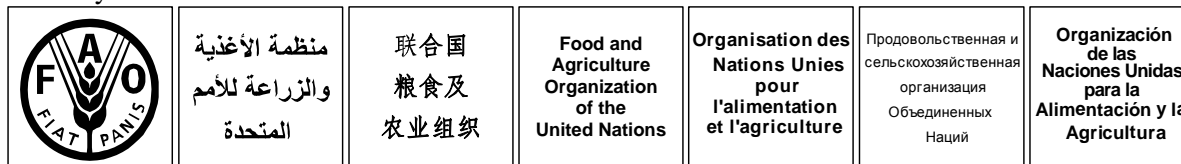


February 2014



Regional Conference for Europe

TWENTY-NINTH SESSION

Bucharest, Romania, 2 and 4 April 2014

Agenda Item 10

Decentralization and Decentralized Offices Network

Executive Summary

The paper provides an update on the steps taken as well as further proposals to improve the structure and functioning of the decentralized office network, building on the guidance provided by Members at 144th session of the Council. Good progress has been made in improved planning and priority setting, including the development of Country Programme Frameworks, ensuring country demands are integrated into corporate planning processes. At the global level a key area of change has been the accelerated turnover in FAO Representatives, with 42 new FAORs since January 2012, all having undergone management competency exams. Strategic and operational partnerships are being strengthened. Resource management has been improved with the full roll-out of the GRMS system to field offices. Skills mix reviews were undertaken to ensure staffing structures matched priorities in each region. The decentralization of emergency and rehabilitation operations was accomplished to support an integrated model for programme delivery.

From the perspective of Europe and Central Asia, within a priority setting agenda and as endorsed by the ERC 2012, emphasis has been given to twelve priority countries in the region and three special attention countries. Following Council endorsement, new posts of FAO Representative were established in Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan, awaiting finalization of Host Country Agreements; and new posts of Assistant FAOR were established for Moldova and Uzbekistan. In all four cases, temporary staffing arrangements are in place delivering the programmes, pending the finalization of agreements with host countries. Delays in filling these posts are related primarily with issues surrounding the application of the Convention of Privileges and Immunities of Specialized Agencies to local conditions. The Region proposes to strengthen further its decentralized office network for 2016-17.

Guidance Sought

*This document can be accessed using the Quick Response Code on this page;
a FAO initiative to minimize its environmental impact and promote greener communications.
Other documents can be consulted at www.fao.org*



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The 29th Regional Conference for Europe is invited to advise on:

- The proposal for the establishment of a fully-fledged FAO Representation office in Uzbekistan, subject to availability of funds
- The proposal for the establishment of an FAO Representation in Albania with an Assistant FAOR, or a Partnership and Liaison Office, subject to availability of funds

1. This paper provides Members with an update on the steps taken to improve the Organization's performance in producing results and impact at the country level in all aspects of FAO's work – normative, as well as global, regional and country programmes. It builds on the guidance Members provided at the 144th session of the Council in June 2012¹ in response to the document entitled Structure and functioning of the decentralized offices network.²

2. There has been good progress in all the areas agreed, namely: (i) to improve the performance, results and impact of all of FAO's work at the country level; (ii) to reduce fragmentation and increase integration across all aspects of FAO's work, irrespective of source of funding, between decentralized offices and headquarters, between normative and global knowledge products and its actions in the field, and between emergency-rehabilitation-development activities in full coherence with the Organization's resilience agenda; and (iii) to promote partnerships with national and regional institutions, other UN and non-UN international agencies, the private sector, universities and research organizations, and civil society. Each of these has received deliberate focus and attention since the June 2012 Council.

3. Council endorsed proposals organized in three broad areas: (a) improved planning and priority setting; (b) improvements in the decentralized offices network; and (c) an integrated model for programme delivery, including the integration of development, emergency and rehabilitation activities, as well as more strategic use of TCP resources, and an improved human resources management for enhanced performance, accountability and country-level impact. The present document updates the progress made in each of these areas.

A. Improved planning and priority setting

4. Members highlighted the critical importance of improved planning and strengthened priority setting at country and other levels. Good progress has been made in this area, both in terms of rolling-out Country Programming Frameworks (CPFs) and their integration into broader corporate planning processes. The 148th session of Council approved the TCP enhancement measures expressing its support “to the alignment of the enhanced Technical Cooperation Programme to the reviewed strategic framework and the bottom up alignment to national priorities through Country Programming Frameworks (CPFs)”. As part of the implementation of the SF, activities funded from the RP as well as TCP resources and voluntary contributions should gradually converge and be aligned with the Strategic Objectives and their action plans. In this context, CPFs are to identify the priorities that guide the mobilization of resources, including the TCP. At country level, the alignment of the TCP to the SF is thus to be ensured through the CPF process. During the CPF formulation phase, the FAOR will highlight, under the strategic priorities identified, those outputs and/or activities which could be achieved through TCP contributions. The indicative TCP pipeline will be added as an Annex to the CPF document and included in its resource mobilization plan.

5. CPFs have been concluded in the region largely as planned, but more importantly, they now need to be seen in light of their important role within the reviewed Strategic Framework and its planning and

¹ CL 144/REP paragraphs 17-22

² CL 144/15

programming approach. To date, out of the twelve focus countries³ expected to have a CPF in the region, five countries⁴ have completed the revised CPFs (2013-2015) and work is on-going in seven countries.⁵ CPFs are also being developed in another four countries.⁶ In Azerbaijan the existing National Medium Term Priority Framework (NMTPF) is still valid, but is being revised in a new CPF. The CPFs provide a solid basis for identifying country priorities for FAO collaboration, in line with government strategic plans and the broader UN Development Assistance Frameworks (UNDAFs). The revision of the CPFs in the coming biennium will consider the close linkage to the UNDAF as the update and revision of the UNDAFs in the Region is rolled out in 2014-15.

6. Implementation of the new results-based framework began in January 2014, following the work by the Strategic Objectives Teams that led the planning process and the development of the results framework. It is the practical result of what the Council supported, "a direct line-of-sight from the top downwards and the bottom upwards [...] The revamped strategic planning process is the foundation for defining country-level "impact pathways" to ensure that global public goods are translated by FAO decentralized staff and collaborating institutions into country-level results in new settings, while the global public goods produced by FAO headquarters colleagues also build on country-level experience."⁷

7. Each of the Strategic Objectives (SOs) has developed work plans that outline a set of corporate outputs necessary to achieve Organizational Outcomes, along with the key areas of work and indicators. The SO work plans benefited from the exercise carried out in April 2013, where CPF results were mapped to the Strategic Framework, ensuring that country demands were taken into consideration in formulating FAO's corporate-level outputs. Regional and sub-regional offices have also been actively engaged in this process and the Corporate Baseline Survey, against which the Organization's results will be measured, is also underway initially in three countries in the region (Armenia, Tajikistan and Montenegro).

8. On the one hand, the reviewed Strategic Framework builds on input from the CPFs as part of the larger Organization-wide planning process, and on the other hand, it guides the continuous strategic focus of the Organization at the country level as new initiatives are agreed with governments and external resource partners. This includes deciding which problems FAO addresses, the expected outcomes of FAO country-level assistance, and alignment of Organizational Outcomes with commitments in the CPFs and how progress in achieving results is measured.

B. Improvements in the decentralized offices network.

FAO Representations

9. At a global level, a key area of change has been the accelerated turnover in FAO Representatives. Since January 2012 there have been 42 new FAORs, including several who are awaiting government clearance. Of these, 36 have previous FAO experience, either at headquarters, in a regional or sub-regional office, as an emergency coordinator, as an FAO project coordinator in the field, or as national staff in a country office. The remaining six all have outstanding credentials and were, like the others, chosen on merit. All passed the management competency exam administered by an external firm. Of

³ 28th ERC approved focus countries: (Albania, Armenia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Georgia, , The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Republic of Moldova, Montenegro, Ukraine, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan) and the UN Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) (Work is linked to UN Security Council Resolution 1244(1999)

⁴ Armenia, Georgia, The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Republic of Moldova, Kyrgyzstan

⁵ Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, UNMIK [Security Council Resolution 1244; (1999)], Montenegro, Ukraine, Uzbekistan Tajikistan

⁶ Belarus, Kazakhstan, Turkey, Turkmenistan

⁷ CL 144/15 paragraph 11

the 42 new FAORs, 12 are women, bringing the total to 19 worldwide. Moreover, a new training programme for FAORs is being implemented.

