agricultural products through Global GAP might need to apply a higher price to amortize the expenses encountered to get the certification. The fact that these crops are currently more marketable on the international scene is reflected in interviewed farmers' perception that the HVC is mainly export-oriented. The project design does not reflect this complexity, and its relevance is therefore diminished by the lack of clarity on the differentiation of (internal/external; producer/consumer) market characteristics. FAO's engagement in internal and external markets should be based on a thorough analysis of the benefits and costs of expanding business on either market, and be flexible enough to adapt to changing circumstances and adopt different strategies on the short, medium and long term.

**Box 17:** Relevance of some FAO agricultural and livelihood support activities

- **Cisterns** address a pressing need due to limited or no access to water and water infrastructures, and are viewed by the majority of interviewed beneficiaries as highly relevant in two ways: they enable local rainwater harvesting to capture a small (and variable) volume of water, while also increasing storage capacity, reducing the costs of tank water supply. Judged on economic grounds a standard household cistern costing around USD 3 000 is economically profitable, since besides storing harvested rainfall, it allows substantial savings from the water that would otherwise be bought from tanks, and this over many years. Furthermore, considering the context of the Israeli occupation, where other sources of water are not available, and/or where costs are prohibitive because of Israeli restrictions, cisterns appear as an appropriate and highly relevant intervention.
- In some instances, projects involving **discrete water infrastructure components** were found to be implemented with limited attention to existing institutional arrangements, or to the requirements needed to ensure their use. This was found to be the case in one location visited for project 403/NET-305/UK where construction of a storage reservoir required main pipes and distribution lines to be purchased by farmers, who were unable or unwilling to do so mainly because of land ownership issues as described above. Similarly, in one of the two locations visited for project 807/ITA, activities were delivered without complementary and necessary parts to connect the pipes to the water well or reservoir, and the water they provided was insufficient to expand agricultural production.
- **The HVC project** (207/NET) is a good example of the relevance of FAO activities to achieve better food quality and safety and contribute to value chain improvement. In general, this project is consistently viewed as positive and relevant by most beneficiaries in both the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, praised for the inputs it distributes – packaging houses, irrigation networks, shoes, masks, gloves – and the associated training and Global GAP certification scheme it provided. MoA staff on the other hand, while appreciating it, considered it less important than investing in a plant health lab and other SPS component. Not enough attention is paid to terms of trade and marketing problems, which beneficiaries report to be major constraints to farming. Relevance would therefore be further improved by incorporating ways to overcome limits to market access, especially in view of competition from settler farmers and Palestinian agribusiness companies. According to interviewed women and in particular to cooperative members, a greater focus on business management capacity would maximize the relevance of interventions.

- **Land rehabilitation** activities conducted under 401/CAN were overwhelmingly recognized as very relevant in the village of Jayyous. Having laid in a state of abandonment since the building of the barrier in 2002, land parcels reclaimed after the changed route of the barrier following the decision of the High Court of Israel were widely described as covered in rocks and shrubs, and in much need of clearance before any agricultural activity could take place. FGD participants mentioned beneficiaries who contributed their own money in order to complete rehabilitation activities to illustrate the relevance of the intervention. In the words of one committee member, "the fact that beneficiaries paid [additional amounts] is an indication that the project succeeded in fulfilling a need". That said, a widespread complaint related to the exclusive focus on land rehabilitation, without complementary attention to improving access to water for irrigation, considered a prerequisite for enabling cultivation on rehabilitated lands. This was found to have played a key role in the self-exclusion of a number of eligible beneficiaries. As explained by local committee members, several households decided not to apply for the project, knowing that once their lands were rehabilitated they would have had little means to irrigate them and start cultivation
- **Sheep distribution**, under project 405/SPA in the Gaza Strip, was widely considered relevant, given the importance attached to small stock as a key productive household asset. Being relatively easy to market, sheep also represented a critical liquid asset in the event of sudden shocks. Referring to losses of livestock and other asset during the 2014 conflict in the Gaza Strip, one non-beneficiary in Khan Yunis stated that sheep distribution had "helped beneficiaries get back on their feet". However, though largely effective, (see section 5.1.3), sheep distribution also suffered from a number of hindering factors that to some extent limited positive results.
- **Emergency interventions** in response to shocks were perceived as very relevant as highlighted by respondents during fieldwork discussions in Susia (plastic sheets for animal shelters), and in the Gaza Strip (emergency fodder distribution). In particular, beneficiaries in the Gaza Strip overwhelmingly reported fodder being a pressing need, both during and in the immediate aftermath of the 2014 war. Some respondents recalled fleeing their homes together with their livestock (donkeys, horses, sheep and goats) and needing fodder to sustain them at that time.
- A number of respondents, including representatives of FAO's implementing partners, explained that historically there has been little interaction between farmers and fishers. Training before the establishment of **fish ponds in Gaza Strip** through project 301/JAP did include a session on the management of the farmer-fisher partnership. However, by their nature the foundations of partnerships require considerable efforts and time in order to build mutual trust, understand each other's strengths and weaknesses, develop problem-solving skills etc., something that a one-off training session could hardly have achieved. The project was finally not considered relevant with regards to the partnership between these two groups
- **Cash Transfers** tied to construction and rehabilitation of cisterns were first implemented in 2011. The shift from procurement arrangements to conditional cash transfers for cistern construction/rehabilitation was based on three main assumptions. First, the realization that excavations could be carried out by beneficiaries who, under the supervision of FAO technical staff or IPs, could replace private contractors either by undertaking the work themselves, or, if the household was labour-less or scarce, hire someone to do it for them. Second, the recognition of the advantages of cash-based assistance, including possible multiplier effects on the local economy thanks to direct injection of cash and, a point that was repeatedly stressed by a number of staff, encouragement and support of micro-entrepreneurship rather than perpetuating dependence on aid. Third, the cost effectiveness of decentralized, informal procurement carried out by beneficiaries compared to FAO's formal procurement procedures. As such, the shift to cash transfers and the conditionality are a case of FAO's actions being predominantly driven by assumptions and past experiences, and while it is positive to capitalize on the past, this cannot be a replacement for context-specific assessments and evidence, such as a market assessment to inform the appropriateness of cash-based responses and therefore their actual (rather than potential) relevance to the situation and needs.

### 5.1.3 / Effectiveness/Timeliness

#### Findings on effectiveness/timeliness

- By restoring or increasing access to assets and key resources, and household-level food production most activities had positive effects. The food produced was used predominantly for household consumption, with important gains on dietary quality and diversity and ability to save.
- Greater access to assets and food production enhanced a few beneficiaries' ability to sell. Some positive spill over effects accrued to non-beneficiaries, and for beneficiaries a number of positive gains were recorded on intangible aspects of wellbeing.
- FAO's activities in support to agriculture were also perceived as carrying political significance by virtue of their role in maintaining presence of Palestinian farmers on land, reducing the risk of confiscation and settlers' attacks, and contributing to resistance to the occupation. Trainings provided as part of the interventions received mixed feedback. Implementation was sometimes slow when several departments and actors were involved, but overall FAO's response to shocks was found to be effective and timely.
- Three recurrent factors were found to limit effectiveness of FAO's livelihood interventions: when quantities of inputs were too small to make a difference; when inputs were of a different and lesser quality than had been promised; when coverage was too limited to ensure a positive outcome.

- 177 Overall, the team found that the great majority of FAO's activities aimed at improving households' livelihoods contributed to restoring or increasing access to livelihoods assets and key resources, and household-level food production. Such short-term success is unsurprising when the focus of the intervention is distribution of assets, and yet the value of this achievement is not to be underestimated when implementing this kind of activity in a challenging operating environment, and considering the high and pressing needs in most of the locations reached by FAO's interventions.
- 178 Establishing whether interventions are effective in reducing households' vulnerability in the long-term is always a difficult objective when distributing assets, and particularly in view of the greatly volatile and insecure environment faced by many of the most vulnerable households targeted by FAO's interventions. In this instance, reaching such firm conclusions would have required longer, more in-depth fieldwork, and in many cases a longer time lapse since the end of the project. Furthermore, an intrinsic limit to measuring the effectiveness of FAO's interventions at household level was the lack of project and programme baselines and endlines. Equally, better monitoring data than currently available would allow greater precision in assessing increases in agricultural productivity, for example by using the farm records, which are a requirement for the Global GAP.
- 179 The food produced through FAO's interventions supporting household level production was used predominantly for household consumption, with important gains in the quality and diversity of beneficiaries' diet and their ability to save, since it reduced purchase of food. Greater access to assets and food production was also found to have enhanced the ability of a minority of male and female beneficiaries to sell their own produce. Some positive spill over effects accrued to non-beneficiaries, as beneficiaries reported sharing with extended family members and/or neighbours. In addition, positive gains on intangible aspects of wellbeing included the confidence and satisfaction arising from making long-term investments and, specifically for women in the Gaza Strip, positive feelings tied to becoming economically active household members.



**Box 18:** Case study: improved nutrition as a result of home garden development and sheep distribution in Khan Yunis, Gaza Strip

Hind is a 40 years old female beneficiary of OSRO/GAZ/405/SPA, she is married with four children and her husband is addicted to Tramadol<sup>143</sup> and unemployed. Hind described him as emotionally detached, so the responsibility of their children falls completely on her shoulders. Before the home garden project one of her children was very thin and "*his face was yellow*". She felt this was linked to a poor and scarce diet since their dire financial condition meant that it was not uncommon for her children to go hungry or for their meals to consist of tea and bread only. When this child came back from school and did not find food he would sit outside in the street and cry, or start fighting with his siblings. She in turn would start crying inside the house, or beat him and his siblings out of desperation. They never used to eat fruit and very rarely vegetables and meat, while now she can afford to buy more vegetables and meat thanks to sales of produce and occasionally slaughtered lambs. In turn, her children's health, well-being and school performance has greatly improved.

- 180 FAO's activities in support to agriculture in the West Bank were also perceived as carrying political significance by virtue of their role in maintaining presence of Palestinian farmers on the land, and contributing to resistance to the occupation. The Arabic term frequently used during fieldwork discussions to illustrate this was *al sumud*, which means steadfastness, rootedness and indeed, has a connotation of resistance. As one UN representative remarked, FAO not only – as in other contexts – supports agricultural livelihoods, but also helps farmers hold on to their land, thus preventing land losses and confiscation. Indeed, the importance of retaining access to land through cultivation was often discussed by community respondents in relation to the ubiquitous risk of confiscation due to Israel's interpretation of the Ottoman Land Code of 1858.<sup>144</sup>
- 181 On the other hand, sometimes FAO's interventions also carried some risks: in particular, cistern construction was perceived as potentially increasing the risk of confiscation of the lands of non-beneficiaries that remained uncultivated and stood out even more when the adjacent parcel was cultivated. One suggestion was to encourage beneficiaries to share the harvested water in the cistern between one or more households. On the other hand, a positive benefit on non-beneficiaries was that, as cultivation activities intensified, the physical presence of a greater number of farmers acted as a collective protection mechanism and as deterrent for settler attacks. Furthermore, increased presence of people on the land meant that attacks could be spotted more rapidly and by a larger number of people, and the response mechanisms<sup>145</sup> that villagers had put in place could be deployed faster.
- 182 As mentioned in the sections on analysis and relevance, this evaluation found that overall FAO's protection measures were unsystematic and ad hoc, despite the nature of the political, economic and social risks involved in FAO projects including, for beneficiaries constructing in Area C, the threat of demolition of property, arrest and detention, as well as increased risk of physical violence from settlers. These different risks affect people's livelihoods as they hinder access to land and property and the movement of goods. Interviews with protection actors suggested that FAO was not at all systematic in referring protection cases.
- 183 The most tangible outcomes of the *High Value Crops* and other interventions on households were related to the introduction of new technologies or crop varieties, or animal breeds. Examples are avocado crops, the introduction of hydroponic planting for strawberry farmers and of artificial insemination of sheep. For example, the evaluation team found that many of the herders in Tubas whose sheep were artificially inseminated through an FAO project<sup>146</sup> experienced breed improvement, increased percentage of twins (70 percent) and economic

143 Tramadol is a synthetic opioid painkiller similar to morphine that has seen a growing number of Gazans addicted to it since the start of the blockade imposed by Israel on the Strip in 2007.

144 See note 16 for an explanation of the consequences of such interpretation.

145 One widely reported mechanism consisted of farmers (or anyone who spotted the attack) alerting the village council and imams by placing a call on their mobiles. Imams would then place a call through the loudspeakers of village mosques for adult and young males to rush to the attack site.

146 The evaluation team was not able to identify the specific project that was implemented by FAO benefitting the interviewed herders, due to lack of information from both herders and implementing partner also considering the long time passed since the activity was carried out. Through the project documents' review, the possible relevant projects are OSRO/GAZ/008/ITA, OSRO/GAZ/105/CAN or OSRO/GAZ/202/CAN.



return from milk.<sup>147</sup> Overall, interviewed beneficiaries were very happy with the quality of the support received. In a small number of cases some complaints were raised regarding the quality of inputs provided. Introducing new systems such as drought resistant seeds, the NAIS and SPS was also promising. The two marketing liaison units established by the HVC project provided marketing support, conducting meetings with marketing companies and traders in Israel and Jordan to maximize the quantities of HVCs marketed on Israeli and Jordanian markets. The Gaza Strip marketing company is working to facilitate the export of Gaza Strip HVCs to the West Bank, Israeli and external markets.

**Box 19:** HVC - hanging strawberry production in Gaza Strip

Hanging strawberries are an example of the effectiveness of a new technology introduced by FAO to ameliorate the use of natural resources for agriculture through the HVC project. One implementing partner reported that even the Ministry of Agriculture, initially reluctant to accept this innovative technique, changed its attitude towards strawberry farmers. He claimed that all the farmers became interested in these new planting techniques provoking up to 60 percent reduction of water consumption and a threefold increase in productivity.

- 184 Despite the fact that the *Global GAP* did not immediately improve access to export markets, the Global GAP training enhanced farmers' practices and awareness about food safety and decreased costs of production. The adoption of such improved practices resulted in fewer rejections at the checkpoints, a potential incentive for more widespread adoption. Positive outcomes of improved practices should presumably also encourage farmers to adhere to Palestinian standards once they are in place.
- 185 *Conditional cash transfers* were perceived as having acted as catalyst for two benefits. First, their use for cistern and land rehabilitation/construction enabled hiring a limited number of local male casual labourers for plastering or terracing. Interviews revealed that often casual labourers hailed from among the poorest and most vulnerable segments of the community, and were described as typically landless or owning small parcels of land which they struggled to cultivate, and living a hand to mouth existence. This finding confirms FAO's assumption that cash-based assistance can be a means to effectively target the most needy. Secondly, according to beneficiaries, contractors typically prioritize their own interests and profit-making objectives, for example by using low quality materials that compromise the durability of the infrastructure in the long-term, while cash allowed beneficiaries to manage construction or rehabilitation activities to their own best interests, ensuring good and robust quality of construction tailored to households' needs and making use of the household's labour force when available. Indeed, this finding supports the rationale underpinning the shift to a cash delivery modality tied to beneficiaries' direct involvement in project activities.
- 186 No evidence, however, was found of cash transfers *per se* acting as catalyst for enhanced entrepreneurship. Rather, the small-scale economic activities that only a handful of beneficiaries had started to engage in were found to be linked to increased ability to cultivate and sell. Beyond the provision of material assets - whether through cash or in-kind assistance - building and strengthening micro-entrepreneurship requires the adoption of a holistic approach to accrue the necessary capacity and skills over time, including technical (e.g. vocational skills and training) and financial (e.g. access to microcredit) support and business-management skills (e.g. record-keeping, marketing, loan administration).<sup>148</sup> One of the challenges faced by FAO WBGS in project implementation was related to unexpected costs, for example when excavation activities were conducted in rocky terrains, or when price fluctuations devalued the FAO cash transfer, forcing beneficiaries of the ongoing BEL/501 project to add around USD 100 each on top of what they had received to make develop their home gardens. Clearly, by shifting to cash-based response, the problems of higher costs of implementation or the risk of price fluctuations in the Gaza Strip have not fundamentally changed. What seems to have changed, however, is that, by involving beneficiaries directly in the implementation of activities, additional costs are now borne by beneficiaries.

<sup>147</sup> Interviewed herders also reported the advantages deriving from artificial insemination, such as the reduced size of the tail which increases the value of the sheep, the fact that they have started producing their own rams and the fact that with artificial insemination births can be every 8 months, instead of once a year.

<sup>148</sup> See for example <http://www.ilo.org/empent/areas/entrepreneurship-and-enterprise-development/lang--en/index.htm> for a wide-range of resources on this topic.

- 187 ***Cistern construction and rehabilitation*** in the West Bank,<sup>149</sup> and the provision of irrigation systems as part of home garden kits in both the WB and the GS,<sup>150</sup> were perceived by the great majority of respondents as having enabled greater access to water and water infrastructure. Most of these interventions were implemented in Area C, where it is virtually impossible to obtain construction permits from the Israeli authorities, making it extremely difficult for FAO and indeed any other humanitarian and development actor operating in this context to plan and implement more robust and permanent water infrastructures to better support household agricultural productivity. Limited access to water had pushed small farmers to adopt coping strategies and incur other costs including practicing rain fed cultivation during winter only, increasing reliance on low maintenance crops, transporting water from the village to the land or purchasing water from private vendors, and in the most extreme cases, leaving the land fallow. Harvested rainwater increased the ability of beneficiaries to irrigate their land while reducing reliance on purchased water for irrigation. In some villages water from rehabilitated cisterns was also used for small stock or domestic consumption. Women who used to fetch water from nearby wells concurred that easy access to water stored in a cistern constructed next to their home was a welcome relief and reduced their daily workload. A further widespread positive effect of cisterns was that they improved household-level food production and access. In the village of Al Qusra, for example, the majority of beneficiaries of cisterns reported having resumed or increased cultivation of trees such as olive, almond and lemon; herbs such as thyme, parsley and sage (often planted in between olive trees); and a wide range of vegetables, including zucchini, onions, garlic, tomatoes, ful (fava beans), lettuce, cucumbers, cauliflower, eggplants, and fruits such as watermelon (depending on the season).<sup>151</sup>

**Box 20:** A FAO Assessment of the value of water stored in cisterns

An assessment was carried out by FAO WBGs over February/March 2011 in selected locations in Bethlehem and Dura to estimate the value of water stored in the cisterns which were the object of FAO's interventions. In most locations, the price of water purchased from private vendors was found to be NIS 50 per cubic metre, which is in line with the findings of this evaluation. The value of water stored in the cisterns was calculated by multiplying the price of water in a given location with the amount of water stored in the cistern at the time of the assessment (the latter was also clearly dependent on the capacity of the cistern itself). The value of stored water, in other words the savings on purchased water accruing to cistern beneficiaries at the time of the assessment, was significant, ranging between NIS 1 500 to a staggering NIS 50 400 per cistern.

