

CL 163/3 - Information Note 1 – November 2019

Adjustments to the Programme of Work and Budget 2020-21

I. Office for Small Island Developing States (SIDS), Least Developed Countries (LDCs) and Landlocked Developing Countries (LLDCs)

1. The Office for Small Island Developing States (SIDS), Least Developed Countries (LDCs) and Landlocked Developing Countries (LLDCs) aims to strengthen the coherence of FAO's work in supporting these countries that are vulnerable to unique and complex food security and nutrition challenges that transcend any one specific strategic objective.
2. As an overarching internal structure, the Office will coordinate with and leverage the expertise of all relevant FAO technical departments, Strategic Programme teams, and decentralized offices to ensure that national priorities and needs of the aforementioned countries are addressed through a consistent and holistic approach. For example, in supporting the SIDS, the Office will coordinate FAO's actions in accelerating the implementation of the Global Action Programme on Food Security and Nutrition in SIDS. In doing so, it will ensure improved engagement with, and between, SIDS and their development partners in order to foster coherence in support and in facilitating the targeted investments required to meet their food security and nutrition challenges.
3. Given that the first stage of the Hand-in-Hand initiative is mainly focused on SIDS, LDCs and LLDCs, the Office will also be closely involved in the development of initiatives to facilitate the implementation of the interventions designed.
4. Moreover, it is worth noting that the proposed structure's placement within the APEX work stream reflects the priority given to SIDS, LDCs and LLDCs within the Organization.
5. In summary, the Office will coordinate the operationalization of the strategic vision set out by national governments with the support of FAO to ensure global and corporate goals are achieved in SIDS, LDCs and LLDCs.

II. Chief Scientist and Office for Innovation

A. Objective

6. The new Office for Innovation is one of the key changes proposed to make FAO a more open, inclusive and flexible Organization, producing tangible results and issue-based solutions for its Members and in a more fruitful collaboration with its partners.
7. An Office for Innovation will further consolidate and strengthen FAO's innovative ethos, including innovation of mindset, innovation of cooperation models, and innovation of application by digitalization. It will help ensure that FAO applies modern science and technology and adopts innovative approaches when facing new situations and challenges, including in the way it works internally and manages its resources, projects and programmes.
8. The concept of the Office is to lead by example, being an aggregator with convening capacity to improve delivery of results and strengthen FAO's innovative spirit throughout the Organization and in its interactions with others. It will address important FAO challenges for achieving the Sustainable



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Development Goals (SDGs) by strengthening the Organization's capabilities to better execute its core functions and promote innovative methodologies, approaches and programmes that can be sustainably scaled up in cooperation with the public and private sectors, academia and civil society.

9. Numerous global, scientific reports were released this year with similar narratives: with ten years to go the majority of the 17 SDGs remain off-track for completion by the 2030 deadline. Inefficiencies in food and land use systems are estimated to generate significant "hidden" environmental, health and poverty costs. Transitioning to more sustainable food systems could lead to considerable economic gains each year, free up land from agriculture, and unlock new commercial opportunities every year until 2030.

10. Business-as-usual is clearly not sufficient - there is a need to move from incremental to transformational change. Accelerating and scaling up innovation is fundamental for achieving the SDGs and leveraging emerging opportunities for reaching a world free from hunger, poverty and malnutrition. It is an opportune time for FAO to harness-and increase-its knowledge and expertise, building on its comparative advantage, promoting a more holistic and coordinated approach to address the complex and interconnected challenges facing agriculture and food systems.

B. Structure

11. The Office for Innovation is proposed as a stand-alone Office under and with a direct reporting line to the Deputy Director-General (Programmes), headed by an Assistant Director General (ADG)/Chief Scientist. In addition to the ADG/Chief Scientist, budgeted posts in this Office will include a D-2 Director and two Professional posts. It will be further strengthened by a small number of technical experts (four to five) transferred on a rotational basis from the technical, and the Economic and Social Development, departments. The Secretariat of the Global Forum on Agricultural Research and Innovation (GFAR) will also be housed in this Office.

