



联合国  
粮食及  
农业组织

Food and Agriculture  
Organization of the  
United Nations

Organisation des Nations  
Unies pour l'alimentation  
et l'agriculture

Продовольственная и  
сельскохозяйственная организация  
Объединенных Наций

Organización de las  
Naciones Unidas para la  
Alimentación y la Agricultura

منظمة  
الغذية والزراعة  
للأمم المتحدة

# PROGRAMME COMMITTEE

## Hundred and Fifteenth Session

**Rome, 26-30 May 2014**

## Evaluation of FAO's Role in Support of Crop Production

## MANAGEMENT RESPONSE

➤ In line with the recommendations of the 112<sup>th</sup> session of the Programme Committee (CL 145/6 para. 24.b) concerning modalities for saving costs, while ensuring adequate access to information contained in Evaluation reports, document PC 115/5 is presented as a comprehensive executive summary translated in FAO languages, while the Evaluation report in its entirety is published on the FAO Evaluation Web site in the original language.

### Guidance sought by the Programme Committee

➤ The Programme Committee may wish to provide its views and guidance on the key issues in the Evaluation report, and to the response to the recommendations and proposed follow-up actions by Management.

### Queries on the substantive content of this document may be addressed to:

Mr Ren Wang  
Assistant Director-General  
Agriculture and Consumer Protection Department (AG)  
Tel. (06) 570-54523

1. FAO Management welcomes the Evaluation of FAO's Role in support of crop production. It is an important and timely contribution to the continued evolution of FAO's activities in the area of crops support specifically and of technical assistance to production more generally in the implementation of the reviewed Strategic Framework and the Medium Term Plan (MTP) 2014-17.

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



mk235e

2. The importance of FAO's support to crops in achieving the Global Goals of Members is reflected in the fact that work on crops was evaluated in 2003<sup>1</sup> and again in 2007 as part of the Independent External Evaluation (IEE). One result was that the sustainable intensification of crop production was identified as one of the Strategic Objectives (SO-A) of the Organization in the MTP 2010-2013.
3. Management appreciates the work of the Evaluation Team, in particular as the context for FAO's work on crops was changing as formulation of the reviewed Strategic Framework and Medium Term Plan 2014-17 evolved during 2013. The final report, beyond the recommendations, represents a rich source of information, analysis and viewpoints.
4. The Evaluation makes eight recommendations, a number of which include sub-elements and other findings that have complicated the preparation of a coherent Management Response. The Programme Committee may wish to consider the format used for presenting and explaining the recommendations in the Evaluation report (Section 7) and as repeated in the Executive Summary provided to the Committee (paragraphs 20 to 47).
5. Management fully accepts recommendations 4, 6 and 8, does not accept recommendation 1 and partially accepts recommendations 2, 3, 5 and 7. Specifically concerning the recommendations not fully accepted:
  - a) Recommendation 1: Management does not accept the principle of prioritizing global public goods over country-specific technical activities on crops. Management believes that the best way of maximizing its impact on crop production is through balancing its work on global public goods and country-specific technical activities, as they are interdependent parts of FAO's mandate. Management has recognized the important role FAO plays as global convener of international treaties and conventions through their designation as Corporate Technical Activities in the PWB for 2014-2015.<sup>2</sup>
  - b) Recommendation 2: Management agrees with the spirit of this recommendation, recognizing that field projects undertaken in response to government requests will continue to be essential to FAO's ability to provide timely effective policy advice. The reviewed Strategic Framework strives to ensure the provision of policy support to member countries, that is based on multi-disciplinary, evidence-based technical inputs, demonstrated through field projects that respond to government demands and are in line with Country Programming Framework priorities. The key is to maintain a close linkage and an appropriate, locally adapted balance between these approaches.
  - c) Recommendation 3: Management agrees with the important role that science-based technologies can play in meeting the challenges agriculture faces in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Management acknowledges the important role of FAO as neutral broker and has concerns that energetically advocating for advanced science-based technologies that might be controversial, as recommended by the Evaluation, would not be in keeping with this role. Given the intergovernmental nature of the Organization, FAO must be mindful of divergent public perceptions, as well as the decision-making authority of the member countries regarding such technologies. Therefore, as a trusted neutral broker FAO's role must be not only science-based, but also inclusive, transparent and credible.
  - d) Recommendation 5: Management agrees with the importance of providing support to national agriculture research, extension and innovation systems. Management agrees that there is a potential role for FAO and other international and national development partners to help fill this technical assistance gap through improved coordination and, in some instances, through developing the necessary in-house technical expertise. Management looks forward to further guidance from Members on this issue. Management agrees with

