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Organisation des Nations Продовольственная и Unies pour l'alimentation сельскохозяйственная организация Объединенных Наций

Organización de las Naciones Unidas para la Alimentación y la Agricultura

منظمة سطسه الأغذية والزراعة للأمم المتحدة

FINANCE COMMITTEE

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Progress Report on Implementation of the External Auditor's Recommendations

Queries on the substantive content of this document may be addressed to:

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

> This report outlines the progress on implementation by the Secretariat of recommendations made by the External Auditor.

➤ The report presents the progress made by FAO to implement recommendations that were outstanding at the date of the previous progress report presented to the Finance Committee at its 151st Session in November 2013. The External Auditor's views on the status of implementation of the recommendations are also reflected in the report.

GUIDANCE SOUGHT FROM THE FINANCE COMMITTEE

➤ The Committee is invited to review the document, and provide its guidance as deemed appropriate.

Draft Advice

- > The Committee reviewed and noted the status of implementation of the recommendations of the External Auditor.
- > The Committee welcomed the progress made in closing recommendations of the External Auditor and urged the Secretariat to continue in its efforts to close the remaining outstanding recommendations.
- ➤ The Committee looked forward to an updated Progress Report at its next regular session in 2015 and which it noted would also include the status of implementation of recommendations contained in the 2012-13 Long Form Report.

Introduction

1. The table below summarizes overall FAO progress in implementing the External Auditor's recommendations.

Audit Report	Total Recommendations	Outstanding at previous Reporting Date ¹	Closed since previous Reporting Date	Outstanding at this Reporting Date
Long Form Report 2008-09 ²	27	9	2	7
Review and Assessment of SFERA ³	8	1	1	0
Long Form Report 2010-11	69	46	20	26

- 2. The table below presents details of the latest status of implementation of each recommendation which had not yet been closed at the date of the previous progress report presented to the Finance Committee, including the timeline suggested by the External Auditor for implementation.
- 3. Actions taken by the Secretariat to implement each recommendation are presented in the column entitled Management Response, and the External Auditor's view on the progress of implementation of all recommendations is presented in the last column entitled External Auditor's Comments.

¹ FC148/22 presented in March 2013 refers

² The recommendations contained in the 2008-09 Long Form Report encompass and take account of outstanding aspects of previous External Audit Recommendations.

³ FC143/16 Add. 1 refers

2010-11 BIENNIUM - AUDIT OF HEADQUARTERS

FUNDAMENTAL

Reco	ommendation	Suggested Timeline	Responsible Unit	Management Response	External Auditor's Comments
Asse	Encourage the Member Nations to	2012	CSF	The Secretariat continues its efforts at Headquarters	In process.
	promptly pay their current assessments and settle their contributions in arrears through the instalment plan scheme for better liquidity, and to sustain the Organization's Programme of Work. (Paragraph 43)			 and FAO offices to remind Member Nations of their financial obligations and to emphasize the importance of timely payment of Assessed Contributions in its cash management for the execution of the Programme of Work including: distribution of timely statements; publishing updates on the status of the Contributions and Arrears on the FAO public websites; soliciting payments of current contributions and arrears through official correspondence and direct contacts with Member Nation Representatives and Government Officials, including through the negotiation of instalment plans. 	This recommendation was reiterated in the Long Form Report for the biennium 2012-2013 in view of the noted decline on the collection of current assessments from 92.3% on USD assessments and 94.03% on EUR assessments in 2010 to 82.59% and 85.18%, respectively in 2013
Bud	getary Controls	<u></u>			
2	Ensure that expenditures are always within the limits of the authorized project budget and cash provided by the donors by: (a) constantly monitoring the cash balance and considering it as the limit of further	2012	BHs/FPSN/ OSD	Monitoring actions are ongoing throughout the lifecycles of projects as described below. The first level of responsibility rests with the Budget Holders (BHs), whether in decentralized offices or at Hqs with operational and monitoring support provided to them by the Field Programme	In process. In spite of several monitoring tools introduced in FPMIS such as the FPSN, LFM and automatic triggers, these were not taken advantage of

Reco	ommendation	Suggested Timeline	Responsible Unit	Management Response	External Auditor's Comments
Ente	incurring expenditure for the project; (b) promptly initiating the request for Call for Funds in accordance with Project Agreements when cash balance is low; (c) promptly preparing Budget Revision with the proper approval before committing expenditures that will exceed the latest approved budget; and (d) constantly ensuring that charges to the project are appropriate. (Paragraph 60)			Support Network (FPSN) at subregional and regional levels with corporate tools, procedures and overall monitoring from OSD, CSF and Funding Liaison Units. Specific actions in place to address these recommendations include: • all new DO budget holders are briefed on the FPSN Monitoring tool available through FPMIS to facilitate the monitoring of their ongoing projects; • the designation memorandum assigning BH responsibility specifies the need for cash monitoring and prompt calls for funds; • automatic trigger messages from FPMIS remind BHs of the need to call for funds, among other actions; and • the subregional Field Programme Support and Monitoring Officers as well as regional operations staff regularly provide overall monitoring and feedback on necessary actions to be taken by BHs.	or utilized by all budget holders. Thus, cash and budget deficits were still noted in on-going projects as at end of biennium 2012-2013.
4	Intensify the implementation of the ERM project and monitor more effectively its progress to achieve intended results on time, enable Management to act on key corporate risks, and protect the reputation, relevance and future existence of the Organization. (Paragraph 136)	2012	OSP	Recommendation Implemented Implementation of ERM is being redesigned to fit into the broader planning and monitoring process, including an accountability and internal Control framework, which is being developed as part of the Director-General's Transformational Change programme.	Implemented.

