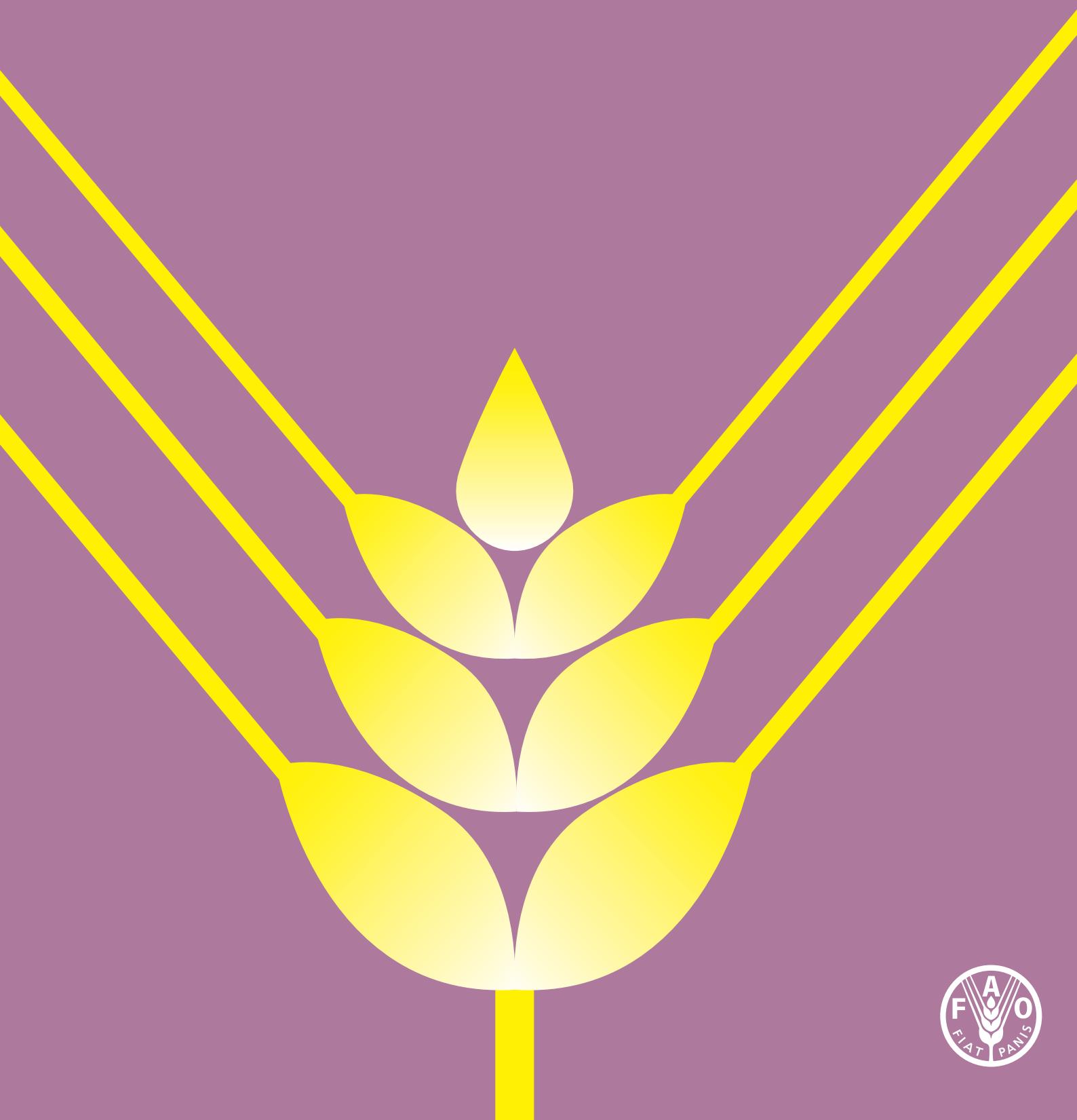


2011

C 2011/4

Programme  
Evaluation  
Report





C 2011/4  
**June 2011**  
*Thirty-seventh Session  
of the Conference  
25th June – 2nd July 2011*

**2011**

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Programme  
Evaluation  
Report

Food and Agriculture  
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## **I. Introduction**

1. The 2011 Programme Evaluation Report consists of four main sections:
  - a) new developments in evaluation, aimed at increasing the coverage of voluntary-funded activities, strengthening evaluation of emergency and rehabilitation interventions, improving follow-up to evaluations and improving access to evaluation products;
  - b) a new section, drawing common lessons from evaluations undertaken during the biennium;
  - c) collaboration with the UN system on evaluation matters;
  - d) the evaluation programme of the Organization, which provides a listing of evaluation outputs over the 2010-11 biennium and the work plan of major evaluations for the forthcoming biennium;
  - e) briefs on the major evaluations completed during the biennium and provided to the Governing Bodies. In the briefs, a summary of the management response to the evaluation and the conclusions of the Programme Committee are provided in addition to the evaluation itself. Each brief is cross-referenced to the complete documentation on the evaluation website.

## **II. Evaluation in FAO – New Developments**

### *Institutional and Governance Arrangements*

2. The Charter for the FAO Office of Evaluation, called for as part of the IPA, was approved by the Council at its 139<sup>th</sup> session in May 2010 after endorsement by the Programme Committee and was incorporated in the Basic Texts. The Charter established a comprehensive evaluation policy for FAO.
3. A Director-General's Bulletin (DGB 2010/20) concerning the Evaluation Committee (Internal) was issued in June 2010 to bring the membership in line with the new organizational structure that came into force in this biennium. Both Deputy Directors-General are now permanent members of the Committee and the Committee is chaired by the Legal Counsel. DGB 2010/20 also announced the new rotating members of the Committee for the biennium 2010-11 (ADG/AG, ADG/ES, ADG/RAF). The rotating members serve for a two-year term.

### *Evaluation of Extra-budgetary Work*

4. At its 103<sup>rd</sup> session in April 2010, the Programme Committee expressed concern about the number of FAO projects that do not contain budgetary provisions for independent evaluation. In its report, the Committee stressed that the June 2007 decision of the Council should be respected by donors and brought to their attention where necessary by the FAO Secretariat. The Committee requested that FAO report to it on the implementation of the Council decision, and this will be done at the October 2011 session.

5. In order to fully implement the June 2007 decision, the Technical Cooperation Department issued Field Programme Circular (FP 2011/01) in March 2011. FP 2011/01 formally established the Trust Fund for Evaluation of Technical Cooperation for Development called for by the Council decision, which will be used to carry out strategic and thematic evaluations in areas where there is a large field programme component. The scale of evaluation budget lines in the Trust Fund for Evaluation of Technical Cooperation for Development is the same as for Trust Fund for Evaluation of Emergency and Rehabilitation Activities, which was established in 2007. The Field Programme Circular specifies that evaluations funded through the Trust Fund for Evaluation of Technical Cooperation for Development will be approved by the Programme Committee, as part of its periodic consideration of the rolling work programme of the Office of Evaluation.

6. In line with the Council decision, FP 2011/01 states that all projects with a budget over USD 4 million, or smaller projects if there are particular requirements, must include adequate provision for at least one independent evaluation during their lifetime. Adequate provision means that the full cost of the evaluation(s) foreseen for the project.

7. The Circular also established a dedicated budget line to be included for evaluation charges in extra-budgetary activities. This will permit clear identification of evaluation resources in extra-budgetary funded activities and thus facilitate planning and organization of evaluations.

#### *Strengthening of the Evaluation of Emergency and Rehabilitation Work*

8. Since the establishment of the Emergency and Rehabilitation Evaluation Trust Fund in 2007, some fifteen evaluations have been conducted utilizing these funds. Topics covered included evaluations of FAO's response to acute emergencies, country evaluations where FAO's work was dominated by emergency and rehabilitation initiatives and an institutional evaluation focusing on issues relating to FAO's emergency work (Evaluation of FAO's Operational Capacity in Emergencies). Until recently, criteria for carrying out evaluation of emergency and rehabilitation (E&R) operations were: (i) volume of operations above USD 5 million; (ii) the emergency response was perceived to have particular features/issues and an evaluation would produce general lessons; and (iii) specific requests from Management and/or the Programme Committee. Given the significant increase of emergency operations in the past few years and with a view to improving evaluation effectiveness, it was felt that these criteria should be revisited. New criteria have been defined that include the following considerations: (i) for accountability purposes, large programmes in response to a food and agricultural threat (volume of response over USD 10 million) will be evaluated as a priority; (ii) the programme of E&R evaluations should ensure a significant coverage of activities under Strategic Objective I, which encompasses most of FAO's E&R work; (iii) evaluations of innovative approaches or new areas of work for the Organization should be conducted to draw appropriate lessons; (iv) balanced country coverage should be achieved to the extent possible; and (v) donor's expressed interests for evaluation topics should be considered in formulating the proposed work programme. Furthermore, in view of the increased role of the Programme Committee in the FAO evaluation regime and to align the E&R evaluation planning process with that for other major evaluations, the Programme Committee will approve the programme of E&R evaluations as part of its review of OED rolling workplan of evaluations, taking into account the need for some flexibility in case of unanticipated crises emerging after the discussion with the Programme Committee.

#### *Evaluation Processes and Methodologies*

9. The Office of Evaluation has developed tools to improve its processes and methodologies as part of its continuous effort to strengthen accountability and learning from evaluation.

#### ***More Rigorous Evaluation Follow-up***

10. The Programme Committee has requested that greater attention be given to follow-up to evaluations. In particular, at its 103<sup>rd</sup> session, it asked that the programme and policy impacts stemming from the implementation of the recommendations of evaluations be specified in all evaluation follow-up reports. At its 106<sup>th</sup> session, in its consideration of the Evaluation of FAO's Regional and Sub-regional Offices for the Near East, it requested that comments of the Office of Evaluation should be part of evaluation follow-up reports.

11. At the present time, follow-up reports are prepared by programme and project management staff responsible for the implementation of agreed evaluation recommendations. The Office of Evaluation performs a quality assurance check, to ensure that the follow-up action reported specifically and clearly addresses the action that was agreed, or that reasons for non-compliance are stated. In addition, for evaluations and management responses that have been presented to the Programme Committee, the follow-up reports are also cleared by the Evaluation Committee (Internal).

12. It has also been suggested that the Office of Evaluation could check and report on the implementation of evaluation recommendations, as a way to further ensure the accuracy of follow-up reporting. While such verification would contribute to achieving this goal, it would require considerable additional resources for the Office of Evaluation in order to be achieved. Such assessments would likely require field visits in order to be accurate and the costs of these may start to approach a considerable percentage of the cost of the evaluation itself. For this reason, improvement

of evaluation follow-up will rely for the time being on self-reporting and quality assurance measures from the Office of Evaluation and the Evaluation Committee (Internal).

#### ***Improved Access to FAO Evaluation Products***

13. For some time, FAO evaluation reports, management responses and follow-up reports have been available to the public. However, the Office of Evaluation has found that evaluation products have not been easily accessible through the FAO Evaluation Website. Accordingly, considerable effort was placed during the biennium on re-vamping the website, to ensuring the accuracy and completeness of the material available, to enhancing the Office's internal management systems and to improving the search function, with a view to increasing accessibility and user-friendliness of evaluation materials for internal FAO stakeholders, member Governments and the public at large. The new website was expected to be activated in April 2011.

### **III. Drawing Common Lessons from Evaluations**

14. As part of an effort to improve organizational learning from evaluation and to assist the Governing Bodies in its deliberations, the Programme Evaluation Report 2011 includes a review of the key common issues that have arisen from the major evaluations conducted during the biennium 2010-11. The analysis also identifies areas of concern and interest expressed by the Programme Committee in its deliberations on evaluations presented to it.

15. Topics relating to ***decentralization*** were covered in several of the key evaluations in the biennium, such as those on country programming, capacity building in Africa, the evaluation of FAO's offices in the Near East and in all the country evaluations.