<sup>1</sup> Evaluation of FAO's Activities on Crops PC 90/3a

<sup>2</sup> CL 148/3 Adjustments to the PWB 2014-15, paragraphs 85-87

the importance of Tropical Agriculture Platforms (TAPs) and their potential role in providing support to the National Agricultural Research Systems (NARS). At the same time, Management recognizes the limited scope of TAP and the need for TAPs to be country-led under the G20 Framework, with FAO as Secretariat, playing a facilitating role.

- e) Recommendation 7: Management acknowledges the evolving role and contribution of FAO in support of crop production, but does not agree with the finding that the reviewed Strategic Framework concentrates on social and environmental sustainability at the expense of crop productivity. Management firmly believes that FAO's approach to crop production in its reviewed Strategic Framework is underpinned by a broad-based perspective addressing all four pillars of food security (availability, access, utilization and stability), ensuring a balance between sustainability and productivity goals.
6. Further information is provided in the attached matrix.

Evaluation Recommendation	Management response <b>Accepted, partially accepted or rejected</b> and comment on the Recommendation	Management plan			
		Action to be taken	Responsible unit	Timeframe	Further funding required (Y or N)
<b>Recommendation 1:</b> As a global, inter-governmental but resource constrained organization, in order to maximise its impact on crop production, FAO should give its first priority to its work on global public goods and global and regional efforts on major issues. Country-specific technical activities in crops, while important, should be the second priority for resource allocation, except where these activities pilot or inform innovative policy and new directions.	<b>Rejected (main recommendation)</b> Management does not accept the principle of prioritizing global public goods over country specific technical activities on crops. Management believes that the best way of maximizing its impact on crop production is through balancing its work on global public goods and country-specific technical activities, as they are interdependent parts of FAO's mandate. The new programmatic approach and ways of working at FAO have been designed to focus on achieving the shared goals of member countries.				
FAO should continue to maintain and strengthen its global role as convenor of international treaties and conventions, and as the source of global norms, standards and guidelines in food and agriculture. In doing so it should become proactive in bringing to the attention of the relevant bodies the changes in norms and standards required for effectively mainstreaming sustainability.	<b>Accepted (sub-element)</b>	In order to maintain and strengthen FAO's global normative role, human and financial resources to support the delivery of Corporate Technical Activities (CTAs) in the PWB for 2014-2015 have been ring-fenced and have been programmed to contribute to achievement of the Strategic Objectives. CTAs include <i>inter-alia</i> those undertaken by relevant bodies established under Articles III, V, VI and XIV of the FAO Constitution.	Secretariats CODEX, IT-PGRFA, CGRFA, IPPC, Rotterdam working with relevant SO Teams	2014-15	N

