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Acronyms

CPF	Country Programming Framework
DaO	Delivery as One
GNI	Gross National Income
FPMIS	Field Programme Management Information System
HDI	Human Development Index
LIC	Low-income country
LMIC	Lower Middle Income country
MDG	Millennium Development Goal
MIC	Middle Income Country
OED	FAO Office of Evaluation
RAP	FAO Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific
TCP	Technical Cooperation Programme/project
TF	Trust Fund
TFD	Telefood
UMIC	Upper Middle Income country
UNDAF	United Nations Development Assistance Framework
UTF	Unilateral Trust Fund

Executive Summary

Background

ES1. Since 2005 country evaluations have been part of the evaluation programme of FAO and cover all FAO activities in the country, including national projects from all funding sources, national participation in regional projects, use made of normative products and the work carried out by the FAO Representation. Country evaluations allow in-depth analysis of the corporate performance in any single country, accountability thereof and lesson-learning, in particular for stakeholders at country level.

ES2. The FAO Programme Committee, which is the Governing Body that approves the work-plan of the FAO Office of Evaluation (OED) and receives its reports, has been indicating the category of country, e.g. Low Income and Food Deficit or Middle Income, to be selected for these evaluations. Synthesis reports, covering evaluations in similar types of countries, have been submitted to the Programme Committee with a view to drawing lessons from FAO's work in similar types of countries. Since 2005, four synthesis reports were prepared.

ES3. At its October 2011 session, the Programme Committee requested the Office of Evaluation (OED) to conduct evaluations in Middle Income Countries (MICs). In the period 2012-2014, four evaluations of MICs were completed, as follows:

- Sri Lanka, completed in October 2012;
- Viet Nam, completed in May 2013;
- Armenia, completed in February 2013; and
- Colombia, completed in June 2014.

ES4. This report synthesises these four country evaluations: it highlights the similarities of key aspects of FAO's work in the four countries, and draws conclusions and recommendations for the Organization's future approach to all those countries that have achieved significant results in improving the economic and social conditions of their populations, the capacity of their institutions and have thus different expectations in terms of collaboration and partnership with FAO.

Methodology

ES5. The synthesis is based on a detailed review of the four evaluation reports. Findings about FAO's work and functioning in the four countries were exclusively identified from the evaluation reports. In addition, an analysis was also carried out of the size and characteristics of FAO's field programme in those Member Countries that in two selected biennia, 2004/05 and 2012/13, were classified as MIC according to the World Bank database.

Overall conclusions and recommendation

ES6. FAO's work in the four evaluated MICs had a number of strengths according to the evaluations. First, projects and programmes were generally judged to be relevant, well aligned with government priorities, largely demand-driven, and appreciated by government partners. Projects were generally effective in terms of delivering on the outputs planned. Second, FAO was valued as a partner for the technical capacity it provided and for the technical quality of its normative products.

ES7. There were also notable achievements in individual countries. These included the significant contribution to food production and asset replacement following civil conflict and natural disasters in Sri Lanka; the effective fostering of collaboration and knowledge sharing between national institutions by the global and regional projects involving Armenia; and the very effective and relevant models for addressing the needs of vulnerable communities developed in Colombia.

ES8. Programme management and administrative strengths identified in the evaluations included the good relationships made and maintained with development partners, albeit too few, and the commitment and competence of FAO national staff.

ES9. There were also a number of recurrent weaknesses. In three of the countries, for some or all of the period evaluated, programme development and management suffered from the lack of high quality Representative, and/or sufficiently competent staff in-country, further compounded by uneven backstopping and support from regional offices and headquarters. Also, insufficient delegation to the country offices affected efficiency of operations: on this specific matter, evidence from Colombia and other countries showed that the introduction in 2013 of the Global Resource Management System (GRMS) represented a significant improvement on administrative matters.

ES10. At the programmatic level, policy influence, policy dialogue and advocacy were widely assessed as limited, as was capacity development at institutional and organisational level in three of the four country programmes evaluated. The integration of gender equality was universally poor. Sustainability and efficiency were mixed and not always adequate. All the CPF's were weak on analysis, strategy and prioritisation and to a large extent, in inclusiveness of other partners in the preparation process. The contribution to FAO's global goals of poverty and hunger reduction, or to environmental sustainability, was limited.

ES11. The analysis of overall FAO's presence in MICs showed that so far, the Organization did not modify the standard business model of country offices to the changed circumstances and expectations of the national governments. In the four countries, following FAO's business model at country level, financial resources made available through the Regular Programme only covered the core staff of the FAO Representation. Additional resources were made available, to different extent, by the host countries and the field programme portfolios did change only to some extent, mostly due to the potential for resource mobilization with resource partners and national governments in MICs.

ES12. In this model, the large majority of employees was recruited through extra-budgetary resources directly as project personnel, or indirectly through the Administrative and Operational Support (AOS) share of the Project Support Costs. The need for extra-budgetary resources and AOS to 'be visible' has led to FAO's engagement in too many projects funded by the governments, other partners or FAO itself, where the field-level operational components prevailed over the technical and policy assistance, and in which the added value and comparative advantage of the Organization was not strong.

ES13. If the approach appears justified, in particular in MICs, in practice this is leading to a project-focused type of support to 'earn visibility' which may not enable the Organization to express its full potential and best comparative advantage in countries that have their own implementation capacity and would mostly benefit from high level policy and technical knowledge. At the same time, in countries where the field programme portfolio is smaller or

national staff costs are high, financial resources available are not sufficient to enhance staff capacity.

ES14. The common thread to the recommendations of the four evaluations indicates what the issues at stake and the obstacles are. There are reasons and incentives that explain why the country offices and programmes are structured as they are. Responding to government requests or donor priorities ensures relevance and visibility, but not necessarily strategic impact, while entering into policy dialogue and providing high-level advice on strategic priorities is more demanding. Advocating for different policies is less neutral and can be more controversial. Consultants of international renown are more expensive.

ES15. Nevertheless, a final important finding of the four evaluations was that the national institutional and cooperation context in all the four countries was changing, and that FAO needed to adapt to meet that change. Moreover, the four countries belong to a group of peers that in 2013, according to the World Bank classification based on per-capita income, included 101 among FAO Members and recipients of the Organization's support: 53 of them were in the category of UMICs and 48 in the category of LMICs. In total, this represented almost three times the number of the LIC Members, which were 36 in the same year.

ES16. In line with their middle-income status, these countries are likely to need more normative, policy, organisational and capacity development support from FAO in future than the Organization is offering now. At the same time, the field-level projects are still necessary as they are a key part in the knowledge generation process and they also contribute to institutional visibility and credibility, if well designed and implemented and their results are properly documented and diffused. The two types of support should be considered complementary and used to develop synergies, meet requests and needs while proposing innovations and capacity development.

ES17. The trends in expectations indicate the need for a presence in the country at the level of authority, competence and clout that allows rapid response to queries and requests for assistance, either directly or by calling upon – and obtaining – inputs from elsewhere in the Organization. The point is not having additional long-term international staff posted in all 101 middle-income countries; rather, it is about maintaining - or re-building - capacity at sub-regional, regional and headquarters level of technical staff who can support countries from a distance and can be mobilized at relatively short notice, virtually or in person, directly or through networks of consultants.

ES18. These changes are happening at a time when the combination of declining donor aid flows to MICs and evolving country demands does present a challenge to FAO, as much as to many other organisations. MICs are increasingly skilled, discerning, and demanding. FAO needs to be equipped in country to provide what these countries need, and financed to be able to meet the costs of doing so. A starting point has to be the recognition that the financial resources, from either the FAO Regular budget or extra-budgetary, will not be sufficient to cover the cost of the type of in-country presence that MICs increasingly require. Other organisations, UN and others, face a similar dilemma. One solution could be a single country office and a common country strategy for all the UN food agencies, agreed with the governments, focused on their priorities and building on respective agencies' comparative advantage. Another alternative could be, on the model of FAO's coverage in Eastern Europe and the Pacific, to appoint non-resident Representatives for MICs where a fully-fledged

Representation may no longer be necessary, while ensuring regular interaction with and support from the responsible Sub-regional or Regional Office.

ES19. All these issues point to the need for a specific business model that includes profile of FAO Representative, delegation of authority, capacity to call upon rapid support from other parts of the Organization and national Resource Mobilization strategies that evolve with the rapidly changing financial resource environment, among others. The numbers of FAO Members that would benefit of a better tailored business model are such that a specific FAO strategy in Middle Income Countries appears fully justified. Not having it, and maintaining Business As Usual, means that it will not be feasible for the Organization to become more upstream, more strategic, more proactive, and more policy and advocacy orientated. In other words, becoming irrelevant and not useful.

ES20. In the light of the above, this synthesis contains only one recommendation addressed to Senior Management, for the development of a strategic approach to the work of the Organization in MICs.

Recommendation 1. To FAO Senior Management, on a strategy for the Organization in Middle Income Countries

FAO should develop an overarching strategy for its cooperation with Middle Income Countries, aimed at improving the delivery of the Organization's core functions and the fulfilment of its mandate. The strategy should:

- i) provide guidance and reference on the main focus, scope and modalities of corporate support, and
- ii) define a new business model for its country offices and the corporate network that supports them.

ES21. This report provides some initial information and analysis on the issues to be included in the strategy. FAO Representatives and staff in middle-income Member countries would be able to provide richer inputs, based on their knowledge and experience, for a detailed strategy development.

1 Introduction

1.1 Background

1. Since 2005 country evaluations have been part of the evaluation programme of FAO and cover all FAO activities in the country, including national projects from all funding sources, national participation in regional projects, use made of normative products and the work carried out by the FAO Representation. Country evaluations allow in-depth analysis of the corporate performance in any single country, accountability thereof and lesson-learning, in particular for stakeholders at country level.

2. The FAO Programme Committee, which is the Governing Body that approves the work-plan of the FAO Office of Evaluation (OED) and receives its reports, has been indicating the category of country, e.g. Low Income and Food Deficit or Middle Income, to be selected for these evaluations. Synthesis reports, covering evaluations in similar types of countries, have been submitted to the Programme Committee with a view to drawing lessons from FAO's work in similar types of countries. Since 2005, four synthesis reports were prepared:

- a. FAO's Effectiveness at Country Level - A Synthesis of Evaluations: Mozambique, Sierra Leone, Cambodia and Honduras, 99th session of the Programme Committee, May 2008;
- b. FAO's Effectiveness at Country Level - A Synthesis of Country Evaluations: Post Conflict and Transition Countries: DR Congo, Sudan and Tajikistan, 104th session of the Programme Committee, October 2010;
- c. FAO's Effectiveness at Country Level - A Synthesis of Evaluations in Large, Rapidly-Developing Countries (India and Brazil), 107th (Special) session of the Programme Committee, May 2011;
- d. FAO's effectiveness at country level: A synthesis of evaluations in countries with major emergency and rehabilitation programmes (Ethiopia, Zimbabwe and Haiti), 110th session of the Programme Committee, May 2012.

3. The Programme Committee at its October 2011 session requested the Office of Evaluation (OED) to extend the coverage by conducting evaluations in Middle Income Countries (MICs). The Office, based on its standard methodology for identifying countries where an evaluation would be most timely and effective, and aiming at a balance across the FAO regions, identified and progressively carried out the following four country evaluations:¹

- i Sri Lanka, completed in October 2012: a Lower Middle Income country (LMIC) since 2010, Sri Lanka represented a very important case for FAO with one of the largest field programmes in Asia, for both Emergency and Rehabilitation and development initiatives;
- ii Viet Nam, completed in May 2013: the country, which was first classified as LMIC in 2009, had joined in 2005 the piloting of the One UN initiative; the evaluation allowed focusing on FAO's role in the process;
- iii Armenia, completed in February 2013: the country became a LMIC in 2002; in 2011, it had the largest field programme in the Caucasus; the evaluation was carried out in the framework of, and provided important insights to the Evaluation of FAO's Regional and Sub-regional Offices for Europe and Central Asia; it

¹ See Annex 1.

- allowed an in-depth analysis of FAO's achievements, strengths and weaknesses also in terms of the most recent efforts to further the Organization's decentralization process;
- iv Colombia, completed in June 2014: a LMIC in 2007 and in the Upper Middle Income Country (UMIC) group since 2009, the country ranked first according to the OED criteria for country evaluation selection the region, and its Country Programming Framework (CPF) was due to come to completion in June 2014. This evaluation enabled a more detailed analysis of the process and usefulness of this instrument for programming and organising FAO's work at country level.
4. This synthesis aims at highlighting the similarities of key aspects of FAO's work in the four countries, as assessed through the respective evaluation reports, as well as at drawing conclusions and recommendations for the Organization's future approach to all those countries that have achieved significant results in improving the economic and social conditions of their populations, the capacity of their institutions and have thus different expectations in terms of collaboration and partnership with FAO.

1.2 Methodology of the synthesis

5. The synthesis is based on a detailed review of the four evaluation reports. Findings about FAO's work and functioning in the four countries and its assessment against each evaluation criteria were exclusively identified from the evaluation reports. Particular weight was given to findings or lessons contained in more than one report, on the assumption that common findings are likely to be more generalizable in similar countries. Other sources of information used include the Management Responses to the four country evaluations, and Follow-up Reports for three of them; a UN Secretary General paper to the UN General Assembly on MICs; and a recent evaluation synthesis on IFAD's engagement with MICs.²

6. In addition, an analysis was also carried out of the size and characteristics of FAO's field programme in those Member Countries that in two selected biennia, 2004/05 and 2012/13, were classified as MIC according to the World Bank database.³ The purpose was to identify whether FAO had a specific pattern of assistance for MICs and whether the field programme portfolios adjusted following changes in national income levels. With respect to the methodology used and the time-period taken into account, four issues need to be flagged:

- The World Bank database methodology to define income categories changed. This analysis did not assess how this modification affected the sample, i.e. whether a change in status was due to the change of methodology rather than to a change in income;
- Sudan and Serbia & Montenegro went through a modification of their national territories. In the case of Sudan, only the projects of the Republic of Sudan were considered, whereas in the case of Serbia & Montenegro, the portfolios of both countries were grouped together in the second biennium;
- The indication in FAO Field Programme Management Information System (FPMIS) of the country coverage of regional, interregional and global projects has not always been complete and the approach to recording this type of

² UNGA paper to be found at: http://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/68/265; IFAD synthesis to be found at: http://www.ifad.org/evaluation/public_html/eksyst/doc/syn/2014/mics/full_report.pdf.

³ <http://databank.worldbank.org/data/home.aspx>

information may have changed over time; this means that a number of these projects may have escaped even if they included some MICs in their scope;

- The analysis was based on total budgets of projects that became operational in the two selected biennia: this method produced a bias of +0.6% in the total budget for the projects that started in 2004/05, due to additional budget resources approved later in projects' life; for 2012/13, at the time of writing this report the difference was even smaller.

7. The analysis also included the assessment of the type of FAO country offices and the allocation of Technical Cooperation Programme (TCP) resources in MICs as per 2013 classification, also taking into account the Human Development Index.