C. Areas of Focus

12. Areas of focus will cover sustainable agricultural approaches, including agroecology, biodiversity, biotechnologies, and Globally Important Agricultural Heritage Systems (GIAHS), sustainable food systems, nutrition, antimicrobial resistance, animal health, digital technology, agricultural machinery and digital agriculture.

13. By establishing this office, FAO aims to move from accidental innovation to actively designed innovation. The office will focus on leveraging innovation, technology and new approaches in support of countries for better results and for bringing the partners together. Taking into consideration that there is no global solution to some of the challenges that we are facing today, and there is no one size fit all, hence the solutions should be adapted to the context, need and demand of the countries.

14. Innovation is more than just technology; it is cross-cutting by nature. The UN innovation toolkit, called for by the Secretary General of the United Nations, shows the main elements of UN innovation; strategy, partnership, architecture, culture and evaluation. It is about doing things differently and doing different things. In his own words, the Secretary-General has stated; "We can do things differently and we can do different things, be bold, be revolutionary....and disrupt...because without innovation, there is no way we can overcome the challenges of our times."

15. The Innovation office will organize its work around the above mentioned UN Framework and its elements in order to develop new and inventive solutions to a number of pressing problems.

D. Proposed functions of the Office for Innovation

16. **Scan the Horizon** for future-intelligence-gathering and medium-to-long-term vision-building and prioritization processes. Results from these studies would also help steer FAO toward unexplored

questions and design innovative cooperation models and partnerships or identify areas where new programmes or programme components would be needed.

17. **Convene task forces on nexus approaches** (e.g. Water-Energy-Food, Land-Water-Nutrition, etc.) to look at the sustainability issues in an integrated manner, that is, away from a focus on a single component of agricultural value chains. Employing systems thinking will be key in establishing critical linkages between competing development objectives, identifying trade-offs and synergies and pinpointing entry points for policy assistance and advice to support countries in achieving multiple development outcomes.

18. **Develop an evidence-base and corporate perspective on emerging innovations** as a corporate approach to evaluate and anticipate the context-specific impacts of innovations, including the potential benefits, risks and unintended consequences as well as the barriers for adoption and diffusion.

19. **Stock-taking to map FAO's leadership and engagement in innovation** to demonstrate value addition and avoid duplication. This will include both internal ongoing and pipeline actions that FAO promotes that would lead to successful agricultural innovation and external ongoing initiatives of the United Nations and others where FAO is already partnering or needs to be further engaged and others where FAO is not yet sufficiently engaged.

20. **Set up a repository of innovative approaches** to promote and facilitate cooperation within and across countries on science, technology and innovation, and to ensure that all governments have access to a one-stop-shop for information sharing and networking on various innovative approaches (e.g. Digital Public Good Alliance).

21. **Establish and promote internal mechanisms to foster, promote and incentivize innovations** to strengthen FAO's innovative ethos including innovation of mindset, developing champions and promoters of innovation.

III. Biodiversity Cluster

A. Introduction

22. In December 2016, FAO established the Department on Climate, Biodiversity, Land and Water (CB). In addition to the Climate and Environment Division (CBC) and the Land and Water Division (CBL), the department hosts the secretariats of two statutory bodies addressing biodiversity, namely the Governing Body of the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (Treaty) and the Commission on Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (Commission).

23. At its 127th Session (November 2019), the Programme Committee reviewed the FAO Strategy on Mainstreaming Biodiversity across Agricultural Sectors (Strategy) and recommended its adoption by the 163rd Session of the Council.¹ The Committee also requested clarification on the scope and coordinating role of the Biodiversity Cluster (BC), its place within the Organization, its staffing, and the link with the Strategy.²

24. This note outlines the scope and functions of the BC, its links with the Strategy and its place within the Organization.

¹ CL 163/4, paragraph 12(b)

² CL 163/4, paragraph 5(m)

B. Scope and role of the Biodiversity Cluster and its links with the FAO Strategy on Mainstreaming Biodiversity across Agricultural Sectors

25. The Strategy aims to mainstream biodiversity across agricultural sectors at national, regional and international levels in a structured and coherent manner, taking into account national priorities, needs, regulations and policies and country programming frameworks. To this end, the Strategy formulates the achievement of four overarching outcomes, for which the BC will play a facilitating, coordinating and supporting role, as appropriate.

