IMPROVED GLOBAL GOVERNANCE FOR HUNGER REDUCTION PROGRAMME: MID-TERM EVALUATION

Annex 4, Issues paper

1. INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this 'Issues Paper' is for the evaluation team to feed back on the Terms of Reference (TOR) for this mid-term evaluation (MTE), to indicate how they are interpreting the TOR, to identify any additional issues they plan to cover in the MTE, to set out the proposed methodology and to identify anticipated constraints. In view of the breadth and complexity of the 'Improved Global Governance for Hunger Reduction' programme and the limited time available for the MTE, preparation and submission of this 'issues paper' is a useful and important step in the evaluation process to ensure the evaluation team and FAO share the same perspective on how the MTE will be carried out and its focus.

The 'Issues Paper' was initially drafted by the evaluation team leader after an initial briefing visit to Rome, preliminary interviews with key stakeholders and an initial review of documentation. It has since been updated after interviewing has begun, the two evaluators have had a chance to work together, and taking into account comments received from OED and the project coordinator within FAO on an early draft. This final version is being shared with Programme Steering Committee members (PSC), as they requested.

2. SCOPE AND FOCUS OF THE MTE

Strategic focus

As clearly stated in the TOR, this MTE should provide 'strategic advice' to programme management, to oversight mechanisms and to the Programme Steering Committee (PSC). This means that the MTE will not provide a detailed analysis and evaluation of the programme's performance against indicators, for example identified in the logframe; this function is performed through FAO's internal monitoring of the programme. The MTE is also forward-looking, designed to feed into key decisions to be made about the second half of the programme.

Five areas of interest

Five areas of interest are clearly identified in the TOR. Initial interviews with some of the programme's key stakeholders, both internal and external, have re-affirmed

this focus although there is some difference in perspective on the issue of the 'FAO Reform process', further elaborated below.

The evaluation team has distilled what is required in these five areas of interest into a number of high-level questions that the MTE will set out to answer. These are as follows:

A) Strategic focus of the programme:

The breadth of the programme has caused concern amongst some stakeholders about whether it is able to maintain strategic focus. In order to address this concern, the Programme Steering Committee meeting in March 2013 identified five priority themes, in turn reflected in the revised lograme. In order to evaluate the strategic coherence of the programme, the MTE will address the following questions:

1) To what extent has the revision in programme design (aligning the logical framework to the revised FAO strategic framework and to the reorientation requested by the PSC) enhanced the strategic focus?

2) To what extent does the revised prioritization (identified during the PSC March 2013) reflect the convergence of FAO and EU priorities, and does the programme represent the right balance across these themes/ issues?

3) Considering the global ambitions of the programme, does it provide the correct emphasis between global, regional and national levels to achieve its overall objective?

4) Based on the programme's performance so far, to what extent is it likely to contribute to improved global governance for food security and nutrition? How appropriate is this as the overall aim of the programme?
   (In order to answer this fourth question, the evaluation team will assess how utilization-focused the programme is, and for example, to what extent it is likely to influence policy as well as governance structures and processes)

B) Added value of the programme

As stated in the TOR and confirmed in initial interviews, some stakeholders (including the EC) are not currently clear about the 'added value' of the programme. The evaluation team will set out to address two levels of 'added value':

5) What might have happened without the programme, and in this sense what value is it adding?

6) What is the added-value of the programme at a strategic level, both within FAO and beyond, in terms of achieving the programme's overall objective? In

what other ways has the programme 'added value' to FAO's work to improve global governance to reduce hunger?

The programme has put considerable effort into mainstreaming gender and nutrition and prides itself on how it has done this. The MTE will therefore also address the question:

7) How successful has the programme been in mainstreaming gender and nutrition into the programme's activities and outputs, and what difference is this making?

C) FAO Reform process

The FAO reform process refers to the revision to the strategic framework and associated changes to how FAO is structured and is planning to organize its work in future. While internal FAO stakeholders see the programme as inherently linked to the FAO reform process, some external stakeholders have questioned the relevance of the link between the programme and FAO reform. The evaluation team has distilled these different perspectives into two questions:

8) What is the programme's contribution as an instrument of FAO reform, and to what extent does/ may this contribute to improved global governance for hunger reduction?

9) How has the design and performance of the programme been impacted by the current phase of FAO reform, positively and negatively?

D) Effectiveness of collaboration between the Rome-based agencies

Although the programme is intended to contribute to more effective collaboration between the Rome-based agencies, the way the programme was set up from the outset has clearly constrained the extent to which this is possible, in particular the fact that it is run and managed by FAO as the sole budget-holder. The MTE will evaluate this aspect of the identification and design phase of the programme and will attempt to answer the following questions:

10) Within the constraints of the programme design, how effective has the collaboration been between the three Rome-based agencies so far?

11) How could collaboration between the Rome-based agencies be strengthened during the second half of the programme?

E) Country-level impacts

Although the programme sets out to improve *global* governance, it is also intended to have an impact at regional and country level. Evidence that it is achieving this is

of concern to a number of stakeholders, especially the EU but also to stakeholders within FAO. In order to evaluate this, the MTE will address the following questions:

12) What is the potential uptake and ownership at regional and country level of the 'global public goods' produced by this programme (and as articulated in the TOR); how appropriate are the approaches being adopted to achieve this in the longer term?

13) What are the early indications of the relevance of the programme's work at regional and country-level?