16. A major theme in many evaluations was the need to ***strengthen FAO's work at country level***. This has been a recurrent issue and is particularly significant subsequent to adoption of the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness and the Accra Agenda for Action that stressed the central role of countries in their development processes. The evaluation of FAO's offices in the Near East noted the primary need and demand for engagement in sectoral strategy development and policy issues, tasks for which FAO Representations in the region are often not well-equipped<sup>1</sup>. The evaluation recommended strengthening the capacity of FAO Representations, both internally and by locating needed technical resources closer to the country, at sub-regional level. A similar recommendation was made with respect to strengthening capacity building skills in Africa<sup>2</sup>.

17. Another issue related to decentralization was the need to more effectively involve FAO offices at country level in identification of priorities and activities, as this is what countries expect and many other organizations are doing. However, evaluations have pointed out constraints for FAO to do this. For example, the evaluation of FAO programming at country level pointed out the difficulties that FAORs have in helping to develop national priority frameworks, including lack of capacity and strategic vision<sup>3</sup>. Like the Near East evaluation, the country programming evaluation recommended that regional or sub-regional resources should be available to support the country programming process. Needs for support to or strengthening of FAO at country level has been a recurrent theme in country evaluations as well. The Brazil and India country evaluation synthesis pointed out that country offices are often not involved in the design and implementation of regional activities<sup>4</sup>. As a result, the opportunity to develop synergies between these and national-level initiatives was lost. The evaluation recommended systematic involvement of FAORs in relevant regional, inter-regional and global projects.

18. The Programme Committee made several recommendations related to decentralization issues, including that the roles and functioning of regional, sub-regional and country offices should be considered in country programming guidelines<sup>5</sup>, calling for strong FAO presence and leadership at

<sup>1</sup> PC 106/5-FC 138/22, para. 197

<sup>2</sup> PC 104/5, para 288

<sup>3</sup> PC 104/4, paras 186-190

<sup>4</sup> PC 106/6, para 58

<sup>5</sup> CL 140/8, para 18

country level<sup>6</sup> and stressing the importance of an appropriate recruitment policy, effective rotation policy, adequate training and an appropriate skills mix for staff, especially FAO Representatives<sup>7</sup>.

19. Another recurrent issue in the 2010-11 evaluations has been the need to develop and foster **partnership** arrangements in FAO activities, taking account work being carried out by development partners and comparative advantage of FAO in particular situations. This was a key theme of the Joint Thematic Evaluation of FAO and WFP Support to Information Systems for Food Security (ISFS)<sup>8</sup>. The evaluation found greater than expected collaboration between FAO and WFP in this area; nonetheless, it identified opportunities for enhancing collaboration and cooperation. An outcome has been that the two organizations have developed a joint strategy based on comparative advantages, covering information exchange, collaboration on development of tools and support of national ISFS and joint communication and advocacy issues. However, the evaluation of FAO's Activities on Capacity Development in Africa, which gave comprehensive attention to partnership issues<sup>9</sup>, was less positive in its conclusions. This evaluation found in most cases partnerships, if established, were the result of individual rather than institutional relationships. In some cases, FAO's effectiveness as a partner was compromised by slow decision-making and cumbersome bureaucratic procedures. The evaluation recommended that specific attention be given, particularly by decentralized offices and FAO Representations, to strengthening partnership aspects of capacity development activities in Africa.

20. Several evaluations considered during the biennium dealt with FAO's **emergency and rehabilitation response** activities. These included the Second Real-time Evaluation of FAO's work on Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza, the Evaluation of FAO's Operational Capacity in Emergencies and an assessment of FAO's effectiveness in three post-conflict and transition countries (DR Congo, Sudan, Tajikistan). Emergency activities also received consideration in other evaluations, such as the one on Country Programming. A key point that emerged from some of these evaluations<sup>10</sup>, echoed by the Programme Committee<sup>11</sup>, was that certain types of emergencies are in fact rather predictable and in some cases recurrent. Accordingly, and with a view to improving efficiency and effectiveness, there is a need to strengthen emergency planning capability at country level. The country evaluation synthesis further examined the issue of connectedness – the linkage between emergency response, rehabilitation/reconstruction and development. It recommended that country programming frameworks should reflect a unified FAO working as one and show continuity between emergency, rehabilitation and development activities, by better targeting populations and areas where it would be necessary to carry on with emergency and rehabilitation interventions and by increasing synergies between the various activities and elaborating advocacy for transition<sup>12</sup>.

21. The need for improved **communication strategies** was identified in major evaluations, including the joint evaluation of FAO and WFP Support to Information Systems for Food Security (ISFS) and the evaluation of FAO's activities on capacity development in Africa. For example, the ISFS evaluation found that a decisive factor reducing the efficiency of ISFS in informing decision-making is poor communication of ISFS products, with products often being widely disseminated without adequate criteria for why, to whom and how the information should be communicated<sup>13</sup>. The evaluation of capacity development in Africa noted the link between poor distribution of FAO's normative products in Africa and the absence of strategies that are appropriate to a region where communications infrastructure is poor in many areas<sup>14</sup>. Communication strategies were addressed by the Programme Committee in its recommendations on both evaluations, where it underlined their

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<sup>6</sup> CL 140/8, para 21

<sup>7</sup> CL 141/8, para 15

<sup>8</sup> PC 103/8, para 36

<sup>9</sup> PC 104/5, pp. 34-38

<sup>10</sup> e.g. PC 103/7-FC 132/10, para 9 and PC 104/4, para 42

<sup>11</sup> CL 139/4, para 25

<sup>12</sup> PC 104/7, para 114

<sup>13</sup> PC 103/8, para 24

<sup>14</sup> PC 104/4, para 237

importance<sup>15</sup> and the need to seek most effective ways to produce and disseminate relevant technical materials<sup>16</sup>.

22. **Gender** was a significant area of concern in Programme Committee recommendations. The Programme Committee stressed the need to consider gender in all evaluations<sup>17</sup>. FAO's evaluation guidelines, including for quality assurance, will now specifically assess gender coverage in evaluation reports. The Programme Committee also pointed out that gender issues had not been sufficiently addressed in a number of programmes that had been evaluated<sup>18</sup>. The Committee, in considering the work plan for the Office of Evaluation at its 103<sup>rd</sup> session, called for a comprehensive evaluation of FAO's work on gender and development. The results of that evaluation and the management response to it will be considered by Programme Committee in October 2011.

#### IV. UN System Collaboration in Evaluation

23. During the 2010-11 biennium, FAO 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 its participation in 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.

24. UNEG works largely through voluntary task forces on themes of common interest, aiming at diffusion and harmonization of evaluation methods and best practices across member agencies. At the 2010 Annual General Meeting (AGM), some Task Forces were closed and others re-constituted, reflecting priorities agreed upon by members. Key priority areas included harmonisation of evaluation practices at country level and evaluation capacity development.

25. UNEG continued to be active in 2010 on the Delivering as One (DaO) evaluability assessment of the eight pilot countries<sup>19</sup>. A Quality Assurance Panel with UNEG Heads and external evaluators, most from bilateral evaluation units, was set-up to review Inception and Final Evaluation reports for six country-led evaluation exercises<sup>20</sup>. FAO participated in the Panel. The UNEG Task Force has also prepared a "Lessons Learned" document on the country-led evaluation process, presented at its Annual General Meeting in March 2011.

26. Over the period 2010-11, the FAO Office of Evaluation has made significant contributions to the following UNEG Task Forces and other initiatives:

- **Evaluation of the Evaluation Function:** This Task Force aims at developing good practices and providing guidance on evaluation of the evaluation functions. Particular attention is given to the Peer Review modality with the objective of strengthening UN ownership in these processes. OED provides the co-chair of the Joint OECD/DAC-UNEG Task Force on Peer Reviews of Evaluation Functions of International Organizations. OED has initiated contacts with the Task Force concerning arrangements for the first Peer Review of the evaluation function in FAO, to be carried out in 2012 as required by the IPA.
- **Harmonisation of Evaluation:** Since 2010, this Task Force has developed question and answer guidelines to support to the UNDAF evaluation process and has worked on identification of best practices for joint evaluations between agencies.
- **Human Rights and Gender Equality:** The Task Force tested and finalised a UNEG Handbook - Integrating Human Rights and Gender Equality in Evaluations for endorsement by the UNEG AGM in March 2011. OED evaluations provided some test cases for the handbook.

<sup>15</sup> CL 139/4, para 33

<sup>16</sup> CL 140/8, para 18 c)

<sup>17</sup> CL 139/4, para 25

<sup>18</sup> CL 139/4, paras 34 and 40; CL 140/8, paras 18 b) and 21

<sup>19</sup> Albania, Cape Verde, Mozambique, Pakistan, Rwanda, Tanzania, Uruguay and Viet Nam.

<sup>20</sup> Albania, Mozambique, Rwanda, Tanzania, Uruguay, Viet Nam

- **Impact Evaluation:** The TF worked on Guidance Materials for Impact Evaluation in the UN system, several of which are expected to be finalized in 2011. OED's experience in this area in the context of country evaluations has provided key contributions to this work.
- **UNEG consultant roster:** This system-wide roster, which will include OED's own roster developed over a number of years, will facilitate access to qualified evaluators for all UN agencies.

27. OED continued its involvement in ALNAP to achieve greater coordination and in particular to improve and systematize evaluation of humanitarian aid. This included the participation to various workshops in 2010, such as the OECD/UNEG/ALNAP joint meeting on strengthening of the coordination of evaluations in the context of the international response to the Haiti earthquake and an ALNAP-led technical workshop on improving humanitarian evaluation.

28. OED participated in inter-agency steering committees for real-time evaluations of major humanitarian assistance interventions, such as those related to the earthquake in Haiti and floods in Pakistan RTE. OED also has made substantive contributions to the OCHA-led evaluation of the Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF) that is taking place in 2011, including through an evaluation of FAO CERF interventions. The results of this evaluation were presented to the Programme Committee at its 106<sup>th</sup> session in March 2011.

29. In addition, during the biennium OED participated in inter-agency evaluations with UNIDO for joint projects in Iraq and with UNEP for the final evaluation of the Land Degradation Assessment in Dry-Lands (LADA) Programme.

## V. Evaluation Programme of the Organization

### *The 2010-2011 Programme Evaluations*

30. All evaluation reports, management responses and follow-up reports to management responses can be found on the FAO evaluation website. The evaluation website was revamped in 2010-11 with improved presentation and appearance and easier document search.

31. **Evaluations for Consideration of the Governing Bodies:** Since the issuance of the Programme Evaluation Report 2009 (C 2009/4), the following major evaluations have been presented to the Governing Bodies through the Programme Committee. Evaluation Briefs for each of them are included in this document:

- a) Evaluation of FAO's Operational Capacity in Emergencies (evaluation brief 18);
- b) Joint Thematic Evaluation of FAO and WFP Support to Information Systems for Food Security (evaluation brief 19);
- c) FAO's Role and Work related to Water (evaluation brief 20);
- d) Strategic Evaluation of FAO country programming (evaluation brief 21);
- e) Evaluation of FAO's activities on capacity development in Africa (evaluation brief 22);
- f) Second Real-Time Evaluation of FAO's work on Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI) (evaluation brief 23);
- g) FAO's effectiveness at country level: A synthesis of evaluations in post-conflict and transition countries (Democratic Republic of the Congo, Sudan, Tajikistan)(evaluation brief 24);
- h) Evaluation of FAO's Regional and Subregional Offices for the Near East (evaluation brief 25)

32. **Project evaluations:** A table summarizing the individual project evaluations undertaken by independent missions during 2010 and through March 2011 is provided as Annex I, along with those expected to be completed in 2011. Evaluations with direct participation of staff from the Office of Evaluation through March 2011 included:

*Development projects:*

- a) Capacity Building for South African Professionals in the Field of Agriculture and Food Security (GCP/RAF/412/SAF) – completed August 2010;
- b) Supporting Conservation Agriculture for Sustainable Agriculture and Rural Development Phase II (GCP/RAF/413/GER) - completed in March 2011;
- c) Gestión Pesquera en Uruguay (UTF/URU/025/URU) – completed in April 2011.