10. It should be noted that this process is in line with the request from the governing bodies to ensure that member countries contribute in a significant manner to the strengthening of the decentralized network. This joint effort with member countries will be pursued throughout the 2014-2015 biennium.

Partnership and liaison

11. In line with the approach endorsed by the 144th Session of the Council in June 2012, considerable attention has been given to strengthening FAO's strategic and operational partnerships at regional and sub-regional levels. The terms of reference and titles of Sub-regional Coordinators and other relevant staff will be modified accordingly to include liaison and other duties as appropriate.

In 2007, FAO Conference approved the decision to establish a Liaison Office in Moscow, and necessary financial resources included in the regular budget. The opening of a new Liaison Office is well underway.⁸

Progress has also been made in upgrading the status of FAO representation in Turkey, thereby adding partnership functions to the Sub-regional office. The Government of Turkey agreed to sign the Supplemental Agreement as well as multiyear Partnership Agreements with FAO. Negotiations are ongoing with regard to the eventual establishment of partnership offices in Azerbaijan and Kazakhstan. Such modalities of decentralized offices do not require regular programme funds from the Organization, but allow to mobilize additional resources from countries to enhance FAO's field presence and project activities at the country level, develop new partnership with governments and other key stakeholders in the focus countries, aligned with FAO's Strategic Framework. FAO will continue to work with other interested countries in Eastern Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia and explore new partnership opportunities across the region.

Resource, office and programme management

12. In addition to these staffing changes, another major innovation has been the full roll-out of the Global Resource Management System (GRMS) in all country offices. Previously, FAO country office administrative and financial information was not part of the headquarters and regional office information system but handled separately. Up-to-date management information is a fundamental element of improved performance and vital for support to country-level operations from all parts of the Organization. The deployment of GRMS helps accomplish this. There is now complete information, for example, on the number of FAO employees, regardless of where their contracts originated. It is now possible to monitor much more effectively the financial and administrative actions of the offices, necessary for IPSAS compliance, as well as for overall performance management of the Organization.

13. The roll-out of GRMS was carried out with staff from headquarters, regional offices and in some cases other country offices providing on-the-job training. The roll-out also provided an opportunity for many of the trainers to see firsthand how country offices function and understand their problems and challenges.

14. This information is now part of the enhanced performance management process, along with other elements. Building on work undertaken as part of the IPA, a new system is being put in place to systematically monitor high-level measures of FAO effectiveness at country level. This new performance assessment system uses a combination of three elements. The first is the continuing

⁸ In November 2013, the Federal Law was approved by the Government of Russia on extension of the provisions of the International Convention on privileges and immunities of UN specialized organizations (dated 21 November 1947) to FAO. The final draft Host Country Agreement was finalized by two parties and is now going through the internal clearance process in the Russian Federation.

review of country office finance, administrative and programme management by the Office of the Inspector General (OIG). The second element is analysis of quantitative data from other existing sources that provide performance benchmarks across countries, or groups of countries based on size and complexity of the country and the FAO programme. The third element is more qualitative, and draws heavily on the approach, and lessons learned from a number of recent external assessments and the methodologies used. In particular, the Multilateral Organization Performance Assessment Network (MOPAN) “common approach” developed by a network of 17 donor countries to assess the organizational effectiveness of the multilateral organizations which they fund, includes a partner survey covering 21 key performance indicators. FAO will use a number of these indicators and related questions, along with some of the questions used in other recent external assessments.

15. As envisaged in the IPA, this is deliberately a work-in-progress that will evolve along with the ongoing transformation of the Organization and the increased availability of relevant information in FAO’s reporting systems. The system will be tested in a number of countries during the first part of 2014 and rolled out to all country offices by the end of the 2014-15 biennium.

16. Skills mix reviews were undertaken by regional and sub-regional offices to ensure that their staffing structures matched the priorities of the countries and regions, and were aligned with the work plans of Strategic Objectives. FAO management has continued work begun in 2012 to strengthen the capacity of regional and sub-regional offices to align staffing with the demands from countries, agreed regional priorities and the reviewed Strategic Framework and emerging work plans.

17. This follows the decentralized office post review undertaken after Council in June 2012. A further skills mix review was undertaken in regional and sub-regional offices following the June 2013 Conference and subsequent work planning by the Strategic Objective teams. Regional office proposals were reviewed by Strategic Objective Coordinators and headquarters technical divisions. With only a few exceptions, there was agreement on where to fill technical gaps or reduce technical capacities where demand was less. As a result of a forward-looking analysis of the regional priorities, fifteen post changes were made for the REU region. However, the overall post count for the Region under the PWB 2014-15 proposals has remained the same.

