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Foreword

It is my pleasure to present FAO Members and stakeholders this biennial Programme Evaluation Report, which covers the period of 2015-2016. The main purpose of the report is to provide Member Countries and other readers with an analytical summary of the emerging and recurrent trends in evaluations, and to discuss the main results, gaps and lessons found in FAO's work.

The Office of Evaluation recently initiated a new series of evaluations to review FAO's contributions to its Strategic Objectives. The first report in this series evaluated FAO's contribution to Strategic Objective 5: Increase the resilience of livelihoods to threats and crises. In addition, three other thematic evaluations were presented to the governing body, covering the issues of climate change adaptation and mitigation, knowledge on food and agriculture, and the conservation and sustainable use of genetic resources. In one example of an evaluation influencing policy decisions, FAO has begun to adopt a more strategic approach to addressing climate change-related issues.

The role of FAO in development is primarily to support the country-led development process through the provision of internationally agreed normative standards, statistics and technical information, and to provide country level support through capacity development and technical assistance activities. The Office of Evaluation conducted 11 evaluations to review FAO's contributions at the country level, including two evaluations focused on support to countries in crisis. Furthermore, to support the accountability and learning of the Organization, the Office managed 39 evaluations that examined the performance of specific programmes and projects at the global, regional and country levels.

This report presents a synthesis of the findings from the above evaluations. The synthesis highlights FAO's progress toward becoming a more goal-oriented organization at global and country levels. It is hoped that our evaluations will continue to help the Organization to better achieve results through credible and strategic advice.



Masahiro Igarashi
Director, Office of Evaluation

List of Acronyms

CPE	Country Programme Evaluation
CPF	FAO Country Programme Framework
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
FAOSTAT	FAO Statistical Programme of Work
IFAD	International Fund for Agriculture and Development
OED	FAO Office of Evaluation
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
WHO	World Health Organization
WFP	World Food Programme

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INTRODUCTION

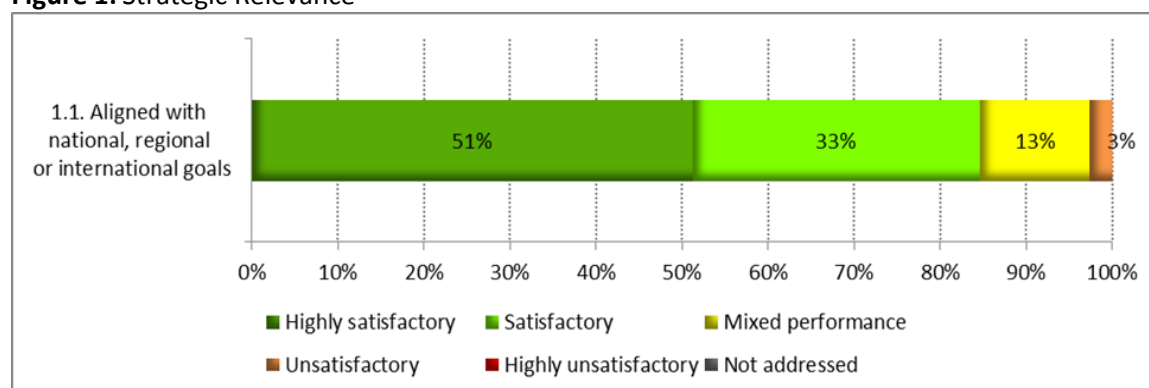
- 1 The 2017 Programme Evaluation Report summarizes the main findings from evaluations conducted by the Office of Evaluation, and presents the activities and reforms introduced by the Office in the period 2015-2016.
- 2 Sections 1 through 3 present the results from a meta-analysis of a sample of thirty-nine evaluation reports,¹ which includes key contributions at the country level (Section 1), at the global and regional levels (Section 2) and on cross-cutting issues (Section 3). Section 4 provides an overview of the evaluations conducted by the Office of Evaluation, as well as reform measures to improve the quality and consistency of its work, strengthen organizational learning, and enhance accountability to the FAO Members and Secretariat, development partners and stakeholders.

SECTION 1. FAO CONTRIBUTIONS AT THE COUNTRY LEVEL

1.1 Strategic relevance

- 3 In the assessment of 'the relevance and strategic alignment of FAO's programmes to national development goals and to regional and global priorities', **most** evaluations (**87%**) found the programme satisfactory or highly satisfactory in this regard (Figure 1).

Figure 1: Strategic Relevance



- 4 FAO programmes were found highly relevant to the countries' needs in about half of the evaluations. They were well aligned with national priorities and needs as identified in national policy documents and plans, and broadly aligned to United Nations Development Assistance Framework strategies (e.g. Burkina Faso, Niger, Lao PDR, etc.). However, in some cases inadequate support for country-led processes resulted in lower levels of engagement in decision-making processes by partners and other stakeholders (e.g. genetic resources).
- 5 Some evaluations, such as the SO5 evaluation, found that the country programming frameworks (CPFs) have become the primary strategic instrument for guiding FAO's activities at the country level, especially since 2012.² CPFs are developed in collaboration with national partners through

¹ Readers should be aware that most of these evaluations examined the programme performance early in, or prior to this biennium.

