

CL 163/4 - Information Note 2 – November 2019

FAO Strategy for Agenda 2030 and UN development system repositioning

1. This Information Note is presented at the request of the Programme Committee at its 127th session, following review of the Evaluation of FAO's strategic results framework, in response to Recommendation 1 on Engagement with the Agenda 2030 and UN Reform.
2. The Evaluation of FAO's Strategic Framework was considered at the 127th Session of the Programme Committee (PC 127/2). The report's first recommendation requests that Management "Develop a clear strategy and action plan for FAO engagement with the 2030 Agenda and UN Reform," noting that "A large-scale country-level effort will be required in the coming months to influence the UNSDCF [UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework]. FAO needs to be able to respond to these requirements, bearing in mind FAO's limited resources." The Programme Committee requested that more information on this recommendation be provided ahead of the 163rd Session of the FAO Council.
3. FAO strongly supports the Secretary-General's leadership and vision on this transformative journey and looks forward to working collectively and harmoniously with all UN partners in delivering together tangible results to UN Member States in their achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals by 2030.
4. FAO believes in a reform that will foster a UN "offer" that is more "demand driven" (country-owned), "open" (involving a wide array of partners across and beyond the UN development system), "integrated" (a single UN programme agreed with the host government that is seamless, rather than multiple and disconnected programs that are simply "aligned" to national objectives), and "transformative" (centred on "structural transformations," ensuring that no one is left behind).
5. During the November 2019 session of the United Nations Sustainable Development Group (UNSDG) Principals and Chief Executives Board (CEB) session in New York, the Director-General reaffirmed FAO's commitment to support the reform and exploit the full potential for pursuing a more synergetic collaboration among UN agencies at all levels, particularly through strengthening collaborative efforts in the Rome-based UN Agencies.
6. FAO's considerable field presence and decentralized technical capacity at regional and country levels, combined with its global normative and standard setting roles provide a robust contribution to the UN system-wide efforts in support of the 2030 Agenda.
7. FAO is committed to supporting the reform financially and has more-than-doubled its contribution under the new cost-sharing arrangement (from USD 2.15 million to USD 4.7 million per year) to support the reinvigorated RC system (FAO is the fifth largest contributor among 19 UN Agencies).
8. FAO has been active in all streams of the design process and UNSDG, since the launch of the new guidelines of the 'Cooperation Framework' in June 2019, FAO has been fully engaged in supporting the 'roll-out' countries in the development of the underpinning Common Country Analysis (CCA) prior to the full development of the Cooperation Framework to ensure FAO's strategic and timely contribution to the UN 'collective offer'.



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9. FAO has substantially revised its own Country Programming Framework (CPF) Guidelines in order for the planning and programming instrument at country level to be fully derived from the UN Cooperation Framework, as required by UNSDCF Guidelines. Internal trainings to FAO Regional and Country offices on the Cooperation Framework, and the derived new FAO CPF have been rolled-out.
10. FAO is currently setting up the mechanism to report to its Governing Bodies on the implementation of the new Funding Compact using the common indicators developed by the UN Development Coordination Office (UNDCO).
11. The reform of the UN work and organization at Regional level is led by a UN Internal Review Team (IRT). FAO has nominated its Regional Representatives (ADG level) for Latin America and the Caribbean and for Near East and North Africa to contribute to the work of the IRT.
12. On monitoring and reporting on the SDGs, FAO stresses the necessity to align with the global coordination mechanisms which for FAO is managed by headquarters rather than regional structures, in particular given FAO custodianship of 21 SDG indicators.
13. With regard to the Regional Collaborative Platform, the organization is actively supporting the analytical and programmatic framework and advisory services, advocacy and convening functions especially for regional processes, strengthened coordination and support to UN Resident Coordinators through policy work, analysis and information.
14. FAO is actively engaging at early Common Country Analysis (CCA) stage and is participating in the MAPS (Mainstreaming, Acceleration and Policy Support) missions in selected countries for further connection/integration with the new cycle of Cooperation Frameworks (see figure below summarizing the timing of the new cycle).
15. Selected FAO Regional Officers (ROs) have been appointed as members of the Regional Peer Support Groups (PSGs) coordinated by the newly established Regional DCO Offices, tasked to peer-review the quality of the CCAs and other parts of the Cooperation Frameworks, ensuring FAO's comparative advantage and contribution to relevant SDG targets are clearly recognized.
16. Financial and human resources are provided 'on-demand' to the roll-out countries starting the new Cooperation Framework cycle. This support includes skilled 'FAO Surge Capacity Teams' from different levels and areas of expertise of the Organization to be timely involved, and deployed as required, during the critical steps of the preparation of the UN CCA and the entire visioning exercise, from which FAO's CPF will be derived.
17. FAO Regional Offices are providing technical and policy assistance support to country offices based on the four phases of the UNSDCF namely; establishment of the country support team, pre-CCA phase, CCA preparation and the preparation of the UNSDCF.
18. The Regional Office for Africa has focused on strengthening the capacity of the country offices in the region for effective and meaningful engagement with the UN Country Teams as well as provision of required technical support to a selected number of countries.
19. The Regional Office for Latin America and the Caribbean has been supporting the countries with the formulation of the UNSDCF, starting with four countries and expanding to another five where the UNSDCF is planned to start in 2020. This work includes provision of data and information in the CCAs, organization of workshop and trainings, as well as sharing experiences and good practices across the countries.

