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PROGRAMME COMMITTEE

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**Follow-up report on the evaluation of FAO's Regional and Subregional
Offices for Africa (*cf. PC 114/2*)**

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1. The issues raised in the “Evaluation of FAO’s Regional and Subregional offices in Africa”,¹ carried out during 2012-13, remain of high priority to Management. A number of the issues in the matrix below have been superseded by other developments. These include the experience with implementation of the reviewed FAO Strategic Framework and MTP 2014-17 during 2014-15, and the measures to strengthen work planning, monitoring and programme delivery that are being put in place for 2016-17.² These measures aim to ensure a much closer integration of FAO’s work between headquarters, the Regional Office and country offices. The new arrangements also provide for additional catalytic funding, within the Regional Initiatives, for work in some country offices. Other aspects are discussed in more detail in the Independent Review of the FAO Decentralized Office Network,³ which builds on this Evaluation, along with the other four regional reviews. Work is ongoing to enhance the skill mix of the Regional and Subregional Offices and more work is needed to reinforce the operational and administrative capacity of the Regional Office.

¹ PC 114/12; PC 114/12 Sup.1

² CL 153/3 paragraphs 17-52

³ CL 153/14

Management Action Records (MAR) Matrix⁴

Accepted Evaluation Recommendations (a)	Action agreed in the Management Response (b)	Description of actions actually taken, or reasons for actions not taken (c)	MAR score (d)	Impact of, or changes resulting from, taken actions (e)
<p>Recommendation 1.1 (to FAORs, with the support of TC and OSD): As a matter of priority, each Country Office undertakes an internal review to establish which of the two strategies described above is the most appropriate for the specific Country Office context; based on this review, develop an immediate action plan to strengthen FAO's impact.</p>	<p>Accepted</p>	<p>Superseded. Recommendation 1.1, in which Management, in accepting, indicates that FAORs would complete (i) CPFs, (ii) country resource mobilization plans and (iii) country office work plans. While all countries have CPFs, not all countries have country resource mobilization plans separate from CPFs; and while the issue of country office work plans was discussed at headquarters within the framework of the old Strategic Framework about 2-3 years ago, there has been a great deal of planning within the reviewed Strategic Framework. In particular, the common results framework, indicators, reporting and monitoring apply equally to country offices, including being explicitly linked to targets at the country level. This new process accommodates the spirit of what was proposed in Recommendation 1.1.</p>	<p>4</p>	<p>n/a</p>
<p>Recommendation 1.2 (to OSD): In support of the approach proposed by each Country Office, and taking into consideration the capacity assessment undertaken in 2011 and 2012 in the Africa region, establish a corporate training programme. Training elements would include resource mobilization, project and budget formulation, communication, administration and finance, and results-based monitoring.</p>	<p>Accepted</p>	<p>Superseded. OSD has played a facilitating role since the centralization of training in 2013, using corporate resources for staff development. Training needs are now identified through the PEMs discussion. RAF submits one regional staff development plan on an annual basis, which is reviewed for corporate funding. In addition, during 2014-15 a special training programme has been developed for all regional offices to build decentralized office capacity to prepare and monitor CPFs and for formulating and monitoring projects (see 2.3 below). The corporate capacity building programme is aimed at strengthening the operational capacity of the regional, subregional and country offices with workshops, four weeks of follow-up on-the-job support, and e-learning tools. The schedule includes workshops in SFS (with</p>	<p>4</p>	<p>Training is demand-driven, based on the needs of country offices; not region-driven.</p>

⁴ 1 - None: no action was taken to implement the recommendation; 2 - Poor: plan and actions for implementation of the recommendation are at a very preliminary stage; 3 - Inadequate: implementation of the recommendation is uneven and partial; 4 - Adequate: implementation of the recommendation has progressed; there is no evidence yet of its results on the intended target; 5 - Good: the recommendation has been fully implemented and there is some initial evidence of its impact on the intended target; 6 - Excellent: there is proven evidence that the recommendation has had a positive impact on its intended target.