Evaluation Recommendation	Management response <b>Accepted, partially accepted or rejected</b> and comment on the Recommendation	Management plan			
		Action to be taken	Responsible unit	Timeframe	Further funding required (Y or N)
<b>Recommendation 2:</b> In the policy-to-technology continuum, FAO should redouble its efforts to actively reorient the focus of its crop activities away from technology-centered field projects and towards the <b>strengthening of national and international policies</b> , through the provision of the most solid and authoritative technical and scientific input to policy formulation and the creation of enabling policy environments supportive of crop production improvement.	<b>Partially accepted</b> Management agrees with the spirit of this recommendation, recognizing that field projects undertaken in response to government requests will continue to be essential to FAO's ability to provide timely and effective policy advice. The reviewed Strategic Framework strives to ensure the provision of policy support to member countries, that is based on multi-disciplinary, evidence-based technical inputs, demonstrated through field projects that respond to government demands and are in line with CPF priorities. The key is to maintain a close linkage and an appropriate, locally adapted balance between these approaches.	Assure implementation of the four Organizational Outcomes under SO2 on technical support, international and global governance and evidenced-based decision-making.	SO2 Core Team	2014-15	N
<b>Recommendation 3:</b> Building on the fact that it is a trusted knowledge broker that provides accurate and timely information to decision makers in all member countries, FAO should be less timid about <b>taking an energetic role of advocacy</b> for advanced science-based technologies that may at times be controversial. As stated in Recommendation 1, it should continue to consolidate its role as a global platform for	<b>Partially accepted</b> Management agrees with the important role that science-based technologies can play in meeting the challenges agriculture faces in the 21 <sup>st</sup> century. Management acknowledges the important role of FAO as neutral broker and has concerns that energetically advocating for advanced science-based technologies that might be controversial, as recommended by the Evaluation, would not be in	Actively monitor deliberations in international fora regarding the application of modern technologies as a reference base for deliberations on a possible update of the FAO perspectives.	DDN	Immediate	N

Evaluation Recommendation	Management response <b>Accepted, partially accepted or rejected</b> and comment on the Recommendation	Management plan			
		Action to be taken	Responsible unit	Timeframe	Further funding required (Y or N)
addressing strategic issues relating to crop production development.	keeping with this role. Given the intergovernmental nature of the organization, FAO must be mindful of divergent public perceptions, as well as the decision-making authority of the member countries regarding such technologies. Therefore, as a trusted neutral broker FAO's role must be not only science-based, but also inclusive, transparent and credible.				
<b>Recommendation 4:</b> In order to strengthen its ability to serve member countries in improving crop production, FAO needs to develop a clear, medium to long-term human resource strategy, directly linked to the 'Theory of Change' (see also Recommendation 7), which should:	<b>Accepted (see sub-elements)</b>				

Evaluation Recommendation	Management response <b>Accepted, partially accepted or rejected</b> and comment on the Recommendation	Management plan			
		Action to be taken	Responsible unit	Timeframe	Further funding required (Y or N)
a) rebuild its technical capacities in the crop sector, with a long term strategic view both in terms of the competencies and skills that are needed in-house to (i) provide the conceptual and scientific leadership necessary to enable the transition to production systems that are more sustainable – environmentally, economically and socially, and (ii) be effective mobilizers of external networks in support of its programmes.	<b>(a) Accepted</b> (i) Management is working to build the skill mix that will enable the transition to production systems that are more sustainable – environmentally, economically and socially, (ii) FAO is actively building and strengthening its external networks involving academia, National Agricultural Research, Extension and Innovation Systems (NAREIS) in developing countries, the private and public sectors in support of its programmes.	(a) As a part of the planning exercise for the implementation of the reviewed Strategic Framework, AGP has recently completed a medium-term human resource strategy development exercise that maps out the expertise and staffing structure in accordance with the functions and demands of the Strategic Objectives.	AGP	Completed	N
b) fully implement the internal Technical Networks, key to FAO's ability to play its role in technical assistance effectively, and that have been on the books for several years now but have not yet become effective. This must be done with appropriate levels of management and resources, to ensure (i) the development of "communities of practice" around the priority disciplinary fields needed to allow the innovative and effective implementation of the new vision, and (ii) the continued contribution of both Regular Programme and project staff to the build-up of the organization's knowledge capital.	<b>(b) Accepted</b> FAO's reviewed Strategic Framework foresees technical networks (TN) to be established along main disciplinary lines as an instrument to maintain and strengthen the technical capacities of the Organization's human resources and to exchange information and knowledge.	(b) Establish a technical network related to sustainable crop production	ADG/AG	Immediate	N

