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JOINT MEETING

**Hundred and Thirty-third Session of the Programme Committee and
Hundred and Ninety-first Session of the Finance Committee**

Rome, 16 May 2022

Update on the Technical Cooperation Programme (TCP) Strategic Exercise

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

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The document provides an update on the strategic exercise agreed by Members to refine the criteria of resource allocation and re-imagine the Technical Cooperation Programme (TCP). It provides information on the status of the consultations on regional TCP resource shares, the internal consultation with Regional Offices on the within-region distribution of resources and the work on adjusting operational guidelines in response to the 2020 TCP Evaluation and the alignment to the FAO Strategic Framework 2022-31 implementation. A section on TCP reporting provides an overview of current efforts, results and catalytic outcome of TCP assistance since 2018.

GUIDANCE SOUGHT FROM THE JOINT MEETING

- The Joint Meeting is invited to provide guidance on the progress of the strategic exercise to refine the criteria of resource allocation.

Draft Advice

The Joint Meeting:

- **noted with appreciation the overall progress on the refinements of the criteria for TCP resource allocation, in particular *within* regions, considering ways to ensure greater uniformity while keeping the required flexibility to respond to regional specificities;**
- **noted the need for updates to TCP operational guidelines in response to the 2020 TCP Evaluation and the alignment to the FAO Strategic Framework 2022-31 implementation;**
- **welcomed the efforts to enhance reporting of TCP results with the aim of documenting more systematically its catalytic effect, contributing to Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) targets and learning from best practices for the continuing enhancement of the programme; and**
- **invited FAO Members to conclude consultations on the final review of the TCP resource shares and looked forward to receiving a full update at the next session.**

I. Background

1. In November 2020, the Joint Meeting of the 129th Session of the Programme Committee and 183rd Session of the Finance Committee requested FAO to begin a strategic exercise, in consultation with Members, aimed at reviewing aspects of the TCP documented in the 2020 TCP Evaluation and efforts initiated by management to re-imagine the TCP. In March 2021, FAO presented a Roadmap for the strategic exercise for consideration by Members ([JM 2021.1/2](#)).

2. The Joint Meeting of the 130th Session of the Programme Committee and the 185th Session of the Finance Committee (22-26 March 2021), in its Report ([CL 166/8, para 12, e](#)):

“welcomed the objectives of the proposed Roadmap for the strategic exercise to refine the criteria of resource allocation and re-imagine the TCP in close consultation with Members; requested this exercise to include the review of the criteria for indicative allocations to regions in line with the 35th (Special) Session of FAO Conference;”

3. The 166th Session of the Council (26 April - 1 May 2021), in its Report ([CL 166/REP, para 23, c](#)):

“underlined the recommendation on the TCP for Management to complete a strategic exercise, in consultation with Members, with the aim to refine, and possibly unify, the criteria of resource allocation, beyond the traditional one of per capita income, and taking into account the specific needs of each region, such as rural poverty and inequality, vulnerability to climate change and biodiversity degradation; and to enhance performance management to be submitted for approval by the 43rd Session of the Conference.”

4. The Joint Meeting of the 132nd Session of the Programme Committee and 188th Session of the Finance Committee (Rome, 8, 9 and 12 November 2021, in its report ([CL168/7, para 10, d, e](#)):

“d) encouraged the continuation of the inclusive and transparent approach in 2022, ensuring Members’ participation in the strategic exercise to refine the criteria of regional TCP resource shares; and

e) invited Management to provide updates on the refinements of the criteria for TCP resource allocation within regions, considering ways to ensure greater uniformity while keeping the required flexibility to respond to regional specificities.”

