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Nations

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# Programme Evaluation Report

## Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations

### Office of Evaluation (OED)

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## 1 Introduction

1. The 2013 Programme Evaluation Report consists of five main sections:
  - a. new developments in evaluation;
  - b. in response to the positive reception in the 2011 Programme Evaluation Report, a section drawing common lessons from evaluations undertaken in the past biennium;
  - c. collaboration with the UN system on evaluation matters including among the Rome-based agencies;
  - d. the evaluation programme of the Organization, including evaluations completed in the 2012-13 biennium and work programme for the forthcoming biennium. For the first time, quantitative data is provided on the evaluations undertaken since 2010; and
  - e. briefs on the major evaluations completed during the biennium and provided to the Governing Bodies. As in the past, the briefs include a summary of the management response to the evaluation and the conclusions of the Programme Committee. Cross-references to the complete documentation on the FAO Evaluation website are also included.

## 2 Evaluation in FAO - new developments

2. Consultation with the governments of member countries has always been a regular feature of FAO evaluations. This however tended to happen almost exclusively during the visits of evaluation teams to the selected countries, and through survey questionnaires. Since 2011, however, OED has been more consistent in consulting with the member countries through their Permanent Representatives to FAO.

3. This approach has been followed for most country evaluations completed in this period, through the establishment of reference groups comprising also major resource partners, and systematically for the evaluations of FAO Regional and Subregional Offices. The teams for the Near East and the Europe and Central Asia evaluations, met member countries, both at their regional conference and at meetings of the regional groups, at different points in time during the evaluation process, including:

- at the beginning of the evaluation work, to canvass suggestions on the issues and questions to be explored;
- mid-way in the process, to inform on preliminary findings;
- towards completion of the drafting phase, to discuss conclusions and recommendations; and
- for in-depth discussion of both recommendations and management response.

4. This intensive interaction was highly appreciated by the members and greatly enhanced the overall ownership and transparency of the evaluations themselves.

5. ***Validation process of follow-up reports:*** Following a specific request by the Programme Committee, OED developed a methodology for a validation process of follow-up reports to management response, which was tested on the Follow-up Report of the Evaluation of FAO's Work and Role related to Water, in 2012. An independent consultant, who had had no involvement in any capacity in FAO's work or in the evaluation, reviewed available

documents related to the follow-up report, carried out a number of interviews and drafted a short report.

6. The Programme Committee appreciated the methodology and its final result and requested OED to follow the same approach, whenever relevant and cost-effective. In 2012, a second validation report was produced for the Evaluation of FAO's Capacity Development in Africa.

7. ***Evaluation trust funds:*** In October 2011 and 2012, OED and TCSR devoted efforts to improve corporate implementation and compliance with the Council's decision in 2007 about the establishment of a Technical Cooperation trust fund (evaluation of voluntary-funded technical cooperation for development initiatives), in line with Field Programme Circular 2011/1. Two reports were prepared on this topic for the Programme Committee, in October 2011 and October 2012. The latter registered an improvement in the integration of adequate evaluation provisions in newly approved projects, and in the contribution to the dedicated OED Technical Cooperation trust fund. The greatest difficulties in including evaluation provisions in FAO projects funded by resource partners, are met with Unilateral Trust Funds and with some partners, mostly due to incompatibility of respective rules and procedures.

8. The first evaluations funded through the Technical Cooperation trust fund are planned for late 2013-early 2014: OED intends to submit a concept note on this topic to the Programme Committee at its session in October 2013.

9. ***Fostering collaboration between Evaluation and Audit:*** OED and the Office of the Inspector General (OIG) have taken steps to improve information exchange and coordination between the two oversight functions. Following a scoping on the state of collaboration and a joint workshop in December 2012, the two units are taking steps to closer collaboration on oversight aspects that may require attention by both units, for example the efficiency of FAO Representations.

10. ***Evaluation knowledge management:*** In 2011, OED decided to strengthen knowledge management in and from evaluations to improve the usefulness and utilization of evaluations in terms of both learning and accountability: the Office established an evaluation knowledge management position, through which it aims to strengthen the learning potential from evaluations into FAO's, as well as OED's, work. At the same time, OED is pursuing its efforts in developing and updating guidelines for different types of evaluation in FAO; for example, in late 2012, the templates for project evaluations have been revised to take into account the introduction of the UN programming principles in the FAO project cycle.

11. ***Evaluation Committee (Internal):*** The Evaluation Committee (Internal) met periodically to advise the Director-General on evaluation-related matters, particularly management responses to corporate evaluations. The committee also interacted on several occasions with the peer review panel that examined the evaluation function in FAO in 2012. Currently chaired by the Deputy Director-General (Operations), the committee is expected to play an enhanced role in better and more systematic utilization of evaluation findings to improve organizational performance, including those outlined in the section on common lessons below.

12. **External Audit of OED:** OED was assessed by the External Auditors in April 2012, as part of a follow-up to the first External Audit of the Office carried out in late 2010. Focus was mostly on project evaluations and on compliance of FAO evaluation function with the UNEG Norms and Standards.

### 3 Drawing common lessons from evaluations

13. This section highlights the key significant and recurrent issues that emerged from the major evaluations completed in the period under reporting. It is notable that some of the topics analysed in the 2011 Programme Evaluation Report,<sup>1</sup> emerged again from evaluations completed since then.

#### 3.1 Mainstreaming gender analysis across evaluations

14. The PER 2011 had identified major weaknesses in FAO's performance in mainstreaming gender equality in its work. In response to this, over the period 2011-2012, OED devoted substantial resources and attention to the evaluative assessment of corporate achievements in mainstreaming gender equality. The main effort was the Evaluation of FAO's Work and Role in Gender and Development, presented to the Programme Committee in October 2011. All recommendations, but one, were accepted. The follow-up report, due for the October 2013 session, will be vetted through the validation process mentioned above.

15. The main finding of the evaluation was that at all levels, mainstreaming of gender equality in FAO was inadequate. This was further confirmed through other country and thematic evaluations. Inadequate attention to gender mainstreaming in FAO's work cut across project documents, implementation and reporting, through normative products, including flagship publications, to recruitment and staffing patterns. The Gender Evaluation identified the absence of an accountability framework on gender mainstreaming and a corporate culture that is overly gender-blind, as major causes for this.

16. In compliance with the new corporate gender policy, OED carried out a stocktaking exercise which analysed the extent of mainstreaming gender equality in FAO's work and in evaluations.

17. The key findings about the integration of gender equality in FAO's work were:

- the relevance of gender equality to the initiative/thematic area scored very high on average: mainstreaming gender equality plays almost a key role in the performance of FAO's work;
- the average overall scoring for FAO's work, excluding relevance, was below acceptable standard, including for awareness raising on gender equality, potential or actual impact on gender equality, technical quality of gender mainstreaming and level of innovation on gender mainstreaming and equality;
- on the other hand, evaluation recommendations focusing on mainstreaming gender equality were in general well accepted and reasonable work plans were established: this criterion was scored well.

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<sup>1</sup> C 2011/4

18. The main conclusion to be drawn is that there is still need to strengthen efforts and commitment to improve mainstreaming of gender equality in the work of FAO, including evaluations. For its part, OED will strengthen its internal peer review mechanism, in particular on the integration of a gender equality perspective in evaluations.

### **3.2 *Partnerships***

19. Partnership was another area covered in the 2011 PER. All thematic and strategic evaluations completed in the reporting period have stressed the importance of partnerships for FAO to achieve its goals in the different sectors, in a more efficient, effective and sustainable manner. Most evaluations acknowledged that FAO had been fairly successful in developing partnerships at the global level, with CGIAR bodies, UN agencies in the case of gender, and international actors; however, they also encouraged FAO to set up broader global strategic alliances with UN agencies and other stakeholders in the evaluated sectors.

20. Major weaknesses, however, were noted at the country level where FAO's capacity (technical as well as resources) to establish and sustain effective partnerships was insufficient. Although the Organization was found to be a well-established partner of ministries of agriculture and other departments (or ministries) in the areas of its technical mandate, it had few working relationships with other institutional and non-governmental bodies. Furthermore, its collaboration with regional bodies, UN agencies and research institutions at the regional and national levels was unsystematic and occasional.

21. Overall, partnerships with NGOs were also limited: these were mostly through participation in the FAO technical committees, or through Implementing Partners (IP) arrangements at the country level. Through this modality, there was little investment in terms of a more equal engagement in partnership agreements or in terms of capacity development of the partners. A positive note was identified in the partnerships developed by FAO with NGOs in the context of humanitarian and disaster risk management, which were found to be more effective.

### **3.3 *Vision and strategies***

22. A common feature emerging from all major evaluations was the lack of corporate vision, strategies and plans of action in the different areas of work. Also, in most cases the work carried out had weak causality links with the results-based hierarchy as described in the Strategic Framework 2010-19.

23. Although FAO was still recognized by most stakeholders, including member countries and other institutions working in the same sectors, as a key player in their respective thematic areas, from a number of evaluations it emerged that FAO was not able to make the most of the range of expertise it has, in an interdisciplinary manner and tended to focus on narrowly defined areas of work, missing out on the opportunity to adopt more strategic, integrated and systemic approaches in its work. Gaps were noted in all sectors, which led to series of missed opportunities to make a difference in terms of innovative approaches and integration of technical and social development aspects. Further, the evaluations noted a strong risk of erosion of the Organization's capacity to provide high-level

technical and related policy support, in a focused and effective fashion, at different levels of action.

24. Thus, there was evidence that FAO should focus efforts in defining its strategies, maintaining, and enhancing in some cases, its technical capacity, while striving to deliver innovative interdisciplinary advice, possibly in partnership with its member countries and other stakeholders.

### **3.4 *Normative and knowledge products***

25. While producing some excellent normative and knowledge products across all thematic sectors evaluated, FAO also produced a significant number of publications of inadequate quality, which were not sufficiently planned in terms of outreach, utilization and usefulness. The evaluations recommended that FAO be more selective and give priority to quality over quantity in the planning and production of normative work, so as to improve its effectiveness, usefulness and impact at regional and country levels. Specific actions included focusing on better targeting of normative products to address key gaps in knowledge, combined with improved dissemination and follow-up activities to encourage greater adoption and adaptation to country contexts.

26. Also, weaknesses were identified by most evaluations in the way FAO made its normative and knowledge products available to potential users: most of the products were unknown and/or not easily accessible. FAO's increasing exclusive reliance on its Web site for dissemination, risks reducing access to normative products in countries with limited access to the Internet and use of documents in electronic format. Recommendations were formulated for more and better targeted diffusion of information.

27. Further, all evaluations encouraged FAO to dedicate more resources and efforts in order to ensure that the tools, guidelines and standards it generates are more effectively and broadly translated in good practices that are adopted and diffused.

### **3.5 *Capacity development***

28. While the evaluations found that FAO had considerable convening capacity at global and regional levels, thus contributing to fostering an enabling environment and providing fora for exchange amongst member countries, most capacity development focused on enhancing individual capacities, with little evidence on how this translated into institutional capacity development. Training activities were often documented but these were not sustained by adequate needs assessment, more systematic support of the institutional dimension or linked to the overall focus of national priorities. In many cases, there was little evidence of their sustainability and longer-term impact and they were not seen as fitting into and supporting longer-term strategies or vision.

### **3.6 *Effectiveness at country level***

29. FAO was still struggling to meet the demands and priorities of the countries in a systematic way. Project interventions were mainly opportunistic and based on availability of funding rather than matching country priorities to areas where FAO has a comparative

advantage. Some of the evaluations touched on the CPFs but there was little evidence yet of more comprehensive and integrated planning and programming at the country level.

30. One of the major causes identified was the lack of appropriate technical support at the national level, and weak access from the countries to technical officers at the subregional, regional and headquarters levels. Sectoral expertise was available mainly through extra-budgetary funding and it was difficult to ensure systematic and high-quality support on non-project related issues and key institutional activities at the national level. The country evaluations all evidenced that FAO had not sufficiently supported governments in developing sectoral and subsectoral strategies across the areas of FAO expertise.

31. Several evaluations noted the absence of *systematic monitoring and reporting at all levels* of FAO's work, aimed at learning lessons and integrating these into new initiatives. Poorly designed and implemented projects undermined effectiveness and sustainability across all areas of intervention. There was also weak capture of the impact of FAO's work in terms of monitoring systems that could report on outcomes and impacts on institutions and people's livelihoods.

#### **4 UN system collaboration in evaluation**

32. During the biennium, FAO has continued to participate actively in the United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG), in the Active Learning Network for Accountability and Performance in Humanitarian Action (ALNAP) with respect to humanitarian activities and in both the Steering Group and the management meetings of the Inter-Agency Standing Committee/Real-Time Evaluations groups.

33. In April 2012, FAO, IFAD and WFP hosted the annual meetings of the United Nations Evaluation Group and of the Network of Networks on Impact Evaluation (NONIE) at FAO headquarters. Four OED staff chaired or co-chaired various UNEG sessions.

34. Since 2011, OED staff has been co-chairing two task forces and participating in four additional ones: Human Rights and Gender Equality; Impact Evaluation; Joint Evaluations; Knowledge Management; Evaluation of Normative Work; and DAC/UNEG Joint Task Force on Professional Peer Review. All of them have made progress in their work plans, oriented to producing guidance documents on the various themes. OED members of the Human Rights and Gender Equality Task Force have been particularly active in the preparation of the analytical framework for the assessment of the evaluation function in the context of the UN system-wide action plan on gender equality and women's empowerment.