Reco	ommendation	Suggested Timeline	Responsible Unit	Management Response	External Auditor's Comments
				The Organization is committed to full implementation of ERM integrated with RBM by end 2013.	
Tech	nnical Cooperation Programme	_			
5	Improve the rate of approval and project delivery by: (a) providing a policy that defines a timeframe for every stage of the process taking into account past experiences or lessons learned in securing project approvals; (b) monitoring action of the budget holders on uncontrollable factors and providing optimal advice on the disposition of the project based on these factors; (c) examining projects in various pipeline stages and extracting exceptions caused by insufficient funding, low priorities, pending formal requests from governments/partners and project revisions, if any, and monitoring the disposal of these exceptions by the budget holders; and (d) the TCP Coordinator ensuring that projects in the active pipeline can be funded within 12 months. (Paragraph 155)	2012	TC/ROs	An estimated timeframe for every stage of the process of TCP was defined at the time of TCP decentralization in 2010. DOs have been requested to respect the established timeframe for project approvals (while recognizing that there may be specific circumstances for delays in project approval). No particular concerns have been noted considering that, for the current biennium, almost 50 percent of the appropriation has already been committed to projects by the end of first year of the funding biennium and 84 percent by 31 August 2013. Management will continue to monitor the level of approvals and provide support and guidance when required. In terms of delivery, 87 percent of the 2010-11 appropriation had been expensed by 31 August 2013. A new standard report entitled "TCP Pipeline Monitoring" has been introduced in FPMIS to help TCP Coordinators in DOs to effectively monitor the project status in the pipeline and enter comments regarding any delay in project approvals. In April 2013, Regional TCP Programme Officers were requested to critically review TCP requests in the active pipeline to ensure that only high priority requests remained and to close requests that have been pending for more than 12 months in	The biennial audit 2012-13 has also identified the need to improve the rate of TCP approval and project delivery. This recommendation will therefore be considered with the relevant recommendations in this area arising from the 2012-13 Long Form Report.

Recommendation	Suggested Timeline	Responsible Unit	Management Response	External Auditor's Comments
			consultation with the TCP coordinators.	

SIGNIFICANT

Reco	ommendation	Suggested Timeline	Responsible Unit	Management Response	External Auditor's Comments
Budg	getary Controls				
6	That concerned divisions obtained the prior approval from OSP for proposals resulting in aggregate year-to-date transfers of allotments in excess of USD 100,000 between organizational results within a Strategic or Functional Objective, or USD 20,000 at chapter level. We also recommended that the concerned divisions evaluate the utilization and balances of allotments at the levels where prior approval from the Director, OSP is required before any shift in resources is implemented. (paragraph 48)	2012	OSP	Recommendation Implemented. This is in line with the established fungibility rules.	Implemented.
7	That OSP provide feedback to the allottee on actions to be taken based on the review of PBRs available at PIRES and submitted reports, and that the budget holders ensure the proper coding of expenditures (paragraph 49)	2012	OSP	Recommendation Implemented. Based on the review of PBRs, OSP replies to allottees and provides feedback as required.	Implemented.
9	Ensure that expenditures are always within the limits of the authorized project budget, and the cash provided by the donors by:	2012	OSD	See management comment to recommendation no. 2	In process. Operationally and financially closed projects with cash and/or budget deficits were

Reco	Recommendation		Responsible Unit	Management Response	External Auditor's Comments
	(a) constantly monitoring the cash balance and considering it as the limit of further incurring expenditure for the project;				still noted at RAF, FRGHA and RAP during 2012-13 biennial audits.
	(b) promptly initiating the request for Call for Funds in accordance with Project Agreements when cash balance is low;				
	(c) promptly preparing Budget Revision and obtaining prior approval before committing expenditures that will exceed the latest approved budget; and				
	(d) constantly ensuring that charges to the project are appropriate. (Paragraph 61)				
10	Expedite action in coordination with relevant divisions and/or donors to resolve the over-expenditures in operationally closed projects and allow their financial closures. (Paragraph 62)	2012	OSD, TC, FPSN, CSF	See management comment to recommendation no. 2 Actions are ongoing by TCSR, CSF and concerned BHs to resolve over-expenditures with OSD follow-up to expedite operational and financial closures. TCSR continues to work closely with CSF and OSD to resolve outstanding issues, within the limits of donor grant regulations. Improvement in this area is almost entirely contingent upon the issues outlined in management response to Recommendation 2, as post-factum action can only	In process. The number of operationally closed projects with budget and cash deficits decreased from 608 and 56 in 2011 to 139 and 51 in 2013, respectively while the issue on over-expenditure was still reported in the 2012-13 Long Form report. The recommendation will
				Recommendation 2, as post-factum action can only mitigate the damage.	The recommendation will followed up in future au

Reco	ommendation	Suggested Timeline	Responsible Unit	Management Response	External Auditor's Comments
11	That (a) Budget Holders/Lead Technical Units inform the official Funding Liaison Officer and the donor liaison group to ensure that formal agreement and funding are obtained from donors before incurring commitment and expenditure for the next phase of the project; and (b) clear operational guidance is provided on the communication flow. (Paragraph 63)	2012	BHs/FPSN/O SD	See management comment to recommendation no. 2	In process. The budget preparation and revision workflow is defined and included in the Budget Facilities FPMIS Training Guide as of June 2013. However, not all BHs promptly prepare budget revisions for approval by the FLO prior to overcommitments.
Impl	ementation of IPSAS/ERP Project				
14	Prepare and finalize a Policy Guidance Manual that establishes and provides policy, practice and guidance on the application of IPSAS, and complement the standards and other professional accounting pronouncements in the Organization as well as provide information on what IPSASs are directly or not directly related to its operations. (Paragraph 77)	2012	CSF	This deliverable was included in the workplan for 2013.	Implemented.
Resu	ilts-based Management		T		
22	Promote and strengthen the use of the existing Quality Assurance facility in PIRES to (a) reinforce accountability and commitment by responsible officers; (b) ensure quality in the	2012	OSP	The importance of Quality Assurance has been highlighted in the work planning guidelines for the 2012-13 biennium. The recommendation will be addressed during the 2014-15 implementation and monitoring cycle in the context of work on the new	Implemented.

