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I. INTRODUCTION

1. The 2007 Programme Evaluation Report continues the revised format agreed by the Programme Committee and Council in 2005. It thus provides an updated overview of the institutional arrangements for evaluation in FAO, its coverage and methods. Like the 2005 report, in the interests of transparency and accountability, it also summarises evaluation and review of the evaluation function in FAO¹. In this case, as suggested by the Programme Committee², this is provided by a summary of the evaluation of the FAO evaluation function completed as a separate study within the Independent External Evaluation of FAO. This Programme Evaluation Report thus consists of five main sections:

- a) evaluation in FAO (institutional arrangements, policies and methods) which provides a description of the current evaluation arrangements;
- b) UN system collaboration in evaluation;
- c) a summary of the evaluation of the FAO evaluation function completed as a separate study in the Independent External Evaluation of FAO;
- d) the evaluation programme of the Organization, which provides a listing of the evaluation outputs over the 2006-07 biennium and the work plan of major evaluations for the forthcoming biennium; and
- e) evaluation briefs on the major evaluations completed during the biennium and provided to the Governing Bodies. In the briefs, a summary of the management response and the reaction of the Programme Committee are provided in addition to the evaluation itself. Each brief is cross-referenced to the complete documentation on the evaluation website³.

II. EVALUATION IN FAO - INSTITUTIONAL ARRANGEMENTS, POLICIES AND METHODS

The Context

2. All the programmes and activities of FAO, financed from the regular budget of the Organization (from mandatory assessed contributions) and those financed from voluntarily contributed extra-budgetary resources, are subject to evaluation. The policies for evaluation of these programmes have been set by member countries in the Governing Bodies and the Director-General. Evaluation is designed:

- a) for accountability on results, particularly in terms of evidence of contribution to sustainable impacts for the benefit of member countries; and
- b) to assist decision-making by the Governing Bodies, the Organization's management and individual member countries as part of a results-based approach to decision-making.

3. In establishing evaluation policies, the Council takes advice primarily from the Programme Committee. The Director-General is advised by the internal Evaluation Committee chaired by the Deputy Director-General, which was established in 2004. Evaluation in FAO adheres to evaluation norms and standards for evaluation in the UN

¹ The 2005 report summarised the findings of the auto-evaluation of the evaluation function, which included the findings of an external consultant and an external peer review.

² Para. 38 CL 132/11 Report of the 97th Session of the Programme Committee (Committee requested to review the report prepared by the IEE on the evaluation function).

³ <http://www.fao.org/pbe/pbee/>

system⁴ established by the United Nations Evaluation Group (which is composed of the heads of evaluation from throughout the UN system). These norms and standards are largely in line with the standards of the OECD-DAC and their purpose is captured in a preambular statement: “Towards a UN system better serving the peoples of the world; overcoming weaknesses and building on strengths from a strong evidence base”. They now provide a baseline against which all organizations and programmes of the UN system can gauge their performance.

4. FAO evaluations currently fall into the following major categories, which are complementary:

- a) major evaluations for the Governing Bodies: These are decided upon by the Programme Committee and cover evaluations of: individual FAO programmes; work towards strategic objectives, as specified in the FAO Strategic Framework; and cross-cutting institutional issues. There are four to five per biennium. They include the aspects of the work covered from the Regular Programme budget and from extra-budgetary funding and deal with work at headquarters, regional and country levels (normative and technical cooperation). The Governing Bodies may also receive summaries or the full reports of the major evaluations of extra-budgetary programmes and the country evaluations listed in the further categories below;
- b) comprehensive evaluations of all FAO’s work at country level (three to five per biennium – this category of evaluation has been introduced in the current biennium);
- c) evaluations of work funded from extra-budgetary resources on particular emergencies, themes or programmes;
- d) evaluations of specific extra-budgetary programmes and projects; and
- e) auto-evaluation by managers of Regular Programme work.

Institutional and Governance Arrangements

Role of the Programme Committee in Evaluation

5. The Programme Committee is the recipient of major evaluation reports for the Governing Bodies. Its functions with respect to evaluation are to advise the Council on overall policies and procedures for evaluation and to:

- a) decide upon the work programme for major evaluations;
- b) receive and consider the major evaluation reports (which are accompanied by a management response to the findings and recommendations). The Committee presents its conclusions on both the evaluation and the management response to the Council in its report; and
- c) receive progress reports on the implementation of evaluation findings and recommendations and provide its views to the Council.

6. The Programme Committee now has a standing agenda item on evaluation, under which it discusses not only individual evaluations and papers on evaluation matters but also ad-hoc matters relating to evaluation as they arise.

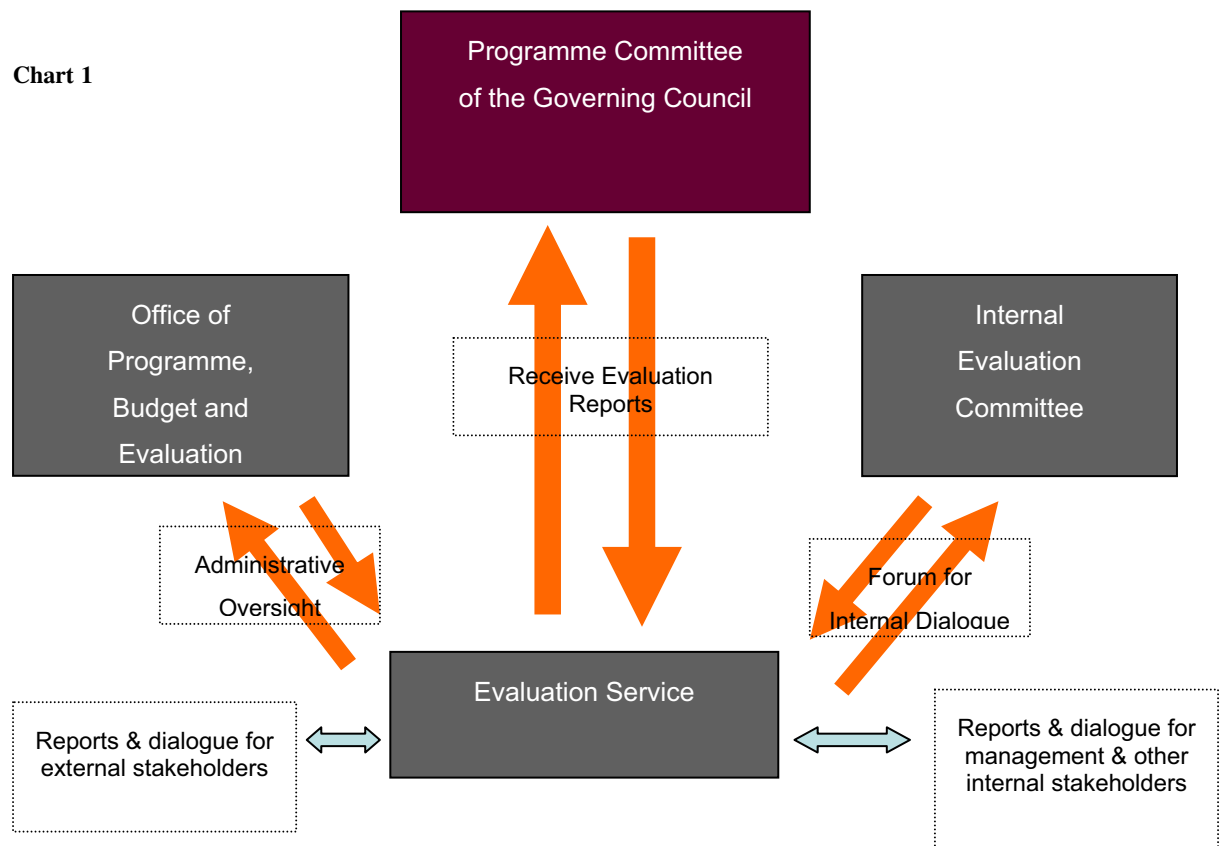
The Evaluation Committee (internal)

7. The internal evaluation committee chaired by the Deputy Director-General provides advice to the Evaluation Service on its work programme and advice to the Director-General on all matters relating to evaluation, including budget level and management responses.

⁴ <http://www.uneval.org>

The Evaluation Service

Chart 1



8. The Evaluation Service is responsible for ensuring the relevance, effectiveness, quality and independence of evaluation in FAO. It is located for administrative purposes in the Office of Programme, Budget and Evaluation, which forms part of the Office of the Director-General⁵. The Service receives guidance from the Programme Committee and consults with the Evaluation Committee (internal). It is solely responsible for the conduct of all evaluations, with the exception of auto-evaluations conducted by programme managers for which it provides support, including the selection of evaluators and the evaluation terms of reference. It thus enjoys a high degree of independence within the Organization. In addition to its responsibilities for the conduct of evaluations, the Service also:

- a) facilitates feedback from evaluation in direct follow-up to individual evaluations and in communicating lessons for more general application;
- b) monitors management reporting on the implementation of those evaluation recommendations accepted by the Governing Bodies, management and other concerned stakeholders;
- c) supports auto-evaluation by managers (but does not have wider responsibilities in results-based management so as to assure a higher degree of independence in its evaluations); and
- d) for staff training, provides comments on training requirements to the Human Resources Division (but is not involved in evaluation capacity building in member countries).

⁵ The Service staffing is composed of a Chief, eight professionals (including one provided from extra-budgetary resources) and three support staff.

Budget for evaluation in FAO

9. For the 2006-07 biennium, the budget for evaluation (including auto-evaluation) stands at approximately US\$ 4.8 million⁶ (in total, approximately 0.5 percent of resources available for the Regular Programme of work). The translation and reproduction of evaluation documents for the Governing Bodies, and certain indirect costs of evaluation such as office space, are covered outside the evaluation budget. In June 2007, the FAO Council⁷ emphasised the importance of the systematic evaluation of the extra-budgetary work of the Organization, and endorsed approximately one percent coverage for evaluation in all budgets: *“the inclusion of a mandatory budget line for evaluation in all extra-budgetary projects on a published scale. Two Trust Fund pool accounts would be established for this purpose: one for emergency and rehabilitation projects, and another for technical cooperation for development projects. The exception to this would be those projects of technical cooperation for development over US\$ 4 million which would continue to be evaluated separately”*.

Evaluation Processes and Methodologies

Processes and methodologies common to all evaluations

10. **Scoping the evaluation and terms of reference:** An approach paper for each major evaluation is developed by the Evaluation Service in discussion with the units most closely involved in implementing the strategy or programme and other stakeholders, including, as appropriate, national government representatives and the representatives of donors. Increasingly, an evaluation team leader is then selected and participates in the finalization of terms of reference. The introduction in 2000 of an enhanced results-based planning model for FAO has made it somewhat easier to identify the outcomes and impacts (objectives) towards which programmes are working, but it usually remains essential to clarify the programme logic as an early step in the evaluation process and define appropriate verification indicators for use in the evaluation.

11. **The evaluation team:** Evaluations are managed and quality assured by the Evaluation Service and teams are led and largely composed of independent external consultants⁸. Evaluation consultants⁹ are selected on the basis of competence, with attention also to regional and gender balance. Evaluation team leaders are consulted where possible on the composition of the remainder of the team. The size of the teams is related to both the scale and complexity of the evaluation, 3-4 lead consultants being a typical number.