*Emergency and rehabilitation projects:*

- a) Restoration of production capacity and food security for the most vulnerable farmers and fishers affected by Cyclone Nargis (OSRO/MYA/902/SWE) - completed May 2010;
- b) Sudan Productive Capacity Recovery Programme (GCP/SUD/622/MUL & GCP/SUD/623/MUL) – completed July 2010;
- c) Appui à la coordination des opérations agricoles d'urgence, soutien aux moyens d'existence et réinsertion des ménages vulnérables et des communautés victimes du conflit en Côte d'Ivoire (OSRO/IVC/903/SWE) – completed October 2010;
- d) Support to aquaculture rehabilitation in districts highly affected by August 2008 Floods (OSRO/LAO/802/SWE) – completed October 2010;
- e) Support to the most vulnerable farming households to protect their livelihoods and to restore agriculture production (OSRO/KYR/901/SWE) – completed October 2010;
- f) Improvement of food security and livelihoods of smallholder farmers through provision of extension and inputs (OSRO/ZIM/903/SWE) – completed November 2010.

33. **Evaluation of FAO's effectiveness in individual countries:** These evaluations analyse the relevance, outcomes and impact of the totality of FAO's work in individual countries. Synthesis reports covering similar types of countries are presented for consideration by the Programme Committee. A synthesis report covering large, rapidly-developing countries (India and Brazil) was presented to the 107th (Special) session of the Programme Committee in May 2011. A Brief on this evaluation, including reactions of the Programme Committee, will be included in the next Programme Evaluation Report. Country evaluations carried out in the 2010-11 biennium are:

- a) Evaluation of the Programmes and Cooperation of FAO in Ethiopia 2005-2010 (completed in January 2011);
- b) Evaluation of FAO Cooperation in Brazil 2002-2010 (completed in February 2011);
- c) Evaluation of FAO Cooperation in Zimbabwe 2006-2010 (completed in May 2011);
- d) Evaluation of FAO Cooperation in Haiti 2006-2011 (to be completed October 2011).

34. A synthesis report covering the country evaluations in Ethiopia, Zimbabwe and Haiti will be presented to the Programme Committee in May 2012.

*Major Evaluations to be Completed in 2011 and Programmed for 2012-13*

35. **Reports for consideration by the Programme Committee:** At its 103<sup>rd</sup> session in May 2010, the Programme Committee approved a rolling work plan for the Office of Evaluation. The Committee assigned highest priority to the following evaluations, which were initiated in 2010 and early 2011:

- a) Evaluation of FAO's Role and Work in Nutrition (to be presented to the Programme Committee in October 2011);
- b) Evaluation of FAO's Role and Work in Gender and Development (to be presented to the Programme Committee in October 2011);
- c) Evaluation of FAO's Role and Work in Land Tenure and Access to Land (to be presented to the Programme Committee in May 2012);
- d) Evaluation of FAO's Role and Work in Policy (to be presented to the Programme Committee in May 2012).

36. Preliminary work has also been initiated on two more evaluations, identified by the Programme Committee as highest priority for evaluations to begin in 2011:

- a) Evaluation of FAO's Work on Sustainable Management of Forests and Trees;

- b) Evaluation of FAO's Work on Capacity Building in Support of Implementation of the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries.

37. At its 108<sup>th</sup> session in October 2011, the Programme Committee will consider a new rolling work plan for the Office of Evaluation that will include proposals for thematic and strategic evaluations to begin in 2012 and subsequent years.

38. **Country evaluations:** At its 103<sup>rd</sup> session, the Programme Committee endorsed that country evaluations should be carried out in:

- i) large, rapidly developing countries;
- ii) countries with large emergency and rehabilitation programmes; and
- iii) middle-income countries.

39. Due consideration is given to regional balance in the selection of countries for such evaluations.

40. The synthesis report for large, rapidly developing countries (India and Brazil) was presented to the Programme Committees in March 2011. A synthesis report on countries with large emergency and rehabilitation programmes (Ethiopia, Zimbabwe, Haiti) will be presented to the Programme Committee in May 2012. Country evaluations in middle-income countries will be carried out in the biennium 2012-13.

## **VI. Evaluation Briefs – Major Evaluations**

Evaluation Brief 18: Evaluation of FAO's Operational Capacity in Emergencies

Evaluation Brief 19: Joint Thematic Evaluation of FAO and WFP Support to Information Systems for Food Security

Evaluation Brief 20: FAO's Role and Work related to Water

Evaluation Brief 21: Strategic Evaluation of FAO Country Programming

Evaluation Brief 22: Evaluation of FAO's Activities on Capacity Development in Africa

Evaluation Brief 23: Second Real-Time Evaluation of FAO's work on Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI)

Evaluation Brief 24: FAO's Effectiveness at Country Level: A Synthesis of Evaluations in Post-conflict and Transition Countries (Democratic Republic of the Congo, Sudan, Tajikistan)

Evaluation Brief 25: Evaluation of FAO's Regional and Subregional Offices for the Near East



# Evaluation Brief

18

## Evaluation of FAO's Operational Capacity in Emergencies

### Operational Capacities in Emergencies

**A**ddressing emergencies constitutes the Organization's Strategic Objective I "Improved preparedness for and effective response to food and agricultural threats and emergencies". Emergency operations now account for well over a quarter of the Organization's total expenditure, and are funded almost entirely from extra-budgetary resources. In June 2007, the FAO Council asked that a process evaluation be undertaken to analyse the Organization's managerial, administrative and operational constraints in carrying out its emergency operations. Unlike the great majority of FAO's evaluations that concentrate on the Organization's relevance, effectiveness and impact, this evaluation deals with operational processes and their efficiency and is as much a management study as an evaluation.

### Findings and Conclusions

**E**mergency operations are more predictable than is often assumed and may continue for extended periods of a decade or more. Where applicable, the emergency programme should be closely coordinated with the development priorities and programme of FAO in the National Medium-Term Priority Framework and for this it is essential that TCE and the FAO Representative work in an integrated manner for both planning and resource mobilization. It also requires that the emergency operation be designed as a whole to lead naturally into rehabilitation and development with subsequent transfer of operational responsibilities to the FAO Representative. Emergency operations should be subject to periodic review and reprogramming and underpinned by an overall intervention strategy for each category of emergency.

**F**unding for planning and preparatory work at **country** level is a major constraint, especially for new emergencies. There is a need to markedly increase the availability and use of funds under the **Special Fund for Emergency and Rehabilitation Activities (SFERA)** component for preparatory work at country level. SFERA advance funding should be extended beyond individual projects, so that if a major emergency occurs which can be expected to attract substantial donor funding, an immediate advance could be made for the programme as a whole. SFERA should be split into separate funds for each of the three existing components (revolving fund to provide advance funding for projects; funding of assessment missions and emergency coordination units; and programme funding. Sub-funds in SFERA (i.e. individual multi-donor trust funds) should be opened much more flexibly than at present for all major emergency operations to encourage pool/programme funding by donors and facilitate management.

Pool funding for human resources, procurement, etc. should be developed for improved programme management, including human resources and procurement. This type of funding allows for consolidation, continuity, and more efficient and flexible use of resources. For example, in human resources the pool fund(s) would contract the personnel and the various projects would purchase personnel services from the fund. A small proportion of Administrative and Operational Support Costs (AOS) should be allocated for the core resourcing of pool funds, including the planning and advance funding functions of the SFERA.

## Findings, Conclusions and Recommendations

Administrative and Operational Support and Technical Support Services are extra-budgetary and should be managed as trust funds or a mechanism for carryover between biennia should be put in place, beginning in the 2012-13 biennium. This will allow smoothing of operations, as has already been agreed in principle by the Finance Committee. The Organization needs a clear policy on TSS levels of funding in emergency projects that is understood by donors.

Changes are required in the internal governance for operational, administrative and financial systems and the related IT support to ensure integrated and comprehensive system development and management. This can be supported by the Business Improvement Unit as well as the foreseen changes in IT governance.

Considerably greater **decentralization** by TCE of its operations is needed. A flexible model should be adopted, which takes into account the total size of the FAO operations in the country, not limited to emergency operations. Priority should be given to out-posting operations' officers to the major emergency operations which constitute 60% of the TCE portfolio. In countries where there is adequate capacity, small emergency operations should be managed by the FAO Representative. Delegations of authority should be differentiated on the basis of capacities and may also be made to the emergency coordinator or operations officer, besides the FAOR.

**Technical support** and clearances should shift more towards overall programme, planning and review and away from individual actions such as small project approvals, procurement and human resource clearances. A comprehensive set of technical decision support tools should be developed. More use needs to be made of technical expertise in TCE (field and headquarters) and they should report for their technical work to the technical units concerned.

The current IPSAS project, the ongoing decentralization in emergency operations and the need for an integrated and multi-functional results-based management system for the field programme, make it imperative to analyse needs and consider the overall system architecture now, including priority to improving planning and programme management for emergency operations and capacities in the field. On the basis of this, a medium-term integrated solution should be developed.

System improvements must continue on the present software platforms for the next few years. Recommendations were made for this and for maintaining the flexibility in system design to move forward in such a way that future improvements and integration will not be derailed by current major projects

FAO should develop a core of emergency personnel with a flexible and competitive contractor of human resources, while avoiding a build up of financial, legal or moral obligations beyond the core. Core staff should be subject to rotation to the field.

**Pool funding for human resources:** Probably the greatest single constraint to management of human resources for emergency operations is that human resources are largely funded in the field from individual projects. This makes it difficult to plan and retain human resources for programmes and reduce the costs resulting from multiple transactions. A pool trust fund should be created.

**Human resource development** is a priority especially for core staff. An urgent current requirement is training in planning, in the possibilities for more consolidated and efficient programme management and operations available through FAO processes and IT systems. Non-core staff in countries with emergency operations of longer duration need essential training to carry out their operational duties, especially training in FAO procedures and systems and for

## Findings, Conclusions and Recommendations

professionals, training in the Organization's policies. FAO Representatives in countries subject to significant emergency risk should have demonstrated competency in emergency operations.

**Procurements** accounted for 57 percent of FAO's emergency expenditures in the period 2004-07. Procurement preparedness and meeting delivery deadlines is probably the greatest single area for improvement. For each major emergency operation there should be an initial procurement plan for the overall programme and this should be updated annually. It should include market research on potential local vendors. For major emergencies, procurement specialists need to be included in both initial and ongoing planning. Also, FAO should not attempt to engage in procurement operations to catch the next planting season when this is an unrealistic goal, as stated by numerous evaluations. The Procurement Service needs to place greater emphasis on the support function both for planning and operations, with more delegation. Delegations need to be more differentiated than is the case at present. The

balance needs to be adjusted in value for money criteria in procurement, placing reduced emphasis on price, and taking into account considerations of the specificities of emergency situations.

Ways to strengthen national development while undertaking procurement requires urgent normative work. An FAO instrument should be developed to cover flexible procurement of services and goods from the small-/medium-scale national private sector with a capacity building sub-objective contributing to sustainable services to farmers and fishers. FAO also needs to ensure that its procurement actions do not unnecessarily disrupt nascent local markets.

## Management response to the evaluation

FAO management welcomed the evaluation process, methodology and timing. The latter benefited from the IEE process and the findings of the Root and Branch Review, but it also coincided with the elaboration of the new FAO Strategic Framework. Most of the recommendations related to enhanced planning and programming, both on the technical and administrative side, will be addressed by the established Strategic Objective I team, which will support and coordinate the implementation of FAO's work in emergencies, covering preparedness, response and transition from emergency to development. Management accepted (fully or partially) most of the recommendations, while bearing in mind that a lot of effort and resources will be required to ensure their successful implementation. Some recommendations have been rejected because they contradict other recent policy decisions.

Both Committees appreciated the evaluation and urged that the recommendations without financial implications or those which were covered by IPA funding be implemented without delay.

They agreed that certain types of disasters were largely predictable in certain countries and that there was a need to strengthen FAO's response capability in particular at country level. In this connection, more predictable and stable donor funding was called for, to enable quicker response. The strengthening of the SFERA mechanism and the idea of pooled funding for human resources was welcomed, but it was stressed that cost implications would need to be considered. The Committees welcomed proposals for greater decentralization of emergency and rehabilitation activity implementation, while recognizing that capacity building for staff in regional, sub-regional and country offices to deal with emergency situations, improved communications connectivity and administrative capacity in general were key prerequisites for effective decentralized emergency operations. The Committees also encouraged Management to continue to build synergies and partnership between FAO and other agencies (e.g. WFP, OCHA, WHO) in emergency situations, including for greater harmonization of operating procedures and shared services. Furthermore, it was recognized that operational efficiencies could take place if there was greater harmonization among donors, many of whom had their distinct rules and reporting procedures.

