

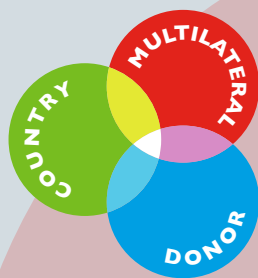
# MOPAN

Multilateral Organisation  
Performance Assessment Network

## **Synthesis report**

**Food and Agriculture  
Organization of the  
United Nations (FAO)**

2014



MOPAN

## Preface

The Multilateral Organisation Performance Assessment Network (MOPAN) is a network of donor countries with a common interest in assessing the organisational effectiveness of multilateral organisations and their measurement and reporting on development and/or humanitarian results. MOPAN was established in 2002 in response to international forums on aid effectiveness and calls for greater donor harmonisation and co-ordination.

In 2014, MOPAN is made up of 19 donor countries: Australia, Austria, Belgium, Canada, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Ireland, Japan, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Norway, the Republic of Korea, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, the United Kingdom, and the United States. For more information on MOPAN and to access previous assessment reports, please visit the MOPAN website ([www.mopanonline.org](http://www.mopanonline.org)).

Each year MOPAN carries out assessments of several multilateral organisations based on criteria agreed by MOPAN members. Its approach has evolved over the years, and since 2010 has been based on a survey of key stakeholders and a review of documents of multilateral organisations. MOPAN assessments provide a snapshot of four dimensions of organisational effectiveness (strategic management, operational management, relationship management, and knowledge management). In 2013, MOPAN integrated a component to examine the evidence of achievement of development and/or humanitarian results to complement the assessment of organisational effectiveness.

### MOPAN 2014

In 2014, MOPAN assessed the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), and the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women). MOPAN Institutional Leads, i.e. the members responsible for representing the network, liaised with the organisations throughout the assessment process. MOPAN Country Leads monitored the process in each country where the survey was undertaken and ensured the success of the survey.

#### MOPAN Institutional Leads

Norway and Korea

Denmark

Canada and United States

Spain and The Netherlands

#### MOPAN Country Leads

United States

Switzerland

France and Belgium

Germany

Finland and United States

Ireland

#### Multilateral organisation

Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO)

United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA)

United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)

United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women)

#### Countries

Bangladesh

Cambodia

Democratic Republic of Congo

Ecuador

Kenya

Tanzania

## Acknowledgements

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We thank all participants in the MOPAN 2014 assessment of FAO. FAO's senior management and staff made valuable contributions throughout the assessment process. They reviewed and provided input to the indicators, organised and participated in interviews, provided key documents, identified the partners to be included in the survey, and provided feedback on draft reports. The Office of the Deputy Director – General played an invaluable role as Focal Point for the assessment process. Survey respondents took time to contribute their insights through the survey. The MOPAN Institutional Leads, Norway and Korea, liaised with FAO throughout the assessment and reporting process. The MOPAN Country Leads oversaw the survey planning process in the field. Consultants in each country provided vital in-country support by following up with country-level survey respondents to enhance survey response rates.

### **Roles of authors and the MOPAN Secretariat**

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The MOPAN Chair was held by France in 2014 and worked in close co-operation with the MOPAN Technical Working Group to launch and manage the survey. The MOPAN Secretariat, established at the OECD in April 2013, oversaw all related tasks.

MOPAN developed the key performance and micro-indicators, designed the survey methodology, co-ordinated the preparation of the lists of survey respondents, and approved the final survey questionnaire for each agency. MOPAN also directed the approach to the document review and oversaw the design, structure, tone, and content of the institutional reports.

Universalialia and Epinion developed the survey instrument and carried out the survey and statistical data analysis. Universalialia carried out the document review, conducted the interviews with multilateral organisation staff at headquarters and country levels, analysed the data and wrote the institutional reports. Epinion is a Danish market research company that conducts specially designed studies for public and private organisations based on data collected among an organisation's employees, members, customers, partners, and other sources. (Website: [www.epinion.dk](http://www.epinion.dk))

Universalialia Management Group is a Canadian consulting firm established in 1980 that specialises in evaluation and monitoring for international development. Universalialia has made significant contributions to identifying best practices and developing tools in the fields of organisational assessment; planning, monitoring, and evaluation; results-based management; and capacity building. (Website: [www.universalialia.com](http://www.universalialia.com))

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## Acronyms

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ADG-ES	Assistant Director-General of the Economic and Social Development Department
CAP	Consolidated Appeals Process
CERF	Central Emergency Response Fund
CFS	Committee on World Food Security
CGIAR	Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research
CPF	Country Programming Framework
CPMB	Corporate Programme Monitoring Board
CSA	Climate-Smart Agriculture
DAC	Development Assistance Committee
DG	Director-General
DRC	Democratic Republic of Congo
ECP LP	Effective Country Programming Learning Programme
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
FAOR	FAO Representative
FNSARD	Food And Nutrition Security, Agriculture And Rural Development
FPMIS	Field Programme Management Information System
FSC	Food Security Cluster
FSCC	Food Security Cluster Co-ordination
FSIN	Food Security Information Network
GJP	Generic Job Profiles
GRMS	Global Resource Management System
GSP	Governance Support Team
HACT	Harmonised Approach to Cash Transfers
HRBA	Human Rights-Based Approaches
IASC	Inter-Agency Standing Committee
IEE	Independent External Evaluation
IER	Initial Environmental Review
IFAD	International Fund for Agricultural Development
IFPRI	International Food Policy Research Institute
IPA	Immediate Plan of Action
IPPC	International Plant Protection Convention
IPSAS	International Public Sector Accounting Standards
ISA	International Standards on Auditing
KPI	Key Performance Indicator
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MAC	Management Assessment Center
MAR	Management Action Records
MDG	Millennium Development Goals
MI	Micro-Indicator
MO	Multilateral Organisation
MOPAN	Multilateral Organisation Performance Assessment Network
MTP	Medium-Term Plan
NMTPF	National Medium-term Priority Framework

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OECD-DAC	Development Assistance Committee of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
OED	Office of Evaluation
OPC	Office for Partnerships, Advocacy and Capacity Development
OR	Organisational Results
OSD	Office of Support to Decentralization
OSP	Office of Strategy, Planning and Resources Management
PEMS	Performance Evaluation and Management System
PIR	Programme Implementation Report
PIRES	Programme Planning, Implementation Reporting and Evaluation Support System
PWB	Programme of Work and Budget
QCPR	Quadrennial Comprehensive Policy Review
RBM	Results Based Management
RMMS	Resource Mobilization and Management Strategy
RO	Regional Office
SFERA	Special Fund for Emergency and Rehabilitation Activities
SMART	Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Realistic and Timely
SO	Strategic Objective
SOFA	State of World Fisheries and Aquaculture
SOFIA	World Fisheries and Aquaculture
SOFO	State of the World's Forests
SOLAW	State of the World's Land and Water Resources for Food and Agriculture
SRO	Sub-regional Office
TCE	Emergency Operations and Rehabilitation Division
TCP	Technical Cooperation Programme
UN	United Nations
UNDAF	United Nations Development Assistance Framework
UNDAP	United Nations Development Assistance Plan
UNEG	United Nations Evaluation Group
UN-REDD	The United Nations Collaborative Programme on Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation in Developing Countries
UN-SWAP	UN System-wide Action Plan on Gender Equality
WFP	World Food Programme

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## Executive summary

This report presents the findings of an assessment of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) conducted by the Multilateral Organisation Performance Assessment Network (MOPAN). MOPAN reports provide an assessment of four dimensions of organisational effectiveness (strategic management, operational management, relationship management, and knowledge management), an assessment of the evidence of the organisation's relevance and development results, and snapshots of FAO performance in each of the six countries included in the survey.

FAO is a specialised United Nations agency that envisions “A world free from hunger and malnutrition where food and agriculture contribute to improving the living standards of all, especially the poorest, in an economically, socially and environmentally sustainable manner”.

FAO's mandate includes normative work, development assistance and emergency support to governments. Its work covers seven broad core functions, which include (i) normative and standard-setting work, (ii) collection, analysis and sharing of data and information, (iii) support and promotion of policy dialogue at global, regional and country levels, (iv) capacity building, (v) encouraging knowledge and technology uptake, (vi) facilitating partnerships and (vii) advocacy and communication. With operations in more than 130 countries, FAO's field programme involves development and emergency/rehabilitation programming. Since 2008, FAO has been engaged in a two-step series of wide-ranging and deep-rooted reforms, consisting of: 1) an Immediate Plan of Action (IPA) from 2009 to 2012 building on the findings and recommendations of the 2007 Independent External Evaluation (IEE) of FAO, and 2) the “transformative changes” introduced by the Director-General. Together, these reforms have touched upon almost all aspects of FAO's work and have included: the introduction of results-based management across the organisation; increased decentralisation and empowerment of regional, sub-regional and country offices; reinforced institutional capacities in support of a new organisational structure; strengthened partnerships with civil society, the private sector and research and development organisations; increased support for South-South co-operation; a heightened focus on results, particularly at the country level; the integration of FAO's emergency and development work; and a range of reforms related to human resource management, including substantial changes in the leadership of FAO's country offices. A new Strategic Framework was agreed in 2013, based on five strategic objectives (reduced from 11 previously). This was accompanied by a corresponding results framework that includes indicators for both broader development outcomes in countries and FAO results, and the introduction of several practices and systems across the organisation to support its implementation. As the new strategic framework and results framework were introduced in early 2014, it was too early for the MOPAN assessment to examine the effects of these new approaches on FAO impact, results, or overall organisational effectiveness.

### MOPAN assessment

In 2014, MOPAN assessed FAO based on information collected through a survey of key stakeholders, document review, and interviews with FAO staff. The survey respondents included FAO's direct partners and peer organisations, as well as MOPAN donors based in-country and at headquarters. Six countries were included in the MOPAN survey of FAO: Bangladesh, Cambodia, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Ecuador, Kenya and Tanzania. A total of 300 respondents participated in the survey (52 MOPAN donors based at headquarters, 23 MOPAN donors based in-country, 175 direct partners, and 50 representatives of peer organisations). The document review examined 425 documents including publicly available corporate documents and internal country programming and reporting documents from all six countries.

The assessment team interviewed 65 FAO staff members (48 at FAO headquarters, 12 Representatives / Assistant Representatives in country offices, 2 sub-regional coordinators, and 3 Assistant Directors-General/Regional Representatives).

As a specialised agency, FAO has an important normative mandate. While this mandate was considered throughout the assessment to the extent possible, the MOPAN methodology is more focused on operations at the country level and the indicators are not all well-suited to assess FAO's normative role. This is noted as a limitation of the assignment. Since the MOPAN assessment of FAO in 2011, the organisation has been in a very dynamic period of ongoing reform; these changes are noted wherever possible in the main findings of the institutional assessment of FAO which are summarised below.

## Key Findings

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### Strategic management

MOPAN established five key performance indicators to assess the extent to which an organisation's leadership and strategy helps the organisation manage for results.

FAO has taken concrete measures and demonstrated strong executive leadership to instil a results-oriented culture at both the organisational and country level. Since the 2011 MOPAN assessment, FAO has sharpened its strategic focus in the reviewed Strategic Framework (2010-2019) by reducing the number of strategic objectives and organisational results and closely aligning them with its core mandate and comparative advantage. It has adopted gender equality and governance as cross-cutting themes to be mainstreamed across all five strategic objectives and has integrated environmental practices and human rights-based approaches in its programming. Moreover, FAO is the only specialised UN agency that has acted both to align its planning cycle with the Quadrennial Comprehensive Policy Review (QCPR) and report on QCPR to its Governing Bodies. FAO is completing the transition from the former National Medium-Term Priority Frameworks (NMTPF) to results-based Country Programming Frameworks (CPF) and FAO staff and partners find this useful for setting country-level priorities.

Notwithstanding FAO's leadership in instituting results-based management across the organisation, this is still a work-in-progress. The assessment team found that there are still weaknesses in RBM and that staff knowledge of RBM varies at both decentralised offices and headquarters. More training is needed to increase staff understanding of results, especially at outcome and impact levels. FAO is currently identifying gaps in RBM capacities through a stock-taking exercise and will address them through training, guidelines and support. In 2014, FAO has worked to sharpen corporate indicators, methodologies for reporting on results, and quality assurance mechanisms.

### Operational management

MOPAN established eight key performance indicators to determine if an organisation manages operations in a way that is performance-oriented, thus ensuring organisational accountability for resources and results.

FAO has refined the criteria for allocating assessed contributions that flow through the Technical Cooperation Programme and processes to attribute voluntary contributions to strategic priorities, though such criteria may still be unknown to external stakeholders.

FAO's shift to results-based management is beginning to affect budgeting and reporting on expenditures.

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While progress on results-based budgeting has been made, the corporate budgets and reports presented to the Governing Bodies do not yet provide a complete picture of how resources are used to achieve organisational outputs and outcomes.

FAO has sound practices and systems in place at corporate level for financial accountability. In line with FAO's Financial Regulations, external financial audits that meet International Standards on Auditing (ISA) are performed every two years by the appointed External Auditor. Beginning in 2014, FAO's annual financial statements are in compliance with the International Public Sector Accounting Standards (IPSAS), the agreed standard for all UN organisations. Decentralisation has led to increased administrative and financial management responsibilities in decentralised offices, where there are some internal control weaknesses, especially in smaller offices with more limited capacities. It is expected that the roll-out of FAO's new Global Resource Management System (GRMS) in 2012-13, accompanied by extensive in-country training, will have a positive impact on financial management across the organisation, and will ensure more integrated, comprehensive and timely financial resources management.

FAO systematically uses evaluation findings to revise corporate-level policies and strategies, and tracks the implementation of evaluation recommendations reported to the Governing Bodies. There are clear procedures in place for incorporating performance information in new project design and for monitoring during project implementation. There is less evidence that performance information is used to plan country-level programming or for dealing proactively with poorly performing initiatives.

In terms of human resources management, FAO has made significant improvements overall, which has notably led to strengthened leadership of FAO Representatives across the organisation, and it is currently addressing the shortcomings identified in a 2014 informal internal review of its Performance Evaluation and Management System (PEMS). In 2015, FAO will start implementing a revised performance management policy framework, in addition to new rebuttal procedures and policies for promotions and rewards.

To increase management effectiveness, more authority has been delegated to country offices for procurement, hiring, and approval of projects financed by Technical Cooperation Programme (TCP) resources.

Since the 2011 MOPAN assessment, responsibility for the management of most emergency operations has been fully entrusted to country offices – the only exception being regional and corporate “Level 3” emergencies. FAO's capacity to work in emergencies was perceived to be strong overall by both document review and survey respondents. Decentralisation of emergency operations has led to strengthened country leadership for work in emergencies, and Deputy FAORs with longstanding experience in emergencies have been appointed to support the FAOR in country offices with large emergency operations. Since the adoption of the reviewed Strategic Framework, FAO started to implement its new resilience agenda and also strengthened its practices and systems for emergency preparedness and response, including for a Level 3 emergency.

### **Relationship management**

MOPAN established six key performance indicators to assess how an organisation is working with others at the country level, and in ways that are aligned with the principles of ownership, alignment and harmonisation, in accordance with the Busan Partnership for Effective Development Co-operation and previous aid effectiveness commitments.

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Since the 2011 MOPAN assessment FAO has made considerable progress in setting country level strategic objectives that are fully aligned with national development priorities and the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF). FAO is also taking into account local conditions and capacities in its administrative procedures, viewed as adequate overall by in-country survey respondents for their ease of use and FAO's operational flexibility to adjust to changing circumstances. In their written comments, respondents still noted administrative and operational efficiencies as an area for improvement. As part of its ongoing reforms, FAO is taking steps to streamline its procedures and enhance its software applications.

As a specialised agency that provides technical cooperation, FAO does not make extensive use of country systems for disbursements and operations but makes efforts to do so when possible. The new Country Programming Framework guidelines call for mutual progress assessments of country programming undertaken jointly by FAO and its partners and there is evidence that these have started to take place. In addition, FAO has a reputation for high quality and valued policy dialogue, particularly at the global and regional levels. FAO has been a champion of South-South dialogue and is acknowledged for its inclusive approach.

FAO's efforts to work with sister UN agencies are commendable; FAO participates in joint programming in areas of its mandate and conducts joint evaluations with peer organisations. FAO also subscribed to the UN Delivering as One, evidenced by its work in Tanzania where it plans and implements programming jointly with other agencies under the United Nations Development Assistance Plan (UNDAP). It has made efforts to harmonise procedures with the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) and the World Food Programme (WFP). Since the 2011 MOPAN assessment, FAO has increased co-ordination with UN agencies and other humanitarian partners in emergency situations, including through its participation with other agencies in the Humanitarian Strategic Response Plan (formerly the Consolidated Appeals Process) to mobilise resources for emergency food security programming and through the creation in 2012 of the FAO/WFP co-led global Food Security Cluster. The cluster has had positive effects on country-level coordination, though continued improvements are needed in some management practices.

### **Knowledge management**

FAO is a knowledge organisation with a mandate to disseminate information to a wide array of stakeholders. MOPAN established three key performance indicators to assess knowledge management: the performance evaluation function, performance reporting and dissemination of lessons learned.

FAO is recognised for having an evaluation function that is independent from technical and operational line management and used to inform decision taking. It also has the policies and systems in place for effective and high quality evaluation. While FAO has adequate evaluation coverage of its thematic and project work related to the strategic objective areas, the coverage provided through country programme evaluations is limited – something that is expected to increase with the organisation's new focus on country results.

FAO's performance reporting has improved in the last three years and it has put in place practices and systems to collect data at all levels of the organisation and enhance its ability to report on results, including at outcome level, in its Programme Implementation Report (PIR). This being said, however, the quality of corporate and country level reports between 2010 and 2013 was affected by weaknesses in the design of previous results frameworks and weaknesses in the data used for reporting. FAO's reviewed Strategic Framework and new methodological notes for monitoring indicators should bring about improvements in monitoring and reporting on results, though FAO's new measurement strategy still needs to be tested to ascertain its effectiveness.

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Since 2011, FAO has made efforts to enhance knowledge sharing and dissemination through the implementation of a knowledge strategy and through a more cohesive way of working between technical departments across all strategic objectives; it is however too early to assess the effectiveness of these reforms. Significant improvements in the level and quality of Internet connectivity in FAO's decentralised offices have helped enhance knowledge sharing, information flow and communication in general across the organisation.

### **Evidence of FAO relevance and development results**

MOPAN established four key performance indicators to assess evidence of an organisation's relevance, of its progress toward organisational results and country-level results, and of its contributions to national goals and priorities in the countries that participated in the MOPAN assessment.

The MOPAN assessment rated FAO strong overall on relevance. Survey data and documents reviewed provide evidence that FAO is pursuing results relevant to its mandate, and that these are aligned with global development trends and priorities, respond to the needs and priorities of beneficiaries, and are adapted to changing country circumstances. The documentation supporting revisions to the Strategic Framework and subsequent work to improve the results framework is evidence of a more cohesive approach to addressing its mandate. Recent evaluations specifically highlighted the relevance of FAO's global roles and specialised humanitarian assistance roles.

In assessing evidence of FAO's progress towards organisational results, the MOPAN assessment examined the 2010-2013 period. As such, KPI B does not capture the more recent events of FAO's strategic thinking process, its reviewed Strategic Framework, its re-organisation or new processes, many of which were put into place to rectify the issues discussed here. For the 2010-2013 period, FAO was rated inadequate overall for the evidence it had provided of its progress towards organisation-wide results, the quality of documented evidence on contributions to results, and the absence of theories of change underlying the results framework. The Programme Implementation Reports (PIRs) for the period reviewed did not provide an accurate picture of progress due to weaknesses in the design of the Strategic Framework 2010-2019 and indicators used. Strategic and thematic evaluations provided a mixed picture; many noted that a lack of theories of change and data on outcome-level progress impeded the documentation of evidence of results. Evaluations noted achievements in FAO's normative work, particularly in support of global policies and conventions, but a 2012 policy evaluation found considerable scope to increase uptake of FAO policy guidance at the country level. FAO has introduced wide-ranging changes in the way policy work is organised, including the creation of a number of policy posts in decentralised offices, which are designed, in part, to increase the uptake of policy-relevant guidance and information. Surveyed stakeholders assessed FAO's contributions to results as adequate overall. They rated it strong for progress towards its strategic objective related to preparedness and response to emergencies and inadequate for its progress towards its objective related to public and private investments in agriculture and rural development.

In terms of progress toward FAO's stated country-level results, survey respondents in the six countries that participated in the MOPAN assessment viewed FAO's contributions to results as adequate overall. Evidence from documents indicates that, during the period under review, FAO's projects were generally effective in delivering planned activities and outputs, but that FAO did not report adequately on its contributions at the country programme level and did not provide conclusive evidence of the extent to which it had contributed to its stated country level development priorities. FAO is implementing new practices and systems for country programme monitoring and reporting. As FAO is still making the transition from project to country programming, more time is needed for these systems to be fully functioning. Evaluation coverage of country programming has been limited and there were no recent country programme evaluations available for any of the six countries assessed this year by MOPAN.

FAO was rated adequate for demonstrating its contributions to national goals and priorities, including relevant millennium development goals (MDGs). While FAO does not provide evidence of the extent to which it has contributed to the national goals and priorities or to relevant MDGs in each country, its explicit focus on MDG1 on food security and its clear alignment with national priorities are recognised. Overall, surveyed stakeholders rated FAO as adequate in this area.

## Conclusions

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FAO is a relevant organisation that has an important contribution to make to improve global, regional and country level food security and agricultural systems.

The reviewed Strategic Framework strongly reflects FAO's mandate, comparative advantages, and core functions. FAO's recent efforts to refocus its work and reorganise around a more results-focused approach emphasise the relevance of FAO's mandate and programme, and are reinforced by more cohesive programming and better co-ordination across technical departments.

FAO has undertaken organisational reforms for more effective management and operations in order to implement its reviewed Strategic Framework. These have included changes in human resources management, enhanced leadership of country representatives, increased decentralisation, and the integration of development and emergency programming.

In recent years, FAO has made significant progress in results-based management, putting in place the new results framework and accompanying measurement strategy, which has been a work-in-progress throughout 2014. Work is ongoing to sharpen indicators, strengthen quality assurance mechanisms and continue staff training in RBM at all levels of the organisation.

Evidence provided a mixed picture of FAO's progress toward the achievement of organisation-wide strategic objectives for the period 2010-13. For this period there were issues with overly complex results frameworks and weaknesses in reporting at all levels of the organisation. This made it difficult for FAO to provide a consistent picture of progress toward the achievement of strategic objectives for the period under review. Many of these inadequacies are being addressed through the reform process.

FAO is a knowledge organisation and its role in knowledge sharing is an important part of its comparative advantage. It has made progress in sharing knowledge internally and externally since it started implementing its Knowledge Strategy in 2011. Strong, continued support to implementing the reviewed Strategic Framework and making fully functional the new technical networks will be important to institute change and demonstrate FAO's effectiveness in this area.

In summary, FAO is in the process of making deep and wide-ranging reforms across the organisation, aimed at improving systems and practices which were problematic in the past and specifically to become a more transparent and result-oriented organisation. It has strengthened its collaboration with other UN agencies and stakeholders to more effectively address global, regional and country-level issues. FAO's efforts to work more strategically in countries and its decentralisation efforts are fundamental to improving the relevance and effectiveness of its programming. Many of these efforts are ongoing and, as such, must be considered a work-in-progress. Subsequent MOPAN assessments would expect to see these reforms supporting better results-reporting and results achievement.

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## Overall MOPAN ratings of FAO

The two charts below show the ratings on the key performance indicators that MOPAN used to assess FAO in 2014. The first chart shows the ratings on 22 indicators designed to measure organisational effectiveness (practices and systems), and the second shows ratings on the four indicators designed to assess FAO's relevance, evidence of progress towards organisational and country-level results, and contributions to national goals and priorities.