12. **Evaluation methodology:** The methods used are tailored to the individual evaluations. Certain features are common. The ultimate value of a programme, project, strategy or process is the benefit it delivers to FAO member country governments and their peoples. Key issues for evaluations include:

- a) changes in the external environment in which FAO functions;
- b) relevance to the needs and priorities of the member countries and the international community;
- c) functionality and clarity of the objectives, strategy, design and implementation plan to meet those needs and priorities;

⁶ US\$ 3.7 million under the Regular Programme allocation to the Evaluation Service for independent evaluation, of which US\$ 0.3 million required earnings, US\$ 0.7 million for auto-evaluation and US\$ 0.4 million for evaluation of the Technical Cooperation Programme –TCP.

⁷ Report of the Hundred and Thirty-Second Session of the FAO Council (Rome, 18-22 June 2007) para. 76.

⁸ Evaluation Service staff but not other staff of FAO may also serve as evaluation team members (but not team leaders, except on relatively small individual project evaluations).

⁹ Evaluation consultancies are now advertised on the web.

- d) efficiency and effectiveness of the processes followed;
- e) institutional strengths and weaknesses, including institutional culture and inclusiveness of process;
- f) quality and quantity of outputs, in relation to resources deployed in undertaking the work;
- g) quality and quantity of the outcomes (effects) resulting from the activities and outputs in relation to resources deployed for the work;
- h) impacts and their sustainability in terms of benefits to present and future generations for food security, nutrition, social and economic well-being, the environment, etc.; and
- i) FAO's comparative advantage in addressing the priority needs.

13. Evaluations are forward looking. The central concern is thus to identify strengths and weaknesses in FAO's programmes, approaches and structures with relevance for the future. In examining the effectiveness and impact of programmes, it has generally been found most productive to examine the outcomes and impacts of work completed and ongoing over the last four to six years (for longer periods than that, both detailed information and the identification of contribution to impact becomes difficult to trace).

14. Evaluations review the work of other institutions comparable to FAO, especially in the multilateral system. This is important for benchmarking on processes, quality of work, etc. As the performance of FAO cannot be judged in isolation from that of its partners and competitors, it is also essential to make judgements on FAO's areas of comparative strength and weakness.

15. Also with respect to methodology:

- a) evaluations are consultative of stakeholders. This is done through visits to countries and partners, questionnaires and workshops;
- b) information is gathered through: document research; surveys; and focus group and individual interviews using check lists. In addition to open questions, questionnaires use closed questions to facilitate statistical analysis;
- c) triangulation of information from different sources and derived by different methods is fundamental in arriving at conclusions;
- d) impact and sustainability were always major areas for investigation by evaluation teams. In view of the relatively small inputs by FAO to development processes at the national and global levels, key questions concern the extent to which there has been contribution to a plausible line of causality. Separate sample impact case studies have now been introduced for country evaluations and where appropriate in major programme and project evaluations;
- e) projects and Regular Programme entities are scored by the evaluation team for: relevance; design; implementation; process; outputs; outcomes; and sustainable impacts. This is to facilitate comparability between the findings of evaluations and analysis of trends and of strengths and weaknesses; and
- f) peer review by experts is used to identify issues for evaluation and to provide additional input for the evaluation findings.

16. **The evaluation report:** The methodology requires the evaluation team to consult with stakeholders, including FAO management, but the team is solely responsible for its report, including the findings and recommendations, subject to quality assurance by the Evaluation Service. The role of the Evaluation Service is to assure adherence to the terms of reference, timeliness, and to provide technical support to the evaluation but the Service has no final say on findings and recommendations.

17. All evaluation reports are public documents and posted on the evaluation website. The report is required to present evaluation recommendations in an operational form and to include recommendations for improvement with no budget increase as well as any recommendations for increases (as it was observed that evaluation teams almost invariably made proposals for both expanded work and budget in the area under evaluation and this was not always realistic).

18. **Quality assurance:** In addition to internal peer review in the Evaluation Service, new quality assurance measures have been introduced for all major evaluations where evaluations are reviewed by two external senior evaluators and scored against a standard review framework.

19. **Management response and follow-up reporting:** For all evaluations, management is required to provide a response to each evaluation on those findings and recommendations it accepts and those it rejects and why, and an operational plan on how it intends to follow-up. Follow-up reports are also required after one year for most evaluations and after two years for major evaluations. In the case of those reports presented to the Governing Bodies, both the management response and the follow-up report are also considered by the Programme Committee. This is an area where there has been considerable progress in the last few years, and a standard procedure and format is now in place. However, the Programme Committee has still found several management responses during the biennium did not meet quality standards and requested elaboration. Further action has thus been taken by management to strengthen the internal process within the secretariat. Management response and follow-up reporting on implementation of recommendations for evaluation of extra-budgetary programmes is generally acknowledged to be an area of weakness and the actual use made of the findings and recommendations is highly dependent upon the extent to which the various partners to the evaluation become convinced of their validity and thus put them into effect. Further action is now underway to improve also this aspect.

Evaluations for the Governing Bodies

20. Evaluations for the Governing Bodies normally cover a strategic objective or cross-organizational strategy as defined in the FAO Strategic Framework, a programme, or an organizational unit. In recent years, these evaluations have tended to deal with large blocks of work at the programme or strategy level in order to maximise their usefulness to the Governing Bodies and senior management.

21. In proposing subjects for evaluation to the Programme Committee in the rolling evaluation plan, the Evaluation Service takes account of expressed interests in the Governing Bodies and by FAO managers. The intention is that evaluation should focus on those areas where the Governing Bodies and management have the greatest need for evidence-based information on processes, institutional arrangements, outcomes, impacts and FAO's comparative advantages. In order to achieve the balanced and progressive coverage of the Organization's strategies and programmes, key factors in deciding on the proposals to be made include: a) the coverage of evaluations over the past six years; and b) the coverage of auto-evaluations and other studies. Criteria also include: the size of the programme or area of work; the demand from member countries; and areas of work being considered for expansion because of their perceived relevance and usefulness, or for elimination, downsizing or major re-orientation. The Programme Committee decides on priorities for evaluation from a list of possible topics and introduces additional topics it considers to be of importance. It also can, and does, request evaluations outside of the regular evaluation cycle and the plan is adjusted to accommodate these.

22. As noted above, evaluation reports are public documents posted on the evaluation website. The Programme Committee decides if it wishes to discuss the evaluation in full or in extended summary and the evaluation is normally presented to the Programme Committee by the evaluation team leader.

Evaluation of extra-budgetary programmes

23. **Major emergencies and rehabilitation:** For major emergencies, FAO needs to evaluate in an integrated way the relevance, efficiency and sustainable benefit from its response to the totality of the emergency and rehabilitation needs. The programmatic evaluation of emergency work has been steadily increasing, both in depth and coverage (Southern Africa 2003, Afghanistan 2003, Tsunami Real Time 2005-07, Desert Locusts 2006, Avian Influenza 2007, Horn of Africa 2007).

24. **Projects of technical cooperation for development** were subject to evaluation by evaluation/review missions, normally as the project drew towards completion and follow-up action was under consideration. The model of a tripartite mission representing the funders, FAO and the country(s) is being replaced by the concept of an independent team with composition and terms of reference agreed by all parties. In the period 2002-06, seventy-four multi-bilateral trust fund projects were completed with budgets over US\$ 2 million and of these, exactly half were evaluated. Although there may be good reasons for a proportion of trust funds not being evaluated, this is clearly an unacceptably low figure. The figures for projects of US\$ 1-2 million budget were considerably lower at 28 percent. Only one of the 29 projects (with budgets over US\$ 2 million) funded by the national governments of the countries in which they took place (UTF) was evaluated.

25. In the last decade, there has been a growth in the number of relatively small field projects, and for these, an evaluation mission of the traditional type cannot normally be a cost-effective use of resources. The increased emphasis on impact assessment requires that studies be carried out and a single mission by a group of evaluators is not always the appropriate approach. It may also be noted that the Independent External Evaluation of FAO review of the evaluation function found that individual project evaluation reports were often of inadequate quality.

26. The emphasis is thus now moving to the evaluation of projects within thematic clusters and country evaluations with separate annex reports continuing to be produced on each major individual project. This formula allows for ex-post evaluation and assessment of impact in a way which cannot be achieved while a project is ongoing. It also facilitates lessons across projects and the examination of the relationship between the results from the extra-budgetary funds deployed and the Regular Programme of the Organization. Country and regional development projects including unilateral trust funds of US\$ 2 million or more will continue to be independently evaluated if not covered by such thematic or country evaluation. Projects, including Unilateral Trust Funds, of over US\$ 4 million will always be subject to full separate evaluation.

27. **Evaluation of programme support by donors:** There are an increasing number of projects integrating support to normative work and the extension of that work to countries. These Programmes will also all be subject to evaluation if their budget exceeds US\$ 2 million. Such evaluation may be integrated with overall corporate programme evaluations if appropriate. However, as this approach to funding is relatively new and different models are being pursued, evaluation modalities will be decided on a case-by-case basis in full consultation with the donor and other participating member countries. Provision for evaluation should thus be made in the budgets of all such programmes with budgets of US\$2 million or more.

28. **Council decision on evaluation of extra-budgetary work:** At its session in June 2007¹⁰, the Council emphasised the importance of the systematic evaluation of the extra-budgetary work of the Organization and, in addition to the funding arrangements discussed above, endorsed: *“the institutionalisation of the arrangements for evaluation of emergency*

¹⁰ Report of the Hundred and Thirty-Second Session of the FAO Council (Rome, 18-22 June 2007) para. 76.

and rehabilitation programmes and the extension of similar arrangements to projects of technical cooperation for development. While respecting the independence of evaluation and the role of the Evaluation Service in this, these institutional relationships would include comprehensive dialogues with stakeholders, in particular funders and partner countries, on the selection of evaluations and their conduct.”

29. These evaluations are managed by the Evaluation Service and consultations are carried out with the main donors and concerned FAO units on the selection of topics for evaluation. The main donors and partner countries for each programme are consulted on all aspects of the evaluation, including terms of reference, impact studies and composition of the independent evaluation team. Reports of the evaluation and the FAO management response are available to all parties and are public documents. Where single donors or individual countries form a large part of the programme, separate annexes may be prepared responding more specifically to individual donors' needs.

30. Unfortunately, although nearly all donors are in principle in favour of in-depth evaluation for accountability and learning and also are in favour in principle of a coordinated approach to this, at the working level, significant problems have arisen with a few of the major funders. Sometimes, this is at the level of individual donor desk officers, who may resist evaluation as an unnecessary cost, and sometimes the difficulties lie at a more fundamental level in the donor's policies and procedures. Discussions are ongoing to resolve these problems.

III. UN SYSTEM COLLABORATION IN EVALUATION

31. At its 132nd Session in June 2007, the Council welcomed FAO's contribution to UN system-wide evaluation and endorsed the Programme Committee report which “endorsed the Evaluation Service devoting up to 15 percent of its resources to UN system-wide evaluation work.”¹¹ During the biennium, the FAO Evaluation Service has continued to work closely with the other evaluation offices of the UN system through the United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG). It has also continued to work for evaluation in emergencies through various OCHA led initiatives and with the Active Learning Network for Accountability and Performance in Humanitarian Action (ALNAP), which brings together evaluators from across the non-governmental and governmental humanitarian agencies.

32. UNEG has followed on agreement on norms and standards for evaluation with finalisation of core competencies for evaluation staff, development of a code of ethics and, in collaboration with OECD/DAC, the introduction of a peer review mechanism. At the request of the UN Chief Executives Board (CEB), it has developed proposals for a UN system-wide evaluation mechanism, including a unit to undertake evaluation of system-wide issues.

33. At its May 2007 session, the Programme Committee also stressed the importance of the evaluation of the UN pilots for delivering as one and at the request of the CEB, UNEG is undertaking a process evaluation of the initiative in the eight pilot countries and at the global level. FAO has taken a lead in this process, including providing the resources for evaluation start-up.