² One of the drivers of this evolution was the 2010 strategic evaluation of country programming.

policy dialogues and discussions on strategic issues and country priorities. Current CPFs largely reflect FAO's strategic objectives and address key development issues of the country.

- 6 Some of the country programmes evaluated, however, were not well aligned with FAO's global goals. In particular, the global goals of poverty reduction (Strategic Objective 3) and enhanced resilience (Strategic Objective 5) were less integrated at the country level. As recommended in the evaluation of FAO's contribution in the Kyrgyz Republic, future CPFs may benefit from analyses of rural poverty reduction drivers and their effects on rural economies and equity; this would help to integrate poverty-related objectives into future programmes and projects.

1.2 Partnerships and coordination

- 7 In general, it was observed that the decentralization process has strengthened coordination with national partners, especially government authorities, and enabled the development of a diversity of partnerships with other stakeholders. The integration of the former Emergency and Rehabilitation Coordination Units within the country offices also helped to strengthen partnerships and coordination at the country level.
- 8 *Government.* Overall, FAO has formed productive partnerships with central government institutions³ for project implementation. This collaboration has increased the governments' sense of ownership, which contributes to the sustainability of project results. In some cases, however, governments were insufficiently involved in, or informed of FAO's initiatives in the country, raising doubts as to the effectiveness and sustainability of the interventions. In other instances, FAO was unable to develop effective partnerships due to inadequate government capacities. Relations and collaborations with authorities were found to be much weaker at the local level.
- 9 *Resource partners.* FAO established effective mechanisms to engage with donors, including i) donor coordination groups that implemented projects in the same sector (such as the European Commission-funded Food Security Coordinating Group, which developed a sustainable National Information and Early Warning System on food security in Timor-Leste); and ii) global/regional steering committees (which led to obtaining US funding for a large Foot and Mouth Disease project in Pakistan, as well as multilateral funding for a Global and Regional Agricultural and Rural Statistics programmes).
- 10 *United Nations agencies.* FAO generally was considered a pre-eminent member of the United Nations Country Team, and worked in partnership with other United Nations agencies (e.g. in Burkina Faso, Eastern Caribbean States and Barbados, Kyrgyz Republic and Niger). FAO's collaboration with other agencies in humanitarian crisis, particularly with WFP and UNICEF, was considered effective (e.g. the Central African Republic and South Sudan). Examples of effective joint initiatives are the Standards and Trade Development Facility to enhance developing countries' capacity to meet sanitary and phytosanitary standards or the UN-REDD programme for Climate Change Adaptation and Mitigation. There were cases however in which FAO missed opportunities to engage in joint programming (e.g. in Burkina Faso, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and Mali).

³ Main governmental authorities: ministries of agriculture but also forestry, water and irrigation, livestock and environment, as well as ministries of health and education, finance, economy and development, different commissions/departments for fishery and forestry.

- 11 *International organizations, civil society, and non-governmental actors.* FAO forged strong partnerships with regional and sub-regional organizations and commissions, as well as other international organizations (e.g. with the Consultative Group for International Agricultural Research and Bioversity International in genetic resources; the World Organisation for Animal Health in animal health; and AgriCord, a network of non-governmental organizations with structural links to farmers' and rural members' organizations in forestry). Partnerships with non-governmental organizations were generally found beneficial. However, in most cases the involvement of non-governmental actors stayed at the implementation level, and did not convert into strategic partnerships to pursue common strategic goals. In contrast, partnerships with universities and institutes seemed more effective at the strategic level.
- 12 *Private sector.* Partnerships with the private sector are still in the early stages with a few exceptions (e.g. examples of increasing engagement were found in El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua, Zambia and Lao PDR). As recommended in the evaluation of FAO's contribution in Eastern Caribbean States and Barbados, FAO must develop strong links with the private sector to establish effective value chains. Therefore, future projects should "pay greater attention to market forces and opportunities and be tailored to enhance partnerships with the private sector and farmer organizations".

