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Validation process of the Follow-up Report to the Evaluation of FAO's role and work related to Water

Final report

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1 Introduction

1. Since 2006, the requirement has been that all evaluations must receive a Management Response (MR). In these MRs, Senior Management gives an assessment of the evaluation report and for each recommendation states whether it is accepted, partially accepted or rejected. The MR must give reasons for rejecting or partially accepting a recommendation and must indicate how, by whom and by when the accepted recommendations will be implemented.

2. FAO evaluation policy also mandates the preparation of a Follow-up Report (FR) one year after completion of the MR (two years for thematic/strategic evaluations submitted to the Programme Committee), in which Management reports the state of implementation of the accepted recommendations. The Office of Evaluation (OED) keeps track of deadlines for the preparation of FRs, prompts their preparation and verifies that the reports meet basic quality standards in terms of format and information. However, OED did not carry out any verification of the substantive contents of FRs so far.

3. In 2010, the Programme Committee asked that FRs describe also the impacts of implemented recommendations from evaluations on corporate policies and procedures, to have more information on the feed-back from evaluation to planning/implementation. Provision of such information was added to the instructions for preparation of the FR.

4. The whole mechanism - the Management Response, the Follow-up Report and the requirement to report on impact of recommendations - enhanced the contribution of evaluations to corporate accountability and learning. However, experience also shows that there is room for improving the way FRs are prepared, both in terms of enhancing transparency and accuracy of information reported and of further strengthening the usefulness of the evaluation function.

5. Because of the importance it attaches to effective implementation of accepted evaluation recommendations, in April 2011 the Programme Committee requested OED to propose a methodology for validating statements of progress made in implementing accepted recommendations as contained in Follow-up Reports to Management Responses. Accordingly, OED developed a validation methodology and decided to test it in the context of the preparation of the Follow-up Report to the Management Response to the Evaluation of FAO's role and work related to Water., which was planned to be submitted to the PC at its May 2012 session. The validation process was carried out in February 2012.

6. Based on the results of this test, and following guidance from the PC, OED will apply the methodology systematically in other FRs, adjusting it as necessary.

2 Purpose and principles of the validation process

7. The purpose of the independent validation process of the Follow-up Report to the Management Response to the Evaluation of FAO's role and work related to water was to enhance the contribution from the evaluation to corporate learning and performance, while ensuring full involvement of FAO management in the preparation of the Follow-up Report.

8. The validation process consisted of two parallel assessments:

- i. Assessment of the progress made in the implementation of accepted evaluation recommendations;

- ii. Assessment of any constraints met in implementing the recommendations and the reasons for them.

3 Methodology

9. The validation process was carried out by an external consultant,¹ who had not been involved in the evaluation process or in the implementation of the recommendations. Steps included:

- i. Review of the evaluation report, the Management response and the Follow-up Report and any other supporting evidence on progress and constraints in implementing recommendations;
- ii. Identification of key recommendations to be assessed in depth in terms of implementation progress; recommendations on operational aspects will be taken into account if they had implications for the whole Organization;
- iii. Round of interviews in FAO HQ, and phone interviews with other relevant stakeholders from FAO or outside (see annex 1);
- iv. Preparation of a draft report, circulation to stakeholders for comments and finalization.

10. As per FAO evaluation policy, the NRL Division compiled in January 2012 a draft Follow-up Report describing the follow up to each of the accepted recommendations. The FR, together with all relevant documentation, was shared with the consultant.²

11. The Evaluation had made 35 recommendations, based on team findings and subsequent discussions. The Management Response had fully accepted thirteen and partially accepted twenty-one recommendations. One recommendation was rejected. Some of the recommendations concerned activities that were related to the work plan 2010-2011, and these were relatively easy to follow-up.

12. In consultation with OED, the consultant focused on nine recommendations in particular. These recommendations were largely strategic in nature, the most important of which was the establishment of a FAO Water Platform, or technical, particularly concerning cross-cutting topics. Box 1 below lists the selected recommendations and an assessment of their current status made by the consultant.

13. In Annex 2 to this report a detailed validation of each of the selected recommendations is given. This consists of a short assessment of the present relevance of the concerned recommendation, an assessment of progress made at present, the evidence in support of progress and general observations.

¹ The consultant was Dr Frank van Steenbergen

² The final version of the Validation report was revised by OED, to harmonize it with the final version of the Follow-up Report.

Box 1. Selected recommendations for validation and assessment of their current status

Recommendation Number	Management response (summarized)	Current achievement *	Explanation
12	Promote integrated management of aquatic resources, aquaculture in irrigation systems and wetlands-agriculture interaction	FI	Several normative products developed and new field projects prepared and started.
15	Engage in the Fouta Djallon Project to make it an example of organizational achievement through intensive collaboration across departments	FI	Jointly implemented transboundary watershed project under effective task force.
17	Take immediate action to sustain the process for the Guidelines on Agriculture and Wetlands Integration	LI	Only limited follow up in Malawi and India under non-FAO funding, as expected FAO funding did not materialize
21	Develop tools for agricultural water policies that are gender sensitive and socially inclusive; recognize gender and family farming in operational and normative work (including in updating the benchmark publications)	FI	Concise gender guidelines for agricultural water management prepared and family farming central in GIAHS program
30	Ensure full time staff capacity in nine thematic areas and locations	NI	Due to budget and recruitment constraints proposed, new appointments did not materialize.
31	Develop an organization wide vision on water in FAO and strengthen cooperation around water within and around NRL	PI	Consultancy commissioned to prepare first draft document for discussion
33	Under leadership of the Assistant Director General draft a Term of Reference for the Water Platform and design a FAO Water Strategy in consultation with DOs and concerned divisions to be submitted for endorsement to the relevant Governing Bodies	PI	Zero draft was circulated and commented on. A stepwise approach of building support and engagement for the FAO Water Platform throughout the organization will be followed.
34	Draft a four-year water programme for Impact Focus Areas and for PWB 2012-13 for the Water Platform	LI	Consultant working on strategy document for discussion
35	Clarify the functions and working arrangements of the Water Platform – in particular the role of different divisions, relation with outside consultants	PI	FAO Water Platform Secretary appointed and a position for support staff created. Focal persons identified. Internal rules prepared in draft.

Legend: * FI: Fully implemented; PI: Implementation in process; LI: Limited follow up; NI: No follow up

4 Overall findings

14. The follow-up to the recommendations should be placed in the following context:

- a) The management response was prepared for the April 2010 session of the Programme Committee – i.e. at least three months into the biennium 2010-2011. New staff and budget allocations based on the recommendations were only possible within the PWB starting in 2012.
- b) The Evaluation had made a strong case for additional resources in the form of professional staff in the Decentralized Offices. The recommendation was partly accepted. However, in the current biennium 2012/13, the Organization has not re-allocated resources in favour of the water sector, which appears to have suffered cuts like any other thematic area. This applies in equal measure to the different divisions in FAO that work on water management. The budget of the NRL division was even slightly reduced over the years.
- c) In the new biennium USD 5.05 million are planned for staff in NRL Water, which is equivalent to less than 0.5% of the overall Program of Work and Budget Net Appropriation. Non Staff-resources amount to USD 1.01 million, to be shared with the Land Division in NRL. The non-staff budget in particular is curtailed from the previous biennium. Also a recruitment freeze is being enforced, from 1 January 2012 until May-June 2012. This made it difficult to follow up on recommendations with budget implications. There are considerable extra-budgetary resources in water-related activities, that the Evaluation had estimated at 20% of FAO's total. These are technical cooperation and emergency and rehabilitation projects and are not necessarily strongly connected with – or in support of - the non-project work of the technical departments and their human resources.
- d) Since the evaluation, more activities have been decentralized. Regional Offices for instance have autonomy in planning staff time and developing TCPs. Though there are obvious merits in decentralization, it makes the development of a coordinated water programme – which is a central recommendation - more challenging. In the process also some units in headquarters have become 'thin on the ground' due to out-posting to the regions, as well as vacancies and budget constraints. As a result, in some divisions there are less human resources and less time to coordinate.

15. Taking notice of these constraints, the validation process supports the final assessment made in the NRL Follow up Report, i.e.: *“Good progress is thus reported on the implementation of many of the Evaluation's recommendations, though it is recognized that much remains to be done to make FAO's role and work on water fit for the needs of its Member Countries and partners.”*

16. The Follow up Report was compiled with contributions from different stakeholders in the Organization and provides an overall idea about progress made and some of the constraints faced in the implementation of the recommendations –

17. A number of accepted recommendations are being implemented. However, the major recommendation that Water in FAO required specific additional resources was not integrated by the Organization in the PWB 2012/13, aside from the assignment of a dedicated senior professional officer and one support staff to provide Secretariat of the Water Platform.

5 Comments on the selected recommendations

5.1 *Comments on strategic recommendations n. 31, 33, 34 and 35*

18. The paramount strategic recommendation concerned the establishment of a FAO Water Platform, and in support of this the definition of responsibilities, the formulation of a strategic vision and identification of priority thematic areas. These would capitalize on FAO's considerable intellectual and operational assets in the water sector. After a delay related to the time and resource constraints described above, the FAO Water Platform is now in the process of accelerated development. A Secretary to the Water Platform was appointed in September 2011. Focal persons are in place in the different thematic departments and decentralized offices. Internal rules have been drafted, though not yet discussed, and a strategic vision document is under preparation.

19. The plan is to build up the FAO Water Platform with a stepwise process. The first, current, stage is the development of linkages, among others by organizing a number of forthcoming events and by doing an inventory of the need to update normative work to respond to the needs for application in the field. The development of more structured and formalized interaction and the identification of joint strategic priorities are planned next. It will also be important to formulate the programmatic activities of the Platform soon, so as to further consolidate its niche and added value for all departments within FAO. There is broad consensus about the usefulness of an effective FAO Water Platform. Promising cooperative activities have developed around water policy support in East Asia and the Pacific with TCI. In general, the development of strong linkage with TCI and TCE as well as the DOs is a main challenge in the Platform, since much of the critical mass in terms of volume of direct operational applications and outreach is comprised in those divisions. Among others, relations are becoming more structured through the assignment of focal persons.

5.2 *Comments on technical recommendations n. 12, 15, 17 and 20*

20. Several of the proposed cross-cutting water activities that were recommended in the Evaluation have been pursued. This has been done within severe bottlenecks of funding and staff time. In some cases, such as in the Fouta Djallon Project, even against the odds as staff time was not compensated. The main exception is the work on wetland-agriculture interaction that, for the time being, is stalled. During the validation, many ideas for more cross-cutting water activities came up, suggesting that this should figure importantly in future programming of water activities.

6 *Comments on the Evaluation*

21. The evaluation was extensive and yielded a long list of detailed recommendations, particularly on the way work is organized within FAO, at procedural, technical and strategic level. It was less able to systematically assess the impact or efficiency of water programmes of FAO activities because of attribution issues. Nevertheless, the text of the Evaluation Report provides many worthwhile insights. Most recommendations (22 out of 35) imply additional resources (rather than reallocation), but here the room to manoeuvre has been limited. Some additional fundraising was undertaken, but this has not yet been successful.

Annex 1. List of stakeholders met during the validation process

NRD	Alexander Mueller, Fred Snijders
FAO Water Platform Secretary/NRL	Mohamed Bazza
NRL	Parviz Koochafkan, Pasquale Steduto, Jean-Marc Faures, Robina Wahaj, Jacob Burke, Jippe Hoogeveen, Maher Salman
TCER	Jeff Tschirley
TCI	Garry Smith, Klaus Urban, Robert Rout
FIRA	Devin Bartley
FOMC	Thomas Hofer
OEDD	Robert Moore, Tullia Aiazzi
Wageningen University	Gerardo van Halsema (telephone)
Evaluation Team	Andy Bullock (telephone)

Annex 2. Detailed validation of the Management Response on the selected recommendation

Note:

For each selected recommendation the top row is copied from the Follow Up Report prepared by FAO and the bottom row is the independent validation.

Recommendations from the Evaluation on FAO's Work Related to Water	Actions agreed in Management Response (April 2010)	Action taken, comments and explanations (Follow Up Report March 2012)	
12. ‘Water at FAO’, under FIMA’s leadership, should promote integrated management of aquatic resources, aquaculture in irrigation systems and wetlands-agriculture interaction	Further funding: Yes Accepted: Partially Comment: Partially ongoing. While the first two points “integrated management of aquatic resources” and “aquaculture in irrigation systems” could be promoted under the leadership of FIMA, this is not the case for “wetlands-agriculture interactions”, which should fall under the leadership of either the NR or the AG department. Action: Project development and guidelines for ecosystem approach to fisheries and aquaculture. Timing: Within the biennium 2010-2011 Responsible Unit: FIR	As above with the following additions: The ecosystem approach to aquaculture guidelines (EAA) have been produced in 2010. The guidelines consider the watershed perspective and integrate aquaculture with other users of common resources while maximizing benefits and minimizing impacts particularly on water resources. Implementation of field projects that integrate irrigation and aquaculture is underway in West Africa, under the joint leadership of FI and AG and the involvement of other FAO units.	
Current validity of the recommendation	Achievements against management response (January 2012)	Evidence	Observations
The recommendation remains very relevant – there is to date limited practical work on the integration of inland fisheries, aquaculture and irrigated farming and environmental flows. FAO is one of the few organizations that have the knowledge in-house to make the link.	• ‘Ecosystem approach to aquaculture guidelines’ published in 2010 as part of the Responsible Fisheries Series. It takes a watershed and ecosystems approach though it is not explicit on irrigation. • Rice-fish agriculture in China is one of the heritage systems selected in the GIAHS project and will be documented • TCP prepared for integrating fish cultivation into rice farming in Mali (TCP/MLI/3304) – planned to start in July 2011 • Guidelines for small scale inland fisheries (inland fisheries still being major source of fresh water fish) are in the making, these will address water management as well. • White paper in the making on link between hydro-power and water management, including contribution on safeguarding inland fisheries. • Fisheries linked into the work on location specific work on environmental flows – for instance in Okavango.	• Aquaculture Development 4. Ecosystem approach to aquaculture • FAO Technical Guidelines For Responsible Fisheries 5 Suppl. 4. • TCP Planning document Validation et dissémination de systèmes d’élevage de poisson intégrés à la riziculture à travers des champs-écoles des producteurs au Mali • Planning workshop report: FAO FIR (2011) RAPPORT SYNTHÈSE Atelier de planification des activités du Projet TCP/MLI/3304 Validation et Dissémination de systèmes d’élevage de poisson intégrés à la riziculture à travers les Champs-Ecoles de Producteurs (CEP) au Mali- Ségou, les 09, 10 et 11 Novembre 2011	• The achievements should be placed within the constraints on human resources. Ex. FIMA, where for inland fisheries there are only two experts in headquarters and two positions are vacant. This limited time available for coordination, interaction and joint projects. • The recent State of Land and Water Report is a step forward in that it puts the water resource rather than the use of it at centre stage. It can progressively become a strong focus in water programming. At present, it does not yet fully integrate fisheries in the analysis. Such further integration may find a place in future editions.

Recommendations from the Evaluation on FAO's Work Related to Water	Actions agreed in Management Response (April 2010)	Action taken, comments and explanation (Follow Up Report March 2012)	
15. 'Water at FAO' should engage in the Fouta Djallon Project to make it an example of organizational achievement through intensive collaboration across departments, both at Headquarters and in decentralized units.	Further funding: No Accepted: Yes Comment: This is done already. The Fouta Djallon project is operational since 1 July 2009 and the collaboration across the departments (including also the Decentralised Offices) has taken off in a major way. Action: The collaboration will be further intensified Timing: Continuously for the duration of the project Responsible Unit: FO	Implementation of the Fouta Djallon Project has further intensified over the last year through greater collaboration between FO, NR, RAF and SFW and the Ministerial Conference which was held in November 2011 in Freetown.	
Current validity of the recommendation	Achievements against management response (January 2012)	Evidence	Observations
• This is a cooperative project under GEF funding implemented under the aegis of the African Union on the management of the Fouta Djallon highland, shared by eight countries in West Africa. After a long gestation, it started in 2009. It aims at the development of a regional convention of the shared area, field activities through 29 pilot activities, capacity building and scaling up. It can, in principle, form the basis for a new generation of watershed projects where institutional and economic issues are addressed and land and water management are integrated. • Water is one of the central elements in this project. Water is represented through the development of a water observatory (using remote sensing), a study on hydrological trends (spring drying) and a study on adaptation. Contributions are made by experts associated with different divisions.	• Joint task force in place bringing together FOM, NRL, NRC, AGS, LEG and Regional Offices – coordinating inputs of the different departments to the Fouta Djallon • Joint implementation has started – main achievement was the identification of pilot activities. • This involved: 7 teams of 3 national experts (in different countries). Pilot/showcase activities were identified, with field implementation through local NGOs and coaching of the more conceptual work from HQ. In the second stage, monitoring stations for ground-truthing for the water observatory will be developed.	• Records of a Task Force meeting Project EP/INT/503/GEF Fouta Djallon Highlands Integrated Natural Resources Management (FDH-INRM) (last one on 1/12/2011), • Draft report from Veerle Verschoren about hydrological trends in the Fouta Djallon (implemented under the direct supervision of Jean Marc Faures from NRL) • Report from Elisa DiStefano on climate change in West Africa / Fouta Djallon (implemented under the direct supervision of Claudia Hiepe from NRC).	• Cooperation under this joint project is (still) unique. as the task force serves to distribute work rather than giving feedback. The contribution from the different divisions is particularly special as under this (earlier generation) GEF project staff services are not compensated. In the case of Fouta Djallon, staff time is an in-kind contribution to the GEF Project – even though concerned staff are highly committed to other activities. • Because of the inter-regional nature of this project, coordination remains at headquarters.

Recommendations from the Evaluation on FAO's Work Related to Water	Actions agreed in Management Response (April 2010)	Action taken, comments and explanation (Follow Up Report March 2012)	
17. ‘Water at FAO’ is strongly urged to take immediate action to sustain the process for the Guidelines on Agriculture and Wetlands Integration, through the mechanism of the Ramsar Thematic Work Area, and to seek funding for this activity.	Further funding: Yes Accepted: Partially Comment: This activity cannot be pursued without additional funding which would allow the creation of one post. Such a post existed till the departure of the incumbent in 2006. Efforts have been made and it was hoped to obtain funding from FMPP, but so far it seems that the establishment of FMPP is not proceeding very well. Action: Follow-up with Wageningen University for resources mobilization. Timing: Within the biennium 2010-2011 Responsible Unit: AG	The expected funding for this activity from FAO Multilateral Partnership Program did not materialize. However, with a support letter from FAO, Wageningen University was able to receive funding from the government of the Netherlands and is working on the guidelines. If the funds from the government of the Netherlands do not suffice for the preparation of GAWI, FAO will seek additional extra-budgetary resources to finalize the process.	
Current validity of the recommendation	Achievements against management response (January 2012)	Evidence	Observations
This recommendation has not lost its validity. With the intensification of agriculture in Africa, the need to balance wetland management and agriculture rather than substitute the first with the latter is highly relevant. In general, the development and management of flood-based farming livelihood systems in Africa and elsewhere remains high priority, if only because of the sheer scale of these productive ecosystems.	• The scoping report on this topic was published as FAO Water Report 33 in 2008. • Funding was obtained from the Netherlands Water Partnership by Wageningen University for the follow up, being the preparation of Guidelines This, however, had to be matched by internal funding within FAO. • The proposal for this to the Multilateral Partnership Program was not accepted. • Instead of a global roll-out of guidelines the GAWI approach was then pursued further in India and Malawi by Wetland Action and Wetland International as well as Wageningen University. Introduction workshops were organized with facilitation of the national FAO office. • At present there is no further follow up planned.	• ‘FAO Water Report 33: Scoping agriculture-wetland interactions. Towards a sustainable multiple-response.- by A. Wood and G. Halsema (eds).’ • ‘Report: Adrian Wood/ Wetland Action (2011) GAWI Analysis of Seasonal Wetlands in Malawi: Towards Sustainable Multiple Use.’	The topic remains of high interest, but had no strong internal champion. In a list of priority issues and programming of the FAO Water Platform, it can still be considered and funding or an APO position may be attracted.

Recommendations from the Evaluation on FAO's Work Related to Water	Actions agreed in Management Response (April 2010)	Action taken, comments and explanation (Follow Up Report March 2012)	
21. a) 'Water at FAO' should develop tools to support Member Countries in preparing agricultural water policies that are gender sensitive and socially inclusive; b) 'Water at FAO' should recognise in all its work, normative and operational, that farming is a household enterprise, often passed down through generations and drawing on traditional knowledge, based on teamwork, where tasks are complementary and not competitive; c) 'Water at FAO' should update 'old' benchmark publications progressively, introducing new material, improving relevance to different farming households, and integrating gender concerns. See list	Further funding: Yes Accepted: Partially Comment: This recommendation is very general and a mix of several others. The principles expressed are already part of FAO approach. It is difficult to abstract specific actions. Action: Will be further considered in the Water Strategy development process. Timing: Continuing Responsible Unit: The Water Platform	As indicated in the Management Response the principles expressed are part of FAO's approach. Water policies cater for traditional knowledge and are automatically streamlined for gender balance and social equity. The GIAHS project, which aims at safeguarding and supporting the world's agricultural heritage systems, continued to be implemented during 2010-2011 in Algeria, China, Chile, Tunisia, Peru, Philippines as well as in India, Japan, Tanzania, Kenya, Sri Lanka, Turkey, Azerbaijan as participating countries (jointly with other sources of funding).	
Current validity of the recommendation	Achievements against management response (January 2012)	Evidence	Observations
This recommendation consist of three different subsets of policy-related and normative activities all highlighting the need for FAO Water to maintain the focus on family farming and feminization of agriculture.	21 a: Pocket format booklet with Gender and Water Alliance and with SEAGA developed for field staff involved in the design, implementation, operation and maintenance of water management projects for agricultural production. Text finalized December 2011. Printing is awaited 21b: The particular recommendation is not specific. The GIAHS program has started to upscale traditional knowledge. It has identified a number of global heritage family farming systems. 21c: As a start-up activity of the Water Platform, the catalogue of FAO publication was circulated among the divisions and the regional offices with a request to indicate priorities and ideas for updating. This drew response from all regions. It also served to bring the work in the various fields under the attention of a large group of potential in-house customers.	• 'Esther de Jong, Juan Antonio Sagardoy and Ilaria Sisto (FAO, GEWAMED and GWA: Passport to Mainstreaming Gender in Water Programmes: Key questions for interventions in the agricultural sector' • 'Compiled review of water-related products and tools'	

Recommendations from the Evaluation on FAO's Work Related to Water	Actions agreed in Management Response (April 2010)	Action taken, comments and explanation (Follow Up Report March 2012)	
30. FAO should ensure full time capacity in the following areas and locations: a) Irrigation engineering capacity at sub-regional levels in East, Southern and West Africa and in the Near East/North Africa; b) Strengthen water management capacity to support the Technical Cooperation Department in its work, with NRL staff based at the most appropriate location. c) Create a post for Social development and gender expert with specific experience in agricultural water and land management at middle/senior level (P4/P5) in NRL at Headquarters; d) Strengthen capacity at Headquarters in NRL on: groundwater management; water harvesting; water statistics and information systems; e) Strengthen capacity on waste-water management and related topics in Latin America, Asia and the Pacific and in the Near East; f) Strengthen capacity on water policies at the regional level, to match requests from Member Countries; g) Strengthen capacity on: water-related issues in AGNS and on agricultural pollution in AGPP; h) Establish capacity on Forest and Water and Watershed Management in Central Asia; i) Sustain the credibility and performance of LEGN by strengthening its human resources in the water sector.	Further funding: Yes Accepted: Partially Comment: Complex matter. Implementation depends on Commitment and prioritization of Member Countries. Potential of national staff is acknowledged and already widely used as consultants Action: To be highlighted to the Programme Committee. Timing: April 2010 Responsible Unit: FAO Secretariat	See action on previous recommendation. The issue of unbalance between staff and work load in the field of water resources as highlighted in this recommendation is endorsed by FAO Water Platform stakeholders. Support has been provided FAO Water Platform to: i) TCSF in the preparation of water control technologies; ii) TCE for the implementation of FAO emergency programme; iii) ESW in the preparation of the "Passport to Mainstreaming Gender in Water Programmes" developed for field staff, technicians and agents of local irrigation and extension services, NGOs and local government employees; and iv) The EU Food Facility. The platform has also launched a training program for FAO Staff to acquaint them with the main normative products and tools particularly relevant for field application.	
Current validity of the recommendation	Achievements against management response (January 2012)	Evidence	Observations
The list is based on feedback from the discussions at the time of the evaluation. The risk of losing critical mass, apart from specific expertise, is still valid and quoted in, for instance, the Follow-up Report.	None of the proposed new positions could be filled. There are two main reasons: • (1) Budget constraints in the period following 2010 offering little opportunity to create new positions. The position of Platform Coordinator has been one of the few new positions created • (2) Complex process of filling vacancies in FAO – even within the water group 12	Interviews Staff list	The follow up to this recommendation should be seen in the context of the recruitment policy in FAO. Selection of candidates not only considers professional competence but also takes into account country representation quotas and other considerations. This has made it more

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	vacancies were open for long periods of time during the biennium 2010-2011.		difficult to find the right match and explain why vacancies persist. In addition, budget constraints in general and a freeze on new recruitment (as of 1/1/2012) has affected the follow up to this recommendation.
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Recommendations from the Evaluation on FAO's Work Related to Water	Actions agreed in Management Response (April 2010)	Action taken, comments and explanation (Follow Up Report March 2012)	
31. NRL should act urgently to: a) develop a NRL common vision and strategy, by involving staff at all levels and locations; b) improve team work, collaboration, coordination and sharing within NRL across all levels and locations, including through annual meetings for all staff, regular and frequent virtual meetings, visits by senior managers to decentralized offices, etc.	Further funding: No Accepted: Partially Comment: (a) there should not be an NRL vision but an organization wide vision on water in FAO. There should be water vision. (b) most recommendations on NRL team work are relevant. Action: (a) Will be dealt with in the process of developing the Water Platform. (b) Improved communication through increased number of virtual meetings and number of visits to DOs. Timing: Within the biennium 2010-2011 Responsible Unit: (a) All divisions and DOs concerned (b) NRL	As indicated under recommendation 1, the preparation of a draft FAO's strategic vision for water has been launched late in 2011 and is expected to be finalized and agreed by the end of 2012. Communication and consultations on water-related matters within HQ and between HQ and DOs has been greatly heightened since establishment of the Platform. At the same time, the number of visits of HQ management and staff to DOs has been boosted, particularly for participation to planning retreats and the organization of training sessions. Over 20 units from HQ and DOs have actively participated virtually and contributed to the preparation of the World Water Day 2012 , coordinated by the Platform. The event is organized on behalf of UN-Water under the theme "Water and Food Security". Similarly, the Platform is coordinating the organization of FAO Land and Water Days, for the first time this year (May 2012), in collaboration with IFAD and WFP. The event will provide an opportunity for Water Officers to participate and to benefit from other activities tailored for their needs as side events.	
Current validity of the recommendation	Achievements against management response (January 2012)	Evidence	Observations
The development of a Vision on Water within FAO, linked to programmatic development, is a powerful step to align different parties in the Water Platform.	A consultant has been commissioned to prepare a first document as an input for a FAO strategic vision on water, including a discussion on Impact Areas. This report is supposed to be completed by February.	Terms of Reference the consultant signed, contain: - identifying major strategic and thematic focuses - special attention to gender and social dimension of water	• The ToR is primarily aimed to produce a report with not much local consultation. It is understood that the report will primarily serve to start the discussion more broadly within the Organization. • On FAO Land and Water Days the Water Platform is on the agenda to be presented and discussed.

Recommendations from the Evaluation on FAO's Work Related to Water	Actions agreed in Management Response (April 2010)	Action taken, comments and explanation (Follow Up Report March 2012)	
33. FAO's Assistant Director General for Natural Resources, in collaboration with concerned Assistant Directors General in Headquarters and in the Regional Offices, should develop a strategy for water in FAO. This should define an official internal coordination mechanism, called FAO Water Platform, and reflect the importance of water in FAO's mandate as well as the objectives of the Organization in the water sector.	Further funding: Yes Accepted: Yes Comment: The recommendation is probably the most important of the Evaluation. It is widely supported throughout the Organization provided that the Water Platform is effective in delivering and enabling interdisciplinary approaches. Additional comments on the recommendation are provided in the Overall Response. It is now urgent to move from analysis to action. The idea needs to be transformed into FAO structure and coordination mechanisms. Action: Establish an IDWG or a Task Force to draft a Term of Reference for the Water Platform, addressing composition, role, functions and responsibility. Define governance, tentative work plan and resources requirements / implications for the Water Platform operation. Design a FAO Water Strategy in consultation with DOs and concerned division, reaching consensus and approval. Submit a document on the Water Platform and on the Water Strategy to relevant Governing Bodies to receive endorsement. Timing: Within the biennium 2010-2011 Responsible Unit: NR Dep. In consultation with AG, FI, FO and TC, and the DOs	According to the Evaluation, the preparation of FAO's strategy for water was to be carried out when the Platform becomes fully operational, in order to engage all the concerned units in the process. Following establishment of the Platform, action has been taken for drafting its profile, covering composition, role, functions and responsibility as well as governance and operational procedures. The profile was presented and discussed during a meeting held in January 2010 and attended by all the concerned units. The Platform has also prepared its work plans for 2010-11 and 2012-13. Preparation of a draft working document for a FAO water strategy has been initiated in late 2011. The consultative process for its finalization and its endorsement by relevant Governing Bodies are expected to be completed before the end of 2012. In the meantime an Information Note giving account of the progress in the Platform's establishment and operation has been prepared for COAG's session of May 2012.	
Current validity of the recommendation	Achievements against management response (January 2012)	Evidence	Observations
The recommendation remains highly valid. FAO is unique in that it has the in-house capacity on the main field of water management (agricultural water management, fisheries, forestry, natural resources) and has the link with implementation through its regional programmes and is the authoritative source of much of the global water information. A large number of important topics can be identified at the interface of different thematic areas that will	• Zero Draft containing suggestions for ToR, internal procedures and work program for the FAO Water Platform circulated for comments by 9/2010 • Response on Zero Draft from 3 DO's and 5 Dept at HQ received • Follow-up then slowed down due to lack of dedicated staff to work on the Water Platform – this changed in September 2011 • From October 2011 a number of steps have been taken to launch the FAO Water Platform within the FAO system; - inventory of the demand for knowledge products so	• 'The FAO-Water Platform, First Draft' – circulated by the Assistant Director General • 'Comments on the Zero Draft' • 'Water-related Products Needs Assessment: Results' • 'Draft brochure World Water Days' and related	• The ADG and Secretary of the Water Platform are taking a stepwise approach to build up the platform, gradually introducing joint visions, programming and external operations gradually. • There are a number of general structural issues that may make the coordination and functioning of the FAO Water Platform challenging and that may need to be discussed - planning of program

contribute to normative work and effectiveness of field activities. There is a large as yet unused potential in FAO's role as a driving force in the water debate and programming. The response to the zero draft of 2010 emphasized the same and highlighted the need for an effective Water Platform. The main points that were given in response to the Zero Draft (in bracket number of responses): - Capitalize on existing cross-cutting work (2) - Better link field programs and normative products – including making normative products user friendly (4) - Define core of Water Platform as more/other than 'agricultural water management' (4) - Specific suggestions for thematic priorities (8) - Improve procedures for project implementation (3) - Clarify the governance of the platform and ensure it is not too complicated (3)	as to prioritize the updating of the normative products – with contribution of six DO's (see also Recommendation 21c) - joint organization of the World Water Day (March 2012) - organization of the Land and Water Days (May 2012). • As a next step the internal rules are planned to be formulated and the strategy and program of activities is being developed. At later stage external strategy, including fundraising, is foreseen.	correspondence • 'Draft Programme Land and Water Days'	activities in the DO's and Headquarter in principle is relatively autonomous. A mechanism of joint review may be considered for DO and HQ programs - a bottleneck in sharing human resources between TC and HQ Division is the different rate structure. As long as this persists, staff sharing will be constrained in spite of considerable goodwill from many sides, not many new cross-sectoral water programs have been started since the Evaluation. Special incentives to undertake cross-sectoral programs may be considered.
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Recommendations from the Evaluation on FAO's Work Related to Water	Actions agreed in Management Response (April 2010)	Action taken, comments and explanation (Follow Up Report March 2012)	
34. The FAO Water Platform should become the organizational mechanism that connects work on water to the Strategic Objectives. Key elements of its structure and role are as follows: a) The Chair should be the Assistant Director General for Natural Resources level and should report to the two Deputy Directors General of FAO on progress and constraints of the Platform mechanism; b) The Platform should develop a four-year program for the Impact Focus Area-Water and Land Scarcity and other Impact Focus Areas to which work on water is relevant; the programme should include priorities, responsibilities, areas for partnerships and required human resources for its implementation; c) The Platform should function through regular joint decision-making meetings among FAO unit managers and regional senior staff with strong responsibilities for water work, including NRL, ESW, FIMA, FOMC and the Technical Cooperation department and others, as appropriate..	Further funding: Yes Accepted: Yes Comment: The recommendation covers the main issues but is considered by some Departments as too prescriptive. The Water Programme is subject to the endorsement by the Governing Bodies and needs to be framed within the existing Strategic Framework and Strategic Objectives Action: Draft a four-year water programme for IFA and for PWB 2012-13. Timing: Within the biennia 2010-2011 and 2012-2013 Responsible Unit: The Water Platform	a., b.) The Platform has been established along the lines of the recommendation. The Platform has also developed the PWB 2012-13 and coordinated the corporate preparation of an IFA WALS. Other focus areas of FAO's work on water have come out of the assessment of water-related products carried out by the Water Platform and will constitute the basis for future work by the concerned units. c) The Platform draft guidelines specify, among other aspects, the concerned units and the decision-making process for the Platform. The Platform has carried out an assessment of the main FAO products related to water, in close consultation with the concerned units in HQ and Decentralized Offices, with the objective of aligning the normative program with application needs in the field. The main outputs of this exercise were an updated database of FAO water-related products, including those produced by decentralized offices, the evaluation of the usefulness and user-friendliness of these products for field applications; and the needs' assessment for new products to be developed starting in 2012. The main gaps identified were the need for future work to give due consideration to regional priorities and the fact that the majority of new products are of multi-disciplinary nature requiring joint work by two or more units. The next steps to fill these gaps are included in the Platform's work plan for the biennium 2012-13.	
Current validity of the recommendation	Achievements against management response (January 2012)	Evidence	Observations
There are two reasons in particular why a FAO Water Platform is still highly necessary: (1) thematically, the importance of many of the cross-cutting issues in water; (2) organizationally, the importance of having a coherent program in view of decentralization.	• Appointment of a Secretary of the Water Platform (P5 level) in September 2011 through internal mobility, effectively devoting 70% of his time to Platform activities. • Secretarial support to the Platform (G4 level) made available in the PWB for biennium 2012/3 – yet could not be recruited due to the freeze on new appointments. • No non-staff budget allocated to the platform. This will need to be sourced from other activities • Focal persons (20 in total, incl 7 in the D0's) have been identified and appointed in the different	• Interviews and mailings • '2012-2013 Work Planning (part of Organizational Result FO 1)' • Coordinator of Water Platform in place, housed in NRL Division but reporting to ADG • 'List of focal persons' • 'Proposal IFA-WALS, Coping with scarcity of	The formulation of a program of activities of the FAO Water Platform is now important as a next step: - to define precise areas of work - to program activities of focal persons - to clarify role of Water Platform and regular departments In the future the Water Platform may also play a role in being FAO's external corporate face in the water sector.