35. OED also continues to represent FAO as a full member in ALNAP. In 2011-12, the network made significant progress in each of the 12 work streams that contribute to the fulfilment of ALNAP's five-year strategy. As this is coming to an end in 2013, full members were involved in a review and discussion on future directions. OED assured FAO's active participation in the governance of the network and joined the newly established Evaluation Capacities Community of Practice. Internally in FAO, OED has sought the pro-active involvement of units in headquarters and field offices involved in humanitarian sector learning and practice.

36. In 2012, the IASC/Real-Time Evaluations Groups, considering the implications of the transformative agenda on systems for collective accountability, decided to reconsider the current framework for real-time evaluations and split the process into a first step consisting of a management-led real-time operational review (within 3 months of the crisis onset) and an independent evaluation following later (6 to 9 months after the response).

37. As required under the quality assurance provisions of the Charter for the FAO Office of Evaluation, a peer review of the evaluation function in FAO was carried out in 2012, under the auspices of the DAC/UNEG Joint Task Force on Professional Peer Reviews of the Evaluation Function in Multilateral Organizations. The review panel, which included membership from other UN agencies and bilateral organizations, found that compared with many other agencies in the UN system, FAO had a mature evaluation function with considerable experience. It concluded that significant progress had been made over the previous two years in implementing the evaluation-related IPA recommendations. The panel made recommendations aimed at enhancing the utility, credibility and independence of the evaluation function. The peer review and the management observations on it were discussed at the 112<sup>th</sup> Session of the Programme Committee in November 2012.<sup>2</sup>

38. Finally, collaboration has been enhanced particularly with the evaluation functions of the Rome-based agencies, namely WFP, IFAD and the newly-established Independent Evaluation Arrangement of the CGIAR. This was fostered through joint participation in events focusing on various aspects of evaluation methodology. Other noteworthy events included the participation of FAO evaluation staff on selection panels for two positions in IFAD and planning for a second joint evaluation with WFP in 2013, on the Joint FAO/WFP Food Security Cluster. The evaluation functions of the Rome-based agencies also agreed on a joint statement to enhance future collaboration. Aspects covered include sharing of work plans and other evaluation-related information, holding of learning events, peer review of terms of reference and reports and preparation of synthesis reports/meta-evaluations on topics of interest related to agriculture, food security and nutrition.

## **5 Evaluation programme of the Organization**

### ***5.1 Evaluations for consideration of the Governing Bodies***

39. The Office of Evaluation has completed and presented to the Council through the Programme Committee, during its 106<sup>th</sup> to 112<sup>th</sup> Sessions over the period March 2011-December 2012, the following evaluation and synthesis reports. All were presented with their respective management responses:

- a) Evaluation of FAO interventions funded by the Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF) (PC 106/4);<sup>3</sup>
- b) FAO's effectiveness at country level: a synthesis of evaluations in large, rapidly-developing countries (India and Brazil) (PC 106/6);

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<sup>2</sup> PC 112/6 and PC 112/6 Sup. 1

<sup>3</sup> The CERF evaluation report and the Synthesis of Brazil and India country evaluations, albeit prepared for the 106<sup>th</sup> Session of the Programme Committee, were discussed at its 107<sup>th</sup> Session in May 2011.

- c) Evaluation of FAO's role and work related to gender and development (PC 108/5);
- d) Evaluation of FAO's role and work in nutrition (PC 108/6);
- e) Evaluation of FAO's work in tenure, rights and access to land and other natural resources (PC 110/4);
- f) Evaluation of FAO's role and work in food and agriculture policy (PC 110/5);
- g) Evaluation of FAO's response to the July 2010 floods in Pakistan (PC 110/6);
- h) FAO's effectiveness at country level: A synthesis of evaluations in countries with major emergency and rehabilitation programmes (Ethiopia, Zimbabwe and Haiti) (PC 110/7);
- i) Strategic evaluation of FAO's role and work in forestry (PC 112/3); and
- j) Evaluation of FAO's support to the implementation of the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries (PC 112/4).

40. In addition, the Programme Committee also received the following follow-up reports during the same period:

- i. Follow-up to the Evaluation of FAO's work on international instruments (PC 108/8);
- ii. Follow-up to the Evaluation of FAO's role and work related to water (PC 110/8) and validation report;
- iii. Follow-up to the Strategic Evaluation of FAO country programming (PC 112/5);
- iv. Follow-up to the Evaluation of FAO's activities on capacity development in Africa (PC 112/INF/3) and validation report (PC 112/INF/3 Sup.1); and
- v. Evaluation of FAO's work in tenure, rights and access to land and other natural resources – update on implementation of recommendations (PC 112/INF/4).

## 5.2 *Country evaluations*

41. During the period January 2011 to December 2012, the Office of Evaluation completed five country evaluations, as follows:

- Ethiopia, January 2011;
- Brazil, February 2011;
- Zimbabwe, June 2011;
- Haiti, March 2012; and
- Sri Lanka, October 2012.

42. The findings from the first four country evaluations have been synthesized in reports already presented to the Programme Committee. As recommended by the Committee, the country evaluation focus in the period 2011-2013 was on middle-income countries, both upper-middle and lower-middle income: Sri Lanka was the first of these.

## 5.3 *Overview of major evaluations in the period 2010-2012*

43. A synoptic table of the major evaluations, and impact evaluations, completed by OED during the period 2010-2012 is contained in Table 1 below. This provides some information on the overall delivery of the Office of Evaluation over time, both in terms of number of evaluation carried out and some of their key features, e.g. source of funding and scope.

**Table 1. Major evaluations completed by OED in the period 2010- 2012**

| <b>Major evaluations completed by OED in the period 2010- 2012</b> |             |             |             |              |
|--|-------------|-------------|-------------|--------------|
|  | <b>2010</b> | <b>2011</b> | <b>2012</b> | <b>Total</b> |
| <i>Thematic and strategic evaluations</i>                          | 3           | 3           | 5           | 11           |
| <i>Major emergency operations evaluations</i>                      | 2           | 1           | 1           | 4            |
| <i>Country evaluations</i>   | 1           | 3           | 2           | 6            |
| <b>Total</b>   | <b>6</b>    | <b>7</b>    | <b>8</b>    | <b>21</b>    |
| <b>Sources of funding</b>  |             |             |             |              |
| <i>Regular Budget</i>  | 3           | 4           | 5           | 12           |
| <i>Voluntary funds - development</i>                               | 0           | 0           | 0           | 0            |
| <i>Voluntary funds - emergency</i>                                 | 3           | 3           | 3           | 9            |
| <b>Scope of evaluations*</b>                                       |             |             |             |              |
| <i>Normative work</i>  | 3           | 3           | 4           | 10           |
| <i>Field Programme</i>   | 3           | 2           | 4           | 9            |
| <i>Emergency operations</i>  | 1           | 1           | 4           | 6            |
| <i>Institutional performance</i>                                   | 2           | 1           | 1           | 4            |
| <i>All FAO's work at country level</i>                             | 1           | 3           | 2           | 6            |
| <b>Impact evaluations</b>  |             |             |             |              |
| <i>FAO emergency operations</i>                                    | 0           | 1           | 0           | 1            |
| <i>FAO technical work at country level</i>                         | 1           | 3           | 0           | 4            |
| <i>Project/programmes</i>  | 0           | 1           | 1           | 2            |
| <b>Total</b>   | <b>1</b>    | <b>5</b>    | <b>1</b>    | <b>7</b>     |

\* Each major evaluation can include in its scope more than one single area of analysis.

#### **5.4 Project evaluations**

44. During the period under reporting, OED backstopped and completed 68 project evaluations. It is worth noting that in 2012, OED achieved the highest number of projects evaluated since 2000. This was the result of a concerted effort to identify evaluation provisions in project documents and advocate with project managers about the added value of devoting resources to evaluation from the project budget.

45. More than half of the projects were evaluated at the end of their implementation: this was mostly due to the aforementioned identification process, which gave priority to projects approaching completion. However, mid-term evaluations are generally more useful for identifying and tackling weaknesses in project implementation. OED is also working to increase the number of such evaluations, so as to improve the effectiveness and usefulness of its work for the Organization.

46. In addition, OED has improved its role in the management and backstopping of project evaluations, by dedicating more efforts to the preparation of the terms of reference, the briefing and support to the evaluation teams and to the quality assurance of the reports. This should contribute to enhance the overall quality of the final report, the learning aspects of the evaluation and the ownership at corporate level.

47. Table 2 below provides synthetic quantitative information on project evaluations in the period 2010-2012.

**Table 2. Technical cooperation and emergency projects evaluations completed by OED in the period January 2010-December 2012**

| <b>Technical cooperation for development and emergency and rehabilitation projects evaluated</b> |             |             |             |              |
|--|-------------|-------------|-------------|--------------|
|  | <b>2010</b> | <b>2011</b> | <b>2012</b> | <b>Total</b> |
| <i>Technical cooperation for development</i>   | 15          | 21          | 30          | 66           |
| <i>Emergency and rehabilitation</i>  | 19          | 8           | 9           | 36           |
| <b>Total</b>   | <b>34</b>   | <b>29</b>   | <b>39</b>   | <b>102</b>   |
| <b>Sources of funding for project evaluations</b>  |             |             |             |              |
| <i>Project funds</i>   | 8           | 21          | 33          | 62           |
| <i>Emergency - rehabilitation trust fund</i>   | 19          | 7           | 6           | 32           |
| <i>Technical Cooperation trust fund</i>  | 0           | 0           | 0           | 0            |
| <i>Regular Programme</i>   | 7           | 1           | 0           | 8            |
| <b>Timing of evaluation for each project</b>   |             |             |             |              |
| <i>Mid-term evaluation</i>   | 9           | 9           | 11          | 29           |
| <i>Final evaluation</i>  | 24          | 20          | 26          | 70           |
| <i>Ex-post</i>   | 1           | 0           | 2           | 3            |

### 5.5 OED work plan for the period 2013-2014

48. At its 112<sup>th</sup> Session in November 2012, the Programme Committee approved the rolling work plan for the Office of Evaluation for the period 2013-2014. Highest priority was assigned to the completion and implementation of the following major evaluations:

- Evaluation of FAO's Regional and Subregional Offices for Africa (to be presented to the Programme Committee in October 2013);
- Evaluation of FAO's Regional and Subregional Offices for Asia and the Pacific (to be presented to the Programme Committee in May 2014);
- Evaluation of FAO's Regional and Subregional Offices for Latin America and the Caribbean (to be presented to the Programme Committee in May 2014);
- Sustainable intensification of crop production (to be presented to the Programme Committee in May 2014);<sup>4</sup>
- Evaluation of FAO's work in post-crisis transition (to be presented to the Programme Committee in 2014);
- FAO's work on climate change adaptation and mitigation (to be presented to the Programme Committee in 2015);
- FAO's role in the dissemination of knowledge on food, agriculture and natural resources (to be presented to the Programme Committee in 2015);
- FAO's work on genetic resources (to be presented to the Programme Committee in 2015); and

<sup>4</sup> This evaluation will include a focus on smallholder agriculture and biotechnologies, with a perspective of integrated crop management in order to capture water use.

- Joint FAO/WFP Evaluation of the joint food security cluster (to be presented to the Programme Committee in 2015).

49. Insofar as country evaluations are concerned, the Committee supported the Somalia country evaluation that will be presented to the Programme Committee in the form of a synthesis report, together with the country evaluation of FAO's programme in Afghanistan, in 2014.

50. OED will also complete the group of evaluations in middle-income countries. The evaluations in Armenia and Viet Nam are to be completed in 2013; an upper-middle income country in the Latin America and the Caribbean Region will also be selected, among those with already completed and endorsed country programming frameworks. The synthesis report on middle-income country evaluations will be presented to the Committee in 2014. Also in 2014, the Programme Committee will receive proposals for the future of country evaluations, taking into account experience gained thus far and the situation with respect to country programming frameworks and their implementation.

51. At the request of the Programme Committee, OED will prepare a synthesis report of all the evaluations of FAO's Regional and Subregional Offices, to be submitted to the Conference at its 39<sup>th</sup> Session in 2015.

## **6 Evaluation briefs: Major evaluations and synthesis reports**

- Evaluation of FAO interventions funded by the Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF);
- FAO's effectiveness at country level: A synthesis of evaluations in large, rapidly-developing countries (India and Brazil);
- Evaluation of FAO's role and work related to gender and development;
- Evaluation of FAO's role and work in nutrition;
- Evaluation of FAO's work in tenure, rights and access to land and other natural resources;
- Evaluation of FAO's role and work in food and agriculture policy;
- Evaluation of FAO's response to the July 2010 floods in Pakistan;
- FAO's effectiveness at country level: A synthesis of evaluations in countries with major emergency and rehabilitation programmes (Ethiopia, Zimbabwe and Haiti);
- Strategic Evaluation of FAO's role and work in forestry; and
- Evaluation of FAO's support to the implementation of the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries.

# OED Brief 26: FAO's interventions funded by the Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF)

FAO Office  
of Evaluation

PER 2013

## Inside this Brief

- 1 Background**
- 2 Key findings and Conclusions**
- 3 Recommendations**
- 4 Management Response**
- 5 Governing Bodies**

All FAO evaluations and management responses are public documents and can be found on:

<http://www.fao.org/evaluation/oed-home/en/>

## Background

Created in December 2005 and launched in March 2006, the Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF, or the Fund) was established to support more timely and reliable assistance to those affected by armed conflict and natural disasters, through a grant facility of up to USD 450 million per year and a loan facility of USD 50 million. FAO's share of the CERF allocations in 2009 was 12 percent of the total. Since FAO has had limited use of the loan facility, the evaluation focused on the grant component, which was further divided in two "windows": one for rapid response (RR), receiving two thirds of the grant, and another one for under-funded emergencies (UFE), covering the remaining third.