1.3 Comparative advantages

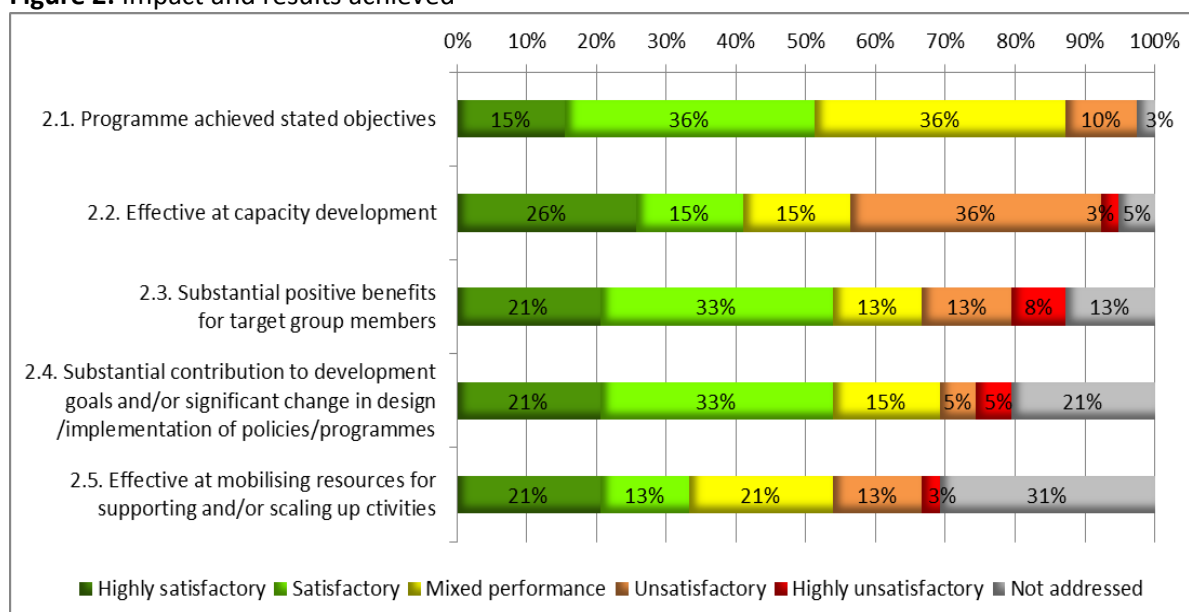
- 13 FAO leadership in creating conditions for effective programmes was recognized in 60% of evaluations. At the country level, FAO leadership was particularly recognizable in a number of thematic areas, as it has established a reputation as a centre of excellence for food security and nutrition, agriculture, plant and animal health, pesticide control, forestry and fisheries.
- 14 FAO's capability in policy and plan development was demonstrated through the leadership and support provided to regional responses for food and nutrition security in the Caribbean. This was also the case in the development of a draft Food and Nutrition Security Policy for Trinidad and Tobago. FAO's experience in programme management in pesticide controls has given it a unique role over other international agencies.
- 15 FAO demonstrated convening power in establishing alliances with key development partners. In the project "Strengthening Forest Resources Management and Enhancing its Contribution to Sustainable Development, Land-use and Livelihoods," a key success factor was FAO's ability to involve relevant government stakeholders in policy and strategies development. In Peru, policy discussion involved the Ministries of both Agriculture and Environment. In Pakistan, FAO connected people and resources from federal and provincial veterinary services with those of the United States Department of Agriculture into an effective network to control Foot and Mouth Disease. FAO also initiated policy dialogue at the national level on such issues as food and nutrition security, sustainable fisheries, food-based dietary guidelines and forest law enforcement.
- 16 On forest management for sustainable development, FAO has accumulated more than 60 years of experience in forest inventory, and strengthened the forest resource information base for policy-making nationally, regionally and internationally. This includes data collection for the Global Forest Resources Assessment, as well as support to countries to assess the state of their national forests and use remote sensing technologies to monitor changes in forest areas.

- 17 In some areas, however, FAO has not clearly identified its expertise and the type of assistance it could provide (e.g. climate change adaptation and mitigation, and social protection). The limited capacity of small country offices detracted from FAO's ability to lead country and regional policy coordination and to promptly provide technical advice. In humanitarian contexts, FAO's leadership was constrained by operational drawbacks, insufficient programmatic capacity, lack of continuity in workflows and staffing.

1.4 Key achievements

- 18 About half of the programmes (51%) were assessed as having achieved the stated objectives and about a third more (36%) as having achieved some objectives. By the types of results, a higher rate of satisfaction was given on 'policy impact' and on 'substantial benefits for target group members' (both were rated at 54% satisfactory or above) than to 'capacity development' and 'resource mobilization' (respectively 41% and 33% satisfactory or above).

Figure 2: Impact and results achieved



- 19 These assessments were based on the realization of intended programme outcomes, rather than on FAO's delivery; therefore, a number of external factors influenced FAO's full achievement of the stated objectives, including government change and other political factors, natural disasters and conflicts. The evaluations also identified the following internal factors that should be addressed, especially in project and programme design:
- The quality of a programme and the level of results achieved are closely linked to the quality of the design process. This includes the context-specific approach, based on systematic needs assessments, and the participatory process that allows the programme to better respond to target-group characteristics.
 - Programme components should be coherent and connected, underpinned by a clear theory of change, and account for changes to the context emerging from social, political, economic and environmental dimensions.
 - The CPFs, while defining programme objectives and outlining intended work to be implemented, should not be overly specific at the level of activities. This will enable emerging opportunities (financial or technical) to be pursued when desirable.

