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# PROGRAMME COMMITTEE

**Hundred and Thirty-eighth Session**

**Rome, 20-24 May 2024**

**Follow-up report on Joint evaluation of collaboration among the United Nations Rome-based Agencies**

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

Mr Maurizio Martina  
Deputy Director-General  
Tel: +39 06570 51913  
Email: [DDG-Martina@fao.org](mailto:DDG-Martina@fao.org)

Documents can be consulted at [www.fao.org](http://www.fao.org)

### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- This document presents an update on the progress made in the implementation of the five recommendations of the Joint evaluation of collaboration among the United Nations Rome-based Agencies (RBAs) (Document [PC 133/6](#)).
- Progress has been made in all five recommendations directed to the Managements of the RBAs, including the formulation and signature of the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), closer engagement and alignment with the United Nations Development System (UNDS) at country level, deeper involvement with the United Nations efficiency agenda, and fostering of joint programming where it is cost-effective.
- The new RBA MOU signed in August of 2023, signifies a strategic renewal for cooperation, delineating six thematic areas that underscore the primary focus of the partnership, while also promoting joint initiatives in other areas of mutual interest.
- FAO Management remains committed to continuing its enhanced collaboration with the RBAs, in line with the UNDS repositioning and its broader engagement with the UN system under UN Country Teams (UNCTs) and the United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Frameworks (UNSDCFs).

### GUIDANCE SOUGHT FROM THE PROGRAMME COMMITTEE

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

#### Draft Advice

##### **The Committee:**

- **appreciated the actions taken to implement the evaluation recommendations; and**
- **encouraged the United Nations Rome-based Agencies to continue to enhance collaboration among themselves in the context of the United Nations Development System (UNDS) repositioning.**

## I. Background

1. Management welcomes the opportunity to provide information on the progress made in implementing the actions agreed in the Coordinated Response to the Joint evaluation of collaboration among the United Nations Rome-based Agencies (RBAs) (Documents [PC 133/6](#), [PC 133/6 Sup.1](#)).<sup>1</sup>
2. In line with FAO's policy on evaluations, this report provides an update on the implementation of the actions set out in the Coordinated Response. The report has been prepared in close consultation with the Managements of the other two RBAs. The report provides a Management Action Record Scoring (MAR Score) with a six-point scale, in which FAO Management self-assessed the level of adoption and implementation of the recommendations.
3. The overarching message from the Joint evaluation is that RBA collaboration is relevant to the broader United Nations Development System (UNDS) repositioning, as well as to the strategies and mandates of the three agencies, particularly at the country and regional levels. While acknowledging the significant role of RBA collaboration in achieving the shared goals around Sustainable Development Goal 2 (SDG 2), the Joint Evaluation revealed that the results of RBA collaboration have been mixed over time due to a spectrum of enablers and constraints. The Joint evaluation findings underscored the need for a more pragmatic and realistic approach to collaboration, supported by a stronger alignment of RBA collaboration mechanisms and modalities to those of the UNDS repositioning. The Joint evaluation made six recommendations, of which five were addressed to Managements of the three agencies and one was addressed to Members.

## II. Overall progress in the implementation of the accepted recommendations

4. Management found that the Joint evaluation report (Document [PC 133/6](#)) was well formulated, insightful and constructive, concurred with the findings and recommendations presented, and accepted all five recommendations.
5. In terms of implementation, progress in all five recommendations is rated as “good”. In particular, the RBAs have formulated a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), which takes into account the points identified in the Joint Evaluation (Recommendation 1), and which was signed by the Principals of the three agencies in August 2023 in South Sudan.
6. The RBAs have taken a variety of actions to ensure closer engagement with each other and with the rest of the United Nations Development System (UNDS) in the context of the Common Country Analysis (CCA) and the formulation and implementation of UNSDCFs (Recommendations 2 and 3).
7. The RBAs have followed up on all relevant areas of administration in the context of the United Nations efficiency agenda at country level, and also at the headquarters level in Rome (Recommendation 4).
8. Actions have been taken to ensure that RBA country offices are following the United Nations guidelines for collaborative and joint programming established under the oversight of the United Nations Resident Coordinator (UN RC) (Recommendation 5).
9. Recommendation 6 falls under the responsibility of the Members of the RBA Governing Bodies, calling for them to reappraise and adequately resource their position on RBA collaboration.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.fao.org/about/meetings/programme-committee/pc133/documents/en/>