Evaluation Recommendation	Management response <b>Accepted, partially accepted or rejected</b> and comment on the Recommendation	Management plan			
		Action to be taken	Responsible unit	Timeframe	Further funding required (Y or N)
<i>c) One approach which appears possible .. could be to “build an external group of experts made up of the key world experts in the areas of FAO’s mandate in crops, that, on a contracted semi-permanent basis, provide conceptual and technical inputs as needed, or find an alternative method for provision of continuous expert input to FAO’s own understaffed divisions.</i>	<b>(c) Accepted</b> Accepted in principle on the understanding that this relates to “need to explore innovative ways to strengthen its technical capacities at a reasonable cost”.	(c) Management is prepared to explore innovative ways to strengthen its technical capacities, including through strengthening cooperation with external partners such as the CGIAR system (see Recommendation 5c).	ADG/AG	2014/2015	N
<b>Recommendation 5:</b> FAO should rehabilitate and strengthen its capacity to support national agricultural research, extension and innovation systems. This support is requested and needed, and will help countries improve their capacities to exploit current and new scientific advances emerging from centres of excellence all over the world. In doing so FAO should <b>a) make better use of the Joint FAO/IAEA Division on Nuclear Technologies in Food and Agriculture.</b>	<b>Partially accepted (see sub-elements)</b> Management agrees with the importance of providing support to national agriculture research, extension and innovation systems. Management agrees that there is a potential role for FAO and other international and national development partners to help fill this technical assistance gap through improved coordination and, in some instances, through developing the necessary in-house technical expertise. Management looks forward to further guidance from Members on this issue.  <b>a) Accepted</b>  <b>Action for Members</b>	Management will address this important issue through:  - Capacity strengthening and development across the SOs, delivered in a coherent way, including through the Corporate Technical Activities, Regional Initiatives and Country Programming Frameworks underpinned by the cross-cutting themes of gender and governance; -policy advice and support to governments for increasing investment in agricultural research and development; -strengthened strategic partnership and collaboration with governments, CGIAR, GFAR and other partners;	AG/AGE/	2014-15	N



Evaluation Recommendation	Management response <b>Accepted, partially accepted or rejected</b> and comment on the Recommendation	Management plan			
		Action to be taken	Responsible unit	Timeframe	Further funding required (Y or N)
		<p>-support and technical facilitation for private sector's engagement and investment in technology dissemination to benefit especially smallholder farmers and rural women.</p> <p>a) Plan how to exploit the Joint Division's capacity to support (i) the ecosystems services approach, in particular, and the development of innovative sustainable practices and approaches, in general, and (ii) the strengthening of national innovation systems.</p>			
<b>b)</b> give high priority to playing an active role in the design of the G-20-sponsored <b>Tropical Agricultural Platform</b> , for which it provides the secretariat, and	<b>b) Partially accepted</b> Management agrees with the importance of TAP and its potential role in providing support to the NARS. At the same time, Management recognizes the limited scope/mandate of TAP and the need for TAP to be country-led/driven under the G-20 framework, with FAO as Secretariat playing a facilitating role.	b) Continue to administer the TAP Secretariat. Ensure that TAP effectively draws on the expertise resident in the technical divisions across the Organization.	DDN/OPC/AGP	2014-15	N
<b>c)</b> seek to reinvigorate other <b>partnerships with donors and bilateral agencies</b> in support of national agricultural research, extension and innovation systems.	<b>c) Accepted</b>	c) Promoting the establishment of the Integrated Innovation Investment Facility for Agricultural Growth (IFAD, GFAR, other partners).	DDN/OPC/AG/TC	2014-15	N

