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# PROGRAMME COMMITTEE

**Hundred and Thirty-eighth Session**

**Rome, 20-24 May 2024**

**Follow-up report on the Evaluation of FAO's contribution to availability  
and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all (SDG 6)**

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### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- In line with FAO's policy on evaluations, this document provides an update from FAO Management on the implementation of the actions set out in the Management Response to the Evaluation of FAO's contribution to Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 6: Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all (Documents [PC 133/5](#) and [PC 133/5 Sup.1](#)).
- The overall implementation of the recommendations has shown significant progress, in particular on the strategic recognition of the central role of water resources management in FAO, the integration of water management into the Programme Priority Areas (PPAs) and coordinated and focused FAO's work across headquarters and Decentralized Offices and Governing Bodies (Recommendation 1), as well as further integration in the FAO Strategy on Climate Change 2022-2031 and its Action Plan 2022-2025 (Recommendation 3).
- The development of FAO's Conceptual framework on integrated land and water resources management (Recommendation 3) alongside other actions initiated since the presentation of the Evaluation, have immensely contributed to the achievement of the other recommendations, in particular the development and implementation of new Irrigation Needs and Potential Mapping Initiative (Recommendation 2); the global dialogue on water tenure in different platforms (Recommendation 3), capacity assessments and sharing good practices and technologies through organization of Rome Water Dialogues, international fora and symposia, as well as knowledge exchange platforms, and enhanced partnerships, communications and visibility (Recommendations 3, 4, 5, 6 and 7).
- While the implementation of related recommendations and actions are well on the way, the document also highlights needs to be addressed for further accelerating and scaling up the implementation of the recommendations made by the Governing Bodies, namely, strengthening technical capacities in both FAO headquarters and Decentralized Offices (in particular the Regional and Subregional Offices), staffing and capacity; and including water as a priority for collaboration with all resource partners to scale up extra-budgetary resource mobilization, partnerships and corporate support to implement integrated water resources management (IWRM).

### GUIDANCE SOUGHT FROM THE PROGRAMME COMMITTEE

- The Programme Committee is invited to review the content of the document and provide guidance as deemed appropriate.

#### Draft Advice

##### **The Committee:**

- **appreciated the update provided and acknowledged the progress made in implementing the recommendations and actions in the Management Response to the Evaluation of FAO's contribution to Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 6: Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all; and**
- **encouraged FAO to maximize the internal and external opportunities to prioritize water for collaboration with all resource partners to scale up extra-budgetary resource mobilization, partnerships and corporate support for integrated water resources management, recalling in particular water resources management being the 2024-25 biennial theme and the development of the UN system-wide strategy for water and sanitation.**

## I. Background

1. The Programme Committee at its 133rd Session in May 2022 discussed the Evaluation of FAO's contribution to Sustainable Development Goal 6: Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all<sup>1</sup> and its Management Response.<sup>2</sup> The Evaluation report described well the comparative advantage, potential and challenges for FAO to fully contribute to the water aspects of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and recognized FAO's ongoing efforts to provide more comprehensive and holistic support. FAO Management welcomes the opportunity to provide an update on the progress made in implementing the actions agreed in the Management Response.

2. In line with FAO's policy on evaluations, this report provides an update in Section II, with details in the Matrix, on the implementation of the recommendations and actions set out in Management Response during 2022-2023. Upon request by the Office of Evaluation (OED), it contains a Management Action Record Scoring (MAR Score) with a six-point scale, in which FAO Management self-assessed the level of adoption and implementation of the recommendations.

## II. Overall progress in the implementation of the recommendations

3. **Recommendation 1:** Significant progress has been achieved in developing coherent and strategic recognition of the central role of water resources management in FAO, through its mainstreaming in the FAO Strategic Framework 2022-31 and Programme Priority Areas (PPAs). "Water resources management for the *four betters: better production, better nutrition, better environment, and better life*, to achieve Agenda 2030 and the Sustainable Development Goals" was the theme of the General Debate at the 43rd Session of the FAO Conference and of the Biennial Theme 2024-25.<sup>3</sup> During the Conference, three high-level ministerial roundtables focusing respectively on water scarcity, water infrastructure and integrated flood risk management were organized.<sup>4</sup> The World Food Day 2023 featured water as a theme and water is included in the agendas of Governing Bodies including the FAO Regional Conferences and Technical Committees in 2024. FAO developed the FAO Conceptual framework for integrated land and water resources management (hereafter as "FAO Conceptual framework"), coordinated by the Land and Water Division (NSL) in consultation with other FAO technical units, Decentralized Offices and external experts. In this exercise, NSL addressed defined strengths and weaknesses in the approach to water resources management (Recommendation 3). The FAO Conceptual framework was discussed by the Programme Committee at its 137th Session in November 2023, endorsed by the FAO Council at its 174th Session in December 2023, and is being rolled out and implemented in partnership with all FAO Members. In addressing the water gap in PPAs, an additional Value-Added Impact Area (VAIA) – Addressing Water Scarcity in Agriculture and Environment (AWSAME) was developed, working across PPAs and is under implementation with funding support from voluntary contributions.