Recomme	endation	Suggested Timeline	Responsible Unit	Management Response	External Auditor's Comments
mo pro eva ach	sign, smooth implementation and onitoring of programmes or ojects; and (c) effect the objective aluation of ORs/URs for the hievement of intended results. aragraph 119)			monitoring framework, accountability and internal control framework.	
Enterprise	se Risk Management	T		,	
Product and the and wo ensured all trains and act ach Immered corrections wo decored and act ach ach Immered corrections wo decored act ach act ach Immered corrections wo decored act act act ach Immered corrections would be act	nat Management (a) enhance the oject Staff Structure by ticipating the next steps vis-à-vis e personnel movement/ availability d increasing the number of staff to ork on the Project as a means of suring that schedules are met and required deliverables are unsmitted; (b) creating the orporate Risk Committee to ensure e smoother flow of affairs and tivities leading up to the hievement of this particular amediate Plan of Action (IPA) form; and (c) coordinating with necerned communications division, volving people to communicate the sentials, and making technology ork for the Project by creating a dicated webpage link to the ERM oject. (Paragraph 141)	2012	OSP	OSP is building its ERM capacity. In addition to the P5 Senior Officer, an officer with an operations background (P4 level) was appointed to the ERM function in September 2012. Implementation of ERM is being redesigned to fit into the broader Accountability and Internal Control framework under development. It is anticipated that ERM will use the same governance mechanism as for other aspects of this mechanism. Based on the project's new design, OSP will coordinate with the concerned communications division and promote appropriate technology to support ERM implementation.	Implemented.

Reco	ommendation	Suggested Timeline	Responsible Unit	Management Response	External Auditor's Comments
	That Management: (a) enhance the existing guidelines to include a policy that will standardize the documentation and timelines of every activity in the project cycle with consequent adjustments in the FPMIS; (b) include all the processes involved in the project cycle in its on-going enhancement of the FPMIS to give all users of the system comprehensive information for project monitoring and management; (c) require the completion of "Clearances" field in the FPMIS as this facilitates monitoring instead of going over the other documents to look into the approval and dates of issued clearances. Create a link between the "TCP" field and "Clearances" field for the automatic upload of the data input of clearances; (d) establish timelines for the uploading of information in the		^	In addition to the response provided to recommendation (5), we note that: (a) - TCP Step-by-Step instructions have been updated to provide guidance on required documentation and timelines of every activity at various stages of the TCP project cycle, in line with existing TCP procedures. Revision and update of the guidelines will continue, concurrently with the implementation of the New Project Cycle in FPMIS. (b) - The new standard TCP reports created and TCP processes to be reflected in FPMIS, (along with newly released Guide to the Project Cycle), seek to address these issues. The guidance provided is enhanced through training and workshops with the timing of specific activities envisaged to align with the implementation of the New Project Cycle in FPMIS. (c) Recommendation Implemented: TCP Step-by-Step instructions have been revised to reflect the need to enter information and upload the related documentation in FPMIS through Clearances field.	In process. Not all measures have been fully implemented.
	system especially reports such as the QPIR in aid of monitoring and to give more value to the purpose of the report; and (e) ensure that only documents/reports in their finalized forms are entered in the system to maintain the integrity of the desired			(d) Recommendation implemented- A new monitoring and reporting approach for the TCP programme (Phases 4-5) has been developed, substituting the QPIR with a new results-based reporting framework. All reports will be uploaded FPMIS under the link designed for this purpose.	

Reco	mmendation	Suggested Timeline	Responsible Unit	Management Response	External Auditor's Comments
	information to be delivered. (Paragraph 164)			(e) Recommendation implemented - This has been clarified. The fact that there are project documents with track changes in FPMIS is not because they were uploaded with track changes but rather due to a lack of compatibility between different versions of Word.	
				While these recommendations have already been largely implemented. it should also be noted that the TCP Enhancement measures (developed in line with the proposals presented in JM 2013.2/2 and endorsed by the Council at its 146th session in December 2013, will further allow the simplification and harmonization of TCP procedures with those of the TF project cycle. The TCP unit and OSD are, in that context, working together to further improve the monitoring tools available to users/TCP coordinators through FPMIS.	
				Following the launch before the end of 2014 of the revised TCP manual and the CPF guidance relating to the development of an indicative TCP pipeline annex to the CPF, capacity development efforts will be undertaken at all levels, and include actions such as the revision of the TCP Web site, the introduction of a specific module in FAOR school, training modules etc.	
31	Review the corporate Budget Holder training course and include the FPMIS operational monitoring tools for projects (FPSN and Pending	2012	TC/CSP	Plans are to ensure training on TCP related issues, tools and guidelines, including new standard reports for project monitoring and reporting, with the timing envisaged to align with the implementation	Implemented.

Reco	ommendation	Suggested Timeline	Responsible Unit	Management Response	External Auditor's Comments
Mon	Housekeeping Actions), and create elearning related products for the staff members in the field. (Paragraph 177) agement of Emergency and Rehabilitation	n Activities		of the New Project Cycle in FPMIS. The corporate budget holder course is being revised in line with the needs of the identified target audiences to carry out their budgetary responsibilities. With the revised FAO project cycle and the need to create common discipline across all offices in operational and administrative project management capacity, a set of virtual tutorials have been identified for design and development during the first quarter of 2013. The RLC, has been identified as having the knowledge and expertise in both the content and the development of such tutorials. This internal arrangement will take place in collaboration with OSD, OSP, RLC and CSPL leveraging the expertise of RLC to assist all other regions.	
32	Make the operating information more reliable by obtaining necessary country-level data as basis for decision-making. (Paragraph 182)	2012	TC	This recommendation related to the TCE Operational Strategy 2010-2013, issued in March 2010, which was superseded by the decentralization process initiated in 2012. Adjusting indicators and measuring progresses at this stage against an outdated document/ strategy would have a limited value.	In process. Validation will be undertaken once the ongoing integration process is completed.
34	That Management: (a) review the milestone set to make it more realistic after recognizing impediments that may not have been considered during the initial strategy formulation; (b) consider a more appropriate timeframe within which	2012	TC	This recommendation related to the TCE Operational Strategy 2010-2013, issued in March 2010, which was superseded by the decentralization process initiated in 2012. Adjusting indicators and measuring progresses at this stage against an outdated document/ strategy would have a limited value.	In process. For validation in future audit