5. The 168th Session of the Council (29 November - 4 December 2021, in its Report ([CL 168/REP, para 17, a](#)):

“commended the progress accomplished in the process to refine the approach for Technical Cooperation Programme (TCP) allocation among regions, including the importance of context specific approaches, according to the results generated by the methodology being developed and based on the principle of universality and the criteria approved by the 166th Session of the Council, giving special attention to Least Developed Countries (LDCs) and Small Island Development States (SIDS), and looked forward to the continuation of the refinement approach in an inclusive and transparent manner in 2022;”

II. Regional TCP resource shares

6. In response to Governing Bodies directions in the first half of 2021 and following the agreed Roadmap, FAO Management held two informal consultations with Members on regional TCP resource shares (16 July and 10 September 2021). The first informal consultation reviewed the statistical data available for the criteria proposed by the 166th session of the Council and the data considered when regional TCP resource shares were established in 2008. The second informal consultation proposed possible scenarios for calculating regional resources shares based on the criteria suggested by Members.

7. As documented in [JM 2021.2/2](#), FAO Management provided Members with the visualization of the criteria and related data through maps and a spreadsheet tool to explore scenarios for regional TCP resource shares calculations by adjusting the weight given to each of the criteria.

8. Table 1 below shows two examples illustrated to Members during the informal consultations which apply different sets of weights to the criteria and the resulting changes in regional shares (both in percentage and in US dollar terms).

9. The 166th Session of the Council approved the principle of universality and the criteria beyond income level of Prevalence of Undernourishment (PoU), Poverty, Inequality, Vulnerability to Climate Change, and Biodiversity, giving special attention to Least Developed Countries (LDCs) and Small Island Development States (SIDS) and reiterated the importance of context specific approaches.

Table 1: Examples for calculated regional shares

	Example 1	Example 2
Criteria	Weight	Weight
Universality	25	14.3
LDC	25	14.3
PoU	10	14.3
Poverty	10	14.3
Inequality	10	14.3
Vulnerability	10	14.3
Biodiversity	10	14.3

* total of weights summing to 100

	Example 1					Example 2				
FAO Regional Office	RAF	RAP	RLC	REU	RNE	RAF	RAP	RLC	REU	RNE
Current share	40.0%	24.0%	18.0%	10.0%	8.0%	40.0%	24.0%	18.0%	10.0%	8.0%
Calculated share	40.3%	24.5%	18.3%	8.3%	8.6%	39.8%	24.6%	19.3%	7.7%	8.6%
Difference between current and calculated share	0.3%	0.5%	0.3%	-1.7%	0.6%	-0.2%	0.6%	1.3%	-2.3%	0.6%
Current allocation (USD million)	44.8	26.9	20.2	11.2	9	44.8	26.9	20.2	11.2	9
Calculated allocation (USD million)	45.2	27.5	20.5	9.3	9.6	44.7	27.5	21.7	8.6	9.6
Difference current and calculated allocation (USD million)	0.4	0.5	0.4	-1.9	0.6	-0.2	0.6	1.5	-2.6	0.7

10. The matter was presented again during an informal meeting of the Independent Chairperson of the Council with the Chairpersons and Vice-Chairpersons of the Regional Groups held on 27 January 2022. A decision on adopting changes or on keeping the status quo on regional shares will have to be endorsed by the 43rd Session of the FAO Conference in July 2023.

III. Within-regions distribution of TCP resources

11. A second part of the Roadmap for the TCP strategic exercise consisted in the review of the allocation of resources within regions. In line with the directions from Members, FAO Management is aiming at greater uniformity while ensuring the necessary flexibility to respond to regional specificities.

12. As described in document [JM 2021.1/2](#), the responsibility and accountability for the use of the regional indicative TCP allocations is assigned to Regional Representatives, and at country level to FAO Representatives. Regional Representatives are accountable to the Deputy Director-General (DDG) with oversight of the Partnerships and Outreach Stream for the use of TCP in line with existing operational guidelines. The DDG retains the oversight and the authority to take any remedial measures that may be required if responsibilities assigned to the decentralized levels are not fulfilled, including redistribution of unused resources. This has not been required since decentralization took effect in 2010.

13. Regional Representatives are advised to manage the TCP regional allocation considering the corporate obligation to:

- a) commit the entire allocation within the biennium in which it was approved;
- b) deliver the entire appropriation by the end of the biennium following the biennium of approval of that appropriation;
- c) ensure that, in allocating resources, special attention is given to Low-Income Food-Deficit Countries (LIFDCs), Least-Developed Countries (LDCs), Land-Locked Developing Countries (LLDCs) and Small-Island Developing States (SIDS); and
- d) ensure the involvement of the FAO Representatives in the prioritization and selection process of regional and subregional TCP projects.