The evaluation of Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF) funded projects was undertaken in 2009-2010 to provide feedback and guidance to FAO management on operational processes, constraints and projects achievements so far, and to account for the use of CERF funds to the CERF Secretariat, the UN Emergency Relief Coordinator, donors, governments of countries affected by crises and other stakeholders. The evaluation was meant to be forward-looking and to contribute to improved relevance, efficiency and effectiveness of emergency activities carried out by FAO with CERF funding in the future. It was timed to serve as an input in the food security sector for the five-year global evaluation of the CERF, foreseen in 2010-2011.

## Key findings and conclusions

### Relevance

The evaluation concluded that FAO provides an important humanitarian contribution to communities affected by crises by supporting their self-reliance and local food availability through time-critical agricultural interventions. Its contribution to saving lives is often indirect, but squarely within the CERF criteria in this respect. According to the evaluation the CERF represented a key financial instrument for FAO because it provided early funding, allowing a response to the most pressing needs after a sudden-onset disaster or early enough during a slow-onset disaster to be effective.

***Needs assessment and priority setting***

All country case study reports concluded that the needs were correctly assessed and that CERF projects responded to these needs in a relevant manner. The CERF placed significant emphasis on multi-stakeholder needs assessments. Guidelines and policy documents described a transparent, inclusive and multi-sectoral process conducted by UN teams and governments and with the participation of NGOs.

***Efficiency and project design***

Although there had been improvements in procurement procedures, timeliness of response remained the main factor constraining the effectiveness of FAO emergency programmes. Efficient and timely execution of projects was found to be correlated with FAO emergency capacity, which is variable among countries. The evaluation found that in the case of CERF, the tendency toward small, rapidly designed projects following fairly standard, simple and technologically un-ambitious approaches was commendable and deserved to be re-enforced.

***Information systems and management***

FAO field staff lacked standard processes, tools and information systems to facilitate and document financial management, procurement, contracting and monitoring at the country level. While emergency procurement and contracting had been decentralized to the field, the corporate accounting, budgeting and management systems had not been adapted to local requirements. Management information systems did not permit a rapid and seamless flow of budgetary and implementation information from the field to headquarters. This hampered the capacity of headquarters to track project performance against benchmarks in real time.

***Partnerships***

The work of FAO in support of both development and disaster risk management over many years allowed the Organization to forge strong links with leading institutions in these areas. Such long-term investment and partnerships with stable organizations proved invaluable to implement short-term disaster prevention or response interventions, as and when the need arose. It was found that partnerships were generally strong, making effective use of the comparative advantages of non-governmental organizations, community-based organizations, governments and UN organizations. Efficient execution was strongly correlated with the capacity of Implementing Partners. Many of the partners stressed the importance of getting good technical support and capacity building from FAO rather than just funding. Long-term partnerships forged by FAO's development work over the past decades often proved very helpful when implementing short-term emergency interventions.

***Equity and targeting***

In most of the reviewed projects, clear beneficiary selection criteria were stated in programme documentation and contracts with IPs. However, these criteria were often adapted at field level to take into account the perspectives and recommendations of communities. Generally, these local modifications tended to weaken targeting criteria and broaden the set of eligible

beneficiaries. Given the short timeframe of CERF rapid response projects and the risk of bias in establishing distribution lists, the evaluation recognized the need for more general targeting guidelines focused on process, especially for easily shared items such as seed or fertilizer, leaving it up to capable NGOs and communities to transparently select broad groups of deserving households at the field level.

### ***Results***

Based on the evidence from the eight country case studies, the evaluation concluded that FAO used its CERF funding to provide an important humanitarian contribution to communities affected by crises through time-critical interventions geared to protect self-reliant livelihoods. Its contribution to saving lives was often indirect – the exception being zoonoses which impact directly on human health – yet fit within the CERF guidelines on how to interpret the life saving criteria.

### **Recommendations**

#### ***Needs assessment, priority setting and project design and quality assurance***

FAO should continue to mobilize knowledgeable specialists from governments, pre-existing development projects and NGOs to participate in needs assessments and should strive to participate in multi-stakeholder needs assessments. It should continue to support early warning systems and/or the collection of simple livelihoods profiles and agricultural calendars developed on the basis of farmers' own knowledge.

#### ***Efficiency and timeliness***

- The CERF Secretariat should consider seasonal delays in the approval of CERF projects;
- Programme staff need to be better aware of the typical delivery durations to expect from various procurement approaches and should start procurement and contracting as early as possible;
- FAO should develop a more precise knowledge of how cropping calendars change from one locality, elevation or agro-ecological zone to the next to allow field teams to better schedule delivery and provide farming inputs before rather than during the sowing season; and
- FAO development-oriented staff at the country level need to acquire “emergency expertise” through the provision of an ongoing and specific awareness raising and implementation training programme.

#### ***Partnership and coordination***

- FAO should continue to develop and maintain working relationships with governmental and non-governmental actors, with a preference for actors with a long-term commitment and good community links in the targeted areas;
- FAO should include core implementing partners in the scoping, design and specification of proposed interventions more than is currently the case;

- To equalize the relationship with implementing partners, the new FAO Manual Section 507 and new partnership instrument should be completed and made available to operational teams;
- FAO should systematically include the logos of its implementing partners in project completion reports; and
- Support from FAO to IPs in the form of technical assistance and training.

### ***Equity and targeting***

- In the immediate response to a disaster, and hence in most CERF rapid response projects, targeting for assets replacement projects should focus at the village level;
- FAO should delegate procurement of some items to the IPs or directly to the beneficiaries through a voucher and fair system; and
- FAO should always procure varieties/breeds/types that are the same as those currently used in the target areas and are familiar to beneficiaries.

### **Management response**

FAO management accepted or partially accepted all 18 recommendations (fully accepted 14, and partially accepted four) addressed to the Organization. Recommendations that were fully accepted included those on needs assessment and priority setting, efficiency and timeliness, and results. It partially accepted the recommendations in relation to partnership and coordination and those related to equity. In addition, the CERF Secretariat fully accepted two, partially accepted one and rejected one of the four recommendations directed at the CERF. FAO management stressed that the overall conclusion reinforced the FAO Strategic Framework, Strategic Objective I (SO-I) and its team towards: “Improved preparedness for, and effective response to, food and agricultural threats and emergencies”.

### **Governing Bodies**

The Programme Committee in its 107<sup>th</sup> Session noted that the evaluation was comprehensive and appreciated the good work done by FAO in emergencies. It recommended that the Secretariat further strengthen its partnerships and emphasized the principle of giving visibility to implementing partners in project completion reports; and that efforts be continued to ensure complementarity between emergency activities and development work at country-level. It requested that the Secretariat address concerns raised in the evaluation related to improving the capacity of country offices.

The Committee noted that the evaluation was timed to serve as an input in the food security sector for the five-year global evaluation of the Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF). The Committee requested a comprehensive review of recommendations made in other relevant evaluations to be used in the Secretariat’s follow-up report on the Evaluation of FAO’s Operational Capacity in Emergencies. It requested an analysis of relevant evaluation recommendations relating to the capacity of country offices to fulfil their mandate, for the Committee’s consideration.

# OED Brief 27: FAO's effectiveness at country level in large rapidly developing countries

FAO Office  
of Evaluation

PER 2013

## Background: A synthesis of evaluations in large, rapidly developing countries (India and Brazil)

### Inside this Brief

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- 2 Key findings and Conclusions**
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Since 2005 country evaluations have formed a part of the evaluation programme of FAO. In discussing country evaluations in May 2007, the Programme Committee *"emphasized the importance of the evaluation of FAO's effectiveness in individual countries and considered that future country evaluations should include in the sample some middle-income countries in addition to Less Developed Countries"*.

India was selected as the country that met established criteria including the contribution of agriculture to GDP, rural population, numbers of food insecure, Human Development Index and the number of projects due for evaluation. The "Evaluation of FAO's Cooperation with India 2003-2008" was carried out during 2008 and the report finalized in March 2009.

In April 2010, the Office of Evaluation proposed to the Programme Committee the evaluation of another similar large country, to complement the India analysis and better identify the role that FAO should play in comparable circumstances. The strategy was endorsed, Brazil was identified as the most appropriate comparison and the "Evaluation of FAO's Cooperation with Brazil 2002-2010" was conducted in the period May-December 2010 and the report finalized in February 2011.

## Key findings and conclusions

FAO technical areas of intervention in each country followed national priorities and focused on the sectors where the national government and its resource partners considered that the Organization had comparative advantage and could bring added value. The choice of actual sectors depended largely on national competence and capacity and on national perception of what was FAO's added value.

Key common elements were:

- the almost total absence of emergency interventions;
- because of bureaucratic procedures, missed opportunities to leverage the resources of the International Financing Institutions, who are among the few donors in countries like Brazil and India, and to bring the Organization's technical knowledge to bear into their initiatives;

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- the gradual phasing out of ‘food security’ projects in both countries: the focus in India was on policy and strategy development assistance at sectoral level and in Brazil on the interactions between agriculture, forest and natural resources management;
- a rapidly changing portfolio structure, due to different reasons, and the need to revise the model of FAO Representations in both countries, to meet the desire of both national governments that wanted to evolve their cooperation framework with FAO; in the case of Brazil, the government was already acting as a FAO resource partner; and
- similar challenges for developing and managing a FAO Country Programming Framework:
  - many different institutional partners, both governmental and non-governmental, with whom it is important to engage to capture the added value that these sectors can bring to the development process; and
  - size of the countries, their federal structure and the diversity in level of development across states meant that FAO should work beyond the federal level and support individual states in greatest need; for example, in India a number of states had been identified through the UNDAF for priority UN action.

The size and pattern of the FAO programme in Brazil and India differed widely. In Brazil, the FAO portfolio was largely funded with national resources through the Unilateral Trust Fund (UTF) modality; in India, the major source of funds was an external donor, the Netherlands.

Relevance, ownership and sustainability of UTF initiatives in Brazil were very high and this funding model had several advantages for the government. However, in FAO’s perspective the model presented potential risks in terms of image and adequate use of corporate resources; it also undermined the Organization’s effectiveness and comparative advantage because its role was mostly one of project management. In India, on the contrary, the model deserved more attention, to revamp cooperation with the government.

The Netherlands-funded projects managed through the ‘National Execution’ model (NEX) in India were an excellent opportunity for the Organization to test this approach. The experience confirmed that the following features should be embedded in the NEX model:

- the FAO technical contribution should be adequately funded in project formulation, monitoring and supervision as a key element of the agreement; and
- the agreement should be informed and underpinned by a vision of partnership and shared responsibility in management and implementation.

In the context of regional, interregional and global projects, FAO was appreciated for its role of steering agent and “honest broker” and in facilitating knowledge transfer from Brazil and India to other countries. National participants saw these projects as an effective approach to develop links between national institutions across neighbouring countries and elsewhere for the purpose of stimulating debate and the exchange of experiences. FAO was perceived as having a major key role in this process. Also, strong national technical competences facilitated the uptake of outputs or processes developed through this type of initiatives.

A noticeable weakness was the lack of engagement by FAO officers with the FAO Representations in the identification, development, implementation and follow-up of these

initiatives. This often had negative consequences on effectiveness, by undermining possible sharing and building of knowledge, coordination and synergy development by the FAO Representation within the country programme; it also discredited the Organization as a whole when the Representation did not know what other FAO units were doing in the country. Last, it appeared very important to identify a national institutional champion for any project, including regional ones.

In relation to gender equality in both countries, FAO's performance overall was satisfactory at best. In the majority of projects and initiatives, topics and overall thrust required that gender equality and/or attention to women's specific roles and activities be fully mainstreamed, but this was not the case in design or implementation. There were a few positive exceptions though, at project level in both countries.

Social inclusion fared better in project design and implementation: more project documents included marginal groups among intended beneficiaries and project activities, a first necessary step to ensuring that some attention would be paid to vulnerable people during implementation.

In relation to normative and knowledge products, both evaluations reached similar conclusions: in a world where FAO was no longer the only player on a number of themes, posting a document on a website was not enough for it to be used, and workshops and web pages were not a very effective way, on their own, of disseminating FAO's message, even in countries like Brazil and India. More proactive strategies for diffusion of information were necessary to attract the attention of potential users already overlaid with information, and to ensure that the information and knowledge that FAO produces is correctly targeted and presented in ways which are useful to and accessible by the end users, also language-wise.

## Recommendations

The synthesis report included five recommendations addressed to FAO.

**Recommendation 1** focused on FAO information systems and stemmed from the observation of the limited awareness, knowledge and therefore use of FAO's normative and knowledge products even in countries well equipped in terms of IT infrastructure as India and Brazil. It advised the Organization to widen the outreach of its products by more pro-active networking, establish repositories in the FAO Representations about all that FAO does in the country and develop country-based communication strategies.

**Recommendation 2** suggested promoting lessons learning and exchange among FAO Representations, on the experience of the CPF development in India.

**Recommendation 3** addressed the cooperation between FAO and International Financing Institutions, to improve cooperation and collaboration by developing joint protocols for project management.

**Recommendation 4** tackled the need for FAO to develop a standard model for the formulation, approval and monitoring of UTF projects and NEX agreements that would also clearly define FAO's roles and responsibilities and lines of accountability.

**Recommendation 5** focused on the need to fully involve FAO Representations in the design, formulation and implementation of regional, interregional and global projects, including the transfer to the country offices of adequate resources for their management at national level.

### **Management response and follow-up report**

The FAO management response stated positive appreciation of the synthesis report, which was found useful to understand some recent features of FAO's performance in the two countries and agreed with the assessment of FAO's comparative advantage in each country.

Management also recognized that FAO needed to be able to meet the different exigencies which stem from its multifaceted membership and that countries like Brazil and India, which were neither unique nor representative of the majority of its member countries, have different expectations and requirements in terms of support. Management fully accepted the five recommendations.