*Follow-up report on Joint evaluation of collaboration among the United Nations Rome-based Agencies – Matrix*

Evaluation Recommendation (a)	Actions agreed in the management response (b)	Description of actions taken, or reasons for actions not taken (c)	MAR score (d) <sup>2</sup>	Impact of, or changes resulted from taken actions (e)
<p><b>Recommendation 1: Update the MOU between the RBAs. Although the current five-year MOU was only signed three years ago, significant changes since then make an update necessary. The updated MOU should include the following elements:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The strategies set out by FAO in its Strategic Framework 2022-2031 and Medium-Term Plan, 2022-2025; in the IFAD12 Results Management Framework 2022-2024; and by WFP in its Strategic Plan, 2022-2026.</li> <li>• Through updating the MOU, the RBAs should reset their strategy for collaboration in a proactive manner, based on the reflections that this evaluation may stimulate, and to move beyond simple reaction to calls for stronger collaboration.</li> <li>• Emphasize the potential benefits of RBA collaboration (RBAC) including through strong performance in various areas of thematic collaboration, and joint promotion of the food systems approach – including follow-up to the Food Systems Summit. The MOU should also</li> </ul>	<p>The RBAs agree to participate in the update of the MOU between the three agencies, as proposed by the Evaluation. In light of their new Strategic Frameworks/Plans, the MOU will build on the comparative advantage of each agency in the humanitarian-development-peace nexus. Each agencies' Senior Management and relevant departments will be engaged in providing input on the content and form of the update to the MOU. As needed, the RBAs will rely on internal consultations with regional and country offices, inter-agency working groups, and external advisory services. Once the MOU will be finalized, the RBA</p>	<p>On 1 August 2023, the Principals of the RBAs signed a new MOU with a five-year term during a joint field visit to South Sudan. The signed document was disseminated to all Members via the respective Gateways of the RBAs and through internal communication channels to all personnel in headquarters and Decentralized Offices.</p> <p>The MOU:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>was developed with input from Senior Management and relevant departments across each agency;</li> <li>recognizes that RBA collaboration is built on a spectrum of work that spans the humanitarian-development-peace nexus;</li> <li>reflects the distinct and well-defined mandates and operational modalities of the three agencies as outlined in the most recent Strategic Frameworks/Plans approved by Members;</li> <li>provides a revised statement on mutual engagement, noting that RBA collaboration is structured by the UNDS repositioning process and the UNSDCF process in coordination with the UN RC, and with due consideration to relevant government strategies and commitments;</li> </ol>	<p>5</p>	<p>The signing of the new MOU signifies another pivotal milestone, providing a clear direction for fostering collaboration among the RBAs across the six thematic priority areas. This has renewed impetus to further join forces and prioritize impact in line with the UNDS realignment.</p> <p>At the global level, the MOU enabled the RBAs to adopt a more flexible and responsive approach to collaboration, leveraging the collective strengths and expertise of the agencies, ensuring that opportunities for impactful collaboration can be created, identified and exploited as they arise. The nature and status of these global collaborations are reported to Members through the RBA Governing Bodies.</p> <p>At the regional and country levels, the signing of the MOU has translated into heightened awareness and enhanced collaborative activities on the ground, encompassing the implementation of joint programmes. This has been further demonstrated by the findings from an FAO internal survey carried out in 2023</p>