### Organisational effectiveness– overall ratings

Strategic management		Survey respondents	Document review
KPI-1	Providing direction for results	3.95	5
KPI-2	Corporate strategy based on clear mandate	4.52	6
KPI-3	Corporate focus on results	N/A	5
KPI-4	Focus on cross-cutting priorities	4.35	5
KPI-5	Country focus on results	4.68	4
<b>Operational management</b>			5
KPI-6	Transparent and predictable funding	3.96	4
KPI-7	Results-based budgeting	3.46	4
KPI-8	Financial accountability	4.32	5
KPI-9	Using performance information	3.93	5
KPI-10	Managing human resources	2.96	4
KPI-11	Performance-oriented programming	N/A	4
KPI-12	Delegating authority	3.78	4
KPI-13	Work in emergencies	4.54	5
<b>Relationship management</b>			
KPI-14	Supporting national plans	4.63	6
KPI-15	Adjusting procedures	4.09	N/A
KPI-16	Using country systems	4.31	N/A
KPI-17	Contributing to policy dialogue	4.51	N/A
KPI-18	Harmonising procedures	4.34	5
KPI-19	Cluster management	4.49	4
<b>Knowledge management</b>			
KPI-20	Evaluating results	4.37	5
KPI-21	Presenting performance information	3.97	4
KPI-22	Disseminating lessons learned	4.21	4

### Legend

Strong or above	4.50–6.00
Adequate	3.50–4.49
Inadequate or below	1.00–1.49
Document review data unavailable	◆
Not assessed	N/A

Relevance and evidence of progress towards results – overall ratings

Relevance and results	Assessment Rating
KPI A: Evidence of FAO's relevance	Strong
KPI B: Evidence of progress towards organisation-wide results	Inadequate
KPI C: Evidence of progress towards FAO's stated country-level results	Inadequate
KPI D: Evidence of contribution to national goals and priorities, including Millennium Development Goals	Adequate

Weak  Inadequate  Adequate  Strong



# 1. Introduction

## 1.1 PURPOSE OF MOPAN ASSESSMENTS

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MOPAN assessments are intended to:

- Generate relevant, credible and robust information MOPAN members can use to meet their domestic accountability requirements and fulfil their responsibilities and obligations as bilateral donors
- Provide an evidence base for MOPAN members, multilateral organisations and their partners/clients to discuss organisational effectiveness and reporting on development and/or humanitarian results
- Support dialogue between individual MOPAN members, multilateral organisations and their partners/clients to build understanding and improve organisational performance and results over time at both country and headquarters level.

MOPAN's assessment methodology continues to evolve in response to what is being learned from year to year, and to accommodate multilateral organisations with different mandates (e.g. global funds, organisations with significant humanitarian programming, organisations with a predominantly humanitarian mandate).

## 1.2 PROFILE OF FAO

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### **Mission and mandate**

FAO was established as a specialised United Nations agency dealing with food and agriculture in 1945. FAO's vision, approved by the Governing Bodies in 2009, is "A world free from hunger and malnutrition where food and agriculture contribute to improving the living standards of all, especially the poorest, in an economically, socially and environmentally sustainable manner."

As stated by FAO in its reviewed Strategic Framework, the three global goals of members are:

- 1) eradication of hunger, food insecurity and malnutrition, progressively ensuring a world in which people at all times have sufficient safe and nutritious food that meets their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life
- 2) elimination of poverty and the driving forward of economic and social progress for all, with increased food production, enhanced rural development and sustainable livelihoods
- 3) sustainable management and utilisation of natural resources, including land, water, air, climate and genetic resources for the benefit of present and future generations(FAO Conference, 2013 [05]).

FAO helps member nations achieve these goals individually at the national level and collectively at regional and global levels through normative work, development assistance and emergency support to governments. Its work covers seven broad core functions: normative and standards setting; collection, analysis and sharing of data and information; support and promotion of policy dialogue; capacity building; encouraging knowledge and technology uptake; facilitating partnerships; and advocacy and communication.

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**Governance and structure**

Headquartered in Rome, Italy, FAO has a national presence in over 130 countries through a network of Regional, Sub-regional, Country, Liaison and Information Offices.

FAO Governing Bodies (the Conference and the Council and supporting committees) contribute, within their respective mandates, to the definition of the overall policies and regulatory frameworks of FAO; the establishment of the Strategic Framework, the Medium-Term Plan and the Programme of Work and Budget (PWB); and exercise or contribute to the oversight of the administration of FAO.

The Conference is the sovereign Governing Body and comprises 194 member nations, the European Union and two associate members (Faroe Islands and Tokelau). It is chaired by an elected member state representative and meets once per biennium. The Council acts as the executive organ of the Conference between sessions and usually meets at least five times in a biennium. The Council comprises representatives of 49 member nations who are elected by the Conference for staggered three-year terms, and is chaired by an Independent Chairperson who is appointed by the Conference for a two-year renewable term.

Internally, FAO is led by a Director-General and is composed of six departments: Agriculture and Consumer Protection; Economic and Social Development; Fisheries and Aquaculture; Forestry; Corporate Services, Human Resources and Finance; and Technical Cooperation. In addition, there are a number of apex divisions and units that are not attached to the Departments, including for example, legal, evaluation, audit, budgeting, decentralised support, information technology, conference services.

FAO's decentralised network includes 5 regional offices, 9 sub-regional offices, approximately 96 country offices (covering 130 countries), and partnership and liaison offices. As of November 2013, FAO employed 1795 professional staff and 1654 support staff on fixed term and continuing appointments. Approximately 58% are based at headquarters in Rome, while the remainder works in offices worldwide. During the last 15 years, the proportion of women in the professional staff category has nearly doubled, from 19% to 37%.

**Finances, services, funding**

The total FAO budget planned for 2014-15 is USD 2.4 billion. FAO's overall programme of work is funded by assessed and voluntary contributions. The assessed contributions from member countries are set at the biennial FAO Conference and comprise the regular budget. The FAO regular budget for the 2014-15 biennium is USD 1 billion (41% of the total budget). The voluntary contributions provided by members and other partners support technical and emergency (including rehabilitation) assistance to governments for clearly defined purposes linked to the results framework, as well as direct support to FAO's core work. The voluntary contributions for 2014-15 are approximately USD 1.4 billion (59% of the total budget).

FAO has both a normative analysis function, based principally at Headquarters and in Regional Offices, and a field programming function, operating in over 130 countries. The field programme involves both development and emergency/rehabilitation programming and provides services in the following areas of focus: information sharing to support the transition to sustainable agriculture; strengthening government capacity and sharing policy expertise; encouraging public-private collaboration to improve smallholder agriculture; bringing knowledge to the field; and supporting countries to prevent and mitigate risks.

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### **Strategic planning and the reform process**

In 2009, FAO launched its Immediate Plan of Action for FAO Renewal (IPA) in response to the 2007 Independent External Evaluation (IEE) of FAO which highlighted the need for a sharper focus for FAO programming and greater adherence to results-based management (RBM) principles. In 2012, the new Director-General accelerated completion of the reforms which were officially completed by the end of 2012. The principal benefits of the IPA reform process were in planning, delivery, assessment and governance.

Since 2012, FAO has undertaken a transformative change process that has built upon and amplified the reforms put in place as part of the IPA. This process has emphasised strategic focus, efficiency and results, particularly at the country level. Intrinsic to the transformational changes is the Strategic Thinking Process initiated in 2012 by the new Director-General to determine the future strategic direction of the organisation.<sup>1</sup> Through an iterative, analytical and consultative process, FAO developed a reviewed Strategic Framework 2010-2019 which identifies: (i) overarching global, political and socio-economic trends envisaged to frame agricultural development over the medium term; (ii) main challenges, derived from these trends, expected to be faced by member countries and development actors in food and agriculture in the coming years; and (iii) FAO's basic attributes, core functions and comparative advantages, resulting in a revised set of seven core functions.

The Conference approved the reviewed Strategic Framework in June 2013. The five new strategic objectives (scaled down from eleven) are:

- 1) Contribute to the eradication of hunger, food insecurity and malnutrition
- 2) Increase and improve provision of goods and services from agriculture, forestry and fisheries in a sustainable manner
- 3) Reduce rural poverty
- 4) Enable more inclusive and efficient agricultural and food systems at local, national and international levels
- 5) Increase the resilience of livelihoods to threats and crises.

The framework also includes a sixth objective on technical quality, knowledge and services, and two cross-cutting themes on gender equality and governance. It guided the formulation of the Medium Term Plan 2014-2017 and the PWB 2014-2015. The revised framework scaled down the organisational results/outcomes from 49 to 17, which should enable a more practical approach to RBM.

Since the implementation of the reviewed Strategic Framework began in January 2014 and many of the organisational changes are also recent, improvements in FAO effectiveness as measured through MOPAN indicators may not yet be evident.

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1. Developing the Strategic Framework involved the Regional Conferences, Technical Committees, the Programme and Finance Committees and the Council.

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### 1.3 PREVIOUS MOPAN ASSESSMENTS OF FAO

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This is the second assessment of FAO using the Common Approach (the previous assessment was conducted in 2011). FAO was also assessed in 2004 through a MOPAN survey. Although MOPAN's methodology has changed over time, findings from previous MOPAN assessments can provide some insight into the evolution of the organisation and the perceptions of surveyed stakeholders. In Chapters 3 and 4, any notable changes in the assessment of the organisation since the previous assessment are noted in specific findings, and/or in the conclusions – as appropriate.

Since 2011, changes are evident in the following areas:

- **Results-based management:** Through the Strategic Thinking Process undertaken in 2012, FAO clarified its core functions and comparative advantage, which should help it to focus on priorities and move away from scattered programming. Since 2011, substantial progress has been made at country level to transition from project to country programming and to introduce new country programming frameworks; 74% of country offices currently have these frameworks. FAO has improved the results chain linking outputs to outcomes and strategic objectives in corporate and country results frameworks. It also improved the quality of its indicators though some are still complex. For the first time, FAO has developed a methodology to collect output and outcome level data at all levels of the organisation that will enable it to report on results against its reviewed Strategic Framework. It is still too early to assess the quality of the reports that will be generated from these new methods, though major improvements are expected.
  - **Decentralisation:** FAO has increased delegation of authority for strategic planning, resource mobilisation, work in emergencies, procurement, hiring of human resources and approval of TCP projects. Interviewed staff in country offices confirm that the speed at which TCP are now approved has increased substantially since 2011 as a result of increased delegation of authority. Efforts are still needed to strengthen the capacities of staff in decentralised offices to assume new operational and administrative responsibilities that decentralisation has brought about.
  - **Human resources management:** Since 2011, FAO has strengthened the competencies of FAO Representatives (FAORs) by instituting competitive recruitment procedures and role-specific training. It has also made substantial progress in its human resources reform agenda, including the introduction of competency-based recruitment and a mobility policy. In 2012, FAO introduced the PEMS, FAO's first performance assessment system for staff on fixed-term appointments, and is currently working toward addressing identified shortcomings in the PEMS. A revised PEMS framework, rebuttal procedures and policies for promotion and rewards are expected in early 2015.
  - **Knowledge management:** FAO has made efforts to increase knowledge management across the organisation through the adoption of its Knowledge Strategy, improvement of IT installations, establishment of technical networks, and re-organisation of technical departments under the reviewed Strategic Framework.
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## 2. Methodology

## 2.1 OVERVIEW

The detailed MOPAN methodology – “the Common Approach” – is presented in the Technical Report, Volume II, Appendix I. The following is a summary.

MOPAN assessments examine:

- Organisational effectiveness: Organisational systems, practices, and behaviours that MOPAN believes are important for managing for results, and that influence an organisation’s ability to achieve its strategic objectives and contribute to its proposed development or humanitarian results at the country level; and
- Humanitarian and/or development results: Evidence of an organisation’s contributions to development and/or humanitarian results at both the organisation-wide level and the country level, as well as the relevance of the organisation’s work.

Refinements that have been made in the methodology over time should be taken into consideration when comparing MOPAN assessments of an organisation across years.

### **Data collection methods and sources**

Over the years, MOPAN developed a mixed-methods approach to generate relevant and credible information that MOPAN members can use to meet their domestic accountability requirements and support dialogue with multilateral organisations that they are funding.

MOPAN uses multiple data sources and data collection methods to triangulate and validate findings. This helps eliminate bias and detect errors or anomalies.

In 2014, the two primary sources of data were surveys of the multilateral organisation’s stakeholders (see respondent groups in Section 2.2 below) and a review of documents prepared by the organisations assessed and from other sources. Interviews with staff of multilateral organisations contributed to contextualising data and helped clarify findings emerging from other data.

### **Assessment of organisational effectiveness**

MOPAN examines performance in four areas of organisational effectiveness: strategic management, operational management, relationship management, and knowledge management. Within each performance area, effectiveness is described using key performance indicators (KPIs) that are measured through a series of micro-indicators (MIs) using data from the survey and document review.

For organisational effectiveness, survey respondent ratings are shown as mean scores and are presented alongside document review ratings based on criteria defined for each micro-indicator. Not all micro-indicators are assessed by both the survey and the document review. The charts show survey scores and document review scores for the relevant KPIs or MIs.

**Assessment of development and/or humanitarian results**

MOPAN also examines the concrete evidence of results achieved and the relevance of country-based activities through four key performance indicators:

- Evidence of the multilateral organisation's relevance
- Evidence of the multilateral organisation's progress towards its organisation-wide results
- Evidence of the multilateral organisation's progress towards its stated country-level results
- Evidence of the multilateral organisation's contribution to national goals and priorities, including the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

In this component of the assessment, a "best fit approach" is used in determining the ratings for the KPIs above. This approach is used because it is better suited when criteria are multi-dimensional, there is a mix of both qualitative and quantitative data, and it is not possible to calculate a simple sum of the data points. Based on an analysis of all lines of evidence (document review, survey and interviews), each KPI is given a preliminary rating (strong, adequate, inadequate, weak) based on performance descriptors. A panel of experts reviews and validates the preliminary ratings and draft findings.<sup>2</sup> The criteria used as a basis for judgement and the process followed to arrive at a final rating are described in the Technical Report, Volume II, Appendix I.

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**2.2 DATA SOURCES AND RATINGS**

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**Survey**

MOPAN gathers stakeholder perceptions through a survey of MOPAN members (at headquarters and in-country) and other key stakeholders of the multilateral organisation. Donor respondents are chosen by MOPAN member countries; other respondents are identified by the multilateral organisation being assessed.

The survey questions relate to both organisational effectiveness and to the achievement of development and/or humanitarian results. Survey respondents are presented with statements and are asked to rate the organisation's performance on a six-point scale where a rating of 1 is considered "very weak" up to a rating of 6 which is considered "very strong." A mean score is calculated for each respondent group (e.g. donors at headquarters).

MOPAN aims to achieve a 70% response rate from donors at headquarters and a 50% response rate among respondents in each of the survey countries (i.e. donors in-country and other respondent groups such as direct partners/clients).

All survey respondents are also required to answer two open-ended questions:

- What do you consider to be the organisation's greatest strength?
- What do you consider to be the area where it most needs improvement?

Responses are reviewed using content analysis based on the themes of the micro-indicators and then categorised by common themes that emerge from the comments. Percentages are calculated based on the total number of people who responded to the MOPAN survey for each organisation (N=300) and the number of responses on each theme. The themes that respondents note most frequently are cited in the report, when relevant.

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2. The panel is composed of the Senior Methodological Advisor, the senior consultants involved in each of the assessments, and external peer reviewers with knowledge of the particular agency, the UN system, or expertise in managing for results.

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### MO survey respondents

In the 2014 assessment, the survey results for FAO reflect the views of 300 respondents on FAO's performance in the areas of organisational effectiveness and contribution to development results.

The respondent groups for FAO included:

- donors at headquarters
- donors in-country
- direct partners/clients
- peer organisations.<sup>3</sup>

**Figure 2.1 | Number of survey respondents and total population for FAO by geographic focus and respondent group (n=300)**

Geographic focus	Donors at HQ	Donors in-country	Direct partners	Peer organisations	Total
Bangladesh	–	4 (6)	21 (45)	5 (10)	30 (61)
Cambodia	–	2 (5)	23 (40)	7 (10)	32 (55)
Democratic Republic of Congo	–	5 (10)	29 (42)	8 (16)	42 (68)
Ecuador	–	2 (3)	32 (44)	12 (12)	46 (59)
Kenya	–	6 (11)	32 (50)	9 (13)	47 (74)
Tanzania	–	4 (7)	38 (53)	9 (10)	51 (70)
Global	52 (68)	–	–	–	52 (68)
Total	52 (68)	23 (42)	175 (274)	50 (71)	300 (455)
Response rate	76%	55%	64%	70%	66%

### Document review

The document review considers: multilateral organisation documents; internal and external reviews of the organisation's performance; and evaluations, either internal or external, of the achievement of results at various levels.<sup>4</sup>

In the assessment of FAO, the assessment team reviewed approximately 425 documents, 80% of which were available publicly while the other 20% were internal documents provided by FAO.

Document review ratings are based on a set of criteria that MOPAN considers to represent good practice in each area. The criteria are based on existing standards and guidelines (for example, UNEG or OECD-DAC guidelines), on MOPAN identification of key aspects to consider, and on the input of subject-matter specialists. The rating for each micro-indicator depends on the number of criteria met by the organisation.

3. Peer organisations may include: UN organisations or international NGOs that have collaborated with the MO in its thematic area of work in the countries included in the assessment. These organisations collaborate with but do not receive any direct funding from the organisation assessed. The original list of respondent groups also included some of FAO's international and regional research and development partners. However, given the small number of responses (6 out of 33), the data was not included in the assessment.

4. MOPAN does not use bilateral assessments of multilateral organisations as a source of data because some of these assessments draw on MOPAN as a source of data.

**Interviews**

Semi-structured interviews are conducted at headquarters, regional offices (in some cases), and country offices of multilateral organisations with staff members who are knowledgeable in areas that relate to the MOPAN assessment. The interviews provide the assessment team with i) the most accurate information about a multilateral organisation's on-going reform agenda and the key documents that explain the various systems and practices that have been established to support it; and ii) contextual insight to clarify, refute and/or validate observations emerging from other lines of evidence/data sources.

Interviews were held with 65 FAO staff members: 48 staff members at headquarters, 12 FAO Representatives/Assistant Representatives in country offices, 2 sub-regional co-ordinators in sub-regional offices, and 3 Assistant Directors-General (ADG) in regional offices.

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**2.3 STRENGTHS AND LIMITATIONS OF THE MOPAN COMMON APPROACH**

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MOPAN continues to improve its methodology based on experience each year. The following strengths and limitations should be considered when reading MOPAN reports.

**Strengths**

- The MOPAN Common Approach is based on existing bilateral assessment tools with the intent to reduce the need for other assessment approaches by bilateral donors.
- In line with donor commitments to aid effectiveness and ownership, it seeks perceptual information from different stakeholder groups.
- It uses multiple sources of data to increase the validity of the assessment, enhance analysis, and provide a basis for discussion of agency effectiveness.
- MOPAN reports are validated and reviewed by the MOPAN members, the multilateral organisation being assessed and the MOPAN Secretariat.

**Limitations**

- Although MOPAN uses recognised standards and criteria for good practice, such criteria do not exist for all indicators. Many document review criteria were developed by MOPAN; these are a work in progress and not definitive standards.
  - The MOPAN methodology is reviewed and revised periodically to reflect expectations of MOPAN members. This poses some challenges for comparing and explaining differences in ratings from one assessment to another. Using ratings on their own will not provide sufficient explanation of the progress or lack of progress an MO is making (e.g. the 2011 and 2014 FAO assessments).
  - The countries selected for MOPAN assessments comprise only a small proportion of each institution's operations, thus limiting generalisations.
  - For the survey, the Common Approach uses a purposive sampling method called 'expert sampling' in which potential respondents are identified by MOPAN members and the multilateral organisations as having the basis for an expert opinion on the organisation being assessed. While the survey aims to gather diverse perspectives on the multilateral organisations being assessed, the collected survey responses are not representative of the entire "population" of donors, partners, etc.
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- The survey covers a broad range of issues and individual respondents may not have the knowledge to respond to all the questions relating to a given organisation. In addition, survey rating choices may not be used consistently by all respondents. Some respondents may tend to avoid extremes on a scale and respondents in some cultures may be unwilling to criticise or too eager to praise.
- While the use of multiple sources of data strengthens the validity of MOPAN assessments, there are often differences between the findings from different data sources. Some differences may be explained by the fact that document review ratings are based on very specific criteria while survey results are determined by the perceptions of a wide range of stakeholders with different levels of knowledge. Interviews often provide important context for the assessment, but may not be sufficient to explain any differences between the survey and document review ratings.
- In the survey at the country level, there are sometimes only a few respondents in a particular respondent group. To ensure confidentiality in such cases, the Technical Report does not provide a breakdown by respondent group. In addition, if the evaluation team identifies outliers whose survey responses are shifting the trend in the mean score, the report presents the mean score with and without the outlier ratings.

### **Challenges in applying the MOPAN Common Approach to FAO**

- As a specialised agency, FAO has both normative and development mandates. The current MOPAN framework and methodology was designed primarily to assess multilateral organisations that provide funding or technical assistance to direct partners at country level, and the methods and indicators used are not all well-suited to assess FAO's normative roles, including its roles as a global convener and knowledge broker for policy and technical issues in food, agriculture and natural resources management. MOPAN is aware of the limitation and aims to introduce further improvements in the Common Approach for 2015 and beyond. The assessment team was well aware of this issue and made deliberate efforts to provide an analysis of FAO's normative role whenever possible and under indicators where that seemed most relevant.
- One of the countries selected for this year's MOPAN assessment, Tanzania, is part of the UN Delivering as One Initiative. As such, FAO and other UN agencies have been using the UNDP as their main country programming tool. This has made it more difficult to use the current MOPAN methodology to assess the extent to which FAO has contributed to development results in this country.
- FAO is a complex organisation and has a physical presence and programmatic roles at headquarters in Rome, in regional and sub-regional offices and in approximately 130 member countries. While MOPAN indicators assess an organisation's practices and systems at corporate and country level they do not facilitate an in-depth analysis of FAO's diverse roles at the regional level. FAO identified a number of potential regional/global respondents that could provide feedback on FAO's performance at this level, but their response rate was too low to collect meaningful data.

MOPAN believes that the large amount of data and the efforts to explore convergence of the different sources help to mitigate the limitations. Face-to-face interviews at FAO Headquarters and the addition of telephone/Skype interviews with some decentralised staff have enriched the analysis beyond document reviews and survey responses. The reports thus provide a reasonable picture at a particular point in time of both the systems associated with the organisational effectiveness of multilateral organisations and the evidence of development and/or humanitarian results achieved.

# 3. FAO's organisational effectiveness

## 3.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter provides a summary of FAO's organisational effectiveness. Any noticeable changes in FAO's practices and systems since the previous MOPAN assessment are noted, as well as any changes in the FAO ratings. The assessment draws on document review, survey results, and interviews. Data on the specific micro-indicators that were assessed in each KPI are presented in the Technical Report.

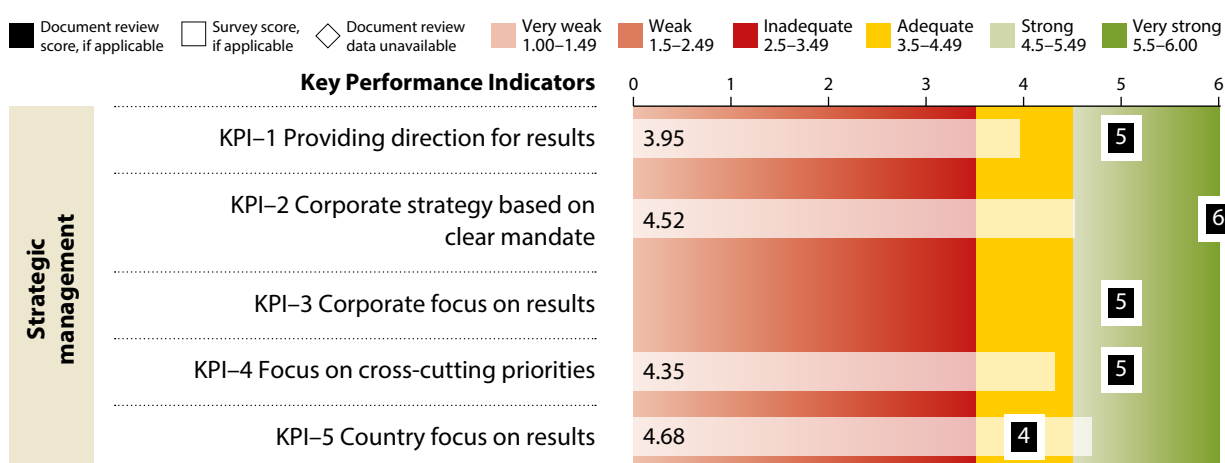
## 3.2 STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT

### 3.2.1 Summary

**Survey respondents generally perceived FAO to be strong or adequate in its strategic focus on results and cross-cutting priorities, the clarity of its mandate, and the alignment of its organisation-wide strategy to its mandate. The document review ratings ranged from adequate to very strong.**

Figure 3.1 shows the overall survey and document review ratings for the five KPIs in the strategic management performance area.

