

Evaluation of FAO's Regional and Sub-regional Offices in the Near East

FINAL EVALUATION REPORT

**FAO Office of Evaluation
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ACRONYMS

AARINENA	Association of Agricultural Research Institutes of the Near East and North Africa
ACSAD	Arab Centre for the Study of Arid Zones and Dry Lands
ADG	Assistant Director-General
AfDB	African Development Bank
ALAWUC	Agriculture, Land and Water Use Commission for the Near East
AMU	Arab Maghreb Union
AOAD	Arab Organization for Agricultural Development
CAEU	Council of Arab Economic Unity
CoC-IEE	Committee of the Conference for the Follow-up to the Independent External Evaluation of FAO
COFI	Committee on Fisheries
COFO	Committee on Forestry
CPF	Country Priority Framework
CRC	Commission for Controlling the Desert Locust in the Central Region
CSH	Human Resources Management Division
ECTAD	Emergency Centre for Transboundary Animal Diseases
ESCWA	UN Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia
FAOR	FAO Country Offices
FAOReps	FAO Representatives
FPMIS	Field Programme Management Information System
GCC	Gulf Cooperation Council
GFCM	General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean
ICARDA	International Centre for Agricultural Research in Dry Areas
ICT	Information and Communication Technologies
IEE	Independent External Evaluation of FAO
IFAD	International Fund for Agricultural Development
IPA	Immediate Plan of Action
LTO	Lead Technical Office
MDT	Multi-Disciplinary Technical Team
MSU	Management Support Unit
MTP	Medium Term Plan
NEFC	Near East Forestry Commission
NEMEDCA	Network on Drought Management for the Near East, Mediterranean and Central Asia
NERAKIN	Near East and North Africa Rural and Agricultural Knowledge and Information Network
NERC	Near East Regional Conference
NMTPF	National Medium-Term Priority Frameworks
NPO	National Professional Staff
ODG	Office of the Director General
OSD	Office of Support to Decentralization

OTO	Out-posted Technical Officers
PWB	Programme of Work and Budget
RADCON	Rural and Agricultural Development Communication Network
RAP	Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific
RECOFI	Near East Regional Commission for Fisheries
REIOs	Regional Economic Integration Organizations
RLC	Regional Office for Latin America and the Caribbean
RNE	Regional Office for the Near East
RNRTWATER	Regional Network on Waste Water Reuse
RP	Regular programme
RPF-NE	Regional Priority Framework for the Near East
RR	Regional Representative
SNE	Sub-Regional Office for North Africa
SNG	Sub-Regional Office for the Gulf Countries and Yemen
SNO	Multi-disciplinary Team for Oriental Near East
SRC	Sub-Regional Coordinator
SRFC	Eastern Central Atlantic Ocean Sub-Regional Fisheries Commission
SRO	Subregional Office
SRPF	Sub-regional Priority Framework
SSC	Services Shared Centre
TCE	Emergency Operations and Rehabilitations Division
TCP	Technical Cooperation Programme
UNCT	United Nations Country Team
UNDAF	UN Development Assistance Framework
UNDG	UN Development Group
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
WB	World Bank
WHO	World Health Organization
WMS	Work Measurement Survey

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

At its October 2008 session the FAO Programme Committee discussed the rolling plan of evaluations and expressed their “support for an evaluation of FAO’s Regional and Sub-regional Offices in the Near East” as a priority to be carried out in 2010. The evaluation was to assess the performance of the Regional Office for the Near East (RNE) and the Sub-regional Office for North Africa (SNE) in servicing Near East and North African countries. In particular, the evaluation was to examine:

- The role of the regional and sub-regional offices: the responsiveness of the offices vis-à-vis the expressed demands and needs of FAO and Member Countries as well as their ability to focus their work on priority areas and on countries with greater need for technical assistance.
- The function of the regional and sub-regional offices: whether the administrative, management and organizational arrangements were “fit for purpose”.
- The work of the regional and sub-regional offices: a strategic assessment with an emphasis on i) technical areas that have been identified as key challenges and priorities for food and agricultural development in the region, and ii) technical areas that the regional and sub-regional offices have covered through normative and field activities in the past six years (2004-09).

In view of the restructuring of FAO organizational arrangements in the Near East in late 2009, and the broad-ranging follow-up to the Independent External Evaluation of FAO through the “Immediate Plan of Action for FAO Renewal”, the evaluation paid considerable attention to the impact of the ongoing reform at decentralized offices level, including the FAO country offices (FAORs).

The Office of Evaluation assembled in early 2010 an independent team of experts to conduct the evaluation. The field phase of the evaluation was carried out from February to July 2010 and included visits to FAO HQ, RNE, SNE and field missions to nine countries in the region. Subsequent to this, the evaluation team carried out several analyses and held several follow-up meetings with FAO staff and Government representatives on the issues emerging from the evaluation including the preliminary conclusions and recommendations. The consultations ended with a presentation on the evaluation at the Regional Conference for the Near East held in early December 2010. Five overarching findings arose from the evaluation’s country visits and analyses that have relevance to essentially all parts of the evaluation’s terms of reference:

First, the evaluation team found that FAO technical expertise (from HQ, RNE or SNE) was widely recognized and generally viewed as providing a stamp of good quality. The quality of FAO technical cooperation received greatest appreciation in countries that already had an established capacity to plan and implement their own strategy and programmes. However, there is a general consensus that FAO has lost its comparative advantage in several thematic areas and as an implementing agency in the region.

Second, FAO priority setting and programming processes during the review period did not result in a clear prioritization of activities for the Near East region or in a clear

delineation of tasks at regional and sub-regional levels. RNE, SNE and FAORs have largely focused on developing and implementing generally small projects (mostly TCP) in a broad range of thematic areas, rather than on agreed priorities or on agricultural sector strategy/policy issues, for which the demand is very high across the region.

Third, RNE and SNE had serious resource constraints during the period under review. Although this situation was partially addressed in the biennium 2010-11 with the allocation of additional resources for sub-regional offices, FAORs have not benefited from this recent influx of resources. FAORs are seriously under-resourced, and are widely seen as the poor relations within FAO and among UN partners.

Fourth, the rationale for the new organizational structure in the Near East with three layers was not always well understood within and outside FAO. The evaluation team concluded that the new structure has a sound basis but needs better implementation and change management and, in some cases, also further refinement.

Fifth, FAO presence in the region was found to be in need of streamlining. The location of three offices in the same place (Cairo) has reduced efficiency and transparency in the management of decentralized offices. Staff performing several and diverse functions concurrently led to heavy workload, confusion and sometimes conflicts of interest. Working conditions and status of technical and administrative staff at country level was not conducive to high performance, especially when compared to other UN agencies.

The issues and findings summarized above had a number of negative consequences on FAO. The evaluation team found that FAO visibility and credibility in the Near East region has declined. Other development agencies have taken over much of FAO's historical comparative advantage in areas such as food security, agricultural development and policy advice. FAO advocacy and resource mobilization role in support of the food and agricultural sector is now much less competitive (and thus less successful) than before. The evaluation team concludes that there is an urgent need to further reshuffle the FAO institutional set-up in the Near East including improving the implementation of the ongoing reform. Although the new reporting lines have encouraged greater integration within the region, a lot still needs to be done to allow RNE to exercise a leading role (as "chef d'orchestre") in assuring that the three layers in the region function as one. This includes better defining the roles and functions of each layer, better delineating responsibilities (in accordance with region-wide, sub-regional and country priorities) and foster synergies and coordination between the three layers and with HQ. This also implies a change in the way HQ has been dealing with decentralized offices in the Near East and significant additional efforts to mobilize change management support from the IPA reform machinery, for the region.

The evaluation team has made twelve strategic recommendations and proposed forty actionable recommendations for urgent implementation. Three strategic recommendations focus on improving the capacity of FAO country offices to perform their mandates; four address sub-regional and regional issues related to the terms of reference and performance of sub-regional and regional offices; the remaining five target general, cross-cutting issues, affecting most or all the office layers in the region.

INTRODUCTION

At its October 2008 session the FAO Programme Committee discussed the rolling plan of evaluations and expressed their “support for an evaluation of FAO’s Regional and Sub-regional Offices in the Near East” as a priority to be carried out in 2010.

The evaluation, being the first-ever evaluation of FAO’s regional and sub-regional offices, was conducted following an innovative approach that builds on standard evaluation criteria and methodological tools developed in the context of previous FAO global, regional and country evaluations. The Near East was selected especially because recent evaluations did not cover much of FAO’s work in the region. Further details can be found in the Terms of Reference (annex 1 to this report).

In view of the restructuring of FAO organizational arrangements in the Near East in late 2009, and the broad-ranging follow-up to the Independent External Evaluation of FAO through the “Immediate Plan of Action for FAO Renewal”, the evaluation paid considerable attention to the impact of the ongoing reform at decentralized offices level, including the FAO country offices.

The evaluation team would stress that its evidence base was restricted to the Near East, except for benchmarking performance in certain areas against other FAO regional offices where noted in the text. The conclusions and recommendations are thus for the Near East region, although some of the issues raised may deserve further study for their applicability to other regions.

It is hoped that by grappling with some of the fundamental institutional issues affecting the contributions by FAO in the Near East, a set of insights and realistic recommendations to improve FAO products and services has been provided.

I. BACKGROUND AND INSTITUTIONAL CONTEXT

This section provides information on past and recent developments influencing the role, function and work of FAO decentralized offices including those in the Near East region. Decentralization in FAO has been the subject of several reforms since the establishment of the organization. A major reform began in 1994 and was characterized by the creation of a network of sub-regional offices and transfer of staff to regional and sub-regional offices. The current reform process started in 2005¹ and has been accelerated by the actions being taken by the FAO secretariat and the membership following the recommendations of the Independent External Evaluation of FAO² (IEE) in 2007.

A. FAO Reform and the Independent External Evaluation of FAO

A first independent, external evaluation of the decentralization process in FAO was conducted in 2004. This evaluation found that direct support to countries was more supply than demand driven, and that a significant percentage of decentralized staff did not meet the required levels of managerial and technical competence. It also found a weak correlation between FAO field delivery and food insecurity levels. The evaluation's main recommendation was to improve the allocation of resources through the development of national priority frameworks, which were also expected to provide the underpinning to regional strategies. It also recommended developing stronger links between global normative work and the specific requirements of regions; raising competency of regional staff and improving gender balance in decentralized offices.

In 2005 the FAO Director General launched a package of structural and programmatic reforms intended to "respond to the challenges of the 21st century". Some elements of this reform were approved by the FAO Conference, particularly regarding the creation of sub-regional multidisciplinary teams in Africa as a pilot initiative, but most were put on hold pending the results of the IEE. The task of the IEE (2006-07) was to review FAO as a whole. The IEE assessment of the FAO decentralized structure noted that field offices were scattered and that there was little justification to keep them in some countries due to high costs relative to the size of the field programmes being supported and in such cases this represented a poor use of FAO's limited budget. It also argued that there was a need to restore balance between FAO Headquarters (HQ) and the field, recommending no further net transfers of resources from HQ to the field until resource adequacy was assured. The IEE called for a clearer role for Regional Offices (ROs), with functions streamlined and its technical work focused on analyses and policy advice; it also recommended giving ROs greater autonomy, decision-making powers, and lead the establishment of partnerships with the UN system and with economic integration organizations at regional level. The IEE further recommended that ROs should assume front-line responsibility and accountability for the development of strategies and

¹ FAO Reform: A Vision for the 21st Century
(<http://www.fao.org/docrep/meeting/010/j6285e/j6285e00.htm>)

² FAO: The Challenge of Renewal (<ftp://ftp.fao.org/docrep/fao/meeting/012/k0827e02.pdf>)

programmes across the region, and sub-regional offices should become, where relevant, the technical support arm of FAO in the respective sub-regions. Reporting lines were to be established where Sub-Regional Coordinators (SRC) and FAO Representatives (FAOREps) reported to the Regional Representative (RR). Finally, it recommended that Regional Conferences become part of FAO Governing Bodies with the aim of transforming them into key forums for the regions to assert their views and priorities.

B. The Immediate Plan of Action for FAO Renewal

In November 2007, the Conference reviewed the report of the IEE and passed a resolution on its follow-up. This included the establishment of a time-bound Committee of the Conference (CoC-IEE) open to all FAO Members. Based on the work of the CoC-IEE, the Special Session of the Conference adopted the Immediate Plan of Action for FAO Renewal (IPA)³ and extended the CoC-IEE to further develop outstanding aspects and monitor the IPA implementation.

The IPA includes 238 actions that deal with a broad range of issues from Governance to technical to administration. Over 40 actions had major implications for FAO's work in the Near East, including activities to enhance the role of Regional Conferences; review the mandate of statutory bodies and technical committees; revamp FAO Programming, budgeting, monitoring and resource mobilization systems; decentralize the Technical Cooperation Programme (TCP) and reform the FAO decentralized office structure. The full list of IPA items of relevance for the evaluation is available in Annex 2.

C. Implications of the Reform Process for Decentralized Offices

The Report of the CoC-IEE to the FAO Conference on the IPA (page 23) summarizes the implications of the reform process on regional and sub-regional offices as follows: "The ROs working as appropriate with Subregional Offices (SROs) will progressively take on new responsibilities for which they will be accountable, for: (i) overseeing the country offices, including the management of resources of the FAO Representations (FAORs) network; (ii) managing the non-emergency TCP programme in the respective regions; (iii) leading the strategic planning, programming and budgeting process for the region; (iv) supervising regional technical officers; (v) organizing and servicing the strengthened Regional Conferences; (vi) leading partnerships, particularly with regional organizations; and (vii) supporting country offices on matters dealing with UN reforms."

The following actions have been taken so far:

- A Director-General's Bulletin 2010/04 (18 February 2010) was issued, establishing new reporting lines in decentralized offices.
- The Field Programme Circular (FPC 2009/03 of 21 January 2010) and the Guidelines on Technical Support and Clearance for TCP Projects (September 2010) were developed to provide guidance for the management of the regional TCP allocation and roles of HQ and decentralized offices.

³ http://www.fao.org/fileadmin/user_upload/IEE/Resolution_IPAEnglish.pdf

- Operational Planning (“work planning”) Guidelines were on 6 January 2010 to explain the process for developing regional and sub-regional work plans aligned to FAO global and regional priorities⁴.
- A note on OCD Responsibilities being transferred to Regional Offices (March 2010) and a Manual for Management of Country Offices (September 2010) were released to provide information on new office management procedures for use by decentralized offices.
- The FAO Basic Texts have been revised (November 2009) to give an enhanced role to the Regional Conferences in priority setting and programming.
- The new Staff Performance Evaluation and Management System was rolled out and human resource policies on staff mobility, rotation and career development are under preparation.
- Web-based support tools to facilitate access to FAO financial data at country level (such as the “Field Office Budget Holder Reporting service”) are under development.
- Regional consultations on FAO proposals for a “New Vision for the Decentralized Offices Network” and on the “Establishment of One Global Shared Services Centre” are ongoing.

Most of the above measures are intended to be accomplished in the period 2009-2011. Some major actions of relevance for this evaluation such as the development of a new vision for decentralization in FAO, the adoption of a staff mobility and rotation policy, and the launch of country programming and work-planning exercises⁵ as well as follow-up actions to the evaluations of FAO’s Country Programming and Capacity Development in Africa (such as the development of a Corporate Strategy on Capacity Development) were in progress at the time of finalizing this report.

⁴ Country level work plans will only be produced from 2011 onwards; a pilot exercise covering five countries including Lebanon started in October 2010.

⁵ Other activities under implementation include the participation of ADG/RRs in senior policy and decision-making meetings; new job descriptions for FAO Representatives, etc.

II. APPROACH TO THE EVALUATION

A. Scope

As described in the Terms of Reference, the evaluation was to assess the performance of the Regional Office for the Near East (RNE) and the Sub-regional Office for North Africa (SNE) in servicing Near East and North African countries. In particular, the evaluation was to examine:

- The role of the regional and sub-regional offices: the responsiveness of the offices vis-à-vis the expressed demands and needs of FAO and Member Countries as well as their ability to focus their work on priority areas and on countries with greater need for technical assistance.
- The function of the regional and sub-regional offices: whether the administrative, management and organizational arrangements were “fit for purpose”.
- The work of the regional and sub-regional offices: a strategic assessment with an emphasis on i) technical areas that have been identified as key challenges and priorities for food and agricultural development in the region, and ii) technical areas that the regional and sub-regional offices have covered through normative and field activities in the past six years (2004-09).

Because of the establishment of a new sub-regional Office for the Gulf Countries and Yemen (SNG) in Abu Dhabi and the creation of a Multi disciplinary Team for the Oriental Near East (SNO) in Cairo, as well as the approval and ongoing implementation of the IPA, the evaluation scope was revised to pay considerable attention to the impact of the ongoing reform more broadly at decentralized offices level, including the FAORs.

The evaluation was expected to be forward-looking with the objective of providing realistic recommendations to improve FAO products and services.

Besides the ongoing reform process, which the team followed closely, the evaluation had to cope with the limited output and outcome data to allow for a comprehensive analysis of the relevance, efficiency and effectiveness of the services and products provided to Near East and North African countries. In this respect, the evaluation makes general conclusions, draws from multiple lines of evidence and uses examples to support its findings. It employs a wide variety of evaluation tools and sources of information (including the use of proxy indicators and benchmarking) to compensate for the above shortcomings.

B. Methodology

The evaluation made use of tools and multiple sources of information including:

- Background research and desk reviews: this included, a) an analysis of FAO regular and field programme delivery in the Near East; b) an analysis of RNE and SNE programme delivery and outputs; c) a review of a sample of FAO projects implemented in the region; d) a review of the regional technical commissions; e) an

analysis of FAO missions to Near East countries (including project and non-project visits); f) a review of RNE and SNE publications and workshops, g) an analysis of FAO information products accessed by users from Near East countries (including FAO Corporate, RNE and SNE Web sites); h) a citation analysis of selected FAO publications, i) a meta-evaluation of relevant corporate, thematic and project evaluations in the Near East and North Africa.

- Intensive consultation with staff at FAO Headquarters (HQ), RNE, SNE and FAORs: This included a) briefings and follow-up meetings with FAO HQ staff (in particular but not only those working in the Near East region) and with FAO Senior Management; b) briefings and debriefings with FAO staff working in the Near East and North Africa region (including RNE, SNE and FAOR staff).
- Missions to nine countries of the region⁶: Algeria, Mauritania, Morocco, Tunisia, Egypt, Lebanon, Saudi Arabia, Syria and Yemen.
- Extensive discussions with FAO Member States, United Nations (UN) and other development partners as well as with key regional and sub-regional organizations in the Near East: this included a) meetings with Senior Government, UN Agencies and development partners such as the World Bank (WB), African Development Bank (AfDB), International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), bilateral donors, civil society, etc. in the countries visited by the evaluation team; c) meetings with Regional Organizations such as the International Centre for Agricultural Research in Dry Areas (ICARDA), the Arab Centre for the Study of Arid Zones and Dry Lands (ACSAD) and with regional integration bodies such as the Arab North Africa Union (UMA), the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) and the Council of Arab Economic Unity (CAEU); d) discussions with Regional Authorities of UN System agencies such as the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) and the World Food Programme (WFP)
- Survey questionnaire targeted at FAO professional staff in the region. The questionnaire focused on FAO organizational arrangements including skill mix composition.
- Benchmarking exercises in order to compare: a) capacities available at FAO regional and sub-regional offices as well as in peer regional organizations working in the region (including UN sister agencies and development partners) to put FAO institutional capacity and arrangements in perspective, and b) FAO regional and sub-regional offices performance in terms of regular and field programme outputs.

The assessment of FAO's regional and sub-regional offices role, function and work has largely drawn on the results of the above.

⁶ Countries visited were selected taking into consideration parameters related to FAO's mandate (such as total GNP per capita, share of agriculture in GDP and imports of staple food products), the volume and type of work conducted in these countries as well as geographic and logistical factors. The main objective of the country visits was to gather the views of government authorities and partners on the performance of FAO decentralized offices in responding to their country needs as well as to collect information on the technical, administrative and operational support provided by the regional and sub-regional offices to FAO country offices and programmes.

C. Stakeholder Consultation

The evaluation team has maintained close contact and interaction with internal stakeholders (Senior Management at headquarters and at RNE; technical staff in the region and at HQ, and the FAO sub-regional and country teams) throughout the process of the evaluation. Regular consultations have been held with these stakeholders to get their feedback concerning the outcomes of the various stages of the evaluation. In particular, the Evaluation Team maintained close contact, both formally and informally, with RNE, SNE, and the main concerned HQ services in order to keep abreast of latest developments related to the reform process, as well as to keep these key stakeholders informed of the evolving findings and conclusions of the Evaluation Team.

Since the evaluation covers a wide range of technical and administrative areas, FAO HQ and field briefings often involved both international and national staff. At FAO HQ, the evaluation team met with representatives from almost all FAO departments and independent offices. In the field, the team met with virtually all FAORs and senior professional staff working in the region as well as with national professional and general service staff in the countries visited.

Three workshops were held in Cairo with regional stakeholders under the auspices of RNE; the first was held in December 2009 to introduce the evaluation and gather input on its proposed terms of reference; the second was held with RNE Senior Management in July 2010 to share with them the preliminary findings at mid-point of the evaluation; the third was held in October 2010 to receive feedback on the main findings, conclusions and recommendations before the report went through the last phase of finalisation. The first and third workshops were attended by FAO Country Representatives and FAO professional staff from the region.

The evaluation team has also maintained contact with external stakeholders, particularly with Member Country Representatives to FAO from Near East countries. The Near East Group based in Rome was briefed at the onset of the evaluation on the terms of reference for the assessment and towards the end of the evaluation on the preliminary findings, conclusions and recommendations.

The evaluation also paid attention to the new role of Regional Conferences, which are now formally part of FAO Governance Structure (IPA Item 2.52), and recent changes to FAO Evaluation Policy (IPA item 2.87), which requires the FAO Office of Evaluation (OED) to make efforts to discuss and bring evaluations to the attention of all concerned Governing Body members. In this regard, a side event on this evaluation was held during the 30th Near East Regional Conference (NERC) in Khartoum, Sudan prior to the finalization of this report.

III. OVERVIEW OF FAO IN THE NEAR EAST

This section begins with a brief description of the setting and the FAO decentralized structure in the region. This is followed by an overview of the resources available, their distribution and reallocation over the evaluation period⁷.

A. The Setting

The Near East region covers a wide array of countries, from Morocco in the West to Iran in the East, with diverse economic and social characteristics. Although it includes some of the richest countries in the world, all countries are net food importers and are highly vulnerable to climate change. The region is also home to 5% of the world's population, but contains less than 1% of the world's renewable fresh water and about 10% of the population are considered to be at risk of malnourishment⁸. Below there is a set of development indicators of selected countries from the region.

Table 3.1 Development Indicators of selected Near East Countries (2007), FAOSTAT/World Bank

INDICATORS	ALGERIA	EGYPT	LEBANON	MOROCCO	SAUDI ARABIA	UNITED ARAB EMIRATES	YEMEN
Population (Millions)	32.4	72.6	4.2	31.0	27.1	8.1	23.5
GDP per capita (PPP US\$)	7,670	5,100	11,040	3,960	23,000	36,175	2,100
Agriculture, value added (% of GDP)	8	14.1	7.4	13.7	2.8	1.8	14.3
Under nourishment (% of population)	< 5%	< 5%	5%	< 5%	< 5%	< 5%	31

The 2010 Regional Priority Framework for the Near East⁹ provides further details as follows: “the Region has extremes of wealth and poverty measured on the basis of per capita income. However, all countries face a common set of problems and challenges that are threatening their development prospects. These include the dwindling water and agricultural land resources, structural imbalance between food needs and food production, increasing difficulties in balancing employment and income generation against a growing population, declining investment in the rural sector, increasing threats

⁷ The Overview draws its information from FPMIS and other internal FAO systems such as COIN and PIRES.

⁸ <http://www.fao.org/news/story/en/item/47881/jcode/>

⁹ <http://www.fao.org/docrep/meeting/020/k9512e.pdf>

from environmental degradation, natural and human-induced disasters including conflicts, as well as a looming Climate Change threat”.

The region’s diversity has been recognized by FAO through the identification of three distinctive sub-regions, namely:

- North Africa (Maghreb): Algeria, Libya, Mauritania, Morocco, Tunisia.
- Oriental Near East (Mashreq): Egypt, Iran, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, Syria.
- Gulf Cooperation Countries and Yemen (Khalij): Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Bahrain, United Arab Emirates (UAE), Qatar, Oman, Yemen.

B. FAO Decentralized offices

The network of FAO regional and sub-regional offices in the Near East and North Africa during the period under review was composed of RNE (established in 1947) and SNE (established in 1994). Following the 2009 Conference approval of a new organizational structure for the Near East, SNO and SNG have been established and are in the process of being staffed with the objective of becoming operational in early 2011.

The region is also served by fourteen FAO country offices (five in the Maghreb, six in the Mashreq and three in the Khalij). Nine are currently fully fledged representations (two of which are co-located within the regional and sub-regional office respectively and one is operated by TCE) and five are led by Out-posted Technical Officers (OTO). Four countries do not have an accredited FAO representation: Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman and Saudi Arabia (although the latter has a project coordination office). The resources available from the Regular and the Field Programme to carry out technical work in the Near East region are described below.

C. Regular Programme

FAO has implemented three biennial Programmes of Work and Budget (PWB) in the period under review. Due to the absence of reliable disaggregated data on HQ activities at regional level, the overview is necessarily restricted to regular programme activities funded by RNE and SNE only.

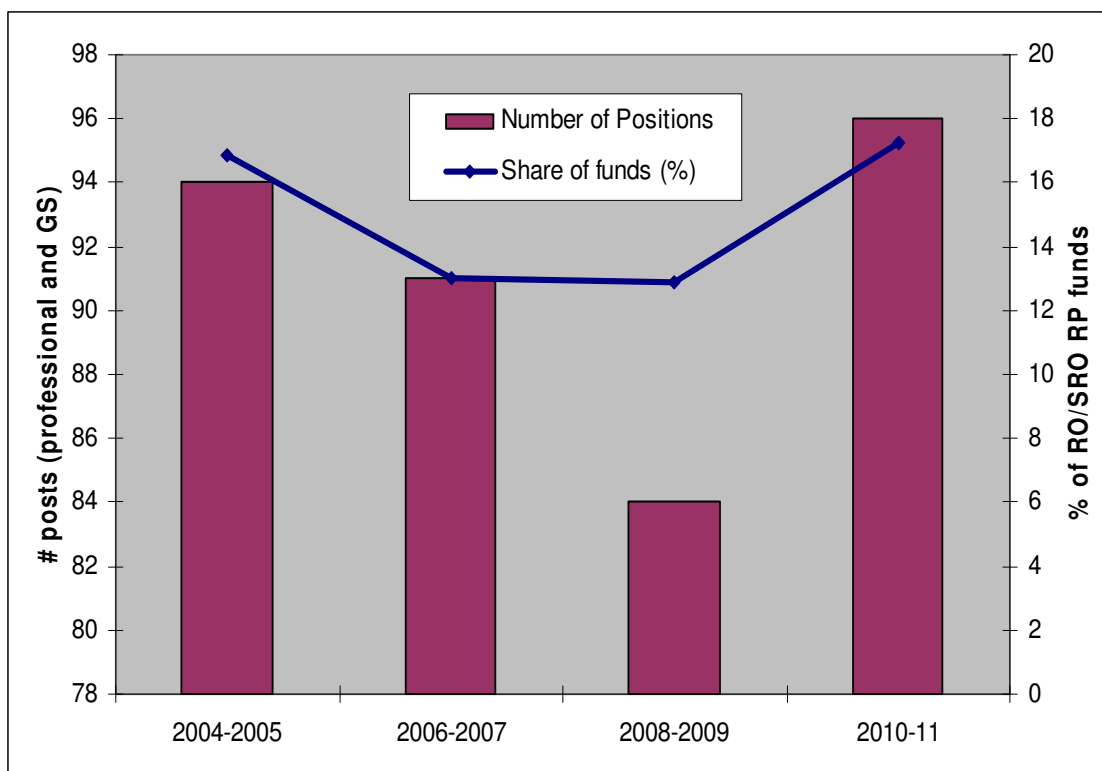
1. Resources

The chart below depicts the share of FAO Regular Programme (RP) funds (excluding income)¹⁰ and human resources allocated to RO and SROs in the Near East.

Chart 3.1 Regular Programme Funding share and Posts (Regional and Sub-regional Offices in the Near East) 2004-11¹¹, PWB

¹⁰ Also referred to as “net appropriations” or assessed contributions paid to the Organization by Member Nations.

¹¹ Figures for 2010-11 also include posts funded from the SNG trust fund.



Between 2004-05 and 2008-09, the share of net appropriations allocated to Regional and sub-regional offices in the Near East from the FAO budget for regional and sub-regional offices worldwide decreased from 16.9% to 12.9%, a reduction in relative share of around 20%. At the same time, there was a loss of over 10% of regional and sub-regional posts in the Near East (from 94 to 84) which was further exacerbated by the high vacancy rates of professional posts (which reached 17% in 2008-09).

The reduction of financial and human resources in the region can be partially explained by the progressive implementation of the 2005 Director-General Reform (see Chapter V, section B.1), which was approved for the Near East only in November 2009. Following the establishment of SNO and additional posts in SNE in 2010, the share of net appropriations for the Regional and Sub-regional offices in the Near East increased to 17.25% of the total. In addition to this, a voluntary contribution of US\$ 4.13 m was made available to support the establishment of SNG. Taking into account all funding sources, FAO now have 96 budgeted positions (83 funded by net appropriations and 13 by the SNG trust fund) at regional and sub-regional levels. As a result, the regional and sub-regional offices for the Near East have in 2010-11 more financial resources (per country covered) than regional and sub-regional offices in other regions. Moreover, most of the growth has occurred at sub-regional level, which now account for 54% of the funding and 50% of the posts allocated to the region (in fact even in 2008-09, when their share of net appropriations were the lowest during the period under review, the RO and SROs in the Near East were on a per country covered basis better resourced than ROs and SROs in other regions except Latin America).

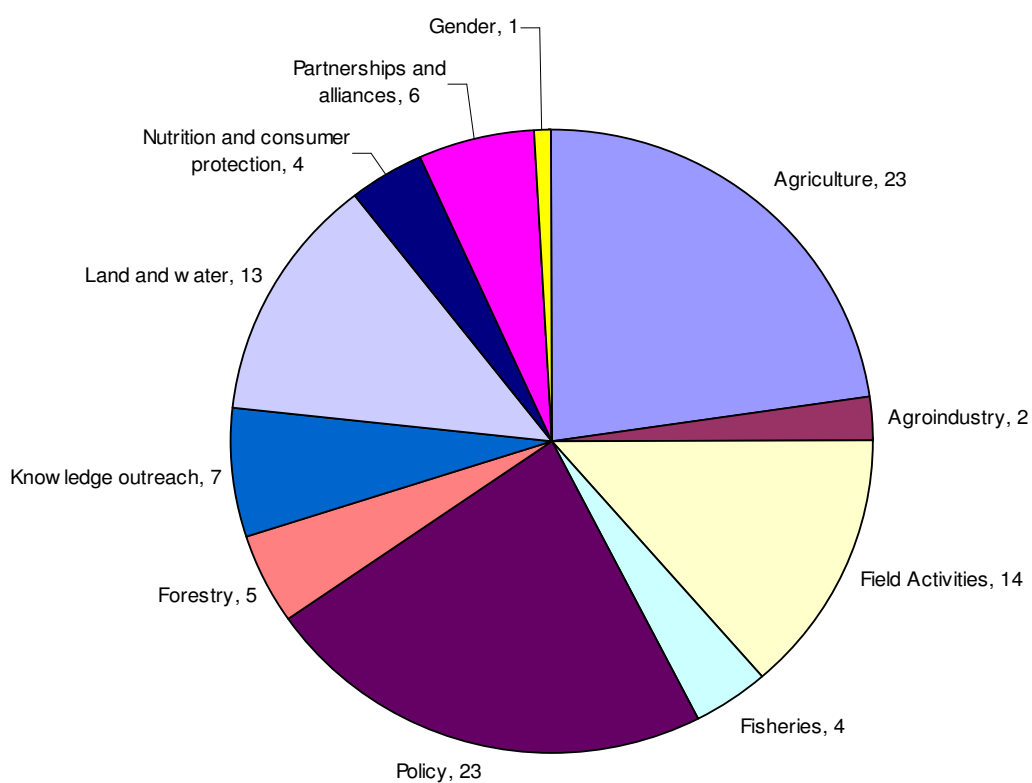
Table 3.2 Regular Programme resources allocated to RO/SROs per region, PWB

Region	Countries		2008-2009		2010-2011	
	Number	%	Budget per country	%	Budget per country	%
Africa	47	29.7	805,000	30.2	826,500	29.1
Asia and the Pacific	34	21.5	721,000	19.6	793,000	20.2
Europe	26	16.5	657,500	13.6	622,000	12.1
Latin America	33	20.9	900,500	23.7	862,000	21.3
Near East	18	11.4	895,500	12.9	1,279,000	17.3

2. Thematic and geographic areas of work

From 2004-09, RNE and SNE regular programme resources for technical programmes (i.e. excluding administration) have been distributed as follows: agriculture – which includes crops and livestock (23% of combined funding), policy (23%), land and water (13%), forestry (5%), fisheries (4%), nutrition and consumer protection (4%) and agro-industry (2%).

Chart 3.2 Average thematic distribution of FAO regular programme resources in percentage (2004-2009), FAO Data Warehouse¹²



¹² It represents the average financial resources from the Regular Programme spent on each technical area during the review period; data was purposively aggregated by theme based on FAO programme entities.

During the period under review HQ activities were not planned at (sub-) regional or country level so that it is not possible to provide a geographic breakdown of RP activities undertaken by HQ technical divisions. The 2010-11 Programme of Work and Budget includes all activities to be conducted by the organization irrespective of the source of funding and following its approval by the FAO Conference in 2009 all FAO units (with the exception of country offices) have had to prepare work plans with information on targeted “implementing countries”. An analysis of FAO HQ divisions as well as RNE and SNE integrated work-plans shows that the combined FAO HQ, RNE and SNE activities will focus mostly on **implementing countries** located in North Africa (36%), followed by the Gulf (34%) and Oriental Near East (28%) sub-regions.

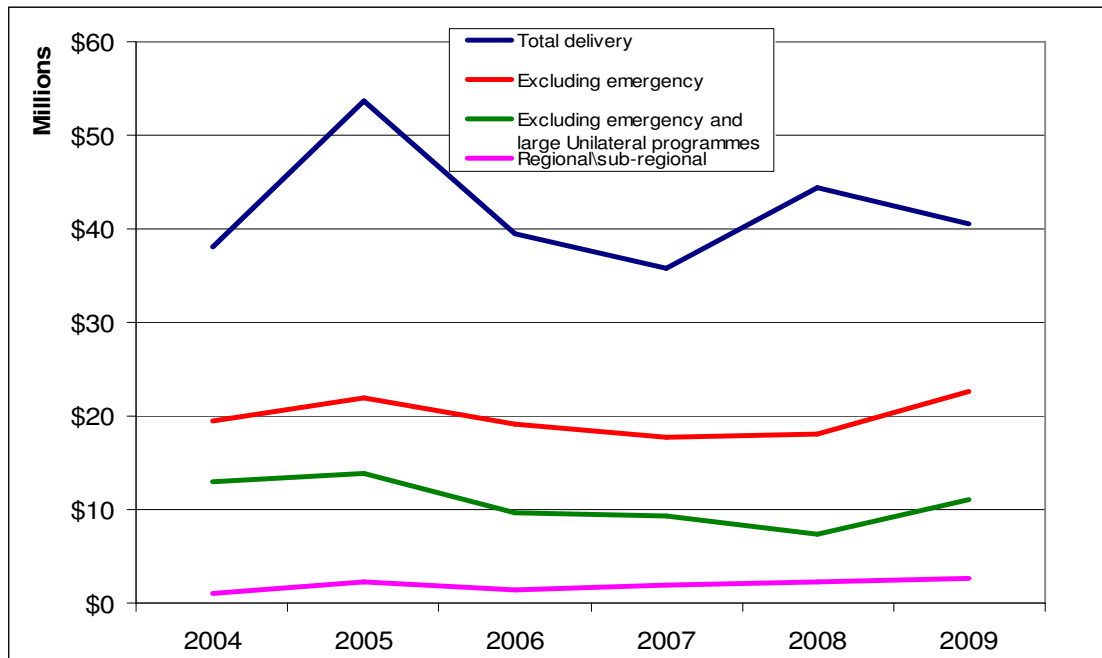
D. Field Programme

From 2004-09, FAO implemented 516 global, regional and national projects in the region¹³: 189 projects (37%) were funded by FAO (TCPs) and 323 projects (63%) were funded through voluntary contributions (about half of them for emergency work). 385 projects (or about 75% of the total) were national projects; 106 (21%) were global/inter-regional and only 21 (4%) were regional/sub-regional.

1. Resources

Delivery of the FAO field programme in the Near East is shown below broken down in four categories: i) total; ii) excluding emergency; iii) excluding emergency and large Unilateral programmes (Saudi Arabia); and iv) regional and sub-regional projects only.

