

July 2003



منظمة الأغذية
والزراعة
للأمم المتحدة

联合国
粮食及
农业组织

Food
and
Agriculture
Organization
of
the
United
Nations

Organisation
des
Nations
Unies
pour
l'alimentation
et
l'agriculture

Organización
de las
Naciones
Unidas
para la
Agricultura
y la
Alimentación

E

PROGRAMME COMMITTEE

Ninetieth Session

Rome, 15-19 September 2003

Evaluation of FAO Activities in Crop Production

Table of Contents

	Pages
Executive Summary	1
I. Introduction	2
CONTEXT FOR THE EVALUATION	2
ROLE OF FAO IN CROP PRODUCTION	3
II. Scope and Methodology for the Evaluation	4
<i>Scope</i>	4
<i>Methodology</i>	5
III. Overview of FAO's Work on Crop Production within AGP	6
REGULAR PROGRAMME STRUCTURE	7
EVOLUTION OF FAO'S WORK IN CROP PRODUCTION	8
REGULAR PROGRAMME RESOURCES	9

For reasons of economy, this document is produced in a limited number of copies. Delegates and observers are kindly requested to bring it to the meetings and to refrain from asking for additional copies, unless strictly indispensable.
Most FAO meeting documents are available on Internet at www.fao.org

W0000

FIELD PROJECTS	10
IV. Assessment of Priorities for FAO Work in Crop Production	11
QUESTIONNAIRE SURVEY	11
REGIONAL PRIORITIES	13
V. Assessment of Results – Regular Programme	13
NETWORKS	14
PUBLICATIONS	15
DATABASES	15
SECRETARIAT FUNCTIONS	16
JOINT FAO/IAEA DIVISION (AGE): SUSTAINABLE INTENSIFICATION OF CROP PRODUCTION SYSTEMS THROUGH TECHNOLOGIES AND CAPACITY BUILDING	17
VI. Assessment of Results – Field Programme (Including TCP)	19
QUALITATIVE ASSESSMENT	19
ISSUES RELATED TO FIELD ACTIVITIES	20
<i>Coherence of FAO Projects in a Country</i>	20
<i>Synergies and Institutional Collaboration</i>	20
<i>Limitations of TCP Format</i>	20
<i>Economic and Marketing Considerations</i>	21
<i>Farmers' Field Schools</i>	22
<i>Evaluation of training effectiveness</i>	22
<i>Operational Constraints</i>	22
<i>Joint FAO/IAEA Division Projects in Crop Production</i>	22
VII. Conclusions and Recommendations	22
STRATEGIC ORIENTATION OF FAO CROP PRODUCTION ACTIVITIES	22
FIELD ACTIVITIES	25
Appendix	29
FAO FIELD PROJECTS REVIEWED BY EVALUATION MISSIONS	29
Annex 1	31
REPORT OF THE EXTERNAL PEER REVIEW PANEL	31
<i>General Observations</i>	31
<i>Recommendations</i>	31

PC 90/3a)	iii
<hr/>	
Annex 2	34
MANAGEMENT RESPONSE (AG DEPARTMENT)	34

Annex 2

MANAGEMENT RESPONSE (AG DEPARTMENT)

1. Management appreciates the methodology used for this evaluation, which included wide consultation with member countries, other clients and partners, and the involvement of an External Peer Review Panel. The process enabled a balanced assessment of both normative and field-oriented activities, and of the roles and contributions of all the concerned FAO units. Management considers that the evaluation was fair and objective.

2. Management notes the general congruency between the evaluation report and the outcome of the External Peer Review Panel. The specific findings, comments and recommendations are constructive, valuable and generally practical. They provide forward looking guidance that provides the foundation for further reshaping FAO's crop production programmes and services to better meet the challenge of improving food security and the sustainability of agricultural production systems.

3. Based on the evaluation, Management will accelerate the reorientation of crop production programmes to increase normative work, especially policy advice and strategy development more in balance with technical services, on major production systems. Emphasis will be placed on crop/livestock and rice-based systems, as well as on comprehensive horticulture development for diversification and income generation. These will part of an enhanced effort, with other programmes, to develop a Good Agricultural Practices approach to practically address the economic, environmental and social dimensions of Sustainable Agriculture and Rural Development (SARD). Activities on crop commodity groups will be deemphasized. Supporting this reorientation, the Crop and Grassland Service (AGPC) will form interdisciplinary, thematic teams, including outposted staff, and strengthen internal partnerships and collaboration such as through the PAIAs on Integrated Production Systems and Livelihoods. Expanded partnerships with CGIAR, GFAR and other international and regional institutions will be pursued to obtain specialist services and to benchmark development activities.