Evaluation Recommendation	Management response <b>Accepted, partially accepted or rejected</b> and comment on the Recommendation	Management plan			
		Action to be taken	Responsible unit	Timeframe	Further funding required (Y or N)
The team recognises that this recommendation has implications on the priorities through which FAO determines allocation of its resources. However, the team feels the high importance accorded by members to this area of work in particular should lead to a thorough reconsideration by the Committee on Agriculture and the other FAO Governing Bodies.		Seek to increase South-South Cooperation in this area.			
<b>Recommendation 6:</b> FAO must be more proactive in its relations and interaction with the CGIAR, developing a strategic partnership. FAO must work both to participate actively in the priority setting process of the CGIAR, and vice-versa, to give the CGIAR a voice in FAO's priority setting.  Where there is consensus on the products of CG research, FAO would provide the needed support to translate the Centres' products into delivery of development outcomes, such as through support to countries in the creation of an enabling environment for uptake, including necessary piloting and up-scaling of selected new technological responses as they become available.	<b>Accepted</b> Management agrees that FAO should be more proactive in operationalizing the existing strategic partnership with the CGIAR in line with the Memorandum of Understanding signed in 2013.	Strengthening linkages between FAO's Strategic Objectives and CGIAR Research Programmes (CRPs).  Three areas of collaboration have been identified i) Gender ii) Metrics iii) Upscaling of proven technologies. Focal points have been identified and discussions are ongoing to substantiate the collaboration on these themes.	AG/DDN/OCP/DOs	2014-15	N

Evaluation Recommendation	Management response <b>Accepted, partially accepted or rejected</b> and comment on the Recommendation	Management plan			
		Action to be taken	Responsible unit	Timeframe	Further funding required (Y or N)
<b>Recommendation 7:</b> In beginning implementation of the Reviewed Strategic Framework, it is recommended that FAO carry out an exercise to highlight the role of crop production as a contributor to the respective Strategic Objectives outcomes, address the coherence of crop interventions within and between SOs, and to explore the intervention logic of the collective crop production contributions of the SOs towards the delivery of FAO's Global Goals. Such an effort is essential not only to inform prioritisation and intervention design in crops work and to support evaluation and impact assessment, but also, with a longer term perspective, to help better define the technical capacities which the organization will need to retain or develop.	<b>Partially accepted</b> Management acknowledges the evolving role and contribution of the Organization in support of crop production, but does not agree with the finding that the reviewed Strategic Framework concentrates on social and environmental sustainability at the expense of crop productivity.  Management firmly believes that FAO's approach to crop production in its reviewed Strategic Framework is underpinned by a broad-based perspective addressing all four pillars of food security (availability, access, utilization and stability), ensuring a balance between sustainability and productivity goals.	The 24 <sup>th</sup> session of the Committee on Agriculture (September 2014) will consider the topic of Sustainable Production Intensification and Sustainable Food Systems.  Communication materials, including progress reports on the implementation of the Strategic Framework will be reviewed to ensure that the importance of the balance between productivity and sustainability is highlighted.	DDN	2014-15	N
<b>Recommendation 8:</b> Since the Reviewed Strategic Framework recognizes and indeed emphasizes that there will have to be a "transition" towards widespread adoption of full sustainability as a central condition for agricultural development, there is a critical need to define key sequential changes and corresponding interventions required to accompany this transition. This includes	<b>Accepted</b>	Strategic Objective 2 has defined a major area of work on <i>Building a common vision for sustainable food and agriculture</i> .  The outcome will help guide policy-makers, development partners and researchers in managing the "transition" from a crop-focused agenda to one	SO2 Team and other SOC's, DDN	2014-15	N

Evaluation Recommendation	Management response <b>Accepted, partially accepted or rejected</b> and comment on the Recommendation	Management plan			
		Action to be taken	Responsible unit	Timeframe	Further funding required (Y or N)
identifying the key entry points (technical, institutional, policy) at different stages of the “transition” and for different types of farmers and farming systems (e.g., subsistence versus market-linked), and forecasting the likely impact of different entry points and types of interventions, and the trade-offs and the costs and benefits of the different options.		which seeks to embrace multi-sectoral, ecosystems and landscape approaches underpinned by principles of social, economic and environmental sustainability			