## FAO Governing Bodies' conclusions (Programme Committee)



# Evaluation Brief

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## Joint FAO-WFP Evaluation of Support to Information Systems for Food Security

### FAO and WFP Information Systems for Food Security 2002 – 2008

**A**fter a decade-long series of droughts and famines, the 1974 World Food Conference concluded that the existing monitoring and information systems were inadequate. New information systems for food security (ISFS) were developed by different agencies, including the Global Information and Early Warning System on Food and Agriculture (GIEWS) of FAO. Following repeated needs for emergency food aid during the 1980s and 1990s, the 1996 World Food Summit encouraged FAO to lead a United Nations inter-agency process to develop more effective information systems to track food insecurity and vulnerability. In response, the Food Insecurity and Vulnerability Information and Mapping Systems (FIVIMS) initiative was undertaken. Thirteen years later food insecurity remains a major concern, subject to increasingly complex threats such as climate change, accelerated urbanization, pandemics and global food price volatility. All this has created unprecedented challenges – but continued need – for stronger ISFS.

While specific projects and programmes have been assessed over the years, the area of ISFS as a major strategic theme had not been evaluated before. Thus, in the course of 2008, at the request of the FAO Programme Committee and with the agreement of the WFP Executive Board, the two agencies launched an independent joint evaluation of FAO and WFP support to ISFS.

### Findings and Conclusions

**R**elevance. Overall, FAO and WFP's support to ISFS is relevant to the needs for improved systems to provide food security information to national governments, donors, FAO, WFP, other United Nations agencies and INGOs – although the knowledge and understanding of these needs remains uneven. The international leadership of both FAO and WFP for conceptual development, technical guidance and general support to ISFS development and functioning has been crucial for the form and existence of ISFS in general, whether they are single-function systems, limited-coverage structures or global, integrated ISFS.

**Efficiency.** The organizational architecture and mandates of FAO and WFP significantly influence the efficiency of their ISFS support. WFP, with the internally focused VAM approach in support of its food assistance mandate, has developed an efficient single corporate ISFS. FAO, with its much wider mandate and dual function of both providing food security global information and building country/regional ISFS capacities, has provided far more fragmented ISFS support. Among the various ISFS activities, communication remains the greatest challenge, mainly due to lack of a strategic approach and to an inadequate understanding of the decision-making processes that the ISFS should inform.

**Effectiveness.** FAO and WFP ISFS products are more timely, analytically sound, accessible and cover more ISFS elements than in the past. Moreover, the systems

## Findings and Conclusions cont.

are increasingly being built on partnerships and consensus. However, there is still some concern regarding important food security dimensions that are not being sufficiently addressed by the ISFS, particularly nutrition, gender and urban issues.

**Impact.** The evaluation confirms the conclusions of many previous studies that ISFS information products supported by FAO and WFP are being used extensively in emergency and humanitarian decision-making. It is much harder to draw a causal line from ISFS information products to decisions on development policy or interventions, although various ISFS products are often cited to justify decisions taken for development investment. Overall, an inadequate understanding in most ISFS of stakeholders' decision-making processes means that ISFS products are not being used to their full potential, especially in development work.

**Sustainability.** The evaluation did not find national ISFS that continued to function fully following the end of external funding. It concluded that ISFS, when designed to serve both donor and national needs, often have not been a funding priority for the national governments in low-income countries. ISFS sustainability should not be viewed as only an issue of national ownership and national budget. Rather,

donors, United Nations agencies and INGOs all have a vested interest in the continuation of a well-functioning national ISFS.

**Complementarity and cooperation.** The evaluation concluded that FAO and WFP collaborate on a number of ISFS-related issues, challenging the common perception that FAO and WFP tend to compete rather than cooperate. Nonetheless, potential exists for greatly strengthening complementarity and collaboration in the area of ISFS support.

The evaluation supported the conclusions of the recent joint FAO/WFP International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) policy paper "Directions for Collaboration among the Rome-Based Agencies," regarding the importance of cooperation for development of food security information and the comparative advantages of the partners.

The recommendations of the evaluation were addressed to senior management of FAO and WFP and to their Governing Bodies. The implementation of some of these recommendations will have resource implications and will therefore require prioritization by both agencies.

## Recommendations

- FAO and WFP should each develop *corporate ISFS strategies* for the range of their ISFS work at national, regional and global levels based on overall goals defined jointly and including means and plans for implementation. The strategies should clearly differentiate between ISFS support – such as generation of models, methods and tools, capacity development and technical advice – and direct execution of ISFS. The agencies' Governing Bodies should take responsibility to ensure that these well-coordinated corporate ISFS strategies and business plans are prepared and implemented.
- FAO and WFP should develop a *joint FAO/WFP ISFS strategy* based on their identified comparative advantages. This would complement the corporate ISFS strategies, and should include operational plans for complementary and joint ISFS support. This joint strategy development process should be closely monitored by the two agencies' Governing Bodies whose role as critical ISFS stakeholders should be recognized. The joint FAO/WFP ISFS strategy should include: awareness-raising and advocacy activities; a strategy for investment mobilization for joint food security diagnostics to strengthen national and global ISFS capacities; and guidelines for integration of FAO and WFP ISFS work and ISFS work in general into coordination and harmonization frameworks.
- FAO and WFP should jointly maintain and strengthen their *leadership* in ISFS. They should jointly invest in maintaining and strengthening – and in the case of FAO, to a great extent reclaiming – their leadership in ISFS development and implementation, based on the analysis of comparative advantages and policy decisions made during the development of the ISFS strategies. Among the priorities, FAO and WFP should jointly organize an informal, multi-stakeholder to focus on future ISFS institution-building. This should be along the lines of the original FIVIMS, but under a joint FAO/WFP leadership, and redesigned and renamed.
- FAO and WFP should promote ISFS which *respond to identified needs*, ensuring that ISFS at all levels have the technical capacities to provide the types of information and analysis needed by decision-makers for today's and tomorrow's food security challenges. In order to do this FAO and WFP should: regularly undertake strategic analyses (preferably jointly) of food security information needs of intended, actual and potential decision-maker, giving special attention to potential future threats to food security; jointly advocate for an agreement on a core set of indicators for integrated measurement of food security, including nutrition.
- ISFS support should promote long-lasting national multi-stakeholder ISFS *partnerships*. In seeking to achieve “sustainability” of national ISFS, FAO and WFP should each pressure funding partners to reconsider the usual working definition of sustainability, which presumes post-project continuation of benefits under exclusively national funding and management. In the case of ISFS, donors and other partners are users as well as supporters, and “sustainability” should be redefined to mean “continuation of benefits under long-term multi-stakeholder funding and partnership”.
- FAO and WFP should strengthen application of ISFS communication strategies based on a genuine understanding of food security *decision-making processes*. They must each ensure that all of their ISFS activities maintain the focus on informing decision-making. Systematic feedback mechanisms should be included.
- FAO and WFP should work together to develop a *joint ISFS communication and advocacy strategy*. Advocacy work should strive to improve awareness of the usefulness of complementary ISFS that provide comprehensive food security information which includes nutrition, urban areas and gender aspects, among others. Special efforts should be made to advocate for the usefulness of ISFS for development purposes (in addition to humanitarian uses).

## Management response to the evaluation

FAO and WFP prepared a joint Management response to the evaluation, which was presented to the Governing Bodies of both agencies. All the recommendations were accepted and a detailed plan of implementation was proposed. Both agencies recognized the importance of the inter-agency character not only of the evaluation but also of the recommendations, which put strong pressure on the agencies to work closely together in future in the field of ISFS.

The Committee complimented the quality of the Evaluation report, noting that it was the first evaluation implemented jointly between FAO and WFP. It appreciated the limited number of recommendations of the Evaluation, which were focused and useful for giving future direction. The Management Response was welcomed and the overall approach suggested in it agreed to. The Committee noted the importance of food security information for the reformed CFS11 and urged close collaboration with the CFS on the implementation of the Evaluation recommendations.

The principle of continued joint work between FAO and WFP on food security information was endorsed and the importance of appropriate systems for assessing food security not just in emergency situations, but also in development contexts underlined.

Sustainability is an important issue. The Committee emphasized that ownership of systems had to be developed through involvement of all relevant stakeholders, especially national governments; that long-term funding, which required advocacy activities with donors, was desirable; and that clear exit strategies needed to be developed during design of interventions.

Also, the importance of effective communication in the development of food security information systems was underlined. Lastly, the Committee noted that gender, nutrition and urban food security issues had not received sufficient attention in most food security information systems and stated that these considerations should receive greater attention in future work.

## FAO Governing Bodies' conclusions (Programme Committee)



# Evaluation Brief

20

## Evaluation of FAO's Role and Work Related to Water

### FAO's Role and Work Related to Water

Over the last decade, FAO's Governing Bodies have frequently discussed issues related to water, given its paramount importance in agriculture. The Programme Committee at its 100th Session in endorsed an evaluation of "FAO's work related to water, as this had been a significant discussion topic in the Committee of the Council for the IEE".

FAO's work related to water is anchored in the Water Development and Management Unit (NRLW) which is part of the Division of Land and Water (NRL) in the Natural Resources Department of the Organization. In addition, 'water' is an important aspect of the work of several other units in FAO. The evaluation assessed FAO's work on water that took place from 2004 to 2009.

### Findings and Conclusions

The analysis confirmed that water is a significant aspect of much of FAO's work, including that related to improving food security at household and global levels; forestry and fisheries-related activities; establishment of international norms and standards for water safety; planning and designing for investments; and emergency operations which have restoration of water services as a priority. Even where there is no apparent direct connection with water, for example when improving the chain of activities from the farmer's field to marketed consumer products, there are significant implications for the productive benefit to society of water use in agriculture.

Globally, FAO has played a strong role in the debate on 'water scarcity' within the topics of climate change and increasing global food needs. FAO has high visibility in international conferences, regional and national water-related forums and the Organization is well recognized and appreciated by other international organizations. Collaboration on global flagship publications as well as for work at country level are appreciated and of good technical quality. The chairmanship of UN-Water has undoubtedly contributed to FAO's credibility and visibility among peer organizations.

FAO's assistance to planners and managers at country level, and its support on legal aspects including on international transboundary issues, has been substantial and should continue. Equally, its normative and operational work on modernization and management of irrigation systems, water productivity, water resources management, ranging from groundwater to rain water harvesting and land and water management, was highly relevant and largely effective. Positive results, mainly at the normative level, were achieved in the areas of water quality, the interface between freshwater management and aquaculture, watershed management and there is potential, if resources are made available and appropriate partnerships developed, in the work

## Findings and Conclusions cont.

on agriculture and wetlands interaction and on water pollution from agriculture.

FAO has a name as an information and knowledge broker and its support for capacity development is highly demanded. The quality of many of its publications is good. AQUASTAT, the only existing database on water resources, is widely known and used. However, poor feedback from field experience into new products, lack of strategic planning for the production of normative outputs, and lack of attention to member countries' constraints in the access to FAO's products, contribute to lessen the contribution the Organization makes with its products and knowledge.

The evaluation found that FAO is the only institution with an explicit mandate for global and country level work on the interface between food, agriculture and water. FAO should exploit its corporate body of knowledge and field

involvement to derive a set of messages and approaches that would constitute an 'FAO approach' to water-related issues within its mandate. This would mean adopting a consistent approach to the identification of constraints and priorities in the water sector, exploiting FAO's contributions to the world water conferences, its analytical and information-based expertise at headquarters, and its wide range of field operations.

With such a diversity of actors and activities within the Organization, the need for coordination is clear. Although this requires time and resources, it should bring strong added value. The ongoing FAO reform offers opportunities for improvement, but this may not be enough on its own. The evaluation saw need for a shift of attention and focus as well as a formal supporting mechanism – a FAO Water platform – that underpins the promotion of FAO's strategic vision for water and greater operational effectiveness.