Chart 3.3 FAO Field Programme delivery by category (2004-09), FPMIS



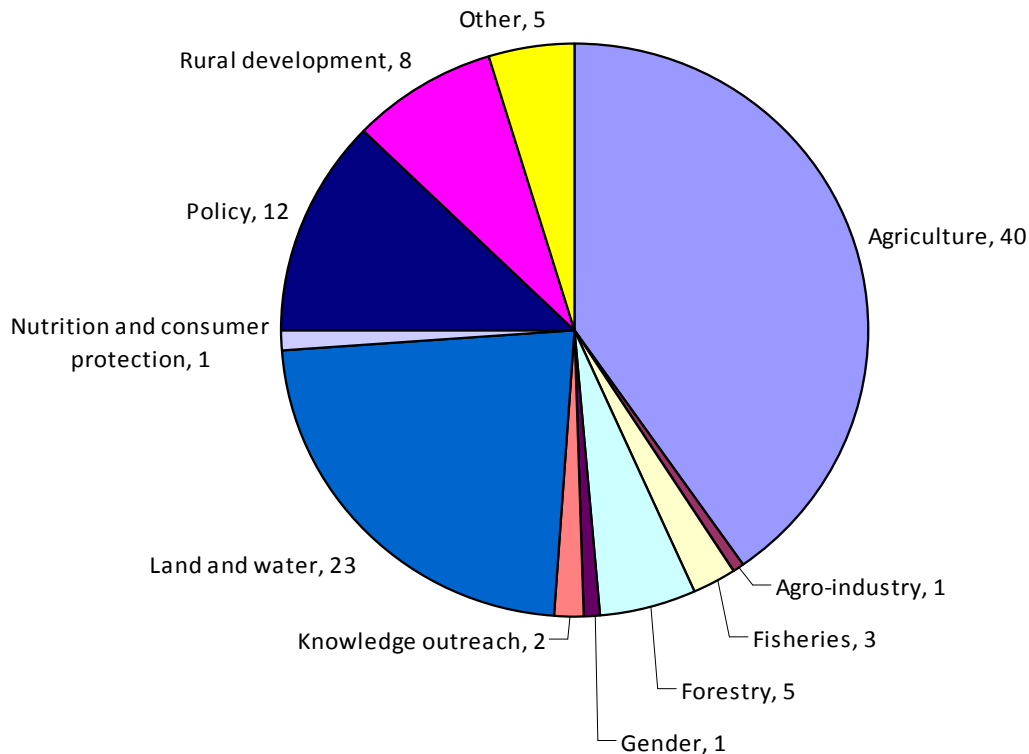
¹³ Excluding TeleFood, baby projects, recoded TCPs and duplicated Unilateral Trust Fund projects but including those in West Bank and Gaza (39 projects).

- Total delivery has ranged between US\$ 35-54 m (on average US\$ 42 m) per year with emergency being the largest component (over 45%) of total delivery.
- Excluding emergency, technical cooperation delivery went from US\$ 19.3 m in 2004 to US\$ 22.6 m in 2009 but was heavily concentrated in a single unilateral trust fund programme.
- Excluding emergency and large unilateral programmes, technical cooperation to Near East countries decreased from US\$ 13 m in 2004 to US\$ 11 m in 2009.
- Delivery of regional and sub-regional projects operated by RNE and SNE has ranged between US\$ 1-2.7 m (on average US\$ 1.9 m) per year.

2. Thematic and geographic areas of work

FAO non-emergency field programme in the Near East has included work in a number of areas, chiefly agriculture (crops and livestock), natural resources (land and water, forestry and fisheries) and policy.

Chart 3.4 Thematic distribution of non-emergency field programme (2004-09), FPMIS¹⁴



Delivery of FAO non-emergency field programme has been concentrated in the Gulf Cooperation Countries and Yemen (around 50% of the funding), followed by the North Africa (with little over 30%) and the Oriental Near East (with around 20%) sub-regions.

¹⁴ It represents the average financial resources from the Field Programme spent on each technical area during the review period; data was purposively aggregated by theme based on FAO programme entities.

IV. ROLE OF REGIONAL AND SUB-REGIONAL OFFICES

This section includes a review of key elements defining FAO's regional and sub-regional offices role in the Near East within the organization's mandate, priority setting and resource mobilization systems. It also deals with the issue of regional partnerships and FAO coverage of the Near East. In drawing the analysis, the following sources of information have been used:

- Desk review of FAO mandate, rules and regulations concerning decentralized offices.
- Past evaluations (chiefly the IEE and the Strategic evaluation of FAO's Country Programming) and background documentation on the subject made available to the team (such as IPA progress reports, notes on RNE coverage)
- Discussions with senior management, FAO staff, regional partners and Permanent Representatives to FAO from the region.

A. Mandate

The mandate of FAO is set out in article 1 of the FAO Constitution (1946), which states that: "The Organization shall collect, analyse, interpret and disseminate information relating to nutrition, food and agriculture." The IEE found the FAO mandate to be "as pertinent today as when it was first crafted sixty years ago" (paragraph 4). The FAO Administrative Manual describes (Section 117) the role of regional and sub-regional offices in achieving the above objectives:

- Regional Offices (ROs) "are responsible for leading FAO's response to the regional priorities for food security, agriculture and rural development. They develop, promote and oversee FAO's strategies to respond to regional priorities and implement related programmes and projects. They develop and maintain relations with region-wide institutions including the Regional Economic Integration Organizations (REIOs)."
- Sub-Regional Offices (SROs) "are responsible for developing, promoting, overseeing and implementing agreed strategies for addressing subregional food, agriculture and rural development priorities. They develop and maintain relations with sub region-wide institutions including REIOs. They assist the FAO Country Representations with addressing subregional food security, agriculture and rural development issues at country level. They are subsidiaries of the Regional Office (RO)."

Three main issues were mentioned recurrently to the evaluation team regarding the implementation of FAO's mandate at regional and sub-regional level.

The first was the weak capacity of FAO to prioritize, plan, implement and mobilize funds at all levels. This within a region not short of human and financial resources, but with an increasing number of providers and more assertive customers of technical services both in the public and the private sector.

The second was the limited partnerships established by FAO with regional and sub-regional institutions, which have led to duplication in terms of mandates and missed opportunities for collaboration.

The third was the lack of clarity in terms of FAO operational coverage of the Near East region. Some Government Authorities were indeed confused as to which FAO regional or sub-regional office was supposed to be their main FAO interlocutor in the region.

B. Priority setting, resource mobilization and partnerships

1. Priority setting, programming and implementation

During the period under review FAO programming cycle was designed with the view of linking FAO work and budget to the Strategic Objectives established in the Strategic Framework 2000-2015. Efforts were made to highlight areas of regional interest (so called “regional dimensions”) within FAO’s Medium Term Plan (MTP) and the biennial Programme of Work and Budget (PWB).

The evaluation found that these efforts were not translated into clear prioritization of activities for the Near East region. An initiative to include regional activities in the MTP was in fact abandoned in 2007. On the other hand, although the PWBs have consistently listed priority areas for the Near East (over 30 in 2008-09 alone), it did not clearly link means (resources available) to ends (actions required to address priority areas). Thus, in the absence of a joined-up framework to identify, plan, budget and implement work in priority areas, FAO regular and field programme activities in the Near East were largely the result of individual initiatives both at regional and sub-regional level.

The new planning, programming and accountability processes adopted by FAO from biennium 2010-11 addresses the shortcomings identified above. It envisages a bottom-up process to align FAO’s work to local priorities based on: a) the development of a Country Programming Framework (CPF), b) identification of Sub-regional Priority Areas, based on the aggregation of country priorities and the identification of priorities specific to the sub-regional level, and c) Regional Priority Areas based on: 1) the overall Strategic Objectives of the Organization, 2) the region-specific issues and perspectives and 3) the aggregation of Sub-regional Priority Areas.

In 2009, RNE started the process of developing the first-ever FAO Regional Priority Framework for the Near East (RPF-NE) in consultation with HQ¹⁵, SNE and FAORs as well as with the involvement of Member Countries. The document was presented to the 30th Near East Regional Conference (NERC) held in December 2010, marking the first time regional priorities for the Near East are identified under the leadership of the Regional Office and for the purview of the Regional Conference.

The evaluation suggests that the scope of the RPF process be progressively expanded to include the preparation of priority frameworks at country and sub-regional levels under the co-ordination of RNE as recommended by the Strategic Evaluation of FAO’s Country

¹⁵ At the request of RNE the draft document was reviewed with FAO Investment Centre (TICI) support.

Programming¹⁶. It furthermore suggests that this process should be open to the participation of a broader range of partners and stakeholders including other UN agencies, technical organizations, regional economic blocs and donors. Consultation with governments and main partners should indeed take place all along the process in order to ensure that: i) the priorities developed at each level reflect the reality of the situation; and, ii) governments and main partners share the results of the analysis made. An RPF for the Near East based on such a process would be instrumental to strengthen co-operation with development partners, better define FAO contributions to UN system-wide initiatives, and support resource mobilization at regional level.

2. Resource mobilization

During the period under review, RNE and SNE had been much less successful than other FAO ROs and SROs¹⁷ in mobilizing extra-budgetary resources. As seen in the overview, funds for non-emergency projects have decreased over time and their distribution became thematically and geographically more skewed. The region is by and large composed of high and middle income countries that, on a cost-sharing basis, have successfully developed large technical cooperation programmes with other UN and technical organizations (including World Bank, UNDP, ICARDA, etc.). For example, UNDP's Regional Cooperation Framework for the Arab States mobilized US\$ 30.2 m for the period 2006-08 with over two-thirds (US\$ 20.7 m) coming from voluntary contributions. Similarly, ICARDA has increasingly raised and spent extra-budgetary funds (US\$ 33 m in 2009 alone) for agricultural projects in the region. At country level, the World Bank is finalising a large Reimbursable Technical Assistance Agreement with Algeria to support the Ministry of Agriculture refining and implementing a Decentralised Rural Development Strategy and formulating an Agro-industry Development Strategy.

In this regard, the evaluation team shares the view of the Strategic Evaluation of FAO's Country Programming team that "Regional Offices should be given authority and necessary resources to develop an aggressive strategy of resource mobilization for regional activities" (recommendation 19) and the proposals made in the draft FAO resource mobilization and management strategy (to be finalized in 2011) which considers "emerging regional and subregional priority areas of action as identified by the Regional Conferences" as candidate areas for allocation of un-earmarked voluntary contributions¹⁸. The evaluation team believes that this approach should be extended to FAO Country Representations in the region. Most donors have decentralised their decision making process for external financial assistance. They have also adopted budget support approaches. Consequently, there is a need to strengthen capacity and train decentralized office staff in order to provide them with the skills needed to tap

¹⁶ See rec. 15 and 16, <http://www.fao.org/pbe/pbee/common/ecg/369/en/CountryProgEval.pdf>

¹⁷ As of December 2009 RNE and SNE were operating one extra-budgetary regional project which is funded out of a HQ-managed trust fund. In comparison ROs and SROs in Latin America were operating eleven projects; while in Asia and the Pacific twenty one.

¹⁸

http://www.fao.org/fileadmin/user_upload/bodies/Fin_Comm_134_Sess/Documents_FC_135/en/JM2010-2-4-E.pdf

these sources. FAO should also in parallel develop adequate fundraising arrangements and instruments to facilitate the mobilization of resources in the region.

3. Partnerships with Regional and sub-regional institutions

Past evaluations have made several remarks regarding the changing environment in which FAO operates. The IEE (paragraph 792) commented that “one of the most striking features of this changed terrain is the presence of many new actors with substantial interests and competence in areas of priority to FAO”. The 2006 evaluation of FAO Partnerships and Alliances noted that the organisation needed to “think more strategically and adjust relationships with some of its partners”¹⁹.

During the period under review, the evaluation team found that RNE and SNE struggled to carry out collaborative initiatives with (sub-) regional institutions including the UN system²⁰. Partnerships were generally weak and at best limited to few joint activities undertaken through projects or UN consultation mechanisms. These have included:

- Joint FAO-IFAD-World Bank study on “Improving Food Security in Arab Countries”
- Support to Arab Maghreb Union (AMU) for developing a Strategic document for Agriculture in the North Africa sub-region.
- Assistance to the Council for Arab Economic Unity (CAEU) for the Formulation of a Regional Programme for Food Security.
- Work on forestry curricula with the Arab Institute for Forestry and Range.
- Participation in UN regional bodies such as the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) and UN Development Group for Arab States/Middle East and North Africa.

RNE was reportedly active in UN regional consultation mechanisms²¹. However, neither adequate frameworks nor resources (mainly manpower) were available for a more active engagement on regional UN-wide priority issues that are at the core of FAO mandate, such as the Millennium Development Goals, food security, climate change and youth employment. FAO efforts were also constrained by the absence of Regional and Country Programming Frameworks and related work-plans which would have helped to identify areas for joint work²². The strongest partnerships were probably those developed with regional bodies with technical capacity such as the Arab Organization for Agricultural Development (AOAD), the International Centre for Agricultural Research

¹⁹ Evaluation of Partnerships and Alliances. PC 95/4b, Preface – page 6.

²⁰ Besides the UN, other major development actors in the Near East agricultural sector are bilateral donors mainly from the Mediterranean basin (such as the European Union, Italy, Spain, France), international financing institutions (such as the WB, IFAD), sovereign wealth funds, private foundations, civil society and – in some countries – faith-based social welfare organisations and charities.

²¹ RNE has chaired the food security working group at the UN Regional Coordination Mechanism for Arab States coordinated by ESCWA and made some inputs to the Regional undg for Arab States regarding support to UNDAF processes.

²² This given that the NMTPF (of which the region only had one signed) was to be FAO’s contribution to national UN Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) and, by aggregation, to regional planning initiatives.

in the Dry Areas (ICARDA) and AMU. Representatives from these three organizations have regularly attended FAO meetings and events and some joint activities have taken place in the recent past. Collaboration with regional inter-governmental institutions such as the Arab League or the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) and regional financial institutions such as the African Development Bank (AfDB) was more limited.

Box 4.1 FAO Cooperation with ICARDA

With over 80 experts on crops, livestock, water, climate change and other topics of interest for Near East countries, ICARDA has become an important technical assistance provider in the region. ICARDA holds regular co-ordination meetings with Governments and donors to discuss priority areas for cooperation. FAO has had a long-standing cooperation with this Institute. The main highlights on this cooperation are (as reported by ICARDA) the following:

- ICARDA has been providing training in the improvement of ICARDA mandate crops to scientists nominated by the FAO (e.g. through the regional FAO IPM programme).
- ICARDA participates in the Inter-Agency Task Forces convened by the RNE.
- ICARDA and RNE are co-sponsors of several technical networks including the regional Association of Agricultural Research Institutes of the Near East and North Africa (AARINENA) and the Near East and Mediterranean drought Network (NEMEDCA).

The evaluation was informed that there was a noticeable reduction of collaborative activities in the period 2007-09 (particularly with technical partners). As RNE/SNE relative capacity declined, other agencies reportedly increased theirs²³.

Overall, FAO was not able to allocate neither adequate resources nor the expertise required to establish strong alliances with regional organizations and lead UN initiatives on key topics of FAO's mandate. An exception was the Joint FAO-IFAD-World Bank food security study²⁴, which was triggered by the soaring food prices crisis, and ultimately resulted in a collaborative effort to provide a comprehensive analysis and possible options for improving food security in the region. The evaluation commends this initiative and suggests it as an example for future collaboration on priority areas for the region which may also result in the development of joint flagship documents. Another best practice that could be worth pursuing is the holding of information-exchange events such as those held between IFAD and ICARDA to "foster joint strategic planning

²³ The World Bank (WB) was recurrently mentioned as one of those emerging providers of technical assistance in the region. The WB has developed a portfolio which now exceeds US\$ 500 m for rural development and natural resources management projects in the Near East region, and has strongly relied on the FAO Investment Centre (TCI) and to a lesser extent on RNE expertise for programme development (including strategic programming, project identification, formulation, monitoring and evaluation). The number of missions conducted by TCI staff to Near East countries (over 60 only in 2009) reflects its heavy involvement in World Bank operations in the Region. Since the expansion of WFP mandate in 2006 (to include the provision of development assistance), this organization has progressively developed an increasingly complex portfolio of activities in both low (Mauritania and Yemen) and middle income (Egypt and Syria) food deficit countries. At regional level as well as in several countries WFP has become the leading agency in food security matters e.g. leading the regional study on nexus between food security and climate change for the Arab UN Development Group (UNDG); chairing the UN system Food security cluster in Yemen; being the lead technical counterpart to national food security bodies in Mauritania, etc.

²⁴ <http://siteresources.worldbank.org/INTMENA/Resources/FoodSecfinal.pdf>

and synergies”²⁵. The above will be in line with the Draft FAO’s Organization-wide Strategy on Partnerships (IPA item 3.108) which highlights that “at the regional and sub-regional level, FAO structures [should] interface with regional and sub-regional inter-governmental institutions” and, to this end, envisages the conduct of training on partnership management for decentralized offices staff.

In all cases, and as proposed by RNE²⁶, future collaborative initiatives should be based on the regional priority framework endorsed by NERC. It is also the view of the evaluation that by working with relevant organizations and civil society (particularly Non-Governmental Organizations), FAO decentralized offices in the region will be able to make a more efficient use of its resources and all together address the major challenges facing the food and agricultural sector in the region.

C. FAO Coverage of the Near East region

Unlike most other regions, there is no internationally acknowledged consensus on the definition or geographical coverage of the Near East. The “Near East” region is defined differently by UN and development organizations, with some countries (notably Sudan and Mauritania) at times either included or excluded. In recent times several FAO regional reports have consistently referred to the region as “Near East and North Africa” although no firm consideration has been given to revising the name of the FAO regional and sub-regional offices servicing the region.

The issue of FAO geographical coverage of the Near East region has taken greater relevance after FAO amended operational responsibilities of regional offices in 2007, which reduced the number of countries operationally covered by RNE to eighteen, and NERC, which has thirty-two members, became part of FAO Governing Bodies in 2009. As this issue had been included in the IPA (item 3.86), a debate on the subject took place in the April 2009 CoC-IEE session, which concluded that: (i) the regional breakdown for Council election purposes, and the established practice of allowing dual (and sometimes triple) participation at Regional Conferences at the request of a Member Nation (possibly as observer), were not being called into question and (ii) the question of RNE geographical coverage needed to be further elucidated, and (iii) that Regional Groups should consult on the issue among themselves and with Capitals, and report back to the Working Groups as soon as possible. The evaluation team was informed that no further discussion on the subject has taken place since then.

Given that the confusion due to the disparity between NERC and RNE geographical coverage risks getting worse, and the matter is eminently political, the evaluation suggest that concerned member countries should urgently address this issue. At the same time, it would be desirable to look again at the name of FAO regional and sub-regional offices in the region, which at present do not reflect historical ties and names of groups of countries, nor recent FAO and other organizations’ definition of the region.

²⁵ http://www.icarda.org/News/2009/09-10-27/09-10-27_IFAD-ICARDA.htm

²⁶ Presentation on RNE Regional Priority Framework (October 2010)

V. FUNCTION OF REGIONAL AND SUB-REGIONAL OFFICES

This section includes a review of key aspects affecting the functioning of FAO's regional and sub-regional offices in the Near East. It starts with an analysis of the administration function as well as of FAO organizational arrangements, functional relationships and skill-mix in the region. In drawing the analysis the following sources of information have been used:

- Desk reviews, past evaluations (chiefly the IEE and the Strategic evaluation of FAO's Country Programming), internal audits and reviews on the subject made available to the team (such as IPA progress reports, CSH missions and reports²⁷, Audits)
- Discussions with senior management, FAO staff, regional partners and Permanent Representatives to FAO from the region.
- Survey questionnaire to FAO regional staff on skill-mix and functional relationships.
- Results of Annual FAO Work Measurement Survey (WMS).

A. Administration

For the purposes of this exercise, Administration includes RNE and SNE work in support of programme management, governing bodies, oversight, shared and common services in the region.

During the period under review, administration related work in RNE (and SNE) has consumed a growing share of the RP resources allocated to these offices (up to 38% in 2009). Other regional offices (such as RAP in Asia and RLC in Latin America) have also allocated substantial resources for administration (on average 36% and 41 % during the review period, respectively); however, these offices still perform the full array of administrative actions (including personnel, travel, etc), which in the case of RNE are now carried out by the Services Shared Centre (SSC) in Budapest²⁸.

Replies to FAO WMS (2004-09) by technical staff at regional and sub-regional offices and the information gathered by FAO missions to RNE in 2009 confirm the perceptions expressed to the team of an increased administrative burden during the period under review.

Table 5.1 Technical professional staff time devoted to administration work (%), WMS

Office	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
RNE	8%	7%	7%	9%	15%	21%
SNE	23%	31%	28%	31%	36%	40%

Specific issues affecting the performance of selected RNE and SNE administrative functions as well as recent developments in some corporate administrative functions of importance for the region are analyzed below.

²⁸ The administration function in RNE and SNE was expected to be streamlined following the abolition of the Regional Management Support Unit (MSU) in 2007, which became an Administrative Support Unit (ASU), and the re-orientation of SNE as a "technical hub" in 2008.

1. Regional and sub-regional administrative functions

Programme Management

In the period under review the programme management function was scattered among the different technical and administration units. With the transfer of budgeting and programming responsibilities for country offices to the ROs (IPA items 3.78, 2.80, 2.81) and the enhanced role of ROs in leading the identification of regional priorities, there is a need to strengthen FAO capacity for strategy planning, programming and monitoring of regional work.²⁹ In this regard, RNE and the Human Resources Division (CSH) have proposed the establishment of a planning function at RNE in order to organize the region's resources and build synergies within the office to better discharge new responsibilities such as servicing of Governing Bodies, oversight and management of the FAORs Network, resource mobilization, field operations (including management of the TCP) and the new Results Based Management system.

Governing bodies

During the period under review RNE provided secretariat support to the Regional Conferences at a cost of over US\$ 200,000 per biennium (NERC 2006 data). The IPA calls for a strengthening of the Regional Conferences and for greater involvement of Regional Offices in their organization. In view of the new functions³⁰ and ways of working³¹, the modality for servicing Regional Conferences (for example as part of a comprehensive strategic planning and monitoring function in RNE) may need to be re-assessed.

Oversight

In the past oversight activities conducted at regional and sub-regional level consisted mainly of audit work. The FAO Manual for Management of FAORs released on September 2010 indicates that ROs have to “supervise the network of FAORs in the region”, and “as part of its mandate, is expected to undertake periodic missions to review the country offices [function and work]”. RNE monitoring capacity for overseeing country offices particularly with regard to the provision of training and advice, monitoring and supervision needs to be strengthened.

Operations

Although servicing field operations seem to be functioning well lately (particularly in RNE, which has provided field programme support to countries without an FAOR), discussions on the introduction of a planning function should also take into account the possible efficiencies to be gained from including some responsibilities of the operations function (such as resource mobilization and TCP management) as part of it.

²⁹ The Evaluation of FAO's Country Programming has already recommended to allocate additional resources to Regional and sub-regional offices for strategic planning, budgeting and programming.

³⁰ Namely, i) Develop issues for regional policy coherence & regional perspective on global policy issues & regulation – presenting its report to the FAO Conference; ii) Review and advise on the FAO programme for the region and the overall FAO programme as it affects the region – presenting its report to the Council through the Programme and Finance Committees.

³¹ The Chair and the “rapporteur” will remain in office between sessions.

Shared services

The evaluation team noted that in view of the role played by the SSC-Budapest (providing Personnel, travel and other administrative services to countries in the region) and the relatively low volume of financial transactions (resulting from the decline of RP and field activities in the region), RNE seems to have an excessive capacity for shared services delivery (including excess capacity in finance, travel and procurement) which is not commensurate with its needs. There is thus a need to review the current shared services function in RNE with the view of shedding and/or strengthening certain elements (such as the Human Resource function given the growing need to support Staff Development and provide assistance on personnel matters and rules to decentralized offices in the region).

2. Corporate administrative functions

There are several administrative functions carried out at corporate level that have an impact on RNE and SNE function. These were reviewed in detail by the IEE (Chapter 8) and as part of the IPA actions have been proposed to improve several corporate policies and services dealing with staff representation, mobility, development and Information and Communication Technologies (ICT).

Geographic and gender distribution of staff

By end 2009, and throughout the evaluation period, RNE and SNE had a low share of RP-funded professional staff from outside the Near East region (around 12% compared to over 20% from outside the region in the case of RLC and over 30% in RAP) and a very unbalanced professional work force in terms of gender (only one female out of 33 technical experts). Geographic representation of professional staff in other UN regional offices was more diverse; for example, at WHO Regional Office for the Eastern Mediterranean³² over 30% of the professional staff came from outside the region. Similarly, over 30% of the professional staff at UNDP's Regional Bureau for Arab States³³ (HQ) came from outside the region. In both UNDP and WHO women were better represented in the composition of technical staff but none reached the 50% of ILO's Regional Office for the Arab States³⁴.

Mobility and rotation

By end 2009, over 60% of RNE and SNE technical staff had spent more than eight years in their current positions and at the same grade. This, as already called for in different evaluations including the IEE³⁵, makes the introduction of a staff mobility and rotation policy framework, governing the rotation of staff within the same duty station and

³² <http://www.emro.who.int/rd/annualreports/2009/annex2.htm>

³³ <http://arabstates.undp.org/subpage.php?spid=4>

³⁴ <http://www.ilo.org/public/english/region/arpro/beirut/about/staff.htm>

³⁵ The 2004 Evaluation of Decentralization called for the rotation of technical staff, both as a means of ensuring effective linkages between headquarters and the field and to catalyse staff skills development (recommendation 9). The IEE called for the development of a rotation and mobility policy aligned with new recruitment, staff development and promotion criteria (page 328)

region, between Headquarters and the region, and between this region and other regions, urgent to reinforce the linkages among technical (international) staff irrespective of their location, increase staff motivation, widen staff expertise, and promote trust and knowledge sharing at all levels.

Staff development

Staff development was identified as one of the weakest areas in the past, at all levels. In 2009, RNE and CSH launched an exercise to review the job profiles of general service staff and produce staff development plans for all RNE staff³⁶. Given the critical importance of staff training, the evaluation team was informed that a 'learning hub' was being developed at RNE for all decentralized offices in the region. By end 2010 staff development plans for RNE and SNE staff had been finalized and tailored training programmes on competency-related skills were under development. An online survey on training priorities for country offices had also been launched and staffing and infrastructure needs for strengthening the HR function in RNE had been identified.

Deployment of support systems including training and upgrade of IT systems

ICT infrastructure was identified as a weak area in the past, particularly at country level. Under IPA item 3.90 an ICT "regional hub" was in the process of being set-up in RNE as an integral part of the Global Support Model. A lighter web-based version of Oracle (called "Field Office Budget Holder Reporting Service") will also be deployed to allow for real-time access to financial data at country level. The evaluation team noted that timely access to this information was critical to ensure transparency in the use of funds vis-à-vis donors and Government partners³⁷ as well as to be able to plan and make informed decisions on project activities. This tool will be available in mid-2011.

Overall, the evaluation team considers that the administrative function needs to be revised with priority given to strengthening strategic support services (such as planning, and HR management). Out of the several corporate initiatives in progress, the evaluation urges FAO to speed up the implementation of the rotation and mobility policy, the staff development plans and the revision of job profiles as well as the deployment of the Field Office Budget Holder Reporting service and the strengthening of ICT infrastructure in the region. The thorough review of RNE administrative functions planned for January 2011 as part of the global review of the SSC should provide more specific insights and recommendations on these and other functions and procedures that need to be streamlined at regional level particularly concerning shared services. The review should also take into account options for improving the performance, timeliness and user satisfaction of SSC in servicing decentralised offices in the Near East.

³⁶ By end 2010 CSH had developed 28 job profiles per function and grade for RNE and SNO staff including clear lines of command and core competencies.

³⁷ Several bilateral donors indicated to the evaluation team their lack of confidence in FAO financial system based on the untimely delivery of financial reports; unclear reporting of expenditures and discrepancies between FAO country and HQ financial data.

B. Organizational arrangements

Below there is an assessment of organizational arrangements in the region including an analysis of the FAO structure, reporting lines, functional relationships and skills mix in the Near East.

1. Organizational structure

As mentioned earlier, during the period under review FAO had one regional and one operational sub-regional office in the Near East: RNE and SNE respectively. Following the 2009 Conference decision, a new organizational structure was established with the addition of two sub-regional offices: SNO and SNG.

The rationale behind the three layer structure of RO, SRO and FAOR was initially established in the Director-General's Reform Proposals in 2005³⁸. ROs were expected to change, to focus more on major regional issues and region-wide institutions; contributing substantively to the formulation of regional strategies and policies; taking the lead in the organization of Regional Conferences; orchestrating the preparation of the regional dimensions of the programme of work and periodically reporting on FAO performance in the region. Creation of SROs was proposed to provide "more effective and efficient services to member countries" with "FAO technical staff...located closer to the countries" to provide "subject-matter and policy support to FAORs and their host country governments". FAORs were expected to continue their role as front-line support offices. This model was, in essence, not modified by the IPA and, as recalled above, the Conference authorized the introduction of a three-layer organisational structure in the Near East in 2009.

Several issues were raised to the evaluation team regarding the new organizational structure in place. The most frequent issue, both within and outside FAO, was the unclear rationale behind the establishment of a three layer structure (regional, sub-regional and country) in the Near East. This was partially the result of a perceived lack of clarity between the respective roles of RO and the newly established SROs in the provision of technical and operational support to FAORs and the potential risk of SROs becoming an administrative layer between FAORs and RNE.

The evaluation team concluded that the FAO three-layer organizational structure in the Near East (i.e. regional, sub-regional and country level) has a very sound basis but needs improved implementation and, in some cases, further refinement – for several reasons.

First, and in view of the major sub-regional specificities and differences highlighted in the RPF-NE, FAO's approach in the Near East has to necessarily include sub-regional and country initiatives that allow for a greater specificity of FAO cooperation. Second, there are relatively mature sub-regional organizations (such as GCC and AMU) with which FAO could establish longer term partnerships. Following the development of the RPF-NE,

³⁸ C 2005/3/Sup.1 "Supplement to the Director-General's Programme of Work and Budget (Reform Proposal)" of August 2005 submitted to the Thirty-third Session of the Conference, 19 - 26 November 2005, paragraph 100.

FAO should progressively be able to develop joint programmes of work with regional and sub-regional organizations. Third, FAO cooperation with some countries of the region (particularly in the Gulf and North Africa) has been virtually nil; thus, earmarking human and financial resources for specific sub-regional work will have a positive effect in improving the geographic distribution of FAO cooperation. Four, there is a need to facilitate FAORs access in a timely manner to FAO technical support and one way to do it is by establishing such technical capacity as close as possible to the field. The sub-regions appear as the most appropriate level for that.

2. Reporting lines

During the period under review, all FAO decentralized offices in the Near East reported directly to FAO HQ for administrative and technical issues. There was no hierarchical organization at regional level (i.e. RNE had no oversight role over sub-regional and country offices). The consequences of such a centralized approach were that a) no regional or sub-regional exchange, leading to a coherent regional approach to address Member Country needs, took place during the period under review (i.e. the first-ever meeting to plan, coordinate and exchange views on regional and sub-regional work were held in early 2009); b) the regional structure was composed of a group of isolated offices instead of constituting one integrated structure. Furthermore, each decentralized office (RNE, SNE and FAORs) used to receive its budgetary allocation as directly from HQ without any involvement of the Regional Office.

In early 2010 a Director-General's Bulletin³⁹ revised the reporting lines of decentralized offices as follows:

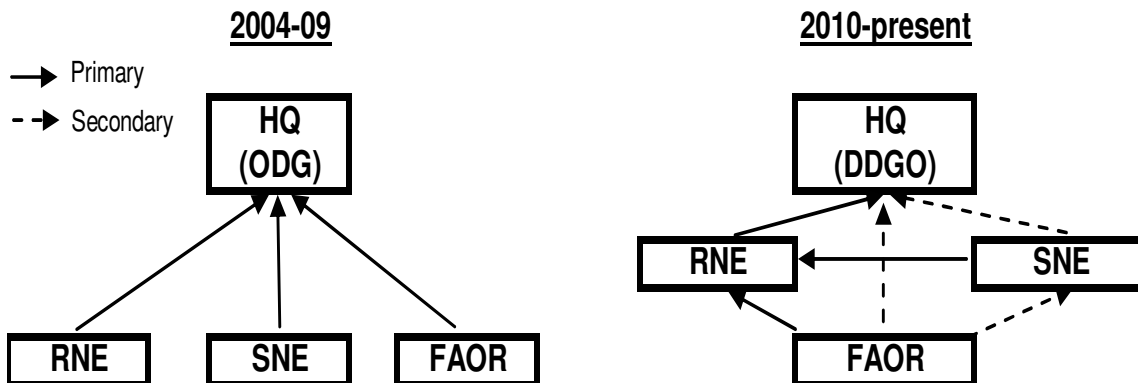
- “The primary reporting line of ADG/RRs is to the Deputy Director-General (Operations), under the authority of the Director-General.
- The primary reporting line of the Subregional Coordinator (SRC) is to the ADG/RR.
- The primary reporting line of FAO Representatives (FAOReps), who are appointed by the Director-General, is to the Assistant Director-General/Regional Representative (ADG/RR). However the FAO Reps would also report, as necessary, to the Director-General through the Deputy Director-General/Operations (DDGO) on representational, policy and political matters.”

The charts below depict the reporting lines a) during the period under review (2004-09⁴⁰), and b) as revised in early 2010.

Chart 5.1 Reporting lines 2004-09 & 2010-present

³⁹ Director-General's Bulletin 2010/04: Decentralized Offices – Primary Reporting Lines.

⁴⁰ As of 2007 the Sub-regional Coordinator at SNE was expected to report to the Regional Representative at RNE.



Legend: ODG (Office of the Director-General); DDGO (Deputy Director-General for Operations)

In discussing with FAO staff from the region, it became clear that the new reporting lines were in the right direction but were not always well understood. One of the reasons was that although FAORs were expected to report primarily to ROs, clearance for some administrative actions (such as requests for travel/leave) was performed by the SROs. FAORs also had less delegated authority than SROs for administrative actions (e.g. signing letters of agreements) and had to report to them on their technical work (see section below).

All the above reinforced the impression that contrary to the IPA (item 3.83⁴¹) the SRO is still (in certain aspects) an administrative layer between the FAORs and the RO. The dual role of SRCs (as SRC for the sub-region and FAORep for the host country) also causes confusion since different reporting lines apply to each layer and conflicts of interest (e.g. prioritizing between national or sub-regional duties) may occur.

Finally, since both SROs and FAORs still have strong relationships with HQ as in the past, and RNE was, at the time of the evaluation, not yet able to provide adequate oversight of and administrative support to SROs and FAORs, FAO HQ largely remained the *de facto* focal point (and thus primary supervisor) of decentralized offices in the region⁴².

3. Functional relationships

During the period under review, technical staffs⁴³ in RNE and SNE were seconded from their parent divisions to decentralized offices and were thus considered (regional outposted) staff of the technical divisions at HQ. FAORs were free to approach technical staff at any layer (HQ/regional/sub-regional) often without the involvement or knowledge of staff at regional or sub-regional offices.

An unintended consequence of the above was that most technical support to the field - expressed in terms of country visits and backstopping of non-emergency field projects - over 80% in both cases, was provided by technical staff from HQ.

⁴¹ Page 68, "Discontinue administrative responsibilities with sub-regional offices to allow them to function fully as technical support units to countries of the sub-region."

⁴² The evaluation was informed that the process of transferring the oversight responsibilities for the FAOR Network from HQ to RNE was ongoing.

⁴³ Only administrative staff (including general service) reported to RNE, SNE and FAORs Management.

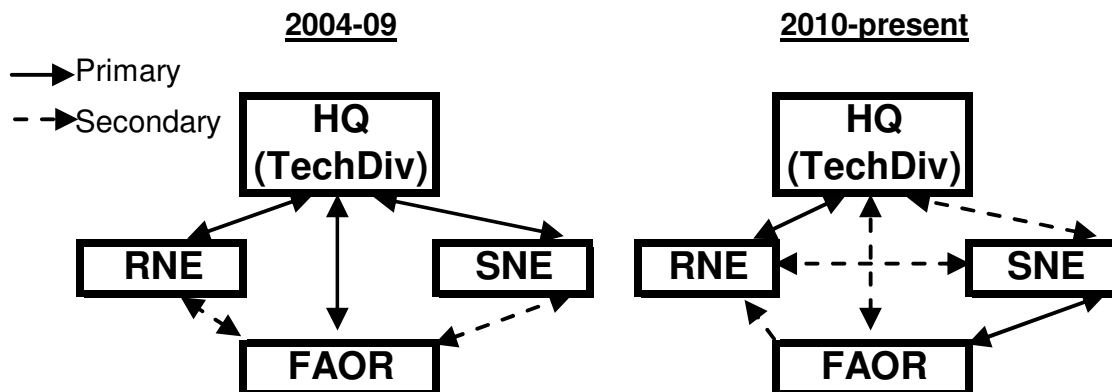
Reasons for this include that funding for and clearance of projects (such as the TCP) was centralized at HQ and that the capacity and responsiveness at regional and sub-regional was perceived to have diminished overtime compared to HQ.

In 2010 the Director-General revised the functional relationships of technical staff:⁴⁴

- Technical officers in decentralized offices, at headquarters and other regions will form functional Technical Networks to facilitate information exchange on specific subjects.
- Regional technical officers will receive functional guidance from the respective (HQ) Technical Division concerned with respect to their work as technical officers.
- Technical officers of the SRO will receive functional guidance from the concerned (HQ) Technical Division concerned and/or Regional technical officers with respect to their work as technical officers.
- As members of the Multidisciplinary Team (MDT) at the subregional level, FAORs will report to the Head of the MDT (equivalent to the SRC), on their work as technical officers.

The charts below depict the functional relationships a) during the period under review (2004-09), and b) as revised in early 2010.

Chart 5.2 Technical functional relationships 2004-09 & 2010-present



Legend: TechDiv (Technical Division)

In discussing with FAO staff in the region, it became clear that professional staff had different views on their new functional relationships.