8. OED led the preparation of the report, with the support of two external consultants.⁴ The draft was shared for comments and suggestions with key stakeholders among Senior Management in FAO headquarters as well as with the concerned Regional Offices and FAO Representations. This final version integrates these, as appropriate. FAO Deputy Director General, Operations, agreed to coordinate the preparation of the Management Response to the report. The Follow-up Report is expected to be prepared for the Autumn 2016 session of the Programme Committee.

2 The context: Middle Income Countries and FAO

2.1 Definitions of Middle-Income Countries

9. There is no universally agreed classification for MICs and different agencies describe them differently. The World Bank's income classification is the most widely used: it classifies countries into low-income, lower middle-income, higher middle-income and high-income based on the countries' gross national income (GNI) per capita in current prices. Box 1 below shows the 2013 GNI range for each category and the number of countries in each group, which was used as reference in this report.

Box 1. GNI range by category and number of countries in each group, 2013

Category	GNI per capita, USD	Number of countries
<i>Low-income country (LIC)</i>	1,035 or less	36
<i>Lower middle-income country (LMIC)</i>	1,036 – 4,085	48
<i>Upper middle-income country (UMIC)</i>	4,086 – 12,615	55
<i>High income country</i>	12,616 or more	75

Source: 2013 World Bank list of economies, <http://muse.jhu.edu/about/order/wdi2013.pdf>

10. The breadth of the income bands, and the extreme diversity of MICs, has led some to question the validity of a single classification based on per capita income alone. Alternative classifications have been suggested by Vazquez and Sumner (2012)⁵ and by the World Development Report (2008). The First High-level Meeting of the Global Partnership

⁴ Mr Michael Flint prepared the first draft of the report; Ms Carlotta de Vivanco conducted the portfolio analysis.

⁵ <http://www.ids.ac.uk/files/dmfile/Wp404.pdf>.

for Effective Development Co-operation in Mexico City in 2014 also recognised the need for a classification methodology that better reflected the complex and diverse realities of MICs.⁶

11. The issue of definition aside, some clear trends are evident.⁷ As a result of economic growth, an increasing number of countries have become middle-income. There were 103 countries classified as middle-income in 2013, up from 93 in 2003. An increasing number have graduated from lower middle-income to upper middle-income status. There are now 55 UMICs compared with 37 in 2003. The other clear trend is that a much larger number of poor people, by international poverty lines, now live in MICs as defined by GNI per capita than in Low Income Countries (LICs).⁸ Poverty is highly concentrated in a small number of countries, mainly LMICs.⁹ Whether this will continue to be the case in future, or whether most poverty will again be found in LICs and fragile states, is a matter of debate.¹⁰

2.2 Food security, agriculture and natural resources management in Middle Income Countries

12. There are important general differences between LICs, LMICs and UMICs. MICs tend to be less dependent on Official Development Assistance, less reliant on agriculture as a sector, and more urbanised. While still overwhelmingly rural (70-75 per cent), the composition of poverty is more urban in LMICs than in LICs, and a lower proportion of the poor are employed in agriculture.¹¹

13. As suggested by the 2008 World Development Report, the agriculture-for-development plans vary by the type of country: agriculture-based, transforming or urbanised.¹² There is considerable overlap between these three types and LIC, LMICs and UMICs respectively. Agriculture-based countries, typically LICs in Sub-Saharan Africa, need to prioritise growth and food security. Transforming countries, typically South Asia and North Africa, need to reduce rural-urban income disparities and rural poverty. Urbanised countries, typically MICs in Latin America and Europe, need to link smallholders to modern food markets and provide good jobs. Food quality and food safety progressively become more important than food security. However, economic and social inequality remains acute, and significant pockets of poverty and food insecurity still exist in rural, less accessible regions.

14. A recent UN survey provides an empirical picture of the most relevant areas of current and future UN development cooperation to MICs.¹³ The type of support cited as most relevant was strengthening national capacities for policy and strategy development, and

⁶ http://effectivecooperation.org/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2014/07/ENG_Final-ConsensusMexicoHLMCommunique.pdf.

⁷ World Bank list of economies: siteresources.worldbank.org/DATASTATISTICS/Resources/CLASS.XLS.

⁸ Sumner, Andy. 2010. Global Poverty and the New Bottom Billion: What if Three-Quarters of the World's Poor Live in Middle-Income Countries? Brighton: IDS.

⁹ Vazquez, Sergio T. and Andrew Sumner. 2012. Beyond Low and Middle Income Countries: What if There Were Five Clusters of Developing Countries? IDS Working Paper volume 2012 no 404. Brighton: IDS.

¹⁰ Sumner, Andy. 2012. Where do the World's Poor Live? A new Update. Brighton, IDS; Kharas, Homi and Andrew Rogerson. 2012. Horizon 2025: Creative Destruction In the Aid Industry. London: ODI.

¹¹ World Bank. 2008. World Development Report: Agriculture for Development. Washington, D.C: World Bank; Sumner, Andy. 2012. Where do the World's Poor Live? A new Update. Brighton, IDS.

¹² http://publications.worldbank.org/e-commerce/catalog/product?item_id=6966252

¹³ http://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/68/265

supporting training and institution-building. The most important area for UN assistance to MICs in the next four years was the environment and sustainable development – including climate change and water – followed by health and poverty reduction.

2.3 *FAO's coverage and field programme in Middle Income Countries*

Main findings

As of 2014, FAO's coverage at country level closely resembled the network established before the year 2000.

Support to MICs at the national level appears to still be an important modality of delivery, as well as support in the case of emergencies.

MICs that improve their income level tend to take on the role of donor of initiatives on their own territory through Unilateral Trust Fund projects (UTF),¹⁴ wherein FAO plays the role of implementing partner.

FAO, in its role as a donor, slightly decreased the resources allocated to MICs through the Technical Cooperation Programme. In the absence of a corporate policy for work in MICs, it is not fully clear whether these changes were explicitly pursued or simply happened.

Expectations of LMICs and UMICs vis-à-vis FAO differ; these should be fully taken into account in the development of CPFs and respective resource mobilization strategies.

2.3.1 *FAO's coverage at country level*

15. Among FAO Members and recipients of FAO's support,¹⁵ 115 were classified as LMIC or UMIC according to the World Bank income categories, either in 2004/05 or in 2012/13, or in both biennia. Based on the evolution of their income levels, the 115 countries could be further split into four sub-groups:¹⁶

- A. Countries that moved from the status of Low Income to the status of either LMIC or UMIC, 28 countries;
- B. Countries that moved from being LMIC to being UMIC, 32 countries;
- C. Countries that did not change Middle Income status, 41 countries; and
- D. Countries moving from middle income to high income, 14 countries.

16. FAO's country office network is virtually the same since the '70s and '80s, when the decision was made to locate FAO Representations in a large number of Member Countries: the Organization has had some type of presence for decades now, in almost 100 countries. Since 2000, the staffing profile of FAO Representations also has not significantly changed. The only modifications for the current MICs have been the transformation of the FAO Representations in two countries into Sub-Regional Offices, namely in Panama and Turkey, and the opening of a few new country offices, namely Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia,

¹⁴ The Unilateral Trust Fund (UTF) is a funding modality¹ for projects financed by a government in its own country, see http://intranet.fao.org/fileadmin/templates/resource_mobilization/docs/RMGuidanceNote1_UTF_EN.pdf. Financial resources may originate from the national resources or through 'ear-marked' direct budget support funds.

¹⁵ The universe of reference includes also entities that are not FAO's Members, but are recipient of FAO's support, e.g. Kosovo and West Bank and Gaza.

¹⁶ See Annex 2.

Moldova, Papua New Guinea and Timor Leste. No country office has been closed down so far.

2.3.2 *Analysis of FAO's field programme in all MICs*

17. In these 115 Member Countries, during the biennium 2004/05, a total of 1,228 projects became operational,¹⁷ 78% of which were national and 22% were regional/interregional/global. In 2012/13, in the same 115 countries, the ratio of national to regional/interregional/global had slightly decreased: out of 1,180 newly started projects, 76% were national and 24% were regional/interregional/global. Budget-wise, the ratio of national to regional/interregional/global in 2004/05 was 57% and in 2012/13 was 60%. All in all, no significant changes.

18. Box 2 below shows the share in source of funding for national projects in the two biennia for all 115 MICs, both in terms of numbers of projects and budgets. The shift in the number of projects was more significant than in the financial values. The use of TCP resources decreased, both in numbers and budget allocated.¹⁸ The use of the UTF modality was more pronounced in MICs in the 2012/2013 biennium and although of minor importance in terms of budget, the approval of Telefood (TFD) projects did not significantly change with income status or shifts in it.¹⁹

Box 2. Sources of funding of national projects in 115 LMICs and UMICs in 2004/2005 and 2012/2013

	N. of national projects 2004/05	N. of national projects 2012/13	% of number of national projects 2004/05	% of number of national projects 2012/13	Total budget (USD) of national projects 2004/05	Total budget (USD) of national projects 2012/13	% of budget of national projects 2004/05	% of budget of national projects 2012/13
TCP	385	242	40%	27%	57,922,751	55,089,847	15%	11%
TF	198	233	21%	26%	244,301,906	275,289,292	62%	57%
UTF	33	65	3%	7%	88,846,639	149,915,419	23%	31%
TFD	343	353	36%	40%	2,548,619	2,907,689	1%	1%
Total	959	893			393,619,915	483,202,247		

Source: FPMIS, compiled by OED

19. Whenever looking at specific groups of countries, however, trends differ. As shown in Box 3, countries in group A, i.e. countries that moved from LIC to LMIC status, went through a small increase in the share of Trust Fund (TF) projects funded by resource partners,

¹⁷ These were projects with an Entry on Duty (EOD) between 1 January 2004 - 31 December 2005 and 1 January 2012 - 31 December 2013 that were either national projects or regional/interregional/global projects, for which FPMIS specified the list of participating countries, in any of the 115 countries in the sample.

¹⁸ The ceiling for TCP initiatives for development was USD 400,000 until late 2005, when the Council at its 129th session, approved an increase of the ceiling to USD 500,000.

¹⁹ Telefood are projects with a budget ceiling of USD 10,000, funded through public raising and aimed at micro-interventions at community and household level.

and a significant decrease in the UTF modality in budgetary terms.²⁰ The TCPs total allocation remained the same.

Box 3. Sources of funding of national projects in A countries, from Low Income to Lower Middle Income, in 2004/2005 and 2012/2013

	N. of national projects 2004/05	N. of national projects 2012/13	% of number of national projects 2004/05	% of number of national projects 2012/13	Total budget (USD) of national projects 2004/05	Total budget (USD) of national projects 2012/13	% of budget of national projects 2004/05	% of budget of national projects 2012/13
TCP	114	80	32%	23%	18,404,232	22,624,074	11%	11%
TF	115	125	33%	37%	117,445,418	167,502,589	72%	82%
UTF	5	8	1%	2%	26,865,529	13,806,593	16%	7%
TFD	118	129	34%	38%	736,333	1,022,520	<1%	<1%
Total	352	342			163,451,512	204,955,776		

Source: FPMIS, compiled by OED

20. On the contrary, changes in the sources of funding for national projects in countries in group D, i.e. that moved from the status of middle-income to high income, show a clear shift in favour of UTF projects, with a dramatic decrease in funds from both FAO and other resource partners, as shown in Box 4 below. This increase was largely due to one single country, Saudi Arabia, that funded 42% of the UTF resources in 2012/13. However, in the same period, also countries in group C alone provided together 18% additional resources in the form of UTFs, when compared with 2004/05.

Box 4. Sources of funding of national projects in D countries, from Middle Income to High Income in 2004/2005 and 2012/2013

	N. of national projects 2004/05	N. of national projects 2012/13	% of number of national projects 2004/05	% of number of national projects 2012/13	Total budget (USD) of national projects 2004/05	Total budget (USD) of national projects 2012/13	% of budget of national projects 2004/05	% of budget of national projects 2012/13
TCP	7	5	47%	36%	319,3874	1,970,411	45%	3%
TF	1	2	7%	14%	1,470,732	217,019	21%	<1%
UTF	2	3	13%	21%	2,184,479	65,522,449	31%	97%
TFD	5	4	33%	29%	217,995	130,165	3%	<1%
Total	15	14			7,067,080			

Source: FPMIS, compiled by OED

21. The data indicate the following trends:

- External resource partners maintain their support to LMICs, at least for some time after the latter have ‘graduated’ to MIC level;
- Recently graduated LMICs still count on FAO as a resource partner rather than as an implementing partner with their own resources;

²⁰ Trust Funds projects are initiatives funded by a single or a group of resource partner/s, be this a country, an International Financial Institution, a Fund or a group, to be implemented in Participating Country/ies. In 2012/13, TFs resources represented 81% of FAO newly starting projects.

- UMICs show increasing interest in collaborating with FAO as implementing partner of initiatives on their national territory, with their own financial resources.

22. Furthermore, out of a total amount of USD 1.5 billion corresponding to the total budget of all FAO projects, national, regional, interregional and global, which became operational in the period 1 January 2012-31 December 2013, MICs contributed 7% of this amount, which corresponded to 42.2% of all UTFs and 2.5% of all Trust Funds.

23. The trends above were also confirmed through anecdotal evidence from interactions with representatives of Member countries. The Organization should consider taking these systematically into account when developing CPFs and respective Resource Mobilization strategies, in particular in the case of MICs.

Field programme analysis: geographical scope and emergency/rehabilitation versus development

24. An empirical observation from a number of evaluations had been that an improvement in income level, when accompanied by an increased management and institutional capacity at the national level, determined a shift in 'preferred' project modality to address policy and technical assistance support requirements, from national interventions towards initiatives that bring together groups of countries facing similar challenges. Thus, regional, interregional and global projects would become a more effective delivery model than national interventions.

25. The trends in the portfolio however do not support the observation, in particular if the portfolio is fully demand-driven. In 49 countries the ratio of national versus regional/interregional/global projects changed towards a higher number of national projects, in 48 countries it changed in favour of more regional/interregional/global projects, in 12 countries it remained the same and 3 countries had no projects. Further, in A and C countries, national projects tended to increase in number, whereas in B countries, the share of regional/interregional/global projects tended to increase, as shown in Box 5. Based on the lack of clear evidence FAO, and Regional and Sub-regional Offices in particular, may still wish to further verify whether the observation bears some validity.

Box 5. Changes in the ratio of national to regional/interregional/global projects between the biennia

	A (from Low to Middle Income)		B (from LMIC to UMIC)		C (no change)		D (from middle to high income)		Total
	N.	% within group	N.	% within group	N.	% within group	N.	% within group	
<i>Countries with increase in regional/interregional / global projects</i>	9	32.1%	18	56.3%	15	36.6%	6	42.9%	48
<i>Countries with increase in national projects</i>	15	53.6%	12	37.5%	20	48.8%	4	28.6%	49
<i>Countries with no changes in the ratio</i>	4	14.3%	2	6.3%	6	14.6%	1	7.1%	12
<i>Countries without FAO projects</i>	0	0.0%	0	0.0%		0.0%	3	21.4%	3

Total	28	100%	32	100%	41	100%	14	100%	112
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Source: FPMIS, elaborated by OED

26. In relation to the funding of Emergency and Rehabilitation (E&R) initiative in the 115 MICs, this was frequent in A countries, 60% of which benefitted of E&R support in both biennia, but almost non-existent in D countries: only one out of 14 in each biennia received any support. For groups B and C, fewer countries received E&R support in 2012/13 than in 2004/05, but the data indicate that the overriding factor for this type of support in MICs, across countries or within the same country, is typically the occurrence of a crisis, man-made or natural, rather than the income-level.

