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## PROGRAMME COMMITTEE

### Hundred and Nineteenth Session

Rome, 16 - 20 May 2016

**Follow-up report on the Evaluation of FAO's Regional and Subregional  
Offices for Asia and the Pacific (*cf. PC 115/3*)**

### Guidance sought by the Programme Committee

The Programme Committee may wish to note progress on recommendations accepted by Management.

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

Mr Daniel Gustafson  
Deputy Director-General (Operations)  
Tel. +3906570-56320

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1. This report has been prepared in follow-up to the Evaluation of FAO's Regional and Subregional Offices for Asia and the Pacific.<sup>1</sup>
2. In line with FAO's policy on evaluations, this report provides an update on the status of implementation of the actions set out in the Management Response. Upon request by the Office of Evaluation (OED), the report introduces a Management Action Record Scoring (MAR Score) on a six-point scale, in which FAO Management self-assessed the level of adoption and implementation of recommendations.
3. As indicated in the Management Response, Management accepted seven of the nine recommendations. In particular, recommendations 8 (on reporting lines of the HR Officer in RAP) and recommendation 9 (on delegation of authority for the recruitment of international consultants) were rejected as not in line with the model in place in all Regional Offices (No 8) and as the substance had been superseded by new policy guidelines issued at the end of 2013.

*Overall progress in the implementation of all accepted recommendations*

4. The document entitled Decentralized Offices Network<sup>2</sup> presented to the 33<sup>rd</sup> Regional Conference for Asia and the Pacific endorsed the principles and the general criteria for the revision of FAO's coverage. The Regional Conference's recommendations will be presented to the FAO Council at its session in June 2016.
5. On recommendation 1 concerning the process for the identification of Strategic Framework results hierarchy and the country programming frameworks (CPFs), enhanced programme implementation arrangements were put in place for 2016-17 to more closely involve and focus on country requirements and results. New guidance on CPF formulation, at an early stage, facilitates the sharing of information among the different planning and implementation levels therefore strengthening the inclusiveness and interaction between country offices and Strategic Programme teams.
6. Regarding recommendation 2 on the current administrative and operational support (AOS) mechanism, a new Cost Recovery Policy was approved by the governing bodies in 2015 for progressive implementation from 2016. Efforts have been intensified to clarify cost recovery modalities particularly among the decentralized offices.
7. Resource mobilization has been strengthened through a training programme organized by the Regional Office. In addition, RAP also took a number of communication initiatives to raise the visibility of FAO's activities in the region therefore supporting the resource mobilization process.
8. In order to address recommendation 4, the Organization established in 2014 Technical Networks to create an enabling environment for discipline-specific exchange of knowledge and ideas. This has proven to be very beneficial in meeting the demands for technical services.
9. The post of Gender Officer in RAP was filled in July 2014 as a first step to increase gender and rural/social development capacity in the region. The gender work in the region has been positively impacted.
10. On recommendation 7, as indicated in the matrix, the situation has much improved. Training on GRMS has been delivered to all users and support is available from different sources. A system of super-users has also been set up in order to provide support in case of need.

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<sup>1</sup> PC 115/3; PC 115/3 Sup.1

<sup>2</sup> APCR/16/8

**Follow-up report on the Evaluation of FAO's Regional and Subregional Offices for Asia and the Pacific matrix**

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 resulted from taken actions (e)
<p><b>Recommendation 1: To FAO, on inclusiveness of the process for the identification of the SF results hierarchy and the CPFs</b></p> <p>In recognition of the respective lead roles and competences at the different levels of priority setting, the Evaluation recommends that:</p> <p>a) specific mechanisms be established for an active and structured participation of the heads of all FAO Decentralized Offices, including Regional and Subregional offices and Country Offices, in the identification and development of Strategic Framework results-based hierarchy; and</p>	<p>a) FAO's Corporate Programmes Monitoring Board (CPMB), with the support of OSP, to ensure that lessons learnt from the new corporate planning processes, with regard to the effective involvement of Regional, Subregional and Country Offices, inform the next planning cycle for 2016-17.</p>	<p>a) Lessons learned documented in MTR 2014 and used to inform enhanced programme planning and implementation arrangements put in place for 2016-17.</p>	5	<p>Output targets reflect country requirements.</p>

