



Members' Update

FAO renewal



Plan for improved mobilization of resources takes shape

A new resource mobilization and management strategy – a key element of the Immediate Plan of Action for FAO renewal – is now taking shape.

The strategy provides a structured approach, aimed at ensuring investment in areas where it is most needed and increasing governing body oversight. It works hand in hand with FAO's new results-based planning and budgeting process, where assessed contributions are supplemented by voluntary contributions, supporting Members' priorities.

The overall approach is being developed in consultation with headquarters divisions, decentralized offices and strategy teams, with implementation set to carry on through 2011.

A set of seven "impact focus areas," endorsed by the governing bodies, provides a natural framework for voluntary contributions in addition to funding for the strategic objectives. The areas are: support to the implementation of the comprehensive framework for action – smallholder farmer food production and global information and monitoring systems; transboundary threats to production, health and environment; strengthening the base for sustainable forest management; capacity building in support of implementation of the code of conduct for responsible fisheries; coping with scarcity of water and land resources; capacity building to strengthen information and statistics for decision-making for the sustainable management of agriculture, natural resources, food security and poverty alleviation; and global standard setting and implementation into national policies and legislation.

A team working on resource mobilization has begun to develop communication materials and opportunities to highlight the areas.

Mina Dowlatchahi in technical cooperation, who is leading the resource mobilization project with Richard China, said work with the decentralized offices was critical in moving the process forward.

“Members of the technical cooperation department have been visiting regional offices with a view to empowering them to mobilize resources and provide them with operational support,” she explained.

“The missions also allow headquarters staff to increase communication with our decentralized offices – a key process as the resource mobilization strategy enters the drafting stage. This will be a highly consultative process, very much tailored to the field and therefore incorporating feedback from field offices.” Dowlatchahi said the strategy would also allow the development of a “roles and responsibilities framework” for resource mobilization, which was in the first consultation stages.

A corporate training curriculum is being developed for field and headquarters staff. Tested in mid-November with assistant FAO Representatives, the curriculum drew positive feedback.

A practical guide to resource mobilization is also being prepared. This follows an assessment survey which confirmed that staff wanted a strategy that took full account of field office needs and opportunities. Staff also expressed a strong interest in training. Training tools will be supported by an intranet site, providing reference materials, contact points, calls for project proposals and a forum for debate. An informal meeting with Members and other resource partners is planned for March 2011.

Procurement team working as one

The pilot phase for a common procurement team combining the talents of the three Rome-based agencies has been extended for another year.

FAO Director-General Jacques Diouf extended the one-year pilot into 2011 based on the success of the team.

Staff work on joint tendering of commonly procured headquarters goods, with the aim of improving efficiency and reducing duplication. The professional and support staff are hosted at FAO headquarters and use the FAO and IFAD e-tendering system. Some 16 joint tenders have been issued to date and a further three are currently being worked on, worth in total an estimated US\$ 28 million. The issued tenders cover goods and services ranging from desktop and laptop computers and Adobe licenses, to cleaning services and stationery.

An evaluation of savings over the past year will be carried out in January. Benefits and savings will be monitored with key performance indicators.

Donatella Castellucci, senior contracts officer, said: “The team brings together resources, tools, expertise and experience of the three Rome-based agencies. Pooling our skills in this way clearly has benefits in terms of savings and quality of service, and demonstrates to the three agencies that we can deliver as one.” The changes are in line with recommendations in the Immediate Plan of Action for increased efficiency in procurement.

Comments? Suggestions? Write to Members-Update@fao.org.