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	منظمة الأغذية والزراعة للأمم المتحدة	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
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PROGRAMME COMMITTEE

Hundred and Tenth Session
Rome, 7 - 11 May 2012
EVALUATION OF FAO'S ROLE AND WORK IN FOOD AND AGRICULTURE POLICY
MANAGEMENT RESPONSE

Overall response to the Evaluation

1. FAO Management welcomes the findings and recommendations of the Evaluation of *FAO's role and work in food and agriculture policy*. Management appreciates the Evaluation's acknowledgement of the important policy work conducted across the Organization, with its emphasis on the work undertaken by the Economic and Social Department, the Technical Cooperation Department and the decentralized offices. The policy work of the other FAO technical departments is the subject of other evaluations; for example, the ongoing evaluations of the implementation of the FAO's Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries and of FAO's role and work in forestry.
2. Management is pleased with the finding that overall the Organization has met its mandate and the expectations of the Members, and performed remarkably well in providing an authoritative international platform where the issues of hunger, malnutrition, poverty and environmental degradation (including climate change) can be examined and decisions taken for collective action. Management concurs with the findings on the dispersion of FAO's policy work at country level, the perceived marginal role played by FAO in influencing national policy dialogue, and the challenge faced by the Organization of being a trusted adviser of government, while trying to influence national decision-making to translate global issues and agreements into country action and policies. Management also agrees with the need to strengthen the country-specific policy analysis capacity and to better address the issue of vertical and horizontal fragmentation.
3. Management appreciates the methodology and process adopted by the Evaluation team for such a broad and complex topic, combining extensive review of documents, interviews with staff in FAO and countries' Permanent Representatives, visits to case-study countries, dialogue and surveys with countries and development partners. Management proposes that follow-up actions should be taken on the basis of an analysis of policy functions currently covered and appreciated, as well as an identification of functions that would need to be developed and strengthened or phased-out in accordance with a long-term vision of policy work at FAO (including nature, focus and content) and

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integrating all FAO's core policy work. The actions proposed by Management in the matrix aim to complement the findings of the Evaluation and provide an operational response.

Context of the Evaluation

4. Management appreciates the efforts made by the Evaluation team to take into consideration and build on the findings of the previous internal and external evaluations conducted on FAO's policy work and to address the crucial point of the constraints to be encountered in the implementation of the proposed recommendations.

5. The Evaluation has taken place in a rapidly evolving context. Other ongoing reform and strategic planning processes are relevant to the implementation of the recommendations for the reform of FAO's policy work. For example, the Immediate Plan of Action for FAO's renewal; the recommendations emerging from the Regional Conferences; the revision of FAO's Strategic Framework and adjustments to the current Programme of Work and Budget in the first half of 2012; as well as responses to other evaluations¹ of FAO's work. Given the urgency of reforming policy work in the Organization, however, implementation of the Evaluation's recommendations should be a priority.

Implementation considerations

6. Management accepts all the recommendations of the Evaluation. It suggests that special attention be placed on the following six issues:

- a) **Impact culture.** It is agreed that FAO has to demonstrate the uptake and impact of its policy work, even if it may sometimes be difficult to attribute impacts to FAO's interventions only and more particularly to policy assistance.
- b) **Synchronization.** To ensure overall coherence with the ongoing functional and structural change processes, implementation of the recommendations of this Evaluation should be, to the extent possible, consistent with the principles and implementation plans of other relevant changes.
- c) **Capacity and continuity.** Management agrees with the Evaluation that "sustainable impacts can be achieved if there are institutions that can provide continuity and a framework for ensuring critical mass to be effective." Therefore, any change should be implemented so that sufficient capacity and expertise on relevant policy functions are in place and an optimal combination of presence at headquarters and decentralized offices exists.
- d) **Shift of FAO's technical assistance from field project to policy level.** Full implementation of the recommendations will imply profound changes in how FAO conducts its technical work at headquarters, particularly in support of country programmes, and the delivery of services at country level. The Evaluation of FAO's policy work reiterates and specifies the need identified in the Independent External Evaluation of FAO for the Organization's technical assistance to countries to be delivered at the policy/strategic level, rather than through technical field projects. This major institutional shift must start now, but will require time to be achieved. This said, well designed and strategic field projects can continue to play an important role in validating and refining FAO's policy advice and making the advice acceptable to the recipient countries.
- e) **Accountability system.** Management agrees with the Evaluation on the need to ensure that adequate accountability systems are put in place with clear indication of impact pathways, measurable results, relationships and responsibilities for results delivery. A proper accountability system is also expected to resolve the problem of "capture" analysed in the report. Establishment of a proper accountability system is not specific to policy work; it is a corporate issue and a prerequisite for successful implementation of the reform