- At regional level, staff felt largely powerless to address regional priorities since they did not have a **clear** role in supervising sub-regional or country level technical activities linked to region-wide issues.
- At sub-regional level, staff were keen to keep strong connections with HQ and FAORs, even at the expense of a more integrated regional approach under the supervision of RNE.

⁴⁴ Director-General's Bulletin 2010/04: Decentralized Offices – Primary Reporting Lines. A new Circular on Responsibilities and Relationships was being prepared at the time of writing this report.

- At country level, FAORs were largely in favour of retaining the ability to tap technical expertise from any FAO unit (HQ, RNE or the respective SRO), even though the SROs were now expected to be “the first port of call” for FAORs.
- FAOReps (and Assistant FAOReps) indicated their inability to play the new technical role expected from them.

Although some measures to increase information sharing among the three layers are under preparation, the evaluation team noted that the functional links currently established between HQ and RO/SROs and between RO and SROs as currently set-up do not provide an incentive for co-ordinated work in the Near East region. RO and SROs experts have historically carried out more or less the same kind of activities at country level (i.e. providing support to national projects, participating in meetings and workshops, etc.). The unclear delineation between region-wide, sub-regional and country issues and tasks, also caused by the absence of country and sub-regional priority frameworks, makes it difficult to distinguish the functions of staff in each layer.

In order to better define the functions of regional and sub-regional technical staff in the Near East region, the evaluation team launched a survey questionnaire⁴⁵ for all professional staff to gather their views on this matter based on the principle that “the RO should be mainly responsible for co-ordination, planning and supervision of activities in the region and have adequate technical capacity to lead the work across the region on common region-wide priority areas; whereas the SROs would provide technical and operational support to national and sub-regional programmes in their respective sub-regions and be responsible for leading FAO’s response to subregional priorities.”

The majority of the staff agreed with this principle and felt that staff at the regional office should be responsible for regional programme development (including developing and managing projects on common priority areas), strategic planning, monitoring and evaluation, and coordination of FAO’s work in the region. At sub-regional level, the emphasis was in supporting field programme development and strategic planning at sub-regional and country level.

Technical staff at regional and sub-regional levels were in favour of maintaining strong links with FAO technical divisions, without this necessarily meaning to reinstate direct reporting lines to HQ divisions (suggestions made included the establishment of a comprehensive rotation and mobility policy as well as the development of functional technical networks around a restricted number of regional priorities under RNE coordination). Resource mobilization was found to be the responsibility of all offices, whereas training and information exchange was considered more a regional than sub-regional function.

The survey results, together with the evaluation team’s observations during the field visits, shows that there is in fact a growing consensus on the functions to be played by technical staff at each layer and that an explicit clarification of functional relationships is needed particularly in view of the ongoing building-up of sub-regional teams.

⁴⁵ A summary of the questionnaire results can be found in annex 4.

4. Regional and sub-regional skills mix

The evaluation team noted that the past regional skills mix was largely governed by abolition of posts, retirements, transfers and out-posting of staff to country offices (OTOs) rather than by a defined set of priorities for the region. In a context of reduced funding, it was indeed very difficult to modify the skills mix, let alone to expand the technical capacity of RO and SROs in the Near East region.

Following the increase in resources to regional and sub-regional offices in 2010-11, the composition of regional and sub-regional technical teams was revised in 2009. In this regard, the evaluation noted that the consultation between RNE and HQ for the revision of the RNE (and SROs) skills mix was rather limited and, in the absence of regional, sub-regional or national priority frameworks, not evidence-based.

Based on the above findings, the evaluation team believes that the RPF-NE should become the basis for defining the skills mix at regional level to better reflect the priority areas identified in the RPF and adopted by the NERC. Sub-regional and country programming processes should now be launched as soon as possible, and when feasible with an expanded stakeholder base including Governments, sub-regional organizations, technical partners and donors, so that the skills mix of sub-regional experts progressively reflect priority areas (and FAO comparative advantages) of interest in each sub-region.

VI. WORK OF FAO REGIONAL AND SUB-REGIONAL OFFICES

This section includes a strategic assessment⁴⁶ of technical work carried out by RNE and SNE during the period under review. It starts with an overview of FAO priority areas, followed by an assessment of the work conducted through the regular and field programme. It ends with a review of structural issues, key programme areas and cross cutting issues that are changing the nature of the demand for FAO services in the Near East. In drawing the analysis the following sources of information have been used:

- Desk review of FAO regular and field programme activities as reported in the PWB, PIR and FPMIS as well as in RNE, SNE and FAORs work plans and annual reports.
- Past evaluations (several project evaluations managed by OED and corporate evaluations including the Evaluation of FAO's work and role in Water; the Second Real Time Evaluation of FAO's Work on Avian Influenza; the Multilateral Evaluation of the 2003-05 Desert Locust Campaign, etc.).
- Discussions with senior management, FAO staff, regional partners and direct beneficiaries.

A. Priority areas of work

The IEE (paragraph 265) found that “while FAO Members agree on FAO's purposes and broad goals, they have been far less successful in translating these into consensus on [global, regional and national] priorities, choices and decisions on what FAO can be expected to do - and not to do - with the resources at its disposal.” The evaluation team found that the Near East region was not an exception. Although RNE identified five priority areas of work “based on the current and ongoing major food and agriculture related development concerns”⁴⁷, FAO's activities did not reflect clear prioritization of work on these areas.

Box 6.1 Priority Areas for the Near East

- Promoting Sustainable Water and Natural Resources Utilization, Conservation and Management.
- Promoting the Formulation and Implementation of Sustainable Agricultural and Rural Development Policy Reforms for Eradication of Food Insecurity, Malnutrition and Rural Poverty.
- Strengthening Capacities for Trade Liberalization, WTO Negotiations and Regional Economic Cooperation.
- Assisting in Disaster Prevention, Mitigation and Preparedness, and in Post-Emergency Rehabilitation and Transition to Sustainable Food Security and Agricultural Development.
- Fostering Knowledge Management, Availability and Access to Information.

⁴⁶ The assessment of RNE and SNE technical work was not intended to assess the impact of all the work conducted by these offices but rather to provide insights on internal and external issues affecting the efficiency and effectiveness of these offices.

⁴⁷ <http://www.fao.org/world/Regional/RNE/morelinks/NERC/Nerc29/Material/RNE-Priority-Areas.pdf>

A complicating factor in defining priorities was that the demand for FAO services emerging from past Regional Conferences was very diverse and included a wide array of political, policy and technical issues. At sub-regional level the evaluation did not find clear common priorities identified for North Africa. At country level, while efforts were made in some countries (such as Egypt, Iran and Syria) to develop National Medium-Term Priority Frameworks (NMTPF), only one country had signed an NMTPF (Yemen) by end-2009, which was not operational due to lack of resources⁴⁸.

Overall, the evaluation found that while the work of FAO in the region was scattered, the quality and neutrality of FAO technical expertise was still widely recognized. However, in terms of quantity, RNE and SNE staff were not as productive as their peers in other regional offices. For instance, only in 2009 the RAP technical team, which is about twice the size of RNE, together with both FAORs and HQs delivered about US\$70 million of technical assistance programmes in the Asia and Pacific region (against less than US\$ 20 m in the Near East). Regular programme activities were not an exception:

- RAP organized 87 meetings and workshops whereas RNE and SNE organized 33.
- RAP produced 18 technical publications⁴⁹ whereas RNE and SNE produced 2.
- RAP fielded 287 missions whereas RNE and SNE fielded 63.

It is against the above background that the evaluation team has assessed the Regular and Field Programme activities conducted by RNE and SNE during the period under review.

B. Regular Programme

The assessment that follows examines the various types of normative services and products provided by RNE and SNE. This mainly includes secretariat services to technical commissions as well as technical and policy advice provided through technical networks, workshops, publications and missions. The process of evaluation is based on: (i) a description of the key outputs; and (ii) an assessment of the quality, perceived utility and, if possible, impact of these outputs. A detailed account of outputs during the review period is found in Annexes 3 (regional technical commissions), 4 (workshops and meetings), 5 (publications) and 6 (highlights of FAO technical work in the Near East).

Secretariat and related functions

RNE makes substantive inputs to Regional Technical Commissions, which are regional bodies established under articles VI and XIV of the FAO Constitution. To date, the following Commissions have been established for the Near East region:

- 1. Agriculture and Land and Water Use Commission for the Near East (ALAWUC).**
- 2. Near East Regional Commission for Fisheries (RECOFI).**
- 3. Near East Forestry Commission (NEFC).**

⁴⁸ FAO has signed a cooperation agreement with Morocco based on the country's "Plan Vert" and prepared a Medium Term Plan for Iraq; although these are not formally considered "NMTPFs" they are operational with funds contributed by FAO and the Government itself.

⁴⁹ Excluding workshop's proceedings, technical commissions' papers and project-funded publications.

In addition to the above bodies, some member countries adhere to technical commissions that are functional to their geographic location and interests, such as the following:

- Commission for Controlling the Desert Locust in the Central Region (CRC). Members include Bahrain, Djibouti, Egypt, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Jordan, Iraq, Kuwait, Lebanon, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Sudan, Syria, UAE and Yemen.
- General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM). Members include Egypt, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, Syria and Tunisia.
- Eastern Central Atlantic Ocean Sub-Regional Fisheries Commission (SRFC). Mauritania is a founding member; the Commission was created in 1985.

The decisions reached by the above technical commissions are discussed at NERC and in some occasions (like in Fisheries and Forestry), also at global level (COFI and COFO, respectively). The areas of competence and priority topics addressed in past sessions (2004-2008) of regional bodies covering Near East countries are summarized below.

Table 6.1 Summary of priority topics addressed by Regional Technical Commissions

Body	Areas of competence & priority topics addressed
ALAWUC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sustainable increase of food production and agricultural productivity. • Finding alternatives to alleviate the effects of water scarcity, developing strategies for drought mitigation and preparedness planning. • Integration of rangeland, pasture and livestock systems. • Seed policy and international regulations on Plant Genetic Resources. Biosafety. • Biotechnology in crop production with reference to GMO crops. • Plant Protection, Food Safety and Agricultural Trade.
NEFC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National forest assessments, updated forest policies and investment programmes. • Livestock overgrazing and forests. • Prevention and fight against forest fires • Exotic invasive species and biodiversity protection. • Economic valuation of forest goods (timber and non-timber) and services. • Role of forests in food and water security in watersheds. • Forests, energy and climate change mitigation
RECOFI	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fish stock assessments and reporting. • National and regional measures to address illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing. Monitoring, control and surveillance (MCS). • Role of fisheries and aquaculture in food security and socio-economic development. Importance of value-chains. • Development of appropriate information & communication systems to support decision-making and policy implementation. • Legal, technical and human capacity building to help countries enforce regional and international agreements and regulations -Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries.

The evaluation noted three main issues regarding the work of the regional technical commissions. The first one was related to the varying geographic coverage of these

bodies. ALAWUC (23) and NEFC (27) have a greater operational coverage than RNE and SNE (18 countries). Other bodies (RECOFI, CRC and GFCM) include only some of the countries covered by RNE. If decisions taken by these bodies are to become key inputs for overall regional programming and priority setting, then there is a need to revise the membership and timing of these regional bodies⁵⁰.

Secondly, a review of FAO follow-up actions to decisions taken by these bodies shows uneven progress. FAO struggled to meet all the demands posed by ALAWUC and NEFC, whereas it was more responsive to needs expressed in RECOFI, CRC and GFCM meetings. This was partially explained by the coverage issue, by duplication of mandates (Member Country decisions taken at COFO were not always consistent with those taken at NEFC e.g. regarding the creation of a forest fire management network). More importantly, as Article XIV bodies, RECOFI, CRC and GFCM have operational funds at their disposal made available by both FAO and the member countries themselves ranging from US\$ 0.2 m (RECOFI) to US\$ 1.9 m (GFCM) per biennium. In comparison, ALAWUC only had US\$ 0.02 m per year from FAO.

Thirdly, and emerging from the above, servicing some of these commissions is very resource intensive (i.e., five staff members at RNE and SNE work full or part time on these commissions) and can potentially affect prioritization of work. RECOFI for example is being subsidized by FAO (in kind) although it serves a group of countries that could finance the work of the commission. Others such as ALAWUC are fully paid for by FAO yet it was not always evident to the evaluation team the added value of this body to improved regional decision making since it has recently lacked an adequate quorum and some of their functions (such as discussing priority work in agriculture and natural resources) are the prerogative of NERC.

Limited commitment from member countries (in terms of funding and actions), duplication (between NEFC and COFO' decisions and follow-up actions) and disparity (in terms of membership and timing of meetings) add to the need (as expressed in the IPA⁵¹) for a review of these bodies with the view of increasing their effectiveness and coherence of their work as well as progressively aligning their agenda to the RPF-NE approved by NERC.

⁵⁰ This issue was discussed by the 31st FAO Regional Conference for Latin America and the Caribbean (April 2010) which proposed "that the Commissions should conduct their work in greater depth and detail and should submit recommendations on courses of action to the Regional Conference and suggested that the Commissions could play an advisory role for the Regional Conferences and could serve to promote South-South cooperation"; and by the 27th FAO Regional Conference for Europe (May 2010) which urged "the specialized regional commissions to convene their future sessions in line with the Regional Conference for Europe in order to allow that priority action could be identified and timely submitted to FAO Governing Bodies".

⁵¹ As part of the IPA (item 2.69) FAO is presently conducting a review of statutory bodies with the "view to making any necessary changes to enable those statutory bodies which wish to do so to exercise financial and administrative authority and mobilise additional funding from their members, while remaining within the framework of FAO and maintaining a reporting relationship with it." Only CRC, GFCM and RECOFI are part of this review.

Networks and linkages

During the period under review, RNE has maintained and contributed to a number of important networks linking the concerned public and private stakeholders in the concerned/interested countries and creating the basis for their cooperation on research and development topics. A non-exhaustive list⁵² of regional networks with basic information on their establishment, objectives, funding and membership is below.

Table 6.2 Main thematic networks in the Near East

Network	Objective	Partners and funding
Association of Agricultural Research Institutions in the Near East and North Africa (AARINENA). Established in 1985	Strengthen cooperation among national, regional and international research institutions and centres through the dissemination and exchange of information, experiences and research results	25 Member countries, ICARDA, Bioversity International, IFPRI, Global Forum on Agricultural Research (GFAR), and FAO (RNE); Members pay annual fees of US\$ 2,000 to US\$ 5,000
Regional Network on Waste Water Reuse (RNRTWATER) Established in 2001	Foster technical co-operation among the concerned institutions, particularly the exchange of information and experience among countries of the Region.	12 Member Countries, nine regional and international organizations, FAO (RNE) No data on funding
Near East and North Africa regional network for agricultural policies (NENARNAP) Established in 2003	Support member countries' efforts to achieve sustainable agricultural development through the adoption of economically viable, environmentally sound and socially acceptable agricultural policies.	23 Member countries FAO provides secretariat No data on funding.
Near East and North Africa Rural and Agricultural Knowledge and Information Network (NERAKIN) Established in 2008	Strengthen the capacity of the Ministries of Agriculture and Agricultural and Rural Research Institutions for effective information management and knowledge exchange in support of rural and agricultural development in the region	17 Member countries, AOAD, ACSAD, AARINENA, Egyptian Universities Network, Central Laboratory for Agricultural Expert Systems, Bioversity International, GFAR, ICARDA, International Center for Biosaline Agriculture. FAO provides secretariat No data on funding.
Network on Drought Management for the Near East, Mediterranean and Central Asia (NEMEDCA) Established in 2001	Enhance technical co-operation among concerned national, regional and international organizations in the Region.	FAO (RNE), ICARDA and CIHEAM are co-conveners of the Network. The National Drought Mitigation Centre in Lincoln, USA recently joined it. No data on funding.

⁵² Other networks developed by RNE include the Near East Virtual Extension and Research Communication Network, the Near East Plant Protection Network, the Regional Aquaculture Information System, the Preventive Desert Locust Management Network, etc.

AARINENA is the oldest of these networks. It has the widest geographic coverage (spans countries from the Mashreq, Maghreb, Western Asia and the Khalij) and has been very active in developing thematic networks (on biotechnology, cotton, olive oil, etc.) and information systems (for example NERAKIN was developed by FAO for communication activities and later on placed it within AARINENA to provide a framework for sustainability and ownership by the National Programmes). In the past few years FAO's involvement has decreased whereas ICARDA has taken a stronger role in guiding the work of AARINENA on agricultural research issues⁵³.

RNRTWATER and NENARNAP are collaborative efforts between Near East countries and international organizations concerned with reuse of treated wastewater and agricultural policies respectively. They both started in the early 2000s with a range of promising activities but have recently become less active mainly due to lack of financial resources, with RNRTWATER reportedly collapsing in 2006 after a regional TCP project in support of the network (which was conditional upon the approval of a Kuwaiti donation) did not materialise. The last NENARNAP workshop (on soaring food prices) and biennial conference were held in 2008 and no further activity (except online and e-mail communications) have been conducted since then. In comparison, NEMEDCA, which grew out of a European Union-funded project that ended in 2008, has continued to carry out some activities (including annual Regional Conferences on Drought Management).

Meetings and Workshops

Besides holding meetings of regional technical commissions and networks, RNE and SNE have also convened or participated in numerous other international workshops, where FAO was called upon to provide high-level advice and bring knowledge from around the globe into the discussions. In total, RNE organized 107 meetings and workshops and SNE 36 during the period under review. The continued use of national and regional workshops is indeed important as a two-way exchange of information enabling RNE and SNE to pass knowledge to the participants and simultaneously gain awareness of their requirements. Target beneficiaries are normally middle-level government officers and technicians, who are often trained as trainers for further dissemination of the information and technologies. Private entrepreneurs are also sometimes trained (e.g. on agro-industry development).

The evaluation had two overall comments regarding the quantity and quality of the meetings and workshops organized/supported by RNE and SNE. In terms of quantity, the workshops and meetings held have been numerous (over 140) and covered many domains: water management, land degradation, plant protection, animal health, livestock, etc. The broad range of issues covered makes it difficult to draw general conclusions although clearly a majority of the workshops were very specialized, with only a handful of them devoted to strategic policy issues for the region. In terms of quality, the majority of the workshops organized by RNE and SNE were highly

⁵³ <http://aarinena.org/Syria2010/index.asp>

appreciated. Officials in countries visited by the evaluation team confirmed this. In some cases it was reported that the workshops could have benefited from inviting representatives of other technical organizations, not necessarily from the region itself, working on the subject. This was particularly true in areas where the region felt there were experiences from outside that were worth considering, e.g. Eastern European experience in agricultural trade negotiations with the European Union.

Publications and databases

The evaluation team was informed that RNE and SNE staff contributed to several publications issued by FAO HQ. However, little independent work by RNE and SNE was published: only 13 policy and technical publications were produced between 2004-09 (as indicated earlier excluding workshop's proceedings, technical commissions' papers and project-funded publications). This is very low compared to publications produced by FAO in other regions (In 2009 alone RAP produced 18 policy and technical papers⁵⁴ while RLC produced 16⁵⁵).

A consequence of the low number of policy and technical publications prepared was a reduced availability of normative products tailored to the region. Since few of the publications were peer reviewed by external experts there was a limited uptake of results by the research community. RNE and SNE publications were indeed cited only four times in scientific journals around the world⁵⁶. This contrast with citations of RAP and RLC publications (e.g. RAP publications alone were cited 248 times in Scirus).

Interlocutors in the region expressed their satisfaction with some specific technical publications developed by FAO (e.g. the Qat study in Yemen, the Inter-Agency Food Security Assessment in Egypt, the paper on marketing of agricultural products in Tunisia and Morocco, etc.). However, these were exceptions; when discussing in general about the quantity and quality of technical publications produced by RNE and SNE with Government staff, the mission interlocutors said that they did not know most of them⁵⁷. This broken link with clients of normative products reinforced the findings that RNE and SNE publications were limited and often unknown at local level.

Dissemination of information and knowledge exchange

The field missions noted that the diffusion of FAO information (notably documents and publications) to Government officials and partners requires improvement, particularly in the Mashreq and Gulf countries. This problem is generic and refers to many publications. As part of the IPA (item 3.55 and 3.57) FAO has committed to improve publication and dissemination of publications in Arabic including the development of a separate mirror Website.

⁵⁴ http://www.fao.org/world/regional/rap/publication_browse_detail.asp?year=2009&pageNumber=1

⁵⁵ http://www.rlc.fao.org/es/pubs/news_archive.asp?PagePosition=2

⁵⁶ The citation analysis took into account scientific journals listed in Scopus, Google Scholar and Scirus.

⁵⁷ An exception to this was the publications for locust control (produced at HQ with inputs from RNE and SNE) and on water and irrigation.

The table below summarizes the percentage of all FAO publications by language, which confirms that publications in Arabic language are lagging behind when compared to other official languages of the organization.

Table 6.3 Breakdown of FAO publications by language (as reported through the PIR)

Language	2004-05	2006-07	2008-09
English	46	49	46
French	19	15	14
Spanish	18	19	13
Arabic	4	7	5
Chinese	13	7	8
Russian		3	4
Multi-lingual			10

As in many other parts of the developing world, increasing internet usage particularly by young people is quickly changing readers' habits. The Near East was not an exception to this. A quick review of FAO corporate and regional websites traffic data for the period under review showed that users of FAO information from Near East and North Africa countries were increasing but they do not limit themselves to information available only in Arabic.

Website traffic data for April 2010⁵⁸ showed that most users from North African countries queried and accessed FAO Web sites (HQ, RNE and SNE) in French; users from the Gulf and Mashreq sub-regions made queries in both English and Arabic, almost in equal percentage. The FAO corporate website was by far the most consulted source of technical information with over 100,000 unique visitors from the region; RNE and SNE websites only draw about 10,000 visitors. Visitors from Near East countries are also actively participating in FAO online forums which are conducted entirely in English (e.g. 129 out of 1791 participants at FAO's Global Forum on Food Security and Nutrition came from the region).

The above results confirm the mission findings that in spite of the limited distribution/availability of publications researchers and particularly university students are very enthusiastic and multi-lingual users of FAO information in the region.

Missions

As stated earlier the vast majority of missions (over 80%) to Near East countries during the review period were carried out by FAO HQ staff and consultants. In 2004, RNE staff conducted 19 project-related visits (28%) and 50 non-project visits (72%). In 2009, RNE project-related missions to countries in the region reduced to 10 (18%) while non-project visits remained high (46 or 82%). In both years the majority of missions (over 60%) were to Gulf countries (mainly to Saudi Arabia). Missions conducted by SNE staff were focussed on North Africa countries and were largely non-project related (81% in 2004 and 71% in 2009).

⁵⁸ Data for previous months was not available.

Table 6.4 Breakdown of missions undertaken by RNE and SNE staff (2004-09), COIN

Office	Type of mission	2004		2009	
		No. of visits	Percentage	No. of visits	Percentage
RNE	Project	19	28%	10	18%
	Non-project	50	72%	46	82%
SNE	Project	3	19%	2	29%
	Non-project	13	81%	5	71%

The fact that the majority of missions were non-project related can be explained by the declining field programme and the relatively high number of workshops and meetings held in the region. Other issues raised to the team were the long periods between project related missions and the tendency by staff to visit countries in which funding for field activities was readily available (such as Saudi Arabia), and not necessarily those with the most serious food security problems (e.g. Yemen, Mauritania).

C. Field Programme

The assessment below covers RNE and SNE inputs to non-emergency regional, sub-regional and national projects carried out in the period 2004-09.

Regional and sub-regional projects

During the review period (2004-09), RNE and SNE had operational responsibility for 18 (sub-) regional projects, 12 of which were funded by FAO's Technical Cooperation Programme (TCP) and 6 by extra-budgetary sources. Of the latter, 1 was funded by Italy, 1 by IFAD, 1 by France and 3 by multiple donors. RNE was the operating unit for 13 regional projects and Lead Technical Office (LTO)⁵⁹ of 3 projects. SNE was the operating unit for 5 sub-regional projects and LTO of 3. FAO HQ was LTO for the remaining 12 (sub-) regional projects operated by RNE and SNE. By far the leading technical subject for (sub-) regional projects was crops; 8 projects were on this topic. Other topics included fisheries development (3 projects), food security (2 projects), policy, animal health, marketing, trade and forestry (1 project each). The combined budgets of these projects were around US\$ 19.6 million. However, only about US\$ 10.5 m were delivered from 2004-09, out of which US\$ 4.5 m corresponded to a single regional initiative backstopped by HQ (Regional IPM project).

Table 6.5 Delivery of Regional and sub-regional projects 2004-09, FPMIS

Delivery	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
Trust Funds	387,253	908,404	640,057	912,074	1,090,786	1,203,931
TCP	654,358	390,313	180,190	22,658	156,109	303,859
Total	1,041,611	2,207,121	1,460,304	1,846,805	2,337,681	2,711,721

⁵⁹ The Addendum to Field Programme Circular 2009/03 dated on 25 March 2010 defines the LTO as the organizational unit that leads the formulation and implementation of a field project. In order to facilitate the reading of this report, the term "backstopping unit" is also used as equivalent to "LTO".

National projects

Besides (sub-) regional projects RNE has backstopped and operated 17 national projects in countries with no FAORs, and backstopped, but did not operate, 18 national projects in countries with FAORs. SNE had backstopped 16 national projects. The bulk of RNE and SNE project backstopping occurred at country (51 projects) rather than at regional level (6 projects). The list of projects operated and/or backstopped by RNE and SNE are in annex 7.

Three observations can be made about the projects backstopped by RNE and SNE.

One is the very low number of extra-budgetary (sub-) regional projects approved and implemented during the review period – only six in total. Furthermore, RNE and SNE have had little role in mobilizing resources for both (sub-) regional and national extra-budgetary projects; this was generally done in Rome or at country level.

The second relates to TCP projects. Very few regional non-emergency TCP projects were approved by FAO during the review period (four in 2004, four in 2008 and one in 2010, none in 2005, 2006, 2007 and 2009). Something similar can be said about national TCP projects (see section below on the TCP). The limited number of projects developed and operated in middle and low-income countries can be attributed to both external and internal causes, e.g. poor formulation of project requests, shortage of staff in the region with skills required for project development, etc. In any case, FAO as a whole could have certainly played a stronger role in support of TCP project development in the region.

Thirdly, the technical capacity available in RNE to backstop and operate projects has been heavily concentrated in the Gulf sub-region (mainly on the Saudi Arabia programme), with correspondingly less on other countries in the region. This could be explained by the fact that technical cooperation programmes in the Gulf sub-region have been a major source of income for RNE (around US\$ 0.5 m per year of overheads), while the field programme in other countries were rapidly decreasing.

Box 6.2 FAO cooperation with Saudi Arabia

The FAO-Saudi Arabia cooperation programme was established in 1981 and has been renewed since then every five years. The current Technical Cooperation Agreement spans the period 2006-11 and includes 14 projects (with a total budget of US\$ 61.7 m) in the following areas:

- Sustainable management, conservation and development of natural resources
- Development of agricultural rural areas
- Increase productivity, production and marketing efficiency and diversification of production
- Upgrading the technical and quality standards to cope with international requirements
- Training and building of institutional capacity

By end 2009 the programme was implemented by a team led by a Senior Programme Coordinator and included two internationals, twenty- two support staff and fifteen technical experts. Programme backstopping was led by FAO HQ, except in the areas of water, livestock and crop protection which were backstopped by RNE.

1. Assessment

Field missions and desk studies undertaken for this evaluation examined ten regional and national projects operated and/or backstopped by RNE and SNE⁶⁰. These included five completed TCP regional projects⁶¹ and five national projects⁶². The full assessment of the projects reviewed can be found in annex 8. Regional projects⁶³ were assessed against 4 different aspects. Scoring was done on a 5-point scale, with 5 being the highest for each item. A score of 3 was deemed satisfactory; average scores above 3 can be considered better than satisfactory and scores below 3 are less than satisfactory. The criteria and average scores for all are presented in the table below.

Table 6.6 Scoring of regional projects against established criteria

Criteria for project assessment		Average
Relevance	Did the project correspond to important country needs? For TCP projects, did it genuinely meet the criteria for approval?	3.6
Project design	Were the objectives clear? How well were target beneficiaries, outputs and inputs specified? Were there linkages between project inputs, activities, outputs and objectives	2.8
Efficiency of implementation	How well and timely were input deliveries by FAO and other parties to the project? What was the quality and quantity of outputs produced, compared to expectations?	2.6
Effectiveness	Was there, or was there likely to be, effective, lasting post-project action that corresponded to what was envisaged when the project was approved?	1.8

RNE and SNE contributions to national projects were assessed on a case by case basis since there are several factors influencing the success of national projects that go beyond the specific intervention of RNE and SNE.

Overall, and as has been the case in past major evaluations, the relevance of regional and national projects to development problems was found to be high, while the translation of this positive aspect into clear objectives and a coherent and implementable design was found to be less than satisfactory. This is often attributed to poor formulation of requests in countries and the absence of project preparation funds (i.e. most projects reviewed were indeed designed before the TCP facility, which could have been used for this purpose, was established) both at regional and country level.

2. Issues related to field activities

Several common issues emerged from the examination of the field activities that should be considered in the future design of projects in the Near East and North Africa region.

⁶⁰ The objective of this exercise was not to evaluate the full impact of these projects but rather to assess the performance of RNE/SNE in providing support to develop, implement and/or backstop regional and national projects.

⁶¹ TCP/RAB/2903, TCP/RAB/2902, TCP/RAB/3002, TCP/RAB/3004, TCP/RAB/3003.

⁶² TCP/SYR/3101, TCP/EGY/3001, UTF/EGY/021/EGY, UTF/SAU/011, UTF/SAU/012.

⁶³ National projects were not subject to the above scoring; however, the findings emerging in the individual reviews have also been taken into account when formulating the overall conclusions.

The first one is an overall remark, followed by three that relate mainly to regional and TCP projects; the last one is particularly relevant to donor-funded national projects.

Project identification

As highlighted by the recent Evaluation of FAO Country Programming, in the absence of a Priority Framework at regional level, a SRPF at sub-regional level or a CPF at national level, projects are identified on *ad-hoc* basis and as a result do not necessarily address key regional or national priorities. For example, none of the regional projects reviewed by the team have dealt with the important issue of water.

Regional focus

In the regional projects examined, there were considerable differences in terms of performance between those addressing truly regional priority issues (as defined at the beginning of this chapter) and those for which a regional approach was not always clearly justified. For example, the projects on emerging plant and animal health issues, which represented more than half of the total, were largely successful because they were targeting issues that required supra-national action either at regional or sub-regional level (e.g. harmonization of trade-related legislation, reducing risk of exotic pests introduction).

Similarly, the projects on fisheries were conceived for specific geographical areas: the Red Sea, the Khalij and the Mediterranean. Projects targeting more general topics (such as forestry training and marketing regulations) suffered from the lack of a strong recognition for (and thus interest from member countries in) supra-national action. This coupled with weak technical counterparts (e.g. and poor timeliness (e.g. phytosanitary capacity building for GCC states project) reduced their effectiveness.

Regional TCP projects

The TCP mechanism has been used for some regional projects for which extra-budgetary funding would have been desirable. TCP, with its budgetary limit of US\$ 500 000, does not seem to be the most appropriate mechanism for projects that require a sustained level of technical support. In addition, these projects tended to address more complex issues and were more likely to slip in their implementation, meaning that sometimes they could not be completed within the two-year statutory limit for TCP projects. This was the case of projects dealing with the development of regional standards (on marketing, trade statistics, etc.). TCP policies restricting certain types of inputs (especially human resources) for project implementation also complicated management of such projects.

Sustainability

Very few regional projects in the period under review have been able to continue once project funding ended. The relevance (expressed in terms of need for a regional approach) and complexity of the interventions were key determinants for this. Also, projects focused on specific capacity building activities (e.g. for peach fruit fly

prevention) for issues that required regional action (e.g. transboundary pests and diseases) had higher chances to be followed-up.

D. Key Programme Areas

This section highlights the results of RNE and SNE work in selected thematic areas and cross-cutting issues during the period under review (2004-09).

1. Natural resources management

RNE and SNE work in natural resources (including land and water, forestry and fisheries) has been the second greatest beneficiary of Regular programme (22%) and field programme (31%) resources. RNE and SNE staff made on average more than 20 country visits per year to provide direct technical advice and overall backstopped 15 national non-emergency projects⁶⁴ on this topic in the region.

Land and water

RNE had one senior staff member covering the whole region devoted to water and irrigation issues⁶⁵; SNE none. Nevertheless, the quantity of missions conducted, projects backstopped, workshops organized and papers produced in this area were among the highest in the region⁶⁶. The evaluation team also found that the work conducted by RNE staff in water and irrigation was generally known by most Government counterparts⁶⁷. The various studies⁶⁸ and projects⁶⁹ on water re-use, drought mitigation and irrigation techniques were particularly appreciated. Funding⁷⁰ and focus⁷¹ of the activities were however not always commensurate with the importance attached or the needs expressed by Member Countries on this area of work.

⁶⁴ The list of projects backstopped by RNE including emergency was "over 20".

⁶⁵ An APO was assigned to RNE in support of Land and Water activities in January 2009.

⁶⁶ Based on a review of staff annual reports and other documentation facilitated by the staff the water expert was by far the most active technical expert with 6 missions made to Near East countries, 11 projects backstopped, 6 workshops/meetings organized and contributions to 6 publications only in 2008.

⁶⁷ This confirmed the findings of the Evaluation of FAO's Role and Work in Water questionnaire which found a good knowledge of the Organization's work in the water sector only in the Near East region.

⁶⁸ RNE reportedly receives about 50 requests/year for documents on water resources, mainly on water re-use, drought mitigation, CropWat and FAO Irrigation and Drainage Papers 33 and 56.

⁶⁹ FAO water and irrigation projects in the region (such as UTF/SAU/011/SAU & UTF/SAU/012/SAU) were found to have good prospects for sustainability and shown some positive impact on the ground

⁷⁰ Between 2004 and 2009, non-staff resources were on average US\$ 20,000 per year, ranging from US\$ 10,750 to 34,000, plus US\$ 40,000/biennium for the management of ALAWUC. In addition to these funds, RNE staff made use of income generated from project support (on average US\$ 24,000/year) to conduct other activities such as studies and analysis through consultants' services.

⁷¹ The evaluation of FAO's role and work in Water found that that Near East countries demanded greater assistance on water management linked to water availability and scarcity. The FAO Regional Priority Framework for the Near East thus calls for a "holistic approach to water and resource management" that also links with activities on other priority areas of work such as climate change, agriculture emergencies, agricultural production and food security.

As recommended by the evaluation of FAO's role and work in water there is a need to increase FAO capacity in the Near East taking into account ongoing developments such as the development of a Water Platform in FAO and the establishment of three land and water positions at sub-regional level.

Forestry and Fisheries

RNE had one senior staff member devoted to forestry issues; SNE none. Issues such as forest policy and sustainable forest management were considered priority areas by FAO⁷² as well as by Government Authorities met by the evaluation team. FAO regional meetings and workshops (including NEFC) were generally well attended but follow-up activities were reportedly constrained by the limited funding available.

RNE had one senior staff devoted to fisheries issues; SNE none. The evaluation team noted that FAO contributions were mainly discussed and agreed within RECOFI, GFCM and SRFC forums, which partially explains that issues relating to marine fisheries received greater support than aquaculture development in the region. Government Authorities expressed high interest in the work of the regional bodies and this was corroborated by their willingness to contribute to their funding (see section on technical commissions for data on Government funding).

In both cases (forestry and fisheries) the evaluation team noted the strong interactions between the regional staff and their HQ technical counterparts particularly in the context of the regional technical commissions work.

2. Crops and livestock

RNE and SNE work in crops and livestock (agriculture) was the greatest beneficiary of Regular programme (23%) and field programme (40%) resources. RNE and SNE staff made on average more than 25 country visits per year to provide technical direct advice and backstopped 8 national projects in the region.

Crops

RNE and SNE had four staff members working on plant protection issues. Two were fully dedicated to Locust control operations (one based in Algeria till 2008 and the other in Cairo); the other two were responsible for normative activities (from adopting plant quarantine to plant genetic norms) and field programme development (to deal with exotic pests such as peach fruit fly, wheat rust U99).

The 2006 Multilateral Evaluation of the 2003–05 Desert Locust Campaign⁷³ found that the Commission for Controlling the Desert Locust in the Central Region (based in Cairo) was “fully operational” but warned that as a whole “the capacity of FAO to carry out its advisory responsibilities effectively was limited” due to scarce resources (i.e. only 4 experts at HQ) available. Besides the locust operations, another major programme in

⁷² See “Forests and range: adapting to global changes for sustainable development” (paragraph 27), NEFC, April 2010, Tunisia

⁷³ <http://www.fao.org/docs/eims/upload/223124/j8196e.pdf> page 18 PIR 2008-09.

the region is the Regional Integrated Pest Management Project funded by the Italian Government and currently active in nine countries⁷⁴. This project has reported several achievements since 2004⁷⁵ and will be subject to an independent evaluation in early 2011.

Livestock

RNE had one staff member devoted to livestock issues and one to range management and fodder crops. Although several activities were undertaken by RNE (including several workshops, support to field projects, etc.), the HQ-based Emergency Centre for Transboundary Animal Diseases (EC-TAD) was the main face of FAO in the region through the US\$ 14.2 m (as of October 2009) emergency programme to prevent and control Avian Influenza and other TADs in the Near East. The programme established two sub-regional hubs (one in Tunisia at SNE for the Maghreb countries and one in Beirut for the Middle East) and a country/liaison unit in Egypt. Currently the only functioning sub-regional centre is the one covering the Maghreb.

