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PROGRAMME COMMITTEE

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FAO Evaluation Strategy (update)

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

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- The FAO Evaluation Strategy 2023–2025 (Document [PC 135/3 Rev.1](#)), endorsed by the Programme Committee in March 2023, has guided a transformation of the Office of Evaluation (OED). The Strategy has strengthened OED’s ability to provide high-quality, relevant, and timely evidence to support the implementation of the FAO Strategic Framework 2022-31 and enhance accountability, learning, and decision-making.
- To promote continued progress in implementing ongoing initiatives, OED proposes extending the Strategy’s implementation period through 2027. An updated Strategy will be presented in the Autumn 2027 Session of the Programme Committee, which will enable alignment of the Strategy with the (future) Evaluation Policy.
- This document highlights notable achievements under the Strategy’s five focus areas: Plan and Monitor, Strengthen Capacity, Research and Innovate, Evaluate for Use, and Disseminate for Broader Impact.

GUIDANCE SOUGHT FROM THE PROGRAMME COMMITTEE

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

Draft Advice

The Committee:

- **welcomed the update on the implementation of the FAO Evaluation Strategy 2023-2025 and acknowledged its extension through 2027; and**
- **looked forward to reviewing the new FAO Evaluation Strategy which will be presented for consideration at the PC Autumn 2027 Session.**

I. FAO Evaluation Strategy: key achievements

A. Background

1. Since its endorsement in 2023, the FAO Evaluation Strategy 2023–2025 ([PC 135/3 Rev.1](#)) has catalysed a significant transformation within OED, positioning it as a more strategic, responsive, and evidence-driven function within FAO.

B. Key achievements under the FAO Evaluation Strategy

2. Notable achievements under the Strategy's five focus areas include:

a) Plan and monitor

Established the Intake Process. OED has significantly strengthened its planning and monitoring functions to improve transparency, responsiveness, and strategic alignment. A key innovation has been the introduction of the intake process - a structured mechanism for identifying, prioritizing, and tracking evaluation opportunities. This process allows OED to systematically assess both expiring obligations and new opportunities, enabling the Office to manage a large and evolving portfolio more effectively. It also facilitates a more deliberate balance between mandatory and discretionary evaluations, ensuring that resources are aligned with both compliance requirements and strategic priorities.

Deployed an online monitoring dashboard. OED has introduced a new internal online dashboard to support real-time monitoring and communication of evaluation progress, further strengthening its ability to plan adaptively and keep stakeholders informed.

b) Strengthen capacity

Expanded regional presence and technical depth by creating a unified global evaluation team through the OneOED initiative. OED aims to become a globally networked and technically robust evaluation function. This requires concrete actions to strengthen institutional and human resource capacity. Through the OneOED initiative, OED has established a unified global team, expanding its regional presence by recruiting personnel across the globe with expertise in rigorous evaluation methods.

Delivered targeted training in evaluation and research methods in OED and across FAO. OED has launched targeted capacity-building initiatives, offering training in research methodologies and evaluation practices, some of which have been extended to other FAO Divisions (including the Regions) and Rome-based Agencies. These efforts have deepened technical expertise, enhanced regional engagement, and fostered a culture of evidence in decision-making across the Organization.

Introduced mechanisms to safeguard the quality of country-led evaluations. OED has invested in developing supports for evaluations led by Budget Holders at the country level, serving as a mechanism to support personnel in the Regions and safeguard evaluation quality.

c) Research and innovate

Promoted use of robust evaluation methodologies, enhancing rigor, credibility, and usefulness of findings. Research and innovation have been central to the transformation of OED's work under the Strategy. OED has modernized and streamlined its evaluation processes to focus efforts on pursuing robust methods. A key area of progress has been the adoption of research methodologies focused on assessing results, particularly through mixed methods and impact evaluations. In so doing, OED is positioning itself at the forefront of evaluation practice within the UN system.

Adopted strong and supportive quality assurance processes to mentor personnel while promoting high quality evaluations. OED shifted from ex-post reviews of completed draft reports to

ongoing quality assurance, which begins with the evaluation design and accompanies the evaluation through key milestones until its publication.

d) Evaluate for use

Strengthened stakeholder engagement early in the evaluation cycle to ensure relevance and utility. A strong emphasis has been placed on ensuring that evaluations are designed with use in mind. OED has increasingly engaged stakeholders early in the evaluation process – including during the design or formulation phase of projects – to ensure that evaluations address relevant and actionable questions with the most robust methods possible.

Developed a draft Learning Agenda to prioritize evidence needs and guide evaluation planning. With the strong collaboration of OED personnel in the Regions, OED is finalizing the development of a Learning Agenda to guide evidence generation in areas prioritized by FAO and its partners. By aligning evaluations more closely with FAO’s strategic priorities and incorporating outcome and impact evaluation questions where feasible, OED aims to produce evaluations that are not only rigorous but also highly relevant for decision-making. The Office’s careful selection of which project, programme, and thematic evaluations to conduct further reflects this strategic orientation and its commitment to utility.

e) Disseminate for broader impact

Established a new communications and knowledge management function within OED.

Dissemination practices have been significantly expanded to promote greater transparency, accessibility, and uptake of evaluation findings. OED has developed a proactive dissemination strategy that embeds communication planning into the evaluation cycle from the outset. A new communication and knowledge management team has been established to lead this work, and an updated internal repository of evaluation products is now fully operational and available to internal and external audiences.

Expanded the use of accessible products to increase reach and usability. To reach broader and more diverse users, OED has introduced more accessible formats – such as shorter reports, briefs, and slidedocs. Additionally, these new formats aim to promote use of evaluations in decision-making not only within FAO, but also among its partners and other external stakeholders.

C. Next steps

3. These achievements underscore OED’s progress toward becoming a more strategic, responsive, and evidence-driven function. To consolidate these gains, the current Strategy will be extended through 2027, providing continuity as OED prepares the new FAO Evaluation Strategy, to be presented at the Autumn 2027 Session of the Programme Committee.

4. The forthcoming Strategy will aim to:

- a) institutionalize the shift to measuring results (outcomes and impacts) through rigorous methodologies, research techniques, and digital tools;
- b) build the capacity needed to execute the forthcoming Learning Agenda, addressing FAO’s most pressing evidence needs; and
- c) strengthen partnerships across FAO and with external actors to reinforce quality and utility.