14. Within the above guidance, each region developed a set of additional region-specific criteria to guide the allocations under the responsibility assigned to Regional Representatives, and flexibility was hence ensured to adapt to region-specific challenges and opportunities.

15. According to the TCP Evaluation ([PC 129/2](#), Findings 7 and 8), “*all regions have well-defined criteria for TCP fund allocation to countries within their respective regions*” and “*countries are generally satisfied with the post-decentralization allocation process and amounts received*”. It is further recalled that in its Report ([CL 165/9](#), para 10 h), the Joint Meeting “*noted the approaches adopted by Regional Offices for TCP resource distribution and reaffirmed the decentralization of the authority to manage allocations in full compliance with the TCP criteria and related corporate obligations.*” The criteria as documented through TCP Evaluation and as they stand currently are shown in Annex 3 of [JM 2021.1/2](#).

16. Flexibility also applies to the share of resources allocated to regional and subregional TCP projects. Needs and opportunities to achieve efficiencies and synergies through cross-border collaboration or on transboundary issues vary from region to region, and within region from period to period. The different number of subregional offices in each region, and nature of regional organizations partnering with FAO are additional factors benefiting from decentralized decision-making within the regional allocations.

17. The TCP Evaluation also showed how the application of the region-specific criteria resulted in a range of possible indicative base allocations, which are communicated to FAO country offices at the beginning of a biennium. In addition to this indicative base allocation to countries, all regions reserve funds for (sub)regional projects and for specific windows of funding that can be accessed by countries upon demand during the biennium and added to the initial indicative allocations. These funding windows are called differently from region to region, but all typically aim at supporting additional projects that, for instance, respond to prospects for catalysing resources, are of particular strategic relevance or respond to important unforeseen programmatic emerging needs or priorities.

18. In allocating funds beyond indicative base allocations, Regional Representatives carefully manage and ensure a balance between demands, the specific country situations within their region and equity in access to FAO technical assistance, while maximizing the catalytic and strategic use of limited funds. As outlined in [JM 2021.1/2](#), para 14, FAO Representatives submit requests for assistance from their countries in alignment with the Country Programming Framework (CPF) derived from the United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF), which determines their contribution to relevant SDGs targets and indicators. As the demands at country level normally exceed available resources, the FAO Representative engages in a prioritization process with national counterparts in line with priorities agreed in the CPF.

19. Regional Representatives count on their management teams and dedicated TCP Officers to support country offices with quality assurance and decision making on final resource allocations.

20. As such, the final allocation by country may vary from biennium to biennium. As shown in Figure 1 from the 2020 TCP Evaluation, FAO country offices are generally satisfied with biennial TCP allocations, even if results also reflect dissatisfaction with limitations in overall resource availability.

Figure 1: Level of satisfaction on the biennial TCP allocation to the country

Source: Survey of FAO country offices – TCP Evaluation (Main Report)

21. Following the request from Members to consider ways of achieving greater uniformity among regions while keeping flexibility to respond to regional specificities, two consultations with FAO Regional Representatives have been held in early 2022.

22. All Regional Representatives welcomed the guidance provided by the 166th Session of the Council to help guide TCP allocations and agreed to work collectively towards a greater uniformity of approach among regions. As already recognized by Members, all Regional Representatives also emphasized the need for flexibility, underlining, for an effective and equitable use of TCP, the necessity to consider the specific evolving context in countries and regions. This includes aspects, such as the availability of alternative donor support, sudden shocks that can impact programmatic priorities and technical support needs (e.g. COVID-19, food chain disruptions), the timeliness of assistance in particular situations, and the readiness/capacity to use assistance productively within a specific timeframe. As such, final allocations to countries may vary from the indicative base allocation and from biennium to biennium and is the result of highly adaptive programming.