As highlighted in the 2010 Real Time Evaluation of FAO's work on Avian Influenza⁷⁶ this programme was highly appreciated by Member Countries and partners since it addressed an emerging issue for which knowledge was not readily available, and exploited –like in the case of Fisheries and Crops – the “honest broker” role of FAO in setting up regional and sub-regional networks to facilitate information exchange and confidence building.

Box 6.4 Sub-regional ECTAD for North Africa

The Sub-regional ECTAD for North Africa was set up in May 2007 to provide technical assistance to the five Maghreb countries (Algeria, Libya, Mauritania, Morocco, and Tunisia) for the prevention and control of transboundary animal diseases. Its main partners are the National Veterinary Services of the sub-region (including Egypt), as well as AMU and OIE.

The centre has a twofold aim: i) coordinating and harmonizing policies and strategies to prevent and control transboundary animal diseases, including zoonoses and particularly the Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza, and support to the implementation of national policies; ii) contributing to the prevention of a prospective pandemic of Avian Influenza. It has lately expanded the scope of its work to cover endemic diseases such as Peste de Petit Ruminants, etc. The main activities of the centre have been the provision of technical assistance to countries in the Maghreb, organization of sub-regional workshops and the establishment of laboratory and epidemiological networks with strong linkages to European countries from the Mediterranean basin. So far US\$ 4.7 m have been mobilized to cover the costs of the centre as well as regional and country-level activities with the majority of the funds provided by Spain and FAO.

3. Policy

RNE and SNE work in food and agricultural policy (including trade) was together with crops and livestock the greatest beneficiary of Regular programme (23%) but only the

⁷⁴ <http://www.ipm-neareast.com/>

⁷⁵ See page 18 <http://www.fao.org/docrep/meeting/019/k8460e.pdf>

⁷⁶ http://www.fao.org/pbe/pbee/common/ecg/391/en/Final_RTE2_report.pdf

third largest beneficiary of field programme (12%) resources. RNE and SNE staff made on average more than five country visits per year to provide direct policy advice and backstopped six national projects in the region.

RNE and SNE had four policy posts but two staff were assigned as OTOs in Jordan and Algeria which left only one full-time senior policy expert in Cairo and one in Tunis for the entire region.

The evaluation team noted that the reduction of policy expertise happened during a period of renewed interest from Governments in high-level policy advice, i.e. for the review of specific agricultural policies and development frameworks, especially in the context of national strategic planning processes including the NMTPF and the UNDAF. This renewed interest, expressed at all levels, was not matched with the required resources and capacity particularly at country level. This resulted in missed opportunities for FAO to engage with policy makers of the region.

New developments within FAO (such as the need to support the preparation of Regional, Sub-regional and Country Programming Frameworks) and outside FAO (such as the need for a stronger capacity to support policy dialogue with supra-national stakeholders such as UMA and the GCC and to contribute to Regional UN Initiatives) call for a substantial strengthening of FAO capacity in this area of work. In dealing with the increased demand, the involvement of the FAO Investment Center (TCI) should be encouraged. TCI expertise on strategy and programme development for International Financial Institutions such as the World Bank and IFAD would be particularly helpful to support the development of country priority frameworks in the region.

E. Cross-cutting Issues

Funding for cross-cutting issues (such as food security and nutrition, extension and gender) by both the RP and field projects was very low (gender and extension received less than 1% of the total resources; nutrition and food safety received 4% of the RP funds but less than 1% of the field programme resources) during the period under review. RNE and SNE staff (and consultants) made an average of 10 country visits per year and backstopped 6 national projects in the region dealing with cross-cutting issues.

1. Food Security and Nutrition

At the time of the evaluation, FAO did not have a comprehensive Food Security and Nutrition (FSN) strategy for the region; rather these two inter-related topics were treated as separate issues. RNE had a nutrition officer but no food security officer⁷⁷. FAO does provide added value on FSN in the region, as it is the only organization that has the technical capacity to provide comprehensive information and analyses on nutrition and agriculture production linkages. Outputs of regional consultations include the development of food composition table adapted to the local produce and, in

⁷⁷ In 2009, the nutrition officer was asked to also cover the few food security activities undertaken in the region. Most food security activities were in fact carried out by HQ through the Special Programme for Food Security.

collaboration with WHO, regional guidelines for healthy food. However, the lack of a FSN strategy linked to the achievement of the MDGs and adequate resources has affected work prioritization. The mission was indeed informed that work on the subject was mostly demand-driven (e.g. basically in function of the TCPs requests received).

At country level, where food security has a high priority, FAO's role is perceived as much less than it should be. The combination of lack of capacity and lack of resources has lessened FAO's comparative edge in food security and nutrition in the region.

2. Gender mainstreaming

From 2004-09 RNE nor SNE did not have any capacity to address gender mainstreaming in the region. The PWB 2010-11 includes a significant move in gender mainstreaming by elevating to the level of a strategic objective. The aim is to enhance gender equity, particularly of women, in agricultural and rural development by identifying a strategy, developing a working apparatus and achieving organizational changes that incorporate gender mainstreaming institutionally, and at the regional and fieldwork level. An underlying challenge in undertaking this strategy is that it also involves changing social behaviour. This underscores the challenge of gender mainstreaming globally.

The evaluation team noted that FAO staff interpretation of gender mainstreaming at field level was generally confined to including women in projects. More importantly, the FAO Strategic Objective K⁷⁸ is not clearly reflected in the RNE's Regional Priority Framework. On the other hand, RNE and SNE are limited in their capability to implement gender mainstreaming for several reasons: first, as of yet, neither RNE nor SNE had not been provided with capacity development training on gender mainstreaming; second, they do not have a gender officer among their technical experts; third, no additional resources were available to operationalize the gender strategic objective. Consequently, RNE and SNE have been unable to initiate dialogue with governments on gender mainstreaming, provide backstopping to FAORs or form partnerships with other development agencies.

At country level, women represent a significant percentage of the agriculture labour force (with some exceptions in the Gulf sub-region). FAORs application of gender mainstreaming as a cross-cutting area is limited to ensuring that gender considerations are mentioned in any project request. In addition, there are gender "qualifiers" to assist the TCP unit in retrieving information for monitoring and reporting on the incorporation of gender issues in TCP projects, in line with TCP criteria and agreed gender biennial outputs for the Unit. However, there was no indication that these qualifiers were actually being used during project implementation.⁷⁹

As a result of the above, the evaluation team noted that FAO's image was affected by their passive role and lack of contribution to promoting gender equity in the agriculture sector.

⁷⁸ Gender equity in access to resources, goods, services and decision-making in the rural areas

⁷⁹ Gender "qualifiers" for TCP. FD September 2008. There are four *gender qualifiers*: (1) gender equality; (2) gender mainstreaming; (3) gender affirmative action; (4) gender neutral.

3. Extension

From 2004-07, RNE had an Extension and Communication for Development Officer who was reportedly active in promoting extension services in the region. This included organizing regional workshops on extension services, inclusion of extension in FAO's fieldwork and capacity development of extension agents. In 2008, the extension and communication development post was abolished and the incumbent was transferred to HQ. As a result, there is no longer any permanent technical staff in the region to oversee extension activities or effectively supervise new ones in the country or the region. Moreover, in HQ there are only two extension officers who are expected to provide support globally. Member states consider extension services essential in the region. In lower income countries such as Mauritania and Yemen extension services in both agriculture and rural development are in great demand and mutually dependent. In medium income countries such as Egypt and Lebanon, the focus is primarily on agriculture extension services. In high income countries such as Saudi Arabia extension is considered an important means to share and exchange information regionally especially regarding transboundary diseases. A good case study that shows how FAO has significantly contributed to capacity development of extension services in the region is the Rural and Agricultural Development Communication Network project in Egypt.⁸⁰

Box 6.5 The Rural and Agricultural Development Communication Network (RADCON)

This project is founded on participatory communication and sharing information by establishing a triangulation between extension agents, researchers and the community.⁸¹ The objective is to enable rural communities to participate in generating, developing and sharing knowledge. Over 115 extension agents in fifty villages were trained to work with farmers. A comprehensive curriculum for training of trainers (TOT) in Arabic was developed, field tested and implemented. Extension agents, particularly those in geographically dispersed areas, were enabled to have access to information online on various issues involving agriculture and rural development. The system has also been a catalyst for developing rural enterprise. For example, extension agents put small farmers in contact with NGOs to assist them market their crops. Equally, this has allowed facilitators to learn about what crops are in market demand, subsequently, provide farmers with the seeds to cultivate these crops. During the project three training courses were provided to extension agents and twelve follow-up workshops. By project completion, approximately 804 participants were trained in using the system. Other outputs include five guidebooks for extension agents, which were further developed to be included in the curriculum of the Faculty of Agriculture, at the University of Cairo. Since the RADCON project ended in 2008, it has successfully sustained itself; more so, up scaled its activities. It is situated in 240 sites in nineteen governorates in Egypt. Current plans are to expand it to cover one-third of Egypt (2010-2017) and to cover all Egypt by 2030.

⁸⁰ RADCON was developed on the experience of VERCON (Virtual Extension Communication Network) that was based on the concept of connecting extension with researchers.

⁸¹ The budget for RADCON was \$US 1.5 million funded by the Italian government; project formulation and implementer was conducted by FAO.

F. Structural Issues

This section comments on a number of issues that have influenced the ability of RNE and SNE to work towards meeting the demands in the region for technical assistance for emergency and rehabilitation activities and through the TCP mechanism.

1. Emergency and rehabilitation activities

Emergency and rehabilitation activities have been the biggest component of FAO field programme in the Near East in the period 2004-09 representing over 45% of total field programme delivery⁸². Staff (and consultants) from the Emergency and Rehabilitation Division (TCE) have been very active in the region, making 422 visits to near east countries only in 2009. This is more than half of the visits made by the remaining HQ divisions, RNE and SNE together (775).

Several evaluations of emergency activities⁸³ have highlighted the positive contributions made by emergency programmes to increase the capacity of FAORs in the region but also the need for “considerably greater decentralization by TCE of its operations”⁸⁴.

Box 6.6 FAO Emergency Programme in Lebanon: Win-win FAOR-TCE Cooperation

In the past few years Lebanon had seen an increase in conflict-induced emergencies and forest fire devastation affecting thousands of farming households. Following the hostilities in south Lebanon in the summer of 2006, the FAOR in Lebanon in cooperation with TCE developed an emergency programme for war-affected farmers. FAO received US\$ 8.3 m from the Lebanese Recovery Fund to assist the Government providing support to vulnerable rural households in South Lebanon. As part of this programme TCE supported the strengthening of the FAOR capacity through the provision of funding for the recruitment of additional operations staff and for training of administrative staff on budget holder responsibilities. The FAOR was also able to tap on the expertise of staff working for the emergency programme, receive a share of the overheads and make occasional use of the programme’s operational and logistical capacity for non-emergency activities in the country.

During the period under review, limited efforts were made to transfer some responsibilities and capacity to the field for emergency preparedness and rehabilitation. However, the need to react quickly and provide strong backstopping to operations in often difficult locations and on complex topics meant that supposedly temporary operational arrangements became *de facto* long-term solutions. The risk of this was illustrated most recently by the closure of the ECTAD regional animal health centre for the Middle East in July 2010 due to the absence of further “emergency” funds and no longer term arrangement having been put in place.

The evaluation team is thus of the opinion that in conformity with the spirit of the IPA and the recently developed TCE Operational Strategy 2010-13 (page 9), FAO should

⁸² RNE was involved in backstopping several emergency projects on water.

⁸³ Including project evaluations in Lebanon, Iraq, Syria; the Second Real Time Evaluation of FAO’s work on Avian Influenza and the corporate evaluation of FAO’s Operational Capacity in Emergencies.

⁸⁴ See page 6 at <http://www.fao.org/pbe/pbee/common/ecg/386/en/OED.pdf>

make every possible effort to effectively “increase delegations of authority to country offices to manage emergency operations for response and delegate budget holder responsibility [in the Near East region] when capacity exists”. A first step in this direction would be to establish formal communication channels between TCE and RNE to allow for an increase in advocacy, communication and resource mobilization for emergency and rehabilitation activities in the region.

2. Technical Cooperation Programme (TCP)

The TCP supports FAO Member Nations through small projects which address specific problems in agriculture, fisheries and forestry. Between 2004 and 2009 the TCP spent US\$ 23.6 m in the region, with the lion’s share of the funds operated by FAORs (62%), followed by TCE (17%), RNE (17%), HQ (3%) and SNE (1%). Delivery of TCP funds slowed in the period 2006-07, and recovered in 2009 following an increase in delivery at country level. On a biennial basis, the Near East share of the TCP decreased from 10% in 2004-05 to 6% in 2008-09. This is partially explained by a decrease in the number of countries covered by RNE in the region (from 23 to 18) in 2008. In 2010 regional allocations were for the first time set at the beginning of the biennium based largely on past delivery, which resulted in the Near East being allocated 8% of TCP resources⁸⁵.

Table 6.7 Share of TCP delivery/allocation by region in percentage, as reported through the PIR (2004-09) and PWB (2010-11)

Region	2004-05	2006-07	2008-09	2010-11
Africa	32%	37%	39%	40%
Asia and Pacific	24%	23%	26%	24%
Europe	9%	6%	9%	10%
Inter-regional	4%	2%	1%	3%*
Latin America	21%	24%	19%	18%
Near East	10%	8%	6%	8%

In the great majority of Near East countries, the TCP has become the main funding source both in terms of number of projects and delivery. The evaluation team noted that this happened even though the TCP manual (and the recently issued guidelines on obtaining and providing technical support and technical clearance for national, subregional and regional development TCP projects) were considered by most of the staff (particularly those at country level) to be fairly complex and rigid. The evaluation noted the difficulties in managing the relatively small amount of TCP funds for the region in the absence of regional, sub-regional or country level frameworks that identify priority areas for FAO cooperation. In this regard, and as recommended by the Evaluation of FAO’s Country Programming, the evaluation suggests to progressively align all resources (irrespective of funding source) to support priority areas of work agreed under the RPF-NE and those identified in each sub-region (SRPF) and country (CPF).

⁸⁵ Different from previous biennia the 2010-11 regional allocations were made after deducting 15% for emergency and 3% for inter-regional projects. This causes the table to show a total for 2010-11 of 103%.

VII. PERFORMANCE OF COUNTRY OFFICES

As mentioned earlier, the scope of the present evaluation, which was originally focused on past performance of RNE and SNE, was revised in order to include the impact of the ongoing reform process on decentralized offices, including FAORs.

This section covers some key areas⁸⁶ influencing FAORs performance that are being revisited in the context of the IPA. In drawing the analysis, the following sources of information have been used:

- Desk review of FAO mandate, rules and regulations concerning decentralized offices.
- Past evaluations (chiefly the Strategic evaluation of FAO's Country Programming) and background documentation on the subject made available to the team (such as FAOR Annual reports, IPA progress reports, Audit reports, etc.)
- Discussions at country level with FAORs staff, national authorities, project managers, UN partners, donors and civil society representatives.
- Discussions with senior management, FAO staff, regional partners and Permanent Representatives to FAO from the region.

A. Coverage and mandate

The IPA (item 3.84) calls for streamlining FAORs coverage and mandate as a means to free up resources to address the critical deficit in country level capacity across the board.

1. Coverage

The table below shows the operational coverage and the types of country offices established in each region.

Table 7.1 FAO Operational coverage of Member States, OSD

Region	Countries	Fully fledged	OTOs	Multiple Accreditation	National Correspondent	Countries not covered
Africa	47	40	1	6	0	0
Asia and Pacific	34	15	0	16	1	2
Europe	26	2	0	4	5	15
Latin America	33	20	3	10	0	0
Near East	18	9	5	0	0	4

With 18 countries, the Near East is the smallest region in terms of operational coverage. The Near East has nine fully-fledged FAORs and five OTOs, which makes it the region with the largest number of OTOs. In addition, and with the exception of Europe, it has the largest number of countries not covered by FAORs (4).

⁸⁶ Including FAORs coverage, mandate, priority setting, resources and structure.

The evaluation team found that FAO field presence in the Near East was weakened during the period under review by three main factors. First, FAO Representatives (FAOReps) and OTOs positions were often left vacant for periods of two years or more (such as in Yemen, Iran, Qatar, Oman, UAE, Libya). Second, the long-standing practice of appointing the head of other UN country office as acting FAORep (in the absence of an FAORep) was seen as outdated since most other UN agencies are now delegating that function to local professional staff or abbreviating the periods of absence of Country Representatives to the minimum possible. Third, the OTO arrangement has not worked either in terms of effective technical support or as a catalyst for field programme development⁸⁷. All of the above have resulted in a loss of visibility and credibility with partners - including Government, UN agencies and donors - in terms of FAO's commitment to national development.

2. Mandate

The FAO Administrative Manual (section 118) specifies the role of FAORs as being to “assist their countries of accreditation with developing national capacity, mobilizing resources, developing partnerships and exchanging knowledge and information in favour of food, agriculture and rural development”. To this end, the FAORs receive functional guidance from several FAO units at HQ, regional and sub-regional level⁸⁸. Externally, FAORs receive guidance from the host government on country priorities and the UN Resident Coordinator for UN Country Team activities, priorities and approaches. The evaluation team noted three main issues affecting FAORs capacity to fulfil the above role:

First, most FAORs have focused on developing and implementing *ad-hoc* projects rather than on sector strategy/policy issues, programming and planning – activities for which there is an increasing demand from member countries. This was partially the result of FAORs closer association with technical units from Ministries of Agriculture (MoA), who tended to request specialized assistance, rather than with policy makers from the MoA or Government Authorities from the Ministry of Planning and/or Economy. In some countries FAORs close association with MoAs was a strategic choice since FAORs lacked the capacity to fully engage with other key stakeholders. In others, particularly those countries with weak strategic planning and programming capacity, Government Authorities often requested FAORs to focus on project formulation in a wide array of topics irrespective of FAO capacity to mobilise technical and financial resources for implementation. The above situation will need to be addressed as the FAORs are requested to lead the development of Country Programming Frameworks (CPFs) which require resources to hold broad consultations with stakeholders beyond traditional Government partners to identify priority areas for cooperation.

⁸⁷ All OTOs reported to the team that the budget for FAOR functions and balancing technical work with FAOR functions were a major problem.

⁸⁸ Including i) the Technical Cooperation (TC) department on field programme and resource mobilization matters; ii) Technical Divisions for disciplinary activities; iii) the Corporate Services Department (CS) on finance and administrative matters; iv) OSD/RNE for resource allocation, day-to-day office management and corporate coordination issues, and; v) the SRC for 30% of their time spent on sub-regional activities.

Second, and related to the above, FAORs have been operating in a shoestring budget without adequate financial and human resources. The need for a revision of FAORs resources (IPA item 3.84) has been exacerbated by the changing environment in which FAO operates (characterized by the increased involvement of other actors in the agricultural sector and competition for resources among technical and UN agencies) as well as the ongoing reform process which is transferring more responsibilities to the field. Third, it was not always clear for FAORs what their primary reporting line was. FAORs must combine representational, managerial and technical (the latter to be up to 30% of their time) tasks but they often had neither the time, resources nor educational background to perform all of them.

B. Priority Setting

There are several IPA items dealing with priority setting and the related issues of resource mobilization and partnerships. Prior to 2005, there was no coherent corporate strategy for identifying and developing priorities at country level. FAORs forwarded Government requests to the relevant HQ unit for review, approval and guidance on funding possibilities. In 2005, and following the Evaluation of FAO Decentralization, FAO started the roll out of National Medium Term Priority Frameworks (NMTPF) with the aim of prioritizing cooperation with Member Countries. By end 2009, however, only Yemen had an NMTPF with FAO in the whole region. In practice, and despite some support provided by FAO HQ and RNE, no FAOR had managed to develop an operational priority framework in the region⁸⁹. Contributing factors to this include: a) the structure of the FAOR which does not reflect this important function; b) FAORs often have a technical background with limited experience in strategic planning. From a review of annual reports and the field missions the evaluation found that FAORs in the region have largely been project implementers. This focus on field programme development has two main caveats. First, an analysis of FAO country delivery against a set of indicators of need (from FAO/SOFI and the World Bank) shows that sub-regions and countries with higher levels of under-nourishment, poverty (expressed in GDP per capita) and with the greatest contribution of agriculture to GDP have received the smallest share of field programme funds from FAO.

Table 7.2 Geographic distribution of field programme delivery against indicators of need (2005-07), World Bank/FPMIS

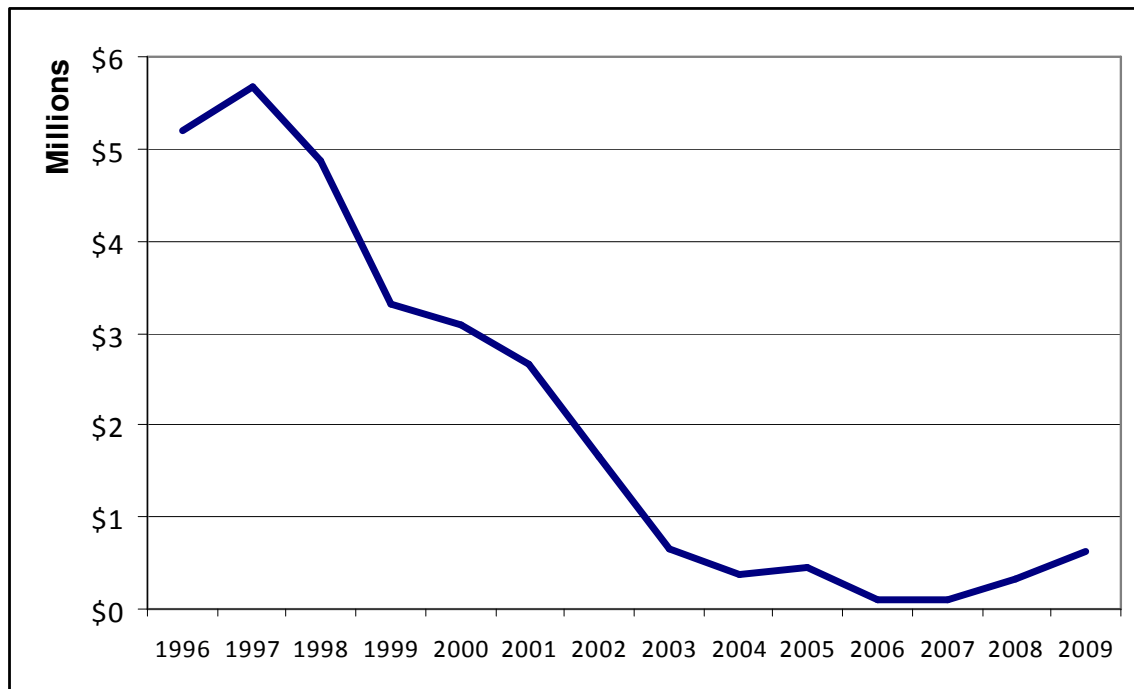
Sub-region/countries	GDP per capita (US\$)	Under nourishment (%)	Agriculture in GDP (%)	Delivery (%)
Gulf Cooperation Countries	36.558	<5	1.7	48.9
North Africa (excluding Mauritania)	8.108	<5	9.0	24.5
Oriental Near East	7.213	<5	10.7	18.5
Yemen	2.100	31	14.3	1.6
Mauritania	1.893	7	16.4	6.5

⁸⁹ As mentioned earlier Morocco is an exception to this.

Second, as a consequence of the project orientation less importance was attached to other functions (particularly policy and strategy development; partnerships and communication). This was in spite of emerging government-led initiatives to improve development cooperation in several countries in the Near East⁹⁰, which calls for a strong involvement of FAORs.

The evaluation team noted that although some FAORs were able to engage with Government authorities at strategic levels for priority setting, the majority were unable to effectively advocate for support to or action on key issues with a broad range of local partners (including technical agencies, donors, civil society and academia) and other FAO units. And when they were able to engage, the FAORs lacked capacity and resources to implement programmes on the priority areas identified. A case in point is Yemen, where the Government endorsed the NMTPF (which included project proposals in several technical areas) but still FAO technical cooperation with the country did not materialise and in fact drastically declined.

Chart 7.1 Non-emergency field programme delivery in Yemen, FPMIS



C. Resources and structure

As part of the IPA (items 3.82 and 3.84), the resources and structure of FAORs will be revised based on the outcome of the ongoing consultations on FAO's new vision for the decentralized offices network⁹¹, which has proposed to give regions greater decision-making authority to allocate resources and define the decentralized structure.

⁹⁰ Such as the Cairo Agenda for Action on Aid Effectiveness (July 2009)

⁹¹ <http://www.fao.org/docrep/meeting/019/k9323e.pdf>

1. Resources

From 2004-09, and similar to the TCP, financial resources made available to FAORs were not allocated on a regional or country level but on a global basis. 2010-11 is the first biennium that budget allocations for FAORs are made on a regional basis and are available at the beginning of the biennium. Expenditures of the fourteen FAORs in the Near East were about US\$ 7 m in 2004-05. This figure increased to US\$ 7.5 in biennium 2006-07, and to US\$ 8.5 m in 2008-09. Regular Programme funds (excluding income) allocated to FAORs in the Near East in 2010-11 are much less (by around 20%) than the expenditures incurred in 2008-09. This is contrary to the situation of Regional and sub-regional offices which have seen an increase in their budgets both nominally and as a share of RO and SROs RP funds. Besides, over 90% of FAORs expenditures were used to cover staff salaries. Un-earmarked resources were less than 10% of the total and very low compared to resources available to other UN sister agencies⁹². The evaluation team noted that the low levels of un-earmarked resources were a major constraint for FAORs to develop a programme of work that takes into account the numerous demands for assistance and commitments resulting from their interactions with internal and external stakeholders. Several examples in which FAO could not join (UN or Government) country initiatives because of lack of non-staff resources were brought to the attention of the team by UN partners, Government Authorities and FAORs themselves. They ranged from not having US\$ 6,000 to co-finance the establishment of a UN Documentation Centre to US\$ 20,000 to hold a workshop in support of a new Government Initiative. Alternative funding sources (such as the TCP Facility) are often not appropriate for these types of investments since they require prior Government and FAO HQ approval and contain a number of exceptions that limit its effectiveness as seed money for the FAORs. Budgeted positions at country level remained the same between 2004 and 2009 (82 in total). They increased in 2010-11 (85) although only minimally. In the past few years FAO has increasingly relied on National Professional Staff (NPO) but mainly as a resource saving measure. The chronic resource deficit of the FAOR network was given as a major reason to maintain the grading of NPOs positions. In the case of the Near East, this has had the undesired effect of limiting options for career development and thus creating a non-conducive environment for high performing staff.

Table 7.3 Evolution of grades of National professional and general service staff, PWB

Year	National Professional	General Service
	Average Grade (1-4)	Average Grade (1-7)
2004-05	2.3	3.6
2006-07	2.1	3.8
2008-09	1.9	3.8
2010-11	1.8	3.7

Although RNE and CSH have started to address the issue of staff development at regional and sub-regional level, working conditions at FAORs in the Near East (with no or

⁹² In 2009 non-staff expenditures were about US\$ 55,471 for FAORs and US\$ 15,950 for OTOs.

very little budget for training, no career path for promotions, inadequate infrastructure, and continuous additional workload) have been generally worse than those found elsewhere in FAO and in other UN agencies.

2. Structure

During the period under review, the average FAORs structure in the Near East was composed of one international (the FAORep), two national professionals (one for programme and one for administration) and between 5-8 general service staff (including programme, administration, logistics and ICT staff)⁹³. OTOs (and FAORs co-located with the regional and sub-regional offices) were staffed with only one or two nationals often provided by the host country. Most stakeholders, including FAOReps, commented on the low capacity in the Representations e.g. to respond to government requests, monitor and follow-up project operations, participate in UN Coordination Team (UNCT) and thematic group meetings, obtain timely technical support, and highlighted the need to adjust the offices structure to deal with the declining performance (in terms of field programme development) of FAORs (and OTOs) in the region (see table below) and to take into account the functions being decentralized through the reform process including leading the CPFs process, mobilizing resources and preparing TCP projects.

Table 7.4 Ratio Field programme vs. office costs in the Near East, FPMIS/OSD

Office type	Office costs (total in US\$)		Field programme delivery excluding emergency (total in US\$)		Ratio Field programme delivery / office costs	
	2004	2009	2004	2009	2004	2009
Fully-fledged	3,124,594	4,030,511	10,735,015	7,026,056	3.4	1.7
OTO	319,661	727,805	1,679,868	897,218	5.3	1.2

Furthermore, the quality and morale of local staff in FAORs was generally low due to long-standing personnel issues (such as the limited staff development prospects and training) and the fact that HQ-led emergency activities and other UN agencies in the region had generally greater flexibility⁹⁴ and resources available than the local offices. Specialized, development and humanitarian organizations such as WHO⁹⁵, UNDP⁹⁶ and WFP⁹⁷ had indeed a stronger field capacity in both low and middle income countries in the region. Such a capacity was seen by all UN and Government partners as a prerogative in order to enable country offices to deliver on the medium –term (often 3-4 year) priority areas of work agreed with the host country.

⁹³ This corresponds to FAO staffing models “B” and “C”.

⁹⁴ Delegated authority of FAORs are low e.g. US\$ 200,000 to receive funds; and US\$ 50,000 for signing letters of agreement.

⁹⁵ WHO has 11 professionals including 3 internationals in Mauritania to implement (2009-13) a US\$ 6.1 m programme funded through Regular Programme (US\$ 2.7 m) and voluntary (US\$ 3.4 m) contributions.

⁹⁶ UNDP has 14 professionals including 6 internationals in Syria to implement a programme (2007-11) of US\$ 29.3 m funded through Regular Programme (US\$ 6.7 m) and voluntary (US\$ 21.7 m) contributions.

⁹⁷ WFP has 28 professionals including 5 internationals in Egypt to implement (2007-11) a US\$ 20.6 m programme funded through voluntary contributions.

VIII. OVERARCHING FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This section includes the evaluation team's overarching findings and conclusions, which emerge from the analyses carried out in the precedent sections, and recommendations, which are directed towards improving the efficiency and effectiveness of FAO's work in the region.

A. Overarching Findings and Conclusions

There are five overarching findings that arose from the evaluation's analyses and that have relevance to essentially all parts of the evaluation's terms of reference.

First, the evaluation team found that FAO technical expertise (from HQ, RNE or SNE) was widely recognized and generally viewed as providing a stamp of good quality. The quality of FAO technical cooperation received greatest appreciation in countries that already had an established capacity to plan and implement their own strategy and programmes. However, there is a general consensus that FAO has lost its comparative advantage in several thematic areas and as an implementing agency in the region.

Second, and linked to the above, FAO priority setting and programming processes during the review period did not result in a clear prioritization of activities for the Near East region nor in a clear delineation of tasks at regional and sub-regional levels. RNE, SNE and FAORs have largely focused on developing and implementing generally small projects (mostly TCP) in a broad range of thematic areas, rather than on agreed priorities or on agricultural sector strategy/policy issues, for which the demand is very high across the region.

Third, RNE and SNE had serious resource constraints during the period under review. As explained earlier, this was partially the result of the progressive implementation of the 2005 Director-General reform. Although this situation was partially addressed in the biennium 2010-11 with the allocation of additional resources for sub-regional offices, FAORs have not benefited from this recent influx of resources. FAORs are seriously under-resourced (particularly regarding non-staff resources), and are widely seen as the poor relations within FAO and among UN partners.

Fourth, the rationale for the new organizational structure in the Near East with three layers (regional, sub-regional and country) was not always well understood within and outside FAO. The evaluation team concluded that the new structure has a sound basis but needs better implementation and change management and, in some cases, also further refinement.

Fifth, FAO presence in the region was found to be in need of streamlining. The location of three offices in the same place (Cairo) has reduced efficiency and transparency in the management of decentralized offices. Staff performing several and diverse functions concurrently led to heavy workload, confusion and sometimes conflicts of interest. Working conditions and status of technical and administrative staff at country level was not conducive to high performance, especially when compared to other UN agencies.

The issues and findings summarized above had a number of negative consequences on FAO. The evaluation team found that FAO visibility and credibility in the Near East region has declined. Other development agencies have taken over much of FAO's historical comparative advantage in areas such as food security, agricultural development and policy advice. FAO advocacy and resource mobilization role in support of the food and agricultural sector is now much less competitive (and thus less successful) than before.

The evaluation team concludes that there is an urgent need to further reshuffle the FAO institutional set-up in the Near East including improving the implementation of the ongoing reform. Although the new reporting lines have encouraged greater integration within the region, a lot still needs to be done to allow RNE to exercise a leading role (as "chef d'orchestre") in assuring that the three layers in the region function as one. This includes better defining the roles and functions of each layer, better delineating responsibilities (in accordance with region-wide, sub-regional and country priorities) and foster synergies and coordination between the three layers and with HQ. This also implies a change in the way HQ has been dealing with decentralized offices in the Near East and significant additional efforts to mobilize change management support from the IPA reform machinery, for the region.

This reshuffling should be introduced as soon as possible in order to take advantage of the opportunity for reform offered by the IPA. The main thrusts of the proposed reshuffling will be:

- A substantial strengthening of FAO capacity at country level; the evaluation team is strongly convinced that FAORs should be put at the center of the reshuffling since they are at the front line of FAO activities; prioritization, planning and increasingly also resource mobilization take place at this level and the overall impact of FAO is largely measured in terms of results on the ground. For all these reasons FAO needs to revisit its field presence in the Near East starting with the provision of adequate resources to FAORs to meet and carry out the multiple demands and functions expected from them.
- This reshuffling should take into account the three sub-regional structures recently established and/or strengthened, which should, in view of the evaluation team, become the "technical hubs" for country level assistance in their respective sub-regions.
- The Regional Office should go through a re-engineering process in order to build-up its planning, coordination, supervision and oversight capacity and focus its technical work on common region-wide priorities ("upstream" work), placing "downstream" work (dealing with sub regional and country-level priorities) under the responsibility of technical teams at sub-regional and country levels.

B. Recommendations

As suggested by the IEE and stated in the IPA, the evaluation team would like to emphasize that the following recommendations should not involve any "further net

transfer of resources from HQ to the field” except for new responsibilities being decentralized in the context of the ongoing reform. In view of the evaluation team most of the recommendations could be implemented through a) budget-neutral redeployment and reallocation of existing capacity and resources within the region, and b) the establishment and operationalization of a Regional Trust Fund in support of the proposed reshuffling.

1. At Country Level

Given the fact that the weakest link in the chain among the existing layers in the Near East are the FAORs, the evaluation team makes several recommendations aimed to strengthen the capacity of FAORs, reinforce the authority of FAORs, and streamline FAO presence at this level.

Recommendation 1: FAORs should be given the necessary tools and resources to become the face of FAO at country level. To this end, FAORs capacity should be strengthened by:

- a. Facilitating FAORs access to FAO technical expertise by locating this capacity as close as possible to the countries (i.e. at sub-regional level).
- b. Increasing non-staff resources at the disposal of FAORs; they should be commensurate to the needs identified by FAORs at the work-planning stage, and differently from the TCP Facility, they should be allocated in full at the beginning of the biennium without any precondition.
- c. Addressing long-standing personnel issues (including staff development and career prospects) and revising job profiles and competencies of national staff in order to improve staff morale and better align FAORs manpower to their enhanced mandate. This should include the introduction of a mobility and rotation scheme (see recommendation 9b)
- d. Recruiting a third NPO to address the increased workload related to strategic planning, partnerships and resource mobilisation at country level giving priority to most needy countries and those with large FAO programmes.
- e. Expediting the development and rolling out of Web-based financial tools (for Oracle access) and the required ICT infrastructure.

Recommendation 2: Reinforce the position of the FAOR as chief FAO officer for any activity undertaken in the country, including:

- a. Assigning FAORs a leadership role in developing CPFs. The CPFs should be prepared with an expanded stakeholder base and ideally have a 4-5 year horizon. In preparing the CPFs, the FAORs should involve key Government stakeholders beyond line Ministries (including Ministries of Planning and Finance) as well as non Government partners such as donors and civil society organizations. As recommended by the Strategic Evaluation of FAO’s Country Programming, the scope of the CPFs should be expanded to cover all FAO activities, including emergency and rehabilitation work. The CPFs would progressively serve as an

- entry point for establishing/strengthening strategic partnerships with donors, development agencies and UN system led initiatives.
- b. Expanding the delegations of authority to FAOReps for receiving funds, carrying out local procurement, signing of letters of agreement and approving field projects at least to the highest level of other UN specialized and technical agencies in the region.
 - c. Introducing a specific training module for newly appointed FAOReps to enhance their capacity to lead country programming processes.
 - d. Revising the competencies required for future FAOReps giving special emphasis to strategic planning and programming skills and experience.
 - e. In view of the different skills required, FAOReps should only perform functions related to their representational mandate vis-à-vis their country (or countries) of accreditation.

Recommendation 3: Streamline FAO field presence:

- a. In order to avoid confusions in their roles and responsibilities vis-à-vis the host country and FAORs in the region and/or sub-region, a maximum of two FAO decentralized offices per country should be allowed.
- b. The OTO scheme should be phased out in the Near East Region in view of its limited effectiveness and the significant reduction in regional and sub-regional technical capacity resulting from its high use.
- c. FAO should make greater use of alternative field presence arrangements such as multiple accreditations (with the assistance of a NPO in the host country) or, as in the case of Iraq, through the appointment of Programme Coordinators as FAOReps.

2. At Sub-Regional Level

Recommendation 4: Sub-Regional Offices should effectively become the “First Port of Call” for FAORs and strictly act as technical hubs. In this capacity they should:

- a. Be field oriented and equipped to allow for timely technical support to FAORs and sub-region-wide counterparts.
- b. Be consulted before FAORs request Regional or HQ technical assistance. Once the request has been discussed at sub-regional level, a joint request could be addressed to other technical units at HQ and/or RNE.
- c. Support the preparation of CPFs in coordination with RNE. The CPFs will eventually serve as inputs to identify common sub-regional priorities and prepare SRPFs.
- d. Lead FAO’s response to sub-regional priorities. In this regard, the holding of sub-regional meetings, with the participation of National Representatives, FAOReps, Assistant FAOReps, staff from RNE and HQ, and sub-regional partners as a minimum every year would be instrumental to discuss the content of the SRPF and the sub-regional work plans. The ultimate objective of such meetings would be to improve communication, build partnerships and steer synergies within and outside FAO, which are prerequisites for effective resource mobilisation.

