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PROGRAMME COMMITTEE

Hundred and Sixteenth Session

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INDICATIVE ROLLING WORK PLAN OF STRATEGIC AND PROGRAMME EVALUATION 2015-17

Executive Summary

- This proposed indicative work plan updates the document reviewed by the Committee in 2012 (PC 112/7) and suggests some new directions for the period of 2015-2017.
- It is proposed to present in each Committee session one thematic evaluation related to the Organization's Strategic Objectives.
- A new series of country programme evaluations will be launched with more attention paid to the achievement of outcomes as defined in Country Programming Frameworks. Five to seven such evaluations are planned for each year.
- The Office of Evaluation continues to support project evaluations, service other evaluation needs of the Organization, and participate in joint evaluation initiatives with other UN agencies.

Guidance from the Programme Committee

- The Committee is invited to comment on the proposed plan 2015-2017 and endorse the plan.
- It is suggested to review the plan every two years; the next review to be in Autumn 2016.

Queries on the substantive content of this document may be addressed to:

Mr Igarashi Masahiro
Director, Office of Evaluation
Tel. (06) 570- 53903

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INTRODUCTION

1. At its 112th session in November 2012, the Programme Committee reviewed a proposed update on the indicative work plan of strategic and programme evaluations for 2012-2014 (PC/112/7). It made some suggestions (CL 148/7), which were incorporated into the work plan. This document further updates the indicative work plan and suggests some new directions for the period of 2015-2017.
2. In 2014, the Office of Evaluation (OED) has shifted the emphasis of its evaluations to the examination of results achieved, i.e. what results FAO has contributed to, how and to what extent. The purpose is to provide the Committee and other stakeholders of the Organization with more information and analysis of results achieved in the field and at the country level. Accordingly, ongoing thematic evaluations are provided with new methods and more research time to collect sufficient results-information from the field. Results-orientation also implies a stronger focus on the Organization's contribution to the achievement of strategic and programmatic objectives. Thematic evaluations proposed are hence aligned more closely to the Strategic Objectives of the Organization. Country evaluations will examine more closely the results achieved in relation to Country Programming Frameworks. The proposed plan contained in this document reflects this shift in emphasis.
3. OED also intends to strengthen cross-utilization of evaluations. If conducted in a sufficient number, country-level evaluations and project evaluations can form a good evidence base for thematic evaluations and consideration of strategic questions. The proposed plan also reflects this notion.
4. OED continues to support project evaluations and service other corporate evaluation needs when its resources allow and the needs are justified. In addition, it will engage in some joint evaluations, where appropriate.
5. Table 1 provides a list of proposed evaluations and related reports to be presented to the Committee. Table 2 provides a list of other evaluations to be conducted during the period, which could be presented to the Committee or provided to Committee Members upon request.
6. It is suggested to review the indicative working plan every two years. The next review would be in the second half of 2016 for the 2017-2019 period.

PROPOSED PROGRAMME OF EVALUATIONS

Thematic evaluations presented to the Committee

7. OED has been conducting thematic evaluations in line with the indicative work plan 2012-2014 to be considered by the Committee. Accordingly, the following three evaluations initiated in 2014 will be presented to the 118th session of the Committee in the second half of 2015.
 - a) Evaluation of FAO's contribution to knowledge on food, agriculture and natural resources
 - b) Evaluation of FAO's contribution to climate change adaptation and mitigation
 - c) Evaluation of FAO's contribution to the conservation and sustainable use of genetic resources for food and agriculture
8. For evaluations to be initiated in 2015 and onwards, it is proposed in principle to have one thematic evaluation relating to a corporate Strategic Objective to be considered at each session of the Committee. Given the implementation stage of initiatives redesigned in line with Strategic Objectives, presentation of these thematic evaluations to the Committee could start in the second half of 2016. The suggested evaluations are as follows:
9. **Evaluation of FAO's contribution to inclusive and efficient agricultural and food systems (SO 4):** With increasing trade and urbanization, value chains and consumption patterns are becoming more complex and challenging for small-scale farmers, forest-dwellers and fishermen to adapt and benefit from. In addition, agriculture is becoming more science and capital intensive, which further risks of excluding small-scale producers and other vulnerable groups. This evaluation will examine how FAO has been contributing to inclusive and efficient agricultural and food systems through policy, normative and capacity development initiatives aimed at improving the livelihoods of

the rural poor; it is planned to be initiated in mid-2015 and completed in mid-2016 for the Committee's consideration in the second half of 2016.