- Developing innovative approaches requires time and resources in order to test and adapt each approach to the targeted country or community context. This is especially so when the innovation aims to induce behavioural changes (e.g. pedagogical approaches, adoption of new practices and empowerment) that would be significantly affected by social and cultural factors.
 - The timeframe of the programme must be realistic to achieve success; however, there is often divergence between the donors' schedules and the time needed to deliver results. The planning should be done prudently, with due consideration to time required for administrative processes such as procurement and recruitment.
 - Some programmes achieved positive results through adaptive management approaches that allowed the design to evolve over time, taking advantage of new opportunities that leveraged existing initiatives.
- 20 The degree of achievements varied across thematic areas of work, across levels and across core functions. In climate change for example, there was good engagement in global fora, but only marginal progress on data and guidance at country level. The work on genetic resources for food and agriculture was more effective on the normative/policy work than in capacity development support. The marine ecosystems work was more successful in regional coordination and governance aspects than in supporting integration of agreements into national policies and their implementation.
- 21 There are a number of examples of positive achievements. In Guyana, for instance, FAO supported the New Guyana Marketing Corporation, facilitating greater market access and information to consumers, producers, agro-processors and exporters. In Benin, FAO successfully developed national capacities for the management of obsolete pesticides, which did not exist before. In Niger, provision of animals raised beneficiaries' production and income while improving the social status of vulnerable women, the availability of milk for children, and the ability of households to save money. In Timor-Leste, the evidence collected by the National Information and Early Warning System for Food Security led to the revision and modification of the 2005 Food Security Policy, and to a decree to reduce the negative impacts of rice imports on local production. In Trinidad and Tobago, a technical cooperation project was developed with the Global Environment Facility to conserve biodiversity by consolidating the protected area system, building capacity for conservation management and reducing forest degradation.
- 22 FAO provided capacity development support in a number of countries in such areas as plant and animal health, rural development through facilitating access to credit, sustainable forest management, agricultural statistics, agro-processing and value chains. Regulatory bodies on food products, fisheries and forests were also supported.

SECTION 2. FAO CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE GLOBAL LEVEL

2.1 Strategic relevance

- 23 FAO has generally responded well to changing global contexts such as the significant increase in global trade of agricultural products in recent years, or the emerging need to prevent the spread of plant/animal diseases for the maintenance of biodiversity. FAO global strategies and programmes were well aligned to global priorities, and its inter-national and regional initiatives responded to important national needs, for example, with the work on agricultural and rural statistics or with the improved Global Governance for Hunger Reduction programme.
- 24 FAO's technical expertise was recognized and appreciated in such areas as agriculture, livestock, agriculture land, irrigation and water management, natural resource management, forestry and fisheries. Likewise, FAO's normative standards and products have been recognized in a number of sectors, including forest governance, animal health and pesticide management.
- 25 FAO also maintained a position as a global intergovernmental forum to discuss a broad range of issues related to food and agriculture. It responded to the demand for a common analytical approach for food insecurity analysis, resilience measurement and nutrition.
- 26 In some areas, FAO could have more clearly responded to the evolving global agenda and communicated this better. FAO could have claimed a central position in the new resilience agenda of humanitarian actions, by redesigning its programmes and advocating for community-based and market-oriented approaches rather than continuing assistance centred on free input distribution. This shift was well recognized in some crisis interventions, for example in Central African Republic, but still not sufficiently visible in the broader international humanitarian community. The importance of agriculture in the global agenda on climate change could have been more effectively advocated.⁴

2.2 Strategic focus and coherence

- 27 The reviewed Strategic Framework provided an opportunity for greater focus in the work of the Organization. Overall, FAO programmes were found to be closely aligned and consistent with the Strategic Objectives, with a few exceptions where the alignment was less clear. Aligning CPF priorities, which responded primarily to national priorities, with the global and regional priorities was a challenge.
- 28 By allocating resources to the Strategic Objectives rather than by sector, FAO is becoming a more strategic organization, breaking down sectoral silos and better linking work streams. Projects were found to have successfully contributed to strategic and cross-sectoral activities, and provided good examples of inter-departmental and interdisciplinary partnerships. On the other hand, institutional arrangements were not always conducive to building synergies and complementarities across regions and countries. For instance, insufficient attention was given to knowledge management that would have facilitated sharing of knowledge and experience

⁴ FAO climate change strategy was developed and adopted at the end of 2016 in response to the evaluation's recommendation.

across offices globally, and with consolidation of the decentralization process, building such knowledge management system would be important for enhanced effectiveness.