¹ Evaluations of FAO's work on nutrition, forestry, the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries, and investment.

of FAO as a whole. Management proposes that the accountability systems on policy work include a corporate anchor in the Economic and Social Department with an adequate accountability mechanism for corporate deliverables on policy and an individual level with linkages to the Performance Evaluation Management System.

- f) **Economies of scale.** Management agrees with the Evaluation that the decentralization should be guided by clear criteria and points out that the economies of scale criterion should be based on a functional analysis of the concerned divisions. It also stresses that economies of scale should include policy services of global validity, such as: policy analysis tools, methods and approaches and related assistance, consolidation of policy findings across countries and dissemination, policy monitoring and country intelligence, cross-fertilization of country level and global policy work and knowledge generation.

7. Management agrees with the recommendation included in Recommendation 2.2 to shift policy work capacity in the Policy Assistance and Integrated Food Security Support Services (TCSP and TCSF) to the Economic and Social Department, and to the decentralized offices, and understands the critical need to move ahead in implementing Recommendation 2.1 on accountability in order for 2.2 to be effective.

8. The reshuffling of organizational arrangements for handling policy work would need to be accompanied by more investment in strengthening accountability systems (and particularly between decentralized and headquarters structures), as well as corporate transversal work, which would contribute to more effective coordination, accountability and effectiveness of policy assistance services and performances. In particular, Management will review the role of the Strategy Teams in preparing the revised Strategic Framework.

9. Finally, Management draws attention to the resource implications of the proposed action plan to implement the recommendations of the Evaluation. The plan of action includes key steps that will be undertaken by June 2012 and others by the end of 2012 and into 2013 and beyond. Management stresses the important implications for financial resource requirements, including for both the net appropriation and voluntary contributions. For example, substantial capacity needs to be built in the Organization to implement the recommendation on policy relevant to the agricultural sector reviews, as outlined in Recommendation 2.1.

Evaluation Recommendations	Management Accepted, partially accepted or rejected and COMMENT on the Recommendation	Management - Action to be taken			
		Action	Responsible Unit	Timeframe	Further funding required (Y or N)
Recommendation 1.1: FAO should protect the excellent policy work conducted at global level.	Accepted In light of resource constraints and inconsistent standards for review, production and use of high-profile outputs, maintaining excellent policy work at global level requires increased allocation from the net appropriation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Focus on protecting global policy work and strengthen it by ensuring global policy products are corporate and reflect multi-disciplinary comparative advantage of FAO. Identify global outputs and outcomes (including flagship publications) that are high Organizational priorities. Ensure consistent requirements for review and production (including translation). Ensure sufficient resources for production and dissemination. Address via increased application of resources the declining capacity to engage with users and other stakeholders in production and dissemination of these outputs whether through intergovernmental groups or technical committees, Regional Conferences and workshops, as well as through global 	DDK, DDO and OSP, in consultation with ADGs of relevant departments and DOs	Ongoing June 2012	Y

Evaluation Recommendations	Management Accepted, partially accepted or rejected and COMMENT on the Recommendation	Management - Action to be taken			
		Action	Responsible Unit	Timeframe	Further funding required (Y or N)
		governance processes (linked to Rec. 1.4).			
Recommendation 1.2: FAO needs to set clear priorities for its role in country-level policy assistance.	Accepted Management agrees with this recommendation and adds that priorities should remain need/demand driven with sufficient flexibility to respond to emerging issues. They should be defined on a case-by-case basis through rigorous assessment of FAO's comparative strengths that would be conducted in consultation with other development partners and take into account of: (i) mandated areas of work of FAO; (ii) results of country and regional level multi-stakeholder fora; (iii) record/capacity of FAO's policy work at country/ regional level.	Prepare guidance for formulation of policy assistance priorities and pathways, in particular in the context of the Country Programming Framework, while maintaining sufficient flexibility and agility to respond to needs/issues as they arise. Link to 1.3 and 1.4.	TC-ES and other relevant departments and OSD/DOs	End of 2012	N
Recommendation 1.3: To guide FAO's priority-setting and strategic management of policy assistance, it is recommended that Management articulates 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.	Accepted <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prioritization of policy work takes place in the context of development of the MTP/PWB through a bottom-up prioritization process, involving inclusion of policy priorities in Country Programming Frameworks and (sub)regional priority frameworks, and reviews by the Regional Conferences, the Programme and Finance Committees, Council and Conference. Prioritization of policy work should be linked to the broader prioritization process. 	Develop overarching management vision and strategic approach to policy assistance and for priority setting at country/regional level that will include requirements and methods for well informed assistance to address various stages of the policy cycle (e.g. policy formulation, intelligence, monitoring and capacity development). Link to Recommendations 1.2, 1.4, 2.1 measure 1 and Recommendation 6.	ES-TC, DOs and relevant technical departments	End of 2012	N