- 188 The ***distribution of two pregnant female sheep per beneficiary household in Gaza Strip*** was widely considered by beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries in Khan Yunis as having succeeded, to a certain degree, in restoring and strengthening beneficiaries' livestock asset base. The value attached to small stock, the fact that sheep distributed were female and pregnant, and their rapid reproduction rates, were all seen as important factors contributing to this objective as well as, to a certain extent, to the ability to maintain and sustain those livestock assets in the future. Two years after the intervention interviewees all stated that they still had between two and eight sheep, and would have been keen to further expand production if it were not for high costs. In particular, a key driver of the sales of lambs was the need to buy high priced fodder to sustain the rest of the flock. FAO staff and beneficiaries agreed that two sheep were too few to lead to sustainable herd growth, considering the risk that animals might die or need to be slaughtered for Ramadan. Selecting less beneficiaries with more heads per capita would have been more likely to induce sustainable growth of stock, with a greater positive impact overall. Furthermore, some problems in implementation were reported to have limited the potential of this intervention, including the distribution of a lesser quality and less productive breed of sheep than had initially been promised.
- 189 The general perception of ***aquaculture ponds***<sup>152</sup> emerging from interviews was that project design and implementation had suffered from a number of shortcomings that limited effectiveness, timeliness and, for some, the sustainability of the intervention. Beneficiaries, non-beneficiaries, FAO and implementing partner staff, all concurred that late distribution

149 Implemented under OSRO/GAZ/108/EC, OSRO/GAZ/202/CAN and OSRO/GAZ/401/CAN from November 2011.

150 Implemented under OSRO/GAZ/202/CAN between March 2012 and April 2014.

151 Not all beneficiaries in Qusra planted all of the above mentioned trees, herbs and vegetables. In some cases, beneficiaries had only planted olive trees and herbs.

152 Implemented under OSRO/GAZ/301/JAP between March 2013 and February 2014.

of fingerlings linked to a delay in procurement was a problem, and the combination of the cold winter season of 2013 and the absence of plastic sheets to protect the pond resulted in the death of fingerlings for several beneficiaries. An estimated 80 percent of beneficiaries, according to IPs, decided to purchase fingerlings from the market and continued to engage in aquaculture until today, albeit not necessarily with fisher partners. However, fishers and farmers interviewed for this evaluation, admittedly not a representative sample, considered that the project's costs exceeded the benefits. There were reports that the quality of fingerlings and fodder provided was poor and that ponds lacked much-needed oxygenation facilities.

- 190 Across all locations visited by the team, increased ability to cultivate was reported in the aftermath of *land rehabilitation* activities, which had also enabled sales of produce for a minority of beneficiaries. Most reported selling small quantities locally and to other village residents, while a handful of beneficiaries were found to have started more reliable and possibly lucrative small-scale economic activities. The critical importance of access to water in order to reap the benefits of enhanced cultivation was particularly evident in the village of Jayyous in the aftermath of land rehabilitation activities in 2015, where beneficiaries with land parcels close to communal wells reported planting olive and lemon trees, thyme and vegetables, predominantly for household consumption. By contrast, beneficiaries who owned lands far from wells were either not cultivating or struggling to do so because irrigation was inefficient and costly: the irrigation network was old and inadequate, comprising a mix of plastic and metal pipes which were either broken or in dire need of repair. As such, the farther lands were located from wells, the higher the volume of water needed to irrigate - due to leakages - the higher the costs of irrigation, which for many constituted a barrier to cultivation. Positive impacts on more intangible aspects of well-being were found, and in particular satisfaction of being able to produce and sometimes sell more. For women interviewed in Khan Younis, Gaza Strip, the enhanced ability to support their families through vegetable and sheep production generated positive feelings of having become economically active members of the family and thus more *"confident and strong"*, as one beneficiary put it. In the villages of Jayyous and Al Qusra, beneficiaries who had planted olive trees in the aftermath of land rehabilitation or cistern construction were not yet reaping benefits, but were nonetheless confident about what they considered a vital long-term investment for future generations. As someone said during a FGD: *"They [our ancestors] planted, we eat. We plant, they [our children and future generations] will eat"*. Such a long-term outlook is a fundamental characteristic of what should constitute a "resilience-building" outcome, though to be sustainable it should be complemented with other risk-reducing measures and markedly protection mechanisms, considering the exposure of land and olive trees to settler attacks and other threats.
- 191 *Trainings* provided as part of the interventions received mixed feedback. The capacity-building component of aquaculture ponds, providing training on fish farming techniques, was considered by some to be useful to gain new knowledge, but also very complex and time consuming by others. Trainings on value chain development in the Gaza Strip were rated very positively, with beneficiaries reporting increases in output and varieties produced and sold, and number and types of markets reached. In the West Bank, on the other hand, such trainings were of no use to farmers who were already well connected to markets and familiar with high value crop varieties. Global GAP capacity support, which included training and certification, was considered timely, and trainings were often highlighted as very efficient in delivering the development of needed capacities.
- 192 Regarding *timeliness*, FGDs highlighted that implementation was sometimes slow when several departments and actors were involved. Sometimes long procurement processes affect the predictability of delivery, with negative consequences especially when support is sensitive to seasonality. Furthermore, FAO staff pointed out that clearance from the Regional Office could take a variable amount of time, and this added to unpredictability of FAO's projects schedule. It is critical that input distribution be timely, especially in response to disaster: if the crop has been planted already, sheets need to be distributed immediately to be of any use to farmers. But overall, FAO's *responses to shocks* were found for the most part to be effective and timely as detailed above, and as in the case of fodder distribution during and immediately after the 2014 Gaza war. 207/NET was also successfully adapted following the war to support the rehabilitation of land, water infrastructure and packinghouses. Beneficiaries praised the speed of FAO's response. FAO's activity under 401/CAN was also shifted following Storm Alexa in the West Bank and following the 2014 Gaza war with at least some success.

- 193 In sum, the following recurrent factors were found to limit effectiveness of FAO's livelihood interventions: 1) At times the quantities of distributed inputs were too small to make a difference in the long run, as in the case of the sheep distribution mentioned above and sometimes even in the short run. For example, a common complaint of beneficiaries of drought resistant seeds (barley and vetch) for fodder production under CAN/401 in Dura, Hebron was that quantities received were too little to grow what they estimated to be a sufficient quantity of fodder. Similar complaints were found among beneficiaries of ITA/807 in Tamoun, Tubas who deemed the irrigation kits for greenhouses to be insufficient. 2) In other cases inputs were of different and lesser quality than what had been promised, again in the case of sheep distribution, or of fish for the aquaculture ponds in the Gaza Strip. 3) In some instances more extensive coverage would have been necessary to ensure a positive outcome. For example, in 2011, the 401/CAN project was adapted to support FAO's response to a red palm weevil infestation, but weevil trap buckets were not distributed comprehensively throughout the Gaza Strip, so though the intervention proved effective for those farmers who did receive the buckets, palm quality and yields have not recovered to pre-infestation levels and the infestation problems remain as this is a generalized threat requiring a comprehensive palm weevil pest control process including follow-up treatment. As we have seen, a further problem related to coverage was the unintended effect of greater exposure to risk for non-beneficiaries of land rehabilitation.
- 194 It is worth reiterating how the volatility of the context and the risks beneficiaries are exposed to can hinder effectiveness. The capacity of the High Value Crops project to increase competitiveness on the export market, for example, depends largely on the political will of Israeli authorities, and as such remains a challenging endeavour. Sustainability is equally dependent on certain factors unrelated to the intervention itself, and FAO's projects run the risk of destruction whether during wars, most lately in 2014 in the Gaza Strip, with a large-scale destruction of productive assets and water infrastructures, or during more localized military actions (demolitions of cisterns in Area C). International donors have no guarantees from Israel that their investment will not be destroyed or compensated if destroyed, and as mentioned FAO does not have its own contingency plan<sup>153</sup> or crisis modifiers inbuilt in projects to minimize losses to beneficiaries in case of crises.

## 5.2 Policy support and capacity development

### Findings on policy support and capacity development

- FAO's engagement with the enabling environment dimension of Capacity Development (CD) was widely appreciated and instrumental in responding to country requests for policy assistance. FAO's assistance to policies and regulatory frameworks on plant protection and food safety was very relevant and contributed to develop the ability to export products, protect agriculture and adapt to the increasing sophistication of consumer demands.
- FAO also fostered coordination in defining cross-disciplinary policies and programmes (SPS), and government's involvement in the management of transboundary resources, for example on pest and animal diseases.
- In line with growing attention to DRR/DRM in the WBGS, FAO supported MoA's capacity in DRR/M by streamlining the Damage, Loss and Needs Assessment data collection processes and providing technical support to the Palestinian Disaster Risk Reduction and Insurance Fund, which was also based on FAO's corporate normative work.
- Less evident was the development of local capacity for policy analysis, formulation and implementation, affecting the sustainability and impact of developed capacities. Efforts to develop the capacity of national NGOs, CBOs and public institutions is limited, though their involvement could enhance sustainability and create multiplier effects at the community level.
- The physical and institutional constraints of the Palestinian Authority together with the lack of preliminary beneficiary consultations and assessment of their needs by FAO have limited ownership and undermined sustainability of some CD activities, and sometimes this leads FAO to emphasize achieving outputs rather than intervening on processes that would instead ensure such local ownership and sustainability.
- Regarding CD at the individual level, most technical trainings designed to transfer technologies and promote good agricultural practices were relevant and effectively delivered. Participative approaches enhancing individual soft skills were more effective than sole formal training with technical assistance, yet FAO has paid little attention to developing the "soft skills" that are likely to significantly influence performance in the organizational and policy/enabling environment dimensions.

- 195 A further objective of the evaluation was to assess **technical assistance to policy and capacity development**. While the area might not be particularly large in terms of funding given its nature (prevalently software), it is a main qualifier of FAO presence in the country, building on its comparative advantage as knowledge organization and qualifying its contribution to the UN undertaking in support of the Palestinian state building process. FAO's work on capacity development was assessed against the degree to which the strategy, programmes and projects with this aim are aligned with national priorities and with the FAO Corporate Strategy on Capacity Development (see box 21).
- 196 At least since 2009, FAO has been increasingly involved in policy support and institutional capacity development, engaging several governmental bodies, civil society, private sector and academia. It is worth mentioning that often policy assistance and especially developing policy capacities was only marginally funded and had to be delivered as side or complementary activities to others. FAO's work in this area resulted in different types of activities, such as the formulation and monitoring of national agricultural strategies; the support to the definition of regulatory frameworks and development of technical and institutional capacities in public services in areas like food safety, SPS regulations, capacity of veterinary (through the NAIS) and plant protection; support to disaster risk management capacities and information management; formulation of quality standards and many others.
- 197 To begin with, the Plan of Action's focus on institutional capacity development (Programme Component 5) was limited to supporting the Ministry of Agriculture in realizing two actions of the Agriculture Sector Strategy 2011–2013: (i) upscale the competence and effectiveness of agricultural institutions (section 5.3.1); and (ii) train and rehabilitate human resources (section 5.3.3). Later on, FAO's work in CD was expanded through Outcome 2 of the Programme Framework, with three outputs targeting *community-level organizations* (2.1), *public institutions* (2.2) and the *agriculture sector* (2.3).

#### Box 21: Capacity Development in FAO

The definition of Capacity Development adopted in the FAO Corporate Strategy on Capacity Development is "the process whereby individuals, organizations and society as a whole unleash, strengthen, create, adapt and maintain capacity over time". In this definition, CD is explicitly directed at empowering beneficiaries to address food security, improve livelihoods and ensure that systems of resource use are sustainable. In other words, national capacity development is seen as an evolutionary process in which the strengthening of individual and organizational capacities influence one another and the enabling environment in a self-reinforcing loop. According to its mandate, FAO assists countries both to enhance the enabling environment for agriculture and to become more effective in formulating and implementing policies.

FAO considers three dimensions of CD:

- i. The *enabling environment* relates to political commitment and vision; norms, values and institutions; policy, legal and economic frameworks; institutional relations; sector strategies and overall resources; the general development level (health, literacy, etc.), and financial resources.
- ii. The *organizational dimension* relates to political and administrative bodies (government agencies, political parties, international and regional bodies), technical bodies (inspectorates, laboratories, research, extension), economic and social bodies (enterprises, commerce chambers, consumer groups, producer associations, CBOs, universities). Interventions designed for the organizational dimension are usually associated with improving the organizational system rather than individual competencies. This can involve the setting-up of veterinary laboratories, information systems, development of restructuring plans, etc.
- iii. The *individual dimension* relates to improving the ability of individuals of all ages and providing them with knowledge and a skill set (both technical and soft) that improves their ability to contribute and that enhances the effectiveness of any group or organization they are associated with.

Each dimension relates closely to the other in an embedded system where the whole is the sum of the parts. It is possible to take one of the parts and change it but for success and sustainability, the changes need to be linked to, supported and reinforced through all dimensions.

FAO's Corporate Strategy on Capacity Development, FAO, 2010



- 198 The evaluation found that FAO WBGS' work on institutional policy support and capacity development at the three different levels is aligned with the national priorities as expressed in the national agricultural strategies as well as with the other ministries' needs. However, seeing that the shift towards more developmental projects and institutional capacity development activities only started in 2013, and that their impacts need longer time frames to emerge, it is unsurprisingly very hard to find evidence of direct or tangible impact at this stage.

#### *Enabling environment dimension*

- 199 At the policy level, FAO was closely involved with the Ministry of Agriculture and other institutions on a number of fronts, including supporting the development of the two latest agricultural strategies and the detailed framework for a comprehensive assessment of land tenure, land planning and land management mentioned in section 4.1.2. Support to national and local institutions developing legal frameworks or with a normative function is of paramount importance to the effectiveness and sustainability of CD initiatives.
- 200 Many interlocutors perceive FAO as particularly well placed to facilitate decision-making groups related to agriculture and food security, by utilizing its recognized comparative advantage as honest broker, facilitator and expert adviser to development and humanitarian national working groups, donors and UN clusters. For example, with regard to the Food Security Sector and the Agriculture Sector Working Group, FAO is considered to be playing this role successfully, raising FAO's profile and respect amongst a wide range of stakeholders.
- 201 FAO's presence in multiple coordination fora (see section 4.1.4) also raised awareness about national sectoral priorities such as working to meet sanitary and phytosanitary capacity development needs. The "Capacity building programme in support of the Palestinian National Authority – Sanitary and Phyto-Sanitary measures"<sup>154</sup> was felt by various stakeholders as a fundamental step for WBGS to safeguarding the health and well-being of people living in the WBGS, as well as increasing access to domestic, regional and international markets (see also section 4.2.2). The programme, in fact, was designed to respond to the need of effectively managing food safety and quality in Palestine, expressed by the Palestinian Authority as well as by many international organizations, including the World Organisation for Animal Health, the European Union, and the WHO. Furthermore, developing SPS-related capacities is a prerequisite for the WBGS to join the World Trade Organization and, in itself, this makes the project extremely relevant for the WBGS. FAO has been particularly effective in developing the capacities of government officials to understand and in some cases apply international regulatory frameworks such as the International Plant Protection Convention and the Codex Alimentarius. However, the fact that Palestine is not an FAO member country limits its international exposure and precludes it from participating in regional exchanges, thus depriving it of an opportunity to legitimize international instruments and provide fertile grounds for advocacy and support.
- 202 Stakeholders recognized this kind of assistance to be FAO's comparative advantage on the basis of its global experience and mandate, and appreciated the focus on facilitating inter-ministerial coordination of food safety and defining the division of roles between various line ministries.<sup>155</sup> FAO has played an important role in fostering coordination to define cross-disciplinary policies and programmes (SPS), and involvement in the management of transboundary resources, for example on pest and animal diseases. FAO's contribution was critical to define the role in the development of the Food Safety Strategy of the various stakeholders and provide a roadmap for future interventions.
- 203 FAO has also been instrumental in responding to the request for policy assistance through the "Institutional level component of the project: Support livestock-based livelihoods (LbL) of the vulnerable populations in the occupied Palestinian territory",<sup>156</sup> which established the first National Animal Identification System in the WBGS, a registration system of all small ruminants and cattle. The NAIS represented an effort to develop capacities pertaining

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154 OSRO/GAZ/402/NET.

155 Ministry of National Economy (MoNE), MoA, MoH, Palestinian Standards Institute (PSI) and key municipalities.

156 OSRO/GAZ/201/EC.

to the 'Sanitary Pillar' of sanitary and phytosanitary measures and is considered relevant to improve food safety for the Palestinian people and enable local animal products to meet international trade standards. The establishment of the NAIS was identified as a priority in the Agriculture Strategy, as also recognized by an international technical assessment mission.<sup>157</sup> Feedback from FAO and MoA officers confirmed the relevance of interventions delivered under this project and its importance for the livestock sector and to strengthen the Ministry of Agriculture's capacity in service delivery. On the other hand, many herders, MoA extension officers and NGOs had conflicting views regarding the NAIS, partly due to a limited understanding of its regulatory aims.

- 204 In 2013, a joint EU-PA-FAO workshop on improving water availability and the ensuing discussions with donors and the Ministry of Agriculture through the Agriculture Sector Working Group, triggered an innovative effort to develop common guidelines for land and water interventions. These guidelines, adopted by the Ministry of Agriculture and donors, embraced a new approach in the way land and water interventions were identified, designed, implemented and coordinated, moving away from ad hoc interventions targeting individuals to more holistic ones aimed at farming communities, responding to their needs and building their ownership, in coordination with the government. Currently, FAO is engaged with the donors and the Ministry of Agriculture for the establishment of an "Interest Group on Land and Water Development" under the Agriculture Sector Working Group where FAO should play a technical advisory role.
- 205 FAO provided support in developing the national standards for wastewater treatment (see also section 4.1.6) and directly produced a number of useful policy documents building on previous ones (e.g. the formulation of the Livestock Sub-Sector Strategy; an assessment of the current land tenure and management situation recommending the adoption of the Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure; a feasibility study on the potential of mariculture in the Gaza Strip). However, less evident to the evaluation team was the development of local capacity for policy analysis, formulation and implementation, affecting the sustainability of the developed capacities and their impact, notwithstanding the widely acknowledged fact, including in FAO corporate Strategy on Capacity Development that policy support should always be provided in parallel with capacity development for policy makers.

