Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations

Office of Evaluation

Evaluation of FAO's Regional and Sub-regional Offices for Europe and Central Asia

Final report

December 2012

Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations

Office of Evaluation (OED)

This report is available in electronic format at: http://www.fao.org/evaluation

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Acknowledgments

The team of the Evaluation of FAO's Regional and Sub-regional Offices for Europe and Central Asia is deeply grateful to the many individuals who made their time available for providing information, discussing and answering long questions.

In particular, the team benefited extensively from the generous information and feed-back by FAO colleagues in Headquarters, in the Regional Office for Europe and Central Asia, the Sub-regional Office for Central Asia and in the Liaison Office with the European Union and Belgium. The team also had constructive meetings with Permanent Representatives to FAO, FAO and government staff in Albania, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Hungary, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova, Tajikistan and Turkey, as well as development partners and people in the communities in these countries. The contribution by FAO Member Countries who answered the questionnaire survey was very useful and highly appreciated.

Finally, the team extends its gratitude to Ms Sarah Jaff and Ms Heather Young in the FAO Office of Evaluation, who supported the team with administrative assistance, patience and good humour. A specific thanks goes to Ms Genny Bonomi, who contributed to the work of the team with background research on FAO's policies relevant to decentralization.

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Acronyms

ACP	African, Caribbean and Pacific Group of States
ADG/RR	Assistant Director-General/Regional Representative
AFAORep	Assistant FAO Representative
AGAH	FAO Animal Health Service
AGAL	FAO Livestock Information, Sector Analysis and Policy Branch
AGAP	FAO Animal Production Service
AOS	Administrative and Operational Support
AP	Agricultural Policy
APH	Animal Production and Health
ASF	African swine fever
BH	Budget Holder
CACFish	Central Asian and Caucasus Regional Fisheries and Aquaculture Commission
CD	Capacity Development
CIS	Commonwealth of Independent States
CO	Country Office
CoC-IEE	Committee of the Council for the implementation of the recommendations of the Independent External Evaluation of FAO
COIN	Country Office Information Network
CPF	Country Programming Framework
DaO	Delivery as One
DG	Director-General
DOs	Decentralized Offices
DRR	Deputy Regional Representative
EFC	European Forestry Commission
EIFAAC	European Inland Fisheries and Aquaculture Advisory Commission
ERC	FAO Regional Conference for Europe
EC	European Commission
ECA	FAO European Commission for Agriculture
ENPARD	European Neighbourhood Partnership for Agriculture and Rural Development
ERG	FAO European Regional Group
ESW	FAO Gender, Equity and Rural Employment Division
EU	European Union
EuFMD	European Commission for the Control of Foot-and-Mouth Disease
FAORep	FAO Representative
FMD	Foot-and-mouth disease
FPMIS	Field Programme Management Information System
FTPP	FAO-Turkey Partnership Programme
GaD	Gender and Development
GCP	Government Cooperative Programme
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GIS	Geographic Information System
GoT	Government of Turkey
GRMS	General Resource Management System (new ORACLE)
HPAI	Highly pathogenic avian influenza
HQ	FAO Headquarters
HR	Human Resources

IEE	Independent External Evaluation of FAO
IPA	FAO Immediate Plan of Action
JTO	Junior Technical Officers
LOB	FAO Liaison Office with the European Union and Belgium
LTO	Lead Technical Officer
LTU	Lead Technical Unit
MC	Member Country/ies
NC	National Correspondent
NMTPF	National Medium Term Priority Framework
NSHR	Non Staff Human Resources
OCD	FAO Office for Coordination and Decentralization Activities
ODA	Official Development Aid
OED	FAO Office of Evaluation
OIE	World Organisation for Animal Health
OSD	FAO Office of Support to Decentralization (muted from OCD)
OSP	FAO Office of Strategy, Planning and Resources Management
PC	FAO Programme Committee
PIRES	Programme Planning, Implementation Reporting and Evaluation Support System
PPR	Peste des petits ruminants
PSC	Project Servicing Costs
PWB	Programme of Work and Budget
RB	Regular Budget
REU	FAO Regional Office for Europe
RM	Resource Mobilization
RMMS	Resource Mobilization and Management Strategy
RNE	FAO Regional Office for the Near East and North Africa
RO	Regional Office
RP	Regular Programme
SEC	FAO Sub-regional Office for Central Asia
SEU	Sub-regional Office for Central and Eastern Europe
SEU/REU	abbreviation used to indicate work by SEU and REU, prior to the merging of the two offices
SF	Strategic Framework
SRC	Sub-regional Coordinator
SRO	Sub-regional Office
SSC	Shared Service Centre
TAD	Trans-boundary Animal Disease
TCEO	FAO Emergency Operations Service
TCP	Project funded through the FAO Technical Cooperation Programme
TF	Trust Fund
TIKA	Turkish International Cooperation Agency
UNCT	United Nations Country Team
UNECE	United Nations Economic Commission for Europe
UNDAF	United Nations Development Assistance Framework
UNJP	United Nations Joint Programme
UNRC	United Nations Resident Coordinator
UTF	Unilateral Trust Fund
VAT	Value Added Tax
WPW	Working Party on Women and the Family in Rural Development

Executive Summary

Background

ES1. In October 2011, in consideration of the interest raised by the Evaluation of FAO's Regional and Sub-regional Offices for the Near East presented earlier that year, the FAO Programme Committee asked the Office of Evaluation to carry out similar evaluations in all FAO regions over the following two years. Priority regions for 2012 would be Europe and Central Asia and Africa. The evaluations in Latin America and the Caribbean and in Asia and the Pacific would start in 2013. All these exercises were requested to follow a similar methodology, in particular in terms of consultation with FAO membership in the respective regions.

ES2. When the Evaluation of FAO's Regional and Sub-regional Offices for Europe and Central Asia started in early 2012, all parties concerned were fully aware that it would be carried out at a time of important discussions and initial transformational changes in FAO's approach to decentralization, led by the new Director-General. Nevertheless, it was considered that the Evaluation would provide additional and more in-depth evidence of the challenges about decentralization in Europe and Central Asia, as well as identify lessons to be learned that could be brought to bear on the operational implementation of the new FAO decentralization policy.

The Evaluation process

ES3. OED launched the preparatory phase of this Evaluation in January 2012. In April, the purpose and scope of the evaluation were presented and discussed at a side-event of the 28th session of the Regional Conference for Europe in Baku, Azerbaijan. Two additional meetings took place in FAO HQ with FAO members, in September and December 2012, on the occasion of planned meetings of the Executive Committee of the European Commission for Agriculture, and of the European Regional Group.

ES4. The Evaluation team, comprised of the Team Leader and five independent consultants, supported and complemented by three OED staff, carried out the data-gathering phase in the period June-October 2012. The draft Terms of Reference and report were circulated to FAO stakeholders; comments and suggestions received were integrated as appropriate. Altogether, the Evaluation:

- visited twice the Regional Office for Europe and Central Asia in Budapest and the Sub-regional Office for Central Asia in Ankara, met with the Governments in each country and assessed FAO's work at national level in Turkey;
- carried out country visits to Albania, Armenia, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova, Tajikistan;
- met staff at the FAO Liaison Office with the European Union and Belgium in Brussels, in some of the institutions of the European Union, in the governments of Azerbaijan and of the Swiss Confederation, as well as in the Secretariat of the European Forestry Commission in Geneva;
- held extensive interviews with approximately 450 people, including FAO staff, government representatives, resource and other partners, participants of FAO's projects and programmes;
- carried out two survey questionnaires, one for Member Countries and one for FAO staff; and

- conducted a number of desk studies and analysis, and revised a substantial number of relevant documents, including corporate policy and strategy papers, project documents and reports, technical publications.

Purpose and scope

ES5. The purpose of the Evaluation was defined as follows:

i. the progress made by the Organization in implementing corporate decisions to decentralize its functions and roles to the Region; and
ii. the results of FAO's decentralization policies and procedures on corporate delivery to its Members in the Region.

ES6. The Evaluation was also to identify lessons and formulate recommendations tackling key bottlenecks, for improving FAO's performance and impact in the delivery of assistance and support to Members in the Region.

ES7. Like the RNE Evaluation, this Evaluation chose the Independent Evaluation of FAO Decentralization completed in 2004 as 'time zero' for its scope and analysis, and included all FAO policies aimed at strengthening the corporate decentralization process. Given the breadth of changes that occurred in this domain, in particular since 2010, a few key areas were selected for more in-depth analysis, namely: governance, efficiency and effectiveness of geographical coverage and presence at country level; resources available to the Region; priority setting; resource mobilization; delivery as One FAO; and support services.

ES8. The Evaluation also included the country evaluation of FAO's cooperation with Armenia since 2004 and the in-depth assessment of two main technical sectors: Animal Production and Health (APH) and Agricultural Policy (AP).[1] These provided insights about relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, sustainability and impact of FAO's work in the Region, that were brought to bear in the overall analysis.

FAO decentralization policies

ES9. The Evaluation assessed very briefly the corporate approach to decentralization since its establishment until 2005, and to a greater level of detail, policies and decisions since the launching of the Director-General's reform in mid-2005. Major milestones of this period were the Independent External Evaluation of FAO, which adopted to a large extent the conclusions and recommendations of the 2004 decentralization evaluation; and the Immediate Plan of Action that became operational in 2010 and put an end to a decade or so of stagnation in terms of real delegation of authority and empowerment of the Decentralized Offices Network.

ES10. Undoubtedly, the challenge faced by the Organization is daunting: finding the right balance in the tension between global and local needs of 192 Members who are the shareholders of a knowledge organization with normative and operational mandates over so many key technical sectors in a rapidly changing world, was and still is a complicated affair.

[1] This encompassed work at policy and strategy level, Emergency and Rehabilitation as well as technical cooperation for development initiatives, issues related to norms and legislation for accession to the EU markets. The Agricultural policy sector included work on policy and information systems for agriculture, food security and nutrition, agriculture and rural development, agriculture marketing and trade, statistics.

Nevertheless, the evidence available raises doubts about the soundness of the foundations and principles underpinning the whole decentralization process in FAO over the period 1995-2010.

ES11. In 2012, the newly elected Director-General gave priority in his agenda, among other issues, to transforming the substance of the corporate discourse on decentralization. Focus moved from the numbers of people in the countries, or the number of offices, to the delivery and impact of FAO's work in its Member Countries. Objectives look more relevant, premises more realistic, the planned actions coherent and well targeted. However, sustained efforts, focus and close monitoring, will still be required to ensure that the planned changes will actually meet expectations.

Key findings, conclusions and recommendations

ES12. In consideration of the complexity and variety of topics assessed by the Evaluation, and the fact that some topics are discussed in different sections of the report, the key findings, conclusions and recommendations have been brought together by major heading, as was done in the Conclusions and Recommendations, complemented here by some additional evidence and analysis.

ES13. There is no doubt that FAO made efforts to better support the Member Countries in the Europe and Central Asia Region since 2004: i) the establishment of SEC, which increased attention to Member Countries until then not one of the priorities by the Organization; ii) the increase in Programme of Work resources to all DOs in the Region; and iii) the use of the TCP to compensate for limited availability of Voluntary funds in some countries.

ES14. However, the short overall answer to the question on the level of implementation of the decentralization policies, can only be '**work is in progress**'. This should not be surprising, considering that the situation was one of 'moving baseline and moving target'. Also, FAO corporate decisions about decentralization were not designed and thought-through for the specific pattern of presence at country level in Europe and Central Asia. Thus, progress in implementation was by default, partial and hampered by inefficiencies in procedures and mechanisms of delivery. At the same time, there was no evidence of 'enhanced delivery' to the Region: FAO's assistance to the Member Countries in the Region appeared, at the time of the Evaluation, to have similar strengths and weaknesses before and after the wave of decentralization policies in 2010.

ES15. In addition, countries in Europe and Central Asia were and are going through several changes in their economic, social, political and cultural context. This meant that the concept of 'moving target' applied as well to the countries where FAO was to work and to the type of work they required. Changes occurred at both national and sub-regional levels, adding complexity. The Region is characterized, in late 2012, by considerable diversity: some of the Member Countries still face acute problems of food security (Georgia and Tajikistan) and rural poverty (Kyrgyzstan and Moldova), while others have markedly improved their socio-economic conditions over a decade.

ES16. In such a complex environment, the Evaluation's analysis and findings confirm that FAO's work in the Region has broadly focused on the priority sectors and in the countries where its mandate and comparative advantage were most needed and where it could make a

difference. In the selection of its focus countries, FAO was also coherent with most other UN agencies working in the Region.

ES17. The Evaluation came to the conclusion that the Regional Office for Europe and Central Asia and the Sub-regional Office for Central and Eastern Europe (SEU/REU), and the Sub-regional Office for Central Asia (SEC) faced with commitment the complexities of the decentralization process and pushed 'the work' forward to the best of their capacity. Work remains to be done, however, in terms of adjustments at both regional and corporate level, to enable the Organization to meet its mandate in a more effective manner in the Europe and Central Asia Region.

ES18. As stated several times, the process of transformational change that was launched in FAO in early 2012 already bore a few fruits in the Region: these appeared to be the right steps to address the earlier 'blindness'. The intention of the Evaluation in formulating its recommendations below, is to contribute to improve even further, the good work that has already started.

ES19. The Evaluation formulated eight recommendations: two address governance issues; one is about FAO's presence at country level and one specifically on modalities of FAO's presence in countries without a fully-fledged FAO Representative; one tackles the implementation of 'One FAO'; and one is about the use of Russian at FAO. The remaining two recommendations concern issues that may appear of secondary importance: in fact, they address systemic problems that will always undermine an effective and efficient performance of the Organization in the Europe and Central Asia Region, and possibly elsewhere, if they remain unresolved.

FAO governance in Europe and Central Asia

ES20. FAO governance in the Region has a number of particularities tied to history and the increase of its Membership in the 1990s, as well as to the following period of adjustment. It includes:

- a governing body, the FAO Regional Conference for Europe (ERC), which includes all countries in the Europe and Central Asia Region;
- statutory bodies, namely the European Commission for Agriculture (ECA), which also comprises the Working Party for Women as a subsidiary body; five regional technical commissions, and
- the European Regional Group (ERG), which is an informal group of Member Countries, similar to what exists for other regions in FAO and in the UN system in general.

ES21. The IPA assigned a stronger role to FAO Regional Conferences that were empowered to make decisions on priority setting for respective regions and report on these to the Council, through the Programme and Finance Committees. Their expanded competence included: 1) advising and identifying the problems of the region and priority areas of work to be considered in the planning, programme and budget; and 2) reviewing and advising on FAO's performance in the Region in contributing to the achievement of results against relevant performance indicators, including any pertinent evaluation.

ES22. At the same time, the FAO Regional Offices took on a new role in the identification and dialogue with the Regional Conferences on the regional priorities, in the actual planning and implementation of the priority activities in the regions, as well as in monitoring and reporting on FAO's response.

ES23. The questionnaire to FAO Member Countries included questions on the priority setting process. The majority of responding countries (14 out of 20) considered that FAO's Strategic Framework 2010-2019 served as a good basis for the identification of the regional priorities; a slightly smaller majority considered that the regional priorities identified at the 28th ERC were relevant to their countries and that the priority-setting process for the Region through the ERC and ECA had become more inclusive and participatory. Some countries noted that the informal consultations for the identification of the priorities were a useful preparatory mechanism for this Region, however others noted that sub-regional priorities got subsumed by larger regional priorities during these discussions.

ES24. Overall, the Evaluation noted an improvement in the focus and detail of regional priorities established by the FAO Regional Conference for Europe (ERC), although there is still room for further fine-tuning. In this process, due attention will have to be given to the sub-regional dimensions, that differ greatly and should inform the work carried out by FAO. REU and SEC made progress in matching the skill mix in the Decentralized Offices (DOs) to the Regional priorities, but in this case as well, there is room for further adjustments, including by taking advantage of the vacant posts.

ES25. At the country level, despite the participation of several FAO technical staff, the Country Programming Frameworks (CPF) still tended to be lists of projects in the different sectors, with very limited success at developing an inter-disciplinary approach. This was a lost opportunity to prove the worth and added value of working as a 'REU team'. The Evaluation was also concerned that the desirable flexibility of the CPFs might turn into a weakness if priorities identified through the process might change because of political decisions, in countries where changes in governments may occur rather frequently.

ES26. A major question in the new context of delegation of responsibility was how the different bodies could contribute more effectively to the new roles assigned to the ERC in priority setting for the Organization in the Region, and its monitoring. The Evaluation had evidence of an existing broad agreement on the following issues:

- it is important there be a body that can prepare the agenda and liaise with REU and Members in the inter-session period;
- Member Countries in the region that do not have a Permanent Representation in Rome or are not members of the European Regional Group need to be consulted to ensure their needs are properly reflected;
- there is interest in having a technical body in the Region to discuss agricultural issues of interest and relevance to the Region;
- in the exercise of priority setting, all sectors within the mandate of the Organization need to be given sufficient attention.

ES27. The Evaluation identified the following scenario as the most appropriate, and formulated Recommendation 1 to foster its implementation.

A. Given the interest in a dedicated technical body for the Region, the technical role of the European Commission for Agriculture (ECA) should be reinvigorated. Issues

discussed should be selected with attention to the pressing issues of interest to the Region as a whole. In order to best do this, the sessions of the ECA should be held in alternate years to the ERC.

B. The Executive Committee of the ECA, the existing elected body within the Region, should retain its double role of preparing both the ECA and working in close collaboration with the Secretariat in REU to prepare the ERC, in alternate years.

C. Holding the ECA sessions in alternate years to the ERC would have a threefold advantage:
   - Technical issues could be discussed in greater depth and results and recommendations from the ECA discussions could better feed into the formulation of priorities in the Region;
   - The Executive Committee of the ECA could maintain its double role by focusing its attention on the preparation of the ECA and the ERC in alternate years;
   - Considering the foreseeable funding limitations, the ECA in an alternate year would provide an opportunity to hold a back-to-back regional informal consultation. This would both ensure cost savings and improve levels of attendance.

D. To ensure that all sectors within the Organization's competence are given their due attention, a report on the recommendations and actions arising out of the technical bodies in the Region should become a standing item on the ERC's agenda. This would be ensured through the relevant technical officers in the Region, some of whom serve as secretaries to the regional commissions. Given that the Ex-Com is to work more closely with, and receive enhanced technical inputs from, the Secretariat, this should ensure that all sectors and issues are given adequate consideration.

E. The European Regional Group (ERG), when it is able to foresee discussions directly relevant to governance and priorities in the Europe and Central Asia Region, should make an effort to include Member Countries which are not formally party to it but belong to the ERC.

F. REU should play a stronger role in identifying the priorities with Members, at sub-regional and regional level; in the period between the ECA and its corresponding ERC, REU and SEC should hold one informal consultation per sub-region. The results of these would be compiled and integrated into the considerations of the Executive Committee through the Secretariat.

Recommendation 1: To FAO and REU, on the Governance institutions for the Europe and Central Asia region

REU as the Secretariat for both the ERC and ECA should, in collaboration with the Member Countries, finalize the Rules of Procedure for the FAO Regional Conference for Europe to be submitted at its 29th session in 2014, as per the above suggestions;
Independently from the contents of the Rules of Procedures, the following should be implemented:
a) summary reports from the regional technical commissions should become a permanent standing item on the ERC agenda;
b) the ERC Secretariat should play a greater role in identifying the priorities for the Region and its sub-regions.

ES28. Furthermore, the Evaluation identified two additional areas that will require enhanced attention by FAO, including the Membership and Secretariat: these are the European Inland Fisheries and Aquaculture Advisory Commission (EIFAAC) and the Working Party on Women and the Family in Rural Development (WPW).

ES29. After the in-depth re-structuring of EIFAAC, the location of its Secretariat remained an item of discussion, as it was still located in HQ. However, there is little doubt that the technical officer in the Region would be better placed to play the role of Secretary to EIFAAC, both in terms of knowing the needs as well as being able to maintain contact with the relevant ministries and departments at country level. Also, some Member Countries expressed the view, through the Evaluation questionnaire, that EIFAAC needs to better demonstrate its added value and improve its communication strategy for better uptake of its advice by the EU and Member Countries. The Evaluation **suggests** that REU and the Fisheries and Aquaculture Department agree on transferring the EIFAAC Secretariat to REU as soon as possible, for reasons of efficiency and effectiveness of the Secretariat itself.

ES30. The WPW is also part of the Organization's governance for the Region, as one of the ECA's statutory bodies. In the past, the WPW reportedly played an important role in keeping the attention of SEU/REU and of Member Countries on gender in agriculture. However, its relevance and effectiveness in recent years has been criticized by many of its key stakeholders: in the absence of the support of the Membership, a body like the WPW does not have reason to be. Furthermore, the Evaluation itself found very limited evidence of uptake of the WPW's work at country level in the Region. Assigning funds and staff-time to the WPW does not appear to be a cost-effective use of the Organization's resources under the current budgetary restrictions. While the Evaluation is fully aware that it does not have the mandate to make a recommendation to abolish or 'suspend' the WPW, as this type of action falls exclusively in the remit of the Member Countries, in view of the importance of the issue, it formulated Recommendation 2.

Recommendation 2: To REU, SEC and ESW, on advocacy for gender equality in the Governance institutions for the Europe and Central Asia Region

REU, SEC and ESW, based on in-depth analysis of the evidence available and further dialogue with all concerned parties, should prepare a proposal to be submitted to the 2014 ERC on the most cost-effective way forward to ensure that gender and social inclusion perspectives are fully mainstreamed into FAO's work in the Region.
Independently from the contents of the proposal, progress made in mainstreaming gender and social inclusion in the work of the Organization in the Region should become a permanent standing item in the ERC agenda.

ES31. Recommendation 2 is not intended to undermine the importance of mainstreaming gender into FAO's work in Europe and Central Asia. Quite the contrary, the Evaluation has no doubt that the integration of gender equality and social inclusion in FAO's work in the Region is of the utmost importance. However, there is evidence that despite some good results, e.g. mainstreaming gender in some projects and project documents, a stock-taking exercise about gender mainstreaming in the work of FAO in the Region and the development of a methodology that integrates a gender perspective in national statistics, quite a lot of additional efforts will still be required to ensure a satisfactory level of compliance with FAO's new Gender Policy. The recommendations of the Evaluation of FAO's Work and Role on Gender and Development still apply, in particular the urgent need to recruit a senior gender officer with the clear mandate to ensure that all FAO products and projects in the Europe and Central Asia Region fully integrate both gender and social inclusion perspectives.

FAO's presence in Europe and Central Asia

ES32. The report describes in detail the various events and decisions that led to the current locations of both REU, which has moved around several times since its establishment, and SEC: these were mostly decided on the basis of the generous offers of the hosting countries. However, neither office was or is 'in' the sub-regions they serve. This undermines to a certain extent, one of the added values that the decentralization process should have, i.e. staff fully immersed in the social, cultural and linguistic environment in which they work. SEC was never located in an airport hub and as of early 2012, transport logistics were no longer as favourable for REU as they used to be.

ES33. In the Region, it was not possible to identify a 'best pattern' for geographical coverage in terms of location of regional and sub-regional offices of UN bodies, although very few other UN agencies made the same choices as FAO. The Evaluation **suggests** adding a new criterion to its list of parameters for selecting locations of its decentralized offices, that is, proximity to other UN agencies, in consideration of the trend towards the One-UN approach.

ES34. The proposal by REU in 2012 to concentrate its efforts on a limited number of countries, as well as the actual selection of the 'focus countries' and the 'strategic and resource partner countries', were found to be sound and rational. Most of these were also countries of focus for other UN agencies. The Evaluation notes however, in this respect, that the Organization has been investing resources into 'potential resource partner countries', without tangible returns yet, in terms of additional mobilized resources.

ES35. The Evaluation considered that FAO should retain a critical mass of geographically-focused technical expertise in the sectors of highest importance for the countries in the Region that need assistance, and should strive for and encourage inter-disciplinarity and added value across all its modalities of work, projects, normative and knowledge products alike.

ES36. The Evaluation came to the conclusion that in the medium term, needs and requests for support from FAO are likely to change substantially in the SEU/REU countries, and become closer to those of other European countries that mostly relate to FAO through HQ. Thus, the core mandate and focus of work of REU and SEC in the Region in future, will likely be as follows:

- provide technical and policy assistance, manage operations and mobilize resources for SEU/REU countries: Albania, Armenia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Georgia, Kosovo and Moldova (time-span 10 years);
- provide technical and policy assistance, manage operations and mobilize resources for Central Asian countries (time-span 20 years);
- produce and make knowledge available for SEU/REU and Central Asian countries;
- act as coordinating entity for: two fully-fledged FAO Representations in Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan; two non-resident FAO Representatives, assigned respectively to Albania plus Moldova, and Armenia plus Georgia; and a number of Programme and Partnership Development officers; and
- service the ERC and its subsidiary bodies.

ES37. In order to carry out the identified tasks, and in consideration of the current drive towards enhanced focus on efficient and effective delivery at country level, the Evaluation believes there are a number of requirements that should be considered by Member Countries in Europe and Central Asia. These are:

i. improved access of REU staff to collaboration with other colleagues in HQ working in the Region and with other parts of the Organization that will become increasingly important for the SEU/REU Members;
ii. more efficient travel to the SEU/REU countries where the focus of work will be during the next decade;
iii. more efficient travel to Central Asian countries serviced by SEC;
iv. improved communication and collaboration between HQ-based, REU-based and SEC-based staff, either working in the same countries or with relevant knowledge at the sub-regional level;
v. reduce, insofar as possible, administration, operations and office management costs; and
vi. facilitate REU's function of servicing the ERC and its subsidiary bodies in easy reach of the ERG.

ES38. A number of options exist to tackle the issues above. The Evaluation understands that considerations for locations of Regional and Sub-regional Offices are not strictly technical and thus refrained from formulating any suggestions. Nevertheless, efficiency and effectiveness are partly a function of the geographical location of such offices: the decision to examine opportunities in this respect rests with the Member Countries of the Organization.

ES39. The observations above also raise a core question for FAO, including both Secretariat and Member Countries: the extent to which locations of Decentralized Offices are permanent once established, or can be flexible and adjusted following new circumstances of work in any given sub-region or region. This is closely linked to how the Organization should best serve countries that do not need FAO's support through projects at national level, but through normative and knowledge products, possibly tailored to the needs of a specific sub-region or region. In the view of the Evaluation, these are issues on which Members and Secretariat should focus soon, as the context for FAO's work at country level is changing very rapidly in Europe and Central Asia and elsewhere.

ES40. The Evaluation also assessed the role of the FAO Liaison Office with the European Union and Belgium (LOB) in the overall network of Decentralized Offices in the Region. The role played by the EU institutions in the Region, directly and through FAO, warrants enhanced attention and efforts by REU to develop more solid partnerships with the EC and other EU bodies in Brussels. In this context, the Evaluation **invites** FAO to take into account the suggestions detailed in the report, in its immediate and future decisions about LOB and the corporate relations with the EU Institutions.

ES41. A closely related issue was the approval by the ERC and Council in 2012 of the Secretariat's proposal to create posts for Programme and Partnership Development Officers in Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan and Turkey as well as Partnership Development posts in all Regional Offices. In REU, such a post has the potential to serve both REU and LOB, through closer collaboration between the two Offices to achieve the common goal of higher visibility with the EU, enhanced dialogue at policy level, and leveraging resources for the Region. Similarly, the post in Turkey should be given responsibility for supporting SEC in its Resource Mobilization efforts. At country level, the Evaluation considers that officers of

adequate seniority should be appointed, to enable them to carry out their mandate at the adequate level of decision makers. These proposals are included in Recommendation 3 below.

ES42. At country level, the Evaluation understands that the basic purpose of decentralization was to anchor the work of FAO as closely as possible to the country level, where the responsibility and authority within the Organization must lie for most aspects of its work with individual countries (subsidiarity). These tasks are normally carried out by fully-fledged FAO Representations in other regions, and many programme and administrative policies and procedures require the presence of a FAO Representative at the country level. The Evaluation therefore supports the appointment of fully-fledged FAORs in Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan, thereby relieving the over-burdened Sub-Regional Coordinator of a part of his workload. The appointment for Kyrgyzstan was completed in a rapid and efficient manner; the rapid designation of the appointee for Tajikistan, with suitable competences and FAO experience, will be of the utmost importance.

ES43. Other countries in the Region require similar further support from FAO and have been 'neglected' so far: Albania and Moldova stand out in this context due to the size and importance of their respective agricultural and rural development sectors: in both countries, FAO's mandate has a particular significance in the national efforts towards harmonized, inclusive and sustainable development. Furthermore, the two countries have embarked on the One-UN approach; the UN is committed to support them in focusing at the meso- and micro-level of interventions, by enabling the implementation of macro-level policies that are being promoted by the European Union. In these countries, FAO should also decide whether to fully integrate its programme of work into the One-UN Programme, or develop its own CPF. The Evaluation suggested the second option.

ES44. On the basis of these observations, the Evaluation came to the conclusion that FAO should have a stronger and more continuous presence in Albania and in the Republic of Moldova. This should be ensured through one of the following options, both under the close supervision of a senior officer in REU:

i. a national staff with a full-time contract with FAO as AFAORep, possibly located in the UNRC Office, with the authority to represent FAO within the UN, make decisions or facilitate rapid decision-making and coordinate FAO's contribution to the One UN Programme; or
ii. an international staff member whose cost is shared with IFAD, located in the UNRC Office, with the authority to represent FAO within the UN and the Government, and responsible for programme coordination and resource mobilization.

ES45. Evidence available showed that the multiple-accreditation of FAO Representatives can be an effective mechanism for ensuring visibility for the Organization and adequate management of FAO's work at country level, as long as no more than two countries are covered through the mechanism by the same FAO Representative, who should spend at least six working weeks per year in each country. This could be achieved by designating two non-resident FAO Representatives, one for Albania and Moldova and one for Armenia and Georgia, posted in REU, who could also carry out additional duties as REU senior officers. This will require additional resources of approximately the value of half a TCP per country per biennium: the Evaluation is of the opinion that its proposed set-up will be much more cost-effective.

ES46. The National Correspondent Scheme has proved not to be an efficient or effective mechanism for FAO's presence in any country. If the Organization or the host country cannot commit sufficient resources to the establishment of an adequate presence of the Organization, as a minimum through a senior national or international FAO staff member sitting in the UNRC's office, FAO should refrain from engaging in implementation of national projects in that country. Other mechanisms can be identified, as suggested in the report, to facilitate the participation of any given country in FAO's normative events and in regional, interregional and global projects.

ES47. The Evaluation decided to consolidate all its recommendations on presence at country level in Recommendation 3 below. Costs of its implementation could be partly absorbed by the resources allocated to the Decentralized Offices Network in the Region, and partly by Member Countries' direct contributions. The Evaluation suggests rapid implementation of all recommended actions.

Recommendation 3: To FAO, on its presence at country level in Europe and Central Asia

The Evaluation recommends the following:
a) a non-resident FAO Representative be appointed with multiple-accreditation to Armenia and Georgia; the Assistant FAO Representatives at country level should be delegated enough authority to manage the whole programme, represent FAO within the UN, make decisions or facilitate rapid decision-making;
b) a non-resident FAO Representative be appointed with multiple-accreditation to Albania and the Republic of Moldova, following one of the modalities suggested above;
c) in the Region, the National Correspondent Scheme should be discontinued and FAO should not engage in operational activities at country level without, as a minimum, an AFAORep within a multiple-accredited FAO Representation or a senior officer embedded in the UNRC Office;
d) The foreseen Programme and Partnership Development posts at country level can be effective if staffed at an appropriate level of seniority (minimum P4);
e) The newly created post in REU for Partnership Development officer should work in close coordination with LOB, to support the development of a stronger partnership between REU and the EU institutions for the Europe and Central Asia Region.

ES48. In several countries, FAO's presence is regulated only through an exchange of letters. Although these are legally binding, they do not give the Organisation a juridical presence or they do not allow the Organization and its staff to benefit from immunities and privileges; this could become a real problem any time for FAO staff and has immediate consequences for the efficiency of the work in the Region. The Evaluation is aware that FAO is already working to tackle this issue, however it decided to formulate Recommendation 4 on this issue to underline the urgency of a process that will also require Member Countries' willingness to be completed within a reasonable time-span.

Recommendation 4: To LEG, OSD, REU and SEC, on Host Country Agreements

The Evaluation recommends that the status of FAO accreditation in all countries in Europe and Central Asia where the Organization carries out field operations, be reviewed to ensure that it can benefit from the relevant immunities and privileges. In so doing, FAO should take into account the experience of other UN agencies in each specific case and should not initiate activities in a country unless the standard basic agreement or equivalent has been signed with the Government.

FAO Resources for Europe and Central Asia

ES49. The analysis of the financial resources from FAO to the Europe and Central Asia Region in the period under evaluation showed the following:

- the small share of the Region in the Programme of Work in 2004-05, was compensated to some extent over time; overall, the Region has benefitted from a greater increase in RP resources than other regions in the following biennia;
- the establishment of SEC had a strong impact on the size of the field programme for Azerbaijan, the Central Asian countries and Turkey, with a five-fold increase in resources; the most likely factor was that through SEC, the sub-Region became more visible for FAO Secretariat and for resources partners interested in working through FAO in the Region;
- as SEU was already located in Budapest, the transfer of REU to Budapest did not affect significantly the visibility of FAO in the Region in a delivery perspective; in the 'SEU/REU' countries, there was an increase in the total funds available for development interventions, mostly through FAO TCPs; the field programme also became focused on fewer countries. The main factors affecting the size of the field programme were the funding of emergency interventions and the access of a number of countries to the EU and their changing needs in terms of support from FAO;
- emergency, inter-regional and global projects were a significant part of the field programme portfolio, with a large predominance of interventions in the area of Animal Production and Health.

ES50. The Evaluation also assessed how the field programme was managed:

- the role played by SEU/REU and SEC in the management of the field programme was mostly of an operational nature;
- the technical contribution by SEU/REU and SEC to the field programme was limited by the number and profile of technical staff in all Decentralized Offices and by the nature of interventions, many of which were inter-regional and global;
- in terms of field programme management, problems may occur at all levels; the location of an LTO in a DO or in HQ did not seem to affect overall project efficiency; other factors play a greater role in ensuring efficient and effective delivery of the field programme, including the presence of a country office.

ES51. Since 2007, the increase in financial resources corresponded to a growth in the numbers of Human Resources, staff and non-staff, to populate the newly established SEC, the new country offices and strengthen REU in Budapest. The enhanced visibility of the work of the Organization in the Region since 2007 was the result of a 'virtuous circle': more offices and more staff, more work through the Regular Programme, more Voluntary funded initiatives identified and funded, and so on.

ES52. The work of the Organization in the Region has been largely carried out by Non Staff Human Resources (NSHR), in all fields of activity. The Evaluation found extensive evidence of problems attached to the characteristics of contracts issued to this category of staff, described in detail in the report. A major consequence of these was that staff recruited by FAO often moved on to positions in other UN agencies in view of better conditions offered, after they "had learnt the ropes of the job" with FAO. This was a major waste of time and resources for the Organization; it also undermined the efficiency of delivery, considering

that new NSHR often had to learn the job from scratch and would not be as efficient as more experienced staff.

ES53. Adequate measures should be taken to invest in the work-satisfaction of this work-force as well, as a large part of the corporate image and quality of its work in the Region rests on their shoulders. Recommendation 5 below addresses this matter, that should be considered with urgency. Costs associated with the implementation of this Recommendation should mostly amount to staff-time; the Evaluation considers that the process should be undertaken with urgency.

Recommendation 5: To CSH/OHR, REU, SEC and SSC, on Manual Section 375 and Non Staff Human Resources contractual conditions

CSH, REU, SEC and SSC should undertake a comprehensive analysis of the adequacy of the system of NSHR contractual arrangements in general and as applied in the country offices of the region, analyzing conditions and procedures and improving the quality of information and communication. This approach should contribute to an overall review of the NPP modality, including its coverage by MS 375.

Delegation of authority

ES54. Since 2010, REU, SEC and the Country Offices in the region have received increased delegation of authority in planning and programming, financial resource use, and on project identification, formulation and management. On a number of areas, the DOs have adequate authority to carry out their mandate.

ES55. The three main systems for support functions in decentralized offices, i.e. ORACLE, FAS and ATLAS, never really interfaced: this generated difficulties, duplication of work and waste of time in financial monitoring, use of resources, discharge of BH functions, reconciliations and financial control. Thanks to the commitment and ingenuity of staff, products and services were delivered.

ES56. The Evaluation believes that the introduction of GRMS can help in analyzing and rationalizing the structure and the human resources component assigned to the support function with the expectation of better quality and economies of scale. Furthermore, the new environment should be used by management as a tool to review the whole body of support service rules and procedures and streamline the administration function. Still, a number of complementary actions will be required to ensure that GRMS can operate at its full potential and that additional artificial bottle-necks are not created, as has been the case so far in REU/SEU supported countries, by abiding to the 'centralized is better' and 'ex-ante control' culture still prevailing in the Organization.

ES57. Information about Delegation of Authority in the Manual for Management of Country Offices in COIN was found to be useful and clear. This should be integrated into a 'delegation of authority package' for FAO staff in the Europe and Central Asia Region, including terms of reference, roles and responsibilities, how to access various types of support, etc. and be regularly updated to ensure accuracy of information. FAO HQ had not carried out, as of June 2012, the updating of post descriptions for existing posts at all levels in the Europe and Central Asia region. This appeared to be all the more urgent in view of the

impending deployment of GRMS: the system, to be fully effective, will require an accurate review and harmonization of the present levels of delegation for accessing and operating it.

ES58. The Evaluation wishes to raise attention to a few key findings related to enhanced efficiency of decentralization and delegation of authority. The first relates to the internal set-up of the Regional and Sub-regional Offices: the positive initiative in REU to merge some functions between the Field Programme Unit and the Administration Unit should be pursued with urgency to improve the efficiency of that Office, and to allow the drawing-up of a model for broader application at corporate level.

ES59. On the other hand, taking the example of SEC, REU should carry out an accurate analysis of the actual information and capacity development needs of its staff in the Region, in particular at country level. The two Offices together should develop appropriate and easily up-dated packages for all staff involved in field programme operations and administration and office and staff management.

ES60. On delegation of authority, the particularity of FAO's presence in the Region, i.e. the absence of fully-fledged FAO Representations, was an obstacle in providing efficient and effective support services to the countries. In this context, the attitude and approach of REU and SEC to delegation and empowerment of the country offices, made a difference in the efficiency and effectiveness of the work at country level. If in both cases some additional administrative and operational burden and duplication were unavoidable, the systematic approach of SEC staff towards the country offices was aimed at developing both individual and organizational capacities to ensure that as many duties as possible could be discharged closer to where the action was. The newly created FAO Representations in Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan will benefit from the work carried out so far by SEC in this sense. This did not happen in REU, with consequences on the efficiency and effectiveness of delivery.

ES61. Corollary issues were identified: i) the reimbursement through AOS of costs incurred in the management of the field programme, was not as close as possible to where the activities actually take place; and ii) the absence of imprest accounts in those countries where FAO had operations at national level, also partly due to the absence of Host Country Agreements. The analysis of the financial costs and additional work-time caused by the absence of imprest accounts at country level showed that this was an additional and useless cost for operations in the Region and a cause for inefficiency in delivery.

ES62. In conclusion, the situation of FAO's presence in Europe and Central Asia calls for a revision of the corporate policy about delegation of authority to nationally-recruited staff, under the appropriate level of supervision and control from the respective multiple-accredited FAO Representative. Recommendation 3 above, about multi-accredited FAO Representatives for two countries only, partly contributes to tackling these problems, by enabling a closer engagement and presence the country level.

ES63. In addition, Recommendation 6 below focuses specifically on the delegation of authority at country level: all of it should be tackled as a matter of urgency, in consideration of the imminent deployment of GRMS and of the changes that will be required for its full implementation at country level. There seems to be scope for a broader application of these recommendations to other regions with similar patterns of presence, e.g. the Pacific and the Caribbean.

Recommendation 6: To CSH/OHR, LEG, OSD, REU and SEC, on delegation of authority

FAO should revise, in the Europe and Central Asia Region, the delegation of authority to countries without a fully fledged FAO Representation. This should include:

a) revise terms of reference, roles and responsibilities that allow national staff to operate GRMS to its full potential, under the adequate supervision of the multiple-accredited FAO Representative;
b) enable staff at country level through capacity development packages that will allow them to operate GRMS safely;
c) ensure that AOS reimbursements accrue to the closest organizational level to where the field programme is actually implemented;
d) open imprest accounts, to permit offices to perform financial/operational functions. FAO staff, recruited at the appropriate level, whether national or international, should be granted full authority for managing these instruments. The present system, implying the use of cash, should be discontinued, except for proven emergencies.

Delivery of products, services and Core functions

ES64. In the Animal Production and Health sector, the FAO programme broadly met the needs and priorities of Member Countries in the region. High quality technical advice had an important role in defining regional and national animal disease strategy, identified as a priority by the Regional Conference for Europe. While the programme has undoubtedly been very relevant, and capacities were developed, the efficiency of delivery has varied.

ES65. Strong links are also needed between the field and HQ, to ensure that the FAO Corporate strategy is applied. A strong animal health capacity is required at HQ as trans-boundary disease control requires both regional and global perspectives. Also, a 'wider than one officer' skill mix is needed at the regional and sub-regional level, as only a pool of experts can give high-quality technical services and maintain FAO's trust and status. The most cost-effective location of such a pool, for this region, appears to be FAO HQ.

ES66. FAO's work in the area encompassed under the heading of Agricultural Policy responded to the needs and priorities identified by the Regional Conference for Europe, its quality was appreciated and well recognized, and capacities were developed. While good work was done in the field of statistics, capacities in REU and SEC in data collection and analysis should be further strengthened. As food security is still a major challenge for some countries, and "strengthening food security and nutrition" is one of the priorities for work in the region, the capacity in REU and SEC in food security policy should also be strengthened.

ES67. Further, although FAO had a significant role in improving the capacity to formulate agricultural policy in the region, and in introducing innovative and more participatory approaches, there is room to improve the consultations with NGOs and CSOs, in those countries where this is feasible.

ES68. Considering some of the regional needs, such as provision of statistics and information, policy advice, and work in the area of animal health and production, the Evaluation sees an opportunity for FAO to place greater emphasis on regional initiatives. This would help foster an enabling environment at both regional and sub-regional level from which the Member Countries could benefit. Within this regional focus, an additional sector that should receive increased attention by FAO and its resource partners, is water resources

management: while highly relevant, has not received adequate consideration, considering the magnitude of the issue.

ES69. Overall, the FAO field programme, including both TCPs and Voluntary funded initiatives, showed very similar strengths and weaknesses as identified in other evaluations: usually with a good relevance, but undermined by poor design and average efficiency of implementation. Effects were thus very varied; in general, the absence of exit-strategies and the limited efforts devoted to partnership development, also affected the sustainability of impacts.

ES70. Capacity Development was a constant positive feature of FAO's projects, mostly at the individual level. There were however also a number of initiatives that tackled the enabling environment dimension, by fostering exchange and communication at the sub-regional and regional level. The UNJPs were good opportunities for complementarity between agencies, to fill in the frequent low attention in FAO's projects to poverty alleviation and social inclusion.

ES71. The Evaluation asked both the Member Countries and FAO staff to rate the relevance of FAO's work in terms of its core functions for the Region. Both groups considered 'assembly and provision of information, knowledge and statistics' and 'development of international instruments, norms and standards' among the most relevant. Member Countries additionally indicated 'advocacy and communication on Food Security and agriculture-related matters' of high relevance, while FAO Staff considered these to be 'policy and strategy options and advice and technical support to promote technology transfer and build capacity.'

ES72. Thus, functions a), b), c) and d)[2] will continue to be important to meet the needs and expectations of the Member Countries, and the Organization should keep working steadily on them. However, also taking into account what discussed above about strengths and weaknesses of FAO"s delivery in the Region, particular attention and efforts will be required to enhance performance on the following core functions. The Evaluation also **formulated a few suggestions** on the way ahead.

i. Core function e), Technical support to promote technology transfer and build capacity: this could be improved through better design, implementation and monitoring of the field projects, as also underlined in Section 10.1; the new Project Cycle Guide represents a major step forward, hat will require adequate capacity development of staff and accountability mechanisms in place to ensure rapid adoption;
ii. Core function f) Advocacy and communication: the challenge on this function will be how to improve performance in countries without FAO Representative; in multiple-accredited Representations, as well as in the fully-fledged Representation, the Representatives will need to develop adequate strategies to improve the visibility of the Organization and foster the corporate messages at the proper policy-making level;
iii. Core function g) Inter-disciplinarity and innovation: although technical staff in REU and SEC were open and interested, virtually nothing was visible yet in this sense;

[2] Core functions: a) Monitoring and assessment of long-term and medium-term trends and perspectives; b) Assembly and provision of information, knowledge and statistics; c) Development of international instruments, norms and standards; d) Policy and strategy options and advice.

better understanding of what these mean and how they can be achieved in the Region, as well as incentive mechanisms through PEMS, may be the path forward;

iv. Core function h) Partnerships and alliances: a recurrent weakness of FAO, in this Region it has a particular relevance in consideration of the limited presence at country level; a regional or sub-regional strategy may be required, to ensure that key potential partners are contacted at the adequate level, with whom to collaborate by sharing long-term vision and commitment.

ES73. FAO's normative products have a satisfactory level of use and satisfaction, although in some areas it will be worth assessing actual needs for more publications. Making more of them available in Russian should be a priority in the Region. At the same time, FAO should enhance the opportunity to tap into the technical skills and competences available in the Region, despite their possible limited knowledge of English. Recommendation 7 addresses this issue. Its implementation, if accepted, will require additional resources, possibly from Voluntary funds; a reasonable time-span for visible results should be late 2015, to be captured in the Follow-up Report to the Management response to this evaluation.

Recommendation 7: To FAO and REU, on the use of the Russian language

In order to enhance the quality of its technical work and the diffusion of its normative products FAO should:
a) in recruitment, give priority to the best technical competence in countries, essentially in Central Asia, where Russian rather than English is the FAO working language, and invest in translation costs for reports and administration forms. Fluency in Russian should be considered an advantage in selecting international staff to work in these countries;
b) invest in translation of publications and other normative products into Russian.

One FAO

ES74. The concept of One-FAO has always been part of the corporate discourse on decentralization, and possibly best embodies the tension between a knowledge organization with a global and local mandate. It has become even more important since 2010, with the change in the reporting lines between Technical Departments in HQ and the technical staff in the Decentralized Offices. The Evaluation devoted particular attention to it, in its interviews and questionnaires. It comes as last in this summary, but is certainly among the first in terms of relevance to the overall thrust of this Evaluation.

ES75. As of 2012, and despite on-going improvements, the skill mix of technical expertise located in the Region was still not adequate to meet the needs of the Members in the Region, excluding the areas of intervention that should, by definition, be handled at the inter-regional and global level. As discussed above, competences were missing in: gender equality and social inclusion; food security policy; irrigation; climate change and natural resources management; animal genetic resources and some aspects of animal health. On the other hand, the DOs in the Region, all together, had an adequate skill mix for administration, operations and support services; the recognized need at the regional level for competence in Resource Mobilization was 'on-going work' in late 2012, as discussed above.

ES76. The gaps in technical expertise in the region were partly compensated through NSHR, who are by definition more flexible, and largely through expertise based or managed from HQ. On average, 80% of the field programme resources were technically backstopped

from HQ: a significant part of these focused on global and inter-regional initiatives, but not only. This required important efforts in terms of integration and coordination among the different levels in the Organization, to ensure coherence and enable synergies.

ES77. These findings strengthen the observations above, on the requirements for enhanced delivery in the Region (see FAO's presence in Europe and Central Asia). The size and nature of the expected work by FAO in Europe and Central Asia, and its foreseeable evolution in the medium term, will not be manageable by any likely increase of technical expertise deployed to the Decentralized Offices. Relevant and effective support to the Member Countries in the Region will only be feasible with an important involvement of HQ staff, in very close collaboration with both REU and SEC.

ES78. Thus, the capacity of the Organization to deliver as One-FAO takes on particular importance in this Region. The survey questionnaire to FAO staff showed a satisfactory degree of integration and communication across the different levels of the Organization working in the Region. Some divisions were doing better than others, through different mechanisms: these imply some additional cost but overall, they seemed to be quite effective. The Plant Production and Protection Division Platform should be taken as example for information sharing.

ES79. In a number of cases, technical officers in DOs had managed to include their former supervisors in HQ in their PEMS agreements, either as multi-raters or as co-supervisor; this appeared as a very effective manner of by-passing the absence of a primary reporting line and of other formal mechanisms, such as the Functional Technical Networks, that do not seem to be known in the Region. However, in the absence of formalized systems, the decision to engage into information sharing and coordination with colleagues was left to individuals: this usually was not effective, as personality and other issues prevailed.

ES80. Recommendation 8 below encompasses all issues noted. The Evaluation is aware that its implementation will require additional resources, some of which will be recurrent costs, with the exclusion of items b) and c). Part of the funds could come from the Multidisciplinary fund. It is likely that similar issues will arise also in other regions, as was the case for Near East to some extent. The Organization will need to make it one of its priorities at all levels, to ensure it maintains its comparative advantage and coherence of message at all levels, within enhanced decentralization. The time-frame for achieving initial results from the implementation of the Recommendation should be mid- to late 2014.

Recommendation 8: To FAO, on enhancing the One-FAO approach

FAO, REU and SEC should invest in developing stronger ties, communication and coordination among Technical Departments and staff in the DOs. Ways to achieve this should include:
a) Annual meetings should be convened for FAO staff, similar to the Land and Water Days in the Land and Water Division, to maintain and strengthen technical links between the officers posted in the decentralized offices and in HQ;
b) Shared supervisors between HQ and DO in the PEMS agreement of all technical officers in the DOs;
c) Shared supervisors between HQ and DO in the PEMS agreements of technical officers in HQ working extensively in the Region;
d) Establish a communication and information sharing platform in all Technical Departments on the model of AGP;
e) Establish a minimum of one-month induction period in HQ for newly recruited technical officers in any DO in the Region.

1 Introduction

1.1 Evaluation background

1. At its 106th session in April 2011, the FAO Programme Committee (PC) received the report of the Evaluation of FAO's Regional and Sub-regional Offices for the Near East (RNE Evaluation) and its Management Response. This evaluation had been approved by the Programme Committee in October 2008 as the first of its kind to examine FAO's decentralized structures in one region. The Programme Committee appreciated the quality of the RNE evaluation report, found it to be important and recommended that similar evaluations should take place in all other regions. It also appreciated the extensive stakeholder consultation process that was integral to the evaluation methodology and urged that the recommendations of the evaluation be considered in preparation of the Programme of Work and Budget and in the FAO Vision for Decentralization.

2. The rolling work plan of evaluations for the period 2012-14, presented by the FAO Office of Evaluation (OED) to the Programme Committee at its October 2011 session, duly took account of the PC's own recommendations six months before and included one evaluation of Regional and Sub-regional Offices per year. The PC placed the highest priority on these evaluations and directed that they should be accelerated, with Europe and Central Asia and Africa to begin in 2012, and those for Latin America and the Caribbean and Asia and the Pacific in 2013. Hence, OED's work plan for 2012 envisaged that the evaluation in Europe and Central Asia would be completed in time for presentation at the Programme Committee in March 2013 and the one in Africa, for October 2013. The evaluations of the other two regions will be initiated in 2013.

3. When this Evaluation started, all parties concerned were fully aware that it would be carried out at a time of important discussions and initial transformational changes in FAO's approach to decentralization, led by the new Director-General (DG). Further developments, both within and outside FAO and of relevance to it and to the UN system as a whole, were also taking place in the Region at the time of preparing and carrying out this exercise. Nevertheless, it was considered that the Evaluation would provide additional and more in-depth evidence of the challenges about decentralization in Europe and Central Asia, as well as identify lessons to be learned that could be brought to bear on the operational implementation of the new FAO decentralization policy.

4. The Evaluation assessed the relations between FAO and its Member Countries (MC) in Europe and Central Asia only within the boundaries of the Region itself. This meant that the role of resource partners of a large number of its Members Countries in the Region, was only assessed when their Official Development Aid (ODA) was directed to other MCs in Europe and Central Asia.

5. OED launched the Evaluation of FAO's Regional and Sub-regional Offices for Europe and Central Asia in January 2012. The preparatory phase was completed in June 2012, when the Terms of Reference were finalized after integrating comments and

suggestions from FAO stakeholders.[3] The Evaluation Team, led by an external Team Leader and comprising of external independent consultants,[4] carried out the data gathering phase in the period June-October 2012. This is the final report of the Evaluation, which together with the Management Response, is due for presentation to the Programme Committee at its 113th session in March 2013.