## Recommendations

- The Evaluation proposed the creation of a *FAO Water Platform* as an official internal coordination mechanism and provided guidance on the set-up and functioning of this platform. The adoption of a renewed mission statement as a building block for the Water Platform was recommended. Also, under the guidance of the ADG/Natural Resources, a water strategy was to be developed defining the Water Platform and outlining FAO's objectives in this sector.
- A dominant theme of this evaluation was that *resources* are insufficient to meet demand and an increase in the human resources for the Organization in this area was recommended. Areas of work, initiatives and projects requiring additional attention were highlighted. Partnerships could help, and pursuing them was recommended, but maximizing complementarity among units and different organizational levels who work in the water sector were considered critical to improve FAO's impact at local, regional and global levels of food security.
- In the area of *normative products* the Evaluation made a series of recommendations. A distribution and communication strategy for publications and normative products should be developed to facilitate knowledge and access. Also, NRL should prepare a 4-year publication strategy aimed at scaling-back output to fewer publications and addressing priority gaps. Areas where more guidance was needed (policy development, rain water harvesting etc.) as well as themes in which collaboration with other actors internally and externally were highlighted.
- The area of *policy and strategy development* in the water sector requires additional focus to meet rising demand from Member Countries. The Organization should advocate for institutional arrangements allowing for engagement with all relevant ministries at country level. Particular attention should be given to the potential of smallholder irrigation and its requirements for specific technical, legal and extension support.
- In the water sector, the Evaluation recommended the *TCP* modality be used in support of national processes of policy and strategy formulation as well as capacity development.
- The Evaluation also made a series of recommendations to FAO with regards to *procedures* that extend beyond the water sector. These included: the project and programme appraisal mechanism should ensure that project designs are strengthened towards mainstreaming gender and social inclusion; a more systematic use of the Project Task Force mechanism throughout the project cycle in particular where projects are multi-disciplinary; a revision of the internal market mechanism and rates so as to create incentives for collaboration; and the development of procedures for national execution of projects and efficient and effective tools for project supervision and monitoring beyond financial delivery.

## Management response to the evaluation

Management accepted and partially accepted 34 of the recommendations and rejected one on the basis that it was already being implemented. Overall, it stated that the Evaluation highlighted the depth and scope of FAO's work in relation to food security and agricultural water management across all Departments, confirming the importance of water for food and agriculture. Also, it recognized the unique role that FAO plays in agricultural water management, both within the UN system and among other international organizations. The Water Platform was seen as an important coordination mechanism, which is expected to promote more operational effectiveness in responding to the needs of the member countries, a corporate vision for water and an overall coherence and cohesiveness in the way FAO works in the water domain between departments and Headquarters and Decentralized Offices.

The Committee welcomed the report and recognized the topic was complex, however noted that evaluations in future should balance regional coverage and more clearly prioritize recommendations.

## FAO Governing Bodies' conclusions (Programme Committee)

The establishment of the Water Platform was endorsed and its creation was said to be started immediately, including both at headquarters and decentralized offices. A primary task of the Water Platform is seen to be the development of Water Strategy for FAO, this was considered urgent to allow for the assessment of resource requirements in preparation for the PWB 2012-13. Also among the Platform's tasks, linkages between normative and field projects in FAO's work related to water need improvement and proper backstopping should be ensured. Cooperation with external partners should be strengthened through it and technical cooperation activities should be an integral part of the Platform's work. The Committee wished to revisit FAO's work related to water once the Platform was developed.

Issues such as environment and gender require greater consideration and due to its possible affect on food security, transboundary water issues should receive emphasis. In the water sector, TCPs should concentrate on policy development or capacity building.



# Evaluation Brief

21

## Strategic Evaluation of FAO Country Programming

### Country Programming in FAO

Recent Country Programming in FAO was formally started in 2006 when the National Medium Term Priority Framework (NMTPF) Guidelines were issued. Under the current reform, FAO has developed a results-based management model for the agency and prepared the new Strategic Framework 2010-20 and associated documents (Medium-Term Plan and Programme of Work and Budget). The Immediate Plan of Action (IPA) for implementation of the IEE stipulates that the NMTPF is one of the major tools in the development of the Strategic Framework. In this new context, the objectives of FAO Country Programming in general and of the NMTPF mechanism as its key tool needed to be thoroughly re-examined.

This evaluation sought to draw lessons from the very mixed results of the early NMTPFs, combine them with a thorough study of the implications of the reforms – in particular of decentralisation – and of the new planning and programming system, and make recommendations for the future development and deployment of effective FAO Country Programming.

### Findings and Conclusions

The Evaluation was undertaken at a time when FAO was undergoing profound institutional changes that directly affect the need for and desired characteristics of Country Programming, and the responsibilities and roles that different organizational units should have. Consequently the Evaluation was forward looking and mainly concerned with the way in which Country Programming activities should be implemented in the new “post-reform” FAO environment characterized by a much stronger decentralization and a new corporate planning, programming and accountability system.

FAO staff and government officials believe that the NMTPF is a necessary and useful instrument to increase the effectiveness of the FAO field program. Furthermore, it is a central element in FAO’s new planning, programming and accountability system along with other elements of Country Programming.

The quality and impact of the NMTPFs that have been developed was very variable and, in many cases, they did not meet desirable standards. The need to correct this weakness is especially important as Country Programming is part of FAO’s new programming system, and is expected to inform future editions of FAO’s MTP and Strategic Framework, bringing in the priority areas of work that countries have agreed with FAO at country level.

FAO Country Programming also needs to be strengthened and adapted taking into account the rapidly evolving UN reform process and changes that result from the

## Findings and Conclusions cont.

Paris and Accra Declarations on aid effectiveness. Thus flexibility and capacity to adapt should be considered important attributes of the programming system.

FAO's present institutional capacities for implementing a structured planning and programming system are not strong. Until these capacities are strengthened, the demands that the new programming system puts on the institution as a whole should be kept to a reasonable level. Overtaxing the existing institutional capacities will put the successful implementation of the new system at risk. This implementation will require significant organizational changes, including a redefinition of responsibilities and a significant increase in the capacities of a number of organizational units that are directly related to Country Programming activities, as well as emerging opportunities for resource mobilization.

Until now Country Programming has been associated almost exclusively with the development of the NMTPFs. In the context of FAO's new corporate programming system, Country Programming must be recognized as a multidimensional process with three main components: a) government development of national priorities, b) FAO's country programming framework which has been formulated jointly with the government (today's NMTPF) and c) FAO's Country Workplan which, starting in 2012, will include the Country Unit Results and the projects and activities contributing to those unit results.

FAO's corporate programming and accountability system is in the final stages of development and deployment. Country programming is an important component of this overall system and must be fully integrated into it. The guidelines that are being developed almost simultaneously to cover different parts of country programming must fully recognize this new situation. Other institutional processes must also be adjusted to allow Country Programming to become a substantive component of the process by which FAO's Strategic Objectives and the MTP are defined.

FAO's management and governing bodies support full participation in UN coordination and UNDAF processes. FAO's country programming has to adjust to the evolving nature of the UN programming processes and optimize its participation and cooperation within the UN family of organizations. However, given the importance of country programming within FAO's overall corporate programming and accountability system, it should remain as a self-standing FAO institutional process.

The Evaluation Team carefully analyzed the different views that exist in relation to the nature and content of FAO's Country Programming. Although there is need for flexibility in order to adjust to the particular circumstances of each country, there are general principles that should guide the processes and the content of the two main documents that need to be prepared in the process: FAO's Country Programming Framework (the NMTPF) and the Country Workplan. In addition, the processes by which the NMTPF is developed and agreed with the government should follow a well planned cycle and should be flexible but all-inclusive. This also means that programming of Emergency activities should be an integral part of Country Programming.

Country Programming is a central piece of FAO's new corporate Programming system. In the new context, new and different institutional responsibilities will have to be defined. In addition, the new requirements in relation to timing, quality and standardization will demand additional, and more flexible, human and financial resources for the formulation and the implementation of Country Programmes.

Country Programming is a major instrument for resource mobilization at country level especially as an organizing mechanism for dialogue and the development of partnerships with government institutions. In addition they can be important elements for the development of regional and corporate strategies for resource mobilization. Regional Offices (ROs) should be assigned a major role in this process.

## Recommendations

- Current work in defining new guidelines referring to different components of country programming activities should result in one single *Country Programming Guidelines* document. They should be endorsed by an FAO Governing Body to provide the necessary strength to the RO and the individual country offices to organize and carry out the full programming process from strategy to workplan. In order to make it possible for Country Programming to feed effectively into FAO's corporate priority setting work, FAO's Governing Bodies, jointly with Management, should ensure that the time cycle of the Regional Conferences is appropriate, so that the decisions made at the regional level (which include national concerns) can serve as inputs to the decision-making process in the global Conference.
- FAO should make every possible effort to fully integrate into the *UN country programming* process. However, as the NMTPF component of Country Programming fulfils several key purposes for FAO beyond country level work, FAO should maintain and strengthen its own independent Country Programming procedures, while keeping them aligned and responsive to the UN Country Programming processes. The cycle for preparing NMTPFs should be aligned with the planning cycle of the host country, and therefore also of the new UNDAF cycle.
- All technical assistance projects and activities included in the *Country Workplan* must be aligned with the priority areas that have been selected in the NMTPF. The Country Workplan may include a "window" to accommodate: a) emerging priorities in areas in which FAO has a strong advocacy role, b) activities that contribute to corporate products that are part of the MTP (e.g. statistics), and c) activities for the implementation of FAO's global mandate (e.g. monitoring of treaties and conventions). All activities in the Country Workplan should be discussed with and approved by the FAOR, and implementation should be under his/her coordinating responsibility.
- The NMTPF should include expected outcomes at the greatest level of detail possible and not include outputs. In the future, indicative figures on resource requirements to meet the expected outcomes should be included, as well as the specific budgetary commitments that FAO and the host country are willing to make ex-ante for the development of activities in the selected priority areas for the following two years. A small number of pilot cases should be developed for learning and testing in 2012-2013.
- The *Regional/Sub-regional Offices* should have the main responsibility for organizing the backstopping, monitoring and quality assurance of Country Programming activities. For this, each RO's operating budget and human resource profile will need to be sufficient to allow it (or its SROs) to adequately discharge these new responsibilities.
- In the new institutional context of corporate programming, the evaluation found that the system of specific rules utilised in the *TCP* appeared unnecessary. It advocated that the funds now in the *TCP* and any other RP funds available for country-level activities should be managed through the rules and procedures established in the corporate programming system.
- FAO should develop a Corporate Strategy for Resource Mobilization. The main thrust of this strategy should be to obtain funds for the implementation of programmes that focus on "country-led normative work," i.e., the normative work that responds to priorities emerging from Country Programming. The ROs should develop an aggressive strategy of resource mobilization for regional activities, but NMTPFs development should not be excessively influenced by the potential interest and priorities of donors in each individual country.

## Management response to the evaluation

Management fully accepted 16 of the 20 recommendations, partially accepted two, rejected one and suggested deferring one. In particular, Management agreed with the integrated character of the country programming process with its three proposed components.

The MR noted that modifications to the timing of the Regional Conferences (recommendation 5) are addressed to the membership. It was suggested that action on recommendation 5 be deferred pending assessment of the workings of the governance reforms in the next two biennia. Management did not accept the recommendation on elimination of the TCP rules and allocation of these resources through Country Programming, since it considered that the provision of RP support to the NMTPF is addressed under the existing TCP criteria.

The Programme Committee appreciated the Evaluation and requested a paper on *Country Programming Guidelines*, focusing on the policies and principles related to country programming for its October 2011 session and recommended that the linkages with the IPA project on decentralization and, particularly the roles and functioning of regional, sub-regional and country offices should be carefully considered when preparing the *Country Programming Guidelines*. It requested that clarifications be provided on how the financial envelope would be reflected in the country programming framework and that the next steps be identified on the integration of emergency activities in the country programming framework. It also stated that the governing bodies should keep the timing of the Regional Conferences under consideration and revert to the matter in the future, as some experience is gained in the new schedule of governing body sessions. Lastly, the Committee recommended a gradual approach to the integration of the Technical Cooperation Programme (TCP) within the overall country programming framework, taking the opportunity for the Regional Conferences to look into this matter and provide recommendations in 2012.