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This recommendation will benefit from the ongoing revision of FAO's Strategic Framework. 				
<p>Recommendation 1.4: FAO can and should play leading role in changing the way that policy formulation support is provided, particularly through a better analytical basis and a more strategic and more stakeholder-participatory facilitation, and with on-going engagement of its consultants and staff, so that there is greater country ownership and consequently a better chance of policies being accepted and sustainably implemented.</p>	<p>Accepted</p> <p>Has significant budget implication as the net budgetary appropriation does not account for permanent policy monitoring functions. Also important to distinguish impact of FAO's policy assistance activities from the impact of changes in country policies.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> See action above for Recommendation 1.3 which also applies here. Organize and use country and regional level multi-stakeholder structures and fora to improve engagement and ownership in policy cycle. Ensure coherence with decentralization strategy. Increase policy capacities in FAO offices (selected countries, subregions, regions) to ensure adequate mass of policy expertise. Ensure new terms of reference of FAORs include policy-related tasks and functions and adjust selection process and profiles accordingly. Ensure policy skills considered in recruitment and training plans of FAORs. Adequately embed and reflect 	ES-TC, other technical departments and DOs in association with DDK, DDO, OSP OSD and CSH	2012-13	Y

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		policy work and priorities in Organizational Outputs and Results.			
<p>Recommendation 2.1: FAO needs to strengthen the accountability for the performance and impact of its country-level policy assistance, since this is a prerequisite for any other reform effort to work.</p> <p>Measure 1: Create a Policy Intelligence and Preparedness System at the country level.</p> <p>Measure 2. Define country-specific impact pathways and results for policy assistance.</p> <p>Measure 3. Strengthen the accountability for policy assistance impact through incentives and performance management involving the Regional Conferences and FAOREps.</p> <p>Measure 4. Develop a system to monitor the impact of policy assistance at country level.</p>	<p>Accepted</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Management agrees with this recommendation and the measures proposed. Implementation of the measures, however, will have financial and human resource capacity implications. • Development of performance indicators for policy assistance should be linked to broader approach to measuring performance of DOs and FAO units in general. • Indicators for DOs should be linked to role of Regional Conferences in oversight of policy assistance and review of performance of DOs in the region. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Carry out review of existing knowledge management e-platforms and initiatives related to country-level policy assistance to identify overlaps, synergies, gaps. • Based on review prepare plan for streamlining and harmonizing existing systems to render better service to users of policy monitoring functions. • Set global standards and quality assurance to allow decentralized data/information gathering, entry and management. • Prepare guidelines for formulation of policy assistance pathways in context of Country Programming Frameworks, while maintaining sufficient flexibility and agility to respond to issues as they arise. • Implementation of measure 2 is linked to measure 1 and Recommendation 2.2. It requires 	TCI-TCS-ESA-EST, and DOs	June 2012	Y

