



Food and Agriculture  
Organization of the  
United Nations



OFFICE OF EVALUATION

Thematic evaluation series

# Evaluation of FAO's contribution to the reduction of rural poverty through Strategic Programme 3

ANNEX 2: EVALUATION TERMS OF REFERENCE

March 2017



**THEMATIC EVALUATION SERIES**

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to the reduction of rural poverty  
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Office of Evaluation (OED)

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## 1. Introduction

- 1 The Office of Evaluation of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) will conduct an evaluation of FAO's Strategic Objective 3 (SO3): Reduce Rural Poverty<sup>1</sup> in 2016. FAO's support to rural poverty reduction was first included as a specific objective in the revised Strategic Framework 2010-2019 of June 2013. Prior to that, FAO's work in rural development was included in at least five of the eleven former Strategic Objectives (e.g. B, E, F, K, L)<sup>2</sup> The revised Strategic Framework was conceived with the intention of focussing on fewer and more joined-up streams of work while enhancing multi-disciplinarity and synergies across the new Strategic Objectives.
- 2 The rationale for FAO's engagement in rural poverty reduction comes from the Organization's vision of "a world free from hunger and malnutrition, with food and agriculture contributing to improving living standards especially of the poorest", which is further captured in one of the three FAO global goals that calls for "the elimination of poverty and the driving forward of economic and social progress for all"<sup>3</sup>. The latter goal has recently been reinforced by the adoption of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), and particularly Goal 1, which calls for "end poverty in all its forms everywhere"<sup>4</sup>. In the revised Strategic Framework, FAO's work on rural poverty reduction aims at ensuring inclusive and equitable access to resources and services, decent employment and social protection by the rural poor.
- 3 While FAO's interventions are all in necessary areas of institutional strengthening and policy formulation aspects, they are by themselves not sufficient to attain progress in rural poverty reduction. National ownership and commitment to institute appropriate legal and regulatory framework; Well-articulated Poverty Reduction Strategies and Programmes targeting rural poor; Adequate and well-targeted resource allocations toward integrated rural development; business and investment climate supporting private participation in the rural economy; and willingness and absorptive capacities for effective use/application of knowledge and technical support received from development partners (including FAO) will, among others, be important determinants of the success of FAO engagement under SO3.

### SO3 intervention logic

- 4 The Strategic Programme (SP3) is the operational programme developed by FAO to contribute to the achievement of the underlined strategic objective. It has been structured around the three outcomes of SO3: 1) empower the rural poor in gaining access to resources and services; 2) improve opportunities for the rural poor to access decent farm and non-farm employment; and 3) improve social protection systems for the rural poor. Each outcome is further elaborated at the output level and include specific indicators for measuring progress (see Appendix 1). Three output indicators make specific reference to the achievement of gender-sensitive rural service delivery systems (1.4), rural development policies (1.5) and social protection systems (3.1), while several others may have implicit effects on gender equality.

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1 <http://www.fao.org/about/what-we-do/so3/en/>

2 [http://www.fao.org/uploads/media/C2009K5864EnglishStrategicFr\\_1.pdf](http://www.fao.org/uploads/media/C2009K5864EnglishStrategicFr_1.pdf)