## FAO Governing Bodies' conclusions (Programme Committee)



# Evaluation Brief

22

## Evaluation of FAO's Activities on Capacity Development in Africa

### FAO's Activities on Capacity Development in Africa

The Paris Declaration and Accra Agenda for Action recognised that limited capacity is one of the major constraints to development in Africa and highlighted the need for development assistance to be better coordinated and led by Africans. This requires a change in approach to development and emphasises the importance of capacity development in particular.

At its October 2008 session, the FAO Programme Committee selected "FAO's work on Capacity Development in Africa" as one of the priority areas for evaluation. The evaluation was conducted from June to December 2009, using a mix of tools to draw evidence. It carried out an in-depth analysis of FAO's capacity development work in six case-study countries: Burkina Faso, Ghana, Kenya, Malawi, Tanzania and Uganda. It also completed an inventory of CD activities at country level, covering the 48 countries of Sub-Saharan Africa.

### Findings and Conclusions

Capacity Development (CD) is part of the core mandate of FAO, as explicitly recognised in the Strategic Framework 2010-2019. In line with the Organization's mandate, FAO CD focus is on food security, rural poverty reduction and sustainable natural resource management. FAO has been active in CD across Departments and Divisions. Yet, interpretation of CD and recognition of its role varied throughout the Organization, with many equating CD with the one-off training of individuals. CD is a process and requires improving the functioning of the individuals and organisations. To be effective, CD also needs to address the enabling environment (policies, norms, values, and legislation) to ensure there are incentives for improving capacity to address these issues and to be adaptable to changing circumstances.

FAO's CD performance in Africa has been mixed. Most interventions are relevant, many have been effective, but few have been sustainable. The Evaluation noted a number of successes, principally where FAO had engaged continuously over time and across all three dimensions, most obviously in plant protection, statistics and increasingly in transboundary animal diseases. This continuous engagement over a long period, across dimensions, allows for the building of a critical mass of skills, institutional memory and the policies, norms, values and structures to support the work in those areas. FAO has also achieved widely recognised success in integrating CD into pilot projects testing new technologies using effective CD approaches such as Farmer Field Schools. There have also been some good examples of policy assistance which has effectively and sustainably strengthened policy analysis and

## Findings and Conclusions cont.

implementation capacity in Burkina Faso, Mozambique and Zanzibar among others.

Several factors contributed to the effectiveness: adequate participatory planning, needs and context assessment; appropriate consideration of the enabling environment, including institutional linkages and challenges; long-term planning and involvement with appropriate follow-up; the use of national consultants with strong FAO back-up; and engagement across time with successive projects.

However, despite many effective and relevant interventions, the Evaluation found that FAO CD activities are, for the most part, unsustainable. There is very little emphasis given to sustainability and too much given to immediate results and outputs. This is evident in the project timeframes and modalities, the lack of understanding by FAO staff of the importance of process to CD, lack of focus on institutionalising CD activities and building the political will to sustain them, and also to the limited motivation and opportunity for follow-up and for monitoring and evaluation by FAO staff.

FAO CD activities permeate nearly all the work FAO does. FAO is recognized as an important source of knowledge, and about half of the field projects (including within the Emergency Programme) FAO carried out in the period 2000-2008 included a significant component of CD.

FAO's work has been more heavily focused on individuals, and primarily on transferring technical skills. Some projects have rather specifically targeted organisational capacity or the enabling environment. FAO is increasingly being

called on to assist countries in setting the agenda for agriculture, fisheries and forestry and in liaising with donors. The Organization has significantly assisted governments in developing food policies, and aligning plant protection, food safety, transboundary animal diseases, fisheries and forestry regulations and policies with international norms and conventions. Only in very few cases, where FAO had a consistent and continuous engagement over time, did FAO intervention address all three CD dimensions.

The Evaluation found that the Regional and Sub-regional Offices need their own capacities strengthened, more resources and better connectivity to expertise in headquarters in order to lead capacity development in Africa. At country level, FAO lacks the capacity to take its expected role in the many committees established to determine priorities, co-ordinate donor activity and facilitate interactions between government and donors and with other stakeholders. The Evaluation considers that FAO will lose both relevance and opportunities unless it is able to significantly strengthen effective capacity in Africa.

In the spirit of the Accra Agenda for Action and to help address capacity constraints in implementing projects and in dealing with the emerging needs of decentralised systems, FAO should strengthen endogenous capacity, and be encouraged to partner more effectively. Setting priorities for CD within a strategic framework such as the NMTPF should take into account the context of the country, FAO's own comparative advantage to address national needs and the potential for partnering with local, regional and international agencies, including universities and research institutes.

## Recommendations

- The Evaluation concludes on the need for a major shift in FAO's approach to CD giving more emphasis to process, partnering and to the enabling environment. It provided some recommendations to strengthen this change.
- It was recommended that the *Interdepartmental Working Group (IDWG) on Capacity Building* take steps to ensure that FAO staff and partners have a common conceptual understanding of CD and FAO's role in it.
- *Senior Management and the IDWG:* Senior management, under the guidance of the IDWG, should incorporate CD into the mandates, work programmes and post descriptions of all relevant programming staff. In addition it should review and, where necessary, revise FAO's systems to improve the effectiveness and sustainability of CD initiatives. The IDWG and senior management should develop, and, implement, guidelines for projects and programmes that emphasise effective CD practices, such as participatory approaches that build ownership, sustainability and partnerships.
- FAO senior management should ensure that staff, in particular those in decentralized offices and FAO Representatives, place increased emphasis on *partnerships* in their CD activities in Africa.
- FAO staff and FAO Representatives in particular, are to place increased emphasis on facilitating the development of *national capacity* for policy analysis and implementation. Priority should be given to the improvement, documentation and dissemination of successful CD initiatives, methods and normative products
- Immediate steps by FAO senior management should be taken to improve the *distribution and uptake* of FAO's products for CD in Africa.
- It is recommended that FAO invest more heavily in the capacity of its decentralized offices in Africa to engage significantly in developing capacities for the agriculture, forestry and fisheries sectors and to respond to emerging demands of African Member Countries.

## Management response to the evaluation

FAO management appreciated the evaluation process and methodology and fully accepted six of the nine recommendations and partially accepted three.

Management recognized that allocation or redirection of resources will be required to ensure implementation of all the recommendations, and that a phased approach will need to be adopted over the coming years. Management will give priority to activities which can be addressed quickly, while allowing more time for the recommendations requiring further analysis or sequenced implementation. The potential resource implications will be quantified for possible consideration in the preparation of the Programme of Work and Budget 2012-13.

The Programme Committee appreciated the Evaluation report and the Management Response. FAO should enhance capacity development activities in Africa, both in terms of effectiveness and efficiency. As part of the overall capacity development strategy, FAO should: ensure sustainability and effective follow-up of activities; ensure that gender issues are considered in capacity development work; actively pursue opportunities for partnerships and South-South Cooperation; and reinforce capacity of producers' organizations.

The most effective ways to produce and disseminate the technical information in Africa should be identified. The role in capacity development of decentralized offices in Africa should be carefully considered as part of the decentralization process. Special attention should be given to activities with long-term impact aimed at strengthening capacities of institutions in Africa, including production and dissemination of technical information.

The role of the Technical Cooperation Programme (TCP) in capacity development should be reconsidered and TCP should be used more strategically for, among others, follow-up, given that capacity development in Africa may require long-term support and extra-budgetary resources.

## FAO Governing Bodies' conclusions (Programme Committee)



# Evaluation Brief

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## Second Real Time Evaluation of FAO's Work on Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI)

### FAO's Work on Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI)

FAO's HPAI global programme was started in 2004 following reports of H5N1 virus outbreaks in Southeast Asia. After a wave of outbreaks of HPAI in many regions of the world, there has been a progressive reduction in the number of countries affected. However, the disease stubbornly persists in some areas of Asia and Africa. New influenza virus threats (particularly the H1N1 virus) have emerged since a first real-time evaluation was conducted in 2007. It was therefore necessary to assess the relevance and efficacy of continuing preparedness and response measures in the light of these dynamics through a Second Real Time Evaluation (RTE2) of FAO's Work on HPAI which focussed on country-level assistance.

### Methodology

The RTE2 was conducted in three phases. These included a preparatory phase entailing the assembly and synthesis of background information at country and programmatic levels, an independent evaluation of the largest FAO HPAI initiative (the Participatory Disease Surveillance and Response programme in Indonesia), and a series of missions to FAO headquarters, member countries, Regional and Sub-regional offices. The latter missions were conducted in two stages, first in Africa and then in Asia, and included the holding of regional stakeholder workshops at the end of each regional mission.

In the inception report, the RTE2 team developed a framework for the Evaluation and provided details on the criteria for assessing the relevance, efficiency and effectiveness of FAO's contribution to national preparedness and response programmes. The framework, which was expanded as a result of the RTE2 team interactions in the field, has six pillars considered to be central to any preparedness and response programme:

- a) Policy development and programme coordination;
- b) Disease surveillance mechanisms;
- c) Disease diagnosis, differential diagnosis and infection characterization;
- d) Disease control and eradication;
- e) Epidemiological data synthesis, analysis, presentation and use; and
- f) Disease prevention.

The RTE2 team then assessed the achievements of the FAO country programmes in terms of the milestones included in the FAO Global strategy, and considered the broader implications of the preparedness and response measures on wider disease surveillance capacity, and on pandemic preparedness. Finally, the team considered the implications on broader agriculture, livestock and poverty reduction aspirations of the countries studied.

## Findings and Conclusions

The RTE2 found that substantial progress has been made in the preparedness and response mechanisms directed at HPAI at country level. This has occurred at several levels, including improved planning and policy development, better communications and collaborations between national and international partners, greater capacity in the field services of veterinary authorities, greater laboratory capacity, and increased credibility of the national livestock services. In most cases, these improvements have also been accompanied by reductions in the numbers of outbreaks of HPAI in poultry, and the number of human cases.

The major weakness has been a lost opportunity to add greater substantive strategic value to many of the preparedness and intervention approaches that FAO has supported in individual countries. FAO could have better exploited its comparative advantage as a widely

experienced, well recognized international body working on HPAI in different settings with different sets of expertise. Furthermore, in several countries FAO was seen to pursue a rather narrow uni-disciplinary approach to HPAI response. International disease response mechanisms, including the One World One Health (OWOH) initiative, increasingly demand broad multidisciplinary approaches, and FAO has the inherent capacity to deliver these.

The RTE2 concluded that FAO has demonstrated to have the capacity and experience to provide strong leadership in supporting countries in avian influenza preparedness and response, and should continue to work in this area to ensure that the important gains made so far are consolidated. These gains should be part of continued efforts to bring HPAI under control, and to extend the benefits of investments made into broader areas of improved animal health and human wellbeing.