4. Management concurs with the recommendations to facilitate the strengthening of plant breeding activities, including biotechnology and biosafety in national programmes, for sustainable use of plant genetic resources for food and agriculture (PGRFA). As plant biotechnology is used primarily to enhance crop improvement, the main technical support to member countries on biotechnology will logically be coupled to plant breeding. This is consistent with the recommendation to enhance and bring together within the Plant Production and Protection Division (AGP) both plant biotechnology and crop-related biosafety with its regulatory aspects, linking directly to existing seed and phytosanitary regulatory instruments in the Division. Some evidence for this new focus on sustainable use of PGRFA can be seen in the PWB 2004-2005 under the new entity 212A9, which couples work on plant breeding and applications of biotechnology to an increased emphasis on sustainable seed systems for developing countries. Management is in full agreement that emphasis must be given to assist member governments to bridge the gap that prevails between conventional plant breeders and biotechnologists to yield tangible products that meet the needs of both farmers and consumers.

5. The recommendation for enhancing planning and joint implementation of plant breeding related biotechnology work by AGE (Joint FAO/IAEA Division) and AGP is well taken. There is a growing linkage between the plant breeding activities of AGP and associated mutation breeding efforts of AGE. Similarly, as some plant biotechnology methods involve isotopes, provision of related training that is part of AGE's programme of work has direct relevance to the work of AGP. Annual planning meetings will ensure concrete progress in convergence and complementarity of programmes to better serve member countries.

Formatted: Normal

Formatted: Bold, English (United States)

Formatted: Check spelling and grammar

Formatted: English (United Kingdom), Check spelling and grammar

6. In developing and delivering programmes and services, Management seeks to balance policy advice and strategy development with capacity building and field-level actions. It was noted by the evaluation that member governments rated the field projects in crop production to be helpful, relevant and generally of high quality, and that they had more substantive - and thus likely more long-term - impact when they were linked to, or nested within larger development initiatives. This supports management's view that the current approach of linking field work to normative activities enables the Organization - through such synergies - to be more effective in delivering demand-driven technical assistance as well as in provision of technical advice and decision support that is based on sound technical foundations. The recommendation to analyse the performance of modified Farmers' Field School approaches used in crop production project has been noted for action as part of project monitoring and evaluation.

7. Management has also noted the recommendations concerning the approval and implementation of TCP projects, which Members may wish to consider in the context of the policy and operational framework of the Technical Cooperation Programme.

8. Management recognizes the need, at all levels, to improve the selection, targeting and distribution of publications, and to review support to networks, as a means to disseminate and share information and knowledge. This is an ongoing effort that will be pursued within the Organization's publications and programme planning and monitoring processes.

Formatted: English (United Kingdom), Check spelling and grammar

Formatted: English (United Kingdom), Check spelling and grammar

Formatted: English (United Kingdom), Check spelling and grammar

ACRONYMS

AGAP	Animal Production Service
AGE	Joint FAO/IAEA Division
AGL	Land and Water Development Division
AGP	Plant Production and Protection Division
AGPC	Crop and Grassland Service
AGPP	Plant Protection Service
AGPS	Seed and Plant Genetic Resources Service
AGS	Agricultural Support Systems Division
AGSF	Agricultural Management, Marketing and Finance Service
AGST	Agricultural and Food Engineering Technologies Service
CG	Encapsulated granule
CGIAR	Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research
CIAT	International Centre for Tropical Agriculture
CIRAD	Centre de coopération internationale en recherche agronomique pour le développement
CP	Continuing Programme Activities
CRP	Coordinated Research Project
EU	European Union
FFS	Farmers' Field School
GCDS	Global Cassava Development Strategy
GCP	FAO/Government Cooperative Programme
GFAR	Global Forum of Agricultural Research
GMO	Genetically Modified Organism
GPA	Global Plan of Action
IARC	International Agricultural Research Centre
IAEA	International Atomic Energy Agency
ICARDA	International Centre for Agricultural Research in the Dry Areas
ICGEB	International Centre for Genetic Engineering and Biotechnology
ICRISAT	International Crops Research Institute for the Semi-Arid Tropics
IDRC	International Development Research Centre
IDWG	Inter-Departmental Working Group
IFAD	International Fund for Agricultural Development
IITA	International Institute of Tropical Agriculture
INIBAP	International Network for the Improvement of Banana and Plantain
IPGRI	International Plant Genetic Resources Institute
IPM	Integrated Pest Management

IPR	Intellectual Property Rights
IRC	International Rice Commission
IRRI	International Rice Research Institute
MGR	Mutant Germplasm Repository
MTP	Medium-Term Plan
NARS	National Agricultural Research Systems
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NRI	Natural Resources Institute
PAIA	Priority Area for Inter-disciplinary Action
PBEE	FAO Evaluation Service
PBG	Plant Breeding and Genetics
PBU	Plant Breeding Unit
PGRFA	Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture
PWB	Programme of Work and Budget
RedBio	Network on Plant Biotechnology for Latin America and the Caribbean
RP	Regular Programme
SARD	Sustainable Agriculture and Rural Development
SD	Sustainable Development Department
SDRE	Extension, Education and Communication Service
SDRN	Environment and Natural Resources Service
SDRR	Research and Technology Development Service
SF	FAO's Strategic Framework
SPFS	Special Programme for Food Security
SPPD	Support for Policy and Programme Development
STS	Support for Technical Services
TAMNET	Tropical Asian Maize Network
TCDC	Technical Cooperation among Developing Countries
TCP	Technical Cooperation Programme
TP	Technical Project
TS	Technical Support
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme