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PROGRAMME COMMITTEE

Hundred and Nineteenth Session

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**Follow-up report on the Evaluation of FAO's role in Support of Crop
Production (*cf. PC 115/5*)**

Guidance sought by the Programme Committee

The Programme Committee may wish to note progress on the recommendations accepted by Management.

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documents can be consulted at www.fao.org*



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1. This report was prepared in follow-up to the Evaluation of FAO's role in Support of Crop Production.¹ The Evaluation analysed the Organization's crop support activities, including what was accomplished, how effectively and what could be improved. In practice the Evaluation became a case study - using crops as an entry point - of the technical assistance FAO provided to crop production activities in implementing the Reviewed Strategic Framework.

2. In line with FAO's policy on evaluations, this report provides an update on the implementation of the actions set out in the Management Response. Upon request by the Office of Evaluation (OED), the report introduces 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.

Overall progress in the implementation of all accepted recommendations

3. In line with the recommendation to strengthen FAO's global role as convenor of international treaties and conventions, the Secretariats of the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (IT-PGRFA), the Rotterdam Convention, and the Commission on Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (CGRFA) made progress in communicating changes in norms and standards required for mainstreaming sustainability. Through the release in 2014 of the document *Building a common vision for sustainable food and agriculture: principles and approaches*, the Strategic Programme 2 (SP2) team initiated a discussion on sustainability for the consideration by the FAO Regional Conferences and Technical Committees in 2016.

4. Following the recommendation to implement the four Outcomes under SP2 (on technical support, international and global governance, and evidence-based decision-making), the project cycle workflow was revised to align new field projects with these Outcomes.

5. Good progress was made in consolidating FAO's role as a global platform for addressing strategic issues relating to crop production development. For example, in September 2014 an International Symposium was convened on agroecology for food security and nutrition, followed by three regional symposia in 2015. FAO's role as a neutral platform for science-based knowledge was further affirmed by convening the International Symposium on the role of agricultural biotechnologies in sustainable food systems and nutrition in February 2016.

6. FAO improved its capacity to support national agricultural research, extension and innovation systems by focusing more on cross-divisional and multidisciplinary actions through the Strategic Programmes (SPs). As a result, the resources of the joint FAO/International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) division on nuclear techniques in food and agriculture were used more effectively.

7. The availability of regular and extrabudgetary resources facilitated FAO's support of the Tropical Agriculture Platform (TAP), drawing on the expertise of both the technical divisions in FAO and external partners.

8. FAO's promotion of the development of the Integrated Innovation Investment Facility for Agricultural Growth (a joint initiative of GFAR and IFAD)² is an opportunity to strengthen partnerships with donors and bilateral agencies in support of national agricultural research, extension and innovation systems.

9. Linkages between FAO's Strategic Objectives and the CGIAR were strengthened in part through FAO's participation on the CGIAR Fund Council.

10. The assessment of the collective crop production contributions to the Strategic Framework in support of FAO's global goals is ongoing.

¹ PC 115/5; PC 115/5 Sup.1

² Global Forum on Agricultural Research (GFAR); International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD)

11. SP2 supported the transition from a crop-focused production approach to the widespread adoption of social, economic, and environmental sustainability as a central condition for agricultural development. SP2 also defined a major area of work on building a common vision for sustainable food and agriculture (SFA). Partnering countries have adopted SFA principles, and indicators were proposed for the Sustainable Development Goals and the Programme of Work and Budget 2016-17, further reinforcing activities to mainstream SFA through all delivery mechanisms of SP2.

