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PROGRAMME COMMITTEE

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**Follow-up report on the evaluation of FAO's South-South and Triangular
Cooperation**

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

Ms Beth Bechdol
Deputy Director-General
Tel: [+39 06570 51800](tel:+390657051800)
Email: DDG-Bechdol@fao.org

Documents can be consulted at www.fao.org

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- FAO Management welcomes the recommendations and would like to take this opportunity to thank the Evaluation team for the constructive suggestions, which were duly taken into consideration.
- In line with FAO's policy on evaluations, this document provides an update from FAO Management on the implementation of the actions set out in the Management Response to the the *Evaluation of FAO's South-South and Triangular Cooperation* (Document [PC 134/6 Sup.1](#)).
- FAO Management was requested further details on some of the following areas: strategic direction, enabling environment for South-South and Triangular Cooperation (SSTC), project/programme design and resource mobilization. FAO Management also welcomed further proposals to guide and strengthen FAO's SSTC work in the future.
- With regard to Recommendation 1, under the FAO-China SSC Programme, a number of activities have been implemented with the aim to enhance capacities of developing countries to respond to agricultural emergencies and build their resilience against climate shocks.
- Recommendation 2 was addressed in implementing projects that are context-specific and in line with the specific local needs from the member countries. FAO conducted a series of scoping and formulation missions to emphasize context-specific issues and local needs in the design of SSTC interventions. The SSTC Toolkit has been recently updated and it now includes a more rigorous context analysis framework.
- With regard to Recommendation 3, FAO successfully organized a series of capacity building workshops, both in headquarters and Regional Offices. FAO also held a series of face-to-face dialogues with FAO Representatives (FAORs) to increase their potential collaboration on SSTC.
- The Recommendation 4 was addressed via the [FAO SSTC Guidelines for Action 2022-2025](#) which focus on the strategic direction of FAO's SSTC programmes and position. Moreover, communication strategies and plans have been drafted on a yearly basis, to ensure that FAO's SSTC messages are adequately transmitted, and activities are impactfully conducted.
- FAO Management confirms that the recommendations are being implemented and results are becoming evident.

GUIDANCE SOUGHT FROM THE PROGRAMME COMMITTEE

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

I. Background

1. The Programme Committee at its 134th Session in November 2022 discussed the Evaluation of FAO's South-South and Triangular Cooperation. The Evaluation report described well the comparative advantage, potential and challenges for FAO to fully contribute to South-South and Triangular Cooperation and recognized FAO's ongoing efforts. FAO Management welcomes the opportunity to provide an update on the progress made in implementing the actions agreed in the Management Response.
2. In line with FAO's policy on evaluations, this report provides an update on the implementation of the actions and recommendations set out in the Management Response. The Report provides a Management Action Record Scoring (MAR Score) on a six-point scale, in which FAO Management self-assessed the level of adoption and implementation of recommendations.

II. Overall progress in the implementation of the recommendations

3. Management found that the Evaluation Report (Document [PC 134/6](#)) was well formulated, insightful and constructive, and generally concurred with the findings and recommendations presented and accepted all four recommendations.
4. Evaluation noted the findings that FAO has focused SSTC on development projects supporting learning and technology exchanges as well as establishing platforms for networking, and less so on humanitarian projects or in promoting an enabling environment for SSTC.
5. **Recommendation 1:** As its humanitarian response work expands, the evaluation recommended that FAO should consider how to leverage SSTC as a mechanism to implement emergency and resilience projects.
6. **Progress:** Emergency and humanitarian response is one of the key working areas under the framework of the FAO-China SSC Programme. The Programme supports the implementation of numerous emergency projects to leverage SSTC as a mechanism to implement different activities. Among others, a few to mention are the Transboundary Animal Disease (TAD) control project in the Greater Mekong Sub-region supported by FAO-China SSC Programme was implemented in Cambodia, China, Lao People's Democratic Republic and Myanmar from 2018 to 2023; the emergency project in support of the FAO's Global Action on the control of desert locust in Ethiopia, Iran, Kenya, Pakistan and Uganda - was successfully implemented between 2020-2021; the regional project on the "response and recovery to the impact of COVID-19 pandemic on rural livelihoods and food systems in countries of the Community of Latin America and Caribbean States (CELAC). To further leverage SSTC as the mechanism for emergency and resilient project, the Office of Emergencies and Resilience (OER) and other technical divisions are looking at ways to integrate SSTC into their respective programmes and projects.
7. **Recommendation 2:** FAO should systematically consider context-specific issues and local needs in the design of SSTC interventions. Some suggested actions include ensuring appropriate context analysis, considering synergies with other FAO projects and/or partners' initiatives, wider engagement with non-government actors, and improving access to documentation on results and lessons learned.
8. **Progress:** Based on the recommendation and aligned with FAO's ongoing efforts, the scoping and formulation activities and missions of all the programmes/projects are now conducted with specific focus on the context and consistency with local needs. An example is the FAO-led scoping mission of the Program on Agricultural and Rural Transformation for Nutrition, Entrepreneurship, and Resilience (PARTNER), with a budget of USD 534 million, conducted in December 2023 in Bangladesh. During this exercise, FAO systematically considered context-specific issues and local needs and formed the team of more than 26 experts from 10 technical divisions of FAO headquarters and the Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific. To ensure wider engagement of non-government actors, the team engaged 15 entities as implementing agencies and strategic partners to be engaged in this potential Unilateral Trust Fund project (UTF). FAO is replicating this approach in other projects,