2.3 Key achievements

- 29 Providing an authoritative source of information and standard technical frameworks was widely recognized as a strength of FAO. A number of knowledge products and services were made available to national governments, the research and academic community, international organizations and other development actors. These products and services were generally recognized for their technical excellence and for providing an evidence base for policies and programmes. The online FAOSTAT database, the publication 'State of Food and Agriculture' and the Global Forum on Food Security and Nutrition have been extensively accessed, heavily cited in peer-reviewed publications, and referenced online. The Global Strategy to Improve Agricultural and Rural Statistics facilitated harmonization of agricultural statistical systems, and will help countries meet data requirements for the agriculture-related Sustainable Development Goals. A number of technical documents were produced on ground water management and governance, which strengthened the scientific basis for this under-researched area.
- 30 FAO also developed frameworks and models to be applied at the country level. The Climate Smart Agriculture approach was considered an important FAO contribution in promoting agricultural practices that respond to climate change. The Integrated Food Security Phase Classification and the Resilience Index Measurement and Analysis Model provided standardized information and analytical tools for development partners to monitor food security situations and design programmes during crisis situations. The Forest and Farm Facility programme promoted an approach that facilitated cross-sector synergies and brought local perspectives into the global forest agenda. The Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure were adopted. Farmer Field School and School Garden models were applied in a number of countries in need of enhancing the resilience of livelihoods against disaster.
- 31 Some global programmes also provided support to countries to make use of these products and services. A number of countries were assisted, for instance, in developing climate change strategies for agriculture and in monitoring, reporting and verifying carbon emissions under the UN-REDD.⁵ The Global Strategy to Improve Agricultural and Rural Statistics supported integration of the harmonized agricultural statistical systems into institutional frameworks at the regional and national levels.
- 32 At the same time, beneficiaries found that FAO's technical materials were often insufficiently contextualized to meet local needs. These materials were developed without sufficient involvement of users at the national level. Furthermore, limited implementation capacities at the sub-national levels were often a constraint for the effective application of knowledge and approaches. For instance, with the Forest and Farm Facility programme, the operational capacity of forest and farm Producer Organizations would need to be further developed, and their rights' awareness further raised for effective policy influence. Similarly, to ensure the sustainability of the Global Strategy to Improve Agricultural and Rural Statistics achievements,

⁵ UN-REDD (the United Nations Programme for Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation in Developing Countries) is a collaborative initiative of FAO, UNDP and UNEP to help developing nations access funding for enhanced forest management as a way to reduce net emissions of greenhouse gases.

capacity should be built in sub-regional training institutions and statistical commissions, and technical guidelines should be further developed to improve the data validation process in national institutions.

The reviewed Strategic Framework

“The importance of having a common results framework, with a number of shared outputs and outcomes that all FAO offices contribute to, cannot be understated. In the words of a staff survey respondent, ‘The new strategic framework has created a level playing field to work as one FAO in order to achieve the goals of the Organization’.” -- *Evaluation of FAO’s contribution to Strategic Objective 5*

SECTION 3. FAO's CONTRIBUTIONS IN CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES

3.1 Capacity development

- 33 Capacity development has been one of the core modalities of FAO's assistance. Among the programmes evaluated, the majority (63%) provided integrated capacity development support encompassing the individual, institutional and enabling environment levels, while about a quarter (24%) focused on individual trainings. There was a wealth of concrete evidence that capacity has been developed with various target groups. However, it was harder to identify long-term and higher-level impacts, such as on policy environment, institutional arrangements and knowledge systems.
- 34 Some factors that made the capacity development successful were: greater use of local expertise and national institutions, working at multiple levels of influence, needs' assessment both at the individual and institutional levels, building a critical mass of trained personnel coupled with institutional capacity building, and post-training follow-up activities. On the other hand, weakening factors included: inadequate targeting, insufficient attention to capacity development needs at the sub-national levels, focus on technical training with limited attention on operational and managerial aspects, focus on training individuals outside the institutional context where they need to use the acquired skills, lack of synergies and linkages with other initiatives and services, and inadequate resources planned for capacity development.

On capacity development

"NGOs had 'grown up' through trainings, acquiring enough technical knowledge to implement other food security-related projects. Through their partnership with FAO, these NGOs developed a higher level of experience and improved operational capacity." -- *Evaluation of FAO's South Sudan Resilience Programme*

3.2 Gender

- 35 The evaluations observed some successes in gender mainstreaming, although this indication should be seen in conjunction with the absence of a standard framework in past evaluations to measure progress against the objectives of the FAO's gender equality policy.⁶ Despite this limitation, the evaluations provided some useful insights on general progress in gender mainstreaming and the contributing factors.
- 36 For instance, in 11 evaluations it was found that the focus on gender equality was either very strategic or a significant component of the evaluated programme; in about 14 evaluations it was noted that gender equality was not a programme priority. Some evaluations noted a significant positive trend in FAO's efforts to improve the coverage, outreach and benefits of a substantive gender focus in all aspects of project design and implementation. The most significant contributing factors were:
- Evaluations noted a good alignment of FAO's work with national priorities addressing gender disparity and national gender action plans.

⁶ Application of standard analytical framework was initiated in 2016.