34. Other joint initiatives to which FAO has made a significant contribution have included:

- a) UNEG study of management response and follow-up to evaluation (provision of a consultancy);

¹¹ Para. 37, CL 132/1 Report of the 97th Session of the Programme Committee, May 2007.

- b) joint evaluation of response to the humanitarian crisis in the Horn of Africa¹²; and
- c) Tsunami Evaluation Coalition: Joint Evaluation of the International Response to the Indian Ocean Tsunami (July 2006 - within which FAO contributed to the thematic evaluation of the role of needs assessment in the Tsunami Response as well as providing the reports of FAO's own evaluations).

IV. EVALUATION OF THE EVALUATION FUNCTION

(Carried out as a separate study in the Independent External Evaluation of FAO)

Background and Context

35. In view of the accountability and organizational learning and improvement roles played by evaluation, the terms of reference of the Independent External Evaluation of FAO (IEE) required an assessment of the quality, independence and impartiality of the evaluation function and the extent to which previous evaluations have been acted on. The need for a separate evaluation of this function was further reinforced because the IEE itself wished to draw substantially on evaluation findings in undertaking its own work and needed to ascertain their reliability.

36. The IEE considered that this stand alone evaluation of the evaluation function in FAO¹³ should be published separately and the Programme Committee requested to review this evaluation at its September 2007 session (this did not occur, as the IEE report was not then published). In line with the transparent reporting on reviews of the evaluation function reflected in the Programme Evaluation Report 2005, this PER also offers the opportunity to provide somewhat more detail on the findings than reflected in the full report of the IEE which has been considered by the Council and is before the Conference.

37. The FAO membership will separately decide on the major recommendations of the IEE with respect to evaluation, in the context of the discussion of the report as a whole. The Evaluation Service and FAO management have already instigated a number of improvements in line with the findings of the evaluation of the evaluation function. These are summarised in the previous discussion and have included a more active role for the internal evaluation committee and the strengthening of:

- a) work on impact evaluation;
- b) quality assurance management;
- c) management response to evaluations and follow-up reporting;
- d) consultation arrangements with stakeholders; and
- e) advertising and selection procedures for evaluation team members.

Further actions are underway, particularly with respect to the full institutionalisation of the new arrangements for evaluation of extra-budgetary work as approved by the Council and the updating and publication of guidelines for various aspects of evaluation (including attention to gender and cost-efficiency aspects in evaluation).

Methodology

38. The methodology included: independent assessment of the quality of 33 evaluation reports from 1998 to date; interviews with just under 60 users of evaluations from Governing Bodies and staff (around 20 percent outside Headquarters); comparison with best practice in literature, current practice across the UN system and with four agencies in more depth (IFAD, UNDP, UNESCO and WHO); statistical analysis of the Evaluation Service

¹² With OCHA, UNFPA, UNICEF and WHO.

¹³ Conducted by K. Bezanson and S. Burrows.

database; and participation in staff focus groups. An external peer reference group gave critical advice at the beginning on the methodology and on the draft report. Evaluation Service staff were also consulted on methodology and in a workshop on the draft report.

Findings

39. **Quality of evaluations:** The majority of informants amongst staff below senior management level expressed a high degree of confidence in the accuracy and quality of corporate evaluations. Independent reviewers marked a sample of evaluations against a standard check list. For corporate and auto-evaluations, there was a statistically highly significant correlation overall between the two independent assessors for each type. For project evaluations, a third (blind) opinion was sought for the 25 percent of cases with significant divergence between the original assessors, which resulted in significant correlation here too.

40. The average score (on a six-point ordinal scale) for the corporate evaluations sampled was 4.1, with the highest score 5.1 and the lowest 2.9. Terms of reference were overwhelmingly found to have been met. The involvement of Evaluation Service staff in project evaluations is not a guarantee of quality. The table below shows the percentage of positive reviews for all types of evaluation for the different stages of the evaluation process.

Table 1: Percentage of evaluations found satisfactory or better			
For: Stage in Evaluation Process	Corporate	Project	Auto
1. Evaluation purpose and scope	92%	67%	80%
2. Design and process	64%	53%	57%
3. Methodology and tools	53%	47%	72%
4. Evidence of results	56%	50%	75%
5. Analysis and conclusions	72%	38%	55%
6. Recommendations	92%	62%	63%

41. Establishing the evaluation purpose and scope is the strongest stage overall and very consistently good in corporate evaluations. The judgments on the design and process for evaluations were very positive on the clarity of the terms of reference but were much weaker on other aspects. For corporate evaluations, there was frequently insufficient information to provide a rating on the links to stakeholders. There was also insufficient information on the professional background and affiliation of the evaluation teams. In corporate and especially project evaluations, the resources were frequently found to be inadequate to achieve the evaluation objectives.

42. The methodology and tools and evidence of results were the weakest aspects of corporate evaluations and weak in project evaluations too (though generally good in auto-evaluations). The weakness on methodology was partly real and partly because many corporate and project evaluation reports devoted inadequate attention to describing methodology. There were also concerns about the quality of the evidence presented, especially sources. The weakest aspect of both project and auto-evaluations sampled was the depth of analysis in deriving conclusions – negative ratings in 77 percent and 70 percent of cases respectively. Evaluation recommendations were also rated positively overall, although for corporate evaluations, most of the grades assigned were only satisfactory. All types of evaluation showed the following weaknesses:

- a) a tendency to focus on outputs (short-term), rather than trying to assess contribution to outcomes (medium-term). This was attributed to the 'process orientation' of FAO's accountability system (rather than results orientation);
- b) over 60 percent negative ratings on whether there had been an adequate gender analysis, despite the fact that gender mainstreaming is an organizational priority; and
- c) cost issues (efficiency and effectiveness). This is a notoriously difficult area with which other agencies also struggle. Nevertheless, there seems to be an acceptance in the Evaluation Service that cost issues are a standard part of terms of reference but are not fulfilled.

43. **Use made of evaluation:** It was found that evaluation in FAO fulfils both an accountability and a learning function but particular emphasis is placed upon evaluation's forward-looking role, an emphasis supported by the IEE. Interviewees confirmed unanimously that corporate evaluations were useful and necessary, but could be made significantly greater use of. A few observed that the main demand and supply for evaluation is as a confirming mechanism, helping to steer work already on a good course, and some stated that course changes can be stigmatised as a sign of bad performance, instead of a desirable ability to learn and adapt.

44. Seventy-three percent of FAO Members responding to a survey agreed that "the evaluation function in FAO contributes to good governance by providing Permanent Representatives with information that is adequate, professional and trustworthy." However, members of the Programme Committee and the Finance Committee affirmed that neither of those Governing Bodies uses the findings of evaluations in making decisions on the overall strategic direction of the Organization and resource allocation – and that, in principle, they think they should. With the exception of the Evaluation of FAO's Decentralization, the same appears to be true at Senior Management level, concerning resource allocation between Departments or Divisions.

45. Three¹⁴ of the eight corporate evaluations sampled (and one auto-evaluation) stimulated a significant degree of course change - including prioritisation and/or cancellation of activities resource allocation and administrative procedures. None has yet stimulated fundamental revision of strategic direction. Factors cited as having a negative influence on the Organization's ability to learn and improve as a result of evaluations included a hierarchical and defensive organizational culture, exacerbated by declining resources.

46. Staff interviewed also largely confirmed the findings of a review, conducted by the Evaluation Service, of the first year's experience of **auto-evaluation**. A high proportion¹⁵ of staff participants found it helpful as a tool for learning, though the depth of learning is higher with better performing programmes. Senior staff find it more useful than junior and it has been more successful in gaining staff input than feedback from partners and beneficiaries. Some informants specifically mentioned under-used potential of auto-evaluations for motivating staff, fostering ownership and building team or group consensus. The link to management decision-making, however, remains weak. Presentation of auto-evaluations to the Governing Body provides an incentive to showcase results. However, the Programme Committee specifically decided not to use the reports in priority-setting, because that would detract from their role in learning and improvement. Thus, the potential

¹⁴ Independent Evaluation of SPFS, Evaluation of Strategy A3 (Emergencies) and Evaluation of Livestock Policy, Production and Information.

¹⁵ 80% in both the IEE sample and the PBEE review.

of auto-evaluation for organizational improvement needs to be further developed through its integration into a functional Results-Based Management System.

47. Use of **project** evaluations is very mixed. There is clear evidence that some are used for improved elaboration of follow-on phases of a project, but not for informing decisions on similar projects or for evidence and diagnosis of more systemic problems in the Organization, except where they have been aggregated into a corporate evaluation. Projects that have been evaluated were always recommended by the evaluation for continuation even if the evaluation had strong reservations on their performance, which raised questions about the quality of the evaluations and the logical flow in decision-making.

48. The key factors and contextual conditions mentioned by informants as critical to the level of acceptance and use of evaluations were: credibility of the Team Leader and the evaluation team (technical competence, process skills, political weight and broad acceptability, and visible independence from management); the supporting role of Evaluation Staff in the team; the timing of the evaluation to coincide with a key decision-making moment; external pressure for change, especially from members; internal constituency for change, including the willingness of immediate managers to develop a positive management response and the engagement of senior management.

49. **Institutional arrangements:** Combination of evaluation, audit and, sometimes, inspection into one internal oversight office is quite common amongst the specialised and/or smaller UN agencies¹⁶ but is not favoured by a number of funds and/or larger agencies¹⁷ and by the multilateral development banks. Examination of the performance of evaluation in these joint arrangements was found by the IEE to be disappointing. The essential differences between the two functions lie in reporting lines, transparency and purpose. Evaluation is essentially forward-looking. It emphasises learning as a basis for improving accountability and encourages informed risk-taking. Audit may examine input-output relationships in value for money and is complementary to evaluation in assuring risk management through compliance with procedures. When evaluation is partnered with oversight mechanisms, the learning function is inhibited, because evaluators are more frequently than not viewed as 'enforcers' and it is difficult to maintain the same levels of transparency and openness. In FAO, the direct line of reporting and responsiveness of evaluation to the Governing Bodies would also be reduced by such an arrangement in an internal oversight office. Consistent with the 2003 decision of the Governing Bodies, none of the key informants nor the team evaluating the evaluation function could see benefit in FAO placing evaluation and audit in the same office.

50. Evaluation Service staff are generally not perceived as independent, although the majority of informants among both staff and the Governing Bodies found their participation in an externally led team valuable, and, in larger and more complex cases, essential. While broadly endorsing the trend for in-house evaluation staff to spend more time managing and less time conducting evaluations, the evaluation of the evaluation function found that the current 40-50 percent of time that staff spend actually taking part in evaluations reduces the risk of de-skilling and increases their ability to communicate findings for organizational learning.

51. The institutional credibility of evaluation depends heavily on the extent to which it is perceived as independent and impartial, which is partly determined by location in the organizational structure. Other important factors include: the credibility of individual team leaders; the extent of stakeholder involvement and the quality of the information base and

¹⁶ e.g. WHO, UNESCO, UNFPA, but not ILO or UNIDO.

¹⁷ e.g. UNDP, IFAD, WFP and UNICEF.

analysis. In FAO, the evaluation function forms part of both the Governing Body oversight and learning systems and the secretariat learning, which are interdependent (organizational learning should improve accountability and the need to be accountable can stimulate organizational learning). However, there is also a tension between the two. The evaluation of the evaluation function thus considered two main options for the institutional arrangements. The first was to maintain the existing location and try to increase independence by other means. The challenge, in this case, was to identify those means given that the arrangement has already been found sub-optimal. The second option was to locate the Evaluation Service with independence from management. The challenge, in this latter case, was to ensure: a) that contact between the evaluation function and staff remained frequent and of high quality to prevent isolation and ensure support to institutional learning and decision-making; and b) that evaluation remained fully responsive to the needs of management.