Follow-up report on the Evaluation of FAO's role in support of crop production matrix

Accepted evaluation recommendations (a)	Action agreed in the Management Response (b)	Description of actions actually taken, or reasons for actions not taken (c)	MAR score (d) *	Impact of, or changes resulting from taken actions (e)
<p>Recommendation 1: to Secretariats CODEX, IT-PGRFA, CGRFA, IPPC, Rotterdam Convention</p> <p>FAO should continue to maintain and strengthen its global role as convener of international treaties and conventions, and as the source of global norms, standards and guidelines in food and agriculture. In doing so it should become proactive in bringing to the attention of the relevant bodies the changes in norms and standards required for effectively mainstreaming sustainability.</p>	<p>In order to maintain and strengthen FAO's global normative role, human and financial resources to support the delivery of Corporate Technical Activities (CTAs) in the PWB for 2014-2015 were ring-fenced and programmed to contribute to achievement of the Strategic Objectives. CTAs include <i>inter alia</i> those activities undertaken by relevant bodies established under Articles III, V, VI and XIV of the FAO Constitution.</p>	<p>Largely working within the framework of SP2, the Secretariat of the IT-PGRFA has actively engaged the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) regarding the Nagoya Protocol on access and benefit sharing. Through active participation in meetings and the joint organization of capacity-building workshops, the Secretariat emphasized the importance of the harmonious implementation of the two instruments.</p>	5	<p>1) The ITPGRFA is recognized in the Nagoya Protocol/CBD as an important means of implementing the access and benefit sharing arrangement, and the conservation and sustainable use of plant genetic resources for food and agriculture.</p>
		<p>The Secretariat of the Rotterdam Convention informed the Conference of the Parties (COP) of FAO's approach to the life cycle management of pesticides in the context of sustainable agriculture (May 2015).</p>	6	<p>2) The 1,200 participants at the COP gained an increased understanding of FAO's holistic life cycle management approach to reduce risks from pesticides, thereby protecting human health and the environment.</p>
		<p>The SP2 team increased awareness of the changes required to effectively mainstream sustainability. In 2014 SP2 released the document <i>Building a common vision for sustainable food and agriculture: principles and approaches</i>.</p>	4	<p>3) The full impact of these actions is not yet evident, as the Regional Conferences and Technical Committees are ongoing.</p>

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		<p>This served as the basis for promoting and addressing the topic of <i>Sustainable agriculture and the 2030 Agenda for sustainable development addressing the challenges in agriculture, forestry and fisheries</i> at the FAO Regional Conferences and Technical Committees (COFO, COFI, COAG) in 2016 (see also Recommendation 8).</p>		
		<p>The 15th Session of CGRFA endorsed the Voluntary Guide for National Seed Policy Formulation, developed by FAO and reviewed by the Commission's Intergovernmental Technical Working Group on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (ITWG PGR-6).</p> <p>FAO developed the Guidelines for developing a national strategy for plant genetic resources for food and agriculture to assist countries in the implementation of the Second Global Plan of Action for Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture. The Guidelines were reviewed by ITWG PGR-6.</p> <p>FAO convened two sessions of its Team of Technical and Legal Experts on Access and Benefit-Sharing (TTLE ABS), and reviewed and endorsed <i>Elements to facilitate domestic implementation of</i></p>	6	<p>4a) The impact of the Voluntary Guide is not yet evident given its relatively recent development and adoption. National seed policy formulation and implementation are monitored through the Second GPA reporting system: http://www.fao.org/wiews/en/</p> <p>4b) The impact of the Guidelines and of the Second Global Plan of Action (the implementation of which the Voluntary Guidelines aim to facilitate) are regularly monitored through the Second GPA reporting system: http://www.fao.org/wiews/en/</p> <p>4c) The impact of the ABS Elements is not yet evident given their relatively recent development and adoption. CGRFA-15 mandated the</p>