23. Going forward, best approaches to refine the criteria for TCP resource allocation within regions, considering ways to ensure greater uniformity while keeping the required flexibility to respond to regional specificities, will be explored and elaborated in collaboration with regions. The reviewed allocation model will result in improved transparency and strengthened governance. The focus will be on increasing the effectiveness, the catalytic impact and the strategic use of TCP limited funding. This process will continue to move in parallel with the update to the TCP operational guidelines and related TCP criteria for project approvals. The elements for a refined approach to within-regions allocation will be presented at the next Joint Meeting in the Fall session 2022.

IV. Update to the TCP operational guidelines

24. Another objective of the Roadmap agreed by Members is the update of the TCP operational guidelines. As part of the operational guidance provided to Decentralized Offices (see [JM 2021.1/2](#) section D for details), the TCP Manual, an annex to the FAO Guide to the Project Cycle, specifies the operational policies and standards applicable to TCP. This includes the set of criteria that all projects approved against TCP resources need to comply with. These criteria were last reviewed in the framework of the TCP decentralization in 2009 ([CL 136/REP, para 37](#)).

25. FAO has recently finalized a first streamlining of its operational guidance to reflect the recommendations of the 2020 TCP Evaluation and to be aligned with the FAO Strategic Framework 2022-31. In particular, the revised TCP Manual highlights that TCP supported assistance:

- a) responds to national or regional priorities set in FAO's Country Programming Frameworks/UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Frameworks and priority

setting processes led by recipient countries, while, by nature, TCP emergency assistance addresses unforeseen needs;

- b) contributes directly to at least one SDG target and outcome of FAO's Programme Priority Areas;
- c) results in clearly defined outputs and outcomes leading to larger scale impacts and should have catalytic or multiplier effects, such as increased mobilization of government, donor or investment funds;
- d) addresses gender equality in identification, design and implementation in full alignment with the Policy on Gender Equality 2020-30; and
- e) where possible, should contribute to new or strengthened partnerships, including with private sector where relevant and in line with FAO Strategy for Private Sector Engagement 2021-2025.

26. No changes are foreseen with respect to the maximum duration (36 months) or maximum budget (USD 500 000) of a TCP project.

V. TCP results reporting

27. Recommendation 4 of the 2020 TCP Evaluation foresees that *“FAO should establish organizational mechanisms to monitor TCP results and to follow up on the catalytic effects of TCP-projects after closure, as well as systems to capture and report best practices and lessons learned.”*

28. Building on efforts initiated in 2018, the approaches and systems to monitor TCP results and to capture and report on best practices are continuously being refined. A first outcome of these efforts was presented to Members in November 2019 in the form of an annual report. The report, posted on the [TCP website](#)¹ provides a comprehensive review of TCP projects that completed implementation in 2018. It presents the achievements and catalytic role of TCP-funded projects and provides information on the strategic alignment, characteristics, typical interventions and results of the programme.

29. Instead of publishing an annual physical report, a dynamic approach has been adopted by reporting on TCP results and catalytic outcomes as they materialize. The TCP website today is a repository for results information on all completed projects since 2018 and is being continuously updated as terminal reports and other related information are received.

30. The website is not only an access point for TCP terminal reports and results data, but also features a series of analytical “in focus” stories to highlight specific features and use of TCP in a concise and engaging manner. As new in focus stories are added, attention is drawn to the information over FAO social media channels and the FAO Members Gateway. A snapshot of information from the website on all projects results that completed implementation in 2020-21 is presented in Annex 1 and compared to those that completed implementation in 2018-19.

31. The 2020 TCP Evaluation has confirmed the findings and outcomes of our results monitoring and reporting. Most notably, the evaluation, looking at the period 2012-19 found evidence for catalytic outcomes valued at USD 2.8 billion. Comparing performance between biennia has revealed that projects that concluded activities in 2018-19 (615 projects for a total value of USD 135 million) supported the mobilization of USD 1.2 billion, while projects in 2020-21 (433 projects for a total value of USD 100 million) supported the mobilization of USD 1.7 billion. It should be noted that USD 805 million of these resources were actually channelled through FAO in the form of trust funds.

