FAO Office of Evaluation

Evaluation of Efforts to Promote Post-Crisis Transition

Call for Expressions of Interest (April 17, 2012)

# The context

The need to establish mechanisms enabling a smooth transition from emergency to recovery and rehabilitation interventions in the aftermath of a crisis has been the focus of long-standing debates within the humanitarian and development communities. The search for pathways to foster such transition is considered a priority to better address a rising number of climate-related disasters and mounting security concerns, and to support peace-building and stability in regions exiting conflict, while making cost-effective use of shrinking aid budgets in a climate of global financial uncertainty.

At the same time tensions and trade-offs have been recognised to exist between humanitarian imperatives driving immediate life-saving and recovery programmes, and longer-term rehabilitation and development goals. Among the challenges are the presence of a multitude of actors with different mandates and the compartmentalized aid and funding architecture vis a vis the complex linkages between different phases of the relief-recovery spectrum, involving multiple and context-specific feedback loops. The very terms recovery and transition demand to be fine-tuned, and their respective objectives specified and distinguished according to the settings they are applied to.

**FAO’s role in recovery and transition**

Improved preparedness and response in emergencies is one of FAO’s global Strategic Objectives. Under this global objective “improving transition and linkages between emergency, rehabilitation and development” is one of three pathways to achieving the overall objective, with specific results expected over a 4 year period.

The strategic role of agriculture and natural resources in crises, whether caused by disasters, conflicts or political or economic instability, has thus been recognised by the organisation. Often the most vulnerable and most affected populations live in rural areas and depend on agriculture for their livelihoods. At the same time that crisis often affect agricultural sectors, land and water, and/or food access and availability triggering emergencies, programmes addressing these areas are also crucial means to overcome insecurity and instability, on the path towards recovery and building greater resilience.

FAO has a global mandate as a specialized UN agency to advise governments, support capacity development, stimulate the generation and dissemination of information, statistics and knowledge, negotiate and promote norms and standards of good practice, and through partnerships support joint action and encourage commonality of purpose. With respect to humanitarian contexts, FAO (together with WFP) has a specific role in coordinating food security responses at global and country levels.

Some examples of FAO efforts where the design of relief responses appear to have been based on longer-term planning for the development of the agricultural sector and of rural livelihoods include i.a.:

* Cash for works rehabilitation of essential rural infrastructures to prepare for the impending planting season, while providing much needed income to households, and stimulating local markets;
* Promotion of local seed production and distribution of locally produced quality seeds;
* Support to local veterinary services to implement large-scale vaccination of livestock, promoting capacity development and in some cases removing barriers to livestock export markets;
* Capacities development of new state institutions in the agriculture sector following the end of longstanding civil conflicts.
* Promotion of the production of diversified nutritious foods during emergency response to tackle underlying causes of silent hunger.
* Development of a livelihood assessment toolkit that, adapted locally, serves as an analytical tool for designing transition interventions.
* Identification and targeting of communities vulnerable to specific climatic shocks for resilience building and risk reduction initiatives.

This evaluation takes place at a moment of transformation for FAO. In the past, emergency operations were managed by a centralized unit in FAO Headquarters – while the organization’s development work has increasingly received support at regional and country level. The current process of decentralization, with full responsibility of emergency programming being handed over to country offices and unified, is bound to change how FAO approaches recovery and transition institutionally.

# Purpose of the Evaluation

The Evaluation will serve as a vehicle for accountability and learning by providing a rigorous evidence-based analysis of the current status of FAO’s work in the area of recovery and transition programming and policy making globally.

The Evaluation will be forward-looking: it will identify areas for improvement and draw lessons to enhance the relevance and effectiveness of FAO assistance in bridging the gap between relief and development, in particular informing FAO’s strategy for transitioning and current efforts to strengthen country level programming.

The main purposes of the Evaluation are:

* to assess the relevance of FAO’s interventions for the long-term recovery of livelihoods, natural resource systems, institutions, and markets at different scales.
* to provide accountability to resource partners that have supported FAO’s interventions about the performance of FAO in relief to recovery;
* to analyse effectiveness and sustainability of FAO’s tools and mechanisms for promoting recovery, including but not limited to, coordination mechanisms between internal FAO divisions and with external stakeholders, assessment toolkits for better planning of transition, institutional capacity building tools and innovative instruments to assist affected populations, rebuild household and community assets, and stimulate markets.
* To assess the extent to which FAO’s work in transition results in efficiency in terms of more quickly establishing self-sufficiency of crisis affected households.