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		<p><i>access and benefit-sharing for different subsectors of genetic resources for food and agriculture.</i> The ABS Elements, welcomed by the 39th session of the FAO Conference, aim to assist governments considering developing, adapting or implementing ABS measures, taking into account the importance of GRFA, their special role in food security and the distinctive features of the different subsectors of GRFA, while complying, as applicable, with international ABS instruments, such as the Nagoya Protocol. http://www.fao.org/3/a-mm660e.pdf</p> <p>The FAO Conference approved the <i>Voluntary Guidelines to support the integration of genetic diversity into national climate change adaptation planning</i>, prepared under the aegis of the CGRFA. The Guidelines aim to assist countries in managing genetic resources as a pivotal reservoir and tool at their disposal to adapt agriculture and build resilience into agricultural and food production systems.</p>		<p>Commission's intergovernmental technical working groups and the TTLE ABS to reconvene for further work on ABS.</p> <p>4d) The impact of the Voluntary Guidelines is not yet evident given their relatively recent development and adoption.</p>
<p>Recommendation 2: to SO2 Core Team</p> <p>In the policy-to-technology continuum, FAO should redouble its efforts to actively reorient the focus of its crop activities away from technology-centered field projects and toward the</p>	<p>Assure implementation of the four Organizational Outcomes under SO2 on technical support, international and global governance, and evidenced based decision-making.</p>	<p>The Director-General's bulletin (DGB) 2014/53 (on aligning resource mobilization and the project cycle to the Strategic Framework) sets the basis to align all new field projects to FAO's Strategic Objectives at Outcome level. As a result, new</p>	<p>4</p>	<p>The DGB 2014/53 was issued at the end of 2014, while the SP2 project assessment criteria have been in place since February 2015 for the formulation of new projects. While there was an</p>

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strengthening of national and international policies. This can be done by providing accurate and authoritative technical and scientific input to policy formulation, and by creating enabling policy environments supportive of crop production improvement.		development projects in the area of sustainable crop production are being aligned to SP2 Outcomes from their formulation. In addition, a standardized project proposal assessment criteria template is applied to all SP2-related projects, ensuring that projects align with SP2 outcomes and important aspects are included such as multidisciplinary and cross-sectorial approaches, potential for upscaling, and consideration for the five principles of sustainability.		improvement in the formulation of projects in terms of alignment to the four Outcomes under SP2, it is still too early to measure the impact on project implementation.
<p>Recommendation 3: to DDN</p> <p>Building on FAO’s position as a trusted knowledge broker that provides accurate and timely information to decision makers in all member countries, the Organization should be less timid about taking an energetic advocacy role for advanced science-based technologies, which may at times be controversial. As stated in Recommendation 1, FAO should continue to consolidate its role as a global platform for addressing strategic issues relating to crop production development.</p>	Actively monitor deliberations in international fora regarding the application of modern technologies as a reference base for deliberations on a possible update of FAO perspectives.	<p>An “International Symposium on agroecology for food security and nutrition” was convened in September 2014. The meeting brought together a broad range of participants from, academia, civil society organizations, the private sector and national governments to share ideas and knowledge on the scientific basis of agroecology. It was followed by a series of regional symposia in Asia, Africa and Latin America in 2015.</p> <p>An “International Symposium on the role of agricultural biotechnologies in sustainable food systems and nutrition” was convened in February 2016.</p>	5	<p>The regional meetings facilitated a dialogue on the challenges, opportunities and potential benefits of agroecology within different regional contexts. The symposia have reaffirmed FAO’s role as a neutral platform for science-based knowledge in support of sustainable crop production.</p> <p>One outcome was the preparation of a series of papers for the regional meetings in Asia, Africa and Latin America in 2016, as well as for the 23rd session of COAG.</p>

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Recommendation 4: to AGP/ADG-AG				
<p>In order to strengthen its ability to serve member countries in improving crop production, FAO needs to develop a clear, medium- to long-term human resource strategy directly linked to the Theory of Change (see also Recommendation 7), which should:</p> <p>Recommendation 4a): to AGP Rebuild its technical capacities in the crop sector, with a long- term strategic view both in terms of the competencies and skills that are needed in-house to: (i) provide the conceptual and scientific leadership necessary to enable the transition to more sustainable production systems – environmentally, economically and socially; and (ii) be effective mobilizers of external networks in support of its programmes.</p>	<p>4a) As a part of the planning exercise for the implementation of the reviewed Strategic Framework, AGP recently completed a medium-term human resource strategy development exercise that maps out the expertise and staffing structure in accordance with the functions and demands of the Strategic Objectives.</p>	<p>The medium-term human resource strategy developed in 2014 was reviewed and updated as part of the skills mix assessment in 2015 (as relevant to the implementation of the Strategic Framework).</p>	6	<p>The revised job profiles have been developed and the posts were either filled or under active recruitment.</p>
<p>Recommendation 4b): to ADG/AG Fully implement the internal Technical Networks, which are key to FAO’s ability to provide technical assistance effectively (this has been planned for years but was</p>	<p>4b) Establish a technical network related to sustainable crop production.</p>	<p>A technical network related to sustainable crop production was established in 2014. Based on lessons learned it was revised in 2015. It is known as the technical network on sustainable crop production and agroecology.</p>	5	<p>The technical network has grown to more than 160 members across the Organization. It serves to promote information exchange and knowledge sharing.</p>