32. The importance of TCP in resource mobilization for Members cannot be underestimated and is now well documented. For every USD 1 invested through TCP, USD 9 were mobilized in 2018-19. In 2020-21, this figure increased to USD 17 for every USD 1 invested.

33. As echoed by the TCP Evaluation, catalytic outcomes are not limited to resource mobilization alone. Other catalytic effects include:

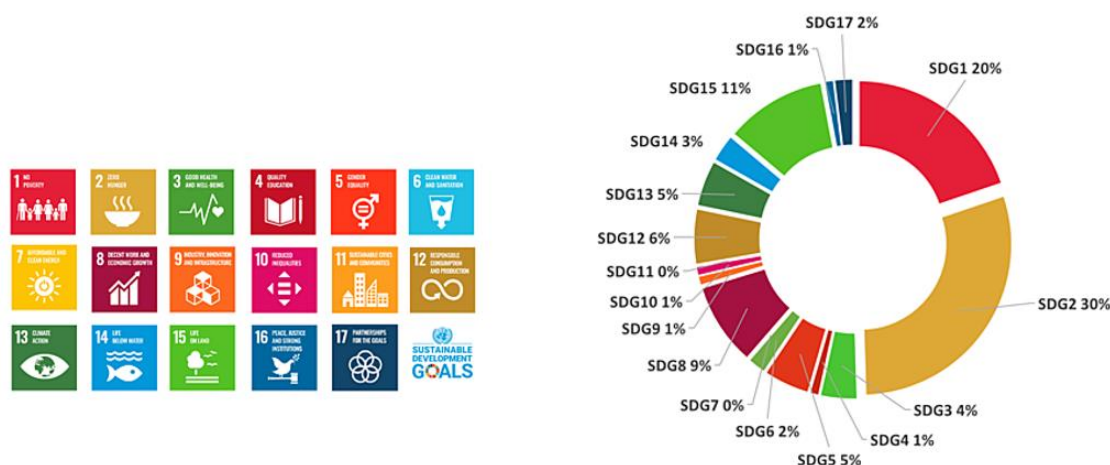
¹ www.fao.org/technical-cooperation-programme

- a) improvements in farming systems that lead to their wider diffusion and adoption by farmers and the private sector;
- b) improved and strengthened institutional capacities;
- c) timeliness in bridging a critical gap (e.g. emergency mitigation, preparedness activities);
- d) policy, legal and regulatory changes that facilitate the development of the agricultural sector; and
- e) improved forms of collaboration at regional and international levels.

34. Capturing these catalytic outcomes, which often materialize well after project closure, is complex and challenging given the many TCP projects approved in a biennium (700-800). Currently, the results are primarily derived from projects terminal reports and Country Annual Reports. A more systematic approach to collecting outcome/impact, possibly including data other than resource mobilization, is in early stages of development. The intention is to align to corporate approaches to establish FAO's contribution to the Strategic Framework 2022-31 and SDGs targets and indicators.

35. The result of current efforts to map TCP contributions against SDGs can be found in Figure 2 below along with additional highlights in Annex 1. The TCP website provides full details.

Figure 2: Use of TCP Allocation by SDGs (projects completed within 2018-2021)



Source: TCP website

Annex 1: TCP results and current approach to data collection (extracted from the TCP website)

About **700** to **800** TCP projects are approved every biennium and more than **1 000** TCPs can be operational at the same time. The challenge to systematically monitor and document how the TCP delivers for **Member Countries** has been taken up since 2018. Results and Indicators are primarily derived from published **Terminal Reports**, but also from **Country Annual Reports**, the 2020 **TCP Evaluation** and from information provided by TCP Programme Officers and Lead Technical Officers.