C. An integrated model for programme delivery

18. In January 2012, the Organization decided to transfer operational responsibilities for emergency and rehabilitation programmes from headquarters under the lead of the Emergency and Rehabilitation Division (TCE) to decentralized offices, under the overall responsibilities of the ADG/Regional Representatives. A time-bound plan for the transfer to decentralized offices was endorsed by the 144th session of the FAO Council⁹ implying a gradual transfer of the emergency portfolio, which was completed by June 2013 in all regions.

19. The decentralization process was carried out in a progressive manner, through a consultative process with decentralized offices, to ensure a smooth transition. Action was taken to review the structure of the recipient offices and gradually build the capacity of the concerned FAO Representations. For REU, given the relatively low incidence of large scale emergencies in past years, there has been no impact on current posts in the region to date.

20. A new interim model for the distribution of project servicing costs (PSC) of emergency projects has been implemented which will feed into the comprehensive review of the policy regarding project support costs which is being undertaken at the request of the Finance Committee.

21. These changes also relate to the implementation of the new Strategic Objective 5 on Resilience. TCE holds the corporate responsibility to enable decentralized offices to assist member countries to prepare for, and timely respond to food and agriculture threats and crises. A number of other technical divisions at headquarters also play key roles, as do the administrative and financial support service

⁹ CL 144/15

centres and the regional and sub-regional offices. Following the integration of emergency operations into the common programming framework, these units are already working together well. Nevertheless, the new model of decentralized management of the emergency responses will require close monitoring and backup support to decentralized offices over the next 12-18 months until adequate capacities are in place in all locations.

22. Good progress has been made during 2012-13. More remains to be done and further enhancements will be implemented during 2014-15. In particular, strengthened work-planning at country level will provide the platform for improved impact and effectiveness and more strategic resource mobilization. In addition, the implementation of FAO's mobility policy is expected to have a positive impact on the functioning of FAO's decentralized offices.

23. Management looks forward to feedback from Members on progress that has been made and looks forward to providing updates on further progress.

D. The Regional Perspective for Europe and Central Asia

24. Improved planning and priority setting in the Europe and Central Asia region is linked to the six priorities endorsed by the ERC 2012 and the application of the business model discussed. In this context emphasis has been given to twelve priority countries in the Region. In addition, new opportunities should be explored with Russian Federation, Kazakhstan and Azerbaijan as countries for extended collaboration in strategic and resource partnership issues. CPFs have been prepared for all twelve priority countries or are in the final stage of preparation and formed the major building block for the preparation of the PWB. The finalization of the CPF also facilitated an improved integration of both regular programme resources and extra budgetary funds in the region. CPFs have been increasingly also used as a resource mobilization tool at country level.

25. The current framework for decentralization specific to the Europe and Central Asia region is provided by the main recommendations which emanated from the 28th Session of the FAO Regional Conference for Europe (Azerbaijan, April 2012) and which were endorsed by the 144th Session of the Council. In addition, decentralization was a major topic of the 2012 Evaluation of FAO's Regional and Sub-regional Offices for Europe and Central Asia carried out by the Office of Evaluation (OED) and whose report was issued in December 2012. Efforts have been made to particularly strengthen the country office capacities both in terms of priority setting, planning and operational responsibility. Progress specifically has been made in further decentralizing operational responsibilities and this works well in countries such as Georgia and Kyrgyzstan. Further improvements are needed still in Tajikistan and Moldova. It depends very much on the deployment of the International FAO Representative. Further details regarding the recommendations and the status of their implementation are reflected in Annex A.

26. Following Council endorsement in June 2012, posts of FAO Representative were created for Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan, awaiting finalization of their Host Country Agreements (HCAs). In addition, Assistant FAOR (National Officer) posts have been created for Moldova and Uzbekistan. These two positions are currently being covered by incumbents holding non-staff contracts pending finalization of agreements with the host countries.

27. Contacts are ongoing with member countries that have requested a stronger FAO presence and an expansion of activities through increased partnership and liaison activities. New or revised HCAs are under discussion in eight countries in the Region, namely Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova, the Russian Federation, Tajikistan, Turkey and Uzbekistan.

