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Evaluation of FAO's country programme in Rwanda

2019–2023



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Evaluation of FAO's country programme in Rwanda

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Abstract

The independent evaluation of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) Rwanda Country Programming Framework (CPF) (2019–2023) offers a comprehensive analysis of FAO's strategic alignment, contributions, and impacts within Rwanda. Focused on enhancing FAO's positioning and impact on national and global agricultural goals, the evaluation serves as a pivotal guide for the forthcoming CPF. The evaluation incorporated a consultative approach, employing qualitative and quantitative methods, including document reviews, project analyses, interviews, surveys, and direct field observations across 12 districts and 18 project sites.

The findings showed that the FAO's CPF was well aligned with Rwanda's broader development goals and priorities, particularly the transition to a high-income, knowledge-based economy with resilient agriculture. FAO demonstrated adaptability in tackling emerging challenges like nutrition emergencies and climate shocks but faced limitations due to budget constraints and a lack of long-term focus. FAO's technical expertise in agriculture and nutrition is highly valued, but there is a need for a more focused strategic approach to maximize impact on development challenges. The introduction of the four betters approach could enhance coordination and result-oriented efforts.

The CPF's design weaknesses included broadly defined outcomes with unclear interconnections and measurable indicators, limited gender analysis and risk assessment. FAO's partnerships, especially with Ministry of Agriculture and Animal Resources, were strong, but engagements with other ministries and local authorities were inconsistent, which affected local ownership, sustainability, and impact.

FAO's initiatives significantly improved agricultural practices, leading to increased yields and incomes, and enhanced market access for farmers. Notable achievements include promoting women's empowerment as well as youth employment and collective action. However, the impact of these initiatives is not fully captured due to inadequate documentation and outcome tracking.

The evaluation concludes that while FAO's initiatives align with Rwanda's agricultural development goals and exhibit adaptability, there is a need for more strategic focus and prioritization, considering limited resources. The design of the next CPF ought to address current gaps and promote a results-based approach, including a clear theory of change (TOC), risk analysis, and robust monitoring and evaluation (M&E) systems. Additionally, FAO should aspire toward a gender transformative approach and inclusivity, particularly for people with disabilities, and focus on building sustainable partnerships beyond the agricultural ministry.

Recommendations include focusing on targeted interventions with clear goals and resource mobilization and operationalizing the four betters approach for better coordination and efficiency. The evaluation strongly recommends that FAO identify which ministries align with its new four betters structure in order to ensure their participation in the development and implementation of the future CPF. It should strengthen stakeholder engagement, particularly with the private sector, and promote a gender transformative approach in the future programme.

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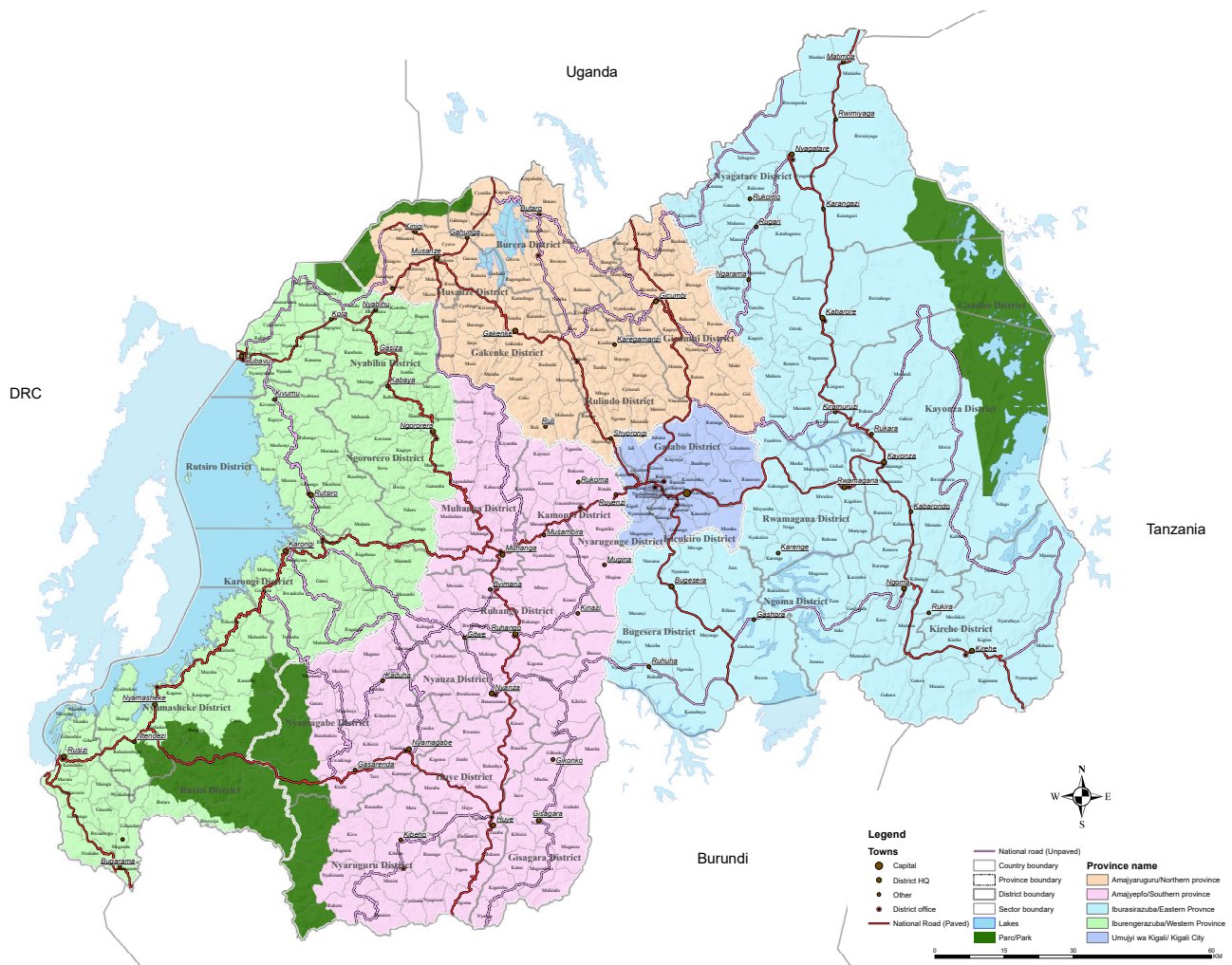
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Abbreviations

CPE	country programme evaluation
CPF	Country Programming Framework
DeSIRA	Development Smart Innovation through Research in Agriculture
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
FFS	Farmer Field School
FGDs	focus group discussions
GDP	gross domestic product
HDI	human development index
ICT	information and communications technology
IFAD	International Fund for Agricultural Development
L-FFS	Livestock Farmer Field School
M&E	monitoring and evaluation
NGO	non-governmental organization
NST	National Strategy for Agricultural Transformation
PSTA	<i>Plan Stratégic de Transformation Agricole</i> [Strategic Plan for Agriculture Transformation]
RWEE	Rural Women's Economic Empowerment
SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
TOC	theory of change
TCP	Technical Cooperation Programme
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNICEF	United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund
UNJP	United Nations Joint Programme
UNSDCF	United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework
WFP	World Food Programme
WHO	World Health Organization
YAHOPROC	Yanze Horticulture Promotion Cooperative

Map of Rwanda



Source: National Institute of Statistics. 2017. *Map of Rwanda*. Kigali. Refer to the disclaimer on copyright page for the names and boundaries used in this map.

Executive summary

Introduction

- 1 This report details an independent evaluation of the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization's (FAO) country programme in Rwanda. The main purpose of the Rwanda country programme evaluation (CPE) is to enhance the positioning of FAO's programme in Rwanda, ensuring it aligns more effectively with the nation's needs, and strengthens FAO's impact on national priorities and the Global Goals of FAO Member Nations. The outcomes of this evaluation will be instrumental in shaping the next Country Programming Framework (CPF) for Rwanda, whose development is scheduled to start in 2024.
- 2 Additionally, the CPE aims to demonstrate FAO's accountability to the Government of Rwanda, its citizens, development and resource partners, and all Member Nations. It will contribute to organizational learning across FAO's corporate, regional, and country levels by drawing out lessons, showcasing good practices, and providing forward-looking, actionable recommendations to guide FAO's future activities in Rwanda.
- 3 The evaluation, covering the period from 2019 to 2023, focused on FAO's overall contribution to the four pillars outlined in the CPF:¹
 - PA1:** Innovative approaches to promote sustainable and integrated crop, livestock, and aquaculture production systems promoted.
 - PA2:** Food security, nutrition and climate, and other shocks to resilient agriculture improved through sustainable and diversified production systems.
 - PA3:** Inclusiveness of agricultural market systems as well as value addition and competitiveness of diversified agricultural commodities in domestic, regional, and international markets promoted.
 - PA4:** Enhanced enabling environment and Responsive institutions for effective and efficient delivery of Services.
- 4 The specific objectives of this CPE were to assess FAO's strategic positioning in Rwanda and the relevance of FAO's work in responding to the country's needs and priorities, assess FAO's contributions to results and outcomes, with a specific focus on the priority areas, identify good practices and lessons learned as well as factors enabling or hindering results; and to identify gaps in FAO's country programming and potential areas of future work. This evaluation was structured around criteria including: i) relevance and comparative advantage; ii) partnership and coordination; iii) contribution to CPF priority areas; iv) cross-cutting issues; v) organizational performance; and vi) sustainability of results.
- 5 In the evaluation process, a consultative approach was adopted, integrating feedback from stakeholders at different phases. The Evaluation Team utilized both qualitative and quantitative methods, considering the available resources and time. Data collection involved a variety of sources, such as thorough reviews of existing documents, detailed analysis and mapping of projects, and interviews with key informants conducted both online and face-to-face. Consultations, focus group discussions (FGDs), and direct observations of the impact FAO has on community beneficiaries were carried out in

¹ The Country Programming Framework (CPF), initially planned to end in 2023, was extended to mid and then end 2024, in order to align it with the ongoing United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework UNSDCF (2018–2024) and Fourth Strategic Plan for Agriculture Transformation (PSTA4).

the four provinces and the city of Kigali where FAO is active and included visits to 17 districts and 16 project sites. Additionally, an online survey was conducted as part of the mid-term evaluation of the project “Capacity development for innovation in Rwanda: Strengthening innovation partnerships in six districts: Burera, Rutsiro, Gatsibo, Nyagatare, Bugesera, and Ruhango” (GCP/RWA/046/EC), part of the Development Smart Innovation through Research in Agriculture (DeSIRA) initiative.

Main findings

Relevance

- 6 The FAO’s CPF for Rwanda (2019–2024) is well-aligned with the country’s broad national development goals and agricultural sector priorities, as reflected in Rwanda’s Vision 2050 and the Fourth Strategic Plan for Agriculture Transformation (PSTA4). This alignment supports Rwanda’s transformation into a high-income, knowledge-based economy with a focus on modern, climate-resilient agriculture and integration into global value chains. However, the CPF could have better integrated the priorities of other key sectoral ministries, addressing gaps in environmental, youth, gender, and local development policies. While the CPF’s alignment with FAO’s global mandates, the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), and United Nations (UN) frameworks is commendable, the program’s overambition in the face of budget constraints and the limited long-term focus of its projects were noted as areas for improvement.
- 7 FAO in Rwanda demonstrated flexibility and adaptability in addressing a range of emerging challenges, including nutrition emergencies, the COVID-19 pandemic, pest outbreaks, and climate-related shocks but faced limitations due to budget constraints and a lack of long-term focus. This adaptability is evident in their significant contribution to the fight against stunting, co-leading the development of the agricultural sector’s COVID-19 economic recovery plan, and implementing diverse projects for climate resilience and pest management. Furthermore, FAO’s initiatives extended beyond their initial mandate to include peacebuilding and health policy support, showcasing their ability to respond effectively to urgent needs while also aligning with the government’s evolving priorities.

Comparative strengths

- 8 FAO in Rwanda is recognized for its technical expertise in agriculture, food, institutional capacity strengthening, and nutrition security, earning trust and value from various stakeholders for its ability to integrate international practices into local contexts. Despite this, there are concerns about the strategic focus of FAO’s efforts, which sometimes appear dispersed, affecting the impact on development challenges. Additionally, the “project” approach, focusing on small, short-term projects, struggles to create lasting impacts due to limited follow-up funding. There is a suggestion for FAO to use its strategic position more effectively, possibly by strengthening coordination interventions with other UN agencies, local civil society organisations, the private sector, and development partners. The introduction of the four betters approach is seen as a potential pathway to a more coordinated, results-oriented framework that could help FAO strengthen its role and contribution to Rwanda’s national agricultural development goals.

Design

- 9 The 2019–2024 CPF for Rwanda and its results framework presented weaknesses in design and internal coherence. The CPF had broadly defined outcome statements that lacked clear interconnections and measurable indicators, making it challenging to assess its overall achievements and how it supported Rwanda’s broader priorities. Additionally, there was a limited comprehensive gender analysis, crucial for ensuring the inclusion of women and vulnerable groups in line with the ‘leave no one behind’ principles, even if efforts were made to address this gap during implementation. The framework also lacked risk analysis, clear underlying assumptions for interventions, and a robust monitoring and evaluation mechanism. Despite estimating the necessary financial resources, the CPF notably lacked a corresponding resource mobilization plan, limiting its operational effectiveness and potential impact.

Partnership and coordination

- 10 FAO in Rwanda has established a robust partnership with the Ministry of Agriculture and Animal Resources, excelling in various agricultural initiatives and policy developments, such as the National Strategy for Youth Employment in Agri-food Systems and the One Health policy. However, engagements with other ministries and local authorities have been inconsistent, often overshadowed by its strong alignment with the Ministry of Agriculture and Animal Resources. This has led to some ministries and local authorities being less aware or involved in FAO's initiatives. While FAO's role in policy and field implementation is recognized, there's a perceived lack of clarity in its strategic positioning, suggesting a need for better communication and reassessment of its approach to ensure more effective and inclusive partnerships across different government levels and sectors in Rwanda.
- 11 FAO's engagement in Rwanda has effectively leveraged partnerships with UN agencies, local non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and the private sector, enhancing its impact on various agricultural initiatives. Collaborations with United Nations agencies like United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and local NGOs in cross-border trade projects, and with the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the World Food Programme (WFP) in social protection interventions, demonstrate FAO's commitment to a comprehensive, multi-stakeholder approach. However, its integration with academia and coordination in value chain development initiatives has been less effective. In terms of private sector engagement, FAO has contributed to knowledge sharing, technology transfer, and market access for farmers, as well as strengthening organizations like the Rwanda Youth in Agribusiness Forum. Yet, challenges remain in fully aligning these efforts with broader initiatives like the Hand-in-Hand Initiative and ensuring that innovation partnerships led by FAO effectively engage all relevant stakeholders, including the private sector, to maximize impact within limited resource constraints.

Contribution to results

- 12 FAO interventions in Rwanda, primarily through the Farmer Field Schools (FFS) approach, successfully boosted agricultural productivity and sustainable practices among farmers. The FFS model, a key strategy, was effectively mainstreamed into the national extension approach, significantly contributing to increased milk production and improved cattle health in the dairy sector, as well as enhancing capacities in pest management and sustainable practices in crop production. Additionally, while FAO's efforts in promoting integrated farming systems, utilizing modern technologies for climate-resilient agriculture, and providing direct input support to farmers were commendable, the spread and short-term nature of these projects led to a perception of dispersed efforts. Interviews and focus group discussions revealed a need for increased resource mobilization, a more programmatic approach, and strengthened partnerships to consolidate FAO's achievements and impacts in Rwanda.
- 13 FAO's interventions under its second priority area focused on improving agricultural productivity, promoting climate resilience, and enhancing nutrition. FAO implemented various capacity-building projects, such as: i) the Rural Women Economic Empowerment (RWEE) programme, which significantly improved agricultural practices and diversified farming methods among households, whilst empowering women and women's groups; and ii) the CDI Rwanda project which conducted significant diagnosis and development of capacity building plans for agricultural innovation, though capacity strengthening interventions were delayed. The overall FAO approach to FFS was pivotal in disseminating knowledge on new agricultural techniques and practices, leading to increased yields and diversification into high-value commodities.
- 14 FAO also emphasized climate resilience through projects like the Emergency-Anticipatory Actions, which provided water pumps to cooperatives, and the collaboration with the Ministry of Emergency Management, aiding communities affected by floods and landslides. Additionally, FAO's interventions in beekeeping promoted non-farm activities and incomes. Despite these achievements, challenges in scaling up successful interventions to other regions and coordinating efforts to maximize impact were noted. The need for further support in adopting modern beekeeping, aquaculture, nutrition-sensitive,

and climate-resilient practices was also recognized. Overall, FAO's technical support demonstrated localized improvements for beneficiaries; and although it required more resources and better coordination to reduce transaction costs of small projects, it strengthened long-term resilience to climate change.

- 15 FAO's initiatives under priority 3, focusing on digital inclusion, capacity building, and market access, particularly emphasized the use of the RuralInvest toolkit, digital services training, and the creation of innovation partnerships. Digital literacy programs, online marketing, and e-commerce training were key components, aimed at improving market access for farmers and cooperatives. The RuralInvest toolkit proved particularly effective in generating high-quality investment proposals, leading to the development of numerous agribusiness plans. This approach facilitated financial access for small and medium-sized rural entrepreneurs. Additionally, FAO's efforts in digital inclusion through the development of mobile applications provided essential agricultural information to smallholder farmers, enhancing decision-making and market knowledge.
- 16 However, despite these strides in local and national market engagement, FAO's interventions showed limited focus on expanding access to regional and international markets and lacked emphasis on value addition. Most capacity-building initiatives concentrated on increasing production and productivity, with less attention to food processing and value addition, which are crucial for penetrating broader markets. The role of innovation partnerships in strengthening access to farm services and markets remains limited. The evaluation noted the absence of specific activities targeted at enhancing food processing, a key step in adding value to agricultural products for larger markets. FAO's future programs, such as the Hand-in-Hand Initiative, present opportunities to address these gaps. By leveraging its expertise in food safety and international standards, FAO can support government efforts in prioritized value chains and expand its impact in facilitating wider market access and promoting value addition.
- 17 FAO's support under its fourth priority area focused on developing key policies, guidelines, and strategies across various sectors, from agriculture and food security to public health and environmental management. This encompassed a broad range of initiatives, such as the development of Rwanda Food Based Dietary Guidelines, a Livestock Master Plan, and strategies for youth employment in agrifood systems. FAO played a significant role in promoting evidence-based policy and strategy development, including in areas like nutrition-sensitive school meal guidelines, e-commerce in agricultural value chains, and post-harvest management strategies. Additionally, FAO's collaboration in developing the One Health policy and strategic plan and supporting the National Pesticides Risk Reduction Plan highlighted its commitment to addressing public health concerns and environmental sustainability.
- 18 While FAO's technical assistance was well-received by government officials, the evaluation noted that the outcomes of these policy supports are not immediately visible, as changes in policy often take time to manifest tangible results. Nevertheless, the evaluation acknowledged FAO's successful cross-sectoral collaboration and partnership with multiple stakeholders in policy development. Looking forward, FAO's next CPF could build upon these established policies and strategies to ensure their effective implementation and integration into operational activities, thereby promoting the operationalization of various instruments developed.
- 19 FAO's training and capacity-building initiatives in Rwanda have significantly improved agricultural practices, leading to increased yields, incomes, and market access for farmers. Farmers have adopted modern techniques like crop rotation and organic fertilizers, resulting in higher yields and increased interest in organic farming. These improvements have translated into higher prices for organic produce and increased income for farmers. Beekeepers transitioning to improved practices have also reported selling higher quality honey at better prices.
- 20 The initiatives have also had a notable impact on inclusion, through collective action and women's empowerment. Cooperatives have reported daily sales increases, and the provision of resources like water pumps has allowed women more time for farming and household responsibilities, leading to the establishment of childcare centres and increased social and economic benefits. Training programs

have empowered women to take on leadership roles and participate more actively in community decision-making. Additionally, social protection and livelihood improvements have been observed, with households moving up in social protection categories and becoming community models. Despite these observed positive outcomes, there is a lack of systematic documentation and outcome tracking by FAO, which limits the ability to fully capture and convey the impact of these interventions.

Cross cutting issues

- 21 FAO Rwanda has successfully incorporated gender mainstreaming and youth engagement, aligning with its policy on gender equality and ensuring women and youth benefit from various projects. This approach has been evident in initiatives like the Accelerating Progress towards the Economic Empowerment of Rural Women project (UNJP/RWA/032/UNJ), which has significantly impacted women's economic empowerment and leadership roles within communities. Women and youth have accessed integrated services, including agricultural extension, financial, and marketing services, leading to increased incomes, savings, and access to better nutrition at household levels. This project has also facilitated women's leadership in various community groups and cooperatives, enhancing their decision-making power and status.
- 22 However, the participation of people with disabilities in FAO's programmes was limited. While disabled individuals were included in some social protection projects, there was no specific strategy to actively involve them. Going forward, FAO could benefit from developing strategies that explicitly include people with disabilities, ensuring their integration and active participation in future projects.

Organizational performance

- 23 The FAO Country Office in Rwanda, consisting of the representative's office, project teams, and administrative/finance personnel, has experienced both successes and challenges in supporting project implementation and achieving results. The office structure has been recently reorganized under the four betters framework to align with the FAO Strategic Framework 2022-2031, aiming to enhance the coordination and delivery of projects on the ground. While the staff shows high commitment and focus, the office has faced challenges due to an increase in the number of projects without a corresponding increase in technical and administrative staff. This situation has led to imbalanced workloads, role ambiguities, and administrative burdens. The evaluation team observed that part of the issue stems from "working hard" rather than following specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and time-bound (SMART) objectives. For instance, senior personnel are involved in field distribution activities while junior personnel and government officials in the districts could well play these roles to enable senior staff to focus on more strategic efforts. Despite these challenges, the FAO Rwanda office has benefitted from significant support from FAO headquarters and regional offices, contributing to the successful implementation of various key projects. The evaluation team also notes that the country office has made efforts to address the performance issues including recruitment of an operations expert, monitoring and evaluation (M&E) officer, reassignment of administrative teams across the four betters, as well as reassignment of some projects to the most competent officials within the team.
- 24 However, coordination between project teams has been difficult, leading to duplication of efforts and inefficiencies. The limited clarity in roles and responsibilities, after the team's restructuring around the betters, and the overburdening of the administrative support team have led to delays in budget revisions, accounting errors, and delays in fund disbursement. The country office has been successful in mobilising over USD 22 million in resources by the time of the evaluation. Procurement has been a particular area of concern due to staff shortages and system inefficiencies, leading to significant delays and budget underutilization. The recent recruitment of an operations officer and administrative support staff is a positive step enhancing procurement and administrative efficiency. Monitoring, evaluation and learning (MEL) is another area where FAO in Rwanda has struggled. The lack of a robust, outcome-focused MEL strategy has hindered the ability to showcase project impacts and foster programmatic learning. The recruitment of an M&E officer suggests progress, but a comprehensive M&E system is still needed for effective tracking and reporting.

Sustainability

- 25 FAO's capacity-building initiatives in Rwanda have effectively strengthened institutional capacities at various levels, demonstrating the potential for long-term economic, social, and environmental sustainability. These initiatives have provided training and technical assistance to a broad range of stakeholders, including farmers, facilitators, and extension officers, in areas such as agriculture, pesticide management, and horticulture. The creation of associations by FFS facilitators and the integration of tools like RuralInvest into university curricula are examples of sustainable knowledge transfer. At the organizational level, cooperatives and farmer groups have received substantial capacity-building support, enhancing their operational effectiveness and sustainability. Nationally, FAO's support has materialized in the form of various policies and strategies, responding to government needs and contributing to long-term institutional sustainability. However, these achievements are threatened by challenges such as limited stakeholder involvement in project design, absence of project exit strategies, and inconsistent engagement with local authorities. These issues have led to mixed outcomes in terms of sustainability, with some communities still expecting continued support from FAO long after project completion.
- 26 FAO has supported organizing farmer groups into registered cooperatives. These are institutions recognized by government and most of them have easily accessed financial support such as loans from banks and savings and credit cooperatives for more agricultural investments. Initiatives like the Buy from Youth programme and the provision of greenhouses, irrigation equipment, and milling machines have demonstrated tangible economic benefits. Socially, FAO's projects have fostered community cohesion, with FFS and savings schemes playing crucial roles in conflict resolution and collective action. Environmentally, FAO's focus on climate-smart agriculture and agroforestry practices has positively contributed to environmental sustainability, supporting climate resilience and resource conservation. Despite these successes, achieving transformative and sustainable results requires ongoing efforts to enhance stakeholder engagement, establish comprehensive exit strategies, and maintain consistent collaboration with local authorities and communities, ensuring that the benefits of FAO's initiatives in Rwanda are sustained and expanded upon.

Conclusions and recommendations

- 27 FAO's initiatives in Rwanda have effectively aligned with the country's national and agricultural development and evolving needs, showcasing the organization's adaptability and valuable technical assistance. Despite operating under limited resources and facing Rwanda's extensive development challenges, FAO's flexibility and technical support have earned widespread appreciation from various stakeholders. A key strength of FAO in Rwanda is the trust and respect it has gained from government counterparts, national entities, and development partners, thanks to its longstanding presence and technical expertise. This positions FAO favourably to leverage these relationships in future programming cycles for the more effective pursuit of agricultural development goals. Although FAO's efforts have significantly strengthened national capacities, the challenge within Rwanda's complex development scenario is not just maintaining relevance but prioritizing areas where FAO's input can have the most substantial impact, especially considering limited resources and field presence.
- 28 The current CPF demonstrated design weaknesses that led to the formulation of broad and unachievable expected outcomes, and an intervention logic that did not provide the basics needed for results-based management, accountability, and demonstration of change. Furthermore, the CPF was overall gender blind, without a clear articulation of a theory of change (TOC), risks, and assumptions that underpin the expected change promoted by FAO.
- 29 FAO's efforts in Rwanda, highlight the need for more strategic, collaborative approaches in addressing the nation's complex agricultural development challenges. Effective partnerships with UN agencies, development partners, and national civil society actors, including NGOs, have been crucial in enhancing project delivery. However, there's a notable opportunity for improvement in the visibility and monitoring of FAO's role in these collaborations, particularly with NGOs. Additionally, engagements

with national universities and the private sector, though significant, require a more consistent and strategically integrated approach. Strengthening these partnerships and enhancing FAO's visibility in collaborative projects will be essential for maximizing the effectiveness and impact of its initiatives in Rwanda's agricultural transformation.

- 30 FAO has successfully established and nurtured robust partnerships with the Rwandan government and other national entities, primarily focusing on agencies related to the Ministry of Agriculture and Animal Resources at both national and local levels. However, the engagement with other affiliated ministries, while notable at the national level, is less pronounced locally. The involvement of local authorities in FAO's interventions varies, often being case specific. This has led to instances where officials from related ministries are unaware of FAO's involvement in their areas, indicating a need for improved communication and coordination. Additionally, the lack of consistent project exit strategies by FAO poses a significant risk to the sustainability of its interventions. Ensuring local ownership and appropriation of the outcomes from FAO's initiatives is crucial, and this inconsistency threatens to undermine these aspects, highlighting the need for more strategic planning and execution in future projects.
- 31 FAO's interventions in Rwanda have significantly contributed to various positive changes at multiple levels, from farmers and cooperatives to national policy, positioning the organization to build upon its strengths in FFS, capacity building, institutional strengthening, and partnerships in the upcoming CPF. Despite the immense challenges in the agricultural sector, FAO's central role in supporting the government's Vision 2050 and the National Strategy for Agricultural Transformation (NST) (implementation of PSTA4 and the design of the PSTA5) highlights its potential for impactful contributions. However, to maximize its effectiveness, FAO must focus on specific areas where it can add the most value, addressing the issue of fragmented interventions and limited resources. The introduction of the four betters approach provides a framework for realigning efforts more programmatically, balancing the need for flexibility with strategic long-term planning. Emphasizing interventions that strengthen private sector linkages, resilience to climate change, addressing stunting, agricultural productivity in food systems, and technological innovation, while leveraging opportunities for investment and resource mobilization, will be key for FAO to enhance its impact and sustainably support the transformation of Rwanda's food systems.
- 32 The FAO team in Rwanda is committed to efficiently delivering the CPF, with recent operational improvements indicating progress. However, challenges such as human resource constraints, budget limitations, and a lack of a results-oriented approach in the CPF have impeded optimal delivery. The recruitment of operations, administration, and monitoring officers marks a positive development, addressing the urgent need not only for a robust M&E system to better track outcomes, enhance learning, and effectively communicate impacts, but also to enhance efficiency in the delivery of FAO interventions. The introduction of a comprehensive M&E system, coupled with post-project monitoring, is essential for enhancing programmatic learning, and demonstrating FAO's impacts to stakeholders and donors.
- 33 FAO's efforts towards gender equality in Rwanda have seen mixed results, with notable gaps in inclusivity, particularly for people with disabilities. While gender considerations were integrated during the implementation phase of projects, inconsistencies in reporting and a lack of focus on gender transformative approach were evident. The next CPF needs to adhere more closely to FAO standards and focus on addressing the root causes of gender inequalities. Building on its successes, FAO should emphasize empowering women, youth, and people with disabilities, ensuring their active participation in project design and implementation, to achieve more impactful outcomes.
- 34 FAO's initiatives in Rwanda have made commendable progress towards institutional, economic, social, and environmental sustainability. Significant strides in capacity building, income generation, community cohesion, and climate-resilient practices have laid a strong foundation for lasting impact. However, challenges such as limited stakeholder and local authority engagement, financial constraints, and the absence of clear exit strategies, pose risks to sustainability. Additionally, the ongoing threat

of climate change underscores the need for continued efforts in resilience and adaptive capacity to safeguard the gains made and ensure long-term sustainability.

- 35 This evaluation recommends that, in the next phase of its work, FAO focus on a targeted number of interventions (projects and/or programmes), drawing on its experts and resources from different offices (including headquarters, region, and subregion) to deliver on its strategies. FAO should also set clear and measurable goals for what it wants to achieve and implement targeted resource mobilisation to achieve these goals. In this way, FAO can both focus on obtaining significant contributions by the end of the cycle and also be ready to adapt to new needs from the country. Part of this includes the need for the FAO to revitalize and diversify its partnerships beyond the - now almost exclusive - relationship with the Ministry of Agriculture and Animal Resources. To this end, FAO should identify which ministries align with its new four betters structure and ensure their participation in the development and validation of the new CPF.
- 36 Furthermore, the next CPF should clearly articulate the four betters programmatic approach which was piloted in 2023/24 to improve the effectiveness, efficiency, and sustainability of its results. Linked to Recommendation 1, the four betters approach represents a significant opportunity for the team to improve coordination, synergies, and efficiencies in the implementation of projects. This will contribute to addressing the challenge of silo working, but also enhance coherence between interventions and timely implementation of activities. The country office needs to develop clear guidelines on how the teams are expected to operate under this new framework. These guidelines should also articulate how cross-cutting issues such as gender, youth, leaving no one behind, M&E and communications intersect, interact, and support the technical aspects of programme delivery under the four betters.
- 37 FAO needs to strengthen internal capabilities that facilitate efficient delivery of the future programme while leveraging civil society and the private sector to achieve more impact on the ground. Part of this includes the need to develop its stakeholder engagement strategy and relevant resource mobilization strategy. This will ensure that its engagements with national and local authorities, civil society and private sector, and other development partners are more intentional and coordinated. Developing a resource mobilization strategy will similarly enable the team to be more strategic in mobilizing the diverse types of resources it requires for the implementation of the future CPF. Part of the resource mobilization strategy should articulate plans about how the FAO intends to utilize the Technical Cooperation Programme (TCP) funding for more strategic resource mobilization.
- 38 The next CPF should promote results-based principles, including a clear set of measurable outcomes and output indicators, and a country TOC supported by robust analyses of the risks and assumptions/prerequisites required for effective delivery and achievement of the CPF's goals. The new programme should be aligned with the new national transformation strategy (NST2), the national agricultural strategy (PSTA5), and the United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF) for the country. Furthermore, an M&E and learning system should be in place to monitor and report on the progress and achievement at the outcome level.
- 39 Finally, the future programme needs to aspire towards a gender transformational approach, while ensuring that its interventions do not leave anyone behind, especially people with disabilities.

1. Introduction



- 1 The Office of Evaluation of the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) of the United Nations carries out country programme evaluations (CPE) to provide accountability to Member Nations, national governments, and development partners, and draw lessons and suggestions for programme improvement. Rwanda was selected as one of the countries for the FAO Office of Evaluation to carry out a CPE in 2023 to contribute to the formulation of the new programme cycle of the Country Programming Framework (CPF) that will start in 2024, after the development of the Fifth Strategic Plan for Agriculture Transformation (PSTA5).