Recommendation 5: In order to perform the above functions, the SROs should become Sub-regional Multi-disciplinary Technical Teams (SMTs) with no administrative functions vis-à-vis the FAOR.

- a. SMTs skills-mix should progressively reflect sub-regional priorities identified in the SRPFs. As the CPFs, the SRPF should be reviewed periodically.
- b. A Senior Expert (preferably on Policy) should be appointed as Sub-regional Multi-Disciplinary Team Leader (SMTL). In addition to the expert's technical role as part of the SMT, the SMTL would be responsible for the organization and supervision of SMTs activities. S/he should not carry any other non-technical function (such as also being FAORep for the host country).

3. At Regional Level

Recommendation 6: Under the IPA process, RNE is receiving greater responsibilities and decision making authority. This decentralization process should not stop at regional level but continue to percolate down to sub-regional and country levels. This will allow RNE to focus in the future on “upstream” work (i.e., region-wide common priorities), placing responsibility for “downstream” work on the SMTs and FAORs (i.e., subregion-wide and country-level priorities). The role of RNE should thus evolve to reflect the orientation mentioned above. Its new mandate would include the following attributions:

- a. RNE should be responsible for coordinating, supervising and evaluating the work of SMTs and FAORs. This will include managing the financial and human resources available to decentralized offices in the region irrespective of the funding source. RNE should then have the capacity and authority to reallocate these funds based on relative sub-regional and country demands and needs.
- b. RNE should be responsible for organising the backstopping and monitoring of CPFs and SRPFs formulation as well as for quality assurance of these processes.
- c. RNE should continue to lead the preparation of the RPF-NE. The CPFs and SRPFs should progressively form the basis for the formulation of the RPF-NE. The RPFs would progressively serve as an entry point for establishing/strengthening strategic partnerships with donors, regional organizations and with UN system led initiatives.

Recommendation 7: RNE should be subject to a re-engineering process as part of the reshuffling of FAO institutional set-up in the region.

- a. RNE should build and/or maintain the expertise and resources required to establish and manage Functional Technical Networks that would mobilize knowledge and encourage specialization around priority topics selected from among those identified in the RPF-NE. FAO expertise available at all levels (FAORs, SMTs and HQ) would be associated to these Networks as appropriate, under the coordination of RNE. The constitution of these networks, which will have a time-bound scope, resources and mandate – will improve the efficiency

- of internal working arrangements and help FAO functioning as one in the provision of technical assistance to the region.
- b. RNE skills-mix should reflect the new technical, operational and administrative functions assigned to the office.
 - c. The assistance of a management expert should be sought to support the ongoing and future change management processes.

4. General recommendations

This section includes recommendations that deal with a number of aspects that apply to most or all layers of the FAO organizational structure in the region.

Recommendation 8: Coverage and denomination of field offices in the Near East should be clarified.

- a. Confusion due to the disparity between NERC and RNE coverage needs to be resolved as NERC is now part of FAO Governing Bodies and there is a risk that differential membership may affect priority setting and planning for regional activities. Being a matter that is eminently political, the evaluation team recommends that concerned FAO Member Countries should urgently take an initiative to address this issue.
- b. The evaluation team also recommends renaming RNE as “Regional Office for the Near East and North Africa”. Likewise, SMTs should also be renamed to adopt historical definitions of the groups of countries served: Maghreb instead of North Africa (SNA); Mashreq instead of Oriental Near East (SNM); and Khalij instead of Gulf Cooperation Countries and Yemen (SNK).

Recommendation 9: Administration and management of financial and human resources across the region should be improved.

- a. The type of, funding for and time allocated to administrative actions should be reviewed with the view of streamlining administrative transactions. In reviewing administration, the findings of the SSC review mission (planned for January 2011) and the need to strengthen the planning and human resource function at regional level should be taken into account.
- b. A mobility and rotation scheme for technical experts within the region, with HQ as well as with other regions should be introduced as soon as possible. Simultaneously, an ambitious training programme to up-grade staff skills (to enhance current performance and allow staff to perform new responsibilities) and a drive to enhance cultural diversity and gender equity of staff across the region should be pursued.

Recommendation 10: FAO Technical work in the region should be rationalized and increasingly focus on regional, sub-regional and country priorities endorsed by Member Countries.

- a. Regional technical commissions and networks have been valuable as forums for information exchange and in some cases also for prioritization and mobilization

- of resources. Some have however been neither very active nor well attended lately and a majority of them have faced financing difficulties. The evaluation team recommends launching a review of the effectiveness of these regional bodies in order to rationalize their numbers. Criteria for deciding their future existence should include the extent of Members' participation and commitment to funding follow-up activities as well as their alignment to priority areas identified in the RPF-NE.
- b. Regional and sub-regional workshops and meetings as well as related publications should have strong linkages with priority areas agreed at regional and sub-regional levels. Efforts should be made to gather feedback from users of FAO technical information to increase the relevance and visibility of the normative work conducted by FAO in the region.
 - c. Following the strengthening of SMTs and the enhanced coordination of technical work within the region, field missions to Near East countries should increasingly be conducted by sub-regional staff (and consultants) who will have better knowledge of the local situation and be closer to the field than their peers at HQ.
 - d. Regional and sub-regional projects should focus on common issues and priorities of supranational concern. The Regional Trust Fund (see recommendation 12) will be instrumental in funding new initiatives linked to the RPF-NE.
 - e. As indicated earlier, technical expertise (at regional and sub-regional level) on key programme and cross-cutting areas for the region, particularly in the areas of natural resources management, policy and gender, should be revised in order to align the FAO regional skills mix to the priority areas endorsed by Member Countries.
 - f. Given the positive result of RNE-TCI collaboration in the finalisation of the RPF-NE, it is recommended that cooperation between RNE and TCI continue and be expanded to FAORs and SMTs particularly for the formulation of CPFs and SRPFs, and vice-versa, to encourage Regional and Sub-regional officers to participate more in TCI activities within the region. Besides, TCI experts who are in close contact with International Financing Institutions involved in the agricultural sector could become a good entry point for partnership building and resource mobilization at country and sub-regional levels. If a budget allocation is provided to RNE to cover CPFs formulation cost (as recommended by the Strategic Evaluation of Country Programming), it could be used for that purpose.

Recommendation 11: Structural issues affecting the efficiency and effectiveness of technical work should be urgently addressed. Of particular interest are issues related to the implementation of FAO emergency field programme. In 2010, TCE issued a new strategy which calls for the decentralization of responsibilities for emergency operations. Taking into account the spirit of this strategy, the evaluation recommends the following:

- a. RNE and TCE should put in place necessary instruments to strengthen information exchange, communication and advocacy for emergency (and non-emergency) programs implemented in the Near East. As done in other regions,

- this should include the holding of regular meetings and the fielding of a liaison and communication officer based in the region.
- b. In coordination with TCE, Regional and Sub-regional experts should be more involved in backstopping and monitoring of emergency operations undertaken in the Near East. Staff work plans should reflect this activity.
 - c. The conditions for out-posting the coordination of regional, sub-regional and country emergency programs should be built as soon as possible.
 - d. In coordination with TCE, budget holder responsibility for emergency and rehabilitation activities identified in the CPFs should be progressively transferred to FAORs.
 - e. Following the development of the RPF-NE, SRPFs and CPFs, administrative procedures (including those listed in the TCP Manual) that limit the full and unrestrictive alignment of FAO financial resources allocated to the region (including TCP) to priority areas of work agreed at regional, sub-regional and country levels should be streamlined.

Recommendation 12: The evaluation team is aware that FAO does not have the resources required to implement the re-shuffling outlined above without the support from Member Countries. Based on the example of the IPA trust fund and recent regional cooperative programmes in other FAO regions, the evaluation team recommends the establishment of a dedicated Regional Trust Fund to support the reshuffling of FAO institutional set-up in the Near East and allow the establishment of a regional structure able to implement collaborative programmes agreed at regional (RPF), sub-regional (SRPFs) and country (CPF) levels. Possible uses of the trust fund include supporting staff training across the region, carrying out analyses on the main regional, sub-regional and country priorities, supplementing resources available for priority areas of work, etc.

Evaluation of FAO's Regional and Sub-regional Offices in the Near East

ANNEXES TO THE EVALUATION REPORT

**FAO Office of Evaluation
January 2011**

Annex 1. Terms of Reference for the Evaluation

1. Introduction

At its October 2008 session the FAO Programme Committee discussed the rolling plan of evaluations and expressed their “support for an evaluation of FAO’s Regional and Sub-regional Offices in the Near East” as a priority during the period 2009-10.

The FAO Office of Evaluation (OED) has conducted a desk review and a series of consultations with key stakeholders with the objective of gathering information and views that would guide the preparation of the terms of reference for the evaluation. The review included a brief study of the food and agriculture sector in the region and gathering information on the resources and activities of the FAO’s regional and sub-regional offices for the Near East as well as on the status of the ongoing reform process and their implications for decentralized offices. Consultations included interviews with senior staff at HQ, a scoping mission to the regional and sub-regional offices for the Near East and meetings with a sample of Government representatives and partner organizations. This process ended with the holding of a seminar with senior FAO Regional, Sub-regional and Country Representation staff on 20 December 2009 in Cairo, Egypt.

In defining the evaluation’s objectives and scope, the OED has taken into account major areas and issues of concern coming up from the preparatory phase as well as time and budget constraints. The evaluation, being the first-ever evaluation of FAO’s regional and sub-regional offices, will be conducted following an innovative approach that builds on standard evaluation criteria and methodological tools developed in the context of previous FAO global, (sub)- regional and country evaluations.

The draft evaluation report will be finalized towards the end of 2010. The final evaluation report will be submitted to the 104th session of the FAO Programme Committee in March 2011.

2. Background

Food and Agricultural Outlook

Countries of the Near East are at very different stages of socio-economic and agricultural development. An FAO prospective study of the regional agricultural sector considers that these countries “span a wide range of developmental situations, ranging from those with low incomes, high rates of poverty and undernourishment and often high dependence on agriculture for food supplies and employment (Mauritania, Yemen) to those in the middle-income range (all others except Saudi Arabia and Gulf countries) ¹”. It also warns that the “region’s increasing high dependency on food importations and the unfavorable arid and semi-arid climatic conditions will make the development of future agricultural [development] policies both unique and challenging².” More recently, countries have also become concern of “long-term changes in the global economic environment and their anticipated impact on agricultural development and food security in the Region³.” In

¹ FAO (2008) Near East Agriculture Towards 2050: Prospects and Challenges.

² FAO (2006) Agriculture in the Near East and North Africa: Towards a Vision for 2050.

³ Report of the 28th FAO Regional Conference for the Near East (March 2006.)

response to these new trends FAO⁴ and other development agencies⁵ that have historically supported agricultural development in the region are giving greater priority to work on natural resource management (particularly water) as well as other technical areas within the organization's mandate⁶.

FAO decentralized structure in the region

The food and agricultural sector of the Near East region is primarily served by the FAO Regional Office for the Near East in Cairo (RNE) and the Sub-regional office for North Africa (SNE) in Tunis. A new sub-regional office for the Gulf Co-operation Council was created in 2008 but is not yet operative while a Multidisciplinary Team for Oriental Near East (SNO) is expected to be established within RNE. There are fifteen FAO representations; nine being fully fledged offices (two of which are located within the regional and sub-regional office respectively) and six led by Outposted Technical Officers (OTO). As part of the ongoing FAO reform the staff of these offices now report to the heads of the regional and sub-regional offices (RNE and SNE). FAO HQ also provides assistance to countries in the region through global and regional initiatives and direct backstopping of field programme activities.

FAO Regional Office for the Near East

RNE was established in Cairo, Egypt on 29 November 1947 and currently serves eighteen Member nations⁷. It is charged with the provision of technical assistance and policy advice to Governments in the region, as well as to collect, analyze and disseminate information on food and agriculture. The office also conducts capacity building activities and develops thematic networks at regional and/or sub-regional levels. A major role of RNE is to service the Regional Conference. It also serves as a secretariat for regional commissions and has collaborative relationships with several regional partners including regional economic blocs⁸.

In 2008-09, besides the Regional Representative and his Deputy, the Office had 14 staff members: a Finance/Administration Officer, Information Technology Support Officer, Senior Policy Officer, Senior Nutrition and Consumer Protection Officer, Senior Fisheries and Aquaculture Officer, Senior Water Officer, two Field Programme Officers (one Senior), Secretary FAO Regional Locust Centre, Animal Production and Health Officer, Crop Production Officer, Statistician, Information and Management Specialist and an outposted Policy Officer (OTO in Jordan). The office's regular programme budget in the period 2008-09 amounted to approximately US\$ 11.5 million, with a net appropriation for 2010-11 of US\$ 12.2 million (source: PWB).

The FAO expected regional project portfolio for 2010-11 is about US\$ 33 million⁹ (Source: PWB 2010-11). This figure, however, includes the largest non-emergency project in the region (on Integrated Pest Management) and all emergency activities, which are primarily

⁴ Report of the 29th FAO Regional Conference for the Near East (March 2008); World Bank Annual Report 2009 for the Middle East and North Africa

⁵ RNE Priority Areas (2009); World Bank Annual Report: Middle East and North Africa (2009); IFAD Thematic Priorities for the Middle East and North Africa (January 2008)

⁶ FAO Programme of Work and Budget 2010-11 (page 163-164): priority areas for the Near East.

⁷ Algeria, Bahrain, Egypt, Iran, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya, Mauritania, Morocco, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Syria, Tunisia, United Arab Emirates, and Yemen.

⁸ http://www.fao.org/world/Regional/RNE/aboutus/aboutus_en.htm

⁹ The largest non-emergency project in the region (on Integrated Pest Management) and all emergency activities have been primarily backstopped and managed from FAO HQ.

backstopped and managed from FAO headquarters. In the past few years RNE has mainly implemented regional Technical Co-operation Projects (TCPs), helped to formulate national TCPs and backstopped Unilateral Trust Fund (UTFs). Main areas of work (and respective countries of concentration) of RNE-supported projects have been land and water (Saudi Arabia, Syria and Iran), SPFS/crops (Syria, Iran, Egypt and Saudi Arabia), agricultural policy (Syria, Iran and Egypt), fisheries (Saudi Arabia) and livestock (Saudi Arabia).

Sub-regional Office for North Africa

SNE was established in Tunis on 8 August 1996 with the objective of supporting agricultural development in the sub-region. It currently serves Algeria, Libya, Morocco, Mauritania and Tunisia, which are all members of the Arab Maghreb Union (AMU). In 2008-09 besides the sub-regional co-ordinator there were 4 staff members in SNE: a Policy Officer, an Administrative Officer, a Desert Locust Officer outposted to Algeria and an outposted OTO in Algeria. Regular programme resources were about US\$ 3.5 m.

The office has a small field programme of its own composed mainly of TCPs. In the past few years it has provided support to emergency activities (particularly on desert locust control and avian influenza) and national projects on areas such as SPFS/crops (Mauritania and Tunisia) and agricultural policy (Mauritania).

Reform of FAO and implications for decentralized offices

In his 1994 Review of the Programmes, Structures and Policies of the Organization, the FAO Director General noted that “FAO headquarters is too remote from the rural masses of Asia, island states of the Pacific, the immense problems of the fragile countries of Africa, and the specific issues of interest to Latin America and the Caribbean, the Near East and Eastern Europe. It is imperative that the Organization remain relevant and visible and be seen to act in proximity to the problems.” This was the origin of the first major decentralization of FAO which included the revamping of regional offices and the expansion of sub-regional and country offices. The results of this process were independently evaluated in 2004¹⁰. It was found that “particularly high and middle income countries had great appreciation of regional normative work” whereas in some regions “there was clearly a sub-optimal use of available resources for technical support”. The findings and conclusions of this evaluation were taken into account by the Independent External Evaluation of FAO (IEE), with some of their recommendations being included in the proposed Immediate Plan of Action (IPA).

In the context of the IPA¹¹ the organization is reforming: i) priorities and programmes; ii) governance; and, iii) systems, programming and budgeting, culture change and organizational restructuring. Some actions that will affect the *modus operandi* of decentralized offices are:

- Greater role of the Regional Conferences in priority setting and programme oversight.
- Overseeing and being the first “port of call” for country offices.
- Transfer of primary reporting line for technical officers to the Regional Representatives (ADGs) and for sub regional staff to the Sub-Regional Coordinator;
- Review of staff profiles and expertise (“skills mix”) at regional and sub-regional level;

¹⁰ <http://www.fao.org/docrep/meeting/008/j2937e/J2937e00.htm>

¹¹ http://www.fao.org/fileadmin/user_upload/IEE/Resolution_IPAEnglish.pdf

- Implementation of a new staff Performance Management and evaluation System (PEMS);
- Integration of budgeting, programming and reporting procedures for assessed and voluntary contributions; and,
- TCP resource allocation for the region will be made by the Regional ADG.

In preparation to these changes RNE and SNE are being strengthened with additional human and financial resources¹². This strengthening should contribute to the implementation of the above actions in the course of 2010-11¹³. The evaluation will pay particular attention to this process as it will influence the future role, function and work of the offices subject to review.

3. Objectives and Coverage

The evaluation will be forward-looking, and it will assess the overall capacity of the FAO's regional and sub-regional offices to provide quality services to their membership. The review will be undertaken by examining the *role*, *function* and *work* of these offices.

In assessing the *role* of the regional and sub-regional offices, the evaluation will review the responsiveness of the offices vis-à-vis the expressed demands and needs of FAO and Member Countries as well as their ability to focus their work on priority areas and on countries with greater need for technical assistance.

In assessing the *function* of the offices, priority will be given to evaluating if the administrative, management and organizational actions taking place in the context of the IPA will lead to institutions that are "fit for purpose". To this end the evaluation will review the management, administrative and operational guidance and support provided by the regional and sub-regional offices to member countries, country offices and programmes in the region.

The *work* of the regional and sub-regional offices will be strategically assessed with an emphasis on i) technical areas that have been identified as key challenges and priorities for food and agricultural development in the region, and ii) technical areas that the regional and sub-regional offices have covered through normative and non-emergency activities in the past six years (2004-09).

4. Scope

The following are the issues that will be addressed in the evaluation:

Role of Regional and Sub-regional Offices (Relevance and coherence)

- Appropriateness of the mandate, coverage, partnerships, networking and priorities of the regional and sub-regional offices for the Near East based on comparative advantages and capacities.
- Adequacy of forums and processes for regional and sub-regional priority setting including the Regional Conference and regional technical commissions.
- Alignment of regular and field programme with FAO priority areas established at global, regional and country level.

¹² <http://www.fao.org/news/story/en/item/37592/icode/>

¹³ A progress report presented to the Conference at its 36th Session in November 2009 envisages full implementation of the IPA by 2011.

- Appropriateness of resource mobilization and allocation among areas of work and countries.
- Synergies and co-ordination of regular and field programme activities carried out by FAO headquarters, regional, sub-regional and country offices in the region.

Function of Regional and Sub-regional Offices (Efficiency)

- Quantity, quality and adequacy of human and financial resources (particularly non-staff resources) allocated to regional and sub regional offices.
- Timeliness and adequacy of operational support to country offices (including programme development and management).
- Appropriateness and adaptability of staff “skills mix”, organizational structure and internal working arrangements, as well as decision-making processes and administrative systems.
- Extent to which regional and sub-regional offices functional support have led to improved programming and performance at country level¹⁴.

Work of the Regional and Sub-regional Offices (Effectiveness)

- Quantity, quality, utility and sustainability of regular programme and non-emergency field programme activities conducted by the regional and sub-regional offices; particularly on:
 - Natural resources management (including forestry, fisheries, land and water),
 - Crops and livestock (including SPFS pilots),
 - Food and agricultural policy (including food security, nutrition and trade)
- Extent to which regional and sub-regional non-emergency activities have contributed/led to improved decision-making, strategies, capacity development, and performance of regional, sub-regional and country-level partners and stakeholders.

Cross-cutting issues

- Knowledge management and dissemination of regular and field programme products (including use made of the Website and other information and data sources).
- Gender equity and mainstreaming in office staff and activities.

5. Methodology

The evaluation will use the following instruments:

Desk review

A desk review will provide an overall background to the regional and sub-regional offices’ role, function and work; outline the scope of their performance and achievements in the region; and help identifying issues and potential stakeholders for the evaluation. As part of the desk review the following documentation will be gathered and assembled:

- Corporate documents, including the FAO Programme of Work and Budget and Programme Implementation Reports;
- RNE, SNE and FAOR Annual Reports;

¹⁴ This aspect will be reviewed in close cooperation with the ongoing evaluation of FAO’s Country Programming including National Medium Term Priority Frameworks.

- Internal FAO reviews, including technical and administrative areas;
- Recent corporate and region-specific evaluations;
- Administrative, financial and human resources data for the offices;
- Reports of Regional Conferences, regional commissions, workshops, meetings, consultations, manuals and any other normative product of interest for the region;
- Reports of global, regional and country-level projects implemented in the region, including technical, progress, terminal and evaluation reports; and,
- Publications, articles, and other information produced by, or containing information about the offices' work.

Information for the desk review will be obtained from FAO staff, FAO management and monitoring systems (FPMIS, COIN, PIREs, MIS), FAO and Partners Websites, etc.

Semi-structured interviews

As part of the desk review key stakeholders for the evaluation have been identified. A series of semi-structured interviews based on checklists of questions will be conducted to gather stakeholders' views and feedback on the role, function and work of the regional and sub-regional offices for the Near East. The tentative list of stakeholders includes:

- Senior Management in RNE and SNE;
- Senior Management at HQ; (e.g. DDG Operations, OSP, OCD, SSC, etc.);
- Technical and administrative officers at HQs and in RNE and SNE offices;
- FAO Representatives and staff in the region;
- Permanent Representatives to FAO from Near East countries;
- Government authorities and technical officers; and,
- Development partners such as donors, UN agencies and civil society organizations at regional and country level.

Visits to Countries and to the Regional and Sub-regional Offices

A sample of countries covering a large part of FAO's normative and non-emergency field programme activities in the region will be visited by the team. The main objective of the country visits will be to gather information on the technical, administrative and operational support provided by the regional and sub-regional offices to FAO country offices and programmes, and the likely contribution of this support to overall development of the food and agricultural sector. Regional and sub-regional offices will also be visited with the main objective of assessing the role, function and work carried out by these offices at the regional and sub-regional level.

Case study countries have been selected taking into consideration parameters related to FAO's mandate (such as total GNP per capita, share of agriculture in GDP and imports of staple food products) as well as geographic factors. The tentative list of countries includes: Egypt (where RNE is located), Tunisia (where SNE is located), Saudi Arabia (a high-income country with a large UTF programme), Mauritania (a low-income country with a large field programme) and Syria (a middle-income country with an important agricultural sector that has a relatively large programme).

Questionnaire surveys

The evaluation will make use of questionnaire surveys to complement the country visits and gather additional information in specific technical, operational and/or managerial areas.

6. Evaluation Team

The evaluation will be conducted by a multidisciplinary team led by a senior external consultant. Gender equity and geographical balance will be pursued in the team composition to ensure diversity of perspectives. The team will consist of a team leader, with knowledge of UN/FAO institutions and experience on high-level policy issues in the Near East, and four experts including staff members of the Office of Evaluation. They will together cover the following areas of expertise:

- Food and agricultural policy (including food security, nutrition and trade)
- Natural resources management (including fisheries, forestry, land and water)
- Crops and livestock
- Cross-cutting issues (including gender)
- Administration

The evaluation team will be assisted by a researcher responsible for the desk review and the conduct of surveys, and by administrative staff in charge of logistics and travel arrangements.

7. Evaluation Work Plan

The evaluation will take place in three phases, with distinct deliverables to be produced at the end of each phase.

Timetable

1st phase: Preparatory Phase (October 2009-early February 2010)

This phase will include:

- Desk review of the role, function and work of regional and sub-regional offices for the Near East, including issues raised in previous evaluations and the IPA.
- Interviews and discussions with staff at HQ, regional, sub-regional and country offices regarding the evaluation's context, objectives, methodology and scope
- Preparation of terms of reference for the evaluation
- Identification and selection of evaluation team.
- Finalization of terms of reference.
- Preparation of the Inception Report.

2nd phase: Conduct of the evaluation (mid-February-early July 2010)

This phase will include:

- Briefings at HQ, RNE in Egypt and SNE in Tunisia for the evaluation team.
- Finalization of inception report.
- Visits to a sample of countries
- Conduct of semi-structure interviews and questionnaire surveys.
- Finalization of country reports.

3rd phase: Report drafting and final consultations (Mid July-December 2010)

This phase will include:

- Preparation of the draft evaluation report.
- Debriefing with RNE, SNE and HQ staff.
- Consultations with Member Countries including presentation to Near East Regional Conference.
- Finalization of evaluation report.
- Preparation of Management Response.

The Final Evaluation Report and the Management Response will be presented to the Programme Committee in March 2011.

Deliverables

- Phase I: Terms of Reference including an introduction, background and objectives of the evaluation, followed by the scope, methodology and timetable for the whole exercise.
- Phase II: An inception report including: results of the desk review; a detailed description of the methodology including annotated outlines for the country missions; templates for the questionnaire surveys; check lists for semi-structured interviews; plan of visits to countries and regional/sub-regional offices; an outline format for reports of visits to countries; and an outline of the final evaluation report; aide memoirs will be prepared for each country visited and will include findings, conclusions and recommendations.
- Phase III: A draft and a final evaluation report (using MS Word) covering all aspects of the ToR and based on an outline format agreed in the inception report. It will not exceed 80 pages (excluding annexes) and will include an executive summary of a maximum of five pages which will capture the main conclusions and recommendations.
- Power Point Presentations as necessary to facilitate the discussion during debriefing workshops or meetings with stakeholders.

Annex 2. IPA items of relevance for the evaluation

IPA item	Planned start date	Planned end date
1.GOVERNING BODY REFORM		
Regional Conferences		
2.52-Changes in lined of reporting functions and ways of working will be introduced immediately in practice and followed-up by Basic Text changes, including changing the status of the Regional Conferences to Committees of the FAO Conference.	01.02.2010	02.07.2011
Statutory Bodies, Conventions, Treaties, Codex, etc.		
2.69-Undertake a review with a view to making any necessary changes to enable those statutory bodies which wish to do so to exercise financial and administrative authority and mobilise additional funding from their members, while remaining within the framework of FAO and maintaining a reporting relationship with it.		
2.REFORM OF PROGRAMMING, BUDGETING AND RESULTS BASED MONITORING		
Reform of programming, budgeting and Results Based Monitoring		
3.6-Introduction of a Revised Implementation Performance Results Based Management monitoring system and report: each report will cover the previous biennium and report on delivery, and targets and indicators of results as well as efficiency indicators for the functional objectives. This report will replace the current Programme Implementation Report.	01.04.2009	31.12.2011
7.1- Identify the areas of improvement and define the actions for the enhancement of the Results Based Management (RBM)		
3.8-The Regional Conferences will with respect to their Regions, review and make recommendations on: -FAO performance in contributing to results against performance indicators, including any pertinent evaluations; -priorities and results planned under the Medium Term Plan, and suggest adjustments for the next biennium; -policy issues for the region to be considered at global level or through additional action at regional level.	01.01.2010	31.12.2011
Design new planning and budgeting model		
7.2- Design the new Planning and Budgeting Model, define the new structure of PWB, outline the new standard streamlined logical framework for "Projects" budgets and the requirements for the standardized new reporting system	23.11.2009	31.12.2011
Publishing in all Languages of the Organization		
3.55-A budget will be set aside for technical publishing (paper and web) in each FAO language. A panel of users of technical documentation in each language will decide on the application of funds for translation (this is in addition to the existing budget for main meeting documentation).	01.01.2010	30.06.2010
3.56-Increased hard copies of technical documentation will be made available to Least Developed Countries with decisions on priorities for documents taken by the same panels.	01.01.2010	31.12.2010
3.57-Separate mirror websites to the FAO website will be developed for Arabic and Chinese.	01.01.2010	31.12.2010
3.RESOURCE MOBILIZATION AND MANAGEMENT		
Resource Mobilization and Management Strategy		

3.12-To supplement Assessed Contributions, projected extra-budgetary resources will be integrated within the programming and budgeting process, including the definition of Impact Focus Areas, while recognising that extra-budgetary funding is not fully predictable (see also paragraphs 8 and 33)	NA	NA
3.14-Put in place management structure for extra-budgetary resources and assessed contributions which places overall strategy, policy, management and coordination of resource mobilization, including donor relations on policy, in a central Office of Strategy, Planning and Resources Management with decentralized responsibilities at all levels within the coordinated framework for resource mobilization, in particular at regional and country levels including a small unit in the Department of the Organization dealing with Technical Cooperation which will support the decentralized offices and operations units in their liaison with donors.	01.01.2010	31.12.2010
3.15-Vigorously pursue new partnerships including with private foundations.	NA	NA
3.17-Review treaties conventions, agreements and similar bodies and instruments established under articles VI, XIV and XV of the FAO constitution with a view to their developing a greater degree of self-funding from their members (see also 2.69 –Statutory bodies, conventions, treaties, codex)). Present report to Council and reports to the parties to the agreements.	NA	NA
4.TECHNICAL COOPERATION PROGRAMME		
Technical Cooperation Programme		
3.22-TCP resources to be allocated to regions under the authority of Regional Representatives, except for 15% retained under the authority of the Department responsible for Technical Cooperation for use in emergencies and 3% for inter-regional projects.	01.01.2010	31.12.2010
5.DECENTRALIZATION		
Decentralization		
3.81-Transfer primary responsibility for technical, substantive and technical aspects of supervising FAORs to the Regional Representatives (ADGs) with, where appropriate, the reporting line to the ADG through the sub-regional coordinator. A unit in the office responsible for operations will handle overall coordination, liaison between regions, etc.	01.01.2009	31.03.2010
3.82-Revise delegated authorities to decentralized offices and control procedures	31.10.2009	30.06.2010
3.84-Clearly distinguishing between well established offices and any plans for additional new offices, rationalise coverage of country offices following results of review utilising agreed criteria, taking into account both existing and potential locations, efficiency cost savings and cost/benefit analysis.	01.01.2009	31.12.2010
3.86-Clarify coverage of Near east regional office	16.04.2009	31.03.2010
3.87-Redefine job descriptions, profile of competencies (including policy competence), recruitment and performance appraisal procedures (open competitive) for Regional ADGs, Sub-Regional Coordinators and FAORs	01.07.2009	31.12.2010
3.88-Introduce benchmarks and a performance-based reporting and monitoring system for decentralized offices	01.01.2010	31.12.2010
3.95-Transfer OCD functions to Regional/Sub- regional offices and to a coordination unit in the office responsible for operations.	01.01.2009	31.03.2010
6.PARTNERSHIPS		
Partnerships		

3.108- The nature of FAO's role will vary according to the different partnerships it engages in and the Organization may take a leadership role or act as facilitator in some, and be a participant in others. FAO must at all times preserve its neutral and impartial role and act in a transparent manner, avoiding partnerships where significant conflict of interest is of concern.	NA	NA
7.REFORM OF ADMINISTRATIVE AND MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS		
Procurement		
3.38-Delegation of authority for procurement, authority for Letters of Agreement to divisional level and in the decentralised offices.	01.01.2010	01.01.2011
7.8-Empowerment of regional and local officers in managing local procurement.	01.03.2010	31.12.2010
Administrative Service Model		
7.10-Align the objectives of the support functions with the strategic objectives of the organization, defining key efficiency targets and service level agreements – SLAs (commitment model). Converted into one of the Value Drivers to promote the reform.	NA	NA
Rome-based agencies – Joint procurement initiative		
7.14-Operational model for the implementation of partnerships in procurement actions with other UN agencies.	01.09.2009	31.12.2011
8.FAO MANUAL		
7.22- Carry out a major overhaul of the FAO Manual, reviewing and publishing a simplified framework, so that staff in all locations can understand and comply with FAO rules and regulations.	01.01.2010	31.12.2011
9.IPSAS		
3.42-To implement new or updated processes to support the recording, accounting, control and reporting of financial transactions at Decentralized Offices. Processes include the policy, procedures and system developments which collectively address the business requirements to support financial transaction processing at Decentralized Offices.	NA	NA
10.INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY		
3.90-Upgrade of ICT infrastructure and Information Systems Functional Support for Decentralized Offices. Comment: the Resolution 1/2008 description for IPA action 3.90 was: deployment of support systems (including training and upgrade of IT information systems) and has been modified as stated above.	01.07.2009	31.12.2011
11.HUMAN RESOURCES		
Human Resource Policies and Practices		
3.60-Introduce a package for increasing staff training including management.	23.11.2009	31.12.2011
3.61-Establish an incentive based rotation policy in HQ and between HQ and the decentralized offices with clear criteria.	23.11.2009	31.12.2010
3.63-Decentralise and delegate decision making within clear policies and requirements, including further delegation of authorities from the Office of the Director-General and from senior management.	01.01.2010	31.12.2010
3.66- Revise competency profiles for Regional Representatives, sub-regional coordinators and FAORs including competencies in management support.		
3.89-Strengthen staff training.	01.06.2009	31.12.2011
HR Role		
7.27-Define a new role for the HR function and review the HR competency framework and accountability framework.	01.01.2010	31.12.2011

Annex 3. Assessment of Regional Technical Commissions in the Near East

The review tracked the follow-up activities undertaken to respond to the requests and recommendations of recent sessions of three commissions: ALAWUC, NEFC and RECOFI. Only sessions falling into the time frame of the evaluation (2004-2009) were reviewed.

Commission	Session Reviewed	Report on Follow-up Activities Available
ALAWUC	the 3 rd , 4 th and 5 th	the 3 rd and 4 th
NEFC	the 3 rd , 4 th and 5 th	the 3 rd and 4 th
RECOFI	the 16 th , 17 th and 18 th	the 16 th , 17 th and 18 th

First of all, the recommendations were grouped into themes. Next, the action reported in the following sessions was measured against the recommendations of previous sessions¹⁵. Only activities that particularly addressed the needs of the region and member countries were included in the review. Last, tables summarizing findings were prepared for the ALAWUC and RECOFI as the NEFC had sufficient reports on and summaries of follow-up activities¹⁶ for all the reviewed sessions.

Agriculture, Land and Water Use Commission for the Near East

The merger of the Regional Commission on Agriculture (RNEA-708) and the Regional Land and Water Use Commission (RNEA-701) created the Agriculture, Land and Water Use Commission for the Near East, making it more effective in its operation and able to respond the needs of member countries. Moreover, this aimed to further strengthen the multidisciplinary approach and to promote integrated and comprehensive agricultural and rural development programmes. The ALAWUC provides a forum through which member countries can exchange information and experience, promote regional and sub-regional technical cooperation in fields of mutual interest and undertake joint programmes of work. An added benefit is to assist FAO and other potential donors with identifying issues, problems and future work programmes in the Region. These could include promotion of technical cooperation to overcome the identified problems on water resources management, sustainable land use, completion of data relating to development and conservation of the land/water resources in the region; promotion of programmes for food production, plant protection, animal health/livestock, development of agricultural research systems, and identification of efficient agricultural services to farmers, etc.

Near East Forestry Commission

Established by the Conference at its Seventh Session (1953) in pursuance of a resolution of the FAO Amman (Jordan) Forestry Conference in 1952, the Near East Forestry Commission is one of the six Regional Forestry Commissions founded by FAO. The NEFC aims to advise on the formulation of forest policy, review and coordinate its implementation at the regional level; exchange information and generally through special Subsidiary Bodies advise on suitable practices and action in regard to technical and economic problems; and make appropriate recommendations in relation to the foregoing. The NEFC has a Working Group on Wildlife and Protected Areas Management.

¹⁵ The tracking of follow-up activities for the 3rd and 4th sessions of both ALAWUC and RECOFI is available in separate documents.

¹⁶ The NEFC prepared both documents.

Regional Commission for Fisheries

The Regional Commission for Fisheries was established by the Director-General on the basis of Resolution 1/117 adopted by the Council at its Hundred and Seventeenth Session (1999). The RECOFI in effect replaces in terms of geographical area the former Committee for the Development & Management of the Fisheries Resources of the Gulfs, a subsidiary body of the Indian Ocean Fishery Commission (IOFC), which was abolished by IOFC at its Eleventh Session in February 1999.

The RECOFI promotes the development, conservation, rational management and best utilization of living marine resources, as well as the sustainable development of aquaculture in the area covered by the Commission. To this end, the Commission will keep under review the state of these resources including the abundance and the level of their exploitation, as well as the state of the fisheries based there, formulate and recommend appropriate measures for the conservation and rational management of living marine resources, and ensure the implementation of these recommendations; keep under review the economic and social aspects of the fishing industry and recommend any measures aimed at its development; encourage, recommend, coordinate and, as appropriate, undertake training and extension activities in all aspects of fisheries; encourage, recommend, coordinate and, as appropriate, undertake research and development activities including cooperative projects in the areas of fisheries and in the protection of living marine resources; assemble, publish and disseminate information regarding exploitable living marine resources and fisheries based on these resources; promote programmes on aquaculture and fish enhancement, and carry out such other activities as may be necessary to achieve these purposes. Presently, the RECOFI has two working groups: Working Group on Aquaculture and Working Group on Fisheries Management.