4. **Recommendation 2:** Ongoing actions are taking place to consolidate and further develop work in the key area of irrigated agriculture. A new Irrigation Needs and Potential Mapping Initiative (IRMA) was developed to conceptualize an approach for the identification of areas suitable and justified for irrigation development. Beyond the assessment of biophysical suitability, it identifies and ranks areas with a solid socio-economic rationale for irrigation development. A technical workshop was also organized in December 2023 involving experts from the FAO Investment Centre, the World Bank, the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) and other partners.

5. **Recommendation 3:** in addition to the aforementioned VAIA on AWSAME and FAO Conceptual framework, water resources management has been well integrated into the FAO Action

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<sup>1</sup> [PC 133/5](#)

<sup>2</sup> [PC 133/5 Sup.1](#)

<sup>3</sup> [C 2023/REP](#)

<sup>4</sup> Supported by two documents prepared for the FAO Conference: *The State of Food and Agriculture: Integrated Water Resources Management* (C 2023/2) and *Biennial Theme 2024-25: Water resources management for the four betters: better production, better nutrition, better environment and better life, to achieve Agenda 2030 and the Sustainable Development Goals* (C 2023/30)

Plan 2022–2025 for the implementation of the FAO Strategy on Climate Change 2022–2031. Guided by the recommendations of Governing Bodies,<sup>5</sup> the global dialogue on water tenure has been organized as part of the FAO Regional Workshop on National Water Roadmaps for Africa, the UN 2023 Water Conference and the Rome Water Dialogue 2023.

6. **Recommendation 4:** To address water quality and pollution as an integral part of FAO’s actions in agriculture and food production, FAO continues to work on the use of treated non-conventional waters in irrigated agriculture, and on wastewater and drainage water generated from agriculture, livestock and aquaculture. To do so, FAO as a member of UN-Water is cooperating with other UN agencies in initiatives such as the World Water Quality Alliance. *Water Quality in Agriculture: Risks and Risk Mitigation*<sup>6</sup> published in November 2023, emphasizes technical solutions and good agricultural practices, including risk mitigation measures suitable for the contexts of differently resourced institutions working in rural as well as urban and peri-urban settings in low- and middle-income countries. Recognizing the importance of addressing the linkages between livestock production and natural resources management (soil, land and water) in an integrated manner, the Committee on Agriculture’s (COAG) Sub-Committee on Livestock will discuss water quality at its 2nd Session under the agenda item *Managing soil, land and water resources for sustainable livestock production*.

7. **Recommendation 5:** FAO facilitated communication, information and dialogue for establishing common analytical frameworks, terminologies and methodologies on different topics related to water management. These topics include, but are not limited to, water governance and water tenure, adaptation and resilience to climate change, water quality, water productivity, water accounting, irrigation management, freshwater ecosystems, catchment/river basin management, and wetlands. The Rome Water Dialogue, the inter-Regional Technical Platform on Water Scarcity (iRTP-WS) and The Global Framework on Water Scarcity in Agriculture (WASAG) are examples of such platforms where FAO and partners shared work and lessons learned on related water topics and benefited from internal and external experts. This recommendation has been included in the FAO Conceptual framework following the guidance by the 137th Session of the Programme Committee. NSL initiated a FAO-wide capacity assessment to take stock of existing expertise in the current workforce, identify any critical gaps, and develop a capacity development plan including actions targeting both headquarters and Decentralized Offices. Further initiatives will be taken to facilitate dialogue and knowledge sharing and learning between FAO personnel and external experts by organizing both in-person and on-line opportunities to exchange innovative approaches and lessons learned on sustainable land, soil and water management among practitioners.

8. **Recommendation 6:** The development of tools and procedures for a more coherent and effective project design process for water-related activities are part of the Project Cycle Guide, and more specifically of the newly designed FAO Framework for Environmental and Social Management (FESM). FESM addresses issues related to the impact on gender equality, lives and livelihoods, issues of exclusion of specific segments of the population and the risk of exacerbating inequalities and considers issues of voice, participation, and access to and management of natural resources.