### *Organizational Dimension of Capacity Development*

- 206 Both the LbL-i and SPS projects are directed towards *enabling the environment* by improving incentives, policies, legislation, regulations and accountability, while also addressing the *organizational dimension* of Capacity Development. In particular, through these projects, FAO helped the Palestinian Authority strengthen its organizational capacities and government institutions supporting plant protection and transboundary animal diseases (including by setting up and strengthening laboratories), food safety, statistics and information management.<sup>158</sup>
- 207 Much of FAO's work on the *organizational dimension* concentrates on data and information management across the range of its technical areas, from food safety to animal health and agriculture statistics, all recognized as important by partners and donors. FAO's assistance in this area responds to crucial information needs. Interlocutors appreciated FAO's effort in facilitating communication among ministries and departments, however, the information-sharing mechanisms across sectors still requires some improvements. FAO has also provided a consultant to help the Ministry of Agriculture to work on M&E

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157 Carried out by the World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE) and the European Union Technical Assistance and Information Exchange instrument (TAIEX).

158 More in general and in programmatic terms, the two dimensions fall under Outcome 2 of the PF. The first area of intervention under Outcome 2 is institutional capacity development, which mainly resulted in developing 1) Sanitary and phytosanitary related capacities including an enabling environment for improved animal, plant health and food safety, and 2) Livestock Based Livelihoods – institutional component, focusing on strengthened capacity of the MoA to fulfil its mandate in service delivery. The second one is community level capacity development, which works in two tracks, one indirect and one direct. Indirectly it works through institutional capacity development of the public sector, aiming at improving quality of extension services; and directly through interventions aiming at improving farmers', and particularly women's, effective engagement in high-value agricultural value chains in local and global markets, by promoting capacity development in the field of quality assurance and standards.



systems and develop national indicators for the sector that are linked with a software on a MoA server. This system is expected to help FAO and other stakeholders to better monitor interventions and develop consistent monitoring matrices, centred on national indicators.

- 208 At the same time, FAO's work on strengthening management and business capacities of cooperatives, through the *HVC and One Stop Shop* projects, was mostly appreciated by farmers and donors. However, there is limited evidence that FAO helps these groups gain more voice in the policy making context and be better networked and linked to markets, services and the policy and advocacy initiatives of established producer organizations, and to do so in a sustainable way. For example, the HVC project established two marketing companies, one in the WB and one in the GS, to facilitate marketing of HVCs produced by cooperative members. However, farmers do not acknowledge these companies nor do they perceive the advantages of such intermediary in their business. The evaluation team also found that in its HVC project FAO tends to emphasize achieving outputs rather than intervening on processes that ensure local ownership and sustainable capacity development. This is largely a consequence of project design failing to adequately consider specific needs and priorities as well as other contextual factors, and failing to involve beneficiaries at different stages of planning.
- 209 The area of Disaster Risk Reduction/Management<sup>159</sup> is another example of FAO's CD work that is relevant to both local priorities and FAO's corporate CD Framework, particularly to the organizational dimension. Following a number of assessments undertaken by national and international actors in 2014, including FAO, which indicated the need for a PA-led DRM framework to guide existing humanitarian and development strategies,<sup>160</sup> FAO facilitated the integration of DRR concepts within the Ministry of Agriculture, provided training on preparedness to MoA staff and harmonized food security information.<sup>161</sup> More recently and in light of the gaps identified above, in spring 2015, FAO WBGS organized two workshops with representatives of the Ministry of Agriculture in Ramallah and Gaza City to assess capacity needs for the development of a DRM system for the agricultural sector. Further individual consultation meetings were conducted in May 2016 with the focus on DRR/M capacities and tools in the Ministry of Agriculture and with high relevance for the operationalization of the PADRRIF as well as linkages with other work streams such as climate change adaptation (see paragraph 212).
- 210 The above-mentioned SPS programme, the LbL-i, HVC and One Stop Shop projects and the work on DRR are also examples of effective institutionalization. Institutions that would go on to become service providers were involved from the design stage and throughout implementation. Institutions were also strengthened as part of the interventions (the Ministry of Agriculture; the National Agricultural Research Centre; farmers' cooperatives; PADRRIF<sup>162</sup>).
- 211 A number of weaknesses are recognized as potentially undermining the role and activities of PADRRIF, including the fact that a public body with virtually no experience on insurance

159 The definitions of DRR and DRM adopted in this document draw on the definitions provided in the "FAO DRM Workshop Summary Report" according to which DRR aims at strengthening the capacities and resilience of households, communities and institutions to protect lives and livelihoods, through measures to avoid (prevention) or limit (mitigation and preparedness) the adverse effects of hazards and provide timely and reliable hazard forecasts. The DRM approach integrates these DRR elements (prevention, mitigation, preparedness) with post-disaster response and rehabilitation and with transition to development (FAO, 2015).

160 In February 2014, a Rapid Damage, Loss and Needs Assessment (DaLA) conducted by the PA with funding from the World Bank in the aftermath of the Alexa storm (*World Bank (2014) Rapid Damage, Loss and Needs Assessment of Winter Storm Alexa West Bank and Gaza December 2013*. [http://www-wds.worldbank.org/external/default/WDSContentServer/WDSP/IB/2014/07/02/000469252\\_20140702112718/Rendered/INDEX/889710WP0P1499270Box385254B00PUBLIC00ACS.txt](http://www-wds.worldbank.org/external/default/WDSContentServer/WDSP/IB/2014/07/02/000469252_20140702112718/Rendered/INDEX/889710WP0P1499270Box385254B00PUBLIC00ACS.txt)); the aftermath of the 2014 war in the GS pointed to the need to streamline the DaLA's data collection system (FAO (2015) *Summary report: Disaster Risk Management in the Agriculture Sector in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip Training & Workshop 17 & 18 March 2015, City Inn, Ramallah; 26 & 27 May, ArcMed Hotel, Gaza City; FAO (no date) Informal note: Support in Disaster Risk Reduction for Agriculture and Food Security. Unpublished*); stocktaking exercise of existing national DRM capacities conducted by the United Nations Disaster Assessment and Coordination team-led mission in collaboration with the PA and the RC/HC (UNDAC (2014) *Disaster Response Preparedness Mission to the State of Palestine. Mission dates: 22 March to 05 April 2014 Draft, 26 June 2014 United Nations Disaster Assessment and Coordination team*); the MoA Agriculture Strategy 2014-2016 identified a number of DRM measures as sectorial priorities to strengthen mechanisms to deal with disasters, climate change and desertification (FAO, 2015).

161 FAO (2013) FAO Disaster Risk Reduction Brief. West Bank and Gaza Strip [http://www.preventionweb.net/files/33680\\_fao.pdf](http://www.preventionweb.net/files/33680_fao.pdf)

162 See box below.

and risk management has been tasked with leading the sector, and the lack of a clear reference to the establishment of a public-private partnership to facilitate the inclusion of insurance companies in the development of the agricultural insurance scheme. FAO is currently planning to address these weaknesses and support the overall function and role of PADRRIF, specifically by providing technical assistance to the development of a public-private agricultural insurance scheme and a risk management system for the agricultural sector. A project proposal in this regard was drafted and presented to donors in May 2016.<sup>163</sup>

**Box 22:** Effectiveness and use of FAO's normative products: support to PADRRIF

In 2013 the Ministry of Agriculture established the Palestinian Agriculture Disaster Risk Reduction and Insurance Fund to deal with all that relates to agricultural risk management.<sup>164</sup> PADRRIF, which became operational in 2014, brings under the same umbrella two main functions: i) insurance and risk management for the agricultural sector; and ii) direct compensation for damages to agricultural activities.<sup>165</sup> PADRRIF recognizes risks to the agricultural sector in the WBGS as arising from natural and environmental hazards, such as snow, frost, earthquakes and desertification, water scarcity, as well as political factors linked to the occupation including the barrier, land confiscation, tree uprooting etc.<sup>166</sup> As noted by an FAO staff member interviewed for this evaluation, besides the Sendai Framework for DRR,<sup>167</sup> the FAO Resilient Livelihoods Framework<sup>168</sup> and its four integrated thematic pillars were also employed to draft the PADRRIF, and particularly to identify and cluster the risk focus and the main areas of its work. This happened without being prompted by the technical support unit at FAO headquarters and is *a good example of the use of FAO normative frameworks to develop a new instrument at national level*. FAO WBGS is also a member of the PADRRIF Board of Directors and the establishment of PADRRIF is recognized in a recent FAO project document as a step forward in the development of much needed insurance and risk management systems for agriculture.<sup>169</sup>

- 212 As part of FAO's support to DRR/M in the agriculture sector, in August 2015 FAO's assisted the Palestinian Authority in standardizing and speeding up the Damage, and Loss Assessment (DaLA) data collection processes<sup>170</sup> through a USD 200,000 USD project funded by FAO Regional Office under FAO's Strategic Objective 5 and as part of the regional country support process. Before FAO's work on DaLA, data entry was done centrally at MoA level. The lack of staff capacity to perform this time-consuming task was a key reason underpinning the slow DaLA process (as outlined above) and in turn delays in the management of farmers' requests for compensation, especially after large-scale disasters. Shifting data entry activities to field staff as part of this intervention is expected to reduce this delay.
- 213 The preliminary work, led by a technical officer at FAO headquarters, to investigate the linkages between DRR and climate change adaptation in the WBGS context is in line with the Ministry of Agriculture's willingness to engage in these areas of work in a structured and systematic way. As explained by a number of FAO staff, the Ministry of Agriculture is indeed stepping up work in other areas that have linkages with DRR and has been recently working, with support from relevant UN agencies, including FAO, on cross-sectoral national strategies: in collaboration with UNDP, the MoA has drafted a Climate Change Adaptation Strategy; drafting of a Drought Management Strategy with support from

163 FAO (2016) Agricultural Insurance and Risk Management Technical Assistance Programme in West Bank and Gaza Strip. March 2016.

164 Agricultural Risks: PAADRIF as Part of the Solution. Palestinian Agricultural Disaster Risk Reduction and Insurance Fund Presentation given to the Agricultural Sector Working Group, Ministry of Agriculture, February, 2016.

165 Agricultural Insurance and Risk Management Technical Assistance Programme in West Bank and Gaza Strip. Draft to be shared with PAADRIF. FAO, March 2016.

166 State of Palestine Palestinian Agricultural Disaster Risk Reduction and Insurance Fund System. PA, October 2015.

167 <http://www.unisdr.org/we/coordinate/sendai-framework>

168 <http://www.fao.org/3/a-i3270e.pdf>

169 FAO (2016) Agricultural Insurance and Risk Management Technical Assistance Programme in West Bank and Gaza Strip. Draft to be shared with PAADRIF. March 2016.

170 FAO 2 (no date) Informal note: Support in Disaster Risk Reduction for Agriculture and Food Security. 160324 DRR support. End of Project Report Unpublished. This included, starting from September 2015 and for approximately five months, supporting a) the development of a mobile application for data collection and of an intermediary application to connect the mobile application to the Damage Assessment Database (DAD); b) the provision of IT infrastructure (tablets) to enable field staff to perform data collection and entry of field survey questionnaires and; c) the provision of training related to functions covered in a) and b).

UN-DESA is currently ongoing, and the Desertification Strategy was recently finalized. Furthermore, FAO has also supported the Ministry of Agriculture in formulating the priority agriculture sector adaptation measures for the National Adaptation Plan (NAP, 2016) as well as mitigation measures for the Nationally Determined Contribution (forthcoming) as part of the communications that the Palestinian Authority needs to provide since the State of Palestine's joined the UNFCCC in March 2016.

- 214 Furthermore, FAO is currently working with a number of NGOs, CBOs and public institutions to implement projects. However, interlocutors reported that FAO's effort in developing their capacity is limited. As previously mentioned, the evaluation found that closer liaison and mentoring and a move towards greater collaborating would help to further strengthen endogenous capacity. This may require large initial investment (especially on capacity development), but such involvement has the potential for greater sustainability and could create multiplier effects at the community level. Furthermore, engaging in partnerships with international NGOs provides opportunities for FAO to reach out more widely and to engage in mutual learning and exchange.

#### *Individual Capacity Development Dimension*

- 215 Interviewed stakeholders consider it important for FAO to continue engaging in field activities, both to provide practical experience to its normative work and, more importantly, to develop the capacity of countries to test the appropriateness of new approaches and technologies to meet their needs. Exchange visits between West Bank and Gaza Strip farmers were conducted and appreciated by participants as a knowledge-sharing method.
- 216 A large majority of FAO projects' activities aim at developing the capacities of individuals, mainly government staff and/or farmers and farmers' groups, but the effectiveness of these varies according to the approach adopted. This seems to be related to the little attention FAO has paid to developing the "soft skills" that are likely to significantly influence performance in the organizational and policy/enabling environment dimensions. For example, though women's cooperatives and MoA extension staff working on the NAIS showed sincere appreciation for the training undergone on business management capacity and animal tagging respectively, they were concerned that they might lack the organizational capabilities and practical skills to conduct their work in an effective manner.
- 217 The evaluation team found that facilitation and participative approaches enhancing individuals' soft skills were more effective than sole formal training on technical aspects. In particular, the proved effectiveness of the training provided through the HVC project demonstrates the importance of practical training for the immediate application of knowledge and skills (Global GAP and demonstration farming), as well as the frequent need to accompany such training with initiatives to strengthen management and organizational capacities (marketing). The trainings provided on Global GAP are one such example, and translated into reduced use of fertilizers, pesticides and water, saving that reflected on the profitability and competitiveness of the farming process and therefore on households' livelihood.
- 218 Furthermore, capacity development projects aiming at more transformative goals have a greater chance of success when the participation and ownership of the end results is ensured. Instances of this kind of transformative projects are the introduction of new crops and technologies enabling farmers to reduce the use of resources and the establishment of demonstration farms through HVC and 807/ITA projects<sup>171</sup> which were felt to be very important, relevant and effective as an encouragement to adopt new crops. Less positive are the outcomes of some individual CD activities carried out under the often-mentioned

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<sup>171</sup> Pineapples, for example, were tested in Tulkaram and allowed farmers to save one third of the water they were previously using for the production of tomatoes; or the introduction of new agriculture technologies, such as strawberry farming in Gaza saving up to 90 percent of water through the introduction of the hanging technique. Prior to the HVC project, 807/ITA had introduced new crops and technologies such as avocados. Since they were planted in 2012 and need 5-7 years for tangible results, early production is expected in 2018-2020. When the evaluation team visited Qalqilia, avocados were found growing well and farmers were happy with the intensive planting, and envisaged making good business in the future if all went well. The same project assisted herders by supplying milking machines and butter churns which, according to beneficiaries, reduced drudgery and improved product quality.

LbL-i project. So, while the LbL-i trainees highlighted their satisfaction in terms of trainer's expertise and relevance of the topic, on the other hand scarce knowledge of the tagging technique on the part of trainers<sup>172</sup> as well as a lack of ownership of the intervention overall and the insufficient awareness raising carried out prior implementation (see also the findings of the LbL-i project evaluation) affected the quality and final impact of the activities.

- 219 On the other hand, one-off trainings targeting individuals (government officials in the case of LbL-i, some farmers in the HVC project, or women in other marketing projects) were found to be of limited impact, even when FAO included the application of knowledge to policy planning and implementation in the training package. In some cases, though there were some good results, the very short timelines were not enough to achieve sustainable capacity and consolidate gains (see projects on LbL-i, aquaculture ponds in the Gaza Strip, etc.).

### 5.3 Cross-cutting issues

#### 5.3.1 Monitoring and lessons learning

##### Findings on M&E

- Overall, the assessment of project and programme contributions to impact is hindered by lack of monitoring of progress towards outcomes and of availability of disaggregated data. This is also a consequence of limited resources and dedicated staff capacities within the office.
- No reference to earlier recommendations was found in project proposals and action plans, and there seem to be no systems in place to ensure that lessons are learned and mistakes are capitalized upon. However FAO is at present developing a system to monitor its activities.

- 220 Formally the M&E system for WBGS consists of three levels: first, monitoring of post-distribution, second, monitoring of outputs to assess progress of programme results including midterm and final reviews of the programme, and lastly, external project evaluations carried out by independent external evaluation teams. Strategically there is an attention to M&E reflected in both programming documents, resulting in heavy reporting burden. As explained by staff during the SWOT analysis, in recent years, the volume of projects handled by the office has increased exponentially, and as a consequence the lack of a proper M&E system to provide sound foundations for decision-making, learning and evaluation is increasingly felt.
- 221 One person is in charge of M&E among other tasks, partially supported by two assistants. This small unit relies on field staff whose primary task as Deputy Programme Managers (DPMs) is to supervise implementation, and who are therefore overburdened. DPMs report on an ad hoc basis according to donor and corporate requirements, and there is ultimately no evidence that in practice the M&E carried out follows established procedures.
- 222 Though great quantities of post-distribution monitoring data are available, lack of capacity and resources to process them hinders more outcome level analysis. Baselines in programming documents are generally not disaggregated below the national level, making attribution of any changes to FAO difficult, considering that the country has many players in the sector. Moreover, as mentioned, the sources of information for baseline data in the Plan of Action and Programme Framework are not clear. Though the PF baseline should depend in theory on the endline of the PoA, no evident link emerges, making effectiveness hard to measure. The midterm and final reviews of the programmes are presented as outcome evaluations, but in fact they mostly concentrate, again, on output level results, weakening their function as learning tools.

172 Although FAO provided the same technical trainings on the tagging system to appointed MoA officers in both the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, the outcome of the tagging process was different in the two areas. While in the Gaza Strip there were no obstacles in implementing the activity, in some areas of the West Bank the tagging was undertaken by unskilled technicians who were unable to correctly tag the animals' ears, sometimes hitting veins and provoking inflammation and swelling. This led herders to remove tags from all their animals, perceiving the tags as a risk for their animals' health.

- 223 The limits of the current monitoring system emerged from the analysis of various interventions. For example, for the long list of marketing activities of the HVC project reporting was carried out at output level,<sup>173</sup> while outcomes were not reported. Weak monitoring made it difficult to assess how productivity was affected, something that could be overcome by using farm records, as mentioned in section 5.1.3. The APIS is a case of a good monitoring practice that was not followed-up systematically (see box 5). This weakness is particularly evident in the case of capacity development, where measuring outputs does not provide any indication of effectiveness.

**Box 23: Monitoring of Cash Assistance**

The adoption of conditional cash transfers in a context of increased volume of projects but without a parallel increase in M&E staff capacity has made monitoring activities particularly burdensome. Specifically, monitoring of conditional cash transfers were found to be more onerous precisely because of the need to ensure that cash expenditures are in line with the conditions defined by the project. Referring to 501/BEL, staff interviewed in the Gaza Strip for example stressed the difficulties faced in monitoring cash expenditures of beneficiaries towards purchases of the many inputs required for home garden development (irrigation pipes, pumps, seedlings etc.). This is not surprising however: by their nature conditional cash transfers, including vouchers, are notoriously administratively burdensome, much more so than unconditional cash transfers for instance (Harvey and Bailey, 2011).

