

Project Evaluation Series

Evaluation of the project “Cross-cutting: Targeted support for agricultural statistical innovation at FAO”

Project code: MTF/GLO/707/BMG

Management response

Evaluation of the project “Cross-cutting: Targeted support for agricultural statistical innovation at FAO” - Management response <i>Errore. L'origine riferimento non è stata trovata.</i>					02/2023
Evaluation recommendation	Management response Accepted, Partially accepted or Rejected	Management plan			
		Actions to be taken, and/or comments about partial acceptance or rejection	Responsible unit	Time frame	Further funding required (Y or N)
<p>Recommendation 1.</p> <p>It is recommended that future multi-component projects that share a common objective but not strong synergies should generally not be proposed or at least should include a stronger management coordination component, both within FAO and by the Gates Foundation in its work with FAO. <i>See Finding 2.</i></p>	Partially accepted	In the future, formulators should adopt different administrative solutions/ project management modalities that could better support implementation and operational management by allowing the subteams to oversee their component with greater independence. If this solution is adopted, a higher coordination budget should be agreed to allow for a central team to provide overall oversight and administrative support for the programme as a whole.	ESS	Continious	No
<p>Recommendation 2.</p> <p>The effectiveness and efficiency of FAO’s external stakeholder communications, particularly at country level, should be addressed and improved by implementing an appropriate and adaptable, Constituent Relationship Management (CRM), including application software. <i>See Conclusion 2.</i></p> <p>The general characteristics of a CRM application should enable it to manage and track the status and progress of the individual project activities related to each of its stakeholders, reducing the time required for this task. This would be done by maintaining and updating contact records of official interactions with stakeholders, especially national ministry contact persons. It would have the ability to flag non-current or unreliable contact records as well as to cater for multiple focal points for different contexts. For example, it could more easily identify national staff trained on FIES analysis in addition to the SDG focal person. These staff often move between posts.</p>	Partially accepted	We recognize the importance of tracking relationships with stakeholders, but in terms of specific applications of the CRM system, we remain of the opinion that the cost, compared to the actual benefit, would have been excessive. The implementation of CRM would have been complex to apply in the framework of this specific project, with the lack of other known similar applications within FAO, making it all the more difficult, and would, therefore, had detracted focus from the main objectives of the project. In the case of Food Security and Nutrition Statistics team, in charge of the FIES, the use of the CRM has not been considered so far but the team is willing, with the needed support, to evaluate the possibility of using it.	ESS	Continious	No

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This recommendation is applicable across all the project components that had country level contact. In particular it is relevant to the approval of the publication of SDG indicator estimates and the validation of FIES estimates with the relevant national institutions. The information system, based on the above CRM, should automate the tracking of FIES estimate validation and adoption, with links to the microdata publication process. The application should be able to generate reports automatically on the periodicity, current timelines and status of FIES data collection and analysis as incorporated within the national surveys ¹ .					
Recommendation 3. FAO should continue its support for Stream A of the Interoperable Agricultural Investment Data component, notably in discussions with UNSD concerning their adoption of its methodology. This support should recognise the highly innovative nature of the methodology underlying Caliper as an interoperable classifications server and its potential general applicability across the field of statistics. In particular, Caliper would be useful at country level to manage and improve the use of national classifications. It would benefit from further support from the Gates Foundation to this end. <i>See Conclusion 3.</i>	Accepted	Caliper is now the FAO platform for the dissemination of statistical classifications. Based on this evidence, ESS will continue dialogue with UNSD aimed at promoting a larger adoption of Caliper - both inside the two Organizations and with other partners. FAO will support collaborations with NSOs to encourage the creation of country-specific "nodes" of Caliper.	ESS and OCS	2022-2023	Yes

¹ CRM packages that could be researched as a means of understanding how such applications can meet FAO's requirements include CiviCRM, SuiteCRM, and EspoCRM. This statement does not constitute a recommendation.