9. **Recommendation 7:** NSL has taken the initiative to build on and extend the support to positive experiences that will contribute to the transformation of FAO’s approach to the realization of SDG 6 and the approach to sustainable water resources management. In realizing and implementing extra-budgetary funded projects and programmes, FAO strengthened the linkages between projects and programmes with normative work to increase mutual benefits. Concrete examples of these synergies include FAO’s normative work on water data and information gathering and dissemination (AQUASTAT) and extra-budgetary funded work on water productivity assessments by using innovative approaches like satellite remote sensing (WaPOR). These contributed to the development of a Global Water Data Portal. In addition, the project on “Scaling up capacities for responsible

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<sup>5</sup> [C 2023/22; CL 171/REP](#)

<sup>6</sup> Drechsel, P., Marjani Zadeh, S. & Pedrero, F., eds. 2023. *Water quality in agriculture: Risks and risk mitigation*. Rome, FAO & IWMI. (also available at [www.fao.org/3/cc7340en/cc7340en.pdf](http://www.fao.org/3/cc7340en/cc7340en.pdf)).

governance of water tenure in support of food security, climate resilience and social inclusion”, formulated in 2023 will support activities related to the Global Dialogue on the Governance of Water Tenure for which FAO was mandated by COAG at its 28th Session. Furthermore, the project Integrated Monitoring Initiative for SDG 6, supports FAO activities related to its role as custodian agency for SDG target 6.4.

10. FAO acknowledges the important role partnerships can play in generating new approaches and catalysing change. Building on existing FAO work, namely the Global Framework on Water Scarcity in Agriculture (WASAG) and regional water scarcity initiatives for both the Near East, North Africa as well as for Asia and the Pacific, the AWSAME Value-Added Impact Area (VAIA), provides an overarching, integrated and multidisciplinary set of interventions from practices at field level to enhanced policies at regional and global levels, as well as concurring partnerships. The 2nd International Forum on WASAG held in February 2023, in Cabo Verde, endorsed the Praia Call for Action, including to organize a High-level Dialogue on WASAG and welcomed all FAO Members to join the WASAG and collectively to make WASAG an impactful and effective partnership to address the global water scarcity challenge. In addition, FAO is organizing yearly Rome Water Dialogues which are open to FAO’s partners including water experts and representatives from national governments, international organizations, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), financing institutions, research institutes, civil society organizations, the private sector and the media.

11. The elements of the Evaluation are integrated as core priorities for the implementation of the FAO Conceptual framework and will be further pursued in the programmatic work of FAO.

12. While the progress made as described above demonstrates that FAO is fully committed to SDG 6 “Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all”, it also reflects the unique position of FAO in supporting integrated water resources management (IWRM) and scaling up programmatic interventions linking water with climate change, forest management, ecosystem restoration and biodiversity, soil and land management, nutrition, food production and safety, and One Water One Health to achieve interwoven benefits and reduce risks.

13. Following the guidance provided by related Governing Bodies, a suite of programmatic initiatives are being implemented in partnership with Members to advance IWRM in agrifood systems, contributing to all *four betters* of the FAO Strategic Framework 2022–31.

14. Going forward in implementing all programmatic initiatives as highlighted in the document C 2023/30, considering water resources management is the theme of the biennium 2024-25, and anticipating the UN system-wide strategy for water and sanitation to be endorsed by the UN System Chief Executives Board for Coordination in April 2024, the Programme Committee is invited to provide further guidance on the implementation of recommendations and actions in the Management Response, recognizing the following needs to drive acceleration and success, as discussed by the Joint Meeting of the 137th Session of the Programme Committee and the 198th Session of the Finance Committee:

- a) continued investment in technical capacity development both at the FAO headquarters and Decentralized Offices, in particular the Regional and Subregional Offices;
- b) continued resources mobilization in particular through prioritizing water in collaboration with all resource partners; and
- c) regular reports on FAO’s work on to the Governing Bodies during the biennium 2024-2025.

15. Following the guidance by the Joint Meeting of the 137th Session of the Programme Committee and the 198th Session of the Finance Committee, NSL is conducting a rapid capacity assessment across the FAO network, analysing the current FAO project portfolio, pipeline, funding gaps and resource mobilization opportunities, and will present the findings and recommendations to the Session of the Programme Committee in November 2024 for consideration and guidance.

*Follow-up report on the Evaluation of FAO's contribution to Sustainable Development Goal 6: Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all - Matrix*