### **Governing Bodies**

The Programme Committee discussed the synthesis report at its 107<sup>th</sup> Special Session in May 2011. The Committee appreciated the synthesis report and welcomed management's positive response to the recommendations made. Some concerns were expressed about the feasibility of implementing the recommendation to develop with each International Financing Institution protocols that would cover all administrative and managerial issues raised.

The Committee's recommendations focused on the following aspects:

- that experience gained from country evaluations be used in enriching the scope, quality and modality of South-South cooperation;
- that knowledge sharing within and between countries be improved;
- that special attention be paid to the access and use of FAO's information products in all FAO languages and from different cultural environments; and
- the nature and content of synthesis reports of country evaluations.

# OED Brief 28: FAO's role and work related to Gender and Development

FAO Office  
of Evaluation

PER 2013

## Inside this Brief

- 1 Background**
- 2 Key findings and Conclusions**
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## Background

The Evaluation of FAO's role and work related to Gender and Development (GaD) was requested by the FAO Programme Committee in October 2008 to take place in 2010. In April 2010, the Committee requested OED to carry out the evaluation in parallel with the planned Gender Audit, managed by ESW.

The evaluation and the audit were coordinated and complementary, in so far as possible. The evaluation focused on the extent of integration of a gender perspective in FAO's work at all levels, whereas the audit focused on FAO's accountability mechanisms, staffing and procedures. The two exercises reinforced each other in terms of highlighting challenges, issues and a way forward, for improved integration of gender equality goals in corporate performance.

The evaluation was carried out during the period September 2010 to May 2011. The evaluation team, comprising eight independent consultants from four regions, and three OED staff members, visited 16 countries across Asia, Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean and Europe and Central Asia.

## Key findings and conclusions

### *Responsibilities, organization and budget*

The two GaD Plans of Action were not well 'internalized' by FAO despite efforts to prepare the second plan in an inclusive and participatory manner. This was partly due to their separation from the overall planning and budgeting process. In general, the plans left very little mark on the Organization, but the Gender, Equity and Rural Employment Division (ESW) could not be held solely responsible for this;

There was little concrete evidence that in the first year of its implementation, SO-K was a stronger driver for gender mainstreaming in FAO. Further, SO-K left open a gap in terms of corporate policy on gender mainstreaming and a related accountability mechanism.

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The Regular Programme resources allocated to GaD work had not increased yet with SO-K and remained in the order of 1 percent of the Organization's Net Appropriation; while improved knowledge of the planning system might facilitate the cross-allocation of resources in the Programme of Work and Budget 2012-13, in the absence of an accountability mechanism, incentives would still be weak.

### ***Work by ESW***

The Gender, Equity and Rural Employment Division (ESW) was found to have mixed performance over the period evaluated. This was partly due to a lack of resources, and partly to a lack of clear understanding within FAO and ESW itself of the role and mandate of the division. In general, the quality of the Global Public Goods (GPG) produced by ESW was high in terms of relevance and technical quality, but they did not have the desired impact. Evidence of positive results and impacts was found in projects like DIMITRA. The Socio-economic and Gender Analysis Programme (SEAGA) was further developed and disseminated, capacity development and technical advice were provided to member countries, and women in rural areas received direct and indirect support. Capacity development on gender for FAO staff was also carried out but often was not tailor-made to the needs of technical units.

### ***HIV and AIDS***

FAO's work on the relationship between agriculture and HIV and AIDS was granted limited resources and the evaluation negatively considered FAO's decision to phase out its work in this area. The most successful results were in the Junior Farmer Field and Life School projects. SEAGA tools related to HIV and AIDS were of very good quality although their use was limited.

### ***FAO's technical work***

FAO integrated gender concerns and included women in approximately 40 percent of its projects operational over the evaluation period; the extent of gender mainstreaming varied widely, but a Gender and Development approach was more frequently followed than a Women in Development approach; However, FAO should have integrated gender issues in approximately 75-80 percent of its projects.

Women tended to be treated as a homogenous group and targeted as recipients of inputs, and not as contributors, and many interventions result in improved incomes but not in socio-cultural or political empowerment.

Awareness about the importance of gender issues among FAO staff was usually good, but competence to integrate a gender perspective in projects and GPGs rather poor. Technical officers in headquarters and decentralized offices were on average less competent about gender than project staff in the countries. Gender skills were never among selection criteria for posts other than gender experts.

***Collaboration with UN agencies***

ESW is well appreciated at the global level but most of the work it carried out on gender with other UN agencies was unsupported by senior management and other units. At the national level, FAO was frequently absent from UN Country Teams (UNCT) and coordination mechanisms related to gender. Cooperation was most successful in the context of UN Joint Programmes (UNJP).

***Mechanisms for implementing GaD Plan of Action and SO-K***

The Organization did relatively little to deal with a major imbalance of male and female staff. In the absence of monitoring and accountability frameworks, the recommendations of the Project and Programme Review Committee were ignored in a number of cases. The Gender Focal Point network was found to be scarcely effective, due to a lack of accountability at the senior level and to limited qualifications of appointees to lead change in a male-dominated organization. FAO was not pro-active in proposing gender-sensitive approaches in its projects, even when governments and donors were committed to gender equality.

**Recommendations**

The evaluation formulated 17 recommendations.

***Corporate responsibility and culture***

FAO should re-state strongly at the most senior level its full commitment to gender equality and gender mainstreaming as a corporate responsibility and not of one division only. An accountability mechanism at senior level should be set up and Governing Bodies should regularly receive reports and recommend actions when compliance is not fully satisfactory. FAO should take steps to establish a corporate culture which encourages and supports gender equality in all aspects of the Organization.

***Policy for gender equality***

FAO should elaborate a corporate policy on gender equality to mainstream gender equality goals throughout the Organization and provide a path for the achievement of SO-K. The policy should contain a strategy and provision for action plans at the divisional level. It must go beyond perpetuating existing gender roles and improving livelihoods, to achieving empowerment and gender equality in decision making and access to and control over resources.

***Structure and staff***

FAO should integrate competence and skills on gender issues as a selection and appraisal criterion in all its recruitment and appraisal processes, for both staff and consultants. Each technical division should have in headquarters a senior staff member with social/gender expertise and able to allocate around 30 percent of time to these issues. Gender/social development posts should be restored in all Regional Offices. Staff competences at subregional

and country levels should also be ensured. A more equal gender balance for staff at all levels should be pursued.

### ***Gender, Equity and Rural Employment Division (ESW)***

The division should become the think-tank in FAO on social equality issues, including gender, being the LTU of projects with a strong focus on gender issues and continuing to develop normative products related to gender equality. ESW should facilitate gender mainstreaming in the rest of the Organization in an advisory role.

### ***Capacity development***

The Human Resources Management Division and ESW should develop templates for gender-awareness raising sessions for all FAO staff. Capacity development on GaD should be specific and focused on the needs of different units and divisions. All FAO capacity development programmes should integrate social inclusion and gender equality in their curricula. FAO should carry out capacity development on gender mainstreaming in member countries only when sufficient voluntary funds are made available.

### ***Technical work***

In all projects with an impact on people, FAO should carry out a social analysis at the design or inception stage, integrate social development and gender issues in project design and implementation and include a budget line for a gender specialist wherever possible. FAO must systematically include in its reporting systems sex-disaggregated information. All FAO publications and communication materials should ensure that they do not convey sexist messages. ESW and the Unit for Field Programme Coordination and Results-Based Monitoring should develop gender qualifiers for FAO projects and related guidelines for their use. FAO should maintain the commitment to work on HIV and AIDS in countries where the epidemic has an impact on rural population.

### ***Partnerships and alliances***

For project design and implementation, FAO should develop partnerships and alliances with organizations competent in gender and social development. FAO should participate in UNJPs supporting women's productive role in agriculture and should participate in the UNCT gender working groups. FAO should establish a corporate partnership with UN Women, based on respective comparative advantage in support to rural women, to further empowerment of rural women.

### **Management response**

FAO management welcomed the Evaluation of FAO's work on Gender and Development stressing that no similar evaluation had been undertaken in recent years. Management noted and welcomed that most of the findings, conclusions and recommendations of the Gender Evaluation reinforced the recommendations of the Gender Audit. Management fully accepted 16 of the 17 recommendations but rejected the one on renewed commitment to work on HIV

and AIDS as at that stage of the epidemic's evolution, prevention and mitigation work could be more effectively managed by better resourced sister agencies in the UN system.

### **Governing Bodies**

During its 108<sup>th</sup> Session in October 2011, the Programme Committee endorsed the implementation of the 16 recommendations of the evaluation accepted by management and requested that they be implemented as soon as possible, in addition to further supporting improved gender mainstreaming in the work of the Organization. .

The Council, during its 143<sup>rd</sup> Session held in November-December 2011, underlined the importance of incorporating gender into all aspects of FAO's work, taking account of the Gender Audit and the Evaluation of FAO's Role and Work related to Gender and Development. In particular, the Council: i) stressed the necessity of culture change in the Secretariat and political will of the Membership for effective mainstreaming of the gender dimension; ii) stressed that accountability was a key requirement and requested an Annual Report on Progress toward Gender Results; and iii) agreed that gender considerations should be an integral part of every evaluation. In line with the Gender Audit and the Evaluation of FAO's Role and Work related to Gender and Development, the Council confirmed that the adjustments to the Programme of Work and Budget 2012-13 incorporated an increase to the budgetary allocation for SO-K of USD 2.7 million, with an additional target of USD 2.5 million to be planned by all units.

# OED Brief 29: FAO's role and work in Nutrition

FAO Office  
of Evaluation

PER 2013

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## Background

Raising levels of nutrition and collecting, analysing and disseminating information on nutrition has always been a principal purpose and mandate of FAO. However, its place and role in the overall activities of the Organization have varied and in recent years been severely constrained by budget cuts. With ever increasing concerns about the fight against hunger and the rising prominence of the “double burden” of malnutrition in the international agenda, the evaluation was commissioned by the Programme Committee and accorded priority at its 103rd Session in April 2010. The evaluation encompassed all the work of FAO in nutrition since 2004 with the exclusion of work on Codex Alimentarius and food safety.

For the purpose of the analysis, FAO's work in nutrition was categorized as: (i) scientific advice including food composition and nutrient requirements; (ii) information, assessment, analysis and statistics; (iii) integration of nutrition into field programmes including nutrition education and community-based nutrition; (iv) policy assistance; and (v) normative work. This work was principally undertaken by the Nutrition and Consumer Protection Division (AGN) of the Agriculture and Consumer Protection Department (AG), which is the core unit responsible for nutrition; other departments are also involved to a lesser extent.

## Key findings and conclusions

The evaluation found that there was very little coordination across technical areas in relation to nutrition. This reflects the lack of vision FAO had for its role in nutrition and diminishes the contribution nutrition should be playing across the Organization. It found that FAO lacks leadership on nutrition within senior management and has no clear direction at this level despite the efforts of the nutrition team to identify FAO's comparative advantage and articulate priority issues.

Generating accurate and reliable information and analysis on **food composition** and nutrient and dietary intake provide the essential coordinates for food and nutrition security assessments and critically informs FAO's *indicator of undernourishment* applied globally.

All FAO evaluations and management responses are public documents and can be found on:

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FAO is considered to be uniquely placed to collect and disseminate agriculture, **food and nutrition statistics and information** as a public good. Central to this is monitoring global progress towards reducing hunger by assessing the prevalence of under-nourishment, the indicator for which has limitations. A key concern was that FAO did not have the resources to build sufficient national capacity. Confidence in FAO's stature as a "reliable source of unbiased data" cannot be sustained without developing this. FAO's support to information systems on food and nutrition security (ISFNS) is considered very relevant, but the focus is still more on collecting information on food availability and access than on nutrition information.

Building evidence of the **link between agriculture and nutrition** requires indicators that directly measure food consumption and dietary diversity. FAO has relatively low-tech and easily understood tools to assess the impact of interventions on diet nutritional quality. However, few assessments supported by FAO, which are widely acknowledged for their reliability and neutrality, take into account nutrition considerations. This is a major shortcoming in developing a better understanding of how agriculture and food-based approaches can better nutrition.

Providing technical assistance on **policy**, principally within agriculture and food security, is central to FAO's work. Many stakeholders recognized that FAO has the capacity to bring together key players across sectors. FAO's **advocacy** work on the *Right to Food* and on technical assistance in support of policies and legislation has been effective across Latin America and the Caribbean. Elsewhere, FAO's advocacy work through regional networks has been much less influential. In some countries, an "inclusive" approach to policy assistance was adopted, which has made the work considerably more influential and effective. In other instances the "turf wars" have been very detrimental.

A substantial quantity of **normative products** has been generated. Only a few common central themes emerge and it is not clear how these are prioritized. Most of the products are geared towards readership by government staff, yet are not demand-driven. Some excellent handbooks and guidelines were developed for practitioners based upon field experience; these are much appreciated by those few who have seen them. Few normative products provide sufficient, clear evidence of how agricultural investments and practices can contribute to improved nutrition at household level.

FAO's nutrition-related work is very effective at including the participation of women at grassroots level, but a common feature is that it is not based on any **gender** analysis, therefore gender issues are not sufficiently factored into the project design and project implementation. The gender concept was commonly misunderstood or misconceived by project staff. Many nutrition training activities (for example) were actually reinforcing the reproductive roles of women and failing to pay sufficient attention to the gender distribution of tasks/time at the household level.

**Partnerships:** A distinct comparative advantage of FAO is a long relationship with member countries, normally through ministries of agriculture, which offers an effective channel through which to raise and focus on nutrition concerns. The tendency at field level though has been to factor FAO in through an implementation function, rather than assuming more of a "stewardship" role which would reflect its comparative advantage. There are few examples of

FAO working strategically with other UN partners or research organizations, nor have effective partnerships with non-governmental organizations been developed.