28. Pending the outcome of discussions on the application of the Convention of Privileges and Immunities of Specialized Agencies to local conditions, which has in some cases delayed the signing of HCAs, the Organization has proceeded with temporary ad hoc arrangements, fielding staff and non-staff resources against these posts and establishing temporary procedures to cover as much as possible the functions ascribed to the positions. In particular, temporary delegations of authority have been granted to the heads of these offices in the area of budget, procurement, administration and other

support areas to replicate as much as possible that of a fully-fledged FAOR office. However, the situation is far from ideal and it would be important that the concerned Government make all necessary efforts to ensure that the remaining issues are speedily resolved thus allowing the deployment of officials with the full title and authorities of FAO Representative and Assistant FAO Representative.

29. In 2013, Belarus became eligible for FAO assistance and the first FAO project was signed with Belarus in early 2014 to help dispose of obsolete pesticides and reduce risks from pesticides used in agriculture. An emergency TCP project was also approved. Based on deliberations at the last ERC and the above arrangements, Belarus should now become a new focus country for the REU region.

30. The decentralization of TCI Investment Centre operations during the biennium has enabled the deployment of Investment Officer positions in three countries in Central Asia – Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan and Turkey. Incumbents are already in place for two of these countries with selection imminent in the third.

31. Even with the establishment of the above offices, the Europe and Central Asia region, in contrast to the other regions, still suffers from a lack of decentralized office structures. Of the 17 countries where FAO has operations, six are covered by National Correspondents (NCs) – effectively government staff who are designated to handle FAO matters on a part-time basis together with their government duties and compensated through a salary supplement. However, in their capacity as Government employees, NCs cannot represent the Organization in UN fora, the UNCT, etc. Indeed, the Evaluation of REU mentioned above made a clear recommendation to replace the NC Scheme with more appropriate mechanisms as the NC Scheme was evaluated as ineffective. The Management Response agreed with OED's recommendation but indicated that, in the absence of more funding, the NC Scheme was reluctantly its best option. Clearly, the respective in-country programmes have potential for growth if FAO were able to invest in full-time dedicated resources such as the deployment of National Officers in these countries.

32. Looking forward to the decentralization needs of the 2016-17 biennium and beyond, the following proposals are presented for the consideration of Members:

- Establishment of an FAO country presence in Albania

In 2012, the ERC confirmed the status of Albania as a focus country for the delivery of FAO assistance in the REU region. The overall developmental patterns for Albania are more similar to some Central Asian countries in transition, sharing the similar structure of economy and structure of population.

Albania has a population of 2.8 million people in 2013. Its GDP is USD 13 billion (2012) or USD 4600 per capita (one of the lowest per capita figures in Europe). The agriculture sector accounts for 17.5 % of GDP. Yet, the Albanian economy still undergoes significant structural changes and its transition has been marked by a reduction of the economic activity rate, with unemployment remaining higher for women. About 55 % of the employed people are engaged in the agriculture sector. FAO could further explore developing policy-level and field-level support measures for women farmers and women producer groups, and issues related to economic inclusion for the rural population in general.

Albania is well endowed with agricultural land and water resources. Albanian farmers suffer from floods, drought and the fact is nationally recognized. The Albanian poverty headcount ratio at national poverty line is still high at 12.4 percent of the population and the figure could further be improved under enhanced international assistance. Along the transition, EU- pre-accessions play a very important role for the country. Taking into consideration the fact of unknown date for accession, reforming of the sector should proceed with the pace necessary to support new innovations and should not slow down with uncertainty. Therefore, FAO presence in the country seems to be timely and supportive to transformation of the agriculture sector in Albania.

Ensuring food security, safety of food for the domestic and international consumer of Albanian products, economic inclusion for rural population, land reforms, enhanced cooperation between farmers in inputs, production, processing or marketing, inclusion of small farmers in food chains, climate change mitigation, sustainability of natural resources including fisheries and forestry, rural education and research, local definition of Albanian rural development are the issues for policy and field work in Albania for 2014-2020.

Albania is one of the eight original pilot countries of the Delivering as One (DaO) approach, which is now being recommended for introduction globally where unified UN efforts have been playing an increasing role. Better presence of FAO can effectively contribute to fulfilling our mandate and to facilitating joint UN activities. In addition, the advantage of close collaboration with the MAFCP and other relevant national actors (agricultural university, NGOs) and the international community of donors could increase visibility of the FAO mandate in the crucial period of continuous transformation of Albanian rural economy.