- 224 Following a thorough desk review of all available documentation, the evaluation team found that despite the programme reviews, midterm evaluations and final project reports, no reference was made to earlier recommendations in programme proposals or action plans. This does not mean that lessons from earlier experiences are not incorporated into the design of new projects, and though there seems to be no systematization of success stories, historic memory of FAO staff is considered fundamental in developing new projects. For instance, when projects were found not to have reached the intended target beneficiaries, enhanced efforts were made to advertise the launch of activities, a positive case of incorporating lessons learned.
- 225 No resources are available to better systematize documentation and manage knowledge, M&E, and learning process, nor is support for M&E provided by the Regional Office for the Near East and North Africa or headquarters. On the other hand, the WBGS office is presently working to develop its M&E system, as well as a new package on process flows for programme implementation. The monitoring process is partially improving, as indicated by FAO staff, and there is a new programme monitoring system which aligns the project, Programme and Strategic Framework logframes, so everything is evolving into something more systematic, and PF indicators are being developed to fulfil CREAM criteria.<sup>174</sup> Information about beneficiaries and interventions are now being centralized,<sup>175</sup> yet information management and archiving needs to be strengthened to ensure quality of the follow-up process with beneficiaries, and to improve the effectiveness of delivery of future activities

### 5.3.2 Gender

**Findings on Gender**

- While the evaluation found that FAO staff made positive efforts to incorporate gender aspects in FAO's operations, overall there was some evidence of gender issues being weakly mainstreamed in projects and of a decreased attention to the issue in strategic documents.
- Targeting women as beneficiaries of projects as is presently done is not enough and does not equate to gender programming. Instead programme designs need to be informed by an understanding of women's specific vulnerabilities and coping strategies in the WBGS.

<sup>173</sup> Report of 2014.

<sup>174</sup> Clear, Relevant, Economic, Adequate, Monitorable.

<sup>175</sup> A beneficiary database system is currently being developed with support from CIO.



- 226 FAO's Programme Framework makes no reference in its needs analysis to the situation of women, and only in the overview of the current Palestinian value chain is there a reference to the fact that "women face unequal access to assets". The suggested response is to increase levels of women's participation in the processing aspects of the value chain, but the document offers no details on how to do so. The rationale behind the percentage of women FAO aims to target, why so few women are included and how programming will be tailored for those who are, all remain unclear. In addition, the PF provides no gendered baseline, indicators or targets, even if the logframe states that data sources will be "gender-sensitive monitoring, evaluation and assessment of relevant programmes to enhance accountability and feedback".<sup>176</sup> The previous programming document, the Plan of Action, on the contrary, does state that the focus must lie "in actively empowering women as agents of development in their homes and communities",<sup>177</sup> and seems overall more sensitive to gender. It uses SEFSEC data and RIMA categories to highlight gendered vulnerabilities and thus the importance of targeting female-headed households. Besides, while references to "gender" and "women" does not equate to gender-sensitive programming, it is nevertheless noteworthy that the words "gender" and "woman" are used three and nine times respectively in the Programme Framework, while in the Plan of Action, they appear a total of 8 and 37 times. A further indication of a greater focus on gender in the past is the request by FAO to UN Women in 2010, prior to the period under evaluation, to carry out an assessment of its work on gender, a very positive and uncommon exercise for FAO in general, which still contains valid and relevant lessons and recommendations for FAO WBGs' work on gender.
- 227 In a context where women are disadvantaged and discriminated on a number of fronts (see section 2.5), and also considering that women earn 17 percent less than their male counterparts and 97 percent of the women working in agriculture are unpaid family members,<sup>178</sup> it is critical for FAO to develop projects that are gender sensitive. Despite this, FAO reveals a weakness in involving women in its projects, and only 11.5 percent of FAO's beneficiaries in 2015 were women-headed households and female members of cooperatives, while in 2014 this figure was 18 percent of the total.<sup>179</sup> Reviewing the available lists of beneficiaries of the projects assessed under the access to market focus of this evaluation revealed that the number of women who directly benefited is minimal. For example, the 207/NET project targeted 23 cooperatives and farmer groups for a total 2 735 participants, of which only six were formed exclusively of women, for a total of 283 members.
- 228 Some of FAO's criteria in selecting beneficiaries exclude women by default: for example, women constitute less than 4 percent of cooperatives and own only 8 percent of total agricultural holdings,<sup>180</sup> so projects working with cooperatives or landowners are very unlikely to include women. In general, though women take an active part in agricultural production, they often do not own assets, and projects aimed at rehabilitating assets, such as cisterns for example, end up targeting men who typically are the asset-owners. Women confirmed that announcements regarding new projects had been placed in public places usually visited by them such as schools and health centres where they could see them, redressing a gap that had been found by the midterm review of the Plan of Action, though this is insufficient to ensuring women's inclusion, which would require a more thorough understanding of underlying issues that affect women in the WBGs, presently absent from many projects.

176 FAO Programme Framework 2014-16, p.38.

177 Plan of Action for the West Bank and Gaza Strip, 2011-2013, p.8.

178 Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics, 2015. Women and Men in Palestine: Issues and Statistics, 2015. Ramallah - Palestine.

179 FAO Annual Report 2015 and FAO Annual Report 2014.

180 ESDC. 2012. Social and Economic Role of Cooperatives in West Bank.

**Box 24:** Gender aspects in project design and implementation

- Fieldwork discussions in Khan Yunis highlighted the benefits of projects designed to be more gender focused. 504/SPA aimed to support poor and vulnerable families with vegetable production units and backyard animal production units. In this case lack of ownership of property by beneficiaries did not appear to affect project results: the men in the family, who had found out about this opportunity, had encouraged women, even though they did not own land, to apply. Despite the conservative society, these women's involvement in the project had allowed them to participate in training and information sessions outside their homes, and then take responsibility of their home gardens. During a FGD women explained that they are normally not encouraged to leave their homes, so they don't work outside, and depend largely on their husbands. The trainings were described as short holidays and trips on which they made friends and felt *mabsuta* (happy). Growing vegetables and animals was a source of joy, in part because it allowed these women to be productive members in their families, and enabled them to have a greater voice in household decisions.
- Some female beneficiaries specifically highlighted that cisterns provided relief from the burden of water collection - a task that typically falls on women and girls. Female Bedouin beneficiaries interviewed indicated that since the rehabilitation of a 100 cubic metre communal cistern in the hamlet they are no longer forced to walk for long distances to fetch water.
- In the case of the Kafr Laqif Women's Association involved in the One Stop Shop project, members rely on buying tomatoes and Za'atar for processing at relatively high prices and were not supported either to plant themselves or to connect with producers who benefit from HVC. Consequently, these women depend on purchased raw material from the wholesale market of Qalqilya paying a higher cost, resulting in lower competitiveness.

229 Interviewed FAO staff admitted being unsure on how to ensure gender-sensitivity within the project cycle, and the issue of limited ownership of assets was used as an example of the constraints faced when targeting women. Field discussions corroborated the need for more in-depth understanding of the vulnerabilities women suffer and the local mechanisms for coping with them. At times what is important to ensure gender issues are mainstreamed is not ownership, but a range of complementary services, such as safe spaces to interact. As mentioned in section 5.1.2. FAO projects are not based on a thorough analysis, including a gender analysis, and partly as a consequence they do not appropriately address a wide variety of key issues affecting women such as workload, unpaid labour and the role of women in the informal sector, and how these affect women's ability to earn an income; or access to and ownership of key land and water resources and the implication of targeting female beneficiaries with land and water interventions when they do not own these resources. Furthermore, though a number of FAO projects as the HVC and One Stop Shop aim to empower women by increasing their market participation, growth of women's productive work and income does not necessarily imply a reduction of their engagement in reproductive work, and this double burden could jeopardize the aim of increased well-being and empowerment. The effect of productive work on women's lives should therefore be monitored with appropriate indicators throughout the project life cycle in order to assess whether the overall project aim of empowering women is in fact being achieved.

230 Despite this strategic weakness, the office appears to be making some efforts to mainstream gender in its operations, as evidenced during several interviews with FAO staff. Towards the end of the period under evaluation the Gender Marker was systematically used for all project documents that are part of HNO/HRP, as this is part of project approvals in the FSS vetting process. The creation of a gender committee is another example of the efforts to pay increasing attention to gender issues in all aspects of the team's work. The committee reviews project documents, ensures women's involvement and checks the wording of reports for gender-sensitivity. In addition, a gender focal point has recently been appointed<sup>181</sup> and according to interviews with staff, this has contributed to a more systematic approach to integrating gender aspects in FAO's programme. Currently the focal person ensures that projects target the stated percentage of women indicated at planning stage through a Gender Workplan as well as being responsible to ensure that gender is monitored in all projects, and with this workload her ability to concentrate on other gender aspects is limited.

<sup>181</sup> The FAO Gender Focal Point for a part of the mission was on maternity leave, and nobody from the Programme Support Unit was replacing her. It is also to be noted that she is responsible for all beneficiary identification and verification of FAO projects.



- 231 During focus group discussions, women from farming and herding communities repeatedly expressed the view that they had never been consulted on FAO projects. Some FAO staff described the positive impacts or outcomes of projects on male beneficiaries, with little consideration of the potential positive or negative effects on women too. For example, short-term employment opportunities generated by cistern rehabilitation was mentioned by staff in terms of opportunities that this intervention provided for men only, while no mention or consideration appeared to have been given to the potential opportunities for women too.
- 232 Both the gender dimensions and the broader relevance and effectiveness of FAO's livelihood activity could be improved through the fuller use of participatory and community-building methods in project preparation, design and implementation. This applies especially to FAO's work with vulnerable communities in Area C, but also in other situations. Such an approach would have the additional benefit of reducing FAO's current focus on input delivery. The Participatory Vulnerability and Capacity Assessment (PVCA) methodology adopted by the World Alliance of Young Men's Christian Associations (YMCA), one of FAO's implementing partners, could be a model for FAO. It's a case where FAO could rely on the knowledge and expertise of its implementing partners in relation to community targeting and context analysis, which could also include a broader use of IP's capacities and resources to complement FAO's own.

**Box 25: Participatory Vulnerability and Capacity Assessment methodology**

The PVCA methodology was developed by Christian Aid and is widely used in Area C by YMCA (with DFID funding). It is an approach to resilience in conflict settings focused on empowering local communities to understand the vulnerabilities they face and their capacities and needs, and to take an active role in achieving change. YMCA staff spends an extensive amount of time in selecting communities, based on their assessment of environmental and political hazards plus community willingness, and go on to create village committees, comprising women, youth and others whose voices are usually ignored. The village committee and community then discuss vulnerabilities, capacities and needs – which may relate to either inputs or skills development, and to land and water or other issues. Discussions are intense: in one Bedouin community, YMCA was involved in 29 meetings, lasting a month, and ended up talking with everyone in the community (around 100 people). Through this, the communities prepare, design, vote on and implement community action plans, with YMCA's support. The approach often results in unusual outcomes. In another Bedouin community it was decided that house gardens for community vegetable consumption was the priority – in support of which YMCA provided both inputs and training. The same community also requested access to expertise and networks on how to take complaints to the Israeli authorities. YMCA staff report that this approach can have transformative effects on community social structures, especially gender relations, as well as community resilience.

**5.3.3 Accountability to Affected Populations (AAP)**

**Findings on AAP**

- Assessed against FAO's corporate commitments on AAP, the office falls short on most of them, though there has been some progress on the transparency of selection processes, and some lessons arising after community consultations have been incorporated in programming.
- Recently the office has made a series of commitments to mainstream AAP throughout the project cycle. These have not been implemented yet, but the new AAP framework appears to have some conceptual weaknesses.

- 233 The evaluation assessed FAO WBGs' work on AAP against FAO's seven corporate commitments (see box 26). In relation to strengthening leadership, governance and staff competencies (1) and preventing sexual exploitation and abuse (6), interviews indicated that some staff were not aware of means and ways to be more accountable to affected populations, nor was training ever provided to assist them to clarify the issue or address issues of sexual exploitation and abuse. Apart from one presentation by the AAP focal point to familiarize office staff with the concept, in general until now no guidance has been provided nor policy established to ensure consistent and effective AAP. FAO WBGs is aware of its present weakness, and is commendable for having made a series of commitments

on AAP throughout the project cycle. At the time of the evaluation, these were still to be implemented and there were few tangible results to report on. The new AAP framework (see Annex 3), however, denotes a certain mix-up in the way means for AAP are classified, displaying a confusion between opportunities, entry points, actions and tools that could limit the framework's potential usefulness in practice. Rather than mostly referring to generic FAO actions and tools for assessment, monitoring and evaluation, it would have been more useful if the framework had relied on AAP-specific resources such as the IASC Tools to assist in implementing the IASC AAP commitments (2012), or the Guidance on AAP and Gender Consideration included in FAO's recent Phased agricultural livelihood needs assessment framework and tools (2016).

#### Box 26: FAO and AAP

In a 2013 corporate guidance note on AAP, FAO defines accountability to affected populations from a human rights perspective, as "an active commitment by actors and organizations to use power responsibly by taking account of, giving account to and being held to account by the people they seek to assist."

FAO's goal to improve policy and practice in AAP is underpinned by seven core commitments that provide the framework for focused improvement:

1. Strengthen **leadership and governance** to embed good practices and to ensure that FAO's staff and implementing partners deliver on its commitments;
2. Provide greater and more routine **transparency**, two-way **communication**, and **information** for affected communities;
3. Offer means to provide **feedback**, submit **complaints**, and to ensure a timely **response**;
4. Enable **participation** of all sections of affected populations, including the most vulnerable and marginalized;
5. Mainstream AAP into **needs assessment, design, monitoring, and evaluation** activities, ensuring continuous **learning**;
6. Prevent **sexual exploitation and abuse** by FAO personnel and implementing partners and put in place adequate response mechanisms;
7. Collaborate with peers and partners to deliver on AAP commitments.

234 Regarding transparency, communication and information provision (2), some interviews with beneficiaries signalled a lack of shared understanding of the rationale of the selection process or of agreement regarding targeting criteria (see 5.1.1). Nonetheless there was a marked improvement in informing on the selection process which has become more inclusive, transparent and standardized.

235 Notwithstanding some reporting including information gathering from beneficiaries,<sup>182</sup> until now FAO WBGS has not had an established feedback mechanisms (3) in place, and this in part results in FAO's weak understanding of local contexts and of vulnerabilities experienced by communities, as well as undermining effectiveness and efficiency of delivery. In one case, interviewed non-beneficiary farmers who applied to be part of a HVC project but were not selected, claimed that while aware of their rejection, they did not know the reason for it, nor had they received any feedback or advice on how to improve their farm to eventually benefit from future interventions. This is an issue that is covered in different parts of this report, as the implications affect programming at various points of the programme cycle. For example, this has an effect on how gender aspects are streamlined, or how monitoring and lessons learning are incorporated in FAO's projects and overall programme. To respond to this gap, a grievance redressal mechanism is being developed and will start being implemented in 2017.

236 Considering FAO's weak community analysis, participation to determine what is needed and how it can be provided, and meaningful and fair representation of communities during

<sup>182</sup> This may include post-distribution monitoring, field visits, project evaluation, midterm and final evaluation of programme framework, MoA channelled feedback, consultations with CBOs.

consultations (4) become even more important for FAO activities. As FAO staff commented, "It is important to listen more to people on the ground. We are responding to a need but we don't talk to people. It [project development and eventually implementation] is always what we or the MoA think they want". In particular, though FAO generally relies on contact with communities and beneficiaries through its staff, no direct effort or mechanism is in place to consult the most vulnerable and marginalized, in order to understand their needs but also ensure that even when not targeted by FAO interventions, they are not indirectly negatively affected by them.

- 237 Though WBGS is flagged as a good example in AAP in the 2013 corporate guidance note on AAP, this refers exclusively to the inclusion of beneficiaries as an information source for the midterm review. While commendable, this is quite a narrow approach compared to the potential of involving affected populations in the overall design, monitoring, evaluating and learning of programmes (5). As mentioned, until now there has been little to show in terms, for example, of participation or complaints and redress mechanisms in project design as a result of the commitments made on paper. However, some lessons following community consultations have been incorporated in project implementation, for example improving previously weak communication to women regarding new projects (see 5.3.2).
- 238 The extent and nature of FAO's commitment to working with partners and other stakeholders (7) is discussed extensively in the section on partnerships (4.1.5) Specifically, FAO does not usually train its partners on AAP or discuss with them on how commitments to AAP can be met. It is also worth highlighting that no mention is made of CSOs in programming documents, a significant omission considering that they often constitute an important link in the chain of accountability to affected populations. Furthermore, as mentioned elsewhere in this report, there are important functions, which would enhance the programme, that FAO does not have the resources to carry out, and in particular analyses to inform FAO's programming could depend on FAO's capacity to establish constructive partnerships with small NGOs and CBOs.

#### 5.3.4 Environmental sustainability

##### Findings on environmental sustainability

- FAO's work presents several examples of efforts to use resources sustainably, especially through knowledge sharing and training at household level, training on Good Agricultural Practices and in some instances by reducing the use of chemicals and overuse of freshwater. Most of the high value crops farming, though, involves conventional fertilizer and pesticide use.
- Seeing that the major challenge to environmental sustainability is the over-exploitation, depletion and salinization of water sources, recycled wastewater is key to resilience, and FAO should continue its work in this area, including at the more strategic and systemic institutional and policy level to regulate resource use and ensure efficiency of production and sustainability.

- 239 If not planned and implemented with a sustainable perspective, the development of the agricultural sector risks an extensive utilization of and an adverse impact on natural resources. Therefore, it is fundamental that environment-related issues are considered throughout the value chain. FAO WBGS' work presents several examples of efforts in ensuring an efficient utilization of resources, especially through knowledge sharing and trainings on the efficient and sustainable utilization of land and water resources at household level.
- 240 In general, efforts have been made by FAO to reduce the use of chemicals and overuse of fresh water, for instance by introducing aquaponics and hydroponic technologies to reduce water consumption, or by enhancing rainwater harvesting storage facilities. All Netherland-funded projects are working towards reduced water use through the introduction of new crops such as cherry tomatoes, hanging strawberries for which water is recycled or reused. Still, most of the HVC farming involves conventional techniques that include the use of fertilizer and pesticides (an interesting exception is pineapple cultivation).
- 241 The training on Good Agricultural Practices (GAP) resulted in a number of benefits towards environmental sustainability. All interviewed stakeholders, from donors to farmers and

government officials, agreed that the Global GAP promoted the rational use of (scarce) resources, reduced the use of chemicals, and encouraged environmentally friendly methods, such as the pollination of tomatoes by bumblebees and pest control through the use of pheromones. The rational use and selection of chemicals is expected to reduce the impact on the environment.