Reco	Recommendation		Responsible Unit	Management Response	External Auditor's Comments
	the milestone will be achieved; and (c) set the bottom line at a level where information movement is not hindered.				
	(Paragraph 188)				
35	Include clearer and more accurate indicators in the reformulation of milestones for more effective tracking with utmost consideration of decentralization efforts. (Paragraph 190)	2012	TC	This recommendation related to the TCE Operational Strategy 2010-2013, issued in March 2010, which was superseded by the decentralization process initiated in 2012. Adjusting indicators and measuring progresses at this stage against an outdated document/ strategy would have a limited value.	In process. For validation in future audit
36	Shorten time lag, and manage obstacles that persist among collaboration points, synergy principle agreements and final delivery of security strategy, and provide adjustments to milestone. (paragraph 193)	2012	TC	This recommendation related to the TCE Operational Strategy 2010-2013, issued in March 2010, which was superseded by the decentralization process initiated in 2012. Adjusting indicators and measuring progresses at this stage against an outdated document/ strategy would have a limited value.	In process. For validation in future audit
37	Require submission of reports within the project time frames despite identified constraints. Prioritize the enhancement of the competencies of those charged with report preparation particularly in the field offices. (Paragraph 197)	2012	TC	Project closure activities are strictly followed up monthly for projects under closure. Donor reporting remains a top priority and management will pursue capacity development efforts in this area, particularly in support of field offices. This recommendation related to the TCE Operational Strategy 2010-2013, issued in March 2010, which was superseded by the decentralization process initiated in 2012.	In process. For validation in future audit

Recommendation		Suggested Timeline	Responsible Unit	Management Response	External Auditor's Comments
				The ongoing amalgamation of the TCS and TCE Outreach Groups results in improved and more consistent service delivery.	
38	Conduct an evaluation of the expected impact of a more inclusive and integrated analysis on food chain crisis prevention, a desired outcome stated in the PIR. (Paragraph 202)	2012	TC	An evaluation on the tool is foreseen within the framework of the corporate strategy on information systems for food and nutrition security which is under development.	In process. For validation in future audit
40	Make policy enhancements to the Field Programme Manual to define timelines for full settlement of commitment, filing of pending claims, and processing of Property Transfer Form (PTF). Include in the Project Agreements clauses pertaining to Disposal of Equipment, or use of equipment after the NTE date. (Paragraph 209)	2012	TC	Project closure has been included as a specific phase of the new project cycle to emphasize its importance and specificity. Under the closure step, specific instructions are included for fulfilling the following actions: • project terminal report completion; • coordination of departure of field project personnel; • provision of last inputs; • disposal of equipment; • information of all parties of operational closure. Additional enhancements of the sections will be made to incorporate recommendation regarding TSS claims, timeline of actions, as well of roles and responsibilities for action.	In process. For validation in future audit

Human Resources Management

Reco	Recommendation		Responsible Unit	Management Response	External Auditor's Comments
41	That the hiring units and the CSH: (a) closely monitor vacancies that are experiencing delays in the processing of applications and that efforts be made to facilitate the timely completion of the evaluation; (b) define a policy on the maximum time allowed for accounts to remain idle in iRecruitment before they may be purged from the system as well as the desired retention period for reports; and (c) revisit the design and routine assignment of vacancy numbers in the iRecruitment to ensure that (i) the basic control on the existence of an audit trail is embedded in the system so that the processed data are complete, timely and accurate; and (ii) gaps and duplications in numbering are avoided. (Paragraph 215)	2012	OHR	 (a) Monitoring mechanisms are in place to monitor vacancies experiencing delays and CSP is actively following up where necessary with recruiting areas. The implementation of iRecruitment is greatly speeding up the timely completion of pre-screening of applicants. (b) The policy will be defined by the end of 2013. Further review of this item was undertaken during the definitions of requirements and testing of the new FAO Roster functionality in 2014, and a concurrent programme (FAO Notify Applicants to update account) was developed for the Recruitment Office use. However, the general policy for iRecruitment on purging of accounts has not yet been defined by CSP and this question will be reviewed in 2015. (c) This is an identified technical issue for which actions to address it have been initiated. 	In process. Recommendations a) and c) were already implemented while b) is still in process.
42	Continuously pursue its efforts to cut down the processing time from VA closure to submission of recommendations to PSSC by reducing the time spent by recruiting units for pre-screening, short-listing, interviewing and selection.	2012	OHR	Efforts are ongoing to identify bottlenecks in the recruitment process and implement solutions. Regular progress reports are presented at each session of the Finance Committee. The processing time for the evaluation of candidatures has generally improved thanks to the implementation of iRecruitment.	Implemented.

Reco	Recommendation		Responsible Unit	Management Response	External Auditor's Comments
	(Paragraph 219)				
43	Require hiring units to closely coordinate with the Human Resources Management Division (CSH) and Professional Staff Selection Committee (PSSC) Secretariat to ensure that submissions for possible appointment will not cause the countries they represent to reach the upper representation limit, to sustain the Organizations' gender balance and geographic representation targets. (Paragraph 224);	2012	OHR	Recommendation implemented.	Implemented.
44	Ensure timely recording of the changes in the geographical representation resulting from change of nationality, recruitments, mandatory retirements, resignation and other modes of separation and include in the Geographical Representation Report, the causes of the change in representation of member countries for an accurate and timely representation profile. (Paragraph 225)	2012	OHR	Recommendation implemented.	Implemented.

Reco	ommendation	Suggested Timeline	Responsible Unit	Management Response	External Auditor's Comments
45	Establish measures to: (a) streamline the recruitment process of Junior Professionals; (b) use the system of iRecruitment in processing applications under the Junior Professional Programme (JPP); and (c) ensure compliance with the requirements of preparing a Project Implementation Document (PID) to establish a clear project outline and more realistic targets and timeframes. (Paragraph 229)	2012	OHR	 (a) Recommendation implemented (b) Recommendation implemented (c) A project plan with clear timelines is prepared at the beginning of the recruitment process for each cohort of J's. This is communicated to recruiting units. 	Implemented
46	Establish clear-cut rules on the acceptance and processing of late submissions from prospective JPP candidates to promote fairness among candidates. (Paragraph 232)	2012	OHR	Recommendation implemented. The third cohort was managed through the iRecruitment FAO Corporate System. The system has an automatic close feature which precludes the possibility of submitting a late application. Candidates would need to demonstrate extreme circumstances justifying that s/he could not send an application on-line within the indicated deadline.	For validation in future audit.
47	Undertake active measures to increase JPP's market base. In this regard, establish linkage with relevant tertiary educational institutions and professional associations to attract participants from target countries. (Paragraph 236)	2012	OHR	Recommendation implemented. In addition to advertising vacant positions through the FAO website, the JPO unit has taken the following measures: Advertise positions through the most common social networks (Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn) Communications have been sent to FAO Representatives and also Permanent Representatives to identify institutions to which	For validation in future audit.