While the establishment of a new Assistant FAOR position will be foreseen in the biennium 2016-17, this possibility could be considered also during the 2014-15 biennium, pending the availability of resources. Alternatively, a Partnership and Liaison Office could be established, subject to availability of funds from the Government of Albania.

- Establishment of a full FAO Representation in Uzbekistan

Uzbekistan is one of three Low-Income Food-Deficit countries in the Central Asia region (together with Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan) and a Landlocked Developing Country. The ERC in 2012 confirmed the status of Uzbekistan as a focus country for the delivery of FAO assistance in Central Asia. The same ERC meeting endorsed the proposal of establishing an FAOR under a double accreditation scheme, subsequently supported by the Conference.

Uzbekistan is well endowed with agricultural land but production is handicapped by water availability and climate conditions, from extreme heat to cold temperatures. There are structural challenges, ranging from the emergence of private large scale monoculture farms, parallel to small household farms that breed livestock and produce fruits and vegetables for their own consumption and marginally for markets using only basic, scarce inputs. Following the formal disbandment of former collective farms, where work was highly specialized and mechanized, new-generation farmers lack the necessary skills and experience and suffer from poor access to markets, inputs and credit.

Agriculture is the most important sector of the Uzbek economy and generates more than 30% of the GDP, employing at least 35% of the workforce. Food security is a major policy concern of the Government and in this context Uzbekistan appreciates the support of FAO. Ensuring food security is an important socio-economic issue for the country. It is the most pressing area of public policy for the provision of national security, statehood and sovereignty, and a prerequisite for the national strategy on improving the welfare of the population. There are also several issues that could adversely affect the agricultural sector. Global climate change, reduction in water resources, and the spread of new plant and animal pests and diseases require strengthened cooperation to develop and introduce adaptive technologies in agriculture.

As a result of the above, for the biennium 2016-17 it is foreseen to upscale FAO's presence in Uzbekistan, to become a fully-fledged representation. This will align the country with the two other focus countries of Central Asia, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan, as well as align FAO with the other UN agencies operating in the country.

Annex A

Recommendations from ERC 2012 and REU Evaluation 2012

ERC RECOMMENDATIONS	RESPONSE/STATUS
<p>The ERC fully supported the endeavours to enhance the impact of the Organization through improved and well designed decentralized structures and emphasized that decentralization efforts should not jeopardize the technical capacity in Headquarters and other locations or the ability to execute the agreed technical programmes;</p>	<p>The overall decentralization initiative of the Organization is being pursued within the Europe and Central Asia region to the extent possible. Nevertheless, the region suffers from the lack of fully fledged FAO Representation offices compared to other FAO regions, with project operations mainly managed from REU and SEC.</p>
<p>The ERC supported the emphasis on value for money by the increased use of cost-sharing agreements with host governments and the efforts to ensure the presence of competent FAO Country Representatives, whose posts should be part of the career development and geographic rotation policies of the Organization;</p>	<p>The negotiations for new offices are ongoing, including cost-sharing arrangements. The Organization constantly looks for opportunities to reduce its decentralized network costs including through cost-sharing arrangements.</p>
<p>The ERC agreed with the proposal to transfer responsibility, management and accountability for operations related to emergency and rehabilitation activities to the Decentralized Offices as soon as their capacities are adequate, in order to better achieve integration of development, emergency and rehabilitation activities;</p>	<p>This transfer of responsibilities has taken place across the Organization. Given the comparatively more limited expected need for emergency and rehabilitation activities in the region, its deployment has not impacted on REU staffing, compared to other regions.</p>
<p>The ERC noted the proposal of the FAO Regional Office for Europe and Central Asia (REU) for positioning decentralized FAO resources in the region to achieve greater impact, including the proposition that FAO should establish two fully-fledged FAO Representations in Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan and two Assistant FAO Representative posts in the Republic of Moldova and Uzbekistan and supported the focus on the most needy countries in the region and requested to address cross-cutting themes such as gender and climate change;</p>	<p>FAO Representative and Assistant Representative posts have been established for all four locations. The appointment of FAORs/AFAORs is still subject to the signing of HCAs in all four countries. HCAs have not been concluded pending the outcome of discussions on the application of the UN Convention on Privileges and Immunities for Specialized Agencies (CPISA) to FAO officials. In the meantime, FAO has put in place some temporary arrangements.</p>
<p>The ERC recommended to further consider funding options, including financing from the REU budget, centralized funds (including extra-budgetary) or a combination of both and to prepare an implementation plan for positioning FAO resources and requested the Programme and Finance Committees in May 2012 on the basis – to the extent possible – of a detailed and timely proposal from the Secretariat to consider the implications of the proposed changes and give appropriate recommendations for further decision to the 144th Session of the Council in June 2012.</p>	<p>The Organization has completed a skills mix review to reflect the needs of Member Countries in each region. In this respect, fifteen post changes were made for the REU region, including the creation of new posts, post abolitions, post regradings, post title changes and the refocusing of the technical emphasis of some posts. However, the overall post count for the Region under the PWB 2014-15 proposals has remained the same.</p>