- Project designs were found to have an increasingly consistent and strong emphasis on gender. Where the project documents lacked a gender focus, evaluations found that corrective efforts were being made during implementation to apply gender equality principles.
- Gender-related dimensions were integrated into surveys and analytical tools. This is important since disaggregated data produced by countries are unlikely to cover all gender-related dimensions in the agricultural and rural sector.
- There was high appreciation and uptake by policy-makers of the flagship publication, *State of Food Insecurity in the World 2010-11*. In some occasions, this might have contributed to greater interest and consideration of gender issues in policies and programmes.
- Dedicated gender specialists across FAO played a key role in facilitating the production of guidelines, sensitization, technical advice, webinars and events. Programmes have developed creative approaches to mainstreaming gender within the Organization.

3.3 Nutrition

- 37 Several evaluations noted that FAO has contributed to improving the quality, availability and access of food security and nutrition data; and that it has played a leadership role in technical coordination processes on nutrition at the national level, and responded to partners' needs by developing capacities to integrate nutrition into agriculture and food security interventions. Challenges remained in multi-sector/actor governance and policy implementation capacities at the sub-national level beyond FAO's reach.⁷
- 38 In accordance with Outcome 1 of the FAO's Nutrition Strategy for 'Increased knowledge and evidence to maximize the impact of food and agriculture systems on nutrition', FAO supported key policy, strategy formulation and decision-making processes at the national level, mainly by strengthening national monitoring and evaluation systems, producing timely and quality statistics, developing analytical tools, food security and nutrition surveys, and utilization of indicators and analysis to support decision-making.
- 39 At the same time, some evaluations noted missed opportunities where technical support was limited, the evidence base was insufficient for projects, nutrition was not high on the political agenda, and the programme or project did not explicitly include nutrition aspects. It was suggested that FAO should work with other United Nations agencies to create synergies and partnerships, in which FAO can provide technical knowledge for nutrition-sensitive agriculture, while leveraging its support through the field operation of other agencies.
- 40 For Outcome 2 on 'Improved food and agriculture systems' governance for nutrition', FAO has actively promoted collaboration and coordination of work between relevant actors at the central level, particularly by supporting Ministries of Agriculture in developing and implementing national multi-sectoral nutrition policies and strategies. FAO was also involved in inter-agency coordination for nutrition under the leadership of the REACH⁸ coordinator in a number of countries, and provided technical leadership to relevant partners. In a number of

⁷ Given that only 28% of evaluations in the biennium examined nutrition aspects, results in this section must be considered with caution.

⁸ REACH (Renewed efforts against child hunger and undernutrition) is a collaborative initiative of FAO, UNICEF, WFP, WHO and IFAD to assist governments of countries with a high burden of child and maternal undernutrition to accelerate the scale-up of food and nutrition actions.

cases, FAO played a key role in breaking down the compartmentalization of nutrition and in fostering inclusive dialogue and creating committees and working groups.

- 41 For Outcome 3 for 'Strengthened national, regional, and local capacities to formulate and implement policies and programmes to improve nutritional status', FAO has provided technical assistance to increase the agricultural sector's contribution in multi-sectoral strategies, to enhance the nutrition-sensitivity of agricultural investments, and to identify resilience priorities relevant to nutrition. FAO also supported training on needs' assessments and the development of multi-sectoral capacity development frameworks.
- 42 FAO's efforts generally focused on enhancing technical capacities of national organizations for developing food and nutrition security policies, strategies and programmes. To achieve the desired results, this needed to be complemented by an effort to enhance implementation capacities at the sub-national, community and household levels. Also required were government buy-in, multi-stakeholder support and a plan for scaling-up both nutrition and technical governance efforts.

SECTION 4. Evaluation in FAO

4.1 Evaluations conducted in the biennium 2015-2016

43 During the 2015-2016 biennium, the FAO Office of Evaluation carried out 11 country-level evaluations, two of which focused on humanitarian responses to crises; 39 project evaluations⁹ in 61 countries; and four thematic evaluations of FAO's contribution to the resilience of livelihoods to threats and crises; climate change adaptation and mitigation; knowledge in food and agriculture; and genetic resources conservation and utilization¹⁰. An independent evaluation of the FAO evaluation function was also carried out for the FAO governing body to ensure that the evaluation function provides effective oversight for accountability and learning. The number of country programme evaluations carried out in this biennium substantially increased compared to four evaluations in the previous biennium.

Table 1: Number of evaluations completed by region and evaluation type (2015-2016)

	Country-level evaluations	Project evaluations	Thematic evaluations	Total
Africa	5	14		19
Asia and the Pacific	1	7		8
Europe and Central Asia	1	2		3
Latin America and the Caribbean	3	4		7
Near East and North Africa	1	1		2
Inter-regional		6		6
Global		5	4	10
Total	11	39	4	54

Source: Office of Evaluation; data as of 5 December 2016

44 Table 2 presents the expenditures by the Office of Evaluation on evaluations completed in the 2015-2016 biennium. During this period, OED spent USD 6.24 million on evaluations, in which: USD 3.73 million for major evaluations and USD 2.5 million on evaluating for project and programme evaluations financed by the extra-budgetary sources. There was a significant variance in the cost of evaluations, depending on the thematic and geographical scope.