<sup>2</sup> The Management Action Record Scoring (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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<p>emphasize that RBAC is not a universally applicable principle: collaboration will only be pursued where it makes clear practical sense to do so, and may often include work with other United Nations entities. While the ‘Rome’ label might be retained for reasons of familiarity, the emphasis should be on the three agencies’ shared commitment to common food security objectives.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A revised statement on ‘mutual engagement’ to explain how RBAC complements and is structured by the United Nations development system reform process and, specifically, the UNSDCF at country level, under the leadership of the United Nations Resident Co-ordinator.</li> <li>• United Nations reforms at regional level, building on the Regional Collaborative Platforms and the implications for regional RBA collaboration, and recognizing the potential contribution of the RBAs to the emerging regional knowledge management hub</li> <li>• In the light of administrative elements of the United Nations reform, the updated MOU should remove its commitments to collaboration on joint corporate services that are covered by the United Nations Business Operations Strategy and other Business Innovation Group initiatives at country level. The MOU should acknowledge that these commitments are</li> </ul>	<p>Principals will send the MOU and a joint communication to all offices worldwide, explaining the MOU and the relationships between their agencies’ mandates.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>e) notes that at the regional level, the RBAs will promote complementarity, including through joint engagement in Regional Collaborative Platforms (RCPs);</li> <li>f) seeks to provide a framework for which the RBAs can ultimately reset their strategies for collaboration and enhance the Parties’ joint contribution towards the 2030 Agenda;</li> <li>g) agrees to enhance collaboration on six priority thematic areas: agrifood systems; nutrition; gender equality and women’s empowerment; resilience building; youth; climate change, environment and biodiversity; and joint corporate services;</li> <li>h) emphasizes that RBA collaboration will only be pursued where it makes clear practical sense;</li> <li>i) commits that unnecessary overlap, perceived and actual competition – including for resources – and duplication of work will be addressed; and</li> <li>j) provides a statement that the development of RBA joint corporate services has essentially been subsumed under UN system-wide enhancements related to the Business Operations Strategy (BOS) and initiatives at country level.</li> </ul>		<p>placing the World Food Programme (WFP) and the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) among the top three UN partners at country level.</p> <p>In line with the repositioning of the UNDS, RBA collaboration at country level now falls under the UNSDCFs (see Recommendations 2 and 3 for examples and evidence), with their own joint results frameworks and indicators which provide the basis for monitoring the contribution and performance of the RBAs.</p> <p>In line with the Joint evaluation conclusion that separate action plans should not be developed (see Recommendation 2, subpoint d); impact will be measured as part of the contribution to the UNSDCF and not specifically through the MOU.</p>

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<p>largely subsumed by the system-wide enhancements to business operations – to which it should commit the RBAs’ support.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Emphasizing the RBAs’ commitments across the humanitarian-development-peace nexus, the updated MOU should clearly state FAO’s commitment and roles in humanitarian response, as well as those of WFP in sustainable development. It should commit all RBAs to work at all levels to clarify and explain the relationships between their mandates; ensure that they do not conflict over roles or compete over resources; and convert competition into collaboration.</li> </ul>				
<p><b>Recommendation 2: Restructure and reinforce the coordination architecture for RBA collaboration within the framework of UNDS reform to ensure that at all levels, the coordination and evaluation of RBAC includes more proactive efforts to develop and disseminate lessons and knowledge about how to optimize collaboration among and beyond the RBAs, about the costs and benefits of RBAC, and about technical experience that can be usefully shared.</b></p> <p>a) The RBAs should retain and strengthen capacity for coordinating RBAC at their headquarters, with financial support from Member States.</p>	<p>The RBAs agree to restructure and reinforce the coordination architecture for RBA collaboration, with the following actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The RBAs will retain and strengthen capacity for co-ordinating RBA Collaboration at their headquarters, as feasible within existing resources, so that in future they can optimize the RBAs’ engagement in and contribution to</li> </ul>	<p>The RBAs have strengthened the structures and processes for collaboration with the framework of the UNDS:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The RBAs have strengthened capacity for coordinating RBA collaboration at their headquarters with a dedicated team in each agency. This also ensures support to the Senior Consultative Group (SCG) which has oversight of the RBAs’ engagement in and contribution to the UNDS repositioning process;</li> <li>The RBAs have appointed focal points in Country and Regional Offices to facilitate and support engagement in the development and implementation of the UNSDCF;</li> <li>Wherever appropriate and feasible, the RBA Country Representatives liaise with each other</li> </ol>	5	<p>Under the UN RC guidance, the RBA Country Offices have actively participated in the negotiation and formulation of 124 UNSDCFs as part of the UNCTs, with close to 90 of those completed in 2022-20/23 after the Joint Evaluation was finalized. The RBAs are contributing to the UN Joint Work Plans, and they will be using UN INFO to capture their contributions to system-wide reporting of UN support and results. The UNSDCFs for Indonesia and Peru represent good examples of RBA collaboration to develop integrated results on food security and agrifood systems.</p>