52. Consistent with the direction of previous Governing Body decisions, an overwhelming majority of FAO Members responding to a survey, many staff and the external peer reviewers considered that the value of FAO's evaluation function would be significantly increased if it were accorded considerably greater independence of location, reporting lines and financial resources. The weight of emerging thinking on evaluation best practice and research results lends strong support to this option, already implemented in the development banks, IFAD and, to a great extent, in UNDP.

53. **Conclusion:** The IEE concluded that the use, quality and institutional reach of evaluation in FAO compares favourably to other specialised UN agencies and is reasonably good, compared with all UN agencies. It is 'mature' with over 20 years' experience. That maturity is reflected in the Evaluation Service staff, the range of types of evaluation carried out, the quality of many of those evaluations (especially at corporate level), the size of the evaluation programme and in the level of independence achieved so far. The Evaluation Service is performing a positive and essential function and has been very innovative over the last four years, introducing new types of evaluation to respond to the changing context. The quality of corporate evaluations is generally more consistent than the quality of other types of evaluation, especially project evaluations. Limitations and difficulties need to be overcome, including in evaluation staff and team selection and recruitment, if evaluation is to have the impact on institution-wide learning in programming and strategy implicit in the purposes for which it is intended and if it is to reach the standards now agreed within the UN system.

54. A recent study of evaluation systems in OECD-DAC agencies¹⁸ states that: "The legitimacy and credibility of evaluation rely on its objectiveness and critical distance from policy makers and managers". The Evaluation Cooperation Group of the Multilateral Development Banks classifies this 'independence' of evaluation into four types: organizational, behavioural, protection from external influence and avoidance of conflicts of interest¹⁹. Further, organizational development theory suggests that the effectiveness of an evaluation system for learning purposes depends principally on the 'quality' of the products produced by the system and the level of 'acceptance' of those products within the organization. FAO's Members have placed increasing importance on the demonstration of development effectiveness and evidence-based resource allocations. The experience of the World Bank, IFAD and UNDP indicates that this is difficult, if not impossible, to achieve without the investments required to build a truly 'world class' evaluation office.

¹⁸ DAC Network on Development Evaluation, 2004, *Evaluation Systems in DAC Members' Agencies: A study based on DAC Peer Reviews*, Item IV.

¹⁹ IEG *Guidelines for Global and Regional Programme Reviews*, 2007.

55. **The IEE recommended²⁰ that “FAO’s evaluation function should be made independent,** continuing the line already set by the Governing Bodies in 2003. Institutional arrangements for this should be such as to ensure the responsiveness of the evaluation office to the needs of both the Governing Bodies and management. This would also enable easier integration of the evaluation functions of the three Rome-based agencies, should this be agreed upon at a later date.”

56. It recommended:

- a) “Establishment of the Evaluation Office as a separate office, with a strong consultative link to management and reporting to the Council through the Programme Committee;
- b) establishment of a small expert evaluation panel to provide advice to the Governing Bodies on evaluation policy and standards;
- c) the head of evaluation should prepare rolling multi-annual evaluation plans, maintaining the 'demand-led' principle to ensure that evaluation meets the immediate needs of the Governing Bodies and management, while at the same time ensuring coverage of different areas of work and that no significant body of work escapes independent evaluation in the medium term and areas of greatest risk are evaluated. The plans would be reviewed and approved by the Governing Bodies after appropriate consultation, including with management;
- d) the evaluation budget, once voted by the Governing Bodies, would be allocated directly to the Evaluation Office. To ensure continued flexibility in responding to management needs, a percentage (possibly 15 percent) of the biennial evaluation budget should be set aside in a reserve to respond to unprogrammed and unforeseen requirements;
- e) the classification of the position of the head of the Evaluation Office should be reviewed to ensure it is classified on a par with the heads of evaluation in those other UN agencies with a mature evaluation function. S/he should be appointed by the Governing Bodies, following an open competitive process and screening by a panel including independent evaluation specialists, representatives of FAO management and the Governing Bodies. The Head of Evaluation would be appointed for a fixed term²¹ and not be eligible for other appointments in FAO for a suitable period after completion of this assignment. S/he would have the sole responsibility for appointment of staff and consultants, following open and competitive processes and as authorized by Governing Bodies;
- f) the Evaluation Office should have a formal advisory role on: i) programme priorities in the light of overall evaluation results; ii) development of Results-Based Management Systems that feed monitoring and evaluation, including auto-evaluation; and iii) providing lessons learned in and to knowledge networks”;
- g) “Evaluation Budget and Resources. Core evaluation plans approved by the Governing Bodies should be funded adequately. In line with best practice amongst the most mature evaluation services in the UN system²², independent evaluation budget targets should be set at one percent of the Organization’s regular budget for independent corporate evaluation, and 0.3 percent for periodic independent thematic impact assessments. Further, FAO should maintain its leadership in requiring a mandatory contribution, amounting to

²⁰ Recommendations 7.10 and 7.11 - “*FAO: The Challenge of Renewal*” - Report of the Independent External Evaluation of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, September 2007.

²¹ Practice in IFAD and UNDP suggests that four to six years, renewable once, might be appropriate.

²² See IFAD, UNDP and UNICEF.

- approximately one percent of the value of each extra-budgetary contribution, for evaluation purposes;” and
- h) “The Evaluation Service should continue to assign highest priority to strategic, corporate-level evaluation and continue to assure full evaluation of extra-budgetary programmes, in line with the new regime approved by the Council in June 2007.”

57. It also recommended that evaluation should focus more attention on outcomes and impacts, with less description of outputs, undertake more comparison with the performance of other organizations and strengthen procedures for the transparent selection of evaluation team members.

V. EVALUATION PROGRAMME OF THE ORGANIZATION

The 2006-07 Programme of Completed Evaluations

58. All evaluation reports and, where available, the management response can be found on the FAO Evaluation website: <http://www.fao.org/pbe/pbee/en/index.html>

59. **Evaluations for consideration by the Governing Bodies:** During the 2006-07 biennium, the following major evaluations were presented to the Governing Bodies through the Programme Committee. For each of these evaluations, the full report is available on the FAO evaluation website, together with the management response to the evaluation and the reactions of the Programme Committee:

- a) Evaluation of Strategy D2: Conservation, Rehabilitation and Development of Environments at the Greatest Risk (evaluation brief 8);
- b) Multilateral Evaluation of the 2003-2005 Desert Locust Control Campaign-Toward a more Effective Response to Desert Locusts and Their Impacts on Food Security, Livelihoods and Poverty (evaluation brief 9);
- c) Evaluation of TeleFood (evaluation brief 10);
- d) Evaluation of FAO’s Work in Commodities and Trade (evaluation brief 11);
- e) Real-Time Evaluation of the FAO Emergency and Rehabilitation Operations in Response to the Indian Ocean Earthquake and Tsunami (evaluation brief 12); and
- f) Independent Evaluation of the Workings of the International Plant Protection Convention and its Institutional Arrangements (evaluation brief 13).

60. **Development projects and partnership programme evaluations:** A table summarising the individual project evaluations undertaken by independent missions during 2006-07 is provided as Annex I. Major evaluations included:

- a) Improving Support for Livelihoods of the Rural Poor -FAO/DFID Livelihood Support Programme GCP/INT/803/UK (completed April 2007);
- b) The Sustainable Fisheries Livelihoods Programme (SFLP) GCP/INT/735/UK (completed June 2007); and
- c) Second Evaluation of the FAO/Netherlands Partnership Programme II (scheduled for completion December 2007) – FNPP/GLO/004/NET.

61. **Emergency and rehabilitation:**

- a) The First Real-Time Evaluation of FAO’s Work on Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (completed June 2007); and
- b) FAO’s Emergency and Rehabilitation Assistance in the Greater Horn of Africa 2004-2007 (scheduled for completion November 2007).

62. **Evaluation of FAO's effectiveness in individual countries:** These evaluations analyse the total relevance, outcomes and impacts of FAO's work, including for emergencies in a few selected countries. A synthesis of these evaluations will form part of the assessment of FAO's effectiveness at country level to be presented to the Programme Committee in May 2008:

- a) FAO Cooperation in Mozambique (completed June 2006);
- b) FAO Cooperation in Sierra Leone (completed April 2007);
- c) FAO Cooperation in Cambodia (completed November 2007); and
- d) FAO Cooperation in Honduras (scheduled for completion December 2007).

Major Evaluations Programmed for 2008-09

63. **Reports for consideration by the Programme Committee:** In addition to the evaluations programmed below, further evaluations will be decided in the light of IEE follow-up:

- a) FAO's Effectiveness at Country Level;
- b) The statistics work of FAO: A comprehensive evaluation of the totality of FAO's work in statistics, with a special focus on FAOSTAT;
- c) Food and nutrition information systems (jointly with WFP);
- d) Corporate strategy B, Strategic Objective B.1, International instruments concerning food, agriculture, fisheries and forestry, and the production, safe use and fair exchange of agriculture, fishery and forestry goods; and
- e) FAO's Operational Capacity in Emergencies.

64. **Country evaluations:** Three to four evaluations during the biennium probably including the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Tajikistan and Sudan.

65. **Emergency and rehabilitation evaluation:**

- a) Response to the Earthquake in Pakistan
- b) Tsunami Ex-Post
- c) Second Real-Time Evaluation of FAO's Work on Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza

VI. EVALUATION BRIEFS - MAJOR EVALUATIONS

- 8. Evaluation of FAO's Strategic Objective D2: on conservation, rehabilitation and development of environments at the greatest risk
- 9. Multilateral Evaluation of the 2003-2005 Desert Locust Campaign
- 10. Evaluation of TeleFood
- 11. Evaluation of FAO's Work in Commodities and Trade
- 12. Real-Time Evaluation of the FAO Emergency and Rehabilitation Operations in Response to the Indian Ocean Earthquake and Tsunami
- 13. Independent Evaluation of the Workings of the International Plant Protection Convention and its Institutional Arrangements

EVALUATION SERVICE

FAO Evaluation Web site
www.fao.org/pbe/pbee/en/index.html

Evaluation of FAO strategic objective D2: on conservation, rehabilitation and development of environments at the greatest risk

Evaluation of FAO strategic objective D2

The FAO Strategic Framework 2000-2015 identifies five major corporate strategies to be followed by the Organization. Corporate strategy D, "Conserving and Enhancing Sustainable use of the Natural Resource Base", is broken down into two strategic objectives: D1 "Integrated Management of Land, Water, Fisheries, Forest and Genetic Resources" and D2 "Conservation, Rehabilitation and Development of Environments at the Greatest Risk".

In May 2003, the Programme Committee commissioned an evaluation to examine whether FAO response to strategic objective D2 had been adequate, and to make recommendations on the design, implementation, results and follow-up of related activities.

Evaluators used the Agenda 21 definition of fragile ecosystems (i.e. deserts, semi-arid lands, mountains, wetlands, small islands and certain coastal areas) as a basis for looking at FAO work on "environments at the greatest risk". For each of these ecosystems, evaluators looked at FAO work in: 1) monitoring and assessing; 2) capacity development; 3) promoting sustainable development; 4) and partnership mechanisms.

The assessment covers the first six years of the Strategic Framework (2000-2005), representing the first phase of FAO's action.