10. **Evaluation of FAO's contribution to elimination of hunger, food insecurity and malnutrition (SO 1):** Hunger, food insecurity and malnutrition are complex problems that require combined action by different actors and sectors to address. At the international level, FAO works to raise awareness, understanding and political commitment of decision-makers in governments and development partners. Building on this FAO, at regional and country level, focuses on helping countries to create an enabling environment for, and support the capacity development of governments and other stakeholders to bring about policy changes, increase investment and intensify actions to eradicate hunger, food insecurity and malnutrition. This evaluation aims to examine the effectiveness of FAO's approach, how its combined work at global, regional and country levels has led to positive outcomes at the country level and how it could further enhance its contribution in the fight against hunger, food insecurity and malnutrition. This evaluation is planned to be initiated in late 2015 and completed in 2016 for the Committee's consideration in the first half of 2017.

11. **Evaluation of FAO's contribution in enhanced resilience of livelihood (SO 5):** Various forms of disasters and crises threaten sustainable agricultural development and food security, especially in poor communities. Today, an international consensus has emerged on the need to address such vulnerability by applying the concept of resilience to enhance the ability of people, communities or systems are confronted with disasters or crises to withstand damage and rapidly recover. This evaluation aims to examine how FAO has been contributing to enhanced resilience through supporting social, economic, political and institutional systems. The evaluation will also build upon a number of evaluations conducted on FAO's emergency interventions. It is planned to be initiated in 2016 and completed in mid-2017 for the Committee's consideration in the second half of 2017.

12. **Evaluation of FAO's contribution to sustainable agricultural development through integrated natural resources management (SO 2):** With intensifying competition for natural resources and shifting social and economic profile of rural communities, sustainable agricultural development is increasingly under threat. Integrated natural resources management, encompassing water, forestry, land, fisheries and their associated ecosystems, is considered to be a key response in ensuring sustainability of agricultural development. While previous evaluations examined FAO's contributions to a single natural resource sector, this evaluation aims to assess the degree to which FAO's support has met the multisectoral nature of the challenge and provided integrated ecosystem services needed for enhancing sustainable agriculture development. It is planned to be initiated in late 2016 and completed in 2017 for the Committee's consideration in the first half of 2018.

13. **Evaluation of FAO's contribution to reduction in rural poverty (SO 3):** Hunger and food insecurity are in large part a manifestation of rural poverty. At the same time, addressing rural poverty requires a broader range of interventions than measures focused on eliminating hunger and food insecurity. In most cases, they entail looking integrally at improving access to productive resources, services, and markets for poor farmers and other producers, strengthening their organizations, diversifying their employment opportunities and income-earning capacities for the rural poor, and improving their capacity to manage risks, including through social protection. The rural poor also tend to be more vulnerable to being affected by natural disasters, erosion or depletion of natural resources, or income losses caused by animal or plant diseases. Thus, many aspects of FAO's work are relevant to efforts aiming at reducing rural poverty. This evaluation aims to examine how FAO has been contributing to rural poverty reduction, where the gaps were and how the poverty reduction effects of various strands of FAO's work can be enhanced. It is planned to be initiated in 2017 and completed in mid-2018 for the Committee's consideration in the second half of 2018.

Other evaluations and related reports presented to the Committee

14. In line with the established work plan, the Committee will review at its 117th session in the first half of 2015:
- a) the Synthesis report of evaluations of regional and subregional offices.
 - b) In accordance with the Immediate Plan of Action and the Charter for the Office of Evaluation,¹ **an independent evaluation of the evaluation function in FAO** is planned to be conducted in 2015 to 2016 for the Committee's consideration in the second half of 2016.
 - c) Based on the findings from the new series of country programme evaluations launched in late 2014, it is suggested to compile a **synthesis of lessons learnt in application of the Country Programming Framework** for Committee's review in the second half of 2017.
 - d) Further, the Committee will be presented with follow-up reports to the previous evaluations prepared by the management after two years of implementing the actions contained in the relevant management response.

Country Programme Evaluations

15. So far, OED has carried out seven country evaluations in Africa, five of which in emergency contexts, four each in Asia and in Latin America and the Caribbean, and two in Europe and Central Asia. In the last quarter of 2014, OED launched a new series of Country Programme Evaluations (CPEs), which focus on the CPF outcomes achieved by the country programmes as well as results-level contributions by global and regional initiatives in the country. The CPEs will, in addition to analysing the effectiveness of FAO programmes and initiatives in the country, assess their strategic relevance in the national context (e.g. development challenges in the country, capacity of national institutions). A new CPE manual was developed and has been put on test in the first batch of evaluations.

16. In principle, OED will conduct CPEs in countries at the penultimate/final year of the CPF period. For country programmes completing in 2016, for instance, CPEs will be conducted from the second half of 2015 to the first half of 2016. This is to ensure the maximum utility of the evaluation to the formulation and launch of the new cycle of CPFs.