e.g., UTF of Sierra Leone, the designing and formulation of the Viet Nam-Nigeria project, the SSTC project of Ferghana Valley, and regional SSTC project in the Sahel, Africa.

9. To streamline this approach, FAO has updated the SSTC Toolkit to include a more rigorous context analysis framework. This framework ensures that local needs and specific issues are systematically considered during the design phase of SSTC interventions.

10. In the case of Brazil-FAO International Cooperation Programme for SSTC during the formulation process, tripartite scoping and consultation missions are organized to advance in a project formulation that responds to the needs and priorities of the countries or group of countries. For example, through the SSC Program Officers in the Latin America and the Caribbean Region, in the framework of the Brazil-FAO International Cooperation Programme a tripartite mission for project formulation was carried out in a project for Central America countries.

11. **Recommendation 3:** FAO should place greater focus on supporting the creation of an enabling environment for SSTC, in order to ensure greater ownership and enhanced prospects of replication. Some suggested actions include providing targeted capacity building to personnel and government staff involved in SSTC and advocating for greater priority to SSTC interventions at Country Office level.

12. **Progress:** FAO designed capacity development and awareness raising trainings across all the regions of FAO which followed a phased approach of implementation starting from 2023. The capacity building events are jointly designed and implemented with the Resource Mobilization Division (PSR). By September 2024, over 300 personnel were trained in the Regional Office for Africa (RAF), the Regional Office for the Near East and North Africa (RNE) and the Regional Office for Europe and Central Asia (REU) through these workshops. At these events comprehensive sessions were conducted for FAORs, focusing on mapping countries' comparative advantages, solutions, and needs with the aim to focus on supporting the creation of an enabling environment for SSTC.

13. In July 2024, FAO successfully organized an Experience Sharing Workshop on SSTC in Rome, Italy, which saw the in-person participation of over 60 participants, among which there were several members of governments as well as FAO personnel from Country and Regional Offices. After the two-day workshop, these colleagues expressed their understanding of SSTC and their willingness to accelerate the agrifood transformation through SSTC. All participants conducted exchanges with other neighboring countries on technical expertise, knowledge and good practices.

14. FAO is working closely with the UN Office for South-South Cooperation (UNOSSC) on a self-paced three-hour e-module on "Leveraging South-South and Triangular Cooperation to Accelerate Transformation Towards Sustainable Development." The modules are based on the recently released Guidelines for UN Country Teams. FAO SSTC programmes and projects will be featured in the mentioned modules.

15. **Recommendation 4:** FAO should revamp its strategic guidance, communication and resource mobilization efforts in order to better incorporate cross-cutting themes, improve awareness and diversify partnerships.

16. **Progress:** FAO was able to mobilize USD 16 million over the past two years through different projects across different countries. FAO also has a pipeline of projects with an approximate financial envelope of around USD 15 million which are being conceptualized jointly with the potential resource partners to be formulated in different countries.

17. While the SSTC Guidelines for Action is the guiding document and incorporates all the cross-cutting themes of FAO, the South-South and Triangular Cooperation Division (PST) has developed the [FAO SSTC Guidelines for Action 2022-2025](#) with an overarching objective to develop a results-focused vision and structure, providing strategic direction for FAO's SSTC programme and strengthening FAO's position as global advocate, convener, broker, facilitator and enabler of SSTC in the area of agrifood systems. The SSTC Guidelines for Action 2022-2025 is aligned with the FAO Policy on Gender Equality 2020-2030, the Vision and Strategy for FAO's work in Nutrition and the FAO Strategy on Climate Change 2022-2031. The Guidelines represent a shift from the ad-hoc SSTC

activities to a more programmatic, focused, results-based, systematic, quality-assured and service-driven integrated approach.