1.2 Structure of the report

6. This report brings together the evidence and analysis made by the Evaluation throughout its work. To facilitate reading, most chapters contain their own conclusions and make reference to the recommendations, synthesised and consolidated in the last chapter.

7. The repeated requests by FAO Secretariat and Governing Bodies to keep the number of recommendations low has been fully taken into consideration, in so far as the Evaluation considered feasible. This means that several suggestions on the 'what' and 'how' FAO could better fulfil its purpose of enhancing impacts at country level, were integrated in the text. This will require attentive reading of the report as well as a more open 'learning attitude' by FAO, in relation to the Evaluation process.

8. The contents of the report are as follows:

- The Executive Summary, at the request of the Programme Committee, is more detailed than in previous evaluations, as a test to decide whether in future, only this part of an evaluation report can be sufficient for translation in all languages of the Organization;
- Chapter 2 describes the Purpose and the Methodology of the Evaluation, including constraints and limitations;
- Chapter 3 describes, as succinctly as possible, the major milestones in the FAO decentralization policies since 2004; some background from the previous phases was also included, as well as the analysis of the Theory of Change that underpinned the whole process;
- Chapter 4 analyses briefly the socio-economic characteristics of the Members of FAO in Europe and Central Asia and the governance mechanism of the Organization in the Region, with focus on current efforts in adjusting to the new delegation of responsibility. This chapter also analyses in depth the Working Party on Women and the Family in Rural Development and, to a lesser degree of detail, the FAO Liaison Office with the European Union and Belgium;
- Chapter 5 describes the current structure of FAO Decentralized Offices in Europe and Central Asia, their history, their efficiency and effectiveness;
- Chapter 6 analyses the resources made available to the Region by and through FAO, including the Programme of Work since 2004, the funds for the Field Programme, both TCPs and Voluntary funded initiatives; and the Human Resources, both staff and non-staff, that FAO deployed to support the Region with products and services;
- Chapter 7 analyses some selected policies on decentralization, how they were implemented and their effects; issues tackled were: delegation of authority; priority

[3] See Annex 1, Terms of Reference of the Evaluation of FAO's Regional and Sub-regional Offices for Europe and Central Asia.

[4] See Annex 2, Profile of Evaluation team members.

setting and planning at the regional level; Resource Mobilization; One-FAO in Europe and Central Asia; Human Resources Management; Staff Capacity Development; and FAO support services in Europe and Central Asia;

- Chapter 8 contains the analysis of the Animal Production and Health sector in Europe and Central Asia, including the assessment of policies, projects and normative products;
- Chapter 9 contains the analysis of the Agriculture Policy sector in Europe and Central Asia, including the assessment of policies, projects and normative products; the Evaluation's definition of the sector also encompassed policy support and projects for agriculture and rural development, agriculture marketing and trade, land tenure and food security policy;
- Chapter 10 synthesises the Evaluation findings on different aspects of FAO's delivery in the Region: the field programme, including the TCP; normative products, corporate core functions, gender equality and social inclusion, Capacity Development and participation in the One-UN model; section 10.3 on core functions also highlights aspects on which FAO should concentrate its efforts in the Region;
- Chapter 11, Conclusions and Recommendations: given the complexity of the topics discussed, this focuses in more detail on those issues of broader relevance that underpin the recommendations put forward by the Evaluation. Recommendations were numbered according to their sequence in this Chapter.

9. The annexes are part and parcel of the report and have been referenced throughout the text and footnotes. They include:

- Annex 1. Evaluation Terms of Reference
- Annex 2. Profile of evaluation team members
- Annex 3. Evaluation tools
- Annex 4. List of institutions and stakeholders met during the evaluation process
- Annex 5. Inventory of the field programme in Europe and Central Asia
- Annex 6. Inventory of FAO normative products for Europe and Central Asia
- Annex 7. Analysis of the survey questionnaires to Member Countries
- Annex 8. Analysis of the survey questionnaires to FAO staff
- Annex 9. Analysis of FAO missions to Europe and Central Asia
- Annex 10. Key projects reports
- Annex 11. Some milestones in FAO decentralization process
- Annex 12. Profiles of FAO Members in Europe and Central Asia
- Annex 13. REU and SEC staff training opportunities

10. The report also made extensive use of footnotes and quotes from official documents. It did not include a specific list of documents consulted, as this would be too long considering that the Evaluation analysed all FAO official documents that touched on decentralization policies since 2004, and some earlier ones as well. It also assessed project documents and reports across several technical sectors and Audit reports by FAO Office of the Inspector General, to identify systemic issues affecting delivery and impact at country level.

2 Purpose and methodology

2.1 Evaluation purpose and scope

11. In consideration of the Programme Committee's request for a harmonized approach among all evaluations assessing the Regional and Sub-regional Offices of FAO, the purpose of this Evaluation was closely inspired by the aim identified for the RNE Evaluation.[5]

12. However, in consideration of the progress made since the RNE Evaluation in strengthening the FAO Decentralized Offices Network, the purpose was articulated so as to better capture the recent changes. Thus, the Terms of Reference of the Evaluation of FAO's Regional and Sub-regional Offices for Europe and Central Asia established that it should aim at providing FAO Management and Membership with an independent evaluative assessment of:

i. the progress made by the Organization in implementing corporate decisions to decentralize its functions and roles to the Region; and
ii. the results of FAO's decentralization policies and procedures on corporate delivery to its Members in the Region.

13. Further, the Evaluation was to identify lessons and formulate recommendations tackling key bottlenecks, for improving FAO's performance and impact in the delivery of assistance and support to Members in the Region.

14. Like the RNE Evaluation, this Evaluation chose the Independent Evaluation of FAO Decentralization completed in 2004 as 'time zero' for its scope and analysis, and included all FAO policies aimed at strengthening the corporate decentralization process. Given the breadth of changes that occurred in this domain, in particular since 2010, a few key areas were selected for more in-depth analysis, namely: governance, efficiency and effectiveness of geographical coverage and presence at country level; resources available to the Region; priority setting; resource mobilization; delivery as One FAO; and support services.

15. The Evaluation also included the country evaluation of FAO's cooperation with Armenia since 2004 and the in-depth assessment of two main technical sectors, namely Animal Production and Health (APH) and Agricultural Policy (AP).[6] These provided insights about relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, sustainability and impact of FAO's work in the Region, that were brought to bear in the overall analysis.

16. The Evaluation assessed the Regional Office for Europe and Central Asia (REU) which had been recently merged with the Sub-regional Office for Central and Eastern Europe

[5] The aim of the RNE evaluation was: 'to assess the performance of the Regional Office for the Near East (RNE) and the Sub-regional Office for North Africa (SNE) in servicing Near East and North African countries'.

[6] This encompassed work at policy and strategy level, Emergency and Rehabilitation as well as technical cooperation for development initiatives, issues related to norms and legislation for accession to the EU markets. The Agricultural policy sector included work on policy and information systems for agriculture, food security and nutrition, agriculture and rural development, agriculture marketing and trade, statistics.

(SEU),[7] the Sub-regional Office for Central Asia (SEC), the multiple- accredited FAO Representations and the National Correspondent scheme. The Liaison Office with the European Union and Belgium (LOB) was also included in the analysis, because of its location in the Region and its potential role in support of the Organization's work in Europe and Central Asia. However, this Evaluation did not have the mandate to assess the Shared Service Centre (SSC) located in Budapest, given its global mandate and the fact that its location out of Headquarters (HQ) is not a measure of decentralization but of 'de-location'. Nor was the Liaison Office with the United Nations in Geneva included, as its institutional mandate does not have a geographical focus.

2.2 Methodology

17. The Terms of Reference established the methodology of the Evaluation, which was based on the evaluation framework. The evaluation used a wide range of quantitative and qualitative tools and methods, described further below and contained in Annex 3 of this report. An evaluation matrix guided the data gathering and analytical process, by relating the evaluation questions to the evaluation criteria and themes set out in the ToR.

18. The Evaluation adopted a participatory approach and consulted extensively with FAO stakeholders. The views of FAO staff on their own work, institutional set-up, achievements and challenges were canvassed extensively throughout the whole evaluation process; draft ToR and report were circulated and staff's comments and suggestions were taken into account as appropriate. Equally, the views of FAO Members, clients and users of FAO products and services, and partners of the Organization were sought extensively through interviews, country visits, questionnaire surveys, phone interviews and meetings.

19. Overall, the Evaluation met and had the opportunity to hear the views of approximately 450 people.[8] Evaluation stakeholders belonged to three groups:

- FAO Membership, comprising of FAO's Governing Bodies, in particular the Programme Committee which requested the Evaluation and to which the report will be submitted and the Executive Committee of the European Commission for Agriculture; Governments of Member Countries in the Region, either directly or through their Permanent Representatives to FAO, and the European Regional Group (ERG);
- FAO Senior Management in the Region and in HQ; FAO staff working in the Region from the different locations, including the Regional Office for Europe and Central Asia (REU), the former Sub-regional Office for Eastern and Southern Europe (SEU), the Sub-regional Office for Central Asia (SEC), the Liaison Office with the European Union and Belgium (LOB) and country offices, in technical, administrative and operational roles; and FAO technical commissions; and
- FAO external stakeholders, including participants directly and indirectly benefiting from FAO's support and assistance, partner organizations such as UN agencies and bodies, International Financial Institutions (IFIs), ODA bilateral agencies, NGOs and civil society.

[7] The report will use the abbreviation SEU/REU when referring to work done by SEU and REU prior to January 2012.

[8] See Annex 4, List of institutions and stakeholders met during the Evaluation process.

20. The internationally accepted evaluation criteria and the UNEG Norms and Standards[9] informed the evaluation process; independence and rigour of analysis were maintained throughout it. Also, particular attention was given to cross-cutting issues: gender mainstreaming, social inclusion, capacity development.

21. Through a search in the corporate Field Programme Management Information System (FPMIS), the Evaluation compiled an inventory of all national, regional, interregional and global projects that included at least one of the countries in the Region. The Evaluation covered projects operational from 1 January 2004 until June 2012.[10] The portfolio was analyzed in terms of thematic areas as well as the responsibilities in operations and technical backstopping.

22. A search of the REU Web site and the FAO Document Repository resulted in a list of 316 publications produced in and for the Region. The Evaluation assessed a sample of these, in particular in the two technical areas of focus.[11] In addition, large numbers of policy documents, project documents, progress reports, governing body reports and technical papers by FAO and other organizations were reviewed.

23. The Evaluation visited a sample of countries, to directly canvass the opinion and perceptions of national stakeholders on FAO's structure and performance. In-country meetings with national and international institutions were held, as appropriate; direct interaction with end-users of FAO projects were also part of the work at country level, at both the institutional and community level. Where possible, at community level measures were taken to ensure sufficient interaction with women, as well as with other groups of actual and potential participants.

24. The main criteria for the selection of countries to be visited were the different modalities of FAO presence at country level, the representativeness of each sub-Region and the size and variety of activities funded through Regular Budget and Voluntary resources. The countries visited were Albania, Kyrgyzstan, Republic of Moldova, Tajikistan and Turkey.[12] REU in Budapest, as well as SEC in Ankara were each visited twice, first during the preparatory phase and the second time, with the full Evaluation team.

25. The Evaluation of FAO's work in Armenia comprised, as per the established OED methodology, a preparatory mission by a small team, followed by a fully-fledged mission to assess the field programme through national, regional and global initiatives; the CPF and its alignment with FAO Strategic Framework and the national UNDAF; the use made by the country of FAO Global Public Goods, and the functioning of the FAO structure in the country. Separate Terms of Reference were prepared and circulated for comments and suggestions, and a self-standing report is to be prepared. The country evaluation provided in-depth insights on FAO's performance in the Region, that were used, insofar as appropriate, to validate the findings and conclusions of the broader Evaluation.

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9 United Nations Evaluation Group.

10 See Annex 5. Projects were included in the list that had an NTE of 1 January 2004 onward, with the cut off being projects with an EOD up to June 2012. This list did not include Telefood projects, which are funded through private contributions, have a ceiling of USD 10,000 and aim at improving the livelihoods of poor women and men agricultural producers. OED does not include these projects in its evaluations any longer.

11 See Annex 6, List of FAO normative products for Europe and Central Asia.

12 The Evaluation planned to visit the Russian Federation. However, logistical constraints prevented this from happening.

26. Consultation with FAO Membership took also place beyond the country visits. A side-event was held at the 28th ERC in Baku, Azerbaijan, in which all Members had the opportunity to be briefed and express their views on the Evaluation. On the same occasion, the Evaluation also interacted with the Government of Azerbaijan, and during its second visit to Budapest, met Representatives of the Government of Hungary. In addition, the Evaluation visited the European Union in Brussels and met Representatives of the Government of Switzerland. Furthermore, Members' views on FAO's performance in the Region were sought through different means and tools throughout the Evaluation process, such as: interviews during the country visits, presentations of findings at meetings of the ECA and the ERG, and a focus group with select members of the ERG on governance issues. Further consultations with Members may be foreseen after the presentation and debate at the Programme Committee in March 2013.

27. In addition to the methods described above, the Evaluation used a range of quantitative and qualitative tools, to tackle the evaluation issues and questions. These included:

- analysis of corporate policies, strategies, Circulars, DG bulletins, decisions made by FAO Governing Bodies, reviews and any other relevant document aimed at strengthening FAO's network, processes and procedures for enhancing delivery and impact at country level;
- the adequacy of FAO staff resources and skill mix for the Region were examined with a view to examining 'critical mass';
- group and individual semi-structured interviews, harmonized through check lists;
- questionnaire survey to the Member Countries of the Region, to reach out to and canvass the opinion of a larger number of FAO Members than possible through country visits;[13]
- questionnaire survey to FAO Staff working in the Region, to expand on a number of issues related to use of time and FAO's decentralization policy;[14]
- desk-studies and analysis of: project portfolio; project cycle management of a sample of representative initiatives; administrative and operations transactions and records;
- mapping and analysis of FAO missions to the countries of the Region from all locations;[15]
- benchmarking of FAO's geographical coverage and governance mechanisms with other specialized UN agencies in the Region.

28. The Evaluation assessed a sample of projects in each country visited, selected according to the following criteria: innovativeness, catalytic role, budget size, time frame and thematic coverage. More recent projects were given priority to facilitate data collection. Findings and conclusions from these in-depth project reviews informed the evidence base of the Evaluation; when enough evidence was available, separate reports were prepared.[16]

29. Triangulation of information gathered from stakeholders and through different tools underpinned the analysis and validation of evidence gathered. In addition, the team members

[13] See Annex 7, Analysis of the survey questionnaire to Member Countries.
[14] See Annex 8, Analysis of the survey questionnaire to FAO staff.
[15] See Annex 9, Analysis of FAO missions to Europe and Central Asia.
[16] See Annex 10, Assessment of key projects.

applied their own technical judgment in the assessment of, for example, the quality of normative, project and process outputs. Independence and rigour of analysis informed the whole evaluation process.

30. OED ensured the management of the Evaluation, including the identification and recruitment of the Evaluation team. Each team member received individual terms of reference, indicating areas of technical expertise and specific evaluation issues, as well as background material.[17] Extensive communication among team members took place throughout the whole process.

31. The final draft report was circulated to FAO stakeholders for comments and suggestions, which were integrated in this report, as considered appropriate by the Evaluation team. A matrix consolidating all comments and the Evaluation's uptake was also circulated.

2.3 Constraints and limitations

32. Because of current FAO restructuring and decentralization, the Evaluation analyzed a 'moving baseline' and provides recommendations to a 'moving target'. This was a major foreseeable challenge and has been taken into account as far as possible: careful attention was paid to the upcoming proposals, so as to capture them in the analysis and assess in so far as possible, their consequences on the corporate delivery to the Region. Also, whenever time of implementation had not been enough to assess the quality of certain innovations, e.g. the introduction of the Resource Mobilization Strategy or the deployment of the Global Resource Management System (GRMS), the Evaluation expressed its views on what appeared to be necessary as complementary measures.

33. One of the challenges of the exercise was the requirement to measure corporate performance in the Region in the absence of related standards, time-use records and baselines. Unfortunately, these limitations did not allow assessing efficiency of delivery in the different locations. Thus, other elements were used, e.g. travel time to countries. Further, the breadth of internal innovations in terms of delegation of authority, roles and responsibilities brought about in the last biennium made it more difficult to map out each stream of reform and assess its specific effects.

[17] This included: Background information on FAO and its decentralization process; notes on the evaluation function in FAO; UNEG Norms and Standards, Code of Conduct, and evaluation methodology; the inventory of FAO normative products, as well as electronic versions of each, if available; the inventory of projects implemented by FAO since 2004; project documents and other available documentation on FPMIS for all the projects in the sample countries and all key projects; evaluation reports for projects and relevant themes and programs already evaluated and a synthesis of their findings and conclusions.

3 FAO decentralization policies in the period 2005-2012

3.1 Background

34. This chapter will describe the corporate policies and decisions related to the decentralization process since the 2004 Independent Evaluation of FAO's Decentralization. Section 5.2 below highlights the specific changes for the Europe and Central Asia Region, brought about through these policies and decisions. It was nevertheless considered useful to provide some key information on decentralization until 2005.

35. Decentralization, intended as a network of offices outside Headquarters, is as old as FAO. Annex 11 of this report synthesises the main steps of the process of developing the network since the foundation of the Organization. Here, it is important to recall that until the mid-1990s, decentralization in FAO basically meant a network of country offices which implemented the field programme at national level, under close technical and operational management by HQ.

36. In 1994, the newly elected Director-General launched a new approach to decentralization. Over the following five years: five Sub-regional and two additional Liaison Offices were established; technical staff, policy officers, project operations and Budget Holder responsibility for national, regional and sub-regional projects, were all moved from HQ to the regional and sub-regional offices. From 2000 onwards, operations and Budget Holder responsibility for national projects were transferred to the FAO Representations, with the Regional and Sub-regional Offices retaining the responsibility for operations of regional and sub-regional projects, as well as administration and operations of international consultants for national projects. In 2001, the first FAO Representative/Out-posted Technical Officer (FAORep/OTO) was appointed. Also in the early 2000s, the National Correspondent (NC) scheme was proposed to all FAO Member Countries that had no form of FAO country presence at the time.

37. To facilitate the decentralization process, the Office for Coordination and Decentralization Activities (OCD) was established in 1994, with a Director at D2 level, to be the direct line of reporting for all Decentralized Offices and the 'clearing-house' between them and the Director-General. Thus, OCD played a key role in managing the network of FAO Representations and Representatives, in terms of budget, staffing, guidance on roles and responsibilities of HQ versus Decentralized Offices.

38. In September 2004, the Independent Evaluation of FAO's Decentralization, henceforth called the 2004 decentralization evaluation, was discussed by the Programme and Finance Committees, with a Preliminary Management Response to its wide-ranging recommendations.[18] Senior Management presented a more articulate response to both the Programme and Finance Committees in May 2005.[19] The PC still found this 'lacking vision', 'not bold enough', and too focused on structures and geographical location rather than shift in

[18] Independent Evaluation of FAO's decentralization, PC 92/6a)-FC 108/18; Preliminary Senior Management Response, PC 92/6a)-FC 108/18 Sup.1.

[19] Follow-up to the Independent Evaluation of FAO's Decentralization, PC 93/7 FC 109/26.

organizational culture. It also stressed the need to find a balance between decentralization and FAO's mandate to be a normative and knowledge organization.[20]

39. Soon after the May 2005 sessions of the Governing Bodies, the Director-General initiated a new reform process that integrated a number of the 2004 decentralization evaluation recommendations, in particular those on geographical location of sub-regional offices.

3.2 The FAO decentralization process since 2005

40. The 2005 Director-General's reform proposals were presented to the 33rd session of the Conference in November 2005. The document 'FAO Reform: a strategic vision for the 21st century',[21] described in detail the rationale, aims and contents of what the DG intended to achieve. The reform was further shaped through several other documents presented to and commented upon in successive sessions of the Conference and other Governing Bodies between late 2005 and mid-2007, including the three versions of the Programme of Work and Budget (PWB) 2006-07. One of the documents for the Conference also introduced the concept of subsidiarity, which implies that '*activities must be located at the level (HQs, regional, sub-regional and country) at which they can be most effectively implemented within the resources available*.'[22] Almost in parallel, starting in mid-2005 with the discussion of its terms of reference, ran the process of the Independent External Evaluation of FAO (IEE, see below).

41. The main focus of the Director-General's proposals on decentralization was 'raising the capacity of the Organization to deliver services at country and sub-regional level'. More specifically:

- At country level, actions would mainly comprise providing enhanced technical and administrative support to FAORs, staff training, establishment of additional national professional officer posts and greater delegation of authority to FAORs; no changes were foreseen in their line of reporting, which remained direct to OCD and the Director General; FAO Representatives were expected to devote 30% of their time to technical work in their area of specialization in the countries in their sub-regions;
- The Sub-regional Offices would be delegated the authority and resources to provide policy and technical assistance to the countries they covered, upon request from the FAOReps, without having to refer to the Regional Office or to Headquarters; and they would lead FAO's response to the needs of the sub-regions, including those of the Regional Economic International Organizations (REIOs);
- The Regional Offices would focus on regional activities, including liaison with regional bodies, formulating regional policies and strategies, servicing regional commissions and coordinating or implementing regional programmes; ROs would also continue to make arrangements for Regional Conferences.

[20] Report of the Ninety-third Session of the Programme Committee, May 2005, CL 128/11.
[21] C 2005/INF/19.
[22] C 2005/3/Sup.1, August 2005.

42. One of the documents presented to the Council at its 131st session in November 2006 included the criteria that had been taken into account in the selection of the locations for new Sub-regional Offices. The major elements included were the following:[23]

- existing FAO presence;
- airline connections, and average cost of transport to the other countries in the sub-region;
- logistical facilities (e.g. telecommunication facilities and internet connections);
- provision by the host government of adequate infrastructure;
- host government contributions towards operating expenses, both staff and non-staff resources.

43. Further, a proposal was put forward to introduce flexibility in the number of country offices FAO would have; it also stated that the Organization would take on full budgetary responsibility for country offices in the 114 Members classified as Least Developed Countries (LDCs), Low Income Food-deficit Countries (LIFDCs), Landlocked Developing Countries (LLDCs) or Small Island Developing States (SIDS). Cost-sharing mechanisms would be sought in any other country.

44. The Governing Bodies eventually endorsed many of the reform proposals, while stressing that these were to be coherent and mutually supportive with the expected results of the Independent External Evaluation of FAO (IEE). Most visible actions that followed were: i) the opening of new Sub-regional offices, among which SEC; ii) the relocation to Budapest of REU; iii) selection of a number of countries as pilot for developing the National Medium Term Priority Framework, which later evolved into the Country Programming Framework; iv) de-location of staff from HQ and ROs to SROs, with no increase in total human resources; v) increase of DO's budget share from 33% in 2004/05 to 37% in 2006/07. However, there were no major steps taken to enhance the delegation of authority to the Decentralized Offices.

45. The IEE, whose report was discussed at the 34th sessions of the FAO Conference in November 2007, was a major milestone in the life of FAO. Through it, the whole technical work, structure, governance and management systems of the Organization were assessed by teams of independent experts. Its findings drew to a large extent from and resonated with several issues raised by the 2004 decentralization evaluation, which had not been tackled yet through the 2005 reform proposal. Overall, the IEE addressed the issue of decentralization as a cross-cutting element of "FAO's way of functioning". It concluded that *the mandates, functions and authorities of the systems require fundamental re-examination and adjustment* and regarding the field structure, it proposed a series of recommendations, synthesised in Box 1 below.

[23] Implementation of Conference Decisions and Proposals from the Director-General, CL 131/18, November 2006.

Box 1. IEE on decentralization

- The IEE strongly endorses the principle of decentralization, but also recommends that no further net transfers of resources from Headquarters to the field should occur until resource adequacy has been assured (Rec 6.19).
- The IEE recommends restoration of the balance in resources and roles between Headquarters and the field (Recommendation 6.19). In the field, the IEE envisions a clear, substantive role for Regional Offices, focused on policy and analysis (Recommendation 6.20). Amongst other measures, Regional Offices would assume first line responsibility and accountability for the development of strategies and programmes across their Region as well as strategies for funding them (Recommendation 6.20). Regional Offices will have greater autonomy, decision-making powers and human and financial resources to fulfil this enlarged role, including responsibility for Regional and Country Office staff, and they would be accountable to top management for their performance.
- In line with the recent reforms approved by the Governing Bodies, Sub-regional Offices would become the technical support arm of FAO in the respective regions (Recommendation 6.21) and report to their respective Regional Offices.
- Entirely new foundations need to be established for the presence, structure, functions and staffing of Country Offices, including cost-efficiency norms and benchmarks (Recommendation 6.22). Criteria are offered to determine whether or not to establish a Country Office (Recommendation 6.22) and when offices should be modified or closed.

Source: IEE report, elaborated by OED

46. Given the breadth of the IEE, a number of its many other recommendations had an impact on decentralization, by addressing issues such as the role of Regional Conferences, staff rotation, the process of appointment of FAO Representatives, delegation of authority in the Organization, Technical Cooperation and the TCP instrument, among others.

47. The November 2007 Conference passed a resolution on the Follow-up to the IEE, which included the establishment of a time-bound Committee of the Council (CoC-IEE) with the main task of preparing a Plan of Action for the implementation of the evaluation recommendations. A complex and participatory process ensued, involving extensively FAO Membership and Secretariat. In November 2008, the 35th (Special) session of the FAO Conference adopted the "Immediate Plan of Action for FAO Renewal" (IPA), which, in the words of the CoC-IEE, aimed '*to chart the future course of the Organization, a course of FAO renewal which had the ownership of the membership and also of the management and staff of the Organization.*'[24]

48. The IPA, which also set the basis for the new FAO Strategic Framework 2010-19, included several Action Matrixes on diverse topics, each containing a list of actions, time-bound and budgeted. Many of these actions, similarly to the IEE recommendations, were not focused on decentralized structures but had consequences on the mechanisms and functioning of FAO's decentralization.[25] Close monitoring was carried out by the IPA Management Unit and regular reports were presented to and discussed by the Governing Bodies. Although most actions were completed, the implementation of the IPA is planned to continue throughout 2013, with a number of actions 'parked',[26] others mainstreamed, others on-going.

[24] Report of the Conference Committee on Follow-up to the Independent External Evaluation of FAO, Immediate Plan of Action, C 2008/4.

[25] The list of IPA actions relevant to decentralization, initially compiled by the RNE evaluation, is included in Annex 11.

[26] The term 'parked' was suggested by the Members of the Programme and Finance Committee at the Joint meeting in November 2012.

49. Many of the IPA's actions within several of the Action Matrixes, were expected to have a direct or indirect impact on decentralization. Those that had the potential to deliver more tangible results and greater impact in enhancing delivery at country level are briefly summarised below.[27]

A. The **Regional Conferences**, becoming fully part of the governance structure feeding into Council and Conference, were to play an important role in governance for: policy coherence for development in their Region; discussion of global priorities as they relate to the Region; providing inputs to the Council and Conference on FAO priorities and in discussing such issues as intra-regional trade and investment.

B. The responsibility for the **Technical Cooperation Programme** (TCP) was to be assigned to Regional Representatives and at country level to FAO Representatives.

C. The **Administrative and Management systems** were to move from *ex ante* to *ex post* controls, to follow the principles of subsidiarity of action, delegation of authority and procedural simplification, and to develop and deploy an Oracle version adapted to the needs of FAO Representations.

D. **Publishing** in all languages of the Organization was considered important, to improve the availability of its publications to users, including different language groups; good translations should be delivered at the lowest possible cost.

E. Review of FAO's **human resources policies and practices**, including: an incentive-based rotation policy, delegation of authority for recruitment and management, revision of competencies for Regional Representatives, Sub-regional Coordinators, FAOReps; and improvement in the selection process of FAOReps.

F. **Functioning as One Organization**: The IPA foresaw that Decentralized Offices and Headquarters would work as one effectively integrated Organization, through decentralization of authority, networking and full involvement of the Decentralized Offices in FAO's overall decision making. Similarly Headquarters would be organized in fewer units with a much more integrated approach to programmes and clearer lines of responsibility. This was proposed as a culture change underlying many of other actions and changes.

G. **Decentralized Offices and Country Presence**: the IPA held it to be important for FAO to have a strong decentralized presence to contribute in a results based framework to the achievements of the Organization's Strategic Objectives, to provide services flexibly to Members and create an effective flow of information as a knowledge organization. Decentralization was to be accompanied by delegation of responsibility with accountability. In common with the whole of FAO, Decentralized Offices and staff were to be subject to results-based performance assessment.

H. **Effective decentralization** would depend upon an appropriate balance between administrative costs and programme expenditures and between Headquarters and field offices and strategically selected locations; adequate budget resources to ensure the continuous staffing of country offices were to be made available. Offices were to be specifically tailored to the needs of individual countries, including through National Medium Term Priority Frameworks, and regions with rationalised coverage based on clear criteria for resource allocation and developmental impact at country level. Improvement and rationalisation of decentralized services was to proceed in a framework which, without impairing Headquarters capabilities, would assure adequate resources for the capacities of both the Decentralized Offices and Headquarters.

[27] Report of the CoC-IEE to the FAO Conference on the Immediate Plan of Action for FAO renewal, C2009/7, November 2009, partly synthesised by the Evaluation.

50. A number of decisions were immediately made, of direct relevance to decentralization. One was the transformation of OCD into the Office of Support to Decentralization (OSD), its transfer under the authority of the Deputy Director-General for Operations and the delegation of a number of its responsibilities vis-à-vis the FAO Representations, to the respective Regional Offices. In 2011, OSD issued a Circular on Roles and Responsibilities: this defined the principles for HQ and DO responsibilities, reporting lines and functional relationships across all levels, and mechanisms for obtaining guidance.[28]

51. A second major decision concerned the establishment of new primary reporting lines for all Professionals and General Service staff in the Decentralized Offices, as well as new functional relationships for technical matters, as follows:[29]

- All Professional and General Service staff in the FAO Country Offices were to report to their immediate head of office, be this the FAO Representative (FAORep), the Sub-Regional Coordinator (SRC) or the Assistant Director-General/Regional Representative (ADG/RR);
- FAO Representatives, appointed by the Director-General, were to report to the ADG/RR and as necessary, to the Director-General through the Deputy Director-General/Operations (DDGO) on representational, policy and political matters;
- FAOReps were also to report to the Head of the Multi-Disciplinary Team in the Sub-regional Office, on their work as technical officers;
- Sub-Regional Coordinators (SRC) were to report to the ADG/RR;
- ADG/RRs were to report to the Deputy Director-General (Operations), under the authority of the Director-General;
- Regional and sub-regional technical officers were to receive functional guidance from the respective Technical Division on their work as technical officers, while their primary reporting line changed to their immediate head of office.[30]

52. In early 2012, FAO's newly appointed Director-General launched a new wave of transformational changes that had decentralization as one of its pillars. All FAO Regional Conferences, on the occasion of the sessions held in the first months of 2012, were presented with a proposal that identified a number of areas for improvement at the corporate level. This included: improved planning and priority setting through decisions made by the Conferences themselves and Country Programming Frameworks (CPFs); a more flexible Decentralized Office Network with strong country office leadership, mostly through increased delegation of authority and flexibility in the use of resources; and an integrated model for programme delivery from all sources of funding, emergency and development included.

53. The recommendations stemming from the Regional Conferences were consolidated, with other issues, into a set of proposals for the Governing Bodies in May-June 2012.[31] The new thrust for decentralization aimed '*to improve the Organization's performance through the production and dissemination of knowledge, and more effective translation of norms and standards into countries' policies, strategies and programmes*' by:

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[28] A question on the Circular was included in the Evaluation questionnaire to FAO staff; see Annex 8.

[29] DG Bulletin 2010/4.

[30] Exception to this rule was made for internationally recruited information technology staff in SROs and ROs who were out posted from the Chief Information Officer (CIO) Division, and for the out-posted Regional Auditors, who would still report to the Inspector-General.

[31] 110th session of the Programme Committee, 144th session of the Finance Committee and 144th session of the Council.

a. improving the performance results and impact of all of FAO's work at country level;
b. reducing the fragmentation between HQ and the DOs, normative and field work, as well as the emergency-rehabilitation-development continuum; and
c. promoting partnerships with a wide range of stakeholders at all levels.[32]

54. Key elements of the proposal were:

- the attention paid to 'preserving the integrity and critical mass of technical capacity at HQ';
- a change in the emphasis of the decentralization process, beyond the simple reallocation of resources between HQ and DOs, to enhance measureable impacts at country-level and linking the corporate global expertise, its knowledge products and the needs and priorities of its Members; and
- the combination of policy vision and strategy with the elements required for their implementation.

55. This 'transformational change', along with others proposed for the whole Organization, may represent a major watershed in the way decentralization is implemented in FAO. The fact that it was proposed and initiated in addition to and above a complex and rapid succession of earlier reform proposals, implementation of recommendations and sets of actions, will not facilitate telling apart what caused what. The extent to which this complex web of changes aimed at improving FAO's delivery to its Members, has actually been implemented in the Europe and Central Asia Region, and with what results, was the thrust of this Evaluation and is discussed throughout this report.

3.3 The theory of change of FAO decentralization policy

56. From the mid-1990s onward, the official discourse on decentralization has been 'to bring FAO closer to its Member Countries'. The key objectives were 'strengthening of the Organization as a centre of excellence' and the 'improvement of the quality of FAO's work and efficiency'. In the words of the newly elected Director-General in 1994, the Organization should pursue decentralization *"of technical expertise but not of administrative and financial responsibilities, which should be maintained at central level to secure cost effectiveness and better control in the use of funds entrusted to the custody of the Organization.*" [33] A strong emphasis was given to FAO to remain one organization. Corollary actions and measures were planned, including '*the streamlining and redefinition of functional responsibilities; a workload analysis and distribution, leading to revised post descriptions, where necessary; revised procedures and improved lines of communication; logistic arrangements; human resources management, based on staff involvement and consultation and the human factor and the development of an overall systems strategy over a time-span of several years'*.[34]

57. The policies, actions and changes that followed were partly coherent with the first of these initial statements, while the others lagged behind to a large extent. The first and most

[32] Structure and Functioning of the Decentralized Offices Network, CL 144/5, May 2012.
[33] General Information Note on the Director-General's policy orientations for the work of the Organization, FAO Director-General, 21 January 1994.
[34] Director-General's Review of Programmes, Structures and Policies of the Organization, CL 106/2, May-June 1994.

visible change was the transfer of technical and operations staff out of HQ, initially to Regional Offices and then to Sub-regional Offices. This slimmed down the technical departments and divisions in HQ. Logic wanted that African staff would move to Accra or Harare; that Asian staff would go to Bangkok, and so on. This meant that HQ lost 'to the regions' to a large extent the geographical diversity of views and experiences that contributed to its comparative advantage, in knowledge terms, over bilateral agencies. At the same time, the stress put on the division of normative and operational roles for technical staff, and the parallel 'turf-war' between HQ and DOs for project Budget Holder responsibility, linked to resources and autonomy of decision, severely undermined the concept of One FAO.

58. The development of IT technologies that could support the deployment of corporate support systems was not so advanced outside OECD countries, which meant that until the mid-2000s, actual communication with the Decentralized Office Network was often quite difficult. Further, only limited investments were made in DOs to enhance it, even where this was possible, until the late 2000s.

59. Also, the transfer of staff was carried out initially without delegation of authority and transfer of resources for operations and administration of the field programme. It took several years before some significant share of the Project Support Costs required to run projects and programmes were also transferred to the DOs.[35] This meant that for several years, the DOs simply did not have the means to operate and follow-up on the field programme, and develop it further.

60. Some re-shuffling of units and departments took place in HQ, that affected cross-cutting issues and themes that were not, in the corporate culture, considered core business of FAO: gender equality, agricultural extension and rural education, rural development, rural institutions. This was not followed – or preceded – by any effort to change the focus, corporate culture and *modus operandi* of the Organization. Eventually, budget restrictions caused cuts in posts that were more effective in reforming the skill mix of the Organization than any official reform.

61. The Priority Areas for Inter-Disciplinary Action (PAIAs) were established for several topics; with one or two exceptions, they were never provided financial resources that would allow them to expand and become real opportunities for the Organization to 'think and act' in an inter-departmental manner. Some donors made praiseworthy efforts in this sense and with interesting results,[36] but lessons from these were not learnt and up-scaled at the corporate level.

62. One of the areas where the discrepancy between the goals of decentralization and its implementation emerged very early on, was the domain of support services: procedures and systems did not keep pace with the decisions made at the political and strategic level. There were three main causes for this: i) the 'ex-ante' and HQ-centred control culture prevailing in FAO, identified in the 2004 decentralization evaluation and stressed again by the IEE; ii) the lack of a clear vision of field reality and its functional requirements; and iii) the fragmented approach to the support function in HQ was transferred to the Decentralized Office Network.

[35] See section 7.7.2 below.

[36] See Evaluation of the FAO-Norway Programme Cooperation Agreement (PCA) 2005-2007, August 2008, PBEE.

63. The end result was that the FAO country offices had no access to corporate systems and FAORs were unable to carry out some key tasks, for example issuing committing documents to match contracts, issuing letters of agreement, recruiting international consultants, etc. This situation existed despite the fact that since the early 2000s, after becoming the Budget Holders for national projects, FAO Representatives were managing funds in the order of millions of dollars. Field staff had to engage in the development of shadow budgets, shadow commitments, manual recording of budget and payment authorizations and in the production of all sorts of spreadsheets. This generated creative monitoring systems, often of excellent quality, but none were official and, in any case, all were quite time-consuming.

64. The Evaluation acknowledges that the challenge was daunting if not impossible: finding the right balance in the tension between global and local needs of 192 Members who are the shareholders of a knowledge organization with normative and operational mandates over so many key technical sectors in a rapidly changing world, was clearly a complicated affair. Nevertheless, the evidence available raises doubts about the soundness of the foundations and principles underpinning the whole decentralization process in FAO over the period 1995-2010.

65. In 2012, the newly elected Director-General started his mandate with the agenda of changing the substance of the corporate discourse on decentralization. Focus moved from the numbers of people in the countries, or the number of offices, to the delivery and impact of FAO's work in its Member Countries. Decentralization was also expected to decrease fragmentation across all levels of the Organization and to lead to 'greater and more creative use of partnerships'. The objectives looked more relevant, the premises more realistic, the planned actions coherent and well targeted.

66. The process initiated in early 2012 of formulation of a new FAO Strategic Framework and planned to become operational in 2014, also aims at enhancing impacts at country level. This Evaluation could not assess how the two process, decentralization and Strategic Framework, will eventually enhance each other. At the time of writing this report, the new theory of change appeared more robust. Sustained efforts, focus and close monitoring, will still be required to ensure that the planned changes will actually meet expectations.

4 FAO Membership and governance in Europe and Central Asia

67. This chapter describes the profile of FAO's Member Countries in Europe and Central Asia, and analyses the Organization's governance system in the Region. This has a number of particularities tied to the history of the Region and the increase of its Membership in the 1990s, as well as the following period of adjustment. It includes:

- a governing body, the FAO Regional Conference for Europe (ERC), which includes all countries in the Europe and Central Asia Region;
- statutory bodies, namely the European Commission for Agriculture (ECA), which also comprises the Working Party for Women as a subsidiary body; five regional technical commissions,[37] and
- the European Regional Group (ERG), which is an informal group of Member Countries, similar to what exists for other regions in FAO and in the UN system in general.

68. The main focus here is on the governance challenges in the Region. Some brief analysis was also done of the regional technical commissions, in particular the EuFMD. Other technical commissions were recently assessed by the FAO evaluations in forestry and fisheries and aquaculture, both completed in 2012.[38] Among the statutory bodies, specific attention was given to the ECA and its Working Party on Women and the Family in Rural Development (WPW).

69. Section 4.3 also briefly assesses the FAO Liaison Office with the European Union and Belgium: the structure and role of this office was included in the Evaluation for its location and potential linkage to the other Decentralized Offices in the Region.

4.1 Profile of FAO Membership in Europe and Central Asia

70. The Terms of Reference for this Evaluation had proposed a classification of FAO Members in Europe and Central Asia in four groups, based on their broad expectations for FAO's assistance.[39] However, REU presented to the 28th Regional Conference for Europe in April 2012, a proposal in which it identified 12 'focus countries' where FAO should concentrate its activities, as well as four countries of particular relevance as strategic and resource partners. 'Focus countries' were divided into three groups: A – highest priority countries; B – selected EU Eastern Partnership Countries; and C – selected EU potential accession countries. For ease of reference, the Evaluation decided to use the REU classification in this report whenever it analyses country needs for FAO's products and services.[40] In this section, the REU focus countries and the other 13 countries are referred to as *REU 25*.

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[37] These are: European Forestry Commission (EFC); European Inland Fisheries and Aquaculture Advisory Commission (EIFAAC); European Commission for the Control of Foot-and-Mouth Disease (EuFMD); General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM); and the Central Asian and Caucasus Regional Fisheries and Aquaculture Commission (CACFish).

[38] Evaluation of FAO's role and work in Forestry, OED, 2012; Evaluation of FAO's support to the implementation of the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries, OED, 2012.

[39] See Annex 1, Terms of Reference.

[40] FAO's presence and activities in the focus countries as of June 2012 is discussed in Chapter 5; basic data about them can be found in Annex 12.

71. The Evaluation compared the socio-economic profiles of the *REU 25* to other regions, identified according to the World Bank classification of developing regions: East Asia and Pacific, Latin America and Caribbean, Middle East and North Africa, South Asia and Sub-Saharan Africa.[41] The WB uses this classification for low-income and middle-income economies only, sometimes referred to as developing economies.[42]

72. The Evaluation was aware of the limitations of such a comparison and of its potential distortions. A case in point are 'focus countries B' composed of Armenia, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine, where the population of Ukraine is more than four times the total population of the other three countries combined (45,4 million people versus 10,9 million). However, the comparison aims at providing a general understanding of the Region in comparison to other regions where FAO has on-going activities, rather than having statistical significance. An additional limitation was the lack of data for some countries within selected regions. In the *REU 25* the most problematic case was represented by Kosovo[43] (Focus country C), for which there were no available data in FAOSTAT. Also in other regions, data were outdated or not available a significant number of countries.

73. The rural population ranged from 20% in Latin America and Caribbean to almost 70% in South Asia. Rural population in the *REU 25* was about 35.4%. However, there was a significant diversity within the grouping itself, where countries belonging to 'A' were characterized by a predominantly rural population with a share of 65.6%.

74. The share of economically active population in agriculture in the *REU 25* was the lowest among selected regions, with 13.8%. The closest region was Latin America and Caribbean (LAC), with 14.5% of employment in agriculture. The highest share was reported in Sub-Saharan Africa, where the population working in the primary sector was about 58%. In 'focus countries A', which had the highest share of economically active population in agriculture (21.7%) within the *REU 25*, figures were significantly lower if compared to other regions.

75. When comparing Gross Domestic Product (GDP) per capita among the regions, findings were as follows: GDP was above USD 9,000 in the *REU 25* and in Latin America and Caribbean; between USD 3,000 and USD 5,000 in East Asia and Pacific and in the Middle East and North Africa,[44] and below USD 2,000 in South Asia and Sub-Saharan Africa. However, the situation within the *REU 25* was rather diverse: 'focus countries A' have a GDP per capita below USD 2,000, while in 'focus countries B and C', the values varied between USD 3,000 and USD 5,000.

76. In the *REU 25*, agriculture accounted for about 5% of GDP. Excluding Latin America and the Caribbean, where it accounted for about 6%, in all other regions agriculture accounted for more than 10% of GDP.

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[41] See Annex 12 for the composition of each region.

[42] The use of the term is convenient; it is not intended to imply that all economies in the group are experiencing similar development or that other economies have reached a preferred or final stage of development.

[43] Kosovo is not yet a Member Country of FAO, but FAO and other United Nations agencies have a mandate to work in the country on the basis of United Nations Security Council resolution 1244.

[44] The most suitable World Bank data to have a reasonable regional coverage of the Middle East and North Africa dated from 2010 for GDP per capita, and from 2007 in the case of Agriculture value added as share of the GDP.

77. Taking into consideration the subgroups within the *REU 25*, the situation was once again rather different:

- 'focus countries A': agriculture accounted for about 16% of GDP;
- 'focus countries B': were driven below 10% by the weight of the population in Ukraine, where agriculture accounted for 8% of GDP; and
- 'focus countries C': about 10% of GDP.

78. The level of undernourishment in Europe and Central Asia was extremely diversified both internally and in comparison with other regions. In the *REU 25* the share of undernourishment was still significant in 'focus countries A', where it reached 11%. At the same time, in 'focus countries B' it was largely below 5%, and rather low in 'focus counties C' and the rest of the *REU 25*. However, levels in Tajikistan and Georgia were significantly above the regional average with 31.7% and 24.7% respectively. Therefore, these countries were still characterized by significant needs in terms of support to food security.

79. The Human Development Index (HDI) is a composite statistic of life expectancy, education, and income indices developed by the UNDP to rank countries into four tiers of human development. The majority of the countries in the *REU 25* was classified in 2011 as high human development, while 'focus countries A' were classified as medium human development. The situation was very similar to the case of Latin America and Caribbean, with the exception of a few countries in the *REU 25* classified as very high human development. The other regions were characterized by a higher number of countries with medium or low human development. Box 2 below shows these data.

Box 2. Socio-economic indicators in REU focus countries A, B, C and *REU 25* compared to other regions

Country/ group	Rural population 2011 (% of total)	Economically active population in agriculture 2011 (% of total)	Under-nourished 2010-2012 (% of total population)	GDP per capita 2011 (USD)	Agriculture added value 2011 (% of GDP)	HDI 2011
REU Focus Country A	65.6	21.7	11.2	1,382	16.2	All medium HDI
REU Focus Country B	33.8	10.5	1.78	3,462	7.9	All high HDI
REU Focus Country C	46.5	16.4	-	4,556	10.6	All high HDI
REU 25	35.4	13.8	<5	9,001	4.9	Mostly medium and high HDI; some Very high HDI.
East Asia & Pacific	53.4	55.9	11.5	4,735	11.3	Mostly medium and low HDI
Latin America & Caribbean	20	14.5	8.3	9,593	6.3	Medium and high HDI
Middle East & North Africa	41	21	8	3,639 (2010)	10.5 (2007)	Mostly medium and low HDI
South Asia	69.7	52.1	18	1,371	17.9	Mostly medium and low HDI
Sub-Saharan Africa	62.5	58.2	28.8	1,424	10.8	Medium and low HDI

Source	FAOSTAT estimations, 2012	FAOSTAT estimations, 2012	SOFI 2012	World Bank, 2012	World Bank, 2012	Human Development report, 2011

Source: Evaluation

80. Overall, the indicators suggested a remarkable diversity both among the different subgroups within Europe and Central Asia and between the *REU 25* and other regions. This diversity was the product of different elements that contributed to agricultural development including: history and culture; knowledge and innovation; institutional setting; and climatic and agro-environmental conditions. Considering the selected socio-economic indicators, the only region that presented significant similarities with Europe and Central Asia was Latin America and the Caribbean, at the level of GDP per capita, share of agriculture in the GDP and share of economically active population in agriculture.

81. The *REU 25* have therefore rather different needs in comparison to other regions. This emerged also from looking at the regional priorities as defined by the FAO Regional Conferences in 2012, shown in Box 3 below. The ERC, for instance, gave stronger emphasis to policy advice, regional and global trade, standard-setting and political-economic organizations. While food security remains a relevant priority to some of the *REU 25,* this does not have the same implications and impact as in other regions. On the other hand, climate change and natural resources management, with particular attention to environmental sustainability, understood as the capacity to respond to threats and emergencies, were increasingly important across all the regions. An additional priority shared with other regions was animal and plant health as well as food safety. However, as in the case of food security, the type of interventions required differed greatly.

Box 3. Regional priorities as defined by the FAO Regional Conferences in 2012

Region	Priorities	Source
Africa	Increase Agricultural Productivity and Diversification-promoting value-chain approach; Promote Sustainable Natural Resources Management- enhancing good governance and implementing mitigation and adaptation measures to climate change; Support Market Access and Sanitary Measures for Better Trade- improving food safety and quality, enhancing public-private partnerships; Promote Knowledge Management, Information and Advocacy in Africa- improving access and use of information and statistical data;	27th Regional Conference for Africa (ARC)
Asia and the Pacific	Food and nutritional security; Agricultural production and rural development; Equitable, productive and sustainable natural resource management; Improving capacity to respond to food and agricultural threats and emergencies; Coping with the impact of climate change on agriculture and food and nutritional security.	31st Regional Conference for Asia and the Pacific (APRC)
Europe and Central Asia	Strengthening food and nutrition security; Policy advice to governments in support of sustainable intensification for small farms; Natural resource management, including climate change mitigation and adaptation; Control of animal, plant and food-borne pests and diseases; Policy and institutional support for entry of Member States into regional and global trade, standard-setting and political-economic organizations; Supporting and building global and regional public goods through applied research in the areas of food, agriculture, fisheries and forestry.	28th Regional Conference for Europe (ERC)
Latin America and the Caribbean	Food and nutritional security; Climate change and environmental sustainability; Family farming; Animal and plant health and food safety;	32nd Regional Conference for Latin America and the Caribbean (LARC)

Near East	Enhancing food security and nutrition; Fostering agricultural production and rural development for improved livelihoods; Sustainable natural resources management; Responding to climate change impacts and developing adaptation strategies; Preparedness for, and response to, food and agriculture emergencies.	31st Regional Conference for the Near East (NERC)

Source: Regional Conferences reports, elaborated by Evaluation

82. Overall, it can be stated that the priorities identified by FAO in the Europe and Central Asia Region meet to a good extent the actual needs for assistance in the Region. The identification of three groups of Focus countries allows a better understanding of the diversity that characterizes the Region. At the same time, the Evaluation noted that in the case of some countries, in particular in the West Balkans and the Republic of Moldova, the Organization did not provide assistance adequate to their socio-economic characteristics and needs.

4.2 FAO governance structure in Europe and Central Asia

4.2.1 The FAO Regional Conference for Europe

83. The first session of the FAO Regional Conference for Europe (ERC) was held in 1949. The second session took place in 1960 and since then, the Conference was held on a biennial basis. The ERC currently has 55 Members (53 Member Countries, the European Union and an Associate Member). Since 2010, the Regional Conferences have enhanced roles in the overall governance structure of the Organization, with particular focus on priority-setting. Within the evaluation period, two ERC sessions have taken place under the new responsibility framework.

84. Over time, the Regional Conferences had developed their own operating practices in their respective regions. In the case of the ERC, for example, the Executive Committee of the European Commission on Agriculture had over time taken on a stronger role in setting the agenda for the ERC and its sessions had been moved from being held in alternate years to the ERC, to being back-to back to the ERC itself.

85. The 91st session of the Committee on Constitutional and Legal Matters (CCLM) in 2010, discussed the operating practices of the various regional conferences and suggested that rather than including them in the General Rules of the Organization, each Regional Conference should adopt its own Rules of Procedure, which would deal with a number of practical matters and arrangements and could be tailored to the needs of specific regions.

86. In this respect, the 28th FAO Regional Conference for Europe highlighted that the Rules of Procedure should reflect the new role of the Regional Conference as an integrated part of the FAO governance system including a reflection of the procedures for preparation of Regional Conferences and the clear reporting lines to the FAO Council and Conference.[45] Furthermore, given its new role, the ERC stressed that the Rules of Procedure should also

[45] As per Rule XXV of the General Rules, the Regional Conferences report to the Programme Committee and Finance Committee on programme and budget matters and to the Conference on regulatory matters.

address the possibility of the Regional Conference exercising oversight of the various regional bodies.[46]

4.2.2 The European Commission for Agriculture

87. After World War II, European countries needed to set up a regional agricultural body which could assist them in solving the most urgent problems they were confronted with and decided to establish the European Commission on Agriculture. Upon the recommendation of 12 European governments convening at an *ad hoc* meeting in June 1949 in Paris, the Director-General established a European Committee on Agricultural Technology, pursuant to Article VI.1 of the Constitution. The title was changed to "European Committee on Agriculture" by decision of the Council at its 15th Session (1952) and in 1956 changed again to its present title. The Regional Office for Europe and Central Asia hosts its Secretariat.

88. The membership of the ECA is open to all Members of the FAO Europe and Central Asia Region, as per Article VI of the Constitution. Over time, the mandate, membership and subsidiary structure have changed in response to the perceived needs of its members.

89. The ECA has an Executive Committee (Ex-Com) composed of the Chairperson and Vice-Chair person of the Commission and six other members elected in their personal capacity by the Commission. The Ex-Com is the only body elected by the Membership of the Region.[47]

90. The 31st Session of the ECA in 1999 made a number of suggestions with regards to the future role and organization of the Commission. The 22nd FAO Regional Conference for Europe in 2000, in which the ECA Executive Committee already played a role in the set-up of the agenda, noted this and after lengthy discussions, formulated a number of suggestions. These included: the agenda-setting role should be taken up by the European Regional Group; the timing of the ECA sessions should be aligned with those of the ERC; and the mandate of the ECA should be revised, whereby it would service the Regional Conference for Europe as a technical preparation meeting. This implied that the deliberations of the ECA would be directly reported to the Regional Conference.

91. By the 23rd Session of the ERC in 2002, the ECA's mandate had been revised and the results of discussions and recommendations stemming from the ECA, were submitted to the FAO Regional Conference for Europe for policy discussion and adoption. The 34th session of the ECA in 2006, was the first to be held back-to-back with the corresponding 25th Session of the ERC. The Commission also monitored the activities of the European System of Cooperative Research Networks in Agriculture (ESCORENA), and those of its subsidiary body, the Working Party on Women and the Family in Rural Development (WPW), discussed in more detail below. At the time of writing this report, the ECA was not formally

[46] The bodies mentioned included the ECA, EIFAAC, Ecosystem and Fishery Management, EFC, GFCM, the Network of Aquaculture Centres in Central-Eastern Europe (NACEE), CACFish, ESCORENA and others. (ERC/12/Rep).

[47] The meeting of the Executive Committee can be convened by the Director-General as often as required, after consultation with the Chairperson. The Executive Committee submits proposals to the Commission concerning the general orientation of the Commission's activities and the programme of work. The Executive Committee also should periodically inform all Members of the Commission, through the Director-General, of any decisions taken.

directly linked with either COAG or any other Committee of the Conference. Technical items were reported through the ERC to the Programme or the Finance Committee.

4.2.3 The European Regional Group

92. FAO has grouped Member Countries into regional groupings for Council voting purposes, to ensure a balanced representation. In the case of the REU Region, as well as for other regions, the Member Countries of the Region are not all party to the same grouping. The European Regional Group is composed of the Permanent Representatives of 48 Member Countries, plus one Member Organization. Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan are part of the Asian Regional Group, while Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Turkmenistan are part of the Near East Group.

93. In principle this would not be an issue, as all of them are Members of the European Regional Conference. However, the ERG, as is the case for other Regional Groups, has been rather active in its role of forum for Members to debate policy issues, priority setting and, most importantly, the formulation of the Region's position on specific topics.

94. Members of the Ex-Com of the ECA were and are either Permanent Representatives themselves or had close ties with the Permanent Representatives to the Organization. This greatly facilitated the organization of meetings of the Ex-Com and communication between the latter and the ERG.

4.2.4 The FAO technical commissions in Europe and Central Asia

95. FAO has in the Region five technical commissions: European Forestry Commission (EFC); European Inland Fisheries and Aquaculture Advisory Commission (EIFAAC); European Commission for the Control of Foot-and-Mouth Disease (EuFMD); General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM); and the Central Asian and Caucasus Regional Fisheries and Aquaculture Commission (CACFish). Responses to the Evaluation questionnaire for Member Countries showed that a considerable number of respondents were not aware of some of these bodies.[48] EuFMD and the EFC were considered the most useful by the respondents.

96. The European Forestry Commission (EFC) consists of 40 Members plus the European Union.[49] The EFC meets biennially; the October 2011 meeting was held in Antalya (Turkey) and the December 2013 one will be held in Finland. The UN Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) Timber Committee, whose membership is open to all Member States of the UN Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE), meets every year, in even years in Geneva and in odd years concurrently with the EFC. At its meeting in October 2012 the Timber Committee proposed changing its name to "Committee on Forest and Forest Industry" to emphasise that its remit covers all forest-related products. This proposal will be submitted to the UNECE Executive Committee for endorsement. Most respondents to the questionnaire to Member Countries agreed with the statements on the usefulness of EFC as a discussion and authoritative body.

[48] Respondents were mostly from Ministries of Agriculture and Permanent Representatives to FAO.

[49] In addition to the 27 EU Member Countries, members are Albania, Belarus, FYR Macedonia, Iceland, Israel, Norway, Russian Federation, Switzerland, Turkey, Ukraine and Uzbekistan.

97. The joint Forestry and Timber Section (FTS) of FAO and the UNECE, which serves as the Secretariat of the EFC, has a project funded by the UN Development Account devoted to the Caucasus and Central Asia, to assist these countries to participate more actively in this work. As these countries adopt a broader approach to forestry matters, it is likely that the Central Asian countries will look to FAO for assistance on developing forestry policy.

98. REU, SEC and the FTS work together without there being any official structure. This could possibly lead to some confusion as to where the first port-of-call lies. The Evaluation also notes that the institutional set-up for forestry matters in the Region is very complex and concurs on this matter with the Evaluation of FAO's role and work on Forestry (2012), which looked at these issues in depth and made a number of recommendations with regards to coordination and communication with the staff in the regions and the technical bodies, aimed at a clearer FAO structure for forestry in the Region.

99. The European Inland Fisheries and Aquaculture Advisory Commission (EIFAAC) was established in 1957 as the European Inland Fisheries Advisory Commission (EIFAC) and expanded its remit to cover aquaculture in 2008. It has 34 Members[50] and is the only body in Europe dealing with inland fisheries, as the EU has a mandate only on marine fisheries. Thereby, EIFAAC provides a platform for discussions and a forum in which approaches can be harmonized, without having a regulatory function. In addition, EIFAAC membership currently extends beyond the borders of the EU, which further cements its potential role. The majority of respondents to the Member Countries questionnaire have expressed a good level of support for it. However, some Member Countries also expressed the view that EIFAAC needs to better demonstrate its added value and improve its communication strategy to ensure better uptake of its advice.

100. EIFAAC was at the time of writing this report, the only FAO fisheries body with a Secretary based in Headquarters. In late April 2012, an intensive period of restructuring supported by FAO was completed. Discussions to shift the Secretariat from Headquarters to REU have been on-going. The rationale was that the technical officer in the Region would be more effective as EIFAAC Secretary, both in terms of understanding Member Countries' needs as well as being able to maintain a relationship with the relevant ministries and departments at country level.

101. One of the un-resolved issues between the Fisheries and Aquaculture Department (FI) and REU has been the 'loss' of the regional officers time through this added responsibility. The Evaluation considers this to be of little relevance: likewise for all other Regional Fisheries Bodies for which FAO hosts the Secretariat, time for this task should be accounted for in the work-plan of the regional fisheries officer; this could in fact provide an opportunity to streamline a number of the activities in the Region. Hence, the Evaluation **suggests** that REU and FI agree on transferring the EIFAAC Secretariat to REU as soon as possible. This should happen with the understanding that Headquarters would continue its functional relationship and support to EIFAAC's sessions and activities.

102. The Central Asian and Caucasus Regional Fisheries and Aquaculture Commission (CACFish) is an Article XIV body established in 2010 and its inaugural session was held in December 2011. At the time of writing, the Commission had four members: Armenia,

[50] These include: EU Member Countries with the exception of Malta and Slovenia; Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, the European Union, Iceland, Israel, Norway, Switzerland and Turkey.

Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Turkey.[51] The Commission aims to promote the development, conservation and rational management and best utilization of living aquatic resources, as well as the sustainable development of aquaculture in Central Asia and Caucasus. CACFish currently has one subsidiary body, the Technical Advisory Committee.

103. The General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean's (GFCM) area of competence is the Mediterranean, Black Sea and connecting waters, and consists of 24 Members.[52] Its objectives are to promote the development, conservation, rational management and best utilization of living marine resources, as well as the sustainable development of aquaculture in the Mediterranean, Black Sea and connecting waters. Membership is open to both Mediterranean coastal states and regional economic organizations as well as to United Nations Member States whose vessels engage in fishing in Mediterranean waters. Both GFCM and CACFish were not well known by respondents to the MC questionnaires.

104. An additional Commission relevant to the Region is the European Commission for the Control of Foot-and-Mouth Disease (EuFMD). The Commission, established in 1954, is specialized in supporting its members in the European Region, currently 36, to prevent the incursion of FMD into Europe, through actions co-ordinated with those of the European Union through the DG-SANCO (Directorate General Health and Consumers) of the European Commission (EC). The EuFMD was the best known and appreciated of the technical commissions by respondents to the questionnaire for MCs. This Commission is further discussed in Chapter 8 below.

105. While the membership of these technical commissions varies, they have a consistent core of members, coherent with the membership of the ERC. Also, these commissions cover areas of the Organization's competence of relevance to the Region. Therefore, the Member Countries and the ERC itself have highlighted that it is important that these be included within the deliberations on priority-setting within the Region. The timing of the sessions of the commissions should theoretically be aligned with the ERC, however this may take time or prove difficult to apply in practice. The more pragmatic solution seems to be that the secretaries of each technical commission should systematically feed the key issues emerging from the respective commission sessions into the priority setting process in view of every ERC (see below).

4.2.5 Governance arrangements in Europe and Central Asia

106. There was an agreement among Member Countries that the current governance arrangements needed to be clarified and to some extent, formalized. The Evaluation, as per the suggestions of the 28th ERC, examined these, while both the ERG, with a significant contribution by the government of Estonia,[53] and the Ex-Com of the ECA have been

[51] Membership to the Commission is open to any Member of the Organization, the United Nations, or any of its other Specialized Agencies provided that the territory of such State is situated wholly or partly within the Commission's are of competence.

[52] Members include: the Mediterranean littoral states; Bulgaria; Romania; the European Union; and Japan. Thus, some Black Sea littoral states are not members.

[53] Estonia, in its capacity as chair of the ERG for the second semester of 2012, commissioned a paper on the working mechanisms of the various governance structures as well as the options and implications of various scenarios for the future.

discussing the various possible scenarios. This section describes the current working mechanisms and the suggestions for the way forward.

107. As of mid-2012, the ECA had three functions:

i. it acted as a regional technical statutory body which identifies and discusses key technical issues related to agriculture and rural development with the objective of making conclusions and recommendations to the ERC on proposed agenda items;
ii. it was directly linked to the ERC, and the results of discussions and recommendations stemming from the ECA are submitted to the ERC for policy discussion and adoption;
iii. the ECA Ex-Com, which has acted as an intersession body, has been involved in the preparation of the agenda of the ERC and facilitated the communication with the ERG.[54]

108. An informal consultation was held in March 2010 prior to the ECA and ERC in Yerevan in May 2010. This was appreciated and both bodies suggested such events be better incorporated into the priority-setting mechanism for the Region. Subsequent informal consultations were organized for the Central Asian countries in October 2010, a regional one in March 2011 in Hungary, and for the preparation of the ERC in January 2012. These were well appreciated by the Member Countries as they provided a forum for discussion. However, as the experience with such forums varied, there were some concerns that there had not been enough room to amply discuss the important issues.

109. At both the 27th ERC in 2010 and the 28th ERC in 2012, there was an item summarizing the reports coming from the regional bodies.[55] This was appreciated by the Member Countries, yet it has happened more on an ad-hoc basis rather than through clear communication channels between the statutory bodies. Concerns were raised about the timing of the sessions of the various commissions, which were not optimally harmonized to allow feeding into the priority setting process of the Region more appropriately.

110. Responses to the Evaluation questionnaire to Member Countries showed that half of the respondents considered that the Regional Conference had become more useful and effective as a forum for regional decision-making since the reform of 2010, and in particular, in setting regional priorities.[56] The ERC was valued mostly as a networking opportunity. The ECA was considered less useful as a forum for technical discussions of agriculture issues and a priority setting in the Region. The ECA Executive Committee was considered effective in setting the agenda for the ERC by less than half of the respondents. Also, some Members questioned the role of the ECA as an agenda-setting body for ERC, which according to them gave a narrow focus to the ERC at the expense of other technical committees. Some respondents pointed out other weaknesses such as the lack of participation from EU members, low level of ministerial representation, and that documents and decision points had not been presented sufficiently in advance to allow time for consideration and debate.[57]

[54] Point iii) is the only one that was not formalized.
[55] In 2010, this included the EFC and UNECE Timber Committee, EuFMD, EIFAAC and CACfish. In 2012, it included the EFC and UNECE Timber Committee, EIFAAC and CACfish.
[56] The total number of respondents to the questionnaire was 21, almost 40% of the members; half of them means 20% of the members in the Region. See Annex 7 for more detail.
[57] See Annex 7.

111. Overall, Members stated to the Evaluation that they were keen to resolve the issues around the governance mechanism by the next ERC in 2014. The main areas of agreement that emerged were the following:

- with the enhanced role of the ERC, it is important there be a body that can prepare the agenda and liaise with REU and Members in the inter-session period;
- those Member Countries in the Region that do not have a Permanent Representation in Rome[58] or are not members of the ERG need to be consulted to ensure their needs are properly reflected;
- there is interest in having a technical body in the Europe and Central Asia Region to discuss agricultural issues of interest and relevance to the Region;
- in the exercise of priority setting, all sectors within the mandate of the Organization need to be given sufficient attention.

112. In light of the broad areas of agreement, the Evaluation considered the various scenarios under discussion for future governance arrangements for the Europe and Central Asia Region. Keeping in mind the needs and possible caveats as expressed by the various interlocutors, the following scenario appears to be most appropriate. Recommendation 1 fosters it as the best way forward.

A. Given the interest in a dedicated technical body for the Region, the ECA's technical role should be reinvigorated. Issues discussed should be selected with attention to the pressing issues of interest to the Region as a whole. In order to best do this, the sessions of the ECA should be held in alternate years to the ERC.

B. The Executive Committee of the ECA, the existing elected body within the Region, should retain its double role of preparing both the ECA and working in close collaboration with the Secretariat in REU to prepare the ERC, in alternate years.

C. The ECA should hold sessions in alternate years to the ERC; this would have a threefold advantage:
   - Technical issues could be discussed in greater depth and results and recommendations from the ECA discussions could better feed into the formulation of priorities in the Region;
   - The Executive Committee of the ECA could maintain its double role by focusing its attention on the preparation of the ECA and the ERC in alternate years;
   - Considering the foreseeable funding limitations, the ECA in an alternate year would provide an opportunity to hold a back-to-back regional informal consultation. This would both ensure cost savings and improve levels of attendance.

D. To ensure that all sectors within the Organization's competence are given their due attention, a report on the recommendations and actions arising out of the technical bodies in the Region should become a standing item on the ERC's agenda. This would be ensured through the relevant technical officers in the Region, some of which serve as secretaries to the regional commissions. Given that the Ex-Com is to work more closely with, and receive enhanced technical inputs from, the Secretariat, this should ensure that all sectors and issues are given adequate consideration.

[58] Member Countries of the Region without any form of representation in Rome are: Iceland, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Turkmenistan.

E. The ERG, when it is able to foresee discussions directly relevant to governance and priorities in the Europe and Central Asia Region, should make an effort to include Member Countries which are not formally party to it but belong to the ERC.

F. REU should play a stronger role in identifying the priorities with Members at sub-regional and regional level as discussed later in Section7.2. The Evaluation finds it unlikely that, given funding concerns, four informal consultations could be held between ERC sessions. However, in the period between the ECA and its corresponding ERC, REU and SEC should hold one informal consultation per sub-region. The results of these would be compiled and integrated into the considerations of the Ex-Com through the Secretariat.

4.2.6 The Working Party on Women and the Family in Rural Development

113. The Working Party on Women and the Family in Rural Development (WPW) is a subsidiary body of the ECA and falls into the category of FAO Article VI.1 of the Organization's Constitution. The WPW was established in 1965 under the name of 'ECA Working Party on Home Economics'. In 1980, it was renamed by the FAO ERC to "Working Party on Women and the Agricultural Family in Rural Development". The change to its present name was approved by the ECA in 1997.

114. As per FAO's Constitution, the Secretariat of Article VI bodies is hosted by the Organization, REU in this case. FAO has been providing resources from the budget of the Regular Programme to run the Secretariat, but these funds could not be used to finance the participation of country representatives at the Session and other WPW meetings. A small multi-donor Trust Fund, with contribution from Austria, Lithuania, Norway and Switzerland, had been operational between 2006 and 2011, to fill this financial gap. [59]

115. The aim of the WPW was and is to help in reducing gender inequalities in rural areas and to contribute actively to achieve the empowerment of rural women. The WPW's mandate is to bring together key stakeholders of the gender and rural development sector and provide a platform for dialogue, knowledge exchange and participatory policy advice.

116. The WPW reports to the ECA and holds biennial Sessions and annual Expert Meetings, open to all member countries of the Europe and Central Asia Region. The delegates and experts are nominated by their respective governments following an invitation from the WPW Secretariat. Its Board reviews and discusses recent WPW activities, future work-plans, expedites follow-up activities and acts as an Advisory Committee between sessions. Board members are usually voluntary representatives of ministries of agriculture and related institutions, who carry out the task in addition to other duties; in 2012, the board comprised members from Italy (chair), Albania, Lithuania, and Ukraine.

117. Since 2004, six Expert Meetings and four WPW Sessions have taken place. Topics included were related to the visibility of female labour in agriculture and creation of jobs in

[59] In 2006, a report to the ECA already noted that over the last decade, participation by members in WPW Sessions and Expert Meetings had been declining. Thus, two options were presented to the ECA: abolishment of the WPW, compensated by ensuring that gender issues became a standing item in future ECA's sessions, or 'maintain the WPW as a subsidiary body of the ECA on condition that extra-budgetary support from interested donors is ensured' (ECA/34/06/4). The ECA opted for the second proposal and a TF was set-up.

agriculture, gender in rural development policies and sustainable rural tourism. Attendance to WPW Sessions since 2004 appears to have been highly variable, from 20 to 45 participants: location in HQ and timing back-to-back with ECA and ERC events were factors at play in this. Attendance to the WPW Expert meetings has been lower.

118. In February 2012, the 22nd Expert Meeting organized in FAO HQ focused on "Gender Statistics for Assessing the Socio-economic Status of Rural Women and Men in Europe and Central Asia" brought together 70 participants. Participants who were interviewed by the Evaluation expressed a good level of appreciation of the topic and of the discussion, and there seemed to be an interest for some form of follow-up.

119. The February 2012 Expert meeting was followed by the 15th Session of the WPW, during which several topics were discussed and the WPW agreed on a number of future activities under its responsibility. These included revising the roles and responsibilities of the WPW Secretariat and Board, exploring the possibility of setting up a regional network of ministerial Gender Focal Points and the potential availability of voluntary funds for the WPW's work, as well as changing the name of the WPW. These proposals were endorsed by the ERC in Baku in April 2012 but the Evaluation had no evidence that any action in this direction had since been taken.

120. The existence of the WPW appears to have played a role in the past as a reminder for REU of the need to take gender issues into consideration and some WPW's recommendations were a trigger for some of SEU/REU's activities on gender mainstreaming. However, in more recent years this role seems to have waned.

121. When the WPW was created, all countries in Western Europe were going through great transformations in the agriculture and rural sector, and the social and economic consequences of the process of agrarian change was a topic of great importance. Several decades later, those same countries face different challenges and have developed different institutions to tackle the topics within the WPW's mandate. At the same time, countries where agrarian change is taking place now and that might need support from networks like the WPW appear to have different needs in terms of support and advice than what the WPW can offer.

122. A solid majority of respondents to the Evaluation questionnaire for Member Countries indicated a good knowledge of the WPW, whereas a slight minority considered it an authoritative body and a slight majority a useful discussion forum in Europe and Central Asia. Some additional comments by MCs were in favour of abolishment: despite the importance of the topic, they felt that WPW was no longer relevant and useful to the membership. Another suggestion was 'suspending' the works of the WPW, until strong manifestation of interest emerges for a consultation on any given relevant topic, that will justify the required investment in organizing it.

123. Under the current circumstances of reduced financial resources in both FAO and its Member Countries, available funds must go to those initiatives that have a stronger strategic importance and have proved so far to be most effective. The Evaluation has little doubt that mainstreaming gender into FAO's work in Europe and Central Asia is of the utmost importance. As discussed later on in Section 10.4, the corporate performance in the Region on this topic is not satisfactory yet. However, the effectiveness and efficiency of the WPW both to '*help in reducing gender inequalities in rural areas and to contribute actively to*

achieve the empowerment of rural women' as per its goal and in improving the mainstreaming of gender into FAO's work, is debatable. Also, the mandate of the WPW of bringing together stakeholders and be a platform of exchange could be easily taken on by other existing networks, e.g. the DAC Network on Gender Equality (GENDERNET), and REU itself could establish and maintain a network of Gender Focal Points in the Europe and Central Asia Member Countries, and organize meetings on a case-by-case basis.

124. The Evaluation is fully aware that it does not have the mandate to make a recommendation to abolish or 'suspend' the WPW, as this type of action falls exclusively in the remit of the Member Countries. In this context, the Evaluation formulated Recommendation 2, in Section 11.

4.3 FAO Liaison Office with the European Union and Belgium

125. The FAO Liaison Office with the European Union and Belgium (LOB) was established in 1997. Its mandate always focused on liaising with the EU Institutions, Belgian Federal and Regional Governments, ACP Secretariat and Committee of Ambassadors, Permanent missions, UN Agencies based in the country, non-governmental and academic institutions based in Belgium. The Office reporting line was/is to OCD/OSD and it never had a functional link with REU or other units in FAO.

126. In 2012, LOB had one director at D2 level, downgraded to D1 in early 2012,[60] two professionals and a secretary.[61] The Office also often hosted an intern. The previous director was in post for 7 years and left in June 2011. The incumbent was appointed in late September, to take on the post in early November 2012. The two professionals have been in LOB for 2-2.5 years approximately. The Government of Belgium provides premises and part of the running costs.

127. To the Evaluation, the size of the Office appeared as a strong limitation to a greater visibility and weight of FAO in Brussels. LOB was not well known among the Brussels-based institutions that might benefit from its presence, although some of those who work with it, e.g. the ACP Secretariat, highly appreciated and valued its collaboration. Equally, LOB did not appear to be very well known to FAO itself, as reportedly often FAO colleagues attend meetings in the EU institutions and negotiate projects and programmes, without informing LOB, let alone coordinating or exchanging views with them. This may depend on a 'house perception' of LOB being too small, irrelevant or on the simple un-awareness of its existence and/or mandate.

128. The size of the Office appeared rather disproportionate also when compared to other UN agencies for which the European Union institutions are important partners. As of October 2012, the Office of the United Nations Resident Coordinator (UNRC), hosted and led by UNDP, coordinated 26 agencies in a variety of formats, and more than 200 staff, including many at D-level. A rough calculation indicated that the UN relates on a regular basis with approximately 3,000 people out of the 30,000 who work for the EU institutions in Brussels. Most importantly, the profile of the UN vis-à-vis the EU institutions has muted from one of

[60] All director posts for the Liaison Offices were downgraded in early 2012.

[61] The D1 and G5 were PWB posts, while the two professionals were provided through the EU's assessed contributions (TEMP/GLO/745/EC).

'executor of EU development aid' into one of peer and partner, policy advisor, and negotiator.

129. In this context of enhanced EU-UN policy dialogue and partnership, and considering the increased attention of the EU institutions to food security and agriculture in its policies within the EU itself, with its neighbouring countries and in the context of its development portfolio, FAO has a major role to play. Recent stronger participation by LOB and FAO in the UNCT policy dialogue with the EU had been highly appreciated and bodes well for improved interaction and collaboration.

130. Respondents to the questionnaire to Member Countries stated that in their views, LOB's main function was to liaise with the EU institutions rather than with individual EU members. Some Members also expressed a view that there needs to be greater transparency and information about its functioning.

131. The Evaluation came to the conclusion that the title of the Office as 'Liaison' might be inappropriate to depict what its function should be, both for internal and external purposes. Definitely, more staff will be necessary to engage consistently with the key units in the different institutions and the ACP Secretariat, while a greater contribution and participation from HQ will be required. Also, FAO HQ should keep LOB informed of its 'bilateral' contacts to allow a full picture to be maintained of what is going on.

132. Resources required to maintain a stronger presence in LOB should take the form of professional staff posted in LOB as well as of a budget line to pay for secondment of FAO staff posted elsewhere to participate/contribute to negotiations, discussions, meetings, etc. in Brussels, including both EU and ACP. Regional Offices could also consider whether to post one of their staff in LOB with the task of Partnership Development and strategic dialogue, to facilitate their own Region's access to EU institutions and resources.

133. The Evaluation assessed the collaboration between FAO and the EC in the Europe and Central Asia Region. In consideration of the paramount role the EC has as resource partner of FAO in this Region, and of the different approach that the EC itself has towards the Region, the Evaluation **suggests** that FAO relates to the EC along the following lines:

- a resource partner to support policy-level assessments and dialogue, as in the case of the framework of the ENPARD programme/concept for the analysis of agricultural and rural policy in a number of countries;
- a resource partner for project implementation at national level, through the delegation agreement, e.g. the support to the formulation of the new agricultural and rural development strategy of Albania;
- a key stakeholder in the Region with whom policy dialogue should be constant and sustained.

134. In this context, the Evaluation decided to include a specific recommendation to REU in relation to partnership development (see Section 7.3 and Recommendation 3) that has implications for LOB. This recommendation could represent a model also for other FAO regional offices or division, to enhance their visibility and partnerships with the EU Institutions.

5 FAO's Decentralized Offices in Europe and Central Asia

5.1 UN agencies in Europe and Central Asia

135. This section briefly describes the institutional set-up of a selected sample of UN agencies in the Europe and Central Asia Region, to compare their structures with those established by FAO. While the degree of decentralization of these agencies and their presence in the countries of the Region are a matter of respective mandate and resources, as well as of particular needs of the countries for their services, the Evaluation wanted to explore whether common patterns existed and if there were lessons to be drawn also for FAO.

136. The agencies were selected on the basis of a number of features, as follows:

- International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), one of the three Rome-based agencies;
- International Labour Organization (ILO), a specialized agency;
- United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), coordination role in the UN;
- UN-Women, part of the UN-Secretariat, in the process of establishing its new decentralized structure; and
- World Health Organization (WHO), a specialized agency.

IFAD

137. IFAD has operations in several countries in Europe and CIS, however no country representations. The country portfolios are managed from IFAD Headquarters in Rome. Countries with operations include Albania, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Cyprus, Georgia, Macedonia, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Tajikistan, Turkey and Uzbekistan.

ILO

138. The ILO Regional Office for Europe and Central Asia is based in Geneva, co-located with HQ, and has eight staff. It maintains overall responsibility for the ILO's presence and activities in the Region. It takes the lead in defining programme priorities and activities, monitoring programme delivery, and providing support and coordination to its field structure.

139. There are sub-regional offices called Decent Work Teams and Country Offices in Budapest, covering Central and Eastern Europe, and Moscow, covering CIS countries. These offices provide advisory services, capacity building and technical assistance to governments and to employers' and workers' organizations. The offices are comparatively large with 56 staff, of whom 7 international, in Budapest, and 62 staff, with approximately 13 international, in Moscow.

140. ILO employs National Coordinators who are full-time national professionals representing the organization in twelve countries: Albania, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, FYR Macedonia, Republic of Moldova, Serbia, Tajikistan, Ukraine. These staff report to the respective sub-regional office.

UNDP

141. The Regional Bureau for Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States (RBEC) began the process of establishing offices and programmes in the Region in 1992. RBEC now serves 29 countries in Central and Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union through its 23 country offices. A Regional Centre is based in Bratislava (BRC), Slovakia. The RBEC Strategy makes a distinction between the work of RBEC and BRC: RBEC-NY is oriented towards policy/strategy and monitoring/oversight of country offices, while BRC focuses on thematic work, acting in partnership with the central UNDP Bureaux.

142. The Bratislava Regional Centre supports the countries with a team of policy specialists with advisory services and technical support to country offices and programmes in the region. The Centre manages regional projects and also documents and shares development successes and best practices throughout the region and beyond.

143. Country offices in the region include Albania, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kosovo, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova, Montenegro, Romania, Russian Federation, Serbia, Tajikistan, Macedonia, Turkey, Turkmenistan, Ukraine and Uzbekistan.

UN Women

144. The newly established UN-Women regional office is based in Istanbul. Only Albania and Kyrgyzstan have international Country Programme Managers, while Georgia, Serbia and FYR Macedonia have national professionals representing the organization.[62] There are multi-country/sub-regional offices based in Bratislava and Almaty that report directly to the Regional Office.

145. The choice of Istanbul was made in 2012, at the time of establishing all other regional offices of the agency; it was based on the following criteria:[63]

- location of regional offices of main UN partners of UN-Women; in this case, the presence of UNFPA regional office in Istanbul;
- best balance of price and convenience in terms of travel to and within the region, including the shortest and most direct flights to a majority of UN-Women's current and proposed country and multi-country offices locations;
- generous financial assistance by the Government of Turkey;
- relatively lower cost of living, reflected in the post adjustment and daily subsistence allowance levels; and
- the location of Istanbul between Europe, the Middle East, the Caucasus and Central Asia offers UN-Women potential additional benefits in terms of interregional cooperation.

146. There was one disadvantage, the absence of an existing UN-Women country office in the city, but this was considered insignificant when compared to the advantages.

[62] Presence in Tajikistan was also being up-graded in late 2012.

[63] Executive Board of the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women, Regional architecture: administrative, budgetary and financial implications and implementation plan, Report of the Under-Secretary-General/Executive Director, UNW 2012/12/10, September 2012.

WHO

147. WHO covers the region from its regional office based in Copenhagen, which manages a network of 29 country offices. The level of representation varies from country to country: some are headed by an international staff member while others, by a national professional. Bigger offices in the region include those in Moldova, the Russian Federation, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan.

Conclusions

148. Among the five agencies and programmes selected, there were no equals. The choice of location for regional and country offices, the mandate of each office, the structure of regional and sub-regional, all differed. Thus, it appeared difficult to identify a 'good structure' let alone a 'best one'. With the exception of IFAD and possibly ILO, the other three agencies have a larger network of country offices than FAO in the Region at the time of writing this report.

149. At the same time, there was a clear convergence among the agencies about the countries where work has to be focused. This was, in the view of the Evaluation, an important validation of FAO's decision made in 2012 about its focus countries in the Region (see Section 5.2).

150. When more agencies were included in the analysis, it emerged that only two UN agencies, ILO and UNHCR, had a regional office in Budapest and none had similar offices in Ankara. A few agencies had or were establishing regional offices in Istanbul, Turkey, namely the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), UN-Women, and possibly UNDP. Other agencies had sub-regional or multi-country offices in Almaty, Kazakhstan, including: UNESCO cluster office; the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR); the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs; the United Nations Information Centre (UN-DPI); the UNFPA sub-regional office; and UN-Women.

151. REU did not develop specific collaboration with either ILO or UNHCR offices in Budapest, or with the regional office of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, to work in a coordinated manner in the countries within their mandate. Nevertheless, the Evaluation considered that should FAO in future decide about moving any of its Decentralized Offices in the Region, it should add 'proximity to other UN agencies working in the same sub-region or countries' as one of the criteria for choice, considering the trend towards the One-UN delivery and the need for increased synergies and efficiency gains.

5.2 FAO's presence in Europe and Central Asia

152. The 2nd Session of the FAO Conference in 1946 decided on the establishment of a European Regional Office, to be located in Rome. The former International Institute of Agriculture hosted the regional office from 1947 until 1951, when the Organization moved from Washington to Rome and absorbed it into its premises. In 1960, the Regional Office for Europe was re-established in Geneva, and moved back to Rome in 1970. Compared with most other FAO Regional Offices, the location of REU has definitely been more mobile.

153. At the end of the 1980s, the immediate effect on FAO of the political changes in Central and Eastern Europe and in the former Soviet Union, was an expansion in the Organization's membership in the European Region. The number of Member Countries went from 29 in 1990 to 53 in 2010. However, by the early 1990s the drive for establishing FAO country offices had somewhat waned: in 1987, the Conference had set a ceiling at 78 country offices and financial resources for the Organization had started to decline.[64]

154. Nevertheless, the FAO Conference at its 27th Session in November 1993, in relation to the emerging needs for assistance of transition economies in Central and Eastern Europe '*recommended that FAO develop further assistance to this Region built on the useful initiatives taken to date.*'[65] As a follow-up, the Council at its 106th Session in June 1994 decided to establish a Sub-regional Office for Central and Eastern Europe (SEU). SEU was opened in Budapest in 1996 and was staffed with a core team of experts in various areas, directly relevant to the development and transition needs of Central and Eastern European Countries. The Evaluation could not find documents supporting the rationale for the location of SEU in Budapest. ILO and UNHCR were also establishing their offices there, the main reason for UNHCR being the proximity to the Balkans.

155. In 2003, when the 2004 decentralization evaluation started, six members of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) were also members o FAO's European Region,[66] but the Russian Federation and Belarus were not yet FAO Members. Other CIS countries in Central Asia were split between FAO's Near East and Asia regions: Azerbaijan was covered by REU in Rome, Kazakhstan by the FAO Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific (RAP) in Bangkok, and Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkey, and Turkmenistan by RNE in Cairo. The 2004 evaluation observed that '*Although the CIS countries had in some cases received substantial technical support, none of them had a resident FAOR and there is a shortage of staff specialised in their problem*s.' It also observed that since the opening of SEU '*There was also an increase in visibility and responsiveness in the countries closest to Hungary in Europe*' but '*there was dissatisfaction with the coverage of CIS countries*'. That evaluation, giving high importance to REU's need for visibility, '*concluded that the Regional and Sub-regional Offices should be combined and the immediate advantages of Budapest outweighed any disadvantages*'. The report stressed the time-bound nature of the advantages, as work would in any case shift east-ward in the following decades.[67]

156. Further, through its Recommendation 16, bullet c), the report was very clear on the need for a sub-regional office fully dedicated to CIS countries. Its last sentence contradicted its earlier statement on Budapest being the best location for providing technical assistance to the other European countries.[68]

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64 UNDP, the first donor of FAO's until then, started to withdraw its funding from the agricultural sector.

65 C 93, Report of the Conference of FAO at its 27th Session, November 1993.

66 Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Moldova, Ukraine and Uzbekistan.

67 Independent Evaluation of FAO's decentralization, PC 92/6a)-FC 108/18, paragraphs 75 and 77.

68 Recommendation 16, c): for the CIS countries of Europe and Asia, two technical groups should be established. The countries of central Asia should now be included in FAO's European Region, as is the practice for other UN agencies. The technical staff posts of the Regional and Sub-regional Office should be almost entirely placed in technical groups based on airline hubs covering the neediest countries (the technical groups will require transfer of resources from the other regional offices covering the CIS, in addition to the European office). The remaining transition states in Europe, including those in the Balkans, should be covered by the establishment of a task force of technical officers in Headquarters.

157. Both preliminary and full Management Responses to the 2004 decentralization evaluation positively considered the recommendation for CIS countries and the 'conclusion' about the advantages of moving REU to the same location with SEU. Recommendation 16 of that evaluation was indeed one of the pillars of the DG's reform proposal launched a year later, in mid-2005.

158. The 33rd FAO Conference in 2005 approved the DG's reform proposal and the PWB 2006/07 that contained among others, three decisions of relevance for Europe and Central Asia: the relocation of REU from Rome, the opening of the Sub-regional Office for Central Asia (SEC) and the creation of the Shared Service Centre (SSC).

159. The agreement with the Government of Turkey to establish SEC in Ankara was signed in mid-2006 and the Office initiated operations in 2007. The mandate of the Sub-Regional Coordinator (SRC) has from the onset included: resident FAO Representative for Turkey and non-resident FAO Representative for Azerbaijan and Kyrgyzstan. Coverage of Tajikistan started in 2010.

160. The 131st Council approved in November 2006, the location of the new SSC in Budapest, as well as the transfer of the Regional Office to the same city and its renaming to 'Regional Office for Europe and Central Asia'. An existing unit for administrative and operational support for projects in the Region moved with the Office and was additionally reinforced. Besides the presence of SEU, additional main reasons for the choice of Budapest for REU were identified as the '*very favourable conditions which could be offered by the Government of Hungary in being host to larger FAO office facilities*'.[69]

161. In the midst of this reform process another important development for the Region was the decision of the Russian Federation to become a Member of FAO in April 2006. With this, Russian became the sixth official language of the Organization. Since accession, discussions have been on-going about the establishment of a liaison office in Moscow.

162. In 2010, on the occasion of the 27th Regional Conference for Europe in Yerevan, Armenia, a number of countries '*requested that, in the context of the new medium- and long-term vision of the DOs Network, serious consideration be given to FAO's fully-fledged presence in some of the countries in the Region, thus Kyrgyzstan and an Assistant FAO Representative in the Republic of Moldova*'.[70] Also, the ERC suggested the merging of REU and SEU to enhance efficiency and savings.

163. The 37th session of FAO Conference in 2011 'took note' of both recommendations. In January 2012, through DG Bulletin 2012/09, the co-located Sub-regional Office for Central and Eastern Europe (SEU) and Regional Office for Europe and Central Asia (REU) in Budapest, were merged into one single office. Thus, in early 2012, FAO's presence in Europe and Central Asia included:

- the Regional Office for Europe and Central Asia (REU) located in Budapest;
- the Sub-regional Office for Central Asia (SEC) in Ankara;
- seven countries covered through two multiple-accredited FAO Representatives.

[69] CL 131/18.
[70] Twenty-seventh FAO Regional Conference for Europe, Report, ERC/10/Rep.

164. Furthermore, in other 17 countries plus Kosovo,[71] comprising countries in Eastern Europe, the Balkans, Caucasus and Central Asia, FAO had some on-going activities, including in six of them, a National Correspondent. In the remaining 29 countries, comprising members of the EU and of the European Free Trade Association (EFTA), FAO did not have any on-going activity.[72]

165. The countries where FAO had activities on-going by the time of the Evaluation, including Kosovo, were grouped following the two categories proposed by REU at the ERC in 2012,[73] plus a third category called 'other countries'. The first group of focus countries includes twelve Members whose profile is synthesised in Box 4:[74]

- Group A, three highest priority countries:
  - Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan, that hosted FAO Representations through the multiple accreditation scheme and a resident Assistant FAO Representative; and
  - Uzbekistan, with a NC.
- Group B, four selected EU Eastern Partnership countries:
  - Armenia and Georgia where FAO presence is through multiple-accredited Representations with resident Assistant FAO Representatives;
  - Republic of Moldova, also serviced through the multiple-accreditation scheme but only with a NC at country level;
  - Ukraine, which joined the Organization at a later date and without any country presence; the country was included in this group because of its role in the global food markets and for food security; work in Ukraine can only be at the policy dialogue level, given the restricted access to TCP funds.[75]
- Group C: five selected EU potential accession countries, including the Western Balkans as defined by the EU,[76] with the exception of Serbia and Croatia.
  - In Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina and the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, FAO had a NC;
  - there was no presence in Kosovo or Montenegro, albeit all countries in this group benefitted from the Field Programme to a different extent.

[71] Kosovo is not yet a Member Country of FAO, but FAO and other United Nations agencies have a mandate to work in the country on the basis of United Nations Security Council resolution 1244.

[72] On-going activities include national, regional, interregional or global projects, that were operationally active in June 2012, or some policy dialogue and/or technical assistance activity.

[73] ERC/12/3.

[74] See also Annex 12.

[75] Annex 2 of the TCP Manual (December 2009).

[76] European Union institutions and member states define the "Western Balkans" as Albania and the former Yugoslavia, with the exception of Slovenia.

Box 4. Country presence in REU focus countries, groups A, B and C

Country Name	Type	Date of Membership	Current FAO Presence	Coverage by	FAO activities operational in June 2012
Kyrgyzstan	Focus country A	08-Nov-93	AFAORep with multi-accredited FAOR in SEC	SEC	National, regional, and inter-regional projects, TCPF
Tajikistan	Focus country A	20-Oct-95	AFAORep with multi-accredited FAOR in SEC	SEC	National, regional, and inter-regional projects, TCPF
Uzbekistan	Focus country A	02-Nov-01	NC	SEC	National, regional, and inter-regional projects, TCPF
Armenia	Focus country B	08-Nov-93	AFAORep with multi-accredited FAOR in REU	REU	National, regional, inter-regional and global projects, TCPF
Georgia	Focus Country B	20-Oct-95	AFAORep with multi-accredited FAOR in REU	REU	National, regional, inter-regional and global projects, TCPF
Moldova, Republic of	Focus country B	20-Oct-95	NC with multi-accredited FAOR in REU	REU	National, regional, inter-regional and global projects, TCPF
Ukraine	Focus country B	29-Nov-03	None	REU	National and regional projects, TCPF
Albania	Focus country C	12-Nov-73	NC	REU	National, regional, inter-regional projects, TCPF
Bosnia & Herzegovina	Focus country C	08-Nov-93	NC	REU	National, regional projects
Kosovo	Focus Country C	n/a	None	REU	National, projects
Macedonia, FYR	Focus country C	08-Nov-93	NC	REU	National, regional, inter-regional projects, TCPF
Montenegro	Focus country C	17-Nov-07	None	REU	Regional projects

Source: FPMIS and COIN, elaborated by Evaluation

166. The REU proposal to the ERC also identified Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, the Russian Federation and Turkey as countries for extended collaboration in strategic and resource partnership issues, as they hold potential to be both strategic and resource partners. FAO's structure in 2012 at national level is described in Box 5 below.

Box 5. FAO country presence in strategic and resource partner countries

Country Name	Type	Date of Membership	Current FAO Presence	Coverage by	FAO activities operational in June 2012
Azerbaijan	Strategic and resource partner	20-Oct-95	AFAORep with multi-accredited FAOR in SEC	SEC	National, regional, inter-regional and global projects
Kazakhstan	Strategic and resource partner	07-Nov-97	None	SEC	Regional, and inter-regional projects
Russian Federation	Strategic and resource partner	11-Apr-06	None	None (currently REU)	National, regional, projects
Turkey	Strategic and resource partner	06-Apr-48	AFAORep with multi-accredited FAOR in SEC	SEC	National, regional, inter-regional projects

Source: FPMIS and COIN, elaborated by Evaluation

167. The 'other countries' are listed in Box 6 below. Most had no particular priority attached to them but had some kind of FAO activities operational as of June 2012. In the case of Belarus and Turkmenistan, efforts were on-going to launch FAO assistance. Should these be successful, these two Member Countries would be considered part of the focus country group. Cyprus, Malta and Slovenia have been EU Members since 2004 and FAO's activities were limited to regional and interregional projects. Bulgaria and Romania are EU Members since 2007, and FAO's on-going activities were limited to regional projects. In fact, Romania recently acted as a donor for the FAO contribution to the agricultural census in Moldova. With Croatia's imminent EU accession, activities, other than relevant regional or interregional ones, will also likely phase out.

Box 6. FAO country presence in 'other countries' with operational activities as of June 2012

Country Name	Type	Date of Membership	Current FAO Presence	Coverage by	FAO activities operational in June 2012
Belarus	negotiations on-going	19-Nov-05	NC	REU	Regional, inter-regional projects
Turkmenistan	negotiations on-going	20-Oct-95	None	SEC	Regional and interregional projects
Bulgaria	activities on going in June 2012	06-Nov-67	None	REU	Regional project
Croatia	activities on going in June 2012	08-Nov-93	None	REU	Regional project
Cyprus	activities on going in June 2012	14-Sep-60	None	None	Inter-regional projects
Malta	activities on going in June 2012	05-Oct-64	None	None	Regional, inter-regional projects
Romania	activities on going in June 2012	09-Nov-61	None	REU	Regional project
Serbia	activities on going in June 2012	02-Nov-01	NC	REU	National, regional projects
Slovenia	activities on going in June 2012	08-Nov-93	None	REU	Regional projects

Source: FPMIS and COIN, elaborated by Evaluation

168. As a follow-up to one of the requests of the ERC in 2010 and of the FAO Conference in 2011, as well as part of the transformational changes promoted by the newly elected Director-General of FAO, the Secretariat's proposal submitted to the ERC at its 28th session in April 2012 included specific proposals for the Region, namely: a) a country and thematic refocusing of FAO's work in the Region; b) transition for some countries from being solely recipients of assistance to becoming resource and technical assistance partners for the Region; and c) new arrangements for strengthening the policy dialogue with Member Countries between Regional Conferences.

169. The ERC accepted the proposals, including the strengthening of the presence at country level and the concentration of FAO activities on 12 focus countries. This decision was further amplified, and endorsed, by the Council at its 144th session and comprised the following:

- the creation of FAO Representative posts in Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan;
- the establishment of Assistant FAO Representatives in Moldova and Uzbekistan, with multiple-accredited FAO Representatives in REU and SEC, respectively;
- the creation of three posts for Programme and Partnership Development, or FAORs depending on the new Host Country Agreements, in Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan and Turkey; and
- the creation of a post in REU for Partnership Development Officer.[77]

170. These processes had, to some extent, already been on-going. In the course of the reform process and the former Director General's vision for decentralization, the establishment of AFAORep posts for all Central Asian countries as well as selected SEU countries had been proposed to the Conference. The Member Countries approved the establishment of these positions for Central Asia and Africa at the time, yet did not do so for Europe and the Latin American Region. As a result, the recurrent requests from the Republic of Moldova could not be accommodated until June 2012. In addition, while the resources had been made available for the establishment of AFAORep posts in the Plan of Work and Budget since 2006/07, the Secretariat was not proactive in taking the initiative for establishing offices at country level. The establishment of AFAORs, in Kyrgyzstan and later Tajikistan took place only after specific requests had been formulated by each country. This meant that the resources allocated for DOs in the Region, had until 2012 not been fully utilized. Lastly, discussions about liaison offices in both the Russian Federation and Kazakhstan had started a few years earlier. Also, the role of the FAO country office in Turkey has been progressively changing to meet the country's shift from being a recipient to a resource partner (see Section 5.3.3).

171. In December 2012, at the time of finalizing this report, the 'designated FAORep' in Kyrgyzstan had been selected and posted and negotiations had started for the amendment of the Host Country Agreement with the Republic of Moldova, to establish the post of the Assistant FAOR.

[77] The Evaluation notes that, to the best of its knowledge, Terms of Reference and lines of reporting for the Programme and Partnership Development new posts were not publicly available yet as of December 2012.

5.3 The Decentralized Offices in Europe and Central Asia

172. This section analyses the structure and management of the Decentralized Offices in the Region that were visited by the Evaluation, based on its direct observations in the period June-September 2012.

5.3.1 The Regional Office for Europe and Central Asia

173. The Regional Office for Europe and Central Asia and the Sub-regional Office for Eastern and Southern Europe were merged in early 2012, after almost five years of being co-located. Despite the two offices having been separate entities until two months earlier, it would have been very difficult to assess them separately in terms of management by the time this Evaluation started. The two offices had been closely linked for some time, and the inevitable changes brought about by the merging were being rapidly tackled, at least to the external observer. Therefore, the analysis of this Evaluation will focus on REU as it appeared in mid-2012.

174. By that time, REU was the smallest Regional Office in the Organization. It had a strong and strategic leadership and was focused on adjusting its working mechanisms and performance to face the external challenges posed by the complex social, economic and political context in which it operated, the internal corporate changes on-going since 2010 as well as those emerging under the new leadership of the Organization.

175. The ADG/RR had been in post since 2010; her mandate also included the supervision of SEC. With the merging of SEU into REU, the Deputy Regional Representative lost the function of Sub-regional Coordinator. This post, which was vacant from March until November 2012, also took on the responsibility of FAORep in Armenia, Georgia and the Republic of Moldova. During 2012, the gap in filling the Deputy post had immediate consequences on the attention provided to the country offices, as discussed later in the report.

176. The Office was organized as follows: a Management Team, including the senior officers in the position of advisors to the ADG/RR; a Programme Management Unit; an Administration Unit; and the Technical Team.

177. The Field Programme Management, Communication and Resource Mobilization Team included the operations function.[78] It was relatively strong, with a broad range of responsibilities from operations to programme and policy development, mostly due to the skills and competences of some of its members. The senior officer leading the unit was also focal point for several tasks, including resource mobilization, Country Programming Frameworks (CPF), Secretary of the ERC, Results-Based Management (RBM).

178. The operations section of the Programme Management Unit was technologically advanced and efficient. A major weakness noted was the prevailing attitude within the unit to maintain a strong grip on operational and managerial decisions that could have been partly delegated to the country offices. As a consequence, the Unit did not make efforts to empower the country offices within its responsibility, through capacity development and allowing them

[78] The Programme Management unit changed name in January 2012. For the sake of abbreviation, it will be called Field Programme Unit in the report.

access to corporate systems, in so far as this was possible. This resulted in the project operation group carrying out work that could have been delegated to the country level, thus resulting in inefficiencies as discussed later in the report.

179. The Administration Unit was well run and efficient, somewhat averse to taking up a stronger role among the various units in the Office. It also appeared to have the potential to exercise a more active role in developing capacities of country office administration staff.

180. The Technical group comprised both professional staff and consultants (see Section 6.3 below): some of them had been with FAO for many years and others had joined more recently. Few of them appeared to have experience of work at 'field level'; two of them had worked in HQ and one in other regions. In their view, they were not working as a formal Multi-Disciplinary Team (MDT) and were not given the opportunity to contribute to the Office's strategic decisions.

181. At the time of the Evaluation, REU was carrying out a study assessing the possibility for the Programme Management Unit (incorporating Operations) and the Administration Group to merge certain functions, so as to eliminate duplication of work across the two groups. The study appeared to be a possible model for a 'support cluster' in any FAO decentralized office: the initiative should be given further impulse and proceed at a faster pace, in consideration of its importance for enhanced efficiency of administration and operations functions.

182. Across all other groups, however, integration, communication and collaboration was rather weak. The Evaluation noted the need for focused efforts aimed at developing trust and mutual respect, in particular between the Technical Team and the other teams in the Office.

183. Last, the efficiency of the Office in reaching out to the Members where its operations were focused, and to HQ, had recently been limited by the collapse in early 2012 of the Hungarian airline company. Travel to HQ and to the countries in the Western Balkans from Budapest had since become lengthier and possibly more costly.

5.3.2 The Sub-regional Office for Central Asia

184. The history of the Sub-regional Office for Central Asia (SEC) was described above. Upon its establishment, the first Sub-Regional Coordinator (SRC) was transferred to Ankara from the Regional Office for the Near East. The current incumbent took up duty in mid-2008.

185. The establishment of SEC in Ankara implied incorporating a sizeable number of technical staff and building up a support structure capable of coping with the specificities of the area. As of July 2012, the Office had a solid structure and an effective cluster of support services, capable of tackling the problems and challenges of operating field activities at a distance. Here as well, there were a Field Programme/Operations Unit, an Administration Unit and a Technical Unit.

186. The Field Programme/Operations Unit appeared to be over-structured, due to an internal division of responsibilities linked to project cycle phases: one part of the Unit dealt with 'project idea to project document' and another part of the Unit with 'implementation'. The Evaluation did not see any advantage in this set-up. Another weakness noted was the low accuracy of information made available in FPMIS on project milestones, information and

documents. During 2012 there was a change in staff, which may have caused some additional problems. In August 2012, SEC established its Field Programme Development and Implementation Committee, with the aim of improving the development, monitoring and coordination of the field programme in Central Asian countries.

187. The Administration Unit was run through strong leadership, and showed good group dynamics and collaboration. The Unit played an important role in developing capacities of staff at country level and in supporting them in their work. The Unit had developed strong capacity in procurement, that would allow it to handle also emergency and rehabilitation operations without efforts. It appeared to have the potential to become a decentralized hub specialized in training administrative 'generalists', especially in the areas of procurement and emergency preparedness.

188. The Technical Unit included five staff and a large number of consultants, many of whom were Turkish national experts. The recent and important addition to the staff of SEC of the Senior Policy Officer, previously posted in Budapest, was to contribute substantially to the policy and strategy development needs of the sub-region. The Unit appeared to be communicating well and keen to carry out work together. The focus of the Technical Unit's work was Azerbaijan and the countries in Central Asia; virtually no attention or support was provided to the FAO field programme in Turkey.

189. Overall, the Office showed a good level of communication across units, which resulted in a good integration and quality of operational support based on capacity development of staff at country level.

190. However, the geographical accessibility of Ankara by HQ-based FAO staff on mission to the Central Asian countries was an issue, considering that the great majority of them had to add a necessary additional day to their duty-travel time to go through SEC for coordination and exchange: this rarely happened, to some detriment of improved coordination and exchange.

5.3.3 The Country Offices

FAO in Albania

191. The Republic of Albania has been a Member of FAO since 12 November 1973. In the 1990s, until early 2000s, through a large Italian funded project, a Project Management Unit was established, perceived by many as the 'FAO Office' in Tirana. At the end of 1999, the Government requested that an FAO office be opened in Albania. In early 2000, FAO proposed to establish an 'Out-posted Technical Officer acting as FAO Representative' (FAOR/OTO) scheme with the Government's contribution, but there was no follow-up. Later on, the Government and FAO agreed to establish a National Correspondent scheme, which was implemented with a relatively high turn-over of appointees.

192. The Evaluation met with the incumbent and a former National Correspondent. What emerged was a wide variability in the interpretation of the role and a lack of accountability mechanisms that would allow addressing problems whenever these would emerge.

193. FAO was not visible in the country: within the Ministry of Agriculture, a few senior officers were aware of its work because of their involvement in specific national projects, in

total three UNJPs and two TCPs since 2010. Within the One-UN context (see Section 10.6), knowledge was limited to the major UNJP, implemented with two other agencies, but nothing was known about the other joint programmes. Very few other organizations were aware that FAO was working at national level.

194. Overall, the United Nations Resident Coordinator's office (UNRC) was more effective in giving visibility to FAO than the NC, even within the same Ministry of Agriculture. The effectiveness of the NC role, independently from who was the incumbent, was almost nil.

195. Albania is benefitting, and will continue to do so, from the EU's support for pre-accession countries; these however tend to focus at the macro-level of the national governance system. The evidence gathered by the Evaluation, supported by the socio-economic data for the country, indicated that the UN and FAO still have a key role to play and a clear comparative advantage, for meso- and micro-level interventions towards food security and sustainable development for all, and this for the next decade or so. An example of this, among others, is in the area of land consolidation and tenure on which the EU has no single policy. REU included Albania among the Focus countries 'C': the Evaluation considers that the Organization should raise it to a similar level as Armenia, Georgia and the Republic of Moldova, with a multiple-accredited FAO Representation.

The FAO Representation in Armenia

196. The FAO Representation in Armenia has been a multi-accredited Representation under the responsibility of SEU/REU, staffed with an Assistant FAO Representative (AFAORep) since 2004. Staff also included an Administrative Clerk and one Driver, and the office was located in the premises of the Ministry of Agriculture. The previous non-resident FAO Representative, also Deputy Regional Representative for SEU/REU, carried out three to four short visits to the country per year.

197. The FAO Office managed its delegated tasks well, including maintaining good and effective relations with the UNCT and with some other government partners, as well as handling the Regular Programme budget, in the order of USD 10,000/year. FAO's visibility in the country was high with the Ministry of Agriculture, the United Nations Country Team, a few other Ministries and resource partners. However, NGOs and CSOs lamented its absence from national discussion forums.

198. FAO in Armenia also included a variable number of project coordinators and assistants, responsible for managing individual projects. All of them had good relations and daily interaction with the AFAORep and the Administrative Clerk. However, FAO Office and project staff were, from an operational and administrative point of view, completely separate and project staff responded directly to the Budget Holder/s in REU or HQ. In theory, a project could be run in the country without the manager ever going through the FAO Office.

199. This situation, following the decision made by REU Field Programme Unit not to delegate any responsibility for the management of the field programme to the country office, affected the efficiency of the Organization in the country. Furthermore, the Office had received limited access to the corporate systems, e.g. FPMIS, thereby limiting the span of knowledge and working quality of national staff. This was in contradiction to the principle of

subsidiarity and to the recent drive to integrate all work by the Organization at country level under the responsibility of the country office.

200. Furthermore, the Evaluation found no evidence of a management and coordination effort across the field programme, to mainstream operations, rationalize the use of resources and strive for improving efficiency and effectiveness. An example was the absence of any solution, following the example of UNDP and WFP, to the issue of the Host Country Agreement, which contributed to waste of resources due to the lack of an FAO imprest account in the country, as well as to lack of exemption from Value Added Tax (VAT).

201. In conclusion, at the time of the Evaluation mission's to the country, the performance of FAO in Armenia was hampered by the following factors:

- country office staff, despite possessing an adequate level of competence and skills to assume more roles and responsibilities, were under-utilized by having their formal responsibility and mandate limited to the management of the Regular Programme;
- the lack of delegation to the country office, by maintaining a number of functions in REU, increased transaction costs in the management of the field programme; and
- the field programme suffered from a lack of coordination and synergy development across projects, because of the artificial separation of work.

202. The Evaluation of FAO's cooperation with Armenia will discuss these aspects more in detail.

The FAO Representation in Kyrgyzstan

203. The FAO Representation in Kyrgyzstan has been a multi-accredited Representation under the responsibility of SEC, since 2007. Initially, FAO was represented by a National Correspondent; in 2009 an Assistant FAORep was recruited. The incumbent Sub-regional Coordinator carried out a few short missions per year.

204. As of June 2012, the Office could be upgraded to the status of fully-fledged FAO Representation: it was expected that the formalization of this step would be completed in mid-2013. In November 2012, an international FAO staff member took up duty as 'designated FAORep'.

205. At the time of the Evaluation mission in September 2012, the FAO Office was very well managed, with a good capacity to handle the problems stemming from being 'managed at a distance'. The incumbent AFAORep had a good knowledge of programme and operational issues and the Office maintained good and effective relations with the UNCT and with other partners.

206. FAO was well considered and visible in the country, thanks to its programme and strong FAO Office. The Evaluation noted that the Office had received attentive, accurate and forward-looking support from SEC. It was functioning through good group integration, spirit of collaboration, knowledge of the various job components, and was able to use corporate systems, compensating for the unavailability of instruments with self-produced monitoring tools. The AFAORep and Projects staff considered themselves as One-Office and there was cooperation in information sharing and mutual help in solving problems.

FAO in Moldova

207. The Republic of Moldova has been a Member of FAO since 1995. Since November 2004, the FAO Sub-regional Representative for Central and Eastern Europe, in Budapest, had been designated as the FAO Representative to the country. Despite several requests by the Government to have an FAO Office with AFAORep, FAO only agreed to the establishment of National Correspondents. The first NC was appointed around 2003; the incumbent has been in post since 2005.

208. Thanks to the experience acquired over time, the NC could easily get in touch with the ADG/RR in Budapest or identify other staff there, who would be able to support and respond to queries, as required. In addition to the experience built over time, she could be quite effective and devote a large share of her time to FAO's matters, mostly because the Ministry of Agriculture had a strong interest in maintaining an active relationship with FAO.

209. The Council in June 2012 approved the creation of an Assistant FAO Representative post in the country. The process, which includes the revision of the Host Country Agreement and the selection of a suitable candidate, is likely to be completed in mid 2013. In the interim period, REU decided to hire a Programme Coordinator who was expected to take up duty in November 2012, working in parallel with the current NC.

210. While FAO was known and well appreciated in the country, and the NC considered by all as 'FAO's person in the country', there was unanimous agreement that a more substantive presence in the country was highly desirable and would allow for much greater impact.

The FAO Representation in Tajikistan

211. In 1996 an emergency coordination office was established. In 2002, a Project Coordination Office was opened with an international coordinator which, while essentially set up to manage an 'emergency programme', established FAO as an organizational presence in Tajikistan. Thereafter, emergency coordinators changed very frequently, which impacted on the image of the Organization in the country. The last Emergency/Project Coordinator took up duty in 2008 and retired from FAO in April 2012.

212. In 2011, the Government went through an 'exchange of letters' with FAO to establish a FAO Representation, through the multi-accreditation scheme within the mandate of the Sub-regional Coordinator in SEC. The SRC carried out a few short missions per year. The current AFAORep took up her post in December 2011. As of June 2012, the Office could be upgraded to the status of fully-fledged FAO Representation, although it was expected that the formalization of this step will be completed in mid-2013.

213. At the time of the Evaluation mission in September 2012, the incumbent AFAORep was making good progress towards a more effective and more organized Office, despite the challenges. She had a good knowledge of FAO mandate and the Office was also developing a network of relations with the Government and other partners.

214. FAO had gained huge visibility in most recent years in the country, through its work at policy level on agrarian reform, and related strong involvement of several national and

international stakeholders. The AFAORep was also working towards an integration of the various streams of work and related staff and developing the field-programme that had slowed down to some extent. All this should contribute to enhance the effectiveness of the Organization in the country.

The FAO Representation in Turkey

215. Turkey hosted a fully-fledged FAO Representation since 1982. The Representation was a relatively small office, including a Representative, an Assistant and support staff, who managed FAO's work in the country.

216. Until the mid-1990s, the office in Ankara was the only fully-fledged FAO Representation in the Region. Over time it adjusted quite effectively to meet the evolution of the Government of Turkey's requirements in type of assistance: the field programme increased since 2000, mostly through the funding of Unilateral Trust Funds by the Government itself and the United Nations Joint Programmes. In 2011/12, six national projects were operationally active, handled by the FAOR, namely two United Nations Joint Programmes, two UTFs and two TCPs/. The country was also participating in a number of regional, inter-regional and global projects managed by SEC and HQ.

217. In 2005, the Host Country Agreement was amended to include Azerbaijan, thereby changing it to a double-accredited FAOR. With the creation of SEC, the office became a co-located and multiple-accredited FAOR, functionally separate from SEC. As of 2012, the FAOR in Ankara was staffed with an Assistant FAO Representative and a programme assistant, both competent and experienced in their jobs; the Representation was also well supported by the Administration and Operations Units in SEC.

218. The Representation played an important role in the management of the FAO-Turkey Partnership Programme, together with the Sub-regional Coordinator, and in the negotiation of the new agreements. At the same time, the AFAORep was fully involved in representing FAO at national level on behalf of the SRC. The programme assistant had also taken on responsibilities and tasks related to SEC, as well as the role of Gender Focal Point for SEC and the Representation.

219. The FAOR was thus moving out of its traditional mandate of Representation, and carried out several typical functions of a Liaison Office. Similar evolutions occurred also in other countries, e.g. Brazil: this appeared to be perfectly in line with the changing requirements of the host country and staff had been able to perform effectively in the new context. The Organization was also adequately following up the transition, through the recent approval of a Programme and Partnership Development officer.

5.4 Efficiency and effectiveness of FAO's presence in Europe and Central Asia

220. As discussed in the previous sections, at the core of the FAO decentralization process was the set-up of a decentralized network that would be closer to and would provide a more relevant, efficient and effective support to countries than HQ. Staff costs were also taken into consideration, albeit this can be a very variable element in the long run.

221. The evidence available to the Evaluation showed that the current location of FAO's Regional and Sub-regional Offices for Europe and Central Asia was mostly driven by the favourable conditions offered to the Organization by the respective host countries. Even now, all FAO offices in Budapest enjoy an excellent relationship with the Government of Hungary, as much as SEC has with the Government of Turkey and both governments still contribute significantly to the running costs of the offices. Communication facilities were also adequate in both offices.

222. In terms of airline connections, in 2012 Budapest ceased to be an easy airline hub and connections to the countries served from REU were, in some cases, worse than from Rome. If in some cases REU staff travelling to the Western Balkans go through Rome airport, which could be an advantage in terms of networking with HQ, this will add to costs and time of duty-travel. Ankara never was a hub, although its frequent links to Istanbul airport undoubtedly make travel to Central Asia less cumbersome than from any other location, except Istanbul or Central Asia themselves. As mentioned above, however, the location in Ankara did not facilitate the meetings between HQ-based staff working in the region and colleagues in SEC.

223. At the same time, with the exception of SEU until late 2007 when the last TCPs came to an end in Hungary, neither REU nor SEC have ever been, and are even less now, very close to the countries they service and where their core geographic and contextual mandate lies. One major advantage of a decentralized network for any organization, is that staff posted 'outside HQ' are fully immersed in the social, cultural and linguistic environment in which they work: besides logistical advantages, this should also help them in understanding and framing better the support they provide to the local contexts. This type of full immersion does not apply either in SEU/REU or in SEC.

224. Questions on the visibility of FAO's DOs in the Region were included in the questionnaire for Member Countries. More than half of the respondents answered that HQs was their main port of call when dealing with FAO; nine out of 15 respondents in the SEU/REU region, including EU countries, considered that FAO's visibility in the Region had improved through the location of REU in Budapest. However only five respondents considered that FAO had become more efficient through this move. REU and SEC were the main port of call for three countries each; also, three member countries in Central Asia thought that FAO's visibility, efficiency and effectiveness has increased with SEC's location in Ankara.

225. The multiple-accreditation scheme ensured some kind of coverage to less than a third of countries where activities were on-going in June 2012. This was a notable improvement when compared to the coverage until mid-2000s. However, the work-load for the SEU and SEC Sub-regional Coordinators, who acted as the multiple-accredited FAO Representatives in three and four countries respectively, prevented substantial engagement in the majority of the countries concerned. This was particularly the case for the SRC's responsibility in Central Asia. The results of the multiple-accreditation in Armenia, Georgia and Moldova were not positive either: in the two countries visited by the Evaluation, there were serious weaknesses in the management of the field programme and in the strategic positioning of the Organization, in particular since 2010 and despite the previous incumbent having carried out three to four visits per year to each country. The vacant position of Deputy Regional Representative for Europe and Central Asia from February to November 2012, further exacerbated a number of problems.

226. The Evaluation appreciated the recently endorsed changes that will decrease time demands on the SEC Sub-regional Coordinator and the REU Deputy Regional Representative while improving presence and visibility of the Organization in Kyrgyzstan, Moldova, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan.

227. In a praiseworthy effort to manage the gap, the ADG/RR in REU set-up a system in 2012 of non-resident 'alternate FAO Representatives' for Armenia, Albania, Georgia and Moldova. This was done by delegating the coordination and management of the on-going activities in each country to a REU Officer. The Evaluation acknowledges that little else could have been done under the circumstances. In three out of the four countries, the Organization could count on experienced staff at country level who could handle the offices.[79] Nevertheless, despite the competences and skills of the Assistant FAO Representatives and National Correspondents currently working for FAO, the lack of an international FAO Representative to maintain a dialogue with governments and partners with the clout and weight that the position entails, and manage the whole programme in the country, caused a loss in the Organization's profile and in the quality of delivery. Thus, the 'alternate FAO Representative' can only be a palliative measure for an interim period, and should not be accepted as a long-term solution in any country where the Organization has a sizable portfolio and wants to maintain a comparative advantage in providing assistance and support.

228. The Evaluation also wishes to stress that the implicit weakness of the multiple accreditation scheme was further compounded in some countries by the 'centralized' management of the field programme by REU Field Programme Unit, which limited a more efficient and effective use of resources at country level. The Evaluation found substantial differences in the way REU and SEC implemented the principles of subsidiarity and integration of FAO's work at country level. This had notable effects on the empowerment, capacity and autonomy of country offices supported by one or the other DO.

229. The National Correspondent scheme was operational in five countries in the Region during the period under evaluation, and the Evaluation visited two of these. National Correspondents are senior civil servants who devote a percentage of their time to liaison functions between the government and FAO. They are designated jointly by the Government and FAO. FAO provides them with a limited budget to cover some operational costs, a computer with an email connection, and a modest salary supplement proportional to the percentage of time devoted to FAO liaison functions.

230. According to the terms of reference developed by FAO, a National Correspondent '*maintains FAO's presence as principal liaison point with governmental and non-governmental institutions in the agricultural, forestry and fisheries sectors*' but '*will have no direct involvement in project execution'*[80]. The Evaluation notes that overall duties for a NC could easily represent a full-time job. However, NCs take on this role in addition to their jobs in the respective ministries and there is no real accountability mechanism in place.

231. Furthermore, the fact that a National Correspondent works from within the government is not necessarily an advantage: in some countries he/she may not be accepted as a member of the United Nations Country Team (UNCT) and in general, scope for dialogue

[79] In Albania, the position of National Correspondent was vacant for most of this period and the newly appointed person had not worked with FAO before.

[80] ToR for NC with an accredited FAO representative, COIN, November 2012.

with resource and other partners is quite restricted. Thus, the NC scheme has limited costs to the Organization but markedly limited results too. In one country, the government had been willing to let the incumbent devote most of her time to carrying out work for FAO, which was greatly helpful for the Organization's work in the country, but this was not the case elsewhere and could be very variable over time too.

232. An extreme case of inappropriateness of the NC scheme to the needs for FAO's presence was Albania. Since 2008, the country was, by governmental decision, a UN Delivery-as-One pilot and was rapidly moving into the One-UN framework phase by the time of the Evaluation. This is discussed more in detail later in the report (see Section 10.6). The NC had no role in this process, for incompatibility of roles by being a Government staff member. Furthermore, the complex national institutional set-up did not facilitate the coordination and facilitation tasks of any NC. Therefore, irrespective of the incumbent's individual competence and skills, the NC in Albania had hardly any role to play in support of FAO's activities in the country, despite the acute need for a more effective contribution by the Organization to the agricultural and rural development process in the country.

233. The conclusion of the Evaluation was that the National Correspondent scheme in Europe and Central Asia should be abolished. Furthermore, FAO should refrain from operational activities at national level if the Organization and/or the host country cannot devote sufficient resources to the establishment of an adequate presence of the Organization, as a minimum through a senior national or international FAO staff member sitting in the UNRC's office as was the case of other non-resident UN agencies in Albania. Other mechanisms can be developed to facilitate the participation of such countries in regional, inter-regional or global projects and normative activities: these could include, among others, partnerships with national and international organizations present in the countries, either through a long-term memorandum of understanding or on a case-by-case basis; collaboration with the UN Resident Coordinator's Office to identify potential stakeholders depending on the issue at stake; use of networks of focal points for different topics; etc.

234. Another issue that deserves immediate attention is the status of the Host Country Agreements in the Region. The evidence available to the Evaluation showed that FAO had an 'exchange of letters' with the governments of all the countries where it has an office, but Host Country Agreements had been signed only in Hungary and Turkey. Although the procedure is legally binding in the international context, the lack of ratification through the national mechanisms means that in all other countries with the exception of Georgia, at the time of writing this report, FAO staff and operations, did not formally enjoy the benefits of the UN Convention on Privileges and Immunities. It appears that to some extent, insufficient coordination and lack of clarity on roles and responsibilities among units in FAO, in HQ and in the Decentralized Offices, was one of the causes for the lack of action on this matter. In the case of Armenia, time and efforts went into discussion with the Government and in coordination with the UNRC, but had led to no results by the time of the Evaluation, as FAO had not considered the possibility of following the pragmatic approach of temporary solutions pursued by other agencies, e.g. WFP.

235. Proper accreditation and juridical recognition by the national State should be the first step to take when a UN organization starts working in any country, independently from the rank, quality and structure of the planned presence of the Organization in the country. Absence thereof can have heavy implications for FAO staff, and has immediate negative effects on a range of operational issues such as access to arbitration, procurement, Value

Added Tax exemption, import rights, opening of bank accounts and imprest account use, among others.

236. Both cases of imprest accounts and import rights are particularly relevant. In the absence of a proper legal status, FAO cannot open a bank account, with immediate consequences on the efficiency and cost of its operations in the country.[81] Equally, exemption from custom duties through import rights affects the possibility of making available to projects at country level, equipment and supplies that they need for demonstration or institution-building purposes.[82]

237. Last, the profile of the newly proposed Programme and Partnership Development officers had not been finalized yet at the time of writing this report. Based on the discussions with various stakeholders, and on its own knowledge of the Region, the Evaluation recommends that these posts be established at a level of seniority that will allow them to be effective, depending on the national and institutional context in which each of them will have to operate. Furthermore, as some of these posts will be created in countries where FAO will have no other presence, their formalization through the UNRC office or other adequate alternative solution will be necessary, within the range of the corporate set-up at country level.

5.5 Conclusions

238. REU was moved several times across a number of different locations, since its establishment. The current location of FAO's Regional and Sub-regional Offices for Europe and Central Asia were mostly decided on the basis of the generous offers of the hosting countries. However, neither office was or is 'in' the sub-regions they serve, thus undermining to a certain extent, the added value of the decentralization process. SEC was never located in an airport hub and as of early 2012, transport logistics were no longer as favourable for REU as they used to be. Travel arrangements do not facilitate communication and collaboration between HQ and DOs and REU staff will face inefficiencies in travelling to some of the countries where it should focus its work in the next decade.

239. In the SEU/REU countries, technical and policy advice will increasingly come in the next future from HQ, but it will still need to be tailored and translated, sometimes literally, to the regional specificities by REU staff: increased close collaboration between REU and HQ staff will be instrumental and necessary for an efficient and effective delivery to the Member Countries in this Sub-region.

240. The multiple-accreditation of FAO Representatives can be an effective mechanism for ensuring visibility for the Organization and adequate management of FAO's work at country level, as long as no more than two countries are covered through the mechanism by the same FAO Representative, who should spend at least six working weeks per year in each country. Also, adequate delegation of authority from the Regional and Sub-regional Offices to the countries is absolutely required to enable efficient and effective delivery and implementation of tasks at the appropriate level.

[81] See Section 7.1 below, on delegation of authority.

[82] FAO could not import into Russia equipment for demonstration purposes for spraying ultra-low concentration locust control insecticides.

241. The National Correspondent Scheme is neither efficient nor effective to ensure adequate visibility for the Organization in any country. FAO should refrain from engaging in operational activities at country level when the Organization or the host country cannot commit resources enough to cover the costs of an FAO presence with the adequate capacity and competence for dialogue and negotiation with stakeholders and partners, as well as for field programme management.

242. In several countries, governments have not signed a Host Country Agreement with FAO ensuring that the Organization and its staff can benefit from the due privileges and imunities; this could become a real problem any time for FAO staff and has immediate consequences for the efficiency of the work in the Region, in terms of costs and smoothness of its operations.

243. The resources that FAO allocated to have a presence at country level in the Region did not always reflect the relative importance attached to the Member Countries in the perspective of 'REU focus'. Changes endorsed by the June 2012 Council addressed this imbalance, but only to some extent.

244. In particular, two countries where the rural population and the agricultural sector play an important role in the national economy, namely Albania and the Republic of Moldova, did not receive adequate attention from FAO over the evaluation period. The two countries have also adopted the One-UN Programme approach and FAO's substantive participation in the agenda setting, planning and reporting phases of these processes will be key in these countries.

245. The Evaluation formulated Recommendation 3, on the structure of FAO Decentralized Offices in Europe and Central Asia, also tackling the Evaluation's observations on Albania and Republic of Moldova, and Recommendation 4 on Host Country Agreements.

6 Resources in Europe and Central Asia

6.1 Regular Programme resources in Europe and Central Asia

246. The Evaluation assessed the allocation of FAO Regular Programme budget to the decentralized network in Europe and Central Asia, for the period 2004-2011.[83] Data originated from the Programmes of Work and Budget for the four biennia concerned, as shown in Box 7.

Box 7. Available data series for the Decentralized Offices

Office	Period
Regional Office for Europe, REU	2004-2011
Sub-Regional Office for Eastern and Southern Europe, SEU	2004-2011
Sub-Regional Office for Central Asia, SEC	2007-2011
Country Offices in Europe and Central Asia, COs	2004-2011

Source: Evaluation

247. The analysis included both Staff and Non-Staff resources. For this purpose, Staff is defined as Regular Programme budget posts; Non-Staff includes 'everything except Staff', i.e. cost of staff recruited through any other type of contract, operational costs, General Operating Expenses, etc. Change over time was presented by assigning the value '100' to the first biennium of the analysis, i.e. 2004/05 for most offices and 2006/07 for SEC, and measuring the increase over the previous biennium.[84] Values above 100 represent an increase, and values below 100, a decrease.

248. Box 8 below shows the absolute values of the Programme of Work for each Decentralized Office in the Region, the share between Staff and Non-Staff resources and the variation over each biennium of the total allocation, in the period 2004-2011.

[83] It was not possible to include 2012, given the timing of the Evaluation in the first year of the biennium. Also, allocations to RNE were not included in this analysis.

[84] For example, a value of 120 in 2008/2009 means an increase of 20 points over 2006/2007.

Box 8. Programme of Work in DOs in Europe and Central Asia[85]

Office	2004/2005 (USD)	2006/2007 (USD)	2008/2009 (USD)	2010/2011 (USD)
REU	4,607,000	4,613,000	7,093,000	7,371,068
SEU	3,575,000	2,938,000	6,206,000	5,255,358
SEC		6,046,000	6,114,000	5,683,525
COs	115,000	1,954,000	2,310,000	2,602,957
Total	**8,297.000**	**15,551,000**	**21,723,000**	**20,912,908**
Staff and non-staff resources (USD)				
All DOs, staff	6,804,000	11,737,000	14,116,000	14,258,012
All DOs, non staff	1,493,000	3,814,000	7,607,000	6,654,896
Variation in total allotments, staff and non-staff				
Office	**2004/2005**	**2006/2007**	**2008/2009**	**2010/2011**
REU staff	100.00	96.21	130.68	141.30
REU non-staff	100.00	129.30	327.11	299.04
SEU staff	100.00	83.56	118.78	133.34
SEU non staff	100.00	77.64	354.33	192.06
SEC staff		100.00	93.65	80.33
SEC non staff		100.00	118.21	125.27
COs staff		100.00	121.02	111.39
COs non staff	100.00	540.87	606.96	973.28

Source: PIRES, elaborated by Evaluation

249. Data above indicate that in the period 2004-2009, FAO provided increasing resources, both Staff and Non-Staff, to the DOs in the Region, with a greater relative increase in Non-Staff resources. A small decrease occurred in 2010/11 in Non-Staff resources, the more flexible of the two elements of the total allotment. The Country Offices component started at a very low level, to increase very steeply for Non-Staff resources, linked to the establishment of FAO offices.

250. The analysis also included the comparison between resources allocated to the DOs in the Europe and Central Asia Region and to all other FAO Decentralized Offices across the world, as well as their change over time. Box 9 below indicates the variations, always taking 2004/2005 as the basis.

Box 9. Comparison between Programme of Work in DOs in all regions and in Europe and Central Asia

Office	2004/2005	2006/2007	2008/2009	2010/2011
All regions, total USD	180,122,000	208,534,000	251,292,000	266.952.291
All regions, variation	100.00	115.77	139.51	148.21
Europe and Central Asia, total USD	8,297,000	15,551,000	21,723,000	20,912,908
Europe and Central Asia, variation	100.00	187.43	261.82	252.05

Source: PIRES, elaborated by Evaluation

251. The comparison shows that the Europe and Central Asia Region started in 2004 with a very small share of the Programme of Work for the DO network; however, the Organization compensated this to some extent, with a greater relative increase in the following biennia.

[85] Figures in Box 8 do not consider internal income

252. In conclusion, in 2004 the RP resources to the Europe and Central Asia Region were very limited and concentrated in REU and SEU. The establishment of SEC led to an absolute increase of the resources for the Region, which went in parallel with an increase for REU and for the country offices. Overall, the Region has benefitted of a greater increase in RP resources than other regions in the world.

6.2 Resources for the field programme in Europe and Central Asia

253. This section analyses the resources available for FAO field programme in Europe and Central Asia in the period 1 January 2004 - 30 June 2012, to support any country in the Region, and funded by any resource partner, through the Government Cooperative Programme (GCP) and Unilateral Trust Fund (UTF) modalities, as well as by FAO Regular Programme through the Technical Cooperation Programme (TCP) modality. Figures reflect project budgets recorded in the FAO Field Programme Management Information System (FPMIS) as of June 2012: this means that total amounts are slightly larger than actual delivery in the Region in the selected period, as some initiatives were operational over longer time-spans and with a global and inter-regional thrust outside the boundaries of the Europe and Central Asia Region. An example of these was an Inter-regional TCP initiated in mid 2003 that included seven countries in the Region plus two in another region. The aim of the analysis was to capture all initiatives that concerned, in a way or another, any country in the Region; also, focus was mostly on trends rather than absolute value. Annex 5 presents the data in table format.

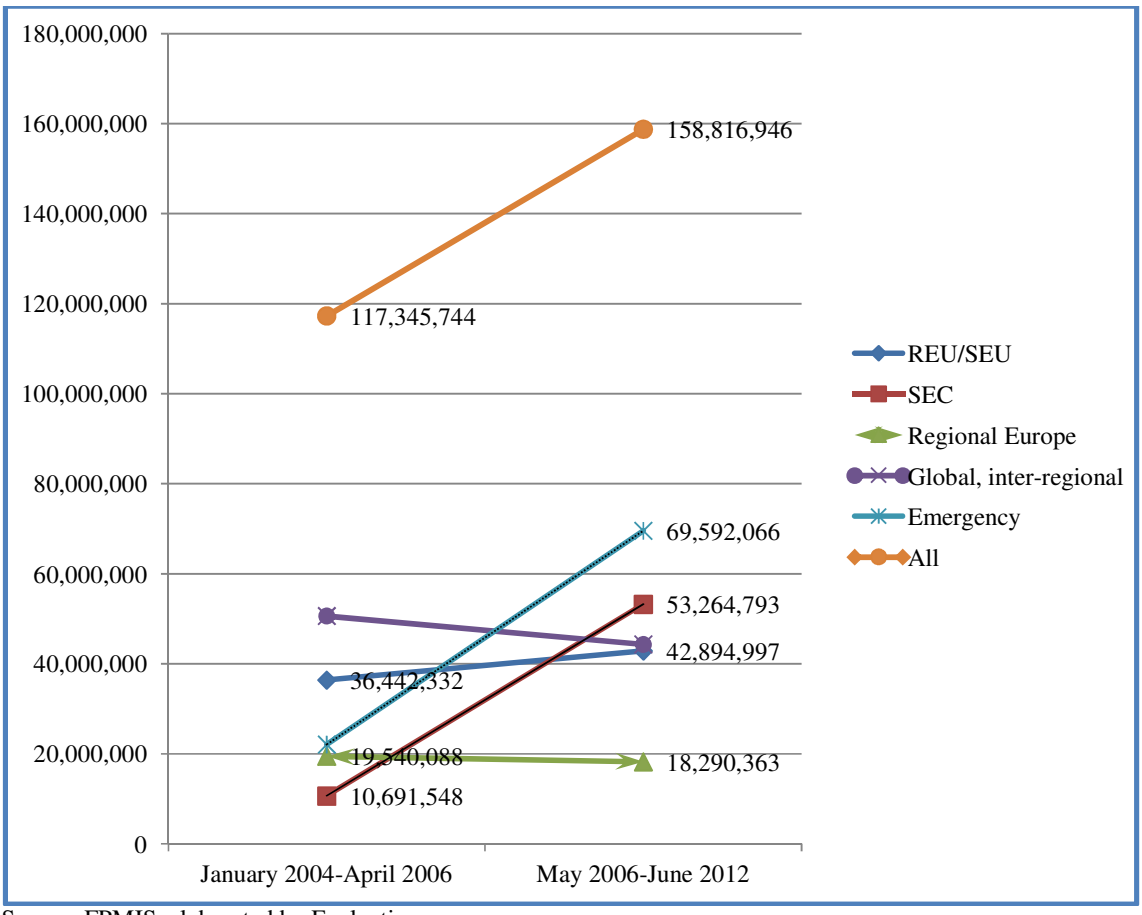
254. The total amount provided through the 372 initiatives funded by 20 different resource partners was USD 276 million, approximately 7% of the total FAO field programme for the whole of its Membership over the same period. Within the total for Europe and Central Asia: [86]

- USD 95 million - 34% - were channelled through global and inter-regional projects, mostly funded by the EC, Italy and OCHA;[87]
- USD 79 million - 29% - were channelled through projects in the SEU/REU countries, mostly funded by FAO, the EC and Italy;
- USD 63.8 - 23% - were channelled through projects in the SEC countries, including Turkey, mostly funded by FAO, the EC, Sweden and Turkey itself; and
- USD 37.8 million - 14% - were channelled through regional projects, i.e. including only countries in the Europe and Central Asia Region, virtually all funded by Italy, the EC and FAO.

255. The graph in Box 10 below shows total amounts over time for each Sub-region.

[86] The order in the listing of Resource partners indicates decreasing contributions.
[87] Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs.

Box 10. Field programme resources to the different sub-regions, by type of project



Source: FPMIS, elaborated by Evaluation

256. The three major donors, across all categories of intervention, were the EC, FAO and Italy, in decreasing order. The total budget made available through 161 Voluntary-funded initiatives, excluding FAO TCPs, was slightly above USD 226 million. Of these, 27 projects only had a budget above USD 1 million, and accounted for 68% of the financial resources. The use of Unilateral Trust Funds in the Region was still lagging behind, with a total just below USD 7 million, of which USD 5 million for one single emergency initiative in Tajikistan. Turkey, the second user of UTFs, has been an active resource partner for countries in Central Asia in recent years, as discussed later in this section.

257. FAO played a role of promoter and 'gap filling' in countries which still asked for its support but for which no other donors were available. The Organization made available through the TCP programme, 18% of the total financial resources of the field programme.

258. Emergency projects absorbed USD 91.7 million, or 33% of the total. Global and inter-regional Voluntary funded initiatives, virtually all addressing Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza control and surveillance and funded by the Asian Development Bank, Canada, the United Kingdom and the USA, were the preferred channel of funding with USD 38 millions. SEC countries as a whole received the second largest amount and SEU/REU countries the third, with interventions mostly focused on distribution of inputs linked to the food prices crisis, from 2008 onward. Main donors were the European Union, FAO and Sweden.

259. As part of the 2012 transformational changes, the responsibility for the management of emergency operations has been handed over to SEU/REU, SEC and country offices. FAO emergency interventions in the Region so far mostly addressed trans-boundary animal diseases (TADs) and pests, which will continue to be handled from HQ.[88] Another major cause for emergency interventions were national and international conflicts. Natural hazards such as cold waves and drought spells occur, and although they have been until now a minor share of the emergency portfolio, they are likely to increase due to climate change. Also, the Caucasus and Central Asia are earthquake-prone areas, and major disruptions of livelihoods may occur at any time.

260. The capacity of SEU/REU, SEC and country offices to handle and coordinate conflict- and natural hazard-related emergencies varied. REU's coordination in Summer 2012 with WFP and the UNCT to carry out a Food and Crop Assessment in the Republic of Moldova following a long drought was highly positive and appreciated by all concerned. In Tajikistan, the office was for long years an Emergency Coordination Unit and although staff had been rotating, know-how remained in place and could easily be revamped. Also, FAO staff in countries of multiple-accreditation are fully part of the national UNCT security plans. Nonetheless, the office in Budapest of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies was not aware that FAO had a Regional Office in the same city. Thus, there is no doubt that all DOs in the Region need to develop contingency plans and be able to coordinate any emergency action required, with the national governments and respective UNCTs.

261. The Evaluation identified as a watershed moment the month of May 2006, when the first project under SEC responsibility became operational and the 2005 reform 'came alive' for the field programme in the Region. Data showed that funds for national projects increased five-fold in SEC countries after May 2006, from USD 10.7 million in the period January 2004-April 2006, to USD 53 million in the period May 2006-June 2012. The increase was of a similar magnitude for both development and emergency projects, which absorbed USD 29 million in total. The Evaluation also assessed the resources allocated to national projects in the period January 2000-December 2003, to verify whether the increase since 2006 was still as strong taking into account a longer time-span. In SEC countries, the picture did not change significantly: funds allocated to national projects until 2003 amounted to USD 4 million, 75% of which were for emergencies. This amount represented 6% of the funds allocated to the same countries over the whole period, thus rather insignificant.

262. In SEU/REU countries, the picture was more complex, in particular when taking into account the longer time-span, since 2000. Funds available in the period January 2000-December 2003 for national projects in these countries were USD 49.7 million, of which USD 46 million were for emergency interventions. The Western Balkans, and Kosovo in particular, which were supported directly from REU in HQ, received the greatest share of these funds. In this period, main donors were FAO, the Netherlands and Luxembourg. In the period January 2004-April 2006, funds available for national projects were USD 36.4 million, allocated to 16 countries; 13% of these were for emergency interventions. Since May 2006, the total amount approved was USD 42.8 million in 11 countries, 44% of which for emergency interventions.

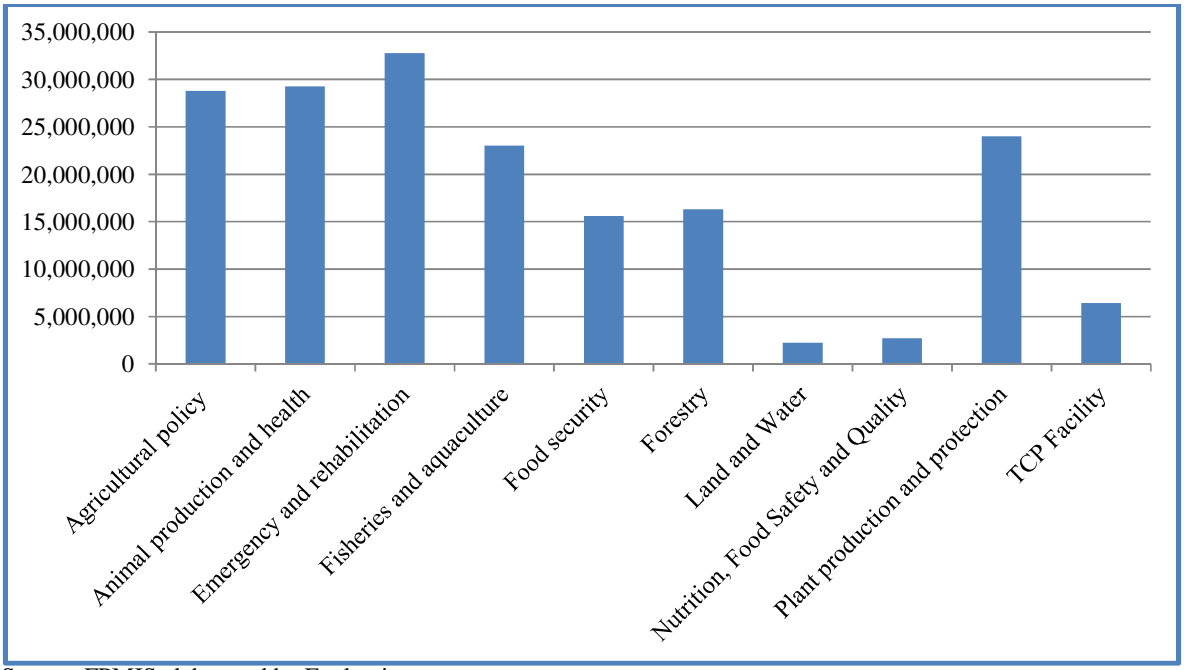
[88] In 2000, the responsibility for handling all initiatives at the inter-regional and global level, was correctly assigned to HQ and should not be changed.

263. Thus, over time, there was an increase in the total funds available for development interventions, mostly through FAO TCPs, and the field programme became focused on fewer countries. In particular, Armenia, Croatia, Georgia, Moldova, Russian Federation and Ukraine have seen an increase in their respective national project portfolios. The emergency portfolio, which decreased slowly over time and included many development-oriented projects approved until the late 2000s, represented a major area of work for FAO at national level in the sub-Region.

264. Funds allocated through regional projects were relatively stable, between USD 18-19 million in both periods. Global and inter-regional projects decreased since May 2006, mostly due to the decrease in funds for global epizooties, e.g. the highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI).

265. Sector-wise, the distribution of field programme resources for national and regional projects, is shown in Box 11 below:

Box 11. FAO field programme budget in Europe and Central Asia in the period January 2004-June 2012, by sector, national and regional projects[89]



Source: FPMIS elaborated by Evaluation team

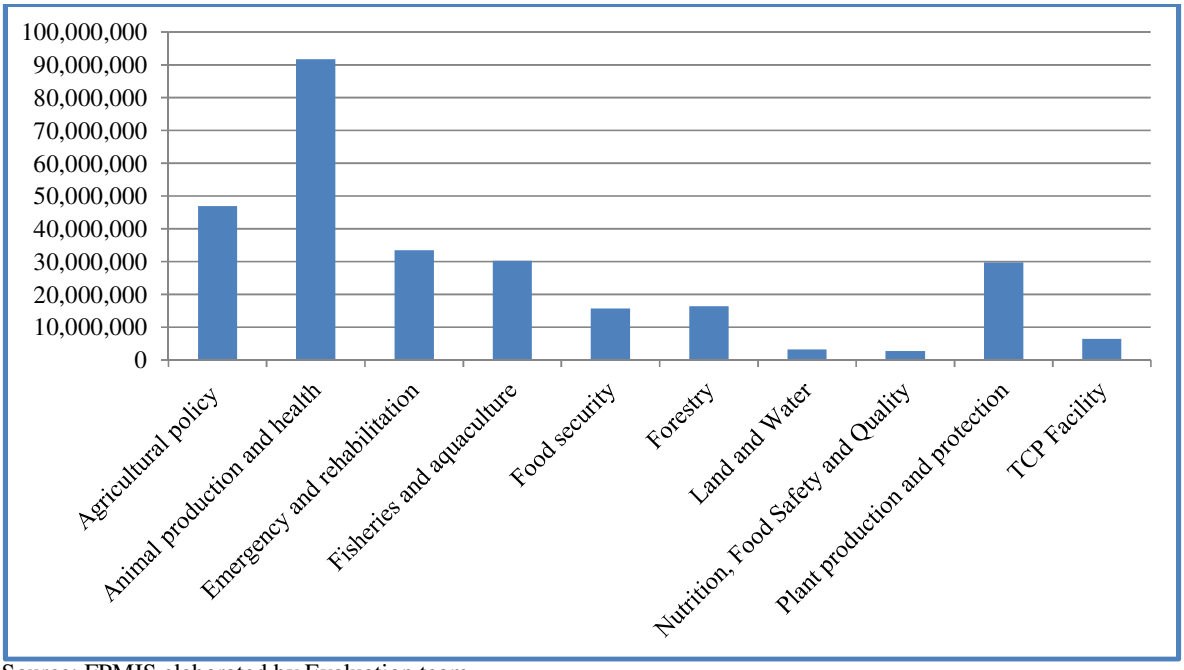
266. The sector absorbing most funds was emergency and rehabilitation, largely linked to conflicts in Central Asia and the Balkans and only to a minor extent, to natural disasters. Most of the interventions focused on distribution of agricultural and livestock inputs. Virtually the whole emergency portfolio was managed from FAO HQ, in terms of both operations and technical backstopping. A few national projects were operated from SEU/REU, as they mostly were 'rehabilitation and reconstruction' initiatives.

[89] The Agricultural Policy sector includes interventions in agricultural policy and information systems, agricultural and rural development, agricultural marketing and trade and statistics.

267. Two sectors, namely 'Agricultural Policy' (AP) - including interventions in agricultural policy and information systems, agricultural and rural development, agricultural marketing and trade and statistics - and Animal Production and Health (APH), received similar financial amounts, although in the case of APH, more than half of the resources were for emergency interventions focused on trans-boundary animal diseases. Fisheries and Aquaculture, with a high number of initiatives at regional level in the Mediterranean, and Plant Production and Protection, received resources at a similar order of magnitude; Forestry and Food Security projects were all at national level and mostly at community level.

268. When the sectoral analysis included inter-regional and global projects, the relative ranking changed to some extent, as shown in Box 12 below. In this case, Animal Production and Health was the largest sector, as it included interventions aimed at controlling global epizooties, e.g. HPAI. Agricultural Policy maintained its second ranking, as a number of global projects funded by the EC worked in the Region but remained embedded in a 'global approach'.

Box 12. FAO field programme budget in Europe and Central Asia in the period January 2004-June 2012, by sector, all projects[90]



Source: FPMIS elaborated by Evaluation team

269. Sectors receiving fewer resources also should be commented upon: in both Land and Water and Nutrition, and Food Safety and Quality, all initiatives were only funded by FAO through the TCP modality until the late 2000s. Only in recent years were projects funded through Trust Funds or United Nations Joint Programmes. Both sectors will require well-tailored Resource Mobilization strategies, given their relevance for many countries in the Region.

[90] The Agricultural Policy sector includes interventions in agricultural policy and information systems, agricultural and rural development, agricultural marketing and trade and statistics.

270. The Evaluation analysed in detail how the management of the portfolio complied with FAO decentralization policy, in terms of Operational, Lead Technical Unit (LTU) and Lead Technical Officer (LTO) responsibility for regional and national projects. By definition, global and inter-regional projects, for example all projects related to trans-boundary animal diseases and pests, were handled from HQ by default. Given the breadth of technical expertise, HQ was also in a better position to handle the occasional sub-regional or national project, as was the case for food security information systems.

271. Operational responsibility for SEU/REU countries was mostly located in SEU/REU, which handled projects worth 67% of the budget. This included all national and regional projects in the countries within their remit since 2005.[91] LTU and LTO responsibility for the same group of countries was, on the contrary, largely held in HQ, with only 10% and 17% of budget within the responsibility of SEU/REU respectively. The trend over time was of increased responsibility to SEU/REU for operations, LTU and LTO. At least three factors influenced this: i) increase in staff size in the Decentralized Offices since 2007; ii) progressive implementation of the 'subsidiarity policy' for project implementation; and iii) efforts by, and increased capacity and credibility of DOs to handle the projects over which they had a mandate.

272. A similar situation emerged for SEC countries,[92] with slightly smaller delegation in operational responsibilities in the Decentralized Offices, at 54% of the budget. The share for LTU responsibility was the same as in SEU/REU countries, with DOs being responsible for 9% of the budget, but higher in terms of LTO responsibilities, with 23% of the budget handled by the DOs.

273. To some extent, the source of funds may have influenced the assignment of responsibility in project management. The LTO for initiatives funded by resource partners was in DOs in 27% of the cases, and in 34% of the cases for the FAO funded TCPs. For the major donors in the Region, namely the EC, Italy and Sweden, it may be easier to negotiate projects directly with HQ, where their Permanent Representations sit, than with a DO.

274. However, the reasons for 'retaining' projects in HQ mostly was the limited skill mix and human resources in both SEU/REU and SEC. The following areas of specialization were not covered in either office: food security policy; climate change and natural resources management, animal genetic resources, some aspects of animal health and irrigation, obsolete pesticides. Insofar as gender and social inclusion is concerned, a gender team had become active in REU since 2010, but the post of senior gender officer foreseen in the Management Response to the Evaluation of FAO's role and work related to Gender and Development was still vacant.

275. The Evaluation did not find evidence that projects that could be handled from either SEU/REU or SEC in terms of technical and human resources capacity, were 'kept' in HQ. Staff in SEU/REU mentioned a few disagreements with HQ on who the LTO should be, but at the same time, they also mentioned relatively heavy work-loads which would not leave much room for additional project backstopping responsibilities. In the absence of accurate corporate time-keeping systems, no other type of analysis could be carried out.

[91] A small number of regional fisheries initiatives in the Mediterranean were operated from HQ.

[92] In the case of SEC countries, until April 2006 the mandated Decentralized Office were both SEU/REU and RNE; in this analysis, they have been considered as SEC.

276. When staff in DOs did not have time and/or technical skill for specific interventions, one possible solution for locating the LTO in a DO was to include a full-time project manager in the project budget. This happened in the area of obsolete pesticides: a project negotiated with HQ was assigned to SEU/REU as funds were available for a full-time project manager posted in REU. In the absence of specific funds, the LTU could not have posted one of its technical officers in either DO, due to other assignments requiring location in HQ. Thus, in the case of smaller projects that did not have enough resources for full-time managers and no specialized staff in any of the regional DOs, the only possible solution was to keep the LTU and LTO responsibility in HQ. This aspect is further discussed in Section 10.1.2

277. The Evaluation also assessed 20 recent or on-going projects, operated and backstopped by HQ, REU and SEC, in terms of FAO's efficiency in their implementation. The main focus of the analysis was on timeliness of operational steps and actions, including follow-up to Government's requests, approvals, inception missions and workshops, as well as completeness and transparency of information available for FAO internal users. The assessment was on a six-point ranking scale and average scoring was 3.7, thus, not fully satisfactory. Five projects were assessed as good or excellent, six as satisfactory, six unsatisfactory and four poor. Reasons for being unsatisfactory or poor included, firstly, unjustified and long delays in approval and implementation, and, secondly, very limited documentation available to understand progress, issues, outputs and results. No specific combination in the assignment of operational and technical backstopping responsibility resulted in better or worse performance, nor did the geographical scope of the projects. Some countries in Central Asia seemed to be slower than others in approving regional projects, but information on this in FPMIS was far from complete. Still, the Evaluation noted faster approval processes of projects in countries where an AFAORep was posted.

278. In conclusion, what emerged from the analysis of the field programme resources was as follows:

- the role played by SEU/REU and SEC in the management of the field programme was mostly of an operational nature;
- the technical contribution by SEU/REU and SEC to the field programme was limited by the number and skill mix of technical staff in all Decentralized Offices and by the large funds that went into inter-regional and global projects;
- the establishment of SEC had a strong impact on the size of the field programme for Azerbaijan and the Central Asian countries; the most likely factor was that through SEC, the Sub-region became more visible for FAO Secretariat and for resource partners interested in working through FAO in the Region;
- as SEU was already located in Budapest, the transfer of REU to Budapest did not affect significantly the visibility of FAO in the Region in a delivery perspective; in the 'SEU/REU' countries, there was an increase in the total funds available for development interventions, mostly through FAO TCPs, and the field programme became focused on fewer countries; main factors affecting the size of the field programme were the funding of emergency interventions and the access of a number of countries to the EU and their changing needs in terms of support from FAO;
- in terms of field programme management, problems may occur at all levels; the location of an LTO in a DO or in HQ did not seem to affect overall project efficiency; as discussed later in the report, (see Section 10.1), other factors play a greater role in ensuring efficient and effective delivery of the field programme, including the presence of an FAO Office.

6.3 FAO Human Resources in Europe and Central Asia

279. This section analyses the size and profile of all FAO Human Resources in the Europe and Central Asia Region. This includes the posts funded by the Regular Programme as well as consultants with various types of contracts who, as is the case all over the Organization, carry out a significant amount of the work, including technical, operational and administrative functions.

6.3.1 Regular Programme Staff profiles and skill mix

280. Over the evaluation period, REU, SEU and SEC have seen an increase of PWB posts. This was mainly attributable to REU moving from Rome to Budapest in 2007 and the opening of SEC in the same year. These changes were reflected in the large increase of posts across categories from the PWB 2004-05 to the PWB 2006-07. In November 2012, there were 71 Regular Programme posts budgeted for the Region, including for the Country Offices. Of these eight were vacant, predominantly in SEC. Box 13 below gives the detailed breakdown in REU, SEU and SEC, excluding the Country Offices, by staff category and biennium.

Box 13. Regular Programme posts in the Regional and Sub-regional Offices for Europe and Central Asia 2004-present

	2004/05			**2006/07**			**2008/09**			**2010/11**			**2012/13**		
Staff category	**P**	**GS**	**N**	**P**	**G**	**N**	**P**	**G**	**N**	**P**	**G**	**N**	**P**	**G**	**N**
REU	10	6	n/a	9	6	n/a	11	14	2	12	15	1	12	16	1
SEU	9	8	n/a	7	8	n/a	7	5	1	7	5	1	8	4	1
SEC[93]	n/a	n/a	n/a	9	13	3	8	6	3	8	6	2	8	8	2
Total	**19**	**14**	**0**	**25**	**27**	**3**	**26**	**25**	**6**	**27**	**26**	**4**	**28**	**28**	**4**
Grand Total	**33**			**55**			**57**			**57**			**60**		

Source: FAO Office of Strategic Planning, SP elaborated by OED; P=Professional; GS=General Service; N=Non Staff

281. Most technical sectors in which the Organization works, had an officer in either REU or SEC. The exception was the area of 'Investment', where both posts were vacant. However, the post titles in the Regional and Sub-regional Offices were of a more generic nature, tied to original LTUs. In order to analyze the skill mix available in the Region, the Evaluation, whenever possible considered the expertise of individual officers. Box 14 lists staff's sectors of competence.

[93] In January 2012, REU and SEU were merged. However, for the sake of continuity (and as the PWB still has the breakdown), they are listed as separate in this table.

Box 14. Regular Programme Staff by Area of Work in REU and SEC (November 2012)

Areas of Work	Staff in REU (specialty if available)	Staff in SEC (specialty if available)
Administration	•Administrative officer •Administration and finance officer (national) •Three admin assistants/clerks	•Administrative officer •Administrative officer (national) •Three admin assistant/clerks
Agribusiness and Enterprise Development	Agribusiness and Enterprise Development officer	n/a
Agricultural research and biotechnology	Agricultural research and biotechnology officer	n/a
Field Programme (operations)	•Senior Field Programme Officer •Field Programme Officer •Programme Officer (TCP) •Programme support and monitoring officer (national) •Six Programme Clerks	•Vacant •Programme support and monitoring officer (national) •Two programme clerks
Fisheries and Aquaculture	Aquaculture and Freshwater Fisheries officer	Vacant
Food Safety and Consumer Protection	Food safety and nutrition officer	n/a
Forestry	Forestry officer	Vacant
Areas of Work	**Staff in REU (specialty if available)**	**Staff in SEC (specialty if available)**
Information and Communications Technology	ICT Officer	ICT Officer (national)
Information and knowledge	Vacant (since July 2012)	n/a
Investment	Vacant	Vacant
Livestock	Animal Health officer	Animal Production officer
Natural Resources (Land and Water)	Land tenure and rural development officer	Water management officer
Plant Production and Protection	Plant Production and Protection officer	Plant Production and Protection officer
Policy	Senior policy officer	Senior policy officer
Statistics	Statistician	n/a
Trade and Markets	Trade and Market economist	n/a
Other	•Human Resource Clerk •Management Information Systems Clerk •Five Office/Typist Clerks •Two Secretaries	• Secretary

Source: COIN elaborated by Evaluation

282. The corporate discourse on skill mix and expertise has placed importance on flexibility in order to ensure appropriate support to best serve the Region. Both documents presented at the 28th ERC and the Council in 2012, made reference to a need for greater flexibility to enhance delivery at country level. The ERC document recognised that adjusted priorities will require corrections in the skill mix and stated that this was under constant review. This adjustment, in the past, had been opportunistic rather than proactive. By November 2012, between the two offices there were seven vacant posts, as the additional one

referred to earlier was a post in a FAOR. Given that matching the skill mix to priorities was part of the decentralization discourse, this will be an opportunity to consider the priorities identified for the Region in the professional profiles of future staff (see Section 7.2 below).

283. A number of staff and Non Staff Human Resources based in Headquarters were working in various technical sectors in the Region. The evaluation was unable to get a full picture of the NSHR and, therefore, the following analysis makes no differentiation in this. Through an analysis of the field programme as well as interviews with stakeholders at all levels, the Evaluation identified more than 120 people, some of whom have since retired, who worked in the Region from HQ over the Evaluation period.

284. Close to half of the expertise from Headquarters working in the Region was from the Forestry, Plant Production and Protection and Animal Production and Health Divisions. About a fourth of HQ expertise came from the Land and Water, Fisheries and Aquaculture, Agricultural Development Economics and the Policy and Programme Development Support Divisions. Other Divisions that had staff working in Europe and Central Asia were: Knowledge and Extension, Nutrition and Consumer Protection, Rural Infrastructures and Agro-industries, Land Tenure, Investment, Statistics and Legal Issues. Although there have been slight fluctuations over time, other than LEGN which had no out-posted staff in any Region, all other technical departments have had a technical officer in either REU or SEC over the evaluation period. However, given the breadth of work within each division, there was still a need for expertise from HQ to meet the Member Countries needs. What this meant for the management of the field programme, was discussed in Section 6.2 above.

285. As of November 2012, there were six country offices funded through the Programme of Work resources: Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Turkey. There was a slight variation in structure between these offices. However, the common features were an Assistant FAOR (Programme) at N-1 to N-3 level and an Administrative or Programme Clerk at G-5 level. Georgia was the only office without a RP-funded Driver and the FAO Representation in Turkey had an additional Programme Clerk post at G-4 level.

286. The profiles of the Assistant FAORs varied greatly. There were also significant variations both between country offices and over time in terms of the size of the teams working in them. Other than the staff discussed here, all the rest were NSHR (see below).

287. Both REU and SEC have hosted people with non-RP funded staff posts and posts funded from other departments. These included Chief Technical Advisors for larger regional projects, as well as posts funded through partnership programmes such as the Junior Professional Officers/Associate Professional Officers (JPO/APO) or Junior Professional Programme officers (JPP). While these do not formally figure in the skill mix lists, they provided additional technical expertise for the Region.

288. Related to this, in both REU and SEC the governments of Hungary and Turkey respectively, in their Host Country Agreements provided for a set of positions. In Hungary, as per the agreement, the government should provide four support staff and seven Junior Technical Officers (JTO). In the case of Turkey, this should include 3 clerks, 3 secretaries, one driver and one receptionist and 7 junior technical officers.

289. The Junior Technical Officers in both REU and SEC were to work in close collaboration with the relevant technical officer. The sectors were agreed upon between FAO and the respective government. This had been the case to a varying degree. During the evaluation period, as an example, JTOs or former JTOs were de-facto filling the position of two technical areas in SEC. The Evaluation was unable to assess the changes over time in number and technical profiles of the JTOs.

6.3.2 Non Staff Human Resources

290. Large numbers of people working for FAO are encompassed by the term Non Staff Human Resources. This category includes a plethora of contract types including Personal Service Agreements, National Project Personnel, etc. and the group is heterogeneous by definition. NSHR can also fulfil staff-like positions across the Organization.

291. During the evaluation period, REU, SEU and SEC had a total of 2,407 NSHR. Of these 55% were hired by REU, 20% by SEU and 25% by SEC. All recruitments at national level were made through REU, SEU and SEC. The Evaluation also assessed the nationality of this expertise, by grouping them as follows: SEU and SEC Countries;[94] other EU and EFTA countries; other regions. As shown in Box 15 below, the majority of NSHR in the Region was from SEU and SEC sub-regions.

Box 15. Nationalities of NSHR as hired by the DOs of the Europe and Central Asia Region

Recruiting DO	NSHR from SEU/SEC Countries	NSHR from Other EU and EFTA Countries[95]	NSHR from Other regions[96]
REU	49%	39%	12%
SEU	63%	24%	14%
SEC	73%	15%	12%
Total	**58%**	**30%**	**12%**

Source: REU-SEC elaborated by Evaluation

292. Furthermore, 37% of NSHR hired by the DOs in the Region were staff with national contracts,[97] and 91% of them were nationals from the same country. Among the remaining 63% NSHR who were hired with 'other than national' contracts, i.e. as international consultants, 38% were from SEU/SEC countries; 46% from other EU and EFTA countries and 15% from other regions.

[94] This grouping includes nationals from: Albania, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Bosnia Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Czech Republic, Estonia, Georgia, Hungary, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Lithuania, the FYR of Macedonia, Moldova, Montenegro, Poland, Romania, Russian Federation, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Ukraine, and Uzbekistan.

[95] This grouping includes nationals from: Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Gibraltar, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Malta, Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland and the UK.

[96] This grouping includes nationals from: Afghanistan, Argentina, Australia, Brazil, Canada, China, Cuba, Egypt, Ghana, India, Iran, Israel, Jordan, Republic of Korea, Lebanon, Morocco, Nepal, New Zealand, Philippines, Senegal, South Africa, Sri Lanka, Syria, United States, Uruguay, and Zimbabwe.

[97] NPPs and PSA.NAT.

6.3.3 A 'snapshot in time' as of November 2012

293. The Evaluation wanted to take a snapshot of the composition of people working for FAO in the Region at a given point in time.[98] The period selected was November 2012: by then, there were 301 people working for FAO in the Europe and Central Asia Region. Of these, 63 were 'RP-funded staff' on existing PWB posts; 'NSHR' were those with any type of contract described in the section above; 'other-funded staff' were staff with JPO/APO and JTO contracts and project funded staff at country level; and 'government provided' were those currently in place, seconded or paid by the governments of Hungary and Turkey as well as the National Correspondents at country level. Box 16 shows these data in table format.

Box 16. FAO-employed personnel in Europe and Central Asia, November 2012

Location	RP-funded staff	NSHR	Other-funded staff	Government-provided
REU	36	7	3	10
SEC	13	29		5
COU	14	171	9	7
Total	**63**	**207**	**9**	**22**

Source: COIN and REU elaborated by Evaluation

294. The snapshot shows that, at a given point in time, the most numerous category of 'FAO staff' were NSHR, although this changed across DOs. In REU, there were five RP-funded staff per each NSHR. In SEC, there were twice as many NSHR as RP-funded staff. At country-level the ratio of RP-funded/NSHR staff was even more skewed in favour of NSHR: this was expected, considering that projects can only recruit NSHR.

6.3.4 Use of staff time

295. The Evaluation asked FAO staff through its questionnaire and interviews, to determine how they allocated their working time before and after 2010. The three main areas of work were defined as shown in Box 17.

Box 17. Evaluation definition of FAO's main areas of work

Technical work is the provision of technical, policy, normative and methodological assistance, advice and/or guidance, in order to carry out FAO's core functions, from all sources of funding. *(In the case of Country Offices, this includes the Programme function.)*

Operational work relates to the implementation and management of activities (funded through any source of funds), with the guidance and clearance from the technical function and in coordination with the administration function.

Administrative work relates to the support to office requirements in the administrative, human resources, procurement, budget, financial and office functioning activities. It includes monitoring budgetary performance, issuing financial and activity reports, providing advice and assisting technical and operations group in discharging their functions.

Source: Evaluation questionnaire for staff

[98] People considered were individuals with any type of contract on-going as of 15th November, 2012 as per the information available through COIN. In addition the numbers includes seven National Correspondents (here counted as government-provided). Staff provided through the Host Country Agreements in both REU and SEC are counted as government-provided staff. The reports were generated in COIN on November 9th (FAO Staffing Reports) and 15th (COIN_Countries & Offices _Staff _FAO Staff Distribution _Europe).

296. Overall, the work load for staff had increased across all areas. The administrative and operational functions had increased in the Decentralized Offices in the Region as a result of increased delegation of authority. This was mainly reflected through an increase of staff working in these areas. However, the Evaluation additionally found that administrative procedures, having become more cumbersome, have been taking an increased share of time of technical staff.

297. Administrative and operational staff who had been working for FAO before 2010, did not perceive an increase in the share of administrative work they were doing. However, technical staff did witness an increase in their share of time dedicated to administrative matters. Furthermore, a third of the technical respondents who had been working for FAO before 2010 now spent a considerable portion (more than 25%) of their time on administrative matters. Reasons for the changes in use of time varied from change in positions, new assignments, and the strengthening of different units within the DOs.

298. When asked whether some of the respondent's current functions would be better assigned to staff with other roles, 36% did not think so while an equal percentage of respondents did not know or did not reply. In both HQ and DOs two thirds of respondents replied No', 'Do not know' or did not reply. However, technical staff in all locations and operational staff in the DOs believe that some of their duties would be better covered by other staff. No respondent within the administrative group believed that their functions would be better assigned to other staff.

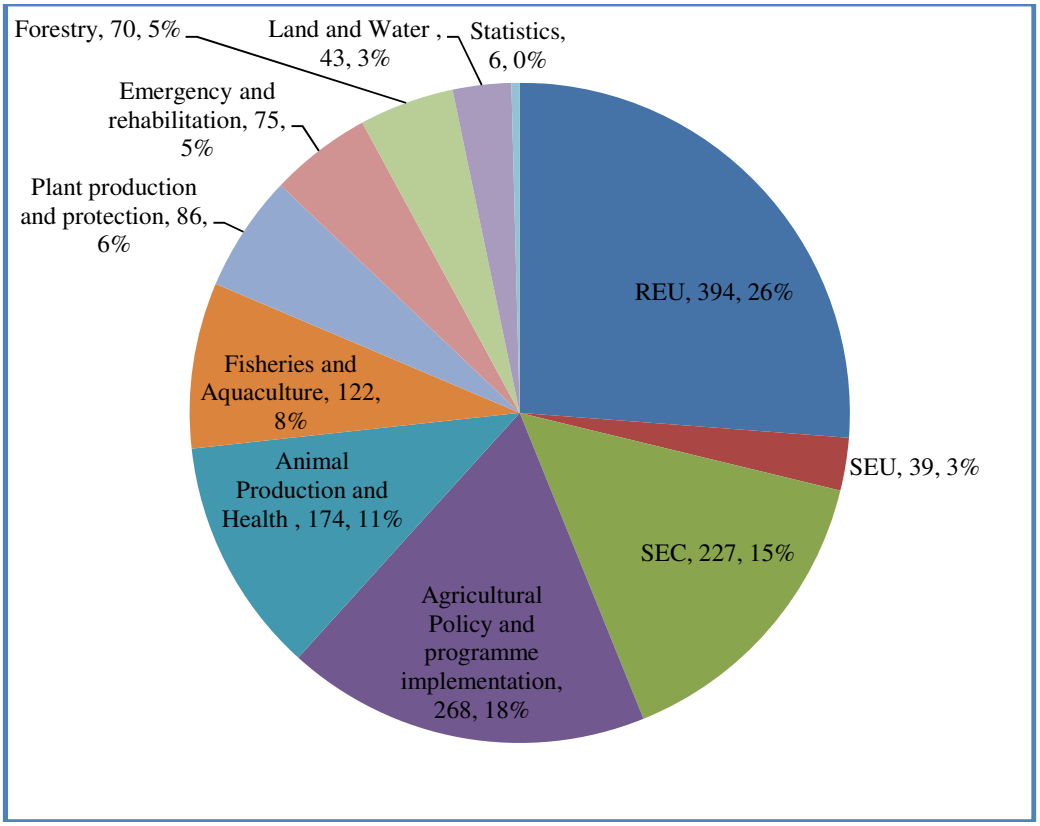
6.3.5 Missions to Europe and Central Asia

299. The Evaluation made an attempt at measuring the types and origins of duty travel to the Region, as an additional source of information on the division of labour, or 'who did what', in the Region. Annex 9 contains the detailed analysis.[99]

300. Overall, there were 1,429 missions carried out by FAO staff and consultants to the Member Countries that were recipients of FAO's support in Europe and Central Asia over the period of January 2008-December 2011. As shown in Box 18 below, REU and SEU had fielded 31% of these (435), and SEC 16% (227). In terms of areas of work, 18% of the missions were related to Agricultural policy and programme implementation and 11% to Animal Production and Health. To simplify data analysis, the sector Agricultural Policy and programme implementation included all missions by the Economic and Social Development Department, excluding the Statistics Division, and the Technical Cooperation Department.

[99] The data on which this analysis was carried out present some weaknesses in terms of accuracy and reliability. Thus, it should be taken as an analysis of trends, not of absolute values.

Box 18. Travel by FAO staff and consultants by sector and Department/Office, January 2008-December 2011



Source: COIN, elaborated by Evaluation

301. Although the data for the identification of the status of travellers in COIN were not fully reliable, e.g. some RP-staff was entered into the system as 'consultant', the majority of duty-travel appeared to be carried out by consultants in the case of HQ, SEU and SEC; in the case of REU, most missions were by staff. This is not a surprising finding, given the staff-NSHR ratio in both offices (see Section 6.3.3).

302. Project-related travel was the purpose for 39% of staff and consultants' missions from both HQ and DOs. Travel for knowledge sharing and networking events (including conferences, seminars, forums, etc) and capacity building events (workshops, trainings and study tours) accounted for 18% and 15% of staff and consultants' missions to the Region from HQ and DOs, respectively.

6.3.6 Conclusions

303. FAO's staff in the Europe and Central Asia Region has increased substantially since 2007, to populate the newly established Sub-Regional Office for Central Asia and to strengthen REU once in Budapest. Thus, the increase in visibility of the work of the Organization in the Region since 2007 was the result of a 'virtuous circle': more offices and more staff, more work through the Regular Programme, more Voluntary funded initiatives identified and funded, more staff, etc.

304. FAO staff – all types included –work more now than they used to before 2010. Increased delegation of authority has increased workloads and administrative procedures have become more cumbersome over time. The introduction of GRMS (see Section 7.7.1) will also likely cause a peak in staff working time between the end of 2012 and mid-2013.

305. The skill mix of technical expertise available as of 2012 located in the Region through the Programme of Work resources was still not fully adequate to meet the needs of Members in the Region. The Organization partly compensated this through NSHR, who are by definition more flexible, and partly through expertise based in HQ.

306. Evidence showed that the work of the Organization in the Region has been largely carried out by Non Staff Human Resources, in all fields of activity. Adequate measures should be taken to invest in the work-satisfaction of this work-force as well, as a large part of the corporate image and quality of its work in the Region rests on their shoulders. This issue is analysed and discussed more in depth in Section 7.5 below.

7 Selected policies on decentralization in Europe and Central Asia

307. The analysis of the implementation of the policies on decentralization is a cross-cutting theme of the Evaluation. This sections discusses certain aspects of the decentralization process, mainly concerned but not solely with delegation of authority, per se and in relation to priority setting, Resource Mobilization, One-FAO, HR management, Staff Capacity development and support services. In consideration of the fact that real 'decentralization' did not take place until the operationalization of the Immediate Plan of Action, the Evaluation decided to focus its analysis on the changes that occurred since 2010.

7.1 Overall delegation of authority

308. Delegation of authority is the provision of a 'functional kit' to a person in a specific role, comprising of autonomy of decision, resources, systems and procedures that allow the person to perform his/her mandated tasks in a given context.

309. Since 2010, the FAO Regional Offices have become responsible for leading the Organization's response to regional priorities for food security, agriculture, and rural development through the identification, planning, and implementation of FAO's activities in the Region. Regional Offices also became responsible for overseeing the management of FAO Representations in their respective regions and to provide operational and administrative support to the functioning of the country offices. The Regional Representatives (ADG/RR) have come to play an increasingly important role in shaping the broader policy agenda of the Organization through the preparation and management of the Regional Conferences, which serve as governing bodies of the Organization and report to the FAO Council and Conference.

310. The observations stemming from the interviews held by the Evaluation were confirmed and complemented by the responses to the questionnaire survey to FAO staff.[100]

[100] See Annex 8 for the full report.

The majority of FAO respondents agreed that since 2010, REU, SEC and the Country Offices in the Region were more empowered through the increased delegation of authority in planning and programming, financial resource use, and on project identification, formulation and management. However, delegation of authority was still found to be insufficient to carry out the additional duties assigned to the decentralized levels in the Region. HR management and burdensome administrative procedures in particular were signalled as obstacles. Only slightly less than half of the respondents stated they were more empowered by the delegation of authority in HR management.

311. Overall, heads of office and staff in the Regional and Sub-regional Office for Europe and Central Asia appeared to possess standard delegations of authority that covered their requirements under the current operational framework, with the exception of access to corporate support services systems (see Section 7.7.1 below). This applied also to the FAO Representation in Turkey. However, the Evaluation noted that restrictions to the travel of the ADG/RR undermined the capacity of the incumbent to enter into policy dialogue with individual Member Countries.

312. Information about Delegation of Authority in the Manual for Management of Country Offices in COIN was also found to be useful and clear. This should be integrated into a 'delegation of authority package' for FAO staff in the Europe and Central Asia Region, and should include terms of reference, roles and responsibilities, how to access various types of support, etc. The package should be regularly updated to ensure accuracy of information, following management decisions. This appeared to be all the more urgent in view of the impending deployment of GRMS: the system, to be fully effective, will require an accurate review and harmonization of the present levels of delegation for accessing and operating it.

313. Country offices in the Region, in general, had not received sufficient delegated authority to operate efficiently and effectively, although the Evaluation noted a marked difference in the 'empowering' support provided by REU or SEC, in terms of approach towards development of both individual and organizational capacities at country level. For example, national projects typically were run by 'national project units', comprised of a National Coordinator or Manager, supported by an administration, finance and/or operations clerk. In SEC-supported countries, these project units had been enabled to ensure that as many duties as possible could be discharged closer to where the action was. As also reported by an EC monitoring mission, the Evaluation noted, that centralized management and control from REU or SEC had been an aggravating factor in a number of 'problematic' projects. Management from National project assistants had been much more active and effective than any administration and operations staff sitting elsewhere.

314. An additional obstacle to improved efficiency of operations at national level was the absence in most country offices, at the time of writing this report, of an imprest account, briefly discussed in Section 5.4 above. Imprest accounts have been, for years, an instrument that could only be used by international professional staff. There were three exceptions: Georgia and Tajikistan, where the AFAORep was granted access to an imprest account opened when the Emergency and Rehabilitation Division (TCE) was the operating unit in the country, and Azerbaijan, where the AFAORep was operating under close monitoring by the multiple-accredited and non-resident FAO Representative.

315. Thus, FAO, in the great majority of the countries where it had operations in Europe and Central Asia, could only 'spend' through the UNDP-managed Agency Service Request/

Inter Office Voucher (ASR/IOV) mechanism. The UNDP 2011 Universal Price List (UPL) indicates USD 27 as the average cost of Payment Process Service. The Evaluation analysed a sample of FAO's expenditure in the Region from 2008 to 2011.[101] The yearly average number of transactions was 383 and the total amount spent since 2008 was slightly above USD 50,000. As of September 2012, a similar trend had been registered.

316. The use of UNDP as a disbursing agency has additional disadvantages:

- FAO depends on the willingness of UNDP colleagues to carry out the requested transactions; usually relationships with UNDP offices were excellent, but this may not always be the case;
- The processing of an Agency Service Request/Inter Office Voucher is lengthy and cumbersome;
- Recording of actual expenditures in FAO ORACLE accounts ranged from 2 to 6 months from the beginning of the operation; in-between, only shadow-budgets could register it, which resulted in unsafe financial monitoring of commitments and could result in over-expenditure;
- FAO national project assistants and staff have to collect cash from the bank and disburse sums that can be above USD 10,000, under their own personal responsibility.

317. Thus, the analysis of the financial cost and additional work-time caused by the absence of imprest account at country level showed that this was an additional and useless cost for operations in the Region and a cause for inefficiency in delivery. The situation of FAO's presence in Europe and Central Asia calls for a revision of the corporate policy about delegation of authority to nationally-recruited staff, under the appropriate level of supervision and control from the respective multiple-accredited FAO Representative. This should also include authorization to operate FAO imprest accounts.

318. In conclusion, at REU and SEC level, delegation of authority has improved although some gaps still exist, for example on travel of the ADG/RR and in HR management. The recent appointment, at the time of writing, of the new Director for the Office of Human Resources in HQ might bode well for these issues.

319. At country level in the Europe and Central Asia Region, improvements could be achieved through: i) improved multi-accredited FAO Representatives, with no more than two countries for one FAO Representative, as per Section 5.5. above; ii) adequate training of national staff; and iii) adequate delegation of authority. Improved access to support systems through GRMS is discussed more in detail in section 7.7 below.

7.2 Priority setting and planning at regional and country level

320. Prior to 2010, FAO had not developed a formal mechanism to set priorities and work plans at the regional level, nor to integrate regional priorities in its corporate priority and planning process; regional offices used different approaches to identify and validate their priorities. In Europe and Central Asia, the ERC used to indicate priority issues in its reports, however this was not done in a consistent and structured manner.

[101] Data provided by REU and Kyrgyzstan country office.

321. Technical units had planning authority for regional offices, but did not have responsibility to address regional priorities and typically, staff in the Regional Offices executed programmes identified by technical units in Headquarters. The PWB 2006-07 had a chapter on the regional dimension of FAO's programmes, but these were fully embedded in the global programmes of the Organization.

322. The Immediate Plan of Action for FAO's Renewal, building on the analysis and recommendations of the IEE, made provisions for an improved results-based approach to programme planning, implementation and reporting. As of 2010, Regional Conferences were empowered to make decisions on priority setting for respective regions and report on these to the Council, through the Programme and Finance Committees. The matters under the Regional Conferences' expanded competence were: 1) advising and identifying the problems of the region and priority areas of work to be considered in the planning, programme and budget; and 2) reviewing and advising on FAO's performance in the Region in contributing to the achievement of results against relevant performance indicators, including any pertinent evaluation.[102]

323. Likewise, through the IPA, since January 2010, the FAO Regional Offices took on a new role in the identification and dialogue with the Regional Conferences on the regional priorities, in the actual planning and implementation of the priority activities in the regions, as well as in monitoring and reporting on FAO's response. However, no specific corporate guidance on the preparation/identification of regional priorities was developed. Ideally, the regional priorities should be derived from common/cross-country issues present in the CPFs in the regions, and conform to the Strategic Framework. Regional priorities were to be addressed through Regional Results defined in the PWB as the '*collective contribution of a Region's country, sub-regional and regional offices to the achievement of the Organizational Results*'.[103]

324. In Europe and Central Asia, the absence of fully-fledged FAO Representations to facilitate a bottom-up consultation process to identify priorities, was the main hindrance in the identification of country and sub-regional level needs on which to focus FAO assistance. REU and SEC carried out informal consultations in the period 2010-2012, as recommended by the 27th ERC in 2010, to identify regional priorities. The mechanism was effective in improving the understanding of FAO's technical competences and comparative advantages and facilitated arriving at a consensus across the different sub-regions of the Region. In total four informal consultations were organized: March and October 2010; March 2011; and January 2012.

325. The first priority action areas identified by the ERC at its 27th session were very broad and conformed to, or better mirrored the Strategic Objectives and some Core Functions identified in the Strategic Framework 2010-19. The ERC decided that priority should be given to regional activities involving advocacy, policy support, capacity building, knowledge management and neutral forums for discussion in the following areas of action:[104]

a. provision of basic global data and statistics;

[102] Report of the 27th FAO Regional Conference for Europe, 2010.
[103] Guidelines for the preparation of regional results, October 2010.
[104] Report of the 27 European Regional Conference, ERC/10/Rep.

b. assistance to define national economic, social, food and nutrition policies, with a focus on capacity building for least developed countries to meet global expectations and benefit from market opportunities;
c. normative role at global level, as well as capacity building to reinforce technical and institutional capacities, especially for least developed countries;
d. implementation of food safety, sanitary and phyto-sanitary standards including global conventions;
e. animal and plant trans-boundary diseases;
f. emergencies and rehabilitation;
g. interface between climate change and agriculture and rural development;
h. gender;
i. conservation and management of plant and animal genetic resources;
j. sustainable management of forests.

326. The 28th session of the ERC in 2012, approved the priority areas identified for the biennium 2014-2015, based on those identified through informal consultations in January 2012. It also recommended a better alignment of regional priorities with the Regional Results in the PWB and the Strategic Framework.[105] Agreement was reached on fewer and better focused areas, as follows:

k. strengthening food security and nutrition;
l. policy advice to governments in support of sustainable intensification for small farms;
m. natural resource management, including climate change mitigation and adaptation;
n. control of animal, plant and food-borne pests and diseases;
o. policy and institutional support for entry of Member States into regional and global trade and standard-setting bodies and organizations of regional economic cooperation;
p. supporting and building global and regional public goods through applied research in the areas of food, agriculture, fisheries and forestry.

327. The questionnaire to FAO Member Countries included questions on the priority setting process.[106] The majority of responding countries (14 out of 20) considered that FAO's Strategic Framework 2010-2019 served as a good basis for the identification of the regional priorities; a slightly smaller majority considered that the regional priorities identified at the 28th ERC were relevant to their countries and that the priority-setting process for the Region through the ERC and ECA had become more inclusive and participatory. Some countries noted that the informal consultations for the identification of the priorities were a useful preparatory mechanism for this Region, however others noted that sub-regional priorities got subsumed by larger regional priorities during these discussions.

328. Thus, since 2010, there have been visible improvements in the focus of the regional and country level priority setting. However, these are still formulated at such a broad level, that it is not difficult to 'find a match' when assessing the alignment between Strategic Framework, regional priorities and CPFs in the Europe and Central Asia Region. A possible cause of this is the need to achieve consensus at the regional level. One Member Country suggested that the ERC should rank regional priorities: this might indeed be a long-term goal. In the meantime, thanks also to the increased familiarity of all stakeholders with the process,

[105] Report of the 28th FAO Regional Conference for Europe. 19-20 April, 2012.
[106] See Annex 7.

it should be feasible to achieve greater focus in the formulation of priorities. A possible step forward in this sense, considering the diversity of groups of countries in the Region, would be aiming at the identification and agreement on a set of sub-regional biennial activities within the broader regional priorities.

329. By the time of the Evaluation, the definition of the regional priorities had not led yet to a substantive change in the profile of the field programme in the Region. Admittedly, this will require some time considering the still broad scope of the priorities and that on-going projects have to come to completion. On the other hand, REU and SEC followed up on the process proposed by the Deputy Director-General for Operations (DDO) on the skill mix review and critical post review with a number of actions: these included the proposal to create two new fully-fledged FAO Representations and Assistant FAO Representative posts, actions aimed at capacity development of staff, the transformation of the post of knowledge management officer into a communication and information officer, the revision of the terms of reference of other professional officers to focus on priority regional needs, just to mention a few. More opportunities to adjust the skill mix to priorities will stem from a number of vacant posts. However, despite repeated requests from REU and SEC, FAO HQ had not carried out yet as of June 2012, the actualization of post descriptions for existing posts at all levels in the Europe and Central Asia Region.

330. By mid-2012, Country Programming Frameworks (CPFs) had been finalized in Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Kyrgyzstan, Macedonia, and Turkey. Albania and Kazakhstan, Moldova and Tajikistan were in the process of CPF formulation. All the newly endorsed CPFs broadly conformed to the Strategic Framework 2010-2019, and the 2012-2013 and 2014-2015 regional priorities, but some of the CPFs contained priorities outside the listed regional priorities for the same period, e.g. capacity building for the design, operation and maintenance (O&M) of rural economic infrastructure in Azerbaijan and institutional capacity enhancement in Turkey. Responses from the questionnaire indicated that most countries where FAO had operational activities considered that the CPFs were useful for the identification of country priorities.

331. The Evaluation noted that the CPFs in the Region, despite participation of several technical staff from REU, still tended to be lists of projects in the different sectors, with very limited attempts at an inter-disciplinary approach, if at all. This was a lost opportunity to prove the worth and added value of working as a 'REU team', all the more so considering that staff in both REU and SEC had made positive statements about the added value of being part of the Decentralized Offices, so as to be able to work in an inter-disciplinary manner in the Region.

332. The Evaluation also had concerns that the desirable flexibility of the CPFs might turn into a weakness if it meant that priorities identified through the process might change because of political decisions, in countries where changes in governments may occur at a rather frequent pace. The evidence from Armenia suggested that within a four-five year CPF, biennial plans should be discussed and agreed with all stakeholders, with no room for further change during the biennium. The usefulness of a CPF in a country following the One-UN approach is discussed later in the report (see Section 10.6).

333. According to the new Strategic Thinking process launched by the Director-General in 2012, the linkages between regional priorities and FAO revised Strategic Framework should become more explicit and integrate the regional priorities approved by the Regional

Conferences. At the time of writing this report, this step was still work in progress and no assessment could be made. In this context, REU and SEC will have to adopt a more pro-active approach to identify, discuss and agree priorities at the sub-regional level, with groups of 'similar countries' and harmonize these within a 'regional' priority framework, as already mentioned in Section 4.2.5 above.

7.3 Resource Mobilization

334. This section analyses both the current progress made in the Region in assuming responsibility for Resource Mobilization, as foreseen by the corporate policy since 2011, as well as the specific case of Resource Mobilization with the Government of Turkey.

7.3.1 Resource Mobilization at the regional level

335. The FAO Resource Mobilization and Management Strategy (RMMS) was initiated under the IPA for FAO's Renewal and approved in 2011. The Strategy encourages and supports the formulation and implementation of subsidiary strategies at regional, sub-regional and country level, with the aim of leveraging additional resources for implementation of the relevant priority frameworks, both in the area of technical cooperation for development, and of emergency, rehabilitation and disaster risk reduction. The strategy foresees that the main responsibility in DOs for Resource Mobilization rests with the head of the office, although all staff should engage in RM; training sessions were also organized for DOs in 2011.

336. In REU, the Field Programme Unit changed its name to Field Programme Management, Communication and Resource Mobilization Team and to some extent took on the responsibility for RMMS, whereas in SEC, as of July 2012, there seemed to be some lack of clarity on whom should be responsible for it. In late 2011, a training session was conducted for both REU and SEC on RMMS in Budapest. However, FAO staff in both DOs tended to agree that competence and skills for RM was an area requiring urgent improvement, despite a number of them having good relationships with resource partners.

337. Success stories in RM in the Region were linked to diverse factors. These included: i) specific initiatives of individuals in key positions, e.g. a particularly active Permanent Representative to FAO; ii) the interest of a given country in funding projects and programmes through FAO, as was the case of the FAO-Turkey Partnership Programme (FTPP); and iii) a strategic approach by REU, as in the case of the collaboration with the EC in the assessment phase of ENPARD.

338. In Armenia, the UNCT mentioned having a solid experience in RM, and willingness to share it with FAO. Thus, a few lessons can be learned to improve FAO's capacity to mobilize resources for several countries in the Region. In this respect, however, the Evaluation notes that until now, limited FAO resources were used to finance presence and programmes in potential strategic and resource partner countries, without any strong evidence of visible returns.[107]

339. An important step forward on RM in the Region was the approval both by the 2012 ERC and by the FAO Council in June 2012, of the proposal to create a Partnership

[107] See Annex 5, field programme portfolio.

Development Officer post in REU and three posts of Programme and Partnership Development officers in Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan and Turkey, which would also serve as stimulus for expanded South-South Cooperation.[108]

340. These decisions opened new opportunities. The Evaluation considers that the Programme and Partnership Development officer in REU should also liaise very closely with the Liaison Office in Brussels, or actually be based there to leverage resources with the EC and other partners from that location. In this perspective, also the post in Turkey should be given responsibility for supporting SEC in its RM efforts. Further, the Evaluation recommends (see Recommendation 3 in Section 11) that the four posts approved be created at the level of seniority P4 or above, to support their ease of access to the decision makers and effectiveness of the work to be carried out.

341. Keeping in mind that by the time this Evaluation was carrying out its assessment, it was still too early to assess the effectiveness of the RMMS on the basis of objective data, it can be said that the approval of the Strategy had the merit of bringing attention to the topic and to the needs for a professional approach to RM also at DO level. The initial steps taken by the Organization as a whole on this matter appear appropriate, if followed by sustained efforts at all levels.

7.3.2 The FAO-Turkey Partnership Programme

342. The Government of Turkey has been a long-standing partner of FAO. In the period 1982-2000, it contributed more than USD 19 million to FAO for UTF projects and USD 2 million for international initiatives. In 2006, Turkey also contributed some funds to emergency operations in the Democratic Peoples' Republic of Korea.

343. In mid-2006, the Government of Turkey, represented by the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Affairs (MARA)[109] and FAO signed a Host Country Agreement for the establishment of SEC; this also included a Partnership Framework Agreement for the establishment of a Trust Fund of USD 10 million '*over an initial period of five years (2007-2011) at the benefit of the countries assisted by the FAO Sub-regional Office for Central Asia (based in Ankara and covering Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkey, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan)*'.[110]

344. The primary objective of the FTPP was to provide substantive, financial and operational support through a programme approach in the areas of food security and rural poverty reduction in the countries concerned, with a specific focus on food security and safety, natural resources management and institutional reform and national capacity enhancement. A number of criteria were also established to regulate the use of the TF. These included a budget ceiling for national interventions, set at USD 200,000; focus on capacity and partnership development and attention to gender issues.

345. A joint Steering Committee was set up with representatives from the Ministry of Food, Agriculture and Livestock (MFAL and FAO to establish the rules of FTPP use, approve projects for funding, and monitor its management and progress. Other partners invited to contribute to FTPP-related activities were the Turkish International Cooperation

[108] See CL144/15, Structure and Functioning of the Decentralized Office Network.
[109] MARA later became the Ministry of Food, Agriculture and Livestock (MFAL).
[110] FAO-Turkey Partnership Programme, SEC, information brief, 2012.

Agency (TIKA), the Ministry of Forestry and Water Affairs, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Development. Projects could be submitted by the participating countries, Turkish institutions and FAO.

346. The Framework Agreement for the FTPP also gave a liaison role to the TIKA delegations in the countries benefitting of the Programme and gave the opportunity to both MARA and TIKA to contribute with '*technical expertise and equipment including through South-South Cooperation and other secondment arrangements*'. In practice, very few of the international consultants recruited through the FTPP were of Turkish nationality.

347. Projects approved were formulated and implemented at national, multi-country/sub-regional, regional and inter-regional level. The first project approved became operational in December 2009. As of 10 October 2012, FPMIS contained the following information:

- Nine multi-country/sub-regional projects, for a total amount of USD 4,820,017;
- Five national projects, one of which in Syria outside the mandate of SEC,[111] for a total amount of USD 1,009,924;
- Four UTF in Turkey for a total amount of USD 678,000
- One inter-regional project, for a total amount of USD 449,970
- Nine projects, including national, multi-country, sub-regional, inter-regional and UTF, in the pre-approval stage;

348. Thus, the total commitment within the FTPP as of October 2010 was almost USD 7 million through 19 initiatives, making Turkey the fourth largest source of funds for SEC countries. The average budget size was USD 347,000 per initiative, with 18 projects with budget below USD 1 million and one above. In terms of sectoral focus, four initiatives supported agricultural policy, four supported plant production and protection, three supported animal production and health, two supported fisheries and aquaculture, two land and water, and one each for forestry and nutrition and food safety.

349. In general, the small size of all FTPP projects increased the management costs of the Programme for FAO and limited their visibility and potential results.[112] Also, projects tended to be slow in taking off, largely due to lengthy approval procedures in some recipient countries which however did not depend on the source of funding (see Section 10.1). In the case of a multi-country project on agricultural innovation, the design was very ambitious and implementation suffered from a number of problems, including the limited common areas of interest among the countries in the Sub-region on this specific topic. A follow-up initiative was nevertheless under preparation. Another project is discussed in Chapter 8 below.

350. The Government of Turkey expressed repeatedly its strong interest to collaborate through FAO in a number of countries. Information available to the Evaluation team as of December 2012 indicated that three new FTPP were under advanced stage of negotiation between the Government of Turkey and FAO. Two of these would be with MFAL, one for UTFs in Turkey and one for GCPs in other countries; and the third Programme was to be with the Ministry of Forest and Water Affairs, with funds both for UTFs and GCPs.

[111] The FTTP established that less than 5% of the total resources could be assigned to SEC bordering countries.

[112] Procedures and time for formulation, approval and management of a project are very similar for projects with small and large budgets. Smaller projects tend to impact more on the work-load of staff paid through the Regular Budget of the Organization, as they do not contain enough provisions for fully-dedicated project managers (see Section 10.1.2).

351. In conclusion, the FTPP is a useful source of funds for countries within SEC mandate. However, at the time of the Evaluation, there was limited evidence of results in Turkey and in the other countries: small project size and dispersion over different sectors undoubtedly affected overall efficiency and effectiveness. Further, there was limited integration of gender and social inclusion perspectives in project designs and their implementation. There is thus ample room for improving the quality and effectiveness of projects to be formulated under the next round of FTPP funding.

7.4 'One FAO' in Europe and Central Asia

352. The discussion in this section is based on the assumption that a good flow of communication, exchange and collaboration across different levels of the Organization are fundamental elements of its effectiveness and are a good proxy – or preamble – to the concept of 'One FAO'.[113]

353. FAO wants to be a 'Knowledge Organization'. One of its main comparative advantages is its capacity to provide state-of-the-art technical and policy support to its Members, through various forms and at various levels in the different sectors of its mandate. FAO Members increasingly want the Organization to bring them knowledge and experience generated in other parts of the world and to facilitate their adaptation and uptake of it. At the same time, for this to happen, relevant knowledge and experience from any given country must be harnessed and made available to others. This is not an easy challenge to tackle: a recurrent tension in the Organization has been ensuring an efficient and effective two-way flow of knowledge and experience acquired at any point in time – and consolidated in the form of 'expertise' or grey literature, formal reports, guidelines, manuals, conventions and codes of conduct – across the whole Organization, from HQ to the Decentralized Office Network and back.[114]

354. Decentralization itself was, to some extent, a disruptive factor for 'One-FAO' and the exchange of information: the transfer of significant numbers of staff to DOs '*to be closer to the field*' created distance and obstacles to what previously could be done informally over lunch, coffee or meetings in HQ, almost any day. Thus, decentralization requested that new mechanisms of exchange, communication and coordination, be put in place. Elements that contributed to maintain close relations between Technical Departments and staff in regional and sub-regional offices were the control of the priority setting process in HQ and the mandatory line of reporting for technical staff to the Technical Department. However, little or no investment was made, as discussed above, to facilitate communication and exchange across the different levels of the Organization.

355. In 2010, as a follow-up to the IPA, DG Bulletin 2010/04 was issued on the new reporting lines and functional relationships.[115] The aim of the Bulletin was to streamline relationships, empower the Decentralized Office Network and enhance accountability at the

[113] The IPA gave a broader meaning to the 'One FAO' concept, by encompassing in it also the full involvement of the Decentralized Offices in FAO's overall decision making.

[114] Direct communication across DOs in different regions was so far through South-South Cooperation, until now always mediated through HQ in any case.

[115] See Section 3.2 above.

regional and sub-regional level. However, by eliminating the reporting line between technical officers posted in the DOs and HQ, one immediate consequence was the formal interruption of communication between technical divisions and their former 'out-posted' officers, who had become regional or sub-regional technical officers. While some formal interaction remains in the process of designating the LTU and LTO for TCP projects, this might not compensate for the interruption of the formal link.

356. Nevertheless, in SEU/REU and SEC, evidence gathered suggests that full interruption happened only in a limited number of cases. These could be grouped as follows:

i. technical officers recently recruited, with no personal network in HQ and whose technical divisions of reference did not invest in integrating them into a team or community of practice;
ii. technical officers who took the opportunity to work more independently; and
iii. technical officers who had personal conflicts with their former supervisors.

357. A question was included on this specific issue in the questionnaire to staff. Overall, respondents did not have a strong opinion on whether the change in reporting lines of the technical officers since 2010 had improved the effectiveness of the delivery to the Region. Headquarters was more cautious and likely to disagree, whereas staff in the Decentralized Offices had a tendency to be more positive about this change.

358. There was also an additional risk attached to the new reporting lines: technical divisions, no longer having 'their' staff in the Region, could disengage from the commitment to support their former colleagues in the DOs and in general the Member Countries in the regions and would focus on inter-regional and global projects and normative work. Some evidence of this situation emerged in relation to individual technical officers' plans of work. In these cases, the approach should have been of collaboration and shared responsibility among senior staff in the Region and in HQ on sectoral priorities and issues at stake. This did not always happened.

359. The decrease in commitment by HQ towards the Region could also affect the technical quality of projects formulated, approved and implemented exclusively at REU and SEC level, in the absence of a quality assurance mechanism by HQ. The Evaluation did not find evidence supporting this in the Region, with the exception of one project discussed in Chapter 8.

360. The Evaluation discussed at length with every technical officer working in the Region, from HQ, REU and SEC the extent to which they communicated with colleagues at different levels. Some technical officers stated they were part of the FAO Community of Practice on a given subject: this was the case for Commodities and Trade, Forestry, Land and Water, Plant Production and Protection. Contributing factors in these cases were:

- past working experience in HQ, a key factor;
- Senior Managers' attitudes and pro-active initiative to ensure that staff are part of a team and all have access to the same information; and
- the periodic organization, usually on an annual basis, of multi-day events in HQ attended by all staff; these would be organized usually in conjunction with other major events in HQ and offered the opportunity to all to meet discuss, exchange, get to know each other and develop confidence and trust.

361. Also, in a number of cases, technical officers in DOs had managed to include their former supervisors in HQ in their PEMS agreements, either as multi-raters or as co-supervisor. This appeared as a very effective manner of by-passing the absence of a primary reporting line.

362. The Plant Protection and Production Division deserves specific mention: it developed a platform, which allows all its staff, independent of location and rank, to have real-time access to any relevant information. This clearly encourages and fosters a culture of sharing and collaboration across all levels. The Division was also making extensive use of video-conference facilities to organize meetings with staff in DOs, including project management meetings.

363. For other divisions, the observations of the Evaluation were that communication with other parts of FAO, and colleagues, was often left to the initiative of individuals and to personal attitudes and relationships. Also, the Evaluation noted that no mention was made in the Region of the Functional Technical Networks foreseen by the IPA,[116] nor was the Circular on Roles and Responsibilities well known or appreciated.

364. A specific section of the questionnaire for FAO staff focused on this topic (see Annex 8). Overall, respondents had mixed feelings about the flow of communication with the other parts of FAO. The predominant opinion was that these flows were at least adequate or good and there were only very few negative replies to this question. REU respondents mostly rated it as adequate. Internal flows of communication within REU were rated higher than those with SEC, although the 'Does not apply' option was high. Communication with HQ across all areas was ranked as adequate.

365. SEC rated flows of communication with REU as adequate across all areas. Similarly to REU respondents, internal flows of communication within SEC were rated as higher. SEC respondents were slightly more positive than REU about their flow of communication with HQ on technical matters.

366. Headquarters respondents rated communication on technical matters slightly higher with SEC than with REU. In the case of operational matters, the ratings were also higher for communication flows with SEC, however the number of respondents that selected 'Does not apply' was significantly higher. They also appeared to have very little interaction with the Country Offices. In this context, the identification of systems aimed at facilitating the communication between DOs and HQ could lead to significant improvements in the efficiency and effectiveness of FAO work in the Region.

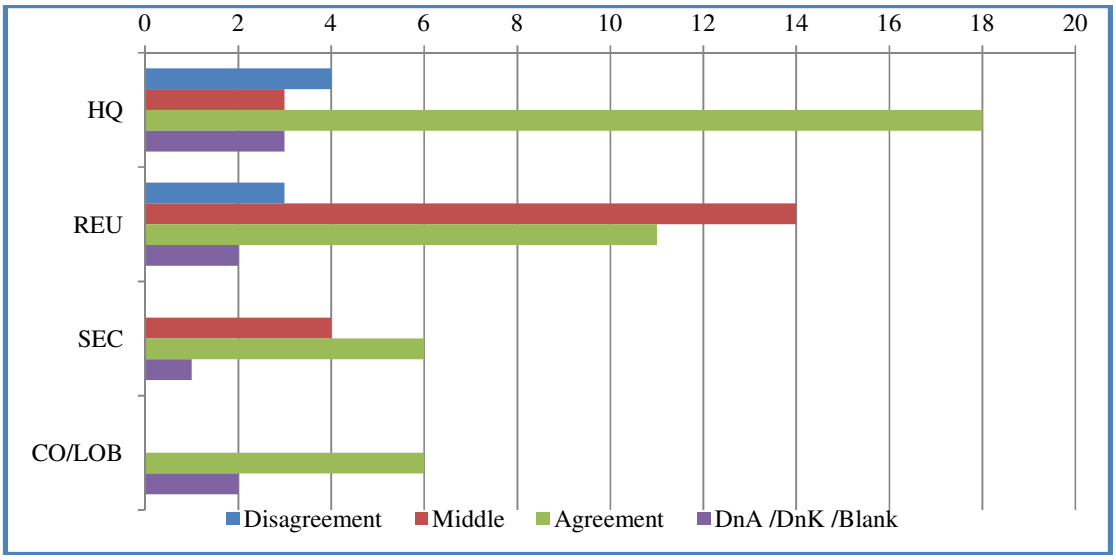
367. All respondents were asked to rate whether they felt part of FAO, across the various levels in the Region.[117] Overall, almost all respondents stated they felt part of their office's or division's team. However, only slightly more than half of the respondents stated they felt part of 'One FAO'. Box 19 below shows the responses by location to the question 'I feel part of One FAO': with the exception of REU where more respondents had more mixed feelings about their sense of belonging, in HQ, SEC , Country Offices and LOB, FAO staff felt as part

[116] At the time of publicly issuing this report, the Evaluation found out that the first meeting of the first FTN in FAO had taken place in early October 2012, after most interviews had taken place.

[117] The questionnaire asked respondents to rate whether they felt part of 'One FAO', REU, SEC and their own office/division.

of One FAO. This was, in the view of the Evaluation, a very positive result that bodes well for improving collaboration across the various levels in the Organization.

Box 19. Responses to the statement 'I feel part of One FAO'– by location



Source: Evaluation questionnaire to FAO staff

368. Collaboration among SEU/REU and SEC was also assessed. SEC staff, including operations and technical officers, stated they enjoyed a very good relationship with REU colleagues and some examples were provided about collaboration. REU had also provided training on operations and organized joint training events, for example on gender equality mainstreaming and on Resource Mobilization. Furthermore, technical staff in both DOs stated that an added value of being together in the same DO, was their ability to work through a more inter-disciplinary approach (see Section 10.1.2).

369. In conclusion, FAO technical staff working in the Europe and Central Asia Region were operating at a satisfactory level of integration and coordination among the different levels in the Organization. Some divisions were doing better than others, through different mechanisms: these implied some additional cost but overall, they seemed to be quite effective. The platform of the Plant Production and Protection Division should be taken as example for information sharing.

370. FAO staff in the Region perceived themselves as part of One FAO, but there was room for improvement. In the absence of formalized systems, the decision to engage into information sharing and coordination with colleagues was left to individuals: this usually was not effective, as personality and other issues prevailed. The Evaluation identified a number of measures to address this issue.

7.5 HR management

371. An important aspect of delegation of authority relates to the selection of staff in DOs. Neither in SEU/REU nor in SEC, mention was made of problems related to delegation of authority in the recruitment of technical staff. In most if not all cases, consultation had taken place between the ADG/RR and the SRC and the technical unit in HQ, so that the short list with selected candidates reflected agreement among parties concerned. This is a

fundamental element to ensure that any DOs achieves the appropriate skill mix to implement its mandate.

372. As of February 2012, the ADG/Regional Representatives were empowered also '*through their involvement in the selection of FAORs*'.[118] By the time of writing this report, the new approach had been only applied for the selection of the candidate for the post of FAO Representative in Kyrgyzstan. This appeared to the Evaluation as a positive step to enhance FAO's response to Members' requests and needs.

373. On the other hand, the Evaluation found extensive evidence of problems attached to the characteristics of contracts issued to Non Staff Human Resources (NSHR), partly linked to the contents of Manual Sections 319 on Personal Service Agreements (PSA) and MS 375 on National Project Personnel (NPP). Some of the problems also depended on the attitude of the REU Field Programme Unit towards the country offices, already discussed above.

374. The evidence that emerged from extensive discussions in DOs in the Europe and Central Asia Region on NSHR contracts was as follows:

- MS319 and MS375 were not distributed together with Offer of Employment; this entails lack of transparency on information provided to NSHR being contracted, on conditions of employment, especially for PSA and NPP contracts;
- The rationale for issuing different types of contracts was not clear, nor who made this type of decisions: different contracts were issued for the same ToR and occupational function; the same type of contracts was issued to staff with very different levels of responsibility;
- The mechanisms for requesting and obtaining support and clarifications on NSHR contracts were unclear and did not meet the basic standards that should be expected by an international organization;
- There was a proliferation of typologies of NSHR contracts that created difficulties in their interpretation and application;
- Manual Sections 319 and 375 were not updated and did not contain complete information on conditions of contracts;
- MS 375 was difficult to interpret and apply and contained confused terminology and contradictory statements;
- MS375 was not aligned with the HR standards of other UN agencies, including the definition of occupational groups, post categorization, salary scales, and general conditions of employment.

375. The differences with recruitment conditions in other UN agencies became more visible in the Delivery as One context, when national staff of different agencies work closely together in a UN team. Uniformity of contractual treatment for staff is one of the HR management principles in the UN: it should also be applied to NSHR.

376. The main result of this situation was that staff recruited by FAO under these conditions often moved on to positions in other UN agencies in view of better contracts offered, after 'they learnt the ropes of the job' with FAO. This was a major waste of time and resources for the Organization; it also undermined the efficiency of delivery, considering that NSHR often had to learn the job and would not be as efficient as more experienced staff.

[118] CL 144/5, Structure and Functioning of the Decentralized Offices Network, May 2012.

377. It is often stated that the major resources FAO has as a knowledge organization, is its staff. Under the current circumstances of a rapidly changing world, and the Europe and Central Asia Region is a perfect example of this, FAO could increasingly rely on staff at national level and NSHR to implement projects and programmes. To secure the best available resources, it appears important to offer them not only challenging and interesting jobs, but also adequate contractual conditions.

7.6 Staff Capacity Development

378. As part of the implementation of the IPA, efforts were devoted to expand the staff training curriculum, with special emphasis on management training, aimed to contribute to the development of a more efficient and accountable workforce to sustain the work of the Organization. This had rapid visible effects in HQ, with a platform offering training opportunities to staff. In the PWB allotments, resources assigned to staff Capacity Development (CD) ceased to be fungible with other budget items.

379. In SEU, REU and SEC there was immediate compliance with the new approach. The number of Capacity Development events attended by staff in the Regional and Sub-regional Offices increased from 1 in 2008, to 8 in 2009, 12 in 2010 and 22 in 2011. As of mid-2012, 6 had been registered and an increase was expected following the introduction of GRMS. Many of these events were attended by staff in Budapest and Ankara, often several staff at a time.[119]

380. In this time span, CD events were mostly focused on procedures, support functions, and training following the introduction of new systems. Language training was also pursued. SEC appeared to be particularly attentive to CD planning, and requested support for the identification of training needs and development of a training proposals from the FAO Development and Training Branch. The mission, fielded in October 2010, produced an accurate Staff Development Proposal Plan subsequently used by the Office to guide the biennial training activities.

381. Nevertheless, despite these improvements, the Evaluation found notable areas for improvement, in particular with respect to Capacity Development of newly recruited staff. In this case, the peculiar structures of the Organization in the Region play a major role. In other regions, FAO's newly recruited staff enter an office with a structure, corporate and local procedures and mechanisms in place, and an institutional memory of several decades. In the Europe and Central Asia Region, this was and is not the case. FAO staff or consultants who work in the Region at country level, more often than not have to act as 'lone runners' with no institutional backstopping or reference.

382. The lack of clarity in contractual procedures mentioned above, is mirrored by lack of information on the 'what, how and when' about project and office management. A recent improvement on this is represented by the new Project Cycle Management Guide, issued by the Technical Cooperation Department in 2012. It was too early to assess its usefulness, although the Evaluation noted that it had not been as diffused as desirable: here more efforts will be required. [120]

[119] See Annex 13, REU and SEC staff training opportunities.

[120] The Guide is a 'living document', meaning that it is still under improvement. The first round of feedback on Phases 1-3 has been collected, including from the field offices.

383. There were, however, aspects that had not been included in the new Project Cycle Guide, and that should be made easily available to FAO staff, both 'old' and new, in particular in a rapidly changing corporate environment. The main focus of such a 'training package' should be:

- projects and programme operations;
- mandate, structure and responsibilities of FAO's departments and divisions;
- contact points for different topics;
- key features of HR, finance, procurement and travel with reference to respective Manual Sections; and
- e-learning links.

384. The Evaluation considers that, taking the example of SEC, an accurate analysis should be carried out of the actual information and capacity development needs of its staff, in particular at country level. Adequate and easily up-datable packages for all staff involved in field programme operations and administration and office and staff management should be developed.

7.7 FAO support services in Europe and Central Asia

385. Support services are those functions and activities that enable the core functions of FAO to be implemented. Support services include Administration, Human Resources (HR), Finance, Procurement, Information Technology, etc. This chapter discusses the support services provided by the Regional and Sub-regional Offices for Europe and Central Asia to the implementation of FAO's work in the Region. In this respect, it is important to recall that at the time of writing this report, the corporate systems supporting FAO's support services were going through major changes. This entails that all observations by the Evaluation will be out-of-date as of mid-2013, when the new Global Resource Management Systems (GRMS) will have been deployed to the whole decentralized network of the Organization.

386. Furthermore, it is important to remind that providing efficient and effective support services to the countries in the Europe and Central Asia Region was more difficult than in other FAO regions due to the absence of fully-fledged FAO Representations: corporate systems and procedures were always developed for a network of country-level offices with an international Budget Holder in charge. Nevertheless, the Evaluation noted that in REU and SEC, support functions were performed by competent groups and individuals who compensated corporate system shortcomings through personal and team systems, especially in financial monitoring and reporting.

7.7.1 Instruments for Support Services

387. In the period 2004-end of October 2012, FAO support functions were implemented through some of the systems listed in Box 20 below. FAS had been introduced in January 2000, ORACLE six-months later and ATLAS shortly afterward. FPMIS and COIN were also set-up in the early 2000s, and constantly improved over time.

Box 20. FAO main corporate systems operational in the period 2000-31 October 2012

ATLAS: a travel system accessible in HQ, ROs and SROs;
COIN, Country Office Information Network: an information system on the decentralized network staffing and functioning characteristics; accessible to everyone everywhere, with different levels of authority;
eBMM, electronic Budget Maintenance Module: the Regular Programme budget monitoring systems, accessible in HQ and ROs;
FAS, Field Accounting System: used by SROs, FAORs, Liaison Offices; it is a cash-based financial operating and reporting system;
FPMIS, Field Programme Management Information System: planning and monitoring of the field programme; accessible to everyone everywhere, with different levels of authority;
ORACLE: the master system for all support modules and all types of activities, accessible in HQ and ROs, including general administration, budget, finance, human resources, management of delegation of responsibility;
PIRES, Programme Planning, Implementation Reporting and Evaluation Support System: planning and monitoring of the Regular Programme budget;

Source: Evaluation team

388. The three main systems for support functions, i.e. ORACLE, FAS and ATLAS, never interfaced to a satisfactory degree. This generated difficulties in financial monitoring, use of resources, discharge of BH functions, reconciliations and financial control. This entailed the impossibility of applying the standard public sector accounting principles to the financial management of country offices, in view of the decision, taken by AFF, to adopt a 'cash basis' system to compensate the lack of interface between ORACLE and FAS. The latter was downgraded to a cashbook registration tool.

389. Similarly, the adoption of ATLAS responded to the desire of automating the travel function with integration into ORACLE databases. This was only partially achieved and ATLAS remained a well-working stand-alone system with no possibility of interface with the ORACLE Account Payable (AP) module.

390. REU should have had access to ORACLE, FAS and ATLAS, whereas SEU and SEC only to FAS. One consequence of this was that SEC, through FAS, could not enter commitments in the project budget system and could not fully manage the field programme in all of Central Asia. A solution was found through which the Shared Service Centre (SSC) in Budapest acted as an ORACLE-hub, entering commitments on behalf of SEC, communicated by e-mail. The 'arrangement' was a good solution to a problem without solution. Unavoidably, this led to increased work-load for all concerned.

391. Another obstacle related to the fact that REU was never given full access to the systems it was entitled to. REU never had access to the ORACLE Account Payable (AP) module: it used FAS for its national disbursements and requests the Shared Service Centre to carry out its international payments. At the same time, SSC would use REU to make its own payments in the country, because ORACLE would not accept the pre-charge/credit-back transaction required to record the VAT transactions.

392. The extra work-load created by this situation was noteworthy, as REU had to make a manual reconciliation of the funds reimbursed by the Government with the original transaction codes. It is also debatable that the mechanisms utilized by REU and SSC were

appropriate.[121] Nevertheless, this was a good example of inefficient use of staff time due to inadequacy of the corporate systems available for support functions.

393. At country level, situations differed. With the exception of Turkey, thanks to the presence of a fully-fledged Representation, and to some extent Tajikistan thanks to the previous establishment of an Emergency Coordination Unit, all operations were carried out by REU, SSC and SEC and through UNDP for disbursements at national level. However, a number of actions could have been delegated to the country level. The decision on how to delegate was partly influenced by the type and quality of the skill mix available in each DO for operations and administration and partly by the 'approach' adopted by the respective units. Countries serviced by SEU/REU were not empowered to many of the functions normally accessible to them, e.g. access to transaction listings in FPMIS, whereas countries serviced by SEC had received training and authority to use all the systems accessible to them.

394. It is almost impossible, and possibly not useful by now, to determine the level of efficiency of the services provided. Huge efforts went into compensating the inadequacy of the corporate systems through group work, consultations, manual recordings, shadow systems and personal data banks. Thereby, thanks to the commitment and ingenuity of staff, products and services were delivered. This had a caveat: sometimes, an efficient result hides an ineffective mechanism underpinning its delivery. There was no doubt that inadequacy of instruments has reflected in higher staff costs and, inevitably, in lower delivery.

395. The Evaluation also took some steps in assessing the new global comprehensive FAO management and operation support system. There is no doubt that the functionalities offered by GRMS will cover better the needs of the users of support services and that a more effective and efficient performance can be realistically expected. GRMS can help in analyzing and rationalizing the structure and the human resources component assigned to the support function with the expectation of better quality and economies of scale. Furthermore, the new environment should be used by management as a tool to review the whole body of support service rules and procedures and streamline the administration function.

396. Still, the implementation of GRMS will require a number of complementary actions and steps, namely:

- an extensive 'generalist-oriented' capacity development plan and a support hub based on the same principles;
- an enhancement in the quality of concerned human resources in a number of countries; and
- incorporation of all the shadow systems introduced to compensate previous shortcomings in available instruments.

397. The key improvement expected from the deployment of GRMS, in the perspective of the Decentralized Offices, is that it '*aims to empower field offices and, consequently the entire Organization, by providing one integrated corporate resource management system and global access to the same information*'.[122] GRMS will be deployed in very different contexts and circumstances of FAO's presence and operations. Among others, there is a risk that the small FAO country offices, and those in the Europe and Central Asia region are among them,

[121] A suspense account could have been opened in HQ/CSF, to allow for the VAT related transactions.
[122] GRMS presentation – FAO intranet site.

will get the 'worst hand of the game': they may receive a set of administration and operation instruments that are heavier than the problem they have to solve. Thus, close monitoring will be necessary to ensure the System respond to users' needs, while maintaining the One-FAO approach. Steps that should be taken to avert major problems will include:

i. instate or maintain a focal-point for support services in offices with field programme support responsibility;
ii. adopt a bottom-up approach to capture clients' requests and problems; and
iii. ensure that support services are an ancillary element to FAO core functions, and not a discipline in itself.

7.7.2 Allocation of Administrative and Operational Support

398. The Administrative and Operational Support (AOS) is a reimbursement levied on the Project Support Cost (PSC), to cover costs incurred by the Budget Holder (BH) for direct project operations. The rest of the PSC is retained by FAO HQ to cover general indirect costs. The corporate Support Costs Policy states the levels of PSC and distribution of AOS for each type of project; FAO Secretariat is responsible for the formulation, monitoring and necessary revisions to the Policy and reports on it annually to the Finance Committee.

399. FAO is committed to achieving full recovery of PSC and improvements have been registered in the last two biennia in compliance with the Policy. The current standard rate of PSC in FAO technical cooperation for development projects is 13%; this differs for some types of project.[123] As a general rule, when the PSC is below 13% of the project budget, administration and operations costs are charged as direct costs to project budget. PSC and AOS rates for each project are specified in the budget of each Project Document.

400. The AOS share of the PSC has gone through a number of changes. As discussed in a previous FAO evaluation,[124] inadequacy of the PSC/AOS resources to finance project servicing and operation costs, had resulted in higher charges to the Regular Programme budget or in solutions based on direct charges to the project budgets as 'consultants'. The trend during the period analysed by this Evaluation has been of an increase of AOS share transferred to Budget Holders, to allow the sustainability of the decentralized network in the management of project operations: since 2004 the standard AOS component has gradually increased from 16% to an average of 50% of the PSC.

401. The June 2012 proposal on functioning of the decentralized structure included further provisions for the allocation of AOS, as follows: '*Guidelines for the provision of AOS to projects, and the allocation of project support cost recoveries, have been revised to ensure that Decentralized Offices have the flexibility and operational capacity to provide AOS services to projects that they support*'.[125] Thus, over the period under evaluation, the Organization has acted effectively to improve the size of AOS transfer to the Decentralized Offices, where most of the Budget Holders are. This represented a major improvement in the implementation of decentralization, by enabling country offices to have access and use additional resources for the field programme management.

[123] Project types that by default have a PSC rate different from 13% are emergency, TCP, Associate Professional Officers. Other projects can have a different PSC rate, authorized on a case-by-case basis by FAO Office of Strategy, Planning and Resources Management.
[124] Evaluation of FAO's Cooperation with Brazil – 2002-2010, FAO 2011.
[125] Structure and Functioning of the Decentralized Offices Network, CL 144/15, June 2012.

402. The current policy on AOS reimbursements, through which they accrue to the General Fund and are disbursed following actual budget delivery, 'detaches' AOS use from its source. In the Europe and Central Asia Region, this element of distance is further exacerbated by the fact that the Budget Holders for all national and regional projects until late 2012, were the ADG/RR in REU and the SRC in SEC. The AOS for all projects, in accordance with the BH principle, was thus retained in the office of the BH, either REU or SEC. Hence, careful management is required to ensure that funds for the management of the field programme will be made available at country level, where project activities are actually implemented. The Evaluation found some evidence that this was not always the case and **calls attention** to the need for improved fairness in the distribution of these resources.

7.7.3 Procurement

403. Procurement in FAO is the direct responsibility of the Procurement Unit (CSAP). It is a solid function, well implemented and regulated in particular since a completely revised Manual Section 502 was issued in January 2010. Although it is debatable whether procurement is part of support functions, there is little doubt that it is an important component of field operations.

404. The position of CSAP vis-à-vis decentralization was that this would require a heavy structure in the Decentralized Offices, with major corporate costs in setting-up technical, monitoring and support hubs and possible risks in maintaining accountability and control. Accountability and economies of scale suggested to opt for a HQ-based monitoring, operation and support unit, complemented by a mechanism that would allow rapid deployment of specialists whenever major procurement or training needs emerged.

405. This principle was applied also in the Europe and Central Asia Region: by using a training share-cost arrangement, a small, efficient and very active hub for procurement of goods was set-up in SEC, considering their high volume of business. The Evaluation can only commend the set-up and its performance.

406. No specific issues emerged in the Region in relation to procurement of services, chiefly through Letters of Agreement (LoA), although the Evaluation noted that the supporting system in HQ was not as solid as for procurement of goods. Main reasons were, at the time of writing this report: the more recent revision of MS 507, issued in June 2011; the appointment of the LoA officer in HQ was somewhat delayed, with the selection completed in November 2012; and more feed-back and lessons learning from the application of the new MS still required to improve the LoA business model.

7.7.4 Travel

407. Until 31 October 2012, international travel was governed by the ATLAS system. It was a partially centralized service, run by HQ and SSC. It was also available in ROs and SROs, but not in the rest of the decentralized network. It was not used for travel in country nor within the area of accreditation of FAO Representatives. ATLAS was discontinued by the introduction of GRMS, which contains an embedded travel module.

408. The expectations from GRMS are the availability of a complete travel function incorporating more agile travel planning, a more rational approval system and a full-scope interface with budget/financial modules that should permit on-line monitoring.

409. Overall, FAO's travel systems have been efficient. A weakness repeatedly noted, however, has always been the lack of an adequate level of information to travellers about their entitlements and status of the process. This is not linked to the systems per se, but to a corporate culture of limited transparency in informing staff and consultants on what their advance payments correspond to, the value of Daily Subsistence Allowance for each planned station, justification of each bank transfer, etc. None of these applied specifically to the Europe and Central Asia Region. If the Organization wanted to improve its image, accountability and transparency, this would be an easy and no-cost action to take.

7.8 Conclusions

410. Overall, delegation of authority to the Decentralized Offices in Europe and Central Asia has improved since 2010 and senior managers can exercise their functions at the appropriate level. Obstacles that still existed were related to travel of the ADG/RR and to some extent, to HR management.

411. One major obstacle to proper delegation of authority to operate effectively beyond the level of REU, and partly for REU itself, was the lack of access to the corporate support systems for operational, administrative and financial management. As of November 2012, with the deployment of GRMS, several improvements were expected, that should also have a positive impact on efficiency of operations. In this context, an accurate revision of the set of delegated authority will be required at all levels. A 'delegation of authority package' for FAO staff in the Region should be put together and include the terms of reference, roles and responsibilities, how to access various types of support etc. The package should be regularly updated to ensure accuracy of information.

412. Improvements were noted in the priority setting process in terms of capacity of the ERC to decide on the regional priorities, however these were still formulated at a rather broad level of focus and detail. Also, the Evaluation noted that CPFs still required more detailed biennial programming. Further, as the new FAO Strategic Thinking process requires more explicit linkages and integration of regional priorities, REU and SEC will have to adopt a more pro-active approach to identify, discuss and agree priorities at the sub-regional level and harmonize these within a 'regional' priority framework.

413. On Resource Mobilization, there was still a clear gap in competence in all DOs in the Region. The RMMS, while too early to assess its effectiveness, brought attention to the topic. The initial steps taken by REU and SEC on this matter appear appropriate, if followed by sustained efforts at all levels. The Evaluation considers that the foreseen additional post in REU of Partnership Development officer should have the mandate to leverage resources with the EC and other partners in close collaboration with, or even located within, LOB. The post in Turkey should also be given the responsibility for supporting SEC in RM efforts. Also, the other Programme and Partnership Development Officers should be posted at an adequate level of seniority that allow effectiveness of the function. These issues are included in Recommendation 3.

414. FAO staff working in Europe and Central Asia were working at a satisfactory level of integration and coordination among the different levels of the Organization; staff in the Region considered themselves to be part of One FAO. Some divisions were doing better than

others: a noteworthy example was the Platform of the Plant Production and Protection Division. In the absence of formalized systems, a lot had been left up to the individual, which the Evaluation did not consider to be effective. Recommendation 8 addresses this issue.

415. Major weaknesses were identified in some policies that have a direct impact on efficiency and effectiveness of the decentralization process. Among these, recruitment of Non Staff Human Resources (NSHR) ranked high: NSHR were and will be a major resource for the Organization and deserve adequate contractual conditions. Also, improving their terms of contract will enhance their performance and contribute to attracting and securing higher level professionals. Recommendation 5 addresses this issue.

416. Another area where FAO should focus its attention is the delegation of authority to the country offices, in the absence of fully-fledged FAO Representations. The Evaluation acknowledges that deployment of GRMS will be a major factor in pushing this process ahead. Nevertheless, a number of complementary actions will be required to ensure that GRMS can operate at its full potential and that artificial bottle-necks are not created, as has been the case so far in REU/SEU supported countries, by abiding to the 'centralized is better' and 'ex-ante control' culture still prevailing in the Organization. Issues identified included simple control, distribution of AOS and opening of imprest-accounts. The 'delegation of authority' package mentioned above should be part of this approach. The evidence gathered in this Region may be useful for other FAO sub-regions, such as the Pacific and the Caribbean, where the multiple-accreditation mechanism is widely used. Recommendation 6 was formulated on these aspects.

8 The Animal Production and Health sector in Europe and Central Asia

417. This section, and the following Section 9, discusses and analyses FAO's delivery in Europe and Central Asia in the two technical sectors that received most resources in the period under evaluation; Animal Production and Health and Agricultural Policy. The assessment was carried by two sectoral specialists, full-time members of the Evaluation team and who took part in the country visits as well, besides extensive interviews with FAO staff in HQ and DOs and analysis of relevant documents.

8.1 Regional and sub-regional context and key problems

418. The diversity across FAO Members in Europe and Central Asia, in terms of development and resources in the livestock sector, greatly affected the Organization's role. As recognized in the PWB 2010-11, FAO's normative role is its most useful contribution in more developed countries, whereas less developed countries require FAO projects and technical assistance as well. REU and SEC have a role in maintaining interaction between and within the country groups: this is particularly relevant to regional approaches to trans-boundary animal disease (TAD) control.

419. The political and economic changes occurring since the 1990s in countries in the eastern part of the Region affected the livestock sector. Among the most notable, it is useful to mention two: i) livestock ownership patterns shifted from the large state-owned farms to private ownership, frequently on much smaller holdings; and ii) State Veterinary Services

struggled to provide comprehensive preventative and curative services without their former central funding levels.

420. Animal productivity in countries with transition economies has in some cases declined. Reasons for this include: new livestock owners may lack animal husbandry knowledge; inefficient use of resources, e.g. under-utilization of concentrate feed and/or shortage in the supply; natural pastureland management issues; and genetic improvement needs. Livestock are important for livelihoods and food security, particularly for the rural poor. Women are often involved with livestock production and animal products can be an important component of children's diets. At the same time, close contact with animals may expose people to zoonotic diseases such as brucellosis, viral influenza of animal or avian origin and echinococcosis. Other diseases like foot-and-mouth disease (FMD) or African swine fever (ASF) can have dramatic economic consequences resulting from direct effects or control strategies involving culling.

421. In 2006, the European Regional Conference (ERC) noted FAO's fundamental work in plant and animal diseases to protect consumers. The Conference referred specifically to two TADs: FMD and highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI). The statements made by the ERC at its different sessions concerning these diseases are summarised in Box 21 below.

Box 21. References in reports of the ERC to FAO's work in FMD and HPAI

FMD In 2004: underlined that the European Commission for the Control of Foot-and-Mouth Disease (EuFMD) is a valuable resource for European countries, In 2010: encouraged all Member Countries to join EuFMD, In 2010: stressed the need for cooperation, transparency and coordination for TAD control, citing EuFMD as a successful example. HPAI: In 2006: highlighted importance of activities 2004-05 for early detection and prevention of highly pathogenic avian influenza; In 2006: welcomed establishment of Emergency Centre for Trans-boundary Animal Diseases (ECTAD) and the Global Framework for the Progressive Control of Trans-boundary Animal Diseases (GF-TAD).

Source: ERC reports 2004, 2006, 2010

422. The sectoral needs in SEU/REU and SEC countries with economies in transition include i) modernising the livestock sector to enhance productivity, ii) access to international markets, iii) controlling TADs, iv) protecting consumers from zoonoses, and v) managing and conserving animal genetic resources. More developed countries are vulnerable to TADs too and zoonoses are a risk for consumers in every country. Livestock-related emergency relief is needed following natural disasters that affect communities in which livestock are important for livelihoods. Thus, the key problems to be addressed in the Animal Production and Health (APH) sector in the Region are:

- TAD surveillance, prevention and control and veterinary service reform;
- protection of consumers from zoonotic diseases;
- efficiency and optimization of unsustainable animal production;
- genetic resource conservation and improvement;
- legal reform and advice, for example, associated with privatisation of veterinary services, public-private partnerships and legal basis of producer associations;
- disaster response, and protecting and restoring the livelihoods of livestock-owning communities.

8.2 FAO initiatives: projects, programmes and other activities

8.2.1 Project portfolio in the Animal Production and Health sector

423. The field programme portfolio of the APH sector in Europe and Central Asia included 51 projects, for a total budget of USD 91.6 million. This represented 33% of total budget resources allocated to the Region in the period under evaluation. The sector was the single largest area of intervention for FAO in the Region.

424. Support to animal health interventions was the main component of the APH programme, with USD 78 million and 37 projects, which covered infectious diseases and veterinary services, as shown in Box 22 below. The projects included surveillance, prevention and control of HPAI, FMD and ASF.

Box 22. Animal health (TADs, zoonoses and veterinary service) projects in the Region

Total	HPAI	Brucellosis	More than one TAD	ASF	FMD	Rinderpest	Echinococcosis	PPR	Vet services
37	14	9	4	2	2	1	1	1	3

Source: FPMIS, elaborated by Evaluation

425. Reflecting the trans-boundary nature of these diseases, the majority of funds (68%) was channelled through global and inter-regional projects. The pattern of resource allocation over time confirmed the disease-drive, with largest project funds approved in 2006-2007 for HPAI and other peaks linked to other TAD outbreaks. The overall trend since 2008 has been of diminishing funds.

426. SEC countries were the second largest recipient of funds for animal health interventions, and received 14% of all APH resources, followed by SEU/REU countries with less than 3%; regional projects received less than 1% of the overall sectoral envelope. Operational responsibility for the animal health sector was assigned to SEU/REU and SEC in the case of national projects and some regional initiatives whereas LTU and LTO were all assigned formally to HQ, although in at least one case, the LTO was posted in SEU/REU.

427. Support to animal production represented slightly less than 15% of the total portfolio budget, with 14 projects. These projects were concerned with animal production/livelihoods from livestock, animal genetic resources, abattoir development (two projects in Armenia including a formulation mission) and disaster response. The number of projects under each subcategory is shown in Box 23.

Box 23. Animal production and other livestock projects in the Region

Total	Livestock & livelihoods	Animal genetic resources	Abattoir	Disaster response	Cattle production	Poultry
14	5	3	2	2	1	1

Source: FPMIS, elaborated by Evaluation

428. About 44% of the animal production funds were channelled through regional and sub-regional projects, and 56% thorough national interventions. Operational responsibility was located in SEU/REU and SEC, except for emergency interventions that were all handled from HQ. Likewise for the animal health projects, LTU and LTO responsibilities were all maintained in HQ.

429. The greatest share of the portfolio was funded by resource partners, the EC being the most prominent in animal health. FAO's own funds were mostly used for national and regional projects in SEC countries, where there was a clear trend to increase since 2006. Part of the increase was also through FTPP funds, for projects on animal genetic resources and cattle production.

430. In consideration of the nature of these interventions, and the available human resources in REU and SEC and their individual competences and skills, the overall pattern of distribution of management and technical responsibilities appeared rational.

8.2.2 Normative products

431. Information from FAO was made available to stakeholders in Member Countries as hard-copy publication and electronically, through the website and mailing lists. Hard copy publications were particularly appreciated by senior stakeholders interviewed, and Russian translations were considered valuable where available. The APH normative products had a broad scope, covering both health and production topics. Key normative products reviewed covered (i) control of specific diseases, such as, FMD, ASF and brucellosis, (ii) Animal Genetic Resources at regional, sub-regional and country levels and (iii) livestock policy in Tajikistan. A new publication concerned with animal nutrition in Central Asia was released in 2012.[126] It was noted that stakeholders found fisheries sector publications very useful as well.

432. Both HQ and Decentralized Offices in the Region contributed to the list of publications: SEU and REU issued three useful species-specific publications, namely *Buffalo Production and Research*, *Goose Production in Poland and Eastern Europe* and *Production Characteristics of Balkan Goats*, as well as a paper on livestock policy in Tajikistan. HQ produced eight publications covering TADs and two regional and sub-regional reports on Animal Genetic Resources. Reports on the status of respective Animal Genetic Resources for Turkey, Moldova, Ukraine and Tajikistan, were also published, most probably under the joint responsibility of HQ and DOs. Overall, officers in the DOs were quite active in producing publications for the Region, which may reflect limited knowledge in HQ about the Region.

8.2.3 Other activities

433. Forty-three regular programme livestock project events and workshops took place. Also, FAO carried out some normative events with project funds at national level aimed at national audiences. Reflecting the share of funds within the programme, more than half the events were related to veterinary services/animal disease (HPAI, brucellosis and ASF in particular) and the remainder were split between breeding/animal genetic resources, production (mainly dairy and beef), identification and recording, and miscellaneous (livestock-based GIS, livestock and fish feed, TCP facility workshops). The numbers of events under these categories are shown in Box 24 below. The events' target groups/participants were regional or government officials in almost all cases; experts and project staff are also targeted.

[126] FAO. 2012. Status of animal nutrition research and development activities in Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan and Azerbaijan, by Harinder P.S. Makkar. Animal Production and Health Working Paper. No. 6. Rome.

Box 24. Regular programme APH project events and workshops in the Region

Total	TADs	Animal genetic resources	Animal production	Identification & recording	Miscellaneous
43	23	6	7	4	3

Source: FAO staff, elaborated by Evaluation

8.3 Sectoral assessment

Relevance

434. The balance of the FAO APH programme was consistent with the priorities cited in ERC Reports, which referred specifically to consumer protection from and control of animal disease. More than a quarter of the 51 projects addressed one disease, HPAI, and 37 out of 51 projects covered TADs and veterinary services. HPAI has zoonotic potential and, in addition to the HPAI projects, 10 (9 brucellosis and 1 echinococcosis project) of 37 projects were concerned with specific zoonoses. Thus, the main components of the sector programme were coherent with the animal disease concerns and the work on consumer protection that had been highlighted by the ERC.

435. The European Commission on Agriculture (ECA) addressed rural livelihood improvement through sustainable livestock production in Central and Eastern Europe and the CIS.[127] The ECA (i) emphasised that progress in livestock sector development depended on regional approaches, (ii) noted the sector's role as main income source for a considerable proportion of the rural population, and (iii) recommended that governments in the Region follow an integrated approach to improve animal husbandry including feeding and breed improvement and animal health and access to inputs, e.g. land, credit, markets and market information. FAO has been less active in animal production than animal health, but nevertheless has made important contributions in animal genetic resource conservation and management, cattle production and protection of livestock-related livelihoods.

436. At the time of the Evaluation, FAO was working with eleven Strategic Objectives the second of which was "*Increased sustainable livestock production*".[128] Building on this, in 2012 the ECA outlined six priority action areas for FAO's work in the Region in relation to Global Challenges for food and agriculture arising from the FAO Strategic Thinking Process.[129] One of the regional priorities was "*Control of animal, plant and food-borne diseases*" and the ECA linked this regional priority to the Global Challenge, "*Improve the livelihoods of the population living in rural territories including smallholder farmers....in particular women, in the context of urbanisation and changing agrarian structures.*"

437. The disease-centred thrust of the APH programme, and its projects and normative activities concerned with modernisation of production and genetic resource management, are relevant to the identified sector needs and priorities in the Region. More effort may be needed, especially in livestock production to ensure that future projects are implemented that particularly improve livelihoods in rural areas and benefit women.

[127] 36th ECA Session, in 2010.
[128] Strategic Framework, 2010-2019.
[129] 37th ECA Session, in 2012, Agenda Item 3.

438. Further, to ensure continued and improved relevance of FAO's APH sector programme and normative products in the Region, technical officers in HQ need close contact with and feedback from the DOs and the field to generate case studies and develop adequate proposals and strategies. Informal networks between field technical staff (e.g. Chief Technical Advisors and REU and SEC officers) within countries in the Region are also important and contribute to FAO's technical excellence in the sector. Technical links between HQ and the field (and within the field) have to be maintained and should be strengthened, for example, with annual meetings between HQ and regional/field technical staff.

439. A brucellosis control project in Armenia[130] provided a good example of a 'One Health' approach. It brought together the Ministries of Health and Agriculture at a strategy planning level and, at field level, included capacity building for both veterinary and human health workers.

Efficiency

440. Within the APH portfolio, efficiency varied significantly between initiatives. There were cases of well-managed, rapid intervention. For example, the response to ASF was very efficient. The disease occurred for the first time in the Region during the period under evaluation. FAO's Crisis Management Centre for Animal Health (CMC) missions and the follow-up TCPs and normative product[131] were timely and met the needs, particularly in Armenia. REU has demonstrated cost-effective and technically sound project management, such as, for brucellosis control in Armenia, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Tajikistan, and for animal identification and traceability in Moldova and Ukraine.

441. The TCP process was described as laborious and slow. In Ukraine, there were reportedly needs in relation to urgent preparedness against the ASF threat that were difficult for FAO to address rapidly: an emergency TCP had been requested, but before qualifying for an emergency TCP, an outbreak had to occur by which time preparedness would be late.

442. The location of SEC in Ankara was not ideal: workshops in Turkey tended to be in Istanbul, due to better travel connections with Central Asia. It was reported that HQ staff had hand-carried cash to Istanbul for workshop costs. Also, lack of clarity on roles and responsibilities had led to some misunderstandings between HQ and SEC on the occasion of the organization of an international animal health workshop.

443. In Tajikistan and Azerbaijan, technical assistance was required in support of the legal reform for brucellosis control, such as cost-recovery, compensation and animal identification. Delay was reported about HQ's provision of appropriate assistance, which slowed implementation in both countries. The first person deployed was not appropriate and had to be replaced; the second legal expert did an excellent job, but time had been lost. In Tajikistan, FAO proposals for the legal reform in the livestock sector were eventually accepted, but due to HQ delay in identifying and fielding a competent specialist, an earlier draft of legislation had already been submitted for parliamentary approval and amendments were required to incorporate the final recommendations.

[130] See Annex 10.
[131] FAO Animal Production and Health Manual, Preparation of African Swine Fever Contingency Plans.

444. In Armenia, FAO HQ was still providing, at the time of the Evaluation, technical backstopping for the ongoing abattoir project which was being delivered with suboptimal efficiency.[132] Several factors contributed to delayed implementation, including (i) renegotiating the terms of the project (such as number of slaughter facilities) with the authorities, (ii) replacing key personnel (National Legal Consultant and Project Coordinator) and (iii) drafting and agreeing contractual terms with private partners. Despite an 18-month extension to the project, at the time of writing this report, further delays had occurred in the Public-Private Partnership (PPP) contracts signature, which should precede FAO's equipment procurement and training programme delivery. Implementation inefficiencies meant that private partners may miss the opportunity to carry out necessary building work before 2012-13 winter conditions make construction impossible, which will further postpone achievements of expected outputs.

445. For most of the APH portfolio projects, i.e. 45 out of 51, the Lead Technical Officer (LTO) had been based in HQ. The six non-HQ LTO projects were currently operationally active, reflecting (i) the recent trend to decentralize project management and (ii) that many APH projects with HQ-based LTOs were approved before REU moved to Budapest and before the decentralization of the TCP. Furthermore, some of the APH projects in Turkey and Central Asia were launched before the SEC officer was appointed. It was early to draw firm conclusions about the process of decentralizing project management, but concern was raised about adequate assurance of coherence with FAO global policy and strategy when projects were managed locally. Technical backstopping has been provided from FAO's Animal Genetic Resources Branch (AGAG) in HQ for national and regional projects concerned with the management of genetic resources. The current Central Asia sub-regional cattle production projects included improvement to local breeds through technology transfer by a Turkish NGO: it was unknown whether genetic material selected for importation was consistent with FAO policy for animal genetic resources and conservation.[133]

446. This example may highlight a potential problem with decentralizing project management where, firstly, HQ Technical Division experts become separated from technical supervision and, secondly, diverse technical projects are assigned to a region or sub-region where an individual technical officer cannot possibly have expertise in all aspects of the broad technical range of FAO's APH work. It seems that a pool of experts, not an individual, is needed to provide high quality technical advisory services to Member Countries.

447. Delegation of authority had not necessarily led to more efficient delivery. For example, delays in SEC approval for procurement apparently caused delay to laboratory and computer equipment purchase in Tajikistan.[134]

Effectiveness

448. Projects in the APH portfolio had been generally effective in addressing key problems and in achieving their objectives. There were notable successes. The strategy developed for brucellosis control in Tajikistan influenced control programmes in Azerbaijan,

[132] See Annex 10.
[133] Global Plan of Action for Animal Genetic Resources and the Interlaken Declaration (FAO, 2007).
[134] TCP/TAJ/3302 Assistance for Improving Sheep and Goat Health – Respiratory disease syndrome diagnosis and control.

Armenia and Kyrgyzstan and was followed in the Region by other agencies, such as the World Bank. The proceedings of the brucellosis technical meeting held in Rome in 2009 have been a useful reference document.[135] EuFMD provided high quality guidance on FMD control strategy in the Region, under its overall remit of reducing the risk of incursion of FMD into Europe from endemic areas, including West Eurasia (Republic of Turkey and its eastern neighbours).

449. The response to the ASF threat was very effective and focussed on: capacity building in epidemiology, response and laboratory diagnosis; equipment including disinfectants and laboratory supplies; research in wild boar and *Ornithodorus spp*. tick ecology; and awareness campaigns. In Armenia, 600 out of a total of 800 field veterinarians were reported to have been trained and a national ASF control policy was developed.

450. As well as assisting with national preparedness and contingency plans, the HPAI programme contributed to strengthening veterinary laboratories' diagnostic capacities, with lasting benefit for the animal health services in a number of countries. FAO's HPAI programme was effectively coordinated with other agencies' programmes at country level.

451. The APH field programme helped the authorities, particularly in countries with transition economies, to put in place legal frameworks for cost recovery from animal health service delivery. An approach developed around Veterinary Field Units, adapting FAO's previous experience in Afghanistan, has become a model for privatisation that was applied in Tajikistan and is applicable to other countries in Central Asia.

452. Animal identification and registration projects have been implemented effectively in Ukraine and Moldova. The Ukraine project reduced the farmers' costs for animal identification and one in Moldova was assessed positively by an external organisation.[136]

453. There have been 43 APH project events and workshops, which have contributed to building the capacity of government staff and regional experts. Additionally, FAO with the support of the World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE) and the European Commission Directorate General Health and Consumers (DG-SANCO) promoted cooperation between countries at a meeting of Chief Veterinary Officers.[137]

454. FAO has led on the development of regional and national plans for the conservation and improvement of animal genetic resources, mostly from HQ. In this respect, the Evaluation **underlines** the need for FAO NSHR working in animal genetic resource improvement, such as National Coordinators, to be adequately informed and trained to ensure that any initiative aimed at animal genetic improvement is aligned with the Global Plan of Action for Animal Genetic Resources. The Evaluation was told that REU and SEC staff were already adequately trained and informed.

455. Normative products have been effective as reference documents: hard copies particularly were utilised by government decision-makers. The proceedings published after

[135] Brucella melitensis in Eurasia and the Near, East FAO Animal Production and Health Proceedings. No. 10. Rome, 2010.
[136] EU Food and Veterinary Office, Dublin.
[137] The first "Veterinary Forum for the South East European Region" under the mechanism of GF-TADs for Europe, Budapest, Hungary 3-4 February 2011.

one of the events have been a useful reference document for brucellosis control. HPAI guidelines have been an effective capacity-building resource. However, normative products would be more widely used in Eastern European and Central Asian Member Countries if they were translated into Russian.

456. Across the portfolio, no evidence was found of a poverty focus in FAO's work in the Region. Where the rural poor were assisted, this appeared to be coincidental rather than by design. For the majority of projects, there was little evidence that the role or needs of women was considered in design or implementation or that most projects had been effective in targeting specific needs of either women or the rural poor.

457. Project design and implementation needs to complement the nascent private sector where it exists. In Armenia, concern was expressed by a private service provider, that government subsidy of bovine artificial insemination services could undermine the emerging private sector. Artificial insemination was included in the Armenia CPF: the Evaluation suggests that care should be taken to avoid unfair competition through the proposed rehabilitation of the government facility.

Impact and sustainability

458. The APH portfolio has had a clear impact on policy development for animal disease control in Member Countries and has strengthened the related infrastructure (veterinary services, laboratories and epidemiology units) to substantiate policy implementation in the future. In some countries the impact was tempered by consequences of transition, such as the stability of political structures and/or the ability of governments to adequately fund public-good activities. In countries where former state-funded structures have been undermined by the transition from the former centrally-planned economy, institutional sustainability will take a long time and will have to coincide with the development of new ways of managing institutions and their finance.

459. Examples of positive impact included: i) establishment of Veterinary Field Units that recover costs (Tajikistan), ii) technical assistance for legislative reform for brucellosis compensation programme, service delivery privatisation and border control (Tajikistan), and iii) strengthened laboratory diagnostic capacity for HPAI with the introduction of new technology and methods, such as polymerase chain reaction (PCR), that can be adapted for diagnosing other diseases (Armenia, Kyrgyzstan, Turkey and other countries). External confirmation that FAO laboratory activities had impact on laboratory capacity development in Tajikistan occurred when an expert advised that further inputs were not required to support diagnosis.[138]

460. Despite examples of long-term impact, project exit strategy planning was a weak area. Priority emphasis was given both to the delivery in current projects and to seeking funds for new ones, but not for achieving sustained, post-project results without continued external input. FAO could have given more attention to the continuation of FMD vaccination when project inputs ended, for example, in Armenia. A lack of country offices from which to liaise

[138] Centre de coopération internationale en recherche agronomique pour le développement (CIRAD) expert referring to contagious caprine pleuropneumonia (CCPP) diagnosis.

with donors may have hampered securing funds for follow-up of TCPs, for example, with ASF projects.

FAO comparative advantage

461. FAO has a clear, comparative advantage in trans-boundary animal disease control. This arises from a highly qualified core team of technical expertise combined with the Organization's access to governments and the trust it enjoys from authorities in Member Countries. FAO has an acknowledged lead role in developing disease control policy as well as in regional and national animal genetic resources strategies.

462. FAO helped forge links that have facilitated communication, both formal and informal, for sharing disease information between veterinary authorities in Member Countries, improving transparency, providing early warning of risk and response coordination. It was able to use its regional experience to build on success stories in one country by adapting them to another country, such as, with Veterinary Field Units or brucellosis control. It also helped Member Countries with surveillance for diseases they did not know were present, including *peste des petits ruminants* (PPR) and contagious caprine pleuropneumonia (CCPP).

463. With the EuFMD, FAO hosts a Commission that has been recognised by the ERC as a valuable resource for countries, promoting coordination, cooperation and transparency. FAO's normative products have been used by governments to define animal disease control policy, which indicates their value and the esteem they have earned.

Contribution to FAO Core Functions for the sector

464. This section analyses FAO's performance in Europe and Central Asia in the APH sector, against the corporate Core Functions as stated in FAO Strategic Framework 2010-19.

465. The first two core functions, that is, Monitoring and assessment of long-term and medium-term trends and perspectives and Assembly and provision of information, knowledge and statistics, are core activities of FAO HQ and include, for example, the long term projections/output including for livestock, which were coordinated by ESA and EST, or statistics for improving livestock data through the Global Strategy for Agricultural Statistics, managed by ESS. Regional staff did not perform these activities, but contributed to data collection for the analysis and they used the final products in their planning and analytical work for the Region.

466. In the animal health field, core function Development of international instruments, norms and standards, is the work domain of the World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE). However, FAO had a key role in the Global Plan of Action for Animal Genetic Resources, and regional, sub-regional and national reports have been produced in line with the Plan of Action.

467. Core functions (d), (e) and (f) have all been applied particularly in connection with TADs, reflecting the significant proportion of FAO's APH work in the Region that is concerned with TADs. Limited evidence was found of core function (g) Inter-disciplinarity and innovation in the APH sector. However, there was considerable evidence of Partnerships and alliances, core function (h).

468. Box 25 below shows specific products linked to each of the core functions.

Box 25. Performance of FAO Core Functions in the APH sector

N.	Core function	Contributions
a	***Monitoring and assessment of long-term and medium-term trends and perspectives***	• Livestock sections in the FAO long term projections on food and agriculture, including for Europe and Central Asia
b	***Assembly and provision of information, knowledge and statistics***	• Data on livestock numbers, production, farmers and gender for Europe and Central Asia in the Global Strategy for Agricultural Statistics are used to assess trends and achievements
c	***Development of international instruments, norms and standards***	• Global Plan of Action for Animal Genetic Resources and related regional documents • FAO with WHO will provide training on Codex Alimentarius in Kyrgyzstan
d	***Policy and strategy options and advice***	• FMD 'roadmap' for control in the Region • FMD planning and preparedness in Georgia, Armenia and Azerbaijan • PPR vaccination advice in Kyrgyzstan • ASF disease control strategy development • Livestock strategy in Tajikistan
e	***Technical support to promote technology transfer and build capacity***	• ASF contingency planning[139] • Capacity development, e.g. ▪ diagnostic laboratories (for HPAI, FMD), ▪ brucellosis control ▪ simulation exercises (HPAI)
f	***Advocacy and communication***	• Brucellosis control, Tajikistan: TV dramas and willingness-to-pay survey • Moldova: assisted preparation of OIE dossier for declaration of 'FMD-freedom without vaccination'
g	***Inter-disciplinarity and innovation***	• Cattle production improvement project: Plant Officer discussed and cleared seed procurement for fodder plots
h	***Partnerships and alliances***	• EuFMD collaborates with EU (DG SANCO) and OIE • EuFMD is close partner of Turkey Ministry of Agriculture (according to A-FAORep) • Turkey's national laboratory was EuFMD's regional laboratory to assist neighbouring countries • Collaboration with 'European Association for Animal Production' (Rome-based NGO) for workshops – proceedings are published[140] • Collaboration with 'European Regional Focal Point for Animal Genetic Resources (ERFP)' • Kyrgyzstan: agreement between FAO and World Bank on which diseases each agency would focus upon, that is, FAO focus on TADs and WB focus on zoonoses • Kyrgyzstan: WB, ADB and EU collaborated on the livestock development component of Agricultural Development policy. • With NGOs for public awareness campaigns, for example, in Armenia (Consumer Rights Organisation) and Tajikistan (Mission East, a Danish NGO)

Source: Evaluation

[139] FAO. 2009. Preparation of African swine fever contingency plans. Edited by M.L. Penrith, V. Guberti, K. Depner and J. Lubroth. FAO Animal Production and Health Manual No. 8. Rome.

[140] A meeting in Barcelona in 2010 was attended by 1,500 participants; last year a meeting in Norway was attended by 700. Publications have been produced jointly, e.g. The Cattle Sector in Central and Eastern Europe: Developments and Opportunities in a Time of Transition. EAAP Technical Series no. 10.

8.4 Conclusions

469. The APH sector programme has broadly met the needs and priorities of Member Countries in the region. High quality technical advice has had an important role in defining regional and national animal disease strategy, which the ERC identified as a priority. The programme has undoubtedly been very relevant to the needs, but the efficiency of delivery has been variable.

470. In future, FAO will have to continue to play a lead role in strategy development and coordination of disease control between Member Countries in the region. It is particularly well placed to do so through the EuFMD Commission, on whose successes the ERC has specifically commented. FAO should continue to support proper animal genetic resource improvement and conservation through application of the Global Strategy. While changes and developments progress in farming systems and land ownership in former Soviet-bloc countries, FAO should give more emphasis to poverty alleviation and efficient resource use through appropriate design of interventions to improve animal production.

471. To ensure that FAO corporate strategy is applied in the region, strong links will continue to be needed between the field and HQ, for example, for the development and implementation of global/regional strategies for responding to specific TADs and for animal genetic resource management. Linkages between specialists in the field will continue to be important. The APH field and HQ staff should convene once per year in Rome: this will provide an opportunity both to build and strengthen working relationships. It may also enable efficiency by combining some technical meetings/workshops that currently occur around the year. With advance planning, all staff can block the time so that when field personnel come to HQ they can find everyone they may wish to meet.

472. A strong animal health technical presence is required at HQ as trans-boundary disease control requires both regional and global perspectives. A presence in the area of animal production is required too, to ensure better use of resources (pasture land, water, cereal by-products) and genetic improvement, contributing to overall animal production improvement and poverty alleviation. Thus, a wider skill mix is needed in the Region than what can be provided by one individual officer at the regional and sub-regional level, as only a pool of experts can give a range of high quality technical services and maintain the Organisation's trust and status, as perceived by Member Countries. **The more cost-effective location of such a pool, for the Europe and Central Asia Region, appears to be FAO HQ**.

9 The Agricultural Policy sector in Europe and Central Asia

473. This section analyses the work of FAO in Europe and Central Asia in the sector of Agricultural Policy. The Evaluation included under the heading 'Agricultural Policy' all projects and initiatives that had a primary focus on supporting policy and strategy development and related capacity development, in the areas of policy and information systems for agriculture, food security and nutrition, agriculture and rural development, agriculture marketing and trade; statistics and policy dialogue and exchange among Member Countries. These topics fall within the mandate of approximately 13 divisions in FAO.[141] Projects focusing on work at community level were not included in this sector.

9.1 Regional and sub-regional context and key problems

474. The Europe and Central Asia Region comprises countries characterized by a significant degree of diversity in terms of history, institutional settings, climatic and agro-environmental conditions. All these elements are strongly connected and lead to significant differences in the characteristics of their agricultural systems and of their related policy and assistance needs.

475. At the beginning of the 2000s, macroeconomic and institutional conditions in the Region started to improve, albeit the situation in terms of policy making capacity continued to be weak in a number of countries. A major problem still affecting a number of countries throughout the decade was the lack of agricultural policy strategies based on clear goals and characterized by a long term perspective. A major driver within the Region was, and still is, the European Accession process. Candidate and potential candidate countries to the European Union started to consolidate their agricultural policy strategies using the European Common Agricultural Policy as the paramount reference. Countries with no plans to access the EU continued to have short-term strategies. Since the 2007 global food prices and financial crisis, short-term policy measures were also pushed by the crisis itself. For example, there was a rising demand for public interventions in the agricultural sector and in particular for measures focusing on protectionism and self-sufficiency. However, the measures implemented differed among countries.[142]

476. The European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD) developed a set of indicators to estimate the progress of reforms since the start of the transition of the economic system. The indicators range from 1 to 4+, with 1 representing little or no change from a rigid centrally planned economy and 4+ representing the standards of an industrialized market economy. Scores are based on an assessment of the size of the challenges in two components: market structure and market-supporting institutions and policies. The analysis in 2012 showed results similar to 2007: this suggested that the economic crisis caused a marked slowdown of reforms, when compared to previous years.[143]

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[141] Over the period under evaluation, divisions in FAO have changed name and institutional location, which makes an accurate tracing of each of them rather complex. Hence the approximation in the number of units.

[142] Swinnen J.F.M., Van Herck K., 2010, Working paper for FAO 27th ERC Ministerial Roundtable, May 2010, Yerevan, Armenia, pp. 1 – 39.

[143] EBRD, 2012. In 2012, over a total number of 261 figures, there were one-notch upgrades in 17 cases and one notch downgrade in nine cases. In 2011 there were one-notch upgrades in 16 cases and one-notch downgrade in four cases.

477. The Region is also very diverse in the distribution of population: the shares of the rural population within the total vary from about 5% in Malta and 25% in Belarus to over 60% in Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan and 73% in Tajikistan. In 15 countries out of the 24 countries plus Kosovo in which FAO has operational activities, the rural population represents more than 40% of the total.

478. Employment in agriculture ranges from below 5% in Bulgaria, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Cyprus, Malta, and Slovenia to over 20% in Albania, Azerbaijan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkey, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan. However, estimates of agricultural employment can vary somewhat between different organisations. In some cases, FAO's estimates are lower than others, notably in the case of Bosnia and Herzegovina, for which FAO shows agricultural employment as 2.2%, while other sources, such as the EU, show 19.6%.[144]

479. Equally, the GDP per capita was extremely varied in 2011. Some countries showed values below USD 2,000: Kyrgyzstan, Moldova, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan. A number of countries were in the range USD 2,001-5,000: Albania, Armenia, Georgia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, Macedonia and Turkmenistan. The third group, including Azerbaijan, Belarus, Bulgaria, Montenegro, Romania and Serbia, had GDP per capita ranging between USD 5,001 and 10,000. The last group, including Croatia, Cyprus, Kazakhstan, Malta, Russian Federation, Slovenia and Turkey, had GDP per capita above USD 10,000.

480. In Albania, Armenia, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan, agriculture counted for more than 20% of GDP, and for several others, including Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, Macedonia, Moldova, Montenegro, Serbia, Turkey and Turkmenistan, agriculture represented more than 10% of the GDP.

481. The share of undernourished in the total population was quite high in Tajikistan, at 31.7%, and in Georgia, at 24.7%. In countries such as Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan significant progress has been made in the past five years and levels in 2011 were slightly above 6%. Other countries in the Region with problems of undernourishment included Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan.

482. The majority of the countries in the Region were classified as High Human Development. Croatia, Malta and Slovenia belong to the Very High Human Development group. Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan belong to the Medium Human Development group.

483. The 2011 World Bank classification for the Region was as follows:

- low income group: Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan;
- lower middle income group: Albania, Armenia, Georgia, Kosovo, Moldova, Ukraine and Uzbekistan;
- upper middle income group: Azerbaijan, Belarus, Bosnia & Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Kazakhstan, Macedonia, Montenegro, Romania, Russian Federation, Serbia, Turkey and Turkmenistan;
- high income group: Croatia, Cyprus, Malta and Slovenia

[144] European Commission, Bosnia Herzegovina 2012 Progress Report, Brussels, 10 October 2012.

484. The Evaluation compared the classification utilized by REU at the 28th ERC 2012,[145] the HDI and the income level classification by the World Bank. Overall, the comparison shows a significant coherence. Countries identified by FAO as "Focus country A", i.e. Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan, belong to the Medium Human Development group, which was the lowest in the Region and to the low-income or lower-middle income group. The main discrepancies concerned the Republic of Moldova, which belongs to the FAO group B and to the lower-middle-income group, and Albania and Kosovo, which belong to FAO group C and to the High Human Development group, but to the lower-middle-income group for the WB. Box 26 below shows the ranking of each country by the three classification methods.

Box 26. REU focus countries A, B and C; HDI, WB Income level

Country/group	FAO focus group	HDI	WB Income level
Kyrgyzstan	Focus Country A	Medium	Low-income
Tajikistan	Focus Country A	Medium	Low-income
Uzbekistan	Focus Country A	Medium	Lower-middle-income
Georgia	Focus Country B	High	Lower-middle-income
Moldova, Republic of	Focus Country B	Medium	Lower-middle-income
Ukraine	Focus Country B	High	Lower-middle-income
Armenia	Focus Country B	High	Lower-middle-income
Albania	Focus Country C	High	Lower-middle-income
Bosnia & Herzegovina	Focus Country C	High	Upper-middle-income
Kosovo	Focus Country C	High	Lower-middle-income
Macedonia, FYR	Focus Country C	High	Upper-middle-income
Montenegro	Focus Country C	High	Upper-middle-income
Azerbaijan	Strategic and resource partner	High	Upper-middle-income
Kazakhstan	Strategic and resource partner	High	Upper-middle-income
Russian Federation	Strategic and resource partner	High	Upper-middle-income
Turkey	Strategic and resource partner	High	Upper-middle-income
Belarus	Negotiations on-going	High	Upper-middle-income
Serbia	Activities on-going in 2012	High	Upper-middle-income
Turkmenistan	Negotiations on-going	Medium	Upper-middle-income

Source: FAO, World Bank and Human Development Index database

485. The 28th session of the ERC confirmed that the main global challenges are consistent with the conditions in the Region and agreed with the regional trends and challenges. It supported six priorities for work in the Region and requested that these be taken into account in reviewing the FAO Strategic Framework and preparing the Medium Term Plan 2014-2017. Three of the priorities were related to the 'Agricultural Policy' (AP), namely a) strengthening food security and nutrition; b) policy advice to governments in support of sustainable intensification for small farms; c) policy and institutional support for entry of Member States into regional and global trade and standard-setting bodies and organizations of regional economic cooperation. Key problems related to the AP area in REU countries included: i) data collection and analysis (including agricultural censuses) ii) food security; iii) productivity improvement; iv) policy advice; v) land reform; vi) support to smallholder agriculture; and vii) agribusiness and trade related capacity.

[145] ERC/12/3.

9.2 FAO initiatives: projects, programmes and other activities

9.2.1 Project portfolio in the Agricultural Policy sector

486. The project portfolio included 75 projects, for a total budget of almost USD 47 million, or 17% of total budget resources allocated to the Region in the period under evaluation. Distribution across the three main sectors was as follows:

- Agricultural policy and information and statistics systems, with 35 projects and a total budget of USD 29 million, mostly focused on food security information systems and agricultural censuses;
- Agriculture and rural development, with 13 projects and a total budget of USD 14 million, mostly focused on land tenure and agriculture and rural development strategies and policies;
- Agriculture marketing and trade, with 12 projects and a total budget of USD 3.7 million, mostly focused on capacity and strategy development for improved marketing of agricultural products.

487. The main donor in this sector was the European Commission, and donor funds represented 78% of total resources available. More in detail, distribution across sub-regions and funding resources was as follows:

- Donor-funded global and inter-regional projects absorbed most resources, with 38% of the total budget to the sector;
- SEU/REU received 29% of total budget resources to the sector, with resource partners and FAO contributing almost in equal shares to the total amount;
- SEC countries received 26% of total resources available, provided mostly from donors (21%) with a minor contribution from FAO (5%);
- regional projects received the smallest share, with 6% of total resources, the majority from donors.

488. In terms of management of the field programme, compliance with the required delegation of authority appeared to have been mixed at best. Data below refer to percentages of financial resources of all national and regional projects:

- since late 2007, operational responsibility was fully handed over to SEU/REU and SEC for all national and regional projects in the policy sector;
- over the entire evaluation period, the Lead Technical Unit responsibility has largely been located in HQ units: in the case of projects in SEU/REU countries, HQ-located LTU handled 75% of the national and regional project budgets; in SEC countries, HQ-located LTU handled 96% of the national and regional project budgets;
- Lead Technical Officers in HQ were responsible for 54% of financial resources for national and regional projects in SEU/REU countries and 83% of financial resources for national and regional projects in SEC countries; LTO in SEU/REU were also responsible for 15% of financial resources for national and regional projects in SEC countries;
- Projects for which the LTU and LTO responsibilities were assigned to REU or SEC focused on land tenure and rural development strategies, improved marketing and trade strategies, and Member Countries' participation in sessions of FAO governing bodies and other conferences

489. Overall, it appears that FAO wisely focused its own resources in countries that still required support, and where no alternative resource partners were available. Also, the limited resources provided for regional projects do not fully reflect the reality: some of the largest global and inter-regional projects carried out activities in a limited number of countries, either cutting across FAO sub-regional boundaries or linked to global projects and therefore considered global. This was the case of the Food Security Information Systems initiatives funded by the EC, for a total of USD 17 million.

490. The minimal delegation of authority to REU/SEU and SEC on technical matters appears to be directly linked to the limited human resources available in both offices in this sector: two Senior Policy Officers were posted in REU and SEU and covered the whole Region. Since May 2012, the SEU Senior Policy Officer has been posted in SEC, where he combined this role with that of assisting the Sub-Regional Coordinator, which involves numerous other tasks. The overall number of policy officers in the Region has not changed. In REU, some policy work was also carried out by the ADG/RR and two field programme officers, in addition to many other tasks and duties. For the other sub-sectors, i.e. agricultural marketing and trade, and land tenure and rural development, LTO responsibilities since 2007 have been carried out by six technical officers.

491. The Evaluation considers that, taking into account the REU and SEC skill mix and staffing capacity as of June 2012, it would be very difficult to plan for a future greater share of LTU and LTO responsibility assigned to either offices in this sector. At the same time, most technical officers in both REU and SEC confirmed a good level of communication and interaction with their respective technical departments. This will become increasingly important as countries in the Region progressively move towards different needs in the agricultural policy sector. Thus, further enhancement of internal communication and collaboration, as and how appropriate, appears to be the most effective way forward for improving FAO delivery to the Member Countries in the Region in this sector.

9.2.2 Normative products

492. The Evaluation identified 112 normative products of relevance to the Region within the Agricultural Policy sector. Of these, it reviewed a purposive sample: four in the agribusiness sector, three on prices, two on food security, eight on policy and two web networks. In general terms, FAO normative products were widely utilized by local academic institutions, research centres and ministries. For example, information about price volatility and crop forecasts to analyze the implications at the local level were widely read. Overall, informants knew how to access and find information on the FAO Web site and used it as a source of information. Specialists in specific sectors knew how to or had access to materials and considered them to be useful.

493. Normative products focusing on prices and food security were particularly relevant also taking into consideration the on-going global economic crisis. This was the case of the "Food Security and Agricultural Highlights" in Moldova that were indicated as useful by several informants.

494. Over the period under evaluation 15 normative products focusing on agribusiness were produced. Eleven were issued by HQ and four by DOs. Assessed products included the Agribusiness Handbook series aimed at providing specific sectoral knowledge (i.e. on Poultry Meat & Eggs, Wheat Flour, Food Retail) to agribusiness bankers and potential local

investors. Products were characterized by a good technical quality and responded to specific informational needs.

495. Normative products focusing on policy included reports on food security, the role of agriculture in marginal areas, farmer entrepreneurship organizations, rural poverty, productivity growth, and the impact of the economic crisis. Of the eight products assessed, three had been issued by HQ and five by REU: all were of good technical quality and in most of the cases dealt with issues of high relevance at the regional level.

496. Over the period under evaluation, a number of networks have been developed and maintained. ESCORENA is a virtual network aimed at enhancing sustainable agricultural development and food security by improving the use of information, communication, and associated technologies. It provides the opportunity to exchange opinions, experiences, good practices and resources related to agriculture research, and to ensure that the knowledge created is effectively shared and used in the Region and worldwide. It covers a wide range of products including cotton, apricots, nuts, olive, rice, sunflower and others. Information is relevant and usually updated. AGROWEB is a Web network for Central and Eastern Europe aimed at collecting and providing information on agricultural institutions and other important agriculture-related subjects to help users to find information and contacts in Central and Eastern European countries. Information is relevant and generally updated.

497. Of the 19 products in the AP area analysed by the Evaluation, only 3 had a Russian version. The number of products translated into Russian had increased recently, but FAO should definitely make more efforts in translating more publications into Russian if it wants to reach out to a broader network of potential users in the Region.

9.2.3 Other activities

498. During the period under evaluation, thirty-three events and workshops, funded through the Regular Programme or projects, took place in the AP sector in the Region. FAO also conducted some normative events with project funds at national level aimed at national audiences. These tended to cover a wide range of topics including food security, food prices, trade and commodity markets, agribusiness, and crop assessments.

499. Target groups/participants were diversified depending on the size and the scope of the event. Some events were targeted to a diversified group of national stakeholders while others had an international dimension and were targeted mainly to governmental officials, with a small participation of representatives from research institutions, private sector and NGOs.

9.3 Sectoral assessment

Relevance

500. FAO's Members Countries in Europe and Central Asia tended to give high importance to the Agricultural Policy sector: as indicated above three out of the six priorities for work in the Region identified by the 28th ERC were related to this area.

501. FAO Agricultural Policy work in the Region clearly addressed the priorities identified by the ERC: approximately 13% of the events organized by the DOs in the Region since late 2009/10, and 26% of the non-emergency field programme resources focused on one theme or another within the AP sector.

502. FAO's support was appreciated in all the countries due to both the high technical quality offered and to the neutrality of FAO expertise. This specific role was also the main reason for the request by some countries (e.g. Albania) to FAO to be a neutral actor in the negotiation process towards full EU membership. However, the Evaluation also found that although FAO was extremely close to governments, it was not providing a leading role in policy support.

503. Likewise for other sectors, the formulation of national Country Programming Frameworks should also enhance the relevance of FAO's support to the AP sector. It would be a key factor in facilitating coordination among units, inter-disciplinarity of action, staff commitment and resources. This Evaluation also identified room for improvement in the integration of social inclusion and gender equity perspectives, to raise the relevance to countries' actual needs in FAO's agricultural policy work.

Efficiency

504. The efficiency of project implementation in the AP sector varied, depending also partly on external conditions. A number of projects suffered delays in their initial phases. A case in point was the "Preparatory Assistance for the Census of Agriculture"[146] in Moldova. The methodological and technical support provided to the national statistics service was highly appreciated and in the end found to be useful, but project implementation was initially characterized by significant delays. However, once difficulties were overcome, the project reached positive technical results as also witnessed by the organization of a study tour from Armenia to learn from the experience of Moldova.

505. FAO showed significant flexibility of response in light of changing demand in challenging national situations. This was the case of the GCP /KYR/008/TUR, "Development of an Agricultural Development Strategy in Kyrgyzstan for 2011- 2020". The work on the strategy had to be adjusted over time due to the frequent turnover of Ministers of Agriculture, as each change had implications in terms of visions and requests. FAO proved capable of responding to these political changes by engaging in policy discussions with the successive new Ministers, to review how their specific proposals would fit within a consistent and coherent agricultural strategy.

506. Delegation of authority did not always lead to more efficient delivery. In the case of GCP /RER/029/TUR, 'Capacity Development for Analysis and Strengthening of Agricultural Innovation Systems (AIS) in Central Asia and Turkey', delays in SEC approval apparently caused delays in project implementation.

507. In the AP sector, communication between REU/SEC and HQ depended to a large extent on individual personalities and experience; this showed the need to identify and develop formal mechanisms to improve and systematize communication to improve

[146] TCP/MOL/3203.

efficiency. Communication between REU and SEC staff was generally fine, with a good level of collaboration and coordination. This allowed a reasonable level of response to Members, in particular in the SEC Sub-region, given the paucity of staff posted in SEC with competence in this area. As mentioned above, SEC was assigned a full-time policy officer only in mid-2012 and the whole Region only had one staff for rural development, rural institutions and land tenure issues. Furthermore, neither DO was ever assigned a food security policy officer, which requires specific expertise.

Effectiveness

508. Overall, the Evaluation's assessment was that work in the AP sector was effective during the period 2004-2012. For example, there was good evidence that the 33 events and workshops organized contributed to developing capacities of participants, namely public servants and other stakeholders.

509. Capacities were also developed through many projects. Positive examples were found in the work on land consolidation (Albania, Armenia, Bosnia & Herzegovina, Moldova, Serbia and Tajikistan), and in other specific projects, e.g. "Institutional strengthening of the Ministry of Agriculture on establishing modern agribusiness and marketing" in Kyrgyzstan.

510. In Moldova, a number of stakeholders stated that the "Price Monitoring and Analysis Country Briefs" were quite useful in their work: the briefs contain updated information on commodity prices, which in recent years have become a major factor affecting food security in many countries.

511. Another positive example was UNJP/TUR/051/SPA "Growth with Decent Work for All" that reached remarkable results and was considered a success story by most of the respondents. The project represented a positive example also in terms of inter-disciplinarity and for the integration of gender and social inclusion elements.

512. In the case of Tajikistan, FAO had 'brand' recognition in the country among both donors and government agencies. There was good donor coordination work at the level of agrarian reform; much of its success was due to individual leadership. In several cases, due partly to the different organizational structures characterizing the country offices, individual skills, personality and initiatives had a strong influence on project effectiveness.

513. In Moldova, beside the initial delay, the agricultural census turned into an extremely positive example. Moreover, FAO promoted the improvement of the capacity of data collection and analysis in a number of countries. Of particular importance in this area, was the work carried out by the Gender team in REU on gender and statistics, discussed more in detail in Section 10.4.

514. In the Region FAO had joint projects with both UN organizations, including ILO, UNDP, UNICEF, UN-Women and WHO and non-UN organizations, e.g. the collaboration with the EU, GIZ and USAID on agrarian reform in Tajikistan. All these resulted in very positive outcomes, which suggested that this kind of partnership can lead to significant added value.

515. In some countries, however, NGOs resent that FAO only worked through the government and did not partner with them more extensively. Indeed, there are several international non-governmental organizations that work extensively in the Region, with a long term vision and interest. This was the case of the Aga Khan Development Network which works in Bosnia & Herzegovina, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan. The Evaluation found there was ample room for developing a partnership with it and others.

516. Last, but not least, a number of policy strategies have been completed, funded through projects or other sources. These were:

- land consolidation in Albania, Armenia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Moldova, Serbia, and land reform in Tajikistan;
- territorial organization and sustainable land management in areas with high natural disaster risk in Hungary;
- agricultural and rural policy framework in Ukraine;
- support to agriculture, land and water policy strategy development and implementation in Tajikistan;
- agricultural strategy in Kyrgyzstan.

Impact and sustainability

517. An important and positive feature of FAO's results was the introduction of new working procedures and approaches in policy work, in particular the use of consultations with external stakeholders, including CSOs, farmers organizations, independent experts, women's associations, local governments etc.

518. In Moldova, the draft strategy on land consolidation should cover 2013-2027. This was drafted with the support of both local and international experts. All relevant ministries had endorsed the strategy and they were waiting for it to be discussed and approved by the government. FAO support was considered important, and it would have been difficult to draft it without FAO assistance, based on its experience in other countries. In this framework the government had also asked for further support in the development of a Land Code/Law.

519. A positive example of sustainability was TCP/ALB/3301, "Support to the Preparation of a National Land Consolidation Strategy and a Land Consolidation Pilot Project in Albania". The aim of the project was to develop a strategy introducing a model for land consolidation. The strategy should be finalized and presented by the end of 2012. Once the strategy is finalized, it should go through the various governmental steps, first the Council of Ministers and then Parliament. The strategy developed with the support of a TCP should provide a land tenure model and should be one of the bases for the new agricultural and rural development strategy.

520. The level of coordination between FAO and other UN Agencies was rather varied across the Region. FAO work on AP could benefit from better coordination with other UN Agencies. In particular better coordination could lead to a more effective integration of innovation, gender issues and social inclusion within the policy work. Positive results in this sense have been shown by several UNJPs.

521. However, project exit strategies and sustainability were noted to be weak in most cases, with particular problems associated to the TCPs and the role this type of projects plays in the Region, as discussed later in Section 10.1.

FAO comparative advantage

522. FAO was seen as having strong competence and comparative advantage in a number of agricultural and rural development sub-sectors including: food security, agricultural markets and marketing (including technologies); food safety and quality (although the EU is also a significant player in this area); land consolidation; and the operationalization of policies at the field level.

523. As also suggested by the "Evaluation of FAO's Role and Work in Food and Agricultural Policy",[147] FAO was better suited than any other organization to assist the countries in the Region in the identification, adoption and implementation of policies that address hunger, poverty and sustainability. FAO was appreciated for its neutrality and the high quality of its work. A good example of this was the collaboration between REU and the European Commission in carrying out the "Assessment of the agriculture and rural development sectors in the Eastern Partnership countries (Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine)" in the framework of the European Neighbourhood Programme for Agriculture and Rural Development (ENPARD). In close collaboration with the EU, similar assistance was provided to IPARD (Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance for Rural Development of the European Union) countries in the Western Balkans: in terms of quality control in Serbia and Montenegro; and in carrying out sectoral reviews (economic diversification, cereal, fruit and vegetables, meat and dairy and wine) in Bosnia and Herzegovina.[148] Another example was the work to develop agricultural policy and land consolidation strategies upon requests by several countries.

524. Also, as FAO is the international standard-setting organization for agricultural censuses, this was clearly an area where FAO had a unique role.

Contribution to FAO Core Functions for the sector

525. FAO's work in the AP sector contributed to all of the Organization's Core Functions, except for c).

526. For Core Functions a) and b) work on long-term projections on food and agriculture was done for the Region, and the Organization provided support on data collection, analysis and implementation of agricultural censuses. Core function d) is most clearly related to AP, and the work in the Region has been done from both HQ and the DOs. There has been significant demand in this area, and most FAO interventions were reported to be satisfactory.

527. Work in e) included workshops and project events organized to improve knowledge and capacity at the regional level. These tended to cover a wide range of topics including food security, food prices, trade and commodity markets, agribusiness, and crop assessment. Target groups/participants were diversified depending on the size and the scope of the event

[147] OED, January 2012.
[148] Two more studies on fisheries and forestry were also conducted.

and included mostly governmental officials, with a small participation of representatives from research institutions, private sector and NGOs.

528. Overall, and in particular in the area of AP, the Organizations work on advocacy and communication (Core Function f) was poor, not reflecting the high quality of FAO's technical work.

529. Considering inter-disciplinarity (Core function g) the Evaluation found limited evidence. In the AP sector, some innovation has been recognized in the introduction of new methodologies: i) the introduction of stakeholders consultations in policy design and therefore the promotion of a more participatory policy dialogue, ii) the introduction of new methodologies for land consolidation; iii) the introduction of new methodologies for data collection and analysis (i.e. within the design and implementation of the agricultural census).

530. A clear goal for Core Function h) was to strengthen the collaboration and coordination with the other UN Agencies operating in the Region. A positive example is represented by the participation to the CARRA inter-Agency Conference on UN Disaster Risk Reduction. Partnerships with NGOs and other international stakeholders were extremely diversified on a country basis, positive examples include: the collaboration with the EU, GIZ and USAID in the agrarian reform in Tajikistan; and the participation of 10 NGOs in the FAO Regional policy consultation on high food prices in the Europe and Central Asia Region, held in Istanbul in June 2011. The relationship with the EC was also relevant in some of the countries.

531. Box 27 below shows specific products linked to each of the core functions.

Box 27. Performance of FAO Core Functions in the Agricultural Policy sector

N.	Core function	
a	***Monitoring and assessment of long-term and medium-term trends and perspectives***	• Price Monitoring and Analysis Country Briefs • AP related sections in the FAO long term projections on food and agriculture for Europe and Central Asia
b	***Assembly and provision of information, knowledge and statistics***	• Agricultural census in Georgia and Moldova; preliminary activities in Armenia; • AP related data (i.e. food security, price, trade) for Europe and Central Asia in the Global Strategy for Agricultural Statistics
c	***Development of international instruments, norms and standards***	
d	***Policy and strategy options and advice***	• Land consolidation strategy in Albania, Armenia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Moldova, Serbia and Tajikistan • Preparatory assistance to the agricultural census, for Georgia, Moldova, Kyrgyzstan. • Support the development of a strategy for territorial organization and sustainable land management in areas with high natural disaster risk in Hungary • Support to the formulation of a medium term agricultural and rural policy framework in Ukraine • Support to agriculture, land and water policy strategy development and implementation in Tajikistan • Development of an agricultural strategy in Kyrgyzstan

e	***Technical support to promote technology transfer and build capacity***	• 33 workshops and project events covering a wide range of topics including food security, food prices, trade and commodity markets, agribusiness, crop assessment.
f	***Advocacy and communication***	• The capacity to communicate results effectively does not always reflect the high quality of FAO technical work. There are projects and countries characterized by relatively poor communication strategies.
g	***Inter-disciplinarity and innovation***	• Inter-disciplinarity: although it has been emphasized as an advantage of REU and SEC, the number of projects characterized by an interdisciplinary approach is limited. Some inter-disciplinarity appears in some UNJPs, but hardly in TCPs. • Innovation needs to be contextualized at least in terms of space and time. Examples include: i. the introduction of stakeholders consultations in policy design and therefore the promotion of a more participatory policy dialogue, ii. the introduction of new methodologies for land consolidation; iii the introduction of new methodologies for data collection and analysis (i.e. within the design and implementation of the agricultural census).
h	***Partnerships and alliances***	• Collaboration and coordination with a number of UN Agencies operating in the Region: ILO; UNDP, UNICEF, UN-Women, WHO. • EC, GIZ and USAID in the agrarian reform in Tajikistan • With the EC: ENPARD in Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine and the Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance (IPA) in Albania.

Source: Evaluation

9.4 Conclusions

532. Overall, FAO work in the AP areas responded to the regional needs and the priorities identified by the ERC. Also, the quality of FAO's work in providing policy and strategy options and advice was appreciated and well recognized in all the countries visited by the Evaluation. The quality of policy and strategy options delivered in the period under evaluation has been rated as satisfactory by the large majority of the beneficiaries.

533. There was good evidence related to the provision of basic statistics, however, since the lack of reliable statistics is a major issue in the Region, **capacities in REU and SEC on data collection and analysis should be further strengthened**.

534. There was good evidence of capacities having been developed through FAO's work and of uptake of the products delivered with FAO's support in the Agricultural Policy sector. Considering that food security is still a major challenge for some of the countries (i.e. Georgia and Tajikistan) and that "strengthening food security and nutrition" is one of the priorities for work in the Region, **capacities in REU and SEC on food security policy should be strengthened**.

535. Although FAO had a significant role in improving policy formulation capacity at the regional level and in introducing innovative and more participatory approaches, there was room to improve the consultation process with NGOs and CSOs in the policy dialogue, in those countries where this is feasible.

10 Modalities of delivery

536. This section presents and discusses the common findings of the Evaluation with respect to the implementation of the field programme, the quality and use of normative and knowledge products of FAO, the performance of the Organization in integrating some cross-cutting themes and in delivering its core functions, as well as the case of FAO in the One-UN approach.

10.1 The field programme

10.1.1 The TCP and TCP Facility

537. A key component of the IPA-led decentralization process was the delegation of authority of the Technical Cooperation Programme (TCP) to the Decentralized Office Network, as well as the indicative allocation of the funds on a regional basis. For the 2010-11 and 2012-13 biennia the Europe and Central Asia Region was assigned 10% of the TCP appropriation for national, sub-regional and regional non-emergency project on a biennial basis.[149]

538. The TCP portfolio in the Europe and Central Asia Region, in total slightly above USD 47 million, represented 26% of the Field Programme resources allocated to national and regional projects in the Region in the period under evaluation, and 60% of the actual number of initiatives. Of the TCP funds, USD 6.4 million, or 14% of the envelope, were TCP Facilities (TCPF). During the biennium 2010/11, total allocations in the Region reached USD 9.4 million, in line with the IPA indication. In most of the recipient countries in the Region, the TCP was the only source of projects at national level. Most respondents to the staff questionnaire agreed that the TCP and the TCP-Facility were useful tools for working in the Region and this opinion was confirmed through the Evaluation's interviews at country level.

539. Since mid-2010, the delegation of authority in the Region was implemented, as follows:

i. all operating responsibilities for TCPs was located in DOs, likewise for all donor funded national and regional projects in the Region; one exception was an emergency TCP in August 2010;
ii. LTU responsibility was always maintained in HQ;
iii. LTO responsibility was in DOs in 12 out of 25 TCPs;
iv. all TCPF were always approved and implemented under the formal responsibility of the DOs in the Region, in terms of operations, LTU and LTO responsibility.

540. The situation above was partly due to the available skill mix in SEU/REU and SEC, that did not allow greater technical responsibility to be assigned to LTOs posted in SEU/REU or SEC. Thus, the new policy did not substantially change the formal attribution of responsibilities in the Region. However, a real major change was that officers in the DOs had de-facto become responsible for preparing the TCP Project Document, whereas this was usually done in HQ until 2009. While formally the TCP Coordinator is responsible for the Project Document, the particularity of the Region has led to Technical Officers taking a

[149] TCP Manual, 2009.

larger role in the formulation of TCPs. This entailed more work, but also more autonomy and room for decision-making.

541. Under the new system, the TCP Coordinator in the Region were the two Sub-Regional Coordinators in SEU and SEC. While the post of Deputy Regional representative in REU was vacant, the responsibility of TCP Coordinator was taken over by the ADG/RR, in addition to the already assigned decision-making authority on allocations of the TCP funds to countries and initiatives, including for regional TCPs. Also in REU, the post of TCP programme officer was created like in other ROs, responsible for supporting the ADG in the allocation of the resources. Given the absence of FAO Representatives at country level in the Region, arrangements needed to be made to accommodate the various steps of the TCP approval process.

542. The establishment of the Peer-review Committee in REU sped up the approval process of the TCPs. This was confirmed by the staff and Member Countries questionnaires. Also, it was stated that this opened up the opportunity to improve mainstreaming of gender equality in the projects. However, there seemed to be a certain level of lack of clarity in the DOs in the Region about the actual roles and responsibilities in the case of technical clearance, assignment of LTO responsibility, the role of field programme coordinator and technical officer in the DO, and similar issues.

543. The questionnaire to the Member Countries contained a question on the TCP. Among the ten responding countries for whom this question was relevant, eight considered that the TCP projects better met their needs since the reform and the technical quality of the design had improved. The feedback on the systematic incorporation of gender and other cross-cutting issues into TCP project design was less positive, with only six respondents acknowledging an improvement also on this aspect.

544. The questionnaire for FAO staff also contained a question on the TCP. In general, there was a positive attitude towards the TCP criteria, although in face-to-face interviews, opinions had not been so positive, in particular about the 'gender mainstreaming' criterion. There were also different perceptions between HQ and DO staff: the former disagreed with the current TCP procedures and management, while the latter expressed reasonable satisfaction with the current set-up.

545. Section 6.2 discussed efficiency in project implementation, for a sample of 20 projects. This showed that on average, efficiency of the TCPs since 2010 had been slightly lower than for TCPs and other project categories over the whole period.[150] Specific issues were identified in the approval of emergency TCPs on trans-boundary animal diseases. However, the Evaluation acknowledges that difficulties in the initial phase of handing-over to the Region the TCP process may have affected negatively the assessment: once resolved, there is good potential for improving efficiency of performance.

546. When looking at quality of design and effectiveness, TCPs suffered from the same weaknesses noted in most other projects, discussed in the following section. No significant

[150] Efficiency in this case was assessed on timeliness of operational steps and actions, including follow-up to Government's requests, approvals, inception missions and workshops, as well as completeness and transparency of information available for FAO internal users.

changes were noted in the quality of TCP design since 2010, despite the Peer-review mechanism.

547. A specific problem was the rule by which a follow-up TCP cannot be approved on the same topic. However, in countries where resource partners are very few and tend to be focused on a restricted number of sectors, TCPs become the only funding resource available for certain types of interventions, e.g. apricot orchard in Armenia, mountain development pilot projects in Armenia and Turkey, even when there cannot be expectations for them to have a catalytic role or achieve sustainable results. FAO and requesting countries should develop more strategic approaches to similar issues, by mobilizing TCP and UTF resources in the planning and design stage, should the topic treated not likely to interest external resource partners.

548. In conclusion, the increased delegation of authority on TCPs appeared to have some positive effects, albeit not enough evidence was available yet to draw more definite conclusions. There was a clear need for increased clarity on respective HQ, REU and SEC roles and responsibilities and related accountability mechanisms.

10.1.2 Overall findings on the Field Programme

549. Features and analysis of the portfolio in the Europe and Central Asia Region are discussed in Section 6.2 above. That showed how the Field Programme was dispersed across a high number of countries over the evaluation period, with a limited number of interventions in each with few exceptions. This was a clear consequence of the political and economic changes taking place in the Region and FAO appears to have played an important role in providing some support to countries that still required it.

550. The Evaluation assessed 15 projects in the visited countries in-depth, purposely selected to include a range of different types of interventions and sector, and scored them on a six-point scale.[151] About a third of these were still half-way through implementation, thus no assessment could be done of their sustainability and impact. Overall relevance of the sample was good at identification stage, with average score at 5.1, albeit in some cases, design undermined the final relevance of the interventions to the identified needs. All other criteria were assessed between satisfactory and good, with the exception of Implementation and Partnerships, just below satisfactory, and Gender and social inclusion, which scored 2.8. All the scorings appear to be broadly in line with the overall trend in FAO's projects, as assessed in other evaluations. A positive note was a slightly higher than usual scoring of impact, mostly due to very positive assessment of some agricultural policy and animal health projects.

551. Support provided through emergency interventions was well appreciated, whether it was for TADs, trans-boundary pests or input supply in case of conflicts and natural hazards. A minority of the emergency projects also focused on development issues. In this respect, the on-going integration between emergencies and development is perceived as a positive sign and the Evaluation considers that capacities exist across the Decentralized Office Network in the Region, and in SEC in particular, to handle emergencies linked to natural disasters and conflicts, if the unfortunate case arises. The summer 2012 rapid support for the Crop and

[151] See Annex 10.

Food Assessment in the Republic of Moldova was a good, albeit small example of such capacity.

552. Some of the regional projects on TADs, trans-boundary pest control, food security information systems, and obsolete pesticides, strived to different levels of effectiveness, to develop collaboration among technical staff from neighbouring countries (see also Normative products below). This appeared to be, as in other parts of the world, one of the strongest comparative advantages of FAO, for which it was highly appreciated.

553. On the other hand, some governments complained of being 'left out' from design and discussions on the formulation of regional projects. In this respect, some of the inter-regional and global projects did not have in FPMIS, the agreements of participating countries: whether this was due to an oversight of Budget Holders in making these available or to the actual absence of such letters, was not clear.

554. Many of the other issues and weaknesses identified in the design of FAO's field programme in the Region were not new to the FAO Office of Evaluation, as they had emerged in a number of thematic, country and project evaluations in recent years across the world.[152] These mostly stem from the fact that projects in the Europe and Central Asia were formulated and approved using the same guidelines that apply at corporate level. The recently approved and diffused Guide to the Project Cycle issued by the Technical Cooperation Department in 2012 is an excellent initiative to address the recurrent weaknesses in FAO project design: it was too early by the time of this Evaluation, to assess its uptake and impact.

555. The majority of projects and programmes in Europe and Central Asia did not integrate gender equality, social inclusion and poverty alleviation in a manner consistent with its own mandate and the importance that social factors have in making progress towards the organizational goals. The Evaluation had evidence of at least one instance, in Armenia, where project design and approach will eventually result in benefits for the better-off groups in society, while reducing access of poorer sections of society to safe food products. Most other initiatives aimed at developing capacities of individuals within institutions, as discussed later in this section. In so doing, they did not integrate a gender and social inclusion perspective, thus missing the opportunity for a diffused approach to advocacy about the founding principles of FAO and the UN.

556. Further, the majority of projects had not developed exit-strategies or included actions aimed at fostering sustainability of the initiative itself, e.g. through partnership or early resource mobilization to leverage additional resources. Some projects also tended to be very focused on one specific phase in a long chain of causality, without paying attention at up- and down-stream complementary initiatives that would have enhanced their sustainability. Examples were several projects in Armenia, including on pesticide residue monitoring, slaughterhouses, forest nursery, and mountain development in Turkey.

557. The capacity to communicate results effectively did not always correspond to the high quality of FAO technical work and most projects were characterized by poor communication strategies. This again tended to be an FAO weakness across the world, but in

[152] For example, FAO's work and role related to water, 2010; FAO's work and role in Gender and Development, 2011; FAO's support to the implementation of the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries, 2012; FAO's work and role in Forestry, 2012; Synthesis of country evaluations, 2008, 2010.

the case of the Region, the absence of FAOReps who could take care of representing the Organization in appropriate forums and venues, appeared to be an aggravating factor.

558. An aspect that, in the view of the Evaluation, will deserve much more attention in future was inter-disciplinarity in FAO's projects in the Region. This was indicated by FAO staff as being a positive result of the existence of REU and SEC. However, so far this did not appear to have resulted in projects formulated or implemented through an interdisciplinary approach. Some degree of inter-disciplinarity appeared in the jointly implemented UNJPs, but hardly in TCPs, and there appears to be a significant room for improvement in this area.

559. In terms of implementation, the consequences of the absence of resident FAOReps or even any kind of presence at country level, were repeatedly mentioned by FAO staff in HQ and in REU and SEC as a major obstacle to efficient and effective implementation of the field programme. The Evaluation found confirming evidence of this throughout projects and countries:

- two complex projects and TCPs in Armenia would have required a closer and more effective management approach to bring together Government, LTO and Operations;
- coordination and harmonization with the One-UN mechanism in Albania of all other FAO's projects was completely lacking, thus missing opportunities for synergies and increased sustainability and impacts;
- in Tajikistan, a problem between IFAD as resource partners and the Project Management Unit led FAO as executing agency into a very complicated situation; if a FAO Representative had been in place, mitigating measures could have been found; poor engagement with different concerned government agencies was another missed opportunity for adequate effectiveness;
- the approval of regional projects was systematically faster in countries where FAO had an AFAORep, compared to countries with only a NC or no presence at all.

560. A main positive factor in project performance in the Region, with only one exception in Armenia, appeared to be the presence of a full-time experienced Project Manager or Chief Technical Advisor (CTA), possibly with international experience, responsible for running the project and capable of both bringing into the task the personal technical competence and getting support from a pool of FAO technical experts. These tasks could also be the responsibility of an LTO, but in the absence of a 'trigger', i.e. a project manager who asks for support, this is not necessarily going to happen. In the Region, this was a particular important factor due to the absence of resident FAO Representatives who could compensate to some extent, the weaknesses of project design and resolve the inevitable implementation problems. Project duration also plays a role: a poorly designed project can be adjusted during implementation if there is enough time; changes in attitudes and practices, or development of policies and strategies through participatory processes, take time and require follow-up to take place and be sustainable.

561. This raises key questions on the appropriateness and effectiveness of the current pattern of project management and funding. Projects tend to have smaller budgets and be shorter, exclude full time-staff and rely on national government staff for their management. Although this has the purpose of enhancing ownership and mainstreaming of project results into government's practices and procedures, in most cases staff assigned cannot devote enough time to carry out the task in an effective and efficient manner.

562. In conclusion, the field programme in the Europe and Central Asia Region seemed to reflect to a large extent, features that had already emerged in previous FAO's evaluations : projects tended to be relevant, however design and implementation were often poor and undermined sustainability and impact. The Evaluation considers that **efforts will have to focus on inter-disciplinarity, integration of gender equality and social inclusion perspectives and on results, rather than delivery per se.** Also, management arrangements and duration influenced project effectiveness and sustainability to a large extent.

10.2 Normative and knowledge products

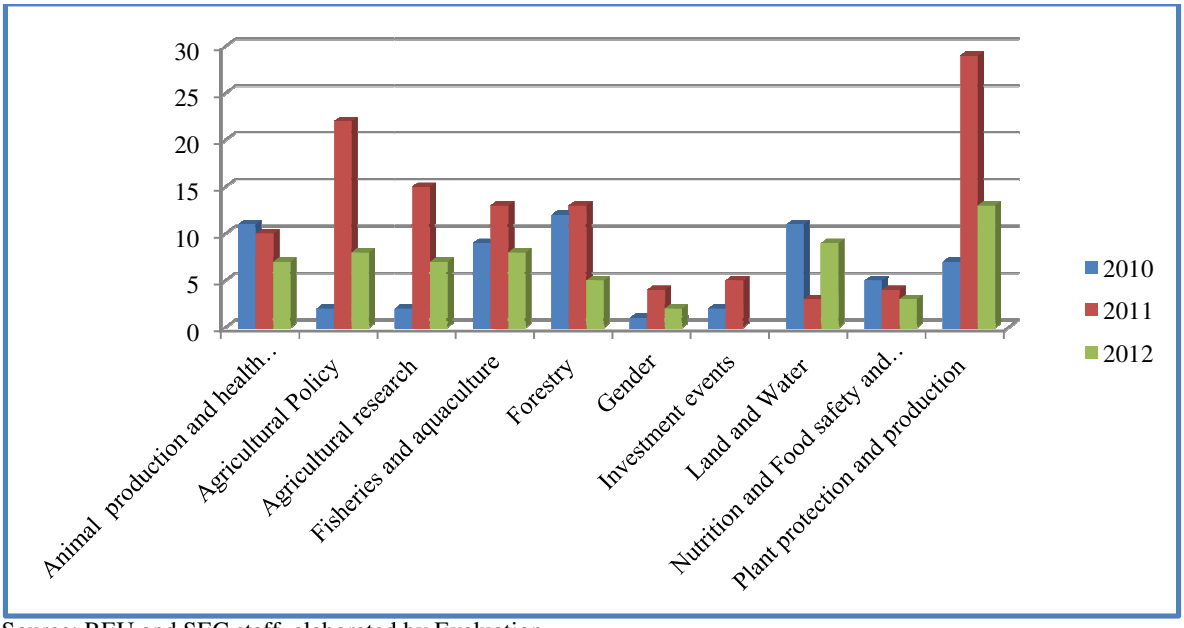
563. The term 'normative and knowledge products' includes publications and public events that FAO issues or organizes as part of its knowledge management mandate. In the context of this Evaluation, a list was compiled comprising all publications that were developed by FAO in or for the Europe and Central Asia Region, as well as all events, workshops and conferences organized by or in which FAO staff participated with presentations and side-events, in or of relevance to the Region.[153] Sources of information were the REU Web site, the corporate Document Repository and REU and SEC's staff. Previous sections in this report discussed in-depth the normative products for the Animal Production and Health and Agricultural Policy sectors. Here the analysis will focus on the overall package of products.

564. In total, the Evaluation identified 316 publications that were relevant to individual countries, groups of countries or the Region as a whole, and 270 events that took place in the Region, directly organized by FAO or to which FAO participated with presentations.

565. Box 28 below contains a break-down by sector of events in the period January 2010 – July 2012. It shows how the number of events organized or attended was often proportional to the number of staff in the DOs in the same sector: since 2010, there have been two Plant Production and Protection officers, one in SEU/REU and one in SEC, hence the peak of events attended or organized that year, and a similar trend was emerging for 2012; the post for Land and Water specialist was vacant for a number of months in 2011 in SEC, hence that year, the numbers dropped. In 2010 and 2011, officers attended or organized events almost on a monthly basis, in most sectors, namely Agricultural Policy, Animal Health and Production, Fisheries and Aquaculture, Forestry and Plant Protection and Production,. Exception to this rule was the peak of events in the agriculture research sector, due to a series of national workshops funded by the regional Turkish-funded project Capacity Development for Analysis and Strengthening of Agricultural Innovation Systems (AIS) in Central Asia and Turkey.

[153] See Annex 6, List of normative outputs.

Box 28. FAO events for the Europe and Central Asia Region, by sector, January 2010-July 2012[154]

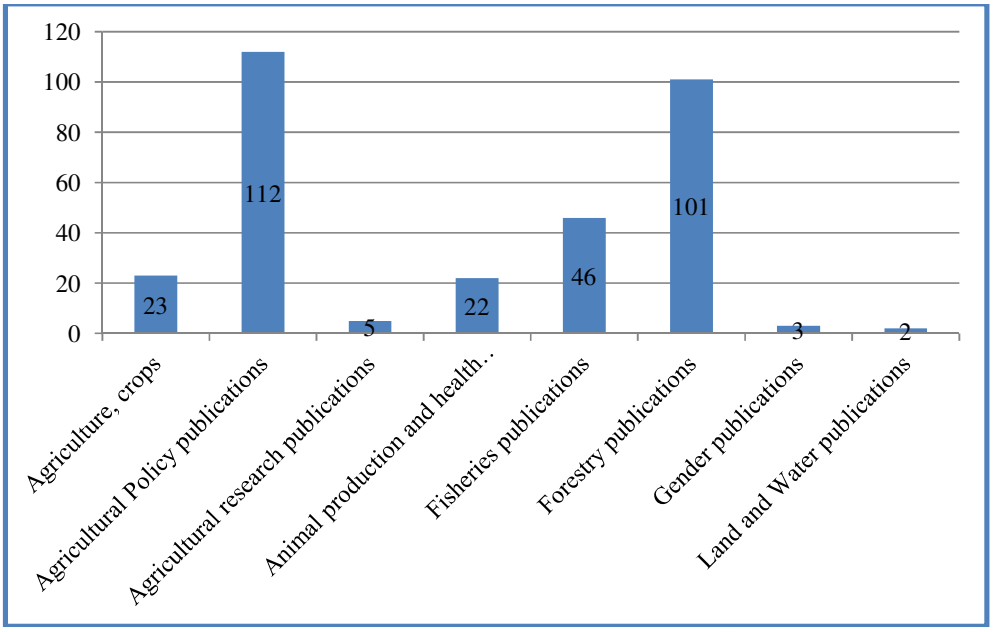


Source: REU and SEC staff, elaborated by Evaluation

566. Box 29 below shows the 316 publications issued in the period January 2004-June 2012, by technical sectors. Some sectors produced many more publications: one such case was Forestry, within which the National Forestry Resource Assessments reports get produced every five years for the Global Forestry Resource Assessment Report. Also, the Agricultural Policy sector in this Evaluation was given a very broad definition. Nevertheless, what looks like an interesting important indicator is the very small number of publications in important sectors for the Region, namely Gender, Land and Water and Agricultural Research. Without making recommendations on something that may have various causes, the Evaluation suggests that respective units revise the needs for more publications in their respective areas for the Region and allocate their resources accordingly.

[154] The Agricultural Policy sector includes interventions in agricultural policy, information systems and statistics, agricultural and rural development and agricultural marketing and trade.

Box 29. FAO publications for the Europe and Central Asia Region, by sector, January 2004-July 2012[155]



Source: REU Web site; FAO Document Repository ; REU and SEC staff; elaborated by Evaluation

567. The Evaluation also assessed what was the ratio of publication issued by HQ and DOs: 120 were produced by HQ; 100 were produced jointly by HQ and one of the Decentralized Offices; 95 by the Decentralized Offices and one by the UN, with contributions from FAO. Overall, this indicated a good level of collaboration among staff in HQ and in Dos, as well as good level of efforts by staff in the DOs compared to HQ.

568. The analysis of 20 publications for the Region in the area of agricultural policy and seven in the sector of animal production and health, assessed them as satisfactory to good in terms of relevance, technical quality and potential use and impact. Two other criteria, integration of environmental sustainability concepts and social inclusion aspects, were assessed as un-satisfactory and the criterion 'integration of gender equality perspective' was rated as poor. [156]

569. One specific publication deserves separate mention: in 2010, FAO Agricultural Department published 'Gardens of Biodiversity: Conservation of genetic resources and their use in traditional food production systems by small farmers of the Southern Caucasus', a thoroughly documented advocacy work in support of the agricultural biodiversity in the Southern Caucasus. The book, which contains hundreds of photographs, was seen in the offices of senior managers in Governments and other partner agencies. One interlocutor said "What I like about this book is that it does not talk about countries, but about the Caucasus and its people". The Evaluation team scored it as good in terms of relevance and above satisfactory for most other criteria, excluding integration of gender equality and social inclusion concerns.

[155] The Agricultural Policy sector includes interventions in agricultural policy, information systems and statistics, agricultural and rural development and agricultural marketing and trade.

[156] The analysis was based on a six-point scale and descriptors used in other FAO thematic evaluations, adjusted to the context, see Annex 6.

570. The Evaluation found that on average, FAO's publications for the Region missed to some extent integrating other disciplinary perspectives, namely the natural resources management and social development fields that should be highly relevant to FAO's work in the area of agricultural policy. Like in the case of projects, the added value in terms of multi- and inter-disciplinary products issued by a team of regional experts in various sectors, went somehow amiss.

571. A major factor in the level of uptake and impact will also depend on the dissemination strategies deployed by FAO to make these products easily available in the Region. Overall, and differently from what usually found in other regions, stakeholders met during the Evaluation missions were quite knowledgeable about FAO publications, and about how to find them in the complex FAO Web site. Still, a recurrent comment was the limited number of publications in Russian: in the list of publications compiled by the Evaluation, only 25 out of 316 were published in Russian and 2 in both English and Russian. The Russian Federation contributed in 2009 to a Multilateral Trust Fund, for a total amount of USD 4 million, to pay for translators and translation.[157] This undoubtedly was a positive step. However, unless more resources are devoted to increase the rate of translations, this will be a major obstacle to a broader uptake of FAO's products in the Region, at least for the foreseeable future.

572. Many among the government officers interviewed, mentioned attending various FAO events. Sub-regional and regional events, including for capacity development, have proved to be very effective mechanisms to develop networks and collaboration at the technical level among peers. This appeared particularly important in the surveillance and management of trans-boundary pests and diseases, but played a role also in most if not all other sectors.

573. Thus, overall FAO's normative products have a satisfactory level of use and satisfaction, although in some areas it would be worth assessing actual needs for more publications. Also, making more of them available in Russian should be a priority in the Region, as conveyed by Recommendation 7.

10.3 Delivery of Core functions

574. The assessment of FAO's delivery of its core functions facilitates describing the performance of the Organization at an aggregate level of analysis: this facilitates visualizing what are the areas of strengths and weaknesses, and where the corporate comparative advantage lies.

575. The Evaluation asked both the Member Countries and FAO staff to rate the relevance of FAO's work in terms of its core functions for the Region. Both groups considered 'assembly and provision of information, knowledge and statistics' and 'development of international instruments, norms and standards' among the most relevant. Member Countries additionally indicated 'advocacy and communication on Food Security and agriculture-related matters' of high relevance, while FAO Staff considered these to be 'policy and strategy options and advice and technical support to promote technology transfer and build capacity.'

[157] MTF /GLO/232/RUS, Support to the use of Russian in FAO, March 2009-Decemvbr 2012

ES81. The Evaluation's own assessment of FAO's delivery of its core functions in Europe and Central Asia is described in Box 30 below.

Box 30. Evaluation's assessment of FAO's performance in delivering its core functions in Europe and Central Asia

N.	Core function	Evaluation's assessment
a	***Monitoring and assessment of long-term and medium-term trends and perspectives***	• In the Region, some use was being made of FAO's work in this area by research institutes and governments. Also, REU and SEC staff contributed to a number of regional and international events on related themes. In addition, the item discussed at the 28th ERC on the challenges and perspectives looking to 2050 was well appreciated. **This appeared to be a function deserving sustained attention in the Region.**
b	***Assembly and provision of information, knowledge and statistics***	• In Eastern and South-eastern Europe, the Evaluation found there was a good level of knowledge and possibly use of FAO's products available on the corporate Web site. Sector specialists in these Member Countries, knew where to find the information they needed. On statistics, the Organization had provided support to the agricultural census in the Republic of Moldova and was starting to provide similar support in Armenia. Also, REU carried out interesting work and contributed to develop capacities on gender in statistics for agriculture and rural development. **A major obstacle for improved performance was the limited number of products available in Russian: efforts in future should concentrate here.**
c	***Development of international instruments, norms and standards***	• There was general appreciation for the international instruments, norms and standards in the Region. Those mentioned in particular included the Codex Alimentarius, the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries, and International Plant Protection Convention.
d	***Policy and strategy options and advice***	• There were some good examples on Food Security Information Systems, in particular in Armenia, Georgia, Moldova, and Kyrgyzstan. FAO had provided or was providing support to the agricultural strategies in Albania and Kyrgyzstan and the agrarian reform in Tajikistan. Contingency planning on trans-boundary animal disease control had been well appreciated, especially in the case of new diseases such as ASF. FAO's involvement and initial support to ENPARD had high visibility. **This function will continue to be one of the priorities in the Region in the medium-term.**
e	***Technical support to promote technology transfer and build capacity***	• This core function was the major focus of the field programme in the Region. Interventions in emergencies were well appreciated in the Republic of Moldova in the case of droughts and across the Region on locust control. However, in responses to the questionnaire to Member Countries, this core function was rated as one of the lowest. The Evaluation noted a high request for this type of assistance. Thus, the Organization **should improve design, implementation and monitoring of its field projects**, to maintain its comparative advantage in this important area of work, and enhance their Capacity Development component.
f	***Advocacy and communication***	• **This area was particularly weak**. However, this could be partly influenced by the modality of presence at country level. Recommendations on this specific aspect were formulated by several evaluations in the past, with no visible improvement.
g	***Inter-disciplinarity and innovation***	• There were a few good examples of innovation in the animal health and land tenure sectors. While inter-disciplinarity was considered an added value and strength by REU and SEC staff, this was not very visible at project level. There were some exceptions to this through UNJPs and interventions on Food Security Information Systems. FAO will **need to devote efforts and attention** to improve its delivery on this function, which embodies its comparative advantage to a large extent.
h	***Partnerships and alliances***	• Very good examples were encountered by the Evaluation through UNJPs in Albania, Kyrgyzstan and Turkey. Another clear success story in this regard

		had been FAO's role in Tajikistan on agrarian reform. Elsewhere, there were limited efforts being made: this is another area where **efforts will be required**.

Source: Evaluation

576. Thus, functions a), b), c) and d)[158] will continue to be important to meet the needs and expectations of the Member Countries, and the Organization should keep working steadily on them. However, particular attention and efforts will be required to enhance performance on the following core functions:

i. Core function e), Technical support to promote technology transfer and build capacity: this could be improved through better design, implementation and monitoring of the field projects, as also underlined in Section 10.1; the new Project Cycle Guide represents a major step forward, hat will require adequate capacity development of staff and accountability mechanisms in place to ensure rapid adoption;
ii. Core function f) Advocacy and communication: the challenge on this function will be how to improve performance in countries without FAO Representative; in multiple-accredited Representations, as well as in the fully-fledged Representation, the Representatives will need to develop adequate strategies to improve the visibility of the Organization and foster the corporate messages at the proper policy-making level;
iii. Core function g) Inter-disciplinarity and innovation: although technical staff in REU and SEC were open and interested, virtually nothing was visible yet in this sense; better understanding of what these mean and how they can be achieved in the Region, as well as incentive mechanisms through PEMS, may be the path forward;
iv. Core function h) Partnerships and alliances: a recurrent weakness of FAO, in this Region it has a particular relevance in consideration of the limited presence at country level; a regional or sub-regional strategy may be required, to ensure that key potential partners are contacted at the adequate level, with whom to collaborate by sharing long-term vision and commitment.

10.4 Gender equality and social inclusion

577. This Evaluation discussed earlier in this report, the actual and potential role of FAO statutory body 'Working Party on Women and the Family in Rural Development'. This section will discuss how gender equality and social inclusion have been integrated in FAO's work in the Region.

578. In 2010-11, OED carried out the Evaluation of FAO's Role and Work in Gender and Development (GaD Evaluation). The evaluation adopted the ECOSOC[159] definition of gender

[158] Core functions: a) Monitoring and assessment of long-term and medium-term trends and perspectives; b) Assembly and provision of information, knowledge and statistics; c) Development of international instruments, norms and standards; d) Policy and strategy options and advice.

[159] United Nations, 1997, 'Report of the Economic and Social Council for 1997', A/52/3, September 18, 1997: Mainstreaming a gender perspective is the process of assessing the implications for women and men of any planned action, including legislation, policies or programmes, in all areas and at all levels. It is a strategy for making women's as well as men's concerns and experiences an integral dimension of the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies and programmes in all political, economic and

mainstreaming, as its overarching evaluation criterion against which to assess all of FAO's work. The team visited SEU/REU, SEC, Armenia and Turkey and its conclusions for the Region were broadly as follows:

- gender had not been a prominent element in REU's activities, due to lack of requests from Member Countries and insufficient action by FAO on this theme. FAO staff in the Region were mostly unfamiliar with gender concepts and, in the absence of specific support or internal accountability mechanisms, any initiative in this area could only be carried out by committed and knowledgeable individuals.
- the abolition of the regional gender expert post in 2004 had contributed to poor performance; some FAO staff also reported lack of responsiveness to requests to HQ for support;
- the Regional Conferences for Europe had been largely silent on gender issues until 2010, when the Conference paid substantial and detailed attention to the topic. Although drivers for integrating gender issues so far were mostly donors or joint programmes, the request emerging from the Conference should play a role in triggering more positive action.

579. This Evaluation noted that some improvements took place since the assessment in 2010/11. Thanks to the full commitment of the Assistant Director-General/Regional Representative in REU, gender mainstreaming had been given strong visibility in the office. The role of Gender Focal Point was currently assigned to the Statistics Officer; his alternate was the ADG/RR herself and resources from the vacant senior gender expert post had been used to maintain a gender team of two gender experts.[160] Beyond REU, there were two other Gender Focal Points and one Alternate in the decentralized offices in the Region, namely in SEC the Sub Regional Coordinator and the Programme Assistant, and in Armenia, the Administrative Clerk.

580. The Gender team was quite active in 2011 and 2012 on a number of activities. A major achievement was the development and finalization of a core set of gender indicators in the agricultural and rural sector refined on the basis of feedback from Member Countries throughout 2011, and its presentation and endorsement by the 28th ERC. This work shows a good potential for uptake by Member Countries, through its integration into national statistics systems.