# Methodology of the evaluation

The methodology will be both consultative and participatory. Consultations will be carried out with the main programme stakeholders (Govt, donors, UN and implementing partners, FAO staff and final beneficiaries) during both the inception period and during the main evaluation phase to ensure that the evaluation answers questions of interest to main audience for the report – as well as to allow for triangulation of information from different sources. The evaluation will use a wide range of tools and methods, including stakeholder consultation through workshops/group meetings and semi-structured interviews; check lists; desk study to gather all relevant background information; field visits.

An inception phase (November 2012- January 2013) will include an evaluability assessment, scoping of the evaluation domain (frameworks, definitions, issues to be addressed, stakeholder analysis, etc), preparation of data gathering tools and definition of methodologies, mapping of FAO’s work in transition, synthesis of evaluations which include FAO’s work in transition, literature review to identify benchmarks of good practice, and preparation for field data gathering work. A FAO reference group and an external expert panel will be established and convened to inform and advise the independent evaluation team.

The Evaluation phase (March-May 2013) will build on the previous analysis and proceed with the assessment by enlarging and deepening the data and information collected through:

* Desk Reviews of projects and normative products related to transition programming;
* Desk reviews (and possible field assessments) of a sample of global, regional and national projects;
* Country case studies where a comprehensive assessment of all recovery and transition related activities will be conducted by the Evaluation Team. The selection of countries will take the following elements into account: i) sub-regional balance; ii) diverse typologies of FAO activities in this area across core functions of the organization; iii) coverage of sub-sectors (crops, livestock, nutrition, natural resources, fisheries, etc.); and iv) coverage by other recent or ongoing assessments (including the evaluation of FAO’s work in Disaster Risk Reduction in South and Central America and Asia).
* Interviews with key internal and external informants and focus group discussions at Headquarters locations and in decentralized offices.

The Report Writing and Dissemination Phase (June-August 2013) will involve the entire team. This phase will work to ensure that the evaluation’s conclusions and recommendations are evidence based, identifying lessons learned, good practices and suggestions for how FAO can be more relevant and effective in its future work in promoting appropriate and timely transitioning to asset building and development post crisis. The team leader together with the Office of Evaluation will identify opportunities for feeding the results of the evaluation into FAO’s strategic planning and learning processes, as well as ensure ample dissemination to external stakeholders.

**Composition and profile of the evaluation team**

The Evaluation will be conducted by a multidisciplinary team of independent consultants. Gender equity and geographical balance will be pursued in so far as possible in the team composition, to ensure diversity of perspectives. Knowledge of FAO, expertise in food security, nutrition, natural resource management, agriculture and related sectors will be prioritised. Direct experience in conducting strategic thematic evaluations will be important – as will experience in working in both humanitarian responses and transition/development programming.

The Evaluation team will consist of:

A **Team Leader**, who will be a leading expert in the field and have experience in leading large and complex evaluations. They will possess in-depth knowledge of transition and recovery debates, and of one or more areas of FAO’s work. The Team Leader will be required to start working during the inception phase, for around 20 working days in the last quarter of 2012.

Four to five **team members** with expertise in one of FAO’s areas of work (Agriculture, Fisheries, Forestry, Natural Resource Management, Food and Nutrition Security), institutional capacity building, market analysis, agricultural and food security policy. They will possess good knowledge of the international debate on transition/recovery post-conflict and post-disaster. Hands on experience in humanitarian settings and in-depth knowledge of funding architecture are a plus.

Candidates will demonstrate solid interviewing skills, confidence with the theoretical debates, and an ability to collect information and to write succinct well developed analysis.

Consultants with expertise in one of the technical areas indicated above and experience in undertaking independent evaluations of complex programmes are invited to submit an expression of interest together with their resume/cv and indication of availability and expected remuneration to the Office of Evaluation: savina.tessitore@fao.org

**Deadline for application: May 30, 2012.**