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<p>The coordination function should in future focus on optimizing the RBAs' engagement in and contribution to the UNDS reform process.</p> <p>b) In each country where it has adequate capacity, each RBA should appoint a focal point whose primary task should be support for and facilitation of RBAs' engagement in the UNSDCF.</p> <p>c) RBA regional offices and hubs should play a stronger role in supporting country offices' redefined collaborative engagement in UNSDCFs through capacity strengthening.</p> <p>d) The RBAs should not continue with a global action plan for their collaboration. Instead, they should jointly monitor and report on their contributions to the overall efforts of the United Nations to achieve SDG 2 through the reformed United Nations development system, through the UN INFO portal.</p> <p>e) The RBAs should monitor the finalization and implementation of their three pilot joint country strategies, assess their value in the context of the UNSDCF, and formally review whether the preparation of more such strategies is warranted.</p>	<p>the United Nations reform process.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The RBAs will encourage the appointment of focal points by country and regional offices, at country and regional levels where possible, and facilitate adequate capacity building to enable engagement in dialogue and discussions on RBA collaboration and where appropriate jointly engage in UNDS processes. This is particularly important for engagement in UNSDCFs.</li> <li>• Identified RBA focal points will be encouraged to proactively develop and disseminate lessons and knowledge about how to optimize collaboration among and beyond the RBAs.</li> <li>• The RBAs will prepare a document with an analysis of the three pilot joint country strategies, lessons learned and</li> </ul>	<p>to jointly consider the main Food Security and Nutrition (FSN) issues facing the country, and how they can collaboratively facilitate and lead the UN Country Teams (UNCTs) efforts in these areas throughout the Common Country Analysis (CCA) and UNSDCF processes;</p> <p>d) The RBAs' regional teams have proactively provided support to develop capacity at country level, and to develop and disseminate lessons and knowledge about how to optimize collaboration among UNCT members in general and specifically between the RBAs; and</p> <p>e) FAO Country Offices are engaging with the UNCT results group and using UN INFO portal upon initiation of their UNSDCF cycle to set their joint work plans under the guidance of the UN RC. Initiated in 2019, the RBAs completed joint country plans in three pilot countries (Colombia, Indonesia and Niger) in 2020-2021. Based on this, and upon further consideration also in the context of the evolving joint programming arrangements, the Managements of the RBAs believe that joint strategies to further the achievement of SDG 2 can be formulated between two or three RBAs when there is mutual benefit and opportunity, and need not be limited to the RBAs, given the need for wider partnerships across the UNDS. On that basis, RBA country teams have engaged in a coordinated manner with UNSDCF processes under the facilitation of the UN RC, and aligned their country programming exercises.</p>		<p>The RBA commitment to this joint collaboration is evidenced by the fact that FAO and WFP are joining efforts with UN Development Coordination Office (UN DCO) to test the feasibility of interoperability between UN entity systems, and UN INFO reduced transaction costs; ensuring data consistency between systems; and fostering integration and innovation.</p>