Reco	Recommendation		Responsible Unit	Management Response	External Auditor's Comments
				VAs can be disseminated through an automated distribution system. The number of institutions thus contacted has considerably increased since 2010. As a result, for the 19 positions advertised in 2013, OHR received 7,500 applications versus the 2,400 received in 2010 for 18 available positions.	
48	Proceed with the issuance of an official Corporate Mobility Policy to provide a common understanding of the goals, benefits and specific expectations of the Organization from its staff with regard to their performance and conduct as well as to provide guidance on staff rotations and reassignments. (Paragraph 240)	2012	OHR	Recommendation implemented.	Implemented.
49	Enhance the evaluation policy to comply with the United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG) Standards by including in the Office of Evaluation (OED) Charter: (a) Responsibilities of evaluators and their required competencies; (b) Expectations from senior management and programme managers; (c) Criteria for the selection of projects to be evaluated; (d) Timing of the conduct thereof; (e) Institutionalization of the monitoring of evaluation results; and (f) Maintenance of an up-to-date	2012	OED	While the suggestions made do not warrant formal amendment of the Charter, they are largely valid and the sub-recommendations have been or are being addressed as follows: a) vacancies for OED posts are drafted based on UNEG standards; b) the Evaluation Committee (Internal) will be requested to discuss and provide feedback on expectations from senior management and programme managers; c) OED is monitoring with TCSR the inclusion of evaluation provisions in projects, as per Field Programme Circular 2011/1	Implemented.

Reco	ommendation	Suggested Timeline	Responsible Unit	Management Response	External Auditor's Comments
	database containing findings, recommendations and lessons learned for use by the Organization and its stakeholders in making decisions. (Paragraph 246)			d) closer internal monitoring of progress on conducting project evaluations has been instituted in OED; e) as endorsed by the Programme Committee where cost-effective, the validation of Follow-up Reports to Management Responses has been initiated as part of the evaluation regime; f) by end of 2013, OED expects having the database set-up and functioning, as part of the Evaluation Knowledge Management Strategy.	
50	Develop the guidelines to implement the recommended additional evaluation policies and ensure its completion. (Paragraph 247)	2012	OED	Following the arrival of the new Director, OED, in February 2014, work is in progress. OED expects to issue a new Manual on evaluation by the end of 2014, which will encompass overall guidelines for evaluation in FAO.	In process.
51	Review the existing planning and collaboratively develop with OED staff the evaluation work plan to foster transparency in planning, monitoring and reporting on the status and results of each project evaluation. (Paragraph 250)	2012	OED	Since 2013, the work-plan for project evaluations is prepared based on the identification of projects due for evaluation twice per year, in consultation with project managers. The plan is regularly updated to reflect new requests for project evaluations or changes in project implementation that affect the timing of evaluation.	Implemented.
52	Conduct an ex-post evaluation on projects to fully assess the impact and sustainability of completed projects. Allocate a budget for the conduct of ex-post evaluation. (Paragraph 258)	2012	OED	Project funds are not available for ex-post evaluations or any other purpose after financial closure of the project. However, OED proposes to use a proportion of the funds gathered in the Trust Fund for the evaluation of voluntary-funded initiatives for this purpose. At the same time, it should be noted thematic, strategy and country	In process. For the time being, no stakeholders have shown interest in ex-post evaluations and no resources could be assigned to this activity from within the Trust

Reco	Recommendation		Responsible Unit	Management Response	External Auditor's Comments
				evaluations have already included ex-post evaluations, and impact studies have been a recurrent feature of country evaluations.	Fund.
53	Improve the QA tools by providing adequate descriptions/criteria or values to the questions/issues and the scoring scale, where applicable and to the extent practicable, to ensure the quality of the project evaluation processes and outputs. Utilize the QA tools during the execution of evaluation apart from ex-post to ensure improved quality of evaluation processes and reports. (Paragraph 260)	2012	OED	Following the new Project Cycle Guide issued by FAO in 2012, OED has revised its guidelines and tools for project evaluations. Plans are to complete implementation of the recommendation by the end of 2013.	Implemented.
54	Continue to closely monitor the submission by responsible officials of their responses to evaluation and follow-up reports. Call the attention of those concerned for noted delay or non-submission of the Management Response and Follow-up Reports. Indicate in the report or record the date of receipt of the said reports for monitoring and control purposes. (Paragraph 265)	2012	OED	OED continues to monitor timeliness of responses and records related dates of receipt.	Implemented.

2010-11 BIENNIUM - AUDIT OF DECENTRALIZED OFFICES

SIGNIFICANT

Reco	Recommendation		Responsible Unit	Management Response	External Auditor's Comments
Proje	ect Management				
56	Work within the approved project budget, and in the case of Trust Fund (TF) projects, work within the cash received from donors; ensure that funds are available for the project before incurring commitments and expenditures; diligently monitor and check cash balances through Field Programme Management Information System (FPMIS), Oracle Data Warehouse and Field Accounting System (FAS); and alert Finance Division (CSF) of any prospective need to obtain additional cash from the donor. (Paragraph 273)	2012	BHs/FPSN/ OSD	See response to recommendation no. 2.	In process. Cases of over-expenditures were still noted in RAP and RAF during the biennium.
57	Review and monitor the status of projects with past NTE dates to determine any reporting deficiencies, require immediate compliance with donor's other requirements, and request full release of the remaining funds for said projects. (Paragraph 274)	2012	BHs/FPSN/ OSD	See response to recommendation no. 2.	In process. Reporting deficiencies were still noted in the audit of RAP and FRUGA.