**Institutional arrangements:** AGN has very limited capacity and leadership to deliver on a wide range of responsibilities. It does not represent a strong and coherent focal point for nutrition despite the efforts of some very committed staff. There are many strategic initiatives within FAO where AGN should be raising nutrition concerns, but is not sufficiently engaged to capitalize on these opportunities. Furthermore, while recognizing the intrinsic links between food safety and nutrition, the evaluation found that the cohabitation of Codex, food safety and nutrition did not translate into stronger linkages and a coherent entity.

## Recommendations

**Corporate position:** Senior management in FAO has to commit to a strong focus on nutrition across the Organization requisite to its mandate. This commitment should be “championed” by the Deputy Director-General Knowledge (DDK). A vision and strategy for FAO’s contribution to *nutrition-sensitive* agricultural development should now be developed reflecting FAO’s commitment to address both under-nutrition and over-nutrition. Within this, the identification of focal countries was advocated where FAO has the capacity to deliver interventions and there is a country-led commitment to address malnutrition.

FAO’s work should be less focused on delivering nutrition-specific activities at the community level and more orientated towards providing “**stewardship**” and a normative function to inform, guide and establish norms and standards for governments and development partners to deliver on and achieve improved nutrition outcomes. To this end, FAO should build evidence and link food and agriculture to nutrition outcomes and strengthen nutrition analysis in statistics and information. In focal countries, the Country Programming Framework (CPF) should be developed around stated nutrition objectives and nutrition mainstreamed into agriculture and food security projects, and how gender and social inclusion issues are taken into account should be clearly articulated.

FAO should build capacity at regional and subregional levels and encourage collaboration to collect and analyse **food composition** data that is demanded by end-users for ensuring the nutrition sensitivity of policies and programme interventions. FAO should support an international repository of the data, and provide quality control, which should be readily accessible to all potential users.

Nutrition should be mainstreamed into the **Strategic Framework** and planning and programming documents through systematically identifying specific joint unit results linking nutrition with other areas of work of the Organization.

**Institutional arrangements:** The “nutrition” element of the Nutrition and Consumer Protection Division should disengage from Food Safety and Codex. The new entity should operate as a “service provider” offering technical assistance and normative guidance to other divisions. A move back to the Economic and Social Development Department would empower and strengthen links with information, assessments, statistics, policy and gender. The technical composition of the nutrition team is to be determined according to the priorities of the vision

and strategy. It should be headed by a strong, internationally recognized director. Nutrition officer posts (separate from Food Safety) should be established in regions and sub-regions where there are nutrition *focal countries*, to which they would provide technical backstopping. Due to scarce resources, nutrition officers at the country level should be resourced through extra-budgetary support.

FAO needs to realign existing collaborative arrangements and develop strong multi-sectoral **partnerships**. It should maintain its close collaboration with WHO while phasing out its leadership role on expert consultations concerning nutrition requirements. It should develop other strategic alliances to deliver more effectively on nutrition outcomes especially in the area of policy assistance. It needs to build on its comparative advantage of working in collaboration with governments and use the opportunity to promote and harness a multi-sectoral approach and platform for *nutrition-sensitive development* in *focal countries*. FAO should be constructively engaged in nutrition-related networks at all levels and its visibility raised.

### **Management response**

FAO management welcomed the Evaluation of FAO's Role and Work in Nutrition and was pleased that the recommendations rightly emphasize the central role of nutrition in FAO's mandate. Management endorsed the call for the development of a corporate vision and strategy for nutrition work in FAO as very timely for re-establishing FAO's global leadership role for improving nutrition from a food and agriculture perspective. Of the 14 recommendations, nine were accepted, one partially accepted and four, in particular on institutional arrangements, were deferred for further review.

### **Governing Bodies**

The Programme Committee appreciated the evaluation and its methodology and found that the recommendations were founded on a sound evidence base. It expressed concern about the truly dissatisfying findings and saw an urgent need for action. The Committee requested more detailed information on financial implications and prioritization. It reiterated that nutrition was both an important cross-cutting issue requiring mainstreaming, as well as a strong hub to ensure visibility and leadership of FAO in the field of nutrition.

With regard to the recommendations, both the Programme Committee and the Council endorsed the development of a strategy and vision for FAO in nutrition, adding that partnership, coordination and the consultation of member countries were important, and commended the approach taken by management in forming an interdivisional steering committee. The Committee urged management to proceed quickly and requested to review the strategy and vision at its May 2012 session in order to enable FAO to take on a strategic role in nutrition. It asked that the documents provided include an assessment of FAO's work on nutritional outcomes, food balance sheets, as well as specific timelines for the implementation phase. It accepted the recommendation to focus on stewardship and normative work based on a firm footing in operational work, and reiterated the important link between gender and nutrition.

# OED Brief 30: FAO's role and work on tenure, rights and access to land and other natural resources

FAO Office  
of Evaluation

PER 2013

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## Background

The FAO Programme Committee at its 103rd Session (September 2009) requested the Office of Evaluation to conduct an evaluation of FAO's work on land tenure and access to land. The evaluation's scope was expanded to reflect the strong linkages between tenure, rights and access ('TRA') issues, and the broader focus of recent FAO work in land tenure and water rights, which also included tenure of other natural resources (e.g. forestry, livestock and fisheries). TRA encompasses the technical aspects of land administration; advice to states on the strengthening of customary land rights and the tenure of vulnerable groups; and assisting states with the more political aspects of water rights, forest tenure reform, access rights in fisheries, land use conflicts and control of illegal forest and fishing activities that directly affect the effective economic access to resources by legitimate rights holders, men and women. The evaluation covers the period from 2006 to 2010.

## Key findings and conclusions

The evaluation found that while FAO's institutional arrangements reflected the diverse nature of TRA issues, there was a lack of coordination and convergence between the various groups dealing with these issues and no real incentives to change the situation. The evaluation concluded that in its work on TRA, FAO should better use its comparative advantage, i.e. integrate its expertise and knowledge related to food security and agricultural development for poverty alleviation.

### **Land-related TRA work**

**Normative work:** Overall, the programme of normative work of the Land Tenure Team (LTT) was found to have been effective, efficient and relevant, reflecting the high level of professional competence and wide experience of its team members.

In the review period, the number of publications on FAO's Land Tenure web pages increased in quantity and in quality; linkages between the normative and field operations were also improved. Land tenure publications, the website as well as training activities on TRA were found to be relevant and useful; although it was noted that awareness of normative products could be improved.

All FAO evaluations and management responses are public documents and can be found on:

<http://www.fao.org/evaluation/oed-home/en/>

**Land tenure field programme:** The field programme was found to be overall relevant to the countries involved and effective in achieving planned outputs. No conclusive evidence was found however on the sustainability and impact of these outputs.

**FAO-World Bank Cooperative Programme (CP) in land tenure:** Some 40 percent of the projects undertaken in the review period were for the World Bank, originating from the Investment Centre's Cooperative Programme. The programme scored highly in terms of service delivery and the contribution made by FAO. However, the evaluation highlighted concerns about over-concentration of FAO's work in Eastern Europe and Central Asia, which led to an imbalance in the overall project portfolio of the Land Tenure Team and a shortage of land tenure advisors with experience in other regions and technical areas.

### ***Cross-cutting TRA themes***

**Gender and post-emergency support:** It was found that gender insights had been well-integrated into TRA work, due to both strong TRA capacity in FAO's unit working on gender mainstreaming and the inclusion of gender-sensitive expertise in technical groups working on TRA. On TRA assistance in post-emergency contexts, FAO's performance was found to be mixed, and dependent largely on the flexible availability of land tenure staff.

**Voluntary Guidelines for the Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land, Fisheries and Forests in the Context of National Food Security (the VGs):** The evaluation found the draft VGs to be comprehensive in the coverage of the essential policy principles. The consultation process succeeded in sufficiently accommodating the views of fisheries and forestry departments, which contributed to the credibility of the VGs. While it was premature to judge whether the investment in the VGs was worthwhile, the process provided an opportunity for FAO to interact with member countries, civil society groups and private sector actors on a variety of critical issues and raise the profile of tenure issues.

**Large-scale Land Acquisition (LSLA):** The evaluation found that FAO has responsibly engaged in the 'land grabbing' debate, fully aware of the sensitivities among member countries, Multilateral Financial Institutions, major corporations and international NGOs. FAO had commissioned relevant and timely research and made the results freely available on its website. However, the evaluation also found that the Organization has rarely been able to provide adequate advice to individual member countries on LSLA, due to the lack of resources and information on the topic at country level.

### ***TRA activity in forestry, fisheries and water***

Different units within FAO have worked together on TRA challenges; however, there is space for greater collaboration for which dedicated funding is needed. FAO has been short of funds for TRA activity related to 'other natural resources'. During the review period, around USD 1 million of extra-budgetary funding was devoted to normative TRA activities for water, forests and fisheries. Given the scarcity of funds, the normative TRA work accomplished is significant and of good quality and reflects the understanding of the importance of TRA issues across FAO sectors.

## Recommendations

***The evaluation proposed that: FAO carry out an assessment of its strategic options for strengthening its TRA work in relation to achieving the basic goals of FAO and its members.*** It recommended that FAO develop a corporate strategic plan for TRA work, to capitalize on many of the potential synergies that exist for TRA activity.

***Publicize more widely the outputs of its normative work:*** More attention should be given to tailoring the pages of the global land tenure website to the needs of particular actors, subregions and language groups. Access via the FAO website to the various TRA-related pages could be more closely integrated and made more user-friendly.

***Undertake more systematic monitoring and evaluation of project performance:*** In the great majority of field projects reviewed, the evaluation was unable to reach conclusions about project impact due to the absence of quantitative approaches involving the use of baseline and follow-up surveys.

***Devise ways to develop a more balanced programme of support to member countries in the area of land tenure:*** During the period under review, FAO has been increasingly focused on providing technical services to land tenure initiatives of International Financing Institutions through the CP. It is recommended that FAO, in coordination with funding partners and anchored on its own strategic plan, devise ways to develop a more balanced and proactive programme in land tenure that gives higher priority to the needs of poorer countries.

***Provide headquarters, regional, subregional and country level staff with training and learning resources on tenure, rights and access issues:*** As part of the development of an FAO TRA strategic plan, the evaluation team recommended the organization of workshops/seminars and the development of learning materials for FAO staff including in Regional, Subregional and Country Offices to train them on the policy principles behind the TRA strategy and relevant regional/country elements (such as TRA issues in disaster risk management, large-scale land acquisitions, etc.).

***Provide dedicated cover for TRA support for emergencies:*** Over the evaluation period, there has been an ongoing and as yet unresolved discussion between the Emergency and Rehabilitation Division and the LTT on how best to provide staff cover for advice and assistance on TRA issues that arise in the course of emergencies. The evaluation team recommended that at least one full-time post be set aside in the LTT for this purpose.

***FAO should be pro-active in pursuing TRA issues that are of concern to the Organization in the context of moving towards its Members' fundamental goals:*** The guidance documentation being prepared to support the implementation of the Voluntary Guidelines should not be constrained by the consensus nature of the VGs, but represent a clear FAO position on these issues. Guidance should be sector-specific, dealing not only with land governance but forestry, fisheries and water governance as well, within a corporate strategic plan.

***Strengthen FAO's role in providing advice and guidance on large-scale land acquisitions by foreign investors:*** The evaluation concurred with the recommendation of the High-Level Panel of Experts on Food Security report that the role of FAO in this area should be to provide sound counsel to governments and development agencies on how to manage this process, and monitor the situation closely. The evaluation recommended that FAO explore the opportunities to take advantage of potential synergies between its work on LSLAs and deforestation through UN-REDD.

### **Management response**

Management found that the evaluation report was well balanced, appreciated the methodology utilized and found the recommendations to be useful and forward-looking. Management fully accepted the recommendations and observed that the anticipated endorsement of the Voluntary Guidelines by the CFS in May 2012 was expected to lead to a rapid increase in demand for FAO services in this area and that these guidelines were foreseen to provide the framework for planning work on tenure within FAO's strategic planning exercise.

### **Governing Bodies**

The Programme Committee appreciated the quality, timeliness and relevance of the evaluation and the management response. It agreed with the evaluation's recommendations, and welcomed the fact that management had accepted all of them. It highlighted the need for work at the global level (which needs a critical mass at headquarters) to continue, and exhorted renewed effort in order to enhance delivery and impact at the country level. The Committee underlined the importance of a clear vision and coherent strategy, duly aligned to the evolving strategic direction of the Organization, for implementation of work in TRA and underlined the need for a robust monitoring, evaluation and accountability framework. It recognized the importance of FAO's role as a neutral actor in the global TRA architecture as a comparative advantage for the Organization. It also noted the shortcomings relating to knowledge transfer and capacity building, and FAO's role and work on policy at the country level. It underlined the need for increased partnerships with other UN agencies, civil societies and the private sector as well as the need for prioritization.

# OED Brief 31: FAO's role and work in Food and Agriculture Policy

FAO Office  
of Evaluation

PER 2013

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## Background

FAO is mandated at the global level to provide an authoritative, objective, scientific and politically neutral international platform where the issues of hunger, malnutrition, poverty and environmental degradation (including climate change) can be examined and decisions taken for collective action. Policy was one of the eight “core functions” that FAO identified as crosscutting approaches that underpin its work in achieving the objectives in its Strategic Framework 2010-19.