Evaluation Recommendation (a)	Sub-recommendation	Actions agreed in the management response (b)	Description of actions taken, or reasons for actions not taken (c)	MAR score (d) <sup>7</sup>	Impact of, or changes resulted from taken actions (e)
<p><b>Recommendation 1: Build from existing strengths to move towards a coherent and strategic recognition of the central role of water resources management in FAO, including significantly strengthening the recognition of water resources management in the Strategic Framework and PPAs. This is recognized as an incremental process that cannot be achieved in the short term or by one set of actions. The following actions are recommended as key steps to catalyse this process (by sub-recommendation):</b></p>	<p>1.1 Consult with Members on options for recognizing the strategic significance of water, including the possibility of establishing a <b>sub-committee on water for agriculture and ecosystems maintenance</b>, either under the Committee on Agriculture or the Committee on World Food Security.</p>	<p>Due to the cross-cutting nature of water and the resource implications of establishing new Governing Bodies, FAO Management advocates for more focused and relevant discussions on water issues in the existing relevant Technical Committees, rather than establishing a sub-committee on water for agriculture and ecosystems maintenance.</p>	<p>This has been fully achieved with water resources management being on the agenda of related Governing Bodies, the theme of the 43rd Session of the FAO Conference and of the biennium 2024-25, the theme of World Food Day 2023, and addressed through different topics in Regional Conferences as well as relevant Technical Committees. In addition, the organization of Rome Water Dialogues in 2022 and 2023 also helped to create coherent and strategic recognition of the central role of water resources management in FAO.</p>	6	<p>Water is mainstreamed in FAO decision making processes. Additional resources from both regular budget and voluntary contributions have been allocated to support works on irrigation, flood management, AWSAME and Soils, Land and Water Information System (SoLaWiSe) initiatives.</p>
	<p>1.2 <b>Stock-take areas of strength</b> and identify the actions needed to make sure they endure and grow.</p>	<p>NSL will engage all FAO stakeholders in a stocktaking exercise to identify areas of strength and the actions needed.</p>	<p>Through technical briefings on water, Rome Water Dialogues, and the 2nd International Forum on WASAG, NSL carried out a stocktaking exercise on FAO's work (experiences, good practices, lessons learned and gaps). Areas of strength to be reinforced were identified and were addressed in adjusting the terms of reference of</p>	4	<p>It's too early to report evidence as the hiring and the capacity assessment have not been completed yet.</p>

<sup>7</sup> Management Action Record (MAR) Score: **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.

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			<p>four PWB vacancies to hire capacity on water quality, water infrastructure, flood management and water policy.</p> <p>Further, the ongoing FAO network-wide capacity assessment will provide more details on technical strength and gaps, which will guide future capacity development actions.</p>		
	<p>1.3 Conceptualize what an <b>integrated approach to land and water resources management</b> entails and how it links to the different dimensions of FAO’s work.</p>	<p>In its strategic planning process, NSL will coordinate with related divisions and Offices across the house in the development of a coherent and strategic recognition of the central role of water in FAO. The process will be aligned with FAO Strategic Framework 2022-31.</p>	<p>Guided by the FAO Strategic Framework 2022-31, NSL strategic planning process addressed this recommendation and FAO’s Conceptual framework on integrated land and water resources management was developed in consultation with FAO’s technical divisions, Decentralized Offices and external experts.</p>	5	<p>FAO’s Conceptual framework on integrated land and water management was endorsed by the FAO Council at its 174th Session and will be rolled out and implemented in partnership with all FAO Members and other partners.</p>
	<p>1.4 Establish <b>links and dialogues</b> between areas of activity that obviously relate to each other, with the PPAs a possible medium through which this can happen. Mutual understanding is needed and, in many cases, should be the basis for moving towards shared concepts and terminology.</p>	<p>NSL will review all PPA outputs and discuss with related PPAs leads/co-leads. NSL will ensure that in the preparation of the Medium-Term Plan 2022-25 (reviewed), water will be visible and well-integrated in the PPAs.</p>	<p>NSL reviewed all PPAs and highlighted the contribution of water to all PPAs in Document C 2023/30 presented to the 43rd Session of the FAO Conference. NSL will continue to coordinate the mainstreaming of water resources management and governance in all relevant PPAs.</p> <p>To fill in the critical gap in the current PPAs, the VAIA – AWSAME was developed and</p>	4	<p>Water has been more efficiently mainstreamed in relevant PPAs. The AWSAME is under implementation, with pilots in four countries as well as through the regional Water Scarcity initiative for Near East and North Africa and the Regional Programme on</p>

