Office of Evaluation



Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations

Responsibilities and procedures for management responses and follow-up reports on evaluations

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Guidance note and template

Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations

Office of Evaluation (OED)

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# Introduction

1. Evaluation contributes to accountability and lessons learning and should lead to improved management decision-making and performance. For evaluation to play its roles, among other measures and procedures, there needs to be careful consideration of evaluation recommendations as a basis for management decisions.
2. Since 2006, FAO evaluation policy establishes that all evaluations in FAO must receive a Management Response (MR) and a Follow-up report (FR). Standardized and assured quality in the Organization’s responses and follow-up reports on evaluations enhances the transparency of the evaluation process and enables drawing lessons on the effectiveness of, and compliance with the corporate evaluation policy. This guidance note outlines the roles and responsibilities for the preparation of these reports.
3. FAO Office of Evaluation (OED) is also aware that the evaluation reports themselves need to facilitate decision by management on recommendations and follow-up. Thus OED, in fulfilling its quality assurance function, will endeavour to ensure that evaluation recommendations are expressed clearly and unambiguously.
4. All queries on these procedures should be addressed to the Director, Office of Evaluation.

# The Management Response

1. The Management Response is the document in which FAO management, at project, country, regional, division or corporate level:
2. expresses its overall opinion about the evaluation and its report, conclusions and usefulness;
3. responds to individual recommendations, either by accepting them fully or partially, or by rejecting them; and
4. describes how it will implement the recommendations that were fully or partially accepted.
5. The unit which has the main responsibility in implementing the work being evaluated (henceforth the Main Unit) takes the lead in preparing the MR, as identified in the Terms of Reference of the evaluation itself. In doing so, the Main Unit must consult those who have a stake in the work being evaluated and obtain the response by those who will have the implementation responsibility for each recommendation. The response to each recommendation will have to be cleared at the level formally responsible for making decisions on the issues at stake. In case of recommendations addressed to the corporate level, the Chair of the Evaluation Committee (Internal) will be responsible for final clearance, in consultation with the members of the Committee as appropriate.
6. The Management Response should be prepared using the format below.

Management response to the Mid-Term evaluation of the Forest and Farm Facility Programme, July 2016

##### Overall response to the evaluation

The Forest and Farm Facility (FFF) was formally initiated in December of 2012 with primary funding received only in August and October of 2013. The programme was initially conceived as a 5 year programmed with and end date of December 2017. Due to the late receipt of funds the Steering Committee and the Donor Support Group agreed it would be most effective to schedule the Mid-term Evaluation (MTE) for the beginning of 2016. FFF is therefore now in its 4th full year and has undergone a rigorous mid-term evaluation, coordinated by the FAO Office of Evaluations and independent external evaluators. The management team thank the five person review team led by James Gasana and Eoghan Molloy for conducting a thorough evaluation of the Forest and Farm Facility (FFF) including missions to five countries (Gambia, Guatemala, Kenya, Myanmar and Vietnam) against its vision that “smallholders, communities and indigenous people’s organisations have improved their livelihoods and decision-making of forest and farm landscapes”.

The management team find the review to be thorough, fair and constructive – and we will endeavour to enhance the programme still further in line with the principal recommendations. We respond here to each of the main area of findings, conclusions and recommendations.

1. **Findings**

Relevance

We are delighted that the review team found that the design of FFF was appropriate for achieving its outcomes and vision. The Management Team worked hard to include views of representatives of forest and farm producer organisation in the design process – and it is a tribute to that hard work (and no small commendation) that the design is effective in targeting poverty reduction and better forest governance. We are also gratified that the review team found FFF to be highly aligned with national policies of participating countries. We have worked very hard to ensure that FFF complements and strengthens the specific context and democratic sovereignty of those countries. Finally, we are delighted that the review team have seen how effectively FFF has been integrated within and helped to shape new integrated approaches to family farming, forest and farm landscapes, smallholder business development, and gender equity within FAO strategic objectives SO2 and SO3.