18. In the Latin America and the Caribbean Region, the SSTC programme officers provided supports to increase communication and visibility of the SSTC programmes such as the FAO-Brazil SSC program and the FAO-Mexico SSTC projects.

19. FAO's SSTC outreach and visibility has significantly increased since the Evaluation was conducted. More than 79 news articles, press releases and human - interest stories were published; 15 videos, 8 newsletters and 3 publications/factsheets were produced, and numerous events were organized, with media/news/social media coverage.

20. In order to improve awareness, diversify partnerships, enhance the impact, outreach, technical and operational efficiency of FAO's existing online SSTC networks, FAO is streamlining and merging the South-South Cooperation website with the former South-South Cooperation Gateway into one integrated platform: SSTC Gateway revamped platform.

Follow-up report on South-South and Triangular Cooperation - Matrix

Evaluation Recommendation (a)	Sub-recommendation	Actions agreed in the management response (b)	Description of actions taken, or reasons for actions not taken (c)	MAR score (d) ¹	Impact of, or changes resulted from taken actions (e)
<p>Recommendation 1: As its humanitarian response work expands, FAO should consider how to leverage SSTC as a mechanism to implement emergency and resilience projects.</p>		<p>The following steps are examples of how this collaboration could be further strengthened:</p> <p>a) Organization of a technical meeting to raise improved awareness and understanding of FAO's SSTC;</p> <p>b) Set up of a working mechanism among relevant divisions/offices. In order to ensure that SSTC can be further facilitated, it would be helpful if relevant technical divisions appoint an SSTC focal point.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Although it is too early to report concrete evidence of a formal structure, as it is still in the infancy stage and actively being discussed to find the best modality, SSTC has actively supported humanitarian and resilience work. Emergency and humanitarian response is one of the key working areas under the framework of the FAO-China SSC Programme. 	4	<p>Emergency and humanitarian response is becoming a key working area in several SSTC programmes. The result is that countries from the Global South involved in SSTC programmes are increasing their capacity to use SSTC modality to become more resilient in responding to agricultural emergencies.</p>
<p>Recommendation 2: FAO should systematically consider context-specific issues and local needs in the design of SSTC interventions. Some suggested actions include ensuring appropriate context analysis, considering synergies with other FAO projects and/or partners' initiatives, wider engagement with non-government actors, and improving access to documentation on results and lessons learned.</p>	<p>The analysis suggests that several interventions have been particularly successful, especially with regard to supporting system solutions. It also shows that sustainability is affected by the level of ownership, capacities and resources.</p>	<p>With the launch of the South-South and Triangular Cooperation Division (PST) Guidelines for Action (2022-2025), Management has accelerated strategic, corporate and operational improvements to increase both the scale and the quality of its engagement in SSTC. Management will attempt to further finetune the SSTC Toolkit subject to feasibility, by ensuring a more systematic consideration of context-specific issues and local</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> PST organizes project scoping and formulation missions to the host countries to ensure that project interventions are context-specific and consistent with local needs. At regional level, SSTC officers participated and provide support in the preparation and implementation of the scoping and formulation mission. FAO has updated the SSTC Toolkit to include a more rigorous context analysis framework. 	5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> More relevant and effective SSTC interventions; increased community engagement and ownership; better documentation and learning. Improved documentation and sharing of results and lessons learned have enhanced the capacity for future project

¹ **Management Action Record (MAR) Score:** 1 - **None:** no action was taken to implement the recommendation; 2 - **Poor:** plan and actions for implementation of the recommendation are at a very preliminary stage; 3 - **Inadequate:** implementation of the recommendation is uneven and partial; 4 - **Adequate:** implementation of the recommendation has progressed; there is no evidence yet of its results on the intended target; 5 - **Good:** the recommendation has been fully implemented and there is some initial evidence of its impact on the intended target; 6 - **Excellent:** there is solid evidence that the recommendation has had a positive impact on its intended target.