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			resourced by the regular budget and voluntary contributions for implementation.		water scarcity for Asia and the Pacific.
<p><b>Recommendation 2: FAO should consolidate and further develop work in the key area of irrigated agriculture.</b> The following steps are examples of how this could be done (<i>by sub-recommendation</i>):</p>	<p>2.1 Assess the full scope and character of work on irrigated agriculture, at all levels and including especially in projects. The analysis of what works where should be a key part of this assessment. It should include an assessment of needs at the national level and reflect differences between different countries and regions.</p>	<p>NSL will consolidate and strengthen FAO's work in the key area of irrigated agriculture as part of its conceptual framework on integrated land and water resources management to be developed (Recommendation 1). This will include an assessment of the needs and demands of Members for support in the field of irrigated agriculture.</p>	<p>Irrigation needs and potential are fully integrated into FAO's Conceptual framework for integrated land and water resources management.</p> <p>NSL conceptualized an approach to map national irrigation needs and potential, thus set directions for planning and development. This is being piloted in four countries firstly (Egypt, India, Saudi Arabia, and Sri Lanka).</p>	4	<p>It is still too early to report evidence of results on the intended target.</p>
	<p>2.2 Based on this, and using partnerships and extensive stakeholder engagement, prepare an overall <b>strategy</b>, a <b>manual of standards</b> (that includes an inventory of different forms of intervention options) and <b>operational guidelines</b> for the design and implementation of FAO projects in this key area.</p>	<p>NSL will carry out an inventory of different intervention options, as well as operational guidelines to support the design implementation, monitoring and evaluation (including addressing social and environmental risks) of FAO projects related to water management in agriculture.</p>	<p>The Irrigation Needs and Potential Mapping Initiative (IRMA) mentioned under sub-recommendation 2.1 started with a global consultative process to set up a multi-criteria framework to assess and reconcile the needs and the potential in different countries.</p>	4	<p>The global consultative process is ongoing, therefore it is still too early to report evidence of results on the intended target.</p>
	<p>2.3 Implement an <b>information and communications</b> programme for governments, technical specialists, irrigation managers and others that provides information and offers technical support on how to maintain and improve irrigation</p>	<p>NSL will assess the need and feasibility of an information and communications platform for governments, technical specialists, irrigation managers and others that initially provide information and offer technical support on how to maintain and improve irrigation</p>	<p>NSL and the Regional Offices jointly established the FAO inter-regional Technical Platform on Water Scarcity (iRTP-WS) in August 2022. Based on lessons learned from this experience, platforms for other subjects may be further developed in the future.</p>	4	<p>The Platform provided functions such as sharing information, tools and methodologies. However, it is too early to report evidence of result on the intended target.</p>



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	systems. Such information and communications could also relate to multi-dimensional nature of water, water tenure, and impacts of agriculture on water use and quality.	systems, to be extended to other fields of water management and water governance, including water tenure.			
<p><b>Recommendation 3: FAO should act to address defined weaknesses in the approach to water resources management through the following actions (by sub-recommendation):</b></p>	<p>3.1 Further consultations, including where appropriate with external experts, on the further integration of water in the PPAs, and into the current processes of revising and operationalize the upcoming Climate Change Strategy and the Framework for Environmental and Social Management (discussed further below).</p>	<p>As mentioned in response to Recommendation 1, NSL agrees to coordinate the development of a coherent conceptual framework on integrated land and water resources management to guide FAO’s work.</p>	<p>As mentioned under Recommendation 1, NSL developed FAO’s Conceptual framework on integrated land and water resources management that has been endorsed by the Council. Water has been well integrated into the FAO Action Plan 2022–2025 for the implementation of the FAO Strategy on Climate Change 2022-2031.</p> <p>FAO promoted water resources management, at the 27th and 28th Conference of Parties (COP) to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) through the support to the COP27 Presidency Initiative - Action on Water Adaptation and Resilience (AWARe), the development of two-year Partnership on building water-resilient food systems, and support to the organization of Water Pavilions and Days during COP27 and COP28.</p>	<p>5</p>	<p>FAO’s Conceptual framework on integrated land and water management was endorsed by the FAO Council and will be rolled out and implemented in partnership with all FAO Members.</p>

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	3.2 Develop an overall approach to water governance that integrates the existing, often high quality, work on different aspects of the issue and that gives clear guidance and support on how to address water governance issues in operational activities at national and community levels.	Recognizing that the current water crisis is by and large a governance crisis, FAO Management strongly supports the inclusive and effective water governance as proposed in <i>The State of the World's Land and Water Resources for Food and Agriculture 2021</i> . NSL will develop an overall approach to water governance that gives clear guidance and support on how to address water governance issues in activities at global, regional, national and community operational levels.	FAO started a new initiative, National Water Roadmaps towards the 2030 Agenda, which recognizes the central role of water in contributing to all Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) defined in the 2030 Agenda. FAO is supporting its Members, upon request, in the development of country-owned National Water Roadmaps through country-led dialogues and participatory processes. FAO organized the Global Dialogue on the Governance of Water Tenure with multi-stakeholders. Good governance of land, soil and water resources is one of the five Outcomes of FAO's Conceptual framework for integrated land and water resources management.	5	The initiatives on the National Water Roadmaps and Global Dialogue on Water Tenure have started, but it is still too early to assess the full impact of these initiatives. FAO's Conceptual framework on integrated land and water management was endorsed by the 174th Session of the FAO Council and will be rolled out and implemented in partnership with all FAO Members.
	3.3 Review and prepare internal learning materials on examples of good practice and of failure found in projects related to different aspects of water resources management.	A review of examples of good practice and areas for improvement emerging from projects related to aspects of water resources management is considered useful and will be part of the stocktaking exercise for developing the conceptual framework for integrated land and water resources management mentioned above, and to consolidate and strengthen FAO's work in the key area of irrigated	FAO's Conceptual framework on integrated land and water resources management has been endorsed by the 174th Session of the FAO Council. Examples and best management practices have been shared via the Rome Water Dialogues in 2022 and 2023, the World Food Forum including its Science and Innovation Forum in 2023, the 2nd	4	Too early to report evidence of results on the intended target.