Table 2: Expenditures and average cost by type of evaluations (2015-2016)

	Number of evaluations	Average cost (USD)	Total (USD)
Thematic evaluations	4	459 866	1 839 465
Country-level evaluations	11		
• Country Programme Evaluations	8	140 373	1 122 981
• Programme Evaluations in crisis countries	3	255 992	767 976
Project evaluations	39		
• Global and inter-regional projects	14	83 112	1 163 581
• Regional projects	7	74 836	523 850
• Country projects	18	45 552	819 399

Source: Office of Evaluation; data as of 5 December 2016

⁹ This includes evaluations of not only projects but also programmes funded by extra-budgetary sources.

¹⁰ The full list of evaluations conducted in the biennium 2015-2016 is available upon request.

Figure 3: Country Programme Evaluations**Country programme evaluations (CPE)**

■ Evaluations completed

■ Evaluations ongoing/ planned for 2017

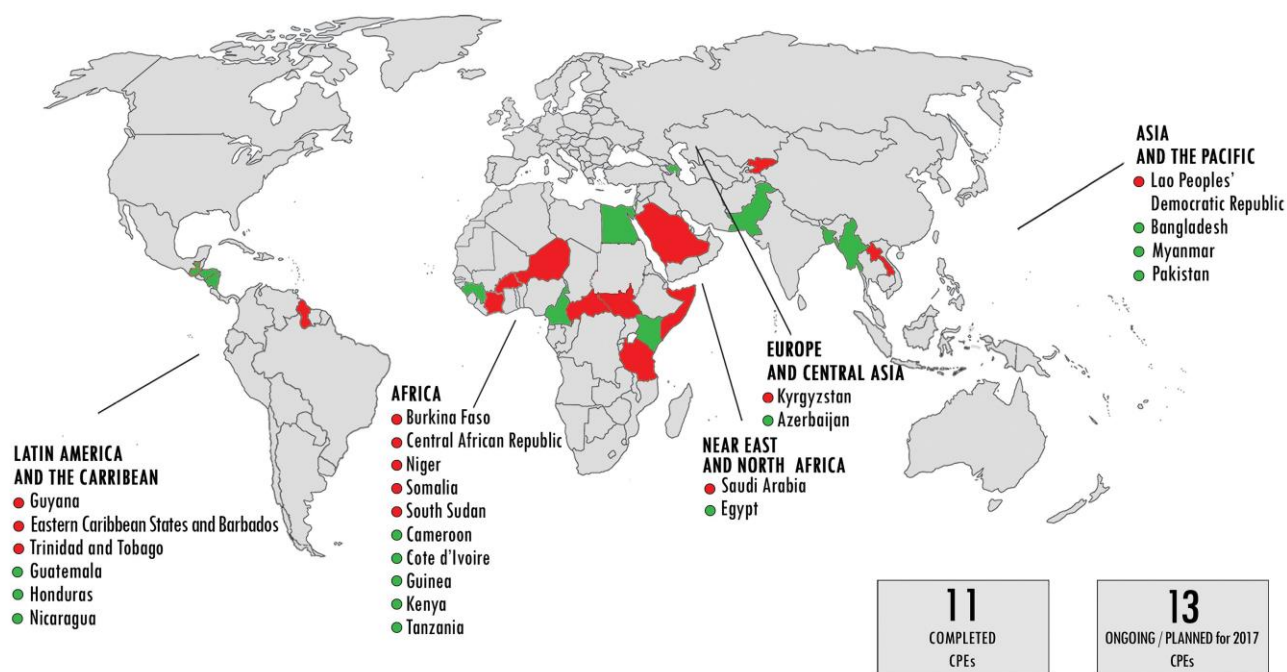
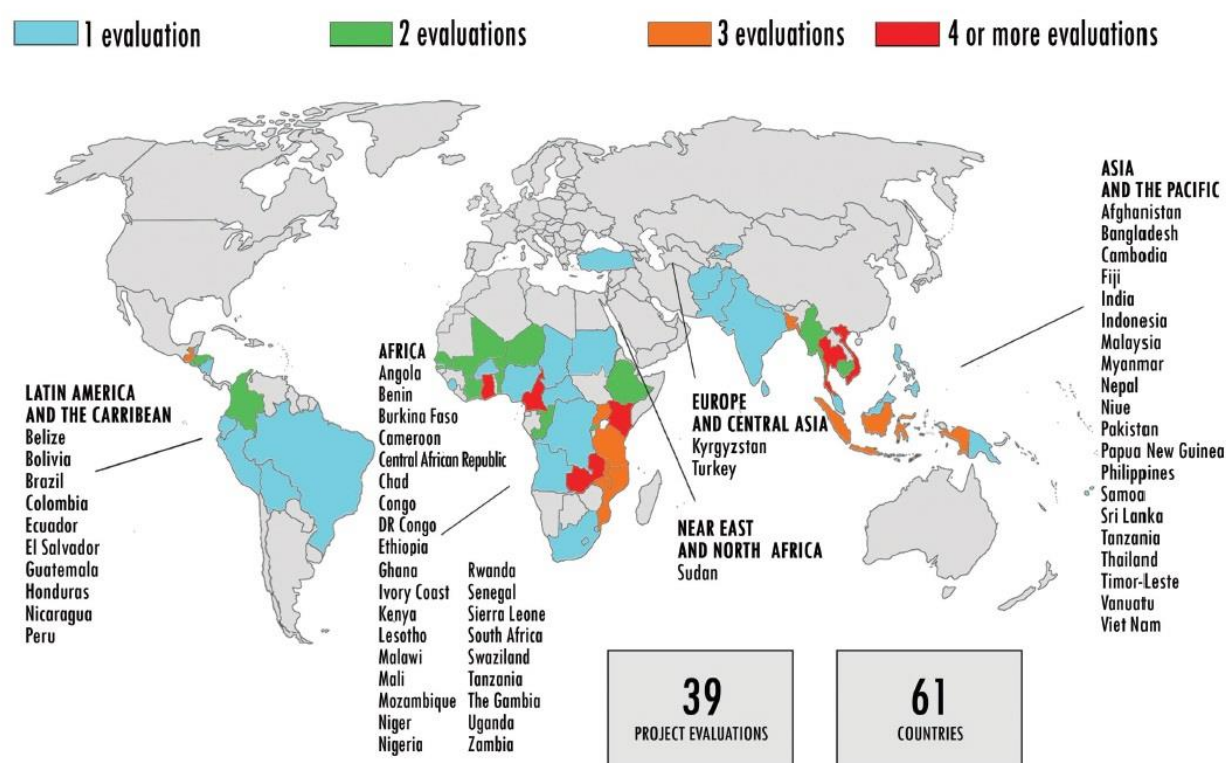