1.1 Purpose of the evaluation

- 2 The main purpose of the Rwanda CPE is to contribute to better positioning FAO's programme in Rwanda, to make it more relevant to the country's needs, and to strengthen the impact of the Organization's efforts towards the achievement of national priorities and the Global Goals of FAO Member Nations. The results of this evaluation will ultimately inform the formulation of the next CPF for Rwanda, set to begin in 2024, by providing evidence, scalable good practices and lessons learned.
- 3 The CPE will also demonstrate FAO's accountability to the Government of Rwanda and its citizens, its development and resource partners, and all Member Nations. Furthermore, this evaluation will seek to contribute to organizational learning at the corporate, regional, and country levels by drawing lessons, highlighting good practices, and providing forward-looking recommendations meant to be actionable and useful for FAO's future engagement in the country.

1.2 Intended users

- 4 The main users of the evaluation, to which most of the lessons and recommendations will be addressed, are the FAO Representative in Rwanda, the Country Office staff (both programme and operations teams), and the Government of Rwanda (the Ministry of Agriculture and Animal Resources and other relevant ministries, departments and affiliated agencies of the government). Other important users include the FAO Regional Office for Africa and the Subregional Office for Eastern Africa, relevant FAO divisions at headquarters, development and resource partners, and the United Nations (UN) country team in Rwanda.

1.3 Scope and objective of the evaluation

- 5 Country evaluations are designed to assess the totality of FAO's assistance provided to Members, irrespective of the funding source. This includes activities funded through the regular programme and extra-budgetary resources; national, regional, and global projects and initiatives; emergency and development interventions. Since the CPE is a programme evaluation, the exercise did not focus on single projects but rather assessed FAO's overall contribution to development changes in the priority areas defined in the current CPF.
- 6 This CPE therefore covers all the activities implemented by FAO in Rwanda since January 2019 up to May 2023 (thus falling under the current CPF 2019–2024) enabling the evaluation to examine past projects that may have already contributed to tangible outcome results. In doing so, it includes activities that were planned and designed before 2019, as they might have been adjusted to respond to the evolving policies and strategies. The evaluation also looked at limiting factors that may have affected FAO's delivery and resource mobilisation in the country, including internal organisation and management arrangements. In terms of geographical coverage, the evaluation assessed FAO's work in the entire country, both at the national and local levels.
- 7 The contributions provided by FAO as part of its core functions, which often are not necessarily part of specific projects, have also been covered by the evaluation. They include the following functions: i) development and implementation of normative instruments; ii) collection, analysis, and improved access to data and information; iii) fostering, promoting, and facilitating policy dialogue; iv) building capacity to prepare, implement, monitor, and evaluate evidence-based policies, investments,

and programmes; v) disseminating knowledge, technologies, and good practices; vi) facilitating partnerships; and vii) advocacy and communication.

- 8 Besides providing lessons specifically on FAO's work in Rwanda, the evaluation also feeds into other thematic and regional programme evaluations. In particular, it provides contributions to the ongoing evaluation of FAO's reducing food loss and waste programme – better nutrition 4 (BN4), as well as to the ongoing evaluation of the interregional project titled "Integrated Country Approach (ICA) for boosting decent jobs for youth in the agrifood system (GCP/INT/335/MUL)". Specific attention has also been given to the project "Capacity development for innovation in Rwanda: strengthening innovation partnerships in six districts: Burera, Rutsiro, Gatsibo, Nyagatare, Bugesera and Ruhango" (GCP/RWA/046/EC) to help the country office take stock of the progress made halfway through its implementation and make decisions on a possible reorientation of the project.
- 9 The specific objectives of this CPE are to:
 - i. Assess FAO's strategic positioning in Rwanda and the relevance of FAO's work in responding to the country's needs and priorities.
 - ii. Assess FAO's contributions to results and outcomes, with a specific focus on the priority areas outlined in the current CPF.
 - iii. Identify good practices and lessons learned as well as factors enabling or hindering results.
 - iv. Identify gaps in FAO's country programming and potential areas of future work.

1.4 Evaluation questions

- 10 The following questions (see Table 1) were developed to further define the objectives of the evaluation and are organized in two parts: A) strategic positioning: Is FAO doing what is needed? and B) programme contribution: Is FAO making a difference?

Table 1 Key evaluation questions

A. Strategic positioning: Is FAO doing what is needed?

EQ 1. *Relevance and comparative strengths:* To what extent has FAO's programme in Rwanda been responding to the national priorities and needs within the areas of FAO's mandate? How has it contributed to strategically position FAO in the country?

EQ 2. *Partnership and coordination:* To what extent were there synergies and/or trade-offs between FAO's and other stakeholders' interventions in the country? To what extent has FAO built solid and effective multi-stakeholder partnerships to implement its programme and related activities in Rwanda?

B. Programme contribution: Are we making a difference?

EQ 3. *Contribution to results:* To what extent has FAO contributed to achieving the objectives and intended results in each of the CPF Priority Areas?

EQ 4. *Cross-cutting issues:* How well are gender and other social equity considerations mainstreamed in the planning and implementation of FAO's work, in accordance with the SDG principle of to "leave no one behind"?

EQ 5. *Organizational performance:* To what extent have FAO's internal coordination and management structure, processes, and operations been conducive to effective programming and delivery of results?

EQ 6. *Sustainability of results:* To what extent will these results be sustainable from an economic, ecological and social standpoint?

- 11 Based on its objectives and scope, the CPE answered the key questions and sub questions addressing the respective Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development/*Development Assistance Committee* (OECD/DAC) criteria, as outlined in Table 1.
- 12 The full evaluation matrix spelling out how each key evaluation question and sub-question was answered and how the lines of inquiry and data collection methods were deployed is presented in Appendix 4.

1.5 Methodology

- 13 The evaluation used a mix of quantitative and qualitative methods taking into consideration available resources. The evaluation was organized in three phases: inception, data collection, and analysis and reporting.

Inception

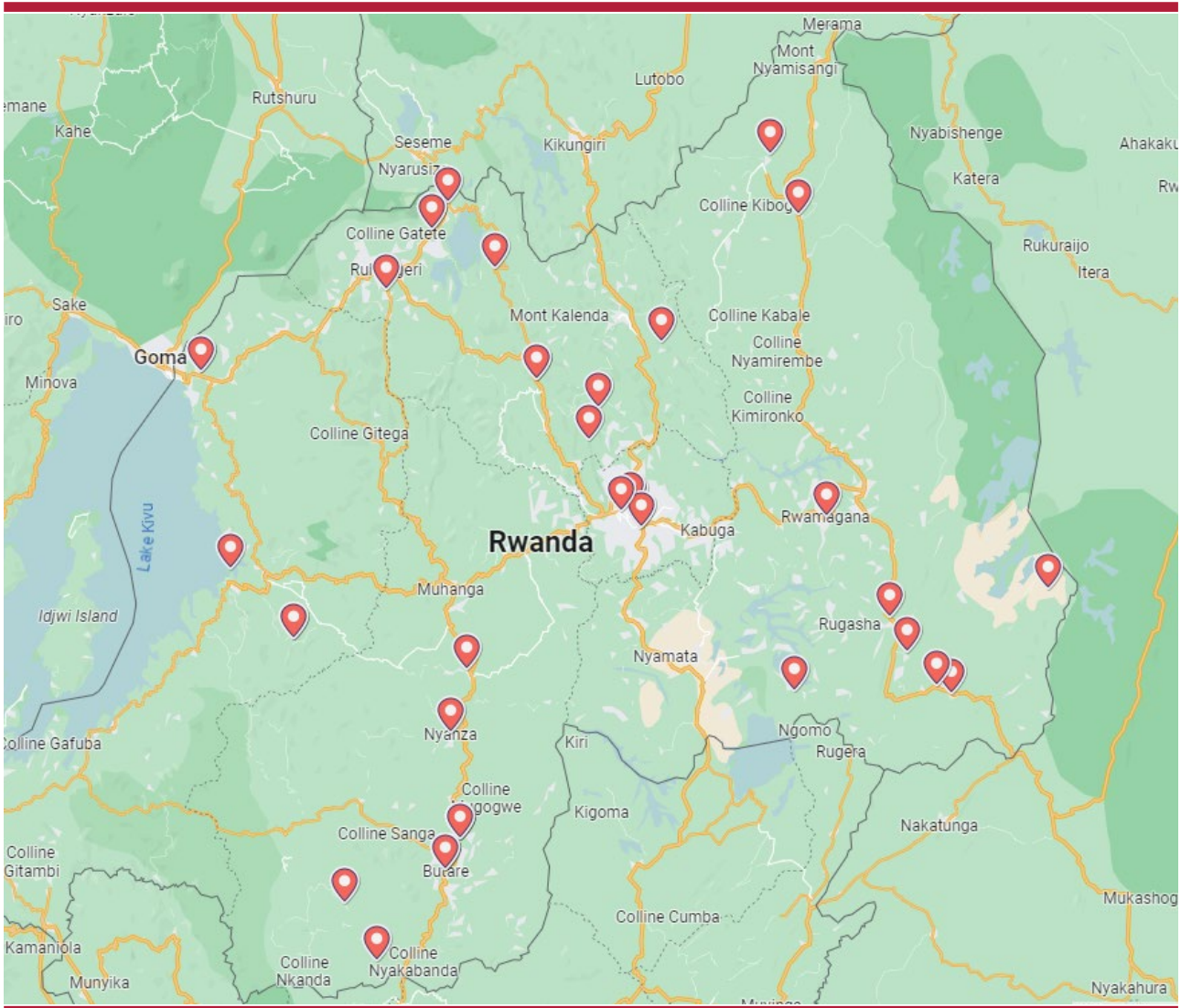
- 14 The inception phase played a crucial role as it enabled the evaluation team and FAO evaluation managers to reach a consensus regarding the scope and objectives of the evaluation. This involved multiple meetings and an extensive exchange and review of programme documents. Subsequently, the evaluation team crafted the evaluation matrix (Appendix 4) and devised the necessary data collection tools. In close partnership with the FAO Rwanda team, the list of potential key informants and project sites was carefully identified. Following this meticulous process, both the itinerary for field visits and the assignment of dedicated evaluation team members to specific sites were finalized and agreed upon.

Data collection

- 15 Document review: The documents reviewed included FAO documentation related to its programmatic, project, and normative activities in Rwanda; relevant regional and corporate-level documentation such as tools, templates, and guidelines for CPF; relevant FAO policies and strategies; past evaluations; and Rwanda's relevant national policies, strategies and other strategic documents including UNSDCF. The FAO Country Office in Rwanda supported the compilation of the documents throughout the inception phase, in addition to the evaluation team's own collection.
- 16 Semi-structured interviews (both online and face-to-face) with key informants, including the staff of implementing partners, national and district level officials, beneficiaries, representatives, and technical staff of UN agencies, FAO personnel, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and implementing partners, resource partners and other key stakeholders. In total, around 100 people were interviewed (see Appendix 1 for the full list of people consulted). The entire evaluation team conducted interviews with government stakeholders in Kigali.
- 17 Direct observation of FAO's activities at institutional and community levels, including visits to 17 districts across the Northern, Western, Eastern and Southern provinces, including Kigali, to assess 15 projects with ongoing or completed activities on the ground (11 national projects, three global, and one inter-regional projects) (more details are available in Appendix 2). This activity lasted ten days (from 12 to 23 July 2023) and the selection of projects visited was based on the FAO "four betters" (better nutrition, life, production, and environment), aiming to have each better represented by one project in every province and encompassing the diverse agroecological zones. The team selected the project sites also to complement the secondary data gaps identified during the documentary review process and to ensure triangulation of the data collected. The evaluation team was divided into two groups, organized based on the expertise of its members. Both groups visited projects being implemented in various provinces:
 - i. Group 1, comprising two team members, visited seven projects in the Southern and Western provinces. Three of these projects focused on value chains, while four addressed social inclusion,

- including one peace-building initiative. One additional project concentrated on rural investments. The team members assigned to these visits had extensive experience in value chains and social inclusion.
- ii. Group 2, consisting of two team members and an FAO Office of Evaluation Analyst, visited 11 projects in the Northern and Eastern provinces. Their visits covered three projects focused on natural resource management, three on value chains, three on social inclusion, one on livestock production, and one on emergency flood response. This group brought significant expertise in agriculture, natural resource management, value chains, and social inclusion.
- 18 Appendices 2 and 3 of this report provide more details on the site visits and focus group discussions conducted, and the full list of projects covered by the evaluation, respectively.



Figure 1 Overview of the locations visited by the Evaluation Team

Source: Elaborated by the Evaluation Team based off Google Maps. Refer to the disclaimer on copyright page for the names and boundaries used in this map.

- 19 Focus group discussions (FGD) with the beneficiaries: in total, 13 FGDs were conducted. The discussions focused on the “community-level” aspects with the aim of gathering feedback from FAO’s ultimate beneficiaries on their experiences with FAO’s activities. The number of FGDs conducted was based on the presence of interventions provided within cooperatives. In such cases, beneficiaries had enough similarities to form a group for a focused discussion. However, for other projects FGDs were not feasible, mostly because beneficiaries received support individually and were located in different areas with diverse backgrounds. In these latter cases, semi-structured interviews were conducted instead of FGDs.
- 20 Online questionnaire about the CDI Rwanda project (GCP/RWA/046/EC): During the midterm evaluation of the CDI Rwanda project, an online quantitative survey was conducted to gather input from project stakeholders. The questionnaire was a collaborative effort, developed and validated with input from both the FAO project team and the evaluation managers. This survey was sent out to a mailing list containing 50 stakeholders, and it yielded 30 complete responses, representing a response rate of 60 percent.

- 21 A debriefing presentation with FAO Rwanda's senior management and personnel was conducted at the end of the field data collection (July 2023), during which the preliminary findings and the next steps in the evaluation process were discussed and feedback integrated into further analysis and reporting of findings.
- 22 A presentation and discussion of the final evaluation findings, conclusions, and recommendations was conducted during the FAO Rwanda country team retreat (December 2023).
- 23 Data and information from stakeholders were triangulated using different data sources and different data collection methods. This was complemented by periodic checks of data quality, accuracy, and reliability, including through cross-referencing with other data sources.

Analysis and reporting

- 24 Content analysis was used to review the programme's secondary data. Thematic analysis was conducted on the primary data emerging from key informant interviews (KIIs) and focus group discussions. The themes were generated in line with the evaluation matrix – criteria and subquestions while being sufficiently flexible to develop new themes from the data. The online questionnaires (CDI Rwanda project mid-term evaluation), which received 30 responses, were analysed using Microsoft Excel.
- 25 This evaluation report represents a comprehensive and rigorous analysis, underpinned by a robust methodological approach that leveraged the principle of triangulation to ensure the validity and reliability of the findings. Triangulation was meticulously applied across various data sources and methods to cross-validate information and interpretations, thereby enhancing the credibility of the conclusions and the strength of the recommendations.
- 26 The key activities linked to the reporting phase included an initial debrief of the country theme following the field data collection and analysis. After the initial draft of the report was submitted to FAO, it underwent a review and received Quality Assurance from the FAO Office of Evaluation. Furthermore, feedback rounds with key stakeholders were conducted before the report was finalized and published.

1.6 Limitations

- 27 The Evaluation Team received support from the FAO country team throughout the entire process. The only setback encountered was related to the timing and availability of key informants during the field visits, which resulted in a delay in completing the data collection phase. However, to overcome this challenge, the team conducted several follow-up virtual interviews following the country mission.
- 28 Addressing potential biases in our diverse methodologies was crucial for ensuring accurate and credible findings. Key challenges included selection bias in participant-driven methods and response bias, where participants might provide socially desirable answers. To mitigate these, we included a broad, representative sample of stakeholders, encompassing diverse perspectives, and assured anonymity and confidentiality, encouraging honest responses. To counter-confirmation and interviewer biases, we used a mixed-methods approach for data triangulation, cross-validating findings, and considering alternative viewpoints. Interviewers and evaluators maintained neutrality in data collection, and multiple analysts were involved in qualitative data analysis to ensure balanced and objective interpretation, thus mitigating individual biases and preconceptions.
- 29 By adopting these measures, we aimed to enhance the reliability and validity of our evaluation, providing a solid foundation for our conclusions and recommendations.

1.7 Structure of the report

- 30 Following this introduction, sections 2 and 3 provide an overview of Rwanda and a summary of FAO's work in the country, respectively. Section 4 presents the key findings and their evidence related to the key evaluation question on FAO's strategic positioning. Section 5 outlines the key findings on FAO's contribution to the country programme outcomes including cross-cutting aspects and the sustainability of results. Finally, section 6 sets out the conclusions and recommendations based on the key findings. The report is accompanied by the following appendices and annexes:
- i. Appendix 1: People interviewed
 - ii. Appendix 2: List of site visits and focus group discussions
 - iii. Appendix 3: List of FAO's national projects assessed under the CPE by Priority Area over the period 2019–2023, as of January 2023
 - iv. Appendix 4: Evaluation matrix
 - v. Annex 1: Terms of references
 - vi. Annex 2: Mid-term evaluation of the GCP/RWA/046/EC project

2. Context



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2.1 Rwanda overview

- 31 Rwanda, a landlocked nation in Central Eastern Africa, is bordered by Burundi, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the United Republic of Tanzania and Uganda. Covering an area of 2 633 800 km² it is characterized by a diverse terrain that includes eastern plains, central plateaux, and highlands around Lake Kivu (FAO, 2020a). The country's climate is predominantly tropical, modulated by altitudinal variations ranging from 900 m to 4 507 m³ (Ministry of Environment, 2018). The Rwandan landscape comprises several ecosystems: mountain rainforests, savannah woodlands, wetlands, and aquatic forests. The Eastern Province is notable for its extensive agricultural land, in contrast to the Northern Province, which has the smallest share. Forest coverage in Rwanda totalled 724 695 ha in 2019, with variations across provinces: the Western Province leading in natural forests and the Southern Province in forest plantations.¹ The total carbon stock in Rwandan forests stands at 135.32 tonnes per ha (FAO, 2020b).
- 32 Rwanda's central and western regions are dominated by mountains, including the Virunga volcano chain with Mount Karisimbi as its highest peak. The western region falls within the Albertine Rift montane forests ecoregion, known for its biodiversity. The temperate tropical highland climate results from the country's high elevation, with daily temperatures in Kigali typically ranging from 12° C to 27° C. Rainfall is uneven across the country, with the west and northwest receiving more than the east and southeast.
- 33 Agriculture is the main economic activity in Rwanda with 70 percent of the population engaged in the sector, and around 72 percent of the working population employed in agriculture. The period for cultivation can be divided into the first cultivable season (also called Season A, from September to January) and the second cultivable season (also called Season B, from February to June). In the marshlands, where water is abundant, there is also a third agricultural season (called Season C) for the cultivation of rice and vegetables (FAO, n.d.a.).
- 34 With one of the highest population densities in Africa, Rwanda's population grew from 321 to 503 persons per km² between 2002 and 2022 (NISR, 2022a). This growth is attributed to natural increase and in-migration from Burundi and the Democratic Republic of the Congo. As of August 2022 Rwanda's population was 13 246 394 (NISR, 2023), with a significant youth (65 percent) demographic (NISR, 2023), accounting for account for 3 percent of the population (NISR, 2022a).

2.2 Governance and administrative structure

- 35 Rwanda is a democratic republic with a multi-party system. Administratively, it is divided into four provinces, and the city of Kigali is further subdivided into districts and sectors. The country's governance structure is characterized by independent executive, legislative, and judicial branches. Key government ministries include the Ministry of Agriculture and Animal Resources and the Ministry of Environment, which oversee natural resource management.

2.3 Strategic Development Plans

- 36 Vision 2050 is Rwanda's roadmap to achieving upper middle-income status by 2035 and high-income status by 2050, focusing on agroprocessing and technology-intensive agriculture (Tuyishime *et al.*, 2020; Republic of Rwanda, 2020). The National Strategy for Transformation (NST1 2017–2024) complements this vision, targeting increased agricultural productivity and modernization. The current PSTA4 covers the period 2018–2024 and is a continuation of PSTA3, however, PSTA4 focused more on strengthening better land management, a shift towards knowledge-based, market orientation, and farm profitability, strengthened private sector service delivery and investment, as well as focusing on diverse animal resources (e.g. fisheries, poultry and pork) and more investment in research and skills development. FAO provided support to the development of PSTA4 (FAO, 2017). The Agriculture Sector Investment Plan (2013–2018) guides public investments in agriculture.

¹ 278 656 hectares (72 percent) of forest plantation are made of large blocks greater than 2 ha whereby the Southern and Western provinces have the largest forest blocks.

2.4 Economic growth and challenges

- 37 Rwanda is a low-income country with a gross domestic product (GDP) of USD 11.07 billion in 2021 and a GDP per capita of USD 822.3. In 2021 it had a growth rate of 10.9 percent, (World Bank, 2024a), while in 2020 the GDP reduced to 3.4 percent, attributed to the COVID-19 pandemic which affected trade, travel and tourism, compared to a growth rate of 9.5 percent in 2019. The International Monetary Fund (IMF) projects a real GDP growth rate of 6.7 percent in 2023 (IMF, 2023). Recent figures for 2023, showed that the GDP was at USD 16.35 billion or RWF 16 355 billion (NISR, 2024a). In 2021, Rwanda had a negative inflation of - 0.4 percent, compared to 9.9 percent in 2020. Rwanda's consumer price index (CPI) increased by 14.1 percent in May 2023, down from 17.8 percent in April 2023, where food and non-alcoholic beverages increased by 25.4 percent, compared to the same period 12 months earlier. For May 2023, the annual change of CPI is higher in rural areas (28.2 percent) than in urban areas (14.1 percent) (NISR, 2023b).
- 38 The 2021 human development index (HDI) rates Rwanda with 0.535, as a low human development country, slightly below the sub-Saharan Africa HDI of 0.547 (UNDP, 2022). The country's unemployment rate is 13.3 percent among the highest in Eastern Africa.
- 39 The high deprivation in terms of years of schooling (whereby 20.9 percent is deprived), nutrition (16.6 percent is deprived), cooking full (11.7 percent) followed by housing (10.7 percent) lead to a Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI) of 0.231 which is below the sub-Saharan Africa average (UNDP, 2024).

2.5 Nutrition and food security

- 40 The 2022 State of Food Security and Nutrition report mentions that in 2019–2021, Rwanda has had, with 35.8 percent, the second highest prevalence of undernourishment in Eastern Africa, after Madagascar. Underlying causes of this undernourishment include the low access to safe water, sanitation, hygiene, health services and inadequate care practices. FAO mentions that in 2020, 60.4 percent of the population used basic drinking water services, and 68.8 percent of the population used basic sanitation services (FAO, 2022a). In 2020,² 86.3 percent (in absolute numbers: 11.2 million) of the Rwandese population were unable to afford a healthy diet, with a cost estimated at USD 2.698 per day per person. (FAO, IFAD, UNICEF, WFP & WHO, 2022).
- 41 Among the Eastern Africa average, 32.6 percent of children under five years of age are stunted in Rwanda but 14 out of 30 (mainly rural) districts are above the World Health Organization's (WHO) critical stunting level of 40 percent, and 5.2 percent of the children under five years were overweighted in 2020 (FAO, IFAD, UNICEF, WFP and WHO, 2022). The Demographic and Health Survey (DHS) of 2019–2020 (NISR and ICF, 2021) mentions that stunting is the highest in the Western and Northern provinces, where respectively 40 percent and 41 percent of the children are stunted. Kigali and the Southern province have the highest prevalence of waste children (2 percent each), while the Southern province has the highest prevalence of underweight children (10 percent). A higher proportion of children in rural areas are stunted (36 percent vs 20 percent) and underweight (9 percent vs 4 percent). Furthermore, the same DHS reports that 22 percent of the children from 6 to 23 months were fed at a minimum acceptable diet, 37 percent of the children aged 6 to 59 months as well as 13 percent of women between 15 and 49 years are anaemic.
- 42 Nsabimana *et al.* (2020) found with a household microdata analysis that poor households consume food with higher carbohydrates and starches, while most of rural households do not consume animal product micronutrients such as meat, milk, or eggs.
- 43 The Western Province has the highest prevalence of food insecure households (35.3 percent), followed by the Southern Province (22.2 percent). A main factor that influences food insecurity is attributed

² No data is available for 2022.

to diminishing purchase power (NISR, 2022b), whereby food inflation is underpinned by increased production costs and raising fuel prices as well as augmented transportation costs. Furthermore, Rwanda hosts 127 000 refugees and asylum seekers who face elevated levels of acute food insecurity (FAO, 2023a). The high prevalence of food-insecure households is observed in rural areas where families depend mainly on subsistence. According to the World Bank, 73.4 percent of the total land area is fit for agriculture (World Bank, 2024b) and 90 percent of the cropland is situated on slopes, while 131 057 ha of the total land area is under radical terraces. The Ministry of Agriculture and Animal Resources mentions 66 480 ha as being registered as under irrigation. The agriculture, forestry and fisheries sectors constitute 26 percent of the GDP and employ 67.8 percent of the total population (Ministry of Agriculture and Animal Resources, 2021; NISR and ICF, 2021), while 77 percent of the women in Rwanda were employed in agriculture (NISR, 2021a).

2.6 Climate change

- 44 As previously mentioned, climate change natural hazards such as droughts, floods, earthquakes, landslides, storms, wildfires, diseases and epidemics are increasing rapidly. Heavy rainfall events in the Northern and Western provinces cause flooding, and trigger land- and mudslides in the hills, plateaus, and sloping areas. Climate change is expected to affect mainly cereal crops, as well as bean, coffee, and tea production (World Bank, 2021). The African Development Bank (AfDB) mentions that climate change also affects the livestock sector, aquaculture, fishing and beekeeping due to the high rain season. In May 2020, Rwanda became the first African country to submit its enhanced nationally determined contribution (NDC) to cut emissions by 38 percent by 2030 and setting up a system of indicators to track adaptation in water, agriculture, land, forestry, human settlements, health, transport and mining (United Nations, 2024; United Nations, 2022). The Global Green Growth Institute is Rwanda's main partner in implementing the National Adaptation Plan towards inclusive climate resilience (United Nations, 2022). The Rwanda Green Fund has a committed investment of USD 40 million and is one of the first national environment and climate change investment funds in Africa (United Nations, 2023).
- 45 Rwanda committed in its revised NDC to a greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions reduction target of 38 percent from the 2015 levels. In 2010, 2015 and 2018 Rwanda faced peaks in total net GHG emissions due to a high cattle population in these years. In 2018, the agriculture sector was with 49.33 percent the largest contributor to total GHG emissions. Methane emissions increased from 3 354.43 Gg CO₂ in 2006 to 4 179.06 Gg CO₂ in 2018, which makes methane the most significant contributor to the GHG due to the large population of cattle whereby 78.43 percent of the ethane emissions come from the agriculture sector. Nitrous oxide N₂O emissions have the second highest contribution to the GHG in Rwanda, of which 62.85 percent of the emissions come from the agriculture sector with a significant increase in 2017 and 2018 due to increased use of synthetic fertilizers and amounts of animal manure associated with an increasing number of animals (Republic of Rwanda, 2021).

2.7 Role of women

- 46 Parliamentary elections in 2018 gave women 61 percent of the seats (World Bank, 2024c) and 52 percent of the cabinet positions are held by women (UN Women, n.d.). The high percentage of women in the parliament and ministries results from a gender quota of 30 percent with reserved seats in parliament and local-level elections.³ However, female political representation did not significantly improve development for women; nonetheless, gender quotas could have a more indirect impact on a slow societal transformation (Guariso *et al.*, 2017). The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) notes that, in 2022, the Rwandese Gender Development Index (GDI)⁴ is among the global average whereby female HDI is 0.524 in contrast to 0.569 for males, resulting in a GDI of 0.921 (UNDP,

³ In July 2016, President Kagame received the gender champion award from the African Women Movements, which is a coalition of women's groups in Africa, while in 2007 he received the African Gender Award.

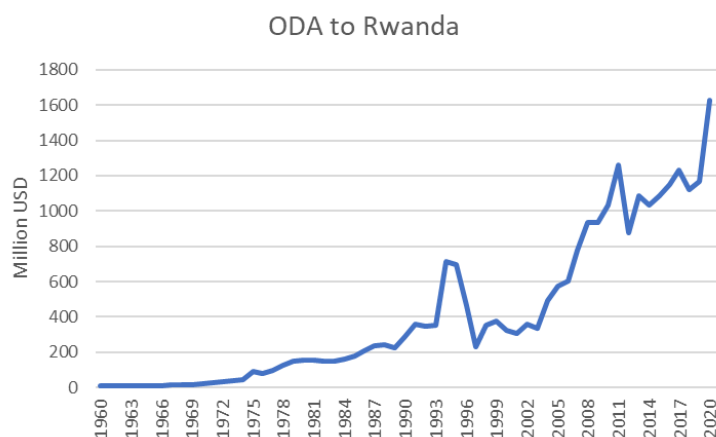
⁴ The GDI is a ratio of the female to the male HDI and measures gender gaps in health (measured by female and male life expectancy at birth), knowledge (measured by female and male expected years of schooling), and living standards (measured by female and male estimated gross national income [GNI] per capita).

n.d.). Although 77 percent of the women work in agriculture, there are still severe gender disparities whereby women receive lower prices for their products due to lack of market information, lack of capacity to participate in agribusiness, and being employed in lowly paid positions. Farms managed by women are also 10.5 percent smaller than farms managed by men. Female farmers also receive lower prices for agriproduce (Musabyimana, 2021).

2.8 International aid flows

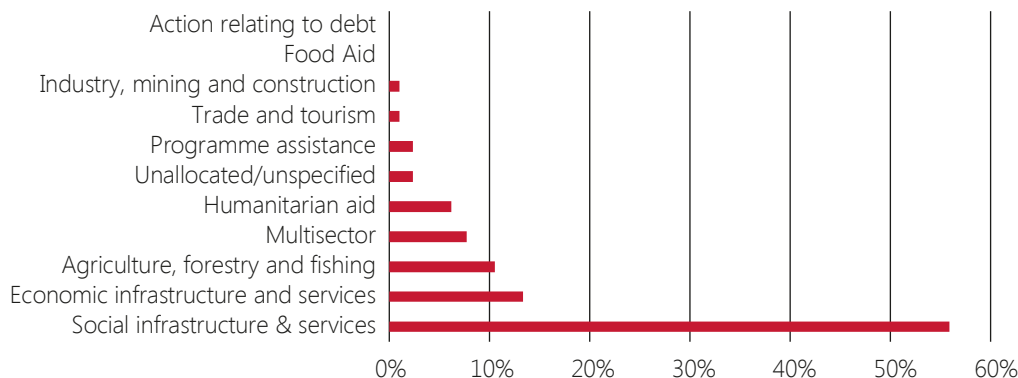
47 In 2020, Rwanda received USD 1.62 billion official development assistance (ODA) and official aid following the COVID-19 pandemic (Figure 2), which is USD 450 million more than the previous year. Figure 3 illustrates that the agriculture, forestry and fisheries sector represents 8.53 percent of the overall ODA during 2011–2020. The highest amount of ODA goes to social infrastructure and services. Remarkably, although there is an overall decrease since 2014 in overall foreign direct investment (FDI), the FDI in agriculture is increasing (World Bank, 2024d).

Figure 2 Official development assistance to Rwanda (in USD)



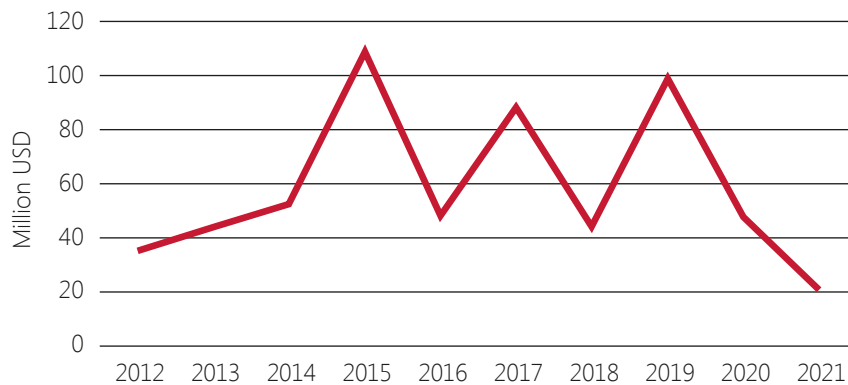
Source: World Bank. n.d. Net official development assistance and official aid received (current US\$) - Rwanda. In: *World Bank*. [Cited 18 September 2024]. Washington, DC. <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/DT.ODA.ALLD.CD?locations=RW>

Figure 3 Official development assistance over 2011–2022 (funded sectors in ratio)



Source: OECD. n.d. Dataset: GeoBook: ODA by sector - bilateral commitments by donor and recipient. In: *OECD*. [Cited 18 September 2024]. Paris. https://stats.oecd.org/OECDStat_Metadata/ShowMetadata.aspx?Dataset=DACSECTOR&ShowOnWeb=true&Lang=en

Figure 4 Official development assistance in agriculture, forestry and fisheries (in USD)



Source: OECD. n.d. Dataset: GeoBook: ODA by sector - bilateral commitments by donor and recipient. In: *OECD*. [Cited 18 September 2024]. Paris. https://stats.oecd.org/OECDStat_Metadata/ShowMetadata.ashx?Dataset=DACSECTOR&ShowOnWeb=true&Lang=en

2.9 United Nations in Rwanda

48 The UN system in Rwanda consists of 22 UN agencies, which have operated since 2008 as ‘One UN’ with a budget of around USD 631 million between the years 2018 and 2024. The United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF) 2018–2024 has three main strategic priority areas with six outcomes as listed in the below Table 2, and FAO is a collaborating agency of all three strategic priorities (UN Rwanda, 2022).

Table 2 United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework

Strategic priority 1: Economic Transformation	Strategic priority 2: Social Transformation	Strategic priority 3: Transformational Governance
Outcome 1: By 2024, people in Rwanda benefit from more inclusive, competitive, and sustainable economic growth that generates decent work and promotes quality livelihoods for all.	Outcome 3: By 2024, people in Rwanda, particularly the most vulnerable, enjoy increased and equitable access to quality education, health, nutrition and water, sanitation and hygiene services.	Outcome 5: By 2024, people in Rwanda benefit from enhanced gender equality, justice, human rights, peace and security.
Outcome 2: By 2024, Rwandan institutions and communities are more equitably, productively, and sustainably managing natural resources and addressing climate change and natural disasters.	Outcome 4: By 2024, people in Rwanda, particularly the most vulnerable, have increased resilience to both natural and man-made shocks and live a life free from all forms of violence and discrimination.	Outcome 6: By 2024, people in Rwanda participate more actively in democratic and development processes and benefit from transparent and accountable public and private sector institutions that develop evidence-based policies and deliver quality services.

Source: Elaboration by the Evaluation Team.

49 FAO contributes in Rwanda to the following Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs): SDG 1 (No Poverty), SDG 2 (Zero Hunger), SDG 7 (Affordable and Clean Energy), SDG 8 (Decent Jobs and Economic Growth), SDG 9 (Industry, Innovation, and Infrastructure), SDG 12 (Responsible Production and Consumption) (UN, Rwanda 2024).

3. FAO in Rwanda

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- 50 Rwanda has been an FAO Member State since 1963, and the organization strengthened its presence in the country through the establishment of a fully-fledged representation in 1985. From 1985 to 1994, FAO supported large-scale projects through UNDP. From 1994 to 2000, FAO conducted agricultural emergency operations put in place after the war and the genocide against the Tutsis. From 2001 to 2006, FAO's portfolio focused on rehabilitation of the agriculture system and strengthening government partnerships. Since 2007, FAO Rwanda operates under the One UN Rwanda initiative and collaborates closely with other governmental organizations and national counterparts on projects that cut across agriculture production, value chain development, nutrition, social protection, and climate change resilience (FAO, 2024a).
- 51 The FAO representation in Rwanda comprises 57 personnel, five FAO staff and 52 persons are employed as non-staff human resources. Of the FAO staff, three are general staff and one FAO representative, completed by one Assistant FAO Representative in Administration (COIN, n.d.).

3.1 Country Programming Frameworks

- 52 The CPF 2019–2024 focuses on the following priority areas:
- i. PA1: Innovative approaches to promote sustainable and integrated crop, livestock and aquaculture production systems.
 - ii. PA2: Food security, nutrition, climate and other shock-resilient agriculture improved through sustainable and diversified production systems.
 - iii. PA3: Integration of agricultural market systems as well as value addition and competitiveness of diversified agricultural commodities in domestic, regional and international markets promoted.
 - iv. PA4: Enhanced enabling environment and responsive institutions for effective and efficient delivery of services.
- 53 The total CPF resource mobilization target is USD 22 million, of which PA3 has the highest allocated budget (USD 6.3 million) and PA4 the smallest one (USD 2.9 million).

3.2 Overview of FAO's portfolio of projects in Rwanda

- 54 From 2019 to 2023, FAO Rwanda had 26 projects that started in 2019,⁵ of which 23 were national, one interregional, one subregional and one global project. Of the entire portfolio, 13 projects are Technical Cooperation Programme (TCPs) (out of which 12 are national projects) and 13 are funded through extra-budgetary resources (including 11 national projects).⁶ Table 3 demonstrates the budget of the projects in Rwanda per geographic coverage. However, current data does not specify the budget that the global and subregional projects allocate to Rwanda specifically.
- 55 The total budget of the 23 national projects amounts to USD 10 389 490 with an average budget per project of USD 451 717. Six projects were United Nations Joint Programmes (UNJPs), five of them were financed by the UN SDG Fund, and one from the Peacebuilding Fund. Figure 4 illustrates the budget evolution of the national projects' portfolio. Although the budget for extra-budgetary resources and the TCP projects have increased until 2021, the budget for the extra-budgetary resources is three times higher than the budget for the TCPs. In 2021, Rwanda had four national projects, in 2022 two

⁵ The project "Integrated Country Approach (ICA) for boosting decent jobs" started on 31 December 2018 and was not included in the analyzed sample. The FAO Office of Evaluation evaluated this regional project through a separate dedicated process.

⁶ The 23 national projects do not include projects that started after the evaluation data collection phase, which took place in July 2023. The following three national projects started after the data collection: i) emergency agriculture response to support vulnerable people affected by floods and landslides in Rwanda (starting date: 20 May 2023); ii) supporting innovative urban agriculture for enhanced food security and nutrition (starting date: 16 August 2023); iii) Global Health Security (GHS) project - Strengthening animal health and One Health capacities to prevent and mitigate zoonotic diseases, food safety and antimicrobial resistance (AMR) risks and threats in Rwanda (starting date: 1 October 2023); and iv) regional approach towards addressing invasive quarantine pests of potato in Eastern and Southern Africa (starting date: 1 November 2023).

national projects started, including one UNJP on food security and nutrition and one emergency project financed by Belgium to enhance the resilience of farmers to manage droughts. FAO and the European Union constitute each 23.50 percent of the budget for national projects, followed by the Government of Rwanda and the United Nations SDG Fund.

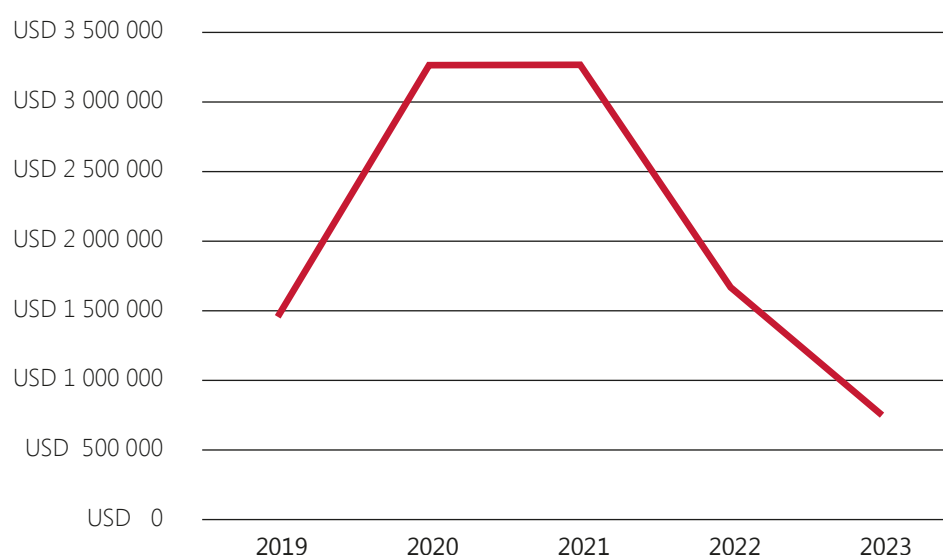
- 56 The average budget for national projects increased from 2019 to 2020 (from USD 242 564 to USD 407 125) and doubled also from USD 407 125 to USD 815 451 in 2021. In 2022, two projects started with an average budget of USD 833 150, while in 2023, three national projects started with an average budget of USD 249 667.

Table 3 Budget of projects in Rwanda launched per year (2019–2023)

Sum of DWH budget	Geographical coverage				Grand total
	Country	Global	Subregional	Interregional	
Year					
2019	1 455 381			449 474	1 904 855
2020	3 257 004	2 000 000			5 257 003
2021	3 261 805		750 000		4 011 804
2022	1 666 300				1 666 300
2023	749 000				749 000
Grand total	10 389 490	2 000 000	750 000	449 474	13 588 963

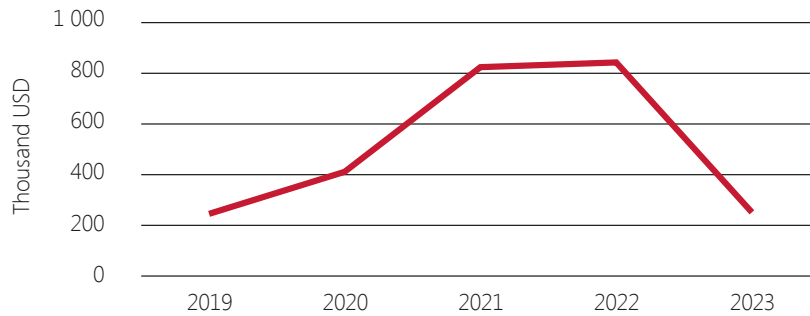
Source: Elaborated by Evaluation Team based on data from the Field Programme Management Information System (FPMIS).

Figure 5 Evolution of country projects budget between 2019 and 2023



Source: Elaborated by Evaluation Team based on data from the Field Programme Management Information System (FPMIS).

Figure 6 Average budget for national projects per year of project start



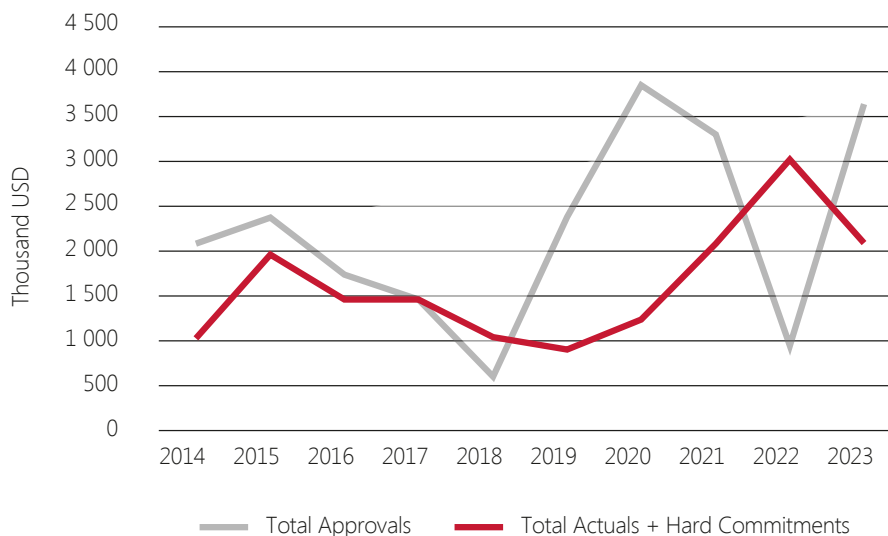
Source: Data retrieved from the FAO Field Programme Management Information System (FPMIS).

57 Within the national portfolio, four projects are classified as emergency projects for a total budget of USD 1 348 620. These projects are funded by FAO, the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UNOCHA), Belgium and the Peacebuilding Fund, respectively. The projects funded by FAO, UNOCHA and Belgium aim to enhance resilience and support farmers to address climate change. The Peacebuilding Fund provides livelihood opportunities for women and youth on the border between Rwanda and the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Half of the emergency projects correspond to Priority Area (PA) 2 – building resilience, while PA1 – agricultural production - and PA3 – value chains- both have one project.

3.2.1 Programme delivery

58 Figure 7 demonstrates the evolution of the field programme approvals and delivery from January 2014 to September 2023, thus including the previous CPF (2013–2018) and the current. The graph demonstrates a positive evolution of the total approvals and the actuals during the 2019–2023 period since the beginning of the period considered. Following the COVID-19 pandemic, total approvals dropped from USD 3.3 million to USD 0.9 million in 2022, in 2023 the approvals rebounded to USD 3.6 million.

Figure 7 Field programme approvals and delivery



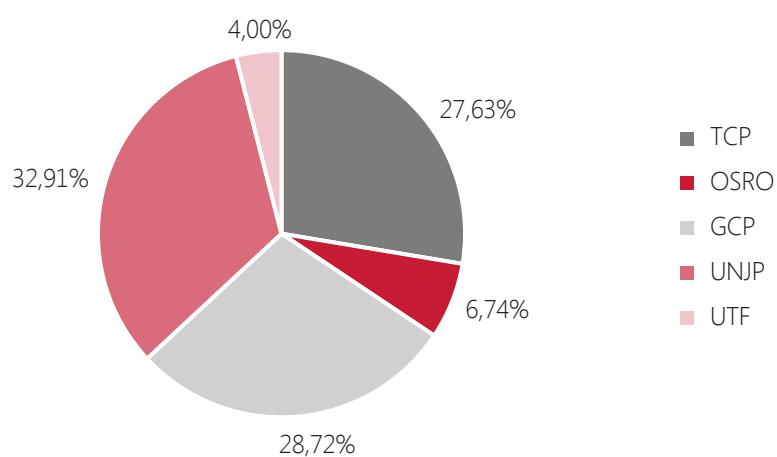
Source: Data retrieved from the FAO Field Programme Management Information System (FPMIS).

3.2.2 Resource partners

Table 4 Main resource partners for FAO Rwanda country-dedicated projects

	Budget in USD					Grand Total
	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	
Belgium				500 000		500 000
China		500 000				500 000
European Union			2 483 805			2 483 805
FAO	843 474	500 000	778 000		749 000	2 870 474
Peacebuilding Fund		357 884				357 884
Rwanda	415 964					415 964
UNDP Administered Donor Joint Trust Fund (UNJ)	195 944	1 699 119		1 166 300		3 061 363
UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UNOCHA)		200 000				200 000
Grand total	1 455 381	3 257 004	3 261 805	1 666 300	749 000	10 389 490

Source: Data retrieved from the FAO Field Programme Management Information System (FPMIS).

Figure 8 National projects' budget per type of project funding

Source: Data retrieved from the FAO Field Programme Management Information System (FPMIS).



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- 59 It is important to highlight the difficulties faced by the country team in raising funds as many donors channel their funds for Rwanda through direct budget support instead of using FAO as an intermediary. This situation restricts the FAO office's ability to mobilize additional resources independently.
- 60 As demonstrated in Figure 8, UNJP contributes the most to the overall budget of national projects (six projects for a total of USD 3.4 million), followed by Global Cooperation Programme (GCP) projects (two projects counting almost USD 3 million in total). The third largest contribution to the national budget comes from TCPs (12 projects in total with an average budget of USD 239 206 each), followed by OSRO projects (two projects for USD 700 000 total) and unilateral trust fund (UTF) (one project of USD 416 000).

- 61 All 23 national projects contribute to different PAs of the CPF (some contributing to more than one PA), as presented in Table 5 below. Most of the resources mobilized by FAO over the period 2019 to 2023 went to PA 1 (on agricultural production) and PA2 (on building resilience), exceeding the target set for those PAs when the CPF was designed, while PA3 (on value chains) and PA4 (on institutional capacity) did not reach the CPF originally estimated budget. Nevertheless, both PA3 and PA4 were complemented and targeted by subregional, interregional and global projects (the specific contribution and allocation of these to Rwanda are not yet known and need to be further investigated during the evaluation).

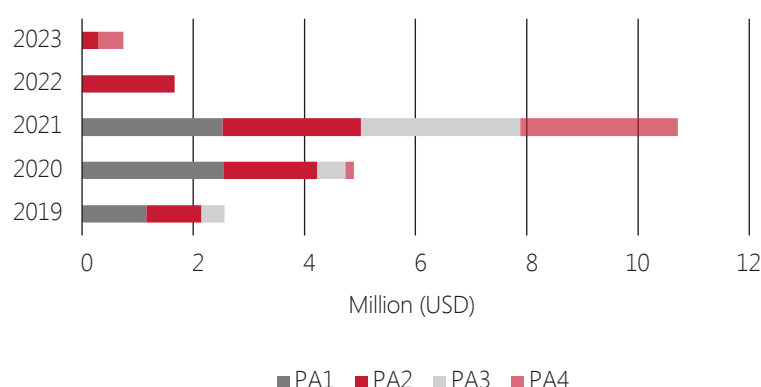
Table 5 Budget per CPF Priority Area

Priority Areas	CPF target	Resources mobilized over the CPF period	Percentage share of targeted PA budget
PA1	USD 5 700 000	USD 6 245 229	110%
PA2	USD 6 000 000	USD 7 120 829	119%
PA3	USD 6 400 000	USD 3 785 652	59%
PA4	USD 3 900 000	USD 3 432 805	88%

Source: Data retrieved from the FAO Field Programme Management Information System (FPMIS).

- 62 Figure 9 shows the budget evolution per priority area, illustrating that the budget dedicated to PA1 (on production) was significant compared to the other PAs in 2019–2021, while no project seems to contribute to it in 2022 and 2023. The budget for PA2 decreased since 2021, as there was only one project corresponding to PA2 in 2022. The resources mobilized for PA3 and PA4 were also higher in 2021, while in 2022 there were only projects corresponding to PA2 and none to PA3.

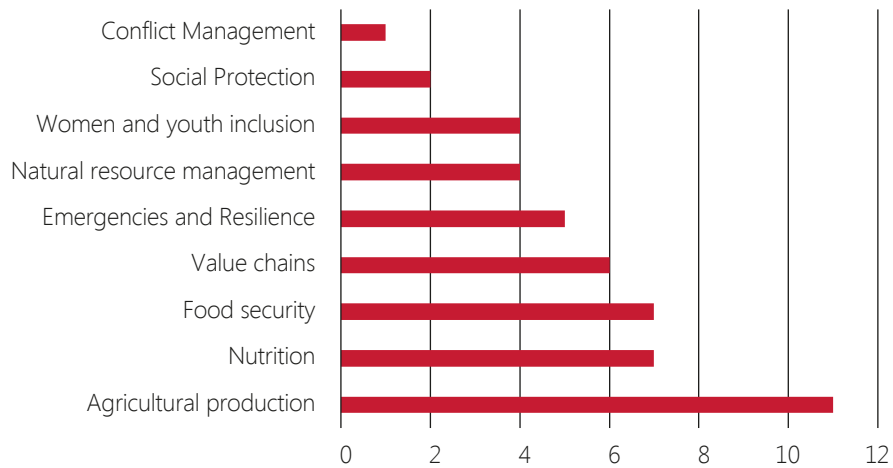
Figure 9 Budget evolution across CPF Priority Areas



Source: Data retrieved from the FAO Field Programme Management Information System (FPMIS).

63 Overall FAO's work in Rwanda through national projects has been focused on the following: agricultural production, food security, nutrition, natural resource management, emergency and resilience, value chains, conflict management, social protection, and women and youth inclusion. Figure 10 below shows the number of projects corresponding to the respective sectors.

Figure 10 Number of projects per sector



Source: Data retrieved from the FAO Field Programme Management Information System (FPMIS).

4. Assessment of FAO's strategic positioning

64 This and the following sections present the key evaluation findings based on the key evaluation questions (Table 1).

4.1 FAO's strategic relevance in Rwanda

Finding 1. FAO's CPF 2019–2024 is relevant and aligned with broad national development goals and agricultural sector development priorities but could have been better aligned with the priorities of other key sectoral ministries and policies.

- 65 The CPF 2019–2024, was highly aligned with the development goals enshrined in the country's Vision 2050, which seeks to transform Rwanda into a high-income, knowledge-based economy. The vision emphasizes economic growth, high quality of life, human development, competitiveness, agriculture and wealth creation, and urbanization and agglomeration. Vision 2050 (Republic of Rwanda, 2020) highlights the role of agriculture in the achievement of a sustained growth of the country's GDP through i) the promotion of modern market-oriented and climate-resilient agriculture; ii) scaled-up use of modern inputs and technologies to maximize productivity; and iii) increased access to agriculture finance and risk sharing facilities and integration within global value chains for higher-value products. These priorities are further operationalized through the National Strategy for Transformation (NST1 2017–2024) and the National Agricultural Policy. These two guiding documents prioritize economic and social transformation, including job creation, agricultural modernization, environmental sustainability, poverty reduction and addressing malnutrition. Furthermore, they seek to promote sustainable agricultural development, integration of smallholder farmers into markets, climate change adaptation, private sector investment and research and innovation in agriculture, which are the central tenets of the FAO's CPF.
- 66 The CPF is highly aligned with Rwanda's priorities in food security, nutrition and rural development, as enshrined in PSTA4 (2018–2024). Rwanda's strategic plan for agricultural development is aimed at increasing productivity, improving market access, promoting climate resilience and enhancing agricultural value chains. It should also be noted that the FAO supported the development of PSTA4 and ensured that nutrition and research were also mainstreamed in the plan, driving a shift from focusing only on food production to include nutrition and research. Furthermore, the CPF directly contributes to the delivery of the Private Sector Development and Youth Employment Strategy 2018–2024, (Republic of Rwanda, 2017), which seeks to increase the competitiveness of the Rwandan economy, with a focus on value chains. This is accomplished through a range of interventions aimed at promoting entrepreneurship, fostering youth employment in agriculture, and facilitating value chain development across the entire country.
- 67 Table 6 below shows that there was a perfect alignment between the four priorities of the CPF and those identified in the national strategy for agricultural transformation.
- 68 Following five years of implementation, key stakeholders acknowledge the limitations of this high level of alignment. The following quote from one stakeholder summarizes the observations of many others during the evaluation, "we picked almost the same components, and this makes it difficult – it was made too ambitious because the budget of the CPF does not allow to achieve those goals. There was an overestimation of what the programme could effectively mobilize." Though this also links to the internal coherence of the programme, it does demonstrate that limited in-depth analysis was conducted on the expected share of the CPF contribution to the overall PSTA4 goals, making the CPF seem overambitious in the face of limited budgets.
- 69 Additionally, the priorities of other sectoral ministries and policies to which FAO contributes were not identified and included in the development and alignment of the CPF. For instance, clear links with priorities of ministries of environment, youth, gender, local development, commerce, and others were not included in the analysis. There is an acknowledgement amongst stakeholders interviewed, that the prioritization of the PSTA4 above other national processes and policies, led to missed opportunities for creating and nurturing synergies between the FAO and other national

Table 6 Fourth Strategic Plan for Agriculture Transformation and FAO CPF Priority Areas

PSTA4 pillar	CPF priorities
Innovation and extension	Priority 1: Innovative approaches to promote sustainable and integrated agriculture, livestock, and aquaculture production systems
Productivity and resilience	Priority 2: Food security, nutrition, climate, and other shock-resilient agriculture improved through sustainable and diversified production systems
Inclusive markets and value addition	Priority 3: Inclusive agricultural market systems, value addition and competitiveness of agriculture commodities in local, regional, and international markets.
Enabling environment and responsive institutions.	Priority 4: Enhancement of enabling environment with responsive Institutions for effective and efficient service delivery

Source: Elaborated by the Evaluation Team.

actors during implementation. As FAO supports the country to develop the next agricultural transformation strategy PSTA5,⁷ stakeholders have called for FAO to focus on areas where it can add value to ongoing national development processes and not only priority efforts led by the Ministry of Agriculture and Animal Resources. Stakeholders argue that this could enhance the strategic positioning of the FAO in the country.

Finding 2. FAO's CPF was fully aligned with the FAO Rwanda Country mandate, FAO Strategic Framework Objectives (2013–2021 and 2022–2031), UNSCDF goals (2018–2024) and the SDGs.

- 70 In addition to being aligned with national policy priorities, the CPF also responded to the FAO mandate, UNSCDF goals and the SDGs. At the design phase of the CPF, it was aligned with FAO's Strategic Framework 2013–2021's strategic orientations to eradicate hunger, food insecurity and malnutrition (SO1); increase and improve the provision of goods and services from agriculture, forestry, and fisheries in a sustainable manner (SO2); reduce rural poverty (SO3); enable more inclusive and efficient food and agricultural and food systems at local, national and international levels (SO4), and; increase the resilience of livelihoods to threats and crises (SO5). It also addressed FAO goals in Africa which are: i) sustainable production intensification and value chain development; ii) capacity building related to multilateral environmental agreements in Africa, the Caribbean and the Pacific (ACP) countries;⁸ and iii) building resilience in African dry lands.
- 71 With the extension of the CPF period to mid-2024, FAO interventions remain aligned with the revised FAO's Strategic Framework (2022–2031) (FAO, 2021a), which seeks to support the 2030 Agenda through the transformation to more efficient, inclusive, resilient, and sustainable agrifood systems for better production, better nutrition, a better environment and a better life, leaving no one behind. The four betters represent an organizing principle for how FAO intends to contribute directly to SDG 1 (No Poverty), SDG 2 (Zero Hunger) and SDG 10 (Reduced Inequalities) as well as to supporting the achievement of the broader SDG agenda, which is crucial for attaining FAO's overall vision. The four betters reflect the interconnected economic, social and environmental dimensions of agrifood systems. As such, they also encourage a strategic and systems-oriented approach within all FAO's interventions. The FAO country programme and the team have been reorganized around these four betters, demonstrating alignment with the overall organization's vision for the future.

⁷ TCP project TCP/RWA/3903 (742900) "Support to the development of the Strategic Plan for Agriculture Transformation (PSTA5; 2024–2029)".

⁸ Rwanda is one among several countries implementing the Strengthening Environmental Governance and Supporting Multilateral Environmental Agreements in the Africa, Caribbean and the Pacific regions programme - (ACP MEAs, n.d.).

- 72 The four priority areas of the CPF were designed to contribute to SDGs in addition to the outcomes outlined in the United Nations Development Assistance Plan (UNDAP II) 2018–2023. This focus also aligns with the objective of UNSDCF, which aims to advance sustainable agriculture and food systems. Both frameworks recognize the crucial role of enhancing productivity and resilience in the agricultural sector, ensuring food security, nutrition, and climate resilience through sustainable and diversified production system

Table 7 Correspondence and alignment between CPF's PA, SDGs and UNDAP

Priority Area	Aligned SDGs	Aligned UNDAP outcomes
Priority 1	SDG1, SDG2, SDG5, SDG8, SDG13	UNDAP 1 and 2
Priority 2	SDG2, SDG3, SDG12, SDG13	UNDAP 1.2 and 2.2
Priority 3	SDG1, SDG2, SDG12, SDG14, SDG17	UNDAP II 1 and 2
Priority 4	SDG1, SDG2, SDG5, SDG9, SDG13, SDG14, SDG17	UNDAP II 1.4, 2.1, and 3.4

Source: Elaborated by the Evaluation Team.

- 73 The following projects illustrate how the priority areas are linked to the identified SDGs. For instance, the main objective of the project "Accelerating Integrated Policy Interventions to Promote Social Protection" (UNJP/RWA/041/UNJ) was to contribute to ending hunger by ensuring access to safe, nutritious and sufficient food for all people, especially the vulnerable (FAO, 2023b). The projects such as "Creating opportunities for increased peace dividend for women and youth in the Democratic Republic of the Congo-Rwanda border region" (UNJP/RWA/043/PBF) and the UNJP/RWA/041/UNJ project contributed to SDGs 1 and 2 (FAO, 2022b; 2023b; 2023c). The project "Effectively Fighting Stunting in Rwanda (Phase 3)" (UNJP/RWA/048/UNJ) responded to SDG 3 (Good Health and Well-Being: Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages),⁹ while the project "Promoting employment opportunity and agripreneurship among youth and women in Eastern Africa" and contributed to SDG 5 (Gender Equality and empower all women and girls) and SDG 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth) (FAO, 2022b).

Finding 3. In the face of immense agricultural development challenges and needs, FAO's work in all four PAs is broadly aligned with national development needs, but it does not always address these issues with a long-term perspective.

- 74 As mentioned earlier, FAO's work is well aligned with broad national priorities and the agriculture sector development needs more specifically. Given the immense challenges faced by the country, all FAO projects were designed to seek and provide solutions to the agricultural sector in Rwanda. The willingness to address the multiple needs is seen in the geographical spread of the initiatives throughout the whole country.
- 75 Interventions under Priority 2 were geared towards promoting food security, nutrition, climate and other shock-resilient agriculture improved through sustainable and diversified production systems. Evaluation respondents affirmed that FAO's resilience support in Rwanda has been highly relevant to the needs of the country, particularly in addressing the challenges posed by droughts, floods and climate emergencies. One of the key areas where FAO has provided support is in promoting climate-resilient agriculture and sustainable agroecological crop production systems. Projects such as TCP/RWA/3707/C3¹⁰ focused on improving agricultural practices and reducing the use of

⁹ Project "Effectively Fighting Stunting in Rwanda (Phase 3)" (UNJP/RWA/048/UNJ).

¹⁰ Project "Promotion of safer alternatives to Severely Hazardous Pesticides Formulations (SHPFs) and creation of Organic crops producers Cooperatives for sale as IGA in Rwanda" (TCP/RWA/3707/C3).

hazardous pesticides. Other initiatives related to meteorological data processing and dissemination, support for small-scale irrigation, analysis of water productivity, and the construction of terraces. FAO supported Kigali city authorities to work on the development of the city's climate-resilient food system.¹¹ Furthermore, the introduction of AgriApps and the development of user guide videos enabled farmers and extension officers to access agricultural services and improve their practices. Increased access to climate information, will strengthen the resilience of farmers to climate shocks and improve their ability to adapt to changing environmental conditions.

- 76 Priority 3 interventions focused on inclusive agricultural market systems, value addition and competitiveness of agriculture commodities in local, regional and international markets. Projects have focused on improving agribusiness, enhancing market survey and business planning skills and creating job opportunities for youth and women in the agrifood system. While FAO's support was highly relevant, FAO's interventions in this area have for the most part focused on strengthening production rather than building integrated value chains. At the time of the evaluation, FAO was supporting 13 value chains spread throughout the country, with none of these demonstrating integration from production through to markets. Under the CDI Rwanda project, for instance, the creation of innovation partnerships was not always aligned with existing innovation platforms in the country.
- 77 Under PA4, FAO's key activities focused on strengthening the enabling environment for agricultural transformation with responsive institutions for effective and efficient service delivery. This effort included providing institutional strengthening in different areas such as: support to the development of the national post-harvest strategy; capacity building of the different stakeholders including the Ministry of Agriculture and Animal Resources in post-harvest assessment, design, and implementation of food loss reduction policies, strategies, and programs. In addition, it included the establishment of post-harvest management strategy and post-harvest losses (PHL) reduction systems to monitor and report on implementation, as well as progress to achieve the Malabo PHL targets.¹² FAO also developed the e-commerce strategy to promote agriculture value chains¹³ as well as the development of the National Strategy on Youth Employment in Agrifood Systems.¹⁴ Though most of the policy and normative instruments have been developed, some of them remain in draft form or are yet to be implemented. Consequently, there is limited evidence that this has translated into an enabling environment for the effective delivery of services. It appears that FAO's efforts tend to end when drafts or different policy instruments have been developed for the government. Limited efforts are expended to encourage and promote the actual application of the instruments developed, which is the ultimate step towards delivery.

Finding 4. FAO in Rwanda demonstrated flexibility and adaptive capacity in addressing emerging needs from the government and urgent challenges posed by the nutrition emergencies, COVID-19 pandemic, pest outbreaks and climate-induced shocks.

- 78 There is some evidence of FAO's programmatic adaptation to emerging needs. Within the context of this CPF, FAO has actively supported the country in addressing the significant challenge of malnutrition, with a general decline in the rates of stunting observed amongst children below five years old from 50 percent to 33 percent during the 2019–2024 CPF. Under the project "One UN Joint Project Phase II: Effectively Fighting Chronic Malnutrition in Rwanda" (UNJP/RWA/036/WFP), FAO played a role in the validation of the national food-based dietary guidelines (FBDGs) and food guide. FAO collaborated with the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the World Food Programme (WFP) and WHO on this project (FAO, 2022e). Through a multi-sector approach, these agencies worked together to effectively combat chronic malnutrition in Rwanda. At the community

¹¹ Taken from various project progress reports of the GCP/GLO/907/GER project.

¹² Project "Rwanda Post-harvest Management Strategy" (TCP/RWA/3801).

¹³ Project "Support local supplier capacity development and promotion of e commerce for agriculture value chains in Rwanda" (TCP/RWA/3706).

¹⁴ Project "Integrated Country Approach (ICA) for boosting decent jobs for youth in the agri-food system" (GCP/INT/335/MUL).

level, FAO was involved in improving the nutrition outcomes of households in several districts, including Kayonza, Rwamagana, Nyabihu, Rulindo, Gatsibo, Karongi and Rutsiro. This was achieved through initiatives focused on increasing access to healthy and diverse foods, as well as promoting good nutrition practices.¹⁵

- 79 The COVID-19 pandemic led to a disruption in the execution of the CPF. However, Rwanda promptly responded by adapting the agricultural sector to the challenges posed by the pandemic through the formulation of a COVID-19 Economic Recovery Plan. (June 2020 - December 2021). This Economic Recovery Plan details activities that were meant to accelerate agriculture production and commercialization and fill the gaps imposed by the movement restrictions. FAO-Rwanda co-chaired with the European Union the Development Partners Group that supported the development of the COVID-19 Economic Recovery Plan for the agricultural sector (FAO, 2020c).
- 80 FAO utilized the flexibility of its TCP funding to respond to other emerging government needs. FAO Rwanda supported the development of the e-commerce strategy of agricultural value chains for Rwanda. The same applies to the development of the post-harvest strategy requested by the Ministry of Agriculture and Animal Resources. In addition, upon request by the Ministry of Agriculture and Animal Resources FAO Rwanda commissioned a study titled "Agricultural Subsidies in Rwanda: Current Status and Future Directions" which was validated in 2020. More so, FAO supported the Government of Rwanda to establish the One Health Multi-Sectoral Coordination Mechanism, Rwanda One Health policy, and the One Health 2019–2024 Strategic Plan.
- 81 FAO's response to climate emergencies in Rwanda includes a mix of short-term and long-term projects. Short-term projects focused on emergency support for farmers affected by low rains, floods and landslides, receiving positive feedback from government officials and beneficiaries. Long-term initiatives aim to build climate resilience in disaster-prone areas like Kirehe, Nyaruguru and Ngoma.^{16, 17, 18} Additionally, FAO has ventured into peacebuilding projects, enhancing peace dividends for women and youth in the Democratic Republic of the Congo-Rwanda border region and supporting refugee reinsertion.¹⁹ In response to agricultural challenges, FAO introduced integrated pest management technologies to combat armyworms in maize and mango mealy bugs and provided training for desert locust outbreak preparedness. These efforts highlight FAO's adaptability and collaboration with government and stakeholders in addressing national priorities.
- 82 These examples demonstrate FAO's responsiveness to emerging issues as well as an ability to work with government and stakeholders on agreed national priorities.

Finding 5. FAO is trusted and valued for its technical expertise by evaluation stakeholders, it utilizes its comparative strengths but is not always strategic leading to the perceived dispersal of efforts and impacts on development challenges on the ground.

- 83 FAO has gained significant recognition for its technical expertise in agriculture, food and nutrition security as revealed by the evaluation interviews conducted with government counterparts, development partners and resource partners. This recognition is attributed to FAO's clear mandate and extensive knowledge in the agricultural field, which positions it strategically in Rwanda. Given the vital role of the agriculture sector in the country's economy and sustainable development priorities, FAO's expertise becomes particularly valuable. Moreover, FAO's ability to bring international good practices, norms and standards to the localized context, further strengthens its reputation as a trusted partner. FAO is the partner of choice of the Ministry of Agriculture and Animal Resources. This is

¹⁵ Projects "Technical Assistance to the Sustainable Agricultural Intensification and Food Security Project" (UTF/RWA/037/RWA) and "Effectively Fighting Stunting in Rwanda (Phase 3)" (UNJP/RWA/048/UNJ).

¹⁶ Project "Emergency-Anticipatory actions to support farmers' resilience impacted by low rains in Rwanda" (OSRO/RWA/200/BEL).

¹⁷ Project "Provision of Emergency Agriculture Support to Communities Affected by floods and landslide" (OSRO/RWA/001/CHA).

¹⁸ Project "Joint Programme on Enhancing Climate Resilient and Integrated Agriculture in Disaster Prone Areas of Rwanda" (UNJP/RWA/044/UNJ).

¹⁹ Project "Sustainable Return and reintegration of Rwandan Returnees" (UNJP/RWA/038/UNJ).

evidenced in the fact that the FAO facilitated the development of the PSTA4 and is now providing additional support in the design of the new national strategy for agricultural transformation (PSTA5; 2024–2029) in the country.²⁰

- 84 FAO brings in significant expertise in the development of normative instruments in the agricultural sector drawing not only from national expertise but also from regional and international offices. The FAO has been instrumental in enhancing Rwanda's agricultural sector, developing key standards and instruments to strengthen competitiveness. This support encompasses various initiatives, such as the national FBDG, strategies for post-harvest management, youth employment in agrifood systems, e-commerce in agriculture, One Health framework, livestock master planning and social protection policy development. Additionally, FAO's collaboration with the Rwanda Standards Board, funded by the Codex Trust Fund,²¹ has been pivotal in improving national food safety standards.
- 85 FAO is highly regarded for its openness and adaptability, enabling constructive dialogue and feedback with stakeholders. This approach has made FAO a sought-after partner for strategy and intervention design. However, this popularity sometimes leads to an overwhelming demand for FAO's support. For instance, as one interviewee said, "whoever wants to engage in the area, they come to FAO to seek their advice, to support the design of their strategies and their interventions. We consulted on a regular basis and sometimes we are overloaded." In the realm of innovation, FAO has excelled in promoting sustainable and integrated agricultural practices. Its contributions include developing e-commerce platforms, digitalization initiatives, and field-level innovations like solar-powered irrigation and rice-fish farming systems. These efforts have firmly established FAO as a leader in agricultural innovation in Rwanda. Furthermore, FAO's capacity-building initiatives, such as Farmer Field Schools (FFS) and training programmes for farmers' organizations, women, youth and agriculture officers, have significantly bolstered Rwanda's agricultural extension ecosystem, equipping stakeholders to tackle emerging challenges such as pest outbreaks and diseases effectively (FAO, 2019b). This is the case with the "One Health" TCP/RWA/3804/C1 project that triggered a five-year project funded by the United States Agency for International Development to strengthen national pest management capabilities.
- 86 FAO faces several challenges in Rwanda, as highlighted by counterparts. These include lengthy administrative processes causing project delays and limited funding for follow-up and scaling up. The coordination of capacity-building support across programmes has been problematic, leading to an inefficient intervention targeting and delivery. Moreover, some projects, initiated by regional offices or headquarters, aren't always aligned with the country's priority areas,²² focusing more on global demonstration than national priorities. This has prompted the Country Office Leadership to request a reassessment of the value chain intervention approach to refocus and streamline for greater impact.
- 87 The evaluation also notes that the FAO's approach of rolling out small, short-term projects has limited developmental impact, creating a perception of being unfocused and driven by resource mobilisation. Many projects, despite having a catalytic objective, struggle to secure follow-up funding, limiting their long-term impact. This has led to a view that FAO hasn't fully utilized its strategic potential in the country. The recent adoption of the four betters approach could provide a more coordinated, programmatic and results-oriented framework, potentially enabling FAO to re-strategize and strengthen its role and contribution to national development goals.

Finding 6. The design and internal coherence of the 2019–2024 CPF and its corresponding results framework present weaknesses. These challenges include broadly defined outcome statements in the CPF without clear interconnections, a lack of indicators for measuring achievement, weaknesses in the design of the results framework with low-level outputs and a notable absence of gender analysis, risk assessment, monitoring mechanisms and a resource mobilization plan.

²⁰ Project "Support to the development of the Strategic Plan for Agriculture Transformation (PSTA5; 2024-2029)" (TCP/RWA/3903).

²¹ Project "Codex Trust Fund 2" (UNJP/GLO/887/WHO).

²² See notes from staff retreat December 2022

- 88 The challenges identified in the evaluation are related to the design and internal coherence of the CPF and the corresponding results framework. One of the main issues is that the priority areas in the CPF have broadly defined outcome statements, but there is no indication of how these areas are interconnected or how they collectively contribute to the overarching results of the CPF in the absence of indicators for their achievement. This lack of clarity makes it difficult to determine the high-level achievements that the CPFs aim to accomplish and in the absence of a theory of change (TOC), it also hinders the establishment of a narrative for how FAO's work would support Rwanda's priorities more broadly.
- 89 Furthermore, the results framework presents weaknesses in its design whereby the hierarchy of objectives highlights four outputs directly aligned with the four priority areas. The proposed outputs tend to be low-level inputs (technologies promoted, events organized, etc.) and the corresponding indicators are not gender disaggregated, nor focus on demonstrating change. The horizontal logic demonstrates weaknesses in the formulation of specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and time-bound (SMART) indicators, means of verification, and the assumptions underlying the implementation of the results framework. There was no comprehensive gender analysis to explain how the CPF was intended to benefit women and vulnerable groups in alignment with the "leave no one behind" principles. The document also lacked a risk analysis and did not provide a clear formulation of the underlying assumptions guiding FAO's interventions. Furthermore, the CPF did not include a mechanism for monitoring and evaluation, nor did it establish a system for benchmarking success. While the CPF document estimated the financial resources required to implement the framework, it did not include an accompanying resource mobilization plan, even though its development had been mentioned in the 2019 Country Annual Report.²³

4.2 Partnership and coordination

Finding 7. FAO has fostered a strong partnership with national government agencies – particularly the Ministry of Agriculture and Animal Resources - and to a lesser extent other allied ministries, while engagement with authorities and agencies at the local level has been mixed.

- 90 As already demonstrated earlier, FAO is very well positioned towards the Ministry of Agriculture and Animal Resources, where its interventions complement government actions on the ground. Recognized as a trusted partner for various reasons and its expertise in various fields, FAO Rwanda enjoys a dynamic partnership with the government for the implementation of the programme, by means of promoting research and innovation, through introducing new crop varieties, disease mitigation, as well as enhancing farmers' knowledge and skills to support specialization, intensification, diversification and value addition.
- 91 One example of synergy with government-led initiatives is the collaboration between FAO and the Ministry of Agriculture and Animal Resources in the development of the National Strategy for Youth Employment in Agrifood Systems. This strategy aimed to coordinate efforts from public and private sectors, youth groups, civil society and academia to promote youth employment in the agricultural sector. FAO's support in the development of this strategy showcased its commitment to working closely with the government to address youth unemployment and promote sustainable agriculture. Another example is the partnership between FAO and the Ministry of Agriculture and Animal Resources in the implementation of the One Health Multi-Sectoral Coordination Mechanism. This collaboration supported the development of the One Health policy and strategic plan, which aimed to address the challenges of managing animal diseases and promote a holistic approach to health and agriculture. By working together, FAO and the government were able to leverage their respective expertise and resources to achieve common goals in the areas of health and agriculture. The collaboration between FAO and government institutions, such as the Ministry of Agriculture and Animal Resources and the National Institute of Statistics of Rwanda (NISR), facilitated the transfer of knowledge, capacity building and the implementation of projects and initiatives.

²³ Though the 2019 report states that it was under development, it appears that it was never completed and consequently was not accessible to the Evaluation Team.

- 92 FAO's partnerships with allied ministries are rather ad hoc and on a case-by-case basis. This appears to be linked to the over-alignment of the CPF with the Ministry of Agriculture and Animal Resources to the detriment of other sectorial policy priorities. Some departments report not being aware of FAO actions in areas under their mandate, including the Ministry of Gender and Family Promotion, the Ministry of Youth and Culture, the Ministry of ICT and Innovation and the Ministry of Local Government, amongst others. Nevertheless, cases of collaboration have been noted in the UNJP/RWA/041/UNJ project, which was implemented in partnership with the government through the Rwanda Development Board (RDB) and World Relief Rwanda (FAO, 2023b). Other interventions focused on creating opportunities for increased peace dividend for women and youth in the Democratic Republic of the Congo-Rwanda border region implemented in partnership with the Ministry of Agriculture and Animal Resources through the Rwanda Agriculture Board (RAB) (FAO, 2023c). FAO and other partners also supported the Government of Rwanda through the Ministry of Agriculture and Animal Resources in conducting the Women's Empowerment in Agriculture Index (WEAI) to provide the government and its partners with empirical data to better track gender transformation within the agricultural sector. It also implemented activities with the Ministry of Gender and Family Promotion and other local institutions in the delivery of the joint Project "Accelerating Progress towards the Economic Empowerment of Rural Women" (UNJP/RWA/032/UNJ) (FAO, 2022c). Also, FAO partnered with Ministry of Trade and Industry in implementing the Sanitary and Phytosanitary Evaluation and Food Control System Assessment through the Rwanda Standards Board (RSB) and the Rwanda Institute for Conservation Agriculture (RICA) as well as in the context of the work under Codex Alimentarius (FAO and WHO, n.d.).
- 93 FAO teams also seek to engage with local authorities and administrations in the districts to ensure the ownership of interventions, but this is not always systematic. For instance, FAO partnered with the local government, especially with RDB in the implementation of the project "Support Local suppliers capacity development and promotion of e-Commerce for agricultural value chains in Rwanda" (TCP/RWA/3706) in different districts like Huye and Rusizi. The CDI Rwanda project is implemented in collaboration with the RAB in policy development. In other areas visited, local authorities were not always aware of and involved in FAO interventions in their communities. Being one of the UN agencies with a lower budget compared to other agencies, FAO stands to leverage the presence and assets of local authorities in the implementation of its activities, as they could ensure follow up of interventions after projects end. However, the non-systematic development of project exit strategies also represents missed opportunities for the involvement of local authorities. FAO personnel also report that partnerships with local authorities are not always productive, particularly if FAO is not providing tangible inputs and infrastructure to their communities.
- 94 Overall, the role of FAO in the policy spheres and field implementation is appreciated, yet there appears to be less clarity about its positioning. Curiously, one development partner echoes the views of many others stating that "FAO is like the Ministry of Agriculture and Animal Resources doing everything and not specialized in anything – they seem to operate from the background ... In a country like Rwanda, they need to be more intentional if they want to play a convening role." Another mentions, that it is less clear whether they are more focused on policy or on implementation on the field. These views suggest the need for better communication with partners and a reassessment of FAO's positioning and image in the country.

Finding 8. FAO's engagement in Rwanda leveraged partnerships with UN agencies, local NGOs and the private sector, yet faced challenges in fully integrating its efforts with academia and coordinating value chain development initiatives.

- 95 FAO has sought synergy with UN agencies in Rwanda, as evidenced by its alignment with UNSDCF. This alignment has facilitated coordination and collaboration among different UN agencies, allowing for a more comprehensive approach. For example, the collaboration with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the Belgian Development Agency (Enabel) and local NGOs in the Democratic Republic of the Congo-Rwanda border region project led to increased cross-

border trade exchanges between border communities. FAO worked with various partners such as UNICEF, WFP and local NGOs to support and strengthen social protection interventions in the country through pooling of resources, expertise, and knowledge.

- 96 FAO has been actively involved in a variety of national initiatives in Rwanda, including the nutrition technical working group under the Ministry of Agriculture and Animal Resources. Here, FAO contributed to the review and approval of nutrition and food security interventions, studies, strategies and policies. It also played a key role in five UN joint programmes, collaborating with entities like WFP, UN Women, the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) and UNICEF. These programmes covered areas such as nutrition, the economic empowerment of rural women, climate-resilient agriculture, youth engagement, and social protection. It has also been influential in promoting innovation partnerships, which advocate a multi-stakeholder approach to address the needs and challenges of stakeholders across various value chains and agroecological regions in Rwanda.
- 97 In collaborating with civil society, FAO primarily engaged local NGOs as service providers to support field activity implementation. Partnerships with organizations like Inades-Formation and World Relief Service have improved activity delivery on the ground. Such collaborative efforts were evident in the RWEE programme, which facilitated multi-stakeholder engagement and co-creation of development solutions. FAO's engagement with academia includes partnerships with the University of Rwanda's College of Agriculture, Animal Sciences and Veterinary Medicine (UR/CAVM) and other entities for evidence generation and decision-making. However, there have been challenges in integrating best practices and lessons learned into the academic curriculum,²⁴ as well as in aligning projects with broader strategies for achieving FAO's objectives in Rwanda.
- 98 The collaboration with the private sector has been beneficial in terms of knowledge sharing, technology transfer, market access for farmers and the development of digital services for agriculture.^{25,26} FAO supported the Rwanda Youth in Agribusiness Forum (RYAF) in enhancing its strategic plan and internal governance. The Hand-in-Hand Initiative, launched by FAO, aims to assist governments in engaging with donors and development partners to implement national agricultural strategies and investment plans. This initiative identifies strategic investment opportunities in Rwanda's agriculture sector, including tea production, small livestock production and potato cultivation. FAO's innovation partnerships in value chains have received mixed feedback. While they enhance communication among various actors, concerns have been raised about their tangible impact (see MTR of CDI Rwanda project).

²⁴ Results of the DeSIRA mid-term review should curriculum develop at the *École Supérieure d'agro-développement international* (ISTOM) instead of national university, however, the team acknowledges that learning might be taking place for lecturers and students involved in DESIRA

²⁵ Project "Institutionalization of FAO's Rural Invest Package to enhance national stakeholders' investment planning and monitoring capacities" (TCP/INT/3703).

²⁶ Project "Support Local suppliers capacity development and promotion of e-Commerce for agricultural value chains in Rwanda" (TCP/RWA/3706).

5. Assessment of FAO's contributions: Are we making a difference?

5.1 PA1: Contribution to innovative approaches to promote sustainable and integrated crop, livestock and aquaculture production systems

Finding 9. FAO interventions in Rwanda, primarily through the FFS approach, successfully enhanced agricultural productivity and sustainable practices among farmers, but were limited by resource constraints and insufficient coordination among various projects.

99 Under the broad vision of PA1, FAO planned to support the government's priorities towards accelerating agriculture transformation by means of promoting research and innovation, that is, introducing new crop varieties, disease mitigation, as well as enhancing farmers' knowledge and skills to support specialization, intensification, diversification, and value addition. FAO's interventions were expected to: i) strengthen farmers' engagement in innovative agricultural practices and improved business management; ii) support effective extension services; and iii) develop agriculture value chains including farmers' organizations, women, and youth. Several approaches were implemented including FFS, promotion of information and communications technology (ICT), direct input support and entrepreneurship, and economic empowerment of farmers. Several stand-alone, mostly uncoordinated projects were implemented under this priority area, and consequently, the achievements remain highly localized.

Adoption of the FFS school approach

100 The FFS were the main conduit for strengthening the capacities of farmers and farmers' organizations during the implementation of CPF. The successful introduction and development of the FFS model by the FAO in Rwanda has led to the approach being mainstreamed as an integral part of the national extension approach. Through the "Technical Assistance to Rwanda Dairy Development Project (RDDP)" (UTF/RWA/042/RWA), FAO supported the dairy sector through the capacity building of 27 FFS Master Trainers and 765²⁷ Livestock FFS (L-FFS) facilitators; overall, 43 479 farmers were trained through L-FFS and 145 model farms established among L-FFS groups. Advisory service and trainings were provided for a total number of 630 L-FFS facilitators (367 males and 263 females) on Values-based Holistic Community Development (VBHCD) approach and introduction to nutrition across 12 districts. Farmers interviewed during the evaluation stated that these interventions have significantly contributed to the increase of milk production (volume and quality in the project areas) as well as general improvement in the health status of dairy cattle. In addition, four documents: i) FFS Training Guide, ii) dairy FFS training curriculum, iii) quality assurance protocols, and iv) Livestock FFS Policy, have been produced, providing the basis for replication and continuation to sustainability. By so doing, the sustainability of the approach and practices is being ensured.

101 In 2021, through the project "Technical Assistance to the Sustainable Agricultural Intensification and Food Security Project" (UTF/RWA/037/RWA), FAO supported farmers and farmer organizations in Kayonza, Rwamagana, Kayonza, Nyabihu, Rulindo, Gatsibo, Karongi and Rutsiro to enhance agricultural productivity. Eighteen FFS facilitators were trained, and they created 558 FFS group members to use new and improved varieties of high-yield beans. Four training modules were created on watermelon production techniques, greenhouse management, tomato cultivation, and the FFS approach. The capacity of 40 investors and cooperative managers strengthened on Farming as Business, 61 small projects received mentorship, and six training modules of national extension services were translated in Kinyarwanda and disseminated. Also, project UNJP/RWA/032/UNJ established 39 Farmer Field and Life Schools (FFLS) to coach 974 beneficiaries and taught 58 FFS facilitators to coach 1 553 farmers in total (FAO Country Team and FAO, 2022c).

102 Other projects applying the FFS approach were implemented in the area of pest management and livestock challenges. For the fall armyworm outbreak affecting maize, FAO supported the Ministry

²⁷ The total cumulative number of facilitators was 765 with 1 704 L-FFS groups (1 373 groups of farmers and 331 groups of farm assistants).

of Agriculture and Animal Resources by enhancing capacities for identification, monitoring, and management in Nyamagabe, Nyanza, Muhanga, Rwamagana, Kayonza and Nyagatare (FAO, n.d.b.). Over 2 400 individuals, including farmer promoters and agronomists, were trained in early warning and pesticide risk reduction. The Fall Armyworm Monitoring and Early Warning System (FAMEWS) was developed for timely alerts. Additionally, 120 FFS facilitators received training on integrating fall armyworm monitoring and management through the FFS approach and utilizing the FAMEWS mobile application (FAO, 2019a).

- 103 Another project, targeting safer alternatives to hazardous pesticides, was conducted in Musanze, Rulindo and Rwamagana.²⁸ This project involved assessing pesticides and implementing integrated pest management training for various stakeholders. The focus was on promoting safer pesticide alternatives using the FFS methodology. Additionally, FAO addressed livestock issues like Rift Valley Fever. In collaboration with the government, they vaccinated over 250 000 animals across Rwanda, effectively preventing an outbreak. The One Health initiative also saw FAO supporting rabies awareness campaigns and vaccinations for dogs and cats in various districts.
- 104 Interviews with FFS facilitators and trainers revealed their effectiveness in introducing new technologies to farmers and facilitating their adoption. Facilitators were able to provide bespoke support to participating farmers in their communities. Participating farmers revealed how the trainings on integrated pest management had helped to reduce pest infestations in their plots.

Promotion of integrated farming systems

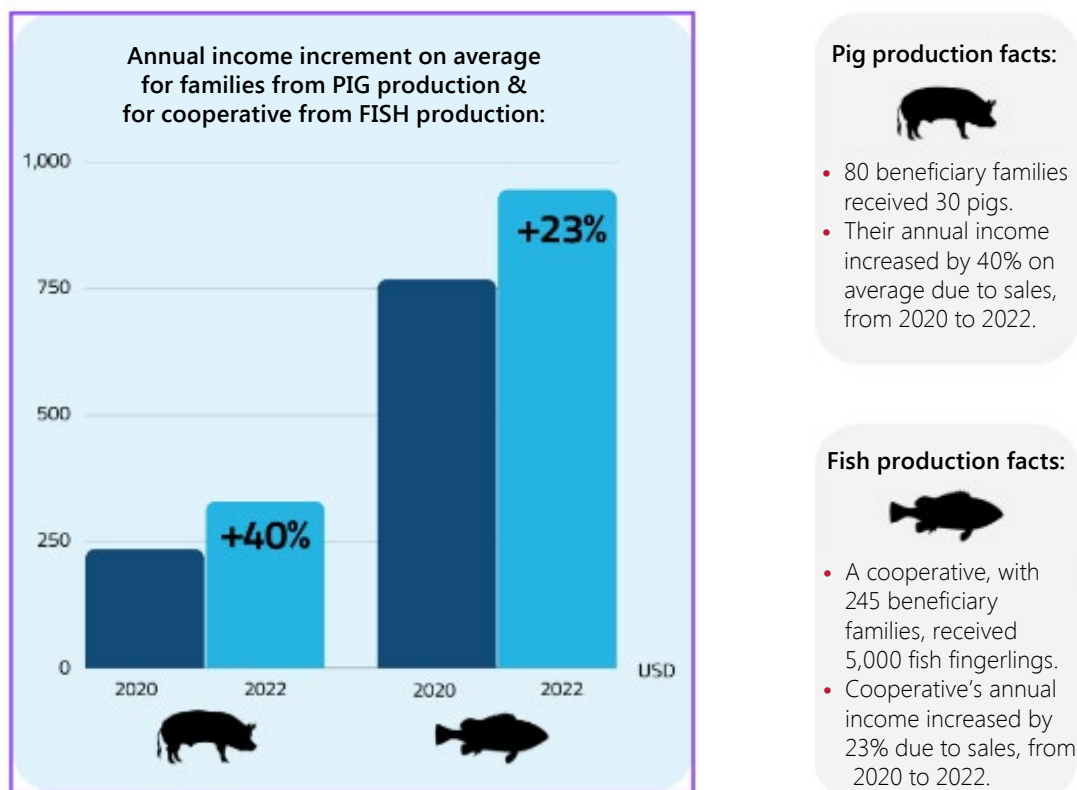
- 105 Through the pilot project "Validation and dissemination of integrated fish-rice systems through the FFS approach" (TCP/SFE/3804), two FFS sites were established in Rwamagana district to test the species of fish and feeds (tilapia with feed, tilapia without feed, catfish with feed, catfish without feed). A training of trainers (ToT) on FFS methodology was organized and 15 people from different stakeholders working on FFS, water, rice, aquaculture and fisheries participated. Sixty FFS group members were selected and two FFS second-season long learning cycles on fish-rice integration were established. During the evaluation, beneficiaries revealed that they were very keen to continue this project. They showed their engagement through their contribution in the form of labour and farmlands for piloting the farming approach. The aquaculture sector is not well developed in the country in terms of access to baby fish, feed, and other services that could support the sector. At the time of the evaluation, there was no follow up project to continue the pilot or to effectively document the performance of the pilot. Further, capital entry barriers are likely to limit the initial engagement of individual farmers in this farming system going forward. Working through cooperatives in the first instance could enhance mastery of the required techniques, before scaling up at the level of individual farmers.
- 106 This was the case with the project "Knowing water better: Towards fairer and more sustainable access to natural resources for greater food security" (GCP/GLO/907/GER) project, which promoted fish and pig integration into productive systems. The integrated production approach benefited Yanze farmers through combining vegetable production with fish farming in water ponds (for irrigation), and pig production (cash income, farmyard manure for improved soil fertility). The evaluation found that this intervention was highly valued by the leadership of the Yanze Horticulture Promotion Cooperative (YAHOPROC). According to stakeholders, through the buy from youth initiative, YAHOPROC has experienced sustained demand for their products and profits, which it is reinvesting to repair existing infrastructure owned by the cooperative (executive vice chair of YAHOPROC). Other farmers are using the services of the cooperative - renting irrigation equipment, solar systems demonstrating wider impact of FAO interventions in the community. Because of the efficient working and irrigation and increased sales, they have now started to pass-on piglets to

²⁸ Project "Promotion of safer alternatives to Severely Hazardous Pesticides Formulations (SHPFs) and creation of Organic crops producers Cooperatives for sale as IGA in Rwanda" (TCP/RWA/3707/C3).

members - from 30 piglets provided to farmers and passed on, 100 farmers (51 women and 49 men) are now producing pigs in the community enhancing diversification of income sources and resilience. The cooperative is now selling agricultural inputs YAHOPROC members can borrow the inputs and repay following production and marketing. Using solar pumps in irrigation has positive impact in increasing agricultural production of small farmers as well as the water productivity. From field assessment under the GCP/GLO/907/GER project, when comparing irrigation technologies, water productivity varies from 16.7 kg/m³ when using watering cans in irrigation to 36.3 kg/m³ with solar pumps. In addition, the production approach facilitated by FAO through YAHOPROC, has benefited Yanze farmers through integration of vegetable production with fish farming in water ponds (for irrigation) and pig production (cash income, farmyard manure for improved soil fertility) (FAO, 2023d).

107 The end-of-project report (FAO, 2023d) showed that 245 families benefited from fish production, (with each family reporting an average of 3 247 RWF) – 8 percent increase in annual family income whereas at YAHOPROC level, (RWF 795 650) 23 percent of the annual revenue increase was realized. In the area of pig production, 80 families benefited from pig production (with an average income per family of RWF 97 906 - about USD 97), which is about 40 percent of the annual income increase per family. The success of the GCP/GLO/907/GER project has been the result of strong stakeholder engagement, a collaboration of the cooperative, technical expertise from FAO and partners, and strong buy in from farmers.

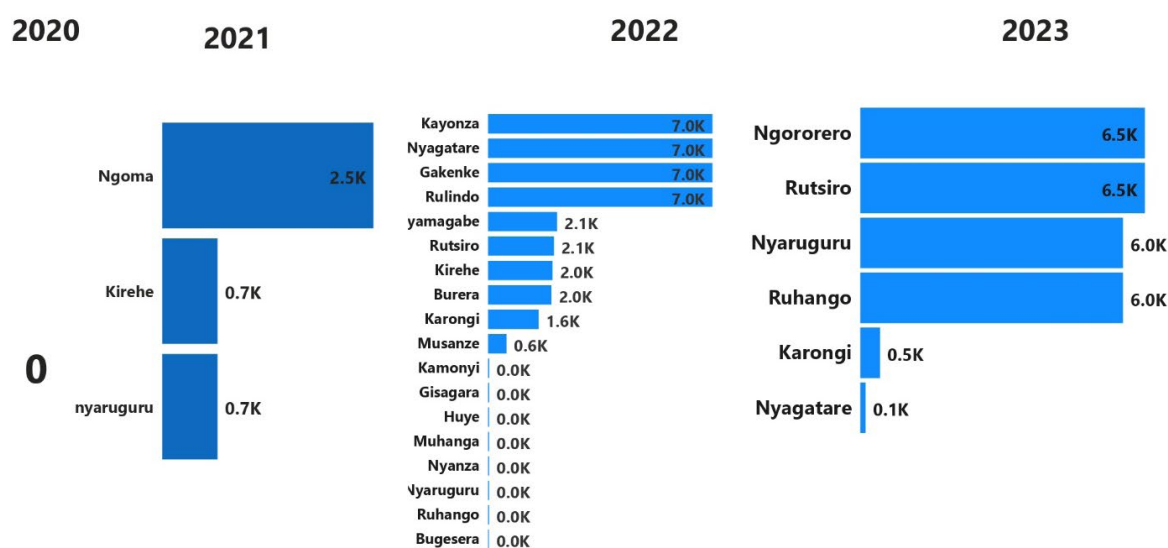
Figure 11 Annual income increment on average for families from pig production and for cooperative from fish production



Source: FAO. 2023d. *Knowing water better: Towards fairer and more sustainable access to natural resources for greater food security – Terminal report*. Rome.

- 108 The institutionalization of the FFS model approach by the government is a further testament to FAO's impact in Rwanda. This has not only been adopted by the government, but also by other development partners such as IFAD, NGOs and others. The Ministry of Agriculture and Animal Resources has the responsibility to monitor the effective application of the approach by its extension services on the ground. Consequently, FAO can play a role in supporting the further development of the approach as well as the harmonisation of its application by different stakeholders. Figure 12 presents the level of distribution of livestock inputs to small holder households in Rwanda between 2021 and 2023. In total, 26 273 items consisting of small livestock, poultry and fish stocks have been distributed.²⁹

Figure 12 Distribution of livestock inputs by district



Source: Elaborated by the Evaluation Team based on FAO Rwanda M&E data presented at FAO Rwanda retreat (December 2023).

Promoting the use of modern technologies and tools for more climate resilient agriculture

- 109 In addition to the traditional FFS model, FAO interventions also focus on strengthening the use of information and communication technologies in agriculture. FAO introduced and supported the adoption and use of ICT in agriculture through the introduction of the Rural Invest tool used in business plan preparation. Representatives of different cooperatives and companies were trained to use excel sheets in recording their production data, calculating production cost, e-commerce and the use of the Esoko application to promote their products and receiving advisory services such as weather forecasts, etc. on their mobile phones.
- 110 In the same direction, to enhance extension services, FAO in collaboration with the private sector, ICT chamber, and the Ministry of Agriculture and Animal Resources, launched Digital Service Awareness campaigns for farmers, and extension officers in Rutsiro and Rwamagana districts for the adoption of AgriApps. To increase the app's accessibility and user base, user guide videos were distributed on social media platforms and websites including the Ministry of Agriculture and Animal Resources, the Ministry of ICT and Innovation and FAO. The AgriApps digital services were promoted on two major radio channels, engaging over 3 000 farmers in discussions about utilising AgriApps to enhance agricultural profitability. These efforts have enabled farmers and extension officers to

²⁹ FAO Country Office M&E data 2023 presented at FAO Rwanda retreat

access crucial agricultural knowledge and advice through digital services via SMS and smartphones. With Rwanda's high mobile phone and internet connectivity, the use of ICT in agriculture is seen as having substantial potential, especially in professionalising the FFS approach, improving market access, and building climate resilience.