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		<p>agriculture, as well as in projects containing water resources management components. This review is expected to also stimulate a wider internal learning process across the Organization.</p>	<p>International Forum on WASAG, the Global Soil and Water Symposium 2023, sessions organized by FAO at the Stockholm World Water Week, UNFCCC COP27 and COP28, ICID Congress, and other global fora.</p> <p><i>The State of the World's Land and Water Resources for Food and Agriculture</i> is now profiled as a FAO 'Flagship Report' which will be published every two years and will provide information, data and case studies on an important topic related to land and water resources management and governance practices. The publication will include examples of good practices as well as failures and lessons learned related to land and water use for agricultural production. The examples described and analysed in this publication will also function as learning material across FAO and beyond.</p> <p>This will also be done with the expanded technical network on land and water, including a dedicated working group on wetlands launched at World Wetlands Day Celebration on 2 February 2024.</p>		

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<p><b>Recommendation 4: FAO should prepare and implement a comprehensive new organizational policy, strategy and guidelines on water quality and pollution that recognizes the seriousness of this problem and sees it as an integral part of FAO's actions in agriculture and food production. This should include a review of existing policies and practices on water quality and pollution, and the preparation of clear and specific measures to ensure that this issue is integrated into all aspects of FAO's work on agriculture and natural resource management.</b></p>		<p>This recommendation is partially accepted by FAO Management. It is acknowledged that FAO does not have a comprehensive organizational policy, strategy and guidelines on water quality and pollution. FAO will work on a review of existing policies and practices on water quality and pollution. Furthermore, FAO will strengthen its efforts to ensure that water pollution inherent to the agriculture sector be further addressed and integrated in FAO's work on agriculture and natural resource management.</p>	<p>FAO created a PWB position for a Water Quality Officer located at FAO headquarters in Rome, Italy. The position is under recruitment process.</p> <p>FAO requested the COAG's Sub-Committee on Livestock at its 2nd Session to discuss the linkages between livestock production and natural resource management (soil, land and water) in an integrated manner. This also includes explicitly the influence of livestock on water quality.</p> <p>Furthermore, <i>Water Quality in Agriculture: Risks and Risk Mitigation</i> published in 2023 emphasizes technical solutions and good agricultural practices, including risk mitigation measures suitable for the contexts of differently resourced institutions working in rural as well as urban and peri-urban settings in low- and middle-income countries.</p> <p>Furthermore, through AQUALEX, the world's largest open-access free online collection of national and international freshwater-related laws and policies, FAO provides free and open access to such texts and reports that cover the whole range of freshwater issues, including but not limited to,</p>	4	<p>Too early to report evidence of results on the intended target.</p>

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			governance, water supply, use of water in agriculture and aquaculture, water and the environment and climate change.		
<p><b>Recommendation 5: Establish online communities of practice to facilitate dialogues and agree procedures between staff working on similar themes,</b> including within and between offices and divisions with the aim of establishing common analytical frames and terminologies. In relation to the present evaluation, the following topics are proposed for such dialogues: water governance (including legal and policy frameworks as well as community-level governance), water, resilience and climate change, standards and good practices <b>on water quality, ecosystems protection and land and water interactions.</b> Other topics could be identified but these will provide a starting point for the process.</p>		<p>NSL will facilitate communication, information and dialogue for establishing common analytical frameworks, terminologies and methodologies on different topics related to water management. These dialogues could include, but may not be limited to, water governance and water tenure, adaptation and resilience to climate change, water quality, water productivity, water accounting, irrigation management, freshwater ecosystems, catchment/river basin management, wetlands.</p>	<p>This recommendation has been incorporated into FAO's Conceptual framework for integrated land and water resources management. NSL will take the initiative to expand its existing Technical Network on Water to facilitate dialogue and knowledge sharing and learning between FAO personnel and external experts. In addition to the Rome Water Dialogue, WASAG Forum and global soil symposium, NSL will organize in 2024 FAO Land and Water days with the aim to increase awareness of the role of sustainable land and water management in improving local livelihoods.</p>	4	<p>Too early to report evidence of results on the intended target.</p>
<p><b>Recommendation 6: FAO should develop and implement the tools and procedures for a more coherent and effective</b></p>	<p>6.1 Ensure that knowledge and capabilities available in FAO headquarters are reflected in the project design process.</p>	<p>This recommendation is partially accepted by FAO Management. Regarding sub-recommendations 6.1, 6.2, 6.3, 6.5, 6.6, FAO's Project</p>	<p>Many of the issues mentioned in recommendation 6 are already part of the Project Cycle Guide. Therefore, it may not be efficient</p>	1	

