

Project Evaluation Series

**Cluster evaluation of
“Establishing a Hunger-free Initiative for
West Africa”
and
“Mainstreaming Nutrition in CAADP and
Agriculture Policies and Programmes in
Sub-Saharan Africa”**

**Project codes: GCP/RAF/476/GER
and GCP/RAF/477/GER**

Annex 1. Contribution to the Evaluation of FAO Nutrition Strategy

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1. Given the ongoing evaluation of the FAO Nutrition Strategy the below points are explicitly provided here to contribute to the reflections of that evaluation, from the perspective of GER 476 & 477's understanding and learning:
 - i. Structured support to countries - The projects are supporting countries and regions to deliver on their nutrition commitments. However, the lack of a structured framework and approach to facilitate change, define capacities and respective support needs, and a lack of internal lobby and political engagement, make the projects less effective and successful.
 - ii. Leadership of FAO – while it is FAOs mandate to promote nutrition through food systems, the organisation is not using its expertise and vast experience and action to position and promote its achievements. The project vs program vision, lack of political engagement, lack of local nutrition capacity and presence, lack of effective communication and marketing around activities and achievements are hampering a stronger recognition and leadership of FAO in this sector. These aspects are critical given the congested and competitive space of nutrition and should be addressed on organisational level, rather than project level.
 - iii. Partnerships and coordination – FAO has very strong and good relationships with regional and national government structures and institutions. In the majority of instances FAO has been able to mobilize and support coordination and partnerships successfully. In some instances, FAO was engaged in mobilisation and kick starting the process, but then dropped out due to various issues, i.e. a lack of country priority, lack of funding or shift in resource priorities. For example, in Namibia, FAO was requested by the MoH to support the development of the Nutrition Policy, which FAO did successfully- develop the policy and support coordination. This was facilitated through a short term consultant support. Unfortunately now, at a time when the nutrition policy is ready to be moved forward for implementation, FAO does not have nutrition staff in country and is by-passed for its efforts and engagement. This is a missed opportunity and does not align with its SF/SO and NS.
 - iv. Appropriateness of FAO's organisational set-up – as mentioned above, FAO has not been able to translate the SF/ SO1 and NS global vision into a regional and sub-regional vision and approach. This has affected the implementation and success of GER 454, 476 & 477, as well as SPA 435. To establish a coordinated and long term vision for this crucial technical assistance work on nutrition in the region and sub-region, it is essential to ensure coherent implementation, optimisation of resources and sustainable success. The management of different projects supporting agriculture policy work in West Africa, as separate projects, rather than a large program, have reduced the opportunities for success across the region. Lack of dedicated resources for the coordination of the sub-regional projects has not allowed the effective linkages of these projects from the beginning of their implementation. Additionally, the presence of nutrition dedicated staff in FAO country and regional offices, albeit big strides since 2010, is still weak in light of its given mandate and strategic focus, as well as competitive agencies' capacity on the same topic. Strategic priorities like nutrition deserve dedicated resources, rather than delegated focal point structures. Due to a lack of capacity on country level, continued engagement in nutrition

action and reputation of mandate and relevance are challenged by other actors in this crowded space.

- v. Communication and Visibility – as mentioned above there is generally a lack of knowledge and understanding of FAO's strategic and normative work on nutrition. In addition to a continued presence of nutrition capacity, the communication and marketing around FAOs' nutrition work should be addressed. It is clear that too many stakeholders and actors in the space still don't understand why MoH has reached out to FAO and not UNICEF, or why FAO would work on food security rather than WFP. This is crucial to FAO's success to supporting countries and regions with nutrition policy, and being recognised as a leader, as well as for the achievement of its own strategy.