Reco	ommendation	Suggested Timeline	Responsible Unit	Management Response	External Auditor's Comments
58	Ensure the provision of evaluation budget for every project to enable the conduct of a terminal or ex-post evaluation. (Paragraph 277)	2012	BH/TC/OSD	For all cases where an evaluation is required by the donor, project evaluations have been and will continue to be carried out. For all other projects, evaluation budgets are established in accordance with established policies. In addition, a budget equivalent to 0.4% of the TCP biennial appropriation is made available to BHs to conduct an Ex-Post-Assessment (EPA) of individual TCP projects, as endorsed by the Council at its 141st session	Implemented.
Proc	urement and Letters of Agreement (LoA)			
62	Ensure that the schedule of payment in the LoA adequately protect the Organization's interests and encourage timely delivery of services/products. (Paragraph 290)	2012	FAOR Pakistan	Recommendation implemented	Implemented.
63	Ensure that the IPs selected possess good track record and financial capacity, and can perform the activities without requesting significant amounts as initial payment and ensure that the amount of advance payment falls within the limit set out in MS 507. (Paragraph 291)	2012	FAOR Pakistan	Recommendation implemented	Implemented.
Asse	t Management				
64	Improve asset management by: (a) strict compliance with the Organization's manual, regulations	2012	CSF	The Organization agrees with the recommendation. Significant changes and improvements of the existing processes have been introduced by GRMS:	In Process. Our review of 2,486 active

Reco	ommendation	Suggested Timeline	Responsible Unit	Management Response	External Auditor's Comments
	and rules through regular submission of an updated Year-end Asset Report (YEAR) as basis for reconciliation with headquarters records; (b) regular monitoring of procurement of non-expendable properties; and (c) prompt reporting of acquisitions using the ADM 41, and losses, damages and non-serviceability using ADM 83. (Paragraph 294)			a) The physical verification of assets (YEAR) process has been simplified and more timely and an asset count and verification was carried out as part of the GRMS deployment. b) Verification of non-expendable properties are now carried out on a rolling basis. c) Timeliness has improved as the former ADM41 manual process has been automated under GRMS and the ADM83 (disposal) process is now fully supported by a system workflow	assets with pending actions for disposal before the GRMS roll-out revealed low turn-out of responses from field offices on request for physical verification of assets by the SSC. Sixty three active assets amounting to USD233,320 with Org Code AGPDD were not available in COIN and thus, field offices concerned may not be able to retire this assets in COIN. Moreover, Codan Transceivers valued at UISD78,748 have been stored in Pakistan Customs since 2008 while assets amounting to USD58,510 were retired without complete documentation. Deficiencies on asset management were likewise noted in RAF and RAP.
65	Establish custodianship and accountability of each staff member and official for both expendable and non-expendable items using the	2012	CSF	GRMS allows direct user system input of custodian or responsible officer data and regular monitoring of this is performed by SSC Assets Group Budapest using custom built monitoring reports to ensure	In Process. Verification of sample assets from the list of active assets with pending action for

Recommendation		Suggested Timeline	Responsible Unit	Management Response	External Auditor's Comments
	Custody of Property form. (Paragraph 297)			adherence to this requirement.	disposal revealed that assets were not assigned to custodians or responsible accountable officers for safekeeping and reporting of these assets. Deficiencies were still noted in RAF and FRGHA.
Cons	sultants		1		,
66	Implement the prescribed controls and guidelines/ regulations in hiring consultants. (Paragraph 300)	2012	OHR	A revised corporate framework on the use of internationally recruited consultants and PSAs was issued at the end of 2013, following extensive consultation with the technical departments. Guidelines for the recruitment and serving of locally -recruited consultants and PSAs were revised and issued in March 2014. Both documents provide substantial guidance on all aspects of their recruitment, including on establishing the honoraria and the importance of the final performance assessment. The templates for the terms of reference of employees, with clear times frames and performance indicators, as well as for performance reports, have been updated and are provided with the new guidelines.	To be validated in future audit
67	Enforce the provisions of MS 319 particularly on the competitive selection process in the choice of consultants to afford the FAO Representation Office (FAOR) Ethiopia the opportunity of getting	2012	FAOR Ethiopia	Agreed.	Implemented.

Reco	mmendation	Suggested Timeline	Responsible Unit	Management Response	External Auditor's Comments
	the best expert at the most advantageous cost. Expand database of consultants and maximize the use of the Roster to reduce dependence on a limited number of experts in the hiring process. (Paragraph 303)				
68	Ensure strict compliance with financial regulations, rules and policies to improve the financial and cash management in the decentralized offices (Paragraph 306)	2012	CSF	See response to recommendation no. 69	In process. The Organization's compliance shall be validated during the biennium 2014-15 audit.
69	Improve monitoring control in decentralized offices by checking regularly their compliance with the Organization's financial regulations and policies to address the risk of inappropriate use of funds. Consider in the action plan of CSF the build-up of competencies of staff performing financial functions in decentralized offices (Paragraph 307)	2012	CSF	The PWB 2014 proposals reflect a reorganization of the Finance Division to better support the transformational changes endorsed by the governing bodies. Internal control of financial and accounting processes will be strengthened both at headquarters and in decentralized locations and which will be further supported by the location of dedicated outposted Finance Officers at each Regional Office. These efforts will be further facilitated by the rollout of GRMS functionality which will provide the Organization with increased tools which support improved monitoring controls in decentralized offices.	In process. The Organization's compliance shall be validated during the biennium 2014-15 audit.

2008-2009 BIENNIUM - AUDIT OF HEADQUARTERS

FUNDAMENTAL

FUNDAMENTAL Rec 1. Staff Related Liabilities We strongly recommend that the Organization take the matter of funding its Organization take the matter of funding its Organization take the matter of funding its	w the attention of the In pro	
We strongly recommend that the Organization take the matter of funding its CSF Management continues to dra Governing Bodies to this matt	w the attention of the In pro	
Organization take the matter of funding its Governing Bodies to this matter	w the attention of the In pro	
staff related liabilities with extreme urgency as deferment of decisions most particularly on funding proposals will in no doubt compromise the financial viability of the Programme of Work and Budget (PWB) in future years. regular documents during the providing updated information liability, on options to address the ASMC Liability, on the or within the United Nations Sys and on activities aimed at con the current medical insurance are ongoing and will continue	biennium 2012-13, n on the size of the s the funding gap of ngoing discussions stem on this matter, taining the costs of plan. These efforts We n yet be Confe obliga recon	oted the proposals made g 2012-13 to address anding gap of After ce Medical Care MC) liabilities and the osals in the PWB for sonal funding of the content of the form of the