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	recommendations on whether more such strategies should be prepared.			
<p><b>Recommendation 3: Further embrace the new joint programming mechanisms at the country level and ensure constructive, collaborative RBA engagement with these mechanisms.</b></p> <p>a) The RBAs should develop and deliver consistent guidance to their country offices on:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. jointly preparing to engage in UNSDCF planning processes;</li> <li>ii. jointly contributing to Common Country Analyses and UNSDCF preparation;</li> <li>iii. harmonizing their respective country multiannual plans with each other and with the UNSDCF;</li> <li>iv. jointly participating in UNSDCF implementation under the leadership of the UNRC.</li> </ol> <p>b) Where appropriate and feasible, RBAs should harmonize their resource mobilization efforts with those of the UNRC for the UNSDCF.</p> <p>c) Particularly in countries where they do not all have offices, the RBAs should be more proactive in supporting the UNRC to reinforce collaboration within the United Nations Country Team, and in collaborating with each</p>	<p>RBA Management agrees and will continue to embrace the new joint programming mechanisms at the country level and ensure constructive, collaborative RBA engagement with these mechanisms. This will be accomplished through the following actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The RBAs will ensure, where possible and appropriate, that agency-specific guidance materials would be prepared within the mutual agreed timeline to reflect recommendation 3 and in line with the MOU.</li> <li>• Each RBA will explore ways in which more senior staff can be encouraged to apply for Resident Coordinator posts through evolving career development programmes.</li> </ul>	<p>The Managements of the RBAs at headquarters and decentralized levels have completely embraced the new UN programming mechanisms and ensured collaborative RBA engagement with these mechanisms.</p> <p>a) The RBA Country Offices have fully engaged in the UNDS planning and programming processes at country level, through the CCA and the UNSDCF. The RBAs have engaged locally in the cycle of renewal and implementation of UNSDCFs at country level, and ensured that their own country level strategies and frameworks are fully aligned with the UN processes in timing and in substance.</p> <p>b) Resource mobilization at the country level takes place within the context of the approved UNSDCF, and hence under the overall facilitation of the UN RC, with agencies mobilizing resources for their country plans. Within the country context and where relevant, the RBAs are pursuing resource mobilization for joint actions and programmes that highlight the added value of each of the RBAs (including through the Joint Work Plans).</p> <p>c) The RBA Human Resources functions have been actively engaged in the Resident Coordinator and Humanitarian Coordinator (RC/HC) Talent Pipeline, including offering</p>	5	<p>Country level engagements in the UN processes, are reported for Recommendation 2.</p> <p>With regard to joint resource mobilization, a range of RBA initiatives exist in which two or all three of the RBAs are working together. Some examples of countries where such initiatives are being taken forward include: Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cambodia, Democratic Republic of Congo, Gambia, Guatemala, Lebanon, Malawi, Mali, Mozambique, Myanmar, Philippines, Rwanda, Senegal, Sudan, Uganda.</p> <p>FAO currently has two staff members serving as UN RCs, with an additional five staff members currently in the UN RC/HC Talent Pipeline. In light of the forthcoming retirement of the two FAO staff members currently serving as UN RCs, there is a concerted effort underway to increase participants in the Talent Pipeline.</p>