Effectiveness

We are pleased that the review team found FFF work to strengthen forest and farm businesses and their representation in policy dialogue to be effective – creating a strong sense of ownership at grassroot level. In this regard it was particularly rewarding to have the evaluation team recognise the “value for money” which the FFF has worked hard to ensure. Our effort is always to try and catalyse or leverage other processes using the relatively small resources at hand and in a relatively fast time frame. The sense of ownership is crucial for ensuring that FFPOs improve their service delivery in the long term which is one of the goal of the Facility.

Efficiency

We are delighted with the review teams verdict that the FFF operational modality is ‘highly efficient’ in terms of outputs relative to inputs, which stresses the great commitment of FFF’s team. We also welcome the acknowledgement of the high level of coordination between the management partners, FAO, IUCN and IIED along with the active engagement of AGriCord– underpinned by an effective Monitoring and Learning (M&L) system – that translated also into effective communications.

Likelihood of Impact

We welcome and agree with the assessment that there is a strong likelihood of the FFF achieving its desired impacts – based on our emphasis on building local capital, through strengthening forest and farm producer organisation businesses to make better livelihoods and effective policy engagements. In this context we appreciate the finding that we may not have given enough attention to some of our achievements in the realm of social and human capital, and actual empowerment of producers and their organizations. We will focus more on strengthening and capturing the results of this in the future.

Partnerships

We are pleased by the recognition of prominent partnerships that are making a significant contribution to the country and global successes to date. These are both informal and more formalized relationships and we fully acknowledge the very important contributions of our many partners in all the elements of the work we have been involved in.

Sustainability

We welcome the positive assessment of the sustainability of this approach based on high political and social ownership in our partner countries and organisations – and acknowledge the need to build up the capacity of FFPOs to increase their (already high) contribution to achieving poverty reduction and better forest governance. We recognize the diversity of progress in this area in different countries, and will work particularly hard to embed the work both within government institutions and FFPOs in several countries where this remains a challenge.

Normative Values

We are pleased at the acknowledgement that our way of working adequately addresses gender and indigenous issues – both in practice and in the governance of the FFF through the steering committee. FFF has a strong commitment to deepening this emphasis.

1. CONCLUSIONS

We are particularly pleased at the recognition by the review team of the high level of ownership and high relevance of the work to forest and farm smallholders. We agree with the assessment of innovation in developing inclusive business models, solid progress in getting local issues into implemented new national policy agendas, and being on track to allow forest farm voices to shape global processes.

We welcome the endorsement of effective business skill development amongst large numbers of forest and farm producer organisations. We appreciate the encouragement to strengthen and deepen our work on inclusive value chains. . We are delighted that our efforts to link FFPOs voices with effective policy interventions has been recognised. We acknowledge that success in this realm has been varied, with some partner countries achieving higher level policy outcomes than expected in a short time, and others proceeding much more slowly, particularly in terms of institutionalizing cross-sectoral platforms and processes. We are also delighted that the ‘highly efficient’ use of resources in terms of outputs to inputs has been recognised. One of our abiding challenges has been to persuade donors to match their rhetoric on wanting to reduce poverty and improve forest governance – with greater resourcing of this ‘highly efficient’ approach.

We felt that two important dimensions of the Forest and Farm Facility’s work: the regional and global events and support to FFPOS and the considerable communications efforts of the FFF received less attention and discussion than might have been merited – though references are made to both of these elements in the current evaluation.

Finally, we are pleased that the M&L system is described as robust and that we have effectively supported learning in our communication efforts involving IIED, FAO and IUCN.

##### Response by recommendation

In this section, Management should address each recommendation, discussing them in the order presented in the executive summary of the evaluation report. This should be done in the format of the Management Response matrix below (see Box 1) and include:

1. The recommendation number and text copied from the evaluation report;
2. Indication of whether the recommendation is accepted fully, partially, or rejected;
3. Description of the actions to be taken, with comments as required on the conditions to be met during implementation, or on reasons leading to a partial acceptance or rejection of a recommendation;
4. The responsible party or FAO unit for implementing the action/s;
5. The time-frame for implementation and/or an implementation schedule, if required;
6. Indication if further funding from FAO or a resource partner is required for implementing the recommendation.
7. Management response matrix[[1]](#footnote-1)