The main purpose of the evaluation was to assess the capacity, role and comparative advantage of FAO in providing policy support to the global community in the areas of its mandate. It sought to evaluate the extent to which FAO had addressed Core Function D and policy-related elements in the other core functions in its work at global, regional and national levels, and consider the relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, sustainability and impact of FAO’s policy work in the period since a previous Evaluation of Policy Assistance undertaken in 2001. It assessed FAO’s internal structure and mechanisms for carrying out its policy functions and its mechanisms for communicating policy outputs, both internally and externally.

## Key findings and conclusions

### *FAO’s global policy work*

The evaluation found that FAO has delivered well in the global policy domain. Specific achievements noted by the evaluation included FAO’s regular flagship publications: State of Food and Agriculture (SOFA) and the State of Food Insecurity in the World (SOFI). Notable achievements in sub-sectoral policy included such global instruments as the Voluntary Guidelines on Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land and other Natural Resources, the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources and the effective servicing of the revitalized Committee on World Food Security (CFS).

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The evaluation concluded that FAO has been able to conduct globally relevant policy work on important agricultural policy issues including the food price crisis, climate change, payment for environmental services and seed systems. The Trade and Marketing Division provides highly relevant policy research and analysis on agricultural commodities as well as the agricultural dimension of international trade, with a particular focus on the WTO negotiations. In particular, FAO's role in bringing developing-country issues to the fore in the global discourse was found to be greatly appreciated by member countries.

FAO has taken leadership in global policy debates including through its "climate-smart agriculture" approach in climate negotiations, trade policy analysis on WTO negotiations, and the work on price volatility for the recent G20 debates. In line with the earlier policy evaluation, this evaluation also concluded that the quality of FAO's policy research and analysis compared favourably to that of other international organizations with similar mandates.

FAO technical departments in Agriculture, Fisheries, Forestry and Natural Resources and the Legal Office also conduct important global policy work, such as support to FAO's respective committees and the promotion, monitoring and implementation of global instruments, including the Voluntary Guidelines on Tenure and the Code of Conduct on Sustainable Fisheries. They also link with other UN organizations and with other global standard-setting bodies, such as the World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE). One of FAO's important and successfully implemented global policy initiatives has been the standard-setting work through the Codex Alimentarius -- a joint undertaking with the World Health Organization (WHO). The team noted, however, that FAO has been less successful in taking on a global leadership role on the question of malnutrition, even though this topic is also squarely within FAO's mandate.

The evaluation noted that to maintain FAO's strong reputation for its flagship reports, the new flagships, even if they are not "officially designated flagships," should be subject to the same rigorous standards as the SOFA, including external peer review, as well as internal review across divisions and departments.

### ***Policy work at country level***

The findings at country level indicated that FAO is better suited than any other organization to help developing countries identify, adopt and implement the policies that address hunger, poverty and sustainability. This was due to the trust, access and ownership developing countries have in FAO, as well as its extensive presence and the comprehensive technical knowledge which allows it to play the role of a global knowledge broker.

However, the evaluation found that despite its close relations with governments, FAO does not play a leading role in policy support at the country level. There is insufficient backstopping provided to FAO Representatives in countries to enable them to engage in high-quality policy dialogue. Policy work carried out by consultants was of uneven quality. There was no systematic "policy intelligence" that country teams could rely on and donors were critical of FAO's willingness to engage in policy dialogue. Lack of organizational accountability and incentives to deliver policy advice at the country level were found to be the major problems, and these were linked to the nature of policy work undertaken. The team found it was difficult to draw a causal line from FAO policy assistance to concrete policy changes at the country

level, a situation surely aggravated by the limited incentives of governments to create accountability. Lack of provisions for quality control and accountability in the decentralization of policy support led to the 'capture' of policy officers in decentralized offices, seen as generalists and too often used for non-policy work, including managerial-administrative work, sometimes becoming virtual assistants of regional/subregional coordinators.

## Recommendations

### *Strategic focus*

**The evaluation recommended that FAO should protect the excellent policy work conducted at the global level; while at the same time setting clear priorities for its role in country-level policy assistance.** It suggested focusing on countries that need FAO policy assistance most as well as activities that have the highest impact on food-insecure people, taking FAO's capacity to deliver into account.

**A detailed vision and strategic approach,** which is based on a thorough analysis of FAO's comparative advantage as a global organization as well as its mandate should be prepared to **guide FAO's priority-setting and strategic management of policy assistance.**

**FAO can and should play a leading role in changing the way that policy formulation support is provided** through a better analytical basis and a more strategic and participatory facilitation, ongoing engagement of its consultants and staff, aiming at greater country ownership and sustainability.

### *Strengthening policy work at country level*

**FAO needs to strengthen the accountability for the performance and impact of its country-level policy assistance.** Suggested measures included: creating a Policy Intelligence and Preparedness (PIP) system at the country level; defining country-specific impact pathways and results for policy assistance; strengthening the accountability for policy assistance impact through incentives and performance management involving the Regional Conferences and FAO Representatives; and developing a system to monitor the impact of policy assistance at country level.

### *Institutional change*

**FAO needs to address the horizontal and vertical fragmentation of policy work in its institutional structure.** The evaluation suggested that the Policy Assistance and Food Security Support Services (TCSP and TCSF) partly be shifted to the ES Department, and partly to decentralized offices. To support the policy assistance work at the country level, FAO should experiment with the creation of formal **Functional Technical Networks (FTNs) or alternative informal structures** that focus on policy advice in subregions and/or in selected high-priority countries. **Policy staff in headquarters should give a share of their time to country policy assistance activities focusing on a set of countries.**

**FAO should create an “impact assessment culture”** with particular emphasis on country-level policy work and require all units doing policy work to document evidence trails for impact assessment. **OED should incorporate into its Regular Programme at least three policy impact assessments per year**, focusing on case studies judged to have the best prospects for institutional learning and accountability.

**FAO managers of policy work should consider the analytical capabilities of their staff to identify gaps in skills and training opportunities that would be relevant in dealing more adequately with uncertainty in policy analysis and investment planning.**

**FAO should improve its communication of policy work.** At the same time, FAO needs to invest in fostering uptake, e.g. in the capacity, especially of national-level policy actors, to demand, access and use the policy material that is made available through websites. FAO should also consolidate its various efforts to provide tools for policy monitoring by using one common platform.

**FAO should focus its technical work on addressing more systematically the enabling environment of policies, institutions and legislation** that is essential for the uptake of technical solutions. Strengthen the capability of technical units to **provide countries with alternative options** that are assessed from economic, social and environmental perspectives rather than pushing “one-size-fits-all” solutions.

## **Management response**

Management accepted all of the recommendations and suggested focusing on six areas: promotion of an impact culture; synchronization of reform processes; institutional capacity and continuity; shift from technical assistance to strategic policy level; accountability; and performance systems for impact assessment. It agreed that that the decentralization should be guided by clear criteria and pointed out that, in implementing the recommendation to re-organize divisions working on policy support, the critical mass criterion should be based on a functional analysis of all potentially affected posts of the concerned divisions.

## **Governing Bodies**

The Programme Committee appreciated the evaluation and the methodology used and welcomed the positive management response. It highlighted that policy work is one of the most important core functions of FAO, and the requirement for the Organization to ensure its human resources competencies and recruitments are aligned with this core function; and the importance of preserving capacities, in particular at headquarters for the excellent, objective and recognized policy work of FAO at the global level.

It endorsed the implementation of the evaluation recommendations, while highlighting the need to increase efforts and activities at the country level, and stressing the need for creating an impact assessment culture, while taking into account the decentralization model – in particular the relationship between headquarters and decentralized offices – in country work. The Committee requested that the future focus of the Organization's work in policy, as well as implementation of the recommendations of the evaluation, be integrated into the evolving

corporate strategic direction, as embodied in the reviewed Strategic Framework 2010-19, the Medium Term Plan 2014-17 and the Country Programming Frameworks. It emphasized that progress reports on implementation of the recommendations should focus on benefits and impact and stressed that policy work must be integrated across geographical and sectoral areas, in order to provide appropriate support to decentralized offices. The need for FAO to widen its partnership with line ministries in individual countries, and to generally strengthen the fostering of partnership was noted.

# OED Brief 32: FAO's response to the 2010 floods in Pakistan

FAO Office  
of Evaluation

PER 2013

## Inside this Brief

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## Background

In July 2010, torrential monsoon rains caused devastating flash floods in mountainous northern Pakistan. The impact of the floods was overwhelming. Although civilian casualties were comparatively low for a disaster of this intensity, the threat of widespread long-term dependency on food aid, and the likelihood of distress selling of the surviving farm animals were extreme.

The evaluation assessed FAO performance in response to the floods in Pakistan, one of FAO's largest disaster responses ever. FAO provided crop recovery support to over 600,000 households, and livestock support to nearly 300,000 households. A further 1,000 damaged irrigation schemes were identified and rehabilitation undertaken using a cash-for-work modality. The total programme delivery in the 12-month period following the floods is estimated at approximately USD 100 million. FAO also provided agricultural advice to the Pakistani Government as well as co-chairing the agriculture cluster (now the agricultural and food security sectoral working group), throughout all the affected provinces and at a national level.

The overall goal was "the early recovery of agriculture based livelihoods and food security of vulnerable households" through restoring agriculture and livestock production as soon as possible so as to return the affected communities to their normal daily activities.

## Key findings and conclusions

Given the extensive damage to the agriculture sector, there was clearly a need to reinvigorate household farming and livestock activities. The evaluation found the relevance of the programme design unquestionable: good quality wheat seeds matched with the necessary fertilizer were clearly appropriate inputs needed to quickly organize the Rabi crop planting. Sunflower seed cultivation was needed to provide a quick cash replacement to lost Rabi crop income in Sindh Province, kitchen gardens had the potential to provide additional nutritional benefit to households, and irrigation rehabilitation through cash for work was designed to provide not only a much needed cash injection, but also to increase access to a water supply previously unavailable in some areas. The provision of compound animal feed was also an urgent but time-bound need.

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Through the timely provision of high-quality seeds and fertilizer, together with the improvements to the irrigation system, FAO's response was proved to have clearly contributed towards the restoration and revitalization of agriculture and livestock production within the affected communities. However, the effectiveness of the response was diminished by delays on the irrigation and livestock components of the response and failure to properly target the beneficiaries most in need.

The evaluation also found that there has been a missed opportunity in terms of **capacity building of communities**, in that training was too short, taking place at the same time as the distribution of inputs, and not well targeted. The evaluation noted that the continuing impact of the intervention on the livelihoods of the beneficiaries could have been improved if a more **participatory community based approach** had been undertaken, building the capacities of individuals through farmer field schools and interactive learning activities. In addition, the evaluation suggested that FAO needs to investigate and increase its own capacity in "modern" methodologies of supporting communities beyond the distribution of agricultural inputs to increase resilience.

Integration of the flood response activities with ongoing FAO development activities was inadequate. An opportunity exists to develop a country programme framework that not only prioritizes emergency preparedness and response, but which can contribute to tackling the underlying causes of vulnerability to recurrent hazards.

### ***FAO in a humanitarian environment***

In a competitive humanitarian environment, it was difficult at times to determine FAO's comparative advantages and added value. The unavoidable use of implementing partners in large disasters, plus its relatively high administrative costs, can make FAO seem expensive in the eyes of resource partners. FAO's timely and large-scale response to the floods in Pakistan and effective role in coordination went some way to counteract this impression. Overall, FAO's interventions were considered successful amongst the donor community.

The evaluation concluded that FAO needs to accentuate its comparative advantage in the eyes of the donors, and to promote its mandate to support agricultural development, its technical expertise, its community capacity building capabilities, and its relationship with the government, gained over years of providing agricultural advice, and coordinating and liaising with international partners on their behalf.

### ***Coordination***

The support FAO provided to the overall coordination of the agriculture recovery response, both as co-chair of the agriculture cluster, and subsequently, the agriculture and food security sectoral working group was found to be well managed and much needed, given the large number of actors intervening in the agriculture sector response. FAO, through the cluster/working group had been active in organizing assessments, providing technical guidelines and support and had contributed to reducing gaps and duplication.

### **Gender**

The mission found a gender perspective missing in the design of FAO's own interventions. The response failed to sufficiently integrate gender issues within the response. Few female headed households were identified and supported, and the kitchen garden initiative, although useful in terms of nutritional supplement to families, benefited neither gender in particular. There were too few female staff within the FAO structure, both at a senior level, and within the monitoring and programme staff. This reduced access to women and the integration of their insights and feedback.

### **Efficiency**

Building on the capacity established under the European Union Food Facility programme, the response was well supported by FAO headquarters. However, there was insufficient delegation of authority for decision-making to frontline staff from headquarters in Rome and financial authorization levels were too low at provincial and country representative levels. The centralized approach and lack of empowerment of provincial offices and staff resulted in delays and, in some cases, missed opportunities.

There were no FAO standard operating procedures to improve the timeliness of decision-making, or sufficient fast-track options when timing was critical to effectiveness. These factors negatively affected fast, efficient, emergency response operations.

## **Recommendations**

**Country Programme Framework:** FAO Pakistan should quickly finalize the Country Programming Framework, ensuring that it includes disaster risk reduction (DRR) and disaster risk management (DRM) as core strategic pillars, also using the document as a resource mobilization tool, to leverage funding for agricultural flood recovery and DRM capacity development over the medium term.

**Go beyond agricultural inputs:** In future responses FAO needs to advocate on behalf of the tenant communities in order to maximize the impact of the items distributed, and to reduce the influence of local powerbrokers. This should lead, over time, to a longer-term advocacy initiative on land reform. FAO should shift emphasis in supporting flood affected agricultural communities beyond agricultural inputs to tackle the underlying causes of vulnerability and contribute to diversify livelihood strategies towards the provision of low-cost credit, value chains development and agricultural extension.