3 <http://www.fao.org/about/en/>

4 <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/?menu=1300>

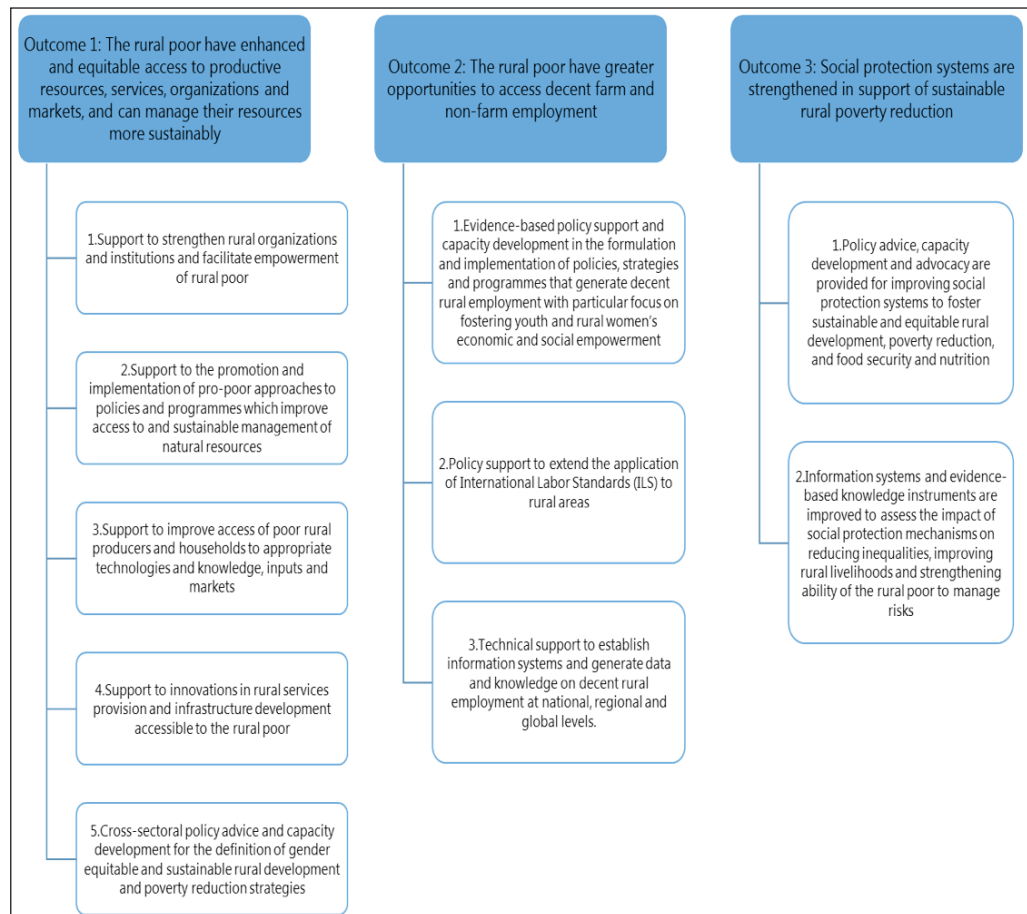


Figure 2. SP3 results framework

## 2. SP3 programming and resources

- 5 The 2014-15 and the 2016-17 work-plans of SP3 were formulated in 2013 and 2015, respectively, under the supervision of the SP3 leader and in consultation with a wide array of technical divisions and offices at headquarters (see below), and the support of a management team. In addition, all FAO Regional Offices contribute to certain aspects of the work, especially the Regional Initiatives.

**Table 1:** Main contributing units to SP3 work at Headquarters<sup>5</sup>

Outcome	Main contributing units at Headquarters (2014-2015 & 2016-2017)
3.1	Social Policies and Rural Institutions Division (ESP); Nutrition and Food Systems Division (ESN); Animal Production and Health Division (AGA); Plant Production and Protection Division (AGP); Forest Economics, Policy and Products Division (FOE); Statistics Division (ESS); Agricultural Development Economics Division (ESA)
3.2	Social Policies and Rural Institutions Division (ESP); Fisheries and Aquaculture Policy and Economic Division (FIP); Trade and Markets Division (EST); Statistics Division (ESS)
3.3	Social Policies and Rural Institutions Division (ESP); Agricultural Development Economics Division (ESA)

**Table 2:** Breakdown of the SP3 funding by outcome and funding source<sup>6</sup>

Outcome	Funding source	Expenditures 2014-15 (USD '000)	% of total SP3 expenditure	Budget 2016-17 (USD '000)	% of total SP3 budget
3.1	Net appropriation	37 902	<b>77%</b>	40 338	<b>80%</b>
	Extra-budgetary	81 279		92 991	
	<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>119 181</b>		<b>133 329</b>	
3.2	Net appropriation	15 030	<b>15%</b>	14 955	12%
	Extra-budgetary	7 983		4 306	
	<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>23 013</b>		<b>19 261</b>	
3.3	Net appropriation	10 349	<b>8%</b>	8 876	<b>8%</b>
	Extra-budgetary	2 763		4 049	
	<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>13 112</b>		<b>12 925</b>	
Total	Net Appropriation	63 281	<b>100%</b>	64 169	<b>100%</b>
	Extra-budgetary	92 025		101 346	
	<b>Total</b>	<b>155 306</b>		<b>165 515</b>	

- 6 The total expenditure in 2014-15 for SP3 was USD 155 million, whereas in 2016-17 it has a budget of USD 165 million. Most of the funding goes to Outcome 1, with Outcomes 2 and 3 receiving a relatively smaller share of regular programme resources. A breakdown of the funding by outcome and funding source is included below.

### SP3 delivery mechanisms

- 7 Delivery of SP3 products and services is organized through dedicated multidisciplinary and cross-organizational teams, under three broad thematic areas – Access Initiative (3.1), Decent Rural Employment (3.2) and Social Protection (3.3) – corresponding to the three outcomes. The main delivery modes are:

<sup>5</sup> PIRES

<sup>6</sup> Source PIR 2014-2015; Medium Term Plan 2014-17 (reviewed) and Programme of Work and Budget 2016-17

- 8 **Country Programming Frameworks (CPF):** SP3-related work was reportedly conducted in over 90 countries in 2014-15, and is taking place in over 150 countries in 2016-17. Country-level work is normally incorporated in the CPFs and often takes the form of technical assistance projects.
- 9 Since 2014, FAO has started to prioritize country assistance using a nomenclature of Focus Countries and Active Observation and Coordinated Support Countries. There are currently 45 SP3 Focus Countries for 2016-17, of which 29 are covered under Regional Initiatives. The Active Observation and Coordinated Support Countries are corporate in nature and number 13 (Mali, Chad, Rwanda, Zambia, Egypt, West bank and Gaza strip, Kyrgyzstan, Lao PDR, Bangladesh, Fiji, Guatemala, Paraguay and Grenada), of which SP3 coordinates support to three (3): Guatemala, Paraguay and Egypt.
- 10 Regional Initiatives: There are currently three Regional Initiatives led by SP3 covering 29 countries.
- Empowering smallholders and family farms (Focus countries: Armenia, Georgia, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan, Albania, Moldova, Macedonia);
  - Family farming and rural territorial development (Focus countries: Bolivia, Guatemala and Haiti, Belize, Colombia, Grenada, Guyana, Jamaica, El Salvador, Honduras, Nicaragua, Paraguay, St Vincent and Suriname);
  - Sustainable small-scale agriculture for inclusive development (Focus countries: Tunisia, Morocco, Sudan, Egypt, Lebanon, Jordan, Mauritania, and West Bank and Gaza Strip).
- 11 **Global knowledge products and services:** SP3 produces a range of knowledge products for use at country, regional and global levels; some key products for the period 2016-17 include the following:
- Information base on rural development (this global product and service aims to improve the availability of analytical information on income and related livelihoods in rural areas);
  - Global strategy for gender mainstreaming in agricultural statistics (this global product aims at ensuring that agricultural statistics are adequately gender responsive);
  - E-learning course: End child labour in agriculture (an e-learning course to strengthen and build capacities towards the prevention and reduction of child labour in agriculture);
  - Global initiative on universal social protection: expansion of coverage of social protection the rural poor (a joint advocacy with strategic partners WB/ILO and Social protection Inter-Agency Coordination Board to support the expansion of coverage of social protection to the rural poor);
  - Focusing rural/agricultural investment and research on achieving SDGs 1 and 2 (Joint FAO, ISPC-CGIAR, IFAD, World Bank effort to better focus rural investment and research on achieving SDGs 1 (rural poverty reduction) and 2 (hunger).