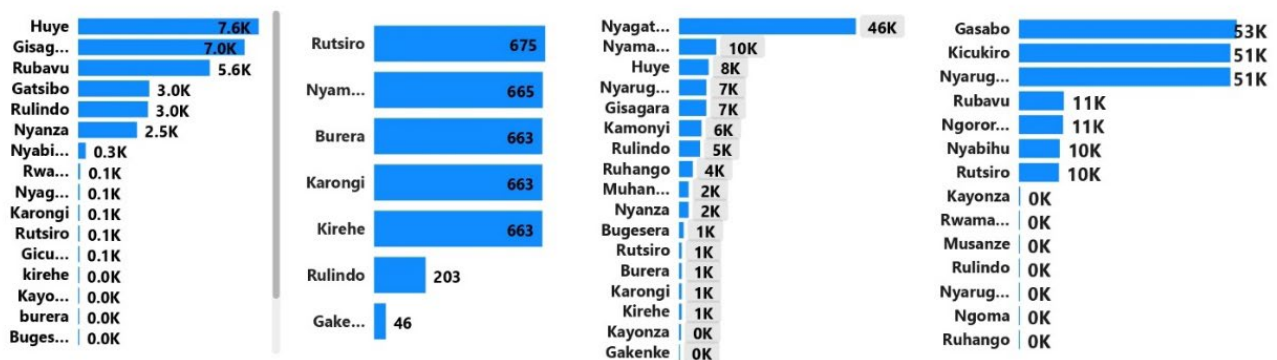
- 111 In response to climate change and the need for effective water management, FAO has implemented projects focusing on water resource assessment in the Yanze River Basin, encompassing Muvumba, Akagera lower and Nyabarongo lower (GCP/GLO/907/GER). This intervention is crucial for production, resilience and community health. As a result, in 2020 a total area of 128 560.8 ha was identified for monitoring using the Water Productivity Open-access Porta (WAPOR) tool for water productivity assessment. Additionally, the project strengthened the productive capacities of communities through the introduction of small-scale irrigation technologies (SSIT) for climate change resilience in the Yanze River Basin in Rulindo district reaching 250 vegetable growers to enhance climate friendly water use efficiency. One hundred YAHOPROC members (51 women and 49 men) benefitted from three water pond dam-sheets and the use of three solar pumps in irrigating various vegetables including broccoli, celery, cabbages, apples and tomatoes. Field interviews with members of YAHOPROC during the evaluation supported earlier findings by the local implementation NGO partner *Action pour la Protection de l'Environnement et la Promotion des Filières Agricoles* (APEFA) regarding the use of solar pumps.
- 112 Interviews with beneficiaries showed that using solar pumps in irrigation has a positive impact on increasing agricultural productivity for farmers as well as in terms of water productivity. Using solar powered irrigation pumps, which were less labour intensive, enabled women to invest their time in other productive or household activities. Quantitative evidence from APEFA demonstrated that in comparison, water productivity varies from 16.7 kg/m³ when using watering cans in irrigation to 36.3 kg/m³ with solar pumps. Furthermore, farmers realized additional RWF 500 000/year when using solar pumps when compared with traditional irrigation methods.
- 113 Understandably, FAO initiatives have focused on improving water efficiency and governance such as the UTF/RWA/037/RWA (FAO, 2022d), GCP/GLO/925/IFA (FAO, 2021c) and CDI Rwanda projects. Under the CDI Rwanda project, enhancing the governance of water resources has been strengthened. The irrigation scheme in the Rwangingo catchment area has made significant strides in addressing challenges related to water use efficiency and the organization of water users. This has led to increased collection of water fees, thanks to the efforts of the innovation partnership. Through constructive dialogues, the contributions of water users have risen by 30 percent. Even farmers who were previously hesitant to pay water user fees are now contributing to the collective management and maintenance of the scheme. This example highlights the importance of collective action where FAO convening interventions mobilized the community to find collective solutions to their own issues. This intervention also demonstrated community ownership and consequently enhancing the sustainability prospects.

Direct input support to farmers

- 114 In addition to strengthening capacities using FFS and ICT, FAO interventions also involved direct capacity building and input support to farmers. In 2019, FAO supported RAB to improve banana production in five districts of Gisagara, Muhanga, Karongi, Rwamagana and Rubavu by distributing clean banana planting materials to sustain banana production. Additionally, 300 Congolese refugees from the Mugombwa camp and 1 424 farmers from the host communities of the Mugombwa sector received maize and bean seeds to build the livelihoods of both refugees and host communities. FAO through the GCP/GLO/907/GER project contributed to the promotion of integrated farming (pig rearing, fish farming and vegetable production) and as a result, 250 farmers were supported in the Yanze River Basin through the distribution of 30 piglets and 15 000 fish fingerlings. Also, the three solar pumps distributed in 2020, increased agricultural production of small farmers from 16.7 kg/m³ using watering cans in irrigation to 36.3 kg/m³ with solar pumps under the GCP/GLO/907/GER project. Through the UNJP/RWA/032/UNJ project (FAO, 2022c), they were facilitated to create

and run income generating activities and use saving and credit schemes available. The programme increased rural women's access to decent employment, in total, 3 670 beneficiaries (2 606 women and 1 064 men) initiated self-employment activities in micro-business projects, small shops, and buying and selling crops (FAO, 2022c). In general, 5 537 beneficiaries (3 875 women vs 1 662 men) learnt how to select better quality seeds for planting; monitor their crop growth, harvest and store their crop production to reduce post-harvest loss; and how to improve their diet with their farmed crops, both in terms of quantity and quality (FAO, 2022c). Figure 13 shows the distribution of crop input and equipment beneficiaries from 2020–2023 representing 307 143 smallholder households.³⁰ These items consist of seeds, fertilizers, irrigation equipment and farming tools.

Figure 13 Distribution of input to beneficiaries by district



Source: Elaborated by the Evaluation team based on FAO Rwanda M&E data presented at FAO Rwanda retreat (December 2023).

- 115 Some other projects focused on facilitating access to financial resources. The project "Promoting employment opportunities and agribusiness among youth and women in Eastern Africa" (GCP/SFE/007/JPN) trained 17 loan officers (of which six women) on agribusiness tailored products and advocacy for access to finance. One hundred and ninety four youth (of which 75 young women) were trained on Fit for Finance in ten districts. As part of the CDI Rwanda project, beneficiary cooperatives were also facilitated to access credits to enhance their business activities. Interviews with beneficiaries also revealed in some cases that participants in FFS were mobilising savings which were used to fund input acquisition and coverage of emergency household needs.
- 116 Whether through FFS groups or member cooperatives, FAO interventions are strengthening communities to access critical financial services for their activities. In this direction, the project "Accelerating Progress towards the Economic Empowerment of Rural Women" (UNJP/RWA/032/UNJ) reached its goal, youth and women were trained, received loans from financial institutions and launched their own agribusinesses. The project contributed to the increase of agricultural production from women farmers, with 80 percent of beneficiaries confirming production increase (FAO, 2022c). Interviews with beneficiaries revealed that increased production was contributing to better sales, incomes and savings for farmers.
- 117 Provision of direct input support to farmers complements other interventions promoted by the FAO and facilitates the adoption of technologies and improved agricultural practices. The evaluation notes that the demand for direct support remains high and obviously beyond what the FAO can deliver with current resources. For this reason and the need to empower communities and reduce the dependency of farmers on grants, the CDI Rwanda project seeks to create stakeholder linkages through

³⁰ FAO Country Office M&E data 2023 presented at FAO Rwanda retreat

innovation partnerships whereby, they can work collectively to address local needs. Farmers and their cooperatives are strengthened with functional capacities to manage partnerships, cooperation, and resource mobilisation. This project is in its early days, and it is too soon to judge its effectiveness, but it represents an approach that holds the potential to complement and add value to other FAO interventions in the country.

- 118 The projects implemented under this priority area have for the most part been successful. Farmers and communities have been strengthened to practice sustainable and integrated crop, livestock, and aquaculture production activities leading to increased production, sales, incomes, and savings in the communities. The demand for FAO support remains significantly higher than its current resources can address. The interviews with stakeholders and focus group discussions with farmers revealed that the short-term nature, spread and mostly uncoordinated nature of FAO projects led to a perception of dispersal of efforts. Increasing resource mobilisation, adoption of a more programmatic approach, facilitation and strengthening of partnerships could further consolidate achievements and impacts on the ground.

5.2 PA2: Contribution to food security, nutrition and climate and other shocks to resilient agriculture

Finding 10. FAO provided high-quality technical support through various projects to promote the broad priority goals. It delivered on projects to respond to climate emergencies, but also integrated interventions with a view to bolster farmer's resilience to current and future climate shocks.

- 119 The second priority of the CPF was to support the country's vision towards improving the productivity and resilience of the economy. The focus is to improve yields and diversification into high-value commodities; promote climate resilience and sustainable land and water and husbandry management; and enhance production, access, and utilization of nutritious food. As Rwanda modernizes into a knowledge-based economy, agriculture remains the backbone for sustained economic growth, with the potential of providing high-quality livelihoods for the population - the sector contributes about a third to the GDP and employs about 70 percent of the population.
- 120 As expected, the projects implemented under this priority area are very much in line with those delivered under PA1. FAO implemented the RWEE programme in three districts of Kirehe, Ngoma and Nyaruguru. Various capacity building efforts implemented were highly relevant and appreciated by beneficiaries interviewed during the field missions. Project reports showed that over the lifespans of the project significant capacity building gains were achieved. 120 farmers (100 women and 20 men) enhanced their capacity in agroforestry technologies such as tree nurseries and grafting and three learning nurseries were established. Three hundred and twenty-five farmers (273 women and 52 men) were trained on how to construct and use improved wood-saving stoves, and biogas use, and energy-saving stoves were distributed to 1 092 households. Also, 33 national experts were strengthened on nutrition-sensitive agriculture, and practical application manuals were provided.
- 121 Furthermore, 120 beneficiaries (90 women and 30 men) on labour-saving technologies and 311 households were supported in the construction of labour-saving technologies at their homes in Kirehe, Ngoma and Nyaruguru districts. Twenty facilitators (15 women and 5 men) from Kirehe, Ngoma and Nyaruguru districts trained on agriculture practice, group organization, and key life skills like nutrition, conflict management and savings. Facilitators conducted learning sessions in 26 FFS with 847 participants (741 women and 106 men). This resulted in increases in maize production and beneficiaries in Nyaruguru were supported through the construction of four drying shades. The project supported on-site training on fruit grafting for women (1 661) and men (328), while 23 429 plants (avocado and mango) were grafted in Kirehe, Ngoma and Nyaruguru to plant in early 2021. The UNJP/RWA/032/UNJ project strengthened the capacity of 240 households to increase production (maize and vegetables). In the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, the project contributed to the improvement of food hygiene. The project also reduced post-harvest losses

by availing drying shade each season for more than 100 tonnes of maize. The drying sheds have helped farmers to reduce post-harvest losses with a direct link to improving food security.

- 122 Relatedly, FAO promotes the development of beekeeping in the country. The Evaluation Team agrees that beekeeping is a non-farm activity that can support beneficial conservation and sustainable exploitation of forest resources. FAO's intervention in this area consisted of building the capacities of beekeepers and master trainers in four agroecological zones (Northern, Southern, Eastern and Western provinces) to improve the quantity and quality of bee products fostering income generation and job creation. Through the project "Capacity building to increase the quality and quantity of bees products in Rwanda furthering income generation and job creation" (TCP/RWA/3802), 27 cooperatives received beehives, beekeeping suits, and other useful beekeeping tools. The intervention of the FAO has drawn nationwide attention to the honey value chain with actors such as Enabel building on the achievements to continue the promotion of the honey value chain following the end of the FAO project. While being successful for the most part, beekeepers are slow to adopt modern beekeeping technologies and consequently require further support. It also emerged that the slow adoption observed was due to the provision of hives which were not sufficiently adapted for their zones and cultural practices in terms of sizes and colour. Future projects would benefit from continuous engagement with the farmers to the lessons of improved techniques and what needs to be done to overcome the initial barriers identified.
- 123 Other interventions under this pathway included support to food systems development in urban areas. Under the project "Building climate resilience in city region food systems through adapted production systems" (GCP/INT/275/GER) FAO built the capacity of 77 stakeholders (12 women and 65 men) on city region food system sustainability including the characterization of food system nodes across all districts of the city of Kigali Region. Another project focused on improving fertilizer use efficiency in the country. This was to address the fact that farmers tend not to vary fertilizer application rates according to perceived soil quality (FAO, 2018). This leads to waste and inefficiencies. Through the project "Capacity Development on sustainable Soil Management for Africa (2) - Rwanda" (GCP/RWA/040/CPR) 500 soil samples were collected and analysed to demonstrate the effects of fertilizer use, other inputs and agronomic practices on soil health. The project faced significant delays due to the COVID-19 pandemic. At the time of the evaluation, the results of this project were not visible on the field. However, the project developed an online platform Edusoil where the different soil classifications could be accessed.
- 124 In addition to these separate interventions, FAO focused on addressing shocks to climate change and building community resilience.
- 125 In terms of building resilience, through the project "Bioenergy and Food Security Assessment and Capacity Building for Rwanda" (TCP/RWA/3704) FAO supported the Ministry of Environment to identify potential bioenergy feedstock and technologies that could be developed in Rwanda for decentralized energy production. Food security surveys were carried out on crops and livestock residues use, wood processing residues use, and biogas household residues users, covering 1 199 households and 53 companies in Nyamagabe, Karongi, Rulindo, Nyagatare and Kirehe. In collaboration with the Rwanda Forestry Authority, the capacity of 21 experts from government institutions, private sectors, NGOs, and academics, was strengthened on the bioenergy and food security (BEFS) approach and tools. Through several trainings FAO also strengthened the capacity of 24 experts from different government organizations, academics, NGOs, and small and medium enterprises (SMEs) on BEFS of selected bio-energy supply chains of agricultural and livestock residue, wood, charcoal and biogas.
- 126 FAO collaborated with the Ministry of Emergency Management through the project "Provision of Emergency Agriculture Support to Communities Affected by floods and landslide" (OSRO/RWA/001/CHA) by providing emergency support to 13 sectors of three districts (Gakenke, Ngororero and Nyabihu) affected by floods and landslides. There were 2 900 households (corresponding to 14 604 individuals) were supported with agriculture inputs (17 400 kg of iron bean seeds, 5 800 kg of hybrid

maize seeds, fertilizers: 14 500 kg of urea and 58 000 kg of DAP, 2 900 hoes, 2 900 pickaxes, 2 900 shovels, 2 900 watering cans). In addition, 2 900 booklets of awareness materials on agriculture techniques and flood prevention and management were distributed to the households. A total of 32 district officials underwent capacity building in various areas, such as soil protection, modern cropping techniques, use of manure and chemical fertilizer, nutritious local vegetable varieties, and diets. Additionally, awareness sessions were conducted to address gender-based violence (GBV) and protection from sexual exploitation and abuse (PSEA), benefitting 633 individuals, comprising 424 women and 209 men (FAO, 2021d).

- 127 The evaluation commends the fact that the FAO combined responding to immediate crisis interventions with building-resilience activities. This was the case with the project “Emergency support to the rehabilitation of the agricultural production for farmers affected by floods in Kireh” (TCP/RWA/3705) which focused on the rehabilitation of the land (destroyed by heavy rains in 2019) located in Mpanga Sector (Kirehe district). This rehabilitated land has covered 65 hectares of progressive terraces rehabilitated and planted with agroforestry trees; during the Season 2021 B. Four hundred and sixty-seven people from 412 households were involved in the public works; after having received 400 hoes, 150 pics and 270 pegs. In addition, a water canal of 500 m in length to 2m of width has been constructed and reinforced on both sides to convey water that runs through. In total, the project has employed 467 people, including skilled and non-skilled individuals. In this regard, the project was extended to an additional agricultural season. This led to the distribution of seeds; including potato vines (cuttings) for beneficiaries: 88 ha located in five sectors as following Mpanga (30 ha), Kigarama (10 ha), Kigina (15 ha), Nyamugali (8 ha) and Mahama (25 ha) – horticulture seeds: cabbage (10 kg), onion (10 kg), bell pepper (10 kg), carrots (5 kg) – and small stock (pigs) to beneficiaries. Terraces were rehabilitated to support them to prepare of organic manure and to increase soil fertility (FAO, 2021e). The local government, in particular Kirehe district officers, has committed to following up on the maintenance of the rehabilitated progressive terraces and water canal and of the planted trees. Continuous monitoring of agricultural infrastructure and community sensitization, coupled with preparedness, will support the population in adapting to any climate-related event that might occur in the Mpanga area (FAO, 2023e). Field observations and focus group discussions with the communities affected by the floods revealed that the intervention had lessened their concerns about floods as the canal was effective in channelling water through these communities. The team also highlighted the need for further buffer measures to be implemented downstream to mitigate erosion caused by runoff water.
- 128 Under the project “Emergency-Anticipatory actions to support farmers? Resilience impacted by low rains in Rwanda” (OSRO/RWA/200/BEL), FAO strengthened the capacities of households to mitigate the impacts of the forecast below-average rains from October to December 2022 by distributing 295 water pumps to cooperatives to serve 45 963 farmers in eight districts. Access to timely climate information is a key aspect addressed by the “Joint Programme on Enhancing Climate Resilient and Integrated Agriculture in Disaster Prone Areas of Rwanda” (UNJP/RWA/044/UNJ) where improved climate information-based planning and early warning in the districts of Kayonza, Bugesera, Nyagatare, Gakenke and Rulindo, with high risks of drought and landslide were instituted. The promotion of AgriApps developed by the FAO also seeks to facilitate small farmers’ access to climate information to enhance agricultural planning. Furthermore, FAO in collaboration with the World Meteorological Organization (WMO) provided technical assistance to 224 (143 male and 81 female) experts from government institutions and academics to strengthen their capacities in weather and climate information dissemination to farmers and agricultural communities. It is expected that improved capacities and access to timely information can enhance the adaptation of farmers while strengthening their resilience.
- 129 The successes achieved under this pillar all need to be scaled up in other regions of the country. FAO’s expertise and knowledge in climate resilience agriculture and off farmer businesses such as beekeeping can be further capitalized to strengthen food security while building long term resilience to climate change.

5.3 PA3: Contribution to inclusiveness of agricultural market systems as well as value addition and competitiveness of diversified agricultural commodities in domestic, regional, and international markets

Finding 11. FAO's initiatives in Rwanda focused on digital inclusion, capacity building, and market access, particularly through the RuralInvest toolkit, digital services training, and creation of innovation partnerships. Despite progress in local and national market engagement, there was limited impact focus on regional and international market access and value addition.

- 130 The third priority area focusses on supporting the structural transformation of the Rwandan economy through enhancing value addition, promoting diversification, boosting the export base, and fostering market linkages. The aim is to deliver initiatives to demonstrate and promote production and appropriate post-harvest handling technologies and processing techniques; and facilitate market compliance through facilitating sustainable market linkages in the country, regionally and internationally. Under this priority area, FAO also intended to support the development of online trading systems/platforms to enhance regional and domestic trade and market. In addition, it aims to support national organizations (producers, private actors, government) in establishing regulations and certification schemes and investment plans to improve the quality and standards of agricultural products.
- 131 FAO supported the digital inclusion initiative through digital literacy and the development of local content in Rulindo, Musanze, Burera, Nyabihu and Rubavu. Four digital/ mobile applications and services on Weather and Crop Calendar; Cure and Feed your Livestock; Agri-Market Place; and E-nutrifood were launched. As a result, 438 smallholder farmers (236 men and 202 women) were able to access essential information. Forty cooperatives were trained in decision-making through enhancing information on the prices of agricultural produce. In addition, 224 extension workers (FFS facilitators, farmer promoters, and district agronomists) trained to train more than 5 000 FFS group members on the four digital services. Furthermore, 120 cooperative leaders' (82men and 38 women) capacity grew on business development concepts; business plan development; marketing management and contracting; and post-harvest techniques in the Irish potato value chain. FAO supported 18 experts from public, private, civil society, and academic institutions to acquire knowledge and skills on investment projects and business plan preparation using the RuralInvest toolkit. As a result, ten investment projects and business plans were developed.
- 132 Other efforts in the same direction under the UTF/RWA/042/RWA project FAO supported the capacity development of 110 (36 women and 74 men) experts from public, private, civil society, academic institutions, NGOs, financial institutions and the UTF/RWA/037/RWA project district agribusiness officers in using RuralInvest tool for more effective and efficient resource allocation by small and medium-sized rural entrepreneur resulting in the formulation of 54 agri-business plans by nine district agribusiness officers. A joint FAO/WFP technical pre-assessment was conducted to help understand the nature, level, and time of agriculture and cross-border trading of agriculture products by farmers. A rapid characterization of 19 identified farmers' organizations was conducted and 12 most promising cooperatives were selected to work with the project. FAO conducted a youth-centred value chain analysis for four selected value chains: chili, tomato, French beans, and passion fruit. Also analysed were youth (self-) employment opportunities with a gender lens; market-based employability skills demand in relation to these opportunities; and constraints for youth employment across different nodes of the value chain.
- 133 In 2021, FAO, through UTF/RWA/037/RWA project, trained 27 district agribusiness officers, engineers, and project service providers to use the RuralInvest toolkit to generate high-quality investment proposals and as a result, 66 business plans valued at USD 3 989 952.16 were formulated, approved, and financed. Moreover, 20 national and local suppliers were trained on online marketing, and their web pages were developed. Two hundred and thirty stakeholders strengthened their capacity on e-commerce principles, online marketing, online payment modalities, challenges, and risks linked to fraud and cyber security concerns and mitigation measures. The capacities of 40 youth (20 men and

20 women) value chain actors were strengthened on access to finance through the four sessions Fit for Finance training, in addition to the 68 youth (17 women and 51 men) who graduated from the Green Agribusiness Fund (GAF) academy and trained on value systems operations, agribusiness chains and access to finance for more effective participation in agricultural value chains. The RuralInvest toolkit is highly valued by beneficiaries considering the emerging results in terms of securing funding for different projects. The evaluation team notes that the promotion of this tool has been highly projectized and not always promoted in a coordinated manner with other projects. The same applies for the different applications that have been developed by the organisation. Stronger coordination amongst projects could further enhance the dissemination of ICT tools developed and their adoption by farmers and private sector actors.

- 134 In support of youth engagement in agricultural value chains, FAO Rwanda supported the development of the national strategic plan for youth employment in agrifood systems through the GCP/INT/335/MUL project. The youth-sensitive value chain assessment and the corresponding Roadmap for priority actions, a consultative workshop on skills gaps identification for youth involved in both tomato and passion fruits value chains was organized in April 2022. The project “Developing capacities in agriculture innovation systems: Scaling up the Tropical Agriculture Platform framework” (GCP/GLO/017/EC) also contributed to strengthen the capacity of 42 poultry and piggery value chain actors in planning, agriculture innovation platforms (AIP) establishment, resource mobilization in AIP and competitive funding proposal development. Other efforts are underway under the CDI Rwanda project to strengthen a wide range of value chains in priority districts through collaboration with RAB, the University of Rwanda and the *École Supérieure d'agro-développement international* (ISTOM). The following table shows the target value chains and related innovation partnerships.

No	Innovation partnership	Region
1	Dairy	Burera and Nyagatare
2	Cassava and agroforestation	Bugesera and Ruhango
3	RWANGINGO Water Catchment (maize, rice, beans and horticulture)	Gatsibo
4	Rwangingo Catchment (maize, beans and dairy)	Nyagatare
5	Potato and smallholder livelihoods	Burera and Rutsiro
6	Piggery	Rutsiro

Source: Elaborated by the Evaluation Team

- 135 Unfortunately, the mid-term evaluation of the project revealed that the project was significantly delayed and consequently the results remain mitigated.
- 136 In terms of cross border trade, under the UNJP/RWA/043/PBF project continued whereby, market connections were forged between traders and farmers associations from twelve cooperatives and cross border traders from the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Rwanda using chambers of commerce of both countries. The capacity of 59 project beneficiaries on e-commerce and on sustainable horticulture production focusing on women and youth was implemented.
- 137 The evaluation team notes that the metrics required to monitor and measure the success of market access initiatives are lacking. Key sales and marketing data is not available and consequently, it is difficult to assess whether the interventions achieved their objectives of developing inclusive markets. Future programmes would benefit from consistently documenting and reporting on sales data emerging from FAO support. In this way, the programme would be in better position to assess effectiveness.

138 Furthermore, at the time of the evaluation, FAO interventions have so far focused on market access at the national level. Apart from the peace building initiative between the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Rwanda which promoted cross border training, the intention of the CPF to facilitate market access to regional and international markets has not been achieved. Various value chain capacity-building initiatives were implemented but were mainly focused on increasing production and productivity and no specific activity was undertaken to strengthen food processing and value addition. There is an opportunity for the FAO to further its impacts in facilitating market access through the Hand-in-Hand Initiative. Its expertise in food safety and international standards could be mobilized to support the government's efforts in the development of the poultry/egg and potato value chains which are prioritized by the country's Hand-in-Hand 2023 investment plan.

5.4 PA4: Contribution to enhanced enabling environments and responsive institutions for effective and efficient delivery of services

Finding 12. FAO provided high-quality technical support to the development of key policies, guidelines, and strategies. The outcome results to date from the support during the evaluation period are not yet evident, as policy work often takes a long time.

- 139 The CPF envisioned a broad outcome for FAO's support, which was to provide technical assistance to the government on policies, strategies, and regulatory frameworks for the effective and efficient delivery of services. Under this priority, the FAO intended to promote evidence-based policy and strategy development/review, strengthen capacities of parliament on food security and nutrition including the right to adequate food, enhance institutional capacities on evidence-based management and learning, and promote private sector engagement in the agriculture sector.
- 140 In 2019, FAO supported the Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Agriculture and Animal Resources for the development and implementation of Rwanda Food Based Dietary Guidelines, and ten technical recommendations on diet priority were validated. FAO supported the Ministry of Agriculture and Animal Resources in the development of a 5-year Livestock Master Plan (LMP) with three components: i) a Livestock Sector Development Framework (LSDF); ii) a long-term (15-year) Livestock Sector Analysis (LSA); and iii) a 5-year Livestock Master Plan (LMP) or investment plan with commodity value chain 'road maps' poultry, pork, dairy, and red meat. Gender assessment was carried out and FAO offered technical support towards WEAI designed to measure the empowerment, agency, and inclusion of women in the agricultural sector. Also, FAO contributed to the New Gender and Youth Mainstreaming Strategy in Agriculture (2019–2024) that was developed to guide the implementation of the 4th National Strategy for Agricultural Transformation (FAO, 2022c).
- 141 In 2020, FAO in collaboration with WFP, through the UNJP/RWA/036/WFP project, supported the development of Nutrition-Sensitive School Meal Guidelines and implemented the National School Feeding Programme. Through the UNJP/RWA/041/UNJ project, FAO implemented with WFP and UNICEF a joint programme to accelerate integrated social protection interventions. The programme supported the government at three levels: policy/strategy, systems strengthening, and integrated poverty reduction at the community level in five districts embracing e-commerce as part of its strategy to digitize the economy. In collaboration with RAB, FAO supported the National Strategy for e-commerce in agricultural value chains in Rwanda (2021–2026) through the TCP/RWA/3706 project.
- 142 Through the projects "Global Health Security in Africa and Asia" (OSRO/GLO/407/USA) and "Support to Fostering the One Health Operationalization in Rwanda" (TCP/RWA/3804), FAO in collaboration with the Rwanda One Health Multi-Sectoral Coordination Mechanism (OH-MCM) supported the development of the Rwanda One Health policy and One Health Strategic Plan (2019–2024) for addressing zoonotic diseases and other public health concerns at the human-animal-environment interface. The One Health initiative supported the development of a Multi-sectoral National Action Plan to combat Antimicrobial Resistance in Rwanda (2020–2024).

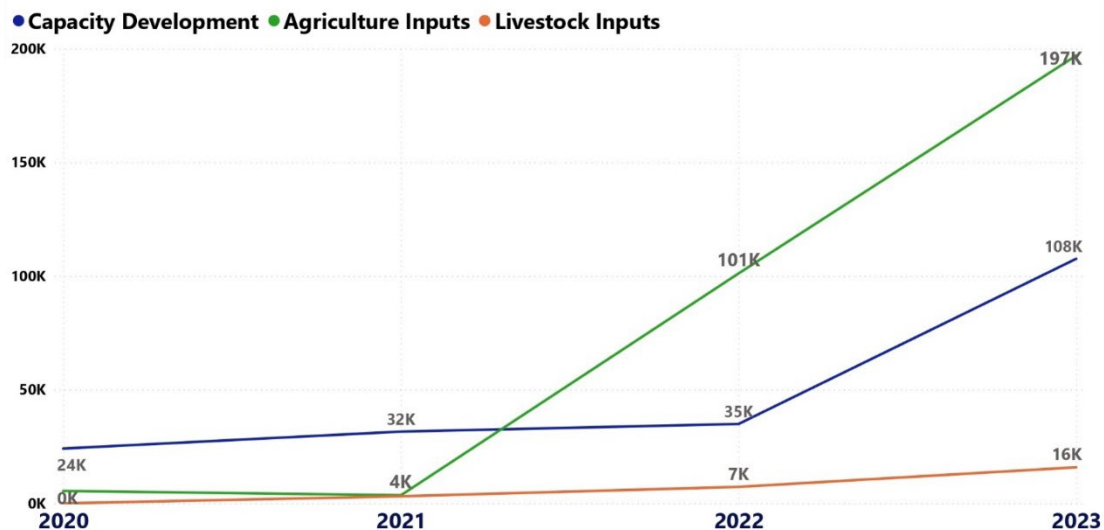
- 143 In 2021, FAO validated the FBDGs and food guide through the UNJP/RWA/036/WFP project. In collaboration with the Ministry of Agriculture and Animal Resources, FAO through the project “Rwanda Post-harvest Management Strategy” (TCP/RWA/3801) developed a comprehensive Post-harvest Management strategy (2021–2025) with Action Plan and monitoring and evaluation (M&E) framework expected to reduce the post-harvest losses to a minimal acceptable level. In addition, the capacity of 50 experts from government institutions and stakeholders has been strengthened for the design and implementation of food loss reduction policies, strategies, and programmes. FAO supported the development of the National Strategy for Youth Employment in Agrifood Systems as a coordination tool to support the achievement of the NST1/PSTA4 decent job targets through the GCP/INT/335/MUL project. To that end, a technical working group comprising of 25 member institutions including youth groups, private sector, civil society, public institutions, and development partners was established.
- 144 In 2022, FAO through the project “Capacity Building Related to Multilateral Environmental Agreements in ACP Countries, Phase III” (GCP/GLO/006/EC) conducted a consultative policy workshop for mainstreaming biodiversity into national agriculture policies and strategies. The project provided support to the National Pesticides Risk Reduction Plan and the process to phase out highly hazardous pesticide (HHPs) through the identification of HHPs which was completed, a shortlist was presented, and mitigation measures were proposed; and development of the National Strategy for Pest Control Products (2023–2028).
- 145 Further policy support efforts were in the area of One Health. The One Health Policy has been developed and approved by the Government of Rwanda to guide the planning, monitoring, and evaluation of all activities under the One Health approach countrywide and reflects shared commitments to enhance collaboration between environmental, animal (wildlife and domestic), plant and human health, and continuing to build future One Health workforce with required capacity through higher institutions of learning. Additionally, the Rwanda One Health Strategic Plan 2021–2026 was developed and approved to ensure the prevention and control of zoonotic diseases and other public health threats in a healthy environment through multidisciplinary collaboration in capacity building, research and community services. The strategic plan for the control and elimination of dog-mediated human rabies (2023–2030) was developed and validated, this is guiding the Government of Rwanda on the prevention mechanisms, and impact of rabies on humans and provide information and advice on how to prevent the disease in at-risk communities, and traces ways to enhance the awareness on rabies control leveraging One Health approach. The multisectoral National Action Plan on Antimicrobial Resistance (NAPAMR) in Rwanda was developed and published providing a framework for the overall goal of ensuring continuity of successful treatment and prevention of infectious diseases with effective and safe medicines that are quality-assured, used responsibly, and accessible to all who need them (FAO, 2023f).
- 146 FAO also supported the city of Kigali through the project “Feeding Urbanization: Building prosperous small cities and towns” (FMM/GLO/132/MUL) on food waste reduction and management, built the capacity of 37 stakeholders (14 women and 23 men) in the sector; conducted an assessment and developed a strategic plan on Food Waste Management for the city of Kigali. A further recognized contribution of the FAO was the development of the New Gender and Youth Mainstreaming Strategy in Agriculture (2019–2024) which provided the guidance for mainstreaming gender in the delivery of the 4th National Strategy for Agricultural Transformation.
- 147 At the time of the evaluation, government officials were satisfied with the technical assistance provided by the FAO and its implementation partners in strengthening the national institutional and regulatory frameworks. The evaluation recognizes that the results of policy changes often take time to become visible. However, the evaluation team considers that the FAO's efforts working across sectors and with multiple partners to support the government in policy/strategy development processes have been successful. The next CPF would benefit from building on these policies and strategies developed and ensuring that they are effectively applied through integrating interventions geared towards promoting the operationalization of various instruments developed.

5.5 Emerging evidence of outcomes resulting from FAO interventions

Finding 13. FAO's training and capacity-building initiatives in Rwanda have led to improved agricultural practices, resulting in increased yields, incomes, and market access for farmers. These interventions have also promoted women's empowerment and collective action, significantly enhancing social and economic benefits in farming communities. However, the impact of these initiatives is not fully captured due to a lack of systematic documentation and outcome tracking.

148 FAO's capacity-building initiatives have played a pivotal role in improving farming practices and knowledge among farmers in Rwanda. The various abovementioned trainings and productive capacities provided to farmers have had a significant impact on increasing yields and reducing production costs. Figure 12 shows the distribution and evolution of FAO's global outreach from 2020–2023 characterized by significant increases in resource mobilisation, project delivery and post COVID-19 recovery and resilience efforts.³¹

Figure 14 Distribution of FAO's outreach through its interventions in Rwanda



Source: FAO Rwanda M&E data presented at FAO Rwanda retreat (December 2023).