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<p>b) CPF formulation process includes a very early step of in-depth consultation between FAOREps, Regional Offices Multi-Disciplinary Teams, representatives of the SOs teams and HQ technical divisions, on the main areas and thrust of work wherein FAO can have a comparative advantage in any given country.</p>	<p>b) Ongoing revision of CPF guidelines to incorporate measures to engage Strategic Objective Teams and HQ Technical Divisions at an early stage in the CPF formulation process.</p>	<p>b) New CPF guidelines were issued in June 2015, which, through the coordination of the Regional CPF focal point, allow for the engagement of SP teams and HQ technical divisions from the very beginning of the CPF formulation process.</p> <p>CPF foundation training was designed and delivered late 2015 targeting regions through a training of trainer's approach to build the necessary knowledge at RO, SRO and M&amp;E officer levels to sustain the capacity for CPF formulation and alignment over the medium-term. The course highlighted the need for involving HQ technical divisions, regional offices, representatives of the SO teams and other relevant stakeholders in the formulation process.</p> <p>A CPF online course will be launched during 2016.</p>	5	<p>RAP is starting to consult with HQ on the preparation of a new CPF for Lao PDR.</p>
<p><b>Recommendation 2: To FAO, on the current AOS mechanism</b></p> <p>The Evaluation recommends that the rules and procedures regulating the calculation and distribution of AOS be revised as follows:</p> <p>a) information available on AOS should be harmonized across the different corporate systems;</p> <p>b) the PSC/AOS policy should be better communicated to the COs and a help-desk should be established in</p>	<p>a) OSP, CIO and OSD will accelerate efforts to harmonize AOS-related information across FAO systems, analyze discrepancies, and propose and implement changes.</p> <p>b) OSD and OSP will work to ensure that AOS modalities are</p>	<p>a) Information provided in FPMIS, COIN and GRMS has been made consistent.</p> <p>b) Every opportunity has been taken to clarify to Decentralized Offices the FAO policy and modalities for cost recovery. In particular, OSD has strengthened</p>	<p>5</p> <p>4</p>	<p>More accurate forecasting of AOS reimbursement by budget holders.</p> <p>Feedback received from new FAORs regarding the</p>

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<p>HQ to provide assistance on the matter;</p> <p>c) AOS need to be posted/made available to users according to a publicly available time-schedule;</p> <p>d) a mechanism should be established ensuring that financial and in-kind contributions by decentralized offices to the management and implementation of regional and global projects are equitably reimbursed.</p>	<p>communicated effectively to, and understood by, all Decentralized Offices.</p> <p>c) OSD and OSP will work to ensure that the timings of AOS reimbursements are clear and are communicated effectively to, and understood by, all Decentralized Offices</p> <p>d) A comprehensive review of the policy regarding project support costs is being undertaken at the request of the Finance Committee (JM 2013.2/3 and FC 151/8 refer). In the meantime, an interim model for the distribution of PSC of emergency projects has been implemented, following the integration</p>	<p>the HQ-based briefing programme for newly-appointed FAO Representatives.</p> <p>The forthcoming Regular Programme Budget Holder course will also address the importance of planning of administrative and operational support to projects. This e-learning course will be mandatory for all budget holders.</p> <p>c) OSD holds quarterly videoconferences with the FAOR Network Officers of decentralized network to discuss financial issues including cost recovery.</p> <p>d) New Cost Recovery Policy was approved by the Finance Committee and Council in 2015 for phased implementation in 2016.</p>	<p>5</p> <p>4</p>	<p>briefing has been positive.</p> <p>The FAOR Network Officers in the Regional Offices have demonstrated a good understanding of the FAO cost recovery policy and modalities during the quarterly video conferences and in communications.</p> <p>Implementation of new Cost Recovery Policy starting in second quarter 2016.</p>

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	of FAO's emergency and development activities.			
<p><b>Recommendation 3: To RAP and SAP, on Resource Mobilization and Communication</b></p> <p>a) Supporting and servicing DOs in the Region to develop and implement their Resource Mobilization strategies</p> <p>b) developing a resource mobilization community of practice within their areas of influence;</p> <p>c) Supporting DOs in the developing communications plan, providing quality assurance during implementation, including for the production of communication materials for resource mobilization, as well as more general awareness purposes.</p>	<p>RAP and other DOs will develop a communication strategy, plans and materials to support resource mobilization.</p> <p>a) Training programme to be delivered within the context of strengthened FAOR training programme, including a specific component on resource mobilization.</p> <p>b) New resource Mobilization Officer in RAP to lead development of community of practice.</p> <p>c) RAP and other DOs will develop a communication strategy, plans and materials to support resource mobilization in the RAP region.</p>	<p>a) In December, the country communication focal points came to RAP's offices in Bangkok for a workshop which included a session on partnerships and resource mobilization. The work continues and further details are provided under c) below.</p> <p>b) In December, a Resource Mobilization Virtual Session on "Exchange Rate Budget Revisions &amp; Verifications for European Union Projects" took place, including RAP. Webinars on resource mobilization are being prepared.</p> <p>c) In 2015, resources were made available to begin raising the visibility of existing donor-funded projects and programmes in Asia and the Pacific. The Regional Communication Officer (RCO) took the lead. Early in the fourth quarter, and in consultation and collaboration with country office communication focal points, a number of projects were identified by the RCO that could be examined more closely to highlight FAO's good work in helping member countries meet their objectives. These focal points on the ground, most with journalistic backgrounds, fanned out to gather compelling stories from the perspective of the end</p>	<p>5</p> <p>6</p>	<p>We are beginning to see evidence of DOs implementing Resource Mobilization strategies.</p> <p>A total of 67 FAO staff, including budget holders, programme officers and AFAORs from 13 DOs participated in the Virtual session. Given the regular interaction between the DOs and RAP, and noting the rich debate on this matter in recent meetings, there has been a demonstrated positive impact.</p>