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not yet completed). This must be done with appropriate levels of management and resources, to ensure: (i) the development of “communities of practice” around the priority disciplinary fields, in order to enable the innovative and effective implementation of the new vision; and (ii) the continued contribution of both Regular Programme and project staff to the buildup of the organization’s knowledge capital.				
<p>Recommendation 4c): to ADG/AG</p> <p>One approach could be to build an external group of world experts in the areas of FAO’s mandate in crops, which, on a contracted semi-permanent basis, provide conceptual and technical inputs as needed. An alternative method could also be considered for provision of continuous expert input to FAO’s own understaffed divisions.</p>	<p>4c) Management is prepared to explore innovative ways to strengthen its technical capacities, including through strengthening cooperation with external partners such as the CGIAR system (see Recommendation 5c).</p>	<p>FAO has undertaken a major exercise to identify the existing skill mix and core functions of the department. Identified gaps could be filled through cooperation with external partners.</p> <p>In the rice sector development in Africa, FAO has developed a comprehensive Africa Rice development programme in collaboration with AfricaRice.</p>	4	<p>AG is better equipped with the expertise needed to contribute efficiently to SPs and regional initiatives.</p>

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<p>Recommendation 5: FAO should rehabilitate and strengthen its capacity to support national agricultural research, extension and innovation systems. This support is requested and needed, and will help countries improve their capacities to exploit current and new scientific advances emerging from centers of excellence around the world. In doing so FAO should:</p>	<p>Management will address this important issue through:</p>		5	<p>Beginning in 2014-15, the work of the Joint FAO/IAEA Division (including the Agriculture and Biotechnology Laboratories) and the resources of IAEA for food and agriculture have been better integrated with those of the SP teams, and the main delivery mechanisms and, in particular, the country programming frameworks and Regional Initiatives. This was facilitated through FPMIS, which allows for sharing information while work planning.</p> <p>In 2014-15, the Joint Division coordinated research projects with a total of 219 participants from 10-15 National Agricultural Research Systems (NARS) in each project.</p> <p>Over the course of the 2016-17 biennium, and more interchanges of the Joint Division with decentralized offices, it is expected that these resources will be better integrated and provide more direct contributions to the Strategic Framework.</p>

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<p>Recommendation 5a): to AG/AGE Make better use of the Joint FAO/IAEA Division on Nuclear Technologies in Food and Agriculture.</p>	<p>5a) Plan how to exploit the Joint Division's capacity to support: (i) the ecosystems services approach, in particular, and the development of innovative sustainable practices and approaches, in general; and (ii) the strengthening of national innovation systems.</p>	<p>5a) As a result of an increased focus on cross-divisional/multidisciplinary actions through the Strategic Programmes and with the decentralized offices, the Joint Division has improved its capacity to support these practices, services and approaches.</p>		
<p>Recommendation 5b): to DDN/OPC/AGP Give high priority to playing an active role in the design of the G-20 sponsored Tropical Agriculture Platform (TAP), for which it provides the Secretariat.</p>	<p>5 b) Continue to administer the TAP Secretariat. Ensure that TAP effectively draws on the expertise of the technical divisions across the Organization.</p>	<p>5b) 1: Progress is monitored in close collaboration with its governance system. Resources under the EU Capacity Development for Agricultural Innovation Systems (CDAIS) project supported the development and implementation of a TAP Action Plan (Jan 2015 to Dec 2018). 2: FAO facilitated a partnership with AGRINATURA – a consortium of 31 European Universities to build capacities for strengthening NARS in developing countries.</p>	4	<p>TAP effectively draws on the expertise resident in the technical divisions across FAO, as well as through other external partners.</p> <p>The CDAIS project offered the opportunity to further expand the capacity development activities at country level.</p>
<p>Recommendation 5c): to DDN/OPC/AG/TC Seek to reinvigorate other partnerships with donors and bilateral agencies in support of</p>	<p>5c) Promote the establishment of the Integrated Innovation Investment Facility for Agricultural</p>	<p>5c) 1: The Integrated Facility for Agricultural Growth is being developed by GFAR and IFAD.</p>	5	<p>IFAD is reviewing ways in which its loan needs' identification process can take better account of, and</p>