20. The Regional Office for Europe and Central Asia is providing support to the countries based on the four phases of UNSDCF as mentioned above in five countries for 2020 and an additional country in 2021. Due to the small size of FAO Representations in this specific region and based on the need and demand of the countries Regional and Subregional Offices provide technical assistance through missions and technical backstopping.
21. The Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific is fully engaged with the formulation of UNSDCF as well as with the joint efforts among the UN agencies to the countries. The Regional Office has started to work closely with six countries which will be further expanded to include additional countries.
22. The Regional Office for Near East and North Africa, in addition to collaboration with the regional bodies on specific knowledge products and conducting policy dialogue in the framework of 2030 Agenda, the office has started the work on UNSDCF in one country which will be further expanded to an additional list of five countries.
23. Additional support from HQ is provided to the FAORs in terms of training (including face-to-face trainings, webinars and e-learning tools), briefings and think-labs on the new Cooperation Framework and the new Country Programming Framework Guidelines.
24. As an example of FAO headquarters' plan for direct support to the country offices, in food crises contexts, Strategic Programme 5 (SP5) will support the countries in the formulation of food security and nutrition sensitive UNSDCF collective outcomes addressing short term urgent needs as well as longer term development investments. Working closely with partners, in particular WFP, SP5 will support country teams in producing joined context analyses, including analyses of the political, economic, social, environmental and security environment, performing gap analyses and mapping of policies, strategies, programmes and investment, ultimately actively informing the CCA.
25. This support will ensure that analyses are translated into consensus-based country actions to support the development of food security, nutrition and sustainable collective result framed within the relevant country led initiatives. This support will also feed a process of learning and documenting effective interventions to address the root causes of the food crises according to the specific drivers of each context, building a body of evidence – e.g. taxonomy of interventions that will be instrumental in terms of recommendations and advocacy for donors and relevant decision makers.
26. In addition, to provide high quality support to such a large number of countries, the Economic and Social Department has elected to establish a web-based platform to enable FAO country and regional offices to access a data panel and, with a limited number of keystrokes, generate data-rich reports on a series of topics related to food and agriculture issues in specific countries or, for comparison purposes, groups of countries in the same regions or with similar characteristics.
27. Moreover, the Governance and Policy Support (GaPS) Unit in ESD is leading a corporate upgrade of the FAO policy portal (www.fao.org/policy-support/en) and has designed a corporate tools repository to make FAO large suite of policy-relevant analytical tools readily available to FAO Representatives, policy officers and partners in the field. The portal and the tools repository (accessible directly and through the relaunched policy portal) will be continuously updated to ensure relevance, quality and visibility to web-based search engines such as Google and Bing.

Number of countries per Region starting new UNSDCF cycles

| Region | Number of countries which start the new UNSDCF cycle in 2020 | Number of countries which start the new UNSDCF cycle in 2021 | Total per Region |
|---------------|---|---|------------------|
| RAF | 8 | 8 | 16 |
| RAP | 2 | 5 | 7 |
| REU | 0 | 12 | 12 |
| RLC | 5 | 5 | 10 |
| RNE | 2 | 4 | 6 |
| Total | 17 | 34 | 51 |