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<p>other to promote effective action to strengthen food systems and achieve SDG 2.</p> <p>d) The RBAs should engage wherever appropriate and feasible in joint strategic advocacy to country governments about issues related to SDG 2 with the UNRC and other members of the United Nations Country Team.</p> <p>e) The RBAs should encourage more of their senior staff to apply for UNRC positions.</p>		<p>targeted training to senior staff in the UN leadership framework, and in promoting calls from the UN Development Coordination Office (DCO) for expressions of interest to eligible personnel each year.</p>		
<p><b>Recommendation 4: Focus administrative collaboration efforts on further embracing the United Nations efficiency agenda.</b></p> <p>a) Except for those limited areas of administrative collaboration between their three headquarters in Rome that clearly have practical value and cut costs for all the agencies, the RBAs should integrate their efforts at administrative collaboration with the overall United Nations efficiency agenda, specifically the workstreams of the Business Innovation Group, to which they should make a joint, proactive commitment at global, regional and country levels.</p>	<p>RBA Management agrees to continue to focus administrative collaboration efforts within the UN efficiency agenda at country level except for those limited areas of possible administrative collaboration between their three headquarters in Rome. Through UNCTs and Operations Management Teams (OMTs), the RBAs will continue to identify areas for enhanced collaboration through the Business Operations Strategy (BOS) process and the</p>	<p>The RBAs have continued their efforts to align with the United Nations efficiency agenda at various levels, by enhancing administrative collaboration which has resulted in efficiency gains at headquarters and field level.</p> <p>a) Existing RBA collaboration at headquarters level in corporate services is significant and is underpinned by regular contacts between the RBA Directors of the relevant divisions;</p> <p>b) Furthermore, through the Feasibility study on the integration of administrative services among the Rome-based Agencies<sup>3</sup>, released in March 2023, areas of improved collaboration that add value at the respective headquarters level have been identified wherever possible across six common service lines: human resources, finance, logistics, IT, procurement, administration. It is noted that IFAD has unique requirements in financial reporting and</p>	5	<p>At a global level, two Service Level Agreements (SLAs) on UN Fleet and UN Booking Hub are being piloted in selected countries, covering vehicle leasing services, purchase of the “green fleet”, and the UN Booking Hub for passenger mobility services.</p> <p>At country level, the benefits of embracing efficiency initiatives are reported through the dedicated UN INFO platform for Business Operation Strategy (BOS) and Common Premises (CP).</p> <p>In terms of CBO, the UNSDG Efficiency Roadmap expects to reach 50 Common Back Offices (CBOs) by the end of 2024, although progress is slower than hoped for. The UN Development Coordination Office (DCO) has collected lessons learnt from the five pilots which</p>

<sup>3</sup> [JM 2023.1/2](#)

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	consolidation of selected services as defined in the Common Back Office (CBO), Common Premises and Shared Service Centres.	<p>has a financial structure as a credit-rated entity, which preclude its involvement in UN system-wide initiatives in the finance domain;</p> <p>c) Very recent and positive examples of collaboration have occurred across common services, corporate insurance, fleet management, passenger mobility, logistics, travel, and health/medical services. Joint use of office space and utilities are additional recent examples of how the three agencies are further optimizing their resources;</p> <p>d) At the country level, the RBAs have continued to engage in efficiency initiatives as part of Operations Management Teams (OMT) and UNCTs efforts which includes broader listing of entities under UNSDG and the UN Secretariat. A brief overview can be provided as follows:</p> <p>i. Business Operations Strategy (BOS): the collaboration continues with broader interagency engagement, which is not specifically limited to the RBAs but has led to efficiency gains for them. The data for country level efficiency gains, listing of services, benefits, and associated risk and assumptions are available in UN INFO;</p> <p>ii. Common Back Office (CBO): lessons learnt from five pilot countries (Brazil, Jordan, Kenya, United Republic of Tanzania, Viet Nam) are being harvested to inform further steps, considering the specificities of each participating entity;</p>		<p>will be presented to Business Innovations Group (BIG) and High-level Committee on Management (HLCM) for further consideration on the way forward.</p> <p>Detailed information on CBO, Global Shared Services (GSS) and headquarters level efficiencies are reported by the UN DCO with support of Efficiency Reporting TaskTeam. Evidence is available in UN INFO, whilst Quadrennial Comprehensive Policy Review (QCPR) is an over-arching reporting mechanism.</p>