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<p>national agricultural research, extension and innovation systems.</p> <p>The team recognizes that this recommendation has implications on the priorities through which FAO determines allocation of its resources. However, the team feels the high importance accorded by members to this area of work in particular should lead to a thorough reconsideration by the Committee on Agriculture and the other FAO Governing Bodies.</p>	<p>Growth (IFAD, GFAR, other partners).</p> <p>Seek to increase South-South Cooperation in this area.</p>	<p>Discussions with IFAD brought a new emphasis on engagement with loan development processes in focus countries. This will ensure agrifood innovation is financed as an integral part of development loans.</p> <p>5c) 2: The Facility approach continues to be pursued through partners in the G20 Agricultural Chief Scientists (MACS) and high-level national support requests are being actively discussed with bilateral funding partners.</p> <p>5c) 3: The need for better resourcing of agricultural innovation and the role of the Facility has been articulated with the Bureau of the Committee on Agriculture, and is now being developed to foster awareness among FAO member countries regarding the need to resource and strengthen their agricultural innovation systems, and the role that FAO plays in this.</p> <p>5c) 4: GFAR co-sponsored a major international meeting on agrifood innovation investment at the Asia Pacific Association of Agricultural Research Institutions (APAARI) in 2015, and this is being taken forward into a review of innovation investments and impacts in the Third Global Conference on Agricultural Research for Development (GCARD3).</p>	<p></p>	<p>incorporate agrifood innovation. The GCARD3 process has set out investment needs in Asia-Pacific and will identify collective actions needed for national and international innovation to have greater development impact.</p>

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		5c) 5: Technical and financial support from GFAR helped the TAP establish effective capacity development partnerships with a wide range of innovation actors.		
<p>Recommendation 6: to AG/DDN/OCP/DOs</p> <p>FAO must be more proactive in its relations and interaction with CGIAR, and in developing a strategic partnership. FAO must work both to participate actively in the priority setting process of CGIAR and vice-versa, to give CGIAR a voice in FAO's priority setting.</p> <p>Where there is consensus on the products of CG research, FAO would provide the needed support to translate the Centres' products into delivery of development outcomes, such as through support to countries in the creation of an enabling environment for uptake, including necessary piloting and upscaling of selected new technological responses as they become available.</p>	<p>Strengthening linkages between FAO's Strategic Objectives and CGIAR Research Programmes (CRPs).</p> <p>Three areas of collaboration have been identified: i) gender; ii) metrics; iii) upscaling of proven technologies.</p> <p>Focal points have been identified and discussions are ongoing to substantiate collaboration on these themes.</p>	<p>The ADG-AG and the head of the Research and Extension unit are FAO's representatives to the CGIAR Fund Council. They interact regularly to ensure effective alignment between FAO's Strategic Programmes and the CRP portfolio.</p> <p>Efforts are underway to capture the most relevant proven sustainable CGIAR technologies and practices and publicize them through the technologies and practices for small agricultural producers (TECA) platform.</p>	5	<p>Greater involvement of FAO in the CGIAR governance.</p> <p>Greater influence in the design and articulation of the new CGIAR CRP Portfolio (2017-2022).</p> <p>Increased collaboration envisioned with the CGIAR Independent Science and Partnership Council (ISPC), Independent Evaluation Arrangement (IEA) as well as FO/CO (future System Office) to monitor key metrics such as quality of science, gender, etc.</p>
<p>Recommendation 7: to DDN</p> <p>In beginning implementation of the reviewed Strategic Framework, it is recommended that FAO carry out</p>	<p>The 24th session of the Committee on Agriculture (September 2014) will consider the topic of</p>	<p>The 24th session of COAG discussed the paper and made the following recommendations:</p>	4	<p>Greater involvement of FAO in sustainable food systems work will contribute to the SDGs.</p>