149 As mentioned by one interviewee, "the training provided by FAO has been instrumental in improving our farming practices. We have learned about modern techniques like crop rotation and organic fertilizers, which have significantly increased our yields." Other farmers also report that the adoption of improved agricultural practices, irrigation and other pest management techniques has translated into increased income and agricultural productivity. For instance, farmers in Rulindo increased the area dedicated to organic farming by 20 percent following the adoption of farming practices taught by FAO. This has resulted in higher prices for organic produce compared to non-organic produce, attracting interest from other farmers in the community. Similar improvements have been reported among beekeepers transitioning from traditional methods to improved beekeeping practices introduced by FAO, as a result, farmers reported selling quality honey at USD 3.34 kg compared to traditional methods (FAO, 2022e).

³¹ FAO Country Office M&E data 2023 presented at FAO Rwanda retreat.

- 150 In the absence of documented reports on sales and farmers' incomes, further anecdotal evidence that FAO interventions facilitated market access for some farmers was also observed. This theme is evident in the testimonies of farmers and cooperatives who have experienced positive changes. For example, one FFS facilitator in Rubavu, doubled his income from USD 501 to USD 1 002 in one year by applying the skills on composting, livestock, and efficient use of seeds acquired through FAO interventions. Another farmer expanded his agricultural endeavours by purchasing more land, a cow, and other livestock. Other farmers revealed that the adoption of integrated pest management (IPM) and organic practices increased their returns on potato production, whereby they sell 1 kg of potatoes for USD 0.50, compared to USD 0.33 before. Furthermore, they also reported a significant decrease in production costs through the adoption of IPM practices. Farmers benefiting from the Peacebuilding Fund project appreciated the role of the project in enhancing access to markets and safe transactions. As one respondent mentioned, «before, I had to accompany my products to the Democratic Republic of the Congo with a lot of risks of being extorted on the way back with the money. Now we farmers advertise our products on the platforms, and buyers also access the platform.”
- 151 Collective action and women's empowerment also appear to have been enhanced in some areas of intervention. For example, the cooperative in Nkundamahoro Market is selling seven to ten tonnes of vegetables and fruits daily, thanks to the support of FAO. The cooperative in Ngoma District, where FAO provided a water pump to reduce the labour and time spent by women on fetching water for agricultural activities, allowed the women in the cooperative to have more time for farming and other household responsibilities. A spinoff of the support was that the cooperative also created an early childcare centre, further enhancing the social and economic benefits for its members. Through gender empowerment and training on conflict management, women were empowered to take leadership positions and to defend their collective positions. A female member of the cooperative in Nyaruguru district stated that before the training, she was not able to speak in public, but after the training she was able. Furthermore, in the case of the cooperative called Tugaruke Mu Nzira, where women who were previously engaged in prostitution received training from the African Institute for Economic and Social Development (INADES), a partner organization of FAO, they have now left the activity to engage in socially and economically empowering activities such as selling agricultural products, operation of village shops and restaurants amongst others. The cooperative also provides a savings and credit scheme, allowing members to access financial resources. In Rwamagana, these savings and credit schemes were reported to be strengthening community cohesion, increasing community access to social insurance services, and ability to cover urgent educational and health needs of households.
- 152 Another outcome identified was related to the strengthening of social protection and improved livelihoods. Through FAO's support to improved nutrition in the country, the evaluation found evidence that two households in Burera graduated from category 1 to 2 of Ubudehe,³² a social protection programme. These households serve as models in the community and were being used as champions to promote healthy living and nutrition practices, demonstrating the positive changes in their livelihoods as a result of FAO's support. The households have experienced improvements in nutrition, access to education, and economic activities.
- 153 This evidence though anecdotal in nature, suggests that, in some cases, FAO's interventions are contributing to strengthening the resilience of farmers through the adoption of climate-smart agricultural technologies, increased productivity, access to markets and improved livelihoods. Due to the lack of systematic documentation and tracking of outcomes resulting from its interventions, there is a missing opportunity to effectively convey the positive impacts of these initiatives. Documenting and identifying, a priori, what are the specific outcomes that FAO wants to achieve through its programme in the country could, among others, further support the country office in resource mobilization by demonstrating the value added of its interventions in the country.

³² This system classifies households by levels of deprivation, and nutrition is a key factor in the classification; consequently, those who report lower levels of food insecurity are moved into higher bands.

5.6 Gender and leave no one behind

Finding 14. FAO ensured that men, women, and youth benefited from its support with close levels of parity between male and female gender categories. The participation of people with disabilities lags behind. The overall results from FAO's support are not yet transformational or long-term to address the causes of inequality and their vulnerabilities.

- 154 FAO's Policy on Gender Equality³³ has established minimum standards for gender mainstreaming for all FAO offices, including country offices. From the analysis of FAO's work in Rwanda during the considered period, the evaluation found that FAO has met some of the minimum standards. First, FAO in Rwanda is compliant with the appointment of a gender focal point, who participates in gender-related (FAO, 2021b) activities within and outside FAO, representing the organisation in different fora such as ONE UN, gender, and agriculture subsector to design and validate important reports such as the Gender Scorecard Report. The gender focal point has provided technical support in the implementation of different projects of the country portfolio in addition to being a resource person for gender equality and gender mainstreaming at the country level, representing the organization in different meetings organized by stakeholders such as government, private sector as well as the civil society (FAO, 2019b).
- 155 Second, FAO conducted a country gender assessment in 2018 (FAO, 2020c). However, the evaluation notes that the gender assessment results were not utilized in the formulation of the current CPF. With the updated global FAO Gender Policy in 2020, country offices are required to conduct a gender stocktaking exercise every four years to assess the extent to which gender is integrated in their work. The 2021 annual report mentioned that the gender stocktaking exercise was effectively conducted in 2020. As a result of the gender stocktaking, a Gender Focal Point and Ethics Focal Person were recruited and voted, respectively. In addition, the gender stocktaking recommended recruiting personnel solely dedicated to gender to ensure the successful inclusion and integration of gender in the countries programme and project. The introduction of the "four betters" structure in the country office allowed for a Gender and Social Inclusion Position under 'better life'.
- 156 Regarding the standards related to programme design and implementation, the evaluation found limited evidence of an in-depth gender analysis being undertaken and mainstreamed in the project design documents. The evaluation also noted that the results from the gender assessment were not explicitly used or referred to in project documents, or to inform project designs. About a quarter of all projects were rated with Gender marker 2 suggesting that gender was an important objective while most of the remaining projects were not designed to principally address gender inequality, women and youth were often described as final beneficiaries. Some projects make an effort to implement gender assessments prior to implementation,³⁴ while striving for gender equity in participation, different projects efforts in ensuring a balanced selection of participants in trainings, events and FFS. None of the projects demonstrated an in-depth analysis of the underlying causes of gender inequality. Some projects, such as GCP/GLO/006/EC and technical assistance and capacity building to cold value chain TCP/RWA/3901, did not have gender objectives or gender goals.
- 157 Evidence of gender-specific activities which seek to address the underlying drivers of inequality such as norms and access to productive resources such as land process was limited. For instance, the "Promotion of safer alternatives to Severely Hazardous Pesticides Formulations (SHPFs) and creation of Organic crops producers Cooperatives for sale as IGA in Rwanda" (TCP/RWA/3707/C3) on the promotion of safer alternatives to severely hazardous pesticides formulations (SHPFs)

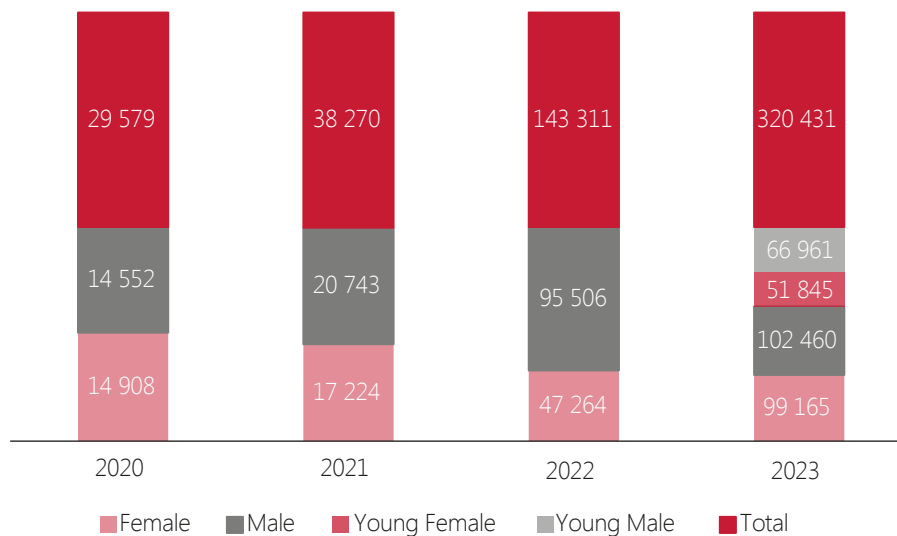
³³ Both the policy in 2013 and the updated version 2020–2030.

³⁴ –See projects "Accelerating Integrated Policy Interventions to Promote Social Protection" (UNJP/RWA/041/UNJ); "Creating opportunities for increased peace dividend for women and youth in DRC-Rwanda border region" (UNJP/RWA/043/PBF); "Creating peace dividends for women and youth through increased cross-border trade and strengthened food security" (UNJP/DRC/078/PBF); "Increasing water productivity for sustainable 'nutrition-sensitive' agriculture production and improved food security" (GCP/GLO/925/IFA); FAO, 2019x; 2021h

and creation of organic crops producers cooperatives for sale as IGA in Rwanda, mentioned the challenges faced by women on accessing land, but no specific actions were developed to secure tenure for women. Through the UNJP/RWA/032/UNJ project, women's access to formal cooperatives and savings, women were facilitated to lease more land for their activities. This enabled them to expand their surface areas under for agricultural activities.

- 158 A significant number of women and youth have been reached across the CPF's four priority areas using a wide range of approaches. The UNJP/RWA/032/UNJ project in Rwanda supported 18 275 beneficiaries, with a focus on integrated services like agricultural extension, financial, health, marketing, and capacity-building services. Significant achievements included the provision of credit to ten women's cooperatives, distribution of pigs and chickens to over 2 000 households, and training in maintaining kitchen gardens to improve nutrition. The project also promoted the cultivation of fortified crops, yielding over 23 metric tonnes of bio-fortified beans.
- 159 Figure 17 shows the distribution of beneficiaries of FAO interventions between 2020 and 2023 by gender. From 2023, the country office has begun to fully disaggregate its beneficiaries, which is commendable. The figure also highlights the near levels of parity between male and female beneficiaries.

Figure 17 Distribution of beneficiaries by gender



Source: FAO Rwanda M&E data presented at FAO Rwanda retreat (December 2023).

- 160 Financial empowerment was a key outcome, with the project creating formal linkages between 77 Village Savings and Loan Associations and microfinance institutions. This enabled women to initiate micro-projects, leading to increased savings and bank account ownership. Beneficiaries also started small businesses and expanded agricultural activities, with many enrolling in health insurance schemes due to higher incomes. The project notably boosted women's leadership and confidence, with 83 percent of women participants elected to lead their groups. Training and sensitization efforts led to women taking on leadership roles in various community structures. To support gender equality and women's empowerment, men were also involved through the ToT on the Men Care methodology, focusing on engaging men in gender promotion. Through various projects, the FAO provided trainings on GBV and protection from sexual exploitation and abuse (PSEA) (FAO, 2021d). (FAO, 2022d) FAO personnel has been trained on these topics as well.

- 161 FAO's efforts extended to policy dialogue and collaboration with Rwandan ministries, contributing to the development of the New Gender and Youth Mainstreaming Strategy in Agriculture (2019–2024) (FAO, 2020c; 2022c). This strategy coordinated efforts across sectors for youth employment and gender transformation in agriculture. FAO also supported WEAI to provide data-driven insights into gender dynamics in the sector (FAO, 2023b). Furthermore, FAO assisted in advancing integrated social protection policies to address poverty comprehensively.
- 162 The FAO programme didn't specifically target other vulnerable groups, although these groups did benefit like other citizen beneficiaries of the project. For example, the disabled were integrated in the social protection project. The cross-border trade missed an opportunity to support disabled people ensuring transport of agriculture commodities across the border with the Democratic Republic of the Congo. No specific support was provided. There is no strategy with the different projects to target, encourage and enhance participation of people with disabilities within FAO's projects in Rwanda.

5.7 Factors affecting the achievement of programme objectives including organizational performance

5.7.1 Internal structure, staffing and coordination

Finding 15. The FAO Country Office's internal structure and function have faced coordination and efficiency challenges but have also functioned relatively well in supporting the implementation of projects and achieving results.

- 163 The FAO Country Office comprises of the representative's office, project teams, administrative/finance and local support staff. The representative's office is led by the country representative, who is seconded by two assistants, an FAO Representative in charge of Programme and another in charge of administration. The office further comprises administrative and finance officers who oversee the administration, procurement, and financial management of the country programme activities. Until recently, the project/technical teams were supported by the assistant FAO representative for the programme who ensured overall management and coordination of project activities. Since his departure in April 2023, this role has been taken up by the country representative and reassigned to four senior staff under the newly introduced four betters (better environment, better nutrition, better life, better production) structure, derived from and in line with the current overall FAO Strategic Framework 2022–2031 (FAO, 2021a). The team spirit is quite high and personnel is very committed and focused on the delivery of their projects.
- 164 The FAO Rwanda Country Office has received significant assistance from FAO headquarters, as well as from regional and subregional offices. This support has been facilitated through funding-based agreements (FBAs) and pilot projects known as TCPs, which are designed to meet the specific needs of the Government of Rwanda. Technical experts from FAO headquarters have been instrumental in the successful implementation of various key projects in Rwanda, including GCP/INT/275/GER, GCP/INT/335/MUL, GCP/GLO/626/EC³⁵ and GCP/GLO/907/GER. In addition, the Subregional Office for Eastern Africa has provided financial backing for projects one focusing on School Food and Nutrition in Eastern Africa, and another aimed at reducing the climate vulnerabilities of the agriculture sector. The FAO Rwanda Country Office personnel have expressed their gratitude for this support, particularly valuing the technical expertise and the chance to exchange experiences with colleagues from the FAO headquarters and regional offices, enriching their work with insights from external personnel. The number of projects increased significantly since the conception of the CPF, but this has not corresponded to an increase in the number of technical and administrative staff needed to deliver on this portfolio. As the majority of projects are small and short-term in nature, the FAO Country

³⁵ Project "Capacity Development for Agricultural Innovation Systems" (GCP/GLO/626/EC).

Office struggles to allocate funds to cover staff costs, consequently leading to turnover and limited opportunities for staff training.

- 165 This situation has resulted in an imbalance in workload allocation and segregation of roles. As a staff member mentions, “the number of projects has increased, but the administration and staff have not increased proportionately.” The reliance on the administrative support team for multiple tasks, including financial management, and human resources, indicates an overburdened staff. Meanwhile, with the increased workloads, there is less clarity on the roles and responsibilities of staff, particularly with the recent restructuring of the team around the four betters. Interviews with FAO personnel also mentioned that because “the team is overloaded, some things are being missed.” This includes amongst others, delays in budget revisions, accounting, and reporting errors which subsequently result in delays in disbursements of funds for activities (FAO, 2021b). These observations are in contrast to the 2019 annual report, which affirmed that the country office had sufficient human and financial resources to enable a smooth implementation of projects and programmes. The evaluation finds that there is significant unease amongst staff relating to the very erratic nature of their contracts. Interviews with staff showed that many were concerned with burnout and the fear of losing employment.
- 166 The Evaluation Team also finds that coordination between project teams has been challenging despite the organization of project and team meetings. The evaluation notes that there are duplication of efforts and insufficient joint up working in the organisation of capacity building activities or in the area of procurement leading to the dispersal of efforts and inefficiencies. Different projects operating within the same geographic areas tend to adopt approaches that do not always demonstrate synergies and complementarities such as the CDI Rwanda project and GCP/GLO/006/EC – implementation of capacity needs assessments and establishment of experimental plots (FAO, 2021f). Staff have been called upon to respect and align their interventions with the existing plans in place such as the procurement plan, and annual work plans, which would enable them to spend their time judiciously while addressing the problems of work overloads. The FAO country team retreat organized in December 2023, further emphasized the need for staff to work “SMART” as opposed to working “hard” as this would enhance the team’s performance, job satisfaction and efficiency.
- 167 The issue of staff shortages at the office is having a direct impact on the delivery and monitoring of activities on the field. Farmers note the limited monitoring of field activities by FAO personnel. One farmer in Ngoma stated “that a physical presence of FAO would be very much appreciated. We see FAO twice a year due to her high workload”. Another farmer stated that “when there is a challenge on the project, we have to wait 3-6 months before the issue is addressed.” In response to these farmers’ concerns, an FAO staff representing the views of other colleagues stated that “there is a clear need to have new people.” To address some of these HR and coordination challenges, some internal reorganization has taken place. The recent recruitment of the operations manager and a monitoring and evaluation officer are all commendable efforts by the country office to enhance performance and efficiency. Staff report that this is already having a positive effect on information sharing within the team as well as improvements in procurement. The project teams have also been reorganized around four betters (better production, better nutrition, better environment, and better life) to enhance coordination and delivery of projects on the ground. The administrative staff has also been reassigned to each Better, but the impacts of this effort are not yet tangible as administration staff continues to work on separate initiatives beyond the programme delivery.

5.7.2 Procurement

Finding 16. Staff shortages and system inefficiencies led to significant procurement delays and budget underutilization in the country office, with further complications arising from local suppliers’ unfamiliarity with the FAO platform and restrictive spending authorizations. The recent recruitment of an operations officer is a positive step towards addressing these challenges, likely to enhance efficiency and transparency in procurement processes.



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- 168 The problem of staff shortages impacted on the office's ability to procure goods and services for efficient and transparent implementation of the country programme. Until April 2023 when an operations officer was recruited, there was only one person dealing with procurement and there was no one in charge of operations to facilitate transparent and smooth functioning of project departments. Technical teams were consequently required to support procurement (FAO, 2019b) tasks through the identification of needs, development of terms of reference, costing, sourcing of potential suppliers, and their selection. The rule of segregation of responsibility, one person dealing with two or more incompatible tasks was consequently unavoidable. As an example, during the award process, some of the opening committee members were also part of the evaluation committee and the local procurement committees. Most technical staff also reported not having sufficient time to deliver projects and to lead procurement of goods and service providers for their projects at the same time. This often led to untimely submission of bidding/procurement documents, translating into delays in procurement of service providers, and failure to acquire timely inputs for farmers.
- 169 The procurement challenges were further exacerbated as local suppliers struggled with the FAO procurement platform due to a lack of familiarity. As a member staff mentioned, "There is a procurement platform from the FAO which is not known by local suppliers and so in many cases, when there are calls for proposals or offers, people struggle to use the system." It also appears that the delays in procurement are also due to the low authorization thresholds. Staff mention that everything beyond a USD 100 000 has to be approved by Headquarters which creates a burden in the system and consequent delays. A cocktail of these factors and procurement issues have led to inefficiencies. As one staff member stated: "we had problems with some projects, procedures, donor requirements ... but we have some projects where some money goes back, or projects extended and when there is really no valid explanation." This is a rather unfortunate situation considering the limited budget the country office has and the immense development challenges facing the country. Returning unspent funds to donors is not acceptable in these circumstances. However, since December 2023, the delegation of authority of the Representative increased to USD 200 000, which will improve the procurement processes.

- 170 It must be stated that some of the issues identified are also worsened by the delayed start of many interventions. For example, for the UNJP/RWA/043/PBF project the first instalment was given in 2020 and the second in mid-November 2022 while the project was planned to close on 8th January 2023. This had an impact on the utilization of the budget as only 78 percent of the budget was used (FAO, 2023c). One FAO personnel stated that “these projects started in 2020, and it is only when the project is ending that there is a rush to complete and sign new letters of agreement”.
- 171 At the time of the evaluation, there was a recognition that the recruitment of the operations officer was a very positive step towards enhancing the efficiency of the office. This included regular updates on the level of spend on different projects, which enabled the technical and administrative staff to make more evidence-based decisions regarding the planning of activities and procurement. These regular updates are likely to improve transparency and enhance timelier and more coordinated implementation of activities as well as procurement.

5.7.3 Monitoring and evaluation

Finding 17. FAO in Rwanda struggles with an ineffective monitoring and evaluation system, limiting its ability to showcase project impacts and hindering programmatic learning. The recent recruitment of an M&E officer suggests progress, but a robust, outcome-focused M&E strategy is still needed for meaningful tracking and reporting.

- 172 As stated in Finding 7, the CPF's results framework did not provide the necessary items required to set up an effective monitoring and evaluation system. The CPF, which typically serves as a framework for programmatic monitoring, is not sufficiently results-oriented to support M&E planning and activities. There are no outcome indicators, and the quality of output statements varies between results-oriented and activity-oriented.
- 173 The conceptual weaknesses and consequent failure to develop an operational M&E and learning system, have limited the ability of the country office to demonstrate how its efforts across various projects are contributing to higher-level changes. The current M&E system lacks critical aspects needed for effective tracking, programmatic learning, and accountability for outcome-level results. Monitoring and reporting on programmatic results against the CPF in the Country Annual Reports are primarily descriptive and activity oriented. No mid-term review of the CPF has been conducted to inform necessary adjustments. Even with the annual reviews implemented at the end of 2022, no adjustments were made to the results framework. Significant evidence in terms of needs assessments, research and other field experiences are produced, but these are not being consolidated to inform programmatic learning and development of programme intervention approaches.
- 174 At the project level, reports are available, but the quality of M&E data depends on the quality of project results frameworks. At the field level, monitoring of field activities is mixed due to the availability of staff and financial resources. FFS facilitators, local agronomists and partner civil society organizations provide additional support for monitoring the implementation of activities on the ground. As already mentioned, the role of local authorities could be further strengthened to enhance not only the monitoring of ongoing initiatives but also post-completion of projects, given the lack of budgets at the level of the FAO ex-post monitoring of projects.
- 175 There appears to be a stronger effort to meet reporting requirements under different projects. There is currently no system for outcome harvesting that should enable the FAO to document and keep track of the changes introduced as a result of the CPF's implementation. The aspect of organizational learning is underdeveloped, and documentation and dissemination of lessons and best practices is on a project-by-project basis. Some projects, such as the GCP/GLO/907/GER project, documented and disseminated best practices on water governance. Policy engagements were organized, which brought stakeholders together to discuss and share the results of the intervention. This was considered by the evaluation team as a best practice. The country office needs to be able to demonstrate the impacts of

its activities to stakeholders, not only as a communication and visibility tool, but also as a key part of the resource mobilization strategy of the organization.

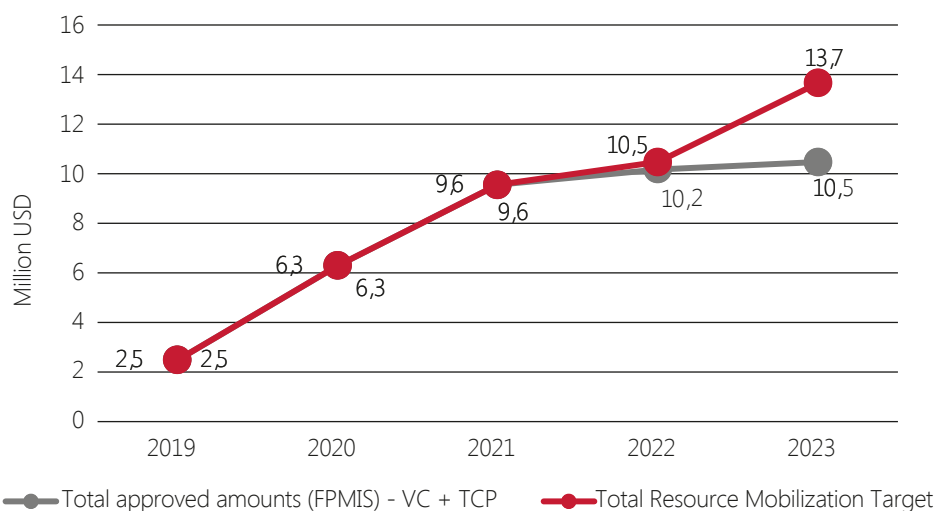
- 176 The Country Office has now recruited the services of an M&E officer who is expected to lead the development of a country programme M&E system. At the time of the evaluation, the new team member was still undergoing induction and consequently, there were no outputs from their activities to be assessed.³⁶

5.7.4 Funding and financial management

Finding 18. FAO has made significant progress towards achieving³⁷ its financial resource mobilization targets, though more funding is needed to respond to the agricultural development challenges the country is facing. However, the delivery of projects has been impacted by delays, internal inefficiencies, and the COVID-19 pandemic.

- 177 Figure 15 shows that the country office has been successful in mobilizing the planned resources for the implementation of the CPF, despite the absence of a resource mobilization strategy. It indicates the yearly approved amounts between 2019 and 2023³⁸ (Voluntary Contributions + Technical Cooperation Programmes) against the country programme's total resource mobilization target of USD 22 million.

Figure 15 Achievement of resource mobilization targets



Source: Elaborated by the FAO Resource Mobilization and Private Sector Partnerships Division.

- 178 Table 9 demonstrates that in 2023, USD 10 626 640 is mobilized, of which USD 4 280 000 went to projects related to 'better life', followed by 'better environment' and 'better production'. The least number of resources mobilized went to 'better nutrition' (USD 878 980). Nevertheless, according to the FAO Rwanda country team USD 21 430 072 was mobilized by December 2023 in total, suggesting that overall amount budgeted for the CPF is likely to be exceeded by December 2024.

³⁶ New staff started on 10 July 2023.

³⁷ Although by December 2023, FAO Rwanda had reached 101.3 percent in mobilizing CPF planned resources (according to FAO Rwanda country team's data, the evaluation refers to data collected up to mid-2023 so they could not verify what happened in the second half of the year).

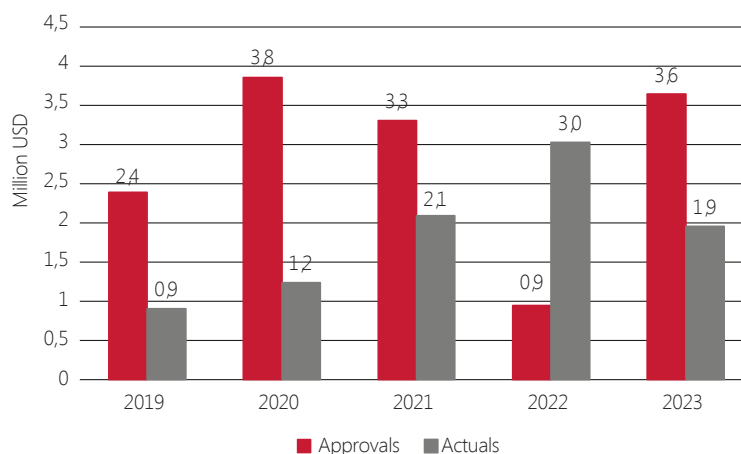
³⁸ Data for 2023 is not yet complete.

Table 9 Resource mobilization 2023 by the four betters

Four betters	Amount (USD)
Better life	4 280 000
Better environment	2 837 660
Better production	2 630 000
Better nutrition	878 980
Total	10 626 640

Source: Data taken from the FAO Country Office.

- 179 FAO personnel recognize that though the resource mobilization targets are on track to be achieved, the funding needs of the country by far outweigh the available financial resources mobilized.
- 180 At the time of the evaluation, 68 percent of the total budget of national projects had been spent. Out of the 23 national projects, three projects were completed, two projects were operationally closed, seven projects were financially closed, and 11 projects are currently operationally active.³⁹
- 181 Figure 16 illustrates the approvals and deliveries from country-level projects that started between 2019 and 2023, demonstrating a spike in the actual delivery in 2022, due to ten projects that ended in 2023, half of which started in 2020.

Figure 16 Approvals and actual delivery 2019–2023 (USD)


Source: Data retrieved from the FAO Field Programme Management Information System (FPMIS).

- 182 Additionally, the level of expenditure in 2020 and 2021 was impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic due to the scaling back of field activities. Delays in project consumption have also been affected by slow and heavy internal procedures, which constrained the timely execution of some field projects. Short-term projects tend to start late and end early, due to internal processes for closing projects. For these reasons, project budgets have not been fully spent and funds returned to donors.

³⁹ Three projects that started after evaluation data collection phase (July 2023) were not included in this analysis.

5.7.5 The COVID-19 pandemic

Finding 19. The COVID-19 pandemic had a negative impact on the implementation of the CPF. However, overall FAO country programme demonstrated adaptive management through re-prioritisation of the interventions and transition to online working.

- 183 The implementation of the CPF was impacted by the emergence of the COVID-19 pandemic. Project activities were affected through the application of national sanitary and lockdown measures which constrained the deployment of face-to-face activities on the ground. The outbreak led to a decrease in the proportion of government and scientific employees going to work and restrictions in public gatherings. These factors have already impacted project implementation as was the case for the GCP/RWA/040/CPR project, where field soil sample collection and implementation of field trials were disrupted. The prohibition of mass gatherings postponed trainings and meetings (FAO, 2021g).
- 184 FAO demonstrated adaptive management to respond to the potential impacts of the pandemic. Project personnel adopted a work-at-home model for online work according to national regulations, and to advance project delivery as much as possible under limited conditions. These also included the organization of meetings, training, and other coaching activities through online platforms. In other cases, local solutions were mobilized to mitigate the impact of lockdowns. For example, the identification of casual labour employed in the rehabilitation of progressive terraces and the construction of the water canal was particularly slowed, as all operations were halted from March 2020 to September 2020 due to a lockdown. Following the delays, a no-cost extension of the project was approved to ensure the completion of all activities (FAO, 2023e).
- 185 To mitigate the impact of COVID-19 on the economy, the Government of Rwanda developed a National Economic Recovery Plan in different sectors. FAO worked with the government and other UN partners to reprioritize activities. This included redirecting the budget allocated to policy work towards supporting the community through innovative poverty reduction efforts in the five joint project districts. (FAO, 2023b)

5.8 Sustainability of results

Finding 20. FAO has strengthened institutional capacities at different levels and achievements are sustainable from economic and social levels, but face sustainability risks due to limited stakeholder involvement, absence of project exit strategies, and inconsistent engagement with local authorities.

5.8.1 Institutional sustainability and risks

- 186 The Evaluation Team identified evidence of institutional sustainability at different levels. The country programme provided a framework for national agricultural capacity building. As discussed earlier, significant capacity building has been provided at individual, organisational and institutional levels. With improved capacities, farmers and stakeholders will be able to apply the knowledge, skills, and tools beyond the individual project interventions.
- 187 At an individual level, close to 200 000 people⁴⁰ have benefited from FAO capacity development interventions. These interventions have trained a considerable number of stakeholders, including farmers, facilitators, and extension officers, on a range of agricultural topics. For instance, in Musanze district, trained FFS facilitators have formed an association to share lessons and sustain learning. Training modules on diverse agricultural topics were developed and a baseline survey conducted to track water use efficiency improvements. Several experts were trained and certified in investment projects and business plan preparation using the Rural Invest tool, which is now integrated into the University of Rwanda's curriculum (FAO, 2022g). Collaboration between the University of Rwanda

⁴⁰ Power Point presented by the FAO Country Office at FAO staff retreat December 2023.



and ISTOM under the CDI Rwanda project has further strengthened the capacities of students and staff in research and critical methods and these are experiences are likely to continue beyond the project initial period. This approach of training trainers and mainstreaming best practices is seen as effective and replicable. The adoption of e-commerce platforms and the establishment of new agribusinesses, particularly by youths and women, are other successes of FAO's interventions. Many youths and women acquired agribusiness-related knowledge and skills through FAO's interventions, and as a result, new agribusinesses were established (FAO, 2022c).

- 188 At an organizational level, FAO provided capacity strengthening support to cooperatives and FFS, including training programmes, which are likely to be utilized beyond projects (FAO, 2022d; van Keulen *et al.*, 2022). The RYAF and the RWEE programme are examples where FAO's interventions have helped in transitioning farmers from informal work to formal, professionalized structures (FAO, 2022h). Around ten cooperatives were supported with different income generating activities and they started all necessary processes for being officially registered. They are now certified and recognized by the Rwanda Cooperative Agency. Various projects have led to the development of training materials, guidelines, and online platforms, contributing to global knowledge transfer in sustainable soil management. For instance, courses on sustainable soil management and establishment of the online platform for e-learning education on soils of the GSP (EduSOILS) and hosted within the official website of the FAO's Global Soil Partnership will support transfer of technology and knowledge on sustainable soil management to a global audience (FAO, n.d.c.). With Inades-Formation, FAO's collaboration on developing, updating, adoption and institutionalization

of the national training curriculum of the agricultural extension programme (Twigire muhinzi) to integrate agrobiodiversity modules and implementation of trainings for farmers to shift towards agroecological farming practices through the FFS approach, is expected to strengthen the national extension system. Similar collaboration with national universities could also strengthen sustainability if implemented as part of a coordinated impact strategy (FAO. 2023g).