27. In conclusion, support to MICs at the national level appears to still be an important modality of delivery, as well as support in the case of emergencies.

Field programme analysis: TCP eligibility

28. Data above show that TCP resources in the overall portfolio for MICs do not represent a major share for MICs. Nevertheless, the nature of the Programme itself, focused on technical and policy assistance, makes it a key element of FAO's delivery that can be very effective in MICs as well. Hence, the variation in the eligibility of a Member Country to TCP resources following a change in income level appeared to be an important indicator of trends in support to this type of countries.²¹

29. Only 14 MICs had no access to TCP funding, whereas 70 had the same access as LICs and only 32 countries were considered to be 'Intermediate'. The latter group are countries that have access to TCP funding after the needs of the 'Special attention' group have been met. Group A countries were almost exclusively 'Special attention' countries, i.e. they have easy access to TCP funds. This was most likely due to their former LIC status, as the 2009 categorization of countries still holds valid as of mid-2014. However, even Group C countries had a clear majority of 'special attention' countries.

30. The analysis of the allocation of TCPs was also done against the Human Development Index (HDI) classification of MICs.²² This showed that Special attention countries for TCP eligibility include all MICs in the category of Low Human Development and the majority of the Medium Human Development group. Box 6 below shows these data.

Box 6. TCP eligibility

Country Grouping	Special attention	Intermediate	High income	n/a	Total
<i>A (from Low to LMIC)</i>	27	1			28
<i>B (from LMIC to UMIC)</i>	14	16	2		32
<i>C (no change)</i>	26	12	1	2	41
<i>D (from Middle to High Income)</i>	2	3	9		14
Total	69	32	12	2	115
<i>Low Human Development Index</i>	15				
<i>Medium Human Development</i>	29	6			

²¹ See TCP Web site: http://www.fao.org/tc/tcp/eligibility_en.asp

²² <http://hdr.undp.org/en/content/human-development-index-hdi>, 2013 data.

<i>Index</i>					
<i>High Human Development Index</i>	18	24	3		
<i>Very High Human Development Index</i>	1	2	9		
<i>Not available (n/a)</i>	6			2	
<i>Total</i>	69	32	12	1	115

Source: data in http://www.fao.org/tc/tcp/eligibility_en.asp, compiled by OED

3 Evaluation frameworks of four FAO evaluations in MICs

3.1 Purpose and scope

31. The four country evaluations had similar, but not identical, objectives. All of the evaluations aimed to examine the performance of the respective programme and to draw lessons that would improve FAO's work in future. Two of the evaluations made specific reference to examining FAO's comparative advantage, and two had an additional objective relating to the nature of the country presence. In Viet Nam this related to Delivering as One. In Armenia the evaluation was asked to consider corporate decentralisation policies and the specific arrangement for FAO's presence in country which involved a non-resident FAO Representative. Only the most recent of the four evaluations (Colombia) could use the CPF as evaluation framework, in addition to including the analysis of the process and utility of the CPF itself among one of its main objectives.²³

32. The evaluations covered broadly similar time periods: 2006-2012 in the case of Sri Lanka and Viet Nam; 2004-2012 for Armenia; and 2009-2013 for Colombia. With the exception of the Viet Nam evaluation, which selected four sectors/themes to examine,²⁴ all the evaluations covered all or almost all of FAO's work across all modalities, including national, regional and global projects.

3.2 Methodology of the four country evaluations

33. All the evaluations followed broadly the same approach and methodology: a desk review of primary and secondary data and literature; a preliminary/inception visit; a main mission consisting of independent consultants and OED staff; in-country debriefing of stakeholders at the end of the country mission; and a period of analysis and reporting. Draft reports were circulated for comment and Management Responses prepared under the coordination of the FAO Representative.

34. Field research methods were also broadly similar. Evaluations used a mix of methods and relied primarily on semi-structured interviews with a wide range of stakeholders, plus existing qualitative information. Quantitative information and impact studies were used in the few instances where available. A sample of normative products and projects were selected for in-depth review, with field visits being made to a small number of projects.

²³ In Armenia, Sri Lanka and Viet Nam, the CPFs had not been finalized yet or had been completed too recently to allow their use as the evaluation framework.

²⁴ The sectors in Viet Nam were: food safety, climate change adaptation, rural development, and fisheries.

35. Differently from previous FAO country evaluations, wherein impact evaluations were frequently included in the methodology, only one of the four evaluations conducted such an exercise: this was done in the framework of the thematic Evaluation of FAO's support to the implementation of the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries, which selected Sri Lanka for an in-depth analysis of the implementation of the Code. The main reason for not including this type of analysis in the other countries was the absence of a larger body of work by FAO in the same sector over a sufficient period of time that justified the investment in time and financial resources. Fisheries in Sri Lanka was a clear exception.

36. The main variation between the evaluations resides in the analysis and reporting. Three of the four evaluations made reference to UNEG Norms and Standards,²⁵ and most used similar evaluation criteria to assess performance: relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact and sustainability. However, all these criteria were not separately assessed in all the evaluations, and only three of the evaluations used a scoring system for project performance. The cross-cutting criteria of gender equality and environmental sustainability were also separately assessed in some, but not all, the reports. The contribution of the programme to FAO's core functions, and to selected Millennium Development Goals (MDG), was explicitly assessed only in the Armenia evaluation.

37. The four country evaluations faced a similar set of constraints and suffered from similar limitations. All faced the challenge presented by the large number of FAO initiatives, limited time, and limited existing information. The Colombia evaluation, for example, found project evaluations conducted previously for just 3 of the 82 projects implemented during the period 2009-2013. The Sri Lanka evaluation, besides the impact evaluation of FAO's work in the fisheries sector, found limited data on which to assess outcomes and impacts. This was a common constraint for all the evaluations. Furthermore, in Colombia the evaluation faced the constraint of high staff turnover in the FAO office and government institutions, which had resulted in a loss of institutional memory.

38. Three of the four country programmes did not have a formal operational framework, be it a CPF or its predecessor, the National Medium Term Priority Framework, covering the period being evaluated, although the evaluation reports analysed the draft or recently finalized CPF documents. The lack of a framework made it very difficult to assess the performance of the programme as a whole. Only the Colombia evaluation, by virtue of being more recent, had the benefit of a CPF at an advanced stage of implementation.

4 Synthesis of the findings of four FAO evaluations in middle income countries

4.1 Profile of country offices

Main findings

- | |
|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">– The profile and quality of the Representative and other resident staff was identified as an important factor in FAO's overall performance in all four evaluations.– Country office staff were found to be competent and committed, although the skill-mix was not always the most appropriate to meet changing requirements in terms of policy and technical support and to express FAO's comparative advantage. |
|---|

²⁵ UNEG: United Nations Evaluation Group at <http://www.uneval.org/>

39. Armenia differed from the other three countries by being a very small FAO office with a non-resident Representative through multiple-accreditation. The other three countries are fully-fledged Representations with a resident Representative – albeit shared with the Maldives in the case of Sri Lanka – and significant number of staff employed in their offices. A particular feature of the FAO presence in Viet Nam has been its involvement in the Delivery as One initiative (DaO). Box 7 shows a few characteristics of FAO country offices in the four MIC under analysis.

Box 7. Characteristics of FAO presence in the four countries at the time of the respective evaluations

Country, year reference	Type of representation	No. of employees ²⁶	Other
<i>Armenia, 2012</i>	Non-resident Representative	9	
<i>Colombia, 2014</i>	Resident Representative	181	
<i>Sri Lanka, 2012</i>	Resident Representative (incl. Maldives)	>100	
<i>Viet Nam, 2012</i>	Resident Representative	86	Delivery as One

Source: country evaluation reports

40. The presence and quality of the FAO Representative and other staff was identified as an important factor in FAO's overall performance in all four evaluations. In the case of Armenia, the evaluation was clear that the short presence in the country of the previous non-resident Representative - who was also responsible for Georgia and Moldova - contributed to the rather unsatisfactory performance of some important projects and that the field programme suffered as a result. Responsibility for the management of the field programme remained with headquarters and the Regional Office for Europe and Central Asia (REU) and there was no delegation to the local office for administration, finance and operational matters. The evaluation concluded that a much stronger and frequent presence was required by the FAO non-resident Representative, for FAO to meet expectations and fulfil its mandate in the country.

41. The FAO office in Colombia was performing well by the time of the evaluation, but for much of the period under analysis (2009 - mid 2012), the office was left without an FAO Representative, or the then incumbent's performance was weak. This, coupled with project approval delays and unsatisfactory financial management, had led to FAO losing its position in key areas and its credibility as a cooperation partner in public policy.

42. FAO in Colombia had one of the largest field programmes and numbers of employees in Latin America at the time of the evaluation. The combination of scarce 'secure' financial resources, inflexible administrative processes, and the number of small projects, meant that more time was spent on fund raising and project management than on strategic development work. Also, due to the funding model, office expenses far exceeded the initial allocations from Regular Budget resources.

43. The quality of the Representative has also had a direct bearing on the effectiveness and influence of the FAO programme in Viet Nam. When the Representative had relevant technical knowledge and been proactive, the relationship with Government had been more

²⁶ This includes staff and consultants under all types of contracts. It does not include employees seconded from the national governments.

dynamic and beneficial. A related conclusion of the evaluation was the lack of long-term, high-level expert staff in the FAO office with the capacity to provide the level of policy advice and engagement required by Government. This in turn was a result of the limited Regular Programme resources that could fund this type of staff. Instead, the office had to rely on Administrative and Operational Support (AOS) to fund a large number of short-term project-related staff without the necessary advanced skills. At present 80 of the 86 staff focus on administration, project management or emergency work; this meant that in the absence of sufficient experienced and dedicated programme staff, engagement in strategic, long-term development work had been limited.

44. By way of contrast, the FAO presence in Sri Lanka showed what can be achieved with a combination of competent staff, good management, and exceptional leadership from the Representative. The incumbent Representative at the time of the evaluation was credited by the team for putting FAO ‘on the map’ in Sri Lanka, for highly successful local fund-raising, and for forging excellent relationships with Government and other partners.

45. In all the countries, FAO staff showed strong commitment and were in general technically competent in their areas of expertise. In Colombia, quite high rates of turn-over meant that the institutional memory was not very strong, but had the positive effect of different experiences brought to bear in the work currently designed and implemented. Satisfaction with work tended not to be very high in any country, given the limited opportunities for exposure to trainings, career development and prevalence of uncertain and short-term contracts. Also, knowledge of FAO’s policies, cross-cutting issues such as gender equality and of FAO’s normative products, was quite limited.

46. In three countries, however, the evaluations raised concerns about the skill-mix of country offices staff in terms of capacity to meet the changing needs of governments and partners for technical and policy assistance. In Armenia, some stakeholders considered there was room and need for strengthening the long-term technical and operational capacity of the office. In Viet Nam and Sri Lanka, the evaluations recognised that the staff mix that worked well in providing household emergency and recovery assistance will need to change in order to provide the type of upstream policy and capacity development support that is increasingly required and wanted.

47. Ultimately, the ‘optimal’ skill-mix will depend on what type of role FAO opts for its country offices in MICs: operational and project management support, technical and policy support, or primarily channel requests to the Regional Offices or headquarters. The staffing profiles in the four countries evaluated mostly matched the first model: although the work done was at times of high quality, it did not seem to offer the opportunity to the Organization to express its comparative advantage and best fulfil its core functions.

4.2 FAO support to the country offices

Main conclusions

The quality of technical backstopping from responsible units in the regional offices and headquarters was usually well appreciated in all countries by all stakeholders, although there were gaps in responding to needs.

48. The nature of the links between country offices, headquarters and regional offices, and the quality of the support provided to the country programmes, were varied. The

decentralisation of functions to country offices, which has been an important pillar of FAO reforms since 2000, with a renewed impetus at various points in time, was still partial even in the three countries with a resident Representative. The implications for efficiency and effectiveness are discussed below.

49. The country evaluations report a mixed picture of the administrative and technical support provided to the country programmes by headquarters and the regional offices. In Armenia, for example, although the quality of the technical assistance provided was widely appreciated, especially for agricultural policy and animal health, the Regional Office provided limited and unstructured institutional support to the country office.

50. Backstopping from FAO headquarters and the Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific (RAP) to the programme in Sri Lanka was uneven and had not kept pace with the country's programme needs. Technical backstopping was insufficient: only 16 of the 62 country projects had a specific lead technical officer assigned to support the project from either headquarters or the regional office. The skills required by the country programme were also not necessarily present in the Regional Office, as in the case of monitoring and evaluation and results based management. Technical support had nevertheless been good in some sectors, such as fisheries and avian influenza.

51. The Colombia and Viet Nam evaluations reported more favourably on this issue. In both cases the technical support provided by the Regional Office was of high quality and widely appreciated. However, in the case of Viet Nam, headquarters rather than the regional office was a more valuable source of the technical services needed. The question for the Colombia programme was whether the Regional Office for Latin America and the Caribbean (RLC) had all the skills necessary to respond to new strategic objectives and to a possible post-conflict situation.

52. FAO participation in the DaO initiative in Viet Nam had been necessary and the then FAO Representatives had effectively committed energy and time. However, the evaluation's conclusion was that from FAO's point of view, the endeavour had been very time-consuming and challenging, with costs far outweighing the benefits. Participation in DaO hindered FAO's ability to engage in issues under its mandate, its relevance and engagement with government and other partners. In the view of the evaluation, a new and more flexible approach to DaO needed to be developed with all the stakeholders involved.

4.3 Country Programming Frameworks and field programme in four countries

Main findings

- CPFs were appreciated by the Governments in the countries where they were under implementation. Room for improvement was however identified in all in terms of focus, integration of cross-cutting issues and inclusiveness of the formulation process.
- No common patterns were identified in the field programmes in the four countries.

4.3.1 The Country Programming Frameworks

53. As mentioned above, only in Colombia the CPF was approaching implementation completion by the time of the evaluation, In Armenia, the document had been finalized and endorsed earlier in the same year of the valuation and in the other two countries, drafting was

in progress. Despite the limited evidence, the importance of the CPF for FAO required some dedicated attention in this report as well.

54. In Armenia and Colombia, the respective Frameworks were favourably viewed by Government representatives and assessed to be broadly aligned with the priorities identified in the National Development Plan and with the UNDAF.²⁷

55. However, the four country evaluation reports formulated similar criticisms of the CPFs: all were considered to lack strategic analysis and focus, and requiring further prioritisation. The draft CPF for Viet Nam did not include a thorough analysis of FAO's comparative advantage in the areas where it was planning to act. Similarly, comparative advantage was not well defined in Colombian CPF; in addition, although cross-cutting issues such as gender were mentioned, there was no indication of the mechanisms and budgets to ensure implementation.