## Recommendations

- The RTE made five broad recommendations and thirty-three specific recommendations to FAO. The former are outlined below:
- The development of a more **integrated and multidisciplinary approach** to international, regional and country level programmes: It is recommended that FAO adopt centrally, regionally and nationally a much clearer and more cohesive multidisciplinary approach to HPAI responses, and indeed to all activities of ECTAD. This approach should be built upon mutual trust, recognition and engagement of the multiple disciplines of agricultural economics, epidemiology, laboratory sciences, communications etc. that form part of the contributions appropriate for a leading UN organization and result in measurably stronger interactions (such as joint projects, publications or events) with relevant FAO units.
- The development of a clear and cohesive **interface between emergency and development** responses to HPAI: It is recommended that FAO strengthen the interface between emergency responses and development programmes at the country level, to ensure that there is effective harmonization of the emergency responses to HPAI and the longer term development aspirations of governments in the livestock health sector.
- The exploitation of HPAI capacity built to cater for broader preparedness and response programmes for other priority livestock diseases: It is recommended that FAO urgently seek to broaden the range of impacts from recently installed HPAI capacity development to the wider sphere of other livestock diseases of priority in each country. This will require FAO to engage at a different level with its Member Countries and development partners to explore jointly the sustainable benefits that can be achieved by such an approach.
- Regular updating of strategies, approaches, protocols on the basis of outcomes and impacts: It is recommended that FAO place greater emphasis on learning from its engagement over five years in HPAI preparedness and response, and on using this learning to regularly review and update, as appropriate, its strategies, approaches and operating procedures at country level. This should be done by paying much more attention to how well definable outputs and achievements have been met, with a view of feeding back such learning to global and regional strategies.
- Active engagement with the **private poultry sectors** in affected countries: It is recommended that FAO take a much more pro-active role in assisting governments in engaging with the private poultry industry sectors at various levels to improve the effectiveness and credibility of the HPAI preparedness and response programmes. In particular, it is recommended that:
  - a) FAO strengthen the technical base of ECTAD units serving endemic countries, with international consultants with strong knowledge and personal experience in commercial poultry enterprises, to advise and mentor on the design and implementation of preparedness and response initiatives; and,
  - b) FAO support the initiation or strengthening of small and medium holder poultry producer and marketer representation, with a view to strengthening the voice of small- and medium-scale poultry sector entrepreneurs, and to facilitate stronger linkages between them and government, and the more industrial enterprises. This ambitious recommendation is considered essential if FAO wishes to exploit fully its honest broker role, its responsibility to improving the effectiveness of HPAI control, and its need for support to poultry enterprises as implements of sustainable and inclusive growth and food security.

## Management Response to the evaluation

Management fully accepted twenty-nine of the recommendations and partially accepted four recommendations. Furthermore, Management proposed a set of ninety-one actions to be implemented by 2015 with further efforts to support work at regional and country level, aligned with FAO Strategic Objectives B and I and organized under the six pillars defined by the Evaluation Team as the analytical framework for the assessment.

The Programme Committee appreciated the quality and professionalism of both the Evaluation report and the management response. It requested a prioritized and sequenced plan of work for the period 2011-2015 be presented to the Committee at its next (March 2011) session. The plan is to give special attention given to proposals for the immediate period and including information following the three-pillar system of the integrated budget on present funding, future funding needs, and possible alternatives for funding, including promoting the Impact Focus Area on transboundary threats to production, health and environment (IFA-EMPRES). Also, the plan should emphasise the comparative advantage of FAO and take a broad, multidisciplinary approach, building on the work done on HPAI. Other considerations for inclusion in the plan are: i) issues of sustainability; ii) country ownership and regional perspectives; iii) private sector engagement; including the "honest broker" role that can be played by FAO; iv) a risk-based approach; v) the transition from emergency to development work; and vi) partnerships opportunities, including cooperation with national governments, regional and subregional organizations, and development banks.

## FAO Governing Bodies' conclusions (Programme Committee)



# Evaluation Brief

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## FAO's Effectiveness at Country Level: A synthesis of Evaluations

### Post-Conflict and Transition Countries (Democratic Republic of the Congo, Sudan and Tajikistan)

### Findings and Conclusions

This report was a synthesis of three evaluations in post-conflict and transition countries with large emergency and rehabilitation programmes, aimed at assessing FAO's effectiveness at country level in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Sudan and Tajikistan.

A common feature of the recent history of all three countries has been the disastrous effects of years of civil conflict on development, with some significant differences between the post-conflict and transition situation in Tajikistan and the fragile and unstable situations that still prevail in some parts of the DRC and Sudan.

Overall, FAO's interventions in DRC, Sudan and Tajikistan were found relevant to the country's needs and to those of its populations. However, there were a number of gaps, some common to FAO's work at country level and others specific to these country contexts, identified by the evaluations.

Emergency seeds and tools distribution, including in Tajikistan where its continued relevance was questioned, was applied too uniformly. The sustainability of interventions was often lacking, although admittedly many interventions were not aimed at sustainability, as they responded to short-term emergency needs.

In all three countries, the evaluation period was marked by intensive dialogue and efforts between the international community and governments and local actors on shaping recovery and reconstruction, in particular in terms of legislative and policy frameworks. FAO's support in that regard has been erratic in all countries, depending very much on the availability of FAO experts in the country and the presence and profiles of the FAO Representative and Emergency Coordinator.

In the crucial areas of *land reform and land governance, natural resource management and forestry*, the Organization did not sufficiently pursue opportunities to shape policies and strategies for the future. While this is not solely attributable to FAO, as donor and recipient countries commitment was sometimes lacking, the Organization should become more pro-active in promoting these areas in which it has clear comparative advantage.

## Findings and Conclusions cont.

There was no harmonized and unified vision of FAO work at country level. The Organization requires a long-term multidimensional vision that reflects the so-called contiguum (relief, rehabilitation and development), covering the immediate short-term acute needs of vulnerable and most food insecure populations, medium-term reconstruction needs as well as long-term development goals in order to have the greatest effectiveness and impact at country level.

Capacity development in these contexts was challenging. While some efforts were made in all three countries, the most considerable programme could be found in Sudan where two large capacity building projects represented one third of the total FAO portfolio. Recent efforts to build institutional capacities, particularly at state level in terms of government service delivery, were significant, yet too early to assess

In each of the countries, there are good examples of knowledge-sharing and dissemination of good practice. However, this is recognized as an important area for improvement. Lack of adequate dissemination of learning and accumulated knowledge has negative repercussions for scaling up interventions from the level of individual project to programmes and policy. Much more needs to be done to make normative services and products accessible, relevant and useful for countries which are not well equipped, and/or do not have the expert capacity to access and adapt this information.

FAO's role at country level includes communication and advocacy with governments and civil society on issues related to its mandate. FAO's credibility depends on its ability to communicate effectively, disseminating knowledge products and technical information and creating awareness.

FAO's effectiveness in mobilizing resources also depends on external factors, including government will and donor trust. In all three countries, the crucial role of agriculture for addressing problems of food-insecurity and economic growth is well recognized by all.

The capacity of FAO to be active in coordination and engage in partnerships at country level depends, to a certain extent, on the environment in which FAO operates, including the cohesion among the UN agencies, the leadership of the Humanitarian/Resident Coordinator and, more generally, the capacity of possible partners to invest in partnership as well. However, and as mentioned in the previous synthesis of country evaluations, the in-country representation of FAO is equally important, as that office is almost entirely responsible for the development of partnerships. In post-conflict reconstruction situations, there is a high demand for coordination and partnership for defining macro-policy frameworks and the role of the aid community, putting a high pressure on FAO's human resources and, consequently, for prioritization. It also requires a continuity of who is involved. In all three countries, coordinating and partnering have been a challenge, especially during the periods where the FAOR post was vacant or, in the case of Tajikistan, there was a high turn-over in the Emergency Coordinator post.

FAO's capacity at country level in DRC, Sudan and Tajikistan was not constant over time. The long absences of FAO Representatives contributed to a lack of stewardship and clear corporate vision and strategy. In addition, due to the large emergency portfolios, there was often a lack of continuity, as the largest proportion of staff is dependent on project funding. Problems with delivery, in DRC and Sudan in particular, related to procurement issues, although some significant improvements have subsequently been made.

## Recommendations

- The synthesis report formulated four recommendations emerging from common issues identified in the three evaluations:
- *Finalization and/or Review of the FAO National Medium-Term Priority Framework:* The NMTPF should reflect an overall coherence, using a contiguum model along the line of FAO strategic objective I “Improved preparedness for, and effective response to, food and agricultural threats and emergencies”. It should also show some continuity between emergency, rehabilitation and development activities, by better targeting populations and areas where it would be necessary to carry on with emergency and rehabilitation interventions and by increasing synergies between the various activities and elaborating some advocacy for transition. Other elements to be considered include FAO comparative advantage in terms of policy and legislative support as well as of analysis and dissemination of information on food security. FAO NMTPF should be realistic vis-à-vis the Organization’s operational capacity and take into account the government strategies and plans.
- *Strengthening FAO’s Presence at Country Level:* In order to increase FAO’s strategic role and improve its capacity to manage the project portfolio, organizational

presence should be maintained at the appropriate levels of governance (national, state or provincial). Furthermore, FAO Representative posts should not be kept vacant for long periods of time and full-time residential FAO presence should be ensured in-country, especially in countries with a large extra-budgetary portfolio.

- *In-house Cross-organisational Coordination:* In order to improve FAO’s operational and technical capacity and effectiveness, FAO staff must coordinate and collaborate more effectively at all levels, first at country level between the emergency staff and Representations and between country staff and headquarters. Support from headquarters and decentralized offices must be received on time by those who requested it.
- *Policy and Legal Assistance:* The Organization should make use of its comparative advantage in order to guide and support governments in formulating strategies, policies and legislation. Particularly in post-conflict and transition contexts, the opportunities to contribute to shaping national policies in areas such as land tenure, forestry, natural resource management, animal health should not be lost. Considering the unpredictability of donor support, FAO needs to take a pro-active role in promoting assistance in these fields.

## Management response to the evaluation

FAO Management welcomed the synthesis and accepted the four recommendations while pointing out that many of the actions to be taken involve several organizational units, which underlines the "contiguum" of simultaneous action on emergency/rehabilitation and development fronts. Also, there are clear linkages with actions in follow-up to the recommendations made in the Evaluation of FAO's Operational Capacity in Emergencies.

Management acknowledged that there is an urgent need to review not just the operational risks but also the financial risks faced by FAO when operating in complex environments and to ensure that the Organization's policies and procedures are appropriate and address those risks. In addition, the importance and challenges of linking relief, rehabilitation and development and is taking action to diversify the technical and operational approaches in relief interventions was acknowledged.

The Programme Committee considered and appreciated the document and the management Response. It recommended a prompt implementation of the recommendations in the synthesis report aimed at ensuring smooth linkage between rehabilitation and development, including: a strong FAO leadership and presence at country level; good coordination between FAO and other actors; promoting conditions for sustainability of interventions; and consideration of gender aspects.

In connection with this discussion, the Committee agreed with the recommendations presented in the State of Food Insecurity in the World - "Addressing food insecurity in protracted crises" (SOFI 2010), as they have been endorsed by the Committee on World Food Security (CFS) at its 36<sup>th</sup> Session.

## FAO Governing Bodies' conclusions (Programme Committee)



# Evaluation Brief

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## Evaluation of FAO's Regional and Sub-regional offices for the Near East

### FAO's Regional and Sub-regional offices for the Near East

**A**t its October 2008 session, the FAO Programme Committee discussed the rolling plan of Evaluations and expressed their "support for an evaluation of FAO's Regional and Sub-regional Offices in the Near East" as a priority during the period 2009-10.

The food and agricultural sector in the region has been primarily served by the FAO Regional Office for the Near East in Cairo (RNE) and the Sub-regional office for North Africa (SNE) in Tunis. Because of the establishment of a new Sub-regional Office for the Gulf Countries and Yemen (SNG) in Abu Dhabi and the creation of a Multidisciplinary Team for the Oriental Near East (SNO) in Cairo, as well as the approval and ongoing implementation of the Immediate Plan of Action (IPA), the Evaluation's scope was revised to pay considerable attention to the impact of the ongoing reform more broadly at decentralized offices level, including the FAO country offices (FAORs).

### Findings and Conclusions

**F**ive overarching findings arose from the evaluation's country visits and analyses.

The Evaluation Team found that FAO technical expertise (from HQ, RNE or SNE) was widely recognized and generally viewed as providing a stamp of good quality. The quality of FAO technical cooperation received greatest appreciation in countries that already had an established capacity to plan and implement their own strategy and programmes. However, there is a general consensus that FAO has lost its comparative advantage in several thematic areas and as an implementing agency in the region.

**FAO priority setting and programming processes** during the review period did not result in a clear prioritization of activities for the Near East region or in a clear delineation of tasks at regional and sub-regional levels. RNE, SNE and FAORs have largely focused on developing and implementing generally small projects (mostly TCP) in a broad range of thematic areas, rather than on agreed priorities or on agricultural sector strategy/policy issues, for which the demand is very high across the region.

RNE and SNE had serious **resource constraints** during the period under

## Findings and Conclusions cont.

review. Although this situation was partially addressed in the biennium 2010-11 with the allocation of additional resources for sub-regional offices, FAORs have not benefited from this recent influx of resources. FAORs are seriously under-resourced.