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		SFE) in October 2015, and in RAF (with SFC) in November 2015. Similar workshops are also being carried out in the other regions/subregions.		
Recommendation 1.3. (to OSD and OSP): Increase the immediate availability of catalytic funding for Country Office support to the Government, and for programme implementation.	Partially accepted. Management agrees with the principle of strengthening the use of TCP funding, use TCP funding to support CPF implementation, but does not agree with the suggested actions for achieving this, and instead makes reference to proposals made in document JM 2013.2/2.	As part of ICN2 follow up and RI1 implementation, several countries (Seychelles, Namibia, Madagascar, Benin, Angola and Niger) received catalytic funds to support the FAO offices in implementing FAO programmes. The ADG/RR, with SROs follow up, continues to support countries based on their requests. The appointment of P4 nutrition officers for SFS and SFC (and soon for SFE) will increase RAF's capacity in providing assistance to FAO offices. A consultation workshop on Post ICN2 for 33 nutrition officers/FAOR carried out in July 2015 in Accra will increase the FAO offices' capacities in mobilizing resources. The 2016/17 work planning for the first time includes all FAO offices.	3	SOs and RIs implementation will improve the planning and resource mobilization at country level.
Recommendation 1.4 (To OSD and the ADG-RR): Enable and encourage dedicated FAO leadership at country level by rewarding excellent FAOR performance.	Partially accepted. Management fully agrees that ensuring strong FAO country leadership remains a priority. It does not agree with one of the suggested actions on FAOR post grading.	Partially implemented. The ADG/RR continues to have overall supervision of the FAORs assisted by the SRCs and DRR in the case of the West Africa Team. There have been efforts to strengthen the senior management team in a variety of ways. For example, the number of Deputy FAORs has increased from four to eight (Burkina Faso, Chad, Mali, Democratic Republic of Congo, Madagascar, South Sudan, Ethiopia, Uganda). In some countries the presence of International Operations Officers (mostly former Emergency Officers at P3 and P4 level) has strengthened the management capacity in the offices. Although the reward system is not in place, there have been concerted efforts through training programmes to strengthen the leadership and management capacity of FAORs. Management establishing a stronger link between the FAOR's performance and the level of responsibilities as for instance expressed in size of programme delivery.	3	

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<p>Recommendation 1.5 (to TC): Country Offices should participate in the formulation of and assume direct responsibility for the country components of sub-regional, regional and global programmes, using either delegated authority from the budget holder, or the “baby” project modality under a central coordinating unit, in order to consolidate FAO’s activities in the country and create synergies between the often disparate elements.</p>	<p>Accepted</p>	<p>New policy, roles and responsibilities were put in place in December 2014 (DGB 2014/53) to align resource mobilization and the project cycle to the Strategic Framework, including direct role of FAORs in project formulation.</p> <p>Countries’ leadership of the target setting and planning for the biennium provides the basis for engagement with all constituents (subregional, regional and headquarters level) with projects and programmes at country level.</p>	<p>2</p>	<p>Projects formulated to make a more direct contribution to country priorities and FAO’s Strategic Objectives</p>
<p>Recommendation 2.1 (to the ADGRR): Focus the substantive technical work of the Regional Office on: (i) coordinating normative work and its policy dimensions; and (ii) leadership of the regional dimension of the Organization’s technical networks.</p>	<p>Partially accepted. Management agrees with the spirit of the recommendation, but believes that RAF technical officers will need to continue supporting country-level programmes and projects.</p>	<p>Most RAF activities are geared towards supporting the priorities of partner countries in their CPF, UNDAF and declarations of AU and RECs. The Regional Initiatives endorsed by the 2014 Regional Conference provide an avenue to coordinate and focus technical work on policy dimensions of regional priorities.</p>	<p>4</p>	
<p>Recommendation 2.2 (to the ADGRR): Re-profile five of the current professional technical posts in RAF to build capacity to provide a wider range of services to Country Offices and Africa-based governing and statutory bodies.</p>	<p>Partially accepted. Management agrees that the functions listed in the recommendation are critical, but not at the expense of abolishing other technical roles of the Regional Office.</p>	<p>RAF effectively responds to needs of country offices and Africa-based governing and statutory bodies as per need, while concentrating on FAO’s reviewed Strategic Framework and results-based management for Regional Initiatives, projects and programmes. Focal persons have been identified and capacitated among existing professional technical staff.</p>	<p>3</p>	