4.3.2 *The Field programme in the four countries*

56. The four country programmes have been very different in terms of size, funding and themes. Box 8 provides a summary of the projects by location and value, for national programmes only.²⁸

Box 8. Size of country-level field programmes

Country	Years	Value of national projects USD million	Number of projects by geographical scope			
			National	Regional	Inter-regional	Global
<i>Armenia</i>	2004-12	9.3	18	13	5	9
<i>Sri Lanka</i>	2006-11	76.4	62	34	6	3
<i>Viet Nam</i>	2006-12	27.2	35	53	10	1
<i>Colombia</i>	2009-13	49.7	61	21		1

Source: FPMIS and evaluation reports

57. In Sri Lanka, 95% of the funding for national projects came via Trust Funds. TCP funding was USD 3.8 million over the period. TCP funding in Viet Nam was of a similar size, namely USD 3.5 million. This contrasts with Armenia where 65% of the budget of national projects was TCP funded. UTFs were a funding modality only in Sri Lanka, where one UTF was funded, with a budget of US 376,928, and in Colombia, where they represented the main source of financial resources for FAO in the period under evaluation for a total amount of USD 15.6 million.

58. Given the importance of UTFs for FAO as a source of financial resources in particular in UMICs, as shown earlier in this report, the findings of the evaluation in Colombia are relevant here. The country benefitted of FAO's assistance through UTFs for public policy development on food and nutrition security, fisheries and aquaculture; capacity development and innovation on agricultural production and livelihood improvements through better access to markets for vulnerable populations. The national stakeholders involved in these initiatives appreciated FAO's contribution and technical comparative advantage. This was mitigated by dissatisfaction with what was perceived as FAO's limited flexibility in

²⁷ UNDAF: United Nations Development Assistance Framework.

²⁸ The evaluations did not estimate the national component of regional, inter-regional or global programmes.

adapting its standard agreement to the country's legal framework and corporate high overhead costs, in particular when compared to other agencies of the United Nations system.

59. The main themes of the programme in Armenia were animal health and production, agricultural policy and statistics/food security information systems, and plant production and protection. Animal health was also the most important theme in Viet Nam. Other significant themes were forestry, fisheries and rural development. In Colombia, the field programme focused on the four sectors identified in the CPF, namely food and nutritional security, rural development and family farming, environment and climate change and animal and plant health and safety. In Colombia and Sri Lanka, a large share of the portfolio included emergency and rehabilitation interventions, focused predominantly on providing agricultural assistance to conflict- or flood-affected households.

4.4 *Evaluative assessment of FAO programmes*

Main findings

- FAO's programmes in the four countries were, overall, highly rated for relevance, also based on the assessment of the projects analysed in detail;
- Efficiency has been mixed and not always adequate;
- Effectiveness has varied greatly across the programmes but has generally been adequate;
- On impact, only anecdotal and quite varied evidence was found, partly due to absence of monitoring systems and resources available for the evaluations;
- Sustainability tended also to be quite varied, affected by absence of exit strategies and design shortcomings;
- Mainstreaming of gender equality was poor in all countries, with only few cases of adequate or positive performance;
- Insufficient attention was given in all countries to environmental sustainability as a cross-cutting issue;
- Last, efforts on capacity development were assessed as positive only in Armenia.

60. This section provides a synthesis of the relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, impact and sustainability of FAO's work in the four countries, including contribution to national development goals; the performance with respect to the cross-cutting issues of gender equality, environmental sustainability, and capacity development; and the contributions to FAO's core functions.

4.4.1 *Overall assessment of projects*

61. A major source of evidence in the country evaluations for the performance on each criterion was the detailed analysis of a number of projects in each country and scored them quantitatively against ten evaluation criteria on a six-point scale. Three of the four evaluation teams, namely Armenia, Colombia and Sri Lanka, provided this, and although not all evaluations assessed all criteria, some trends can be seen in Box 9 below.

Box 9. Average assessment of twenty six projects in Armenia, Colombia and Sri Lanka*

Evaluation criteria	Armenia, 5 projects	Colombia, 10 projects	Sri Lanka, 11 projects	Overall average
<i>Relevance</i>	4.6	5.3	5.0	5.0
<i>Design</i>	3.8	4.0	2.9	3.5
<i>Implementation process/efficiency</i>	3.0	3.9	n.a.	3.6

Results/effects	3.0	4.2	3.3	3.6
Effectiveness of capacity development	4.0	n.a.	n.a.	4.0
Effectiveness of partnerships	3.4	4.2	n.a.	3.9
Gender mainstreaming (all criteria)	2.2	2.9	n.a.	2.6
Social inclusion	n.a.	4.3	n.a.	4.3
Sustainability	2.7	3.8	3.5	3.5
Impact (actual or potential)	3.3	4.7	3.5	4.0

*: 1=very poor; 2=poor; 3=inadequate; 4=adequate; 5=good; 6=excellent; n.a.: not available

62. The values in Box 9 broadly confirm the findings stemming from most project evaluations in FAO, with the possible exception of the assessment of the Social inclusion criteria, which tends to be slightly lower over a larger number of evaluations:

- the relevance of FAO's projects to national policies and needs was good on average, with a better performance in Colombia;
- gender mainstreaming was systematically scored as poor;
- Capacity Development and Potential Impact were scored as adequate along with Social inclusion, which was only assessed in Colombia;
- all other criteria scored less than adequate, including project design.

4.4.2 Relevance

63. In Armenia, the field programme appeared to be largely demand-driven and FAO's work in the five sectors evaluated was assessed to be relevant or highly relevant to, and met, national needs and requests. Two major exceptions were noted, related to project designs that did not seem to have taken the context of intervention in due account. Normative products scored positively for relevance, as broadly did TCP projects. However, not all TCP requests were critically assessed for relevance and utility.

64. The Sri Lanka evaluation concluded that the programme was well aligned with government priorities, largely demand driven, and generally in keeping with the UNDAF. However, there was room for improvement in relation to FAO's global goals of food security, poverty reduction and the sustainable use of natural resources. For example, FAO support for the fisheries strategy paid insufficient attention to the sustainable management of fish resources. The relevance of some post-conflict interventions could have been improved had the target populations participated in the design by the participation of the target populations, and better poverty targeting – including more attention to the landless – would have better aligned the programme to FAO's pro-poor mandate. Regional and global projects were, in general, less relevant and more supply-driven than national projects.

65. Projects in the Colombia programme were highly relevant, as were the normative products assessed. FAO's work in food and nutrition security, and in emergency and rehabilitation, were both favourably evaluated for relevance. However, given the scale of the deforestation and climate change challenges, the relevance of environmental projects was assessed as only moderately satisfactory.

66. FAO's programme in Viet Nam was aligned with FAO's corporate goals and strategies and consistent with government policies. Greater emphasis could have been given to food insecurity, poverty and malnutrition, but that aside, it was evaluated as highly relevant overall. However, two challenges to its relevance were identified. First, because of the small scale of its interventions compared to some other agencies, and the similarity of its

approach to others, FAO risked being viewed as neither a unique nor a highly relevant partner. Second, FAO's support to Viet Nam needed to evolve in line with the country's graduation to MIC status. A new vision and direction was considered necessary by the evaluation, if FAO was to remain relevant.

4.4.3 Efficiency

67. In Colombia, the limited real delegation of authority to the office for project approval has led to delays and has adversely affected effectiveness and efficiency. Other agencies had faster response times, leaving FAO at a disadvantage despite being valued for its technical capacity. The evaluation noted a need to speed up and streamline the project approval process and to simplify the requirements for technical approval.

68. The Viet Nam programme was judged to be fairly efficient in terms of support costs and overall implementation efficiency, although some resources could have been better directed given the country's needs and FAO's comparative advantage. Financial and administrative systems were sometimes slow and cumbersome, and resultant delays in responding to requests undermined FAO's credibility. The report came to conclude that 'while FAO's decentralization policies may have strengthened RAP's capacities in the region, they have yet to bring changes to FAO's national-level activities in Viet Nam'.²⁹

69. In Armenia, efficiency had been rather uneven, with both positive and negative examples. Regional projects, in particular on transboundary animal and plant diseases and threats, were better managed than national projects. For the latter, efficiency suffered from 'centralised' management of the field programme by the Regional Office for Europe and Central Asia which had hosted the role of FAO Representative and Budget Holder and did not take timely action, nor delegated sufficiently to the country office. The FAO office had no administrative or operational authority for almost all of the projects and lacked basic access to corporate information systems. The absence of Host Country Agreement that would permit FAO to open an imprest account added to inefficiencies. Overall, greater decentralisation and more pragmatic solutions, as deployed in other countries, would have been more efficient.

70. In contrast, one of the notable successes of the FAO programme in Sri Lanka was the timely delivery of recovery inputs and the efficiencies realised by using government systems and sharing resources with other organisations. However, as in other countries, the combination of a large number of small, short-term projects and cumbersome procedures have contributed to uneven efficiency.

4.4.4 Effectiveness

71. In Sri Lanka FAO projects frequently achieved the stated outputs and targets. However, there was much less evidence that planned outcomes were achieved, particularly those related to a change in practice. Effectiveness was reduced by FAO's limited role in selecting beneficiaries and weak poverty targeting more generally. The evaluation concluded

²⁹ This finding was confirmed by the Evaluation of Regional and Sub-regional Offices for Asia and the Pacific, completed in early 2014: http://www.fao.org/fileadmin/user_upload/oed/docs/Eval%20RAP_2014_ER.zip

that more detailed vulnerability assessments in consultation with the target population would have increased effectiveness.

72. In Armenia the effectiveness of regional and global projects was generally higher than for national projects. Regional and global projects tended to be better designed and implemented. National projects suffered much more from poor implementation which had a negative impact on results. Effectiveness also varied by sector. For example, projects in the animal health and plant protection sectors were generally effective, whereas in the agricultural policy, food standards and forestry sectors, results were more mixed.

73. Overall, project effectiveness in the four sectors assessed in Viet Nam was adequate to good. As in the case of Sri Lanka, some projects – such as the regional programmes in fisheries and livelihoods and in food safety – tended to achieve outputs rather than outcomes due to design issues. Other projects, such as emergency and capacity support for rice production in northern mountainous provinces, increased crop yields and were much more effective. FAO also made a very effective contribution to avian influenza preparedness and response.

74. Analysis of a selection of field projects in Colombia found that the majority had achieved the results expected. Partners and counterparts have highly rated FAO's performance and valued the technical assistance provided. In particular, FAO's model of intervention in emergencies has proved to be effective in increasing the production of food and in rehabilitating livelihoods.

4.4.5 Impact

75. The difficulty of assessing impact within the time and resources available for these evaluations, and the limited impact data available, have already been mentioned. In this respect, the impact evaluation of FAO's support to the implementation of the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries in Sri Lanka, which was an analysis of *FAO's contribution* to the decisions made and programmes implemented by the sovereign Government of the Republic of Sri Lanka, showed how complex is the assessment of impact of a global regulatory framework issued through FAO. Thus, evidence available to the evaluations was usually of potential impact; in addition, the coverage and treatment of impact also varied across the four evaluations. It is worth mentioning that most findings below resonate with similar findings from a number of other evaluations, of projects or work at country level, and do not seem to be limited to MICs.

76. The Viet Nam evaluation noted that existing monitoring systems did not adequately capture outcome and impacts, which made any overall assessment difficult. Examples nevertheless were found where positive impacts could be reasonably attributed to FAO's work, as in the rural development portfolio where crop yields had increased and incomes were higher. The impact of the work in the forestry sector was also judged to be moderately satisfactory. In other cases, such as the animal health sector, significant outcomes and contributions were reported.

77. The absence of expected or significant impact was also evident in a number of cases. In the fisheries sector, for example, longer-term impacts from a capacity building project have been modest: expected improvements in food safety and environmental sustainability did not materialise. Another fisheries project was unable to make significant advances in

developing alternative livelihoods for poor coastal communities. Most of the rural development projects were field-orientated and therefore had little impact on policy design or institutional strengthening. The influence of FAO's normative products was mixed. These were often not well known, not shared with partners or used in projects, and have had no major impact. The three TCP projects for which outcomes were reported met government needs but could only make very finite contributions due to their small size and short duration.

78. The evaluation team for Armenia acknowledged that the impacts of institutional collaboration and capacity building projects were difficult to measure. There was some evidence of uptake, albeit at different speeds, and of changed practices and attitudes. Significant impacts were observed on agricultural policy making, and for livestock owners in rural communities. However, impact was limited in the forestry sector and from normative work in general. In the case of knowledge products, poor dissemination and publication in English only led to lower levels of uptake and impact.³⁰ More generally, the evaluation concluded that FAO may have missed some opportunities to enhance the impact of its interventions by better collaboration and coordination with other partners.

79. The Colombia evaluation contained little information on impacts and in most cases impact was described as, limited or potential or dependent on other factors. One hampering factor for some projects was the lack of coordination with other organisations that could complement and support FAO-supported initiatives, e.g. in water, sanitation and health.

80. The Sri Lanka programme made a significant contribution to food production and asset replacement following the civil war and natural disasters. It contributed to improved agricultural production in the North and East of the country and, through its support for diversified farming, to increased production of staple and non-staple crops. Greater attention to targeting women and other vulnerable groups, and to agricultural marketing, would have increased these contributions. Overall, however, the evaluators concluded that FAO had limited impact on food and nutrition security and poverty reduction in Sri Lanka, as well as on policy influence and the capacity of institutions.

81. More positively, in the area of fisheries, actions implemented by FAO in Sri Lanka have contributed to promoting and implementing responsible fisheries at the district level in Sri Lanka and in turn, actions and activities implemented by district level stakeholders have also contributed to and continue to promote and implement, responsible fisheries at the district level in the country.

4.4.6 Sustainability

82. The performance of the four country programmes with regard to sustainability was mixed. There were some good examples of sustainable interventions, namely work on seed varieties and dairy genetics in Sri Lanka and food safety in Colombia. However, there were probably more examples where sustainability was not assured: in Armenia, few potentially positive examples of sustainable interventions were identified; in Sri Lanka, it was assessed as mixed, only adequate in Viet Nam and limitations were found in Colombia.

³⁰ A Trust Fund financed by the Russian Federation specifically aimed at translating FAO documents into Russian.

83. The evaluations identified two common reasons for this. First, very few projects in any of the four countries had any sort of exit strategy. The second common reason was the weakness of the counterpart institutions. In some cases there was concern that the government did not have the necessary financial resources to maintain the initiative, for example for the food safety laboratories in Armenia. But more generally sustainability was at risk because of weak institutions and/or dependence on coordination among institutions. As the Viet Nam evaluation observed, greater attention should have been given to ensuring and strengthening the capacity of institutions in planning and managing follow-up and coordination. A key feature of too many projects was that the necessary institutional capacity was assumed rather than planned for.

84. A variety of other reasons for a lack of sustainability were identified. The evaluation in Sri Lanka concluded that greater beneficiary participation, although challenging in some emergency situations, was important for sustainable results. Design shortcomings were responsible for weak sustainability in Viet Nam. This evaluation also observed that the challenges to sustainability were greatest in more complex and joint programmes, or where markets were involved. Greater attention to sustainability is warranted at design and during implementation for these types of programmes.

4.4.7 Cross-cutting issues

85. This section examines country programme performance in respect of three cross-cutting issues: gender quality, environmental sustainability, and capacity development.³¹

Gender equality

86. Performance in relation to gender equality and gender mainstreaming was poor in all four country programmes. In Sri Lanka it was described as extremely weak and devoid of accountability. There was little evidence of any serious implementation of this FAO priority; few signs of leadership commitment in the FAO country office or support from headquarters and RAP; no reference to the use of FAO normative products on gender; and no strong partnerships with government or Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) in pursuit of gender equality. Only 15 out of 60 projects reviewed had some element of gender mainstreaming in their design, and no project had all the features of good gender equality practice. By and large, FAO failed to identify women's differential needs and its effectiveness at targeting women was poor.

87. The picture in Armenia was similar. The programme as a whole, and the normative products reviewed, scored 'poor' for gender equality and social inclusion. A small number of good examples of integration of gender equality perspective were identified, but in all other projects there was no attention to gender issues in design and implementation. According to the evaluation report, FAO staff in the country did not consider gender equality to be a theme that fell within the mandate of the Organisation. Overall, FAO initiatives did not contribute to improving gender equality and to the country's efforts to achieve MDG3.

³¹ Both gender equality and environmental sustainability are UN country programming principles. The former has been integrated in FAO's policies for decades, although the corporate policy on gender equality was approved in early 2012; environmental sustainability has become integral part of FAO's project elements in late 2013. This partly explains the poor performance at country level described in this section.

88. The Viet Nam evaluation also reported inadequate gender mainstreaming, particularly in the rural development and climate change adaptation themes. The gender dimension was not significantly considered in the design and implementation of field projects. While some gains were identified from gender training, and some steps have been taken more recently by the FAO Representation to mainstream gender, converting these into better practice has not been easy.

89. The inclusion of gender equality was uneven, and in most cases limited, in the Colombia programme. Although 60% of projects reviewed included some elements related to gender equality, integration in practice was limited. The FAO Representation had not appointed anyone to lead on this issue, which may partly explain the limited knowledge of FAO policies on gender and the weak implementation of FAO's guidelines and tools.

Environmental sustainability

90. Environmental sustainability has not been a major or particularly successful theme in any of the country programmes. It was also only covered as a cross-cutting theme in two of the four evaluations. The Armenia evaluation noted that some projects had contributed to MDG7 to some extent, but that there had been a number of missed opportunities in terms of advocacy, synergies and collaboration with other institutions and civil society organisations. The Viet Nam evaluation made a similar point with respect to the fisheries sector. While two fisheries projects had aimed to reduce unsustainable fishing, FAO's efforts did not match the severity of the environmental challenges in both capture fisheries and aquaculture. The evaluation concluded that FAO might have addressed these challenges in a more fundamental way had there been greater fisheries sector expertise in the country office.

91. The Colombia field programme included numerous environment and climate change field projects, but these have not been cross-cutting themes throughout the various projects. As in the case of Armenia and Viet Nam, opportunities were missed to use FAO's international expertise and status to engage with environmental policies.

92. Similarly, insufficient attention was given to environmental issues in the Sri Lanka programme. No rigorous system was in place to assess the potential environmental impacts of its projects prior to implementation, and only secondary attention was given to environmental concerns during the design of projects. This was partly due to the emergency and short-term nature of many of the projects, pressure to implement quickly, and the environmental attitudes of FAO's partners.

Capacity development

93. Only one of the four evaluations rated FAO positively for capacity development. The Armenia evaluation concluded that capacity development was adequate or good in most projects, and virtually all initiatives had contributed to developing individual and institutional capacities. The evidence of uptake and of changed practices and attitudes among national staff was a very positive result of the programme.

94. The other three evaluations were more critical. The Sri Lanka evaluation concluded that, some noteworthy successes aside, there was little evidence of sustainable organisational and institutional change, in part because of an over-reliance on short-term training and technical assistance. With a few exceptions, FAO failed to carry out adequate organisational

assessments as part of the design process. The lesson drawn was that short timeframes and a reliance on training had usually been insufficient for strengthening organisational capacity.

95. The Viet Nam evaluation reached a similar conclusion. While technical training featured heavily in projects, there was scant evidence of its effectiveness. A systematic approach to developing capacity was missing from FAO's work. This links to the finding that capacity development was not a goal that FAO projects have treated with much seriousness, and to the earlier observation that institutional capacity tended to be assumed rather than planned for. The Colombia evaluation concluded that although some 'exceptional cases' existed of full appropriation of methodologies by the national institutions, FAO had overall made a limited contribution to capacity development.

4.5 Contribution to FAO's core functions

Main findings

- FAO's contributions to policy making in the four countries was limited; when FAO had been well regarded in terms of quality of inputs, poor follow-up at the adequate strategic level was the main hindering factor; similar findings were recorded for work in advocacy;
- FAO's role in providing technical assistance was highly valued in all countries, although working procedures undermined at times the timeliness of responding to requests for it;
- On partnerships and alliances, all evaluations found existing good relations with partners, although too few of these and limited in scope and action.

96. The evaluation of the Armenia programme was the only one that explicitly assessed the contributions to all of FAO's core functions. However, information on some of the core functions was contained in the other evaluations. This section therefore provides an assessment on the four core functions for which there is sufficient information and evidence: policy and strategy options and advice; technical support to promote technology transfer; partnerships and alliances; and advocacy and communication.

Policy and strategy options and advice

97. Three of the four evaluations found that there was room to improve FAO's contribution to policy and strategy. The Armenia evaluation was generally positive about FAO's contribution to agricultural policy. FAO has been an important source of knowledge on agricultural policies and strategies – and on food safety and quality - and a useful facilitator of regional policy initiatives. However, despite extensive appreciation of the quality of agricultural policy support, adoption and follow up by government has been rather uneven. One reason for this has been the limited presence of the FAO Representative in the country, which affected the dialogue with senior government staff on a number of policy issues and consequent advocacy in support of the uptake of some project results.

98. As in the case of Armenia, the main reason for the lack of policy engagement in Viet Nam has been the lack of advanced expertise for policy analysis, elaboration and dialogue in the sectors that were assessed in depth. The lack of a strategic, rather than primarily demand-led, approach also contributed. In the rural development sector, FAO's programme was described as the product of a coincidence of needs within Viet Nam and the availability of short-term experts in FAO. This did not produce a strategic programme, nor did it allow for the continuous high-level contact required for policy dialogue, and increasingly wanted by government. The story was the same in other sectors. FAO's support for forest policy was

relevant, technically strong, but did not significantly influence policy. FAO has a strong comparative advantage in climate change adaptation, but opportunities to engage with government partners were missed.

99. In Sri Lanka the evaluation concluded that FAO had opportunities to engage, thanks to its strong working relationships with line ministries, but these were not taken and overall, the Organization had relatively little policy influence. Once again, the structure of the programme, largely emergency and recovery field projects, and the office staffing to support such a programme was not conducive to upstream policy work. As Sri Lanka's needs shift from the delivery of household recovery assistance to policy, strategy and capacity development, so the skill-mix in the country office would need to be restructured to meet these.

100. The Colombia experience had parallels with the other three country programmes: the lack of an effective FAO Representative for much of the period being evaluated, and a programme that was more field-orientated than strategy- and policy-focused. Over the period evaluated these resulted in FAO losing credibility as a partner for, and having limited impact on, public policy.

101. The common weakness that emerged from the four evaluations was a generalized low attention in FAO's work to influencing policy making at the national level. This was observed of policy development projects that came to an end and did not benefit of any follow-up by FAO, as much as in terms of missed opportunities to engage in longer-term policy dialogue on relevant issues. This should typically be one of the main tasks of the FAO Representative, with adequate support from the rest of the Organization as required.

Technical support to promote technology transfer

102. The Armenia evaluation concluded that the great majority of FAO interventions had contributed to this core function. In most of the projects evaluated FAO had responded in a timely manner with high quality technical support. There was wide recognition of the technical excellence of FAO's inputs on animal health. The findings in Sri Lanka were similar: much of FAO's technical assistance, particularly in agriculture and fisheries, brought timely and relevant information that helped resolve urgent problems or prepared for future shocks. In Colombia partners and counterparts highly valued the technical assistance provided.

103. Two criticisms were made of technical assistance. The first, in Colombia, was that the approval of projects was sometimes slow. Although valued for its technical capacity, FAO was sometimes at a disadvantage compared to other agencies with faster response times. The second, in Viet Nam, was that technical assistance projects in the rural development sector sought to solve specific identified problems within sub-sectors or small geographical areas. They were not strategically determined or guided by a sector-wide theory of change.

Partnerships and alliances

104. The overall conclusion of the evaluations was that FAO generally had good relationships with its partners, but that the range of partners was too limited. Many missed opportunities were identified.

105. On average, the national and regional projects reviewed by the Armenia evaluation were rated as mid-way between adequate and inadequate. FAO is facilitating some useful partnerships among national and regional institutions. However, it may have missed opportunities in terms of partnerships and synergies with other partners in the food safety and quality sub-sector. More partners could also have been involved in the formulation of the CPF in order to broaden the analysis and the diversity of perspectives. The evaluation concluded that the process was not inclusive enough, and represented a missed opportunity for developing stronger partnerships at the technical level.

106. Missed opportunities were also identified by the Viet Nam evaluation. Outside collaboration with several other UN agencies under the DaO, FAO might have sought to work more with these and other organisations of a variety of other issues in other partnerships. FAO did not participate in numerous policy and advocacy working groups where it could have contributed valuable technical knowledge. It could have engaged more actively than it did with both the international NGO community and with the private sector.

107. In Sri Lanka, some of FAO's post-conflict partnerships with government were compromised by weak capacity and high staff turnover, and by FAO's inability to influence project designs, select beneficiaries, or effectively monitor implementation. There were however relatively few successful partnerships with the private sector, and more recently FAO had developed links with NGOs and community based organisations.

108. These and other evaluations have indicated that the lack of staff in country offices, and therefore lack of time were major factors affecting partnerships development. There is some truth in this, also because partnership development can result in high transaction costs. Nevertheless, this type of activity should be factored in as part of a medium- to long-term strategy to achieve more visibility and develop alternative entry-points for both policy and programme development.

Advocacy and communication

109. Policy and advocacy are often linked. It is therefore unsurprising that the evaluation findings on advocacy and communication are similar to those for policy. All the evaluations reported unfavourably on FAO's contribution in this area.

110. In Armenia the lack of a resident Representative hampered any efforts to support collaboration and coordination in the forestry sector, let alone any advocacy. FAO was not very active in discussion fora on agriculture and rural development; did not play any advocacy role in support of the global goals of reducing food insecurity and poverty; and was not seen as an advocate outside the Ministry of Agriculture. Limited advocacy efforts directly contributed to the limited impact on agricultural policy. Also the Sri Lanka and Colombia evaluations commented on FAO's limited advocacy role and effectiveness.

111. In general, the technical quality and relevance of FAO's publications was widely recognised and appreciated and a key role of FAO was to bring this knowledge to the countries where it works. However, in neither Sri Lanka nor Colombia was there much evidence that FAO had invested significantly in advocacy, nor had it effectively disseminated its normative products.

112. FAO's core function of advocacy and communication was not carried out to a substantial extent in Viet Nam. In none of the four sectors examined was FAO found to have

carried out any real advocacy orientated to government or any other audience. This was despite the large number of significant policy issues with which FAO could have engaged - the effect of climate change on agriculture; urbanisation; water resources management; unsustainable fisheries; biodiversity loss; and environmental pollution affecting the food chain – and despite the receptiveness of some in government to a more active role by FAO. In the opinion of the evaluators, this lack of initiative stemmed from a strong belief within the Organisation that it should only act in response to specific requests from the government. Such a conservative stance may be undermining FAO's credibility and effectiveness.

5 Recommendations and Management Responses

5.1 Recommendations in the four country evaluations

113. Despite the diversity of the countries and programmes evaluated, there was a high degree of commonality in the recommendations. Also, with the exception of Armenia, the evaluations made clear or explicit reference to the middle-income status as a key factor that should inform FAO's future work in these countries.³²

114. The first common recommendation was that in the four countries, FAO's work needed to become more strategic, more focused, and less of a reactive agglomeration of responses to almost any kind of government requests. Specifically, CPFs needed to be strategic, prioritised and coherent; aligned with FAO's global comparative advantage; and involve a greater range of stakeholders in their design and monitoring.

115. The second and related common recommendation was that FAO needed to shift upstream and engage more with a small number of priority policy and strategy themes, and less with a large number of small field projects. FAO needed to engage more with policy advocacy networks, more with other agencies and actors working in the same policy areas, and ensure more use of the normative products for which it has a global reputation.

116. Following from this, a third common recommendation was that FAO's country offices needed to be staffed with the seniority and calibre of staff that could engage at a high-level on policy and strategy issues with government and other partners, as well as on priority cross-cutting issues such as gender equality and environmental sustainability. This means having an appropriately skilled Representative in post or, in the case of Armenia, an appropriately skilled non-resident Representative with sufficient time in country. In most cases it would also mean a smaller and more skilled country office with greater decentralised authority.

117. Last, a common recommendation in Colombia and Sri Lanka evaluations concerned the integration of gender equality perspective in FAO's work at country level, as all evaluations had assessed performance as poor on this cross-cutting issue. The Viet Nam evaluation referred to gender mainstreaming among 'needed improvements discussed in other evaluations'. In Armenia, the team did not include any specific recommendation or reference, as the issue was raised in the parallel broader evaluation of FAO's Regional and Sub-regional Offices for Europe and Central Asia.

³² See Annex 3, Recommendations of four evaluations of FAO's cooperation with MICs.

5.2 Management Responses

118. At the time of finalizing this report, all Management Responses had been received, although for Colombia only in draft format; also, the three due Follow-up reports had been issued in final version.

119. All recommendations formulated in three evaluation reports were accepted, with three out of nine were Partly accepted in Viet Nam. The Follow-up reports stated that most recommendations in Armenia and Sri Lanka had been implemented to a satisfactory or good degree, whereas Viet Nam had not made as much progress as initially planned. In the three countries, best progress was reported on CPF formulation and measures for improving country offices' staff capacity and skill-mix. Insofar focus on more upstream policies was concerned, no strong evidence of progress was provided. Some progress was however reported in relation to gender mainstreaming.

120. An important element to keep in mind is that one year is a relatively short time to radically modify the way an organization like FAO works in any given country, unless there is a dramatic change in policies and presence at country level. In Sri Lanka and Viet Nam, the incumbent FAO Representatives at the time of writing this report had been appointed after the evaluations and the respective Management Responses had been completed; in Armenia, he was appointed while the evaluation as being completed. The three new heads of office focused on those actions that looked most urgent and that would have a broader impact on the whole programme, namely CPF and office staffing. These were eminently reasonable decisions.

121. The Follow-up Reports, on the other hand, indicate slower, if any at all, progress in the implementation of recommendations that involved action from the regional or headquarters levels. Although it is well understood that the last year and a half all regional offices and units in headquarters have been overly busy with the transformational changes, the information available raises some concerns about accountability on commitments taken in Management Responses to evaluations.