Commission for Controlling the Desert Locust in the Central Region

The Agreement for the establishment of the Commission was approved by the Council at its Forty-fourth Session (1965, Resolution 6/44), under the authority of the Conference (Eleventh Session, 1961, Resolution 9/61) and on the recommendation of a Special Conference held in Beirut (1965). The Agreement came into force on 21 February 1967 and was amended by the Commission at its Seventh Session (1976), with subsequent approval of the Council at its Seventy-second Session (1977, Resolution 5/72). The Twentieth Session of the Commission, held in Cairo from 18-20 December 1994, considered renaming the Region "Central Region" and consequently modifying the name of the Commission and the Agreement. It also considered modifying the definition of the Region covered by the Agreement to make it possible for Djibouti, Eritrea, Ethiopia and Somalia to become Members of the Commission. This was approved by the Council at its Hundred and Eighth Session in 1995. The Commission aims to carry out all possible measures to control plagues of the Desert Locust within Commission Members' countries and to reduce crop damage by adopting the following procedures:

- Maintain a permanent locust reporting and control service;
- Hold reserves of insecticides and application equipment;
- Encourage and support training, survey and research stations, including where appropriate the maintenance of national research stations for the study of the Desert Locust, considered desirable by the Commission and compatible with the resources of the country;

- Participate in the implementation of any common policy of locust control or prevention which may be approved by the Commission;
- Facilitate the storage of any items of anti-locust equipment and insecticides held by the Commission and permitting their duty-free import or export without hindrance, as well as their free movement within the country;
- Provide the Commission with any information it may request to implement its functions effectively.

Table 6.3 Synopsis of Technical Commissions in the Near East, PC 104/9

Name/Date of Establishment/Membership	Reporting Line/Frequency Of Meetings	Funding
Agriculture, Land and Water Use Commission for the Near East (ALAWUC) – 1997 by FAO Council Resolution Secretary: Mohammed Bazza, RNE, Cairo	1. Reports to Regional Conference 2. Biennial Plenary Session prior to Regional Conference	RP. for Secretariat (P5) salary and operating expenses of approximately US\$ 40,000 per biennium TF: none
Commission for Controlling the Desert Locust in the Central Region (CRC) – 1965 16 Member Nations Secretary : Munir Butrous, RNE, Cairo	1. Reports to CRC Sessions. Technical matters to AGPM. Administrative matters to RNE. 2. At least one Session every two years and meetings of the Executive Committee.	RP: for Secretariat and operating expenses approximately US\$ 200,000 per year. TF: currently US\$ 266,850 per year from member countries
General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM) – 1949 24 Member Nations Secretary: A. Srour FAO, Rome	1. Members + FAO Director-General 2. About 25 meetings a year: Plenary session; Committee on Aquaculture (CAQ) ; Scientific Advisory Committee (SAC); Compliance Committee (CoC); Committee on Administration and Finance (CAF) and Committees working groups/sub committees meetings	Budget funded by fixed contributions by Contracting Parties. Extra-budgetary funds for specific activities. Adopted autonomous budget for 2010: US\$ 1,624,000 + Extra-budgetary funding: approximately US\$ 330,000 The Commission also benefits from support from cooperative projects
Regional Commission for Fisheries (RECOFI) – 1999 8 Member Nations Secretary: P. Mannini, Senior Fishery Officer (RNE)	1. Members + FAO Director-General 2. Biennial Plenary Session; Annual meetings of Working Groups; Ad hoc workshops	RP: Secretary (P5) salary + FAO technical support Fixed contributions by Contracting Parties equivalent to US\$ 40,000 per year Budget 2009-10: US\$ 160,000

Findings

Agriculture and Land and Water Use Commission for the Near East: Water related issues like global events on water resources and their implications for the Near East (the 3rd session), improving agriculture water productivity (the 4th session) as well as public and private partnership in irrigation (the 5th session) have remained a standing topic in the agenda of the ALAWUC's three sessions though the Commission gives priority to topics that were not covered by the past sessions. This has clearly shown a close link between the ALAWUC's concern with one of RNE regional priorities, which is to promote sustainable water and natural resources utilization, conservation and management. Moreover, the 28th

Regional Conference's recommendation on developing national preparedness plans for drought mitigation was based on those of the 3rd ALAWUC session. The topics for discussion seemed to have been reduced from 5 (the 3rd session) to 2 (the 4th and 5th sessions). Apart from water issues, the sessions covered drought mitigation and preparedness; range land, pasture and livestock system; plant protection, seed policy and regulations, biotechnology in crop production; and agricultural product marketing. For each priority for discussion, ALAWUC has two separate recommendation sections for member countries and FAO. In addition, the section focusing on reporting action taken to implement the previous session's recommendations is often followed by recommendations for consideration by member countries with the support of FAO (the 4th session) or both governments and FAO (the 3rd and 5th sessions). Action taken by member countries to address the recommendations of the 3rd session was not reported, but that of the 4th session was available. Some recommendations have led to the formulation and implementation of new projects in both the region and member countries, e.g.: Over 20 projects of all kinds were reported in the follow-up report of the 3rd session; and this number dropped to 13 projects in the Commission's next session.

Near East Forestry Commission: Like ALAWUC, the NEFC has different recommendations for member countries and FAO (the 17th and 18th sessions). FAO Headquarter has been heavily involved in the implementation of follow-up activities responding to the requests of preceding sessions. RNE's role and participation in these activities have been much more limited than they did in ALAWUC. No specific information on national and regional project initiated and implemented resulting from the Commission's recommendations has been reported. The issues for concern were diverse and increasing in the 18th session comprising different aspects of forestry such as land tenure and participatory forestry; forests and climate change; forest policy; forest health; forest and water; forest and fire; wood energy systems, forest assessment; FAO forest strategy, etc. Forest and water and forest and fire have been repeatedly discussed in the 16th and 18th sessions.

Regional Commission for Fisheries: The RECOFI's operation mechanism is different from those of ALAWUC and NEFC as it has its own programme of work and budget covering activities performed by member countries and working groups. This gives the RECOFI flexibility and independence in initiating and planning its work. The 28th Regional Conference adopted fisheries - Fisheries in the Near East region: situation, constraints and prospects - as a priority issue. The RECOFI's topic for discussion seems to have been more practical and technical. The 3rd session focused on capture fishery statistics, aquaculture and regional issues of concern. The priorities in the 4th session included a number of issues such as aquaculture, national and regional measures to address IUU, guidelines for reporting stocks status, report on the regional workshop on food safety, regional on the regional workshop on fisheries statistics in Egypt, report on the RECOFI capture production database, strategic issues and challenges for RECOFI. It was noted that most of the recommendations for the 4th session were not yet fulfilled.

Expert Consultation Meeting on “Regional Agro-Industries Development”

Cairo, Egypt (06 Dec 2009 To 07 Dec 2009)

A Regional Workshop on “Emerging Global Issues in Food and Agriculture: Implications for Agriculture and Food Security in the Near East”

Cairo, Egypt (22 Nov 2009 To 23 Nov 2009)

A Regional Workshop on “Adapting to Climate Change: the Ecosystem Approach to Fisheries and Aquaculture in the Near East

Sharkia, Egypt (10 Nov 2009 To 12 Nov 2009)

Regional Commission for Fisheries (RECOFI) hold the Third meeting of the working group on fisheries management

Doha, Qatar (20 Oct 2009 To 22 Oct 2009)

A Contingency Planning Desert Locust Workshop

Cairo, Egypt (02 Aug 2009 To 06 Aug 2009)

Regional Commission for Fisheries (RECOFI) Organizes a Workshop on Fishery Stock Indicators and Stock Status Reporting

Tehran, Iran (26 Jul 2009 To 29 Jul 2009)

A Regional Workshop to Review the International Draft Standards for Phytosanitary Measures

Cairo, Egypt (18 Jul 2009 To 22 Jul 2009)

A Consultation Meeting on “Irrigated Fodder Crops in the Near East Region – Forage Production, Conservation and Utilization for Sustainable Animal Production”

Rabat, Morocco (15 Jun 2009 To 19 Jun 2009)

A Regional Aerial Training Course on Desert Locust Operations

Ethiopia, Ethiopia (08 Jun 2009 To 11 Jun 2009)

A Regional Meeting on “Wildlife Conservation and Protected Areas Management in the Near East Region” {Summary Report and Presentation Attachment }

Damascus, Syria (25 May 2009 To 28 May 2009)

A Training Workshop on “Establishing Food-Based Dietary Guidelines for the Gulf Countries”

Muscat, Oman (17 May 2009 To 19 May 2009)

Regional Training Workshop "Building National Capacities in Information and Knowledge in support of Agricultural Research for Development in Near East Region"

Cairo, Egypt (17 May 2009 To 20 May 2009)

Regional Commission for Fisheries (RECOFI) will organize its Fifth Session in Dubai

Dubai, United Arab Emirates (12 May 2009 To 14 May 2009)

Workshop on “Modernization of Open Canal Irrigation Schemes Using the MASSCOTE Approach”

Aleppo, Syria (18 Apr 2009 To 28 Apr 2009)

4th Regional Steering Committee of the Global Frame-Transboundary Animal Disease

Beirut, Lebanon (07 Apr 2009 To 09 Apr 2009)

A Training Workshop on Agricultural Statistics

Rabat, Morocco (06 Apr 2009 To 10 Apr 2009)

Regional Commission for Fisheries (RECOFI) will organize a workshop on combating illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing

Muscat, Sultanate of Oman (30 Mar 2009 To 02 Apr 2009)

Regional Workshop on “Weed Risk Assessment”

Al Bayda, Libya (22 Mar 2009 To 25 Mar 2009)

Advanced Training Workshop on “Camel Health and Transboundary Animal Diseases”

Tunisia, Tunisia (09 Mar 2009 To 11 Mar 2009)

Workshop on “Animal Identification, Traceability and Performance Recording”

Aleppo, Syria (02 Mar 2009 To 04 Mar 2009)

Regional Symposium on Oil Trees for Energy Production and For Valorization of Marginal Land and Water Resources in the Near East

Luxor, Egypt (10 Feb 2009 To 13 Feb 2009)

The Regional Commission for Fisheries (RECOFI) will hold a Regional Technical Workshop on Sustainable Marine Cage Aquaculture Development along with the fourth meeting of its Working Group on Aquaculture

Muscat, Oman (25 Jan 2009 To 28 Jan 2009)

Near East Forestry Commission's Steering Committee

Cairo, Egypt (02 Dec 2008 To 04 Dec 2008)

Roundtable Meeting on 'Programme for the 2010 Round of Censuses of Agriculture'

Cairo, Egypt (16 Nov 2008 To 20 Nov 2008)

The Regional Commission for Fisheries (RECOFI) hold the second meeting of the Working Group on Fisheries Management

Cairo, Egypt (27 Oct 2008 To 30 Oct 2008)

Regional Course on the Production and Use of Food Composition Data in Nutrition in Tehran

Tehran, Iran (18 Oct 2008 To 29 Oct 2008)

Workshop of the Near East National Correspondents to FAO's Global Forest Resources Assessment Programme

Alexandria, Egypt (13 Oct 2008 To 16 Oct 2008)

11th General Conference of AARINENA

Damascus, Syria (12 Oct 2008 To 14 Oct 2008)

Experts Meeting to Finalize the Draft Voluntary Guidelines for Good Forestry Practices in Arid and Semi-Arid Lands of the Near East Region

Tunisia, Tunisia (22 Jul 2008 To 24 Jul 2008)

A Regional Consultation to Review the Draft International Standards for Phytosanitary Measures (ISPMs)

Cairo, Egypt (21 Jul 2008 To 23 Jul 2008)

Workshop on “Strengthening Food and Agricultural Statistics in the Arab Countries”

Amman, Jordan (20 Jul 2008 To 24 Jul 2008)

A regional training workshop on the “Use of Geographic Information System in Fisheries Management”

Tunisia, Tunisia (07 Jul 2008 To 11 Jul 2008)

A training workshop on the implementation of Standard Number 15 (Wood packaging material in the international trade)

Alexandria, Egypt (30 Jun 2008 To 03 Jul 2008)

A Regional Workshop on “Expansion in Biofuel and Soaring Food Prices: Implications for Agricultural and Food Policies in the Near East and North Africa”

Cairo, Egypt (02 Jun 2008 To 04 Jun 2008)

International Experts Consultation Meeting on Spate Irrigation

Cairo, Egypt (07 Apr 2008 To 10 Apr 2008)

RECOFI’s Technical Workshop on Aquatic Animal Health

Jeddah, Saudi Arabia (06 Apr 2008 To 10 Apr 2008)

Regional Workshop for Strengthening National Information Communication Management Focal Units in Near East Region

Muscat, Oman (08 Jan 2008 To 10 Jan 2008)

Regional Agricultural Biotechnology Network Expert Consultation Meeting

Cairo, Egypt (15 Dec 2007 To 16 Dec 2007)

Expert Consultation on “Micronutrient Deficiencies: Can Agriculture Meet the Challenge”

Cairo, Egypt (11 Dec 2007 To 13 Dec 2007)

A Regional Expert Meeting on Forest Health and Invasive Species in the Near East in Tunisia

Hammamet, Tunisia (11 Dec 2007 To 13 Dec 2007)

A Regional Experts Consultation on Good Forestry Practices in Arid and Semi-Arid Lands

Alexandria, Egypt (03 Dec 2007 To 05 Dec 2007)

A Regional Expert Consultation on Range Monitoring in The Near East

Cairo, Egypt (26 Nov 2007 To 28 Nov 2007)

2nd Regional Expert Consultation on the Utilization of Agricultural Residues

Cairo, Egypt (29 Oct 2007 To 01 Nov 2007)

Workshop on Communication Planning for Practitioners

Amman, Jordan (02 Sep 2007 To 07 Sep 2007)

Workshop on Wild Aromatic, Culinary and Medicinal Plants

Cairo, Egypt (02 Sep 2007 To 04 Sep 2007)

Workshop to Review the International Standards for Phytosanitary Measures

Cairo, Egypt (22 Jul 2007 To 26 Jul 2007)

Sub-Regional Training Course on Desert Locust Survey and Control Operations

Damascus, Syria (07 Jul 2007 To 17 Jul 2007)

Second meeting of the Near East Forestry Commission (NEFC)

Rabat, Morocco (03 Jul 2007 To 05 Jul 2007)

Training Workshop on Phytosanitary Information Exchange Capacity Building for the Near East Region

Cairo, Egypt (24 Jun 2007 To 28 Jun 2007)

Regional Aerial Training Course on Desert Locust Operations

Ethiopia, Ethiopia (04 Jun 2007 To 08 Jun 2007)

The organization of sub regional training workshop on" Agricultural Information Systems for Agricultural Research for Development "

Cairo, Egypt (27 May 2007 To 30 May 2007)

27th Arab Veterinary Medical Congress

Cairo, Egypt (13 May 2007 To 16 May 2007)

Expert Consultation on the Red Palm Weevil (RPW) in the Mediterranean Region

Rome, Italy (02 May 2007 To 05 May 2007)

Regional training workshop on improving the quality and safety of fish and fish products

Cairo, Egypt (15 Apr 2007 To 19 Apr 2007)

Expert Consultation Meeting on Utilization of Agricultural Residues for Biofuel

Cairo, Egypt (09 Apr 2007 To 11 Apr 2007)

FAO/WHO Expert consultation on establishing regional food-based dietary guidelines

Doha, Qatar (02 Apr 2007 To 04 Apr 2007)

Codex Coordinating Committee for the Near East

Amman, Jordan (26 Feb 2007 To 01 Mar 2007)

Agricultural trade databases and analysis

Cairo, Egypt (18 Feb 2007 To 20 Feb 2007)

**National Agricultural Research Knowledge and Information Network (NARKIN).
Stakeholders Project Workshop Meeting**

Cairo, Egypt (31 Jan 2007 To 31 Jan 2007)

**Near East and North Africa Regional Network for Agricultural Policies (NENARNAP):
Technical Workshop on "Sustainable Rural and Agricultural Development in the Near East
and North Africa within the Context of the European Neighbourhood Policy and the Euro-
Med Association Agreements".**

Damascus, SYRIA (13 Nov 2006 To 15 Nov 2006)

**National training workshop on Codex Alimentarius and regional training workshop on risk
analysis in food**

Aqaba/ Amman, JORDAN (11 Nov 2006 To 14 Nov 2006)

14th EMPRES/CR Liaison Officers Meeting

Muscat, OMAN (11 Nov 2006 To 14 Nov 2006)

Workshop on Good Agricultural Practices for dates

Tripoli, LIBYA (06 Nov 2006 To 08 Nov 2006)

Regional Workshop on Reform of National Extension Systems

Hamamat, TUNISIA (18 Sep 2006 To 21 Sep 2006)

Postharvest Training in Magreb Sub-Region

Hamamat, TUNISIA (15 Sep 2006 To 17 Sep 2006)

ECM to Strengthen Linkages between Biotechnology and Postharvest

Hamamat, TUNISIA (12 Sep 2006 To 14 Sep 2006)

Regional Workshop on the Role of Agriculture Education and Training in Sustainable Development for the Arab States

Al-Salt, JORDAN (12 Sep 2006 To 14 Sep 2006)

Improving the quality and safety of fresh fruits and vegetables

Tunis, TUNISIA (11 Sep 2006 To 15 Sep 2006)

Regional Consultation meeting on the International Standards for Phytosanitary Measures.

Cairo, EGYPT (13 Aug 2006 To 17 Aug 2006)

The 25th Session and the 28th Meeting of the Executive Committee of the Commission

Doha, Qatar (28 May 2006 To 01 Jun 2006)

The Third International Conference on Date Palm

Abu Dhabi, Emirates (19 Feb 2006 To 21 Feb 2006)

FAO/AOAD sub-regional Workshop on Digital Libraries for Management and dissemination of Agricultural knowledge for Development

Cairo, Egypt (28 Jan 2006 To 31 Jan 2006)

FAO Regional Workshop On Recent Development in the WTO Negotiations on Agriculture and in Regional Trade Agreements and their Implications for Trade, Agriculture and Food

Security in the Near East

Cairo, Egypt (15 Nov 2005 To 17 Nov 2005)

The Annual Meeting of the Executive Committee of the FAO Commission for Controlling the Desert Locust in the Central Region(CRC)

Khartoum, Sudan (24 Jul 2005 To 28 Jul 2005)

Consultation Meeting on Rotterdam Convention

Cairo, Egypt (29 May 2005 To 01 Jun 2005)

FAO Regional Workshop on Improving the Status of Livelihoods of Rural Women and Men through Natural Resources Management, especially Medicinal and Aromatic Plants in the context of the Near East Countries

Meknes, Morocco (10 May 2005 To 13 May 2005)

Third Session of RECOFI

Doha, Qatar (09 May 2005 To 11 May 2005)

Land Degradation Management in The Arab Countries: Case Studies

Amman, Jordan (25 Apr 2005 To 28 Apr 2005)

Regional Workshop on Validation of New Module on New Methodologies for Natural Resources Management in the context of a Revised Curriculum for the Arab Institute for Forest & Range (AIFR)

Lattakia, Syrian (18 Apr 2005 To 22 Apr 2005)

RAMSES-NDVI interpretation workshop

Cairo, Egypt (17 Apr 2005 To 21 Apr 2005)

National Demonstration Centre on Food Security and Consumption Statistics for the Near East

Cairo, Egypt (16 Apr 2005 To 26 Apr 2005)

Sub-regional Workshop on Country Reports for Forestry Outlook Study for west & Central Asia

Damascus, Syria (11 Apr 2005 To 15 Apr 2005)

3rd Emergency Prevention Meeting

Cairo, Egypt (22 Mar 2005 To 24 Mar 2005)

3rd Postharvest Training "Technologies & Marketing Aspects"

Antalya, Turkey (21 Mar 2005 To 25 Mar 2005)

3rd Codex Coordinating Committee for the Near East

Amman, Jordan (07 Mar 2005 To 10 Mar 2005)

Regional Meeting on Food Safety

Amman, Jordan (05 Mar 2005 To 06 Mar 2005)

FAO/WHO Coordinating Committee for the Near East (CCNEA)

Amman, Jordan (05 Mar 2005 To 06 Mar 2005)

Food Based Dietary Guidelines

Cairo, Egypt (27 Feb 2005 To 27 Feb 2005)

Sub-Regional Training Workshop on "Information Management Systems for Management and Dissemination of Electronic Information in Agriculture"

Cairo, Egypt (26 Feb 2005 To 03 Mar 2005)

Regional Workshop on Validation of New Module on New Methodologies for Natural Resources Management in the context of a Revised Curriculum for the Arab Institute for Forest & Range (AIFR)

Lattakia, Syrian (06 Feb 2005 To 10 Feb 2005)

FAO/WHO Regional Technical Consultation on Food-Based Dietary Guidelines

Cairo, Egypt (06 Dec 2004 To 09 Dec 2004)

Sub-regional Workshop on Application of ICT for Enhancing Extension Linkages, Coordination and Services

Hammet, Tunisia (22 Nov 2004 To 24 Nov 2004)

Regional Workshop on Options of Reform in Agricultural Extension in the Near East

Amman, Jordan (02 Oct 2004 To 04 Oct 2004)

International Workshop on Water Harvesting and Sustainable Agriculture

Moscow, Russia (07 Sep 2004 To 12 Sep 2004)

Regional Training Course on Agriculture Project Analysis

Issyk-Kul, Kyrgyz Republic (01 Sep 2004 To 05 Sep 2004)

First Planning Workshop: Forestry Outlook Study for Western & Central Asia (FOWECA)

Beirut, Lebanon (23 May 2004 To 23 May 2004)

FAO Workshop on Forests Resources Assessment (FRA-2005)

Beirut, Lebanon (21 May 2004 To 22 May 2004)

Workshop on On-Farm Research in Wheat Based Production Systems in North Africa

Tunis, Tunisia (04 May 2004 To 06 May 2004)

Sub-regional Workshop on Fisheries Products

Cairo, Egypt (27 Apr 2004 To 29 Apr 2004)

Expert Consultation Meeting on the Utilization of Agricultural Residues

Cairo, Egypt (26 Apr 2004 To 28 Apr 2004)

Twenty Fourth Session of the CRC and Twenty Sixth Executive Committee Meeting. CFP Workshop for Saudi Arabia

Jeddah, Saudi Arabia (13 Apr 2004 To 26 Apr 2004)

Regional Technology Transfer Workshop and 9th General Conference of AARINENA

Muscat, Oman (11 Apr 2004 To 16 Apr 2004)

Workshop on Integrated Pest Management of Date Palm in the Gulf Countries

Dub

The Second International Conference and Exhibition on Organic Agriculture- Safe and Healthy Food for Everyone

Cairo, Egypt (25 Mar 2004 To 27 Mar 2004)

Technical Assistance to RECOFI Workgroups Meetings on Fisheries Statistics and Aquaculture

Manama, Bahrain (18 Mar 2004 To 20 Mar 2004)

Regional Workshop on Application of ARTFISH and Fisheries Statistics and Aquaculture Data collection System

Arab Academy for Science and Technology, Egypt (16 Feb 2004 To 25 Feb 2004)

Workshop on Agricultural Information Strategies- a follow-up to Consultation On Agricultural Information Management-COAIM

Dubai, Emirates (10 Jan 2004 To 12 Jan 2004)

Année	Date	Lieu	Objet
2005	06-11 Juin	Nouakchott, Mauritanie	Troisième réunion du Groupe de Travail sur le contrôle phytosanitaire dans les pays de l'Afrique du Nord,
	06-05 juillet	Tunisie	Séminaire National sur la gestion des Pesticides.
	22 Août- 02 Septembre	Tunis, Tunisie	Atelier sur le thème de l'utilisation des statistiques en appui aux politiques (lutte contre la pauvreté et analyse de filières),
	25-26 Novembre	Tunis, Tunisie	Atelier de travail national sur l'évaluation des la dégradation des terres agricoles
	25-26 Novembre	Tunis, Tunisie	Atelier de travail sur l'analyse des dangers et la sécurité alimentaire des aliments
	28-30 Novembre	Gafsa, Tunisie	Atelier de travail sur la conservation et la gestion intégrée des stratégies agricoles traditionnelles, les oasis
2006	12-14 Avril	Gammarth, Tunisie	Atelier plate forme d'échanges pour une contribution stratégique des pays du Maghreb central à l'intégration Euro-Méditerranéenne
	18-20 Avril	Tunisie	Réunion des experts sur « le rôle de la femme dans la gestion des ressources en eaux : cas particulier du secteur irrigué »
	11-15 Septembre	Tunis, Tunisie	Atelier sous régional sur « l'amélioration de la qualité et de la sécurité des fruits et légumes frais »
	18-21 septembre	Tunisie	Atelier régional sur la réforme des systèmes nationaux de vulgarisation
2007	24-25 Janvier	Gafsa, Tunisie	Séminaire national sur la protection et production intégrée des oasis

	02-03 Février	Sfax, Tunisie	Séminaire sur la protection intégrée des cultures et qualité des produits alimentaires
	27-29 Mars	Rabat, Maroc	Plateforme d'échanges pour une contribution stratégique des pays du Maghreb à l'intégration Euro-Méditerranéenne
	11 Avril	Chatt, Meriem, Tunisie	National Seminar Crop Protection in Organic Agriculture
	15 -19 Avril	Chaloos, Iran	Réunion d'experts sur la Sédimentation et l'érosion en régions arides et semi-arides pour présenter les résultats et acquis du programme GCP/TUN/028/ITA.
	15-16 Mai	Hammamet, Tunisie	Quatrième réunion du Groupe de Travail sur le contrôle phytosanitaire dans les pays de l'Afrique du Nord,
	16-17 Mai	Bizerte, Tunisie	Séminaire national de lancement de la seconde phase du projet d'appui au développement de l'agriculture de conservation.
	11 Avril	Sousse, Tunisie	Séminaire national sur la protection des cultures dans le cadre de l'agriculture biologique
	04-08 Juin 2007	Sousse, Tunisie	Atelier de négociation pour les pays francophones du Maghreb
	11-12 Juillet	Hammamet, Tunisie	Atelier stratégique de CAWTAR
	18-30 novembre	Béja, Tunisie	Atelier régional pour la formation des formateurs sur les méthodes d'évaluation de la dégradation des terres,

2007	21-22 Novembre	Hammamet, Tunisie	Séminaire International: Exploitation des Ressources en Eau pour une Agriculture Durable
	27 Novembre - 1 Décembre	Hammamet-Tunisie	AGPP, PIC & IPPC Meetings
	26 Novembre -02 Décembre	Tunis, Tunisie	Atelier régional pour la formation de formateurs pour la participation du genre dans la gestion intégrée des ressources en eau dans la région arabe, organisé par CAWTAR
	15 Décembre	Gammarth, Tunisie	Atelier organisé par 'Arab network for gender and development', ANGED-Cawtar
2008	25 au 27 février	Hammamet, Tunisie	Atelier sur les indicateurs d'impact des travaux de Conservation des Eaux et du Sol (CES) et de collecte d'eau (Water Harvesting) pour les pays du Maghreb
	18 Mars	Tunis, Tunisie	Séminaire national sur la Convention de Rotterdam en Tunisie
	31 Mars-4 Avril	Jerba-Medenine	Atelier Constitutif du Réseau Maghrébin des Associations de Développement Durable
	26-27 Juin	Fes, Maroc	Conference on the perspectives for the agriculture in the Maghreb region
	14 -17 Juillet	Budapest, Hongrie	Atelier Plateforme d'échanges pour une contribution stratégique des pays du Maghreb à l'intégration Euro-Méditerranéenne
	25-27 Novembre	Sousse, Tunisie	Symposium international IPM Olivier

2009	24-26 Février	FAO-SNE	Atelier sous régional, SNE de coordination et de concertation
	13 Mars	FAO-SNE	Réunion du sous réseau tunisien des associations Tunisiennes membres du Remadel
	22-24 Avril	Djerba, Médenine- Tunisie	L'institut des Régions Arides de Médenine en collaboration avec FAO-SNE, GTZ et OSS a organisé un colloque International intitulé « Sociétés en transition et développement local en zones difficiles » (DELZOD)
	28-30 Avril	Meknès, Maroc	5ème réunion du Groupe de Travail sur le contrôle phytosanitaire dans les pays de l'Afrique du Nord
	18-21 Mai	Hammamet- Tunisie	Atelier sur les outils et méthodes de négociations pour les pays du Maghreb

Annex 5. Publications issued by RNE and SNE (2004-09) excluding workshop/meetings and project's reports

No	Title	Published by	Year	Availability online	Format
Land and water					
1	The Near East drought planning manual: guidelines for drought mitigation and preparedness planning	Cairo, FAO/RNE and National Drought Mitigation Center, University of Nebraska-Lincoln, Nebraska, USA,	2008	RNE website	Manual/guidelines (print)
2	A review of drought occurrence and monitoring and planning activities in the Near East region.	Cairo, FAO/RNE and National Drought Mitigation Center, University of Nebraska-Lincoln, Nebraska, USA,	2008	RNE website	Issue paper (print)
3	Near East fertilizer use	FAO Rome	2006	RNE website	Manual/guidelines
4	Methods of analysis for soils of arid and semi-arid regions	FAO Rome	2007	RNE website	Manual/guidelines
5	Guidelines for improvement of water and fertilizer productivity of irrigated crops in the Near East	RNE	2007	No	Manual/guidelines
6	Guidelines / manuals on the valorisation of sewage sludge in agriculture	RNE	2006	No	Manual/guidelines
Animal production and health					
7	Dictionary of poultry scientific terms and relevant sciences, English-Arabic.	FAO/RNE	2005	No	Other (print)
Food and nutrition					
8	FAO/WHO Technical Consultation on National Food-based Dietary Guidelines	FAO/RNE and WHO	2006	FAO website	Manual/guidelines
Agro-Industry and technologies					
9	Training manual on postharvest handling and marketing of horticultural commodities.	FAO/RNE	2008	RNE website	Manual/guidelines
Forestry					
10	Guidelines for good forestry and range practices in arid and semi-arid zones of the Near East. Working paper	FAO/RNE	2009	No	Manual/guidelines
Plant production and protection					
11	Explore on farm: adoption of GAP for wheat in North Africa.	FAO/RNE and ICARDA	2006	RNE website	Manual/guidelines
Fisheries and aquaculture					
12	Video "Managing By catch and Reducing Discards"	Arabic translation made by RNE	2009	No	CD-ROM

No	Title	Published by	Year	Availability online	Format
Range management					
13	Integrated production for sustainable natural resource utilization in the arid "qoz" of north kordofan State	RNE	2005	RNE website	Issue paper
Policy					
14	Les petites et Moyennes exploitations Agricoles face aux structures de supermarchés, Commercialisation des produits agricoles en Tunisie et au Maroc à l'exemple de trios filières. SLE publications series –S234	SNE	2008	No	Issue paper

Annex 6. Highlights of FAO technical work in the Near East (from the Programme Implementation Report and staff reports)

Theme	2004-05	2006-07	2008-09
Policy	<p>Technical support and backstopping were provided to policy projects in a number of countries as well as assistance in the implementation of country strategies for national agricultural development. Assistance also included: monitoring and assessment of the impacts of domestic and external factors on food security and poverty alleviation; WTO accession and policy reforms; water policies; preparation of regional programmes for food security in the Near East. National Demonstration Centres were established to strengthen the capacity of national statistical organizations in the design, collection, processing, analysis and dissemination of food insecurity statistics. Regional publications included: Selected Indicators for Food and Agriculture for Arab States 1999-2003.</p>	<p>Policy assistance focused on key priority issues, including trade negotiations, water scarcity and transboundary animal diseases (e.g. HPAI). Technical assistance on WTO-related issues was provided to Egypt, Jordan, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, Sudan and Yemen, focusing on strengthening national institutional capacities for effective participation in trade negotiations and in meeting commitments of trade agreements. In addition, capacity building workshops and direct policy advice were organized for North African countries to support negotiations with the EU. Assistance on water policy focused on water resource management, including support to Oman in formulating and implementing policies to adopt a new cropping mix in Al-Batinah Region.</p>	<p>Besides direct assistance in policy formulation to individual countries, FAO supported the Near East and North Africa Regional Network for Agricultural Policy (NENARNAP), in the exchange of information and strengthening national capacities. Assistance was provided to non-WTO countries in the region on agriculture-related aspects for their preparatory work for accession to the WTO; and to North African countries in negotiating bilateral association agreements with the EU. On the eve of the food price crisis, RNE in collaboration with the World Bank and IFAD issued a policy framework report on Improving the food security situation in the Near East and provided policy advice and support to Egypt, Mauritania and Yemen.</p>
Nutrition and Consumer Protection	<p>Technical support nutrition and house food security was provided to Mauritania. Coverage of the North Africa and Near East regions by the Nutrition Country Profiles was improved substantially following the release of enhanced profiles (Algeria, Tunisia, Egypt, Libya, Syria, Palestine, Iran and Jordan). Extensive training carried out on the management of Codex national activities has had a positive impact on the level and quality of participation of the countries of the region in Codex work.</p>	<p>Food safety remained one of the main priorities for countries in the region, especially in relation to sanitary measures and trade. National capacity building workshops (Lebanon, Jordan, Iran, and Iraq) were organised to enhance the countries' participation in international standards setting fora, notably the Codex Alimentarius. Regional and sub-regional capacity building workshops were also organised to help improve the quality and safety of fresh fruits and vegetables, fish and fish products, and strengthen food risk analysis.</p>	<p>Continued attention was given to enhancing the participation of countries in Codex activities, as well as supporting the implementation of recommendations, guidelines, and standards through advice to the Codex Coordinating Committee for the Near East and capacity building workshops. The development of Food-based Dietary Guidelines was an example of successful collaboration with the competent national authorities.</p>

Theme	2004-05	2006-07	2008-09
Plant protection	<p>The EMPRES-Desert Locust Component that is well established in the Central Region (around the Red Sea) contributed to efforts to contain an outbreak which developed in Sudan in 2003 and again when an upsurge spread to the Central Region in November 2004. South-South partnerships and extra-budgetary funding were critical elements during a period of increased locust activity, when the limited national resources for locust survey and control operations were quickly exhausted. Meetings of EMPRES Liaison Officers, monitoring of the Desert Locust situation, survey, training and strengthening of national capacities within the region were organised. Regional IPM programmes in the Near East contributed to inter-country collaboration.</p>	<p>Work included the support provided by the Desert Locust Commission and EMPRES in building capacities in countries for successful preventive control strategies for the desert locust. The Organization has supported the implementation of joint border surveys between neighbouring countries and encouraged the exchange of expertise to enhance skills and enable monitoring of inaccessible areas. Assistance in plant protection focused on IPM using the FFS approach in several countries. Assistance was also provided to countries regarding trans-boundary plant pests and diseases, including Red Palm Weevil, Wheat Stem Rust and the Peach Fruit Fly.</p> <p>Supported the implementation of the Rotterdam Convention (PIC) in the region through organisation of seminars and training of Designated National Authorities;</p> <p>A training course was conducted on pesticides management for pesticides dealers and traders in Yemen;</p> <p>Translation into Arabic of a number of manuals and guidelines dealing with use of FAO and WHO specifications for pesticides; and registration of plant protection products;</p> <p>Prepared two guidelines on pesticide management: Guidelines for Pesticides and Plant Protection Products Guidelines; and “Pesticides and Plant Protection Dealers Trainers Guidelines”;</p>	<p>The Desert Locust Commission and EMPRES facilitated rapid responses to locust outbreaks in the region. The Commission supported the implementation of joint border surveys between neighbouring countries and encouraged the exchange of expertise to enhance skills, and enable monitoring of inaccessible areas. An Early Warning System, the Global Cereal Rust Surveillance Programme for prevention and disease management of threatening wheat rusts was established using the experience and model of the Desert Locust. The Regional IPM programme has continued its operations with focus on integration of community-based IPM activities, enhanced pesticide management systems, and phytosanitary components in interested countries of the Maghreb and the Near East.</p>

Theme	2004-05	2006-07	2008-09
		<p>Organized an international conference on Red Palm Weevil in the Mediterranean Region; Supported the implementation of plant protection-related projects in Saudi Arabia and Yemen; Supported the publication and editing of the Arab and Near East Plant Protection Newsletter.</p>	
Livestock	<p>Through a number of projects and capacity building activities, RNE promoted use of indigenous species adapted to the local conditions in rehabilitation of degraded rangelands in order to fight serious deterioration of rangelands following countries' inability to use exotic seeds</p>	<p>Following the outbreak of HPAI in Egypt, an ECTAD unit was established. This unit provided key support to the government including the provision of technical advice and capacity building. An epidemiology unit was established, a surveillance plan developed, and a participatory epidemiology network was implemented on a pilot basis. Organized the 27th Arab Veterinary Medical Congress (13-16 May 2007), which was attended by 12 countries; Organized a conference on zoonotic diseases and human health; Supported the 9th Scientific Conference on Transboundary Zoonotic Diseases and Human Health; Published the 2nd edition of Poultry Dictionary after being upgraded in 2006; Prepared user manuals on veterinary diagnostic and interventional ultrasonography in farm animals; Printed and disseminated an Arabic version of the FAO-OIE Manual "Preparing for Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza".</p>	<p>FAO established two decentralized units of the Emergency Centre for Transboundary Animal Diseases (ECTAD) - in Beirut for the Middle East, and in Tunis for North Africa - and formulated and implemented an Action Plan for avian influenza preparedness and response in the region. As the problems linked to HPAI were of particular concern to Egypt, the ECTAD unit in the country continued its broad-ranged support to national authorities, including technical advice and capacity building.</p>

Theme	2004-05	2006-07	2008-09
Forestry	<p>Regional impacts include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Capacity-building support was provided to seven Near East countries. -Silva Mediterranea was re-activated with a successful meeting in Morocco. -Regional reviews of national State of forest genetic resources were published on FAO's Web site. -Regional workshops promoted implementation of the clean development mechanism (CDM) of the Kyoto protocol on forests. <p>Support to Low Forest Cover Countries (LFCC) continued through a regional study on tree, forest and rangeland data availability and national capacities, involving seven countries of the Near East (Egypt, Iran, Jordan, Oman, Saudi Arabia, Syria, and Yemen).</p>	<p>The overall health conditions of forests were threatened by increasing diebacks, endemic insects and diseases, as well as the degradation of forest ecosystems in many countries. Following a successful expert meeting organized by FAO, in collaboration with the Tunisian Government and supported by the FAO-Norway Partnership Programme, experts from 12 countries of the region assisted by resource persons from the Canadian and US Forest Services reviewed the situation of forest health and invasive species and created the Near East Network on Forest Health and Invasive Species, NENFHIS. This is an important step towards promoting the collection and dissemination of information, and fostering technology exchange.</p>	<p>A number of forestry field projects, meetings, workshops and thematic studies addressed priority issues of interested countries, such as: the formulation of effective forest policy and national forest programmes, the management of wildlife and protected areas, combating forest fires, and assessing the implications of bio-energy development and climate change.</p>
Fisheries	<p>During the biennium activities were intensified by the Fisheries Department to develop and manage fisheries and aquaculture on a long-term sustainable basis within the framework of the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries (CCRF) and other related international, regional and national fishery instruments.</p> <p>Regional impacts were observed under some global programmes. The ASFA Partnership expanded with new partners for Mauritania and Iran. A national workshop on statistical methodologies was conducted for Lebanon.</p>	<p>A priority activity in the fisheries sector is to strengthen regional cooperation in support of responsible management and sustainable exploitation of fisheries resources. FAO is assisting countries in improving and harmonising national fisheries statistics indicators and in promoting scientific and institutional capacity in support of the implementation of the FAO Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries, particularly in the Mediterranean sub-region.</p>	<p>FAO continued its assistance to countries in expanding regional cooperation in support of responsible management and sustainable exploitation of fisheries resources, and in establishing sufficient scientific and institutional capacity for the implementation of the FAO Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries.</p>

Theme	2004-05	2006-07	2008-09
Extension and communication	Partnerships with relevant regional institutions were strengthened in the Near East for pilot national AGRIS networks, and for pilot rural information and communication systems. Technical assistance for improving national research and extension systems increased in Near East.	FAO assistance in extension and communication for development focused on activities aimed at strengthening the institutional and human capacities of national agricultural research and extension systems and their linkages. The implementation in Egypt of the Rural and Agricultural Development Communication Network (RADCON) project is one the most important achievements. Drawing on the results of its predecessor, the Virtual Extension and Research Communication Network (VERCON), which has become a model for adaptation worldwide, the RADCON concept combines the use of participatory communication approaches with a modern Internet-based information system to provide farmers with timely access to relevant and technically sound information and services.	FAO has continued to furnish technical support to a variety of operational projects in Egypt, Jordan and Oman. These include technical backstopping, provision of technology systems and capacity development that focus on information and knowledge policy assistance, on strengthening of national institutions, on training, as well as on advisory missions when requested
Land and water	Activities carried out in this area included studies on irrigation of date palm and associated crops covering ten Near East countries; a regional study on Groundwater Management; collection of data and information on Wastewater Treatment and Reuse in Algeria; a joint expert meeting on the Role of Gender in the Management of Water Resources with an emphasis on the agriculture sector in the Near East; and a project to formulate a National Drought Mitigation Strategy in Jordan; New activities include projects in Saudi Arabia	TCP projects in Iran and Jordan were completed in 2007 and produced national strategies and action plans on drought mitigation. In Syria, an ongoing TCP project includes the formulation of a drought management strategy. Draft guidelines on “Best forestry practices in arid and semi-arid zones” have prepared and negotiated through a series of regional meetings. Drought management strategies were formulated for Iran and Jordan included development of objectively verifiable indicators for drought early warning and monitoring and	Capacity development was supported for irrigation modernisation in the region, together with technical assistance to formulate and implement drought mitigation and preparedness strategies. FAO also assisted various programmes for assessment of land degradation in dry lands (LADA), an effective tool to develop databases for accurate and objective land management systems.