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<p><b>project design process for water-related activities, with this including the following actions (by sub-recommendation):</b></p>	<p>6.2 Develop a standard <b>procedure for policy diagnosis</b>, based on existing headquarters initiatives and products<sup>8</sup>.</p> <p>6.3 The project design process should take into account the impact on gender equality, lives and livelihoods, assess issues of exclusion of specific segments of the population and the risk of exacerbating inequalities and consider issues of voice, participation and access to and management of natural resources.</p> <p>6.5 The <b>learning materials</b> on the documentation of good practices and areas of failure proposed in Recommendation 3, above, should be set out in manuals that are required reference materials for the early stages of project conceptualization and design, to ensure lessons from the past are not forgotten and inform actions in the future.</p> <p>6.6 For larger projects in particular, the design process should ensure a</p>	<p>Cycle Guide sets corporate standards and procedures for project management by enhancing accountability and quality through results-based management principles, while improving the strategic focus of all FAO's projects.</p> <p>The inclusion of specific water criteria in the Project Cycle guidelines as part of the sustainability criteria will be considered.</p> <p>NSL in consultation with other units will assess possibilities to develop learning materials (including with the FAO Academy) on the documentation of good practices and pitfall areas that can be used in the design and implementation of projects in general, not limited to projects related to water resources management, as suggested in Recommendation 3.</p>	<p>and effective to develop and implement tools and procedures specifically for water-related activities.</p> <p>The inclusion of specific water criteria in the Project Cycle guidelines as part of the sustainability criteria will be considered as soon as the newly designed FAO Framework for Environmental and Social Management (see sub-recommendation 6.4) can be properly evaluated. Since this new framework has been put into place only a year ago, it is too soon to change it already.</p> <p>Learning materials on the documentation of good practices and areas of failure will be designed as reference material for the online communities of practice as suggested in Recommendation 5. This is a core activity of the technical network for land and water, which will be strengthened with the capacity assessment under development.</p>		

<sup>8</sup> Including the 2017 **Policy Guidance Series**, the **AQUALEX** system that will be launched in spring 2022, outputs from normative initiatives on **groundwater governance** and **water tenure**, existing guidance on **gender, participation** and **social inclusiveness** and other materials.

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	multidisciplinary review to ensure proper judgements on risks, impacts and mitigation measures are put in place.				
	6.4 The scope and purpose of the <b>Framework for Environmental and Social Management</b> should be extended through the elaboration of the details in the Guidance Notes that support the Framework. A present, they exist to assess risks and remedial actions only happen if a “risk” is identified, which depends on who is making the assessment. A more positive, development-oriented approach should be added to the Framework that sets required <b>minimum standards</b> in relation to water resources use and management, with these minimum standards a design requirement regardless of the level of risk assessment.	A new FAO Framework for Environmental and Social Management is designed to help manage and improve FAO’s environmental and social performance through a risk- and outcome-based approach. The Framework already adopts “a more positive, development-oriented approach” to programming. FAO Management and the Office of Climate Change, Biodiversity and Environment (OCB) agree with the recommendation that operational guidance notes (in this particular case, primarily for Environmental and social safeguards (ESS) 2: Resource efficiency and pollution prevention and management but not only) will “embrace” all the above principles of risk management and good development practices related to sustainable water management and sanitation.	The new FAO Framework for Environmental and Social Management has been put in place to help manage and improve FAO’s environmental and social performance through a risk- and outcome-based approach.	6	Safeguards for the sustainable use of natural resources are included in FAO’s new Framework for Environmental and Social Management, including reporting mechanisms related to required standards and risks which resulted in better project proposals and project documents.
<b>Recommendation 7: Actions should be taken to build on and extend the support to positive experiences that will contribute to the transformation of FAO’s approach to the realization of</b>	7.1 Existing <b>normative work</b> in areas such as legal and policy assessment, governance topics, integrated approaches to forestry, watersheds, the land-water-energy nexus,	NSL will take the initiative to build on and extend the support to positive experiences that will contribute to the transformation of FAO’s approach to the realization of SDG 6	Through the development process of FAO’s Conceptual framework for integrated land and water resources management, the dedicated discussions with related PPA lead units, the implementation	5	FAO’s Conceptual framework for integrated land and water resources management will be implemented in