Findings

The most important findings of the evaluation related to the validity of D2 as a free standing strategic objective for FAO. Evaluators found that while it is certainly relevant for FAO to devote attention to the problems of fragile ecosystems, they would best be addressed through a more inclusive approach within the major programmes of the organization.

There are conceptual constraints to FAO delivery of D2. Distinctions between fragile ecosystems and any others are becoming increasingly difficult to make based on the simple geographical terms of mountain zones, drylands, and coastal and marine ecosystems used in D2. Parts of each of these systems are relatively robust, while highly sensitive parts of other ecosystems are not taken into account by this spatial definition.

Findings cont.

There are operational constraints to FAO delivery of D2. To be effective, FAO work on D2 would have to clearly differentiate why D2 environments require different strategies from other ecosystems, or are different from other development challenges, which has not been the case.

FAO performance in terms of defining and leading the D2-related agenda was very modest. Activities related to D2 have been diverse, and dispersed, and varied in quality, relevance and impact. The evaluation found that FAO showed little evidence of strategic leadership in D2 areas, even where they had the technical capability and prior standing.

Much of FAO's comparative advantage in working on D2 related issues is dependent on the individual professional capabilities of a small number of changing staff.

The D2 strategic objective has received a minor share of FAO resources, mainly through TCP funds. Links between FAO Strategic Objectives and resource allocations were made explicit for the first time in the Medium Term Plan 2002-07, when D2 was ranked second to last of all strategic objectives, receiving three percent of Regular Programme resources. The proportion rose slightly in the following Plans. Around four percent of extra-budgetary projects implemented by FAO were related to the objective.

Of the four evaluation components, the strongest delivery was in the development of monitoring and methodologies, primarily in the context of broader resource assessments, management approaches, guidelines and information products. There was some capacity building, though not set in a D2 context. The promotion of sustainable development was also noted, and a limited number of rehabilitation activities, but there was little to be distinguished from more generic action. Support for Agenda 21 and for international conventions and programmes was also noted.

Recommendations

- **FAO comparative advantages** for working with D2 issues should be identified and used in measuring performance and determining appropriate priorities and responses. FAO should develop areas where it shows leadership, and where it does not build up capacity among others. Processes should be established for pioneering concepts, testing and scaling up, negotiating and developing partnerships, and transferring skills and responsibilities for longer term engagement. The Evaluation Team concluded that while FAO engagement in D2 issues is very important and will remain so, **there is no specific advantage in maintaining a separate D2 objective** as currently structured. The functions of D2 should be absorbed into the broader aims of FAO through a more comprehensive and operationally effective restructuring of its strategic objectives.
- **FAO needs an operational framework for issues related to fragile ecosystems.** In order to provide FAO and its partners a framework in which to define priorities, goals and indicators, an approach needs to be developed which puts production, resources, vulnerability and risk into context from global to local levels. Opportunities should be sought for donor support and developing strong partnerships for implementation.
- **D2 related work** in areas such as economic valuation and the realisation of environmental values by local communities should be given greater emphasis and extended across a wider range of FAO activities, drawing on applications used in other agencies.
- **Projects with environmental and sustainable development themes should be longer in duration.** Short-term FAO Technical Cooperation Programme (TCP) projects should not be used for this unless they are pilot activities with very strong assurances of up-scaling, or there is a certainty that full requirements can be met within the project cycle. FAO should be much more rigorous in its ex-ante analyses to ensure these conditions.
- **FAO should define specific and effective criteria and measures for the stewardship of important fragile agro-ecological systems** and for developing sustainable and effective livelihood approaches, capable of being applied to meet future challenges at major system and local action levels. Working with partners, and agreeing on respective roles, an integrated approach should be taken in setting major goals, defining advocacy issues, investment needs and management approaches.

Peer review

The Peer Review did not agree with the Evaluation Team on the important question of whether a strategic objective dedicated to fragile ecosystems should be retained in FAO's Strategic Framework. It considered that the objective adds visibility and enhances FAO's ability to demonstrate the connection between food security and the environment, in keeping with the Millennium Development Goals and the recommendations of Agenda 21. The Review agreed with the other evaluation conclusions and recommendations. It stressed the need for more precise targeting and better use of FAO's comparative advantages. It also recommended promoting the ecosystem approach at a range of operative levels.

Management response to the evaluation

Management welcomed the evaluation report, stating that it contained useful findings and recommendations that would improve performance in both the Regular and Field Programmes. It agreed with all recommendations except that it had strong reservations regarding the recommendation that the D2 objective should be absorbed into the broader aims of FAO. It felt that retaining the strategic objective would enhance the ability of the Organization to direct its human and financial resources toward issues which are taking on greater global importance and visibility. It also stated that retaining the D2 objective would strengthen FAO's partnership with international financial institutions and bilateral agencies in mobilizing resources.

The Programme Committee found that the report provided a frank assessment of the work covered in this area over the past five years, but that some of the critical findings could have been better substantiated. It agreed with the FAO Management and the Peer Review that a re-formulated Strategic Framework should continue to feature a strategic objective directed at fragile ecosystems. The Committee welcomed management's intention to develop a coordinated overall strategy to address D2. The strategy should give priority to FAO's role in promoting policy dialogue at the country level, bringing together the diverse government departments concerned. Another essential feature of the strategy would be capacity building to support both national policy development and implementation. It agreed that longer duration projects should be sought in D2-related areas.

FAO Governing Bodies' conclusions (Programme Committee)

References

Evaluation of FAO Strategic Objective D2 "Conservation, Rehabilitation and Development of Environments at Greatest Risk".

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Report of the Ninety-sixth Session of the Programme Committee. Rome, 20-25 November 2006. CL 131-12.

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www.fao.org/pbe/pbee/en/index.html

Multilateral evaluation of the 2003-2005 desert locust control campaign

FAO and desert locust control

Countering locust emergencies has been an important role of FAO since 1951 when the Desert Locust Control Committee (DLCC) was established. FAO coordinates Desert Locust forecasting based on reports received from national locust units and weather information, and in the case of an outbreak coordinates an international response. Specific services provided by FAO to combat desert locust upsurges include: a forum for discussing policies, strategies, and plans; gathering of information for regular bulletins and early warnings; strengthening national locust control units and promoting collaboration at the regional level; declaring Desert Locust emergencies, organizing international assistance and providing technical advice and other support for control activities.

Multilateral evaluation of the 2003-2005 desert locust control campaign

FAO coordinated the Desert Locust Campaign of 2003-2005 in response to an upsurge in the Western region of the Sahel. The Campaign was carried out by affected countries, donors working directly with affected countries, donors working through FAO, Desert Locust Commissions and technical and operational units of FAO itself. The total cost of the campaign is estimated at US\$ 400 million, of which US\$ 280 million were used for control operations and US\$ 90 million for food assistance and rehabilitation of communities affected by the upsurge. Most funding for the control operations was provided by the affected countries, especially Algeria, Morocco and the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya.

A multilateral evaluation of the Campaign was proposed at the extraordinary session of the Desert Locust Control Committee in December 2004, with the objective of assessing the campaign in its entirety (i.e. the effectiveness and impacts of the work by all parties). The evaluation was funded from extra-budgetary resources, carried out by an independent team and overseen by a Steering Committee with representation from all partner countries and donors. The FAO Evaluation Service provided secretariat and methodological support to the independent team.

Findings

Donors generally considered that they were not adequately informed by FAO on the actions to be undertaken to address the Desert Locust invasion. The bulk of contributions arrived relatively late and affected countries believed that costs of the control operations would have been reduced, and the impact of the locust invasions more limited, had interventions started earlier. This having been said, a combination of effective control operations, especially the aerial control undertaken by Algeria and Morocco, and poor locust breeding conditions owing to unusually cool weather resulted in an early end to the emergency. This, the evaluation emphasized, could not have occurred without the substantial assistance to countries and prevented further threats to livelihoods.

Findings cont.

Invasions contribute heavily to the **degradation of socio-economic conditions** of affected communities and an estimated eight million people in the Sahel suffered to varying degrees from the Desert Locust invasions. However, Livelihood protection and rehabilitation were largely overlooked in the campaign. The extent of the negative impact on food security and livelihoods was attributed in part to the primary focus of control campaigns on the regions with high agricultural potential to the detriment of more marginal and pastoral areas, sometimes already affected by drought. In these areas, locust further threatened livelihoods through:

- loss of crops and pastures;
- migration for grazing by pastoralists and ensuing tension between pastoralists and farmers;
- severe food shortages, inflation of food prices and falling prices for livestock;
- reduction in non-food expenditures to face the rise in food costs (clothing, social expenditures, travel, and in some cases health and schooling).

Another area of concern was the **effects of pesticides on human health, livestock and the environment**. Although, this was given considerable attention in the Campaign, the measures taken were not always adequate and instances of human and animal poisoning and negative environmental effects were recorded in some countries. Most Plant Protection Services staff members who participated in the Desert Locust control operations did not undergo cholinesterase tests before the start of the campaign, and the negative effects on their health could not be determined. Pesticide stocks may represent a substantial disposal problem in the near future (more than 6.3 million litres of pesticides were left over after the campaign). In the wake of the invasions, significant numbers of empty pesticide containers were not collected and plastic containers provided to handle pesticides were used for domestic purposes.

While the evaluation found that staff in all affected countries made enormous efforts and often worked under harsh conditions to limit the impact of the Desert Locust invasion, the level of **preparedness of affected countries** was insufficient. Sahel countries were generally unable to launch timely, effective control operations to minimize damage to crops and pastures. The substantial costs incurred by the affected countries were not foreseen by national budgets and resulted in fewer available resources for other national development activities.

The **evaluation team concluded** that in the future the frequency and impact of Desert Locust invasions can be further reduced, provided effective action is taken on recommendations.

Recommendations

This evaluation was multi-lateral, addressing not only the activities of FAO, but also those of affected countries, Desert Locust organizations and donors.

■ International collaboration

The evaluation stressed the links between Desert Locust recession, the pre-emergency and emergency phases. Donors were found to have given generously to the campaign. Interest is there, but must be solicited in a more timely manner and channelled effectively, including strengthening capacity for monitoring and pre-emptive control measures. They urged donors and affected countries not to consider a Desert Locust emergency as a unique, stand-alone, event and to maintain preparedness.

Desert Locust emergency responses should fully incorporate livelihoods protection and restoral.

The Desert Locust Control Committee should be transformed from an essentially technical committee into a mechanism in which all parties (affected countries, donors and FAO) determine their coordinated work programmes.

The Commission de Lutte contre le Criquet Pèlerin dans la Région Occidentale should also be strengthened so as to play a more important role in the Western Sahel Region, working with the Maghreb countries to develop an appropriate action plan and legal framework for joint use of the existing control capacity.

■ Affected Countries

Contingency plans should be developed at national, regional and international levels for locust monitoring and control. The costs of control campaigns should be better studied to identify the reasons for the high costs of Desert Locust control operations in certain countries. Affected countries should give attention to both high and low production areas, take steps to comply with environmental and health standards in the use of pesticides, and make arrangements for a safer distribution and recovery of pesticide containers.

■ FAO

A large number of the Evaluation's recommendations are designed to address weaknesses in FAO operational efficiency, including:

- the concerned FAO units should better prepare for emergency situations by establishing categories of emergencies, a roster of experts, and working more closely with donors to understand and plan for the relief- rehabilitation- development continuum;
- FAO should establish procurement methods more consonant with Locust emergency needs and delegate authority to the lowest possible level. There should be one manager clearly responsible for operations. If it is not possible for FAO to provide improved emergency management, most operational responsibilities should be outsourced and;
- the staff handling Desert Locusts should be increased.