**Figure 3.1 | Performance area I: Strategic management, survey and document review ratings**



### 3.2.2 Findings on each key performance indicator

#### KPI 1: Providing direction for results

**Finding 1:** **FAO has taken concrete measures to become an organisation that manages for results. Systems and practices to address weaknesses in RBM capacities across the organisation are being rolled out with considerable progress made in 2013-14.**

In 2009 FAO undertook an Immediate Plan of Action (IPA) for FAO Renewal to transform itself into a results-based organisation. The IPA was completed in 2012 and it is evident that the reforms have brought about a culture change at FAO (FAO Conference, 2013 [01]). Interviews with Executive Management at FAO Headquarters indicated their strong commitment to focus on results.

The assessment noted strong executive leadership and many efforts undertaken by senior management to institute systems and practices in support of RBM, including: the creation of the Office of Strategy, Planning and Resources Management (OSP) which is responsible for planning, monitoring and reporting on corporate results; the development of an organisation-wide results framework; a reviewed Strategic Framework adopted in 2013 that is based on FAO's comparative strengths; more results-oriented Programme Implementation Reports; the creation of the Corporate Programme Monitoring Board (CPMB) to provide oversight of the reviewed Strategic Framework; and Country Programming Frameworks (CPF) for country-level priority setting. While it is too early to measure the effects of some of these recent initiatives, the direction FAO is taking in implementing its new results agenda is positive.

FAO staff capacities to implement RBM are still variable across the organisation and evaluations suggest that the RBM training offered has not yet resulted in strong RBM capacities at all levels of the organisation for monitoring and reporting on results. As discussed in KPI 21 on presenting performance information, the 2012-13 Programme Implementation Report (PIR) did not provide adequate results-based reporting.. To address these weaknesses, systems and practices are being rolled out. FAO has recently identified RBM focal points in all regions and sub-regions and FAOR responsibilities have been defined. Africa has established an M&E network with M&E focal points in almost all countries, and this is progressing in Latin America and the Caribbean. FAO management notes that the ongoing monitoring exercise being carried out for the preparation of the Mid-term Review Synthesis Report 2014 has helped to identify institutional capacities and gaps in RBM and FAO has taken action to: increase management understanding of RBM; increase demand for and use of results information (e.g. Dashboard); ensure monitoring capacity in each regional office and each strategic objective team (e.g. networks); and continue next year to strengthen quality assurance of CPFs and project results frameworks and the use of results information for project decision taking.

Survey respondents rated FAO adequate overall for providing direction for results. Donors at headquarters responded more negatively than other groups regarding FAO's institutional culture for and application of results-based management (the differences are statistically significant). In their written comments on the MOPAN survey, 23% of donor respondents at headquarters suggested that FAO's implementation of results-based management is one of its greatest weaknesses. These ratings may suggest that many donors are not yet aware of the changes undertaken by FAO to manage for results or that they are sceptical about the effectiveness of these reforms. As expressed by one of the donors at HQ, FAO's lack of reporting on impact and outcomes is "being addressed as a key priority of the senior management of the organisation. [The] new Medium-Term Plan 2014-17 includes a new comprehensive results framework."

## **KPI 2: Corporate strategy based on clear mandate**

**Finding 2: FAO's reviewed Strategic Framework is fully aligned with its mandate and with the Quadrennial Comprehensive Policy Review.**

In the Preamble of its Basic Texts revised in 2013, FAO has described its mandate as "raising levels of nutrition and standards of living of the peoples under their respective jurisdictions; securing improvements in the efficiency of the production and distribution of all food and agricultural products; bettering the condition of rural populations; and thus contributing towards an expanding world economy and ensuring humanity's freedom from hunger." (FAO, 2013 [01]) This is achieved through its dual normative and development/humanitarian programmes.

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In its normative role, FAO convenes and facilitates international partners and member states to develop public goods (such as codes, norms, standards, conventions and global databases) in food and agriculture and disseminates knowledge on global agricultural issues. Through its field programme, FAO provides technical and operational support for a range of initiatives in crops, livestock, forestry, fisheries, natural resource management and rural development, including assisting member states to comply with international agreements and to apply these norms and standards by providing capacity development and technical expertise in a wide range of disciplines. Through its work on resilience, FAO enhances preparedness to situations threatening agriculture and food security and protects/restores agricultural livelihoods during and after a crisis.

As part of the Strategic Thinking Process (discussed under KPI 3 below), FAO revised its Strategic Framework which is fully aligned to revised core functions. As such, the document review rated FAO as very strong for having an organisation-wide strategy that is based on a clear mandate. Survey respondents rated FAO as strong for having a clear mandate and as adequate for having an organisation-wide strategy that is aligned with its mandate. When asked to comment on FAO's greatest strength, more than 15% of survey respondents identified its normative mandate and convening role (the third most frequently noted strength).

FAO has also aligned its strategic planning cycle to the Quadrennial Comprehensive Policy Review (QCPR) resolution. While the QCPR is not binding for specialised agencies as it is for UN entities that report to the General Assembly, it does provide guidance that these agencies are encouraged to follow. FAO is the only specialised agency to have aligned its strategy with the QCPR and also to report on its compliance to its Governing Bodies (UN General Assembly Economic and Social Council, 2014 [01], p. 33). Within its reviewed Strategic Framework, FAO has been emphasising QCPR principles such as south-south co-operation and the transition from relief to development activities in its work in emergencies.

#### Illustrative survey respondent views: FAO technical expertise and normative role often cited as a strength

*"FAO's normative work, based on strong technical capacity and universal membership, is its main strength."*  
(Donor at HQ respondent)

*"FAO has global reach and has formidable technical expertise available to it."* (Peer organisation respondent)

*FAO is a UN agency with global outreach. Its greatest strength is in getting and disseminating information globally, which it has done timely and appropriately. It has good documentation on best practices that can be replicated."* (Direct partner respondent)

*"[FAO is] an agency with a global mandate, presence and capabilities to influence policy makers and developments in the sector of food and agriculture."*  
(Peer organisation respondent)

### KPI 3: Corporate focus on results

**Finding 3:** **FAO's reviewed Strategic Framework is clearer and more focused on results than the previous framework and provides distinctions between outputs and outcomes, although there were still some weaknesses in the quality of indicators at the time of the assessment.**

FAO's corporate focus on results was assessed by document review only, which rated FAO as strong for having an organisation-wide strategy that is results-focused.

In 2012, under the impetus of the current Director-General, FAO undertook a Strategic Thinking Process which analysed global trends and challenges and areas of FAO comparative advantage. This resulted



in a redefinition of seven core functions (see KPI A on Relevance for details) and a reviewed Strategic Framework (2013) that identified five strategic objectives. It also simplified its development results framework, reducing the number of strategic objectives from 11 to 5 and the number of outcomes from 49 to 17, which are now measured by 34 outcome indicators instead of 133 (FAO Conference, 2013 [05]).

The Strategic Thinking Process is of utmost importance for FAO's effectiveness on the ground. According to several evaluations, FAO's effectiveness has been curtailed by its scattered approach to programming (FAO Office of Evaluation, 2013 [05], pp. 5-6). FAO has been addressing this issue through the CPF roll-out and its emphasis on alignment with strategic objectives and regional priorities. Given that FAO started implementing the reviewed Strategic Framework in January 2014, it will take time to ascertain how well programming decisions are aligned with this revised document.

The new results framework offers a number of advantages. First, there is a clear distinction between outputs and outcomes. Several evaluations had commented that the previous results framework had a very poor results chain (FAO Office of Evaluation, 2014 [03], p. xii; FAO Office of Evaluation, 2012 [04], p. xv; FAO Office of Evaluation, 2013 [08], p. xvi). In the Strategic Objective Action Plans accompanying the reviewed Strategic Framework, FAO has significantly improved the results chain linking outputs to outcomes and strategic objectives (FAO Conference, 2013 [07]). Second, the revised framework requires technical departments to work across all five strategic objectives, which should help to address the critique that departments worked in silos under the previous strategy.

FAO has also strengthened linkages between its normative work and results expected on the ground. FAO, as a normative agency, identified Objective 6 which addresses technical quality, knowledge and services (see sidebar). The revised results framework also includes four functional objectives that measure organisational effectiveness.

FAO has put in place mechanisms to ensure implementation and monitoring of the reviewed Strategic Framework, including the creation of Strategic Objective teams and Strategic Objective Co-ordinators for all SOs.

FAO has improved the way it formulates indicators and, for the first time, is collecting baseline data in 39 countries that are representative of FAO's work organisation-wide through a corporate baseline survey developed jointly with its statistics division. However, there is still room to improve the quality of some indicators in FAO's reviewed Strategic Framework, as some are still complex, and more information could be provided on the way targets are set. During 2014, FAO has done considerable work to develop methodological notes and

#### **Elements of Results framework - MTP 2014-17 and PWB 2014-15 (May 2014)**

*Strategic Objective 1: Contribute to the eradication of hunger, food insecurity and malnutrition*

*Strategic Objective 2: Increase and improve provision of goods and services from agriculture, forestry and fisheries in a sustainable manner*

*Strategic Objective 3: Reduce rural poverty*

*Strategic Objective 4: Enable more inclusive and efficient agricultural and food systems at local, national and international levels*

*Strategic Objective 5: Increase the resilience of livelihoods to threats and crises*

*Objective 6: Technical quality, knowledge and services*

*Functional Objective 8: Outreach*

*Functional Objective 9: Information Technology*

*Functional Objective 10: FAO governance, oversight and direction*

*Functional Objective 11: Efficient and effective administration*



indicator compendiums for all five strategic objectives that will be used to measure progress toward established targets (FAO, 2014 [51]). Work is ongoing to develop such methodologies for Objective 6 and the functional objectives. This is the first time that FAO has developed such methodologies and the analytical work undertaken by the organisation to monitor and measure progress toward objectives set in its results framework is largely positive. There is some room for improving the consistency of methodological notes across strategic objectives. Given these are very recent, they will also need to be tested to ascertain that they provide effective guidance for monitoring and reporting on results.

#### **KPI 4: Focus on cross-cutting priorities**

**Finding 4:** **FAO's strong commitment to mainstream cross-cutting priorities is evident from its reviewed Strategic Framework and concomitant organisational restructuring. While these changes are promising, it is too early to assess their effectiveness.**

FAO was rated as strong by the document review and adequate by surveyed stakeholders for maintaining focus on cross-cutting themes identified in its strategic framework (gender equality and governance) and for other themes considered important by MOPAN (environment and human rights-based approaches (HRBA)). To ensure mainstreaming of these cross-cutting themes, FAO has recently adopted a number of new practices and systems.

FAO is mainstreaming gender equality and governance across all five strategic objectives in its reviewed Strategic Framework; in the previous strategic framework, gender equality was addressed as a stand-alone strategic objective and governance was addressed in only 3 of the 11 strategic objectives. Moreover, since 2012 FAO's Project Cycle Guidelines require the mainstreaming of gender equality, environmental sustainability and HRBA/right to food/decent work into all phases of the project cycle (FAO, 2012 [01], p. 5).

**Gender equality**– Since 2011, FAO has taken a number of steps to enhance gender mainstreaming across the organisation as this was considered weak according to several recent evaluations. In 2012 FAO adopted its first policy on gender equality which was cited by UN Women's report on the UN System-wide Action Plan on gender equality (UN-SWAP) as good practice for including an accountability framework and institutional mechanisms for implementation. With the adoption of the reviewed Strategic Framework in 2013, each Strategic Objective Team has been assigned a gender expert and has developed a work plan detailing how FAO's products and services will contribute to gender equality mainstreaming (FAO, n.d. [16]). Relevant output and outcome indicators in the reviewed Strategic Framework have been disaggregated by gender to ensure adequate reporting on gender equality mainstreaming. To facilitate implementation, FAO has established a network of 116 gender focal points (48 at headquarters and 68 in decentralised offices). However, reported vacancies in gender experts' posts in several regional offices constitute a concern to adequate gender equality mainstreaming. The human resources department is in the process of enhancing efficiencies in hiring procedures, which should help address this.

#### **Illustrative survey respondent views: Gender equality mainstreaming often cited as an area for improvement by donors at HQ**

*"The operations are not yet sufficiently gender sensitive though respective policies and actions are in place now. The world of agriculture and food security issues is still very much handled in a top-down way, and in addition, by males who are far away from the problems that farming families in the poorest areas and under difficult environmental and economic circumstances have to deal with."* (Donor at HQ respondent)

*"FAO needs to become better at mainstreaming gender, this is a clear weakness identified by several evaluations."* (Donor at HQ respondent)

FAO received ratings of adequate overall from survey respondents for mainstreaming gender equality. Direct partners responded more favourably than other groups (the difference was statistically significant). In their written comments, 12% of donors at headquarters respondents commented that gender equality mainstreaming is the area that needs the most improvement.

**Environmental sustainability** – Since 2011, FAO has revised its strategic framework and organisational structure to facilitate mainstreaming of environmental sustainability across the organisation. The reviewed Strategic Framework gives special consideration to environment and climate change; one of its three global goals is the “sustainable management and utilisation of natural resources, including land, water, air, climate and genetic resources for the benefit of present and future generation” (FAO, 2012 [01], p. 5). The revision of FAO’s organigram resulting from the Strategic Thinking Process and reviewed Strategic Framework have also led to the creation of a new pillar headed by the Deputy Director-General and Co-ordinator for Natural Resources which is responsible for ensuring co-ordination between the technical departments for sustainable natural resources management across the organisation; this and the technical networks formally established in 2014 should improve FAO’s performance in environmental policies and programmes (FAO Conference, 2013 [06], p. 53). Available evaluations provide positive assessments of FAO’s work to promote environmental sustainability in agricultural production. Survey respondents rated FAO as adequate overall for promoting sustainable management of natural resources in its work.

**Good governance** – As a specialised agency with a normative mandate, FAO is engaged in major governance mechanisms in the area of food and nutrition security and also contributes to the development and adoption of international instruments in the area of its mandate. It is also committed to providing policy advice to member countries and building capacities for policy implementation. Since 2011, FAO has taken steps to enhance mainstreaming of the principles of good governance across the organisation. It recently created a Governance Unit under the oversight of the Assistant Director-General of the Economic and Social Development Department (ADG-ES). The new unit will be supported by a Governance Support Team (GSP), which will include an informal network of focal points across the organisation (FAO, 2014 [24]). Evaluations have consistently highlighted FAO’s strong performance in global governance mechanisms, and the organisation has taken steps to address shortcomings previously noted by these evaluations in providing policy advice and support for governance at country level. While survey respondents rated FAO as adequate overall for promoting the principles of good governance in its work, the majority of direct partners (56%) rated FAO as strong or very strong and the difference is statistically significant.

**Human rights-based approaches**– The reviewed Strategic Framework promotes human rights-based approaches through the inclusion of the right to food into national policies for reducing hunger and malnutrition (Strategic Objective 1) and decent work in rural development (Strategic Objective 3), with a special emphasis on social protection for farmers and rural households. A Social Protection Division was recently created under the oversight of the ADG-ES to ensure implementation of FAO’s new agenda on social protection (FAO Council, 2013 [13]). According to recent evaluations, FAO has effectively contributed to incorporating the right to food in national policies. This is the cross-cutting theme for which FAO received the strongest survey ratings; it was rated strong by all respondent groups other than donors in-country who rated it adequate.

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**KPI 5: Country focus on results**

**Finding 5:** **FAO's recent introduction of results-based Country Programming Frameworks (CPF) represents a significant improvement in the organisation's strategic planning approach at the country level. While results-focused CPFs have been implemented in most countries, some inconsistencies were found in the results frameworks assessed.**

The Country Programming Framework (CPF) is a new results-based strategic planning approach at the country level for which FAO and the country government are mutually accountable. Since 2012 the previous NMTPFs have been gradually replaced with CPFs (FAO, 2012 [03]). Five of the six countries reviewed by MOPAN this year now have CPFs in place; the CPF for Cambodia is expected to be finalised in 2016. According to FAO's March 2014 status report on CPF formulation, 74% of the expected CPFs (149 in all) had been developed by March 2014.

The primary purpose of a CPF is to identify and agree on programme priorities between FAO and the government of a country in which it is working to sharpen its strategic focus and reduce the risk of *ad hoc* programming decisions. CPFs aim to align activities and programmes with country priorities in ways that contribute to FAO's regional and global results. Most of the CPFs assessed by the document review have results frameworks that include both output and outcome level results statements, although the quality of some indicators could be improved. Some results frameworks also use overly complex results statements (e.g. the CPF for Ecuador) which make it difficult to understand the objectives that FAO intends to achieve and the link between the results statement and the indicators.

None of the results frameworks provided an explicit analysis of how specific outputs will lead to development outcomes. FAO notes that this is to be done in a separate corporate reporting process which is being instituted. According to three recent evaluations of FAO's regional and sub-regional offices (for Africa, Asia and the Pacific, and Latin America and the Caribbean), the organisation's new approach to country programming has been well received in the majority of countries (FAO Office of Evaluation, 2014 [04]; FAO Office of Evaluation, 2013 [06]; FAO Office of Evaluation, 2014 [05]). The evaluations were generally positive regarding CPFs as a priority setting tool and concluded that most development partners, including governments, found them useful.

FAO was rated as strong by survey respondents for consulting with direct partners during the development of its Country Programming Frameworks. Indeed, almost 60% of respondents provided ratings of strong or very strong on this particular micro-indicator.

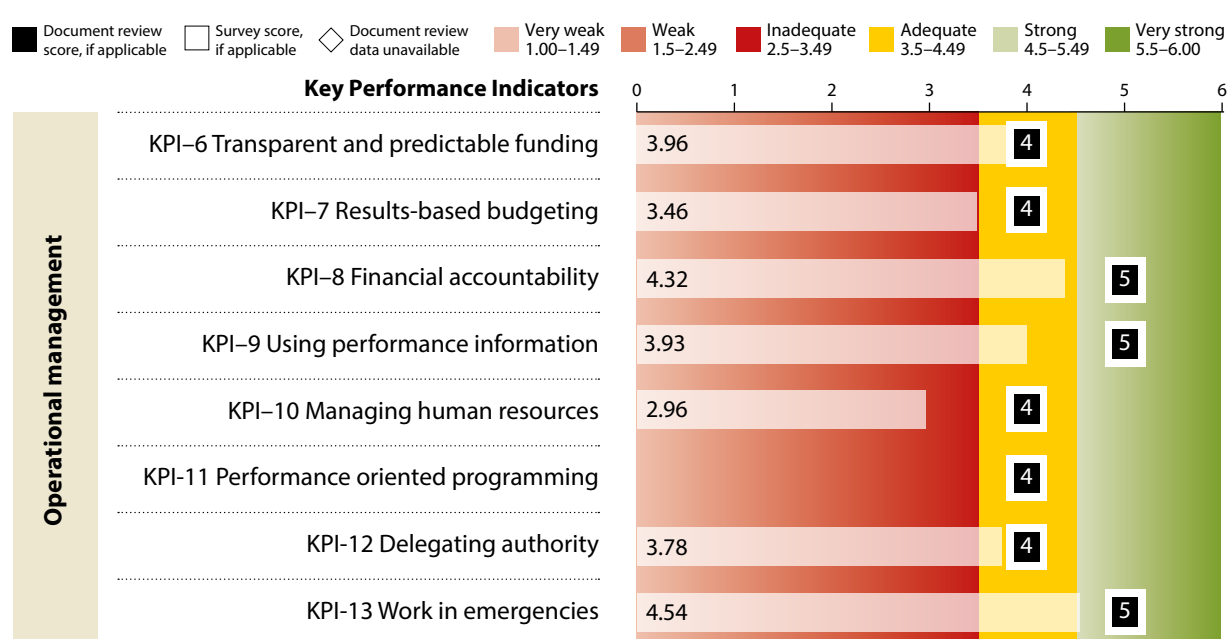
### 3.3 OPERATIONAL MANAGEMENT

#### 3.3.1 Summary

In operational management, survey ratings ranged from inadequate to strong. Document review ratings tended to be more positive, with strong ratings in financial accountability, using performance information and work in emergencies.

Figure 3.2 shows the overall survey and document review ratings for the KPIs in the operational management performance area.

Figure 3.2 | Performance area II: Operational management, survey and document review ratings



#### 3.3.2 Findings on each key performance indicator

##### KPI 6: Transparent and predictable funding

###### Finding 6:

**FAO has criteria for allocating assessed contributions that flow through the Technical Cooperation Programme and processes to attribute voluntary contributions to strategic priorities, though more could be done to ensure their transparency. The predictability of FAO funding is considered adequate by survey respondents.**

The document review rated FAO as adequate for the transparency of its criteria for the allocation of resources. FAO was rated adequate overall by survey respondents for its resource allocation criteria, although donors at headquarters rated it inadequate.

FAO's field programming is composed mostly of its Technical Cooperation Programme (TCP) financed through assessed contributions and projects financed through voluntary contributions mobilised from members and other partners. FAO allocates development and emergency TCP resources according to specific TCP Criteria which were last revised in 2009. According to recent evaluations, TCP resources were

allocated equitably in Asia and the Pacific but in Latin America and the Caribbean the process was less transparent. FAO has taken actions to address this shortcoming.

Voluntary contributions comprise more than half of total FAO funding and are usually earmarked for specific purposes. To ensure more strategic use of voluntary contributions, FAO has been pushing for increased mobilisation of un-earmarked, or slightly earmarked, voluntary contributions. To that effect, it established a number of funding mechanisms, including the Multipartner Programme (FMM), the Multidonor Programme (MUL) and the Umbrella Programme. An evaluation of the FMM published in 2013 notes that while the “FMM is potentially a very important mechanism (...) [there are] several areas that need to be strengthened in order to realise the full potential benefits.” (FAO Office of Evaluation, 2013 [10], p. vii). To date, these mechanisms have not resulted in substantial increases in un-earmarked funding; for example, since 2010, donors have channelled only USD 34 million in un-earmarked funding through the FMM; to put this in context, USD 1 billion is provided every biennium through voluntary contributions (earmarked and un-earmarked). FAO has recently taken steps to review its processes for allocating un-earmarked or slightly earmarked contributions through the establishment in early 2014 of the

CPMB Working Group on Resources Mobilisation. Criteria for allocating such resources do not yet appear to be documented, widely disseminated and well-known by donors. Enhancing their transparency might encourage donors to provide more un-earmarked contributions through FAO's new funding mechanisms.

In a context where voluntary contributions account for half of the budget, the predictability of funding is a natural concern. As part of its RMMS, FAO has also been advocating to reduce the unpredictability of voluntary contributions (FAO Programme Committee/Finance Committee, 2011 [01]). In this respect, FAO can only encourage the donor community to commit resources in a more predictable manner and has provided different funding mechanisms that might meet their requirements.

In the MOPAN survey, donors at headquarters rated FAO as adequate for the extent to which it has adopted measures to make its funding more predictable and direct partners rated it as adequate for the extent to which it provides funding according to established schedules.

#### History and use of voluntary contributions

*In the past, a major issue that was perceived to adversely affect FAO's effectiveness at the country level was the lack of strategic focus in the use of voluntary contributions. This led to small and scattered projects which were not part of a longer-term strategy. FAO has taken a number of steps to address this.*

*With the introduction of results-based management in 2010, FAO started to plan for the use of voluntary contributions in its Programme of Work and Budget. These resources, formerly called “extra-budgetary”, had not been previously included in budget planning.*

*In 2011, FAO adopted its corporate Resource Mobilization and Management Strategy (RMMS) which states that voluntary contributions are to be mobilised and allocated for purposes that are linked to the achievement of results outlined in FAO's organisation-wide strategic framework.*

*FAO's Programme of Work and Budget clearly explains how resources are to be allocated to the regions and technical departments under each strategic objective and organisational outcome (FAO Conference, 2013 [06])(FAO, 2014 [47]).*

**KPI 7: Results-based budgeting**

**Finding 7:** **FAO's shift to results-based management is beginning to affect budgeting and reporting on expenditures. While progress on results-based budgeting has been made at project level and in operational workplanning, corporate budgets and reports do not yet provide the Governing Bodies with a complete picture of how resources are used to achieve organisational outputs and outcomes.**

MOPAN donors at headquarters provided overall ratings of inadequate or barely adequate on the two survey questions concerning FAO's results-oriented budgeting and reporting on expenditures. The review of documents provided similar ratings.

At the corporate level, FAO has revised its corporate budget structure to align with its new results framework but the structure is still complex, and it is difficult to discern exactly how resources are being allocated to contribute to the desired results. As in the past biennium, the current Programme of Work and Budget 2014-2015 provides the budget required for each organisational outcome and strategic objective. The budget is currently allocated across 14 categories or chapters, including the strategic and functional objectives (FAO Conference, 2013 [06]). However, while resources allocated to the Technical Cooperation Programme (Chapter 7) and to technical quality, knowledge and services (Objective 6) are considered separate budget categories, in principle these also contribute to the achievement of strategic objectives.

In addition, in the budget document it is not clear how the indicative allocations to outcomes (which are established in the Programme of Work and Budget) are determined, and whether these are based on estimates of costs for outputs, which are the deliverables that result from FAO interventions (processes, tangible products and services). FAO uses the subsequent phase of operational planning to define products and services and estimate resources required to deliver on these outputs within the indicative allocations. In the development of operational work plans for strategic objectives, teams define the products/services and the more precise resource requirements (staff time and non-staff resources) for producing agreed-upon outputs (FAO, 2013 [27]). This is the first time that operational planning (and allocation of the approved budget) has been so closely aligned with organisational results and that teams are being directed to take stock, make hard choices, and prioritise, and is a positive evolution in the planning and budgeting cycle.

At the project level, FAO has improved its Field Programme Management Information System (FPMIS) so that budget planning and monitoring is in line with results specified in the project logical framework. It is also modifying the system so that costs can be linked to corporate outputs.

FAO expenditures are presented in the Programme Implementation Report 2012-2013, Web Annex 4 (Downs, 2013 [01]). This report provides the data on each of FAO's organisational results, including baseline, target, and end result. For each organisational result it also provides the total expenditure associated with that result area. However, the information provided is brief, with no explanation of expenditures, their relationship to the types of results achieved (as reported by indicators), or of variances from the planned allocations. FAO is implementing a new integrated results-based budget system which should help in reporting on expenditures by results. FAO management notes that this will be reflected in the mid-term review (MTR) 2014 and could be done in the PIR 2014-15, if Members so request.

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**KPI 8: Financial accountability**

**Finding 8:** **FAO has sound corporate policies and procedures for financial accountability. It has delegated increased financial management responsibilities to decentralised offices, and continues to make progress in addressing internal control weaknesses in these offices.**

FAO received strong ratings from the document review for financial accountability. Survey respondents rated it adequate overall. However, a high percentage of 'don't know' responses across all micro-indicators assessed by the survey suggest that survey respondents have limited knowledge of FAO's practices to ensure financial accountability.

In line with FAO's Financial Regulations, external financial audits that meet International Standards on Auditing (ISA) are performed every two years by the appointed External Auditor (currently this position is held by the Philippines' Commission on Audit, a member of the UN Panel of External Auditors). Beginning in 2014, FAO has moved to produce annual financial statements in compliance with the International Public Sector Accounting Standards (IPSAS), following a 2006 General Assembly decision to adopt the IPSAS as the accounting standard for all UN organisations. FAO's Financial Regulations also stipulate that external financial audits are to be performed in decentralised offices. During 2012-13, the External Auditor conducted audits in 11 decentralised offices, including 2 regional offices, 2 sub-regional offices and 7 country offices. The External Auditor performs a risk assessment to identify 'high risk' country offices so as to ensure that these are covered in its Programme of Work (FAO Conference, 2014 [03]). The Inspector General also conducts risk-based internal audits at headquarters and in decentralised offices and reports to the Director-General on a yearly basis on internal controls, risk management and governance. The Director-General receives advice on these matters from the Audit Committee which has been fully independent from management since 2009. Annual Reports of the FAO Audit Committee, presented to FAO's Finance Committee, track the implementation of audit recommendations (which increased from 70% in 2010 to 90% at the end of 2013).

In order to combat fraud and other forms of misconduct, FAO adopted in 2004 its Policy on Fraud and Improper use of the Organization's Resources; created a hotline to receive allegations of fraud and misconduct; and in 2011 adopted a Whistleblower Protection Policy protecting staff against retaliation. Irregularities are systematically investigated by the Office of the Inspector General's investigation unit and cases of fraud and misconduct by staff are punishable by disciplinary sanctions outlined in the FAO Manual Section 330. In 2014 FAO adopted sanctions procedures for vendors and service providers (private sector and NGOs) found guilty of fraud and corruption, including the possibility of debarment. In 2013, FAO also adopted its first policy on Enterprise Risk Management and created a Risk and Advisory services unit in the Office of Strategy, Planning and Resources Management (OSP) which is responsible for analysing corporate risks using FAO's risk catalogue and for reporting risk to FAO's Corporate Programme Monitoring Board (CPMB).

FAO's decentralisation process led to increased responsibilities for financial management in decentralised offices. Individual country audits and recent over-arching annual "capping" reports have highlighted weaknesses in internal controls at decentralised level in procurement, accounting, disbursements, control of assets and management controls, especially in smaller offices with more limited capacities (FAO Office of the Inspector General, 2014 [01], p. 17). FAO notes that management has taken note of these findings and, building on guidance provided by its Governing Bodies, has developed a comprehensive programme



to address these weaknesses as systematically and as quickly as possible. It is expected that the roll-out of FAO's new Global Resource Management System (GRMS) in 2012-13, accompanied by extensive in-country training, will have a positive impact on financial management across the organisation, and will ensure more integrated, comprehensive and timely financial resources management. Although FAO provided extensive training to decentralised offices on the use of GRMS during the roll-out phase, the latest Annual Report of the Inspector General notes that some country offices are still experiencing difficulties with this new tool and that further post-deployment training and support is required (FAO Office of the Inspector General, 2014 [01]).

### **KPI 9: Using performance information**

***Finding 9:*** **FAO systematically uses evaluation findings to revise corporate-level policies and strategies, and tracks the implementation of evaluation recommendations reported to the Governing Bodies. There are clear procedures in place for incorporating performance information in new project design and for monitoring during project implementation. There is less evidence that performance information is used to plan country-level programming or for dealing proactively with poorly performing initiatives.**

FAO was rated adequate overall by the document review and survey respondents for its use of performance information, including evaluations, to make decisions on policies, strategies and programming.

When asked whether FAO uses performance information to revise policies and strategies, donors at headquarters rated the organisation as adequate. However, the document review found that FAO has made considerable progress in using performance information from evaluations to revise policies and strategies at the corporate level, as evidenced by FAO's implementation of the Immediate Plan of Action (2009-2012) in response to the findings of the 2007 Independent External Evaluation (IEE) of FAO. The IPA led to a comprehensive overhaul of FAO's systems, processes, policies and practices, including for example, for knowledge (2011), resource mobilisation and management (2011), human resources (2012), gender equality (2012), capacity development (2011) and nutrition (2012). In response to several evaluation findings on how FAO relates to the private sector and civil society, FAO approved in 2013 its Strategy for Partnerships with the Private Sector and Strategy for Partnerships with Civil Society Organisations.

In recent years, FAO has improved its use of evaluation recommendations to enhance its performance. The FAO Office of Evaluation (OED) has been tracking the implementation of evaluation recommendations since 2010. The 2010 OED Charter requires that every evaluation be accompanied by a management response detailing management's views on the recommendations and intended actions to implement them. A follow-up report explaining the actions taken is produced two years after the publication of the initial management response. In 2012, FAO also introduced independent reports to validate information reported in follow-up reports; to date there have been four independent validations. In 2013, 80% of accepted evaluation recommendations had been implemented within the agreed timeframe, which represents a 30% increase since 2010. The OED is piloting a new model of follow-up reports that will include a tool to track the implementation of accepted recommendations, the Management Action Records (MAR), which will rate the level of implementation on a scale of 1 to 6 (FAO Office of Evaluation, 2013 [07]).

There is evidence that FAO uses performance information in project development and implementation. MOPAN donors at headquarters, direct partners and peer organisations were asked whether FAO uses

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information on the performance of its projects/programmes to plan new areas of co-operation at the country level. The majority of respondents (61%) provided ratings of adequate or above, with direct partners giving a strong rating; there was a high rate of 'don't know' responses, particularly among donors at headquarters (33%) and peer organisations (35%).

Most FAO interventions are delivered through a project mechanism. Though progressive improvements in project cycle management were introduced over a decade ago, the project cycle was revised in 2012 to require a more systematic and rigorous design and approval process. Beginning with the Concept Note, peer reviewers examine the problem statement, including references to previous evaluations. At the full project document stage, the formulators and reviewers are required to include lessons learned from the past and related work, including from evaluations. The Appraisal Checklist Template includes a section which explicitly references evaluation recommendations and lessons learned from other projects in the same sector or in similar environments and whether such lessons are reflected and incorporated in the project, and the way information generated by the project, evaluation and lessons learned will be captured and shared with stakeholders and partners, including how this is planned for in the activities/outputs.

FAO's use of performance information to develop its country programme is not as evident, though it is likely to improve once FAO has fully made the transition from project to country programming. As mentioned in KPI 20 on evaluating results, the FAO evaluation function is centralised and comprehensive country programme evaluations are relatively few, though thematic and strategy evaluations allow for a considerable number of country visits (e.g. 88 country visits in 2012-2013 period). Indeed, for the six countries in the assessment, there were no recent country programme evaluations. As highlighted in KPI 21 on presenting performance information, in 2013 FAO introduced mandatory country-level reporting on country programming frameworks (CPFs) based on the use of indicators to measure progress toward outcomes. However, the quality of country reporting differs between countries and not all provide a strong analysis of problems, successes and lessons learned. Indeed, none of the country programming documents reviewed for the six countries included an analysis of how performance information (from either evaluation or internal monitoring) has shaped new country programming.

A new corporate results reporting framework is being instituted in FAO which aims to improve reporting at all levels of the organisation. FAO notes that the new Dashboard project will soon enable senior management to track progress toward FAO's corporate results framework at global, regional and country levels, thereby allowing managers to better guide planning and reconsider initiatives (FAO, 2014 [41]).

In terms of dealing with poorly performing programmes, projects and/or initiatives, FAO is more systematic and transparent at the corporate level. FAO has four clearly explained steps to assess its performance in implementing its Programme of Work and Budget, including ongoing monitoring by managers, internal mid-term reviews on a six-month basis, a mid-term review synthesis report presented to the Programme and Finance Committees, and Programme Implementation Reports presented to the Committees and the Conference.

At the country level, FAO monitors project performance based on a Logical Framework Matrix and associated work plan. The assessment team did not find much evidence that changes in resources were correlated with good or poor performance or that poorly performing projects were either re-designed or terminated as a result of performance information. While survey respondents rated FAO adequate overall for addressing proactively poorly performing programmes, projects and/or initiatives, MOPAN donors at headquarters provided ratings of inadequate and the difference was statistically significant.

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**KPI 10: Managing human resources to improve performance**

**Finding 10:** **FAO has made many significant improvements in human resources management overall and is currently addressing shortcomings in its performance assessment system to manage staff.**

The MOPAN assessment methodology focuses on performance assessment mechanisms in place to make decisions on staffing and the transparency of such systems. It does not attempt to assess the overall human resources management landscape nor is this included in the ratings. This being said, it is important to contextualise the MOPAN parameters and give credit where credit is due. Through the implementation of the Immediate Plan of Action (IPA) and concomitant Transformational Changes, FAO has undertaken, particularly since 2012, significant corporate improvements in HR management, including, for example, the development and monitoring of the Human Resources Strategic Framework and Action Plan; generic job profiles to simplify and streamline job classification and support vacancy announcement processes as well as staff mobility; the iRecruitment process to enable a more objective, transparent and timely staff selection process; efforts to promote a greater gender balance in the professional work force (currently 39%) and to retain high performing Junior Professionals; a Corporate Mobility Policy (2013) with refinements expected in early 2015; staff training and capacity development support through a variety of learning approaches; streamlined HR servicing through Standard Operating Procedures now in use in the Shared Services Centre offices; and the implementation of the Performance Evaluation and Management System (PEMS).

Surveyed stakeholders (donors at Headquarters) rated FAO as inadequate for its performance assessment systems whereas the document review provided a rating of adequate. The disconnect between the survey and document ratings begs the question as to how the many changes occurring in human resources management are communicated to or perceived by survey respondents. It is possible that the respondents were not aware of the fast-moving and recent reforms.

Currently there are 3 500 staff members under continuing and fixed-term appointments. Since 2012, these staff members have been subject to an annual performance assessment system called the Performance Evaluation and Management System (PEMS). The approximately 8 600 employees under other contractual arrangements are subject to a Quality Assessment Report (QAR) which is simpler than the PEMS but has retained similar features, such as work plans with pre-agreed objectives and performance indicators to evaluate performance. In 2013, 92% of continuing and fixed-term staff had completed the PEMS assessment. In addition to the PEMS, FAO's Management Assessment Center (MAC) was set up in 2004 and is run jointly with WFP to assess managerial and leadership competencies of managers and candidates for senior positions. Since 2012, FAO's efforts to strengthen its leadership by appointing FAO representatives (FAORs) based on past performance and developing new management assessment tools are commendable and have resulted in substantial changes in terms of FAO's country leadership.

Despite this progress, FAO has acknowledged shortcomings in its performance assessment system. These include inconsistencies in the way individual workplans have been developed and lack of clarity on the competencies against which staff have been evaluated resulting in uneven staff appraisals (FAO, n.d. [04]). According to a study conducted by the sub-working group of the HR Network in 26 UN agencies, these challenges are not unique to FAO and are common to all UN agencies reviewed (UN, 2013 [01], p. 1). At the beginning of 2014, FAO introduced a corporate Competency Framework that clearly identifies the five core competencies against which all staff will be recruited and assessed. This ensures that all candidates

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are assessed against a same set of competencies, which are also included in the individual performance reports of the staff members. This should allow for greater consistency and transparency in FAO's system to manage staff performance. Professional selection panel members have now been trained in the use of competency-based interview techniques to support the revised recruitment process, allowing for greater consistency and transparency in staff recruitment, and managers are receiving training and guidance materials for more effective PEMS implementation.

An informal internal review of the PEMS was conducted in May 2014, leading to Senior Management revising its performance management policy framework. This revised framework will update the performance management process, clarifying roles and responsibilities of managers and staff, and provide for transparent mechanisms that recognise high-performance and address under-performance, including proposals for recognition, rewards and performance improvement and a rebuttal process. The target date for the introduction and implementation of the related policy and revised process is early 2015 (FAO Finance Committee, 2014 [07]). Such policies should help address the concerns that are reflected in the perceptions of survey respondents who rated FAO as inadequate for the transparency of its system to manage staff performance. As these policies and processes are recent or forthcoming, it is not possible to document how successfully they have or will be implemented. The evidence presented to the MOPAN assessment team allow for some confidence that FAO is improving its staff appraisal practices in a comprehensive way (FAO, n.d. [04]).

### **KPI 11: Performance-oriented programming**

**Finding 11:** **FAO has several policies and guidelines in place to ensure that appropriate environmental, social and gender equality analyses are conducted prior to project approval, though the extent of their application is not clear. FAO systematically establishes milestones to rate the progress of project implementation.**

FAO's performance-oriented programming was assessed by document review only. Evidence from the review suggests that FAO's programming is adequately performance oriented. FAO has a number of key guidelines and policies in place to ensure that appropriate analyses are conducted prior to project approval, including its Guide to the Project Cycle: Quality for Results; Environmental Impact Assessment – Guidelines for FAO Field Projects; and FAO's Policy on Gender Equality. The Guide to the Project Cycle provides practical guidelines and templates for all steps in the project planning process including the preparation of initial concept notes, project formulation documents, and peer review processes. The guidelines also explain when and how gender equality and environmental impact analyses should be conducted in the project cycle.

While these guidelines and policies demonstrate FAO's commitment to ensuring that projects are environmentally sustainable and that issues related to gender equality are taken into account, the document review did not find clear evidence that they are being systematically implemented or done to a quality standard. This observation is in line with some of the main conclusions from a recent validation report on the follow-up to the 2010 evaluation of FAO's role and work related to gender and development (FAO Programme Committee, 2013 [02]). The validation report acknowledges that the Policy on Gender Equality has positioned FAO to better mainstream gender equality into its five Strategic Objectives, but also finds that the implementation of the policy faces some challenges.

The document review found that FAO systematically sets milestones to rate the progress of project implementation. All the Project Documents and Work Plans reviewed include a description of activities and outputs and expected dates (i.e. month or quarter) for their implementation. However, none of the Project Documents reviewed have established baseline values for each indicator used to measure the progress of project/programme implementation.

### **KPI 12: Delegating authority**

**Finding 12:** **FAO has substantially increased delegation of authority to decentralised offices, and there is scope for further decentralisation. Country office human and financial resources do not currently match the increased responsibilities, and staff vacancies and increased workload are a concern.**

Survey respondents were asked if staff deployment in country is sufficient for the development of effective country-level partnerships; if aid reallocation decisions can be made locally; and if new programmes/projects can be approved locally within a budget cap. They rated FAO adequate overall. The document review rated FAO as adequate for delegating authority to country offices.

Decentralisation and increased delegation of authority were an integral part of FAO's Immediate Plan of Action (IPA) for FAO's Renewal. Regional offices are now the budget holders for all decentralised projects and they also manage regional projects. A number of sub-regional offices have been created to provide technical support to country offices. FAO Representatives (FAORs) were given more authority for aid reallocation and project approval of non-emergency TCPs for up to USD 500 000 in 2009 and for emergency TCP projects within a budget cap in 2012 (FAO Programme Committee/Finance Committee, 2011 [02]). Decentralised offices were given more authority over strategic planning, human resources, finances, procurement and resource mobilisation. FAO's Office of Support to Decentralization (OSD) was restructured in 2013 and 2014 and its new functions include support to decentralised offices for CPF formulation and the project cycle, including project approval, monitoring and selected aspects of RBM.

All staff interviewed in country offices reported that their authorities had increased substantially in recent years, particularly for the approval of TCP projects. However, they also noted that decisions about projects funded through voluntary contributions are, for the time being, still largely centralised within headquarters even though FAORs were given the responsibility in 2012 to develop donor partnerships and mobilise resources at the country level. FAO management has approved proposals to delegate final review of all country and sub-regional-level projects to the regional level. According to interviewed staff, the authority for approving these projects within a budget cap should be decentralised by the end of 2014.

The decentralisation of human and financial resources is a complex issue that has been the subject of vigorous discussion between FAO and its Governing Bodies, which have emphasised the need for FAO to maintain its technical strength and capacity at headquarters in order to perform its normative roles. On the other hand, additional staff and financial resources may be required to delegate most field programming responsibilities to regional, sub-regional and country offices. As noted in recent evaluations, decentralisation was undertaken without proportional increases in financial and human resources for decentralised offices and many staff have seen their workload increase significantly (FAO Office of Evaluation, 2014 [03]) (FAO Office of Evaluation, 2014 [04]) (FAO Office of Evaluation, 2013 [06]). Interviewed staff also noted that vacancies are an issue in many decentralised offices and particularly in

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some essential specialised fields. While strides have been made in improving the managerial competencies of FAORs through enhanced recruitment, handling the workload is a widely reported challenge. The increased administrative and financial responsibilities delegated to decentralised offices require adequate staffing and training to fully support functioning, transparent operations.

In terms of partnerships, evaluations note that there is a lack of capacity at country level to engage with civil society, the private sector and non-agricultural government entities (FAO Office of Evaluation, 2013 [05]). FAO is attempting to address these issues through its Office for Partnerships, Advocacy and Capacity Development (OPC) and the creation of some specialised partnership posts in decentralised offices. In their written comments, survey respondents expressed mixed views regarding FAO's ability to establish partnerships, suggesting there has been progress but there is still some room for improvement in this area.

**Illustrative survey respondent views: Partnerships with CSO and private sector perceived as both a strength and an area for improvement**

*"FAO can bridge the CSOs with governmental agencies on some important issues, especially food security."*

(Direct partner respondent)

*"FAO needs to reach beyond its government focused mandate to other partners including civil society, INGOs, and very certainly the private sector in the countries it operates in." (Peer organisation respondent)*

### KPI 13: Work in emergencies

**Finding 13: Decentralisation of emergency operations has led to strengthened country leadership for work in emergencies. During this process, FAO started to implement its new resilience agenda and also strengthened its practices and systems for emergency preparedness and response, including for a Level 3 emergency.**

FAO's capacity to work in emergencies was perceived to be strong overall by both document review and survey respondents. MOPAN donors were generally more positive than direct partners and peer organisations.

Over the last decade, FAO's work in emergencies and rehabilitation has nearly doubled and currently accounts for more than one-third of the organisation's expenditures. FAO plays an important role in emergency preparedness by monitoring global threats to food and nutrition security through a wide array of early warning systems. According to a 2013 evaluation of FAO's role and work in disaster risk reduction in Asia and in Latin America and the Caribbean, the organisation also builds the capacities of member countries in disaster risk reduction, although impact in this area has been somewhat limited in these regions because capacity building initiatives have been geared toward individuals rather than institutions (FAO Office of Evaluation, 2013 [04]). Following a crisis or a disaster, FAO contributes to restoring agricultural production through the provision of seeds and agricultural inputs and through the reconstruction of agricultural infrastructure. Evaluations note that FAO's contribution in this area has been positive (FAO Office of Evaluation, 2014 [03]; FAO Office of Evaluation, 2012 [09]).

In the past, the responsibility for and management of emergency operations rested within the Emergency Operations and Rehabilitation Division (TCE) located at headquarters and these operations were programmed separately from development activities. In recent years, operations related to emergency and rehabilitation were decentralised to the field and integrated along with development activities into Country Programming Frameworks under the overall responsibility of the FAO Representative (FAOR).

To strengthen country leadership for work in emergencies, FAO also appointed Deputy FAORs with longstanding experience in emergencies to assist the FAOR in countries with important emergency operations. The latest report of the Inspector General indicates this decentralisation process has gone well and that as a result country leadership for emergencies has been significantly strengthened (FAO Office of the Inspector General, 2014 [01], pp. 7-8).

FAO's reviewed Strategic Framework frames the organisation's new focus on increasing the resilience of livelihoods to threats and emergencies and emphasises the linkages between relief, rehabilitation and development. Through this new approach, FAO focuses on developing, protecting and restoring livelihoods while addressing the underlying factors of risks and disasters threatening these. The 2014 *Evaluation of FAO's Contribution to Crisis-related Transition* concludes that FAO has a widely recognised comparative advantage in this area and that FAO's work in transition, now firmly embedded in the organisation's new resilience agenda, is moving in the right direction (FAO Office of Evaluation, 2014 [09], p. 98).

FAO's has systems in place to ensure timeliness of its interventions during an emergency, including the Special Fund for Emergency and Rehabilitation Activities (SFERA), an advanced financing mechanism that allows FAO to disburse funds immediately, before donor funding for a specific emergency is secured. FAO's practices and systems for emergency preparedness and response were enhanced in 2013-14 with the adoption of its Emergency Preparedness Framework and revision of policies and operational guidelines (FAO, 2014 [36]), including response procedures to be followed in case of a system-wide level three emergency that were developed by FAO as part of the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) Transformative Agenda (FAO, 2013 [41]).