	departments. Indicatively these are expected to devote 10% of their time to the Water Platform. • Draft internal rules prepared (see also 35), describing among others: - FAO Platform Board meeting once a year - Focal persons - Support team of senior staff and assistant • Fundraising was undertaken through a proposal for the Impact Focus Area on Water and Land Scarcity (IFA WALs) – consisting of an early warning system on water and food security, a Global Soil Partnership, support to the CAADP and a river basin program in SE Asia. The proposal, which was not very cross-cutting, was not successful.	water and land resources (February 2011)'	
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Recommendations from the Evaluation on FAO's Work Related to Water	Actions agreed in Management Response (April 2010)	Action taken, comments and explanation (Follow Up Report March 2012)	
35. The FAO Water Platform should ensure: a) Clarity on the context and principles of collaboration between NRL, ESW, FIMA, FOMC and units in the Technical Cooperation Department, defining responsibilities and roles, resources, allocation and sharing procedures and compliance with technical requirements of projects and initiatives; b) Close coordination between all members of the Water Platform on all steps of project preparation, from discussions with donors to project approval and adequate planning for resources for backstopping and technical clearances. c) Improved two-way linkages between technical staff and consultants working for all members of the Water Platform, as sources of information and means to disseminate and test ideas.	Further funding: Yes Accepted: Yes Comment: The recommendation relates to the functions and working arrangements of the Platform. The recommendations are useful and will be considered in the process. There is a concern that the Platform might become just a coordination mechanism without resources and with no mandate to call on resources across the organization for interdisciplinary work. This aspect needs to be closely monitored and corrected if required. Action: Will be dealt with in the process of establishing the Water Platform. Timing: Within the biennia 2010-2011 and 2012-2013 Responsible Unit: NR, AG, FI, FO,TC and concerned DOs and divisions	Draft internal guidelines on collaboration mechanisms and operational procedures for the Platform have been prepared along the lines of the recommendation. The guidelines will be discussed by the concerned units in an upcoming meeting in the first semester of 2012. All water-related activities are currently streamlined through FAO Water Platform and shared with the concerned units for greater integration and synergy. The latest of these activities is the organization of the World Water Day 2012, under the theme "Water and Food Security", on behalf of UN-Water, and several other joint activities, for which all the concerned units in HQs and DOs have been consulted and are contributing.	
Current validity of the recommendation	Achievements against management response (January 2012)	Evidence	Observations
The recommendation does not explicitly mention the link with the Decentralized Offices, as in 2009 the decentralized staff were still associated with the technical departments. In the meantime, in FAO the decentralization process has progressed. This has added another dimension and more urgency to the Water Platform as a method to ensure coherence in activities.	• Draft internal rules have been prepared. These have not yet been discussed. • Joint programming as foreseen in the management response still needs to start: defining new joint activities and area of work of the Platform (vis-à-vis regular department's) beyond coordination and internal communication • Several joint activities ongoing (see recommendation 12 and 15). A new cooperative program has been developed between TCI, RAP and NRL in support to GEF World Bank Water Program in East Asia and Pacific. This may also receive support from AusAid and concerns elements such as mapping water productivity, irrigation modernization, ground-water governance – in China, Vietnam, Philippines and Indonesia.	• 'Draft Internal Guidelines for FAO's Work Related to Water' • 'WB-FAO Cooperation Proposal in EAP (East Asia and Pacific)'	• Thematic interaction is a larger point in FAO. There are number of initiatives (genetic resources, climate change) trying to give shape to this that can provide lessons to the FAO Water Platform • The main challenge for the Water Platform is to develop functional coordination with the TC Department and the DO's as much of the outreach and critical mass lies there.