■ Research

More research should be undertaken on improving Desert Locust monitoring and control techniques through the use of new technologies, better understanding of Desert Locust population dynamics, and determining the overall impact on the economies of the countries affected by Desert Locust invasions.

Management response to the evaluation

A management response was submitted following requests for the strengthening of original by the Programme Committee of the Council. Management welcomed the integration of livelihood protection and rehabilitation into Desert Locust campaigns which it considered a fundamental step forward. The great majority of recommendations were accepted but it was recognised that the extent of additional Regular Programme funding which could be allocated to Desert Locust activities was limited.

The Programme Committee found the evaluation analytical and comprehensive, covering new and important ground in its examination of locust issues from the socio-economic, health and environmental perspectives. It also found major improvements in the second expanded response it had requested from management. It recommended that FAO should continue to play the lead role for locust early warning, coordination of response and control. Given the operational difficulties experienced by FAO in this campaign and in the Tsunami response, the Evaluation Service was asked to evaluate the nature of the constraints, with a view to streamlining operations and procedures, while maintaining an acceptable level of risk. It requested FAO to support the implementation of evaluation recommendations made to donors and other locust organizations and that FAO maximise the potentials of the UN common appeal mechanism for locust and similar emergencies.

FAO Governing Bodies' conclusions (Programme Committee)

References

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FAO Evaluation Web site
www.fao.org/pbe/pbee/en/index.html

Evaluation of TeleFood

Evaluation of TeleFood

TeleFood was established in 1997 to raise public awareness of food security issues through the sponsorship of cultural and sport events organized around the world. Proceeds from its fundraising activities are allocated in their entirety to financing grassroots-level projects intended to combat hunger and malnutrition.

The evaluation was a follow-up to the July 2005 evaluation on Cross-Organizational Strategy on Communicating FAO's Messages, which questioned the added value of TeleFood's efforts in achieving FAO goals. The evaluation examined TeleFood's efficiency and effectiveness in: 1) advocating to the general public FAO's basic messages on tackling hunger and food insecurity; 2) raising money to support the Organization in these strategic goals; and 3) the extent to which TeleFood projects were an effective use of the resources mobilised.

Between 1997 and 2005, 2,068 TeleFood projects were approved for a total value of US\$ 14,794,000, corresponding to a project average of US\$ 7,154. In the course of the evaluation, 323 final reports were reviewed and 25 projects were visited.

Findings

Institutional support for TeleFood is on the wane. Priority given to TeleFood has declined in terms of the level of attention it receives from senior management, staffing arrangements and the comparative share of Regular programme funding for the TeleFood unit.

Integration of TeleFood into an overall FAO advocacy and communication strategy. TeleFood has demonstrated its viability in mobilising funds from the public and in public awareness raising in a few countries. These activities now need to be fully integrated into a greater FAO institutional communications strategy. TeleFood, World Food Day, the Ambassador's Programme and FAO's mainstream development and emergency work should be fully integrated. TeleFood events have not made their audiences aware of the causes of hunger, at the international, national or local levels and of the multifaceted FAO activities in policy development, emergency response and field projects. They may even give the message that the multiplication of small TeleFood type projects is what is needed to successfully fight hunger, which is not the claim of FAO itself.

Targeting and performance. Evaluators found that TeleFood projects have not been particularly focused on poor countries nor have they benefited the most poor in the communities where they took place, although there has been an encouraging emphasis on women and children. It was found that TeleFood projects perform no better or worse in delivering sustainable benefits to the poor and malnourished than the average NGO project of this type. Very few community funds, or revolving funds, were put in place at the end of the projects.

Findings cont.

Transaction costs. The cost of running TeleFood projects is borne by the Regular Programme budget of the Organization and evaluators estimate it at 49% of direct project funding, compared to the 13% overhead cost on FAO technical cooperation development projects. The operational workload is excessive given the small size of the projects.

Comparative advantage. TeleFood projects do not maximise on FAO's comparative advantages. By definition, TeleFood projects are not intended to be innovative, so they cannot really serve as pilots or demonstrations drawing on leading edge technologies or approaches. Also they do not make any link between the macro and meso policy and institutional dimensions and the farming community.

Recommendations

- **TeleFood projects should not be continued as separate entities.**

Funds mobilised from public donations should be used to support FAO's mainstream development and emergency work, which fully meet the criteria of addressing the needs of the poor.

- **All FAO advocacy, information, and communication activities should be brought together into one unit.**

The World Food Day, Ambassador's programme and the TeleFood Unit with its mandate for advocacy and fund raising have all been combined in one entity. However, this still remained separate from the Information Division. This institutional break between advocacy, awareness raising, fundraising on one hand and information/communication on the other is not conducive to a coherent FAO Communication policy (this institutional merger has since been largely achieved).

- **Communication strategy and branding.**

A clear concise corporate strategy for communication and advocacy should be developed for all FAO activities. Messages should be simple and direct and not restricted to TeleFood projects or the World Food Day theme. The use of several brands and logos by FAO dilutes its efficacy as a communicator. The public branding of TeleFood should be gradually phased out. All branding should be in the name of FAO.

- **Donors.**

Advocacy and fund raising activities should focus on a few carefully selected countries with the highest potential for raising funds from the general public and local business sector. Donors should have some measure of opportunity to choose what they wish their donations to be used for and should receive information on ongoing work.

Management response to the evaluation

In its second response to the Governing Bodies, management stressed the importance of the communications aspect of the TeleFood Programme. Management stated that TeleFood's primary focus was in raising public awareness, and fundraising was only a "by-product". Management estimates for FAO overheads in running TeleFood projects were 13% and not 49% as mentioned in the report. Management provided proposals related to advocacy and fund-raising strategies, as well as measures to improve the targeting of projects and streamlining of procedures. It did not accept that TeleFood support should be directed towards FAO's wider development and emergency programmes, rather than individual TeleFood projects.

Most Committee Members found the expanded management response satisfactory. Some, however, felt the response to be unconvincing and that it did not fully address issues raised especially regarding criteria to guide advocacy and whether TeleFood projects should continue as separate entities.

While most members agreed that well designed small-scale projects assisted by TeleFood can contribute positively to household food security, others questioned the Organization's comparative advantage in this area, noting the high level of overheads and that many projects did not lead to sustainable benefits.

Some Members also questioned the efficacy of advocacy efforts to the general public. The Committee called for an advocacy and communication strategy, which it would review at a future session. The development of FAO's advocacy strategy to the general public should take account of the outcome of the Independent External Evaluation of FAO.

FAO Governing Bodies' conclusions (Programme Committee)

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EVALUATION SERVICE

FAO Evaluation Web site
www.fao.org/pbe/pbee/en/index.html

FAO work in commodities and trade

Evaluation of FAO's work in commodities and trade

The work of the FAO Trade and Markets Division is geared toward helping member countries, particularly developing countries, increase income from trade in agricultural commodities and participate in international trade negotiations such as those under the World Trade Organization. Over the last decade, FAO has had to review its basic function and roles in these areas in light of international trends, in particular the move away from controlled commodity markets and government commodity trading and the increasing globalisation of agricultural production and trade.

The evaluation team visited 23 countries and over 25 international institutions in both developing and developed regions. It carried out extensive interviews and assessments at headquarters, and carried out a questionnaire survey of FAO member countries. An External Peer Review panel endorsed the terms of reference as well as the conclusions and recommendations of the evaluation.

The evaluation was conducted during a time of significant transformation in the Trade and Markets Division structure and work to focus more on analysis of markets and trade than on commodity market monitoring. Several of the evaluation recommendations were in fact already being addressed by the end of the evaluation process.

Findings

FAO comparative advantage. FAO currently houses the world's largest international body of staff devoted to studying global agricultural commodity markets and trade. Its comparative advantage lies in its emphasis on commodities, agricultural activities and policies in smaller developing countries. It is also the only international entity that informs the world about impending food shortages on a regular basis.

Limited partnerships. FAO's country level partnerships for trade and commodities work have remained with Ministries of Agriculture and have not expanded to include Ministries of Finance, Economy, Commerce and Trade or private sector entities, which now often play a bigger role than Agriculture in issues, trends and policy making in commodity trade. FAO also has little contact with NGOs involved in advocacy on commodity and trade issues.

Findings cont.

The Committee on Commodity Problems and the Intergovernmental Groups. Evaluators found that these fora for government officials have become much less relevant to international commodity markets than in the past. They suggest experimentation with different structures for the Intergovernmental Groups, using FAO's convening capacity to bring together stakeholders from the public and private sectors to improve exchange of data and information on commodity markets. Another suggestion is that meetings of both groups be held jointly with UNCTAD and WTO in Geneva, so as to bring country trade representatives together with the agricultural representatives from Rome and commodity specialists from capitals.

Outreach and dissemination of information. The "OECD/FAO Agricultural Outlook" was considered a good example of cooperation and partnering efforts and it was recommended that the publication become the flagship of the commodity market analysis work of ESC. FAO's normative policy and trade activities, however, are not well known in countries. This may be because the focus is on Ministries of Agriculture alone and other appropriate targets are not being reached. Also, only a small percentage of documents are published in refereed journals or other frequently cited formats. Publication in more credible journals would raise the profile of the work.

Recommendations

Evaluators made a general recommendation that Management is on the right track with its re-orientation. However, it is recommended that certain strategic issues receive further attention. These include:

- Partnerships need to be created or expanded in a number of areas: 1) with ministries besides Agriculture that work in commodities and trade; 2) with the International Commodity Bodies to develop the monitoring, outlook and analysis of commodity markets; 3) with private sector and industry associations to undertake analysis of supply networks and value chains and; 4) by broadening cooperation with other institutions that are involved in international and domestic markets, including universities, research organization and NGOs.
- Medium- Term commodity analysis and the simulation model (COSIMO): Evaluation country visits confirmed that the direction being taken in longer term commodity market analysis is the correct one. The evaluation team recommended continuing the change in focus of FAO's commodities work away from market monitoring (for which others may be better adapted) towards more medium-term analysis and trade policy work. COSIMO is highly valued and the evaluation recommended that the COSIMO project should be enhanced and continued (and be the only large model supported by FAO).
- Incentive systems need to be developed to encourage staff to expand extra-budgetary resources, improve collaboration within FAO, and increase partnerships with other organizations. An examination of successful experiences elsewhere to identify effective incentive systems that are compatible with these various objectives should be undertaken.
- Priority themes. A number of thematic areas should be selected around which to structure work on commodity market and trade analysis. This should solve some management and coordination problems and raise the international profile of FAO's work.
- Technical support to member countries should receive a greater relative proportion of support in the work programme as opposed to headquarters-based activities such as research, servicing meetings and publications. Given its mandate to provide assistance to individual developing countries on trade and commodity policies FAO must ensure that the results of its analytical work are made available in easily accessible and user-friendly form. Staff should also provide training and capacity-building assistance on a country and regional basis.
- FAOSTAT data base improvements were strongly supported. These should reduce the need for the Trade and Markets division to maintain short- and long-term commodity databases

Management response to the evaluation

Management generally agreed with the findings noting that progress had already been made on many of the recommendations under the Reforms of the Organization and the Revised Programme of Work and Budget 2006-07. The scope for implementing further changes would depend in part on the availability of both Regular Programme and extra-budgetary resources.

The Programme Committee appreciated the evaluation methodology and process, including the involvement of the Peer Review Panel. The evaluation should, however, have given greater attention to identifying the outcomes and impacts of FAO's work, and the report could have been more pro-active in recommending priorities and identifying issues.