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Recommendation 2.3 (to CS): Commission a work organization and performance analysis of the RAF office in order to improve existing capacity in the administration and operations sections for more efficient and effective service.	Accepted	In collaboration with the CS Department, the TC Department sent a mission to RAF in September 2015 to help reorganize the operations functions of the Office; in light of the integrated programme and budget, this covered both assessed and voluntary contributions, and in particular, the integration of the former emergency and development programme operations. This is seen as a necessary step along with the implementation of other changes, including the new role of the Regional Initiatives Coordinator and the re-profiling of other operations and administration-related posts.	3	
Recommendation 3.1 (to OSD): Increase the size and skill mix of the sub-regional Technical Teams.	Accepted. Although the suggested action of consolidating technical support in two sub-regional teams requires more discussion and analysis.	Until now, the size and skill mix of subregional technical teams has been strengthened on an ad hoc basis. However, Senior Management is currently considering more structured interventions to strengthen the technical capacity in decentralized offices.		
Recommendation 3.2 (to the ADGRR): Strengthen Technical Team management arrangements.	Accepted	Multidisciplinary teams, both at RAF and in the Subregional Offices, are working in line with the CPFs and Regional Initiatives contributing to the Strategic Objectives.	4	
Recommendation 3.3 (to Regional Technical Officers and members of the sub-regional Technical Teams): Establish broader technical networks that include all FAO technical expertise in the region and expand their use.	Accepted	Mapping of expertise at FAOR in the 15 countries of West Africa has been completed. Similar exercises need to be done in other subregions.	3	n/a
Recommendation 4.1 (to OSD, TC and CS): Review and streamline programme cycle procedures.	Accepted	The Project Cycle Guide was revised and updated in line with DGBs 2014/53 and 2015/08. The specific requirements of funding sources (SSC, TCP, TeleFood, GEF, UTF) have been covered in	4	

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		separate appendices. In addition, 14 operational guidelines together with 14 UPKs for distance learning were produced based on DO-identified priorities.		
Recommendation 4.2 (to OSD and OSP): Streamline priority setting and planning processes.	Accepted	The priority setting and planning processes have been revised significantly in preparing the PWB 2016-17 and related work plans, in line with the enhancement of implementation arrangements of FAO Strategic Framework. Regional priorities endorsed by the Regional Conference in 2014 are implemented as Regional Initiatives, helping to focus FAO's work on results.	4	
Recommendation 4.3 (to CS, OSD and CIO): Provide one-stop-shop guidance online on the most current policies, procedures, responsibilities and authorities related to decentralized offices and field programme operations.	Accepted	The online FAO Handbook now provides this information.	4	
Recommendation 4.4 (to the ADGRR, OSD and CSH): Through better succession planning, introduction of a mobility policy and the abolition of vacancy management as a budget strategy, seek to address the skills mix issue and reduce the chronic vacancies in the region that undermine decentralized offices' capacity.	Accepted	Partial implementation. Mobility policy has been introduced, with a number of headquarters-based staff moving to regional offices, including RAF. Vacancy management for country offices is decentralized to RAF and is no longer applied as a cost-saving measure. Authorization to recruit is provided in an expedited manner by RAF once a country office submits a request to the FAOR Network.	3	Fewer vacancies within country offices. However, the length of time for an actual recruitment (i.e. between the VA and EOD) needs to be further reduced.