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Management response to the (Evaluation Title) | | | | | Date |
| Evaluation Recommendation (a) | Management response (b)  Accepted, partially accepted or rejected | Management plan | | | |
| Actions to be taken, and/or comments about partial acceptance or rejection (c) | Responsible unit (d) | Timeframe (e) | Further funding required  (Y or N) (f) |
| Insert title of section, if any | | | | | |
| Recommendation 1:  The results achieved during the remaining 1.5 years of the FFF should be consolidated in order to maintain and build upon the programme’s achievements, further improve progress and impact, and continue the political momentum achieved in participating countries to support the development priorities of forest and farm smallholders. | Accepted | Work plans for the second half of 2016 are proceeding as planned and new work plans for 2017 will be developed drawing on recommendations from the MTE and learning from the Monitoring and Learning system (notwithstanding current financial shortfalls for 2017)  A comprehensive resource mobilization plan has been developed and efforts are underway at global, regional and country level to attract the necessary funding to maintain and build upon current programme achievements. | FFF Management Team | Until December 2017. | Y |
| Recommendation 2: A second phase of FFF should be considered in order to consolidate and expand its achievements, strengthen the capacity of participating countries to scale up results, and develop appropriate exit strategies. | Accepted | FFF is actively planning a second phase of work The Management Team and partners with support from delegated Steering Committee members have developed a Concept Note for Phase II. This is being widely shared with other donors and partners and a longer version will be finalized on receipt of feedback. Phase II discussions with relevant donors have already been initiated and will continue at the global, regional and country levels. | FFF Manager and Management Team | June 2016 –Draft Concept Note;  September 2016 -longer version  Sept 2016 to project end date –meetings with donors |  |
| Recommendation 3: To the FFF team on refining the FFF’s ToC to match the strength of its model - Consider refining the FFF’s ToC and revising the M&L system accordingly to match the strength of its model by adding the missing building blocks. | Accepted | We fully appreciate the need to enhance the refinement of our theory of change internally – although would resist making it externally more complicated – as our expression of the theory of change had to be significantly simplified from earlier iterations in the project document in order to be intelligible to partners. Drawing from the recommendations, we will amend our internal TOC to reflect some of the implicit assumptions more clearly. We will assess whether any additional information will be needed in the Monitoring and Learning system and whether and how we might be able to share the amended TOC with our immediate partners during the annual learning and planning meetings at the end of the calendar year, to further crystalize the work. | FFF Management Team and Facilitators | By December 2016 |  |
| Recommendation 4: To FFF team to streamline VCD in interventions relating to Pillar. Increase efforts to improve the value chain development approach by adding elements which focus on value addition, processing, linkage to various actors in the same chains (especially downstream), and enable FFPOs to improve the terms of engagement with national, regional and international markets. | Partially accepted | We welcome the endorsement of effective business skill development amongst large numbers of forest and farm producer organisations. We appreciate the encouragement to strengthen and deepen our work on inclusive value chains. We feel that the observation on insufficient development of value chains misunderstands slightly the focus and the pace at which progress is possible given the limited resources of the programme spread across ten countries. Value chain development is central to the Market Analysis and Development (MA&D) approach which we have been using, but with low levels of capacity in many countries, there is a need to build technical, analytical and entrepreneurial skills to identify opportunities for value chain upgrading gradually. The evaluation offers useful suggestions on moving the work on value chains to a higher level which we will take into account. We will address this further through exposure and exchange visits with actors higher up in the value chains and pursue embedded services as well as to include within our value chain work further options to add value, enhance processing, and develop market opportunity, as time and resources allow. An ongoing challenge is the need to build multiple product value chains which can support diversified production within sustainable landscapes – an approach often missing from much of the more commodity focused vertical value chain work. This is an area which we feel could play a significant role in FFF Phase II. | FFF Management team including Facilitators and implementing partners | Through December 2017 | Y |
| Recommendation 5: To the FFF team to enhance support to the development of women’s entrepreneurship- While continuing to address gender-specific barriers (including lack of skills and poor access to resources), enhance support to the development of women’s entrepreneurship in forest and farm-based value chains in order to ensure equal participation in value chains and linkages to markets. Increased focus should also be given to the inclusion of youth in FFPO activities. | Accepted | We welcome the exhortation to continue our work on gender mainstreaming in value chain development –and an increased focus on youth. In pursuit of this a more explicit FFF Gender Strategy is being developed and each country programme will be infused with a strengthened emphasis on support to women’s enterprises and to expanding opportunities for youth. | FFF team | Draft Gender Strategy by end of October, 2016.  Increased emphasis to gender issues and youth in 2017 work plan objectives in December 2016. |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |

# The Follow-up Report

A follow up report is proposed to coincide with the project end date (December 30 2017) to feed into the final project report. FFF management team will use the tool called Management Action Record (MAR) and the Follow-up Report template. The MAR is the quantitative self-assessment by responsible units **of the progress made** **in the implementation** of each fully and partially accepted recommendation, through a six-point scoring scale, following the qualifiers in Box 2 below.

1. Qualifiers for the Management Action Record scoring

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 solid evidence that the recommendation has had a positive impact on its intended target.

1. The MAR allows OED and FAO to gain a better understanding of good practices and obstacles in the implementation of evaluation recommendations, through the consolidation of quantitative information from all FRs. When OED carries out a validation process of a Follow-up Report, it will enter its own rating of progress made in the implementation of the recommendations. The MAR will also contribute to the tracking system of all recommendations and their implementation, for both accountability and learning purposes, that was established by OED in response to the 2012 External Audit recommendations.
2. The MAR score complements the narrative description and the evidence available about the progress made in implementing each recommendation, and their impact.
3. Furthermore, following a request by the Programme Committee at its 103rd session in April 2010 that Follow-up Reports to evaluations include “*the programme and policy impact stemming from the implementation of the recommendations of evaluation*”, the Impact column was added to the Follow-up matrix. Impact is here defined as the long lasting change directly generated by the actions carried out to implement the specific recommendation.
4. The Follow-up Report should be prepared using the format below.

Follow-up report of the Management response to the Evaluation (Title and date)

##### Overall progress in the implementation of all accepted recommendations

This section will provide a concise description of main achievements in the implementation of all accepted recommendations, fully and partially, as well as of the obstacles met in the process.

##### Detailed progress in in the implementation of each accepted recommendations

In this section, Management should inform on the progress made in the implementation of each accepted recommendations, fully or partially, as well as on obstacles met in the process. This should be done in the format of the Follow-up report matrix below (see Box 3) and include:

1. The recommendation number and text, copied from the Management Response;
2. The actions agreed in the Management Response, in a summary version as required;
3. Description of actions actually taken and any comment or information considered useful as supporting evidence to the self-assessment;
4. MAR score; and
5. The impact of those actions: impacts can occur at any level, including changes in policies, procedures, technical knowledge, livelihoods, state of natural resources, etc.
6. Follow-up report matrix[[2]](#footnote-2)

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Accepted evaluation recommendations (a) | Action Agreed in the Management Response (b) | Description of actions actually taken, or reasons for actions not taken (c) | MAR score (d) \* | Impact of, or changes resulted from taken actions (e) |
| Recommendation 1 | Summary of actions agreed | Short narrative |  | Short narrative |
| Recommendation 2 | Summary of actions agreed | Short narrative |  | Short narrative |
| Recommendation 3 | Summary of actions agreed | Short narrative |  | Short narrative |

\*: **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 solid evidence that the recommendation has had a positive impact on its intended target

1. Schedule for the evaluation management responses and follow-up reports to be submitted to the Programme Committee

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Action | Responsibility for action | Deadline before PC meeting |
| Final report of the evaluation and request for the management response will be sent to the appointed senior officer. | Office of Evaluation | 12 weeks |
| Draft management response/follow-up report will be provided by the responsible senior officer to the Evaluation Committee through the Director, Office of Evaluation. | Designated officer/OED | 8 weeks |
| Comments by the Evaluation Committee to the responsible senior officer. | Evaluation Committee | 7 weeks |
| Forwarding of the management response/follow-up report through the PC Secretariat to ODG for clearance before posting. | Designated officer/OED Director | 6 weeks |

1. Each column is cross-referenced to the bullet letters above. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Each column is cross-referenced to the bullet letters above. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)