- 242 FAO is already working on recycled waste water reuse both in terms of standards and formulation for future investments/projects, including: assistance to the Palestinian Water Authority and Ministry of Agriculture in defining water pricing tools, bylaws and policies; technical support to development of standards for reuse and ongoing consultative process to develop a comprehensive project document to promote reuse; support to the government through the Regional Initiative on Water Scarcity on water accounting and to enable increased water productivity; support to the development of the bylaw on water user committees. Seeing that the major challenge to environmental sustainability in the oPt is the over-exploitation, depletion and salinization of water resources due primarily to Israeli restrictions, FAO's work on reclaimed water use is a key area for development and resilience, requiring FAO to also intervene at the more strategic and systemic institutional and policy level to continue assisting in the implementation of macro-interventions and support the development of strong regulations on resource use to ensure that increased efficiency of production will not lead to unsustainable use of resources.<sup>183</sup>

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<sup>183</sup> Increased production efficiency in the absence of regulations is typically associated not with decreased overall resource use, but rather its increase because of rising rate of resource consumption due to increasing demand (the Jevons paradox).

## 6. Conclusions

*In answering the evaluation questions these conclusions consider what worked well in the WBGS programme, what the gaps were, and what is innovative for FAO. Beyond this, they also touch upon the broader issue of FAO's role as a knowledge organization in contexts of protracted crises, in territories under occupation and where the state is fragile or its status uncertain, as in the present case.*

### Conclusion 1. On FAO's strategic positioning and reputation

- FAO has been exceptionally capable in this highly sensitive political context to engage on different fronts, covering the three aims of the UN in WBGS of responding to humanitarian needs, supporting institutions through development cooperation and affecting the peace process (albeit mostly indirectly). It does so by exploiting its own comparative advantage and working as a broker between institutions, something that has been appreciated by resource partners and national authorities.
- An innovative emerging trait of the WBGS programme and a lesson for FAO corporate is to address resilience by working through value chains on accessing markets. Building a strategy along the value chain is quite innovative for FAO and relevant to its mandate and role, as well as to needs, all the more so in a middle-income context such as the WBGS, where the potential to develop value chains and increase market access is considerable, and improving food security and agricultural systems is more a matter of access to markets than of increased production.
- FAO's strategy to adopt a technical approach to advocacy has been much appreciated by resource partners and elevates FAO's standing among UN agencies. For FAO it is an unusual way to be proactive and position itself as a technical development agency in a protracted/complex political crisis environment, exploiting its own comparative advantage including by working with different, and sometimes conflicting, institutions. FAO's role in coordination fora and as a leader in the sector as well as in resilience analysis is widely acknowledged and valued.
- NGOs and implementing partners would like to play a greater role when working with FAO and be engaged in a more equal partnership than has been the case up to now. FAO has tried to strengthen its partnership capacity, and an experimental partnership agreement to engage on a more equal basis was designed in the WBGS, and has since been translated by FAO at a corporate level into a new manual section named OPIM. However, this ultimately resulted in a tool that proved to be too costly and rigid for widespread utilization.

### Conclusion 2. On translating FAO's position programmatically

- Though much work has been done to strengthen continuity and coherence at programmatic level, and there are cases of successful normative activities, in particular through the establishment of regulatory frameworks (SPS, LBL-i), the programme's overall clear structure is not reflected when translated into projects and activities. The "resilience" approach at the core of the programme needs to translate into projects addressing livelihoods more holistically and ensuring that asset distribution is more consistently integrated with activities aimed at tackling processes and provoking sustainable change. There is a coordination gap between FAO's more developmental and humanitarian activities. In practical terms the specific constraints due to the context affect the structure of the office and the way it works. On one side as an outlier the WBGS provides interesting learning points for FAO corporate on working in difficult and volatile environments. On the other hand, the special condition of the office and the important role it plays require careful consideration on ways to ensure that it is appropriately supported.
- The use of **value chain as a basis for programming** is to be commended, as it offers an opportunity to bridge the gap between humanitarian and development activities. An important effect of programming through VCA should be to allow distribution of risks along the value chain, which requires carrying out a preliminary market and risk analysis and setting up a contingency plan for emergencies that is structured around the value chain, something that is lacking at present. Analyses remain generic and this undermines the resilience aim and effective integration of humanitarian and development activities

and goals in practice. For example, the differences between the West Bank and the Gaza Strip are sometimes not accounted for in design of projects which target both. And while the office has shown a capacity to programme and operate flexibly, modifying project activities when necessary in the face of unexpected events, at present this remains too ad hoc, and there is no contingency planning specific to FAO. This impacts on FAO's capacity to address risks.

- The weak link between programming documents and project activities is partly related to the unclear corporate definition (until now) of the primary goals of FAO's programming documents, and whether they are analytical, programmatic or resource mobilization tools, something that should be partially solved by the new Country Programming Framework format that the WBGS is also about to adopt.
- In order to achieve greater and longer term impact there is the need to make a further step towards integrated programming, as also recommended by the evaluation of SO5, considering that linking different areas of work, levels and objectives is key to building resilience and ensuring access to markets. In this sense FAO WBGS is to be congratulated for already going in this direction, having recently reunited multiple donors under one single programme and funding stream for the next CPF.
- The context and constraints due to the political situation affect how the office is structured and the way it works. Full reliance on project funding has a number of implications. While on one side the need to fundraise for survival has had a positive impact on efficiency, on the competitive hiring process, and on the selection of the Officer in Charge, on the other hand the lack of access to the TCP funds at the design stage, the dependence on UNDP contracts and short-term consultancy contracts for staff and, critically, the fact that no fund is available to finance the fulfilment of FAO's core functions all heavily affect the office. This situation clearly also constitutes a challenge in shifting towards a more development oriented portfolio, as FAO is presently doing. This move supports the UN goal of a two-state solution and building Palestinian institutions, in the direction of greater sustainability as per the Paris Declaration, and supporting economic development and capacity to enhance value addition on domestic and international markets. On the other hand, care should be taken to avoid the risk of dedicating less attention and resources to humanitarian needs and protection and to the link between humanitarian and development areas of work.
- In general support from headquarters and the Regional Office is functioning, though the procedures at the basis of the country support process are found by the evaluation to be cumbersome and vague. Moreover, in this context it is necessary to reflect carefully on ways to support and fund the office, considering its particular status and the critical role it covers.

### **Conclusion 3. On policy support:**

- Support to Palestinian Authority institutions to develop policies is a small but important and growing area of FAO's portfolio in the WBGS. Considering the constrained space and the many difficulties and setbacks due to the occupation, FAO's assistance has been found not only to be greatly appreciated by national authorities, but overall effective. In this context this kind of support has a particular relevance at different levels. In the first instance, better policies and normative and standard-setting frameworks have the potential to immediately ease or open outlets for the constrained Palestinian economy in all directions, i.e. between the Gaza Strip, the West Bank and East Jerusalem, with Israel and towards regional and global markets. Second, a better policy environment builds the Palestinian Authority's credibility in its negotiations with local and international partners and with the Israeli authorities. Lastly, it strengthens the Palestinian position and its authority, in the perspective of a future advancement in the peace process.
- Weak government capacity to implement policies could severely hamper the achievement of sustainable results in the policy/enabling environment dimension. Therefore, it is important for FAO to keep focusing on enhancing capacities at the national level to translate policies into action while also working on inter-departmental linkages and assisting the government to engage with other actors.
- For trainings to trigger change and in turn increase national capacities to influence the global agenda, they need to be provided in conjunction with other capacity development modalities further supporting the gradual uptake of changes across the three dimensions of CD. Instead, in WBGS complementary activities to CD such as advocacy measures in some cases affected and weakened the design and therefore the effectiveness of FAO's



work across all three dimensions. A better understanding of needs would have thus led to more strategic targeting of CD, effective project implementation and sustainable results.

- The current status of the office as a non-Representation affects FAO's capacity to perform its core functions, including normative work, policy development and support to information systems, as these very often fall outside the scope of project activities.
- The question for FAO of whether and how to support institutions and at times re-build them from scratch applies to many other protracted crisis or post-disaster or conflict settings where gains are volatile. In view of the findings of this evaluation, the case can be made that even in contexts where institutions are fragile, risks are rampant and success elusive, there is an "imperative" for FAO to support institutions, not just by default, because it is in the nature of the Organization and part of its comparative advantage, but because there are concrete potential gains in terms of peace dividends, even when there can be no guarantees that these will be long-lasting.

#### **Conclusion 4. On community level assistance:**

- At the community level work is still mostly focused on asset building and land and water rehabilitation, as opposed to other more nuanced interventions to enhance household resilience, targeting specific needs and vulnerabilities. This has provided households and communities with often critical assets to enhance their agricultural production, at times with important secondary effects on non-economic factors. At the same time more attention is to be paid to the implications of the way activities are designed, if they entail risks or trade-offs for beneficiaries, and the way in which the quality and quantity of assets distributed concretely affects outcomes.
- More could be done to factor in risk and protection at the community level, and to protect, support and, to the extent possible, promote livelihoods, as is the case and according to circumstances. In this sense there needs to be a greater effort to put in place mechanisms to reduce the many and diverse risks and uncertainties faced by households in the WBGS, and spread the costs they entail, for example when infrastructures are demolished.
- Though there is some acknowledgement of gender in FAO's programming documents, when it comes to design of activities there is still space for better consideration of how these really affect women's inclusion and empowerment, seeing the latter's specific conditions in relation to ownership and access to natural resources, and to their position in the agricultural sector.
- RIMA and SEFSEC analyse and collect data at an aggregated level, which makes them appropriate to orient the general direction of the country programme, as they provide a wide analysis of the context and outline needs broadly. However, other tools and mechanisms need to be in place to capture different and possibly more subtle and context-specific information, to feed into a livelihood analysis conducive to better understanding and better targeting of specific interventions.



## 7. Recommendations

*While the conclusions broadly follow the structure of the report and the evaluation questions, the recommendations have a slightly different order: Recommendation 1 addresses issues related to FAO's strategic positioning in WBGS (Conclusion 1) and Recommendation 2 is related to programming, including policy support and community level assistance (Conclusions 2, 3, and 4). The remaining two, Recommendation 3 (on partnerships) and 4 (on support to the office in view of its special status) address two specific topics which are dealt with throughout the report and considered by the evaluation team as two areas requiring particular attention and deserving of self-standing recommendations.*

### **Recommendation 1. On strategic positioning in WBGS**

#### **a. General**

Building on its successful and well-recognized strategic positioning in the WBGS, FAO should continue in the same direction, while trying to improve some areas of weakness, as detailed below:

#### **b. Strategic framework**

Market access and value chains are appropriate strategic frameworks to address resilience considering FAO's mandate and technical expertise, and the WBGS office's adoption of such an approach should provide learning for FAO as a whole.

In developing the strategy, however, in general more clarity should be reached between livelihood promotion and protection objectives, which need to be suited to the context and target group, both to inform programme activities and to refine targeting.

Strategic alignment with Strategic Objectives needs to be reviewed in light of the local context that defines national priorities and funding resources available.

#### **c. Doing technical work in a crisis context**

FAO's ability to engage with different aspects of the UN's mission in Palestine (developmental, humanitarian and political) by using its knowledge and its focus on food security, natural resources, rural livelihoods and agricultural value chains constitutes a positive example which can shed light on FAO's potential to perform in difficult and constrained environments.

This stance is also consistent with FAO's commitments to use its technical entry point towards peace building, as encouraged by Kofi Annan at the meeting of Elders convened at FAO headquarters, and outlined in the corporate guidelines on food security in protracted crises.

Attention to protection threats should be made more explicit to better understand the causes of livelihood vulnerability, and the multiple links between livelihoods and protection. One way for FAO to strengthen its focus on protection is to link up and coordinate more with protection actors: much work and analyses exist on the links between protection and agricultural activities and livelihoods which may be tapped into. Not tapping into this existing wealth of work, efforts, resources and capacities would mean missing an opportunity, and risks reducing effectiveness and appropriateness of FAO WBGS interventions.

#### **d. Coordination and consistency between humanitarian and development work**

FAO should continue to play a role in coordinating and bridging development and humanitarian work. The link between humanitarian and development should be mainstreamed in all activities and coordination efforts, including programme formulation, implementation, Food Security Sector and Working Group coordination. Ensuring the link between the two sides of FAO's work includes investing resources directly, for example by dedicating at least part of a staff member's time to this. Greater efforts to plan for contingencies and systematically put in place crisis modifiers would also contribute to this end, as would mitigation activities towards recurrent weather-

related events affecting farmers. Preliminary stocktaking of situations under threat could be carried out as part of preparedness activities.

A caveat to all this is that resource partners would need to secure funds to this aim, aligning with 'bridging interventions' without an exclusive humanitarian or development focus, aware that this would result in greater effectiveness and sustainability of their investments in WBGS.

## **Recommendation 2. On programming**

### **a. General**

Though the office is to be commended for its ongoing efforts to adopt an increasingly programmatic and harmonized approach, more systematic integration between analysis, programming and M&E is recommended.

In a context of declining resources, it is vital to increase efficiency by promoting synergies between projects and activities. However, this requires dedicated resources, and donors need to be more open to support activities whose benefits go beyond the projects they fund directly to allow, among other things, greater focus on strategic activities and policy.

### **b. Analysis**

To improve the effectiveness and sustainability of interventions, but also their ongoing relevance and timeliness, more attention is needed to ensure that design and implementation of project activities is robust and technically sound, based on a solid analysis of the context (social, economic, political) and making sure that technical and financial resources are available for preliminary assessments and studies. The following are some more specific suggestions:

- An investment in more rigorous community level analysis to underpin FAO WBGS programming is strongly recommended. This would entail better and consistent communication directly with beneficiaries at the early stages of engagement to inform the analysis and gain a better understanding of the characteristics of vulnerable groups, which in turn would result in more accurate targeting. More use should be made of FAO's staff knowledge of the context to inform these analyses.
- Consider including a needs analysis complemented by a more robust problem analysis and related detailed response options in key programme strategies and documents, to outline the choices open to FAO and the rationale for targeting, delivery modalities and activities selected.
- Consider carrying out an in-depth study, ideally using a combination of qualitative and quantitative research methods, to gain a better understanding of the impacts of the different interventions implemented at the household and community levels. Further development of the M&E system and related indicators would provide a useful basis for identifying areas of investigation for such study.
- Undertake a gender analysis to understand the conditions of women in relation to the areas of FAO's work. This could be used to inform all interventions and maximize their relevance in terms of women's inclusion, empowerment and access to natural resources.
- A thorough analysis of the business model promoted by FAO should be carried out, including a comparison between different models such as marketing cooperatives' products through private companies or trade channels or directly through cooperatives.
- In-depth ex ante and ex post market analyses need to be carried out, including systematically collecting baseline data to ensure relevance and effectiveness of FAO interventions in this domain. Such assessments need to factor in needs of different producer and livelihoods groups, including marginal groups and individuals, their position in the market and the risks they are exposed to, and the power relations between actors through a political economy lens. At the same time, undertaking a proper value chain analysis would be extremely useful. Tracking production costs along the value chain from field to fork would help identify the crops to be selected for farmers' production.

### **c. Policy support**

The positive role of FAO WBGS support to policies and institutions in this context has already been mentioned, and constitutes an encouragement to continue this kind of

assistance. However, seeing that constrained government capacity risks affecting the sustainability of results in the policy dimension, FAO should support - and advocate for - the necessary institutional capacities to be in place for policies to be translated into action. This would include enhanced coordination among institutions and with external actors, and strengthening capacities to generate, manage and use information of the line ministry, beyond the production of statistics. Furthermore, in perspective FAO should promote the functions of policy development to be increasingly embedded within Palestinian institutions and owned by them. To this end, FAO should pay more attention to complementary activities to its capacity development work such as awareness raising and training on soft skills for individuals, together with initiatives to strengthen their organizational capacities and create more systematic and better links between technical assistance and capacity development.

Considering the importance of this area of work, resource partners should reverse the decline in funding for this sector, invest more in policy and capacity development and, by supporting FAO to fulfil its mandate, contribute to Palestinian State-building efforts.

Furthermore, this area of WBGs' work provides the lesson for FAO corporate that supporting institutions in difficult contexts may produce concrete gains towards peace building. Future work supporting food security information systems will also need to shift to more comprehensive systems and include more research, technical support and financial commitments in order to cover a wide range of agricultural data.

#### **d. Access to markets**

Finding ways to enhance access to markets should be a preoccupation of all FAO activities involving farmers, including those targeting more vulnerable households, focusing more on Terms of Trade and marketing problems, especially in view of competition from settler farmers and Palestinian agribusiness companies. In particular, FAO needs to address the imbalance between producers and traders to empower the former to negotiate favourable prices, possibly continuing to encourage farmers to organize in cooperatives, when appropriate, and engage in addressing gaps over rural financing services. Local markets should be supported in order to reduce farmers' post-harvest losses and encourage the marketing of Palestinian higher quality produce. To this end, working at the consumer end of the value chain through sensitization and awareness campaigns would enhance the competitiveness of local high quality production.

#### **e. Community level assistance and cash transfers**

While relating to the global debate on cash, including donor preference for cash or in-kind assistance, FAO should better clarify and communicate the rationale for its choice of assistance modalities - cash or in kind -, and make explicit the alignment with the overall objective of resilience-building. Some guidance can be sought from the cash transfer team at headquarters, which provides trainings to this end. Market assessments could be carried out to this end, complemented by a study aimed at understanding what kind of risk mitigation measures are needed to reduce the potential costs borne by beneficiaries of cash responses. The relevance and appropriateness of conditional cash transfers in this context need to be better analysed and communicated: FAO should consider its own positioning in WBGs in relation to cash assistance, and while finding its own niche, also optimize its partnerships with other agencies more engaged in cash, all the time ensuring that administrative/ financial tools are available at corporate level to implement cash-based activities.

The relevance and effectiveness of livelihood activities as well as the gender dimension of FAO's work could be improved through fuller use of participatory and community-building methods in project preparation, design and implementation. FAO WBGs should continue to adhere to FAO's commitment to Accountability to Affected Populations principles, including reinforcing the possibility for beneficiaries to provide feedback, and having mechanisms in place to redress complaints.