## 3.4 RELATIONSHIP MANAGEMENT

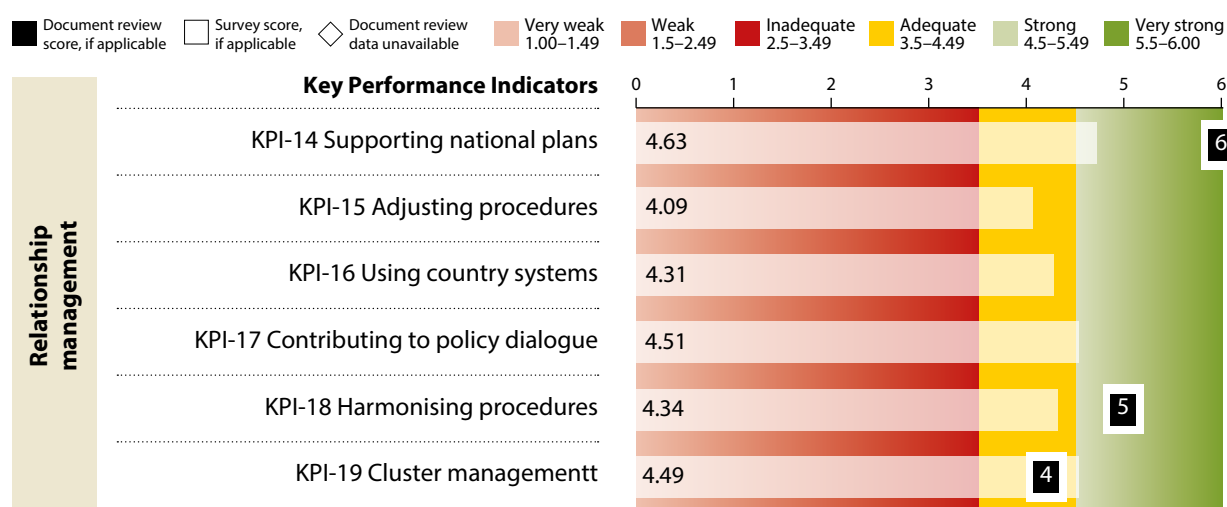
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### 3.4.1 Summary

**Overall, survey respondents considered FAO to be adequate or strong in the area of relationship management, including in supporting national plans, adjusting procedures, using country systems, contributing to policy dialogue, harmonising procedures, and managing the Food Security Cluster. The document review provided ratings ranging from adequate to very strong.**

Figure 3.3 shows the overall ratings for the five KPIs in the relationship management performance area, which illustrates how the organisation is working with others at the country level. Many of the indicators are based on the principles of the Busan Partnership for Effective Development Co-operation and previous aid effectiveness commitments.

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**Figure 3.3 | Performance area III: Relationship management, survey and document review ratings**

### 3.4.2 Findings on each key performance indicator

#### KPI 14: Supporting national plans

**Finding 14:** The objectives in FAO's new Country Programming Frameworks are highly aligned with national development priorities. Recent evaluations have noted that FAO's new approach to country-level planning is appreciated by development partners as an effective means of defining development objectives of national importance.

FAO was rated as strong by survey respondents for the alignment between Country Programme Frameworks (CPFs) and national development strategies. It was rated adequate overall for developing funding proposals with governments or direct partners.

The document review found that statements of expected results in the CPFs were consistent with those in national development strategies and UNDAFs. Indeed, all CPFs reviewed explicitly refer to national development strategies in the narrative text as well as in results frameworks. They also clearly explain the mechanisms used to involve national and international development partners in the definition of FAO's country objectives.

The alignment between CPFs and national development priorities was also noted in three recent evaluations of FAO's regional and sub-regional offices in Latin America and the Caribbean, Asia and the Pacific, and Africa (FAO Office of Evaluation, 2014 [05]; FAO Office of Evaluation, 2014 [04]; FAO Office of Evaluation, 2013 [06]).

#### Quote from the 2014 Evaluation of FAO's Regional and Sub-Regional offices for Latin America and the Caribbean on CPF alignment with national priorities

*"The formulation process of the CPF can be an excellent opportunity for dialogue and subsequent partnership development based on a common understanding of the issues to be addressed and the specific capacities and advantages of FAO in addressing the issue (...) In particular, the CPFs have been successful in stating the results that FAO in partnership with Government aim to achieve over the programme period"*  
(FAO Office of Evaluation, 2014 [04])



### KPI 15: Adjusting procedures

**Finding 15:** In-country survey respondents rated FAO adequate overall for timeliness, flexibility in adjusting to changing circumstances and/or learning, and the ease with which FAO procedures can be understood and completed. However, nearly one-quarter of all respondents highlighted administrative/operational efficiency as an area for improvement.

The extent to which FAO's procedures take into account local conditions and capacities was assessed by in-country survey respondents only. FAO was rated as adequate in terms of its procedures being easy to understand and use and for the length of time it takes to complete procedures. In written survey comments from all respondent groups, administrative/operational efficiency at FAO was the most frequently cited area for improvement (24% of survey respondents overall). Some of the most frequent comments were that country offices still rely too much on regional offices and HQ to make decisions, that procedures are still lengthy, and that delays in disbursements of funds sometimes have negative effects on project implementation. On the other hand, when asked about FAO's greatest strength, 6% of direct partner respondents highlighted the organisation's efficiency and timely interventions (see sidebar). As part of its ongoing reforms, FAO has recently taken steps to enhance efficiencies in its systems and procedures, notably through its shift toward an online user servicing system, the automation of multiple procedures through GRMS, and the inclusion of flags and warnings in administrative processes and project implementation.

#### Illustrative survey respondent views on administrative/operational efficiency at FAO

FAO's administrative procedures often cited as needing improvement

*"Once finances to start a project are released, subsequent tranches are often delayed slowing down the implementation of the project. In the recent past their requirements for provision of certain information to account how money has been spent was put in place without adequately informing their implementing partners in advance. This led to disallowing expenses which had been used on project work".*

(Direct partner respondent)

*"There are still some unclear and administratively heavy mechanisms especially with regards to the HQ-field dynamics."* (MOPAN donor in-country)

*"The agreements are clear and precise. There is regular contact with the partner and whenever called upon, the [FAO] staff are ready to respond to issues. The funding disbursements and feedback on reports are prompt."*

(Direct partner respondent)

FAO was rated adequate overall for its operational flexibility to respond to changing circumstances at country level although 21% of respondents considered it inadequate, weak or very weak in this area. The majority of respondents (69%) rated FAO as adequate or higher for its operational flexibility to adjust implementation as learning occurs.



**KPI 16: Using country systems**

**Finding 16:** As a specialised agency that provides technical co-operation, FAO does not make extensive use of country systems but makes efforts to do so when possible. Through its new Country Programming Framework, FAO participates in mutual assessments of country programmes with national stakeholders.

FAO's use of country systems was assessed by survey only. Respondents were asked whether FAO uses country systems where appropriate and whether it participates in mutual assessments of progress in implementing agreed commitments with national partners. They rated FAO as adequate overall.

Due to the nature of its work as a specialised agency that provides technical co-operation, the use of country systems may not apply to FAO's work in all countries. Nonetheless, FAO has taken a number of steps to increase the use of national systems in its work. For instance, FAO is currently piloting and will soon roll out the Harmonised Approach to Cash Transfers (HACT) to implementing partners, which is meant to strengthen national capacities for management and accountability, to increase FAO's use of national systems as much as possible, and to harmonise procedures to transfer and report on funds. The HACT examines risks to using public financial management systems and audit functions and provides a risk rating to guide decision making.

FAO is also working to strengthen national statistics, most recently through the Global Strategy to Improve Agricultural and Rural Statistics. Indeed, FAO's CPF guidelines list the critical activities to be undertaken at different stages of the CPF formulation process for building statistical capacity in the agricultural sector.

**KPI 17: Contributing to policy dialogue**

**Finding 17:** FAO has a reputation for high quality and valued policy dialogue, particularly at the global and regional levels. FAO has been a champion of South-South dialogue and is acknowledged for its inclusive approach to policy dialogue.

The extent to which FAO adds value to policy dialogue with its partners was assessed by survey only. Respondents rated FAO strong overall for its high quality, valued policy dialogue and for carrying out policy dialogue in a manner which respects partner views and perspectives.

FAO's role as a global convener and knowledge broker on food and agriculture is well acknowledged. It is noted for its normative work preparing and negotiating international agreements on a wide range of issues. A 2012 evaluation of FAO's policy work noted FAO's high-quality policy work at global and regional levels, but commented that FAO's contribution to policy dialogue had been less effective at country levels, notably due to lack of expertise on policy in country offices (FAO Office of Evaluation, 2012 [08]). FAO has made significant efforts to implement recommendations from the evaluation, including by increasing support for policy work in regional and sub-regional offices and by strengthening country leadership for providing policy support. Strong survey ratings from in-country respondents may suggest that these changes are already starting to show results. Since the arrival of the current Director-General, FAO has also been actively engaged in South-South dialogue and now has a South-South and Resource Mobilisation Division which assists and develops member country capacities to use this modality more effectively.

**KPI 18: Harmonising procedures**

**Finding 18:** **FAO has made concerted efforts to co-ordinate with partners, harmonise its operations with other UN agencies, work within its comparative advantage, and contribute actively to inter-agency plans and appeals in emergencies.**

Overall, FAO was rated strong by the document review and adequate by survey respondents on this KPI.

At the global level, FAO plays an important role in convening and facilitating forums, such as for the Committee on World Food Security (CFS), and has a reputation as an “honest broker” in these processes. At the country level, FAO has made concerted efforts to adhere to common UN programming principals and processes. FAO participates in more than 200 joint programmes (i.e. 23% of the 886 joint programmes identified in a review of the UN’s joint programming mechanism in 2013).

FAO conducts joint evaluations for thematic and project purposes and subscribes to UNEG and DAC evaluation principals. FAO has participated with other UN agencies in thematic evaluations, including for example, the Joint Thematic Evaluation of FAO and WFP Support to Information Systems for Food Security (2009), and the Joint Evaluation of Food Security Cluster Co-ordination in Humanitarian Action, again with WFP. At the project level, FAO has participated in joint evaluations of trust-funded projects.

In terms of business practices, FAO has made efforts to harmonise its operations with those of other UN organisations and the other Rome-based agencies – the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) and the World Food Programme (WFP) – in order to achieve economies of scale and improve efficiency. It participates in or is piloting the use of the Harmonised Approach to Cash Transfers (HACT), the International Public Sector Accounting Standards (IPSAS), and Common UN procurement processes. In 2009, FAO, IFAD and WFP agreed to collaborate on four ‘pillars’ to enhance harmonisation between the agencies: (a) policy advice and monitoring; (b) operations; (c) advocacy and communications; and (d) administrative collaboration. The three organisations also recently agreed on five common food security and nutrition targets for the post-2015 agenda: (1) Access to food; (2) Malnutrition; (3) Sustainable food systems; (4) Smallholder productivity and income; (5) Food loss and waste.

In the survey, direct partners were more positive than peer organisations about the extent to which FAO co-ordinates with partners throughout the programme cycle and builds on the initiatives of others to avoid duplication. However, survey respondents strongly agreed that FAO’s work reflects its comparative advantage. FAO has made considerable efforts to develop its Reviewed Strategic Framework based on its comparative advantage. It has also rolled out an Effective Country Programming Learning Programme (ECP LP) to enhance staff capacities to improve the strategies focus, relevance and impact of FAO’s work at country level, in response to recommendations provided by the Strategic Evaluation of Country Programming.

FAO has engaged with other humanitarian organisations in the development of consolidated appeals in countries where it works in emergencies. Overall, the documents consulted present descriptive information of FAO’s involvement in the consolidated appeals process (CAP) but provide limited feedback on its performance in this area. As part of the CAP, FAO and WFP are undertaking needs assessment in the agriculture and livestock sectors. Given that FAO’s contribution to emergencies is usually not considered by donors as having a direct impact on saving lives, FAO has faced recurrent challenges in resourcing its part of the CAP and is rarely able to mobilise more than half of the funding it needs to fulfil its CAP commitments. In 2014, as per Office for the Co-ordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) guidelines, FAO

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is making the transition from the CAP to the new Humanitarian Strategic Response Plan and country level staff have received guidance on this from FAO's Emergency Operations and Rehabilitation Division (TCE) at headquarters.

### KPI 19: Cluster management

**Finding 19:** **The Food Security Cluster, co-led by FAO and the World Food Programme, has had positive effects on country-level co-ordination. FAO was rated adequate overall for its role in cluster management, understanding that further improvements in some cluster management practices are still needed.**

This KPI examines how effectively FAO leads or co-leads clusters and whether it has effective systems and practices in place. The survey ratings are based on responses from direct partners and peer organisations in Bangladesh and the DRC as these were the only countries surveyed by MOPAN in which FAO is active in the Food Security Cluster (FSC).

More than two-thirds of respondents rated FAO as adequate or stronger when asked whether it dedicates sufficient resources on behalf of the cluster it leads or co-leads. FAO was rated as strong or very strong for the leadership it provides through the senior staff dedicated for co-ordination (60% of respondents) and for ensuring that pertinent information is circulated within the cluster (59%). A majority of respondents (65%) rated FAO as adequate or higher for generating reliable financial forecasts for the cluster.

In terms of effective systems and practices, FAO co-leads with WFP the Global Food Security Cluster (FSC) which has been active in some 40 countries worldwide, and there is broad consensus on the important role it plays in food security co-ordination. The FSC Strategic Plan is structured around four pillars: capacity development in support of national clusters; information management and learning; operational and surge support to national clusters; and advocacy, communication and partnership. The FSC is supported by a multi-institutional Global Support Team (GST) composed of the co-leads and international NGOs. The FSC has established three working groups that provide technical direction. According to the 2014 *Joint Evaluation of Food Security Cluster Coordination in Humanitarian Action* the Global FSC also produces valuable guidance material that could be used more consistently by co-ordination mechanisms in countries to provide guidance (FAO Office of Evaluation, 2014 [08]).

According to the 2014 joint evaluation, food security co-ordination has had a positive effect on participating organisations by facilitating networking, helping to build trust, providing credible data for funding applications, enhancing clarity of the roles and responsibilities of different stakeholders, and to some extent reducing duplication of efforts at country level. Co-ordination mechanisms have also contributed to more standardised and consistent reporting on food security among participating organisations. The evaluation suggests that more could be done to integrate contingency planning and preparedness into food security co-ordination. There is also room for improving the handing over of co-ordination responsibilities to the government once a cluster is deactivated.

According to the 2014 *Evaluation of FAO's Contribution to Crisis-related Transition*, the effectiveness of FAO's role as a cluster co-lead at the country level has varied and is contingent upon the quality of the FAOR and its staff and cluster co-ordinators and the support they receive from the regions and headquarters (FAO Office of Evaluation, 2014 [09]). Raising funds for cluster co-ordination has proved challenging for FAO but efforts are currently underway to strengthen capacities on the ground (FAO Programme Committee, 2014 [03]).

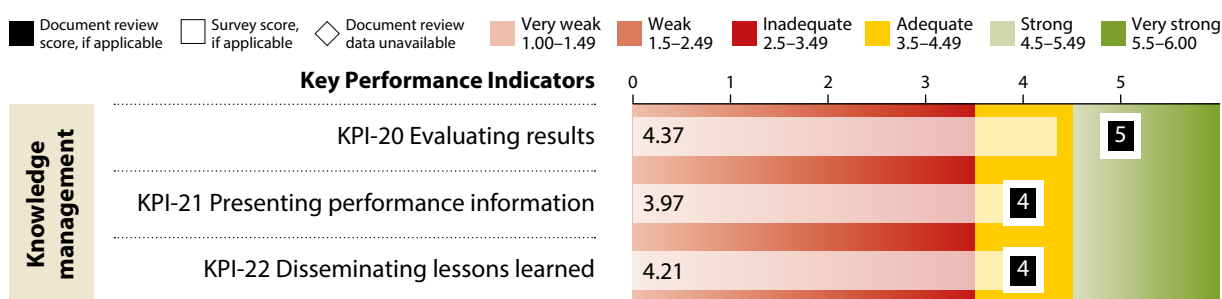
## 3.5 KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT

### 3.5.1 Summary

Survey respondents rated FAO as adequate in all areas of knowledge management. While the document review found FAO to be adequate in presenting performance information and disseminating lessons learned, it rated the organisation as strong for evaluating results.

Figure 3.4 shows the overall survey and document review ratings for the three KPIs in the knowledge management performance area, which examine an organisation's evaluation function, feedback and reporting mechanisms, as well as the practices and systems that facilitate the sharing of knowledge and performance information.

Figure 3.4 | Performance area IV: Knowledge management, survey and document review ratings



### 3.5.2 Findings on each key performance indicator

#### KPI 20: Evaluating results

**Finding 20:** FAO is recognised for having an evaluation function that is independent from technical and operational line management. It has the policies and systems in place for effective and high quality evaluation and broad evaluation coverage of themes and projects and aims to improve its evaluation coverage of country programmes.

FAO was rated strong overall by the document review and adequate by surveyed stakeholders for its evaluation of results.

The Office of Evaluation (OED) was established in 2010 as a separate evaluation unit located within the FAO Secretariat. It reports to the Director-General and Council and is independent from line management functions. It is considered amongst the most functionally and structurally independent evaluation functions in the United Nations System (FAO Office of Evaluation, 2012 [02], p. vii). FAO increased its budget for the OED from 0.5% of FAO budgeted net appropriations in 2005-06 to 0.8% in 2014-15. In 2013, the OED issued procedures to ensure that voluntary contributions include a budgeted envelope for evaluation.

The OED Charter stipulates that all FAO's work is subject to evaluation through: 1) thematic evaluations to Governing Bodies, 2) country evaluations, and 3) evaluations of individual programmes/projects financed through voluntary contributions, and that these evaluations should engage with relevant stakeholders at different stages of the process (FAO Programme Committee, 2010 [02]).

FAO achieves adequate evaluation coverage through its thematic, strategic and project level evaluations, which have also been the priorities of FAO's members. Nonetheless, the portfolio of available country programme evaluations is limited. Country programme evaluations are expected to increase with the organisation's new focus on country results (FAO Programme Committee, 2014 [07]). Regarding the involvement of stakeholders in the evaluation process, evidence indicates that this has not been done systematically. The 2012 Peer Review noted that stakeholders appear to be more engaged in thematic and country evaluations and less in individual programme/project evaluations (FAO Office of Evaluation, 2012 [02], p. 20).

The OED ensures the quality of major evaluations presented to Governing Bodies through a panel of independent experts. In 2011 it also instituted an internal peer review mechanism to ensure quality of other types of evaluations. In November 2014, the External Auditor confirmed the implementation of a previous recommendation to improve quality assurance tools for evaluations, which should contribute to enhancing FAO's internal peer review mechanism (FAO Finance Committee, 2014 [08], p. 22).

### KPI 21: Presenting performance information

**Finding 21:** In 2013, FAO revised its results framework and, for the first time, has put in place mechanisms to collect data at all levels of the organisation and to report on its strategic objectives. This should help address identified shortcomings in FAO's most recent performance report (for 2012-2013).

FAO's strategic cycle is framed around a four-year Medium-Term Plan (MTP), which is operationalised through a two-year Programme of Work and Budget (PWB). FAO uses two instruments to report on its effectiveness: 1) the Mid-term Review Synthesis Report, which is presented to the Programme and Finance Committees after the first year of implementation of the PWB, reports on the likelihood of achieving targets set for the biennium; and 2) The Programme Implementation Report (PIR), which reports on results achieved during the biennium and is presented to FAO's membership at the subsequent biennial Conference (e.g. the 2013 Conference reviewed the 2010-2011 PIR).

FAO's system for reporting on results has improved significantly since the introduction of results-based management in 2010; prior to this, FAO did not report on a results framework with indicators but rather in narrative form. However, there were still issues arising from the two Programme Implementation Reports covering the 2010-13 strategic cycle, the most recent of which (PIR 2012-13) will be presented to the Council in December 2014 and to the Conference in July 2015.

The principle issue affecting FAO's ratings for reporting on effectiveness is that both the PIR 2010-11 and PIR 2012-13 reported on a prior and poorly designed results framework (2010-13). The organisational results (OR) in the framework were not consistently formulated as outcomes (i.e. some were formulated as outputs) and this hindered FAO's ability to report on outcomes during the 2010-13 strategic cycle. The high number of strategic objectives (11), organisational results (49) and associated indicators (133)<sup>5</sup> in the previous results framework (2010-13) also made it difficult for FAO to report on its organisation-wide results in a concise and comprehensive manner. The lack of a results chain made it difficult to

5. FAO's Strategic Framework includes both strategic and functional objectives with a total of 54 organisational results 175 indicators. However, because KPI 21 focuses on FAO's reporting on results, we included the total number of organisational results and indicators for the strategic objectives only.

understand the link between results statements and strategic objectives (FAO Conference, 2014 [01]). As a consequence, while the achievement rates for the strategic objectives presented in the PIRs were quite high, these were not substantiated by strong evidence.

Aware of shortcomings in its previous results framework, FAO has made significant efforts to improve it. The reduction in the number of strategic objectives, organisational outcomes and outputs, as well as the clear distinction between outcome and output level results statements, should facilitate FAO's reporting on outcomes in the PIR 2014-16. Along with this new results framework, FAO has for the first time put in place mechanisms to collect data at all levels of the organisation that will be used to report on its strategic objectives. While outputs will be measured on a yearly basis, outcomes will be measured at the end of each biennium and reported in the PIR. FAO has developed and shared with all departments and decentralised offices methodological notes on measuring output indicators and data collection has recently started for the 2014 Mid-term Synthesis Report (FAO, 2014 [51]). At the end of this biennium, the baseline survey (see KPI 3 on corporate focus on results) used to set baseline data in the corporate results framework will also be used to collect data on outcome indicators. FAO's Corporate Programme Monitoring Board (CPMB) also established clear lines of accountability for monitoring and reporting at all levels of the organisation and quality assurance mechanisms are being put in place (FAO, 2014 [46]). FAO's first corporate monitoring and reporting exercise has already contributed to identifying certain gaps in monitoring and reporting and represents a significant shift for the organisation in terms of managing for results.

As for country level monitoring and reporting, country offices report on their performance through the Annual FAO Representative (FAOR) report. Until recently, the FAOR reports were narrative and did not use indicators to provide evidence of results. Most National Medium-Term Priority Frameworks (NMTPF) have been replaced by Country Programming Frameworks (CPF) that are better aligned with FAO's results framework. With this transition, FAO has issued guidelines for FAOR reports that require Country Offices to report on the outcomes expected in the CPF in line with FAO commitments to Governments and contributions to FAO's corporate strategic framework (FAO, n.d. [31]); the revised templates are to be available for January 2015 reporting. As noted in KPI 5 on country focus on results, the results frameworks in some of the CPFs reviewed included overly complex results statements that might make it difficult to monitor and report on results. The assessment team reviewed FAOR reports for five of the six countries included in the MOPAN assessment<sup>6</sup> and while three used indicators with baselines and targets to report on results, the others provided only narrative under outcome statements. Without indicators it is unclear how outputs contribute to outcomes. Nevertheless, FAO's efforts to enhance the quality of its reporting at country level are commendable and it is expected that country offices will continue to improve their outcome-level reporting, especially as the organisation progresses in making the transition from project to country programming.

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6. The FAOR report for Cambodia was not reviewed because the Country Office still operates on an NMTPF. Transition to the CPF should be done in 2016.

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## KPI 22: Disseminating lessons learned

**Finding 22:** Since 2011, FAO has made efforts through its Knowledge Strategy to improve knowledge sharing and dissemination. It has also revised its strategic framework and enhanced collaboration between technical networks to promote knowledge management across the organisation – efforts which are too recent to assess.

As a specialised agency, knowledge dissemination is central to FAO's mandate. This was appreciated by MOPAN survey respondents who rated FAO as strong in facilitating the exchange of knowledge. In their written comments 18% of respondents also cited FAO's work in generating and disseminating knowledge as its greatest strength. (This was the second most frequently cited strength.) This may suggest that FAO has addressed some of the deficiencies highlighted in the independent external evaluation (IEE) in 2007 and in recent OED evaluations regarding knowledge management and dissemination.

Since its inception, FAO has been a knowledge organisation with a clear role to disseminate information. In 2011, in response to shortcomings noted in the IEE and as part of its commitment to enhance knowledge management, FAO adopted its first knowledge strategy to improve knowledge dissemination to stakeholders through enhanced knowledge sharing between staff at headquarters and in decentralised offices (FAO, 2011 [06]). FAO has also taken steps to enhance the quality and dissemination of its knowledge products, including through the adoption of a new Corporate Publishing Policy, increased resources for the production and dissemination of flagship publications, and greater electronic dissemination through email and social media campaigns. FAO hosts and participates in a number of networks and portals, and also maintains FAOSTAT, FAO's renowned website where external users can access statistics on food and agriculture in English, French and Spanish; at the end of 2013, the site received 9 million hits per month, representing a 50% increase from 2010.

As part of its Strategic Thinking Process, FAO has made significant efforts to break the silo culture that had resulted in some duplication of effort and poor knowledge sharing (see KPI 3 corporate focus on results). Under the reviewed Strategic Framework, FAO's technical work now cuts across the five new strategic objectives and enhanced collaboration and sharing of lessons learned will be facilitated by recently established technical networks (FAO, 2014 [20]). Though positive, these changes are very recent and may not have been considered by survey respondents, who rated FAO as adequate for providing opportunities to share lessons across the organisation.

The Office of Evaluation (OED) has made efforts to increase its capacity to fulfil its role in incorporating lessons learned into the corporate feedback loop. It has recently adopted an Evaluation Knowledge Management Strategy and has also established an evaluation knowledge management position. In response to a recommendation from the External Auditor's latest report to enhance knowledge

### Illustrative survey respondent views: Importance of FAO role in sharing knowledge and supporting good data

*"FAO is still a ready source of global technical knowledge on agriculture and food security."*  
(Peer organisation respondent)

*"Its [FAO] publications are very informative and help to standardize best practices and protocols in the agriculture sector for various regions of the world."*  
(Direct partner respondent)

*"The work of FAO on statistics is essential for all rural development, agricultural and food security issues of all international organisations, national organisations working in rural areas, agriculture and food security issues, and member states of the UN (including the IFIs)"*  
(Donor at HQ respondent)

management and the use of lessons learned from project evaluations, the OED expected to have by the end of 2013 a functioning database containing evaluation findings, recommendations and lessons learned to be used by the organisation for decision making.

In the past, variable information technology (IT) connectivity with some decentralised offices limited some opportunities for Internet-based communication and knowledge sharing between headquarters and decentralised offices. FAO has made significant efforts to address this issue and the assessment team noted that all country and regional offices visited had functioning videoconference installations. Interviewed staff in decentralised offices said that country offices now connect on a regular basis with regional offices and headquarters through these IT installations to share knowledge and lessons learned.



## 4. Evidence of FAO's relevance and development results

## 4.1 INTRODUCTION

This section presents the results of 2014 Common Approach assessment of the evidence of the relevance of FAO's programming and of its contributions to results. It includes four key performance areas:

- Section 4.2: Evidence of the multilateral organisation's relevance (KPI A)
- Section 4.3: Evidence of the multilateral organisation's progress towards its organisation-wide results (KPI B)
- Section 4.4: Evidence of the multilateral organisation's progress towards its stated country-level results (KPI C)
- Section 4.5: Evidence of the multilateral organisation's contribution to national goals and priorities, including the MDGs (KPI D)

The assessment of this component uses the same "traffic light" colours used in the organisational effectiveness component. However, the overall rating is based on a simplified four-point scale and reflects the assessment team's judgment after considering all of the evidence from documents, survey, and interviews. (See detailed methodology in the Technical Report, Volume II, Appendix I.)

## 4.2 EVIDENCE OF FAO'S RELEVANCE (KPI A)

This section presents an analysis of the relevance of FAO's work (programming), based on documents reviewed and survey data.

**Figure 4.1 | Evidence of FAO's relevance, overall rating**

Weak Inadequate Adequate Strong

Overall rating:	STRONG
Justification of the rating for FAO	MOPAN perception data and documents consulted on FAO practices provide evidence that FAO is pursuing results relevant to its mandate, and that these are aligned with global development trends and priorities, respond to the needs and priorities of beneficiaries, and are adapted to changing country circumstances. The documents suggest that FAO has made concerted efforts to improve overall relevance to its stakeholders.
MOPAN description of this rating	There is clear evidence of the congruence/alignment between the organisation's stated results and partner country priorities, beneficiary needs and priorities, global trends and priorities in development or humanitarian field, and the organisation's mandate. Consistent data emerges from corporate (organisation-wide) and country-level sources.

**Finding 23: FAO's ongoing relevance is confirmed both in documents and by survey respondents. Its strategic thinking process and subsequent reforms have contributed to strengthening the relevance of the organisation.**

As the specialised UN agency responsible for food and agriculture (crops, livestock, fisheries and forestry), FAO has a recognised mandate that is considered relevant by both survey respondents and the document review. Evaluations have noted FAO's unique and important roles in, for example, setting global norms and standards, ensuring food safety, and convening international meetings on emerging issues. FAO was also rated highly in providing specialised humanitarian assistance, as underlined in recent evaluations of FAO's work in crisis-related transition and in the Food Security Cluster. In terms of field programming, FAO is putting in place a prioritised and more results-oriented approach that should correlate to higher relevance at country level.

Survey respondents rated FAO strong for pursuing results within its mandate and adequate in the other three MIs in this KPI A. Direct partners considered FAO strong on all aspects of relevance in KPI A. FAO was also rated as strong on other performance indicators associated with relevance, including the alignment between Country Programming Frameworks (CPF) and national strategies, FAO's capacity to work in areas reflecting its comparative advantages, and its contribution to policy dialogue. Most respondents also provided positive ratings regarding its operational flexibility.

The document review acknowledges FAO's recent efforts to realign its strategic focus and define its comparative advantages in relation to major global trends and priorities in the fields of agriculture and rural development, including but not limited to world food security, the effects of climate change on agriculture, and globalisation.

In 2012 FAO launched the Strategic Thinking Process to determine the future strategic directions of the organisation. This process included extensive consultation with and input from staff members, partner organisations, member nations, and an external Strategy Experts Panel. With input from these stakeholders, FAO identified major global trends as drivers of change as well as main challenges, pointing to possible priority areas for future work. The Strategic Thinking Process also encompassed an analysis of FAO's core functions and comparative advantages in relation to other organisations with similar mandates. According to FAO's reviewed Strategic Framework 2010-2019 (FAO Conference, 2013 [05]), its core functions correspond to the areas identified by the IEE that would need to be reinvented "if FAO were to disappear tomorrow." These include FAO's capacity to:

- 1) Facilitate and support countries in the development and implementation of normative and standard-setting instruments such as international agreements, codes of conduct, technical standards and others
- 2) Assemble, analyse, monitor and improve access to data and information, in areas related to FAO's mandate
- 3) Facilitate, promote and support policy dialogue at global, regional and country levels
- 4) Advise and support capacity development at country and regional level to prepare, implement, monitor and evaluate evidence-based policies, investments and programmes

- 5) Advise and support activities that assemble, disseminate and improve the uptake of knowledge, technologies and good practices in the areas of FAO's mandate
- 6) Facilitate partnerships for food and nutrition security, agriculture and rural development between governments, development partners, civil society and the private sector
- 7) Advocate and communicate at national, regional and global levels in areas of FAO's mandate.<sup>7</sup>

Based on the Strategic Thinking Process, FAO identified five strategic objectives in its reviewed Strategic Framework that are highly relevant and aligned with national and global priorities. As highlighted in KPI 3 on corporate focus on results, the reviewed Strategic Framework represents a significant improvement in terms of enhancing the organisation's strategic focus and is contributing to further increasing its relevance.

In addition to implementing reforms at the corporate level, FAO continues to consult its national and regional stakeholders to identify priorities and incorporate them into its Medium-Term Plan, such as through Regional Conferences and facilitating forums on emerging problems. FAO also launched a new approach to planning and programming at the country level that aims to increase the added value of the organisation's work by applying a more programmatic and results-focussed approach. The rationale and merits of this new approach are reported in KPI 5. For the first time, the CPFs explicitly refer to and are aligned with FAO's strategic priorities and comparative advantages at corporate level, as defined in its reviewed Strategic Framework. This indicates that the strategic re-orientation process at the institutional level is being implemented in practice at the country level. Indeed, recent evaluations of FAO's regional and sub-regional offices (for Africa, Asia and the Pacific, and Latin America and the Caribbean), acknowledge the relevance of CPFs as a priority setting tool and confirm that development partners, including governments, find them useful and well aligned with national development priorities (FAO Office of Evaluation, 2014 [05]; FAO Office of Evaluation, 2014 [04]; FAO Office of Evaluation, 2013 [06]).

While strong survey ratings among direct partners may be an indication of FAO's increased relevance in countries, other respondent groups provided ratings of adequate when asked whether FAO responds to the needs of its target groups and whether it adapts its work to countries' changing needs and priorities. Those differences were statistically significant. While there are signs that FAO's new programming practices are likely to increase FAO's relevance at the country level, more time is needed to conclude whether or how they are delivering the desired results. FAO is still in the process of implementing CPFs in certain countries, and no CPF evaluations assessing the organisation's relevance have been conducted to date.

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7. For more detail see: "FAO's attributes, core functions and comparative advantages in relation to the Global Challenges" <http://www.fao.org/docrep/meeting/025/md881E01.pdf> prepared by an FAO working group composed of: A. Agostini, B. Benbelhassen, R. Grainger, D. Gustafson, K. Gallaher, V. Gitz, E. Hibi, S. Rudgard.

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### 4.3 EVIDENCE OF PROGRESS TOWARDS ORGANISATION-WIDE RESULTS (KPI B)

The purpose of this KPI is to provide an assessment of FAO's evidence of progress towards organisation-wide results between 2010 and 2013. Because of its focus on contributions to development results, the review is retrospective and considers the results emerging from implementation of the FAO strategic framework for 2010-2013 which included 11 strategic objectives (see sidebar). As such, KPI B does not capture the more recent events of FAO's strategic thinking process, its reviewed Strategic Framework, its re-organisation or new processes. These newer practices are reflected in chapter 3 on organisational effectiveness.

#### FAO Strategic Objectives (SOs)

*SO A: Sustainable intensification of crop production*

*SO B: Increased sustainable livestock production*

*SO C: Sustainable management and use of fisheries and aquaculture resources*

*SO D: Improved quality and safety of food at all stages of the food chain*

*SO E: Sustainable management of forests and trees*

*SO F: Sustainable management of land, water and genetic resources and improved responses to global environmental challenges affecting food and agriculture*

*SO G: Enabling environment for markets to improve livelihoods and rural development*

*SO H: Improved food security and better nutrition*

*SO I: Improved preparedness for, and effective response to, food and agricultural threats and emergencies*

*SO K: Gender equity in access to resources, goods, services and decision-making in the rural areas*

*SO L: Increased and more effective public and private investment*

This section identifies FAO's main areas of achievement and analyses the evidence produced to support conclusions in performance reports. The assessment is based on evidence presented in FAO's Programme Implementation Reports (PIR) and from a sample of major thematic evaluations published by the FAO's Office of Evaluation (OED) during the period under review. Unfortunately, the sample of evaluations did not provide comprehensive coverage of all 11 strategic objectives. The assessment also presents data from the MOPAN survey. KPI B builds on the assessment of FAO's reporting in KPI 21 on presenting performance information.

FAO received an overall rating of inadequate on this KPI for the 2010-2013 period under review.

**Figure 4.2 | Evidence of FAO's progress towards organisation-wide results, overall rating**

<div> <div>Weak</div> <div>Inadequate</div> <div>Adequate</div> <div>Strong</div> </div>	
<b>Overall rating:</b>	<b>INADEQUATE</b>
<b>Justification of the rating for FAO</b>	<p>The Programme Implementation Reports (PIRs) for the two biennia under review did not provide an accurate picture of progress towards organisation-wide results due to weaknesses in the design of the Strategic Framework 2010-2013 and in the baselines, targets and indicators used for reporting. While the PIRs reported significant progress towards most organisational results, corporate and thematic evaluations provided a mixed picture; many noted that a lack of theories of change and data on outcome-level progress impeded the documentation of evidence of results. FAO is aware of these limitations and has implemented a number of changes in 2014 to address them.</p> <p>Evaluations noted achievements in FAO's normative work, particularly in support of global policies and conventions, but limited uptake and use of related knowledge products at country level. Surveyed stakeholders assessed FAO's contributions to results as adequate overall. They rated it strong for progress towards its strategic objective related to preparedness and response to emergencies and inadequate for its objective related to public and private investments in agriculture and rural development.</p>
<b>MOPAN description of this rating</b>	<p>The organisation does not provide evidence that it is meeting or moving toward most of its stated results. In addition, the theories of change are not well articulated. The exploration of different sources of data (including perceptions of key stakeholders) does not provide consistent evidence with regard to the achievement of results at output and outcome levels. While the organisation presents some data on progress towards its expected results, the evidence base is weak.</p>

**Finding 24:** For the 2010-2013 period under review, there is evidence that FAO made contributions in most of its 11 strategic objectives, especially in its normative work and role as a global convenor. It faced some challenges in supporting the uptake and use of knowledge and normative products in countries. It is difficult to assess or substantiate FAO's reported organisational results for the 2010-2013 period as FAO reports and other sources of data provide diverse views.

In the period under review, FAO was in the early stages of incorporating RBM into its management culture and practice. The Strategic Framework at the time was overly complex and needed to be supported by concerted efforts to develop staff capacities in RBM throughout the organisation. It is not surprising that planning, data collection, monitoring, reporting and performance management were uneven in the organisation, and this is reflected in the evidence gathered for this assessment – through Programme Implementation Reports (PIRs), evaluations, interviews and the survey – which provided mixed views of FAO's progress towards organisation-wide results.

**The PIRs** for the period under review reported that FAO had made strong progress towards expected results in all areas and that it had met or surpassed targets for most of the strategic objective indicators. However, as FAO itself has observed and already begun to address, there were also a number of problems with the results statements and indicators and with the reporting provided through the PIRs (discussed in KPI 21 on presenting performance information). In several instances, the formulation of results statements was inconsistent. Moreover, FAO did not clearly articulate a theory of change for its strategic objectives,

making it difficult to fully understand how the indicators on which FAO reported were contributing to the achievement of its objectives.

A selection of **thematic evaluations** was used by the assessment team to corroborate the information presented in the PIR. Most evaluations noted important deficiencies in FAO's capacity to measure results beyond activity and output delivery, thereby limiting the ability of the Office of Evaluation to capture results at outcome or impact levels. The selected thematic evaluations reviewed for this assessment presented a varied picture of both successes and failures. Most evaluations were quite positive about FAO's contributions to global discussions and the setting of international policies, norms and standards. Some salient examples of higher level results in this area include the contribution of FAO's trade policy analysis to WTO negotiations and its work on price volatility in recent G20 debates (FAO Office of Evaluation, 2012 [08], p. 68). Evaluations also noted FAO achievements at the country level related to food safety, plant protection, integrated pest management and management of plant genetic resources (FAO Office of Evaluation, 2014 [03]). On the other hand, evaluations also noted challenges in linking FAO's global normative work to its operational activities at the country level and identified the need for more capacity development in member countries for compliance with the large array of international instruments for which FAO is the Secretariat.<sup>8</sup> Similarly, it was noted that while FAO produces many publications, guidelines and tools, they are not all as well disseminated and used at country level as some of its noted "flagship" publications (FAO Office of Evaluation, 2012 [03]; FAO Office of Evaluation, 2012 [04]; FAO Office of Evaluation, 2013 [08]).<sup>9</sup> FAO has moved quickly to address these issues in 2014, although the results of this work are not yet evident in the documentary evidence base that was used in this assessment.

Regarding FAO's work in emergencies, evaluations noted contributions of FAO's early warning systems to mitigating the effects of plant pests and animal diseases such as the Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI), which have led to strengthening national surveillance systems and capacities for preparedness and response to outbreaks in conjunction with the World Health Organization (WHO) and others (FAO Office of Evaluation, 2013 [04], p. xv). Evaluations also commented positively on FAO's work in post-crisis transition and on its work to restore agricultural production through the distribution of seeds and agricultural inputs after an emergency.

**Surveyed stakeholders** provided mixed reviews on FAO's progress towards its 11 different strategic objectives. FAO was rated strong for preparedness and response to emergencies (SO I) and inadequate for effective investments in agriculture and rural development (SO L). All other strategic objectives were rated adequate.

A more detailed analysis of results reported under the strategic objectives is presented in the Technical Report, Volume I.

8. A survey undertaken as part the *Evaluation of FAO's Role in Support of Crop Production* (2014) indicates that FAO partners have a low level of engagement with international instruments supported by FAO in the area of crops, with the exception of the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture, International Plant Protection Convention (IPPC), and Codex Alimentarius. Similarly, the evaluations reviewed indicate that staff in country offices have limited knowledge of most instruments and knowledge products.

9. Some of its noted publications are: the State of Food and Agriculture (SOFA); the State of the World's Forests (SOFO); the State of World Fisheries and Aquaculture (SOFIA); the State of the World's Land and Water Resources for Food and Agriculture (SOLAW); World Livestock; and Resilient Livelihoods: Disaster Risk Reduction for Food and Nutrition Security Framework Programme.

#### 4.4 EVIDENCE OF PROGRESS TOWARDS STATED COUNTRY-LEVEL RESULTS (KPI C)

This section presents a summary of FAO's evidence of progress in achieving its stated country-level results during the period under review (2011-14) in the countries that were part of the MOPAN 2014 assessment. Given the focus on development results, priority areas highlighted in FAO's strategic frameworks (NMTPF and/or CPF) in each country were the unit of analysis. Country offices validated the selection of the priority areas to be assessed and progress was analysed based on a sample of up to two projects per priority area. Due to the relatively limited sample of project-level reports and significant variations with regard to focus, structure and content of the documents reviewed, the following analyses should be seen as indicative rather than conclusive. More detailed analysis is provided in Chapter 5 below on country level performance.

**Figure 4.3 | Evidence of FAO's progress towards stated country-level results, overall rating**

Weak Inadequate Adequate Strong

Overall rating:	INADEQUATE
Justification of the rating for FAO	Survey respondents in the six countries included in the MOPAN assessment viewed FAO's contributions to priority result areas as adequate overall. Evidence from documents indicates that FAO's projects generally deliver activities and outputs. However, during the period under review, the organisation did not yet report on results beyond activities and outputs at the <u>project</u> level. As a result, FAO does not yet have the evidence base that provides an aggregate picture of results at the country level. Given this limitation it is difficult for FAO to provide conclusive evidence of the extent to which it contributed to country level development priorities in the past few years.
MOPAN description of this rating	The organisation does not provide useful evidence that indicates that it is meeting or moving toward most of its stated results in the countries assessed. In addition, its theories of change are not well articulated. The exploration of different sources of data (including perceptions of key stakeholders) does not provide consistent evidence with regard to the achievement of results at output and outcome level. While the organisation presents some data on progress towards its expected results in the countries assessed, the evidence base is weak.

**Finding 25:** Survey respondents in the six countries included in the MOPAN assessment viewed FAO's contributions to results as adequate overall. Evidence from documents indicates that FAO's projects have been effective in terms of delivering activities and outputs, but that the organisation's reports during the period under review did not yet capture evidence of contributions to development outcomes at the country programme level. Given the lack of reporting at this level, there is limited evidence on how FAO contributed to broader results beyond project-level outputs.

The majority of survey respondents rated FAO's contributions to country-level results as adequate or above.

Evidence from the document review suggests that, during the period under review, most of the planned activities and outputs in FAO's country programmes were delivered. FAO's Annual Reports at the country level provide a fair overview of the current implementation status of FAO's projects in the countries reviewed, but, as highlighted in the sections on individual country results below, they do not include



a systematic review of results achieved beyond activities and outputs. While project evaluations and Terminal Statement reports generally provide more information about outcome level results, it is not possible to aggregate data from these reports to the programme level. FAO is in the process of developing M&E tools that will enhance country programme monitoring and reporting, but more time is needed for these systems to be fully in place as the organisation is still making the transition from project to country programming. FAO does not make widespread use of theories of change, although it includes elements of this approach in its planning documents.

In addition, the body of Country Programme Evaluations is very limited, which, combined with limitations in FAO's internal reporting practices during the period assessed, makes it difficult to appreciate the extent to which FAO's initiatives contributed to country level development priorities above and beyond individual project achievements.

#### 4.5 EVIDENCE OF CONTRIBUTION TO NATIONAL GOALS AND PRIORITIES, INCLUDING THE MILLENNIUM DEVELOPMENT GOALS (KPI D)

This section presents a summary of the evidence of FAO's contribution to national goals, including the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), in all countries that were part of the assessment. It draws on document review and survey data. The details on each country are provided in Chapter 5.

**Figure 4.4 | Evidence of FAO's contribution to national goals and priorities, including MDGs, overall rating**

<div> <div>Weak</div> <div>Inadequate</div> <div>Adequate</div> <div>Strong</div> </div>	
<b>Overall rating:</b>	<b>ADEQUATE</b>
<b>Justification of the rating for FAO</b>	The majority of survey respondents provide ratings of adequate or above regarding FAO's contributions to national goals and priorities, including relevant MDGs. Document review of strategic planning documents at the corporate level and the country level also confirm the organisation's focus on MDG1 and high level of alignment with national development priorities. However, FAO's reports do not yet illustrate the organisation's overall contributions to national priorities, including relevant MDGs.
<b>MOPAN description of this rating</b>	The organisation provides some evidence of contribution to the achievement of national goals and priorities, including relevant MDGs, in some countries assessed. It provides some evidence of contributions that have been significant and where they have been less successful, as well as the factors that have affected that contribution. The description of contribution is supported by some reliable data from measuring indicators, evaluations, or other sources. The organisation's key stakeholders perceive that it is contributing to the achievement of national goals and priorities, including the MDGs, and that partner countries positively benefit from the organisation's work. There is some consistency across the different data sources, including the perceptions of the organisation's key stakeholders.

***Finding 26:*** **FAO's corporate and country level strategic frameworks explicitly focus on contributing to national development priorities, including the achievement of MDG1. In addition, survey respondents and a review of CPFs and external evaluations confirm that FAO's country strategies are aligned with national development priorities. However, FAO's current reporting practices do not yet illustrate how FAO has contributed to national development outcomes, including MDGs.**

A clear majority of survey respondents rated FAO adequate or above on the three indicators used by MOPAN to assess whether FAO is contributing to development results that support the achievement of national priorities, making effective contributions to relevant MDGs, and whether FAO programming has resulted in positive benefits for the country.

The document review did not find any reported evidence of the extent to which FAO has contributed to national priorities. While none of the reports analysed whether or how the organisation is contributing to national goals or MDGs, the CPFs are aligned with national development priorities and developed in close collaboration with national partners, in accordance with the CPF guidelines (FAO, n.d. [08]). The high level of alignment between national priorities and the CPFs was also acknowledged by recent evaluations of FAO's regional and sub-regional offices for Africa, Asia and the Pacific, and Latin America and the Caribbean (see KPI 14 and section 4.2 above) (FAO Office of Evaluation, 2014 [05]; FAO Office of Evaluation, 2014 [04]; FAO Office of Evaluation, 2013 [06]).

In addition, both organisation-wide and country-level strategies explicitly address relevant MDGs and performance reports at both levels review overall progress towards achieving the MDGs (although without directly assessing FAO's contributions). FAO has also provided evidence of contributions to positive project-level results related to the MDGs and to MDG 1 on food security in particular.

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## 5. FAO performance at the country level

## 5.1 INTRODUCTION

The sections below provide an overview of the FAO's organisational effectiveness and evidence of results and relevance in each of the countries participating in the MOPAN assessment. Detailed analysis and country data are presented in the Technical Report, Volume I.

## 5.2 BANGLADESH

Bangladesh joined FAO in 1973, within two years of its independence. Since the start of operational activities in 1978, a close collaboration has been established between FAO and the Government of Bangladesh (GoB). FAO's strategic priorities are outlined in the 2013-2018 CPF which is a revised version of the first FAO CPF for Bangladesh formulated in 2010-11. The decision to revise the CPF for that period was taken jointly by FAO and the Government of Bangladesh in late 2012 in response to changes in planning and strategic frameworks of both FAO and the GoB. Bangladesh was one of the first countries to engage in this process, thereby taking a leading role in FAO's transition towards a country-led, bottom-up approach to defining the organisation's work at the decentralised level.

### CONTEXT

Bangladesh has a population of 150 million and is one of the most densely populated countries in the world.

Some of the key contextual factors highlighted by FAO's country office in Bangladesh include:

- Low production of major food crops.
- Decreasing land availability due to degradation, erosion and urbanisation.
- Significant under-nutrition, particularly among children; 41% (approximately 7 million) of children under five are stunted, 16% are wasted and 36% are underweight.
- High susceptibility to cyclones, storm surges and floods.
- Deteriorating access to scarce natural resources.

### FAO'S KEY PRIORITIES IN BANGLADESH DURING THE PERIOD UNDER REVIEW

FAO's strategy to meet these development challenges is outlined in the 2010-2015 Country Programming Framework (CPF) which was updated for the 2013-2018 period as a response to the new organisation-wide Strategic Framework (FAO, 2013 [19]). FAO's strategic objectives in Bangladesh are to:

- Reduce poverty and enhance food security and nutrition (access and utilisation).
- Enhance agricultural productivity through diversification/intensification, sustainable management of natural resources, use of quality inputs and mechanisation.
- Improve market linkages, value addition, and quality and safety of the food system.
- Further improve technology generation and adaptation through better producer extension-research linkages.
- Increase the resilience of communities to withstand 'shocks' such as natural disasters, health threats and other risks to livelihoods.

**FAO's organisational effectiveness – some highlights from the MOPAN survey****Strategic management**

- Survey respondents found that FAO's strategic management practices were adequate overall, but rated the organisation strong for involving direct partners in the development of its country strategies.

**Operational management**

- Survey respondents rated FAO as strong for respecting humanitarian principles, but adequate for the transparency of its funding decisions, financial accountability, use of performance information, delegation of decision making and practices and systems to work in emergencies. They provided inadequate ratings regarding the extent to which aid reallocation decisions can be made locally and the level of staff deployment in country.

**Relationship management**

- FAO's country level objectives were seen as consistent with those in national development strategies and UNDAF and the organisation was acknowledged for providing high quality input to policy dialogue. FAO also received strong ratings for its participation in the cluster system and for its dedication of resources for cluster management. The organisation was rated as adequate on other aspects of relationship management including development co-ordination and co-operation at the national level, procedures take into account local conditions and capacities, use of country systems, and level of harmonisation with development partners.

**Knowledge management**

- FAO received adequate ratings on all aspects of knowledge management at the country level (key beneficiaries and partners are involved in evaluation processes; FAO facilitates the exchange of knowledge in the area of agriculture and food and nutrition security).

**FAO's relevance and development results – some highlights from the assessment**

There is little programme-level data on FAO contributions to outcomes in Bangladesh. Project level documentation and survey responses reveal a number of notable successes and challenges in relation to individual projects.

**Relevance**

- Survey respondents rated FAO strong for pursuing results in areas within its mandate and for aligning its results with global trends and priorities. FAO received adequate ratings for its capacity to respond to the needs and priorities of its target group and for adapting its work to the changing needs and priorities of the country.

**Progress toward FAO's stated country-level results**

- Survey respondents in Bangladesh rated FAO as adequate on all the MIs related to its stated country-level results. According to the document review, FAO has contributed to significant results in relation to food security, emergency and recovery, and avian influenza preparedness and response. Food security received the largest share of funding during the period under review and FAO led donor co-ordination in this area which, according to interviews, has been a "real bedrock" of the programme and has contributed to influencing the food security agenda and strengthening capacity for evidence-based policy making in Bangladesh.
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- FAO's contributions to establishing agricultural extension systems remain a work in progress in terms of funding and results achieved. This area received the lowest amount of funding in FAO's country programme from 2011-2014. This observation is in line with the survey results: not only was this the lowest rated MI on results in Bangladesh; one-third of survey respondents answered "don't know" when asked to rate the extent to which it has demonstrated progress towards establishing a pluralistic extension system in Bangladesh.
- According to interviews, factors that affected the effectiveness of some projects included high turnover among senior government staff, project design, and lack of funding for basic items such as fuel and vehicles in the Agricultural Extension Department.

#### **Contributions to national priorities and MDGs**

- Survey respondents generally perceived FAO to be adequate in its contribution to development results that support the achievement of Bangladesh's national priorities and in making effective contributions to relevant MDGs. However, they rated FAO strong for its contributions to positive benefits for Bangladesh.
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## 5.3 CAMBODIA

FAO began its development assistance to agriculture and related activities in Cambodia in 1993. The current activities of FAO in Cambodia are guided by an NMTPF for the period 2011-15, which builds on the first ever done in Cambodia from 2006. The total delivery against the current NMTPF amounted to USD 25 623 913 by end-December 2013 of which USD 7 188 000 were delivered in 2013 (FAO, 2014 [19]).

### CONTEXT

Some of the key contextual factors highlighted by FAO's country office in Cambodia include:

- Population 15.5 million of which almost 80% in rural areas.
- A huge, but largely unexplored, potential for agricultural export and import substitution and a food and agricultural export sector that does not comply with international trade standards, food safety requirements, and quality controls for agricultural products.
- Major challenges related to food security and nutrition: 37% of Cambodian children under the age of 5 suffer from chronic malnutrition which makes food security and nutrition among the most significant problems that Cambodia faces today.<sup>10</sup>
- An agricultural sector largely anchored to a fragile subsistence rain-fed system with low productivity.
- A high vulnerability to effects of climate change including floods and droughts which severely impact the rural population due to their reliance on agriculture and fisheries (FAO, 2010 [06]).

### FAO'S KEY PRIORITIES IN CAMBODIA DURING THE PERIOD UNDER REVIEW

FAO's strategy to meet these development challenges is outlined in the National Medium-Term Priority Framework (NMTPF) 2011-2015 which will be replaced by the new Country Programming Framework (CPF) in 2016. The five specific development objectives for the period 2011-2015 include:

- enhance agriculture productivity and diversification (representing USD 5 760 069 or 22% of total FAO spending during the 2011-2013 period<sup>11</sup>).
- improve consumer protection, food safety, and market access for agricultural products (USD 1 060 462; 4% 2011-2013).
- improve food security (USD 16 240 077; 63% 2011-2013).
- achieve sustainable natural resource management (USD 1 169 518; 4.6% 2011-2013).
- improve response to climate change threats, improve emergency preparedness and disaster risk management (USD 1 393 787; 5.4% 2011-2013).

10. Ibid.

11. The spending figures represent delivery against the 5 NMTPF outputs from 2011 to 2013, i.e. the amounts that were actually spent on each one of the outputs. However, the figures should be interpreted with caution as some projects that contribute to several outcomes, have only been associated with the outcome to which they contribute the most. For example, a project with a large component related to food security and a smaller component on disaster risk reduction would have been counted only under outcome 3 and not at all under outcome 5.

**FAO's organisational effectiveness – some highlights from the MOPAN survey****Strategic management**

- Survey respondents rated FAO as strong in Cambodia for its institutional focus on results and for involving direct partners in the development of its country strategy. FAO's mainstreaming and promotion of cross-cutting thematic priorities (gender equality; environmental policy and assessment practices; good governance; and human rights-based approaches) was rated as adequate overall.

**Operational management**

- Survey respondents provided strong ratings for FAO's procurement procedures and its respect for humanitarian principles. Other operational management practices including the transparency of its funding mechanisms, the level of financial accountability, its use of performance information, the delegation of decision making and practices and systems to work in emergencies were rated as adequate overall.

**Relationship management**

- FAO in Cambodia was rated as strong for the consistency between its expected results and those in national development strategies and the UNDAF. Survey respondents also found that FAO's work reflects its comparative advantages and provided strong ratings in this area. FAO was rated as adequate on most of the other aspects of relationship management (including development co-ordination and co-operation at the national level, procedures take into account local conditions and capacities, use of country systems, contributions to policy dialogue and level of harmonisation with development partners). Survey respondents were critical about the length of time it takes to complete FAO procedures and provided an inadequate rating on this MI. FAO noted that the implementation of strict procedures are of utmost importance to protect the organisation from corruption, which represents a significant risk to FAO in Cambodia. The government's limited capacity to respond to such requirements may also contribute to respondents' perceptions that lengthy procedures adversely affect implementation.

**Knowledge management**

- FAO was rated strong for involving key beneficiaries in evaluations of projects and programmes, but adequate for involving key partners in evaluations and for facilitating the exchange of knowledge in the area of agriculture and food and nutrition security.

**FAO's relevance and development results – some highlights from the assessment**

FAO's reporting practices do not allow for a systematic assessment of the extent to which it has contributed to progress towards its objectives at the country level.

**Relevance**

- Survey respondents perceive FAO to be adequate in adapting its work to the changing needs and priorities of the country and in its responsiveness to beneficiary needs. It also received adequate ratings for pursuing results within its mandate and for being in line with global trends and priorities. There is evidence of a high demand for policy and legislative advice indicating that FAO is considered relevant by the Royal Government of Cambodia (RGC). Furthermore, the main national development policies used for the development of the NMTPF include the nine Cambodian Millennium Development Goals (GMDGs) adopted in 2003.
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**Progress toward FAO's stated country-level results**

- FAO has maintained a strong and consistent focus on food security and there is evidence of results in this area; 45% of the MOPAN survey respondents rated FAO's contributions to improving food security as strong or very strong.
- The document review identified several examples of successful use of farmer field school approaches through which FAO has managed to train a substantial number of people.
- Other areas with evidence of substantial results include FAO's successful implementation of animal health and avian influenza projects which, among other things, have resulted in increased awareness and better surveillance practices in the Cambodian government (FAO Country Office Cambodia, 2013).
- Survey respondents rated FAO inadequate for its contributions to improving consumer protection and market access for agriculture and related products. This relatively low rating corresponds with observations from both document review and interviews indicating that this priority area remains a work in progress. FAO noted that inefficiencies and lack of clearly defined roles and responsibilities among government ministries working on this thematic area make it difficult for FAO to contribute to establishing national standards, certification mechanisms, inspections, etc. in Cambodia. FAO emphasised that it is currently working with the government on the formulation of a food safety law that would create a legal framework for future work in this area.

**Contributions to national priorities and MDGs**

- Survey respondents rated FAO adequate in (a) achieving development results that support the achievement of national priorities; (b) supporting progress on the MDGs in Cambodia; and (c) implementing programmes and initiatives that have resulted in positive benefits for Cambodia. The document review found evidence of clear alignment between FAO's NMTPF 2011-2015 and national priorities. The NMTPF also has a clear and explicit focus on MDG1. However, there is no programme level data that illustrate FAO's contributions to of national priorities, including relevant MDGs.
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## 5.4 DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO

FAO has been active in the DRC since 1978, and developed the first CPF for the country in 2013. Between 2008 and 2012, FAO's country portfolio continued to grow and reached 40.9 million \$ in 2010 (of which 5% came from the ordinary budget while 95% consisted of extra-budgetary resources) which is among the three biggest FAO country programmes in the world. During the period 2008-2012, the portfolio was dominated by projects focusing on urgency and rehabilitation. The average annual portfolio size of projects focusing on these two issues amounted to 31 million USD compared with the portfolio of development projects representing an average size of slightly more than 4 million USD per year (FAO, 2013 [20]).

### CONTEXT

Some of the key contextual factors include:

- DRC has a population of almost 80 million people.
- Opportunities: vast natural resources and a huge potential for agriculture.
- Challenges: food insecurity (75% of population); underexploited agricultural potential; threats to vast tropical forests and high vulnerability to climate change; degradation of the environment.

### FAO'S KEY PRIORITIES IN DRC DURING THE PERIOD UNDER REVIEW

DRC's 2013-2017 Country Programme Framework is based on national priorities, sector priorities outlined in the National Agricultural Investment Plan as well as DRC's national Programme for the Environment, Forests, Water and Biodiversity. Its priorities, which also reflect FAO's work during its previous strategic cycle (NMTPF 2011-15), aim to:

- Improve governance of agricultural, rural development, and natural resources sectors, as well as management of humanitarian crises.
- Develop value chains for crop, livestock, and fisheries.
- Protect the environment and fight climate change.
- Assist vulnerable people through emergency and resilience programmes.

## FAO's organisational effectiveness – some highlights from the MOPAN survey

### Strategic management

- Survey respondents found that most aspects of FAO's strategic management practices at the country level were strong. They were particularly positive regarding FAO's overall results-orientation, its mainstreaming of cross-cutting priorities such as gender equality and human rights-based approaches and its involvement of direct partners in the development of country strategies.

### Operational management

- FAO received mixed ratings for its operational management practices in DRC. While most respondents found that FAO makes readily available its criteria for allocating resources, they rated the organisation as inadequate for providing funding according to schedule. Survey respondents also found FAO's

delegation of decision-making authority to the country level inadequate overall; they were particularly critical towards staff deployment levels and the extent to which the country office can approve projects within a budget cap. However, FAO received a strong rating for respecting humanitarian principles while working in emergencies. FAO noted that operational efficiencies are affected by external factors including insecurity due to recurring conflicts, the large size of the country and remoteness of interventions, lack of communication infrastructure, and weaknesses in the capacity of local implementing partners.

### Relationship management

- Several of FAO's relationship management practices were seen as strong by the survey respondents. Respondents particularly approved of the alignment between FAO's expected results and those defined in national development strategies and UNDAF. They also found that FAO's procedures were easily understandable and rated FAO strong for its participation in mutual assessments of progress in implementing agreed commitments with national partners. FAO was also rated as strong for harmonising arrangements and procedures with other programming partners. Respondents particularly approved of the organisation's capacity to work in areas reflecting its comparative advantages and its contributions to inter-agency plans and appeals. Finally, FAO is seen as strong for circulating pertinent information within the clusters it leads or co-leads.

### Knowledge management

- FAO received adequate ratings for all aspects of knowledge management assessed at the country level, i.e. involving key partners and beneficiaries in evaluation processes, and facilitating the exchange of knowledge in agriculture and food and nutrition security.

### FAO's relevance and development results – some highlights from the assessment

- FAO has limited data available on the extent to which it has contributed to the priority areas during the period under review. The FAO Annual Report 2013 does not systematically report on outputs or outcomes against a results framework. In addition, it does not provide an overall assessment of the extent to which the implementation of the country programme is on track. However, project level reports do provide evidence of results on FAO's contributions to agricultural emergency assistance and resilience and environmental protection.
- Survey respondents were particularly positive regarding FAO's contributions to developing assessments of food security needs of the population in the DRC.
- In spite of generally positive documentary evidence, survey respondents provided overall ratings of inadequate regarding FAO's contributions to protecting the environment and fighting climate change; FAO's contributions to fighting climate change received particularly poor ratings with 52% of the survey respondents rating the organisation as inadequate or below on this question.

### Relevance

- FAO's programming and results are generally considered relevant by stakeholders in DRC; survey respondents were particularly positive regarding FAO's practice of pursuing results in areas within its mandate.

**Progress toward FAO's stated country-level results**

- Survey respondents provided positive ratings regarding FAO's contributions to emergency and resilience programmes and developing assessments of food security needs; they particularly approved of FAO's assessments of food security needs of the population in the DRC: 61% of the survey respondents provided ratings of strong or very strong on this question.
- There is also good documentary evidence of FAO's contributions to emergency and resilience programmes. Several projects focusing on support to agricultural production for vulnerable farming families show evidence of increased farming outputs and revenues from sales. One project provided strategic farming inputs (seeds and tools) as well as training for 7 190 vulnerable households which resulted in the production and sale of 888 tons of vegetables, 876 tons of other food products, and 135 tons of fish. This production has contributed to lowering food prices on local markets while increasing revenues for households involved in the project.
- FAO's contributions to protecting the environment and fighting climate change received mixed reviews: while survey respondents rated FAO inadequate overall, the final national report on the UN-REDD+ Programme in DRC concluded that it had been a success overall. However, according to a recent evaluation of the UN-REDD programme (UN-REDD, 2014 [01]), representatives from Civil Society Organisation and Programme staff had reservations regarding the actual commitment of policy-makers. According to the evaluation, these observations are consistent with the results of a recent comparative study, which points to weak political ownership in DRC.

**Contributions to national priorities and MDGs**

- A clear majority of survey respondents provided ratings of adequate or above regarding FAO's contributions to national priorities and relevant MDGs.
  - While FAO's Country Programming Framework refers to relevant MDGs, the assessment team did not review any documents that provide an illustration of the organisation's contributions in this area. Notwithstanding the above, FAO did highlight that it has been active in implementing the MDGs in DRC, where it has supported the government in putting in place a MDG acceleration framework and has taken the lead on target c of MDG 1. It also mentioned that a number of FAO initiatives, including the Special Food Security Program and National Synthesis on Agricultural Investments, have contributed to this MDG.
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## 5.5 ECUADOR

Since 1952, FAO has been supporting Ecuador in its efforts to raise levels of nutrition, increase agricultural productivity and better the lives of rural populations. For the period under review, FAO used as its main strategic document in Ecuador the NMTPF 2009-2012. In 2013, FAO made the transition to the CPF, which covers the period 2013 – 2017. This CPF was developed in close collaboration with the government and corresponds directly to objectives included in the Ecuador's National Development Plan (el Plan Nacional para el Buen Vivir) and other key national strategies. In addition, the current CPF is fully aligned with the priorities outlined in the 2010-2014 UNDAF. The FAO Office in Ecuador is currently managing 25 projects, with an approximate value of USD 19 million. Eleven of those projects were approved in 2013, which represents a significant increase in project approvals compared to previous years.

### CONTEXT

Key contextual factors:

- Ecuador has a population of approximately 16 million people.
- Agriculture only accounts for 5.9% of GDP, but employs 27.8% of the country's labour force.
- Banana and plantain are the main export crops and provide almost one-third of the total non-oil exports.
- Ecuador is one of 12 "megadiverse" countries that together represent almost the 70% of planet's biodiversity. However, there are important threats to the country's environment and biodiversity.
- There are significant conflicts of interest between family farming and commercial agriculture. However, more than 64% of agricultural production comes from family farming which also contributes to the majority of the food consumed in Ecuador.
- Ecuador is a net exporter of food which represents an average of more than 28% of total exports, and 16.11% of GDP.
- The country's susceptibility to natural disasters impedes the development of the farming sector.

### FAO'S KEY PRIORITIES IN ECUADOR DURING THE PERIOD UNDER REVIEW

Given that the priority areas in the CPF differ substantially from those in the NMTPF, they did not reflect FAO's work in Ecuador in past years. As a result, the priorities outlined in the NMTPF 2009-2012 were used as the basis of the assessment of results. The NMTPF priorities were:

- Support the formulation and implementation of the rural development strategy.
- Support the formulation and implementation of the food security and sovereignty strategy.
- Improve and modernise the food safety system.
- Support the implementation of the fishery and aquaculture development plan.
- Provide assistance for the implementation of a sustainable forest development strategy and protecting biodiversity and agro-biodiversity.
- Support risk management in the agricultural sector.

**FAO's organisational effectiveness – some highlights from the MOPAN survey****Strategic management**

- Survey respondents generally perceived FAO as strong in providing direction for the achievement of development results. They rated FAO as adequate overall for maintaining a focus on cross-cutting priorities, but found that the organisation was strong in terms of promoting the principles of good governance.

**Operational management**

- Surveyed stakeholders found that FAO's procurement procedures were strong in terms of providing effective control on purchases of goods and services. All other operational practices assessed in Ecuador were rated as adequate (including transparency of funding, financial accountability, use of performance information, delegation of decision making and practices and systems to work in emergencies).

**Relationship management**

- FAO was rated as strong for co-ordinating and directing its development co-operation at the country level in support of agreed national plans or partner plans. Survey respondents generally found that FAO's funding proposals were fully designed and developed with direct partners and that its statements of expected results were consistent with those in national development strategies and UNDAF. Surveyed stakeholders also rated FAO as strong for its operational flexibility to adjust projects and for undertaking policy dialogue in a respectful manner. All other aspects of FAO's relationship management in Ecuador were rated adequate.

**Knowledge management**

- FAO received adequate ratings for all aspects of knowledge management assessed at the country level (key beneficiaries and partners are involved in evaluation processes; FAO facilitates the exchange of knowledge in the area of agriculture and food and nutrition security).

**FAO's relevance and development results – some highlights from the assessment**

The documentation reviewed varies in terms of content and quality and often results statements are inconsistent in their use of results terminology (e.g. the term "outcome" is often used for results at the output level and vice versa). Observations from the document review suggest that FAO has made progress towards achieving most of its *project level* objectives in the country. However, given the variation in type and quality of the reporting and main focus on project level activities, it is not possible to provide general observations on the basis of document review alone.

**Relevance**

- Survey respondents rated FAO adequate in (a) pursuing results in areas within its mandate; (b) aligning with global trends and priorities; (c) responding to beneficiary needs; (d) adapting its programmes and operations to the changing needs of the country.

**Progress toward FAO's stated country-level results**

- Survey respondents provided mixed ratings regarding FAO's contribution to development results. While they rated FAO strong for its contributions to the formulation and implementation of the food security and sovereignty strategy, its support to the implementation of the fishery and aquaculture development plan was rated inadequate. FAO noted that in support of this plan, it developed through a participatory approach a policy document and action plan. Since then, FAO has increased its work on fisheries and aquaculture, as evidenced by five new initiatives currently underway. All other
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stated priority areas received adequate ratings from survey respondents (including its support to the formulation and implementation of the rural development strategy, its contributions to improving and modernise the food safety system, its assistance for the implementation of a sustainable forest development strategy and for its support to risk management in the agricultural sector).

- Observations from the document review suggest that FAO has made progress towards achieving most of its project level objectives in the country. Examples include FAO's contributions to decreasing the percentage of children of 5 years or younger with chronic malnutrition in Ecuador's priority territories (50% to 19%) (FAO, 2013 [38]). Other project evaluations demonstrate how FAO has contributed to improving food and nutritional security to family farmers (FAO, 2013 [37]).
- Qualitative comments from FAO's direct partners in the MOPAN survey also indicate that FAO has contributed positively to family farming and food security in Ecuador. Indeed, 30% of direct partner respondents highlighted FAO's work and impact on improving family farming food security as one of the organisation's strengths.

#### **Contributions to national priorities and MDGs**

- Survey respondents generally found that FAO had contributed positively to national priorities and the MDGs; FAO received strong ratings for contributing to national priorities.
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## 5.6 KENYA

FAO has been working with the Government of Kenya in all aspects of food security and agriculture for several decades, even before the FAO country office was established in 1977. The current CPF for Kenya (2013-2017) builds upon and replaces the National Medium Term Priority Framework (NMTPF) 2009-2013. The CPF builds on key government policy documents, in particular Kenya's Agricultural Sector Development Strategy (ASDS) 2010-2020. It reflects the priorities set out in the current United Nations Development Framework (UNDAF) and provides the basis for engagement with other UN agencies during the discussions that will lead to the approval of the new UNDAF in June 2014 (FAO, 2013 [22]). In December 2013, the FAO office in Kenya had 74 staff members in total with ten (10) staff working in the three field offices.

### CONTEXT

Kenya has a population of 45 million people of which more than 40% (75% of Kenya's actual labour force) are employed in the agricultural sector (CIA, 2014).

Agricultural products account for 65 % of the country's export earnings and provide the livelihood for more than 80% of the population.