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<p>Recommendation 4.</p> <p>FAO and the Gates Foundation should provide continued support, as currently organised, for the 50x2030 Initiative, as the successor to the AGRISurvey and Open Data components. In countries not eligible for 50x2030 Initiative, FAO should continue supporting with the AGRIS survey approach. <i>See Conclusions 4-7.</i></p>	Accepted	The ESS Division in collaboration with the country representations and the regional offices will guarantee technical assistance to countries interested in establishing or improving national agricultural surveys when resources are available. The technical support will take stock of the lessons learned in the implementation of AGRISurvey and 50x2030 Initiative.”	ESS	2022-2030	Yes
<p>Recommendation 5.</p> <p>FAO should fully integrate operationally any continuing Open Data activities with AGRISurvey, while maintaining a distinct statistics dissemination unit within FAO (FAM Catalogue). FAO should continue to maintain FAM and sustain activities related to it as a distinct microdata dissemination platform within FAO. <i>See Conclusion 4.</i></p>	Accepted	<p>FAO Statistics Division (and OCS) will continue providing technical assistance on Open Data activities with application to agricultural statistics, including in countries not supported by existing donor funded projects (e.g. GSARS and 50x2030).</p> <p>The OCS has already been involved in mobilizing resources for sustaining the FAM activities and accordingly a project proposal has been developed and submitted to potential donors. Moreover, a revised proposal with minimum funding resource request from the regular program has also been developed and submitted to FAO management. The recommendation will immediately start to be implemented as soon as positive responses are obtained either from the potential donors of the FAO management.</p>	ESS and OCS	Continuous	Yes

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<p>Recommendation 6. Partners should be sought for implementing Open Data activities that are not related to agricultural statistics, such as the revision of legislation covering respondent confidentiality. <i>See Finding 6.</i></p>	Accepted				Yes
<p>Recommendation 7. FAO should consider seeking funding to allocate more time for upfront and continuous on-the-job training on AGRISurvey modules for a faster turnaround. This would give ample time for the countries to familiarize themselves with the concepts, FAO should invest in designing and implementing an interoperable data quality management module to supplement the existing AGRISurvey modular approach. This module will need to have the capacity to integrate with national data quality assurance frameworks of various types. <i>See Conclusion 7.</i></p>	Accepted	The tool is already in place, and continuously being improved, e.g. training materials under AGRIS Survey modules, which are already available. Additional support for the accelerated integration into 50x2030 is being provided by MTF/GLO/1078/BMG. ESS continues to develop the mechanisms for guaranteeing data quality management.	ESS	Continious	Yes
<p>Recommendation 8. FAO should provide continued support and seek external financing for FIES on its current composition of data collection by both Gallup World Poll (or similar) and FIES modules integrated into national surveys. Support should take into account the expectation that the number of countries covered by GWP should decline over time in normal circumstances but that there is a possible continuing need for data collection by GWP (or similar) in some countries. <i>See Conclusion 8.</i></p>	Accepted	ESS is continuously looking for more resources to directly collect and technically support FIES data collections in countries.	FAO/OCS/ESS	Continuous	Yes

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<p>Recommendation 9.</p> <p>In line with the recommendations in the 2018 evaluation of the Voices of the Hungry project, FAO should de-prioritize investment in the GWP data collection mechanism for high income countries. Instead, FAO should invest more effort to sensitize high-income countries to appropriately incorporate the FIES module in national surveys for increased reliance on national survey data for annual FIES estimates. Further to the recommendations in the past evaluation, FAO should invest more in technical capacity building among national institutions for the analysis of FIES data as included in their national surveys. <i>See Conclusions 8-10.</i></p>	Accepted	This is a long-term objective as priority (advocacy and technical support activities) is given to low income – food deficit countries. This transition could be accelerated if more resources are mobilized.	ESS	Continuous	Yes
<p>Recommendation 10.</p> <p>FAO should invest in an increased understanding of the relevance and active use of FIES related information products beyond SDG reporting. This should be coupled with the promotion of collegiality and harmonized understanding among international organizations active in the global ecosystem of food security monitoring of how FIES based food insecurity data can be interpreted for use in policy and decision making. <i>See Conclusions 8-10.</i></p>	Accepted	This is a crucial activity that ESS is prioritizing and currently implementing. Even in this case, the speed to achieve this objective is defined by the available resources.	ESS	Continuous	Yes

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