#### **f. M&E**

An intrinsic limit to measuring the effectiveness of FAO's interventions at household level has been the lack of project and programme baselines and endlines. Better monitoring data than currently available would allow greater precision in assessing increases in agricultural productivity, for example by using the farm records which are a requirement for the Global Gap. Likewise, improved monitoring of gender progress based on gender-sensitive analysis of interventions would contribute to improve women's inclusion and empowerment. In

line with the positive effort so far to streamline M&E processes among various projects and implementation processes, the WBGS office should continue to review its current tools and continue building the stand-alone unit established in 2015, enhancing capacity for long term impact analysis, dedicating technical and financial support to this. At the same time M&E resources from projects should also be used to build local capacity. Updating the livelihood profiles that underpin FAO's programming is expensive and time consuming. A possible solution to maximize the benefits of such high costs is for FAO to turn this into an FSS exercise considering that livelihood profiling could be a useful tool for everyone in the food security and agriculture sectors.

### **Recommendation 3. On support to the office in view of its special status**

#### **a. General**

Seeing the important role played by the office and its overall excellent performance over time, the growth of the programme and the impossibility to access regular programme funds for exogenous reasons independent of its performance, FAO corporate needs to attentively think through how to ensure that the office can continue to play such role by finding ways to channel the necessary financial and technical resources. Resources should be made available in support of functions that are not project-specific, and in particular M&E, accountability, needs assessments, programme formulation, and in order to address some present weaknesses, particularly in project development and communication.

#### **b. Financial support**

As long as FAO WBGS is expected to bear the duties/responsibilities of a Representation, it is recommended that headquarters endow the office with the resources required to carry out said duties. The general principle should be full cost recovery for any action that the office is required to undertake, in so far as possible leaving the office the flexibility to decide how to use the funds accrued from delivering any service. To achieve greater efficiency, ideally FAO should follow the concept of hard budget constraint for each cost centre in the way it allocates and manages funds for country offices, including the special case of WBGS. Suggestions to increase financial support include:

- Seconding staff from the Regular Programme according to demand from WBGS in order to help it with its core functions and the policy and normative dimension of work.
- Pay as you go (model applied over the course of this evaluation, where the office is reimbursed for services or hours spent on specific non-project tasks).
- FAO headquarters should look into the possibility of allotting a different share of Project Support Cost to the field offices that do not benefit from an annual allocation of staff and resources from the Regular Programme. This is especially the case when projects with non-standard PSC are accepted, as the reduced rate is detrimental for FAO's ability to successfully implement projects at field level.

#### **c. Technical support:**

FAO WBGS has demonstrated it is possible to engage in positive and fruitful relationships with technical officers at headquarters, providing a good example of how relationships can work between country offices and headquarters which should be replicated. A strong case can be made for more technical support to FAO WBGS being provided from headquarters rather than the Regional Office, the main reason being that strong and specialized technical skills are necessary to assist in drafting legislative frameworks and in general for strategic action (assessments, evaluations, capacity building, M&E, communications, assessments and studies) and these are not presently available in the Regional Office. Furthermore, the nationality of many officers in RNE does not allow them to travel through Israel, making the support process from the Regional Office more complicated.

### **Recommendation 4. On partnerships**

#### **a. General**

The office in practice enters into different partnerships, and partners participate in FAO activities to different degrees (e.g. projects and Country Programming Framework formulation, country analysis, workshops, etc.). However, this is not reflected in formal

terms due to the complexity of the legal aspects of contractual arrangements, and even informally there is space for FAO to work more and better with its partners. In order to maximize the use of partners' capacities through more flexible partnership mechanisms and more direct and equal involvement of partners throughout its work, FAO corporate should create simpler and more actionable legal instruments to put true partnerships in place, beyond the two presently existing modalities (OPIM and MoU). This would also respond to donors' frequent demand for more equal partnerships, which echo the same kind of request from many NGOs.

More systematic headquarters guidance, which could take the form of training, is recommended to improve capacity to negotiate with governments and build trusting partnerships with resource partners.

**b. Palestinian Government**

Governmental entities need to be fully committed and involved for their partnership with FAO to be effective, and on the other hand FAO should make sure that the CPF is a fully nationally owned process to guarantee its uptake.

To ensure long term effects of its technical assistance, FAO should aim to equip the Government with the capacity to undertake tasks autonomously and include the development of an exit strategy as part of its capacity development strategy in the WBGS. Important areas on which FAO should focus its support to the Palestinian Government include technical innovations, rural finance, nutrition sensitive agro-food systems and safe agriculture, as well as enhancing MoA capacity to support preparedness of farmers to respond to seasonal challenges, and in general involving the government more in community level assistance. Ensuring coordination and synergies with the Ministry of Health could be important in areas such as food safety, zoonoses and antimicrobial resistance.

**c. United Nations Agencies**

Better and more complementary collaboration with UN agencies can be sought, for example in partnering with UNRWA and WFP on cash-based interventions, where FAO could potentially add value by facilitating a better match between supply and demand for example by intensifying efforts to link farmers' cooperatives and retailers accepting food vouchers, with ILO on activities involving labour force and the labour market, on SPS (human/animal health interfaces) and coordinating on activities undertaken with the MoH (see above) with WHO facilitating synergies on activities involving the food industry and in regard to laboratory development with UNIDO, and liaising with UNDP on its livelihood portfolio.

**d. NGOs/IPs/CSOs**

To comply with FAO's corporate stance on partnerships, and to tailor partnership agreements and modalities to specific circumstances that arise, in partnering with NGOs/CBOs, FAO should clarify the respective roles and responsibilities, and whether the relationship is one of true partnership or of service provision, and use different contractual instruments accordingly. FAO could, for example, simplify the process of establishing a Memorandum of Understanding with national NGOs, and at the same time find ways to accelerate it when partnering with international NGOs. These steps would also be a means to establish a full partnership rather than confining NGOs to service provision. At the same time, the recently established OPIM instrument is already in need of simplification in order to be easily utilized. An in-depth assessment and analysis of the NGO sector in Palestine would be useful and conducive to define compatibility of existing potential partners with the use of a LoA or OPA mechanisms.

The added value each partner brings should be considered, especially seeing that partners are often in the position to fill gaps in knowledge and capacity. In this sense, FAO should strive to create synergies rather than working in competition, and build their capacities rather than consider them as implementers exclusively.

**e. Private sector**

Considering FAO's market-focused strategy and its work on value chains, FAO should clarify who the different actors it engages with are, and find ways to regulate conditions of

partnership with them. While these partners are often grouped under the label of private sector, in reality they constitute a very varied group whose different characteristics should be taken into account in programming more than FAO has done up to now, since this would make the partnerships far more effective and satisfactory for all. For example, in exploring partnership opportunities, FAO should consider enhancing inclusiveness of the developmental process of small and vulnerable holders, an area of work that is not yet fully valorized. This would involve carrying out the kind of market assessment recommended above (see Recommendation 2), to understand the position in the market of different producer and livelihoods groups, the risks they are exposed to, and the power relations between them. To guide action it is recommended that a research surveying the potential of Public/Private Partnerships in the context of WBGs is undertaken.



## Appendix 1: List of People met

### FAO WBGS Office

Name	Role/Organization
Ciro Fiorillo	Senior Emergency and Rehabilitation Coordinator, Head of Office, FAO WBGS Office
Azzam Saleh Ayasa	Emergency and Rehabilitation Coordinator, Head of Programme, FAO WBGS Office
Rana Hannoun	Economist, FAO WBGS Office
Amjad Abu Jalboush	Deputy Project Manager, Ramallah, FAO WBGS Office
Amro Kalouti	Deputy Project Manager, Ramallah, FAO WBGS Office
Husam Al Hudhud	Deputy Project Manager, Ramallah, FAO WBGS Office
Nasser Samara	Deputy Project Manager, Ramallah, FAO WBGS Office
Cornelis Hendrikusvan Kessel	Deputy Project Manager, FAO WBGS Office
Ruben Baert	Disaster Risk Reduction Advisor Consultant, FAO WBGS Office
Mira Ansari	Programme Support Assistant, FAO WBGS Office
Intissar Eshtayah	Programme Support Associate, FAO WBGS Office
Priya Gujadhur	Operations Officer, FAO WBGS Office
Masae Sumikoshi	Programme Coordinator, Gaza, FAO WBGS Office
Masoud Keshta	Project Coordinator, Gaza, FAO WBGS Office
Adham Elkhateeb	Deputy Project Manager, Gaza, FAO WBGS Office

### FAO HQs

Name	Role/Organization
Rodrigo De La Puerta	Director, Office of Support to Decentralized Offices (OSD), FAO
Dario Gilmozzi	Senior Programme Officer, OSD, FAO
Daniel Gustafson	Deputy Director General Programmes, FAO
Patrick Jacqueson	Senior Programme Officer, SP5, FAO
Jimmy Owani	Emergency and Rehabilitation Programme Officer, Emergency Rehabilitation Division (TCE), FAO
Luca Russo	Programme Coordinator, SO5, FAO
Rodrigue Vinet	Senior Programme Officer, Officer in Charge, Liaison Office with the United Nations in Geneva (LOG), FAO
Carmen Bullon	Legal Officer, Development Law Branch (LEGN), FAO
Ahmed El Idrissi	Senior Animal Health Officer, SP5, FAO
Markus Lipp	Senior Food Safety Officer, Food Safety and Quality (AGFF), FAO
Hilde Kruse	Food Safety and Quality Officer, AGFF, FAO
Martin Heilmann	Food Safety and Quality Consultant, AGFF, FAO
Mischa Tripoli	Economist, Trade and Markets Division (EST), FAO
May Hani	Policy Officer, Social Protection Division (ESP), FAO

Turi Fileccia	Senior Agronomist, Investment Centre (TCI), FAO
Andre Ariazza	Office for Partnerships, Advocacy and Capacity Development – Advocacy Unit, FAO (former Operations officer in FAO WBGS Office)
Cyril Ferrand	Food Security Cluster Global Coordinator, FAO (former Officer in Charge of FAO WBGS Office)
David Calef	Cash Transfer Programming Coordinator, TCE, FAO
Julius Jackson	Technical Officer, Agricultural Development Economics Division (ESA), FAO
Sylvie Wabbes Candotti	Liaison and Operations Officer, TCE, FAO
Nina Koeksalan	Climate Change Officer, Climate and Environment Division (CBC), FAO

### FAO RNE Office

Name	Role/Organization
Francesco Del Re	Senior Adviser, SP5, FAO
Alfredo Impiglia	Project Coordinator ( <i>Small Scale Agriculture in the Near East</i> Regional Initiative), RNE, FAO
Fawzi Karajeh	Senior Water Resources Officer, RNE, FAO
Tatjana PopovicManenti	Emergency and Rehabilitation Officer, RNE, FAO
Pasquale Steduto	Deputy Regional Representative, Sub Regional Coordinator, RNE, FAO

### National Institutions (central and decentralised level)

Name	Role/Organization
Abdel-Karim Qassem	Mayor of the Municipality of Tamoon
Amjad Elayat	Head of land development division, Ministry of Agriculture - Directorate of Agriculture of Tubas
Jamal Mohammed Abu Arra	Mayor of the Municipality of Aqaba
Yousuf Ghanam	Director of the municipality of Aqqaba
Kamel Abu Kaida	Um Al Nasser Municipality
Adel Attala	Head of Planning and Policies department, Ministry of Agriculture, Gaza
Samer Titi	Head of Planning, MoA, Ramallah
Abdallah Q. Lahllouh	Deputy Minister, MoA
Dr Zakareia Salawdeh	Assistant Deputy Minister at Ministry of Agriculture, Gaza
Dr Ibrahim al-Qudra	Under-Secretary of State, Ministry of Agriculture, Gaza
Safa Bsiso	Rural Development Officer, Ministry of Agriculture
Issam Nofal	D.G. of Agricultural Water & Irrigation at Ministry of Agriculture, Palestine
Ibtisam Abu Al Hayja	Ministry of Agriculture
Khaled Barghouti	Deputy General Director, Combating Poverty Directorate, Minister of Social Affairs
Dr. Rami Al Nakhal	Head of Veterinary Laboratory, Ministry of Agriculture, Gaza

Majed Aswed	Forest & Pastures division manager, MoA, Hebron
Amjad Salah	General Director of Plant Protection, MoA
Shadi Darweesh	Director of Plant quarantine and Phytosanitary Measurements, MoA
Tareq Abu Laban	Director of Marketing, MoA
Izzidin Abu Arqub	Chief, International Relations Unit, National Agricultural Research Centre, MoA
Hadeel Abushalbak	International Relations Advisor, Palestinian Central Bureau for Statistics (PCBS)
Haleema Saeed	International Relations Director, PCBS
Mustafa Khawaja	SEFSec Survey, PCBS
Reham Mualla	International Relations Directorate, PCBS
Aseel Zidan	Head of Consumer Price Index Division, PCBS
Shadia Abu Alzain	Director of Agriculture Statistics Department, PCBS
Ahmad Mardawi	Natural Resources Statistics and Land Use Division, PCBS
Ashraf Samara	Price Statistics, PCBS
Nibal Ismael	Cartography and GIS department, PCBS
Adel Yasin	Palestinian Water Authority

### NGOs and CBOs

Name	Role/Organization
Fuad Abu Seif	Acting General Director, Director, Operations and Development Department Union of Agricultural Work Committees (UAWC)
Islam Nairoukh	Project Manager, Union of Agricultural Work Committees (UAWC)
Basheet Al Ankah	Projects Manager, Union of Agricultural work committees (UWAC)
Mohamed Motaweh	Project Coordinator, UWAC
Baha'a Abu Baker	Area coordinator, Union of Agricultural work committees (UWAC)
Saleh Al Ahmed	Project coordinator (High Value Crops), Union of Agricultural work committees (UWAC)
Mohammad Al Bakri	Executive Director, UAWC, Gaza
Manager for Rafah branch	UAWC, Gaza
Khalil Shila	General Director, Palestinian Agriculture Relief Committee (PARC)
Izzat Zeidan	Programs and Projects Director, Palestinian Agriculture Relief Committee (PARC)
Abdelrahman Tamimi	Palestinian Hydrology Group - PHG
Mohammad Musa	Project Coordinator, ESDC
Akram Al-Taher	General Director, Economic & Social Development Centre of Palestine - ESDC
Jamal Burnat	Monitoring & Evaluation Manager, Economic & Social Development Centre of Palestine - ESDC

Imad Ghanmeh	Soil and land development expert, House of Water and Environment
Hanan Taha	CEO, Palestine Trade Centre (PalTrade)
Mai Jarrar	Young Men's Christian Association - YMCA
Mohammed Khaled	Country Director, We Effect
Eman Beseiso	Project Manager, International Trade Centre
Mohamed Sawafta	Food Security and Livelihood Country Coordinator, Oxfam GB
Lidia Hernandez	Humanitarian Programme Coordinator, Oxfam Italia
Elena Qleibo	Food Security and Livelihoods Coordinator, Oxfam GB
Ingrid Beauquis	Project Development Officer, ACTED
Asia Khalil	Agency for Technical Cooperation and Development - ACTED, ex Project Manager
David Makin-Taylor	Technical Coordinator, Action Against Hunger/ACF-Spain
Marina Djernaes	Executive Operations Officer, EcoPeace/FOEME
Mir'i Shawahneh	Palestinian Livestock Development Centre - PLDC
Maha Al Masri	Rural Women Development Society (RWDS)
Mr. Khaled A. Abu Sharekh	General Manager, ALNajd Developmental Forum, Gaza
Ms. Refqa Al Hammalawi	Head of Board, ALNajd Developmental Forum, Gaza
Mr. Mohammed Al Jaja	Project Manager, ALNajd Developmental Forum, Gaza
Raed Jalal	Marketing Supervisor of the Agricultural National Company for Investment & Marketing
Jumana Salous	Programs Manager, Business Women Forum - Palestine
Doa Waddi	Executive Director, Business Women Forum - Palestine
Mohamed Abu S'aied	Head of Burgin agricultural cooperative, Packing house in Burqin
Sawsan Sawafta	Responsible for the One Shop Stop in Jenin, Managing partner of Al Thimar company (Women Cooperative)
Iyad Malouh	Chair, Thinnabeh Agricultural Services Cooperative (TASC)
Amal Nasser	Chair, Kafr Laqef society (KLS)
Several members	Burqa Women Club
Several members	Rozana Cooperative
Several members	Dura women Cooperative
Several members	Kafr Laqef society (KLS)

### Other stakeholders

Name	Role/Organization
Amer Madi	Managing Partner, Al-Sahel Company for Institutional Development and Communication
Hilel Adiri	Economist, former Advisor to the Israeli Min. of Agriculture (acted as FAO Senior Technical Marketing Advisor)

Nadav Galon	Director of Veterinary Services, Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development, Israel
Boaz Karni	Managing Director & Treasurer, Economic Cooperation Foundation (ECF), Israel
Tamar Tsamir Tandler	Project Director, Economic Cooperation Foundation, Israel
Raymond Ellard	Consultant on SPS project, Director, Food Safety Authority of Ireland
Camilla Corradin	Advocacy Task Force (ATF) coordinator, EWASH

### Resource Partners

Name	Role/Organization
Carlo Marsico	Task Manager for FAO Projects, European Union
Jochen Peters	Aid Coordination Officer (Economic Sector), Local Aid Coordination Secretariat (LACS)
Wijnand Marchal	Senior Advisor, Representative of the Kingdom of the Netherlands to the Palestinian Authority
Thameen Hijawi	Senior Advisor, First Secretary Economic Affairs, Netherlands to the Palestinian Authority
Jesús Tomé	Senior Programme Manager, Rural and Economic Development, Agencia española de Cooperación Internacional para el Desarrollo - AECID
Buraq Nuseibeh	UK Department for International Development - DFID, Senior Policy and Programme Officer, Palestinian Programme
Karine Tardif	First Secretary (Humanitarian Assistance), Representative Office of Canada
Naela Shawar	Development Officer, Representative Office of Canada
Tania Abdullah	National Officer, Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC)
Ayman Daraghme	Senior Programme Manager, Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC)
Yuki Igarashi	Second secretary, Embassy of Japan in Israel
Jochen Peters	Aid Coordination Officer (Economic Sector), Local Aid Coordination Secretariat (LACS)
Task Manager for FAO Projects	Italian Agency for Development Cooperation
AG sector meeting	

### UN Agencies

Name	Role/Organization
Michael Neuwirth	Coordination Officer, UN Special Coordinator Office (UNSCO)
Sabine Michel	Head of UN Women
Reine Van Holsbeek	Associate Programme Support Officer, United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees (UNRWA)
Dima Abu-Alsaud	Field Emergency Officer West Bank (acting), UNRWA