Key contextual challenges include:

- Low agricultural productivity.
- Highly variable climate (droughts and floods).
- High and increasing demand for natural resource goods and services.

### FAO'S KEY PRIORITIES IN KENYA DURING THE PERIOD UNDER REVIEW

FAO's responses to these development challenges are outlined in the 2013-2017 CPF, and also correspond to some of the main priorities highlighted in the previous strategic framework, the NMTPF 2009-13. They include the following priority areas:

- Agricultural-based livelihoods are supported by an enabling policy, strategy and investment environment.
- Agricultural productivity and production of medium- and small-scale producers increased, diversified and aligned to markets.
- Improved management of natural resources (rangeland, agricultural land, water and forest) at national and community level.
- Improved livelihood resilience of targeted, vulnerable populations.

### FAO's organisational effectiveness – some highlights from the MOPAN survey

#### Strategic management

- Survey respondents generally found that FAO's strategic management practices at the country level were strong. They particularly acknowledged FAO's application of its policy on results management, the promotion of its cross-cutting priority of rights to food and the development of country strategies in consultation with direct partners (MI 5.3).



### Operational management

- FAO was rated as strong overall for its transparent and predictable development co-operation funding. Survey respondents in particular found that the organisation was strong in terms of using transparent criteria for allocating resources. Surveyed stakeholders also provided strong ratings for FAO's capacity to quickly follow up on any financial irregularities identified at the country level, for using performance information to plan new interventions and for respecting humanitarian principles while working in emergencies.

### Relationship management

- FAO was seen as strong in terms of co-ordinating and directing its development co-operation at the country level in support of agreed national plans or partner plans. Surveyed stakeholders generally found that funding proposals were fully designed and developed with direct partners and that statements of expected results were consistent with those in national development strategies and UNDAF. FAO was also rated strongly for adding value to policy dialogue with its partners and for focusing on areas where it is seen to have comparative advantage. However, the majority of survey respondents found that the amount of time it takes to complete FAO's procedures negatively affects implementation of its programmes and rated the organisation inadequate in this area.

### Knowledge management

- FAO was seen as strong in terms of facilitating exchange of knowledge in the area of agriculture and food and nutrition security, but adequate for involving key beneficiaries and partners in evaluation processes.

### FAO's relevance and development results – some highlights from the assessment

- Availability of results data at the programme level was limited and insufficient to draw firm conclusions about FAO's overall contributions to Kenya's development priorities. The content and quality of project level reporting also varied and some reports did not include solid baselines, targets, and indicators which made an independent assessment of the project's effectiveness difficult.
- Based on evidence from interviews and project level documentation it is interesting to note that projects with a comparatively narrow scope and a technical focus (e.g. the Mau Forest Complex project) seem to be more successful in demonstrating results than those geared toward large scale or systemic change (e.g. the Agribusiness Support for Smallholders project). However, this may of course be the result of the relative ease of demonstrating results in such projects compared to those geared more toward achieving large scale or systemic change where the impact pathways are less obvious.
- Uncertainty about project sustainability was a common theme observed in much of the project level documentation. Lack of continued donor support, lack of adequate M&E mechanisms, and the absence of well-developed exit strategies were often mentioned as factors limiting the likely sustainability of benefits. According to interviews, one of FAO's main challenges over the years has been the high number of relatively small projects with limited evidence of impact on a sufficient amount of people.
- In conjunction with the development of the new CPF, FAO has worked on consolidating its project portfolio to focus on fewer, but larger projects and more focus on upstream work to ensure more widespread impact and limit the comparatively high transaction costs associated with the implementation of many small projects.

### Relevance

- Survey respondents found FAO relevant overall; they were particularly positive regarding FAO's practice of pursuing results in areas within its mandate and for being in line with global trends and priorities in the development field.

### Progress toward FAO's stated country-level results

- Observations from the document review suggest that FAO has made progress towards achieving its project level objectives in the country.
- Survey responses from donors and direct partners in Kenya suggest that FAO has provided adequate contributions to three of the four key priorities of the CPF.
- FAO received the highest ratings for its contributions to improving livelihood resilience – 53% of respondents rated it as strong or very strong and only 1% answered “don't know” which indicates that area of FAO's work is well known. Interviewed staff members also noted this as one of the areas with best results.
- There is also good documentary evidence of FAO's contributions to improving resilience to drought. Key results include development of by-laws to govern holistic natural resource management in three counties; improved land and water management practices and assets; enhanced and diversified social and cultural livelihoods endowments for 1 912 participants in Farmers' Field and Life Schools, Junior Farmers' Field and Life Schools, and People Living with HIV/AIDS groups. These benefits were extended to 9 560 household members of project participants. 128 government and NGO staff were trained on information gathering and management for early warning systems (FAO, 2012 [12]).
- FAO received inadequate survey ratings regarding its contributions to improving natural resource management practices, but 34% of respondents answered “don't know”. FAO noted that its work on natural resources management is long-term and therefore it is expected that results will take some time to show.
- A recent evaluation of FAO's Agribusiness Support to Smallholders Project in Kenya reveals that achievement of the project outputs and their contribution to project outcomes were mixed. While some outputs (e.g. business models validated) were only partially validated, the contribution of other outputs (e.g. strengthening capacity of SMAEs, trainers, and support organisations) exceeded the quantitative targets established. While the extent to which improved institutional capacity has translated into up-scaling and replication of linkage models was uncertain, there was reasonable evidence that the public sector's capacity to support agribusiness models had been significantly improved. FAO noted that its support to agribusiness is relatively new in Kenya and that more time is needed to show conclusive results.
- According to interviews, one of FAO's main challenges over the years has been the high number of relatively small projects with limited evidence of impact on a sufficient amount of people. In conjunction with the development of the new CPF, FAO has therefore worked on consolidating its project portfolio over the last few years and focus on fewer, but larger projects and more focus on upstream work to ensure more widespread impact and limit the comparatively high transaction costs associated with the implementation of many small projects.

### Contributions to national priorities and MDGs

- A clear majority of survey respondents provided ratings of adequate or above regarding FAO's contributions to national priorities. They were also generally positive regarding FAO's contributions to relevant MDGs.
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## 5.7 TANZANIA

During the period under review (2011-2014), FAO Tanzania did not have its own country strategy, but operated within the UNDAF 2011-2015 Framework.<sup>12</sup> While the UNDAF does not focus on agricultural development per se, it has a strong focus on poverty reduction and perceives agriculture to be one of the key drivers for economic growth. FAO is leading the UNDAF Programme Working Group for Economic Growth and is currently finalising a new Country Programming Framework (CPF) which is expected to be finalised in 2014. According to interviews, the new CPF will be fully aligned with the strategic priorities outlined in the UNDAF and integrated into the joint UN monitoring mechanism for Tanzania. In December 2013, the FAO country office in Tanzania had 12 regular staff members, and two field programme staff members.

### CONTEXT

- Population: 50 million, 70% of whom live in rural areas.
- The economy largely depends on agriculture, which provides 85% of Tanzania's exports and employs 80% of the work force.
- Challenges: low agricultural productivity; high rates of malnutrition and chronic hunger among children; inadequate environmental management; unsustainable harvesting of natural resources; growing demand for water, food, shelter, land, household fuel.

### FAO'S KEY PRIORITIES IN TANZANIA DURING THE PERIOD UNDER REVIEW

- Enhance use of forest assessments and natural resources management.
- Introduce good agricultural practices and support farming as a business approach.
- Enhanced control of plant and animal diseases and production of disease-free planting material.
- Support agricultural sector development planning.
- Support national planning processes through DP (development partners) co-ordinating mechanisms.
- Support fisheries development.

### FAO's organisational effectiveness – some highlights from the MOPAN survey

FAO Tanzania received the highest survey ratings for organisational effectiveness among the six countries included in the MOPAN 2014 assessment.

#### Strategic management

Respondents in Tanzania consider FAO to be strong in terms of applying an organisation-wide policy on results management and for developing country strategies in consultation with direct partners. FAO was also rated as strong for mainstreaming the cross-cutting priority of gender equality and for promoting the right to food in its work. However, it received adequate ratings for other aspects of its focus on cross-cutting priorities (environmental policy and good governance).

12. The United Nations Development Assistance Plan (UNDAF) is based on experiences from previous UNDAF and Delivering as One experiences. Tanzania was the first country to develop an UNDAF.

### Operational management

- FAO was rated as strong on four out of five key performance indicators in operational management including the transparency and predictability of its development funding, its financial accountability practices, its use of performance information for decision making and practices and systems to work in emergencies. However, surveyed stakeholders rated FAO as adequate for delegating decision-making authority to the country level.

### Relationship management

- FAO was also rated as strong on four out of five key performance indicators related to relationship management. Survey respondents particularly approved the alignment between statements of expected results in FAO strategies and those in national development strategies, its use of country systems, FAO's added value to policy dialogue and the extent to which it harmonises arrangements and procedures with other programming partners (KPI 18). However, the extent to which its procedures take into account local conditions and capacities was rated as adequate.

### Knowledge management

- FAO was seen as strong in relation to all areas related to knowledge management, i.e. its involvement of key beneficiaries and partners in evaluation processes and its facilitation of knowledge exchange in the area of agriculture and food and nutrition security.

### FAO's relevance and development results – some highlights from the assessment

During the period under review, FAO operated as part of the One UN programming approach, which made it more difficult, using the current MOPAN methodology, to assess the extent to which FAO contributed to development results at the country level.<sup>13</sup>

### Relevance

- FAO's programming in Tanzania is perceived as relevant by the stakeholders surveyed. Respondents were particularly positive regarding FAO's capacity to pursue results in areas within its mandate and for being in line with global trends and priorities.

### Progress toward FAO's stated country-level results

- Survey respondents rated FAO strong for its contributions to agricultural sector development planning and its support to national planning processes through DP (development partners) co-ordinating mechanisms.
- The document review also provided evidence of important achievements including successful completion of the Tanzania component of the Regional Cassava Initiative, teaching farmers to produce disease free cassava planting material using the Farmer Field School approach. FAO's assistance has for example contributed to doubling the cultivated area in the targeted communities and maintaining

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13. It is expected that the introduction of the CPF will improve FAO's capacity to report on results beyond activities and outputs. With the transition to Country Programming Frameworks (CPFs), FAO has issued "Guidelines for the preparation of FAO Country Annual Report". The guidelines require country offices to focus on the results achieved at the output level for annual reports and outcomes when the reporting coincides with a CPF mid-term or final review. The guidelines also state that a results matrix including the outcome/outputs, indicators, baseline, targets, achievements and ratings of on track, moderately off track, and significantly off track should be added the FAORs.

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high productivity levels (Stenhouse & Akoroda, 2012 [01]). Data collected through interviews indicate that FAO's policy work has had substantial impact on the integration of food security aspects into national legislation.

- Another notable success was the implementation of projects focussing on Farming as a Business and Agri-food Value Chain Development approach. FAO contributed to capacity development of advisory service providers and farmers in farm business management and marketing, as well as agro business entrepreneurs in business management skills. According to interviews, major successes have been achieved in terms of changing the mind-set among high-level government officials and politicians, which is reflected in new policies and strategic thinking.

#### **Contributions to national priorities and MDGs**

- A clear majority of survey respondents rated FAO as adequate or above when asked about FAO's contributions to national priorities and MDGs.
  - FAO's projects clearly address development issues of high national priority which is demonstrated in the upcoming CPF. The Annual Report 2013 for Tanzania is noted for commenting on the country's progress towards the MDGs, but does not discuss FAO's contributions.
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## 6. Conclusions

FAO is a unique multilateral organisation which is valued for its role in addressing global agriculture and food security issues. Since 2008, FAO has been engaged in a two-step series of wide-ranging and deep-rooted reforms, consisting of: 1) an Immediate Plan of Action (IPA) from 2009 to 2012 building on the findings and recommendations of the 2007 Independent External Evaluation (IEE) of FAO, and 2) the “transformative changes” introduced by the Director-General following completion of the IPA. Central to these reforms was the need for FAO to have a sharper focus in its programming and adhere to results-based management (RBM) principles. In so doing, FAO has strengthened its collaboration with other UN agencies and stakeholders to more effectively address global, regional and country-level issues. FAO’s efforts to work more strategically in countries and its decentralisation efforts are fundamental to improving the relevance and effectiveness of its programming. FAO is an organisation on the move, and the current MOPAN methodology is not well suited to capturing the full breadth of the changes being implemented and their current and potential effects on organisational performance.

These conclusions step away from the specific ratings of the MOPAN assessment and look at the major messages that can contribute to dialogue between individual MOPAN members and FAO and its partners.

**FAO is a relevant organisation that has an important contribution to make to improve global, regional and country level food security and agricultural systems.**

Since its inception – and perhaps more so now in a globalised economy, influenced by climate change and other dynamics – FAO has had an important role to play to address global, regional and national issues of food security and agriculture, including a humanitarian response to crises. There is strong evidence of FAO’s relevance through its mandate and strategic objectives which are now better aligned with global development trends and priorities, responsive to the needs and priorities of beneficiaries, and adapted to changing country circumstances.

**The reviewed Strategic Framework strongly reflects FAO’s mandate, comparative advantages, and core functions. FAO’s recent efforts to refocus its work and reorganise around a more results-focused approach emphasise the relevance of FAO’s mandate and programme, and are reinforced by more cohesive programming and better co-ordination across technical departments.**

FAO has a clear mandate to support member states to raise their levels of nutrition, improve agricultural productivity, better the lives of rural populations and thereby contribute to the growth of the world economy while safeguarding natural resources. Both the document review and survey respondents rated FAO as strong for having an organisation-wide strategy that is based on a clear mandate. FAO is also the only specialised UN agency to have aligned its strategy with the Quadrennial Comprehensive Policy Review (QCPR) resolution and to report on its implementation to its Governing Bodies.

The Strategic Thinking Process undertaken in 2012 provided the basis for prioritising and refocusing FAO’s work on areas of comparative advantage and core functions. FAO’s new approach to planning and programming at the country level should increase the added value of the organisation’s work by applying a more strategic and results-focussed approach. As FAO is trying to move away from scattered country programming, it will need to continue making efforts to reduce earmarking of voluntary contributions and further disseminate its allocation criteria for pools of un-earmarked funding.

The Strategic Thinking Process is also contributing to breaking the silo culture that used to prevail at FAO. Technical departments are now expected to work cohesively to reach common strategic objectives, which in turn should help reduce overlap and enhance efficiencies across the organisation. FAO's recently instituted practices and systems (e.g. strategic objective teams and co-ordinators, operational work plans and technical networks) should facilitate the implementation of the reviewed Strategic Framework. Given that the framework and associated reforms are fairly recent, it will take time to ascertain if these efforts are delivering desired results. Adequate functioning of the technical networks and continued communication between technical departments will be key to successfully implementing the reviewed Strategic Framework.

**FAO has undertaken organisational reforms for more effective management and operations in order to implement its reviewed Strategic Framework. These have included changes in human resources management, enhanced leadership of country representatives, increased decentralisation, and the integration of development and emergency programming.**

FAO is an organisation in transition. Reforms have touched upon nearly all aspects of FAO's work and have included: the introduction of results-based management across the organisation; increased decentralisation and empowerment of regional, sub-regional and country offices; reinforced institutional capacities in support of a new organisational structure; strengthened partnerships with civil society, the private sector and research and development organisations; increased support for South-South co-operation; a heightened focus on results, particularly at the country level; the integration of FAO's emergency and development work; and a range of reforms related to human resource management, including substantial changes in the leadership of FAO's country offices. While many of these reforms can be considered a "work in progress", nonetheless, there is optimism that these will lead to more relevant, effective and transparent programming.

Essential to every highly-functioning organisation is the strong management of human resources. While the MOPAN assessment methodology focuses on performance assessment mechanisms in place to make decisions on staffing and the transparency of such systems, it is important to acknowledge that FAO has made significant overall improvements in many areas of human resource management not covered in the MOPAN assessment (e.g. the development of the Human Resources Strategic Framework and Action Plan; job profiles; staff selection process; efforts to promote a greater gender balance in the work force; a Corporate Mobility Policy; staff training and capacity development support; Standard Operating Procedures).

FAO has implemented the Performance Evaluation and Management System (PEMS) for staff appraisals and is currently adapting and refining the system. The application of competency-based recruitment and training has resulted in enhanced leadership of FAO country representatives, a critically important role with the increased delegation of authority to country offices. The development of competency frameworks and the refinement of the PEMS should improve the transparency and utility of performance-based placements, promotions, etc.

FAO decentralised its operations to the field and created an extensive network of sub-regional offices to support country offices in the management of operations. It has delegated authority to country offices for procurement, hiring of human resources and approval of projects financed by TCP resources. FAO Representatives report that this has improved country-level programming, especially regarding the approval of TCP projects. Though FAO has strong corporate practices and systems for financial

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accountability, including the new Global Resource Management System (GRMS), increased administrative and financial responsibilities in decentralised offices mean that there is a continuous need to strengthen staff capacities, in particular with regard to internal control.

In 2012, emergency and rehabilitation operations, which now account for nearly one-third of FAO's expenditures, were decentralised and integrated with FAO's development programmes and operations, in line with the organisation's greater focus on resilience-related outcomes and objectives. Steps have been taken to ensure that this area of work is fully incorporated into CPFs, in particular in crisis-affected and transition contexts. Decentralisation has strengthened country leadership for emergency management, which now aims to better integrate relief, rehabilitation and development. FAO was rated as strong in emergency management by survey respondents and the document review. FAO was also rated as adequate or better for its role in cluster management (in terms of resources, leadership, and information it generates and circulates).

FAO has made concerted efforts to co-ordinate with partners, harmonise its operations with other UN agencies, work within its comparative advantage, and contribute actively to inter-agency plans and appeals in emergencies. FAO has made progress in managing its relationships with other UN agencies and stakeholders at all levels, including through the setting of global policies, norms and standards, its active participation in a number of joint UN initiatives, its emphasis on capacity development, and more inclusive planning and mutual assessments at country level.

While most direct partner survey respondents report that they can understand and comply with FAO procedures, allowing for easier working relationships, nearly one-quarter of survey respondents cited FAO's administrative/operational efficiencies as one of its major weaknesses, sometimes resulting in implementation delays. In the reform process, ease of use and communicating changes in procedures will be needed to enable partnerships.

**In recent years, FAO has made significant progress in results-based management, putting in place the new results framework and accompanying measurement strategy, which has been a work-in-progress throughout 2014. Work is ongoing to sharpen indicators, strengthen quality assurance mechanisms and continue staff training in RBM at all levels of the organisation.**

In response to the Independent External Evaluation (IEE) which underlined the organisation's failure to manage for results, FAO developed between 2009 and 2013 policies, structures and processes to support results-based management (RBM). These measures are bringing about a culture change in the organisation and senior management is strongly committed to the process.

The reforms undertaken by FAO are still very recent and more time is needed to see concrete results. The Programme Implementation Reports (PIR) presented since the last MOPAN assessment do not yet provide strong evidence of FAO's organisation-wide results, especially its contributions at the outcome level. This is due in part to weaknesses in the design of FAO's corporate results framework for 2010-13 which had poor results statements and indicators and lacked a clear theory of change. The reviewed Strategic Framework is more concise and includes a better theory of change that links outputs to outcomes and strategic objectives. Nonetheless, FAO's monitoring and reporting on results needs improvement, for example, to address inconsistencies in the quality of some indicators. Continued efforts within headquarters to develop sharper indicators and extensive training of staff at all levels of the organisation to implement the new measurement strategy will be key to FAO's ability to report on corporate results in the future.

Since the last MOPAN assessment, FAO has also made progress in introducing results-based country programming frameworks (CPF), which are now used in most country offices. FAO staff and partners find the new CPF a useful tool for setting country-level priorities that align with FAO's strategic objectives and the UN Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF). However, country level reporting does not yet provide an accurate picture of results at outcome level. While the results frameworks reviewed have causal links from outputs to outcomes and strategic objectives, the quality of the results statements and indicators greatly varies among countries. Similarly, there were inconsistencies in the quality of the country performance reports reviewed (FAOR annual reports). While some used indicators to report on results, others reported in a narrative form, which suggests that some country offices have a better understanding of RBM principles than others. As FAO is still making the transition from project to country programming, more time is needed for the practices and systems introduced to monitor and report on country programming. Continued staff training on RBM will be important to standardise the quality of internal reporting in country offices.

While performance information is used systematically to improve project implementation, some weaknesses in internal reporting have limited FAO's ability to use performance information for making decisions on country-level and corporate programming.

FAO's efforts to engage in results-based budgeting and report on expenditures are still in very early stages. However, notable progress has been made in the use of evaluation and audit recommendations to improve organisational performance.

Since 2011, FAO has continued to decentralise its operations and to delegate authorities to regional and country offices. It has instituted competency-based hiring for managers, including country office representatives, and has strengthened the technical and operational capacities of regional and sub-regional offices through staff deployment and improved financial and administrative systems. This is leading to improvements in a number of areas of operations management, such as TCP project approval and management and emergency management. Though FAO has sound corporate practices and systems for financial accountability, increased administrative and financial responsibilities in decentralised offices require sufficient staffing and training to support fully functioning and transparent decentralised operations.

**Evidence provided a mixed picture of FAO's progress toward the achievement of organisation-wide strategic objectives for the period 2010-13. For this period there were issues with overly complex results frameworks and weaknesses in reporting at all levels of the organisation. This made it difficult for FAO to provide a consistent picture of progress toward the achievement of strategic objectives for the period under review. Many of these inadequacies are being addressed through the reform process.**

While the PIRs were quite positive about FAO's progress in achieving results between 2010 and 2013, corporate thematic evaluations provided a mixed picture, many noting a lack of theories of change and data on outcome-level results. As noted above, the quality of the PIRs over this period was limited by the quality of results frameworks and data used for reporting. Evaluations noted FAO's achievements in its normative work, particularly in support of global policies and conventions, though the uptake and use of related knowledge products at country level was deemed weak in many cases. Evaluations highlighted achievements at the country level related to food safety, plant protection, integrated pest management and management of plant genetic resources. Surveyed stakeholders rated FAO's progress toward most

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strategic objectives as adequate. They rated FAO as strong for demonstrating progress towards its goal of improving preparedness and response to agricultural threats and emergencies and inadequate for demonstrating progress towards its goal of increasing public and private investment in agriculture.

At the country level, there is evidence that FAO's projects were effective in delivering activities and outputs during the period under review. The document review identified examples of positive results at the project level including contributions to food security and nutrition, emergency preparedness and resilience, avian influenza preparedness and prevention, natural resource management and plant protection. However, the organisation did not adequately report on its contribution to results at the outcome level and therefore it was difficult for FAO to provide conclusive documented evidence of the extent to which it contributed to country-level development priorities. As FAO continues to shift from a project to programme approach, this is likely to improve.

**FAO is a knowledge organisation and its role in knowledge sharing is an important part of its comparative advantage. It has made progress in sharing knowledge internally and externally since it started implementing its Knowledge Strategy in 2011. Strong, continued support to implementing the reviewed Strategic Framework and making fully functional the new technical networks will be important to institute change and demonstrate FAO's effectiveness in this area.**

FAO is a knowledge-based organisation with a central mandate to generate and share information both internally and with external stakeholders. It covers many different technical areas and has a worldwide audience. Past evaluations have severely critiqued knowledge management at FAO, especially regarding the dissemination of knowledge products. In recent years, FAO has developed a knowledge strategy and has made significant efforts to break the silo culture that had resulted in some duplication of effort and poor knowledge sharing in the past. Under the reviewed Strategic Framework and concomitant reorganisation, FAO's technical work now cuts across five new strategic objectives. In 2014, FAO established 11 technical networks to ensure that technical knowledge is shared across the organisation. It is too early to assess the extent to which these changes will enhance knowledge sharing but there are some early indications that it is improving. MOPAN survey respondents rated FAO strong in facilitating the exchange of knowledge and in their written comments 18% cited its work in generating and disseminating knowledge as one of its greatest strengths. Strong, continued support to implementing the reviewed Strategic Framework and making fully functional the new technical networks will be important to institute change and to demonstrate that FAO is effective in this area.

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