26. Through the Strategy, FAO aims to improve its capacity to provide support to Members to enhance their capacity to mainstream biodiversity across all agricultural sectors, including fisheries, aquaculture and forestry (Outcome 1). The Strategy also aims to integrate biodiversity across FAO's policies, programmes and activities (Outcome 2). Furthermore, the important role of biodiversity and the ecosystem services it provides should be globally recognized and fully reflected in relevant international agreements and processes (Outcome 3). To deliver on these outcomes, the Strategy recognizes the importance of improved coordination of FAO's work on biodiversity, including through enhanced technical capacity of and better coordination between FAO departments and regional, subregional and country offices (Outcome 4). The Strategy also defines the related activities for each of the four outcomes.

27. **Support to Members:** The BC will act as a one-stop source of information for relevant units in the Organization that, at the request of Members, may contribute to the enhancement of capacity to develop and implement evidence-based policies, programmes and activities for mainstreaming biodiversity across the agricultural sectors. In cooperation with relevant units, the BC will also provide and regularly update information on FAO tools and instruments that may assist Members and stakeholders in mainstreaming biodiversity across agricultural sectors.

28. **Mainstreaming biodiversity across policies, programmes and activities:** In the development, review and implementation of relevant FAO policies, programmes and activities, the BC will provide advice on the integration of aspects related to the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity, with the aim of ensuring alignment with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Furthermore, it will also facilitate collaboration among relevant bodies within the Organization with a view to sharing best practices and experiences.

29. **Advocating for the recognition of the role of biodiversity and ecosystem services for food and agriculture:** In close coordination with relevant technical units in the Organization, the BC will raise awareness of the important role of biodiversity for food and agriculture, including at the global level through its inclusion in relevant international agreements and processes. Upon consultation with and in close coordination with relevant technical units of the Organization, the BC will liaise with relevant international instruments, including multilateral environmental agreements and instruments, the UN and relevant specialized agencies, as well as other international and regional organizations.

30. **Strengthen coordination of FAO's work on biodiversity:** Through established instruments and bodies, including the Commission and the Treaty, FAO already provides a coordinated framework for the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity for food and agriculture. The BC will strengthen FAO's institutional capacity to address negative impacts of agriculture on biodiversity by facilitating knowledge management and cross-departmental and inter-disciplinary communication and collaboration on biodiversity mainstreaming.

31. As a first step, the BC will coordinate the development of the Action Plan for the implementation of the Strategy and ensure complementarity with other mainstreaming activities, strategies and policies, including the FAO Strategy on Climate Change, the Strategy and Vision for FAO's Work in Nutrition, the FAO Policy on Indigenous and Tribal Peoples and the FAO Policy on Gender Equality.

C. Biodiversity Cluster within the Organization

32. **Place:** The BC will be established in the Office of the Assistant Director-General of the Climate and Biodiversity Department (CB-ADG), which already hosts a number of instruments, bodies and programmes addressing genetic resources and biodiversity for food and agriculture.

33. **Staffing:** The BC will be funded with USD 0.8 million in non-staff resources and a newly established post of Senior Biodiversity Officer (P5).³ A Natural Resources Officer (P4) post was already established during the 2018-19 biennium.⁴ The BC will be supported by an interdepartmental working group on biodiversity mainstreaming.

34. **Reporting:** The BC will regularly report through the CB-ADG to the Deputy Director-General Climate and Natural Resources (DDG-N). Furthermore, the BC will also coordinate regular reporting by the Organization on the status of biodiversity mainstreaming and on the implementation of the Strategy and the Action Plan to the FAO technical committees: Committee on Agriculture (COAG), the Committee on Fisheries (COFI), the Committee on Forestry (COFO), the Committee on Commodity Problems (CCP) and the Committee on World Food Security (CFS). Pertinent matters related to biodiversity mainstreaming contained in the reports of the technical committees will be submitted to the FAO Council and FAO Conference for approval as required

³ See CL 163/3, paragraph 28

⁴ See C 2017/3, p. 31