Recommendation	Suggested Timeline	Responsible Unit	Management Response	External Auditor's Comments
We recommended and the Organization agreed to undertake a comprehensive review of outdated Host Country Agreements (HCAs) to assess the adequacy of the contributions, in cash or in kind, and explore the possibility of generating additional revenues by negotiating improved cost-sharing schemes between the Organization and amenable host countries.	2010	OSD	The Office of Support to Decentralization (OSD) has prepared a proposal for a comprehensive review and re-negotiation of the FAOR HCAs and relevant Government's contribution based on countries' income classification. This exercise has started on a pilot basis for a first group of countries where there are no arrears and using the new standard HCA format which has been developed. Further details of progress on the pilot were provided to the 147th Session of the Finance Committee (doc FC 147/14 Annex). Progress on the pilot exercise is slower than originally anticipated, primarily due to the low rate of response from the concerned Governments and the need to re-negotiate the level of their contribution. OSD will continue to work closely with the FAO Representatives in the countries concerned by the re-negotiation of host country agreements in order to fully address and conclude the comprehensive review.	Implemented.
Rec 4. Working Capital Fund (WCF)	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	1	<u></u>
We recommended that the Organization seriously consider increasing the level of the WCF to provide sufficient buffer to the General Fund (GF). In this regard, the Secretariat confirmed that they will include proposals to increase the level of the WCF in the PWB for 2012-13 under the section on Financial Health similar to those which were previously presented in the PWB	2010	CSF	The Secretariat included proposals to increase the funding level of the WCF in the PWB 2014-15. However the 38th Session of the Conference in June 2013 deferred to future biennia. At is 154th Session in May 2014, the Finance Committee reviewed document FC154/5 which provided a review of the levels of the Working Capital Fund and the Special Reserve Accounts.	In process. We took note of the actions taken by the Secretariat and the Governing Bodies to increase the funding level of the WCF. The recommendation shall be monitored until it is fully

Recommendation	Suggested Timeline	Responsible Unit	Management Response	External Auditor's Comments
2010-11 but which were not endorsed by the Membership at that time. We also reiterate our recommendation that the Organization continue its efforts to collect contributions and arrears due from member states.			Following its review, the Committee looked forward to considering proposals related to the replenishment of the reserves of the Organization in the context of the proposed Programme of Work and Budget 2016-17.	addressed.
Rec 5. Regular Programme budgetary contro	ls			
We encourage the Organization to consider the standard Oracle budgetary functionality for effective and efficient fund sufficiency checking in accordance with the budget fungibility rules.	2010	OSP/CSF	The External Auditor notes in his report (para. 61) that a thorough approach to budgetary control is already in place at the Organization, which ensures that budget holders are provided with regularly updated budget status information and which includes all transactions processed in both Oracle and non-Oracle applications. Such information is made available to budget holders (BH) via the Oracle Data Warehouse (ODW) and is updated on a daily basis. BHs are instructed to review this information regularly and to commit funds after review of the available balances. In addition to this, the Organization has established systems and procedures for monitoring and reporting on the status of allottee appropriations and for the review and authorization of additions to and transfers between allotments. With the implementation of GRMS and the roll-out of financial systems to country offices in 2013, more complete and timely financial information will be available and facilitate the potential implementation of automated budgetary control functionality.	In process. We recognize the linkage of the recommendation with the ongoing review of the new planning and budgeting module and we encourage the Organization to complete the action on the recommendation. Validation will be undertaken once a new reporting system has been put in place.

Recommendation	Suggested Timeline	Responsible Unit	Management Response	External Auditor's Comments
			During 2012-13 the Organization finalized the requirements for the design of the new Planning and Budgeting Model, which was introduced for 2014-15 along with a new standardized monitoring and reporting system The use of standard Oracle budgetary functionality for automated funds checking has not been found to be practical in this context.	
8. Support costs to Field Programme (Project	Servicing Co	osts)		
We suggest that the Organization: a) in accordance with the principle of reasonable alignment of support costs to field programmes and projects as they had actually materialized and recoveries from donor funded projects, work on the immediate expansion of the policy on support cost reimbursements to include recovery of any fixed indirect costs as far as already acceptable to donors and can be made acceptable to them and provide for the appropriate guidelines and training required. b) in accordance with the principle of transparency and in order to accurately establish the reasonable level of support cost reimbursements, consider reporting and assessing the level of reimbursements of support costs from Extra Budgetary (EB)	2012	OSP	The Secretariat presented measures to improve implementation of the Organization's Support Cost Policy to the Finance Committee at its 138th Session in March 2011. These measures were welcomed by the Committee and it looked forward to reviewing in further detail at its session in October 2011 proposals for cost recovery measures of categories previously excluded from the policy. The 37th Session of the Conference in June 2011 reaffirmed the policy of full cost recovery and noted its concern about the persistent underrecovery of administrative and operational support costs as regularly reported in the biennial Programme Implementation Reports. The Conference urged the Director-General to vigorously pursue improved administrative and operational support cost recovery from extrabudgetary activities and develop new mechanisms, as appropriate, building on the experience of other UN Agencies. Such means for improved cost	In process. We noted the implementation during the 2012-13 biennium of the ICRU at HQ and the planned full implementation in decentralized offices in 2014-15. We believe that the evolving internal and external operating environments and the appetite for harmonization of cost categorization and recovery among UN agencies offer good prospects for a more thorough study of FAO's support cost arrangements and note the report on this which is expected to be

Recommendation	Suggested Timeline	Responsible Unit	Management Response	External Auditor's Comments
funded projects to show the following:			recovery, including for security, information systems and technology were considered by the	presented to the Finance Committee in 2014.
b.1 unrecovered fixed indirect support costs			Finance Committee in October 2011 and approved	201 H
b.2 unrecovered support costs by category of programmes or projects;			by the Council in December 2011. As a result, an uplift of project staff costs and project consultant	
b.3 unrecovered support costs represented by the difference between the approved Technical Support Services (TSS) and Project Servicing Costs (PSC) rates and actual reimbursements; and			costs has been gradually introduced from 2012 and was fully implemented by January 2014 to improve cost recovery for categories of variable indirect costs that had been largely excluded from the FAO Support Cost Policy, but were normally recovered by other UN Organizations. Thus recommendation	
b.4 unrecovered support costs represented			8a) has been implemented.	
by the difference between the support cost income budgeted and the actual reimbursements by manner of recovery (fixed-percentage charge, direct charge to			Recommendations 8b.3) and 8c) were addressed in the PIR 2012-13 (Section III.D - Cost of Field Programme Support).	
programme or project or combination of the two).			Recommendation 8.d.1was addressed in the Annual Report of Support Costs Expenditure and Recoveries to the Finance Committee (e.g. FC	
c) in order to present fairly the support costs actually incurred under the Regular			151/9).	
Programme (RP) funds, consider the disclosure in the financial statements of the unrecovered support costs from donor funded projects and absorbed by the RP fund and how these were calculated.			A comprehensive review addressing all aspects of FAO's support cost policy was initiated in 2012 and reported progressively to the Finance Committee in November 2013, May and November 2014. A new policy is expected to be put in place during 2015. It	
d) in keeping with the principle of reasonable alignment of support costs to field programmes and projects as they had actually materialized and recoveries from donor funded projects, and in order to accurately establish the reasonable level of			will address the remaining recommendations.	