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		<p>iii. Common Premises (CP): FAO engagement in this initiative remains unchanged, as it is based on the government-provided premises, on which FAO reports through the UN INFO platform. FAO joins the common premises in locations outside the capital cities, and especially for project offices and in an emergency context; and</p> <p>iv. Global Shared Services (GSS): FAO and IFAD are users of a number of offered services, with WFP being service provider. Expansion of the services is subject to demand and quality, which is assessed based on the needs at Country Office level.</p> <p>e) RBAs, in common with all other UNSDG entities, share their good practices, such as guidelines, tools, and methodologies, through the respective UNSDG Task Teams.</p>		
<p><b><u>Recommendation 5: In considering the development of joint projects and programmes, assess the costs and benefits of the proposed collaboration and only proceed if the benefits outweigh the costs.</u></b></p> <p>a) The RBAs should jointly prepare simple guidance for assessing the benefits and costs of proposed joint projects and programmes that captures the likely higher transaction costs and potential reputational risks of this type of collaboration, alongside the benefits of joint RBA action.</p>	<p>RBA Management agrees that, in line with QCPR resolution 75/233 paragraph 52, while encouraging joint programming – also requests the UN system to be mindful of potentially increasing transaction costs, fragmentation, unproductive competition and overlap among entities. This will be</p>	<p>Joint UN programming is important in project and programme design. Also, maintaining a strategic relationship among the RBAs as well as other members of UNCTs is essential to achieve the SDGs, through operational mechanisms that aim to enhance collaboration within the broader UN system, avoiding fragmentation and inefficiency. Specific assessments of the costs and benefits associated with engaging in joint programming are conducted on a case-by-case basis by agencies. Existing UN Joint Programmes and UN to UN Partnership Agreements support this broad approach, reflecting the repositioning of the UN development system. The effectiveness of current guidance and support on UN Joint Programmes is</p>	5	<p>As already reported to the 174th Session of the FAO Council in December 2023, the RBAs have had success in establishing joint programmes with a range of UN partners, as well as each other. The potential for expansion and diversification of such collaborations is being reinforced by adoption of additional instruments at agency level and across the UNDS.</p>

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b) The RBAs should streamline inter-agency administrative arrangements and charges, as well as procedures for the delegation of authority to country level where feasible and appropriate, in order to reduce some of the transaction costs of joint projects and programmes	<p>accomplished through the following actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The RBAs' focal points will support country offices as needed to decide when and how to design joint projects that are based on synergies, complementarities, and assurance that the impact/benefits largely outweigh the costs, and the most appropriate modality to engage.</li> <li>• Where feasible and appropriate, the RBAs will explore streamlining inter-agency administrative arrangements and charges, as well as procedures for the delegation of authority to country level.</li> </ul>	evident in the <a href="#">Update on FAO's collaboration with other UN system entities</a> report <sup>4</sup> presented to the 174th Session of the FAO Council in December 2023, particularly in the summary of FAO's primary UN system partners at the country level (Figure 2), where WFP and IFAD were two of the three most frequent partners. Furthermore, FAO is currently exploring the possibility of broadening a streamlined instrument for accepting small ad hoc contributions from UN agencies (as an update to Administrative Circular 2016/03), which would support further UN inter-agency collaboration including among the RBAs and reduce associated transaction costs. Finally, FAO had also updated and streamlined internal guidance to promote and facilitate joint UN programming since the Joint Evaluation recommendation was issued.		
<b>Recommendation 6: The Member States of the RBA Governing Bodies should reappraise and adequately resource their position on RBA collaboration.</b>	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a

<sup>4</sup> [CL 174/12](#)

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<p>Through their various representative RBA governance structures, the Member States should confirm to the RBAs that they:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• recognize that RBA collaboration is an important objective in some circumstances but not all;</li> <li>• recognize that RBA collaboration should be pursued within the framework of reformed United Nations co-ordination at country level;</li> <li>• recognize that RBA collaboration on joint corporate services should largely comprise proactive commitment to the overall United Nations efficiency agenda, rather than administrative harmonization and efficiency initiatives focused on the RBAs only;</li> <li>• will give priority to resourcing collaborative RBA action on the principles set out above, to be reflected in the updated MOU that they should endorse.</li> </ul>				