17. From the group of countries completing CPFs each year, OED intends to select five to seven countries² (or a group of countries in some cases) to conduct CPEs. The selection of countries is primarily based on the composite index established by OED in 2011, which measures various dimensions of the presumed need of the country for FAO support (e.g. agricultural dependency) and the actual significance of the FAO programme (e.g. programme size). Other factors, such as regional balance, security risks and strategic interest expressed by the coordinating offices, are also taken into consideration in finalizing the list.

18. Applying the above principle, among the countries which complete the CPF cycle in 2015, the following countries (and a group of countries) were selected for CPEs: Benin, Burkina Faso, Guyana, Kyrgyzstan, Lao PDR, and a group of Caribbean countries in which CPFs are operated by the office in Barbados.³

¹ Item 2.83 c) of the Immediate Plan of Action, and paragraph 30-31 of the Charter. The aim of the evaluation of the evaluation function is to ensure that the evaluation function in FAO corresponds to needs of Members and conforms to UNEG norms and standards. It will result in a report to the Director-General and the Council, together with the recommendations of the Programme Committee.

² The number will depend on the resource availability, both financial and human, and the expected cost of each CPE.

³ Most Caribbean countries will complete current CPFs in 2015. A number of them are operated under the multiple-accreditation system without in-country representatives. It provides a unique opportunity to assess programme achievements under such an arrangement. The precise scope (countries) of this exercise will be determined after the initial research.

19. It is hoped that, after several rounds of CPEs, substantial evidence-based information is compiled on the relevance and effectiveness of FAO's contributions at country level so as to help governing bodies and management to provide strategic guidance on the future direction of the work of the Organization.

Other Evaluations

20. With regard to **project evaluations**, in line with Council decision in 2007 and subsequent requests by the Committee, OED systematically carries out evaluations of development projects and self-standing emergency rehabilitation initiatives⁴ funded through voluntary contributions with a budget over USD 4 million.⁵ Separate project evaluations are also carried out to respond to specific requirements of resource partners and stakeholders, independently from the budget size of the initiative.

21. Since 2010, OED has evaluated on average 36 projects per year and intends to maintain this level of activity in this work plan period. Among others, the following main evaluations are in the pipeline:

- a) Final evaluation of multi-partner programme support mechanism (FMM)
- b) Evaluation of a cluster of Italian-funded projects in Myanmar
- c) Evaluation of 15 Global Environment Facility (GEF) funded projects
- d) Evaluation of World Bank contribution to the Agriculture Market Information System
- e) Joint management with UNEP and UNDP of several national UN-REDD initiatives

22. For emergency interventions, **Interagency Humanitarian Evaluations (IAHEs)** are conducted through an interagency mechanism⁶ in which OED participates as a Steering Committee member and as a member of the management group of specific evaluations. Starting from early 2014, IAHEs are conducted for Level 3 responses nine months after the initial emergency declaration. So far, one Level-3 IAHE has been conducted in the Philippines, one is under preparation for South Sudan and a third one is under discussion for Central African Republic. Since IAHEs often cannot cover sectoral aspects in sufficient depth, OED plans to conduct follow-up impact assessments of FAO's interventions once the situation has reached recovery stage and impact can be analysed.

23. In April 2014 the Commission for Phytosanitary Measures,⁷ the governing body of the International Plant Protection Convention (IPPC), requested OED's technical support in conducting the **IPPC Secretariat Enhancement Evaluation**. The final report is expected for January 2015 to be discussed at the March 2015 session of the Commission for Phytosanitary Measures.

24. OED also engages in joint evaluations. In 2013, IFAD's Independent Office of Evaluation was asked to prepare a synthesis of evaluations on IFAD's engagement in pastoral areas and requested OED to participate in this exercise. The **Joint IFAD-FAO evaluation synthesis on pastoral development** has taken stock of the extent and quality of the two agencies' work on pastoralism over the past ten years, and puts forward suggestions on how the two agencies could become more effective in their work on pastoralism. The final report of the synthesis is expected to be ready in February 2015.

25. Discussion is underway to conduct a **Joint Evaluation of the UN partnership for renewed effort against child hunger and undernutrition (REACH)** implemented in eight countries. This joint evaluation was initiated by the WFP Office of Evaluation. Its initial evaluability assessment, conducted in 2013, led to an agreement that the evaluation offices of its programme partners (UNICEF, WHO and FAO) would join in this evaluation.

⁴ Emergency and rehabilitation initiatives that are part of major operations are assessed through the respective thematic evaluations.

⁵ The "Procedures for financing the evaluation of initiatives funded by voluntary contributions" issued in November 2013 have been integrated in the Project Cycle Guide and are increasingly taken into account in new project formulations.

⁶ The IAHE Steering Group involves evaluation offices of UNOCHA, UNICEF, UNDP, WFP, WHO, UNHCR and FAO.

⁷ The Commission is an Article XIV body.