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		<p>innovative and sustainable management decisions on need to generate, develop and manage policy intelligence functions in FAO and provide capacity development support to countries.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Integrate in Organizational Outputs and Performance Evaluation Management System. 			
<p>Recommendation 2.2: FAO needs to address horizontal and vertical fragmentation of policy work in its institutional structure.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To consolidate its policy work and increase capacity for policy assistance at country level using existing resources, the Policy Assistance and Food Security Support Services (TCSP and TCSF) should partly be shifted to the Economic and Social Department, and partly to decentralized offices. FAO should experiment with creation of formal Functional 	<p>Accepted</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Management recognizes the importance of addressing the horizontal and vertical fragmentation to improve relevance and quality of policy services offered. Management agrees with decentralization and transfer of policy capacities to ES. How the relocation of posts will be implemented and which functions and capacities of TCSF and TCSP should be transferred laterally or to decentralized offices will have to be assessed rapidly, including assessment of the policy capacities and roles in decentralized offices and functional relationships with headquarters. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mapping of existing policy functions and assistance, including related Organizational Output teams, against vision of how FAO policy work should evolve in coming years. This analysis should include accompanying structural changes, capacity building and adjustments to products and services necessary to evolve from the current situation to the target. Prepare detailed proposal for addressing horizontal and vertical fragmentation through appropriate mix of measures, 	TCS-ESA-ESD, OSD/DOs	June 2012	N

Evaluation Recommendations	Management Accepted, partially accepted or rejected and COMMENT on the Recommendation	Management - Action to be taken			
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<p>Technical Networks (FTNs) or alternative informal structures that focus on policy advice in subregions and/or in selected high-priority countries</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> FAO should implement policy of requiring staff in policy units at headquarters to “sell” specified share of their time to country policy assistance activities. 		<p>including transfer of TCSF/TCSP to ES, decentralization, strengthening of Organizational Output and Result teams, FTNs (building on lessons learned with existing teams and networks such as the Forestry FTN) and “internal contracting of policy assistance services” and other options.</p>			
<p>Recommendation 3: FAO should create an “impact assessment culture” with particular emphasis on assessing the impact of its country-level policy work and require all units doing policy work to document evidence trails for impact assessment.</p>	<p>Accepted</p> <p>This recommendation has significant budget implications as the net budgetary appropriation does not account for permanent policy impact monitoring functions. Management notes it is important to distinguish impact of FAO’s policy assistance activities (technical assistance) from impact of changes in country policies.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clarify causality and attribution of policy assistance ranging from production of outputs, outcomes and impacts (which is ongoing area of research). Start by developing policy measurement culture in FAO and consolidating policy monitoring and intelligence functions based on existing initiatives (MAFAP, FAPDA, MAfFS, ADAM, PIP). Develop country-level policy impact assessment approach and methodology and include other organizations working in this 	<p>TC-ES, DOs other technical departments in association with DDK, DDO, OSP, OED and CSH</p>	<p>2012-13</p>	<p>Y</p>

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		<p>area (IFPRI, WB, IFAD and WTO).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Revisit, adjust and systematically apply new logical framework for policy-related projects, including steps to include impact assessment. Train staff on performance assessment at individual and corporate levels (link to Rec. 4). 			
Recommendation 4: FAO managers of policy work consider the analytical capabilities of their staffs to identify gaps in skills that would be relevant in dealing more adequately with uncertainty in policy analysis and investment planning.	Accepted	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Carry out capability needs assessment and human resource capability mapping. Based on results of the above, develop capacity development programme to upgrade human resource capabilities. 	CSH with TCS/ESA/OEK, DOs	<p>1. by June 2012</p> <p>2. starting mid-2012 and continuous</p>	Y
Recommendation 5: FAO should continue to innovate in and expand the emphasis on its e-engagement efforts in order to extend its communications regarding policy.	Accepted	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Carry out review of existing knowledge management e-platforms and initiatives related to policy assistance functions in FAO to identify overlaps, synergies, gaps. Based on review, prepare plan for streamlining and harmonizing existing systems to 	TCS/ESA/OEK/OSD/DOs	<p>1. By mid-2012</p> <p>2. By end-2012</p>	Y

Evaluation Recommendations	Management Accepted, partially accepted or rejected and COMMENT on the Recommendation	Management - Action to be taken			
		Action	Responsible Unit	Timeframe	Further funding required (Y or N)
		<p>render a better service to users of policy assistance.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Produce regular policy reports at global, regional and country level. 		Continuous	
Recommendation 6: FAO should create central focus in its technical work on addressing more systematically the enabling environment of policies, institutions, legislation that are essential for uptake of technical solutions.	Accepted	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Actions will be identified following development of the overarching vision and strategic approach to policy assistance (see actions in 1.3) and related mapping of existing policy assistance and adjustments needed (see actions in 2.2); in particular the roles and skills of staff in the technical departments and their policy units will be reviewed and adjusted as appropriate to elevate policy analysis capacity. 		2012-13	N