6 Conclusions and recommendations from the synthesis of four country evaluations

122. FAO's work in the four evaluated MICs had a number of strengths according to the evaluations. First, projects and programmes were generally judged to be relevant, well aligned with government priorities, largely demand-driven, and appreciated by government partners. Projects were generally effective in terms of delivering on the outputs planned. Second, FAO was valued as a partner for the technical capacity it provided and for the technical quality of its normative products.

123. There were also notable achievements in individual countries. These included the significant contribution to food production and asset replacement following civil conflict and natural disasters in Sri Lanka; the effective fostering of collaboration and knowledge sharing between national institutions by the global and regional projects involving Armenia; and the very effective and relevant models for addressing the needs of vulnerable communities developed in Colombia.

124. Programme management and administrative strengths identified in the evaluations included the good relationships made and maintained with development partners, albeit too few, and the commitment and competence of FAO national staff.

125. There were also a number of recurrent weaknesses. In three of the countries, for some or all of the period evaluated, programme development and management suffered from the lack of high quality Representative, and/or sufficiently competent staff in-country, further compounded by uneven backstopping and support from regional offices and headquarters. Also, insufficient delegation to the country offices affected efficiency of operations: on this specific matter, evidence from Colombia and other countries showed that the introduction in 2013 of the Global Resource Management System (GRMS) represented a significant improvement on administrative matters.

126. At the programmatic level, policy influence, policy dialogue and advocacy were widely assessed as limited, as was capacity development at institutional and organisational level in three of the four country programmes evaluated. The integration of gender equality was universally poor. Sustainability and efficiency were mixed and not always adequate. All the CPF's were weak on analysis, strategy and prioritisation and to a large extent, in inclusiveness of other partners in the preparation process. The contribution to FAO's global goals of poverty and hunger reduction, or to environmental sustainability, was limited.

127. The analysis of overall FAO's presence in MICs showed that so far, the Organization did not modify the standard business model of country offices to the changed circumstances and expectations of the national governments. In the four countries, following FAO's business model at country level, financial resources made available through the Regular Programme only covered the core staff of the FAO Representation. Additional resources were made available, to different extent, by the host countries and the field programme portfolios did change only to some extent, mostly due to the potential for resource mobilization with resource partners and national governments in MICs.

128. In this model, the large majority of employees was recruited through extra-budgetary resources directly as project personnel, or indirectly through the Administrative and Operational Support (AOS) share of the Project Support Costs. The need for extra-budgetary resources and AOS to 'be visible' has led to FAO's engagement in too many projects funded by the governments, other partners or FAO itself, where the field-level operational components prevailed over the technical and policy assistance, and in which the added value and comparative advantage of the Organization was not strong.

129. If the approach appears justified, in particular in MICs, in practice this is leading to a project-focused type of support to 'earn visibility' which may not enable the Organization to express its full potential and best comparative advantage in countries that have their own implementation capacity and would mostly benefit from high level policy and technical knowledge. At the same time, in countries where the field programme portfolio is smaller or national staff costs are high, financial resources available are not sufficient to enhance staff capacity.

130. The common thread to the recommendations of the four evaluations indicates what the issues at stake and the obstacles are. There are reasons and incentives that explain why the country offices and programmes are structured as they are. Responding to government requests or donor priorities ensures relevance and visibility, but not necessarily strategic

impact, while entering into policy dialogue and providing high-level advice on strategic priorities is more demanding. Advocating for different policies is less neutral and can be more controversial. Consultants of international renown are more expensive.

131. Nevertheless, a final important finding of the four evaluations was that the national institutional and cooperation context in all the four countries was changing, and that FAO needed to adapt to meet that change. Moreover, the four countries belong to a group of peers that in 2013, according to the World Bank classification based on per-capita income, included 101 among FAO Members and recipients of the Organization's support: 53 of them were in the category of UMICs and 48 in the category of LMICs. In total, this represented almost three times the number of the LIC Members, which were 36 in the same year.

132. In line with their middle-income status, these countries are likely to need more normative, policy, organisational and capacity development support from FAO in future than the Organization is offering now. At the same time, the field-level projects are still necessary as they are a key part in the knowledge generation process and they also contribute to institutional visibility and credibility, if well designed and implemented and their results are properly documented and diffused. The two types of support should be considered complementary and used to develop synergies, meet requests and needs while proposing innovations and capacity development.

133. The trends in expectations indicate the need for a presence in the country at the level of authority, competence and clout that allows rapid response to queries and requests for assistance, either directly or by calling upon – and obtaining – inputs from elsewhere in the Organization. The point is not having additional long-term international staff posted in all 101 middle-income countries; rather, it is about maintaining - or re-building - capacity at sub-regional, regional and headquarters level of technical staff who can support countries from a distance and can be mobilized at relatively short notice, virtually or in person, directly or through networks of consultants.

134. These changes are happening at a time when the combination of declining donor aid flows to MICs and evolving country demands does present a challenge to FAO, as much as to many other organisations. MICs are increasingly skilled, discerning, and demanding. FAO needs to be equipped in country to provide what these countries need, and financed to be able to meet the costs of doing so. A starting point has to be the recognition that the financial resources, from either the FAO Regular budget or extra-budgetary, will not be sufficient to cover the cost of the type of in-country presence that MICs increasingly require. Other organisations, UN and others, face a similar dilemma. One solution could be a single country office and a common country strategy for all the UN food agencies, agreed with the governments, focused on their priorities and building on respective agencies' comparative advantage. Another alternative could be, on the model of FAO's coverage in Eastern Europe and the Pacific, to appoint non-resident Representatives for MICs where a fully-fledged Representation may no longer be necessary, while ensuring regular interaction with and support from the responsible Sub-regional or Regional Office.

135. All these issues point to the need for a specific business model that includes profile of FAO Representative, delegation of authority, capacity to call upon rapid support from other parts of the Organization and national Resource Mobilization strategies that evolve with the rapidly changing financial resource environment, among others. The numbers of FAO Members that would benefit of a better tailored business model are such that a specific FAO

strategy in Middle Income Countries appears fully justified. Not having it, and maintaining Business As Usual, means that it will not be feasible for the Organization to become more upstream, more strategic, more proactive, and more policy and advocacy orientated. In other words, becoming irrelevant and not useful.

136. In the light of the above, this synthesis contains only one recommendation addressed to Senior Management, for the development of a strategic approach to the work of the Organization in MICs.

Recommendation 1. To FAO Senior Management, on a strategy for the Organization's approach in Middle Income Countries

FAO should develop an overarching strategy for its cooperation with Middle Income Countries, aimed at improving the delivery of the Organization's core functions and the fulfilment of its mandate. The strategy should:

- i) provide guidance and reference on the main focus, scope and modalities of corporate support, and
- ii) define a new business model for its country offices and the corporate network that supports them.

137. This report provides some initial information and analysis on the issues to be included in the strategy. FAO Representatives and staff in middle-income Member countries would be able to provide richer inputs, based on their knowledge and experience, for a detailed strategy development.

Annex 1. Evaluation timing and CPF cycles in Armenia, Colombia, Sri Lanka and Viet Nam

Country	Evaluation completed	Period evaluated	CPF completed	CPF cycle
<i>Sri Lanka</i>	Oct 2012	2006-2012	Dec 2012	2012-2017
<i>Viet Nam</i>	May 2013	2006-2012	Jun 2013	2012-2016
<i>Armenia</i>	Feb 2013	2004-2012	Jan 2012	2012-2015
<i>Colombia</i>	June 2014	2009-2013	Nov 2012	2012-2014

Annex 2. List and key indicators of FAO Members classified as Middle Income Countries in 2004/05 and 2012/13

Country	MIC Group	FAO Region	Income level (WB 2004)	Income level (WB 2013)	HDI 2013 ranking*	FAO Presence
Albania	B	REU	LMC	UMC	HHDI	NC
Algeria	B	RNE	LMC	UMC	HHDI	FAOR
Angola	A	RAF	LIC	UMC	LHDI	FAOR
Argentina	C	RLC	UMC	UMC	VHHDI	FAOR
Armenia	C	REU	LMC	LMC	HHDI	AFAOR
Azerbaijan	A	REU	LIC	UMC	HHDI	AFAOR
Belarus	B	REU	LMC	UMC	HHDI	NC
Belize	C	RLC	UMC	UMC	HHDI	Multiple Accreditation
Bhutan	A	RAP	LIC	LMC	MHDI	AFAOR
Bolivia	C	RLC	LMC	LMC	MHDI	FAOR
Bosnia & Herzegovina	B	REU	LMC	UMC	HHDI	NC
Botswana	C	RAF	UMC	UMC	MHDI	AFAOR
Brazil	B	RLC	LMC	UMC	HHDI	FAOR
Bulgaria	B	REU	LMC	UMC	HHDI	n/a
Cameroon	A	RAF	LIC	LMC	LHDI	FAOR
Cape Verde	C	RAF	LMC	LMC	MHDI	FAOR
Chile	D	RLC	UMC	HIC	VHHDI	RO
China	B	RAP	LMC	UMC	HHDI	FAOR
Colombia	B	RLC	LMC	UMC	HHDI	FAOR
Congo, Rep.	A	RAF	LIC	LMC	LHDI	FAOR
Costa Rica	C	RLC	UMC	UMC	HHDI	FAOR
Côte d'Ivoire	A	RAF	LIC	LMC	LHDI	FAOR
Croatia	D	REU	UMC	HIC	VHHDI	n/a
Cuba	B	RLC	LMC	UMC	VHHDI	FAOR
Czech Rep.	D	REU	UMC	HIC	VHHDI	n/a
Djibouti	C	RNE	LMC	LMC	LHDI	FAOR
Dominica	C	RLC	UMC	UMC	HHDI	Multiple Accreditation
Dominican Rep.	B	RLC	LMC	UMC	HHDI	FAOR
Ecuador	B	RLC	LMC	UMC	HHDI	FAOR
Egypt, Arab Rep.	C	RNE	LMC	LMC	MHDI	RO
El Salvador	C	RLC	LMC	LMC	MHDI	FAOR
Estonia	D	REU	UMC	HIC	VHHDI	n/a
Fiji	B	RAP	LMC	UMC	HHDI	AFAOR
Gabon	C	RAF	UMC	UMC	MHDI	SRO
Georgia	A	REU	LIC	LMC	HHDI	AFAOR
Ghana	A	RAF	LIC	LMC	MHDI	RO
Grenada	C	RLC	UMC	UMC	HHDI	Multiple Accreditation
Guatemala	C	RLC	LMC	LMC	MHDI	FAOR
Guyana	C	RLC	LMC	LMC	MHDI	FAOR

Country	MIC Group	FAO Region	Income level (WB 2004)	Income level (WB 2013)	HDI 2013 ranking*	FAO Presence
Honduras	C	RLC	LMC	LMC	MHDI	FAOR
Hungary	C	REU	UMC	UMC	VHHDI	RO
India	A	RAP	LIC	LMC	MHDI	FAOR
Indonesia	A	RAP	LIC	LMC	MHDI	FAOR
Iran, Islamic Rep.	B	RNE	LMC	UMC	HHDI	FAOR
Iraq	B	RNE	LMC	UMC	MHDI	FAOR
Jamaica	B	RLC	LMC	UMC	HHDI	FAOR
Jordan	B	RNE	LMC	UMC	HHDI	FAOR
Kazakhstan	B	REU	LMC	UMC	HHDI	n/a
Kiribati	C	RAP	LMC	LMC	MHDI	NC
Kosovo	C	REU	n/a	LMC	n/a	n/a
Lao, PDR	A	RAP	LIC	LMC	MHDI	FAOR
Latvia	D	REU	UMC	HIC	VHHDI	n/a
Lebanon	C	RNE	UMC	UMC	HHDI	FAOR
Lesotho	A	RAF	LIC	LMC	LHDI	FAOR
Libya	C	RNE	UMC	UMC	HHDI	FAOR
Lithuania	D	REU	UMC	HIC	VHHDI	n/a
Macedonia, FYR	B	REU	LMC	UMC	HHDI	NC
Malaysia	C	RAP	UMC	UMC	HHDI	n/a
Maldives	B	RAP	LMC	UMC	MHDI	Multiple Accreditation
Marshall Islands	B	RAP	LMC	UMC	n/a	NC
Mauritania	A	RNE	LIC	LMC	LHDI	FAOR
Mauritius	C	RAF	UMC	UMC	HHDI	Multiple Accreditation
Mexico	C	RLC	UMC	UMC	HHDI	FAOR
Micronesia, Fed. Sts.	C	RAP	LMC	LMC	MHDI	NC
Moldova	A	REU	LIC	LMC	MHDI	AFAOR
Mongolia	A	RAP	LIC	LMC	MHDI	Multiple Accreditation
Morocco	C	RNE	LMC	LMC	MHDI	FAOR
Namibia	B	RAF	LMC	UMC	MHDI	FAOR
Nicaragua	A	RLC	LIC	LMC	MHDI	FAOR
Nigeria	A	RAF	LIC	LMC	LHDI	FAOR
Oman	D	RNE	UMC	HIC	HHDI	SRO
Pakistan	A	RAP	LIC	LMC	LHDI	FAOR
Palau	C	RAP	UMC	UMC	HHDI	NC
Panama	C	RLC	UMC	UMC	HHDI	SRO
Papua New Guinea	A	RAP	LIC	LMC	LHDI	Programme officer
Paraguay	C	RLC	LMC	LMC	MHDI	FAOR
Peru	B	RLC	LMC	UMC	HHDI	FAOR
Philippines	C	RAP	LMC	LMC	MHDI	FAOR
Poland	D	REU	UMC	HIC	VHHDI	n/a
Romania	B	REU	LMC	UMC	HHDI	n/a
Russian Fed.	D	REU	LMC	HIC	HHDI	n/a

Country	MIC Group	FAO Region	Income level (WB 2004)	Income level (WB 2013)	HDI 2013 ranking*	FAO Presence
Saint Kitts & Nevis	D	RLC	UMC	HIC	HHDI	Multiple Accreditation
Saint Lucia	C	RLC	UMC	UMC	HHDI	Multiple Accreditation
Saint. Vincent & Grenadines	B	RLC	LMC	UMC	HHDI	Multiple Accreditation
Samoa	C	RAP	LMC	LMC	MHDI	SRO
São Tomé and Príncipe	A	RAF	LIC	LMC	MHDI	Multiple Accreditation
Saudi Arabia	D	RNE	UMC	HIC	VHHDI	n/a
Senegal	A	RAF	LIC	LMC	LHDI	FAOR
Serbia & Montenegro	B	REU	LMC	UMC	HHDI	NC
Seychelles	C	RAF	UMC	UMC	HHDI	Multiple Accreditation
Slovak Rep.	D	REU	UMC	HIC	VHHDI	n/a
Solomon Islands	A	RAP	LIC	LMC	LHDI	AFAOR
South Africa	B	RAF	LMC	UMC	MHDI	FAOR
Sri Lanka	C	RAP	LMC	LMC	HHDI	FAOR
Sudan	A	RNE	LIC	LMC	LHDI	FAOR
Suriname	B	RLC	LMC	UMC	HHDI	Multiple Accreditation
Swaziland	C	RAF	LMC	LMC	LHDI	AFAOR
Syrian Arab Rep.	C	RNE	LMC	LMC	MHDI	FAOR
Thailand	B	RAP	LMC	UMC	HHDI	RO
Timor-Leste	A	RAP	LIC	LMC	MHDI	AFAOR
Tonga	B	RAP	LMC	UMC	HHDI	AFAOR
Trinidad & Tobago	D	RLC	UMC	HIC	HHDI	FAOR
Tunisia	B	RNE	LMC	UMC	HHDI	SRO
Turkey	B	REU	LMC	UMC	HHDI	SRO
Turkmenistan	B	REU	LMC	UMC	MHDI	n/a
Tuvalu	C	RAP	n/a	UMC	n/a	NC
Ukraine	C	REU	LMC	LMC	HHDI	n/a
Uruguay	D	RLC	UMC	HIC	HHDI	FAOR
Uzbekistan	A	REU	LIC	LMC	MHDI	NC
Vanuatu	C	RAP	LMC	LMC	MHDI	AFAOR
Venezuela, RB	C	RLC	UMC	UMC	HHDI	FAOR
Vietnam	A	RAP	LIC	LMC	MHDI	FAOR
West Bank & Gaza	C	RNE	LMC	LMC	n/a	ERCU
Yemen, Rep.	A	RNE	LIC	LMC	LHDI	FAOR
Zambia	A	RAF	LIC	LMC	MHDI	FAOR

*: VHHDI: Very High Human Development; HHDI: High Human Development; MHDI: Medium Human Development; LHDI: Low Human Development

Annex 3. Recommendations of the evaluations of FAO's cooperation with Armenia, Colombia, Sri Lanka and Viet Nam

The table below contains all recommendations formulated by each of the four country evaluations, whether they were accepted, fully or partly, and the self-assessment called Management Action Record, by the FAO Representations of the progress made by FAO in implementing the actions they committed to in the Management Responses, against a six-point scale.