581. Other activities by the Gender team in REU included:

- technical support to the formulation and implementation of UN Joint Programmes in Albania, Georgia, and Kyrgyzstan; technical support to the formulation and implementation of TCPs and GCPs in Albania, Armenia, Kosovo, Moldova, Ukraine and sub-regional projects in South-Eastern Europe and Central Asia;
- participation in and contribution to the formulation of CPFs in the Region; a good example was the CPF in Macedonia;

societal spheres so that women and men benefit equally and inequality is not perpetuated. The ultimate goal is to achieve gender equality.

[160] One of the consultants was a Junior Technical Officer position provided by the Ministry of Agriculture of Hungary, only partly paid by FAO.

- in line with the new FAO policy on Gender Equality, the stock taking exercise in REU/SEC was finalized, distributed, presented and recommendations discussed with REU Senior Management;[161] and
- Support to the Working Party on Women and the Family in Rural Development (WPW);
- Contributions to publications and workshops, partnership development, participation in FAO's Gender Focal Point Network.

582. These were very good steps towards making gender more visible and improving the quality of FAO's work in the Region. It was also recognized that recent work on project formulation could not be captured by this Evaluation. Also, there is no doubt that adequate gender mainstreaming remains one of the major challenges for the Organization and that it takes time to raise the levels of awareness and knowledge. However, the Management Response to the GaD evaluation, finalized in July 2011, gave high importance to capacity development on gender mainstreaming for all FAO staff and to the recruitment of a senior gender officer in all regional offices, including REU.

583. In the period 2011/12, overall, only the international consultant and the Junior Technical Officer could work full time on gender issues in the whole Region. Despite their personal commitment, their coverage was limited. The role of Gender Focal Point for all incumbents, in REU, SEC and in country offices, overlapped with too many other tasks to ensure an adequate mainstreaming of gender perspective in FAO's work in the Region. Only two gender training events were carried out in SEU/REU and SEC and the recruitment for the post of senior gender expert in REU had been postponed to mid-2013. In general, the inclusion of gender issues in projects was driven more by external factors such as UN Joint Programmes, donor requirements and individual initiatives than by FAO programming priorities: the few positive examples resided mainly in the UNJP context. For example, in one of the countries with the largest field programme, gender and social inclusion were considered a theme for Telefood projects and none of the project staff was aware about the need to integrate a gender perspective in their work. Also projects funded by the FTPP mentioned women in a limited number of project documents, and 'gender' to a more limited extent, albeit the CPF in Turkey had integrated a gender perspective.

584. Thus, this Evaluation confirms the GaD evaluation's findings and the regional gender stock-taking exercise, about the poor understanding of gender and social inclusion issues among FAO officers backstopping and managing the field programme in the Region. Overall, this Evaluation strongly supports the recommendations contained in the gender stock taking exercise, although it wishes to add to those, the urgent need to recruit a senior gender officer with the clear mandate to ensure that all FAO products and projects in the Europe and Central Asia Region fully integrate both gender and social inclusion perspectives.

10.5 Capacity development

585. Capacity Development (CD) is one of the core functions of FAO through which it contributes to achieving its strategic objectives. A Corporate Strategy for capacity development was put in place in October 2010: in it, focus was made on the multiple

[161] Report on the Gender Stock Taking in the Regional Office for Europe and Central Asia (REU) and Sub-Regional Office for Central Asia (SEC), 2012

dimensions of capacity development - individual, organizational and enabling environments. Also, it included both technical and functional capacities, relevant to policy and norms development, knowledge, partnering and implementation.

586. In the Europe and Central Asia Region, weak capacity at all levels of governance had been noted by both national counterparts and development partners. Low salaries, lack of career opportunities and high turnover in government institutions, are all obstacles to sustainability of capacity development efforts. There was a broad agreement that capacity development in the Region, and in particular in the Caucasus and Central Asia, should focus at the national, sub-national and local levels, where it is more likely to be retained.

587. Capacity development of individuals has been a major component of FAO's services and products in the Region, over the Evaluation period, in particular on technical issues. Among others, one of the FTPP focus areas was CD, and many projects were funded within it. There were also some good examples of addressing enabling environments at national and sub-regional level as well as developing institutional and organizational capacities. Capacity development work done by FAO was largely appreciated by Member Countries.

588. In Central Asia, highlights included the EC-funded projects on food security information systems in Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan which incorporated substantial training components, at national and district level. Considerable capacity development work was carried out by FAO in the Animal Production and Health sector in Tajikistan. Another good example includes a UNJP project on irrigation systems in Kyrgyzstan where Farmer Field Schools were incorporated.

589. In Albania, the UNJP project on malnutrition was another notable example, where trainings and study trips had been organized on a comprehensive range of subjects and for many stakeholders. In Armenia, most interventions had a strong individual CD component: notable examples of this were initiatives in the Animal Production and Health, as discussed above, and food security information systems, through a sub-regional EC-funded project. CD in the area of APH was quite effective, resulting in changed attitudes and practices. In a number of cases, e.g. forestry, pesticide residue monitoring, agro-meteorology, FAO's interventions had also addressed aspects of institutional capacity, through provision of equipment. Furthermore, 50% of the consultants recruited by FAO in Armenia were national experts: this was also a way to indirectly pursue CD among a broader range of stakeholders.

590. Most of FAO's events, workshops and seminars in the Region, had an element of CD on various subjects, including statistics, policy consultations, Codex Alimentarius, International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources, etc. Through these, FAO facilitated the exposure of large numbers of government staff to new ideas, methods and approaches, as well as networking with experts and peers from neighbouring countries. Although the effects of these events are difficult to measure, participants stated great appreciation for these opportunities.

591. Analysis of the duty travel in the Region showed that SEU/REU and SEC have played a major role in bringing participants to CD events in Europe and Central Asia. In Headquarters, the Animal Production and Health Division was the major sponsor in terms of numbers of participants attending CD events organized in the Region.

592. While FAO's activities were appreciated, there was a sense of consultation fatigue among participants from Member Countries, who felt 'over-trained' by development partners and complaints were raised about ineffectiveness of short workshops and trainings. There appeared to be a need for more extensive, in-depth capacity development initiatives. Functional areas where particular needs of staff in state agencies were mentioned were project design, project management, resource mobilization and impact assessment. Whether FAO has the competence to assist in developing capacities in these areas in the Region, remains to be seen, considering the weaknesses identified in its own projects discussed above.

593. In Central Asia, national counterparts stressed that capacity building work should focus on lower and local levels of governance, rather than mid-level officials at national level institutions who tend to be over-trained. Also, they noted that CD work by FAO was sometimes too advanced, and there was no capacity to absorb it. An example was the support provided to the meteorological agency under Food Security Information Systems project in Kyrgyzstan, where training and software in modelling provided by FAO was considered too advanced.

594. Taking into account also the Member Countries responses to the question on core functions, the Evaluation's conclusions were that while FAO had a comparative advantage and was appreciated for its expertise in capacity development particularly in technical fields, there was significant room for improvement in terms of CD approaches, inclusions of lower levels of policy making and governance, gender balance and effectiveness of the capacity development component within projects and activities.

10.6 The One UN model of delivery

595. In 2006, eight governments decided to volunteer piloting the Delivery as One (DaO) Approach for the UN system in their countries. This was based on a proposal by a High-Level Panel on UN System-Wide Coherence in the Areas of Development, Humanitarian Assistance and the Environment, appointed by the Secretary General, and fostered a much closer integration among all agencies of the UN in their work supporting their Member Countries. Albania was the only country in the Europe and Central Asia Region among the eight. [162] In 2012, the Republic of Moldova joined in the group as a self-starter.

596. The Evaluation assessed FAO's decentralized presence in both Albania and the Republic of Moldova, as discussed earlier in the report (see section5.3.3). Here the discussion will focus on the modality of collaboration within the UNCT, in both countries.

597. In Moldova, the NC was a senior staff of the Ministry of Agriculture and had been NC for seven years. She participated in the UNCT on behalf of FAO, including in the formulation process of the UN Programming Framework and her contribution in this context was well appreciated, also thanks to her knowledge of. Thus, the NC was instrumental in facilitating the dialogue with FAO, but was not a possible substitute for FAO's presence at the technical and policy dialogue level which, in the view of the UNRC, would have been highly beneficial to the work of the UN as a whole.

[162] Pilot countries were: Albania, Cape Verde, Mozambique, Pakistan, Rwanda, Tanzania, Uruguay, Viet Nam

598. In Albania, FAO had had consistent and well appreciated presence in the UNCT, DaO and One Un programme processes until late 2011, through FAO the SEU senior policy officer and a more junior colleague. Since then, however, FAO had 'disappeared' from the coordination mechanism through which all activities in the country should have been mainstreamed. For example, the Organization had not indicated its contribution to the Annual Work Plan, had not kept the Office of the UNRC informed about its activities and projects, attendance in the UNCT meetings had been changing frequently and there was the feeling that no proper hand-over of programme was done. The UNCT was not even informed of the other on-going FAO projects.

599. The opinion of key stakeholders, shared by the Evaluation, was that in order to contribute properly to the One UN process, FAO should maintain a qualified presence and contribution to the work of the UNCT, either through an international or national presence at the appropriate level of seniority and competence. FAO's technical value was appreciated, but institutionally the Organization had become invisible. The National Correspondent had no role in this, given the ToR for this position and that by being a Government staff, she could not be considered a member of the UNCT.

600. During the evaluation period there were three on-going United Nations Joint Programmes (UNJP) in Albania. Two of them were FAO single-agency interventions and only one was in collaboration with other UN agencies. The latter was the 'Reducing Malnutrition in Children' project,[163] led by UNICEF and implemented with FAO and WHO. The initiative was considered a success story in the Albanian One UN Programme. FAO's component of the project had a total budget of USD 782,170 and was effectively backstopped by two nutrition and food safety and quality officers, one in HQ and one in REU. At the time of the Evaluation, the project was in full implementation.

601. Steps in the project preparation process had been as follows:

- pre-operations: from project idea to definition of project activities, through the active participation of all concerned, including the Government, until consensus on 'what' and 'how' was achieved; FAO participated actively throughout this phase;
- operations: preparation of initial and annual work-plans, monitoring through 6-month mid-term reviews; execution through cross-coordination at organization and activity levels; the budget of individual project components was under control of each responsible implementing agency;
- reporting: reports were activity-based, consolidating reports by each implementing agency and transmitted to project stakeholders.

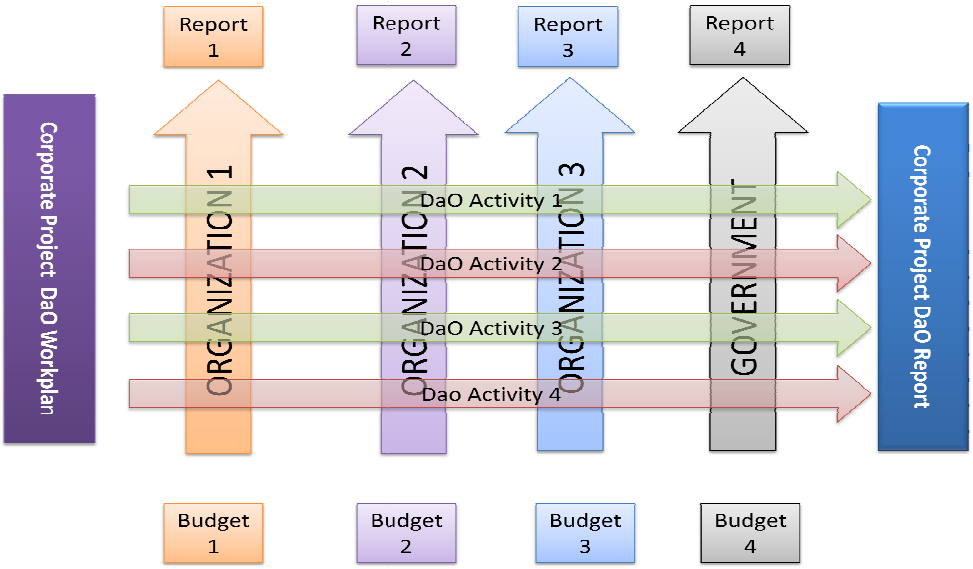
602. The programme was also managed by a Joint Steering Committee, responsible for approving yearly work-plans, subject to 6-monthly mid-term reviews. Activities were identified with all stakeholders. A self-produced system of combined reporting was put in place by the lead agency, to guarantee contemporary flow of information and monitoring tools both to single stakeholders and for each activity cluster. Financial and activity reports were merged at DaO level by lead agency and disseminated to all project partners.

603. The DaO business process in the case of this project was based on two dimensions: participating agency and UNJP activity-based programme outputs. Each agency operated

[163] UNJP/ALB/007/SPA

entries using its own rules, procedures and documentation. Activity-based reports were then produced by the lead agency using the ad-hoc system created for this specific project. Box 30 below depicts the current reporting set-up for this project as described above.

Box 31. Implementation and reporting matrix for UNJP 'Reducing Malnutrition in Children' in Albania



Source: Evaluation

604. Activity-based reports were considered the official reporting methodology by all project stakeholders. In the case of FAO the process continued as follows: upon receipt of the report, REU, in its capacity as BH of the FAO component, had to transform the Project Activity Report into a budget line-based FAO standard report. The Evaluation noted that the process was completely manual. REU's operation service met FAO reporting standards through a manual input of each single entry extracted from the report received. This seemed to be a major time consuming effort of doubtful accuracy.

605. This example, while considered a success in terms of substance and collaboration by the national and other UN stakeholders, illustrates an unfavourable situation. The operating rules, systems, procedures and reporting of the participating agencies were not standardized. A DaO environment requires different implementation, monitoring, and reporting instruments that have simply not yet been developed.

606. The already mentioned new FAO Guide to the Project Cycle included considerations to adhere to UN system-wide reforms and are fully aligned with the UN Common Country Programming Principles. Phases 1-3 systematically included considerations to be made in the case of UNJP. This was an excellent initiative, which however will require some use and time before anything can be said about its thoroughness and usefulness. Also, the extent of possible incorporation of DaO operational requirement in GRMS is unknown at this stage.

607. At the time of writing this report, there appeared to be definitive evidence that the One-UN approach will be fostered throughout the UN system, thus FAO will have to move towards a rapid harmonization of its programming systems with those of other agencies.

Given the well recognized extra-effort required in joint implementation of projects, it is also likely that a prevailing approach will be joint planning and separate implementation.

608. In consideration of this trend, FAO will have to decide in One-UN countries, whether it should develop its own CPF or mainstream completely all its activities, national and regional, in the UN Planning Framework. There seem to be advantages and disadvantages in both approaches, as a separate CPF may be a duplication of work and encourage drifting away from an integrated and harmonized One-UN Programme. Still, in consideration of the still incipient capacity of FAO to work as One in any given country, the Evaluation reached the conclusion that in Albania and in the Republic of Moldova, a separate FAO CPF would still be useful to ensure:

- clear agreement with the Government on the priority areas of work for FAO in the period considered;
- improved focus by FAO's various stakeholders on the agreed priorities for the Organization in the country;
- opportunity for developing synergies and inter-disciplinary approaches across the agreed areas of work.

609. The formulation of the CPF will also require close coordination with the UN partners, to identify areas FAO's comparative advantage and complementarity within the overall UN framework in support to the country. FAO's experience from other DaO pilots should also be brought to bear to the process in Albania and Moldova.

11 Conclusions and recommendations

610. In consideration of the complexity and variety of topics assessed by the Evaluation, and that some topics are discussed in different sections of the report, it was decided to prepare a longer section than usual for Conclusions and Recommendations. This focuses on the major issues, and provides detailed evidence in support of the recommendations put forward to FAO.

611. The Evaluation had to respond to two over-arching questions:

i. the progress made by the Organization in implementing corporate decisions to decentralize its functions and roles to the Region; and
ii. the results of FAO's decentralization policies and procedures on corporate delivery to its Members in the Region.

612. There is no doubt that FAO made efforts to better support the Member Countries in the Europe and Central Asia Region since 2004: i) the establishment of SEC, which increased attention to Member Countries until then not one of the priorities by the Organization; ii) the increase in Programme of Work resources to all DOs in the Region; and iii) the use of the TCP to compensate for limited availability of Voluntary funds in some countries.

613. However, the short overall answer to both questions can only be '**work is in progress**'. This should not be surprising, considering the initial observation in the Terms of Reference about a 'moving baseline and moving target'. Also, FAO corporate decisions about decentralization were not designed and thought-through for the specific pattern of presence at country level in Europe and Central Asia. Thus, progress in implementation was by default,

partial and hampered by inefficiencies in procedures and mechanisms of delivery. At the same time, there was no evidence of 'enhanced delivery' to the Region: FAO's assistance to the Member Countries in the Region appeared, at the time of the Evaluation, to have similar strengths and weaknesses before and after the wave of decentralization policies in 2010.

614. In addition, countries in Europe and Central Asia were and are going through several changes in their economic, social, political and cultural context. This meant that the concept of 'moving target' applied as well to the countries where FAO was to work and to the type of work they required. Changes occurred at both national and sub-regional levels, adding complexity. The Region is characterized, as of late 2012, by considerable diversity: some of the Member Countries still face acute problems of food security (Georgia and Tajikistan) and rural poverty (Kyrgyzstan and Moldova), while others have markedly improved their socio-economic conditions over a decade.

615. In such a complex environment, the Evaluation's analysis and findings confirm that FAO's work in the Region has broadly focused on the priority sectors and in the countries where its mandate and comparative advantage were most needed and where it could make a difference. In the selection of its focus countries, FAO was also coherent with most other UN agencies working in the Region.

616. The Evaluation came to the conclusion that both SEU/REU and SEC faced with commitment the complexities of the decentralization process and pushed 'the work' forward to the best of their capacity. Work remains to be done, however, in terms of adjustments at both regional and corporate level, to enable the Organization to meet its mandate in a more effective manner in the Europe and Central Asia Region.

617. As stated several times, the process of transformational change that was launched in FAO in early 2012 already bore a few fruits in the Region: these appeared to be the right steps to address the earlier 'blindness'. The intention of the Evaluation in formulating its recommendations below, is to contribute to improve even further, the good work that has already started.

618. The Evaluation formulated eight recommendations: two address governance issues; one is about FAO's presence at country level and one specifically on modalities of FAO's presence in countries without a fully-fledged FAO Representative; one tackles the implementation of 'One FAO'; and one is about the use of Russian at FAO. The remaining two recommendations concern issues that may appear of secondary importance: in fact, they address systemic problems that will always undermine an effective and efficient performance of the Organization in the Europe and Central Asia Region, and possibly elsewhere, if they remain unresolved.

Governance and priority setting

619. Since 2010, there has been an improvement in the focus and detail of regional priorities established by the FAO Regional Conference for Europe (ERC), although there is still room for further fine-tuning. In this process, due attention will have to be given to the sub-regional dimensions, that differ greatly and should inform the work carried out by FAO. REU and SEC made progress in matching the skill mix in the Decentralized Offices (DOs) to the Regional priorities, but in this case as well, there is room for further adjustments, including by taking advantage of the vacant posts.

620. At the country level, despite the participation of several FAO technical staff, the Country Programming Frameworks (CPF) still tended to be lists of projects in the different sectors, with very limited success at developing an inter-disciplinary approach. This was a lost opportunity to prove the worth and added value of working as a 'REU team'. The Evaluation was also concerned that the desirable flexibility of the CPFs might turn into a weakness if priorities identified through the process might change because of political decisions, in countries where changes in governments may occur rather frequently.

621. A major question in the new context of delegation of responsibility was how the different bodies could contribute more effectively to the new roles assigned to the ERC in priority setting for the Organization in the Region, and its monitoring. The Evaluation had evidence of an existing broad agreement on the following issues:

- it is important there be a body that can prepare the agenda and liaise with REU and Members in the inter-session period;
- Member Countries in the region that do not have a Permanent Representation in Rome or are not members of the European Regional Group need to be consulted to ensure their needs are properly reflected;
- there is interest in having a technical body in the Region to discuss agricultural issues of interest and relevance to the Region;
- in the exercise of priority setting, all sectors within the mandate of the Organization need to be given sufficient attention.

622. The Evaluation identified the following scenario as the most appropriate, and formulated Recommendation 1 to foster its implementation.

A. Given the interest in a dedicated technical body for the Region, the technical role of the European Commission for Agriculture (ECA) should be reinvigorated. Issues discussed should be selected with attention to the pressing issues of interest to the Region as a whole. In order to best do this, the sessions of the ECA should be held in alternate years to the ERC.

B. The Executive Committee of the ECA, the existing elected body within the Region, should retain its double role of preparing both the ECA and working in close collaboration with the Secretariat in REU to prepare the ERC, in alternate years.

C. Holding the ECA sessions in alternate years to the ERC would have a threefold advantage:
   - Technical issues could be discussed in greater depth and results and recommendations from the ECA discussions could better feed into the formulation of priorities in the Region;
   - The Executive Committee of the ECA could maintain its double role by focusing its attention on the preparation of the ECA and the ERC in alternate years;
   - Considering the foreseeable funding limitations, the ECA in an alternate year would provide an opportunity to hold a back-to-back regional informal consultation. This would both ensure cost savings and improve levels of attendance.

D. To ensure that all sectors within the Organization's competence are given their due attention, a report on the recommendations and actions arising out of the technical bodies in the Region should become a standing item on the ERC's agenda. This would be ensured through the relevant technical officers in the Region, some of whom serve as secretaries to the regional commissions. Given that the Ex-Com is to

work more closely with, and receive enhanced technical inputs from, the Secretariat, this should ensure that all sectors and issues are given adequate consideration.

E. The European Regional Group (ERG), when it is able to foresee discussions directly relevant to governance and priorities in the Europe and Central Asia Region, should make an effort to include Member Countries which are not formally party to it but belong to the ERC.

F. REU should play a stronger role in identifying the priorities with Members, at sub-regional and regional level; in the period between the ECA and its corresponding ERC, REU and SEC should hold one informal consultation per sub-region. The results of these would be compiled and integrated into the considerations of the Executive Committee through the Secretariat.

Recommendation 1: To FAO and REU, on the Governance institutions for the Europe and Central Asia region

REU as the Secretariat for both the ERC and ECA should, in collaboration with the Member Countries, finalize the Rules of Procedure for the FAO Regional Conference for Europe to be submitted at its 29th session in 2014, as per the above suggestions; Independently from the contents of the Rules of Procedures, the following should be implemented: a) summary reports from the regional technical commissions should become a permanent standing item on the ERC agenda; b) the ERC Secretariat should play a greater role in identifying the priorities for the Region and its sub-regions.

623. Furthermore, the Evaluation identified two additional areas that will require enhanced attention by FAO, including the Membership and Secretariat: these are the European Inland Fisheries and Aquaculture Advisory Commission (EIFAAC) and the Working Party on Women and the Family in Rural Development (WPW).

624. After the in-depth re-structuring of EIFAAC, the location of its Secretariat remained an item of discussion, as it was still located in HQ. The Evaluation **suggests** that REU and the Fisheries and Aquaculture Department agree on transferring the EIFAAC Secretariat to REU as soon as possible, for reasons of efficiency and effectiveness of the Secretariat itself.

625. The WPW is also part of the Organization's governance for the Region, as one of the ECA's statutory bodies. In the past, the WPW reportedly played an important role in keeping the attention of SEU/REU and of Member Countries on gender in agriculture. However, its relevance and effectiveness in recent years has been criticized by many of its key stakeholders: in the absence of the support of the Membership, a body like the WPW does not have reason to be. Furthermore, the Evaluation itself found very limited evidence of uptake of the WPW's work at country level in the Region. Assigning funds and staff-time to the WPW does not appear to be a cost-effective use of the Organization's resources under the current budgetary restrictions. While the Evaluation is fully aware that it does not have the mandate to make a recommendation to abolish or 'suspend' the WPW, as this type of action falls exclusively in the remit of the Member Countries, in view of the importance of the issue, it formulated Recommendation 2.

Recommendation 2: To REU, SEC and ESW, on advocacy for gender equality in the Governance institutions for the Europe and Central Asia Region

REU, SEC and ESW, based on in-depth analysis of the evidence available and further dialogue with all concerned parties, should prepare a proposal to be submitted to the 2014 ERC on the most cost-effective way forward to ensure that gender and social inclusion perspectives are fully mainstreamed into FAO's work in the Region. Independently from the contents of the proposal, progress made in mainstreaming gender and social inclusion in the work of the Organization in the Region should become a permanent standing item in the ERC agenda.

626. Recommendation 2 is not intended to undermine the importance of mainstreaming gender into FAO's work in Europe and Central Asia. Quite the contrary, the Evaluation has no doubt that the integration of gender equality and social inclusion in FAO's work in the Region is of the utmost importance. However, there is evidence that despite some good results, e.g. mainstreaming gender in some projects and project documents, a stock-taking exercise about gender mainstreaming in the work of FAO in the Region and the development of a methodology that integrates a gender perspective in national statistics, quite a lot of additional efforts will still be required to ensure a satisfactory level of compliance with FAO's new Gender Policy. The recommendations of the Evaluation of FAO's Work and Role on Gender and Development still apply, in particular the urgent need to recruit a senior gender officer with the clear mandate to ensure that all FAO products and projects in the Europe and Central Asia Region fully integrate both gender and social inclusion perspectives.

FAO's Decentralized Offices in Europe and Central Asia

627. REU was moved to a number of different locations, since its establishment. The current locations of REU and SEC were mostly decided on the basis of the generous offers of the hosting countries. Neither office was or is 'in' the sub-regions they serve: this affects the interaction of staff with the culture, also linguistic, in which they operate. SEC was never located in an airport hub and as of early 2012, transport logistics were no longer favourable for REU as they used to be.

628. In the Region, it was not possible to identify a 'best pattern' for geographical coverage in terms of location of regional and sub-regional offices, although very few other UN agencies made the same choices as FAO. The Evaluation **suggests** adding a new criterion to its list of parameters for selecting locations of its decentralized offices, that is, proximity to other UN agencies, in consideration of the trend towards the One-UN approach.

629. The proposal by REU in 2012 to concentrate its efforts on a limited number of countries was sound and rational. The Evaluation considered that FAO should retain a critical mass of geographically-focused technical expertise in the sectors of highest importance for the countries in the Region that need assistance, and should strive for and encourage inter-disciplinarity and added value across all its modalities of work, projects, normative and knowledge products alike.

630. Based on these considerations, on further analysis and on extensive interactions, the Evaluation came to the conclusion that in the medium term, needs and requests for support from FAO are likely to change substantially in the SEU/REU countries, and become closer to those of other European countries that mostly relate to FAO through HQ. Thus, the core

mandate and focus of work of REU and SEC in the Region in future, will likely be as follows:

- provide technical and policy assistance, manage operations and mobilize resources for SEU/REU countries: Albania, Armenia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Georgia, Kosovo and Moldova (time-span 10 years);
- provide technical and policy assistance, manage operations and mobilize resources for Central Asian countries (time-span 20 years);
- produce and make knowledge available for SEU/REU and Central Asian countries;
- act as coordinating entity for: two fully-fledged FAO Representations in Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan; two non-resident FAO Representatives, assigned respectively to Albania plus Moldova, and Armenia plus Georgia; and a number of Programme and Partnership Development officers; and
- service the ERC and its subsidiary bodies.

631. In order to carry out the identified tasks, and in consideration of the current drive towards enhanced focus on efficient and effective delivery at country level, the Evaluation believes there are a number of requirements that should be considered by Member Countries in Europe and Central Asia. These are:

i. improved access of REU staff to collaboration with other colleagues in HQ working in the Region and with other parts of the Organization that will become increasingly important for the SEU/REU Members;
ii. more efficient travel to the SEU/REU countries where the focus of work will be during the next decade;
iii. more efficient travel to Central Asian countries serviced by SEC;
iv. improved communication and collaboration between HQ-based, REU-based and SEC-based staff, either working in the same countries or with relevant knowledge at the sub-regional level;
v. reduce, insofar as possible, administration, operations and office management costs; and
vi. facilitate REU's function of servicing the ERC and its subsidiary bodies in easy reach of the ERG.

632. A number of options exist to tackle the issues above. The Evaluation understands that considerations for locations of Regional and Sub-regional Offices are not strictly technical and thus refrained from formulating any suggestions. Nevertheless, efficiency and effectiveness are partly a function of the geographical location of such offices: the decision to examine opportunities in this respect rests with the Member Countries of the Organization.

633. These requirements and observations also raise a core question for FAO, including both Secretariat and Member Countries: the extent to which locations of Decentralized Offices are permanent once established, or can be flexible and adjusted following new circumstances of work in any given sub-region or region. This is closely linked to how the Organization should best serve countries that do not need FAO's support through projects at national level, but through normative and knowledge products, possibly tailored to the needs of a specific sub-region or region. In the view of the Evaluation, these are issues on which Members and Secretariat should focus soon, as the context for FAO's work at country level is changing very rapidly in Europe and Central Asia and elsewhere.

634. The Evaluation also assessed the role of the FAO Liaison Office with the European Union and Belgium (LOB) in the overall network of Decentralized Offices in the Region.

The role played by the EU institutions in the Region, directly and through FAO, warrants enhanced attention and efforts by REU to develop more solid partnerships with the EC and other EU bodies in Brussels. In this context, the Evaluation **invites** FAO to take into account the suggestions detailed in section 4.5, in its immediate and future decisions about LOB and the corporate relations with the EU Institutions.

635. A closely related issue was the approval by the ERC and Council in 2012 of the Secretariat's proposal to create posts for Programme and Partnership Development Officers in Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan and Turkey as well as Partnership Development posts in all Regional Offices. In REU, such post has the potential to serve both REU and LOB, through closer collaboration between the two Offices to achieve the common goal of higher visibility with the EU, enhanced dialogue at policy level and leveraging resources for the Region. Similarly, the post in Turkey should be given responsibility for supporting SEC in its Resource Mobilization efforts. At country level, the Evaluation considers that officers of adequate seniority should be appointed, to enable them carrying out their mandate at the adequate level of decision makers. These proposals are included in Recommendation 3 below.

636. At country level, the Evaluation understands that the basic purpose of decentralization was to anchor the work of FAO as closely as possible to the country level, where the responsibility and authority within the Organization must lie for most aspects of its work with individual countries (subsidiarity). These tasks are normally carried out by fully-fledged FAO Representations in other regions, and many programme and administrative policies and procedures require the presence of a FAO Representative at the country level. The Evaluation therefore supports the appointment of fully-fledged FAORs in Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan, thereby relieving the over-burdened Sub-Regional Coordinator of a part of his workload. The appointment for Kyrgyzstan was completed in a rapid and efficient manner; the rapid designation of the appointee for Tajikistan, with suitable competences and FAO experience, will be of the utmost importance.

637. Other countries in the Region require similar further support from FAO and have been 'neglected' so far: Albania and Moldova stand out in this context due to the size and importance of their respective agricultural and rural development sectors: in both countries, FAO's mandate has a particular significance in the national efforts towards harmonized, inclusive and sustainable development. Furthermore, the two countries have embarked on the One-UN approach; the UN is committed to support them in focusing at the meso- and micro-level of interventions, by enabling the implementation of macro-level policies that are being promoted by the European Union.

638. On the basis of these observations, the Evaluation came to the conclusion that FAO should have a stronger and more continuous presence in Albania and in the Republic of Moldova. This should be ensured through one of the following options, both under the close supervision of a senior officer in REU:

i. a national staff with a full-time contract with FAO as AFAORep, possibly located in the UNRC Office, with the authority to represent FAO within the UN, make decisions or facilitate rapid decision-making and coordinate FAO's contribution to the One UN Programme; or
ii. an international staff member whose cost is shared with IFAD, located in the UNRC Office, with the authority to represent FAO within the UN and the Government, and responsible for programme coordination and resource mobilization.

639. Evidence available showed that the multiple-accreditation of FAO Representatives can be an effective mechanism for ensuring visibility for the Organization and adequate management of FAO's work at country level, as long as no more than two countries are covered through the mechanism by the same FAO Representative, who should spend at least six working weeks per year in each country. This could be achieved by designating two non-resident FAO Representatives, one for Albania and Moldova and one for Armenia and Georgia, posted in REU, who could also carry out additional duties as REU senior officers. This will require additional resources of approximately the value of half a TCP per country per biennium: the Evaluation is of the opinion that its proposed set-up will be much more cost-effective.

640. The National Correspondent Scheme has proved not to be an efficient or effective mechanism for FAO's presence in any country. If the Organization or the host country cannot commit sufficient resources to the establishment of an adequate presence of the Organization, as a minimum through a senior national or international FAO staff member sitting in the UNRC's office, FAO should refrain from engaging in implementation of national projects in that country. Other mechanisms can be identified, as suggested in the report, to facilitate the participation of any given country in FAO's normative events and in regional, interregional and global projects.

641. The Evaluation decided to consolidate all its recommendations on presence at country level in Recommendation 3 below. Costs of its implementation could be partly absorbed by the resources allocated to the Decentralized Offices Network in the Region, and partly by Member Countries' direct contributions. The Evaluation suggests rapid implementation of all recommended actions.

Recommendation 3: To FAO, on its presence at country level in Europe and Central Asia

The Evaluation recommends the following:
a) a non-resident FAO Representative be appointed with multiple-accreditation to Armenia and Georgia; the Assistant FAO Representatives at country level should be delegated enough authority to manage the whole programme, represent FAO within the UN, make decisions or facilitate rapid decision-making;
b) a non-resident FAO Representative be appointed with multiple-accreditation to Albania and the Republic of Moldova, following one of the modalities suggested above;
c) in the Region, the National Correspondent Scheme should be discontinued and FAO should not engage in operational activities at country level without, as a minimum, an AFAORep within a multiple-accredited FAO Representation or a senior officer embedded in the UNRC Office;
d) The foreseen Programme and Partnership Development posts at country level can be effective if staffed at an appropriate level of seniority (minimum P4);
e) The newly created post in REU for Partnership Development officer should work in close coordination with LOB, to support the development of a stronger partnership between REU and the EU institutions for the Europe and Central Asia Region.

642. In several countries, FAO's presence is regulated only through an exchange of letters. Although these are legally binding, they do not give the Organization a juridical presence or allow it and its staff to benefit from immunities and privileges; this could become a real problem any time for FAO staff and has immediate consequences for the efficiency of the work in the Region. The Evaluation is aware that FAO is already working to tackle this

issue, however it decided to formulate Recommendation 4 on this issue to underline the urgency of a process that will also require Member Countries' willingness to be completed within a reasonable time-span.

Recommendation 4: To LEG, OSD, REU and SEC, on Host Country Agreements

The Evaluation recommends that the status of FAO accreditation in all countries in Europe and Central Asia where the Organization carries out field operations, be reviewed to ensure that it can benefit from the relevant immunities and privileges. In so doing, FAO should take into account the experience of other UN agencies in each specific case and should not initiate activities in a country unless the standard basic agreement or equivalent has been signed with the Government.

FAO Resources for Europe and Central Asia

643. The analysis of the financial resources from FAO to the Europe and Central Asia Region in the period under evaluation showed the following:

- the small share of the Region in the Programme of Work in 2004-05, was compensated to some extent over time; overall, the Region has benefitted from a greater increase in RP resources than other regions in the following biennia;
- the establishment of SEC had a strong impact on the size of the field programme for Azerbaijan, the Central Asian countries and Turkey, with a five-fold increase in resources; the most likely factor was that through SEC, the sub-Region became more visible for FAO Secretariat and for resources partners interested in working through FAO in the Region;
- as SEU was already located in Budapest, the transfer of REU to Budapest did not affect significantly the visibility of FAO in the Region in a delivery perspective; in the 'SEU/REU' countries, there was an increase in the total funds available for development interventions, mostly through FAO TCPs; the field programme also became focused on fewer countries. The main factors affecting the size of the field programme were the funding of emergency interventions and the access of a number of countries to the EU and their changing needs in terms of support from FAO;
- emergency, inter-regional and global projects were a significant part of the field programme portfolio, with a large predominance of interventions in the area of Animal Production and Health.

644. The Evaluation also assessed how the field programme was managed:

- the role played by SEU/REU and SEC in the management of the field programme was mostly of an operational nature;
- the technical contribution by SEU/REU and SEC to the field programme was limited by the number and profile of technical staff in all Decentralized Offices and by the nature of interventions, many of which were inter-regional and global;
- in terms of field programme management, problems may occur at all levels; the location of an LTO in a DO or in HQ did not seem to affect overall project efficiency; other factors play a greater role in ensuring efficient and effective delivery of the field programme, including the presence of a country office.

645. Since 2007, the increase in financial resources corresponded to a growth in the numbers of Human Resources, staff and non-staff, to populate the newly established SEC, the new country offices and strengthen REU in Budapest. The enhanced visibility of the work of

the Organization in the Region since 2007 was the result of a 'virtuous circle': more offices and more staff, more work through the Regular Programme, more Voluntary funded initiatives identified and funded, and so on.

646. The work of the Organization in the Region has been largely carried out by Non Staff Human Resources (NSHR), in all fields of activity. The Evaluation found extensive evidence of problems attached to the characteristics of contracts issued to this category of staff, described in detail in the report. A major consequence of these was that staff recruited by FAO often moved on to positions in other UN agencies in view of better conditions offered, after they "had learnt the ropes of the job" with FAO. This was a major waste of time and resources for the Organization; it also undermined the efficiency of delivery, considering that new NSHR often had to learn the job from scratch and would not be as efficient as more experienced staff.

647. Adequate measures should be taken to invest in the work-satisfaction of this work-force as well, as a large part of the corporate image and quality of its work in the Region rests on their shoulders. Recommendation 5 below addresses this matter, that should be considered with urgency. Costs associated with the implementation of this Recommendation should mostly amount to staff-time; the Evaluation considers that the process should be undertaken with urgency.

Recommendation 5: To CSH/OHR, REU, SEC and SSC, on Manual Section 375 and Non Staff Human Resources contractual conditions

CSH, REU, SEC and SSC should undertake a comprehensive analysis of the adequacy of the system of NSHR contractual arrangements in general and as applied in the country offices of the region, analyzing conditions and procedures and improving the quality of information and communication. This approach should contribute to an overall review of the NPP modality, including its coverage by MS 375.

Delegation of authority

648. Since 2010, REU, SEC and the Country Offices in the region have received increased delegation of authority in planning and programming, financial resource use, and on project identification, formulation and management. On a number of areas, the DOs have adequate authority to carry out their mandate.

649. The three main systems for support functions in decentralized offices, i.e. ORACLE, FAS and ATLAS, never really interfaced: this generated difficulties, duplication of work and waste of time in financial monitoring, use of resources, discharge of BH functions, reconciliations and financial control. Thanks to the commitment and ingenuity of staff, products and services were delivered.

650. The Evaluation believes that the introduction of GRMS can help in analyzing and rationalizing the structure and the human resources component assigned to the support function with the expectation of better quality and economies of scale. Furthermore, the new environment should be used by management as a tool to review the whole body of support service rules and procedures and streamline the administration function. Still, a number of complementary actions will be required to ensure that GRMS can operate at its full potential

and that additional artificial bottle-necks are not created, as has been the case so far in REU and REU/SEU supported countries, by abiding to the 'centralized is better' and 'ex-ante control' culture stillprevailing in the Organization.

651. Information about Delegation of Authority in the Manual for Management of Country Offices in COIN was found to be useful and clear. This should be integrated into a 'delegation of authority package' for FAO staff in the Europe and Central Asia Region, including terms of reference, roles and responsibilities, how to access various types of support, etc. and be regularly updated to ensure accuracy of information. FAO HQ had not carried out, as of June 2012, the updating of post descriptions for existing posts at all levels in the Europe and Central Asia region. This appeared to be all the more urgent in view of the impending deployment of GRMS: the system, to be fully effective, will require an accurate review and harmonization of the present levels of delegation for accessing and operating it.

652. The Evaluation wishes to raise attention to a few key findings related to enhanced efficiency of decentralization and delegation of authority. The first relates to the internal set-up of the Regional and Sub-regional Offices: the positive initiative in REU to merge some functions between the Field Programme Unit and the Administration Unit should be pursued with urgency to improve the efficiency of that Office, and to allow the drawing-up of a model for broader application at corporate level.

653. On the other hand, taking the example of SEC, REU should carry out an accurate analysis of the actual information and capacity development needs of its staff in the Region, in particular at country level. The two Offices together should develop appropriate and easily up-dated packages for all staff involved in field programme operations and administration and office and staff management.

654. On delegation of authority, the particularity of FAO's presence in the Region, i.e. the absence of fully-fledged FAO Representations, was an obstacle in providing efficient and effective support services to the countries. In this context, the attitude and approach of REU and SEC to delegation and empowerment of the country offices, made a difference in the efficiency and effectiveness of the work at country level. If in both cases some additional administrative and operational burden and duplication were unavoidable, the systematic approach of SEC staff towards the country offices was aimed at developing both individual and organizational capacities to ensure that as many duties as possible could be discharged closer to where the action was. The newly created FAO Representations in Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan will benefit from the work carried out so far by SEC in this sense. This did not happen in REU, with consequences on the efficiency and effectiveness of delivery.

655. Corollary issues were identified: i) the reimbursement through AOS of costs incurred in the management of the field programme, was not as close as possible to where the activities actually take place; and ii) the absence of imprest accounts in those countries where FAO had operations at national level, also partly due to the absence of Host Country Agreements. The analysis of the financial costs and additional work-time caused by the absence of imprest accounts at country level showed that this was an additional and useless cost for operations in the Region and a cause for inefficiency in delivery.

656. In conclusion, the situation of FAO's presence in Europe and Central Asia calls for a revision of the corporate policy about delegation of authority to nationally-recruited staff, under the appropriate level of supervision and control from the respective multiple-accredited

FAO Representative. Recommendation 3 above, about multi-accredited FAO Representatives for two countries only, partly contributes to tackling these problems, by enabling a closer engagement and presence the country level.

657. In addition, Recommendation 6 below focuses specifically on the delegation of authority at country level: all of it should be tackled as a matter of urgency, in consideration of the imminent deployment of GRMS and of the changes that will be required for its full implementation at country level. There seems to be scope for a broader application of these recommendations to other regions with similar patterns of presence, e.g. the Pacific and the Caribbean.

Recommendation 6: To CSH/OHR, LEG, OSD, REU and SEC, on delegation of authority

FAO should revise, in the Europe and Central Asia Region, the delegation of authority to countries without a fully fledged FAO Representation. This should include:

e) revise terms of reference, roles and responsibilities that allow national staff to operate GRMS to its full potential, under the adequate supervision of the multiple-accredited FAO Representative;
f) enable staff at country level through capacity development packages that will allow them to operate GRMS safely;
g) ensure that AOS reimbursements accrue to the closest organizational level to where the field programme is actually implemented;
h) open imprest accounts, to permit offices to perform financial/operational functions. FAO staff, recruited at the appropriate level, whether national or international, should be granted full authority for managing these instruments. The present system, implying the use of cash, should be discontinued, except for proven emergencies.

Delivery of products, services and Core functions

658. In the Animal Production and Health sector, the FAO programme broadly met the needs and priorities of Member Countries in the region. High quality technical advice had an important role in defining regional and national animal disease strategy, identified as a priority by the Regional Conference for Europe. While the programme has undoubtedly been very relevant, and capacities were developed, the efficiency of delivery has varied.

659. Strong links are also needed between the field and HQ, to ensure that the FAO Corporate strategy is applied. A strong animal health capacity is required at HQ as trans-boundary disease control requires both regional and global perspectives. Also, a 'wider than one officer' skill mix is needed at the regional and sub-regional level, as only a pool of experts can give high-quality technical services and maintain FAO's trust and status. The most cost-effective location of such a pool, for this region, appears to be FAO HQ.

660. FAO's work in the area encompassed under the heading of Agricultural Policy responded to the needs and priorities identified by the Regional Conference for Europe, its quality was appreciated and well recognized, and capacities were developed. While good work was done in the field of statistics, capacities in REU and SEC in data collection and analysis should be further strengthened. As food security is still a major challenge for some countries, and "strengthening food security and nutrition" is one of the priorities for work in the region, the capacity in REU and SEC in food security policy should also be strengthened.

661. Further, although FAO had a significant role in improving the capacity to formulate agricultural policy in the region, and in introducing innovative and more participatory approaches, there is room to improve the consultations with NGOs and CSOs, in those countries where this is feasible.

662. Considering some of the regional needs, such as provision of statistics and information, policy advice, and work in the area of animal health and production, the Evaluation sees an opportunity for FAO to place greater emphasis on regional initiatives. This would help foster an enabling environment at both regional and sub-regional level from which the Member Countries could benefit. Within this regional focus, an additional sector that should receive increased attention by FAO and its resource partners, is water resources management: while highly relevant, has not received adequate consideration, considering the magnitude of the issue.

663. Overall, the FAO field programme, including both TCPs and Voluntary funded initiatives, showed very similar strengths and weaknesses as identified in other evaluations: usually with a good relevance, but undermined by poor design and average efficiency of implementation. Effects were thus very varied; in general, the absence of exit-strategies and the limited efforts devoted to partnership development, also affected the sustainability of impacts.

664. Capacity Development was a constant positive feature of FAO's projects, mostly at the individual level. There were however also a number of initiatives that tackled the enabling environment dimension, by fostering exchange and communication at the sub-regional and regional level. The UNJPs were good opportunities for complementarity between agencies, to fill in the frequent low attention in FAO's projects to poverty alleviation and social inclusion.

665. The Evaluation asked both the Member Countries and FAO staff to rate the relevance of FAO's work in terms of its core functions for the Region. Both groups considered 'assembly and provision of information, knowledge and statistics' and 'development of international instruments, norms and standards' among the most relevant. Member Countries additionally indicated 'advocacy and communication on Food Security and agriculture-related matters' of high relevance, while FAO Staff considered these to be 'policy and strategy options and advice and technical support to promote technology transfer and build capacity.'

666. Thus, functions a), b), c) and d)[164] will continue to be important to meet the needs and expectations of the Member Countries, and the Organization should keep working steadily on them. However, also taking into account what discussed above about strengths and weaknesses of FAO's delivery in the Region, particular attention and efforts will be required to enhance performance on the following core functions. The Evaluation also **formulated a few suggestions** on the way ahead.

i. Core function e), Technical support to promote technology transfer and build capacity: this could be improved through better design, implementation and monitoring of the field projects, as also underlined in Section 10.1; the new Project

[164] Core functions: a) Monitoring and assessment of long-term and medium-term trends and perspectives; b) Assembly and provision of information, knowledge and statistics; c) Development of international instruments, norms and standards; d) Policy and strategy options and advice.

Cycle Guide represents a major step forward, hat will require adequate capacity development of staff and accountability mechanisms in place to ensure rapid adoption;

ii. Core function f) Advocacy and communication: the challenge on this function will be how to improve performance in countries without FAO Representative; in multiple-accredited Representations, as well as in the fully-fledged Representation, the Representatives will need to develop adequate strategies to improve the visibility of the Organization and foster the corporate messages at the proper policy-making level;

iii. Core function g) Inter-disciplinarity and innovation: although technical staff in REU and SEC were open and interested, virtually nothing was visible yet in this sense; better understanding of what these mean and how they can be achieved in the Region, as well as incentive mechanisms through PEMS, may be the path forward;

iv. Core function h) Partnerships and alliances: a recurrent weakness of FAO, in this Region it has a particular relevance in consideration of the limited presence at country level; a regional or sub-regional strategy may be required, to ensure that key potential partners are contacted at the adequate level, with whom to collaborate by sharing long-term vision and commitment.

667. FAO's normative products have a satisfactory level of use and satisfaction, although in some areas it will be worth assessing actual needs for more publications. Making more of them available in Russian should be a priority in the Region. At the same time, FAO should enhance the opportunity to tap into the technical skills and competences available in the Region, despite their possible limited knowledge of English. Recommendation 7 addresses this issue. Its implementation, if accepted, will require additional resources, possibly from Voluntary funds; a reasonable time-span for visible results should be late 2015, to be captured in the Follow-up Report to the Management response to this evaluation.

Recommendation 7: To FAO and REU, on the use of the Russian language

In order to enhance the quality of its technical work and the diffusion of its normative products FAO should: a) in recruitment, give priority to the best technical competence in countries, essentially in Central Asia, where Russian rather than English is the FAO working language, and invest in translation costs for reports and administration forms. Fluency in Russian should be considered an advantage in selecting international staff to work in these countries; b) invest in translation of publications and other normative products into Russian.

One FAO

668. The concept of One-FAO has always been part of the corporate discourse on decentralization, and possibly best embodies the tension between a knowledge organization with a global and local mandate. It has become even more important since 2010, with the change in the reporting lines between Technical Departments in HQ and the technical staff in the Decentralized Offices. The Evaluation devoted particular attention to it, in its interviews and questionnaires. It comes as last in this summary, but is certainly among the first in terms of relevance to the overall thrust of this Evaluation.

669. As of 2012, and despite on-going improvements, the skill mix of technical expertise located in the Region was still not adequate to meet the needs of the Members in the Region,

excluding the areas of intervention that should, by definition, be handled at the inter-regional and global level. As discussed above, competences were missing in: gender equality and social inclusion; food security policy; irrigation; climate change and natural resources management; animal genetic resources and some aspects of animal health. On the other hand, the DOs in the Region, all together, had an adequate skill mix for administration, operations and support services; the recognized need at the regional level for competence in Resource Mobilization was 'on-going work' in late 2012, as discussed above.

670. The gaps in technical expertise in the region were partly compensated through NSHR, who are by definition more flexible, and largely through expertise based or managed from HQ. On average, 80% of the field programme resources were technically backstopped from HQ: a significant part of these focused on global and inter-regional initiatives, but not only. This required important efforts in terms of integration and coordination among the different levels in the Organization, to ensure coherence and enable synergies.

671. These findings strengthen the observations above, on the requirements for enhanced delivery in the Region (see FAO's presence in Europe and Central Asia). The size and nature of the expected work by FAO in Europe and Central Asia, and its foreseeable evolution in the medium term, will not be manageable by any likely increase of technical expertise deployed to the Decentralized Offices. Relevant and effective support to the Member Countries in the Region will only be feasible with an important involvement of HQ staff, in very close collaboration with both REU and SEC.

672. Thus, the capacity of the Organization to deliver as One-FAO takes on particular importance in this Region. The survey questionnaire to FAO staff showed a satisfactory degree of integration and communication across the different levels of the Organization working in the Region. Some divisions were doing better than others, through different mechanisms: these imply some additional cost but overall, they seemed to be quite effective. The Plant Production and Protection Division Platform should be taken as example for information sharing.

673. In a number of cases, technical officers in DOs had managed to include their former supervisors in HQ in their PEMS agreements, either as multi-raters or as co-supervisor; this appeared as a very effective manner of by-passing the absence of a primary reporting line and of other formal mechanisms, such as the Functional Technical Networks, that do not seem to be known in the Region. However, in the absence of formalized systems, the decision to engage into information sharing and coordination with colleagues was left to individuals: this usually was not effective, as personality and other issues prevailed.

674. Recommendation 8 below encompasses all issues noted. The Evaluation is aware that its implementation will require additional resources, some of which will be recurrent costs, with the exclusion of items b) and c). Part of the funds could come from the Multidisciplinary fund. It is likely that similar issues will arise also in other regions, as was the case for Near East to some extent. The Organization will need to make it one of its priorities at all levels, to ensure it maintains its comparative advantage and coherence of message at all levels, within enhanced decentralization. The time-frame for achieving initial results from the implementation of the Recommendation should be mid- to late 2014.

Recommendation 8: To FAO, on enhancing the One-FAO approach

FAO, REU and SEC should invest in developing stronger ties, communication and coordination among Technical Departments and staff in the DOs. Ways to achieve this should include:
a) Annual meetings should be convened for FAO staff, similar to the Land and Water Days in the Land and Water Division, to maintain and strengthen technical links between the officers posted in the decentralized offices and in HQ;
b) Shared supervisors between HQ and DO in the PEMS agreement of all technical officers in the DOs;
c) Shared supervisors between HQ and DO in the PEMS agreements of technical officers in HQ working extensively in the Region;
d) Establish a communication and information sharing platform in all Technical Departments on the model of AGP;
e) Establish a minimum of one-month induction period in HQ for newly recruited technical officers in any DO in the Region.

Annexes

Annex 1. Evaluation Terms of Reference
Annex 2. Profile of evaluation team members
Annex 3. Evaluation tools
Annex 4. List of institutions and stakeholders met during the evaluation process
Annex 5. Inventory of the field programme in Europe and Central Asia
Annex 6. Inventory of FAO normative products for Europe and Central Asia
Annex 7. Analysis of the survey questionnaires to Member Countries
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