1. Strategic relevance: To what extent has the formulation and implementation of the Strategy responded to global development

priorities and the needs

provided strategic direction

and guidance to FAO units?

of FAO Members and

2. Effectiveness and

contribution to results:

partnerships with CSOs

contributed to FAO's

and country level?

To what extent have FAO's

Strategic Framework results

and to results at regional

FINDINGS

- 1. At decentralized level FAO' partnerships with CSOs are guided by the local context and Member priorities, but not well reflected in CPFs.
- 2. The Strategy reaffirms FAO's intention to build upon its long-standing collaborations with CSOs, providing a framework for partnerships in support to FAO's mandate.
- 3. FAO promoted greater participation of CSOs in global policy discussions, regional and national consultations and multi-stakeholder mechanisms, and international forums associated with the Organization's mandate.
- 4. While FAO's Strategy has remained relevant in view of global commitments, emerging development priorities and the 2030 Agenda, gaps remain in the systematic assessment of the impact and contributions of CSO partnerships.
- 5. There are noteworthy CSO partnership at country level which established or strengthened national platforms for multi-stakeholder policy dialogue, allowing CSOs to participate more actively in policymaking.
- 6. Despite CPFs being the main mechanism for planning partnerships at country level, most CSO collaborations are formed based on specific project needs, generally through service-delivery arrangements.
- 7. Partnerships that supported the implementation of the VGGTs have offered an effective avenue for greater civil-society engagement at country level.
- 8. Overall, results arising from CSO partnerships are not directly linked to the Strategy, but to the specific needs of FAO programmes. However there are cases of partnerships formed thanks to a corporate drive towards CSO engagement.
- 9. Most notable achievements resulted from partnerships in field-programme implementation and policy dialogue, albeit mostly as one-time engagements with limited sustainability of results.
- 10. The limitations to further engagement with CSOs at country level stem from country context, FAO's positioning as a primarily government-oriented organization and the limited resources available to FAO offices to proactively seek out new partnerships.
- 11. Partnerships with CSOs have largely resulted in mutual benefits, as envisaged by the Strategy, adding value to FAO programs and building capacities and networks for CSOs.
- 3. Cross cutting themes: To what extent are crosscutting issues (governance, gender, nutrition and climate change), effectively integrated into Strategy's design and implementation?
- 15. In terms of public discourse on governance-related issues, FAO's Basic Texts provide mechanisms for the engagement of non-state actors, including CSOs.
- 16. Climate-change adaptation and resilience considerations are integrated into partnerships with an explicit focus on promoting environmental sustainability.
- 17. Effective gender mainstreaming has been demonstrated to some extent in the design and implementation of the partnership initiatives developed.
- 19. Nutrition considerations have not been well-integrated in partnerships, apart from few initiatives specifically targeting nutrition-related issues.
- 4. Efficiency of partnership development modalities: Do the Strategy and its implementation mechanisms provide a coherent framework for promoting CSO partnerships?
- 12. FAO's risk management mechanisms, due diligence and associated processes have served the purpose of maintaining FAO's neutrality, independence and impartiality, but they are perceived to be cumbersome, lengthy and restrictive, limiting the number of partnerships.
- 13. Collaboration with the diverse organizations included in FAO's definition of Civil Society has not been accompanied by sufficient clarity on taxonomy, principles of engagement, roles and the scope of demand-based engagement.
- 14. The challenges in establishing collaborations and partnerships between FAO, its Members and civil society lie in limiting policies, time-consuming and complex processes, inconsistent procedures and reactive, rather than strategic approaches.
- 18. The majority of partnerships with CSOs, particularly at country level, are not focused on long-term relationship-building, partly due to limited planning, a lack of sufficient knowledge management and guidance on capitalizing on and nurturing partnerships.

CONCLUSIONS

1. The Strategy remains a relevant foundation for engagement with civil society, and despite the limited number of formalized partnerships, there is a trend towards greater collaboration with CSOs, particularly at country level. FAO would benefit from capitalizing on its partnerships to guide its units towards strategic, long-term engagements, to achieve the SDGs.

1. The Strategy should continue to serve as a framework for FAO's engagement with civil society. Technical Divisions and decentralized offices should should undertake mapping of potential partnership opportunities.

RECOMMENDATIONS

2. Most of FAO's partnerships with CSOs have not been strategically planned, with minimal integration into FAO programmes and workplans.

CSOs can potentially be long term and strategic partners, rather than short term service providers.

2. FAO should expand its engagement in multistakeholder partnership networks beyond bilateral partnership agreements. At country level, the UNSDCF can be an opportunity to do so.

- 3. Partnership development efforts are not underpinned by an effective guidance and knowledge-management system that could serve as an organizational hub for best practices to partnership development and collaboration.
- 4. FAO's models, instruments and procedures for partnership development do not foster strategic, demand-based engagement with CSOs.
- 4. FAO should improve its assessment of the value and impact of ongoing and past partnerships and draw lessons for any necessary updates to the Strategy implementation.
- 3. FAO should streamline its processes and revisit its instruments for engaging with CSOs. Potential solutions may include a one-stop-shop portal for perspective partners, adequate resources allocated to partenship development, and changes to its partnerhip tools.

RATING CRITERIA		
Assessment of the evaluation questions	Potential impact	Urgency (years)
Negative	High	<0.5
Mixed	Medium	0.5-1
Positive	Low	1-2

CPFs Country Programming Frameworks

CSOs Civil Society Organizations

SDGs Sustainable Development Goals

UNSDCF United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework

VGGTs Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land, Fisheries and Forests in the Context of National Food Security