Addressee of the recommendation	Recommendations	Recommendation Accepted, Partially Accepted, Rejected	Comments on implementation of actions planned in the Management Response	MAR score (see below) ³³	Impact (changes) of actions taken in terms of programme, policies and/or procedures
Armenia					
<i>R.1 - To the Government of Armenia and FAO, on the status of the organization</i>	The Republic of Armenia and FAO should urgently act for the Organization to become a fully-accredited specialized agency of the UN in Armenia, to allow smoother and more efficient performance of the Organization in the country.	Accepted	Follow-up actions were taken regarding the current FAO status in the country which depends on the ratification of the Convention on Privileges and Immunities of the Specialized Agencies in the absence of a Host Country Agreement with the Government. As soon as the Convention is ratified, FAO as a specialized agency will be granted respective privileges and immunities although this is unlikely to happen soon due to issues beyond FAO's control as per exchange with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in this regard. Therefore parallel to this, relevant actions have been taken to sign an Agreement between Armenia and FAO to shorten the approval process of new projects - this draft Agreement, prepared by the	3	

³³ **1 - None:** no action was taken to implement the recommendation; **2 - Poor:** plan and actions for implementation of the recommendation are at a very preliminary stage; **3 - Inadequate:** implementation of the recommendation is uneven and partial; **4 - Adequate:** implementation of the recommendation has progressed; there is no evidence yet of its results on the intended target; **5 - Good:** the recommendation has been fully implemented and there is some initial evidence of its impact on the intended target; **6 - Excellent:** there is proven evidence that the recommendation has had a positive impact on its intended target.

Addressee of the recommendation	Recommendations	Recommendation Accepted, Partially Accepted, Rejected	Comments on implementation of actions planned in the Management Response	MAR score (see below) ³³	Impact (changes) of actions taken in terms of programme, policies and/or procedures
			Ministry of Foreign Affairs, was submitted to the FAO Legal Office who have made some comments and the draft is back with the Ministry for final acceptance. In addition, the standard FAO Host Country Agreement (HCA) is being discussed within the Ministry.		
R.2 - To FAO, on FAO Representative in Armenia	FAO should urgently revise the job-description of the non-resident FAO Representative for Armenia, who should be able to visit the country at least six to eight weeks per year and fulfil his/her mandate by providing strategic guidance for the work of the Organization in the country, effectively developing and coordinating the field programme, participating in UNCT meetings and carrying out advocacy and communication activities.	Accepted	The FAO Representative made one visit in 2013, one visit in March 2014; one more visit is planned for the second half of the current year. The Alternate FAOR made four visits in 2013; one visit at end of June 2014 and two visits are planned this year.	5	
R.3 - To FAO, on its operational set-up in Armenia	FAO should revise the operational set-up of FAO in Armenia in terms of roles and responsibilities as follows: a) Bringing all projects under the operational responsibility of the Assistant FAO Representative; b) Through AOS resources originating from the national projects, or direct costs charged to project budgets, recruit 2 support staff for operations and administration; c) Enhance the technical competence of the office, through better focused and specialized profiles and terms of reference of project coordinators, in support of the	Accepted	There was a delay with opening of the bank account with HSBC Yerevan due to the status of the Organization in the country and it became only available in July 2014. Roles and responsibilities of the staff in GRMS can now be defined by mapping office functions to GRMS, taking segregation of duties into account, and relevant training be provided	4	

Addressee of the recommendation	Recommendations	Recommendation Accepted, Partially Accepted, Rejected	Comments on implementation of actions planned in the Management Response	MAR score (see below) ³³	Impact (changes) of actions taken in terms of programme, policies and/or procedures
	priority areas of the Country Programming Framework.				
R.4 - To the Government of Armenia and FAO, on prioritizing within the CPF	Based on a realistic assessment of resources available and on committed engagement for resources mobilization, the Government and FAO should agree on ranking priorities within the current CPF, so as to focus efforts for the period 2013-2014. In early 2015, a revision of the CPF should lead to priority setting for additional two years, after which the CPF should be revised in depth. A greater range of stakeholders should also be involved in the CPF monitoring and implementation.	Accepted	Based on the signed CPF a working document was prepared for 2013-2015 to operationalize the CPF in close cooperation with the Government, relative parties, stakeholders, etc. The focus areas for that period have been agreed with the Government around six priority areas.	5	
R.5 - To FAO, on on-going projects in Armenia	FAO must urgently devote the required attention and resources to the successful completion of the projects for Pesticide residue monitoring and quality control (GCP/ARM/003/GRE) and Abattoir development (GCP/ARM/004/GRE).	Accepted	Pesticide residue monitoring and quality control project (GCP/ARM/003/GRE) The Pesticide Residue Monitoring Laboratory is operational after the training conducted and the equipment has been installed although some additional equipment and consumables will be procured. Training is continuing to strengthen the skills of the lab's staff, e.g. recently two staff were trained in Germany and presently Prof. Gong from ICAMA. The construction works for the pesticide formulation laboratory have after a long search for a suitable location which was necessary because the government had no suitable space available. In cooperation with the Pesticide Registration Unit of the Ministry of	5	

Addressee of the recommendation	Recommendations	Recommendation Accepted, Partially Accepted, Rejected	Comments on implementation of actions planned in the Management Response	MAR score (see below) ³³	Impact (changes) of actions taken in terms of programme, policies and/or procedures
			Agriculture the pesticide related database was created. The database provides data relevant to the registration of pesticides, pesticide imports, manufacturers, etc. The project team has prepared a Pesticide Handbook which contains all the information that farmers need to know about registered pesticides: the list of registered pesticides, their agricultural usage, directions for use, application date, time, rate, crops, target pests, etc.. Abattoir Development project (GCP/ARM/004/GRE) The abattoir equipment is being installed in the selected sites. A training plan for five abattoirs was prepared and will be implemented by the supplier. In addition, the project has prepared a capacity building/ training plan for review.		
Colombia					
R.1 - To FAO on the role of the Organisation in Colombia	FAO in Colombia should assume a much more strategic role and better position itself in its areas of <i>specialisation</i>, nationally and in the United Nations System. Suggested measures: Prepare a strategy document that defines FAO's priority areas of action in the country based on corporate reviewed strategic objectives and that includes clear directives for the post-agreement period. The strategy must include well defined lines of action that promote FAO's impact on public policies	Accepted	FR not due yet	FR not due yet	FR not due yet

Addressee of the recommendation	Recommendations	Recommendation Accepted, Partially Accepted, Rejected	Comments on implementation of actions planned in the Management Response	MAR score (see below) ³³	Impact (changes) of actions taken in terms of programme, policies and/or procedures
	and its participation in national debates and in decision-making, as well as in the United Nations System discussions, to defend its mandate as a leading agency on food and agriculture. This document will be an important input for the preparation of the 2015-2018 CPF. Systematise information about national and international experiences that could serve as input for discussions on key topics for the country in the areas of: FNS, area-based rural development, family farming, links between emergency and rehabilitation and development actions, as well as the mainstreaming of the differential and gender equality perspectives, amongst others. In the event that the peace agreement is signed, FAO should provide the Colombian Government with its knowledge and the experience it has gathered in post-conflict situations in the region and internationally. On the basis of the strategic areas defined and the systematisation performed, identify the circumstances and conditions in which FAO should participate in the delivery of field projects. In these types of projects, its role should focus on the innovation and development of effective methods and models for addressing the needs of the Colombian population. Once the methods have been validated, FAO's role should be directed towards strengthening the skills of the relevant national and local institutions so that these methodological models can be				

Addressee of the recommendation	Recommendations	Recommendation Accepted, Partially Accepted, Rejected	Comments on implementation of actions planned in the Management Response	MAR score (see below) ³³	Impact (changes) of actions taken in terms of programme, policies and/or procedures
	replicated and integrated into the public policies. In any case, the FAO Representation must be very rigorous in the defence of its mandate and in the added value that it can offer in its key sectors of intervention. Organise a high level visit by FAO Senior Management to Colombia that helps to recover FAO's positioning in the country at a time when matters related to land and rural land development are a priority on the national agenda.				
R.2 - To the Country Office with the support of RLC and Headquarters, on the Country Programming Framework	The 2015-2018 CPF must be more strategic and prioritise actions aligned with FAO's strategy document for Colombia recommended previously, geared towards results for measuring progress and with a clear differential and gender equality perspective. Suggested measures: Given the complexity of the situation in Colombia, perform a detailed analysis of the main needs and problems in FAO's areas of intervention, particularly within a post-agreement scenario, in order to adequately identify the objectives to be achieved by the FAO cooperation programme and the strategies required to achieve them. Promote the participation of the main FAO partners in the formulation process, including society, academia, the private sector and beneficiary communities, at national and local level, as well as institutions at the sub-national level;	Accepted	FR not due yet	FR not due yet	FR not due yet

Addressee of the recommendation	Recommendations	Recommendation Accepted, Partially Accepted, Rejected	Comments on implementation of actions planned in the Management Response	MAR score (see below) ³³	Impact (changes) of actions taken in terms of programme, policies and/or procedures
	sufficient resources should be allocated, to conduct the process in an inclusive manner. The CPF must not include a budget so as not to create false expectations. An estimate of the resources needed and available and the possible resource partners should be included. Review and implement the tools for CPF implementation (annual operational plans) and the monitoring and evaluation framework in order to effectively monitor the results foreseen in the programming framework. Promote and facilitate South-South Cooperation projects, by replicating successful experiences developed in Colombia in other countries and by adapting good practises of other countries, to the Colombian situation.				
<i>R.3 - To RLC and Headquarters, on technical support for the country programme</i>	FAO should reinforce the component relating to strengthening the competence of staff in the Country Office and its partners, with technical support from RLC and Headquarters. To do so, it is essential that the Country Office has the right human resources and that experts provide feedback and follow-up on their missions. Suggested measures: Develop a training and professional development plan for Country Office staff, including on programme and cross-cutting issues, with a view to providing them with the necessary tools for the effective implementation of the CPF.	Accepted	FR not due yet	FR not due yet	FR not due yet

Addressee of the recommendation	Recommendations	Recommendation Accepted, Partially Accepted, Rejected	Comments on implementation of actions planned in the Management Response	MAR score (see below) ³³	Impact (changes) of actions taken in terms of programme, policies and/or procedures
	Promote the participation of technicians from the FAO Representation in Colombia in the internal technical knowledge and information exchange networks that FAO is establishing globally. Create a roster of experts to cover the areas of specialisation where limitations have been found, in order to respond adequately to requests for technical assistance (public policies, post-conflict, nutrition, social aspects, etc.) and that are highly relevant to the situation in Colombia. Distribute the reports of the missions and other technical assistance activities periodically and promptly to the counterparts of the projects visited.				
<i>R.4 - RLC and Headquarters, on administrative support and management for the Country Office</i>	FAO must complete the decentralisation process so that decisions about the approval and implementation of projects can be made nationally, and the financing of the Representation is more predictable and enables a more strategic handling of the cooperation programme resources. Suggested measures: Speed up the approval of the projects nationally. In the case of TCP projects, RLC should allocate the budget in a more transparent and relevant manner. As an integral part of the study that FAO is conducting into the structure of FAO project support costs, the criteria for the distribution of the AOS between Headquarters, RLC and the Country Office should be updated.	Accepted	FR not due yet	FR not due yet	FR not due yet

Addressee of the recommendation	Recommendations	Recommendation Accepted, Partially Accepted, Rejected	Comments on implementation of actions planned in the Management Response	MAR score (see below) ³³	Impact (changes) of actions taken in terms of programme, policies and/or procedures
Sri Lanka					
R.1 – To FAO Sri Lanka	FAO's Sri Lanka country office consult more broadly with FAO staff and partners and develop a coherent, focused CPF that capitalizes on FAO's global and country-level comparative advantages, that is aligned with GoSL's emerging priorities, Sri Lanka's middle-income country status and the new UNDAF, and that advocates pro-poor and sustainable policies.	Accepted	All actions were undertaken, including the hiring of a gender specialist to ensure an appropriate gender focus. CPF was signed by Govt in December 2013	5	Improved CPF agreed by relevant stakeholders; implementation underway
R.2 – To FAO in HQ, RAP and Sri Lanka	FAO HQ, RAP and FAO Sri Lanka work together to ensure that the country office has the right staff and consultants in place in order to implement the CPF, transition to new administrative management systems and compensate for increased operational responsibilities under decentralization.	Accepted	New Organigramme is being discussed within the office and will be finalized shortly. One aspect that needs to be further reviewed is bringing in an "Operations" pillar. No core funding is available, so needs to be reviewed within existing means. There is no longer a distinction between "Emergency" and "Development" staff within the office. Some TORs of existing staff have been adjusted; some contracts of staff who were focused mainly on the Recovery projects are ending. For new projects, we are going through normal recruitment processes, which has resulted in some turnover and new staff on board.	4/5	Staff are generally appreciative of the new processes and structures that are being put in place, and understand the value and need for these changes. As a result, many processes are running more smoothly and information sharing is improving.
R.3 – To FAO Sri Lanka and RAP	FAO Sri Lanka continue to strengthen its monitoring and evaluation systems to meet both learning needs and accountability requirements, and that FAO create a position at RAP to better support country	Accepted	Progress in this area has been slower than desired, partially due to limited staff capacity within the office. Nonetheless, we are working with existing tools to set up monitoring and	3	The impact of the actions to date is still early to evaluate, partially because we are still transitioning from the