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		needs in the design of SSTC interventions.			<p>design and implementation.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recent partnership with Sierra Leone , and ongoing initiative with Bangladesh. • The updated Toolkit has led to more relevant and effective SSTC interventions that are better aligned with local needs and conditions.
<p>Recommendation 3: FAO should place greater focus on supporting the creation of an enabling environment for SSTC, in order to ensure greater ownership and enhanced prospects of replication. Some suggested actions include providing targeted capacity building to personnel and government staff involved in SSTC, and advocating for greater priority to SSTC interventions at country office level.</p>	<p>FAO has a track record of implementing SSTC in support of institutional collaboration and policy dialogue in a wide range of technical areas. There is, however, a high dependence on certain donor countries and a need to diversify the partnerships. In addition, SSTC strategic documents do not make adequate reference to relevant corporate initiatives such as the Policy on Gender Equality 2020-2030, the Vision and Strategy for FAO’s work in Nutrition and the FAO Strategy on Climate Change 2022-2031. 27 The analysis suggest that an updated guidance could facilitate an even greater focus</p>	<p>In terms of next steps, Management will continue the capacity development activities aimed at enhancing the capacity of FAORs with due attention to mapping countries’ comparative advantages/solution/ needs and identifying areas for practical support of their engagement in SSTC</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PST has initiated an extensive global capacity development exercise implemented region-wide- to all the country offices of FAO. In the past two years, PST has organized a series of regional workshops on SSTC, and a SSTC experience sharing workshop in headquarters involving a number of countries and FAO technical units. Through these workshops and exchanges, SSTC has received adequate attention and understanding by all partners internally and externally. • In addition, FAO has implemented: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Face-to-face consultations between FAORs and PST. 	5	<p>Enhanced capacity and strategic decision-making; effective partnerships; improved ownership and replication of SSTC initiatives experiences.</p>

Evaluation Recommendation (a)	Sub-recommendation	Actions agreed in the management response (b)	Description of actions taken, or reasons for actions not taken (c)	MAR score (d) ¹	Impact of, or changes resulted from taken actions (e)
	on these important cross-cutting themes within partners' agreements and projects		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Quarterly meetings with the five regional SSC focal points ○ Delivery of the joint FAO/UNOSSC e-modules to support FAO SSTC capacity development activities at regional level. Through the SSTC program officers located in the regional offices, technical assistance and training are provided to countries according to demand. 		
<p>Recommendation 4: FAO should revamp its strategic guidance, communication and resource mobilization efforts in order to better incorporate cross-cutting themes, improve awareness and diversify partnerships</p>		<p>PST is working on the SSTC Implementation Plan (2022-2025), which envisages, among others, to provide further integration with corporate strategies, such as the FAO Gender Strategy, the Nutrition Strategy, and the Climate Change Strategy.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Under the SSTC Implementation Plan, PST is developing several initiatives, projects and activities to echo a number of FAO technical initiatives, including OCOP, SIDs, soil and water management, GIAHS, etc. PST will provide further guidance to the project teams to incorporate the essence of the strategies (Gender, Nutrition and Climate Change) into the formulation of relevant projects. ● PST is currently coordinating the implementation of a triangular cooperation project in Kenya on low carbon tea funded by China and Germany, which is fully in line with the 	4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● There are a number of projects and initiatives undertaken which were found to be impactful. ● There is evidence that awareness of SSTC is increased. ● Improved integration of cross-cutting themes has led to more holistic and impactful SSTC projects. ● Increased awareness and understanding of the importance of gender, nutrition, and climate change

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			<p>Climate Change Strategy and Gender Strategy.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PST is ensuring enhanced communication and visibility via the implementation of an annual FAO SSTC Communication Strategy and Plan. • FAO will launch its revamped SSTC Gateway Platform in 2024. • At regional level, SSTC networks have been promoted to facilitate the exchange of experiences. Some examples are: sustainable School Feeding Network²; Parliamentary Front against Hunger in Latin America and the Caribbean³; Platform for Climate Action in Agriculture in Latin America and the Caribbean⁴, among others. • PST is making proactive efforts on diversifying resource partners and actively engaging with emerging partners such as Indonesia and Viet Nam. • PST is expanding the partnerships to academics and has conducted series of 		<p>considerations have resulted in more comprehensive project designs.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased awareness and visibility of FAO's SSTC programmes and projects added value has led to stronger and diversified partnerships. New SSTC partnerships have been established.

² <https://redraes.org/la-raes/>

³ <http://parlamentarioscontraelhambre.org/frentes/>

⁴ <http://accionclimaticaplaca.org/es/>

Evaluation Recommendation (a)	Sub-recommendation	Actions agreed in the management response (b)	Description of actions taken, or reasons for actions not taken (c)	MAR score (d) ¹	Impact of, or changes resulted from taken actions (e)
			dialogues with university networks in pursuit of establishing a South-South and Triangular Cooperation Research Network (RESNET).		