26. It is often not possible to plan in advance for these emergency-triggered evaluations, joint evaluations and other evaluations conducted on request. At the same time, OED intends to serve evaluation needs of the Organization through conducting, participating and technically supporting these evaluations to the extent that its resources allow and the needs are justified, and has set aside resources for this purpose.

Table 1: Evaluations and other reports presented to the Programme Committee for its consideration

Session of the Committee and evaluations to be presented	Year(s) conducted
Spring 2015 session	
Synthesis report of evaluations of regional and subregional offices	2014
Follow-up report on evaluation of FAO's role in investment for food and nutrition security, agriculture and rural development	2012
Follow-up report on evaluation of FAO's regional and subregional offices for Europe and Central Asia	2012
Autumn 2015 session	
Evaluation of FAO's contribution to knowledge on food, agriculture and natural resources	2014-2015
Evaluation of FAO's contribution to climate change adaptation and mitigation	2014-2015
Evaluation of FAO's contribution to the conservation and sustainable use of genetic resources for food and agriculture	2014-2015
Follow-up report on evaluation of FAO's regional and subregional offices for Africa	2013
Spring 2016 session	
Follow-up report on evaluation of FAO's regional and subregional offices for Asia and the Pacific	2013
Follow-up report on evaluation of FAO's regional and subregional offices for Latin America and the Caribbean	2013
Follow-up report on evaluation of FAO's role in support of crop production	2013
Autumn 2016 session	
Evaluation of FAO's contribution to inclusive and efficient agricultural and food systems (SO 4)	2015-2016
Evaluation of FAO's evaluation function	2015
Follow-up report on evaluation of FAO's contribution in crisis-related transition – Linking relief to development	2014
Indicative rolling work plan of evaluations 2017-2019	
Spring 2017 session	
Evaluation of FAO's contribution to elimination of hunger, food insecurity and malnutrition (SO 1)	2015-2016
Follow-up report on evaluation of FAO's contribution to knowledge on food, agriculture and natural resources	2014-2015
Autumn 2017 session	
Evaluation of FAO's contribution to increase the resilience of livelihoods to disasters (SO 5)	2016-2017
Follow-up report on evaluation of FAO's contribution to climate change adaptation and mitigation	2014-2015
Follow-up report on evaluation of FAO's contribution to the conservation and sustainable use of genetic resources for food and agriculture	2014-2015
Spring 2018 session	
Evaluation of FAO's contribution to integrated natural resource management for sustainable agriculture (SO 2)	2016-2017
Synthesis of lessons learnt in application of the Country Programme Framework	2017
Autumn 2018 session	
Evaluation of FAO's contribution to reduction in rural poverty (SO 3)	2016-2017
Follow-up report on evaluation of FAO's contribution to inclusive and efficient agricultural and food systems (SO 4)	2014-2015

Table 2. Other evaluations currently underway or planned (provided on request)

Evaluations	Year(s) conducted
Country Programme Evaluations	
Country Programme Evaluation in Benin	2014-2015
Country Programme Evaluation in Burkina Faso	2014-2015
Country Programme Evaluation in Guyana	2015
Country Programme Evaluation in Kyrgyzstan	2015
Country Programme Evaluation in Lao PDR	2014-2015
Country Programme Evaluations in selected Caribbean countries (tentative title)	2015
Five to seven country programme evaluations are planned to be conducted annually. The countries will be selected each year from those completing the CPF cycle in consultation with relevant offices.	
Inter-agency humanitarian evaluations and OED follow-up assessments	
Inter-agency humanitarian evaluation and OED follow-up assessment of Typhoon Hayan emergency operations	2014-2015
Inter-agency humanitarian evaluation and OED follow-up assessment of emergency operations in South Sudan	2015
(Possible) Inter-agency humanitarian evaluation and OED follow-up assessment of emergency operations in Central African Republic	2015-2016
These evaluations are triggered by system-wide emergency declarations, which are not predictable. However, OED is prepared to participate in one to three such evaluations each year with different degrees of involvement.	
Joint and other evaluations	
IPPC Secretariat Enhancement Evaluation	2014
Joint IFAD-FAO evaluation synthesis on pastoral development	2014-2015
Joint Evaluation of the UN partnership for renewed effort against child hunger and under-nutrition (REACH)	2015
These evaluations originate from external requests or inter-agency consultations, and hence not predictable much in advance. However, OED is prepared to conduct or support one to two such evaluations each year.	
Project evaluations	
Approximately 30 to 40 project evaluations are planned to be conducted each year. The evaluations are triggered by requests/inquiries from the programme offices.	

Guidance from the Programme Committee

27. The Committee is invited to comment on the proposed plan 2015-2017, and endorse the plan with the Committee's comments included.

28. It is suggested to review the plan every two years. The next review to be in Autumn 2016. The Committee is invited to concur or decide otherwise on the timing of the next review.