### **3. Purpose and scope of the evaluation**

- 12 This evaluation will provide FAO management and Governing Bodies with an external assessment of the progress made in the implementation of the rural poverty reduction approach under SP3, with the aim of providing evidence-based recommendations for improving programme design and implementation.
- 13 In order to determine the feasibility and readiness of evaluating FAO's work in these areas, the Office of Evaluation carried out an Evaluability Assessment in the first quarter of 2016 to identify which components of SP3 were worthwhile to evaluate for results, as well as the linkages it had with other Strategic Programmes, bearing in mind the relatively short time since the programme started and the likely benefits, consequences and costs. It was then concluded that as a whole sufficient results and resources have been achieved/allocated since the start of the implementation of the revised Strategic Framework, and that potential synergies with regional initiatives in Africa and Asia would be worth looking at. Therefore, the evaluation will cover FAO's work delivered/planned in the periods 2014-15 and 2016-17, including synergies with relevant Regional Initiatives in Africa and Asia.
- 14 The evaluation will assess, among others, issues relating to SP3 strategic relevance, design, communication and partnerships from a country perspective. Although less prominently, the evaluation would also assess emerging effects of the programme including the (potential) sustainability of the results.

## 4. Methodology

- 15 The evaluation questions listed above will guide the assessment; they are complemented with evaluation sub-questions to be contextualized according to the countries, projects, and stakeholders involved. These sub-questions appear as Appendix 1. The evaluation team will conduct an exhaustive review of the work being carried both at headquarters and in the field, with emphasis on SP3 focus countries. As part of this process, the evaluation team will review relevant FAO documentation, discuss with FAO staff, and contact key global, regional and country partners – both actual and potential – to identify strengths and weaknesses of the SP3 intervention logic and overall strategic relevance of the programme.
- 16 In order to provide relevant feedback on the relevance and the results achieved at thematic and regional levels, the evaluation team will examine FAO's contributions under each of the three SP3 outcomes in a purposely-selected sample of countries. In selecting the countries to study, attention will be given to including countries from the following groupings:
- Countries reporting SP3 results in 2014-15 (90);
  - Countries targeting 2016-17 results under SP3 (77);
  - SP3 focus countries (45);
  - Countries recommended by SP3 team (30);
  - Active observation and coordinated support countries (13).
- 17 Based on the above, the following countries<sup>7</sup> have been preliminarily identified for in-depth study:
- Africa: Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Lesotho, Malawi, Mali, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal and Zambia;
  - Asia: Bangladesh, Cambodia, Indonesia, Myanmar and Vietnam;
  - Europe and Central Asia: Albania, Armenia, Georgia, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan;
  - Latin America and the Caribbean: Colombia, Grenada, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico and Paraguay;
  - Near East: Egypt, Lebanon, Sudan, Tunisia, and West Bank and Gaza.
- 18 In each of the countries visited, the evaluation will assess strategic relevance and progress with SP3 implementation against a set of indicators. The indicators used are: i) national commitment to SP3 themes; ii) Prioritization in Country Programmes; iii) Analytical base of SP3 interventions; iv) Country Office capacities in SP3 themes; v) Government and Partners' awareness; vi) Partnership leverage, and vii) Evidence of contributions. A full description of the rubrics is included in appendix 2.
- 19 The evaluation will report its findings in separate thematic reports dealing with FAO's support to access and empowerment, decent rural employment and social protection as well as SP3 contributions to gender equality. The latter will consist of a review of the consideration given to the minimum standards for gender mainstreaming in the design of the SP3 programme, and an analysis of the SP3-related global and country-level contributions towards the achievement of the gender equality objectives of the FAO gender equality policy.
- 20 A tentative outline of the final report is included in Appendix 3.

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<sup>7</sup> The evaluation will benefit from ongoing/recent research in Bangladesh, Egypt, Niger, Kyrgyzstan, Guatemala and Myanmar conducted in the framework of Country Programme and project evaluations led by the Office of Evaluation.