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		<p>beneficiary – farmers, fishers, natural resource practitioners and their families. They prepare a suite of various human interest stories about how the lives of people had been changed for the better from our joint-interventions. The feature stories were in final editing by late 2015.</p> <p>In November of that year, the beneficiary feature story plan was taken to the next step with a videographer video documenting these and other similar stories across six countries in the region. In at least one case, a donor (EU) was willing to participate in the film and attest to how important the project work was and how satisfied the donor was.</p> <p>Continuous efforts have been made to engage and strengthen support to DOs and their RM efforts, particularly with focus on training and capacity building to DOs.</p>		
<p><b>Recommendation 4: To FAO and RAP, on technical expertise</b></p> <p>The Evaluation recommends that FAO and RAP:</p> <p>a) develop a more comprehensive and flexible system to draw upon technical expertise within the Organization and the Region to complement existing RAP capacity, in order to more effectively meet the demand for technical services of its Members;</p>	<p>a) Support further definition and implementation of corporate technical networks which bring together HQs technical departments and decentralized multi-disciplinary teams (PC114/2 Sup.1 refers).</p>	<p>Technical Networks were established in 2014 to create an enabling environment for discipline-specific exchanges of knowledge and ideas. Currently there are 17 technical networks. In February 2016, they had approximately 2600 members, 46% of whom work in decentralized offices. The Technical Networks have successfully improved their membership’s technical knowledge. The future emphasis will be on strengthening the relationship with all locations,</p>	<p>4</p>	

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<p>b) monitor attentively the performance of LTOs under the new Project Cycle Guide, through time recording systems, and allow open feedback and discussion among key players on systemic bottlenecks and possible ways forward;</p> <p>c) ensure that FAO projects and programmes meet quality standards</p>	<p>b) Management will monitor both LTO performance and the effectiveness of the new project cycle guidelines. It does not believe time-recording systems represent an effective performance monitoring tool.</p> <p>c) Support provided by OSD to the roll-out of phase 3 of the Project Cycle to ensure projects meet the required standards of FAO's Quality Assurance Review process.</p>	<p>including decentralized offices in order to continue to share and capture all knowledge produced at FAO.</p> <p>b) The effectiveness of the new Project cycle guide implemented further to DGB 2014/53 is under review.</p> <p>c) A capacity building programme was delivered in 2015, increased the capacity of RAP, and SROs, and Country Offices in the region on Project Cycle (including phase III), procedures and related FPMIS tools.</p>	<p>5</p> <p>5</p>	
<p><b>Recommendation 5: To FAO and RAP, on regional programmes</b></p> <p>a) FAO Technical Officers in HQ and RAP always communicate with the concerned country office, at the time of initial planning of any initiative involving specific country;</p> <p>b) The identification and formulation of regional programmes, both TCPs and extra-budgetary funded draw on the priorities of work identified by the technical regional commissions and</p>		<p>a) RAP has continued the practice of contacting the country office at the time of initial planning of any initiative involving the specific country.</p> <p>b) RAP continues to approve TCP projects linked to priorities expressed by technical regional commissions.</p>	<p>6</p> <p>6</p>	<p>Country offices are fully involved.</p> <p>Work of the technical commissions is drawn upon, e.g. for Forestry.</p>