Results Category Description

Resources mobilized

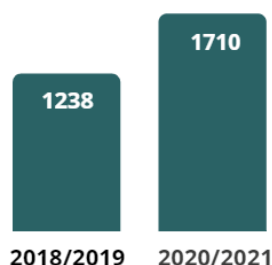
Financial resources mobilized through various types of support provided by TCPs that attracted further investment by national governments, or funding from donors and multilateral agencies such as GEF/GCF, or that led to loans from regional/international development banks and funds. Whenever a part or the totality of mobilized resources are implemented through FAO, such amount will be recorded as "implemented through FAO"

Technical facilities upgraded

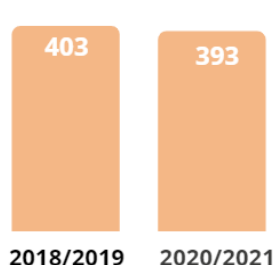
Refers to material support in various forms provided to enhance capacities, resilience and preparedness of counterparts and communities (examples range from the establishment of micro-irrigation systems, data processing equipment, greenhouses, tree nurseries, upgrading of laboratories or communal food processing facilities).



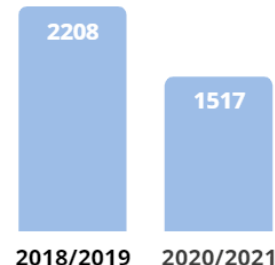
Resources Mobilised USDM



Resources Implemented through
FAO USDM



Technical Facilities Upgraded



Number of outreach products produced

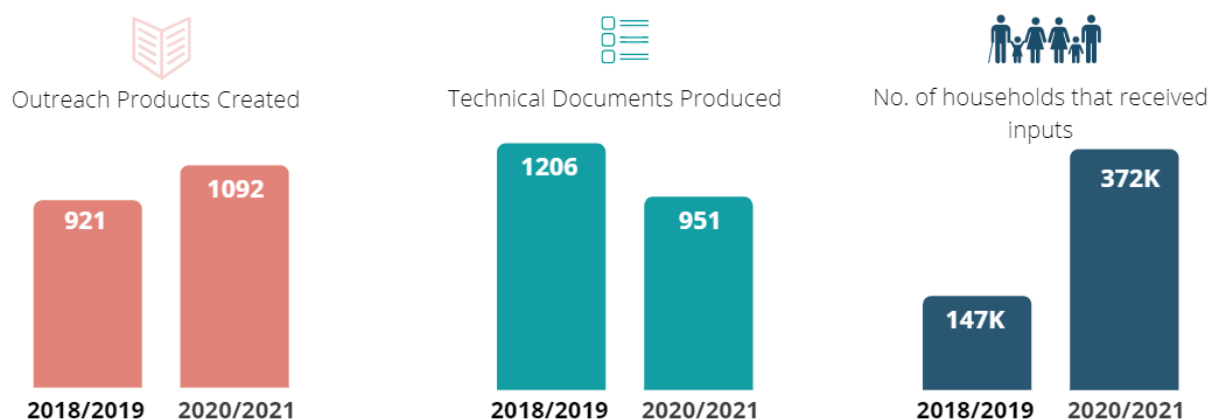
Accounts for the different types of training material produced (manuals, posters, videos, brochures, TV/radio programmes).

Number of technical documents produced

Refers to the number of technical reports, assessments, surveys and technical guidelines delivered as project outputs. Back-to-office reports, and meeting, workshop and training reports are not counted.

Number of households that received inputs

Indicates the number of households that received assistance through the provision of various types of inputs like seeds, tools, poultry, vaccines and/or fodder for livestock, equipment, etc.

**Number of policies, programmes, strategies, action plans, and pieces of legislation prepared**

Accounts for outputs that are typically used by counterparts in follow-up to TCP assistance and are relevant to achieve higher-level outcomes and impacts.

Number of technical government staff trained

Accounts for the number of staff from government institutions/ministries that received training improving their capacities and awareness. When not specified in the terminal report, an average of 10 staff are counted per workshop/event. Inception and other planning workshops are not counted.

Number of non-government staff trained

Accounts for the number of people that received training that enhanced awareness, knowledge and skills (farmers, private sector actors, community leaders, or staff of civil society organization). When not specified in terminal reports, an average of 20 people are counted per workshop/event.