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<p><b>SDG 6 and the approach to sustainable water resources management.</b> Examples of the seeds that can be built on are (<i>by sub-recommendation</i>):</p>	<p>gender equality and others are all of a high international standard, but there is a need for a strategy to take the lessons from these normative activities through to operational design and implementation.</p>	<p>and the approach to sustainable water resources management.</p>	<p>of water being the theme of biennium 2024-25 and support to Governing Bodies (e.g. COAG's Sub-Committee on Livestock, Committee on Forestry [COFO] and Committee on Fisheries [COFI]), support to the Regional Conferences and regional programmes/initiatives, NSL's coordination of FAO's participation to global fora, collaboration with other divisions, centres and Decentralized Offices have been strengthened significantly.</p>		<p>partnership with all FAO Members. Governing Bodies and Regional Conferences have tabled water on their agenda, which will further contribute to the biennium theme of water, although the impacts on the ground will only be possible to observe in the future.</p>
	<p><b>7.2 Regional Offices and programmes</b> can be the missing link to establish more effective links between headquarters approaches and operational activities. The newly-emerging <b>regional programmes</b> show particular potential but will require sustained and expanded support if this potential is to be realized. Action to ensure that there are adequate <b>human resources</b> at regional and, where appropriate, country levels should be taken to ensure that the intention for strengthening the role of the Decentralized Offices becomes a reality.</p>	<p>NSL will take the initiative to strengthen the ties with the regional offices in developing joint programmes related to water resources management and governance.</p>	<p>Regional Offices in Cairo, Egypt, and Bangkok, Thailand, have developed regional water scarcity programmes in cooperation and consultation with NSL. NSL, in cooperation with Regional, Subregional and Country Offices organized regional workshops on National Water Roadmaps as well as multistakeholder Global Dialogues on the governance of Water Tenure. FAO iRTP-WS is established as an example to strengthen the network-wide approach and linkages. NSL provided technical support to Regional Conferences in preparing</p>	5	<p>A three-day regional workshop on National Water Roadmaps for Africa organized in Zimbabwe in February 2023. Over 30 countries were represented and most of them confirmed interest to join the initiative. Similar regional workshops, which will also include meetings on the Global Dialogue on Water Tenure, will be held in 2024 in Thailand and Colombia.</p>



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	<p>7.3 <b>Partnerships</b> can play an important role in generating new approaches and catalysing change and FAO needs to build on existing networks of partnerships to better reflect FAO’s capabilities and leading role on water in agriculture and ecosystems management, including extending systematic learning and cooperation between Members.</p>	<p>NSL will conduct a thorough review on the needed partnerships of all purposes, such as for resource, for knowledge, for advocacy and for implementation, to deliver FAO’s mandate on SDG 6. NSL will also strengthen the Global Framework on Water Scarcity in Agriculture (WASAG), which is hosted by FAO and has been designed to bring together key players across the globe and from different sectors to collectively tackle the water scarcity challenge.</p>	<p>and deliberating agenda items related to water.</p> <p>NSL conducted a thorough review of key partnerships and fully incorporated partnership into FAO’s Conceptual framework for integrated land and water resources management.</p> <p>A dedicated review of the WASAG was conducted, based on its recommendations, proposals on operational modalities to make WASAG a more impactful global platform are under implementation, including the organization of a high-level Dialogue on WASAG in FAO headquarters in Rome, Italy, in every other year and WASAG Forum in Cabo Verde every other year.</p> <p>FAO organizes the yearly ‘Rome Water Dialogue’ which is open to FAO’s partners including water experts and representatives from national governments, international organizations, NGOs, financing institutions, research institutes, civil society, the private sector and the media.</p>	<p>5</p>	<p>Rome Water Dialogues have been organized in 2022 and 2023, with a plan for a 3rd in October 2024. The High-Level Dialogue on WASAG is planned to be organized in October 2024 in conjunction with the Rome Water Dialogue in FAO headquarters, Rome, Italy.</p>
	<p>7.4 <b>Long-term funding</b> for partnerships, programmes and innovative normative work is needed if their potential is to be</p>	<p>As part of its planning process, NSL will assess funding opportunities and identify and engage with key partners for resource mobilization.</p>	<p>Through the Regular Programme, new funding has been allocated to support NSL’s work on AWSAME,</p>	<p>5</p>	<p>Finding major additional long-term regular budget funding has proven difficult, but FAO’s</p>

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	realized and a coherent and sustained approach to resources management in FAO is to be developed.		flood management, irrigation potential and needs mapping. Extra-budgetary financial resources have been secured for several normative initiatives, including: innovative approaches to assess WaPOR; capacity development activities to support the monitoring of SDG 6, SOLAWISE, and scaling up capacities for responsible governance of water tenure. In addition, NSL is assessing the current FAO project portfolio, pipeline and resource mobilization opportunities.		extra-budgetary funding of water related projects and programmes has been growing consistently over the last years.