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# PROGRAMME COMMITTEE

## Hundred and Twenty-sixth Session

Rome, 18-22 March 2019

Evaluation of the strategy and vision for FAO's work on nutrition

## MANAGEMENT RESPONSE

### Guidance sought by the Programme Committee

The Programme Committee may wish to provide its views and guidance on the key issues in the Evaluation report, and to the response to the recommendations and proposed follow-up actions by Management.

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

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*This document can be accessed using the Quick Response Code on this page;  
an FAO initiative to minimize its environmental impact and promote greener communications.  
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PC 126

1. FAO welcomes the evaluation of the Strategy and Vision for FAO's Work in Nutrition, which was conducted with the following objectives:
  - a) Assess progress achieved in the implementation of the Strategy and Vision for FAO's Work in Nutrition in all its forms, especially towards mainstreaming nutrition into FAO's own work and thinking, promoting food and agricultural systems governance for nutrition, increasing knowledge and evidence to maximize their impacts on nutrition, and strengthening capacities at all levels for effective action.
  - b) Examine how the Strategy, the reviewed Strategic Framework and associated delivery mechanisms have helped FAO to focus and improve the relevance, strategic positioning and effectiveness of FAO's contribution to tackling malnutrition through nutrition-sensitive food and agricultural systems.
  - c) Based on the above, provide strategic recommendations for FAO at all levels – headquarters, regions and countries – to further mainstream nutrition in the work of the Organization and increase the contribution of food and agricultural systems to nutrition.
2. The findings and conclusions of the evaluation highlight how FAO's work on nutrition has created momentum globally for addressing nutrition in all its forms through food systems actions, as is evidenced by the Second International Conference on Nutrition (ICN2), the formulation of Agenda 2030 and the Sustainable Development Goals, as well as the Declaration of the UN Decade of Action on Nutrition. The report also illustrates how FAO's revised Strategic Framework and its implementation modalities have influenced the rollout of the strategy.
3. The first and main recommendation of the evaluation calls for an update of the Nutrition Strategy, which is topical and timely in view of the changing landscape for nutrition. Recommendations 2-7 should be considered in the context of such a strategy update, as they provide useful suggestions on how to tailor FAO's work on nutrition, in terms of the provision of global public goods, support to countries and nutrition mainstreaming across the organization.
4. Updating and renewing the strategy is a welcome opportunity for FAO to further catalyse its work on the contribution of food systems to healthy diets and to address all forms of malnutrition through its core functions, while considering regional perspectives. The update also provides an opportunity to link strategy development with strategy delivery by giving due consideration to human and financial resource requirements and by attributing accountabilities.
5. As the evaluation does not include a costing of recommendations, FAO proposes to carry out a costing exercise as part of updating the Strategy and Vision for FAO's Work in Nutrition. Key cost items to be considered include: a) maintaining the skill base for an evidence-based and policy-relevant approach to FAO's technical work on nutrition, b) enhancing the capacity for backstopping country-level work, c) coordinating nutrition mainstreaming across the organization, and d) building strong partnerships. Related resource requirements will be thoroughly assessed.
6. Finally, some of the conclusions and recommendations could have taken into account more fully how the reviewed Strategic Framework and associated delivery mechanisms have influenced the relevance, strategic positioning and effectiveness of FAO's contribution to tackling malnutrition. It may therefore be appropriate to examine the findings and conclusions of the report in light of the synthesis of findings and lessons learned from the earlier Strategic Objective Evaluations.
7. Further information is provided in the Matrix.

## Response by recommendation

Management response to the Evaluation of the Strategy and Vision for FAO's Work in Nutrition					
Evaluation recommendation (a)	Management response (b) Accepted, partially accepted or rejected	Management plan			
		Actions to be taken, and/or comments about partial acceptance or rejection (c)	Responsible unit (d)	Timeframe (e)	Further funding required (Y or N) (f)
Insert title of section, if any					
<p>Recommendation 1:</p> <p>The Strategy and Vision for FAO's Work in Nutrition should be updated in order to take stock of ICN2, reflect the broadened focus on "all forms of malnutrition" including overweight and obesity, articulate the potential contribution of food systems to nutrition over and beyond nutrition-sensitive agriculture, and strengthen accountability towards Member States with a robust accountability framework.</p>	Accepted	<p>FAO will update the Strategy and Vision for FAO's Work in Nutrition to take into account the outcomes of the ICN2, FAO's role under the UN Decade of Action on Nutrition, and the principles and work modalities laid out for the organization's contribution to the Sustainable Development Goals. Particular attention will be placed on how FAO's contribution to sustainable food systems can be shaped to provide access to healthy diets for ending malnutrition in all its forms.</p> <p>The new strategy will be accompanied by a clear implementation plan and by an accountability framework that is aligned with corporate reporting and accountability mechanisms.</p>	ESN with SP teams, regional, sub-regional and country offices, and other technical units	Draft by end 2019, completion by mid-2020.	Yes
<p>Recommendation 2:</p> <p>ESN should strive to better maintain functions over time when key staff are moving to new positions, strengthen its collaboration with other units and divisions at Headquarters, and lead the development of an organization-wide network of resource persons for nutrition-sensitive approaches in order to build internal capacity and further mainstream nutrition within the Organization.</p>	Accepted	<p>FAO will assess staffing capacity requirements arising from this evaluation and from the revised nutrition strategy and propose how gaps can be filled through hiring and mobility.</p> <p>Building on an already existing informal network of nutrition focal points in regional, sub-regional and country offices, which includes resource persons supporting mainstreaming nutrition in decentralized offices, FAO will assess resources required for turning this into a formal Technical Network with dedicated</p>	OHR, OSP, ES-ADG and ESN	Mid-2020	Yes