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<p>an exercise to highlight the role of crop production as a contributor to the respective Strategic Objectives outcomes; address the coherence of crop interventions within and between SOs; and to explore the intervention logic of the collective crop production contributions of the SOs towards the delivery of FAO's Global Goals. Such an effort is essential not only to inform prioritization and intervention design in crops work and to support evaluation and impact assessment, but also, with a longer term perspective, to help better define the technical capacities which the organization will need to retain or develop.</p>	<p>Sustainable Production Intensification and Sustainable Food Systems.</p> <p>Communication materials, including progress reports on the implementation of the Strategic Framework, will be reviewed to ensure that the importance of the balance between productivity and sustainability is highlighted.</p>	<p>a) support FAO's work on local adaptation of Sustainable Production Intensification practices, value chain and methodologies to assess and reduce food losses and waste, in support of sustainable food systems;</p> <p>b) encourage FAO to integrate further its work on the sustainability of food systems, including the development of a programme on sustainable food systems to be integrated in the Ten-Year Framework of Programmes on Sustainable Consumption and Production (10YFP-SCP), and in accordance with the rules governing this Framework.</p>	<p>*</p>	<p>The PIR 2014-15 (C 2017/8) showed that five out of six outcome targets under SP2 (2.1 and 2.3), linked to increasing and improving agricultural sector production in a sustainable manner, had been met or exceeded.</p> <p>The reformulation of SP2's Regional Initiative in Africa (2016-2017) to focus on integrated production systems for cassava, maize and rice, reflects a balance between productivity and sustainability. FAO has undertaken a communications initiative, that will <i>inter alia</i> highlight the contribution of sustainable crop production across the different SPs.</p>

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<p>Recommendation 8: to SO2 Core Team, Other SOCs, DDN</p> <p>Since the Reviewed Strategic Framework recognizes and indeed emphasizes that a transition is needed toward widespread adoption of full sustainability as a central condition for agricultural development, there is a critical need to define key sequential changes and corresponding interventions required to accompany this transition. This includes identifying the key entry points (technical, institutional, policy) at different stages of the transition, and for different types of farmers and farming systems (e.g. subsistence versus market-linked), as well as forecasting the likely impact of different entry points and types of interventions, and the trade-offs and the costs and benefits of the different options.</p>	<p>Strategic Objective 2 has defined a major area of work on <i>Building a common vision for sustainable food and agriculture</i>. The outcome will help guide policy-makers, development partners and researchers in managing the transition from a crop-focused agenda to one which seeks to embrace multi-sectoral, ecosystems and landscape approaches underpinned by principles of social, economic and environmental sustainability.</p>	<p>SP2 established a major area of work on building a common vision for sustainable food and agriculture (SFA) in 2014-15. This was composed of two work streams: a) support to countries; and b) mainstreaming SFA.</p> <p>Under a) three countries were actively supported in strengthening cross-sectoral governance towards sustainability.</p> <p>Under b) events and side-events were held at major events, including Council and Technical Committees, and global events such as the World Forestry Congress.</p> <p>Action was also taken to integrate SFA into the indicators for Sustainable Development Goals.</p>	6	<p>Countries supported have integrated SFA principles, and strengthened cross-sector policy dialogues and policy action on sustainability.</p> <p>FAO parent bodies welcomed and supported the action, resulting in a consideration in FAO Technical Committees in 2016 (COFI, COFO and COAG).</p> <p>Actions also led to the development of SDG indicator proposals in support of Recommendation 8.</p> <p>The PWB 2016-17 further strengthened SFA action, with reinforced activities to mainstream SFA through all delivery mechanisms of SP2, enhancing support to countries on the topic.</p>

* **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