- 189 FAO has also influenced the creation of various policies and strategies, aligning with the government's ICT and agriculture programmes. However, institutional sustainability faces challenges such as lack of stakeholder participation in project design, absence of exit strategies, and inconsistency in local authorities' engagement. This has led to mixed outcomes and perceptions of FAO being unfocused. There's also a concern that policies and strategies developed are not fully operationalized, especially with high turnover in public service.
- 190 Institutional sustainability is however, threatened by several risks. A primary risk is related to lack of participation of primary stakeholders in decision making regarding project design and the selection of interventions. Evidence was found of interventions that were rejected by communities because they did not respond to their needs. As one farmer from the RWEE programme stated, "we received different races of pigs, but they are not adapted to the region so all of them died in an extremely short period. We did not receive any training on how to care for the pigs.". In addition to participation, the evidence collected during this project points to the fact that most projects end without an exit strategy and consequently, mechanisms for reinforcing learning and follow up are not implemented. This means that even if learners demonstrate early signs of adoption, there is no guarantee that the behaviour will be perpetuated beyond the initial project period, without additional follow up.
- 191 The evaluation effectively found that in some cases, farmers were still waiting for FAO to come back to the village months after the projects had ended. Moreso, some beneficiary cooperatives were still expecting the FAO to come back and repair dams even when the cooperatives were involved in profitable economic activities. In addition to participation of beneficiaries in the design of interventions, the lack of consistency in the engagement of local authorities in projects, is a key risk leading to mixed outcomes in terms of sustainability of initiatives. The short-term nature and geographically widespread interventions, also means that most initiatives are one off with no follow-up on actions⁴¹ to build on or further embed gains acquired in earlier interventions. Associating local authorities consistently could enhance the integration of FAO interventions in local economic development plans and consequently ensure their monitoring and continuity. FAO needs to be cognisant of the perception amongst stakeholders that it is unfocused and spreading itself thin. This represents a reputational risk for the organisation.
- 192 At policy level, FAO does not establish any mechanisms to ensure/encourage application and use of the strategies and policies developed for policy making. The evaluation team found that many of the policies and instruments developed were either still in draft form or had not been operationalized. With the high levels of turn over characteristic of the public service, such efforts might be lost when new individuals take over when policies have not been institutionalized, particularly when the individuals come with their own priorities.

5.8.2 Financial

- 193 The evaluation notes that the country office has made significant strides to mobilize the resources it requires to deliver on the country programme. This demonstrates that there is internal capacity to design and mobilize resources and working with stakeholders to leverage other types of resources for collective action.

⁴¹ Limited experiences such as (TCP/RWA/3707/C3 ended in 2020) - FAO built on gains achieved to further develop its activities (UNJP/RWA/044/UNJ).

- 194 FAO Rwanda has been successful in leveraging additional resources following the implementation of TCPs and projects funded by extra-budgetary resources. Notably, the office secured EUR 2 000 000 from the European Union in 2020 for the CDI Rwanda GCP/RWA/046/EC project, building upon the achievements of the GCP/GLO/626/EC project. The office also applied a cost recovery policy to fund administrative and operational staff using resources from UNJPs, contributing 40 percent of the resources needed for UN joint projects.
- 195 The office has effectively used TCP projects as seed funding to mobilize additional financial resources. For instance, TCP/INT/3703 facilitated the mobilisation of funds from the Global Agriculture and Food Security Programme for the RuralInvest in agribusiness project. Similarly, TCP/RWA/3706 and TCP/RWA/3804 were instrumental in discussions with the FAO Office of Innovation and the AfDB, respectively, to enhance digital skills and operationalize the One Health framework in Rwanda. There is recognition of the need for a resource mobilisation strategy and enhanced staff capacity for long-term and programmatic funding. However, accessing funds like the Global Environmental Facility (GEF) and the Green Climate Fund (GCF) require accreditation and capacity building, which is currently lacking. Assistance from FAO headquarters is available to support the team in this area.
- 196 As Rwanda progresses towards becoming a middle-income country, FAO needs to adapt its strategies to align with the country's changing needs and priorities. The shift in funding allocation towards government departments necessitates FAO to demonstrate significant value addition to benefit from government funding. For this to happen some of the duration of administrative procedures specifically pertaining to delegation of authority, procurement and recruitment of consultants are serious bottleneck (FAO, 2020c).

5.8.3 Economic sustainability

- 197 FAO's interventions have led to the accumulation of capital assets amongst farmers and farming groups, which are likely to be utilized beyond FAO interventions. FAO's capacity-building programs, such as FFS and training workshops, are designed to enhance farmers' knowledge and skills in various agricultural practices. By equipping farmers with improved techniques like crop rotation, soil conservation, and sustainable and climate resilient farming methods, these interventions are leading to increased productivity and profitability. By facilitating market linkages locally and across borders, (case of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Rwanda) FAO is enabling farmers to access better prices for their produce, thus increasing their income and promoting long-term economic viability.
- 198 Through the Buy from youth initiative, YAHOPROC has experienced sustained demand for their products and profits, which it is reinvesting to repair existing infrastructure owned by the cooperative (male farmer Rulindo - executive vice chair of YAHOPROC). Other farmers are using the services of the cooperative - renting irrigation equipment, solar systems demonstrating wider impact of FAO interventions in the community. Because of the efficient working and irrigation and increased sales, they have now started to pass-on piglets to members - from 30 piglets provided to farmers and passed on, 100 farmers are now producing pigs in the community enhancing diversification of income sources and resilience. The cooperative is now selling agricultural inputs members can borrow the inputs and repay following production and marketing.
- 199 New agricultural technologies such as greenhouses, small-irrigation equipment, milling machines and tanks for collecting water were provided to farmers. Other productive assets such as warehouses and driers were also provided. Mechanisms were also put in place to ensure sustainability through payment of maintenance fees. These payments are managed autonomously by cooperatives that collect the money and utilize the funding with the supervision of the Rwanda cooperative agency.
- 200 At the request of local authorities and beneficiaries, FAO helped to set up infrastructures to properly control harvesting aspects especially for maize crop. Indeed, year after year, production increased, and it was necessary to work on the losses observed during the harvest. It was under this framework

that a total of 6 cooperatives received support for the construction of drying sheds with a capacity of 25 tonnes per cooperative and two cooperatives now have milling machines to transform maize and cassava/sorghum. The flour produced is consumed on the local market and the by-products are used to feed animals and then produce manure for agricultural production. Regarding sustainability aspects, Government beneficiaries availed plots where the different infrastructures were installed.

- 201 In Rwamagana and other regions visited during the field visits, this capacity building support translated into the creation of savings and credit schemes, which are now providing loans and credit services to small holders. FAO helped to develop the capacities and financial resourcing required to sustain results. Beneficiaries conducting income generating activities (FAO, 2023c) were connected to local financial institutions for savings and credits (FAO, 2022c). For instance, linkages between cooperatives and farmers using RuralInvest and financial institutions (Banque Populaire du Rwanda, Bank of Kigali, Access Bank, Vision Finance and Reseau, Interdiocesain de Microfinance [RIM], DUTERIMBERE) and insurance companies (Societe Rwandaise d' Assurance, Prime insurance) were undertaken (FAO, 2022d). While these are commendable efforts, significant efforts are required to strengthen access to these institutions, particularly for women and youth. With the very young population of the country, failure to strengthen access to credit facilities poses a risk to achieving longer term impact of FAO interventions in the country. Unfortunately, there is no evidence that local financial institutions and key private sector actors such as the Association of Microfinance Institutions in Rwanda (AMIR) (van Keulen *et al.*, 2022) and the private sector federation are being involved in the design of FAO interventions. Such engagements could improve understanding of banking requirements and contribute to develop credit products that are adapted to the needs of youth and women.

5.8.4 Social sustainability

- 202 Interviews with beneficiaries in all project districts, also identified that the FFS, and village savings and credit schemes were creating a spirit of community cohesion. Farmers explained how these structures were being utilized as tools for community conflict resolution and for learning. Respondents explained how the creation of savings and credit schemes had enabled them to pay for health insurance coverage and other family needs. Obviously, the key risks relate to the emergence of community conflicts/cross border conflicts that might destabilize community cohesion (FAO, 2023c). Defaults on repayment of small credits and loans might increase tensions if the savings schemes are not capacitated and strengthened to absorb losses due to defaults.
- 203 FAO's peace building project in collaboration with UNDP in Rwanda and the Democratic Republic of the Congo FAO Country Office, is leading in the effort to improve bonds of peaceful cohabitation. As one of the beneficiaries – a trader from Rwanda, selling pulses – testified in Rubavu.⁴²

I have been a member of the Rwanda small traders' association COPIYU for three years now, but our exchanges are limited to the national zones only in Rwanda because we are less informed about the Democratic Republic of the Congo-Rwanda cross-border exchanges in terms of taxations and related rules. Through cross-border workshops, exchanges with our Democratic Republic of the Congo partners and the knowledge/information received, I extend my activities to the Congolese [the Democratic Republic of the Congo] markets. What I lacked was information on the procedure to use without being mishandled at the border as one should avoid at all costs losses due to multiple taxes. Through these activities mentioned above, which I appreciated very much, the economic operators of Rwanda and the Democratic Republic of the Congo living on the border have strengthened the bonds of peaceful cohabitation.

⁴² PBF testimony of beneficiary.

5.8.5 Environmental

- 204 No negative environmental impacts were observed because of FAO interventions during the implementation of the CPF. Conversely, its interventions promoted national efforts to fight against climate change and environmental degradation.
- 205 FAO's promotion of climate-smart agriculture practices is vital in building resilience and sustainability in the face of climate change. By equipping farmers with techniques and infrastructures and productive assets that mitigate the adverse effects of climate change, FAO is enhancing their ability to maintain agricultural productivity and secure their economic sustainability in the long run in the face of climate shocks.
- 206 During the 2021 B Season (March 2021 to June 2021), a total of 65 ha of progressive terraces were rehabilitated and planted with trees, thanks to the participation in public works of 467 people, including skilled and unskilled individuals, from 412 households. The implementation of a range of agroforestry technologies (planting, maintenance, role in soil protection) was encouraged in order to meet the zone's food security challenges. The project helped the local community to build its resilience to the consequences of climate change with positive long-term influence on the natural ecosystem, notably agroforestry resources. The project contribution, if maintained sustainably, has the potential to bring a number of advantages, including erosion protection, rural employment and development (FAO, 2019b). Other projects promoted nutrition improvements by distributing fruit tree seedlings (avocados and mangoes) to 2 956 households and providing onsite trainings on fruit tree grafting techniques and nursery bed management. The 60 457 trees produced through the learning process were distributed among the communities and, as a result, some beneficiaries, including women, started their own nurseries to sell fruit trees in the community, which makes them entrepreneurs in the agroforestry sector (FAO, 2022c). With the same project, improved cooking stoves were promoted to reduce community pressures on forested landscapes due to fuelwood consumption needs. A total of 120 persons (85 women and 35 men) were instructed to become Master Trainers in the construction and maintenance of homemade stoves. This knowledge was appreciated because it meant a job-creating opportunity for trainees. Ultimately, 1 200 households were given fuel-efficient stoves, which contributed to a reduction in women's cooking time and workload, as well as providing a safe environment.

6. Conclusions and recommendations

6.1 Conclusions

Conclusion 1. FAO's initiatives in Rwanda are relevant and respond to national agricultural development needs and priorities. However, there remains untapped potential for FAO to capitalize on its comparative advantages and significantly enhance its strategic positioning for a more substantial contribution. It needs to focus on national priorities where it can add value beyond the priorities of the Ministry of Agriculture and Animal Resources.

- 207 During the evaluated period, FAO's initiatives have shown a clear alignment with emerging and acute needs of the country, underscoring its adaptability and commendable technical assistance. The flexibility demonstrated by FAO and its technical support have garnered strong appreciation and respect from various stakeholders. It is worth acknowledging that FAO operates within the constraints of limited resources, a reality magnified by Rwanda's extensive development challenges. Considering these limitations, it becomes imperative for FAO to strategically focus its efforts on areas where its contribution can yield the greatest impact.
- 208 One of FAO's undeniable strengths in Rwanda lies in the trust and respect it commands from key government counterparts, national entities, and development partners. This is primarily attributed to FAO's long-standing presence in the country and technical expertise, which have enabled the organization to foster multi-stakeholder collaborations. Going forward, FAO has a significant opportunity to harness this strength to pursue its developmental objectives more effectively in the subsequent programming cycle.
- 209 FAO's efforts have undeniably contributed to strengthening national capacities in alignment with its mandate. However, within the context of Rwanda's complex and multifaceted development landscape, the evaluation highlights that the challenge isn't about relevance, but rather prioritizing areas where FAO's contribution can deliver the highest value, particularly given the reality of limited resources and field presence.
- 210 The evaluated CPF was designed to be fully aligned with the four priorities of the Ministry of Agriculture and Animal Resources under the PSTA4, while other national priorities promoted by other sectorial ministries, and where FAO could add value, were ignored.

Conclusion 2. The current CPF demonstrated design weakness that led to the formulation of broad and unachievable expected outcomes, and an intervention logic that did not provide the basics needed for results-based management, accountability, and demonstration of change. Furthermore, the CPF was overall gender blind, without a clear articulation of a TOC, risks, and assumptions that underpin the expected change promoted by the FAO.

Conclusion 3. The FAO leveraged relationships and collaborations with United Nations agencies, development partners, civil society, and private sector in the delivery of interventions contributing to the CPF. However, the overall partnership approach highlighted weaknesses in engagement with academia and private sector and the need for clearly articulated stakeholder engagement strategy which was lacking.

- 211 The complexity of development challenges in Rwanda means that the FAO cannot do it alone – leveraging the assets of other UN agencies and development partners would yield bigger dividend. FAO in Rwanda has been effective in forging formal and informal partnerships with other United Nations agencies and development partners. The joint UN projects worked well in creating synergies and avoiding duplication of effort. FAO benefited from the expertise of other partners such as UNDP, UNICEF, IOM, IFAD and WFP amongst others in the delivery of its priorities.
- 212 Partnerships with national civil society actors such as NGOs contributed to enhance effectiveness in delivery of projects. NGOs such as Inades-Formation and World Relief were mainly utilized as service providers, and in many instances the role of FAO in their interventions was masked due to limited visibility and monitoring of their activities by FAO personnel on the field. Partnerships with

national universities were struck, though the objectives of such engagement were not part of a clearly articulated strategy.

- 213 FAO recognized the important role private sector has to play in agricultural transformation and significant efforts were expended to engage private sector at different levels. However, this engagement was inconsistent, demonstrating limited participation in the design and delivery of interventions.

Conclusion 4. FAO has fostered strong partnerships with national government particularly with the Ministry of Agriculture and Animal Resources at national and local levels. The engagement of local authorities and other allied ministries was ad-hoc and limited, particularly at the local level, leading to concerns of local ownership and sustainability of interventions on the field.

- 214 FAO has cultivated robust partnerships with the government and, to a certain extent, other national entities. These partnerships have predominantly revolved around agencies connected to the national and local levels of the Ministry of Agriculture. While interactions with other affiliated ministries were noted at the national level, they were comparatively less pronounced at the local level. The involvement of local authorities in various intervention domains exhibited a varied pattern, often occurring on a case-by-case basis. However, it was observed that in certain instances, officials from related ministries remained unaware of FAO's involvement in their respective areas of intervention, both at local and national levels.
- 215 Furthermore, the inconsistencies in FAO personnel's proactive formulation of exit strategies for their projects introduces a substantial risk to the sustainability of FAO's interventions in terms of local ownership and appropriation of accomplishments stemming from FAO's initiatives.

Conclusion 5. FAO interventions have yielded significant outputs across the four priority areas of the CPF, contributing to various identified changes and benefits in capacities, agricultural practices, diversified livelihoods, and incomes at the level of farmers, their cooperatives and groups, communities as well as national policy levels. FAO is suitably placed to build on its greatest assets and technical expertise in FFS, capacity building and institutional strengthening, and partnerships to deliver more impactful outcomes in the new CPF.

- 216 Agriculture is a key sector that the government envisions as a key driver to transform the country's economy, enhance food and nutrition security in its Vision 2050 and the National Strategy for Agricultural Transformation (2025–2030, under development). As already demonstrated earlier, the FAO is playing a leading role in the development of this future plan and is consequently very well positioned to contribute towards the government's vision.
- 217 The analysis of the agricultural sector and the challenges facing the sector highlighted in the PSTA4, suggest that the task at hand is immense requiring the FAO to create and nurture strategic alliances, in country and beyond. The key lesson from the current CPF is the need to focus on a limited range of areas where it can add value, considering its limited resources. As evidenced by the broad priority areas and stated outcomes in the current CPF, FAO's interventions and portfolio became fragmented and dispersed, limiting the prospects of sustainability of its achievements.
- 218 The recent introduction of the four betters approach presents an opportunity for the office to reassess its strengths and realign its efforts through a more programmatic long-term perspective, while remaining sufficiently flexible to respond to emerging needs and the evolving context. In a country like Rwanda with strong needs in terms of investments, there is a huge opportunity to leverage the world leading expertise of FAO Investment Centre in strengthening its interventions in the country.
- 219 The evaluation has highlighted the need to emphasize interventions which seek to strengthen private sector linkages and national investment capabilities; resilience to climate emergencies and shocks and natural resource degradation; off-farm entrepreneurship for youth; digitalization and e-commerce; nutrition/healthy diets and safe food; gender and social protection; new technological innovations in sustainable production and value addition; integrated value chains linked to professionalized FFS;

market access and urban food systems; Hand-in-Hand, generating the evidence for policy making and empowerment of rural, local and national institutions.

- 220 The office demonstrated its ability to leverage TCP funding as match/co-funding for further resource mobilisation. This is a good practice that needs to be scaled up in addition to strengthening internal capacity for mobilisation of climate related finance. The current efforts by the country office to develop a funding proposal on aquaculture for GEF funding is a step in the right direction, but this also must be part of a coordinated stakeholder engagement and resource mobilisation strategy.

Conclusion 6. The FAO team in Rwanda remains committed to the effective and efficient delivery of the CPF, with recent operational improvements showing promise. However, challenges in human resource capacity, budget constraints, and a lack of a results-oriented approach in the current CPF have hampered delivery. The recruitment of operations and monitoring officers are positive steps. There is an urgent need for a robust M&E system to better track outcomes, enhance programmatic learning, and effectively communicate impacts to donors and stakeholders.

- 221 The evaluation noted that despite staff shortages and high workloads, the team spirit remained high, and staff remained committed to deliver on their roles. There is already emerging evidence that the recent efforts by the country representative to strengthen the operations department is leading to efficiencies in procurement. Additionally, the reorganization of the technical and administrative teams around the programmatic four betters, has been appreciated by the team, though at the time of the evaluation the roles and responsibilities and reporting lines were yet to be clarified. The contract situation is of concern to many staff, and this might affect morale and institutional memory loss in the worst case if staff have to leave.
- 222 There is a need for the country team to reassess the state of the human resources and its ability to deliver a future programme. While such a future programme should be fully ambitious, it has to be built in full consideration of the available human capital and the potential to mobilize additional support from the regional offices and headquarters. Providing opportunities for continuous professional development and training would enhance job satisfaction and delivery of programmes, but this is limited at the moment due to budget constraints.
- 223 The evaluation also noted that the current CPF was not sufficiently results-oriented; outcome results were not clearly defined and lacked monitorable, results-oriented outcome and output indicators. As a result, outcome monitoring and reporting are predominantly activity-based and descriptive, lacking data and evidence to promote programmatic learning. Post-project monitoring to track outcome results rarely took place due to a lack of resources. This also limited the ability of the office to communicate the impacts of its interventions. With the recruitment of a monitoring and evaluation officer, there is a need for the country office to develop a robust monitoring and evaluation system which enables it to collect and document its outcomes. Such a system will further enhance learning within the team, but also its ability to showcase its impacts to its donors and stakeholders.

Conclusion 7. FAO's interventions seek to achieve gender equality as demonstrated with near parity levels of outreach to male and female beneficiaries. Targeting of people with disabilities remains low. Overall, the results from FAO's support are not yet transformational or addressing the underlying causes of inequality.

1. As previously mentioned, the current CPF was gender-blind in its design. However, during implementation, most projects integrated gender considerations in their design and implementation. Consequently, FAO's programmatic activities reached vulnerable women, youth and, to a limited extent, other vulnerable groups. Project reports were inconsistent when reporting on gender in terms of providing disaggregated data, with women and youth often reported as a homogenous group. Future project designs should ensure minimum FAO standards are respected and that results of gender stock taking exercises are taken into consideration during design and implementation. FAO's support to bring about various policies and guidelines in the country was highly appreciated and valued. FAO also needs to develop measures to ensure that the various policies and guidelines support are effectively implemented.

224 Though FAO's interventions are reaching men, women, young men and young women in comparable proportions, its activities are not focused on achieving a gender transformative objective. None of the projects in the portfolio could be considered to have achieved a Gender 3 marker on the UN gender marker score (UN Women, n.d.). While the FAO applies a different scoring metric to its projects, it will need to consider projects which address the root causes of inequalities, discriminations, and their vulnerabilities so that FAO could make a more impactful contribution ensuring no one is left behind. FAO can build on its successes in promoting women's social and economic empowerment to re-orientate its focus on issues which strengthen women and youth control over productive resources and the benefits which emerge from their activities. This also calls for the FAO to strengthen the use of its gender assessments in project formulation, improve the participation of women and youth in the definition, design and choice of interventions and support, and to strengthen ownership and boost sustainability prospects.

Conclusion 8. The sustainability of FAO achievements is mixed, due to institutional, social, financial, and environmental risks. The evaluation highlights significant strides in achieving institutional, economic, social, and environmental sustainability within the CPF. The capacity-building initiatives at individual, organizational, and institutional levels have laid a solid foundation for lasting impact. The work with academic institutions, the establishment/strengthening of cooperative networks and FFS are commendable strategies with replication potential.

225 Economic sustainability is evident through improved income generation and capital asset accumulation, fostering potential long-term economic viability among beneficiaries. Community cohesion and conflict resolution mechanisms underpin social sustainability, while peace-building initiatives contribute to cross-border cooperation. Moreover, climate resilient practices promoted are expected to promote resilience and conservation in the face of climate change.

226 However, challenges to sustainability persist. Inadequacies in stakeholder participation in decision-making, limited local authority engagement, limited financial resources, and the lack of exit strategies pose risks. Reputation concerns linked to perceived unfocused efforts and inadequate representation of people with disabilities need to be addressed. The country remains exposed to the vagaries of climate change, and consequently, farmers, communities and national ecosystems remain vulnerable to its impacts.

6.2 Recommendations

Recommendation 1. In the next phase of its work, FAO should focus on a smaller targeted number of interventions (project and/or programmes), drawing on its experts and resources from different offices (including headquarters, region, and subregion) to deliver on its strategies. FAO should also set clear, accountable, and realistic goals for what it wants to achieve and implement targeted resource mobilization to achieve these goals.

227 The new CPF provides an opportunity to strengthen and strike a better balance between field work and institutional support. The FAO should take advantage of this opportunity to strengthen its positioning on what constitutes the core of its mandate. It has to be more intentional in this phase as it repositions itself vis à vis the government counterparts and development actors.

228 Given FAO's and government commitment towards the Hand-in-Hand Initiative, the future CPF provides an opportunity for the FAO Country Office to explore concrete ways in which it can support the government not only achieve the goals of the future PSTA5, but also the investment goals espoused in the country's Hand-in-Hand investment plan.

229 The evaluation team recommends that the FAO does a reassessment with its linkages with the various government ministries and agencies as part of the development of the future CPF, to identify opportunities and areas of possible collaboration in line with the new four betters structure. Following this assessment, it should ensure their participation in the process of formulation of the future CPF.

While the Ministry of Agriculture and Animal Resources remains the line ministry in the country, this process will facilitate diversification of its partnerships and consequently create more opportunities for resource mobilisation and impact on the field.

Recommendation 2. The next CPF should clearly articulate the four betters programmatic approach to improve the effectiveness, efficiency, and sustainability of its results.

- 230 The programmatic approach also enables the programme team to adopt a more longer-term perspective on interventions. The current CPF has shown that FAO has struggled to implement short term projects, due to their late start in many cases and delays in procurement and internal processes. While these projects respond to immediate needs, they do not provide FAO with a sufficient margin of manoeuvre to adjust and adapt to these challenges. Consequently, FAO would benefit from investing in resource mobilisation around longer-term projects, which would enable it to deliver interventions more effectively and efficiently. Such projects should focus on building the resilience of communities around the four betters, while leveraging the assets and gains achieved during the current CPF such as the FFS, FFS facilitators, cooperatives and emerging savings and credit schemes, buy from youth initiatives, online digital platforms for facilitating access to financial services and markets amongst others.
- 231 Through the evaluation, stakeholders recommended the need for FAO's interventions to prioritize projects which build resilience to climate emergencies and shocks and natural resource degradation; off farm entrepreneurship for youth, digitalization, nutrition/healthy diets and safe food, gender and social protection, new technological innovations in sustainable production and value addition, market access and urban food systems included focus on a limited number of integrated value chains, strengthening national investment capability, and empowerment of rural, local and national institutions. The ultimate decisions in terms of priorities must align with the NST2, PSTA5 and the UNSDCF priorities.
- 232 FAO must systematize the participation of beneficiaries in the design and choice of interventions to enhance uptake. It needs to invest resources and time to consult project participants to ensure that their needs and aspirations are considered. The development of exit strategies should be an imperative in all its projects to ensure post-project monitoring, ownership, and appropriation of project gains. Stronger linkages with research and academia to embed best practices in curriculum represent further pathways for strengthening the sustainability of interventions.

Recommendation 3. FAO needs to strengthen internal capabilities that facilitate efficient delivery of the future programme, while leveraging civil society and the private sector to achieve more impacts on the field.

- 233 The evaluation has identified internal challenges that impacted the efficient implementation of the current programme including staffing, internal coordination, procurement, and resource mobilisation. Regarding the internal structure, as part of this programmatic approach, it is crucial to articulate the roles and responsibilities of teams and reporting lines within the organisation. To deliver on an ambitious programme, requires technically competent and administrative/back office and leadership support with clarity on roles and responsibilities and segregation of functions. FAO will benefit from reassessing the current staffing resource, to identify gaps in capacities required to deliver on an ambitious future programme.
- 234 Procurement is a massive challenge for the office particularly for short term projects. Timely procurement plans must be developed, and programme staff have to respect the plans, processes, and the established internal systems. Measures need to be implemented in the country to support national suppliers to understand and utilize FAO online platforms for bidding, to reduce the rate of readvertisements observed. Separation of duties and functions between staff members is needed to ensure transparency in the procurement process.

- 235 FAO could also explore the extent to which procurement for short term and emergency projects could be subcontracted out to local partner NGOs and private sector actors as a means of bypassing the sometimes-heavy internal procedures, which are known to cause delays in the delivery of services and goods to stakeholders. Doing so, would also alleviate the workload and enable staff to focus on more strategic areas of programme delivery.
- 236 Linked to Recommendations 1, FAO needs to develop its stakeholder engagement strategy and relevant resource mobilisation strategy. This will ensure that its engagements with national and local authorities, civil society and private sector and other development partners are more intentional and coordinated. Developing a resource mobilisation strategy will similarly enable the team to be more strategic in mobilising the different types of resources it requires for the implementation of the future CPF. Part of the resource mobilisation strategy should articulate plans about how the FAO intends to utilize the TCP funding for more strategic resource mobilisation. Building on the stakeholder engagement strategy should further explore how it could draw on partnerships as a tool for resource mobilisation in furtherance of the CPF's objectives.

Recommendation 4. The next CPF should promote results-based principles, including a clear set of measurable outcomes and output indicators, and a country TOC supported by robust analyses of the risks and assumptions/prerequisites required for effective delivery and achievement of the CPF's goals. An M&E and learning system should be in place to monitor and report on the progress and achievement at the outcome level.

- 237 The future CPF should be grounded in deep analysis of FAO's comparative advantage and its interventions under a four betters approach must be results oriented with clear accountability frameworks. This will require the formulation of robust nested (with the four betters) intervention logic, a TOC and a comprehensive analysis of the conditions of change (risks and assumptions).
- 238 Furthermore, this should be accompanied by a robust MEL system which includes a system for outcomes harvesting across the four betters areas. This will ensure that the programme can demonstrate its contributions to stated outcomes in the CPF. The future programme should also articulate how learning will take place and the modalities and resources required to ensure results oriented and evidence-based approach to implementation of the future CPF.

Recommendation 5. The future programme needs to aspire towards a gender transformational approach, while ensuring that its interventions do not leave anyone behind especially people with disabilities.

- 239 The evaluation noted that the 2019–2024 CPF was gender blind, though most of its interventions targeted women and youth, with about a quarter of projects ranked with a gender marker 2. FAO can be more aspirational and set targets regarding how it will grow its portfolio towards more gender transformational projects. The results of the mandated gender stocktaking exercises, need to be utilized in the design of projects.
- 240 In the future CPF as well as in project documents, specific indicators for gender, young people and people with disabilities need to be included. The presence of a gender focal point within the team is a strong asset that can provide the support required to enhance mainstreaming, while strengthening the capacities of other staff and stakeholders on gender concepts and tools. The CPF should also build on the gender expertise to ensure that the PSTA5 is also gender sensitive and aspires towards a gender transformative approach, while ensuring that the policies developed⁴³ during the 2019–2023 period are effectively implemented as part of PSTA5.

⁴³ Including those where gender was mainstreamed.