Salah Al Lahham	Programme Officer (VAM)/Deputy Head of PSU Unit, WFP
Marco Ferloni	Food Security Sector Coordinator
Samira Hiliss	Senior Operations Officer and Project Team Leader - World Bank
Rima Abumiddain	UNDP, Team Leader, Environment and Natural Resources PAP
Matthew Ryder	OCHA, Inter-cluster coordinator (WB coordinator)
Rasha ElShurafa	Senior Programme Officer and Acting Deputy Representative, ILO
Mounir Kleibo	Representative, ILO
Nasser Al-Faqih	Team Leader for Poverty Reduction & Productive Capital, UNDP
Mohammed Sinokrot	National Officer, UNWOMEN
Nur Nasser Eddin	Economist, World Bank Group
Mattia Polvanesi	Programme Support Officer, UNRWA, Gaza
Gerald Rockenschaub	Head of Office, WHO Occupied Palestinian Territory
Roberto Valent	Special representative of the Administrator, Programme of assistance to the Palestinian People (PAPP), UNDP Palestinian Territory



## Appendix 2: List of documents consulted

- Al-Shabaka.** 2014. *Donor Complicity in Israel's violation of Palestinian Rights*. Al-Shabaka policy brief by Nora Lester Murad. (also available at [http://www.aidwatch.ps/sites/default/files/resource-field\\_media/Murad\\_PolicyBrief\\_En\\_Oct\\_2014.pdf](http://www.aidwatch.ps/sites/default/files/resource-field_media/Murad_PolicyBrief_En_Oct_2014.pdf))
- Amnesty International.** 2009. *Troubled Waters: Palestinians Denied Fair Access to Water*. Amnesty International, Israel- Occupied Palestinian Territories. (also available at <https://www.amnestyusa.org/pdf/mde150272009en.pdf>)
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## Appendix 3: Evaluation Matrix

Issues / Questions		Criteria of judgement/ indicators	Data collection methods and sources
<b>Q1: Is FAO's strategy, considering its mandate and its Strategic Framework, relevant and effective in WBGS?</b>			
1.1	Design of programmes (POA to PF) – is the TOC / Logframe well designed to reach its goals? How do the two strategic frameworks compare?	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Analysis of internal coherence of the conceptual frameworks used and of their relevance to the stated goals/objectives.</li> <li>2. Comparative analysis of how the resilience-building objective translates into programme design. Is resilience framed in terms of target groups, kind of assets delivered or by addressing processes?</li> <li>3. Consistency of theoretical framework and appropriateness to the goal of building resilience.</li> <li>4. Assessment of inclusion of changing context in the evolution from the PoA to the PF.</li> <li>5. Assessment of the outcomes (positive and negative) resulting from the addressing contextual factors, or failing to do so, in the design of the programme</li> <li>6. Evidence of inclusion of DRR in programme design, and eventually of relevance and appropriateness to context</li> </ol>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Literature review and analysis of programme and project documents.</li> <li>○ Literature on resilience and analysis of evolution from PoA to PF</li> <li>○ Comparative analysis of programme documents</li> <li>○ Interviews with FAO WBGS Staff (Previous and present)</li> </ul>
1.2	Analysis – is the strategy based on an adequate analysis? Does the analysis take into account all the relevant factors?	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Evidence of appropriateness of analysis conducted and of relevance to context and to goals.</li> <li>2. Evidence of needs and situation analysis having been carried out and eventually integrated into the programme's design.</li> <li>3. Evidence of integration of different levels (household, community, livelihood group, political) in the analysis</li> <li>4. Evidence of inclusion of crosscutting issues such as gender and environmental sustainability in the analysis.</li> <li>5. Assessment of whether the value chain model is an appropriate outcome of the analysis through evidence of regained and boosted productive capacities and/or preservation of assets (resilience).</li> <li>6. Assessment of how FAO bridges the gap between humanitarian and development through a value chain approach, and whether risks are distributed along the value chain.</li> </ol>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Review of the UNDAF and HPC documents</li> <li>○ Interview with FAO staff</li> <li>○ SWOT Analysis</li> <li>○ Interview with government officials from MoA</li> <li>○ Interview with the Food Security Sector Coordinator</li> <li>○ Analysis of data collected by the FSS</li> <li>○ Fieldwork</li> <li>○ Review of FAO WBGS programming documents (including livelihood profiles, gender work plan, etc.)</li> </ul>

Issues / Questions	Criteria of judgement/ indicators	Data collection methods and sources
1.3 To what extent are the FAO emergency and development projects in the protracted crisis of WBGS relevant and connected?	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Ability to "transition" or two way LRRD <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Ability to respond in emergency, to scale up and/or modify interventions and effectiveness and impact thereof <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Evidence of FAO's preparedness for crisis and deteriorating food security</li> <li>ii. Evidence of the relevance and timeliness of FAO's response</li> <li>iii. Evidence of the effectiveness of FAO's response including project delivery, quality and appropriateness of provided inputs, and quality of technical information and support provided to beneficiaries.</li> <li>iv. Evidence of coverage, analysis of FAO's approach to targeting, against available information and knowledge on the most affected areas and population groups</li> </ol> </li> <li>a. Evidence of having incorporated developmental elements in humanitarian action and effectiveness and impact thereof.</li> <li>a. Evidence of having incorporated humanitarian elements in developmental interventions, and effectiveness and impact thereof</li> </ol> </li> <li>2. Evidence of how well FAO WBGS management structure and systems adapted to scaling up and responding to emergencies and crisis peaks, and identification of enabling and constraining factors</li> <li>3. Review of programme objectives and outcomes in view of the recommendations of the Evaluation of FAO's contribution to transition.</li> </ol>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Interviews with Gaza Households</li> <li>o Fieldwork, interviews with beneficiaries</li> <li>o Interviews with implementing partners</li> <li>o Review of project documents and progress/final reports</li> <li>o Interviews with FAO staff</li> <li>o Interview with stakeholders and humanitarian actors, including UN agencies</li> <li>o interview with resource partners</li> <li>o Review of FAO 2016 HPC profiles</li> <li>o Desk review of prodocs and against transition evaluation report</li> </ul>
1.4 To what extent does the strategy incorporate and integrate the corporate Strategic Framework?	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Evidence of alignment of the PoA and PF strategies with the SOs.</li> <li>2. Evidence that the SOs have positively influenced programme and project design and implementation in the WBGS.</li> <li>3. Analysis of synergies and integration between SOs.</li> <li>4. Evidence of the programme's alignment with FAO's global goals and core functions</li> <li>5. Assessment of the outcomes of being involved in Regional Initiatives for the WBGS programme, including evidence of relevance of Regional Initiatives for the programme.</li> <li>6. Evidence of any influence of SO5 on programme design, implementation, and on the functioning of the WBGS office.</li> </ol>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Interviews with FAO WBGS Staff</li> <li>o Interviews with FAO staff in RNE</li> <li>o Interviews with MoA officials (MoA, Mosa, others);</li> <li>o Review of MoA Strategic documents</li> <li>o Review of FAO WBGS programming documents and evaluations</li> <li>o SWOT Analysis</li> <li>o Analysis of project documents and progress reports</li> </ul>

Issues / Questions		Criteria of judgement/ indicators	Data collection methods and sources
1.5	How effective was FAO in partnering with other actors?	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Assessment among partners of effectiveness of FAO's role in coordination, including assessment of FAO's capacity to maximise synergies and minimise duplication between FAO's and other actors' interventions within the food security sector.</li> <li>2. Analysis of feedback from FAO's IPs on the nature and quality of their relationship with FAO, triangulated with FAO staff feedback, including: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Whether it was a relationship of service provider or genuine partnership</li> <li>b. Accessibility and responsiveness of FAO to IPs</li> <li>c. Whether partners received appropriate technical support</li> </ol> </li> <li>3. Analysis of feedback from donors and FAO staff on the nature and quality of their relationship, including: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Donor perceptions of FAO's ability to combine development and humanitarian work and to scale up and respond rapidly and appropriately to the crisis</li> <li>b. FAO staff perceptions of the responsiveness, flexibility and speed of donors in providing resources when needed and in response to sudden peaks in humanitarian needs</li> <li>c. Extent to which donors engage with FAO as a partner, or as a sub-contractor</li> </ol> </li> <li>4. Analysis of feedback from government departments and with FAO staff on the nature and quality of their relationship, including: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. The provision of technical advice, information and support to enable government to respond to the needs of the Palestinian population</li> <li>b. Quality of the FAO longer-term relationship with government</li> </ol> </li> <li>5. Analysis of feedback from UN agencies and programmes on the nature of quality of their relationship, including: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. The quality of the collaboration between the Rome-based agencies</li> <li>b. The modalities and quality of the collaboration with the agencies with a humanitarian and political coordination mandate (UNSCO, OCHA, UNDP)</li> </ol> </li> <li>6. Evidence of alignment with UN strategies</li> <li>7. Evidence of alignment with PA strategy</li> <li>8. Assessment of the relevance and effectiveness of the collaboration between the Rome-based agencies on the resilience agenda.</li> <li>9. Assessment of FAO's relationship with civil society, including whether it met civil society's needs and provided fora for exchange.</li> </ol>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o SWOT Analysis</li> <li>o Interviews with UN and non UN coordination groups (FFS, AG Sector WG, Advocacy and Humanitarian Working Groups)</li> <li>o Interviews with resource partners</li> <li>o Interviews with UN agencies</li> <li>o Analysis of LoAs between FAO WBGS and partners</li> <li>o Review of FAO WBGS donor brochures (background)</li> <li>o Interviews with FAO WBGS Staff</li> <li>o Interviews with government officials (MoA, Mosa, others);</li> <li>o Review of other UN Agencies' evaluation reports</li> <li>o Review of Documents of SRP HNO HPC UNDAF</li> <li>o Review of MoA Strategic documents</li> <li>o Desk review and analysis of activities' portfolio</li> <li>o interviews with NGOs, CBOs (including cooperatives)</li> </ul>
1.6	How does the decentralisation process affect FAO's work in WBGS?	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Assess the effectiveness of the backstopping functions in RNE, and of the decentralisation of this function from HQ to RNE.</li> <li>2. Evidence that FAO programme staff felt technically adequately supported.</li> <li>3. Identification of gaps in technical support.</li> </ol>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Interviews with FAO Staff in RNE and HQ</li> <li>o Interviews with WBGS FAO staff</li> <li>o SWOT Analysis</li> </ul>

Issues / Questions	Criteria of judgement/ indicators	Data collection methods and sources
<b>Q2: How does FAO position itself in the context of the protracted crisis in oPt? What are the challenges and opportunities for FAO as a technical agency in this context, and to what extent has it addressed and taken advantage of them?</b>		
2.1 Seeing that the office is not a representation, how does the office structure - staffing, funding, procedures – affect FAO's work in WBGS? What are the constraints and opportunities this creates? How does FAO's modus operandi affect its capacity to work in WBGS?	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Perception of FAO's staff regarding effectiveness and efficiency of FAO's office structure</li> <li>2. Donors' perception regarding effectiveness and efficiency of FAO's office structure</li> <li>3. NGO perception regarding effectiveness and efficiency of FAO's office structure</li> <li>4. Assessment of negative and positive impacts, if any, of FAO's office structure on capacity to work, including assessment of funding modalities, organigram and reporting lines.</li> </ol>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ SWOT Analysis</li> <li>○ Interviews with FAO WBGS Staff;</li> <li>○ Interviews with resource partners</li> <li>○ Interviews with NGOs, CBOs and implementing partners</li> <li>○ Interviews with FAO Staff in HQ</li> </ul>
2.2 What is the impact of FAO's technical work (in particular Land and Water, Cash Transfers and Vulnerable Livelihoods, Access to Markets) on the political context?	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Analysis of direct and indirect impact of FAO's technical work on conflict and potential conflict management/resolution.</li> <li>2. Assessment of the relationship between FAO's technical areas of work (e.g. agriculture, food security, land tenure, NRM) and peace-building efforts.</li> <li>3. Analysis of feedback from concerned parties of FAO's capacity to play a role as broker and in political advocacy, and relevance thereof.</li> </ol>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Interviews with UN Humanitarian and political agencies Minutes OCHA UNSCO</li> <li>○ Interviews with HCT</li> <li>○ Interviews with FAO WBGS Staff</li> </ul>
2.3 Considering the political economy of the aid environment in the context of WBGS what are FAO's role and comparative advantage, and what is its capacity to deliver?	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Evidence of FAO working according to its comparative advantage and accessing resources based on a leadership role in the technical areas of its expertise.</li> <li>2. Evidence of FAO's capacity to confront contextual issues and incorporate them in its programme and strategy.</li> <li>3. Evidence of FAO's capacity to play a role in negotiating with the GoI and the Palestinian Authority over technical issues</li> <li>4. Assessment of how the volatile and insecure context and the multiple risks affect FAO's capacity to deliver</li> <li>5. Evidence of FAO's capacity to differentiate its interventions in WB and GS according to different levels and kinds of risks.</li> <li>6. Comparative analysis of FAO's engagement in other comparable protracted crisis contexts.</li> </ol>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Interviews with actors in the FSS</li> <li>○ Review of FAO WBGS programming and project documents and progress/final reports</li> <li>○ Interview with resource partners</li> <li>○ interviews with FAO Staff</li> </ul>

Issues / Questions	Criteria of judgement/ indicators	Data collection methods and sources
<b>Q3: To what extent has the programme made progress in addressing the humanitarian and developmental needs of Palestinians and their communities through agriculture, going towards sustainable socio-economic growth, resilience and food security? What have been the impacts of FAO's work on livelihoods, on institutional capacity and on crosscutting areas of work?</b>		
3.1 According to which methodology and criteria has FAO targeted, and were they appropriate and relevant in the context? Have any exclusion and inclusion errors occurred in the selection of beneficiaries, and if so, what were the consequences?	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Evidence of the coverage of FAO's programme and analysis of its approach to targeting, against available information and knowledge on the most vulnerable populations and affected areas.</li> <li>2. Assessment of targeting according to vulnerability and according to resilience</li> <li>3. Assessment of the advantages and trade-offs of adopting specific targeting modalities (i.e. targeting individuals, cooperatives, communities)?</li> </ol>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Fieldwork, interviews with beneficiaries</li> <li>o Interviews with implementing partners</li> <li>o Review of project documents and progress/final reports</li> </ul>
3.2 To what extent and how were FAO's activities relevant to the goal of addressing humanitarian and development needs, towards socio-economic growth, resilience and food security?	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Analysis of the relevance of FAO's activities (in different areas) considering the needs and the stated outcomes.</li> <li>2. Evidence of links between activities and overarching goal of achieving economic growth, greater resilience and food security.</li> <li>3. Evidence of coherence between activities and stated goals, and of the link being based on appropriate analysis.</li> <li>4. Evidence of projects designed according to context and needs</li> <li>5. Evidence of inclusion of DRR in programme and project design, and eventually of relevance and appropriateness to context</li> <li>6. Assessment of how the risk analysis in the PoA translated into design and implementation</li> <li>7. Assessment of FAO's capacity to differentiate the design of its interventions in WB and GS according to different levels and kinds of risks</li> <li>8. Evidence of inclusion of beneficiaries' perspectives into project cycle.</li> </ol>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Review of FAO WBGS programming documents and evaluations</li> <li>o Analysis of project documents and progress/final reports</li> <li>o ST reports</li> <li>o Review of UNDAF, HRP, PA documents</li> </ul>

Issues / Questions	Criteria of judgement/ indicators	Data collection methods and sources
<p>3.3 Are HH more able to cope, anticipate, accommodate, absorb, recover from crises and shocks in an efficient and sustainable manner? How have FAO interventions affected specific population groups (e.g. women, herders, fisher people, IDPs)?</p> <p>How were institutions supported to enhance their capacity and develop their policies?</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Evidence of the effect of participation of beneficiaries on outcome of projects. (e.g. cash assistance)</li> <li>2. Analysis of the wider positive and negative, intended and unintended impact of interventions on the life of beneficiaries (equity, dignity)</li> <li>3. Assessment of household capacity to cope, absorb and recover from shocks and crises because of FAO's interventions, and eventually of the sustainability of such enhanced capacity.</li> <li>4. Assessment of FAO's capacity to work at different levels (household, livelihood group, community, political) to build resilience, considering the interactions between these levels.</li> <li>5. Analysis of the effectiveness of FAO's strategy to build resilience of households.</li> <li>6. Evidence of improved resilience through the comparison of current situation of households with baseline data.</li> <li>7. Evidence of MoA's and other institutional actors' increased capacity at the individual, organisational and enabling environment level.</li> <li>8. Evidence of increased ownership of the development process following FAO's capacity development activities.</li> <li>9. Evidence of new and more effective strategies and normative products being developed in the areas of FAO's mandate following FAO's support.</li> <li>10. Evidence that FAO is supporting government to implement food security and agriculture policies that address resilience.</li> <li>11. Evidence that FAO is building national and local capacity to reduce and manage agriculture and food security risks.</li> <li>12. Evidence of support to information systems and capacity development of the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics in line with SO6.</li> </ol>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Fieldwork</li> <li>o Analysis of the Mid-term review of PF and mid-term and final review of PoA</li> <li>o Interviews with MoA and other national institutions</li> </ul>
<p>3.4 How is the monitoring function incorporated in programme and implemented, and which relevant lessons were learned in the process?</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Assessment of the use of the RIMA and of the impact of its use on the programme cycle (design, implementation, M&amp;E)</li> <li>2. Analysis of feedback from stakeholders on FAO's measurement tools (donors, UN partners, PCBS, PA, IPs)</li> <li>3. Assessment of whether lessons arising from past activities were incorporated into present ones, and whether this has been done in a systematic fashion.</li> <li>4. Assessment of the office's monitoring capacity.</li> </ol>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o SWOT;</li> <li>o interviews with FAO WBGS Staff</li> <li>o Interviews with Uother UN Agencies</li> <li>o Ananalysis of programme reviews and final reports</li> </ul>



Issues / Questions		Criteria of judgement/ indicators	Data collection methods and sources
3.5	Were the cross-cutting areas of work such as appropriate gender focus and environmental sustainability sufficiently addressed in the implementation of the programme?	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Evidence of integration of gender components in FAO projects.</li> <li>2. Analysis of FAO's performance against FAO's corporate commitments on AAP and gender</li> <li>3. Assessment of the relevance and usefulness of the AAP and gender markers against project results.</li> <li>4. Evidence of any unintended negative impacts of FAO's activities on the environment.</li> <li>5. Assessment of environmental sustainability of FAO's activities.</li> </ol>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Analysis of factsheets and case studies produced by FAO WBGs on gender</li> <li>○ SWOT</li> <li>○ Analysis of activities' portfolio and project documents</li> <li>○ Review of the analysis of the mid-term review of PoA</li> <li>○ interviews with FAO staff in WBGs and RNE</li> </ul>