Addressee of the recommendation	Recommendations	Recommendation Accepted, Partially Accepted, Rejected	Comments on implementation of actions planned in the Management Response	MAR score (see below) ³³	Impact (changes) of actions taken in terms of programme, policies and/or procedures
	programmes in the region on matters pertaining to performance enhancement, monitoring and evaluation.		evaluation frameworks, with clear indicators and targets. We are also reviewing and discussing project contributions to the CPF, and the CPF linkages to the SOs, to ensure a focus and understanding of these linkages. New projects, such as the large EU funded project, have sound M&E frameworks. An additional staff person has been redirected to this area, who is collecting and maintaining relevant project data (GIS), as well as setting up an overall procurement plan. No support has been received from RAP in this area and the Regional O		emergency-focused projects to the more longer-term development projects, which will have the strengthened monitoring and evaluation systems in place. We also believe that Country Workplanning will assist in this regard, which has not yet been rolled out to the country offices
R.4 – To FAO Sri Lanka	FAO Sri Lanka improve the design, implementation and sustainability of its country projects by continuing to expand its choice of partners, incorporating better participatory processes, analyzing and responding to gender-based differential needs, and drawing on FAO's rich repository of normative products and effective practices.	Accepted	A new programming staff person will be hired to assist the AFAOR-Programme (and the FAOR) to provide technical input to the development of new proposals, and ensure we make good progress with the UNDAF, CPF, and gender issues. TORs are currently being developed. Our current gender focal point has provided some training to staff, but has limited time under his new role as project manager for a UNREDD project. The large EU funded programmes are moving ahead under challenging new government modalities, which has made expansion to other partners more difficult at this stage, but has a very strong participatory process in the field.	4	Strong participatory processes are built into the new projects, but impact is still early to assess. As shown in the EU project, these processes are very time consuming, which has delayed implementation. With FAO moving into more longer-term development projects with stronger technical and capacity building components, as well as with advocacy/communication undertaken by the FAOR

Addressee of the recommendation	Recommendations	Recommendation Accepted, Partially Accepted, Rejected	Comments on implementation of actions planned in the Management Response	MAR score (see below) ³³	Impact (changes) of actions taken in terms of programme, policies and/or procedures
			As far as taking advantage of FAO's normative aspects, the incoming FAOR has made efforts to promote and discuss global/regional topics and campaigns in many meetings, speeches, presentations, interviews, radio, etc., (Save Food, Year of Family Farming, Food Systems, International Day of Forests, Water and Agriculture, etc). She also describes the five SOs and their importance in meetings with government counterparts and resource partners, to ensure an understanding of FAOs broader role and capabilities.		and other staff, government counterparts and resource partners are gaining a better understanding of the potential richness and depth of FAOs interventions.
Viet Nam					
R.1 - To the Office of Support to Decentralization and the Office of the Director-General	Ensure that the new Representative to be appointed to FAO VN has strong technical knowledge relevant to a shared key priority of Viet Nam and FAO, and the capacity to engage with GOV on issues of policy and strategy.	Accepted	The new FAOR has been appointed since June 2013, and taken office since 8 July 2013. The FAOR has worked for many years in the area of international trade policy and multilateral trade talks. He also has expertise on agricultural policy in rural development, farm management and restructuring rice sectors. Recently Vietnamese government put high priority in restructuring agricultural sectors and regional trade agreements. To support government on these areas, two TCPF projects are being implemented, including one supporting TPP negotiations.	6	The new FAOR has been actively contributed to various national policy and strategy discussions. Thanks to that, the three restructuring plans for crop production, livestock and aquaculture were approved. FAO's technical support to TPP will improve government's capacity to deal with multilateral trade agreements.
R.2 - For the Office of Support	Explore and adopt a new business model and staffing structure for the FAO VN that	Accepted	The action is to be taken. Financial resources are to be sought, but currently	2	Not Available

Addressee of the recommendation	Recommendations	Recommendation Accepted, Partially Accepted, Rejected	Comments on implementation of actions planned in the Management Response	MAR score (see below) ³³	Impact (changes) of actions taken in terms of programme, policies and/or procedures
to Decentralization and the Technical Cooperation Department	enables a greater focus on delivering higher-level expert advice on a set of limited key priorities. A fixed-term Policy Officer with relevant technical skills should be included in the new staff structure, and this officer and other staff should interact with RAP and HQ experts in their respective areas in the process of engaging with GOV. The resources used to fund the office with this smaller but more skilled cadre of experts should be less reliant on AOS and draw on funds from additional UTFs negotiated with GOV.		the Policy issues are well supported by a FAO-RAP Officer. Currently a National Programme Officer in charge of Policy Issue is being supported by the AOS, but a more qualified person will need to be recruited, once the establishment of this position is confirmed by FAO RAP. Nonetheless, the current FAOR has strong capacity in policy issues.		
R. 3- To FAO VN and the Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific	Considering the social, political and technological changes occurring in Viet Nam as it has transformed toward modernization and the new approaches for development that they suggest, FAO should identify the issues in the country corresponding to its mandate where the agency could bring the greatest changes through broad communications and advocacy efforts, and conduct campaigns on a feasible number of them, involving GOV, the media, public education and national and international organizations with shared aims.	Accepted	The key social, political and technological changes in Viet Nam have been well taken into account of the CPF. Advocacy strategy has been adopted at both the Representation level as well as specific programme.	4	The FAO's visibility has been improved to certain extent, particularly in ECTAD and IPM activities. The UN Communications Team has frequently visited FAO to elicit news to be covered in the UN media.
R.4 - To FAO VN, RAP and Relevant Technical Departments in HQ	Given that a large number of other development organizations are active in Viet Nam in the same sectors or geographic areas as FAO, such as CCA or the remote, ethnic-minority areas where poverty is concentrated, the agency should seek to develop partnerships with some of these organizations, in consultation with GOV, to	Accepted	A formal partnership with the Government, development partners and donors has been formed (ISG group). A FAO professional staff was assigned to be the ISG's policy adviser providing technical inputs and facilitating high-level policy dialogues in ARD sector. Currently, FAO is taking the leading role	4	FAO has been able to contribute its inputs and innovative ideas to various policy and development for a, and take advantages of the networking with partners for rural development,

Addressee of the recommendation	Recommendations	Recommendation Accepted, Partially Accepted, Rejected	Comments on implementation of actions planned in the Management Response	MAR score (see below) ³³	Impact (changes) of actions taken in terms of programme, policies and/or procedures
	join their comparative advantages with those of FAO and formulate innovative approaches. These organizations may include other UN agencies, NGOs and the private sector. However, the partnerships should strive to have efficient and manageable frameworks, coordinated platform, and be based on collective assessments and joint, results-oriented strategies		in the fora of rural development policy, agriculture restructuring plan, agri-PPPs core-donor groups (WB, IFAD, KOICA, JICA, Oxfarm, Netherlands, USDA, ADB, CIDA, DANIDA, etc.). Besides, FAO VN has been actively taking part in the VDPF forum, Mangroves for the Future (MFF) initiative, global One-Health Initiative, and the upcoming Regional initiative of Blue-Growth. FAO VN has also supported the FAO-EU FLEGT program with CSO engagement in the combat against illegal logging. FAO provides technical inputs in developing the ARD sector/ sub-sector policy direction, strategic intervention matrix, and building consensus in supporting policy implementation among DPs and GoV ministries.		poverty reduction, DRR, inclusive growth and decent work (e.g. VDPF planning and implementation, MFF implementation and M&E, and so forth), have been adopted by the GoV and DPs such as the restructuring policies, the revised Land Law (2013), Law on Food Safety (2013), and an approach in new rural development that promotes accountability and decentralization in law/regulation making and amendment, in which FAO develops or introduces new intervention concepts, then supports the planning stage while other DPs and GoV work at implementation stage.
R.5 - To FAO VN, the Office of Support to Decentralization and the IDWG-One UN	Considering the importance of DaO for GOV and the UN agencies involved, including FAO, and the constraints that it currently faces: A) FAO should work with the UNRC, GOV and other UN agencies to help them develop a more flexible arrangement to achieve DaO. The arrangement could follow the One Plan	Partially Accepted	A. In the UN context, FAO is contributing to various JPGs (particularly JPG-1 on economic growth for which the FAOR is the Convener, JPG for Gender, JPG for Climate Change, One-Health). The MTE of the One Plan has not been conducted yet.	3	SDGF proposal jointly developed by UNICEF and WHO on 'Food Security and Nutrition' has been preapproved by Steering Committee. Final decision will be made in September.

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	2012-2016 but should also be based on a greater recognition of the unique mandates of FAO and the other agencies and the changing donor environment. The agencies could develop combined innovative initiatives based on their comparative advantages to achieve the One Plan 2012-2016 outcomes, and donors could fund them within or outside the One Plan Fund; and B) For the purposes of reducing transaction costs of GOV, and given the difficulties that some aspects of NEX could pose to FAO's work as a technical agency, the agency should conduct a comprehensive study of the cost, administrative and implementation-related implications of adopting the HPPMG given its importance to GOV, and based on the findings discuss with GOV which aspects of FAO's procedures could be modified to align with the guidelines and how the revised HPPMG can suit FAO.		An M&E position has been established under the phase 2 for the purpose of monitoring the HACT modality from FAO and draw lessons for improvements in the future. A draft of PIM for UNREDD has been developed and to be endorsed soon by the Government and other UN participating agencies (UNEP and UNDP and FAO). Once approved, it's will better serve the implementation of UN-REDD in the field and be a model for future UN joint programs. The Programme Support Group has not been formed.		As JPG 1 Convener, FAO has been leading the process to develop a UN breakthrough proposal for inclusive growth in Ethnic Minority Areas, for resource mobilization to address the One Plan Fund funding gap. N/A
R.6 – To FAO VN, RAP and the Agriculture and Consumer Protection Department	A) In addition to disseminating food safety-related best practices to farmers, such as good agriculture practices (GAP), FAO should work with the private sector, i.e., traders, wholesalers and large retailers, to create markets for safe foods and thus incentives for farmers to use the best-practices; and B) FAO should propose to GOV an initiative	Accepted	FAO Vietnam has successfully mobilized fund for a project on fresh vegetable value chain under UN Fund to support producers in reaching market with products of good quality and food safety standard. VIETGAP standards for vegetable products are being improved. Another project financed by the One UN Fund is about to start to support the Government of Vietnam to take risk-	3	FAO has contributed to the revision of the new VIETGAP standards will help farmers produce safer food. Farmers and private sector, wholesaler and supermarkets are better connected to share information and take advantage of the supply chain

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	where the agency assists the three ministries responsible for food safety to improve their coordination and harmonize their practices to create one inspection and enforcement system for the country.		based management approach to enhance the enforcement of the Law on Food Safety through IEC and capacity building activities, with key implementing partner being MOH. To improve inter-ministerial coordination, it was discussed during the ADG/RR's visit on 18-19 June 2014 that FAO will provide MARD technical support. Senior FAO RAP officer will have a mission to Vietnam to discuss the issue in August.		Upon completion, the project will potentially through capacity building of technical staff at all level, and facilitation of communication channel with private sector, industry and customer.
R.7 - For FAO VN, RAP and the Agriculture and Consumer Protection Department	FAO should bring its technical and analytical capacity and its global experience and work with MARD, provincial authorities and policy and research institutes to develop policies models for agricultural and rural development, including for the <i>Tam Nong</i> initiative. Specifically, FAO should focus its proposals on 'slices' in the sector, i.e. all the aspects of a production, marketing, processing or other activity, and the GOV institutions, enterprises and other entities that are involved in its operation and regulation.	Partially accepted	The Project TCP/3302 (Tam Nong) was completed at the end 2013, creating a basis for the new UN joint programme in support of NTP-NRD (UNJP Tam Nong) which was activated in March 2014 with the participation of FAO and other four UN agencies, namely UNESCO (for IEC activities), UNV (providing quality voluntary services), IOM (for migration issues), and UNIDO (for value-chain and investment related activities). The UNJP provide assistance to both policy advices at national level and livelihood improvement for villagers. Since RD is a comprehensive macro policy, FAO in cooperation with other UN agencies and DPs is developing a RD policy framework. In which FAO's support mainly focuses in improving rural economic life while other UN agencies are providing assistance in other aspects as social and culture development.	4	FAO's support on Result-based Monitoring and Evaluation (RBME) and and Open Distance Learning (ODL) has been adopted by the GoV to apply nation-wide to RD officers. As a side effect of the UNJP Tam Nong, FAO has facilitated the negotiations between the GoV and donors for formulation of new projects. Collective policy advocacy by the participating UN agencies has also helped strengthened horizontal coordination among concerned ministries in Vietnam.

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			FAO's support to develop the sector/sub-sector agriculture restructuring plans as an agriculture sector policy serving RD. Besides, other policies (education, culture, S&T, etc) advocated by the participating UN agencies also transferred the Tam Nong policy principles when they're working with relevant ministries. FAO's technical officers have actively participated in various projects targeting agricultural value-chains, covering all stages from production, processing to marketing. A new pipeline project has been submitted, to support the pro-poor policy in the free-trade context		
R.8 - To FAO VN, RAP and the Natural Resources Management and Environment Department	FAO should engage with the several existing policy advocacy networks on CCA and DRR to bring to them its technical expertise on the issue and to enhance the agency's ability to influence policy in this area.	Accepted	Climate Smart Agriculture – Capturing synergies between adaptation, mitigation and food security was launched. The project aimed at developing partnership to support VN in achieving climate smart agriculture. The project organized two scenario-guided planning workshops (regional and country) for policy decision making with participation from key national and regional partners including ministries, research institutes, development partners, and CSOs.	3	The Government as well as some potential donors and partners (WB, ICRAF, etc.) are now more interested in working with FAO and using FAO's expertise in these areas to cope with CCA in conjunction with food security.
R.9 - For FAO VN, RAP and the Fisheries and Aquaculture Department	A) Continue and expand on the present efforts to develop alternative and enhanced livelihoods and employment for coastal fishing communities by drawing on the opportunities under the Tam Nong programme to create larger-scale and non-	Partially accepted	Experience of the FAO regional Fisheries Livelihoods Programme (RFLP) and the IMOLA project was shared as a case study in the Open & Distance Learning programme for about 400,000 local leaderships.	3	A network of Fisheries Associations were established and made operational, drawing the participation of women, and contributing to the

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	fisheries based enterprises. This will require FAO to be proactive and convene and facilitate joint efforts by government partners at local, provincial and national level and across various departments in addition to fisheries (e.g., rural development, transport, enterprise and processing), community Fishery Associations and the private sector. B) Resources should be obtained to support more regular technical assistance and implementation and supervision from HQ for the REBYC-II CTI programme and the fishing capacity NPOA.		NPOA for fishing capacity management and combat against IUU has been drafted. The achievements of the RFLP Project are now disseminated in all 10,000 communes through the ODL programme. Discussions are still ongoing regarding the development of larger-scale alternative livelihoods projects.		livelihoods diversification and safety-at-sea for central coastal provinces. The National Aquatic Resources Rehabilitation Fund has also been activated, directed by the the former NPD of the RFLP Project. The World Bank has shown interest in replicating good management practices generated by the IMOLA and RFLP in their CRSD Project.