Theme	2004-05	2006-07	2008-09
	<p>on Sustainable Development for Irrigated Agriculture in Al-Hassa and Improvement of Irrigation Water Management; two joint activities with the National Drought Mitigation Center in Nebraska, USA, including the preparation of a Report on Drought Progress and Activities to Manage Drought in the Near East Region and the development of a manual for assisting member countries in preparing plans and strategies for managing drought; and launching of pilot studies on Climate Change and its Impact on Water Resources and Agriculture in Morocco, Jordan and Iran.</p>	<p>operational triggering mechanisms for drought management. Assistance was also provided to a World Bank project on groundwater and soil conservation in Yemen.</p>	
Crop production	<p>Adoption of a new approach to monitor implementation of the Global Plan of Action on Plant Genetic Resources (GPA-PGR), and preparation of guidelines for country reports contributing to the second report on the State of the World's PGRFA. Meetings for 21 country representatives in the Near East and Africa regions were organised in this context. Regional PGRFA and seed networks were supported technically and scientifically to enhance conservation and use of PGRFA and the development of regional PGRFA conservation strategies.</p>	<p>Support to rapid seed multiplication systems was provided to several countries, and Iraq was assisted in developing its national seed policy, considered an important milestone for the country's agricultural development. Unilateral Trust Fund (UTF) projects were formulated on Olive Industry Development in Saudi Arabia and Enhancing Organic Farming in the United Arab Emirates. A Special Programme for Food Security (SPFS) project was implemented on Intensification and Diversification in the New Valley, Egypt; and Technical Cooperation Programme (TCP) projects on Agronomic Practices for Rice Straw Management in Egypt and Training on Improved Rice Technologies for the Enhancement of Irrigated Rice Production in the White Nile State in Sudan.</p>	<p>New initiatives at country level aim at "sustainable production intensification", to meet growing national and international demand for more and higher-quality food. In the Near East, FAO carries out a regional programme on IPM (Integrated Pest Management) through knowledge intensive decision-making that combines ecosystem-based strategies (biological, cultural, physical and chemical) to manage pests. FAO assistance aims in the first instance at improving the efficiency of sustainable agricultural production by reducing the use of chemical pesticides, and promoting the adaptation of IPM strategies to crops through farmer field school methodology.</p>

Annex 7. List of Projects Operated/Backstopped by RNE and SNE
Table 1. List of regional and sub-regional projects operated by RNE and SNE, 2004-09

Project Symbol	Project Title	Start date	End date	Budget	Funding source	Operating Unit	LTO
GCP /RAB/002/FRA	Renforcement de la surveillance et des systèmes d'alerte pour la Bluetongue, la Fièvre du Nil Occidental et la Rage au Maroc, en Algérie et en Tunisie	2007-02	2010-06	\$250,003	France	SNE	HQ (AGAH)
GCP /RAB/006/IFA	Understanding the impact of rising food prices on farming communities in the NENA	2009-04	2010-03	\$175,000	IFAD	RNE	RNE (RNEP)
GCP /REM/071/MUL	Marine Resources Programme in the Red Sea	2008-07	2013-06	\$3,200,000	IFAD (28%) ; Islamic Development Bank (14%); Multilateral (41%); OPEC Fund	RNE	HQ (FIMF)
GCPN/REM/011/GLF	Sub-Regional Fisheries Training Centre, Kuwait	1981-01	2009-07	\$5,202,031	Conf. of Arab Ministers of Agri. in the Gulf and Arabian Penin.	RNE	RNE (RNEI)
GTFS/REM/070/ITA	Regional Integrated Pest Management (IPM) Programme in the Middle Eastern Countries	2004-04	2011-12	\$7,609,371	Italy	RNE	HQ (AGPP)
MTF /REM/001/MUL	Support to the Secretariat of RECOFI	2003-04	2011-04	\$319,812	Multilateral	RNE	HQ (FIEL)
TCP/INT/2902	Support to Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO) for the Preparation of a Regional Programme for Food Security	2003-07	2005-06	\$320,196	FAO	RNE	RNE (RNEP)
TCP/RAB/2902	Management of the Peach Fruit Fly (<i>Bactrocera zonata</i>) in the Middle East and North Africa	2002-12	2004-11	\$376,000	FAO	RNE	SNE (SNEM)
TCP/RAB/2903	Support to CAEU for the Formulation of a Regional Programme for Food Security	2003-03	2004-12	\$287,000	FAO	RNE	RNE (RNEP)
TCP/RAB/3001	Assistance for the Processing of Regional Trade Statistics of Agricultural Trade Commodities	2004-01	2005-11	\$152,144	FAO	RNE	HQ (ESSB)
TCP/RAB/3002	Strengthening capacities for agricultural marketing adjustment to the changing trade environments	2004-03	2005-12	\$310,342	FAO	RNE	HQ (AGSF)
TCP/RAB/3003	Improving the training capacity of the Arab Institute for Forestry and Range	2004-09	2005-12	\$208,789	FAO	RNE	HQ (FONP)
TCP/RAB/3004	Strengthening phytosanitary services in the Gulf Cooperation Council States	2004-11	2007-01	\$324,133	FAO	RNE	HQ (AGPP)
TCP/RAB/3101	Formulation of a Unilateral Trust Fund Project for obsolete pesticide prevention and disposal	2008-01	2009-04	\$69,410	FAO	RNE	HQ (AGPP)
TCP/RAB/3102	Gestion intégrée des plantes envahissantes, en particulier la morelle jaune au Maroc et en Tunisie	2008-05	2009-12	\$259,000	FAO	SNE	SNE (SNEA)
TCP/RAB/3201	TCP Facility	2008-02	2009-12	\$78,667	FAO	SNE	SNE (SNEA)
TCP/RAB/3202	Strengthening capacities towards the establishment of a regional platform for the detection of genetically modified organisms	2008-12	2010-12	\$413,000	FAO	RNE	HQ (AGPS)
TCP/RAB/3301	Management of the Invasive Plant Solanum elaeagnifolium in the Near East	2010-09	2012-07	\$389,000	FAO	RNE	HQ (AGPM)

Table 2. List of National Projects backstopped but not operated by RNE and SNE

Project Symbol	Project Title	EOD	NTE	Budget	LTO
OSRO/GAZ/302/AUL	Development of information systems for improving nutrition and food security in the West Bank and Gaza Strip	2003-12	2004-09	300,000	RNE
OSRO/GAZ/605/EC	Improving food security in the Jordan Valley through emergency agricultural interventions	2007-01	2007-12	1,033,576	RNE
OSRO/GAZ/808/ITA	Increase of water availability and access in areas vulnerable to drought in the West Bank	2008-11	2010-03	421,384	RNE
TCP/ALG/2904	Etude et mise en place d'un système d'organisation et de gestion de l'information pour l'Agence de bassin hydrographique	2003-10	2005-09	194,921	SNE
TCP/ALG/3104	Valorisation de l'eau par une approche participative et intégrée en petite et moyenne hydraulique (PMH)	2007-04	2009-05	174,000	SNE
TCP/ALG/3202	Lutte intégrée contre la mineuse de la tomate	2009-03	2010-12	150,000	SNE
TCP/EGY/3001	Development of a National Agricultural Research Information Management System (NARIMS)	2004-07	2006-07	213,069	RNE
TCP/EGY/3101	Intensification and diversification of agricultural production systems, in support to the SPFS in the New Valley	2006-11	2009-01	234,000	RNE
TCP/EGY/3102	Rice straw management and conservation of environment	2006-12	2008-12	314,905	RNE
TCP/EGY/3201	Support to the updating of the agricultural strategy and the preparation of a plan of action for agricultural development	2008-04	2010-03	299,000	RNE
TCP/IRA/2908	Framework for Sustainable Agricultural Development Strategy (Phase II of TCP/IRA/0168)	2003-12	2004-11	109,899	RNE
TCP/IRA/3003	National Strategy and Action Plan on Drought Preparedness, Management and Mitigation in the Agricultural Sector	2004-12	2007-05	252,816	RNE
TCP/LEB/3002	Strengthening and building capacity of the extension services of the Ministry of Agriculture	2006-01	2007-12	151,220	RNE
TCP/LIB/2901	TCP Facility for FAORs	2003-05	2004-07	10,000	SNE
TCP/LIB/3001	Support to enhancing national capacities for the collection and analysis of farm level economic data	2004-11	2006-06	213,255	SNE
TCP/LIB/3002	TCP Facility for FAORs	2004-10	2005-12	10,000	SNE
TCP/LIB/3201	TCP Facility	2009-02	2010-07	88,286	RNE
TCP/MAU/3101	Economie de l'eau dans les oasis de l'Adrar et du Tagent	2006-03	2008-02	142,000	SNE
TCP/MAU/3102	Appui technique à la préparation d'une proposition de loi d'orientation agricole	2006-06	2007-06	93,000	SNE
TCP/MOR/2901	Appui à l'identification d'une stratégie spécifique pour le développement des petites et moyennes exploitations agricoles (PMEA)	2004-01	2004-05	7,573	SNE
TCP/MOR/2905	Renforcement des capacités nationales pour les négociations commerciales sur l'agriculture	2003-06	2005-05	253,917	SNE
TCP/MOR/3005	Appui à l'identification d'une stratégie spécifique pour le développement des petites et moyennes exploitations agricoles (PMEA)	2004-10	2005-03	61,888	SNE
TCP/SYR/2909	Assistance to the Establishment of a National Food Insecurity and Vulnerability Information and Mapping Systems (FIVIMS)	2004-03	2005-12	327,393	RNE
TCP/SYR/3002	Capacity building in drought early warning system for rangelands	2004-09	2006-11	241,067	RNE
TCP/SYR/3101	Water Harvesting in the Southern Region of Syria	2007-09	2009-08	298,000	RNE

TCP/TUN/2901	Développement et réorganisation du secteur de la défense des cultures	2004-01	2005-03	29,594	SNE
TCP/TUN/2902	Contrôle de la Cératite par la technique des mâles stériles	2003-09	2005-06	165,217	SNE
TCP/TUN/2906	Assistance dans l'élaboration d'une stratégie spécifique de développement des petites et moyennes exploitations agricoles (PMEA)	2004-01	2005-03	244,000	SNE
TCP/TUN/3101	Appui à la mise en place de mécanismes de cogestion pour le développement durable des forêts tunisiennes	2008-05	2009-12	224,914	RNE
UTF /MAU/025/MAU	Assistance technique au projet protection des palmiers de l'Adrar	2001-06	2006-12	467,820	SNE
UTF /MOR/019/MOR	Ass Technique au Project de Gestion des Ressources en Eau	1999-08	2010-08	1,092,243	RNE
UTF /MOR/032/MOR	Assistance technique aux cellules de gestion du projet DRI-PMH	2005-03	2010-12	489,941	RNE
UTF /MOR/035/MOR	Assistance Technique au Conseil Général du Développement Agricole (CGDA)	2006-10	2009-12	46,405	SNE
UTF/EGY/021/EGY	Rural Development Communication Network in Egypt	2004-02	2008-03	1,541,442	RNE

Table 3. National projects operated and backstopped by RNE

Project Symbol	Project Title	EOD	NTE	Budget
TCP/ALG/2903	Renforcement des moyens de contrôle et d'analyse des pesticides	2003-10	2004-12	\$206,000
TCP/JOR/3001	National drought mitigation strategy	2005-08	2007-04	\$229,000
TCP/KUW/3001	Formulation of a medium-term programme for sustainable development of agriculture and fisheries	2004-06	2005-08	\$277,171
TCP/KUW/3002	Formulation of Unilateral Trust Fund (UTF) project proposals for establishing a centre on wastewater treatment and reuse in Kuwait and in other areas related to crop, livestock and fisheries	2004-06	2005-08	\$104,446
TCP/OMA/3001	Range Resource Information Monitoring and Evaluation in the Dhofar Region	2004-05	2006-04	\$364,699
UTF /SAU/011/SAU	Improvement of Irrigation Water Management in Saudi Arabia	2007-08	2011-12	\$3,464,040
UTF /SAU/012/SAU	Sustainable Development for Irrigated Agriculture in Al-Hassa	2007-07	2011-12	\$3,542,005
UTF /SAU/014/SAU	Support of the Rural Agricultural Institutions, Raising Productivity Efficiency and Diversifying Agricultural Activities of Small Scale Farmers in Rural Areas	2007-07	2011-12	\$3,480,987
UTF /SAU/017/SAU	Support to the Fish Farming Center, Jeddah, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia	2007-03	2011-12	\$3,627,885
UTF /SAU/021/SAU	Camel Breeding, Protection and Improvement Centre in Northern Region of the Kingdom	2007-07	2011-12	\$4,274,680
UTF /SAU/025/SAU	Capacity Building in Integrated Plant Health Management	2007-06	2011-12	\$3,599,504
UTF /SAU/033/SAU	Preservation and Improvement of Arabian Horse in its Homeland	2007-03	2011-12	\$2,674,710
UTF/OMA/005/OMA	Study on Policy Options and Alternatives for the Cultivation of Fodder Crops in Al-Batinah Region, Sultanate of Oman	2007-01	2009-06	\$211,116
UTF/OMA/006/OMA	Development of a National Agricultural Information Centre, Sultanate of Oman	2009-06	2010-12	\$253,071
UTF/SAU/031/SAU	Programme Coordination Unit	2007-03	2012-02	\$8,300,000
UTFN/SAU/008/SAU	Range and Animal Dev. Centre Al Jouf (Phase II and III) (Riyals & US\$ Account)	1999-02	2006-12	\$27,060,274
UTFN/SAU/010/SAU	Fish Farming Centre (Phase II and III) (Riyals & US\$ Account)	1987-01	2006-12	\$14,902,242

Annex 8. Assessment of a Sample of Regional and National Projects

1) TCP/RAB/2903: Support to CAEU for the formulation of a regional programme for Food Security

Original duration: 1 Mar 2003 – 29 Feb 2004
Actual duration: 1 Mar 2003 – 31 Dec 2004
Original budget: US\$ 220,897
Actual expenditure: US\$ 220,897

1. Background and justification

Ensuring national food security has been a common objective of the member countries of the Council for Arab Economic Unity (CAEU) for a number of reasons among them a rapidly growing population and increasing production constraints such as limited land and water resources. With assistance from FAO, several CAEU member countries (such as Egypt, Mauritania, Syria, Sudan and Yemen) had implemented the Special Programme for Food Security (SPFS) in the late nineties. In June 2002 the Secretary General of the CAEU visited FAO HQ to attend the “WFS: five years later” meeting and expressed interest in establishing a regional programme for Food Security with FAO support.

Moreover, seven CAEU member countries had launched the Arab Common Market. This required the harmonization of agricultural policies that would eventually lead to the formulation of a strategic framework for a common agricultural policy. However, the CAEU lacked an adequate mechanism and the capacity to coordinate and harmonize national agricultural policies in general and those pertaining to the successful implementation of the Arab Common Market in particular.

2. Project preparation and design

Following CAEU’s request, the Policy Assistance Branch of the Regional Office for the Near East (RNEP) was asked to formulate a project proposal in close collaboration with the CAEU Secretariat. The project aimed to assist the CAEU Secretariat and member countries in formulating a Regional Programme for Food Security (RPFS) that included regional and national components as well as strengthening their capacities to ensure a successful and sustainable implementation of the RPFS.

The overall project goal was to be achieved by:

1. Formulating the RPFS and a set of bankable development projects at country and regional levels for donor funding.
2. Strengthening the capacities for the CAEU Secretariat and member countries in: project/programme identification, formulation, appraisal, monitoring and evaluation; food standards and CODEX Alimentarius; and agricultural trade issues including WTO negotiations on agriculture, Euro-Med Free Trade Area and intra-regional trade.

To this end, the project was expected to achieve the following results:

1. A finalized and updated Regional Strategy for Agricultural Development and Food Security in the CAEU member countries.
2. A Regional Programme for Food Security (RPFS) for the CAEU member countries including a set of priority programme components/projects to implement the RPFS for submission to potential donors (particularly the Islamic Development Bank).
3. Strengthened capacity for
 - The CAEU technical staff and National Focal Points in project/programme identification, formulation, appraisal, monitoring and evaluation, especially activities related to the formulation of the RFPS and preparation of bankable projects for donors' support.
 - The CAEU Secretariat, National Focal Points and private sector/NGOs in technical aspects related to food standards and CODEX Alimentarius as well as agricultural trade issues including WTO negotiations on agriculture, Euro-Med Free Trade Area and intra-regional trade.

3. Implementation and results

RNE (particularly the Policy and the Food Safety Branches) was the LTO of the project with the HQ-based Investment Centre providing specific support for the development of bankable projects. A regional project coordinator was recruited to liaise with CAEU and the national focal points to ensure smooth project implementation. In terms of capacity building, separate workshops were organized to train CAEU technical staff, the national coordinators, representatives of the private sector and NGOs. Given the number of activities that needed to be carried out in order to obtain the expected results, the planned duration was certainly too short. The project was indeed extended for 10 months in order to finalize the activities envisaged.

According to the project's progress reports, a Food Security Strategy and a Working Plan for Food Security Strategy for CAEU member countries were produced in late 2004. The former was a strategy report highlighting historical and current performance of agriculture development and constraints to the performance in CAEU member countries. The latter proposed a set of regional and national bankable projects for donors' consideration. These documents were drawn from separate national reports prepared for Egypt, Jordan, Mauritania, Sudan and Syria. In addition, two training workshops were organized to enhance capacity of the CAEU Secretariat and national focal points from Egypt, Jordan, Mauritania, Sudan, Syria and Yemen in Codex Alimentarius and current agricultural trade issues and food security in CAEU's member countries.

4. Sustainability and follow up to the project

Discussion with CAEU Secretariat and stakeholders from participating countries suggested that this project lacked a sound resource mobilization strategy and adequate follow-up measures to ensure sustainable achievements. The mission was told that after the project ended, no further action beyond posting the project profiles on the CAEU website was taken to elicit potential donor interest in the projects. On this point, several stakeholders suggested that potential donors should have been involved in project

formulation and should probably have been involved earlier in the process by FAO and its partners in order to enhance the chances for substantive follow-up.

Criteria for project assessment	Score (from 1 = low to 5 = high)
Relevance	3
Project design	2
Efficiency of implementation	3
Effectiveness	1

2) TCP/RAB/2902: Management of the Peach Fruit Fly (*Bactrocera zonata*) in the Middle East and North Africa

Original duration: 1 Dec 2002 – 30 Nov 2004
 Actual duration: 1 Dec 2002 – 30 Nov 2004
 Original budget: US\$ 348,251

1. Background and justification

The Peach Fruit Fly (PFF) was till a few years ago considered exotic to the Middle East and North Africa. In South Asia, from where it originally comes, is known as a serious economic pest causing up to 30% damage under insecticide treatment and up to 100% losses without control. PFF was found in Egypt in the late nineties and quickly expanded to other countries in the region. By early 2000 the pest was well established in Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Oman, Iran, Yemen and possibly also in the Palestine territories. At that time further pest spread was deemed to be a potential threat to domestic and export fruit production markets. Following this and several discussions with organizations like IAEA (particularly with the Joint FAO/IAEA division) FAO was requested to provide technical assistance to limit the spread of PFF in the region.

2. Project preparation and design

The need for a regional project to particularly deal with PFF arose from the training of Egyptian authorities in the management of Indian Red Date Palm, Weevil and PFF in Cairo, 2000. Although Egypt was for long-time insisting to be free from the disease, it eventually accepted to become part of the regional initiative.

Given that expertise for this project was available at SNE, the project was technically backstopped by this office in close collaboration with national counterparts and staff at FAO Headquarters and in Cairo. The project was aimed at:

1. *Assisting the Ministries of Agriculture in Egypt, Iran, Saudi Arabia and Yemen to assess the current geographical distribution of the pest and eliminate its populations from specific areas.*
2. Assisting to identify and strengthen specific phytosanitary measures in order to prevent the introduction and spread of the pest to non-infested countries in the region.
3. Training government and industry personnel in surveillance and management techniques for PFF.

4. Training phytosanitary officers in Pest Risk Analysis to identify pathways for entry of PFF and management options for risk mitigation.
5. Reviewing and updating the phytosanitary legislation of participating countries to ensure that adequate legal frameworks were in place to support the achievement of project objectives.
6. Establishing national and regional vigilance (surveillance) systems.
7. Preparing emergency response capability to eliminate *Bactrocera zonata* outbreaks and prevent its establishment and spread in each country.

Upon completion, the project was expected to attain following outputs:

1. Strengthening national capacity to eliminate PFF from the Sinai Peninsula and control it in Egypt, Iran, Saudi Arabia and Yemen.
2. Setting up a vigilance (surveillance) and emergency response system in non-infected countries.
3. Training 13 persons in pest risk analysis for PFF.
4. Training plant protection officers in PFF surveillance, management emergency preparedness.
5. Strengthening phytosanitary services in the region.
6. Conducting national pest risk analysis for PFF to provide technical justification to decide the import of fruits or other commodities that may be pathways for the introduction of PFF.
7. Updating phytosanitary legislation in the countries.
8. Establishing systems to maintain pest free status in the region.

The project had a two-pronged approach: to strengthen capacities in affected countries while building up prevention systems in the non-affected countries. To ensure project sustainability, the project included industry personnel in training and national task forces. Due to funding constraints, the project did not cover the Palestinian territories, which were considered to be PFF infected.

3. Implementation and results

As per the project design, a regional coordinator appointed by FAO was in charge of overall project implementation whereas national coordinators were nominated to oversee project implementation in their respective countries. A task force was also established to address the issue at regional level. In order to facilitate sub-regional interactions the region was divided into two sub-regions: Middle East and North Africa. Jordan was the host country for the former sub-group, and the SNE office in Tunisia was in charge of the latter sub-group.

Main activities carried out through this project included:

1. The holding of two regional workshops on Peach Fruit Fly Management and Peach Fruit Fly Phytosanitary Control (total number of participants was 12 and 18 respectively).
2. The review of existing legislation on plant protection in Egypt, Jordan and Libya, aiming to evaluate its compliance to the International Plant Protection Convention

and determine if revisions were needed to make it an effective tool to support project implementation.

3. National training in PFF management and field demonstration of PFF monitoring were conducted in several countries such as Yemen, Saudi Arabia, Jordan, Lebanon, Syria and Sudan.

The project is considered to have provided timely information to help preventing a potential spread of the pest throughout the region. It trained national coordinators and technicians in PFF management and phytosanitary control as well as assisted the countries in organizing national training to enhance farmers' awareness. The project also raised awareness, and supported the establishment of early warning systems in non-infected countries and surveillance systems in infected countries.

4. Follow up to the project

Follow up activities are reportedly taking place in Egypt through an ongoing national IPM project implemented by the private sector, directed by the Egyptian Ministry of Agriculture and supported by the fruit industry. Other countries (Libya and Yemen) have apparently been less active in their follow-up.

Criteria for project assessment	Score (from 1 = low to 5 = high)
Relevance	5
Project design	3
Efficiency of implementation	3
Effectiveness	3

3) TCP/RAB/3002: Strengthening capacities for agricultural marketing adjustment to the changing national and international trade environments

Original duration: 1 Mar 2004 – 31 Dec 2005

Actual duration: 1 Mar 2004 – 31 Dec 2005

Original budget: US\$ 253,989

Actual expenditure: US\$ 253,989

1. Background and justification

Agricultural production in many countries in the Near East has not met the rapidly increasing demand for food in the region. The lack of orderly and efficient agricultural marketing systems has significantly affected efforts to improve agricultural production and improve food security through enhanced food availability and accessibility. Two major challenges facing the agricultural marketing system in the region have been policy related constraints and systematic constraints including poor infrastructure, limited technical knowledge, insufficient market information, unsatisfactory post-harvest handling and weak institutional set-ups. In addition, being exposed to rapid changes in national, regional and international trade and economic environment such as the implementation of macro economic structural reforms in several countries and the

impacts of World Trade Organization and free trade agreement, it has experienced an amorphous and erratic state.

As a result, potential opportunities to increase trade and agricultural production were not taken advantage of due to the lack of adopting appropriate marketing policies and insufficient capacity in terms of required institutions and manpower. Hence, there was an urgent need to restructure and orient the agricultural marketing system in order to adapt to new changes. This was mentioned in regional meetings including the regional conference for the Near East in Tehran, 2002.

2. Project preparation and design

The need for an improved marketing policy framework and better marketing practices for the member countries of Association of Food Marketing Agencies in the Near East and North Africa (AFMANENA)¹⁷ was identified by the AFMANENA countries and Secretariat. The marketing officer of the FAO Regional Office for the Near East (RNE) supported AFMANENA to formulate the project.

This project aimed to enhance the capacity of agricultural marketing institutions to introduce required marketing improvements that facilitated improved performance and adaptation to changing national and international trade environments.

The project goal covered three objectives:

1. Strengthening understanding and institutional capacities of the concerned public and private marketing institutions to adapt to changes in national and international trade environment.
2. Enabling member countries to better formulate and adopt required marketing policies and procedures in order to improve the performance of marketing institutions and enhance their flexibility to adapt to changes.
3. Training staff in improved performance and adaptability to changes.

Upon completion, the following results were expected:

1. Preparing an action plan for enhanced performance and adaptability of agricultural marketing institutions to economic changes.
2. Training 30 senior and middle-level management officers in private and public sectors in requirements for improved marketing performance and adaptability to change as well as strategies and programmes for export promotion.
3. Training 45 middle level management officers in marketing extension cum post-harvesting handling, marketing information and contract farming.
4. Training 400 national technical staff of member countries in marketing extension, contract farming, post-harvest handling, market information as well as marketing rules, regulations and legislation.
5. Producing and distributing technical documents, working papers and training materials.

¹⁷ Established in 1988 through encouragement and support from FAO, AFMANENA has an autonomous financial and administrative status. It is a voluntary, non-governmental and self help regional association for private, public and quasi-government agricultural food marketing institutions in the Near East and North Africa.

6. Producing and distributing compact discs comprising contract farming, market information, marketing extension, post-harvest handling and quality control and inspection.
7. Producing leaflets and brochures on effective post-harvesting handling methods for major horticultural crops.

3. Implementation and results

FAO in collaboration with AFMANENA implemented the project. Technical assistance was delivered by FAO headquarters. One officer of the Policy Assistance Branch of the FAO Regional Office for the Near East (RNE) acted as alternative lead technical officer, while another RNE technical officer sat on the project task force. The AFMANENA assisted in organizing seminars and training activities and facilitating communication with recipient countries to arrange project activities at the national level.

Following activities were carried out during project implementation:

1. Three training workshops were organized for technical officers and middle-level management in private and public marketing institutions of member countries. They focused on issues such as contract farming; marketing extension and transfer of post harvest technology; and export standards, inspection and food safety. A total of 63 people participated in these workshops.
2. The seminar jointly discussing WTO negotiation on agriculture and the impacts of economic reform and WTO on agricultural marketing systems in the Near East countries successfully addressed member countries' needs in strengthening their understanding and institutional capacities to adapt to the changing trade environment. Fifty three (53) participants from 15 countries attended this seminar.

It seemed that stakeholders highly appreciated the training workshops and seminars. Due to budget constraint, the organizing of national follow-up workshops entirely relied on financial resources in each country. As foreseen by project appraisal, no national follow-up workshop was reported to take place in the participating countries. Though being part of activities in the training programme, there was no information if brochures and compact discs on improved post-harvest handling and technology for major horticultural crops as well as manuals on agricultural marketing standards, inspections and management were prepared and distributed to the participants.

4. Follow up to the project

While the AFMANENA Secretariat showed a great interest in formulating a follow-up project based on the discussion and recommendations engendered by the seminars and workshops held by this project, budget constraints did not allow FAO at that time to provide further support to sustain projects achievements. The evaluation team was made aware that contacts with AFMANENA continue (proposals to form a 'Mediterranean Marketing Association' with FAO support were discussed as recently as May 2010) but was not given information on specific follow-up to project activities at national level.

Criteria for project assessment	Score (from 1 = low to 5 = high)
Relevance	3
Project design	3
Efficiency of implementation	2
Effectiveness	1

4) TCP/RAB/3004, Strengthening phytosanitary services in the Gulf Cooperation Council States.

Original duration: 1 August 2004 – 31 July 2005

Actual duration: 1 Nov 2004 – 31 Jan 2007

Original budget: US\$ 309,798

Actual expenditure: US\$ 309,798

1. Background and justification

Most of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) States are members of the World Trade Organization. They have been in the process of ratifying the International Plant Protection Convention (IPPC). This required harmonized and effective phytosanitary systems. Given this reasons, the GCC Secretariat officially requested technical assistance from FAO to review the current phytosanitary capacities of its member countries. The review would help them strengthen their national phytosanitary capacities for effective phytosanitary control and compliance with international treaties for phytosanitary measures. The results of this phytosanitary capacity evaluation were anticipated to assist the GCC States in formulating new projects (Unilateral Trust Fund or other types).

2. Project preparation and design

The formulation of this project was a joint collaboration between RNE and FAO Headquarters. The project addressed a critical need for strengthening phytosanitary capacity in the GCC States. It seemed that there was an inconsistency in implementation duration. While project activities were scheduled to complete in 24 months, the project proposal suggested only 12 months. Also, the GCC Secretariat reported a long incubation period for this project which ultimately had consequences on the relevance of some of the planned activities.

The project aimed to assist the GCC States in establishing effective national and regional phytosanitary control systems complying with the IPPC and supporting safe regional and international trade.

The project objective would be achieved by:

1. Completing the review of current phytosanitary capacities in each GCC State.
2. Preparing country specific development plan for further promotion and upgrade of plant quarantine capacities.
3. Assisting the GCC States in formulating phytosanitary related projects (Unilateral Trust Fund project or other types) to address priorities identified in (1).

4. Identifying potential technical collaborators for the establishment of adequate phytosanitary systems.
5. Advising on and initiating the establishment of an information exchange and management system for phytosanitary and trade data.
6. Reviewing available documented procedures to implement international standards for phytosanitary measures and identifying priorities to develop documented procedures for training and procedural harmonization.
7. Conducting training for senior staff in phytosanitary related issues.
8. Conducting training for inspectors in contemporary phytosanitary procedures.

3. Implementation and results

The project was implemented by FAO in close cooperation with the GCC Secretariat. The GCC Secretariat designated a Regional Project Coordinator who was responsible for establishing a Project Management Committee comprising National Project Coordinators and competent officers from National Plant Protection Organizations (NPPO) in the GCC States.

The actual implementation duration was 27 months compared with originally planned 12 months. A number of reasons attributed to the extension of project duration. First, the customization and installation of the information management system was slowed down due to trainees' insufficient proficiency in English and unanticipated needs to issue certificates in both Arabic and English. Second, the experience of procuring equipment for the information management system in UAE showed that a needs assessment should be conducted in Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman and Qatar to ensure that compatible and appropriate equipment was purchased for each country.

Tangible achievements were summarized as follows:

1. A functional system of information exchange and management called National Phytosanitary Database including pest status component was established in each country.
2. Over 110 NPPO officers from the GCC States participated in several workshops in pest risk analysis, international standards for phytosanitary measures and contemporary phytosanitary procedures. In addition, the project provided extensive training in information management system.
3. A documented system for undertaking phytosanitary was developed, e.g. a draft inspectors' manual was prepared in English and Arab; users' manuals, in hard and soft form, for certification and pest status records were distributed to each country; etc.
4. Equipment including a small business server and accessories and hand-held Global Positioning Systems was procured for the five countries.
5. A comprehensive needs assessment of phytosanitary capacity was conducted in Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar and United Arab Emirates¹⁸.

4. Follow up to the project

¹⁸ The phytosanitary capacity evaluation in Saudi Arabia was carried out by another project.

The project termination report made several recommendations to ensure project sustainability.

1. Recommendation 1: Due to the shortage of diagnostic specialists in the GCC States, it was urgently required that a well resourced regional centre to support the planning of pest surveys, diagnosis of pests and management of pest survey operations should be established in one of the GCC States.
2. Recommendation 2: To facilitate safe and free trade in plants and plant products, the GCC States should seek technical assistance from FAO to connect the information exchange system between them.
3. Recommendation 3: The NPPO senior managers in the GCC States should continue to use the phytosanitary capacity evaluation tool as part of the strategic planning process to re-assess needs on an annual basis and take appropriate actions.
4. Recommendation 4: Further technical assistance from FAO through regional and/or national UTF projects was needed for further development of phytosanitary capacity in the GCC states.

As reported, however, the results of phytosanitary capacity evaluation were not used by the countries to support new UTF projects, since each country seemed to have followed its own development plan to enhance phytosanitary capacity. This raised the issue of incorporating stakeholders as early as possible ie, in project formulation and monitoring as well as to timely replies to member country requests. The evaluation team was informed that it took too long for FAO to respond to the original project request so that by the time the TCP project was approved several countries had already developed their own plans.

Criteria for project assessment	Score (from 1 = low to 5 = high)
Relevance	3
Project design	3
Efficiency of implementation	2
Effectiveness	2

5) TCP/RAB/3003 (3/XII/RAB/065) Improving the training capacity of the Arab Institute for Forestry and Range

Original duration: 1 Apr 2004 – 31 Mar 2005
 Actual duration: 1 Sept 2004 – 31 Dec 2005
 Original budget: US\$ 177,803
 Actual expenditure: US\$ 177,803

1. Background and justification

Forest degradation has posed a major challenge to Arab countries in the Near East region. Recognizing this problem, the governments have had a strong desire to make extensive and sustained efforts and massive investments to halt the problem. Furthermore, taking into account of insufficient technical knowledge and specialized human resources in forestry sector, strengthening forestry and range education and

training was of importance and helped them address effectively the fragility and instability of ecosystem in the region.