**M&E and targeting:** Both the capacity and structure of FAO Pakistan's monitoring system needs to improve drastically, so as to ensure better beneficiary identification, reduced levels of misallocation of distributed items and better monitoring of the results of interventions. Furthermore, a system of evaluating the impact and efficiency of coordination needs to be elaborated and implemented. Targeting of beneficiaries needs to be improved. The recently developed "beneficiary selection and targeting, intersectoral guidelines for Pakistan" should be evaluated and where advisable adopted.

**Emergency preparedness and standard operating procedures:** FAO needs to enhance emergency preparedness and institutionalize learning opportunities and activities to improve its capacity to respond to future emergencies. Standard operating procedures and a classification system for categorizing the severity and scale of emergencies should be developed/adopted in support of fast-tracking administrative actions. With respect to **funding**, pre-agreements with identified donors (including CERF) need to be established in order to precipitate the establishment of a nationwide cluster system, available for any future large-scale disaster responses. The level of SFERA funding should be raised proportionately dependent on the scale of the disaster and the funding commitments made.

**Change in organizational culture:** A change in organizational culture is required so as to empower in-country staff to respond in a more efficient and effective manner, including, but not limited to, formally involving the FAO Representative in decisions regarding the recruitment of senior emergency and recovery staff; considering merging of the two FAO offices at the earliest moment possible; opening an “imprest account” for the Emergency and Rehabilitation Coordination Unit so as to facilitate the speedier processing of payment and reducing bureaucratic delays; and in the context of the Government of Pakistan’s decentralization, increasing the authority and responsibilities of provincial offices to plan and manage field programme interventions.

**Gender:** To improve the integration of gender issues into FAO’s programming, more women need to be employed within FAO Pakistan, not only at senior level in the organization, but also in the programme and monitoring teams, so as to improve access to female members of the community.

**Promotion of good practice and learning:** FAO needs to follow up on training of staff and sector partners to better promote the use of good practice guidelines such as in the Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards in Humanitarian Response (SPHERE), Livestock Emergency Guidelines (LEGS), and Social, Economic and Gender Analysis (SEAGA). FAO needs to learn from its cash for work initiative, and develop its internal capacity for future usage of this, and other cash transfer mechanisms, including the use of vouchers and unconditional cash transfers.

## **Management response**

Management welcomed the independent evaluation and accepted all 13 recommendations made by the evaluation team. However, the management response observed that the full context and exceptional operating environment of the Pakistan 2010 floods may not have been sufficiently taken into account when appraising the decisions and choices available to FAO.

Management agreed with the findings which highlight the importance of FAO’s role in emergency and rehabilitation and noted that particular emphasis had been placed by the evaluators on the need to go beyond the direct distribution of inputs in order to ensure programme sustainability.

## **Governing Bodies**

The Programme Committee at its 110th Session appreciated the evaluation and the methodology used. It commended the Organization for the high quality of work carried out in very challenging circumstances and recommended improvements for the future, in particular on: the time required to start-up emergency programmes; the development of standard operating procedures; targeting of beneficiaries; integration of gender considerations; and monitoring and evaluation of emergency programmes.

The Committee encouraged enhanced collaboration with partner agencies to increase mutually beneficial knowledge-sharing and stressed the key role of FAO Representatives in major emergency situations. It also emphasized the importance of further strengthening integration of emergency and development activities in order to increase resilience, which should be included in the Country Programming Frameworks.

The Council at its 144th Session endorsed the findings of the Programme Committee on the Evaluation of FAO's Response to the July 2010 Floods in Pakistan, stressed the importance of the role of FAO Representatives in such circumstances and emphasized the importance of integration of emergency and development activities in order to increase resilience and promote sustainability.

# OED Brief 33: FAO's effectiveness at country level in countries in protracted crises

FAO Office  
of Evaluation

PER 2013

## Background: A synthesis of evaluations in countries in protracted crises (Ethiopia, Zimbabwe, Haiti)

### Inside this Brief

- 1 **Background**
- 2 **Key findings and Conclusions**
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In 2010-2011, the Office of Evaluation carried out three country evaluations (Ethiopia, Zimbabwe and Haiti). These country evaluations formed part of the evaluation work plan presented to the Programme Committee at its 103rd Session. They were selected because the country portfolios reached annual emergency funding in excess of USD 10 million per year, marking the accountability threshold above which independent evaluations are mandatory.

The country evaluations are analysed together in a synthesis report, as all three are part of the list of 22 countries in protracted crises, identified in the 2010 State of Food Insecurity in the World (SOFI). The report defines protracted crises situations as *'characterized by recurrent natural disasters and/or conflict, longevity of food crises, breakdown of livelihoods and insufficient institutional capacity to react to the crises. Countries in protracted crises thus need to be considered as a special category with special requirements in terms of interventions by the development community'*.

The three country evaluation reports present quite different characteristics, even though there are common elements in terms of both the context for agriculture and food security and the nature and scope of FAO's interventions, structure and operational modalities. There is also a striking degree of convergence amongst the conclusions and direction of the recommendations in the three reports.

## Key findings and conclusions

### **Assessment of the role of FAO in policy, strategy and programming**

The three country evaluations reviewed the role of FAO as a lead agency in the agriculture and food and nutrition security sectors. FAO activities were found to be largely aligned with government priorities and strategies. However, FAO has not been systematically a key actor in supporting the government to develop sectoral and subsectoral strategies across the range of FAO's areas of expertise.

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The evaluations were critical of the non-strategic nature of the NMTPFs and the absence of fully fledged Country Programming Frameworks (CPFs), which was found to be a factor limiting FAO's capacity to be a key strategic player in agriculture and food and nutrition security. This also reduced internal programme coherence.

One of the main programmatic challenges is that of reconciling the short-term activities carried out under the sizeable emergency related and humanitarian-funded portfolios, with the smaller and less resourced projects looking at longer-term development measures to reduce vulnerability and develop various aspects of the agricultural sector. There is a lack of information related to measuring the impact of FAO programmes and activities. More specifically, the reports identify the lack of appropriate analysis and resources dedicated to understanding impact, in particular the absence of monitoring data that looks at outcomes beyond the recording of inputs and activities carried out. Little use is made of data disaggregated by gender, age or vulnerability status in identifying beneficiaries of interventions and FAO does not satisfactorily carry out its institutional role of providing information and analysis for agriculture and food and nutrition security. At the country level, this capacity should feed into the programming cycle and support the design and targeting of appropriate interventions.

### ***Institutional arrangements and operational capacity for delivery***

All three evaluation reports present findings and recommendations on FAO's structure and functions. Two of the countries, Ethiopia and Zimbabwe, are comparable, hosting Subregional Offices. In both countries, the evaluation reports conclude that this tripartite structure presents several weaknesses and suggest similar corrective actions. Having all these teams with different resources and responsibilities provides an extremely fragmented image of FAO to external partners and government and in general it is considered detrimental to FAO's corporate identity, its image and raises significant issues relative to the smooth internal working of the Organization.

Evaluations highlight the need to improve coordination amongst development and emergency activities as well as occasionally amongst emergency activities under different project funds. The support function provided by subnational offices and/or other units such as the Zimbabwe Monitoring Unit needs to provide core capacity and support to all FAO's activities so as to improve efficiency in operations and increase quality in implementation.

Technical support present in current FAO teams at the country level (and considering the multidisciplinary teams at subregional level) is not sufficient to support FAO's activities at both policy and project implementation levels. Members of the MDT are overstretched and sometimes some key technical positions are missing. This is particularly the case for those areas of FAO's work which may be of strategic importance but are not supported by direct extra-budgetary resources.

The other major challenge in FAO's technical capacity at country level is how to ensure more integrated cross-sectoral work, better integrating the various aspects of FAO's technical activities and subsuming them to the need to achieve greater impact in institutional capacity and in strengthening beneficiaries productive and/or resilience profiles.

***Focus on cross-cutting issues and core functions***

Gender was considered by all three evaluations. They all found that the gender balance of FAO teams was unsatisfactory and more efforts need to be made to recruit women. The gender focus in technical and operational work was also found to be insufficient. FAO should focus more on improving capacities to monitor and report on impact based on gender disaggregated data.

All reports concluded that, to support a more focused and better integrated strategic approach to agriculture and food and nutrition security, FAO needs to concentrate more on supporting national systems. In order to do this, FAO must step up its capacity development efforts, in particular for policy and sectoral data collection and analysis.

***Coordination and partnerships***

The main issues in coordination emerging from the three evaluations highlight the continuum between longer-term development coordination mechanisms in the agricultural sector versus the shorter-term 'humanitarian' coordination mechanisms; the relationship between the agricultural cluster and the positioning of food security and nutrition coordination mechanisms and FAO's capacity to take on a 'lead' role; the effectiveness in covering subnational coordination mechanisms.

Investing in improved partnerships in terms of selection, capacity development and strategic choices in terms of typology (research, private, extension, etc.) will greatly enhance the capacity of FAO to scale up its innovative interventions and ensure longer-term sustainability as well as broader geographic impact of its interventions.

**Governing Bodies**

The Programme Committee appreciated the synthesis report, which drew common lessons across countries with large emergency and rehabilitation programmes, and highlighted systemic issues.

The Committee:

- a) emphasized the importance of further strengthening the integration of emergency and development activities;
- b) stressed the need for enhanced monitoring and evaluation, and accountability of country-based activities;
- c) urged that inclusion of gender considerations be accelerated;
- d) recommended that cross-cutting themes, such as sustainable environment and adaptation to climate change, be considered in countries in protracted crisis situations; and
- e) suggested that the choice of future country evaluations target countries on the basis of geographical and economic commonalities.

# OED Brief 34: FAO's role and work in Forestry

FAO Office  
of Evaluation

PER 2013

## Inside this Brief

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## Background

This evaluation covers all of FAO's activities relating to forests and trees at the country, regional and global levels for the period 2006 to 2011, while also looking at some trends in challenges and opportunities beyond the evaluation period. The results framework defined by Strategic Objective E "sustainable management of forests and trees" was used as the guiding framework for the evaluation. However, given the contribution of forestry-related activities to other strategic objectives, additional cross-cutting themes have also been included in the scope of the evaluation. The evaluation covers all major aspects of FAO's work relating to forests and trees, as undertaken across the Organization.

The promotion of the sustainable management of forests and trees has been an integral part of FAO's mission since its founding in 1945. FAO's forestry activities include monitoring, assessing and sharing information on forests, participating in global forestry processes, supporting national forest policies and institutions, and more broadly work on forest resources management, the socio-economic aspects of forests, and cross-cutting themes such as watershed management and climate change. These activities are intended to contribute to all three global goals of the Organization, namely food security, poverty reduction, and the sustainable management and utilization of natural resources.

## Key findings and conclusions

### *FAO's role and position in the international forestry regime*

FAO is seen by the global forestry community as a technical organization whose role in the international forest regime has been declining over the years due to the emergence of new actors, many of them competitors, and fragmentation of the global forestry agenda. There are many other entities that can do various activities as well or better than FAO now, in contrast to the past where FAO was the main or only entity in the field.

At the same time, there is more need than ever for an impartial global leader looking at forests and forestry in a holistic sense, linking global, regional and national levels and relating forests and forestry to other land use sectors. FAO has the potential to become again an international leader in forestry.

### ***FAO's comparative advantages in forestry***

FAO's main comparative advantage is that it has the expertise to deal with technical issues in forestry and also with land and natural resource uses meeting the cross-sectoral challenges and opportunities existing in many countries. FAO should bring its work across different land uses together in member countries that promote an integrated landscape approach. FAO also has a comparative advantage in forest resource assessment (FRA) and monitoring, global forest-related information services, forest sector policies and planning, and some aspects of forest resources management.

Unfortunately, FAO's comparative advantage in cross-cutting or cross-sectoral work is not yet being fully realized. The evaluation concluded that FAO has missed a number of opportunities to make use of its potential, e.g. by not combining its expertise and work in the current internationally important topic of "land grabbing" with its expertise and work related to deforestation and Sustainable Forest Management (SFM).

### ***Institutional arrangements and partnering***

FAO needs to be more inclusive and partner more effectively with non-governmental organizations, civil society organizations and the private sector. It should strengthen its forestry capacity and work in areas where it enjoys a clear comparative advantage and become a more inclusive organization.

FAO has made great efforts in the field of communication and outreach at the global level, and information is becoming increasingly easy to access. However, FAO needs to reflect on the way it communicates and interacts on information and communication in forestry at the regional and country levels. There is scope for improving the working arrangements in forestry at FAO to better reflect a strategic approach and to develop incentives and mechanisms to enhance sharing of experiences and lessons learned both horizontally across sectors and vertically between headquarters, regions, subregions and member countries.

### ***FAO's forestry strategic vision and its implementation***

FAO's forestry work programme does not reflect a clear vision and interconnected priorities focused on achieving that vision. The way SO E and the organizational results are structured does not give guidance on how the three global goals of FAO are to be achieved. SO E reflects a forest-centric approach to forestry. There is little accountability in terms of outcomes resulting from resources spent in the context of the strategic objectives.

At the country level, project interventions are mostly based on availability of funding and not on the assessment of how FAO could best help the country, in partnership with other organizations. A common perception of external stakeholders is that FAO often does not work

on key strategic issues of member countries in the forestry sector, and that it is not actively involved in various fora concerned with policy and strategic sector development issues at the national level – particularly if the issues being dealt with are controversial. FAO is perceived as being too focused on the work of traditional national forest agencies, even though the drivers of many forest-related challenges and opportunities lie outside the traditional forestry sector.

Certain areas of work will have to be de-emphasized in order to strengthen the cross-sectoral work and traditional core areas in which FAO still has a comparative advantage. The obvious topics to de-emphasize are those with low need/demand from member countries, those for which FAO does not have a comparative advantage, and those in which other entities are active and have recognized leadership.