REU EVALUATION RECOMMENDATIONS	RESPONSE/STATUS
<p>A non-resident FAO Representative be appointed with multiple-accreditation to Armenia and Georgia; the Assistant FAO Representatives at country level should be delegated enough authority to manage the whole programme, represent FAO within the UN, make decisions or facilitate rapid decision-making;</p>	<p>Implemented. The Deputy Regional Representative, REU was appointed with multiple accreditation to Armenia, Georgia and Moldova. With the implementation of GRMS, further delegations have been assigned to the AFAORs to manage the local programmes.</p>
<p>A non-resident FAO Representative be appointed with multiple-accreditation to Albania and the Republic of Moldova, following one of the modalities suggested above;</p>	<p>See above for Moldova. The situation in Albania is under review, with a proposal to establish a multi-accreditation FAOR in 2016-17.</p>
<p>The National Correspondent Scheme should be discontinued and FAO should not engage in operational activities at country level without, as a minimum, an AFAOR within a multiple-accredited FAO Representation or a senior officer embedded in the UNRC Office;</p>	<p>FAO is looking at ways to replace the NC Scheme. However, having full-time positions in the countries concerned will involve a significant increase in resource requirements. While the situation is far from ideal, it would not seem appropriate to fully interrupt activities, preventing the countries from benefitting from FAO technical support and services.</p>
<p>The foreseen Programme and Partnership Development posts at country level can be effective if staffed at an appropriate level of seniority (minimum P4);</p>	<p>The 2014-15 Budget does not permit the deployment of such posts at the country level.</p>
<p>The newly created post in REU for Partnership Development officer should work in close coordination with LOB, to support the development of a stronger partnership between REU and the EU institutions for the Europe and Central Asia Region;</p>	<p>The Partnership Development Officer post in REU has a broader role in partnership development in the region, and closely coordinates with LOB on matters related to the EU.</p>
<p>The status of FAO accreditation in all countries in Europe and Central Asia where the Organization carries out field operations, should be reviewed to ensure that it can benefit from the relevant immunities and privileges. In so doing, FAO should take into account the experience of other UN agencies in each specific case and should not initiate activities in a country unless the standard basic agreement or equivalent has been signed with the Government;</p>	<p>The question of privileges and immunities is a major obstacle in establishing or upgrading offices. The Organization is bound by the UN Privileges and Immunities Convention, which also protects the rights of FAO staff members. Discussions are ongoing on the application of the UN CPISA to FAO Officials in a number of countries. Nevertheless, REU is continuing its activities in the framework of the existing agreements, albeit with some difficulties.</p>
<p>FAO should revise, in the Europe and Central Asia Region, the delegation of authority to countries without a fully fledged FAO Representation. This should include: revise terms of reference, roles and responsibilities that allow national staff to operate GRMS to its full potential, under the adequate supervision of the multiple-accredited FAO Representative; enable staff at country level through capacity development packages that will allow them to operate GRMS safely; ensure that AOS</p>	<p>This has been completed following the deployment of GRMS.</p>

reimbursements accrue to the closest organizational level to where the field programme is actually implemented;	
FAO should open imprest accounts, to permit offices to perform financial/operational functions. FAO staff, recruited at the appropriate level, whether national or international, should be granted full authority for managing these instruments. The present system, implying the use of cash, should be discontinued, except for proven emergencies.	This has been implemented following the deployment of GRMS.