



Food and Agriculture  
Organization of the  
United Nations

Office of the  
Inspector General

# Audit of FAO's Social Media Management and Use



AUD1623

29 November 2023

This document is comprised exclusively of the executive summary of the audit report.

Permanent Representatives accredited to FAO and institutional resource partners of FAO may be granted access to the full report upon written request to the Inspector General, in accordance with paragraphs 59-61 of the Charter of the Office of the Inspector General.

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

## WHAT WAS AUDITED?

The Office of the Inspector General (OIG) conducted an audit of FAO's Social Media Management and Use in accordance with its risk-based audit plan for the 2022–2023 biennium. The objective of the audit was to assess the adequacy and effectiveness of the governance, risk management and control processes for effective and efficient management and use of FAO's social media accounts. The audit covered the period between January 2021 and April 2023.

## WHY IT MATTERS?

Social media are multi-platform digital technologies that allow ideas to be shared through virtual networks and communities. As such, social media is one of FAO's key communication channels to advocate and increase the visibility of the Organization's work; contribute to the global dialogue in its areas of expertise; and engage in a dialogue with stakeholders. During the audit period, FAO maintained an active presence across 18 social media platforms, boasting more than 7.3 million followers over approximately 200 institutional accounts.

## WHAT ARE THE KEY OBSERVATIONS?

As a result of dedicated efforts by the Office of Communications (OCC), there has been a remarkable growth in the number of FAO's social media followers in recent years, which has been accomplished by a very small social media team at FAO headquarters.

The audit identified a number of improvements needed to enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of the management of social media at FAO, which OCC has committed to undertake.<sup>1</sup> The main improvement actions are:

- defining the scope of social media within FAO and creating an official categorization for social media accounts;
- revising and enhancing the Social Media Policy;
- establishing a consolidated repository of resources for account managers;
- defining appropriate arrangements for effective coordination of FAO's social media activities and monitoring arrangements to ensure compliance with policies and guidelines Organization-wide;
- formulating an entity-wide social media roadmap;
- designing an onboarding and training programme for account managers;
- compiling an exhaustive inventory of FAO social media accounts; and
- adapting account management guidelines to address emerging social media risks.

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<sup>1</sup> At the time of report issuance, OCC indicated that some of these actions were already in progress.

## CONCLUSION

Identified weaknesses in the existing structures, policies and procedures negatively impact the effective mitigation of key risks. The audit identified seven risks, of which five were rated as high and two as moderate. If not addressed, they will hinder the achievement of some important governance, risk management or internal control objectives.

OCC management has developed a suitable action plan to address the issues raised, and OIG will follow up on their timely implementation.



**Mika Tapio**  
**Inspector General**  
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