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Appendix 1. People interviewed

Name	Job title	Ministry/agency
FAO personnel		
Anastase Harelimana	National Project Coordinator	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO)
Angelique Uwimana	Digital Agriculture Consultant	FAO
Caritas Kayilisa	National Project Manager	FAO
Christine Mukantwali	Better Nutrition Team Leader	FAO
Christopher Nyachogo	Operations Expert	FAO
Coumba Sow	FAO Representative	FAO
Damien Shumbusha	National Coordinator Hand-in-Hand Initiative	FAO
Grace Uwamwezi	National Policy and Programme Specialist	FAO
Jean Habineza	National Nutrition Specialist	FAO
Jean Paul Mushayija	National Project Manager One Health	FAO
Joseph Bizima	Better Environment Team Leader	FAO
Joseph Higiro	FFS Expert Aquaculture	FAO
Josepha Mukumana	Better Life Team Leader	FAO
Placide Nshuti Kanyabujinja	National Project Manager - (Capacity development for innovation Rwanda) CDI Rwanda project	FAO
Rosine Mizero	National Project Manager	FAO
Selvaraju Ramasamy	Senior Agricultural Officer – FAO Office of Innovation (OIN) and LTO CDI Rwanda project and DeSIRA initiative	FAO
Rudebjer, Per	Capacity Development Specialist – FAO Office of Innovation (OIN)	FAO
FAO SubRegional Office for Eastern Africa		
Dia Sanou	Nutrition Officer	FAO
Orlando Sosa	Lead Technical Officer	FAO
National government		
Alexis Kabayiza	Chief Technical Advisor	Ministry of Trade and Industry
Alphonsine Mukamunana	Environmental Health Specialist	Ministry of Health
Chantal Ingabire	Director General of Planning	Ministry of Agriculture and Animal Resources
Christophe Munyarugerero	Director in charge of Monitoring and Evaluation	Ministry of Youth
Godfrey Kayigana	Director General in Charge of Community Development and Social Protection	Ministry of Local Government
Emilie Uwase	Climate Finance Analyst. FONERWA	Ministry of Environment
Jean Bosco Rwayitare	Specialist in charge of youth policy mainstreaming	Ministry of Youth

Name	Job title	Ministry/agency
Jean Claude Ndorimana	Director General of Animal Resources Development	Ministry of Agriculture and Animal Resources
Octave Nshimiyimana	Director General Value chain development	Ministry of Agriculture and Animal resources
Jerome Ndahimana	Focal Person Codex	Rwanda Standards Board
Marie Goretti Mujawamariya	Seed Registrar Agrochemicals	Ministry of Trade and Industries (RICA)
Priscille Ingabire	Crop Protection Specialist/RAB	Rwanda Agricultural and Animal Resources Development Board
Gregoire Hagenimana	Focal Person CDI Rwanda Project	Rwanda Agriculture Board (RAB)
Hakirumurame Savio	Advisor to the Director General /RICA	Ministry of Trade and Industries
Ngayaboshya Silas	Director General in Charge of Gender Promotion and Women Empowerment	Ministry of Gender and Family Promotion
Bishumba Shakila	Women Mobilisation Specialist	Conseil National des Femmes (CNF)
Mwesigwa Robert	Executive Secretary	National Youth Council of Rwanda
Kamaraba Illuminee	Division Manager of Crop Post Harvest and Processing Management	Rwanda Agricultural and Animal Resources Development Board
Local government		
Angelique Mukangamije	SAIP District Coordinator	Ministry of Agriculture and Animal Resources /Karongi
Augustin Dusengimana	Irrigation Officer	Rulindo District
Camille Hodari	District Agriculture Officer	Musanze District
Daniel Hakizimana	Ngoma Sector Agronomist	Rulindo District
Emmanuel Gitaramo	Agribusiness Officer, SAIP	Nyanza District
Emmanuel Hategekimana	Director of Agriculture and Natural resources	Rulindo District
Eugene Mushimiyana	Joint Action Development Officer	Kirehe District
Innocent Mudahemuka	Director of Agriculture and Natural resources	Ngoma District
Innocent Ukizuru	District Agronomist	Rwamagana District
Jean de Dieu Tuyishime	Bushoki Sector Agronomist	Rulindo District
Jean de Dieu Nizeyimbabazi	Director of Agriculture and natural resources	Burera District
Jean Paul Niyonzima	Mpanga Sector Agronomist	Kirehe District
Jeanette Mutuyimana	Sector Executive Secretary	Rulindo District
Kwitonda	Deodatus sector Agronomist	Nyagisozi
Mbarubukeye Papien	Burabwa Village Leader	Burera District
Monique Buteto	Irrigation Officer	Kirehe District
Mukase Valentine	Vice-Mayor in charge of Social Affairs	Karongi District
Mukarubuga Gentile	In charge of cash crops	Rubavu District
Nkurunziza Pierre Claver	Agronomist	Rulindo District
Ntezimana Regis	Socio-Economic Development Officer	Rugabano/Karongi DistrictFduhu
Shyaka M Keneth	Directeur of Agriculture and Natural resources	Nyagatare District
Turamyé Servilien	Acting director of Agriculture and Natural Resources	Rutsiro District

Name	Job title	Ministry/agency
Other UN agencies		
Jean De Dieu Kayiranga	Peace Building Fund Focal Point	Peacebuilding Fund /UNDP
Ahmareen Karim	Country Director	World Food Programme (WFP)
Inka Himanen	Programme Advisor	WFP
Muhammad Khilji	Inclusive Market Systems Specialist	WFP
Veronica Rammala	Head of Vulnerability Analysis	WFP
Gloria Chepkoech	Social Protection Consultant	WFP
Colleen Oconnor	School Feeding Manager	WFP
International organizations		
Marshall Banamwana	Programme Officer	IUCN
Barbara Mbabazai	Associate Programme Officer	Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa (AGRA)
Resource partners		
Innocent Matabishi	Agricultural Advisor	Embassy of the Netherlands
KAYITENKORE Mugeni	Cooperation EEAS-KIGALI	European Union
Research organizations		
Prof Bizoza Alfred	Professor	University of Rwanda – Agricultural college
Ludovic ANDRES	Researcher	ISTOM
Private sector and civil society organizations		
Claver Ndagijimana		Agriculture of Mushrooms
Donath Banyurwaniki	Chairperson	Potato Innovation partnership In Rutsiro District
Emerence Nyirantezimana	Member	Piggery Innovation partnership In Rutsiro District
Emilie Uwase	Climate Finance Analyst	GreenFund
Gilbert Niyomwungeri	Manager	Water user's organization Rwangingo IP
Innocent Nsenga	Digital Ambassador	RISA
Juliette Akimana	Entrepreneur	DICHO Ltd
Kennedy Makahamadze	Executive Director & Value Chain IP Committee Member	Burera Dairy Ltd
Mbonaruzza Pierre Celestin	Chairman	Coopérative d'élevage pour la production et la transformation du lait (CEPTEL).
Norbert Tuyishimire	Agripreneur	Broiler Production
Ndagijimana Claver	Entrepreneur	Agriculture of Mushrooms, Rusizi
Nyirabahufite Lydie	Entrepreneur	Work Roselyne Ltd, Processing, Rusizi
Pauline Kayizere	Entrepreneur	Agribusiness
Valence Dushimimana	Entrepreneur	GIGAS Business Ltd

Name	Job title	Ministry/agency
Nsengiyumva Jean Damascene	Executive Secretary	National Union of Disability Organisations of Rwanda
Bazimenyera Francois	Chairperson	Piggery Innovation partnership In Rutsiro District
Cooperatives		
President	Abahangudushya Cooperative/	Nyaruguru
Chairperson + Secretary	AMIZERO IWACU Cooperative	Nyagatare
National Farm Manager	Association of Student Genocide Survivors (AERG)	Nyagatare
President	Cassava Cooperative	Ruhango
Chairperson	COAHIRU Cooperative	Rulindo
Accountant + Chairperson + Chair Tender Committee + Store Manager	COOPAMA Cooperative	Nyagatare
6 Members	KOINYA Cooperative	Nyanza
President	Kojyamunya Cooperative	Nyanza
Chairperson	COVAMABA Cooperative	Rulindo
Focal Person CDI Rwanda Project	Heifer International	Burera
Acting Manager + Sales Manager + Supervisor of Milk Quality	IAKIB	Gicumbi
Representative	Ingabo	Ruhango
Advisors + Secretary + Surveillance committee member + V/Chairperson	Ishema ry'Umuhinzi Kanyirarebe Cooperative	Burera
Member	Koteco Cooperative	Nyaruguru
President (4 other members)	Murereyimana	Kirehe
President	Rugabano IDP Model Village	Karongi
Chairperson	Rwanda Potato Stakeholder Platform	Burera
Chairperson	Rwangingo Rice and Maize growers Cooperative	Nyagatare
Committee Member + FFS Facilitator and Member + Secretary + Surveillance Committee Member+ V/ Chairperson	Terimbere Mukoto Cooperative	Rulindo
Accountant Secretary + Chair of the Supervisory sub-committee + Advisor	Terimbere Sake	Rulindo
President and 20 members	Tugaruke Munzira	Kirehe
Chairperson + accountant + secretary + 2 Advisors + Chair of sub-committee + 1 member	Tuzamurane Kigoma	Ngoma
Chairperson + Accountant	Union des Cooperatives des Apiculteurs des Volcans (UNICOOPAV)	Musanze

Name	Job title	Ministry/agency
6 members	Urumuri Cooperative	Nyaruguru
Secretary + Surveillance sub-committee member + V/Chairperson + 2 Advisors + Cooperative Manager + 6 members	YAHUPROC Cooperative	Rulindo
Beneficiaries (farmers and FFS facilitators)		District
6 Farmers (2 women and 4 men)		Rwamagana
1 Farmer and FFS Facilitator		Karongi
2 Farmers (1 woman and 1 man) + 2 Innovation partnership facilitators		Ruhango
5 Farmers (3 women and 2 men) + FFS Group members (16 women)		Kirehe
3 Female FFS facilitators and 11 FFS group members (4 women and 7 men)		Musanze
1 FFS member		Rubavu
2 Male farmers		Burera
3 Farmers (2 women and 1 man)		Ngoma
21 Farmers (9 women and 12 men)		Rulindo

Appendix 2. List of site visits and focus group discussions

Site visits conducted by the Evaluation Team

Province	District	N. of FGD	Better nutrition	Better life	Better production	Better environment
Southern	Ruhango				GCP/RWA/046/EC, TCP/RWA/3803	
	Huye				TCP/RWA/3706	
	Nyaruguru	1		UNJP/RWA/045/UNJ UNJP/RWA/032/UNJ		
	Nyanza	1			TCP/INT/3703	
	Muhanga				TCP/RWA/3706	
Western	Rubavu	1		UNJP/RWA/043/PBF		GCP/GLO/006/EC
	Karongi	1		UNJP/RWA/041/UNJ		
	Rusizi				TCP/RWA/3706	
Eastern	Nyagatare	1			GCP/RWA/046/EC UNJP/RWA/044/UNJ	UNJP/RWA/044/UNJ
	Kirehe	2		UNJP/RWA/045/UNJ, UNJP/RWA/032/UNJ TCP/RWA/3705	TCP/RWA/3705 UNJP/RWA/044/UNJ	TCP/RWA/3705 UNJP/RWA/044/UNJ
	Ngoma	1		UNJP/RWA/045/UNJ, UNJP/RWA/032/UNJ	UNJP/RWA/044/UNJ	UNJP/RWA/044/UNJ
	Rwamagana	1				TCP/RWA/3707/C3, GCP/INT/335/MUL
Northern	Musanze	1			GCP/RWA/046/EC, TCP/RWA/3706	TCP/RWA/3707/C3
	Burera	1	TCP/RWA/3802	UNJP/RWA/041/UNJ TCP/RWA/3802	GCP/RWA/046/EC	
	Rulindo	2	GCP/GLO/907/GER	GCP/INT/335/MUL	GCP/GLO/907/GER GCP/INT/335/MUL	TCP/RWA/3707/C3, UNJP/RWA/044/UNJ GCP/GLO/907/GER
	Gicumbi				UTF/RWA/042/RWA	
Kigali	Gasabo					GCP/GLO/907/GER, GCP/INT/335/MUL

Appendix 3. List of projects implemented in Rwanda in the period 2019–2023

Symbol	Title	EOD	NTE	DWH Budget (USD)	Geo. Coverage
GCP/GLO/006/EC	Capacity Building Related to Multilateral Environmental Agreements in ACP Countries ? Phase III	10/15/2019	03/31/2025	9 964 800	Global
GCP/GLO/017/EC	Developing capacities in agricultural innovation systems: scaling up the Tropical Agriculture Platform Framework	01/07/2019	31/07/2024	239 293.73	Regional
OSRO/GLO/407/USA*	Global Health Security in Africa and Asia	10/01/2014	09/30/2024	3 100 000	Global
GCP/GLO/802/GER(BMU)*	National Land Monitoring and Information System for a transparent NDC reporting	05/01/2018	05/31/2022	3 652 187	Global
GCP/GLO/907/GER*	Knowing water better: Towards fairer and more sustainable access to natural resources for greater food security (KnoWat)	12/01/2018	12/31/2022	2 996 105	Global
GCP /GLO/925/IFA	Increasing water productivity for sustainable 'nutrition-sensitive' agriculture production and improved food security	02/06/2020	09/30/2023	2 000 000	Global
FMM/GLO/132/MUL	Feeding Urbanization: Building prosperous small cities and towns	31/01/2020	31/12/2022	1 655 000	Global
GCP/INT/335/MUL*	Integrated Country Approach (ICA) for boosting decent jobs for youth in the agri-food system	12/31/2018	04/30/2023	5 728 738	Inter-Regional
GCP/INT/275/GER*	Building climate resilience in city region food systems through adapted production systems	01/12/2018	31/03/2024	2 565 586	Inter-Regional
TCP/INT/3703	Institutionalization of FAO's Rural Invest Package to enhance national stakeholders' investment planning and monitoring capacities	05/01/2019	12/31/2021	449 474	Inter Regional
GCP/SFE/007/JPN	Promoting employment opportunities and agripreneurship among youth and women in Eastern Africa	04/01/2021	09/30/2022	750 000	Inter-Regional
OSRO/SFE/702/USA*	Establishing an emergency community-based fall armyworm monitoring, forecasting, early warning and management system (CBFAMFEW) in eastern Africa	08/14/2017	08/31/2019	944 000	Regional

Symbol	Title	EOD	NTE	DWH Budget (USD)	Geo. Coverage
GCP/RWA/040/CPR	Capacity Development on sustainable Soil Management for Africa (2) – Rwanda	07/06/2020	05/31/2023	500 000	Country
GCP /RWA/046/EC	Capacity development for innovation in Rwanda: strengthening innovation partnerships in six districts: Burera, Rutsiro, Gatsibo, Nyagatare, Bugesera, and Ruhango	02/01/2021	01/31/2025	2 483 805	Country
OSRO/RWA/200/BEL	Emergency-Anticipatory actions to support farmers? Resilience impacted by low rains in Rwanda	11/15/2022	05/31/2023	500 000	Country
OSRO/RWA/001/CHA	Provision of Emergency Agriculture Support to Communities Affected by floods and landslide	07/22/2020	01/21/2021	200 000	Country
TCP/RWA/3608*	Support to the Government of Rwanda in sustainable control and management of Fall Armyworm	12/28/2017	12/31/2019	284 000	Country
TCP/RWA/3701/C1*	TCPF: Support to Agricultural Services and Digital Inclusion in Rwanda	09/01/2018	12/31/2019	50 000	Country
TCP/RWA/3702*	Support for Enhancing the Production and Distribution of Seeds and Healthy Banana Planting Materials	09/27/2018	08/31/2020	257 000	Country
TCP/RWA/3704	Bioenergy and Food Security Assessment and Capacity Building for Rwanda	02/11/2019	12/31/2021	274 560	Country
TCP/RWA/3705	Emergency support to the rehabilitation of the agricultural production for farmers affected by floods in Kireh	10/07/2019	12/31/2021	290 736	Country
TCP/RWA/3706	Support Local suppliers capacity development and promotion of e-Commerce for agricultural value chains in Rwanda	11/14/2019	10/31/2021	181 046	Country
TCP/RWA/3707/C3	TCPF: Promotion of safer alternatives to Severely Hazardous Pesticides Formulations (SHPFs) and creation of Organic crops producers Cooperatives for sale as IGA in Rwanda	11/21/2019	12/31/2020	97 133	Country
TCP/RWA/3801	Rwanda Post-harvest Management Strategy	14/10/2020	08/04/2024	150 000	Country
TCP/RWA/3802	Capacity building to increase the quality and quantity of bees products in Rwanda furthering income generation and job creation	11/18/2020	11/15/2023	350 000	Country
TCP/RWA/3803	Support to the strengthening of egg production subsector in Rwanda	03/15/2021	12/31/2023	378 000	Country

Symbol	Title	EOD	NTE	DWH Budget (USD)	Geo. Coverage
TCP/RWA/3804/C1	TCPF: Support to Fostering the One Health Operationalization in Rwanda	05/03/2021	04/30/2023	50 000	Country
TCP/RWA/3805	Transformational Change in Rwanda Through Hand-in-Hand Initiative	10/01/2021	09/30/2023	350 000	Country
TCP/RWA/3901*	Technical assistance and capacity building for cold chain development in Rwanda	01/03/2023	12/31/2024	300 000	Country
TCP/RWA/3902/C1*	TCPF: Strategic support on domestic and external agricultural food trade	01/27/2023	06/30/2024	99 000	Country
TCP/RWA/3903*	Support to the development of the Strategic Plan for Agriculture Transformation (PSTA5; 2024-2029)	01/27/2023	01/31/2025	350 000	Country
UNJP/RWA/032/UNJ*	Accelerating Progress Towards the Economic Empowerment of Rural Women	01/01/2015	31/12/2022	825 291	Country
UNJP/RWA/036/WFP*	One UN Joint Project Phase II: Effectively Fighting Chronic Malnutrition in Rwanda	01/02/2018	31/08/2021	427 633	Country
UNJP/RWA/038/UNJ	Sustainable Return and reintegration of Rwandan Returnees	08/05/2019	04/30/2020	195 944	Country
UNJP/RWA/041/UNJ	Accelerating Integrated Policy Interventions to Promote Social Protection	01/01/2020	06/30/2022	361 996	Country
UNJP/RWA/043/PBF	Creating opportunities for increased peace dividend for women and youth in DRC-Rwanda border region	07/09/2020	01/08/2023	357 884	Country
UNJP/RWA/044/UNJ	Joint Programme on Enhancing Climate Resilient and Integrated Agriculture in Disaster Prone Areas of Rwanda	02/12/2020	06/30/2023	880 607	Country
UNJP/RWA/045/UNJ	Accelerating Progress Towards the Economic Empowerment of Rural Women under the Rwanda SDG Fund	02/03/2020	06/30/2024	456 516	Country
UNJP/RWA/048/UNJ	Effectively Fighting Stunting in Rwanda (Phase 3)	07/15/2022	06/30/2023	1 166 300	Country
UTF/RWA/042/RWA	Technical Assistance for the implementation of Rwanda Dairy Development Project	09/16/2019	11/30/2022	415 964	Country
UTF/RWA/037/RWA*	Technical Support to Sustainable Agricultural Intensification and Food Security Project (TA-SAIP)	01/11/2018	01/11/2023	1 500 000	Country

* projects that were not included in the portfolio analysis, but shared in the report for completion of information.

Appendix 4. Evaluation matrix

Criteria and subcriteria	Indicators	Guiding questions	Methods of data collection and analysis	Data sources / means of verification
Strategic Positioning: Is FAO doing what is needed?				
1. RELEVANCE & COMPARATIVE STRENGTHS				
To what extent has FAO's programme in Rwanda been responding to the national priorities and needs within the areas of FAO's mandate? How has it contributed to strategically position FAO in the country?				
1. A. Adherence to national development priorities	Country programme responded to major development priorities in the country as defined in the country's development plan, SDGs, or sector policies. (Responsiveness to national priorities)	To what extent is FAO's programme aligned with national development plans, strategies, and policies? Are there any gaps or missed opportunities?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Secondary documentary review <ul style="list-style-type: none"> content analysis Face-to-face interviews – thematic analysis of qualitative data 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> CPF, Government documents, project proposals, project reports and evaluations, FAO annual reports <ul style="list-style-type: none"> KIIs, government, civil society, private sector, UN agencies and other development partners
1. B. Alignment with FAO goals/ UNSDCF/SDGs goals	Country programme responded to FAO global priorities, UNSDCF/SDGs. (Responsiveness to FAO Strategic framework – 2022-2031)	To what extent does the country programme align with FAO global priorities, UNSDCF/SDGs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Secondary documentary review <ul style="list-style-type: none"> content analysis Face-to-face interviews – thematic analysis of qualitative data 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> UNSDCF document, FAO strategic document (2022-2031), CPF, SDGs, Project reports, FAO annual reports <ul style="list-style-type: none"> KIIs, government, civil society, private sector, UN agencies and other development partners
1. C. Relevance of programme priorities	Programme adds value to ongoing efforts at the country level. (Comparative strengths/Value addition)	To what extent has FAO identified and focused on areas of work in which it has a strategic advantage to help Rwanda deliver on its priorities, including those related to the nationally prioritized SDG targets? What role has FAO played vis-à-vis other development actors (government, civil society, the private sector, and other international development partners) and did FAO draw from its own comparative advantage? In which areas did FAO utilize to the greatest/least extent its strengths? The core functions are: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> development and implementation of normative instruments; collection, analysis and improved access to data and information; 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Secondary documentary review <ul style="list-style-type: none"> content analysis Face-to-face interviews – thematic analysis of qualitative data <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Focus group discussions – thematic analysis of qualitative data 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> UNSDCF document, FAO strategic document (2022-2031), CPF, SDGs, Project reports, FAO annual reports <ul style="list-style-type: none"> KIIs, government, civil society, private sector, UN agencies and other development partners

Criteria and subcriteria	Indicators	Guiding questions These questions are the sub-questions of the evaluation matrix. They are not meant for rating or binary response but should be used to arrive at findings and conclusions.	Methods of data collection and analysis	Data sources / means of verification
		iii. fostering, promoting, and facilitating policy dialogue; iv. building capacity to prepare, implement, monitor, and evaluate evidence-based policies, investments, and programmes; v. disseminating knowledge, technologies, and good practices; vi. facilitating partnerships; and vii. advocacy and communication.		
	Programme is responsive to changing development needs/ priorities/ challenges, demonstrating flexibility and adaptability. (Responsiveness to evolving development needs)	Has FAO been addressing the most acute and structurally important challenges in Rwanda in line with the areas of FAO's competence? To what extent and how do these changes affect the relevance of the CPF? To what degree has FAO's COVID and resilience (droughts, floods, climate emergencies) support been relevant to the needs of Rwanda?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Secondary documentary review – content analysis Face-to-face interviews – thematic analysis of qualitative data Focus group discussions – thematic analysis of qualitative data Field observations – visual comparison of what was planned vs what was effectively delivered 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> UNSDCF document, FAO strategic document (2022–2031), CPF, SDGs, Project reports, FAO annual reports, M&E framework KIIs, government, civil society, private sector, UN agencies and other development partners Photos of FAO responses and projects on the ground
	Transition implications are documented. (preparedness for transition)	What are the programmatic implications for FAO in Rwanda in view of its transition to become a middle-income country? How does this affect FAO's work in Rwanda vis-à-vis staffing, funding, and procedures?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Secondary documentary review – content analysis Face-to-face interviews – thematic analysis of qualitative data 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Documentation of implications experienced in other countries Interviews with FAO country staff, interviews with other development agencies and government officials
	FAO programme is responsive to gender-specific development concerns. (Responsiveness to gender concerns)	To what extent did FAO programme respond to immediate and long-term gender-specific development concerns?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Secondary documentary review – content analysis Face-to-face interviews – thematic analysis of qualitative data Focus group discussions – thematic analysis of qualitative data Field observations – visual comparison of what was planned vs what was effectively delivered 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Project reports, FAO annual reports, M&E framework Primary stakeholders, KIIs, government, civil society, private sector, UN agencies and other development partners

Criteria and subcriteria	Indicators	Guiding questions	Methods of data collection and analysis	Data sources / means of verification
	Programme is responsive to groups at risk of being left behind. (Responsiveness to groups at risk of being left behind)	To what extent did the sub-questions of the evaluation matrix. They are not meant for rating or binary response but should be used to arrive at findings and conclusions. To what extent did the FAO country programme advance "Leave No One Behind", and Human Rights?		
2. COHERENCE/PARTNERSHIP AND COORDINATION				
To what extent were there synergies and/or trade-offs between FAO's and other stakeholders' interventions in the country? To what extent has FAO built solid and effective multi-stakeholder partnerships to implement its programme and related activities in Rwanda?				
2. A. Internal programme coherence	Linkages between projects, outputs and outcomes were identified and established to enhance FAO contribution. (Linkages between programme levels)	To what extent does the FAO country programme have a logical theory of change (TOC) based on reasonable assumptions? To what extent is the portfolio composition appropriately supporting the TOC and maximizing interlinkage for combined impact? To what extent did FAO aggregate resources for a more consolidated response?	Secondary documentary review – content analysis • Face-to-face interviews – thematic analysis of qualitative data	CPF, programme M&E framework, Risk management documents, TOC, annual reports, project reports, resource mobilization strategy, annual planning documents, annual reviews • Interviews with FAO country staff, interviews with government officials
demonstrates an internally coordinated approach to an identified problem	An integrated, issue-based programming approach was adopted to enhance development results in accordance with comparative advantage. (Integrated programming pursued)	To what extent did FAO pursue integrated programme outcomes and map the synergies between the thematic areas it supports (Four Betters)?		

Criteria and subcriteria	Indicators	Guiding questions These questions are the sub-questions of the evaluation matrix. They are not meant for rating or binary response but should be used to arrive at findings and conclusions.	Methods of data collection and analysis	Data sources / means of verification
2. B. External programme coherence FAO proactively pursued external partnerships	FAO established strategic and programmatic partnerships with government development initiatives. (Strategic partnership with government) FAO established strategic partnerships with United Nations agencies, other bilateral and multilateral agencies. (Strategic partnership with the United Nations agencies and other agencies)	To what extent did the FAO country programme seek and benefit from synergy with government led initiatives? To what extent did the FAO country programme optimize FAO's strategic positioning in the country? How did this impact delivery (benefits) and challenges? How can this be further improved? To what extent did the FAO country programme seek and benefit from synergy with UN agencies in the country? How did this impact delivery (benefits) and challenges? How can this be further improved?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Secondary documentary review – content analysis Face-to-face interviews – thematic analysis of qualitative data 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Project reports, FAO annual reports, annual reviews Interviews with FAO country staff, interviews with government officials
FAO established strategic partnerships with non-state actors (e.g., the media, civil society organizations [CSOs], academia, think tanks, international NGOs) (Strategic partnership with civil society)	FAO established strategic partnerships with non-state actors (e.g., the media, civil society organizations [CSOs], academia, think tanks, international NGOs) (Strategic partnership with civil society)	To what extent did FAO partnerships with non-state actors foster multi-stakeholder engagement and the co-creation of development solutions? How did this impact delivery (benefits) and challenges? How can this be further improved?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Secondary documentary review – content analysis Face-to-face interviews – thematic analysis of qualitative data 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Project reports, FAO annual reports, annual reviews Interviews with FAO country staff, interviews with civil society actors
FAO established partnerships with the private sector, identifying key areas for private sector development and engagement, and/or for facilitating SDG financing. (Strategic partnership with private sector)	FAO established partnerships with the private sector, identifying key areas for private sector development and engagement, and/or for facilitating SDG financing. (Strategic partnership with private sector)	To what extent did FAO develop strategies for private sector engagement at national and local levels? How did this impact delivery (benefits) and challenges? How can this be further improved?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Secondary documentary review – content analysis Face-to-face interviews – thematic analysis of qualitative data 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Project reports, FAO annual reports, annual reviews Interviews with FAO country staff, interviews with private sector actors

Criteria and subcriteria	Indicators	Guiding questions These questions are the sub-questions of the evaluation matrix. They are not meant for rating or binary response but should be used to arrive at findings and conclusions.	Methods of data collection and analysis	Data sources / means of verification
	FAO played a coordination role working in the agricultural development, forestry, natural resource management, value chain, environment, digitalization, post-harvest management, food security and nutrition sectors. (coordination role)	To what extent did FAO play a role in facilitating coordination and synergies amongst development actors in the country?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Secondary documentary review – content analysis Face-to-face interviews – thematic analysis of qualitative data 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Project reports, FAO annual reports, annual reviews Interviews with FAO country staff, private sector actors, civil society, government, UN agencies, and other development actors
Programme contribution: Are we making a difference?				
3. EFFECTIVENESS/CONTRIBUTION TO RESULTS				
The extent to which the intervention has been achieved, or is expected to achieve, its objectives and its results, including any differential results across groups.				
3. 1. Achievement/ eventual achievement of the stated outputs and outcomes	Programme outputs were achieved or will eventually be achieved. (Programme outputs achieved)	To what extent did FAO achieve its specific objectives (CPF outputs) as defined in the CPF and other strategies (if different)? <ol style="list-style-type: none"> What are FAO contributions to the promotion of sustainable and integrated crop, livestock, and aquaculture production systems through innovative approaches? (CPF Priority 1) What are FAO contributions to food security, nutrition and agriculture resilience to climate and other shocks through sustainable and diversified production systems? (CPF Priority 2) To what extent did FAO promote inclusive agricultural market systems (including value chains) and competitive diversified agricultural commodities in domestic, regional, and international markets? (CPF Priority 3) What are FAO contributions to the enhancement of Rwandan institutional capacity at different levels (individual, organizational and enabling environment) for effective and efficient delivery of services? (CPF Priority 4) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Secondary documentary review – content analysis Face-to-face interviews – thematic analysis of qualitative data Focus group discussions – thematic analysis of qualitative data Field observations – visual comparison of what was planned vs what was effectively delivered 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Project reports, FAO annual reports, M&E framework Primary data collection from KIIs, focus groups with primary stakeholders and field observations Photos of outputs and deliverables at community and national levels

Criteria and subcriteria	Indicators	Guiding questions These questions are the sub-questions of the evaluation matrix. They are not meant for rating or binary response but should be used to arrive at findings and conclusions.	Methods of data collection and analysis	Data sources / means of verification
		<p>To what extent have the design, implementation, and contextual factors contributed to or hindered CPF Rwanda's results (output and outcome)?</p> <p>To what extent could the disabling factors have been prevented or mitigated?</p>		
	<p>FAO has influenced (or is likely to influence) outcome-level results and processes. (Influenced outcome-level results)</p>	<p>To what extent did the achieved results (outputs) contribute to development outcomes and processes in Rwanda with specific importance for advancing the SDGs?</p> <p>Were there any positive or negative, direct or indirect unintended outcomes?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Secondary documentary review – content analysis • Face-to-face interviews – thematic analysis of qualitative data • Focus group discussions – thematic analysis of qualitative data • Field observations – visual comparison of what was planned vs what was effectively delivered 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project reports, FAO annual reports, M&E framework • Primary data collection from KIIs, focus groups with primary stakeholders and field observations. • Photos of outputs and deliverables at community and national levels
<p>4. CROSS CUTTING ISSUES How well are gender and other social equity considerations mainstreamed in the planning and implementation of FAO's work, in accordance with the SDG principle of "to leave no one behind"?</p>				
<p>4.1. Programme inclusiveness (especially those at risk of being left behind)</p>	<p>Outcomes have been beneficial for those at risk of being left behind. (Outcomes benefited those at risk of being left behind)</p>	<p>To what extent are FAO interventions mainstreaming gender and inclusivity? Which groups are / are not benefiting from FAO's support? To what extent did FAO programme outputs include benefits for marginalized groups?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Secondary documentary review – content analysis • Face-to-face interviews – thematic analysis of qualitative data • Focus group discussions – thematic analysis of qualitative data • Field observations – visual comparison of what was planned vs what was effectively delivered 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project reports, FAO annual reports, M&E framework • Primary data collection from KIIs, focus groups with primary stakeholders and field observations • Photos of outputs and deliverables at community and national levels
<p>4.2. Prioritization of gender equality, youth, and women's empowerment (Outcomes contributed to inclusiveness)</p>	<p>Outcomes have contributed to enhancing the processes for gender equality, youth, and women's empowerment. (Outcomes contributed to inclusiveness)</p>			

Criteria and subcriteria	Indicators	Guiding questions These questions are the sub-questions of the evaluation matrix. They are not meant for rating or binary response but should be used to arrive at findings and conclusions.	Methods of data collection and analysis	Data sources / means of verification
5. EFFICIENCY/ORGANISATIONAL PERFORMANCE To what extent has FAO contributed to achieving the objectives and intended results in each of the CPF Priority Areas?				
5. A. INTERNAL Coordination and structure	FAO's internal coordination mechanism functions as planned. (Internal coordination)	To what extent has the FAO country internal structure and coordination functioned as planned? What coordination mechanisms exist amongst thematic areas? What has worked well and what could be further improved?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Secondary documentary review – content analysis Face-to-face interviews – thematic analysis of qualitative data 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Project reports, FAO annual reports, annual reviews, M&E framework, financial reporting, roles and responsibilities/organigramme, organisational structure, planning documents Interviews with FAO country staff
5. B. Management and operational efficiency	Country programme has the necessary technical capacity to achieve programme results. (Necessary technical capacity)	To what extent has the FAO country programme been implemented efficiently? (including human resources management and M&E capacity)?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Secondary documentary review – content analysis Face-to-face interviews – thematic analysis of qualitative data 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Project reports, FAO annual reports, annual reviews, M&E framework, financial reporting, roles and responsibilities/organigramme, organisational structure, planning documents, resource mobilization strategy Interviews with FAO country staff
	Estimated resources were mobilized pursuing appropriate, diverse, and sustainable funding streams. (Mobilized planned resources)	To what extent has FAO mobilized the financial resources required to implement the CPF? To what extent has the FAO country programme been implemented efficiently? (including financial resources management)? To what extent were FAO financial and human resources optimized during the implementation of the programme (for example by building on outcomes with synergies, allocating resources efficiently and strategically based on risk analysis)?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Secondary documentary review – content analysis Face-to-face interviews – thematic analysis of qualitative data 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Project reports, FAO annual reports, annual reviews, M&E framework, financial reporting, roles and responsibilities/organigramme, organisational structure, planning documents Interviews with FAO country staff
	Programme resources were strategically allocated. (Programme resources used strategically)			

Criteria and subcriteria	Indicators	Guiding questions These questions are the sub-questions of the evaluation matrix. They are not meant for rating or binary response but should be used to arrive at findings and conclusions.	Methods of data collection and analysis	Data sources / means of verification
6. SUSTAINABILITY To what extent will these results be sustainable from an economic, ecological, and social standpoint?				
6.1. Sustainable capacity Extent to which positive changes enabled by the FAO programme can be pursued within the country's development trajectory.	Target institutions and/beneficiary groups are equipped with knowledge, skills, and partnerships to continue with programme/project related efforts after their completion. (Capacities improved) Measures were taken to facilitate local and national ownership of programme results. (Ensured national ownership)	To what extent has FAO helped to develop the capacities, transfer of knowledge/ technologies required to sustain results? Is there evidence that the initiatives supported by FAO have scaled up beyond their funded targets? To what extent have the design, implementation, and contextual factors influenced the sustainability of results? To what extent did FAO take measures to facilitate national ownership of the programme results?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Secondary documentary review – content analysis Face-to-face interviews – thematic analysis of qualitative data Focus group discussions – thematic analysis of qualitative data Field observations – visual comparison of what was planned vs what was effectively delivered 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Project reports, FAO annual reports, M&E framework Primary data collection from KIIs, focus groups with primary stakeholders and field observations Photos of outputs and deliverables at community and national levels
6.2. Financing for development	Measures were taken to promote scale-up. (Promoted scaling up) Financial and human resource needs for sustaining/scaling results achieved are addressed. (Enabled development financing)	To what extent have the design, implementation, and contextual factors influenced the scale up of the CPF achievements? To what extent has FAO helped to develop the capacities, and financial resourcing required to sustain results? To what extent did FAO prioritize and facilitate development financing?		
6.3 Continuity of gains beyond CPF	Achievements are likely to continue beyond CPF phase. (Sustainability of results) Risks to sustainability are identified and mitigated. (Risk management)	What is the likelihood that the results of the project will continue to be useful or remain even after the project has ended? What results, lessons or experiences have been replicated? What are the main risks that may affect the sustainability of programme benefits (considering financial, socio-economic, institutional, and environmental and governance aspects)?		

Annexes

Annex 1. Terms of reference

http://www.fao.org/3/cd3545en/Rwanda_CPE_Annex_1.pdf

Annex 2. Mid-term evaluation of project GCP/RWA/046/EC (DeSIRA)

http://www.fao.org/3/cd3545en/Rwanda_CPE_Annex_2.pdf

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