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c) FAO Reps be involved in the RAP-led process of identification and selection of regional TCPs and other regional and global projects		c) RAP has continued to invite and share submissions in response to calls for proposals for regional TCP funding to ensure full involvement of FAO Reps.	6	This new initiative has had positive results.
<p><b>Recommendation 6: To RAP on gender analysis and social protection capacity</b></p> <p>The Evaluation recommends that RAP take immediate steps to increase gender and rural/social development capacity in RAP by hiring a Gender Expert with strong experience in gender and rural/social development issues in order to support the regional Gender Focal Point network and the country offices, integrate gender analysis and gender equality and rural/social development perspectives in the CPFs at both Outcome and Output level and in the normative and knowledge products, and fully implement the Gender Equality Policy. In consideration of the likely long delays in filling the post, RAP should also secure expertise on a short term basis.</p>	RAP will expedite procedures to fill the vacant Senior Gender Officer post.	The post of Gender Officer was filled in July 2014.	6	The gender work in the region has been positively impacted.
<p><b>Recommendation 7: To FAO, on further support to GRMS</b></p>				

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<p>The Evaluation recommends that FAO continues its support to the implementation of GRMS. Necessary actions are as follows:</p> <p>a) The Regional Offices have formulated their plans for the first half of 2014. Longer term support plans will also be devised through the Programme Executive Board.</p>		<p>a) A certification programme on invoicing in being established and the online training programme is being updated. Training in RAP has been undertaken through missions, Skype sessions and virtual training. In addition, in late 2015, a regional workshop dedicated to GRMS refresher training was delivered for 6 offices in the RAP region. Participating offices were selected based on level of support required and/or overall project size. An outposted Finance Officer took up duties in RAP in February 2016 and will support future training endeavours.</p>	5	
<p>b) The current configuration of access and super-user responsibilities will be revised in the second half of 2014 once the system is fully stabilised.</p>		<p>b) The current configuration of Super User access is being revised and will be moved to the SSC in Budapest once appropriate training has been provided, which is expected in the first half of 2016. The SSC team has the adequate resources to provide the Super User support functions in a timely manner and improve the support to decentralized offices and operations.</p>	5	

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<p>c) A Field Office reporting dashboard and numerous monitoring reports are available but need to be fully deployed.</p> <p>d) Certain approval hierarchies (e.g. travel, recruitment) should be revisited; and</p> <p>e) Responsibilities for GRMS need to be clarified, in order to ensure the timely and effective execution of transactions in support of operations.</p>	<p>d) See b) above</p> <p>e) See b) above. The overall operating model underlying GRMS needs to be reviewed in light of creating more synergies between administrative, operational and programme functions.</p>	<p>c) In addition to standard iMIS reports in a number of areas, which are available to all FAO offices, several reporting and dashboard functions have been made created for country offices and regional offices in the following areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Finance, cash and assets</li> <li>• Procurement</li> <li>• International travel</li> <li>• HR – currently available at the regional office but will be rolled out to country offices in 2016</li> </ul> <p>The use of the dashboard was a key part of GRMS refresher training.</p> <p>d) Approval hierarchies are being revised and streamlined as part of the SSC transformation. Although certain approvals will be streamlined and management by exception introduced, a number of controls will still remain to ensure proper segregation of responsibilities is maintained. This point is related to b) above.</p>	<p>5</p> <p>5</p>	
<p><b>Recommendation 8: To FAO, on reporting lines of the Human Resources Officer</b></p> <p>To ensure a consistent application of the corporate HR policy, the Evaluation recommends that the</p>	<p><b>Rejected</b></p> <p>Note: The primary reporting line of all HR Officers in Regional Officers is to the Regional Representative. The secondary functional</p>			

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<p>position of HR Officer in all Regional Offices be out-posted from OHRD, similarly to what is currently the case for other staff.</p>	<p>reporting line is the Director, OHR. Management believes that it is important to preserve consistency across the regions.</p> <p>Management will monitor the situation to ensure a consistent application of corporate HR policy in all regions.</p>			

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<p><b>Recommendation 9: To FAO, on delegation of authority on recruitment of international consultants</b></p> <p>The Evaluation recommends that further delegation of authority to Budget Holders be given for the recruitment of international consultants where there is sufficient capacity within the respective DO.</p>	<p><b>Rejected</b></p> <p>Note: New HR Policy guidelines on the recruitment of non-staff human resources (NSHR) were distributed at the end of 2013. These include the recruitment of international consultants. Some additional delegated authority to Regional Offices is included but all recruitment continues to be processed by the SSCs. Management believe these new guidelines supersede this Recommendation. OHR and HR Officers in Decentralized Offices will ensure that information on the new guidelines regarding the recruitment of NSHR are disseminated to all Decentralized Offices and understood.</p>			

\* **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 solid evidence that the recommendation has had a positive impact on its intended target