Founded in 1954, the Arab Institute for Forestry and Range (AIFR), formerly called “The Near East Forest Ranger School”, has been placed under the management of the Arab Organization for Agricultural Development (AOAD) since 1972. It is responsible for providing technical education in forestry and range. Since its establishment, AIFR has undertaken two curriculum revisions. The former took place in 1980 – 1981. The latter added two new curricular, namely range (1996) and environment and biodiversity (2001). However, AIFR recognized that the training curriculum and teaching methodologies should be reshaped and updated in order to enable it to deal with changes in regional and worldwide forestry sector. As it lacked capacity and means to carry out this task, technical assistance from FAO was highly necessary to improve its training capacity.

2. Project preparation and design

The project was initially formulated by a consultant requested by the AIFR. Subsequently, FAO in close collaboration with the Director General of AOAD to review and revise the project design. It addressed technical gaps in forestry and range in the region through enhancing training capacity for AIFR. However, the project did not indicate clearly to which extent the AIFR teachers would be involved and trained.

This project aimed to strengthen the training capacities of AIFR by:

1. Improving teaching and education techniques of the lecturers.
2. Updating and enriching curricular to meet the current needs of AOAD by including recent policy development in forestry, range management, environment and biodiversity conservation.

The following outputs were expected by the end of the project:

1. Developing a new curriculum for AIFR;
2. Strengthening AIFR’s training capacity through the development of two new training modules, namely policies for conservation and development of forest and range sector and new technologies for the utilization of forest and range lands resources;
3. Developing an action plan for future development of AIFR.

3. Implementation and results

The AOAD, AIFR and the Ministry of Agriculture and Agrarian Reform of the Syrian Arab Republic jointly implemented this project. Though having been endorsed in early April, the implementation actually started in September. The project was mainly carried out through workshops and meetings that were conducted by regional and national consultants.

More than 60 participants from AOAD member countries including AIFR teaching staff and student representatives, forest and range academicians and project experts attended two workshops regarding the development of new curriculum for AIFR. The

former focused on testing and validating new approaches to the management of natural resources, especially forest and range resources. The latter dealt with policies for the conservation and development of forest and range resource and aimed to validate a new curriculum as well as a training module on forest and range policies legislation for AIFR. In addition, another workshop was held to define and present an action plan to enhance AIFR's training capacity. Subsequently, a task force meeting was held in December 2005 (Cairo, Egypt) to fine-tune the curriculum which resulted in significant changes to the curriculum.

Following achievements were reported at the closure of project:

1. A newly developed curriculum comprised 22 common courses for the first year and additional 6 courses for the first and second terms of the second year. Each specialization covered 10 courses. The total hours for each course used in the old curriculum were replaced by the number of credit hours.
2. Two training modules were developed, covering the usage of Geographic Information System in the management of forest and range policies and new approaches to formulate forest and range policies.
3. A master plan with mid-term and long-term activities for follow-up and future development of the AIFR was developed.

In general, the project attained the expected results. However, it was difficult to develop a curriculum that effectively met the needs of member countries due to the diverse demands in forestry and range between the countries. Technical levels in terms of training facilities in forestry greatly varied in these countries. While training facilities were sufficient in some countries, they did not exist in others. Moreover, countries tended to give more attention to the issues of regional concern rather than focusing on matters pertaining to national or sub-regional needs.

4. Follow up to the project

According to the project report, a draft time table and a budget of US\$600,000 were set to pursue issues and activities proposed in the master plan. Thus, it required efforts, commitments and follow-up activities to implement the plan for successful and sustainable development of AIFR. Conversations with project stakeholders informed that the proposal was submitted to several donors for funding, but in spite of the evaluation team follow-up no information was reported on whether further support actually materialized.

Criteria for project assessment	Score (from 1 = low to 5 = high)
Relevance	4
Project design	3
Efficiency of implementation	3
Effectiveness	2

SAUDI ARABIA

1) Improvement of Irrigation Water Management in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (extracted from the Evaluation of FAO's Work and Role in Water)

Project basic data

Symbol	UTF/SAU/011/SAU
Budget USD	3,964,040
Duration	August 2007 – August 2012

Background

1. Agro-ecologically, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA) is 40% desert and its water resources are very limited with renewable resources constituting a very small percentage of the total water withdrawals. Renewable resources are composed of groundwater recharge, spate flows, desalinated sea water, and treated waste water. Non-renewable groundwater resources are being depleted at alarming rates, and the agriculture sector is blamed for this depletion, as it consumes 88.3% of all water withdrawals in KSA.

2. Agriculture contributes very little to the GDP of KSA (about 4.2%) and most of it is dependent on irrigation. Irrigation is based mainly on underground water resources (86%) while the remaining 14% make use of water sources other than wells (dams, springs and others). Irrigation practices in KSA are very varied, from traditional surface irrigation systems to the modern ones such as center pivots and trickle irrigation. However, although the statistics show that modern irrigation technology is dominant (68%), the hydraulic performance of irrigation is very low in terms of efficiency. Modern systems are either poorly designed, poorly installed and operated.

3. Irrigators have a tendency to over-irrigate applying a lot more water than what would be required by the crops. Modern irrigation scheduling techniques are only used in few large corporate farms, under center pivots. Farm water management as well as good operation of collective irrigation distribution systems are lacking in KSA.

4. The main challenge now facing the KSA is how to get the water consumption by the irrigation sector reduced. Obviously, this has to go through demand management mechanisms, chief among them being the improvement of irrigation water management. Despite all these concerns, the KSA is encouraging diversification into agriculture as a way of reducing dependence on fossil fuel for driving economic growth and development.

5. Water insecurity on the medium and long range is evident and calls for a reform of agriculture policies and of the water resources sector, through adequate planning and management of the available resources from both supply and demand side. KSA, in collaboration with the WB is re-organising the water sector and has created a Ministry of Water & Electricity (MoWE) as well as the removal of various subsidies that encouraged excessive water use.

6. The water sector faces the following issues and challenges: high water consumption; limited wastewater reuse; high agricultural water use; unsustainable groundwater extraction; focus on water supply rather than demand management; weak regulations and enforcement; highly subsidized sector representing a high fiscal burden; inadequate human capacity to deal with the challenge; and lack of adequate and reliable data on both the resources and the demands or uses, and implications for planning.

7. In this context, the major issues facing irrigation in KSA are:
- non-adapted policies on water use and non-enforcement of the existing regulatory framework;
 - the absence of a comprehensive strategy on irrigation;
 - the lack of updated data and information about irrigation practices and of a database system;

- d. poor management of water use in agriculture, especially at the farm level, and where private pumping is practiced; and
- e. low resources and capacity to manage irrigated agriculture.

Relevance

8. The main objective of the project was to achieve sustainable irrigation water use through the rational, efficient and effective planning and management of irrigation water, with due consideration to preserving the current irrigated area, balancing water supply and demand and promoting the productivity of water use. The specific objectives of the project were to:

- i. Develop the national capacity to use demand management as a means for better balancing supply and demand for irrigation water;
- ii. Promote the sustainability, cost-effectiveness and competitiveness of irrigated agriculture; and
- iii. Develop knowledge for improved management of treated waste water in irrigated agriculture.

9. The project was to be funded by the the KSA to the tune of USD 3,964,040 dollars over a 5 year period, under the 2006–2011 framework of the Technical Cooperation Agreement between FAO and KSA, and to start January 2007. In reality the project only started in September 2007 with the recruitment of a fulltime CTA. Also, project budget was reduced by 25% when the project started.

10. FAO has been involved in previous UTF projects with KSA over the last 15-20 years; FAO is also assumed to enable access to worldwide updated and adapted technology and human resources at competitive costs. FAO's knowledge and experience is considered one of the best and the focus on food and agriculture merges very well with the MoA activities in KSA. In addition, FAO also has a worldwide presence.

11. The project is very relevant to the needs of KSA given the problems the country is facing regarding management of water resources in agriculture and the attempt to improve efficiency of water use and its productivity. A focus on improved water use is very important given the alarming rates of abstraction of fossil groundwater for irrigation. The project is comprehensive in that it attempts to address all the issues at various levels, from field level up to policy guidance.

12. At the field level some of the work conducted by the project tackles aspects of crop and irrigation water requirements leading on to the selection of crops best suited to various regions of KSA, irrigation scheduling studies intended to improve on-farm water management, evaluation of system performance to get a baseline of the current performance and hence the potential for improvement, and technology testing to assist farmers in migrating from inefficient surface methods to more efficient drip and localised irrigation technologies.

13. At the intermediate level, attention to capacity building was also an important aspect given that KSA has financial resources but no capacity to implement good on-farm water management. A significant proportion of water management activities, including monitoring pumping groundwater rates, irrigation scheduling, system evaluation, etc., require capacitated human resources. This aspect was proven or established quite soon after the beginning of the project when it was found that there was limited available competences on the ground. Subsequent revisions or adjustments of the project took this into account and made capacity development a key output area.

14. At the policy level, data and information generated by the project will be used to guide policy in MoA and MoWE. For example, once the crop and irrigation water requirements of the various crops will be mapped by the project, recommendations will be made to guide the government on suitable cropping patterns for the different regions in KSA.

15. In the 1st backstopping report of January 2008, it is interesting to note the following being reported "...informed the meeting that H.E. the Minister of Agriculture had read the project document and found it very relevant (emphasis added) to the needs of both the Ministry and the agriculture sector. H.E. the Minister recommended hastening the elaboration of a national irrigation

strategy instead of waiting until the end of the project as planned in the project document. The other priority recommended by H.E. the Minister concerns the determination of water requirements figures for all major crops practiced in the country, to be used when enacting and implementing the new policies. Assessment of reasonable water requirements is also an expected output of the project". This is an indication that the authorities in KSA found the project to be relevant to the water problems they were facing.

Design

16. The way the UTF was designed was quite good and comprehensive. It is apparent that an effort was made to fully understand the water issues bedeviling KSA and come up with a project that would try and address these as much as possible. Effective planning would be achieved through the capacity building of staff in MoA institutions involved in irrigation, with regards to their skills and strategic vision, and by bridging gaps on information and data. Efficient and effective management of irrigation water was to be achieved through the implementation of field programs in pilot projects in three regions, to demonstrate the use of improved irrigation techniques and management methods by using less water for irrigation and increasing water productivity.

17. Project documentation seems to suggest that there was wide consultation during formulation of the project; inputs from a wide range of experts were also envisaged during implementation. These consultations allowed the project to capture the essence of the key issues.

18. The project has several intermediate results, with sub-objectives, activities and outputs, namely:

- The knowledge base on irrigation practices is created,
- The institutional capacity of MOA to manage irrigation water is developed,
- Treated Waste Water (TWW) use and management around Riyadh is improved,
- Modern on-farm water management is demonstrated in Domat Al Jandal and Najran,
- Off farm water management is improved in Domat Al Jandal and Najran, and
- Irrigation advisory services and extension are provided to the farmers.

19. To ensure that the above results would be achieved, the project proposed the following key inputs funded by KSA through FAO:

- A CTA who would be responsible for all FAO activities and inputs in the project;
- International and national consultants to cover the various technical areas (e.g., hydrology, irrigation design, crop water requirements, agronomy, environment, waste water, soil science, etc)
- Backstopping technical support and supervisory services from RNE in Cairo (TS&SS)
- Expendable and non-expendable equipment,
- International and local training, and
- Support staff and staff travel.

20. The design envisaged project management being driven by the CTA on FAO side and a National Project Director (NPD) for the KSA side of the project budget, in liaison with the resident project coordinator (PC).

21. The project was designed in phases: Phase I with a duration of 1 year, mainly preparatory work), Phase II with a duration of 3 years, mainly all the key activities of the project and, lastly, Phase III for 1 year mainly for dissemination of results.

22. The down-side of a comprehensively designed project is that sometimes it becomes too big, has too many activities and outputs that may end up being unachievable. Some aspects of this are revealed in the results and implementation sections.

Implementation

23. As established during country visits, the project did not start on time due to the delays in the recruitment of the CTA. Effectively the project was delayed to September 1, 2007 (instead of January 1, 2007). This meant that all project activities were delayed as well.

24. By January 2008, a good number of the Phase I activities had been implemented. Mainly: the recruitment of the CTA, identification and nomination of the local NPD within the General Administration of Irrigation Affairs (GAIA) in the MoA, embedding the project within MoA and establishing links with MoWE, securing office space, acquisition of office equipment, networking with local institutions and potential consultants, reviewing and updating the project document and the project work plans, preparing and holding the inception workshop, and writing the inception report. Later, project implementation slowed down significantly.

25. During the country visit, a number of problems were highlighted regarding project implementation. One of these was that it took time to find dedicated and properly qualified local counterparts for the project. This was mainly due to the structure of the MoA and the housing of irrigation therein. The structure (organogram) has the Director General of GAIA at the top and directly below there are the two units of Irrigation Technology and that of Drainage, and below these there is the National Irrigation Administration (NIA) and also Irrigation and Drainage Projects (I&DP). The organization was very thin on human resources, and some of the incumbents had no adequate background in the discipline of irrigation. This is mainly due to the national system of appointment, through which middle and high level officials can take up professional positions outside their area of expertise.

26. Thus, the general shortage of staff in the GAIA to do most of the project work, affected project implementation: the project had no staff except the CTA and NPD, and the few people in place had no experience in irrigation. The project decided to focus more strongly on capacity development, as this was one of the expected outcomes of the project anyway.

27. By the 2nd backstopping visit of February 2009, the project implementation had made some progress, but overall was still lagging somewhat behind schedule. The set of problems encountered included: the inability to raise or identify willing consultants at the local level to work on some aspects of the project; poor quality of work by some consultants; lack of competent local staff to work alongside international consultants; unrealistic bids by consultants; and the reluctance and lack of interest by local consultants to work on field activities the project. Despite all these problems, project implementation was recorded as satisfactory taking into account what had been achieved to date.

28. Due to the problems associated with getting adequately competent and committed staff at the local level, the project has since agreed to engage an international consultant at the P3 level to work on a number of the tasks that are lagging behind. This international consultant was due to start in Riyadh on 1st October 2009, after the Evaluation mission.

Results/Effects

29. The project was still on-going at the time of the Evaluation. A number of outputs had been produced:

- the assessment of the irrigation technologies in use in KSA had been completed;
- key water use efficiency problems have been identified;
- some work on crop water requirements has been completed, although the quality of work required some improvements;
- preparations were at an advanced stage for the national irrigation strategy, although behind schedule;
- some data on crop water use had been collected;
- national research centres to conduct some of the research work had been identified; and

- some in country training as well as study abroad tours for local staff had been undertaken; these are discussed in detail later on in the report.

30. Other field activities included the design of irrigation field demonstration in Najran and Domat Al Jandal in October-November 2008, the design of field demonstrations in Riyadh with emphasis on treated wastewater in November-December 2008. Various documents and reports had been produced.

Sustainability and Impact

31. Despite the problems associated with scarce national human resources, which has affected the project implementation schedule, the prospects of sustainability seem good, because the KSA staff involved are fulltime employees of the government of KSA and are likely to remain in place for a long time to come. All the staff who have undergone training are nationals. Additionally, unlike many places where FAO is involved through TCP projects, KSA is well resourced and thus is in a position to fund continued activities in these areas of concern in water.

32. The project seems to have had some impact and is quite visible in and around Riyadh. From lower level KSA officers all the way to the minister of agriculture, all are acknowledging the importance and relevance of this UTF project to water issues in KSA. The buy-in obtained from the interested minister of agriculture is expected to give good payback through continued and sustained work in this area.

Effectiveness of Capacity Building

33. The project has a focus on capacity building. It has achieved reasonable outputs in terms of trained staff in the various ministries on KSA and other partners. As of early 2009, the following training and capacity building activities had taken place:

- Lysimeters and Irrigation Research: joint activity with UTF/SAU/015/SAU, benefited the following projects UTF/SAU/011/SAU, UTF/SAU/012/SAU, UTF/SAU/015/SAU, UTF/SAU/016/SAU, UTF/SAU/018/SAU, and UTF/SAU/019/SAU through excellent cooperation and organization. Training was 4 days long (22-25 Mar 2008) in Al Hassa.
- Design of Sprinkler Irrigation Systems: benefited UTF/SAU/011/SAU, UTF/SAU/012/SAU, UTF/SAU/015/SAU, UTF/SAU/016/SAU, UTF/SAU/019/SAU; training duration was 5 days (7-11 June 2008), in Riyadh.
- Study tour to Morocco: Lysimeters, irrigation research and management, for 10 participants for 2 weeks (29 June – 14 July 2008). Beneficiary participants were from UTF/SAU/011/SAU, UTF/SAU/012/SAU, UTF/SAU/015/SAU, UTF/SAU/016/SAU, UTF/SAU/018/SAU and UTF/SAU/019/SAU.

34. Capacity building is still on-going. The projects and KSA are yet to fully benefit from the training that has taken place so far. The prospects for such benefits seem good.

35. It is of interest to delve a little more into the capacity building activities. Initially the training envisaged included long term, e.g. MSc studies, and short term training, e.g., 1-2 weeks duration or conferences. For the long term training, disappointingly, no national candidates were identified: that component of the training program was changed to include short term trainings such as laboratory work, lysimeter training, etc, ranging from 2 – 6 months.

36. The original short term training were undertaken and included: irrigation design and management, monitoring and evaluation of irrigation systems, improvement of drip irrigation systems, computers in irrigation, and irrigation scheduling. MoA and MoWE staff also went on study tours to Spain, for senior staff to study automated irrigation; to Italy, for senior staff for large scale irrigation with automated hydrants; and to Morocco for lysimeter and research management. More study tours are planned to Morocco on IWRM, to Cyprus on irrigation advisory services and to California on irrigation districts.

37. What is missing is the training of farmers, but that is not explicitly stated in the project objectives and outcomes.

Effectiveness of Partnerships

38. The project has established a wide range of partnerships that include departments in various KSA government ministries (especially MoA and MoWE), other UTF projects (specifically UTF/SAU/012/SAU, UTF/SAU/014/SAU, UTF/SAU/015/SAU, UTF/SAU/016/SAU, UTF/SAU/018/SAU and UTF/SAU/019/SAU), private consultants, researchers from the universities of KSU and KFU, research stations in KSA (specifically the Mango Research Centre, the Citrus Research Centre in Najran, the Date Palm Research Centre in Al Hassa, and the Olive Production Research Centre in Al Diouf), private companies interested participating in irrigation demonstration and related activities.

39. One important partnership is missing with the Desert Research Centre in Aleppo¹⁹, Syria. The Evaluation considers that the project should link with this centre since they both work on crop production under desert conditions.

Effectiveness of Participation

40. Just as is the case with partnership, the Evaluation’s findings indicate that there has been fairly effective participation in the project. There is a lot of complementarity in activities between various projects related to UTF/SAU/011/SAU as indicated in the training given above. At the inception workshop there were 44 participants from various ministries and department, the local universities, FAO and others.

41. What was not evident to the Evaluation was the participation of farmers in a lot of the work taking place. Admittedly, most of the work is taking place at demo plots at research stations and the Evaluation had not enough time to explore this issue in detail.

Gender Equality and Social Inclusion

42. There is no evidence of gender issues being taken into consideration. No women were part of the staff trained as part of the capacity development activities. It was only indicated that where water is distributed, e.g. TWW, any farmer (male or female) who is entitled to such water will have access to it.

43. The Evaluation is aware that in KSA, gender seclusion makes it impossible for women to take part in capacity building activities, thus these criteria cannot be applied fully in the case of these projects.

2) Sustainable Development for Irrigated Agriculture in Al-Hassa, UTF/SAU/012/SAU

(extracted from the Evaluation of FAO’s Work and Role in Water)

Project basic data

Symbol	UTF/SAU/012/SAU
Budget USD	4,042,010
Duration	July 2007 – July 2012

Background

44. The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA) is a desert country where the overall water resource potential is limited and non-renewable. The total water supply in the Kingdom in 1999 was 20 billion cubic-meters, the bulk of which came from non-renewable groundwater (80%), with desalination and reclaimed wastewater accounting for 6% and renewable surface runoff and groundwater accounting

¹⁹ Some of the work for the AquaCrop model was done by researchers in Aleppo.

for the remaining 14%. Of the total area under agricultural production, about 1.2 million hectares are under irrigation.

45. The Al-Hassa Oasis, the largest one block irrigated area in the KSA, is suffering from rapidly deteriorating irrigation conditions. The cultivated area of Al-Hassa Oasis is about 16,000 hectares, out of which 7,800 hectares are irrigated agriculture. Total number of farm holdings is approximately 23,000, with an average cultivate area of 3390 m². The Al-Hassa Irrigation and Drainage Authority (HIDA) has full control of the water irrigating an area of about 3,300 hectares, while the remaining area (ca. 4,500 hectares) is irrigated by privately owned wells. Until recently, dates constituted the main agricultural production (more than 80%) in addition to forage or animal feed, fruit trees and other commodities.

46. The Al-Hassa Irrigation and Drainage Authority (HIDA) is a public authority under the Ministry of Agriculture (MoA), providing support for irrigation and a variety of agricultural services to a large number of farms in Al-Hassa. The Authority operates the wells, maintains the water irrigation and drainage networks, in addition to which it provides a wide variety of other services to farmers free of charge, such as: extension, provision of seedlings, disposal of old plantations, land preparation, etc.

47. In addition, HIDA is responsible for the agricultural improvement and development projects in Al-Qatif and Al-Aflaj. HIDA had also established a date packing factory to support farmers in selling and marketing their products. HIDA comprises a staff of around 1500, out of which 400 deal with irrigation water control and distribution and consists of four main technical departments, three projects, a date packing factory, financial and administrative departments and the planning and evaluation section. The four main technical departments are the Irrigation Department, Extension Services Department, Engineering Department, and the General Maintenance Department.

48. The current situation of water resources in Al-Hassa is critical, as demands increase while supply is limited. Studies in the 1970's showed that the safe yield from the aquifer feeding groundwater in Al-Hassa is about 10m³ per second. However, the ever increasing demand for water for different purposes reached up to ca. 15m³ per second in 2002, and led to a considerable drop in the groundwater table (40 to 60 meters) as well as deterioration in water quality. The current concentration of total dissolved solids (TDS) of pumped groundwater is about 1750 ppm.

49. The above situation shows that groundwater is not reliable for sustainable developments in Al-Hassa, and justifies actions to allocate additional new sources of water to reduce demands from irrigation water and to protect existing resources. In facing this challenge, HIDA is already planning to receive and utilize significant amounts of treated wastewater (up to 530,000m³ per day) from several wastewater treatment plants in the near future (2010). These amounts will cover irrigation water requirements for the whole Al-Hassa area and will allow groundwater to be considered as a spare resource (to be used in emergencies).

Project objectives

50. The project was a product of two previously proposed projects by HIDA in Al-Hassa: one on the use of non-conventional water resources, and the other on agricultural irrigation water management in general. However, due to a limited budget, the MoA had agreed to finance the current project entitled "Sustainable Development for Irrigated Agriculture in Al-Hassa" also covering the second component.

51. The development objective of UTF/SAU/12/SAU was to assist HIDA to achieve sustainable development for its irrigated agriculture. The long-term objective was to strengthen and build HIDA's capacity for managing irrigation water demands. The four immediate objectives were: (a) Reduce demands on irrigation water; (b) Facilitate and improve irrigation management; (c) Reduce salt build-up; and (d) Achieve higher professional performance.

52. The project funded within the 2006–2011 Framework of the Technical Cooperation Agreement between FAO and KSA and was to start in January 2007 with an estimated budget of USD 4,042,010. MoA was the responsible agency for its implementation. However, it started later than planned, in August 2007, due to various delays.

53. When the project was initially conceptualized it was going to tackle specific problems that existed in Al-Hassa regarding groundwater mining and operational inefficiencies of the HIDA. However, by the time the project commenced, conditions on the ground had changed and the KSA had introduced some new policies on water use. A full assessment of water issues in the Al-Hassa Oasis was conducted to lead to the final project design, which adapted to these new changes and put forward a revised set of objectives and expected outcomes.

54. The revised project objectives are: i) improve the whole framework of water quality monitoring in HIDA; ii) Reduce demands on irrigation water; iii) develop knowledge for improved management of wastewater & drainage water reuse; iv) facilitate and improve irrigation management; v) reduce salt build-up; and vi) achieve higher professional performance.

55. The project is expected to achieve the following outcomes: a) water savings and reduced demands on water consumption for irrigation; b) easy operations and efficient control of the water distribution system; c) establishment of a water quality monitoring and management system; d) less salinity problems and increased soil fertility; e) high institutional and technical performance in HIDA including the use of information technology and GIS; f) at least one active water user group (association) is formed and can participate in water distribution effectively; and g) high awareness regarding water conservation.

Relevance

56. The project is considered very relevant as it set out to address real problems in Al-Hassa and within the HIDA organisation. The expected outcomes were, among other issues, a decrease in the demand on irrigation water, use of treated wastewater (TWW) for irrigation to conserve groundwater, and improve the capacity for water quality monitoring. The operationalisation of the project through FAO was well within the Framework of the Technical Cooperation Agreement between FAO and KSA.

57. FAO had comparative advantage as the executing agency, based on its leadership for management and development of irrigated agriculture, its experience over the past forty years in this area of work and the due consideration it gives to scientific and technological developments, the related costs and adaptability to local conditions, without bias.

Project Design

58. Project design was adequate to address the issues that existed in the Al-Hassa Oasis and within the HIDA. However, the project design considered most of the existing problems regarding water use, and did not give adequate attention to issues associated with availability and capacity of human resources. This led to some delays and problems during the implementation phase.

59. Project design included the essential elements for ensuring sustainability of results included, namely: continuous support for the extension programs, innovative incentives to save water and encourage farmer participation; support from MoA to implement proposed actions aiming at water savings and solving soil salinity problems; a fully functional information system (in terms of updating, analysis and dissemination); and continuous training and capacity building.

Implementation

60. As indicated, project start-up was delayed from January 2007 to August 2007. This was due to problems related to getting all required staff into place, including the Chief Technical Advisor and National Project Director. The NPD was appointed in July 2007, and the Project Steering Committee only came into existence in December 2007. Surprisingly, despite the late start, the project implementation picked up its pace quickly. By the time the inception report was prepared (June 2008), a number of activities had been implemented, including:

- Establishing working arrangements (setting-up and equipping the project premises and procuring the necessary equipment);

- Arranging meetings with HIDA management and staff to create awareness about the project and its implementation arrangements;
 - Inception Workshop attended by 25 participants from HIDA, King Faisal University, and the Water Studies Centre. The event was based on a presentation of the project scope, objectives and activities made by the project CTA and subsequent discussion by participants;
 - Fielding of the GIS-IT Local Consultant;
 - Review and updating of the project document;
 - Fielding of Soil and Drainage International Consultant;
 - Establishment of the GIS unit: most of the necessary equipment and software was procured (incl. workstation, server, plotter& scanner, GPS equipment, satellite images, GIS software, and GPS software); and
 - Arranging a study tour for six trainees from HIDA laboratories to the High Institute of Public Health, Alexandria University, Egypt. This program aims at improving the performance of the trainees in the field of physical, chemical, and biological wastewater analyses.
61. Outcomes of the inception workshop that had implications on future project activities included:
- the need for the project to focus on increasing water productivity in Al-Hassa as the main output;
 - the importance of taking into consideration the relevant research activities conducted by university and research centres in Al-Hassa;
 - the need to relax the KSA standards on wastewater reuse based on the new WHO-FAO-UNEP guidelines;
 - the need to assess the performance of the drainage system installed in Al-Hassa, and
 - the important role of the Project Steering Committee in supervising and guiding the project.
62. By the time of the Mid-term progress Review (September 2009), more project activities had been undertaken in line with the stated objectives. Significant progress had been made towards meeting these objectives. Some of the most relevant aspects will be integrated in the sections that follow, e.g. results and capacity building.

Results/Effects

63. According to the Mid-term Review, results achieved included some of the following:

Objective 1 – Improve framework of water quality monitoring:

- Fielding of local and international GIS-IT consultants
- Establishment of the GIS Unit
- Formulation of an information system group – 6 HIDA staff were identified to run the GIS tasks under the supervision of the FAO GIS consultant
- Digitisation of all irrigation and drainage network maps
- Establishing of 4 GIS layers (out of 6) of the irrigation and drainage networks
- Preparation of GIS maps for the location of 100 observation wells
- Conversion of old soils map into GIS format
- Update of data on non-conventional water resources in Al-Hassa

Objective 2 – Reduce demands on irrigation water:

- Fielding (3 missions) of international irrigation consultant
- Analysis of crop water requirements
- Definition of weaknesses and opportunities for improvements to save and allocate water adequately and compare options

Objective 3 – Develop knowledge for improve management of wastewater and drainage water reuse:

- Fielding (3 missions) of soil and drainage international consultant
- Update of data on quantities of agricultural drainage water (ADW) reused in HIDA in 2007 & 2008 as well as an assessment of the sustainability of this non-conventional water resource
- Identification of the most suitable treatment process for HIDA
- Preparation of detailed specifications and tender documents for the ADW treatment plant
- Introduction of a simple and practical way to measure and monitor rootzone soil salinity using the SoluSampler®
- Update and upgrade of the soil map to GIS

64. Results varied and depended on the activity undertaken. Work completed by the project is already producing applicable results, for example, the appropriate blending ratio of TWW, ADW and groundwater for crop irrigation. Overall the progress made is rated quite well.

Sustainability and Impact

65. One of the main factors supporting the high prospect for sustainability is the total involvement of local staff in the activities. All training activities benefited local people who were already employed by the government of KSA. The newly developed water quality monitoring laboratories, the tools for monitoring soil salinity, and the approaches for monitoring pumped boreholes are all staffed by nationals.

66. Therefore upon project completion, as long as resources are available, work should continue. Any savings in groundwater achieved by using TWW and ADW will be to the benefit of the Al-Hassa Oasis and environmental sustainability.

Effectiveness of Capacity Building

67. The project has undertaken a significant amount of training and capacity building of local manpower in both government and local institutions, such as universities. Training activities are categorised as external and internal.

68. External training undertaken by August 2009 included:

- Training on physical, chemical and biological analyses of wastewater. This training was conducted in Egypt over a 3 week period March/April 2008. Six HIDA staff members benefitted from this training.
- GIS training held in Hanover, Germany in February 2009. Six HIDA staff from the GIS unit benefitted from this training
- Internal short-term training undertaken by the project comprised:
 - The use of GPS – held at HIDA in March/April 2009 for six HIDA members from the GIS unit
 - Sustainable salinity management in Al-Hassa irrigated date palm orchards – held in November 2008 at HIDA for 16 trainees from KFU, HIDA and the Palm and Date Research Centre
 - Introduction to GIS – held at HIDA in January 2009 benefitting 13 trainees from HIDA and Saudi Electricity Company
 - Basic crop water requirements and irrigation scheduling – held at HIDA in August 2009 for 15 trainees from HIDA, Directorate of Irrigation, Horticultural Development Centre, National Date Palm Research Centre, Directorate of Agriculture, and Al-Qateef Agricultural Development Project
 - Professional use of EM38 and mapping of soil characteristics – held at HIDA Headquarters in August 2009 for 2 weeks for 19 trainees from HIDA and the research centres

69. Training activities are still on-going. The project appears to be on track with training programs, which are benefitting HIDA employees and some of their partners in KSA. FAO played a key role in all of the training, either directly or through the consultants that offered the training

services. The project utilised some of the top experts in the various fields, e.g. salinity, crop water requirement and GIS. The project is commended for the quality of its training programs

Effectiveness of partnerships

70. Information available seems to indicate a good level of partnerships with local institutions, government departments, universities (KFU). The partnership between the local institutions, HIDA and FAO are good.

71. The project also is working in close collaboration with the other UTF projects (UTF/SAU/011/SAU, UTF/SAU/015/SAU, UTF/SAU/016/SAU, UTF/SAU/018/SAU, UTF/SAU/019/SAU) in an attempt to find synergies and an effective utilisation of limited resources, e.g., in training activities.

Effectiveness of Participation

72. All the HIDA staff involved in the project seem committed and after training were said to take pride in their tasks, e.g., in the HIDA water quality monitoring laboratories. However, it may be too early to tell as the project is still on-going. For those involved in the project, there is a fair level of participation.

73. Although no farmers were met during the evaluation mission, indications were made that the various project components interacted with farmers.

Gender Equality and Social Inclusion

74. There is no evidence of gender issues being taken into consideration. No women were part of the staff trained as part of the capacity development activities. Neither was attention given visibly to issues of social inclusion.

75. The Evaluation is aware that in KSA, gender seclusion makes it impossible for women to take part in capacity building activities, thus these criteria cannot be applied fully in the case of these projects.

Project symbol	Project Objectives	Outputs
3) UTF /EGY/021/EGY	<p>1. Develop a sustainable operational dynamic information and communication system that would respond to the needs of stakeholders, including resource-poor communities;</p> <p>2. Identify 50 resource-poor communities and enable them to participate in RADCON activities and benefit from its knowledge and information resources; and</p> <p>3. Develop an innovative media communication programme to increase the benefits of RADCON.</p> <p>Overall, farm families and their communities benefit from an information system, which is operated by agricultural extension in collaboration with researchers.</p>	<p>- Development of information and communication system.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <u>Virtual and Extension Communication Network (VERCON) management structure:</u> the system was established and came into operation. Activities carried out were: redefining VERCON management structure, undertaking stakeholder analysis, setting up a management and execution (ME) unit and an accounts section, establishing financial control and a business plan, selecting units/centres of extension and research, identifying needs, preparing tenders, employing and training staff for the management unit and monitoring RADCON activities. ▪ <u>Development and implementation of training plan:</u> three main activities carried out: 1) the establishment of training plan was completed in March 2007: organised 3 training courses and 12 follow-up workshops; 2) the implementation of training plan was completed in March 2008: trained 804 participants; and 3) the evaluation of training was completed in March 2008: the participants felt that training subjects were practical, helpful and relevant to their work. ▪ <u>Installation and operation of infrastructure:</u> 235 computers, 178 printers, 114 digital cameras, 2 video cameras and a digital photocopier were purchased and distributed. ▪ <u>RADCON information system development:</u> carried out three activities which were the identification of content and system specifications, system development and content development. <p>- Community identification and enablement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <u>Community selection:</u> selected 50 villages to participate in RADCON activities; and trained 150 selected focal persons. ▪ <u>Knowledge management and exchange:</u> refer to the "Terminal report" for detailed information. <p>- Media communication programme:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ A plan for three-month cycle of television and radio programmes was developed, comprising 24 episodes and would be produced by the DSCC in close cooperation with TV Ch6 and MDRS. ▪ 12 radio and 12 television episodes were produced and broadcasted, including drama, interviews, documentation and demonstration; ▪ The number of rural people who visited their village communication point to hear or watch the recorded programmes was 221 in Kafr El-Shiekh, 97 in Ismaillia, and 83 in Daquahlia, while 128 of the visitors asked to borrow the recorded CD-ROMs; ▪ The Information and Communication for Development unit coordinated with CAES to convert its video production into digital format, summarize and upload it to RADCON's multimedia online system.

Project symbol	Project Objectives	Outputs
4) TCP/EGY/ 3001	Strengthen the capacity of the Agricultural Research Centre (ARC) of the Ministry of Agriculture and Land Reclamation to develop, manage and apply a relevant and effective national agricultural information management system in support of agricultural development and food security policies.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Institutional arrangements: prepared_strategy for agricultural information management compliant with the National Agricultural Development Policy (2002-2007) and the National Information and Communications Technology (ICT) Strategy. - Staffing and training: 111 decision makers and researchers attended training in the use of modern information technologies and the use of specific system modules; 50 specialized staff members attended training in document indexing and cataloguing, and the use of the Arabic AGRIS application profile. - Facilities and equipment: the project contributed a server dedicated to system development, a firewall to protect the network servers, a network intrusion detection system, four additional workstations and a scanner. - Information products: five structurally-linked NARIMS modules, which were Institutes and laboratories, researchers, projects, publications and 5-year plan, were accessible through the bilingual (English/Arabic) ARC Web site (http://www.arc.sci.eg/).

Project symbol	Technical area	Project Objectives	Activities	Outputs
5) TCP/SYR/ 3101	Land and water	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Establish pilot water harvesting schemes for agricultural production, with the participation and contribution of beneficiary farmers, to be used for demonstration and training purposes. 2. Develop and implement a training program on water harvesting technology for building the capacity of the Ministry of Agriculture and Agrarian Reform and farmers 3. Elaborate a strategy for the development of water harvesting in the project region, to serve as input in the regional water resources strategy and pilot for other regions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Undertake an assessment of current practices of water resources management in the project area, including water harvesting; - Identify technical and socio-economical factors to be adopted as selection criteria for water harvesting systems and participating farms. - Identify participating farms and establish cooperation mechanisms between relevant public institutions and these farms, - Design water harvesting schemes for installation in participating farms; - Conduct first training for technicians and farmers; - Install water harvesting schemes in farms; - Purchase and install equipment for monitoring water harvesting and its use, including low-cost localized irrigation; - Elaborate monitoring program and launch its implementation; - Conduct field days for farmers; - Conduct second training for technicians & farmers; - Formulate a draft strategy for the development of water harvesting in the Southern Region, based on the project experience, to be used as input to the regional water resources strategy and a pilot strategy for other regions; - Hold a national workshop for presenting, discussing and updating the strategy; - Prepare and organize study tour; - Prepare project final report. 	<p>Expected outputs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A fully developed and operational 15-20 ha demonstration area is equipped with appropriate water harvesting schemes and efficient water use systems for agricultural production, and monitored with the participation of beneficiary farmers, - A total of 85 staff (35 engineers and 50 technicians) from institutions dealing with water harvesting and 200 farmers are trained on various aspects of water harvesting, according to the Training Programme given below, - A strategy for the development of water harvesting in the Southern Region of SAR is elaborated, taking into consideration the lessons learnt from the pilot farms.