## 5. Management arrangements

- 21 The Office of Evaluation has the overall responsibility for the evaluation, including its conceptualization, design, selection of the team and the expert panel, the management of the evaluation process and the production and dissemination of the final evaluation report.
- 22 In order to facilitate internal arrangements and communication, a “contact group” composed of the SP3 management team, delivery managers, output leaders and focal points at regional and/or sub-regional levels will be assembled to review and comment on key documents (i.e. the evaluation’s terms of reference and the draft evaluation report) and provide information/support throughout the evaluation process. The contact group will be responsible for preparing the draft management response under the coordination of the SP3 team leader.
- 23 An expert panel will also be convened to review and provide feedback on initial (evaluation design) and final (draft evaluation report) products of the evaluation, thereby enhancing the quality and credibility of the evaluation. The panel will comprise up to five experts with a broad range of geographic and thematic expertise on rural poverty reduction issues, who will come from academia, civil society, partner agencies, or government. The panel members will be asked to comment on the methodology of the evaluation as well as on the preliminary findings and conclusions of the evaluation at the beginning (mid-September 2016) and towards the end of the evaluation.
- 24 The (internal) FAO Evaluation Committee will act as reference group of the evaluation. The main responsibility of this Committee will be to review and provide comments on the final draft of the evaluation report and ensure the finalization of a corporate management response to the evaluation. The Office of Evaluation will finalize the report, taking into account the comments from the reference group, and disseminate widely the final report on the FAO website, relevant networks and events, as well as to key stakeholders and Member Countries engaged in the evaluation process.

## 6. Team composition

- 25 The evaluation will be led by the appointed FAO evaluation manager, who will be supported by an associate evaluation officer and an evaluation analyst. It will avail itself of the inputs of senior technical experts in different types of rural poverty reduction work that will provide inputs into specific thematic and regional areas of work. On top of prior evaluation experience, the Office of Evaluation will seek consultants with expertise in the following areas:
- Rural development, including institution building;
  - Rural employment;
  - Social protection;
  - Agricultural economics;
  - Gender mainstreaming.
- 26 Each of the consultants recruited will have a specific role in the team, either as lead evaluator for a specific outcome (i.e. Outcome 1, Outcome 2 and Outcome 3) or for a specific regional report (i.e. Asia and Pacific, Europe and Central Asia, Africa, Near East and North Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean). In putting together the team, the Office of Evaluation will seek to ensure adequate thematic, linguistic, geographic and gender representation.

## 7. Evaluation timeline

<b>Output/activity</b>	<b>Tentative deadline</b>
Finalization of the Terms of Reference	Mid-June 2016
Identification of the expert panel and the evaluation team	30 June 2016
Review of evaluation methodology by expert panel and contact group	15 July 2016
Selection and organization of regional missions and thematic studies	15 August 2016
Conduct of regional missions and thematic studies	15 November 2016
Finalization of regional reports	January 2017
Finalization of the thematic reports (first draft)	January 2017
Debriefing of internal stakeholders	January 2017
Presentation of final draft of the evaluation report and draft Management Response to the reference group	February 2017
Finalization of the Evaluation Report and Management Response	February 2017
Presentation to the Programme Committee and other stakeholders	March 2017

## Appendix 1: Evaluation questions

Questions	Sub questions
<p><b>1. Strategic relevance:</b> Is FAO's approach to rural poverty reduction under the revised Strategic Framework architecture relevant?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What unique contributions does/can FAO make towards addressing key drivers and constraints to rural poverty reduction in countries?</li> <li>• Is the SP3 conceptual approach well directed and contain the most valuable contributions FAO can make within a larger strategy for poverty reduction?</li> <li>• Is the present thrust across the pillars appropriate taking into account FAO's most valuable contributions?</li> </ul>
<p><b>2. Programme design:</b> Are the SP3 intervention logic and its delivery mechanisms appropriate?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Are SP3 initiatives and resources well aligned with country/regional/global priorities and demands?</li> <li>• Do the interventions under SP3 have clearly specified logical pathways that point out assumptions and risks? Are these being effectively used for management and understood by key clients?</li> <li>• How coordinated and synergistic are the various delivery mechanisms to attain SP3 results at country level (i.e., global products, Regional Initiatives and CPFs)?</li> <li>• What value do Regional initiatives bring towards attaining SP3 results?</li> <li>• How well does the FAO delivery and work plan match the conceptual approach?</li> </ul>
<p><b>3. Communication:</b> Is there a common understanding and commitment to FAO's intervention logic among FAO decentralised offices, country counterparts and development partners?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Have SP3-related interventions (and FAO's role in them) been communicated effectively to stakeholders?</li> <li>• What is the level of ownership and agreement by FAO decentralized offices of the revised Strategic Framework/SP3 and of the way it is working in practice?</li> <li>• Is FAO expertise and work in rural poverty reduction adequately recognised to/acknowledged by regional/national counterparts and development partners)?</li> </ul>
<p><b>4. Partnerships:</b> Is FAO selecting, using and leveraging partnerships appropriately to achieve SP3 intended results?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is FAO engaging with appropriate partners for SP3 and for individual activities?</li> <li>• How has FAO leveraged partnerships to secure the right entry points for diverse themes and/or complement its own skills/develop knowledge products in domains that are relatively new at FAO?</li> </ul>
<p><b>5. Effectiveness and sustainability:</b> Is the SP3 strategy bearing signs of results in the form of institutional change, improved policy frameworks and enhanced resource mobilization? Are the results achieved under SP3 sustainable?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What type of improvements in terms of empowerment and access, rural employment and social protection are observable in countries?</li> <li>• What benefits are seen/ foreseen in the above areas specifically for women, youth and socially marginalised sections?</li> <li>• Are the programme arrangements translating into institutional changes, strengthening of policy frameworks and enhanced resource mobilization?</li> </ul>

## Appendix 2: Rubrics for assessing progress at country level – thematic level only

Indicators	Description of the rubric	Data source
National commitment	0 = There are no specific national policies, strategies or programmes to support <b>this SP3 theme</b> 1 = Sectoral national policies and strategies incorporates SP3 theme; however, there are no specific/resourced programmes to support this theme. 2 = SP3 theme is incorporated and resourced in national policies and strategies.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review of national policies and programmes</li> <li>• Interviews</li> <li>• SP3 monitoring data</li> </ul>
Prioritization in country program	0 = This SP3 theme is not included in Country Programme. 1 = This SP3 theme is included in Country Programme but no significant resources are earmarked for their implementation. 2 = This SP3 theme is included and significant resources for their implementation are earmarked in the Country Programme.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review of CPF and related documents</li> <li>• Interviews with FAO staff</li> </ul>
Analytical base	0 = FAO projects did not include an analysis of the rural economy in their formulation. 1 = FAO projects are based on a generic analysis of the rural economy but not of specific analysis relevant to the intervention. 2 = FAO projects are based on specific research and analysis of the rural economy.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review of FAO SP3-tagged project documents</li> </ul>
Country Office capacities	0 = FAO country office personnel has no expertise on this theme. 1 = FAO country office personnel has generic expertise on this theme. 2 = FAO country office personnel has specialized expertise on this theme.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Interviews with FAO staff and partners</li> <li>• Data on staff training, learning meetings/ events</li> </ul>
Government and Partners' awareness	0 = Key government institutions and development partners are not (yet) aware of FAO's work on this theme. 1 = Key government institutions and development partners are aware of FAO's work on this theme and consider FAO as a player but not a major one. 2 = Key government institutions and development partners are aware of FAO's work on this theme and consider FAO to be among the most important players.	
Partnership leverage	0 = FAO has not engaged (yet) with relevant government institutions and development partners on this theme. 1 = FAO has started to engage with non-traditional partners (i.e., beyond Ministry of Agriculture and Rome-based Agencies) from among Government institutions and development partners on this theme. 2 = FAO has engaged/developed partnerships with non-traditional partners on this theme.	
Evidence of contributions	0 = FAO has not (yet) contributed to the achievement of rural poverty reduction outcomes under this theme. 1 = FAO has contributed to intermediate results, such as policy dialogue, capacity building, research or pilots. 2 = FAO has contributed to long-term development results, such as policy change, development of large-scale budgeted programmes.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Project documentation/ evaluations</li> <li>• SP3 monitoring data</li> <li>• Interviews with FAO staff and partners</li> </ul>



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