The Committee found the management response to be both positive and useful. It asked management to provide a strategy for FAO's work in commodities and trade for review at a future session. Work should concentrate on the analysis of longer-term trends and FAO's use of models should be mainly restricted to COSIMO. The Committee supported FAO's neutral role in analysing the implications of changes in trade instruments and the trade regime for developing countries.

FAO Governing Bodies' conclusions (Programme Committee)

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EVALUATION SERVICE

FAO Evaluation Web site
www.fao.org/pbe/pbee/en/index.html

Real time evaluation of the FAO emergency and rehabilitation operations in response to the Indian Ocean earthquake and tsunami

FAO response to the Indian Ocean earthquake and tsunami

The December 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami killed approximately 300,000 people and affected the livelihoods of two million people. The disaster represented FAO's biggest emergency challenge to date, requiring a more varied response and more technical assistance than any previous FAO relief and recovery operations.

A real time evaluation of FAO activities was carried out to provide immediate feedback and guidance to FAO management on strategic and operational achievements and constraints, and to identify unintended outcomes and gaps in the response. The evaluation focused on Indonesia, Sri Lanka, Thailand and the Maldives, where most FAO assistance was provided. It involved desk studies, field surveys and three successive evaluation missions in 2005 and 2006.

Findings

Donors and resources. FAO had raised US \$77 million in support of its tsunami response. Contributions were received from a number of non-traditional donors, including private sector companies. The Special Fund for Emergency and Rehabilitation Activities (SFERA) played a critical role to speed up project implementation and cover strategic though yet unfunded needs (e.g. needs assessments and the set up of emergency response coordination units). The fisheries sector received two-thirds of these funds, a share which the evaluation found appropriate. Half of all expenditures were used for procurement of equipment and inputs. Overall donor support was more flexible than in previous disaster responses. However, FAO had more success in mobilizing resources for its early rehabilitation programmes than for longer-term reconstruction and development activities.

Damage and needs assessments did not sufficiently identify key elements for programme design. They were conducted in a piece-meal way, tended to be released late, and were not well communicated. FAO tsunami atlases in particular could have been disseminated more widely at the country level and through OCHA and ReliefWeb. Early **project designs** were derived from previous emergency project documents, sometimes with limited feed-back from field offices and national governments. Project designs during subsequent phases become more context-specific. **Monitoring** of results and of partners' contractual obligations was found insufficient.

Findings cont.

Operations: The real time evaluation found that the Organization's excessive centralisation of authority, bureaucratic procedures and rigid employment practices lowered the level of operational capacity in the field. Deployment of staff during the first few months was relatively rapid, but during subsequent phases, personnel regulations on contract lengths made it difficult to retain staff. Regarding procurement, the speed of delivery and quality of items varied considerably. Local procurement was found to be generally preferable to international procurement, but required adequate financial management capacity in field offices. Splitting large procurements in smaller quantities which could be produced quickly proved beneficial.

Partnerships: FAO engaged very actively in partnerships at local, national and global levels with a wide array of stakeholders including governments, donors, NGOs, academic institutions, UN agencies and international financing institutions, although cumbersome contractual arrangements sometimes bogged down collaborative efforts.

Sectoral coordination: FAO's coordinating role was generally limited to information sharing and advocacy. This role was strongest in Sri Lanka, where sectoral coordination forums, well facilitated by FAO and co-chaired by the Government, may have surpassed the delivery of physical assistance in terms of visibility and utility.

Impact on beneficiaries: Overall, the FAO tsunami response assisted an estimated 106,000 households. FAO was better able to respond to agriculture sector needs than to those in the fisheries and forestry sectors, reflecting its past experience with agricultural emergencies and a lighter degree of destruction in agriculture than was incurred by the fisheries sector.

FAO performed best in the agriculture sector, which is understandable given the Organization's past experience with agricultural disasters. For fisheries, new modalities had to be developed, tailored to the varied natures of the fishery-based. The best response in fisheries rehabilitation was in Sri Lanka, through a mix of sectoral coordination, technical assistance and the repair and distribution of assets. Contributions to the reconstruction of the fisheries sector were less significant in Indonesia, Thailand and the Maldives where deliverables were few and came at high transaction costs. FAO support to the forestry sector was

smaller and also came rather late.

Evaluators found that women did not receive sufficient attention, largely because the FAO focus was on repairing or replacing boats and gear for fishermen. However, support was provided to Indonesian fish dryers, 30 percent of them female, and nutritional training in Sri Lanka reached 2,000 beneficiaries, almost all women. In the agricultural sector, women interviewed during evaluation missions considered they had received their due share of assistance.

In the agricultural sector, communities tended to share assets for self-subsistence activities (seeds, fertilizer, even tractors or cows) with a much larger group of beneficiaries than intended by FAO, as a way to help maintain social cohesion. This tendency applied much less to more competitive activities such as commercial vegetable production, fish drying, and boats and fishing gear, where the tendency for elite capture was harder to resist. As a result, beneficiary selection was on average more contentious and difficult in the fisheries than in the agricultural sector.

Transition to reconstruction and development: In each country, FAO introduced long-term concerns in its emergency and early rehabilitation work and developed a series of relevant project concept notes for longer term reconstruction. However, in spite of significant demand from governments and other stakeholders for a prolonged involvement of FAO, FAO was not able to mobilise significant development resources to follow upon its large tsunami rehabilitation programme.

Recommendations

- **Collaboration and partnerships:** A clearer articulation of corporate-wide goals and strategies would help to promote in-house collaboration between units, and enable a smooth transition from initial rehabilitation to longer-term reconstruction and development. The creation of stand-by partnership agreements could speed up implementation of initial activities. A simpler mechanism for entering into formal partnerships should replace the current Letter of Agreement. FAO should continue to convene national coordination meetings in its areas of competence.
- **Beneficiary targeting:** FAO should live up to corporate commitments to vulnerable groups, women and the poorest, even when that entails providing poor households with assets they may not have possessed before the disaster. A simple beneficiary selection process is sufficient for small or sharable assets, while the selection of beneficiaries for high value assets must be carefully planned, conducted and monitored.
- **Damage and needs assessments:** Initial FAO assessments should cover all areas within its mandate in one consolidated document. Recovery assessments should be made at regular intervals.
- **Monitoring:** Simple reporting systems for monitoring should be developed and the Organization should provide mapping and remote sensing services over a longer period, ensuring wider dissemination.
- **Operations:** FAO should delegate significant authority to FAO Representatives and emergency staff at the national level, and increase investment in the development of national level administrative skills, operational capacity and control mechanisms. In order to retain experienced staff in the field, FAO should offer longer-term consultant contracts and the regulation for mandatory contract breaks should be applied more flexibly, especially as to timing for emergency projects.
- **Resource mobilisation:** FAO should continue to raise the awareness of donors of the usefulness of the Special Fund for Emergency and Rehabilitation Activities (SFERA), stressing the advantages of flexibility and the costs of conditionality. FAO should lobby with other organizations involved in livelihood rehabilitation for longer timeframes in consolidated appeals with the UN Office for Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) and the UN Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC).

Management response to the evaluation

Management accepted, with some caveats, almost all the recommendations of the evaluation, noting that many of the recommendations are already being implemented, either fully or in part.

FAO Governing Bodies' conclusions (Programme Committee)

The Programme Committee appreciated the thoroughness and quality of the evaluation and expressed satisfaction with the comprehensive and positive management response. It noted the usefulness of real-time evaluations, but found that an ex-post evaluation to assess the sustainable benefits in terms of livelihoods and capacity building would also be important.

The Committee stressed FAO's comparative advantage in coordination and technical support, while recognising that operational inputs were sometimes important to fill gaps in assistance provided by others. It emphasised the importance of deploying both technical and operational staff quickly when an emergency occurred and the need for management to address operational bottlenecks. The Committee viewed the Special Fund for Emergency and Rehabilitation Activities as a useful means of obtaining donor support for more programmatic and timely interventions. It found that moving from relief and rehabilitation to development cannot be dealt with by FAO alone, but should involve the participation of national governments, donors and partners in the field. National NGOs could be important partners not only during emergencies, but also for sustainable rehabilitation.

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EVALUATION SERVICE

FAO Evaluation Web site
www.fao.org/pbe/pbee/en/index.html

Independent evaluation of the workings of the International Plant Protection Convention and its institutional arrangements

FAO and the International Plant Protection Convention

The International Plant Protection Convention (IPPC) is an international treaty relating to plant health, to which as of September 2007 165 governments adhere. The Secretariat for the IPPC is provided by FAO and the Convention is governed by the Commission on Phytosanitary Measures (CPM). The WTO agreement on sanitary and phyto-sanitary matters (SPS) recognises the IPPC as the international standard-setting organization for the elaboration of international standards to help ensure that phytosanitary measures are not used as unjustified barriers to trade. Consequently, steps were undertaken to adapt the Convention to the new realities. This resulted in the development of a revised text which extended the Convention's scope and mandate to include standard-setting, the promotion of the provision of technical assistance, and to address environmental concerns. The new revised text of the IPPC was adopted in 1997 and came into force in October 2005.

The Evaluation was called for during this transitional period for the Convention to review the expectations of the Contracting Parties and FAO and provide an input on future policy, organizational structure, funding negotiations, strategy and management of the IPPC. The methodology used to conduct the evaluation included desk studies, visits to countries for discussions with a range of stakeholders from government industry and civil society, a questionnaire survey to governments which received 92 responses, an external peer review and a review of the draft report by the Commission for Phytosanitary Measures (CPM) during its session in March 2007.

Findings

The Convention is valued by the Contracting Parties to the Convention as a forum for discussion on phytosanitary issues and measures. The International Standards on Phytosanitary Measures (ISPM) are essential benchmarks for national standards and to facilitate trade while reducing the risk of pest introduction. These benefits will increase as trade continues to expand. Increased attention should be paid to enhancing public information on the overall importance of plant protection to effectively address food and bio-security concerns.

Findings cont.

Balanced FAO/IPPC governance: FAO's hosting of the IPPC Secretariat is considered desirable by virtually all stakeholders and the financial support provided by FAO has been instrumental in the work undertaken so far. However, the revised Convention that came into force in October 2005 provided the Convention with its own governing body, the consequences of which are inadequately reflected in the current administrative arrangements with FAO. A more balanced relationship needs to be established with fully shared responsibilities between the governing bodies of the IPPC and FAO, in particular regarding budget levels and management as well as IPPC secretariat staffing.

Strengthening the IPPC Secretariat's capacity. The Secretariat suffers from a constant shortage of adequate resources on which it can depend to plan its work. Agreement will have to be reached on a minimum level of sustained funding from FAO and the Contracting Parties to ensure necessary additional funding over a significant period.

Standard-Setting: Stakeholders consider IPPC standards to be relevant; however, for some developing countries, their usefulness is limited because of inadequate capacity. There is a need for greater prioritization in the development of new standards and more clarity on the process for establishing the work programme. The criteria which have been defined as a basis for prioritisation, while valid, are too numerous and not sufficiently aligned with the overall objectives. There is insufficient rigor and transparency in the selection of the Standards Committee (SC) members. The effective application of the existing rules of procedure and more active involvement of Regional Plant Protection Organizations in the identification of appropriate candidates would do much to improve this. The standard-setting process could benefit from more content-based reporting of discussions held during the process which would help members prepare informed comments on draft standards. There is an increased need for consideration of environment and biodiversity issues when developing and revising phytosanitary standards. This requires both capacity in the Secretariat, and a Technical Panel on Biodiversity to provide a wider range of technical expertise.