FAO must find ways to keep the various demands on it at bay in order to be more strategically focused and more effective, and to become again the “leading light” in international forestry for sustainable development. This can be achieved by: (i) enhancing its leadership role in dealing holistically with forests in the international forest regime; (ii) strengthening its role and responsibilities in the assessment and monitoring of forests; and (iii) developing the broader role of forests in climate change adaptation and REDD+ (Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation).

## Recommendations

The report concludes that the FAO forestry programme is alive and well but it can contribute much more in terms of helping member countries deal with the forest-related land and other natural resources challenges and opportunities facing them in their quest for improved food security, poverty reduction and environmental sustainability.

To realize these greater contributions, FAO as a whole, Members and donors, needs to think and act more holistically and synergistically and focus on those forest-related programmes that: (1) best can contribute to all basic goals of FAO and its Members; and (2) take advantage of FAO’s unique comparative advantages.

COFO members and FAO need to recognize:

- FAO’s unique position to deal with sustainable land and other natural resources management and use overall, including where forests are a central component;
- FAO’s comparative advantage in being both a technical and a policy organization and the only one in the forestry sector;
- FAO’s need and ambition to be strategic rather than opportunity driven to remain relevant; and
- FAO’s need for a more rational base for regular funding, to avoid becoming an implementing agency for various stakeholders with resources.

FAO also must consider the following recommendations:

- adopt a holistic approach to forests, and trees outside forests, to directly contribute to meeting all the strategic objectives of FAO and its Members;

- focus on the overall role of FAO: food security, poverty alleviation, sustainable use of natural resources and the Millennium Development Goals;
- in close partnership with others, be more proactive and strategic in positioning forests and forestry in the global change agenda;
- a global leadership role in forests and forestry is needed more than ever; and FAO is a logical entity to fill such a role, in partnership with other key entities;
- strengthen modalities for linking knowledge and expertise on forestry across the Organization, including global, regional and national levels; and
- address efficiency and effectiveness to deal with forests and land-use within the Organization and with countries and priority partners.

## Management response

Management welcomed the evaluation and was pleased it confirmed the important global leadership role played by FAO in forestry. It accepted five out of the nine recommendations made. It agreed that the contributions of forestry to achieving the global goals of FAO's Members have not been fully realized but they can effectively be addressed within the process of reviewing FAO's Strategic Framework.

Management agreed that FAO's main comparative advantage in forestry is its expertise to deal with the interactions between resource uses that are manifested in cross-sectoral challenges and opportunities in many countries. To become a more effective organization, FAO needs to increase synergies and collaboration both horizontally and vertically.

Challenges remain in order to "prioritize FAO's programme areas based on its comparative advantages and with guidance from the Governing bodies" and to emphasize and de-emphasize given areas of work as well as in taking a more proactive approach in the global forestry regime, especially for Collaborative Partnerships on Forests (CPFs).

## Governing Bodies

The Programme Committee welcomed the comprehensive and timely nature of the evaluation, as well as of the management response. It recognized the usefulness of presenting the evaluation to the Committee on Forestry in October 2012.

The Programme Committee:

- a) emphasized the importance of better prioritization in work on forestry allowing FAO to take a leading role, while seeking partnerships for other areas of work;
- b) highlighted the connection between work on sustainable forests on the one hand, and food security and poverty reduction on the other;
- c) encouraged FAO to increase its cross-sectoral work, focusing on integrated land use and sustainable forest management;
- d) requested that work on REDD+ take into account the relation between agriculture and forests;
- e) looked forward to the recommendations of the evaluation to be taken into account when preparing the next Medium Term Plan and Programme of Work and Budget;

- f) noted that the evaluation should be presented to the six Regional Forestry Commissions;
- g) encouraged mobilization of additional resources, for implementation of FAO's forestry programmes; and
- h) noted that no low-forest cover country was visited by the evaluation team.

# OED Brief 35: FAO's support to the implementation of the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries (CCRF)

FAO Office  
of Evaluation

PER 2013

## Inside this Brief

- 1 **Background**
- 2 **Key findings and Conclusions**
- 3 **Recommendations**
- 4 **Management Response**
- 5 **Governing Bodies**

## Background

The Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries (CCRF) was adopted by FAO Members on 31 October 1995. In the Resolution adopting the Code, FAO member countries (MCs) also requested that the FAO Secretariat provide support to those among them that most required assistance for making progress in the implementation of the Code. FAO Members, the Committee on Fisheries (COFI) and the Secretariat are the official owners of the Code. COFI has continuously guided the Fisheries and Aquaculture Department's (FI) work in supporting the implementation of the Code, which has been the first agenda item of COFI since adoption. All FAO fisheries staff refer to the Code as the "overarching framework for their work and mandate".

In April 2010, the Programme Committee of FAO selected FAO's support to the implementation of the CCRF as one of the priority areas for evaluation in 2011, with particular focus on human capacity development.

## Key findings and conclusions

As of end 2011, the set of Code products or 'instruments' comprised of: eight legal instruments, including the 1995 Code itself, four International Plans of Action, two Strategies and one binding legal agreement; 31 Technical Guidelines, of which three had been negotiated and endorsed by COFI; and four related instruments.

FAO's performance has been highly commendable and the quality of its work consistently high. However, the Fisheries and Aquaculture Department has fallen well short of its potential. The implementation of the Code is central for sustainable fisheries and aquaculture management; therefore, it is also a key pillar of FAO's mandate and mission. To contribute fully to it, FI must re-align its strategic position and support the implementation of the Code in a much more proactive manner.

The evaluation found general dissatisfaction with the current **monitoring** of the implementation of the Code, in terms of the frequency, the low response rates for self-reporting and the biases in the subjective self-reporting format. Further, FI has focused its support of Code implementation on a rather limited set of roles.

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By 2011, the **International Plans of Action** (IPOAs) on Sharks, Seabirds, Managing Fishing Capacity and Illegal Unreported and Unregulated Fishing (IUU) and their technical guidelines had limited to very limited uptake by less-industrialized countries, though somewhat better uptake by others. FAO has worked on developing broader normative measures to address control of the fishing fleet, and to help member countries build their capacity for monitoring, control and surveillance.

The most important ongoing activity in **Small-scale Fisheries** (SSF) was the development of a new normative instrument on SSF, which, as appropriate to the topic, will not be part of the Code itself but will be allied with it.

Key parts of FAO's work in **Safety at Sea** (SaS) were carried out in close cooperation with the International Labour Organization and the International Maritime Organization and focused on updating and production of standard international guidance. Publications were generally of high quality and some are readily available through the FI and the Safety for Fishermen web sites. A major weakness in dissemination was due to the International Maritime Organization's (IMO) publication policy, but a compromise was reached.

When the Code was drafted, **aquaculture** was much less important than it is now. FAO has compensated for this by a vigorous programme of development of instruments and changing FI's name to "Department of Fisheries and Aquaculture". The Technical Guidelines for aquaculture are of high relevance and high technical quality. The first TG on Aquaculture Development was cited as the best known after the Code itself by most respondents in member countries. FI could reconsider the quantum of resources being allocated to aquaculture, while ensuring the support to capture fisheries does not decrease.

FI developed the **Ecosystem Approach to Fisheries (EAF)** and its companion the **Ecosystem Approach to Aquaculture (EAA)** as the vehicle by which the Code would be implemented or operationalized. FAO's interpretation that the EAF and EAA are sectoral adaptations of the Ecosystem Approach (EA) based on the CCRF, is valid. Experience was still lacking, however, on how to implement the EAA and EAF in practice.

FAO is the lead UN agency on global fisheries and aquaculture statistics, status and trends. The fisheries and aquaculture **data** collected by member countries, regional fisheries bodies and regional fisheries management organizations, using FAO standards and compiled by FAO are also important inputs to the major synoptic and flagship reports, including the biennial State of World Fisheries and Aquaculture (SOFIA).

The Code provides guidance on **fisheries research**, including a comprehensive statement of the obligations of member countries. The evaluation found that research is actually supported, with a wide range of achievements according to respective national means and priorities; often, however, there is discontinuity between agencies carrying out the research and those that need its results.

FI has a strong **publication** programme and a strong, although flawed, web site. The Code and its instruments were not accessible widely, either in their standard form or other languages. FI should seriously re-consider a more focused and strategic approach, with fewer products but

of higher quality and better used, meeting a precise need, complemented by an active dissemination strategy.

The CCRF stresses the importance of CD, by bringing attention to the special needs of developing countries. The range of **Human Capacity Development (HCD)** activities was broad. Activities covered the three levels of HCD as defined by the new FAO corporate HCD strategy, individual, institutional and enabling environment. However, limited evidence was found that capacity development needs assessments were mainstreamed.

**Social and gender issues** have been sidelined in FAO's CCRF work. This has been the result of a lack of focus on the primary objectives of FAO and an over-emphasis in FAO's work on narrowly defined technical issues.

**Emergency operations** became a major area of work following the Indian Ocean earthquake and tsunami in 2004. The core activity in the fisheries sector was distribution of gears. The most successful projects moved into coordination, advice and capacity development activities on boat building and aquaculture management. FAO showed good performance when involved in the needs-assessment phases.

**FishCode** was found to have been rather efficient and transparent in its resource mobilization and management function, in particular for the Code. The function of resource mobilization for the implementation of the CCRF must be enhanced within FI and a dedicated resource mobilization unit should be maintained to ensure that additional funds are mobilized in support of Code implementation.

## Recommendations

**Vision:** As the Code is the key pillar of FAO's mandate and mission for fisheries and aquaculture, FI should make the promotion, development and implementation of the Code central to its strategies, planning and management. To achieve this, the FI Assistant Director-General should explicitly be the chief Code promoter and manager, responsible for Code coordination and resource mobilization through direct reporting lines.

FI should ensure that human developmental objectives such as **gender equality, food security and poverty reduction** become the primary driver of its work, across all types of fisheries and aquaculture. Greater attention should be paid to the social and economic context in which fishing and fish farming populations live.

**Monitoring and reporting:** FI should, with member countries, develop a set of objective indicators and benchmarks for reporting on progress in Code implementation. Each issue of SOFIA should include a stand-alone section on the Code. In consideration of current budget restrictions, the frequency of the CCRF questionnaire should be extended to four years so as to redirect efforts to increase response rates.

By COFI 2014, a Code **dissemination strategy** for the next six years should be developed. Furthermore, the different categories of Code instruments should be defined, clear and transparent criteria for assessing the need for new TGs should be established and submitted to

COFI for endorsement, and balance (geographical, expertise and gender) in the participants to technical consultations ensured. A simplified version of the Code should be developed, to serve as a template for adaptation of the Code to national contexts.

A strategic and programmatic approach to **resource mobilization** should be maintained through a dedicated unit that manages the umbrella programme and has trust and visibility with traditional and new resource partners. FAO should engage more effectively with major resource partners promoting the Code.

An action plan for improving the planning, implementation, coordination, and monitoring of **human capacity development** in fisheries and aquaculture should be developed. The FI focal point for CD should be assigned the responsibility for leading the action plan development and implementation.

Member countries and regional fisheries bodies and regional fisheries management organizations should be supported in **developing capacity** to implement the Code at the individual, organizational and enabling environment levels.

The momentum in addressing the **management of fishing capacity** should be increased. Technical guidance on fishing capacity should be revised to better address the complexity of issues that relate to fisheries management.

FI should engage more vigorously with member countries and the private sector, fostering awareness of resource demands associated with further development and intensification of **aquaculture development**. FI should also take stock of – and clarify – its role in certification.

FI should explain the **EAF and EAA** by making explicit references to the relevant Articles of the CCRF and its technical guidelines. Furthermore they should explore whether the EA could be renamed or rebranded to emphasize its people-centered approach. Partnerships should be formed to accelerate, coordinate and assess practical applications. The EAF toolbox should be developed as a more comprehensive toolbox to serve wider Code needs.

By COFI 2014, FI should have conducted an expert consultation to explore the issues concerning **research** and research systems to support the development and implementation of the Code.

FI should develop a corporate policy and strategy defining its role and mandate in **emergency, rehabilitation and disaster preparedness** in the fisheries and aquaculture sector. The policy should be informed by the CCRF, ensure that FAO engages exclusively in rehabilitation needs' assessment, coordination and technical advisory role and clarify the Organization's role in input distribution and boatbuilding.

## **Management response**

Management welcomed the evaluation and appreciated the participatory process used. Management agreed with the evaluation's conclusion that implementation of the Code is at the core of sustainable fisheries and aquaculture management, which is central to FAO's

mandate and mission. FI has a specific responsibility in this endeavour and will strategically re-align its work to support the implementation of the Code in a more proactive manner, seeking extra-budgetary funds to extend its reach. Of the 16 recommendations, nine were accepted, six were partially accepted and one, on aquaculture certification, was rejected.

### **Governing Bodies**

The Programme Committee commended the quality of the evaluation report and felt it would be very useful in guiding future work. Both the Council and the Programme Committee supported the recommendations, in particular on IUU, and encouraged FAO to concentrate resource mobilization through the application of the Code.

Regarding monitoring, the Committee stressed that the inclusion of a stand-alone section on the Code in SOFIA would be useful, as would be a reduced frequency of the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries questionnaire to four years, both for budgetary reasons and to increase response rates.

The Committee strongly underlined the need to address the situation of small-scale fisheries that are among the most vulnerable, as well as having a robust gender component. It agreed that the development of a strategic framework with priorities for the development of the Code and support for its implementation are important points for future success. Lastly, it noted that FAO needed to consider its role in certification carefully as its comparative advantage lies in standard-setting.



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