Figure 4: Project Evaluations**Project evaluations****4.2 OED reform agenda and beyond**

- 45 During the biennium, the Office of Evaluation continued its reform process initiated in 2014, aiming at improving the relevance, quality and utility of FAO evaluations. In February 2016, the Office conducted a self-assessment of its 2014-2015 reform agenda. This resulted in a renewed agenda for 2016-2017, with a stronger focus on capacity building of staff and dissemination of evaluation results.
- 46 In 2015, the Office of Evaluation introduced a mechanism to strengthen its engagement with the evaluation functions of national governments at all stages of the country programme evaluations. The purpose was to ensure that FAO programmes contributed effectively to national priorities and needs, as well as relevant national policy goals. It also aimed to support evaluation capacity development within the governments. The Office further plans to develop a professional network of evaluation functions in the ministries relevant to FAO's areas of work. Finally, the Office introduced a policy to prioritize the use of national consultants in all evaluations, in order to improve national evaluation capacities and to better reflect the national context in its evaluations.
- 47 Another reform initiative started in 2014 was to expand the source of recruitment of evaluation team members through a mandatory global public call, coupled with advertisement in national media where applicable. The call for evaluators has been circulated extensively through regional

and professional networks of evaluators. One manifestation of this effort was an improved gender balance in the evaluation teams: in 2016, 75% of the evaluation teams were gender balanced according to the standard set by the Office, and the ratio of female evaluators hired by the Office reached 49%. Moreover, out of the 26% gender unbalanced teams, 57% were led by a female team leader. Finally, 96% of the teams included a team member who had competence in gender analysis, representing 71 percent increase from the 2013 level.

- 48 As part of its reform agenda, the Office of Evaluation identified the need to increase the effectiveness of its communication activities. This was particularly important considering the limited understanding among stakeholders of the role of evaluations in FAO's work, and to position evaluations as key elements in the overall achievement of FAO's corporate Strategic Objectives. Thus, a communications plan was developed in consultation with the Office of Corporate Communication. The Office of Evaluation also introduced the use of video documentaries as a tool for communicating evaluation findings and results to direct stakeholders.
- 49 FAO Office of Evaluation continued its collaboration with the United Nations Evaluation Group, having actively participated in a number of its Working Groups, and with other evaluation networks. The Office actively contributed to the work of the Inter-agency Humanitarian Evaluations in the framework of the United Nations Inter-agency Standing Committee, as well as to the Active Learning Network for Accountability and Performance in Humanitarian Action. In 2015, OED jointly organized with WFP, IFAD and the CGIAR Global Agriculture Research Partnership an international technical seminar on enhancing the evaluability of Sustainable Development Goal 2 "End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture", gathering representatives of national governments and the professional evaluation community from 38 countries.
- 50 In November 2016, the report of the independent evaluation of FAO's evaluation function was presented to the FAO Programme Committee, which noted the progress made in improving the evaluation function in FAO in the previous biennium. Following the Committee's request, the Office of Evaluation developed an action plan to implement the agreed recommendations to enhance accountability and organizational learning, and to improve the integration of gender considerations in its evaluations.

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