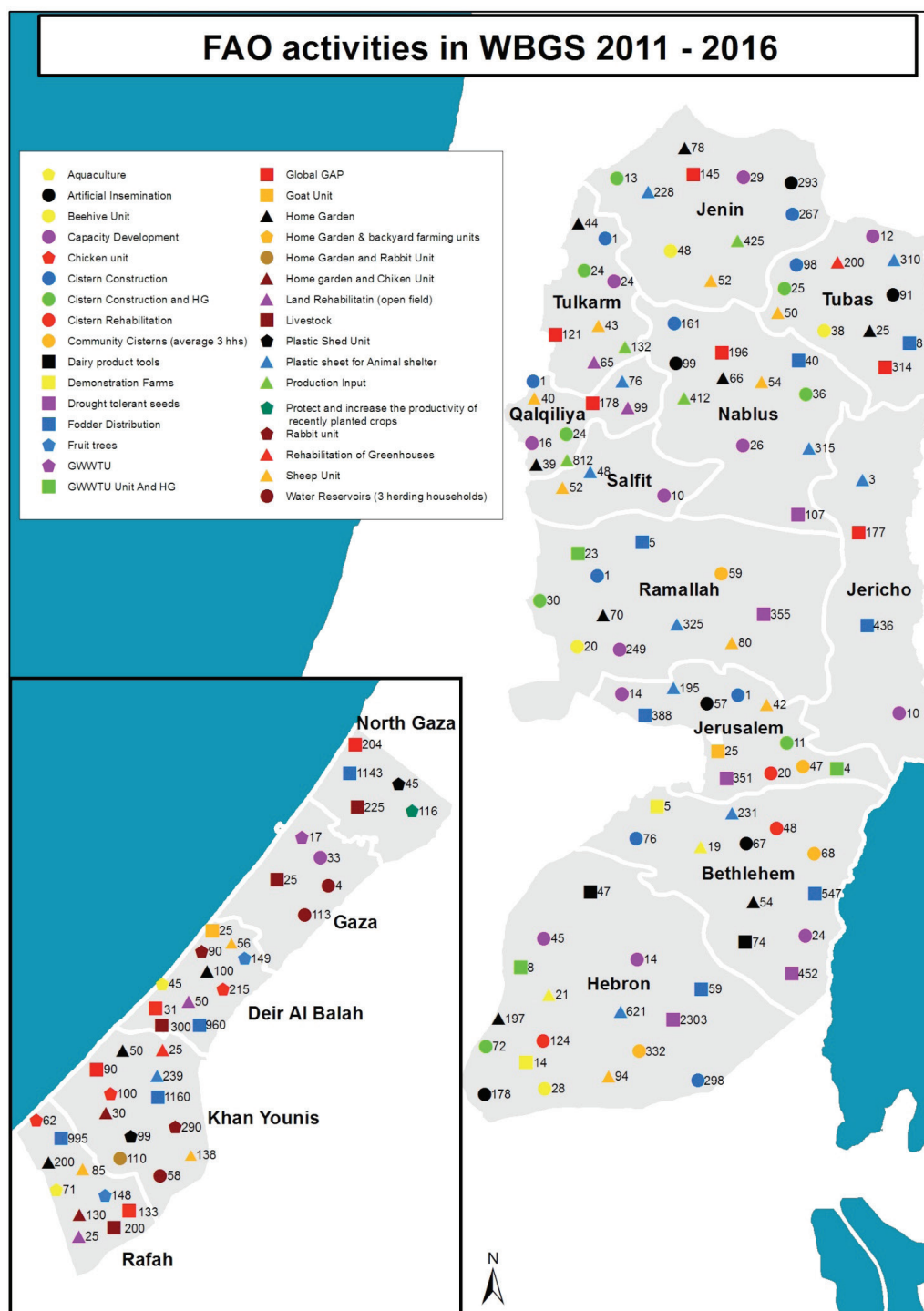
## Appendix 4: List of Country, Regional and Global Projects

Project Symbol	Project Title	Actual EOD	Actual NTE	Total Budget (DWH)
<b>Country Projects</b>				
MTF /GAZ/008/OSF	Pilot aquaponics use for improved food availability in the Gaza Strip	01/01/2015	31/03/2016	\$33.000
OSRO/GAZ/001/BEL	Mitigation of household food insecurity through backyard production and women and youth socio-economic empowerment in the West Bank	01/06/2010	31/08/2011	\$863.132
OSRO/GAZ/002/UNO	Livelihood Protection and Sustainable Empowerment of Vulnerable Rural and Refugee Families in the Jordan Valley Through Integrated Income Generating Interventions	01/07/2010	31/12/2013	\$2.027.650
OSRO/GAZ/003/CAN	Protection of livelihoods of small ruminant herders and promotion of better herd management in the West Bank and Gaza Strip	01/04/2010	30/09/2011	\$1.590.931
OSRO/GAZ/005/SPA	Emergency assistance to protect the livelihoods of vulnerable farming families and rural women through restoration of horticultural production and household food production in the West Bank and Gaza Strip	21/07/2010	20/07/2012	\$1.526.252
OSRO/GAZ/007/BEL	Emergency food production support to poor families in the Gaza Strip	05/07/2010	05/03/2011	\$400.000
OSRO/GAZ/008/ITA	Emergency support to protect agriculture-based livelihoods in the pastoral areas of the West Bank	01/10/2010	28/03/2012	\$2.196.160
OSRO/GAZ/009/AED	Project to Calculate Food Acquisition to Estimate the Daily Adult Equivalent Food Intake at Governorate level in the West Bank and Gaza Strip	13/10/2010	31/01/2011	\$19.575
OSRO/GAZ/010/NOR	Support to reduce the impact of food insecurity for Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza Strip	17/12/2010	16/12/2011	\$776.502
OSRO/GAZ/102/UK	Beneficiary Impact Assessment Survey Using Resilience Analysis for DFID-funded Project ?Immediate Support for Endangered Livelihoods of Food Insecure Farmers, Herders and Fisher Folk in the Gaza Strip	01/02/2011	31/03/2011	\$86.942
OSRO/GAZ/103/CHA	Emergency support to livestock herders in the southern part of the West Bank	01/03/2011	31/12/2011	\$800.003
OSRO/GAZ/104/CAN	Mitigation of household food insecurity through backyard food production activities targeting vulnerable women and youth in the West Bank and Gaza Strip	30/03/2011	30/09/2012	\$3.012.613
OSRO/GAZ/105/CAN	Emergency support to endangered livelihoods dependent on livestock in the West Bank and Gaza Strip	30/03/2011	31/03/2012	\$3.127.280
OSRO/GAZ/106/BEL	Emergency food production support to poor families in the Gaza Strip (Phase 2)	01/08/2011	31/07/2012	\$400.000
OSRO/GAZ/108/EC	Supporting the food security and sustainable livelihoods, of poor rural families through improving rain water harvesting and water demand management for agricultural purposes	01/11/2011	28/02/2013	\$2.012.414

Project Symbol	Project Title	Actual EOD	Actual NTE	Total Budget (DWH)
OSRO/GAZ/109/BEL	Rapid mitigation of the livelihood crises in the Gaza Strip	11/11/2011	10/11/2012	\$645.995
OSRO/GAZ/201/EC	Support to livestock based livelihoods of vulnerable population in the West Bank and Gaza Strip (The institutional level component of the Food Security Thematic Programme [FSTP])	01/02/2013	31/01/2016	\$4.163.615
OSRO/GAZ/202/CAN	Protection of farmer livelihoods (West Bank)	29/03/2012	30/04/2014	\$5.983.844
OSRO/GAZ/203/CAN	Food security through backyard food production	29/03/2012	30/04/2014	\$3.989.229
OSRO/GAZ/204/NET	Improving food security in North Gaza through land rehabilitation and open-field vegetable production	07/12/2012	31/03/2014	\$497.200
OSRO/GAZ/205/BEL	Emergency backyard food production activities in vulnerable and marginalized areas of the West Bank and Gaza Strip	23/01/2013	22/02/2014	\$649.351
OSRO/GAZ/206/NET	Institutional capacity building programme formulation mission	10/09/2012	10/11/2012	\$20.000
OSRO/GAZ/207/NET	Market oriented and sustainable high value crops sector development in the West Bank and Gaza Strip	01/01/2013	31/12/2016	\$9.368.974
OSRO/GAZ/301/JPN	Emergency protection of Palestinian-owned assets and contribution to building resilient livelihoods	01/03/2013	28/02/2014	\$4.000.000
OSRO/GAZ/304/SPA	Quick impact emergency interventions to protect the endangered livelihoods of poor and small scale farmers in Area C, the Seam Zone and Gaza Strip against external shocks (CAP project OPT-13/A/52233/123)	01/09/2013	31/01/2015	\$260.756
OSRO/GAZ/305/UK	Enhancing the resilience of farmers' livelihoods in Area C of Qalqilya, Jericho and Tulkarem Governorates through improved water availability and management	01/02/2014	31/03/2016	\$1.978.974
OSRO/GAZ/401/CAN	Prepare and respond to shocks affecting low resilience farmers and herders in West Bank and Gaza Strip	01/04/2014	31/05/2016	\$9.183.833
OSRO/GAZ/402/NET	Capacity building programme in support of the Palestinian National Authority Sanitary and Phyto-Sanitary (SPS) measures PART I	01/04/2014	31/03/2017	\$1.367.658
OSRO/GAZ/403/NET	Enhancing the resilience of farmers' livelihoods in Area C of Jenin, Nablus, Tubas and Jericho Governorates through improved water availability and management	01/06/2014	31/05/2016	\$2.463.957
OSRO/GAZ/405/SPA	Emergency support to low resilience urban and peri-urban livelihoods in the Gaza Strip through small scale domestic food production (HPC project OPT-14/F/60976)	08/07/2014	07/07/2015	\$267.379
OSRO/GAZ/501/BEL	Emergency support to Avian Influenza outbreaks and to low resilience and food insecure urban and peri-urban livelihoods in the Gaza Strip (HPC project OPT-15/F/73149).	01/06/2015	31/05/2016	\$475.000
OSRO/GAZ/807/ITA	Agriculture Revitalization Project - Phase II	01/02/2011	30/09/2013	\$2.678.535

Project Symbol	Project Title	Actual EOD	Actual NTE	Total Budget (DWH)
OSRO/GAZ/901/QAC	Immediate interventions to Assist the General Early Recovery of the Agricultural Sector in the GAZA STRIP and to Restore the Livelihoods and Food Production of Vulnerable and Conflict Affected Rural Households	01/06/2009	31/05/2011	\$2.137.500
OSRO/GAZ/904/AUS	Emergency support to poor families in the Gaza Strip to restart open field vegetable production.	01/08/2009	31/12/2011	\$415.163
OSRO/GAZ/906/ITA	Emergency support to small ruminant herders and vulnerable farming households in the West Bank and Gaza Strip (WBGs)	12/10/2009	11/04/2011	\$1.085.810
OSRO/GAZ/908/SPA	Emergency support to vulnerable farmers in the West Bank and Gaza Strip to maintain and protect their livelihoods through horticulture production	12/11/2009	11/11/2011	\$1.722.455
UTF /GAZ/005/GAZ	Support to reduce the impact of food insecurity for Palestinians in the West Bank	05/11/2010	04/09/2011	\$43.715
GCP /GAZ/002/SPA	Support to FAO Programme Coordination, Jerusalem	01/12/2007	15/10/2011	\$1.298.855
GCP /GAZ/006/SPA	Support to FAO Programme Coordination, Jerusalem	01/02/2012	31/01/2013	\$363.372
UNJP/GAZ/003/SPA	Culture and Development - (MDGF-1841)	01/04/2009	30/11/2012	\$391.683
UNJP/GAZ/011/UNJ	Creating one-stop-shop for sustainable businesses.	01/01/2015	31/12/2016	\$426.700
UTF /GAZ/007/GAZ	Upgrade of the Central Veterinary Laboratory of the Ministry of Agriculture of the Palestinian Authority for animal disease control and human health protection.	30/12/2014	31/12/2015	\$232.107
GCP /GAZ/012/SPA	Capacity building programme in support of the Palestinian National Authority - SPS measures.	2015-09-15	2018-12-31	\$381.876
GCP /GAZ/013/SWI	Capacity building programme in support of the Palestinian National Authority SPS measures	2015-12-01	2018-11-30	\$1.980.000
<b>Regional Project</b>				
GTFS/REM/070/ITA	Regional Integrated Pest Management (IPM) Programme in the Near East	01/12/2003	2014-06-30	\$8.609.372
<b>Inter-Regional projects</b>				
GCPA/INT/028/SWE	Ms. HEDTJARN SWALING, Julia, Associate Professional Officer, Productive water use, water management and adaptation to climate change	07/01/2015	06/01/2017	\$265.092
GCP /INT/041/EC	Scientific and Institutional Cooperation to Support Responsible Fisheries in the Eastern Mediterranean (EastMed Year 3)	26/10/2012	31/03/2013	\$390.595
<b>Global projects</b>				
GCP /INT/229/NET	Monitoring water productivity by Remote Sensing as a tool to assess possibilities to reduce water productivity gaps	09/03/2015	28/02/2019	\$2.779.800
SFER/GLO/101/MUL	SFERA Revolving Fund Component - Needs Assessment and Programme Development window	01/01/2015	31/12/2025	\$1.631.570
SFER/GLO/101/MUL BABY24	WEST BANK AND GAZA STRIP	23/06/2015	31/12/2015	\$70.000

## Appendix 5: Map of WBGS project sites



## Appendix 6: Table of projects visits

The table below summarises the number of project sites visited and of Focus Group discussions held by the evaluation team in the different governorates of the West Bank and of the Gaza Strip. The table also includes the four non-FAO project sites visited by the evaluation team as mentioned in the evaluation report.

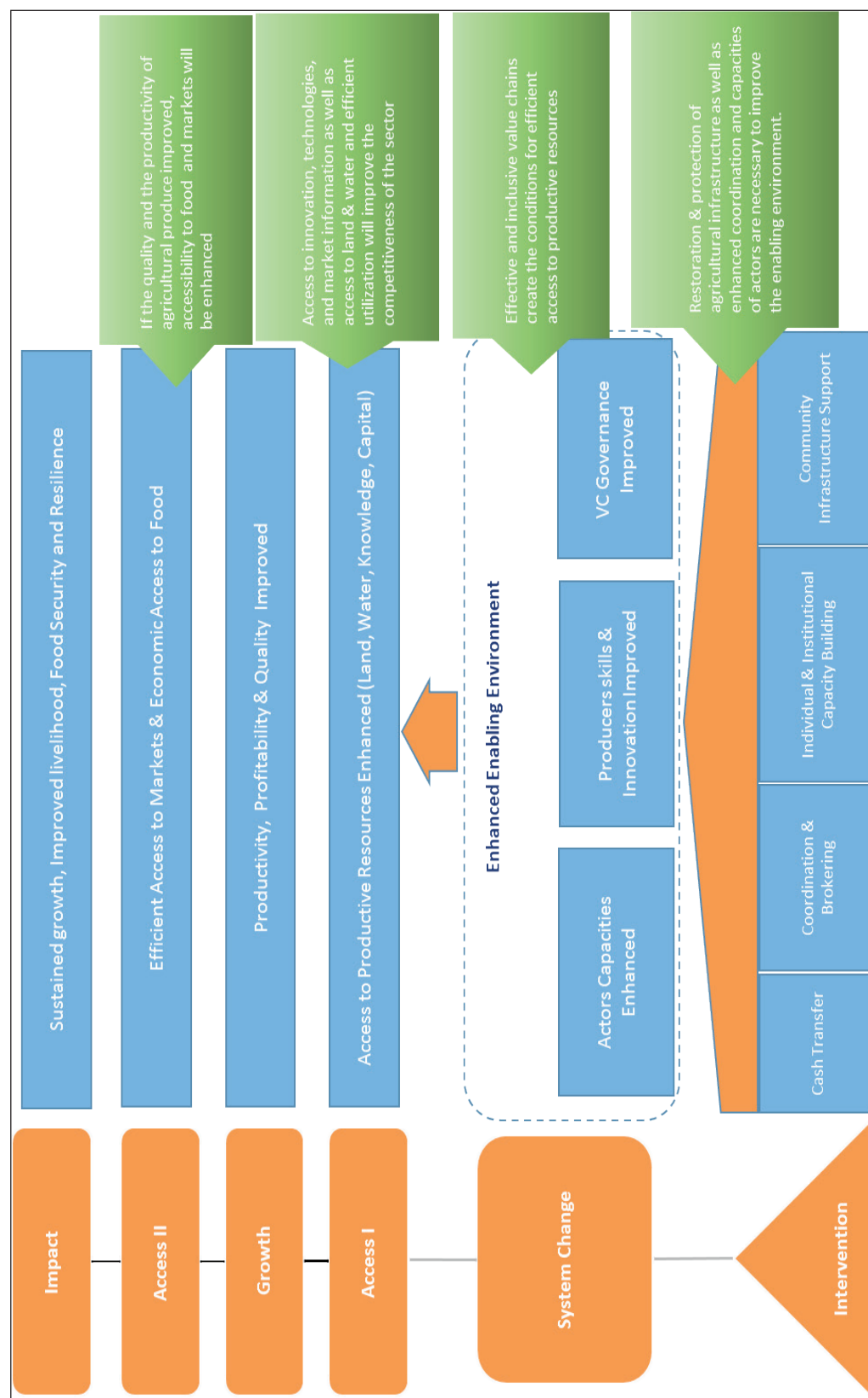
Locations/Governorates		L&W		CT&VL		A2M	
		n. FGD	n. project sites	n. FGD	n. project sites	n. FGD	n. project sites
West Bank	Bethlehem	2	3				
	Hebron	3	1	4	2	1	1
	Jenin	4	1			1	1
	Jericho	8	3			1	1
	Jerusalem	2	2	3	1		
	Nablus		1*	4	2	1	
	Qalqiliya			4	1	5	2
	<b>Ramallah</b>		1*				
	Tubas	7	3			2	2
	Tulkarm	1	3			1	2
Gaza Strip	Deir Al Balah (Middle Area)	2	3	4	2		
	Gaza City	1*		4		6	
	Khan Younis	2	4 +1*	4	1	2	1
	North Gaza	3	6	1		2	1
	Rafah	4	6			1	
<b>Total</b>		<b>38</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>11</b>

\* non FAO project sites



## Appendix 7: Theory of change

The Theory of Change (TOC) of FAO programme in WBGS 2011-2015 was developed by the evaluation team in consultation with FAO WBGS managers and is based on the discussions with the FAO WBGS team and the review of project and programming documents produced by the FAO WBGS Office.







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