The rationale for the **new organizational structure** in the Near East with three layers was not always well understood within and outside FAO. The Evaluation Team concluded that the new structure has a sound basis but needed better implementation, a change in management, and, in some cases, also further refinement.

FAO presence in the region was found to be in need of streamlining. The location of three offices in the same place (Cairo) has reduced efficiency and transparency in the management of decentralized offices. Staff performing several and diverse functions concurrently led to heavy workload, confusion and sometimes conflicts of interest. Working conditions and status of technical and administrative staff at country level was not conducive to high performance, especially when compared to other UN agencies.

The issues and findings summarized above had a number of negative consequences on FAO. The Evaluation Team found

that FAO visibility and credibility in the Near East region has declined. Other development agencies have taken over much of FAO's historical comparative advantage in areas such as food security, agricultural development and policy advice. FAO's advocacy and resource mobilization role in support of the food and agricultural sector is now much less competitive (and thus less successful) than before.

The Evaluation concluded that there is an urgent need to further reshuffle the FAO institutional set-up in the Near East including improving the implementation of the ongoing reform. Although the new reporting lines have encouraged greater integration within the region, a lot still needs to be done to allow RNE to exercise a leading role in assuring that the three layers in the region function as one. This included better defining the roles and functions of each layer, better delineating responsibilities (in accordance with region-wide, sub-regional and country priorities) and fostering synergies and coordination between the three layers and with HQ. This also implied a change in the way HQ has been dealing with decentralized offices in the Near East and significant additional efforts to mobilize change management support from the IPA reform machinery for the region.

## Recommendations

- The evaluation team made twelve strategic recommendations and proposed forty actionable recommendations for urgent implementation. Three strategic recommendations focused on improving the capacity of FAO country offices to perform their mandates, four addressed sub-regional and regional issues related to the terms of reference and performance of sub-regional and regional offices, and the remaining five targeted general, cross-cutting issues, affecting most or all the office layers in the region. A summary of the recommendations is presented below.
- *FAO Country Offices:* FAO Representatives should be given the necessary tools and resources to become the face of FAO at country level. The position of the FAOR the as chief FAO officer for any activity undertaken in the country, should be reinforced. FAO's field presence should be streamlined.
- *Regional Office for the Near East & Sub-Regional Offices:* Sub-Regional Offices (SROs) should effectively become

the "First Port of Call" for FAORs and strictly act as technical hubs. The SROs should become Sub-regional Multi-disciplinary Technical Teams (SMTs) with no administrative functions vis-à-vis the FAOR. The role of RNE should evolve to reflect the orientations of the SROs as they are outlined above. RNE should be subject to a re-engineering process as part of the reshuffling of FAO institutional set-up in the region.

- The Evaluation recommended that the coverage and denomination of field offices in the Near East should be clarified as well as administration and management of financial and human resources across the region should be improved. FAO's technical work in the region should be rationalized and increasingly focus on regional, sub-regional and country priorities endorsed by Member Countries. Structural issues affecting the efficiency and effectiveness of technical work should be urgently addressed. Also, a dedicated Regional Trust Fund should be established to support the reshuffling of FAO institutional set-up in the Near East.

## Management response to the evaluation

FAO Management welcomed the Evaluation and accepted 9 of the 12 recommendations, partially accepted one, and considered that two recommendations were addressed to the FAO membership. Management was of the view that the recommendations of the Evaluation provided a good basis for defining a consensual agenda for change for FAO's work in the Near East and North Africa region.

The Programme Committee appreciated the quality of the Evaluation, which it found to be helpful and important. It appreciated the extensive stakeholder consultation process that was integral to the evaluation methodology. The Committee urged that those recommendations that could be implemented without further consultation be addressed as a matter of priority by FAO Management.

The importance of an appropriate recruitment policy, effective rotation policy, adequate training and an appropriate skills mix for staff in the region, especially FAO Representatives was also stressed, given the key role played by them in FAO's work. While a regional Trust Fund for programme-related purposes was endorsed, the Committee stated that core activities of FAO should be funded out of the net appropriation. Dialogue with national stakeholders and other UN agencies on ways to improve FAO performance at country level, as well as for more ownership and visibility of FAO was encouraged.

It was noted that the Plan of Action would be submitted to the Regional Conference for the Near East and recommended that a paper on harmonization of the Regional Conference for the Near East and the Regional Office for the Near East be submitted to the next conference. The results of the Evaluation are to be considered in the implementation of the Programme of Work and Budget and the Vision for Decentralization.

The Committee recommended that similar Evaluations should take place in other regions, and that these should be conducted in a similarly consultative manner. Furthermore, an increased emphasis on reporting of follow-up to Evaluations, including comments from the Office of Evaluation on follow-up reports submitted to the Programme Committee was recommended.

## FAO Governing Bodies' conclusions (Programme Committee)

## **Annex 1: Evaluations of Extra Budgetary Development Projects and Programmes during January 2010 - March 2011**

### **PLANNED EVALUATIONS OF EXTRA-BUDGETARY DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS AND PROGRAMMES APRIL - DECEMBER 2011**

#### **GLOBAL AND INTER-REGIONAL**

##### **Evaluated Projects**

EP /GLO/502/GEF	Land Degradation Assessment in Drylands
GCP /GLO/234/EC	Technical and institutional support for the development of a global multi-agency approach to food security classification based on the Integrated Food Security Phase Classification - Phase II
GCP /INT/988/JPN	Strengthening Monitoring, Assessment and Reporting on Sustainable Forest Management in Asia

##### **Planned Project Evaluations**

GCP /GLO/198/GER	Supporting Food Security and Reducing Poverty in Kenya and Tanzania through Conservation of Globally Important Agricultural Heritage System
GCP /GLO/208/BMG	CountrySTAT for Sub-Saharan Africa – Improved access to nationally owned, quality statistics on food and agriculture in 17 Sub-Saharan Africa Countries
GCP /GLO/194/MUL	Strengthening Forest Resources Management and Enhancing its Contribution to Sustainable Development, Landuse and Livelihoods (National Forest Monitoring and Assessment of Tanzania)
GTFS/INT/907/ITA	Controlling Transboundary Animal Diseases in Central Asian Countries

#### **AFRICA**

##### **Evaluated Projects**

Regional	GCP /RAF/009/NET	Programme sous-régional de Formation Participative en Gestion Intégrée de la Production et des Déprédateurs des cultures à travers les champs-écoles des producteurs (GIPD/CEP) pour le Bénin, Burkina Faso, Mali et Sénégal
Regional	GCP /RAF/412/SAF	Capacity Building for South African Professionals in the Field of Agriculture and Food Security
Regional	GCP /RAF/413/GER	Supporting Conservation Agriculture for Sustainable Agriculture and rural Development - Phase II
Regional	OSRO/RAF/907/EC	Consolidation of the Integrated Food Security Phase Classification in the Volatile Humanitarian Context of the Central and Eastern African Region
Regional	OSRO/RAF/908/SWE	Appui aux activités de coordination de la Cellule sous-régionale pour le suivi de la sécurité alimentaire et des opérations d'urgence et de réhabilitation en Afrique de l'Ouest et renforcement des moyens d'existence durables des ménages vulnérables.
Chad	GCP /CHD/028/EC	Système d'information sur la sécurité alimentaire
D.R Congo	GCP /DRC/033/BEL	Projet de développement et de mise en oeuvre de la foresterie communautaire en République Démocratique du Congo

Mozambique	GCP /MOZ/078/ITA	Coastal Fisheries Development for Gaza and Inhambane Provinces
Ivory Coast	OSRO/IVC/903/SWE	Appui à la coordination des opérations agricoles d'urgence, soutien aux moyens d'existence et réinsertion des ménages vulnérables et des communautés victimes du conflit en Côte d'Ivoire
Liberia	OSRO/LIR/903/SWE	Emergency support to the food production and income generation for 5 000 urban and peri-urban inhabitants, vulnerable to soaring food prices in 5 counties.
Sudan	OSRO/SUD/622/MUL	Sudan Productive Capacity Recovery Programme - Capacity Building Component in Northern Sudan
Sudan	OSRO/SUD/623/MUL	Sudan Productive Capacity Recovery Programme - Capacity Building Component in Southern Sudan
Zimbabwe	OSRO/ZIM/903/SWE	Improvement of food security and livelihoods of smallholder farmers through provision of extension and inputs
Ivory Coast	UTF /IVC/027/IVC	Appui institutionnel au secteur du développement rural pour la sortie de crise en Côte d'Ivoire
Ivory Coast	UTF /IVC/028/IVC	Projet d'appui institutionnel et multisectorielle de la Banque Africaine de Développement à la sortie de crise: Appui aux organisations de base en charge de l'appui aux groupes vulnérables

#### **Planned Project Evaluations**

Regional	GCP /RAF/441/GER	Enhancing the contribution of Non-wood Forest Products to Poverty Alleviation and Food Security in Central African countries
Swaziland	GCP /SWA/016/EC	Swaziland Agricultural Development Project
Angola	GCP /ANG/033/SPA	Programa Especial de Seguridad Alimentaria en Angola - Proyecto de Capacitación de Comunidades y Pequeños Productores sobre Seguridad Alimentaria y Mejora de los Medios de Subsistencia
Kenya	OSRO/KEN/002/SWE	Improve livelihoods in targeted drought affected communities in Kenya
Sudan	OSRO/SUD/620/MUL	Sudan Institutional Capacity Programme: Food Security Information for Action in Northern Sudan
Sudan	OSRO/SUD/621/MUL	Sudan Institutional Capacity Programme: Food Security Information for Action
Somalia	OSRO/SOM/810/EC	Agricultural Rehabilitation and Diversification of High Potential Irrigation Schemes in Southern Somalia

## **ASIA AND PACIFIC**

#### **Evaluated Projects**

Afghanistan	GCP /AFG/050/GER	Support to Household Food Security, Nutrition and Livelihoods in Afghanistan
Afghanistan	GCP /AFG/056/GER	Strengthening coordination and capacity for integrated food security and livelihoods programming in Afghanistan
Indonesia	OSRO/INS/601/ARC	Rehabilitation and sustainable development of fisheries and aquaculture affected by the tsunami in Aceh Province, Indonesia
Laos	OSRO/LAO/802/SWE	Support to aquaculture rehabilitation in districts highly affected by August 2008 Floods
Myanmar	OSRO/MYA/902/SWE	Restoration of production capacity and food security for the most vulnerable farmers and fishers affected by Cyclone Nargis

#### **Planned Project Evaluations**

Myanmar	GCP /MYA/009/EC	Support for sustainable agriculture and rural livelihoods in Northern Rakhine State of Myanmar
Regional	GCP /RAS/218/JPN	Regional Programme for Participatory and Integrated Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries Development for Long-term Rehabilitation and Development in Tsunami-affected Areas
Regional	GCP /RAS/247/EC	Support to the EC Programme on Linking Information and Decision Making to Improve Food Security for Selected Greater Mekong Sub-regional Countries
Pakistan	OSRO/PAK/701/SWE	Project to assist the Earthquake Reconstruction and Rehabilitation Authority and its partners in restoring livelihoods in the earthquake affected areas of Pakistan

## EUROPE AND CENTRAL ASIA

### Evaluated Projects

Kyrgyzstan	OSRO/KYR/901/SWE	Support to the most vulnerable farming households to protect their livelihoods and to restore agriculture production.
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## LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN

### Evaluated Projects

Haiti	UTF /HAI/023/HAI	Plan d'actions à court terme d'appui à la production vivrière en Haïti
Uruguay	UTF /URU/025/URU	Gestión pesquera en Uruguay

### Planned Project Evaluations

Regional	GCP /RLA/169/SPA	Programa Regional para reforzar los impactos de las políticas públicas en la erradicación del hambre y la desnutrición crónica infantil
Regional	GTFS/RLA/141/ITA	Promoting CARIFORUM/CARICOM Food Security

## NEAR EAST

### Evaluated Project

Regional	GTFS/REM/070/ITA	Regional Integrated Pest Management Programme in the Middle Eastern Countries
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