Technical Assistance needs: The report recognizes that there is an extensive need to assist developing countries in strengthening their national phytosanitary capacities. The report concludes that the IPPC Secretariat is not the appropriate place for implementing technical assistance activities aimed at strengthening phytosanitary capacities.

Information Exchange: The International Phytosanitary Portal (IPP), an electronic internet-based forum for the exchange of official phytosanitary information by Contracting Parties to the Convention, the Secretariat and Regional Plant Protection Organizations, has not been fully effective. Mandatory reporting obligations are only being partially met; there is a lack of country information; and unreliable information is sometimes posted. While Secretariat training efforts have been successful, there is still a need among countries for capacity-building to meet reporting obligations and make appropriate use of the Portal.

Recommendations

- **Standard setting** The evaluation team has identified a number of ways to improve the efficiency of the standard-setting process. These include greater use of existing standards, in particular those developed by Regional Plant Protection Organizations, and greater use of the knowledge and expertise outside of governments, in particular, industry groups and NGOs. To ensure continued relevance of standards, a monitoring system for their implementation must be developed.
- **The IPPC should focus its activities on what it can do best** for the Contracting Parties. Given the limited resources, strategies and activities at all levels need to be prioritised. More effort needs to be put into strengthening the core work of information exchange and standard setting. Technical assistance under the IPPC by its secretariat, should be strictly limited to core business, while technical assistance activities aimed at strengthening national phytosanitary capacities should be undertaken by international technical assistance organizations, including FAO.
- **Strengthening of Governance structures.** The recommendations regarding Governance aim to strengthen ownership of all members while applying governance principles of representivity, accountability, efficiency and transparency. It is recommended that the current Informal Working Group on Strategic Planning and Technical Assistance become part of an extended Bureau. The effectiveness of the Standards Committee could be improved by reducing the current membership from 25 to 14. Agreement should be reached on funding that can be expected from FAO to better plan for additional fund raising in support of the Convention.
- **Strengthening of the Secretariat.** The analysis of IPPC activities and governance calls for a significantly strengthened Secretariat. The Secretary of the IPPC should be a full-time manager free of other FAO duties. The decision on the appointment should be taken by the new Bureau and representatives of the FAO Director-General. The posts dealing with the IPPC's two core functions (standard-setting and information exchange) should be upgraded to senior positions. The professional staffing of the Secretariat should be increased from five to ten. FAO should settle with the IPPC governing body, the Commission on Phytosanitary Measures (CPM) Bureau on a level of guaranteed funding in support of the Secretariat's core activities. This would facilitate timely identification of the amount of additional resources to be mobilized to meet the full IPPC budget requirement.
- **Funding of the IPPC:** There is little margin for significant increases in the IPPC's funding level by FAO from its Regular Programme budget given FAO's overall budget situation. However, FAO should guarantee funding of the core activities at a level agreed between the CPM's expanded Bureau and FAO. This would facilitate timely identification of the amount of additional resources to be mobilised through voluntary funding to meet the full IPPC budget requirement. There should be a more solid resource mobilisation strategy based on multi-donor rather than bilateral funding.

Response of the Commission on Phytosanitary Measures

The Informal Working Group on Strategic Planning and Technical Assistance, responding for the Commission on Phytosanitary Measures, generally agreed with the recommendations on the need for sufficient and reliable direct funding from FAO and appropriate staffing of the IPPC Secretariat. The CPM did not agree with the recommendations which suggest that FAO, rather than the IPPC Secretariat, take the lead role on technical assistance and capacity building activities. The CPM-relevant recommendations were not addressed in the Programme Committee response but will instead be considered at the next CPM annual meeting.

Management response to the evaluation

Management noted that the technical responsibilities and the policy context of the IPPC are complex and continue to evolve. Of the 36 FAO-oriented recommendations, 32 were accepted wholly or in part. Contrary to the Evaluation Team's recommendation, FAO considered the IPPC Secretariat best suited to catalyse and coordinate the response to addressing the developing countries' needs. It rejected a recommendation on the outsourcing of document translation in order to reduce costs.

The Committee appreciated the quality and thoroughness of both the Evaluation report and the management Response. It supported combining the functions of the Bureau and the Informal Working Group on Strategic Planning and Technical Assistance and concurred with the Management Response that the Coordinator's position should be maintained, together with a full-time Secretary at DI level. The Committee considered that a catalytic role in phytosanitary capacity building should continue to be a priority for the FAO Technical Cooperation Programme, while acknowledging its limitations in longer-term support and suggested exploring a multilateral trust fund with a broader scope than the one presently employed by the IPPC. It supported the recommendation to make greater use of standards developed by regional organizations.

The Committee felt it could not address funding issues without a multi-year funding strategy that clearly indicated resource requirements, potential funding sources and the expected outputs and benefits. It stressed the importance of increased and reliable FAO Regular Programme funding to the IPPC to promote extra-budgetary resource mobilisation and mobilisation of resources in kind.

The Committee regretted that FAO management had only accepted partially the recommendation that the Organization should undertake a Review of the World Phytosanitary Status because of resource constraints and recommended that a less-costly product be produced.

FAO Governing Bodies' conclusions (Programme Committee)

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**ANNEX I: EVALUATIONS OF EXTRA-BUDGETARY
DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS AND PROGRAMMES
DURING 2006-07**

Global and Inter-regional		
	OSRO/GLO/504/MUL	French Contribution to Multilateral Programme of Emergency Assistance for the Control and Prevention of Avian Influenza
	GCP/INT/007/BEL	Evaluation de l'axe thématique "Approche participative et gestion des terroirs"
	GCP/INT/864/SWI	Capacity Building for Surveillance and Prevention of BSE and Other Zoonotic Diseases
	GCP/INT/735/UK	Sustainable Fisheries Livelihoods (SFL) Programme
	GCP/INT/803/UK	Improving Support for Enhancing Livelihoods of the Rural Poor
	GCP/INT/915/UK	Support to Building, Communicating and Using Evidence Relating to the Impact on Developing Countries of the Agriculture and Trade Policy of the OECD Countries (Phases I and II)
	GCP/INT/916/JPN	Socio-Economic Analysis and Policy Implications of the Roles of Agriculture in Developing Countries (Phase II)
	GCP/INT/976/SWI	Establishing the Mountain Partnership Secretariat Follow-up Phase of GCP/INT/706/SWI
Africa		
Regional	GCFS/RAF/387/ITA	Acacia Operation – Support to Food Security, Poverty Alleviation and Soil Degradation Control in the Gums and Resins Producer Countries
Regional	OSRO/RAF/510/SAF	Strengthening Livelihoods through Food and Nutrition Security in Vulnerable SADC Countries
Regional	OSRO/RAF/511/SAF	Surveillance and Control of Epidemic Foot-and-Mouth Disease (FMD) and Contagious Bovine Pleuropneumonia (CBPP) in Southern Africa
Regional	UNTS/RAF/010/GEF	Environmental Protection and Sustainable Management of the Okavango River Basin
Angola	GCPS/ANG/027/EC	Support to the Food Security Department (Phase II)
Burkina Faso	BKF/98/006	Appui à la Fixation des Jeunes dans leurs Terroirs
Burkina Faso	GCP/BKF/041/BEL	Projet d'Appui aux Organisations Paysannes de la Province de la Kompienga dans le Cadre de la Sécurité Alimentaire et de la Décentralisation au Burkina Faso
D.R. Congo	GCP/DRC/028/BEL	Project d'appui au Développement de l'Horticulture Urbaine et Péri-Urbaine (Phases I et II)
D.R. Congo	GCP/DRC/031/BEL	Appui à la Définition des Politiques de Développement Agricole en République Démocratique du Congo
Eritrea	GCP/ERI/006/ITA	Strengthening of Agricultural Research in Eritrea (Phase II)

Mozambique	GCP/MOZ/027/BEL	Improving Nutrition and Household Food Security in Manica Province
Mozambique	GCP/MOZ/081/NET	Decentralized Legal Support and Capacity Building to Promote Sustainable Development and Good Governance at Local Level
Mozambique	GTFS/MOZ/076/ITA	Mozambique - National Special Programme for Food Security PAN II
Mozambique	UTF/MOZ/071/MOZ	Support to the Coordinating Structure for Food Security Information System Activities of the SETSAN
Zambia	GCP/ZAM/059/BEL	Luapula Food Security, Nutrition Action and Communication Project (LFSNAC)
Asia and Pacific		
Regional	GCP/RAS/186/JPN	Implementation of the Global Plan of Action for the Conservation and Sustainable Utilization of Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture in Asia and the Pacific Region
Bangladesh	GCSP/BGD/033/JPN	Cluster Evaluation Special Programme for Food Security
Indonesia	GCSP/INS/073/JPN	
Laos	GCSP/LAO/011/JPN	
Sri Lanka	GCSP/SRL/049/JPN	
Afghanistan	GCP/AFG/029/UK	Development of Sustainable Agricultural Livelihoods in Eastern Hazarajat
Afghanistan	GCP/AFG/036/UK	Alternative Agricultural Livelihoods Programme
Indonesia	OSRO/INS/512/SPA	Emergency Assistance to Tsunami-affected Coastal Communities in Aceh and North Sumatra
Philippines	GCP/PHI/047/AUL	Technical Support for Agrarian Reform and Rural Development (PATSARRD)
Philippines	OSRO/PHI/501/JPN	Emergency Rehabilitation of Agri-based Livelihood for Disadvantaged Farmers and Returning Internally Displaced People in Mindanao
Vietnam	GCP/VIE/027/ITA	Capacity Building, Extension, Demonstration and Support for the Development of Market-Oriented Agroforestry in Quang Nam Province
Europe		
Regional	GCP/RER/017/ITA	Integrated Pest Management for Western Corn Rootworm in Central and Eastern Europe
Bosnia & Herzegovina	GCP/BIH/002/ITA	Inventory of Post-War Situation of Land Resources
The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia	GCP/FRY/002/NOR	Support to Refugee Integration through Agricultural Activities (RITA)
Latin America and the Caribbean		
Regional	GCP/RLA/138/SPA	Proyecto Regional de Cooperación Técnica para la Formación en Economía y Políticas Agrarias y de Desarrollo Rural en América Latina (FODEPAL)

Colombia	UNO/COL/303/DCP	Manejo Forestal en la Costa Pacífica de Nariño del Plan Nacional de Desarrollo Alternativo
Near East		
Iraq	OSRO/IRQ/405/UDG	Promotion of Cottage Industry in Rural and Urban Areas
Somalia	GCP/SOM/045/EC	Somalia Water and Land Information and Management System (Phase II)
Planned Last Quarter 2007 – First Quarter 2008		
Global and Inter-Regional		
	GCP/INT/952/EC GCP/GLO/162/EC	EC/FAO Food Security Programme
Africa		
Regional	UNO /RAF/381/FIP	Central African World Heritage Forest Initiative
Regional (Lesotho, Malawi)	GCP/RAF/388/GER	Protecting and Improving Food and Nutrition Security of Orphans and HIV/AIDS Affected Children (Lesotho and Malawi)
Nigeria	UTF/NIR/048/NIR	National Programme for Food Security (Phase I)
South Africa	UTF/SAF/001/SAF	Special Programme for Food Security in South Africa
Europe		
Albania	GCP/ALB/005/ITA	Agricultural Production Support in Albania - (Phase II of GCP/ALB/003/ITA)
Latin America and Caribbean		
Regional	GTFS/RLA/141/ITA	Promoting CARIFORUM/CARICOM Food Security
Guatemala	GCP/GUA/012/SPA	Restauración de Activos de las Familias Vulnerables Pobres Afectadas por la Tormenta Stan en las Cuencas del Lago de Atitlán y Río Naranjo