Recommendation	Suggested Timeline	Responsible Unit	Management Response	External Auditor's Comments
TSS cost recovery:				
d.1 consider articulating the instances where recovery is possible or not and;				
d.2 establish the extent at which the Organization desires to recover the cost of TSS.				
SIGNIFICANT				
Rec 16. Plan Assets				·
We recommend that the Organization consider placing the earmarked long term investment and advance payments for the Separation Payment Schemes (SPS) in a separate trust fund to properly recognize them as Plan Assets as part of the effort towards full adoption of International Public Sector Accounting Standards (IPSAS).	2012	CSF	As noted by the External Auditor in his report (para. 158), review of the recommendation to place the earmarked assets in a separate trust fund shall be undertaken within the context of IPSAS implementation.	In process. We will review the implementation of the recommendation within the context of IPSAS implementation.
Rec 17. Procurement – Liquidated Damages	of Late Deliv	veries Assets		

Recommendation	Suggested Timeline	Responsible Unit	Management Response	External Auditor's Comments
We recommend that the monitoring of deliveries be strictly performed by the Budget Holders (BH). The recommendation to impose penalties, if any, should be made by him/her already and subsequently deducted from the payment.	2011 onwards	CSA	The Organization agrees that monitoring of deliveries should be performed by the Budget Holders and, as appropriate, that they make recommendations regarding application of liquidated damages for late delivery. However, final determination of application of liquidated damages rests with the Buyer and Authorized Official so as to ensure that all factors including any mitigating circumstances or contractual obligations are considered. Guidance notes to the Budget Holders have been prepared and take into account changes introduced by GRMS and the receiving function. The Guidance Notes are posted on the front page of the Procurement intranet site and further dissemination to Budget Holders will be undertaken via e-mail and the CSAP NewsBrief.	In process. We noted during the biennium end audit that liquidated damages were not enforced on late deliveries at RAF and FRGHA. Compliance will be validated again in 2014-15 audits

2008-09 BIENNIUM - AUDIT OF DECENTRALIZED OFFICES

Recommendation	Suggested Timeline	Responsible Unit	Management Response	External Auditor's Comments		
FUNDAMENTAL						
Rec 20. Budgetary Controls – Regular Progra	amme (Regio	onal Office for A	Africa)			
We recommend that the Regional Office for Africa (RAF) enforce more strictly the requirement to secure prior approval from the Office of Strategy, Planning and Resources Management (OSP) before incurring commitments and expenditures requiring shifts of allotments exceeding USD 100,000 at programme level and USD 20,000 each at chapter and allottee levels. RAF's request for shift, which may be included in the PBR, needs to state specifically the allotted amounts to be shifted, the source of allotment for transfer between programmes or chapters and the reasons or justifications for the transfer. We also encourage RAF to work consistently within the limit of the institutional allotment provided in accordance with the PWB.	2010	RAF	RAF will ensure that it works within the limit of allotments provided and reported through PBRs in accordance with the PWB, and that written authorizations are received from OSP before proceeding to budget implementation.	Implemented.		
Rec 21. Budgetary Controls – Projects (Reg	Rec 21. Budgetary Controls – Projects (Regional Office for Africa)					
We recommended and RAF agreed that the Budget Holders (BHs) endeavour to work within the approved project budget for TCP	2010	RAF	RAF agrees with the recommendation, and notes that the newly created Regional Programme Coordination Unit (RPCU) has the responsibility to	In process. Over-expenditures were still		

Recommendation	Suggested Timeline	Responsible Unit	Management Response	External Auditor's Comments
and in the case of Trust Fund (TF) project within the cash received from donor. To ensure that funds are available for the project before incurring commitments and expenditures, the BH should consider employing worksheet of actual commitments and expenditures outside of the existing systems to keep track of project cash or fund balance until system embedded controls to prevent over-expenditure are put in place. In the event that the cash balance is low and there is a need to obtain additional cash from the donor and as required in the Project Agreement, the BH needs to promptly request from the Finance Division - Project Accounting (CSFE) the need for the Call for Funds and submit budget revision needing donor's consent/approval to prevent incurrence of negative cash balance for TF projects			address the issues and closely monitor programmes/projects and their budgets in the manner that has been recommended by the External Auditor. Some FAO Representations are already using the tracking system to monitor their project budget. Following the hub trainings carried out by RAF at the end of the last biennium, RAF is now working closely with other FAO Representations to have the tracking system in place. The new field solution to be rolled out in 2013 as part of the GRMS Programme will provide complete and timely information on local commitments, hence facilitating budget and cash balance monitoring, and more timely call for funds. It is also noted that "The Field Programme Support Network" (FPSN) Monitoring Tool in FPMIS highlights where Budget Holder attention is required for a call for funds as one of the specific monitoring elements and FPMIS also sends trigger messages in this respect.	noted in RAF projects during our 2012-13 audits.

Review and Assessment of the Special Fund for Emergency and Rehabilitation Activities

Recommendation	Suggested Timeline	Responsible Unit	Management Response	External Auditor's Comments						
Rec 2. Logical Framework for SFE	Rec 2. Logical Framework for SFERA Projects									
Ensure that a logical framework are prepared for all SFERA-funded projects, regardless of project cost, and made part of project documentation, in accordance with the Instructions Manual on Results-Based Integrated Planning and Monitoring, in order to facilitate review and monitoring of emergency projects.	2012	ТС	SFERA funded projects follow the new Guide to the Project Cycle Guidelines (issued on July 2012). All projects include a Results Matrix.	Implemented.						