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		coordination support. Approaches used for institutionalizing the gender network may provide useful lessons and insight.			
Recommendation 3: Keep on clarifying the main impact pathways from food systems to nutrition and clearly communicate FAO's role and priorities in this domain. Building on the current effort to craft a food system framework, FAO should distill its vision of how to link agriculture and food systems to nutrition outcomes in simple, crisp "FAO talking points" for food based approaches to nutrition. It would be desirable to keep this list reasonably concise to give FAO's communication efforts greater focus, coherence, clarity and visibility.	Accepted	As part of ongoing work, and in conjunction with the review and update of the nutrition strategy, FAO will expand the evidence-base that underpins the pathways between food systems actions and nutrition outcomes and capture the main linkages in simple, crisp and clear messages for policy-makers.	ESN	December 2019 and ongoing	No
Recommendation 4: Improve coordination and collaboration with nutrition stakeholders, e.g. with the UN Network for SUN for greater country-level outreach and ICN2 follow-up, with UNSCN for global policy convergence and knowledge sharing, with GLOPAN for global advocacy and with universities and research centers to generate evidence for food-based approaches to nutrition. These efforts should continue to involve the FAO Director -General, who has played an important role in forging new	Accepted	FAO will continue to maintain strong partnerships with nutrition stakeholders. It is expected that the convergence of UNSCN and the UN Network for SUN will be a great catalyst for further deepening the existing partnership with SUN. Collaboration with GLOPAN is already strong, with FAO represented at the highest level and working closely in the preparation of topical policy briefs.  FAO has a strong ongoing collaboration with WHO within the framework of implementing the work programme of the Decade of Action for Nutrition.	ESN, PSP, UNSCN	ongoing	No

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partnerships, in raising the profile of nutrition-related events as well as in general advocacy.					
Recommendation 5: ESN should maintain its current set of normative products, build upon its vast library knowledge products to support policy change, and adopt a more bottom-up approach in knowledge production, as befits an increasingly decentralized technical assistance model.	Accepted	FAO will maintain its current knowledge products and provide inputs to corporate planning for a systematic use of knowledge for policy and programme support and nutrition mainstreaming. To sustain FAO's leadership role on nutrition and food systems, along with the recommended decentralised technical assistance model, it is essential to also strengthen ESN at Headquarters so that FAO can stay at the frontier of new nutrition challenges and develop topical knowledge products.	ES-ADG, ESN, OSP	ongoing	Yes
Recommendation 6: Develop tools to support more systematic nutrition mainstreaming in the FAO field programme: a 'nutrition marker' to flag projects with a strong nutrition component; a series of nutrition country assessments progressively rolled out as part of the CPF preparation process; an expansion of current training and knowledge management platforms to all FAO staff and consultants; improved guidance on how to work with small- and medium-scale private sector entities; and a global financing instrument able to translate the visibility accrued to FAO through ICN2, the Decade of Action and the Zero Hunger Challenge into financial resources that the Organization can use to expand its normative	Accepted	The development of tools for systematic nutrition mainstreaming in FAO's field programme and CPFs' is already underway. How this is done is laid out in an internal document entitled "FAO's corporate approach to nutrition mainstreaming: Pillars of action and institutional arrangements". These pillars of action also make provisions to expand training and knowledge platforms, which are to be scaled-up in the course of 2019.  Expanded guidance on how to work with small and medium-scale private sector entities will be elaborated in line with corporate guidance on building partnerships in collaboration with FAO's Partnership Division. Experience derived from ongoing field project work on nutrition with SMEs will feed into this.	ESN, PSP, PSR, OSP	December 2019	No

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and field-level work in nutrition-sensitive food systems.		A global financing instrument/marketing tool will be developed, under the lead of PSR, to enhance visibility of FAO's nutrition work in order to attract extra-budgetary financial contributions.			
<p>Recommendation 7:</p> <p>At this time when FAO needs to address new challenges such as overweight and obesity, nutrition in crisis and conflicts, or sustainable food systems, it should strengthen its capacity to backstop Country Offices and help them and their national counterparts design nutrition-sensitive projects, programmes and policies, through a combination of more positions in Regional, Sub-Regional and Country Offices, and a temporary surge capacity in new technical areas.</p>	Accepted	<p>The recommendation for FAO to stay at the forefront of emerging issues on nutrition in all its forms, and to create and make available knowledge for action has been already dealt with in Recommendations 3 and 5 above.</p> <p>The evaluation's call for FAO to strengthen its backstopping capacity requires determination of the appropriate quality and quantity of human resources needed, in particular at regional and country levels. How much of this capacity should be permanent and how much should be planned for, as temporary surge capacity will be elaborated as part of updating the nutrition strategy, also considering resource implications.</p>	ESN, OSD	tbd	Yes