14) How can country and regional-level impacts be strengthened in the second half of the programme's life?

During this initial briefing and inception phase, a sixth issue has emerged that is pertinent to the MTE:

F) Management and coordination of the programme

There are a number of different aspects to this issue. Given the complexity and breadth of the programme, overall management and coordination appears to be key to maintaining its strategic focus and to realizing its strategic impact. The reporting and accountability framework for the programme has been developed in a number of steps or iterations since the programme began, yet some key stakeholders are still unclear about what the programme is achieving. The MTE will therefore address the following questions:

15) How appropriate and effective are the current governance structure, management arrangements and planning processes for a programme of this type and with these ambitions? What is working and what can be improved?

16) How appropriate are current reporting and accountability mechanisms and processes to meeting the needs of different stakeholders, from management to the PSC, and how effective is communication to these different stakeholders?

17) Overall, how effectively and efficiently has FAO managed the programme?

Analysis and write-up

In the course of answering the questions articulated above the evaluation team will be alert to emerging examples of good practice in the programme and will attempt to capture as many of these as possible, and the wider learning that can be drawn from them.

The MTE report will be structured around the (now) six issues listed above. It will conclude with a summary analysis against the evaluation criteria. See Annex 1 for the proposed report structure.

3. PROPOSED METHODOLOGY

The MTE will be based on the following evaluation methods:

1) Documentation review

2) A summary analysis and overview of the programme's progress and performance (to be carried out by OED's evaluation analyst)

3) Identification of key stakeholders, internal and external to be interviewed face-to-face where possible, otherwise by skype and teleconference, including the following:
   - all FAO focal points for the programme
   - resource persons supporting the mainstreaming of the cross-cutting issues
   - FAO programme management
   - members of the different tiers in the governance structure for the programme
   - key stakeholders involved in the FAO reform process with a perspective on this programme (eg directors of some of the FAO divisions involved)
   - focal points and other key stakeholders in IFAD and WFP
   - key staff members involved with the programme in the EU
   - staff of regional organisations who have been involved in the programme, including NEPAD-CAADP, CILSS, IGAD, COMESA, SICA and ASEAN
   - staff of FAO and other organisations at country level who have been involved in the programme, including staff in relevant EU delegations. The MTE will particularly focus on South Sudan and Niger as target countries in the Horn of Africa and the Sahel, but will also include stakeholders from other countries such as Ethiopia and possibly Mozambique
   - external stakeholders with a perspective on global governance and food security, and with an understanding of the programme

   NB The evaluators deliberately spent the week of 7th October interviewing stakeholders in Rome, to coincide with the CFS, and to observe a number of CFS sessions.

4) Ongoing and iterative process of analysis, to ensure findings are triangulated and that later interviews build on the findings of earlier interviews

5) Although the evaluation team will touch upon all the 21 outputs of the programme, it will necessarily explore some in more detail than others, especially those that illustrate the strategic potential (or lack) of the programme.

4. CONSTRAINTS

The major constraint the evaluation team faces is the breadth and complexity of the programme and finding an appropriate trade-off between breadth of coverage of the MTE and depth of evaluative investigation into any one aspect of the programme in view of the time constraints. Whilst the MTE has a strategic focus, its findings must be based on a sound understanding of the programme and on evidence. This will be a challenge to achieve in the short time available. Where the team is unable to gather sufficient evidence to reach conclusion, it may highlight certain issues/ questions that deserve further attention beyond the MTE.

A further constraint is the lack of knowledge and awareness of the programme (especially outside the Rome-based agencies and the EU). It is already apparent that potential respondents feel uneasy to be interviewed about a programme with which they are associated, at least in terms of outputs, but about which they know very little. The implications of this will be reflected in the MTE evaluation report.

The evaluation team will mostly be dependent on interviews by skype and telephone with respondents at regional and country-level and will not be spending time in the field due to time constraints. This may limit insights from the field although the team recognizes that outreach to country level may still be quite limited after just eighteen months.

5. REVISIONS TO THE MTE TIMETABLE

There have been some revisions to the schedule of deadlines for deliverables of the MTE, as follows:

Submission of first draft of the 'Issues Paper'	2nd October 2013
Final version of 'Issues Paper'	16th October 2013
Presentation of preliminary findings by powerpoint	29th November 2013
Submission of draft MTE report to OED	17th December
OED comments	18th December
Submission of draft MTE report for circulation	19th December
Comments on draft MTE report to be received by	13th January 2014
Submission of final MTE report	20th January 2014

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18th October 2013

ANNEX 1

Proposed report outline

1. Introduction

Background and purpose of the evaluation
Methodology

2. Context

External

As points of reference for this programme (rather than comprehensive contextual analysis)

Internal

Related to FAO, EU and collaboration between the RBAs

3. Analysis of programme concept and design

4. Performance and progress: an overview

5. Areas of interest (as identified in the 'Issues Paper')

5.1 Strategic focus

5.2 Value added

5.3. Regional and country level impact

5.4 Collaboration between Rome-based agencies

5.5. FAO Reform process

5.6. Management and Coordination

6. Cross-cutting themes

- Nutrition
- Gender
- Capacity development (if not adequately covered in above sections)

7. Conclusions and recommendations

Analysis and conclusions by evaluation criteria
Overall conclusions

Recommendations

Boxes will be used throughout the report to illustrate particular aspects/ issues of the programme

18th October 2013