



Food and Agriculture  
Organization of the  
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Investing in rural people

Independent Office of Evaluation



World Food  
Programme



# Joint evaluation of collaboration among the United Nations Rome-Based Agencies

EVALUATION REPORT





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# Joint evaluation of collaboration among the United Nations Rome-Based Agencies

Evaluation report

Commissioned by the  
FAO Office of Evaluation, Independent Office of Evaluation of IFAD, and WFP Office of Evaluation

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# Summary

## I. Introduction

### A. Evaluation features

1. The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) and the World Food Programme (WFP) are the three Rome-Based Agencies (RBAs) of the United Nations. Since 2008, there have been growing calls, mainly by Member States (through the Governing Bodies and by individual governments), for RBA collaboration (RBAC) to be intensified and optimized.
2. The RBAs have responded with a number of strategic statements about collaboration. In 2018 they signed a memorandum of understanding (MOU) in this regard.<sup>1</sup> To date there has been no evaluation of RBAC that can provide credible evidence of the extent and quality of joint RBA performance towards their shared objectives, or explanation of the reasons for that performance. Nor has the potential value added by RBAC been systematically assessed. The Evaluation Offices of the RBAs have therefore conducted a joint evaluation of their collaboration from November 2016 to the present, appointing an independent evaluation team for the purpose. Data were collected between October 2020 and May 2021.
3. The evaluation answers four questions:
  - How relevant is RBA collaboration in contributing to the achievement of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development?
  - What are the positive, negative, intended and unintended results of RBA collaboration to date?
  - What factors have enabled or hindered the effectiveness of RBA collaboration?
  - What is the added value of RBA collaboration (as opposed to single Agency processes and results) across the different aspects and levels?
4. The evaluation spans RBAC at country, regional and global levels (focusing on the country level), and includes all forms of collaboration (which it defines as joint work) between the RBAs.
5. Evidence was gathered remotely (due to COVID-19) through 12 country studies; eight 'deep dive' studies of selected themes; extensive document review; and an online survey of RBA professional staff. Some 400 informants expressed their views in interviews and meetings.

### B. Context

6. Since 2018, the drivers of RBAC have been significantly reshaped by the reform of the United Nations development system (UNDS). The most significant consequences of this evolving context are at country level, under the auspices of a strengthened United Nations Resident Co-ordinator (UNRC). Each RBA's multi-annual country programme is now expected to be clearly linked into a United Nations Sustainable Development Co-operation Framework (UNSDCF), preceded by a reinforced United Nations Common Country Analysis (CCA).
7. Other United Nations reforms, aimed at enhancing operational efficiency, are being pursued with the support of the Business Innovations Group. They include the Business Operations Strategy, which focuses on common services that are implemented jointly or delivered by one United Nations entity on behalf of other United Nations entities.
8. The RBAs (particularly FAO and WFP, which co-lead the global Food Security Cluster) play important roles in United Nations humanitarian work. They are committed to the collaborative intent of the New Way

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<sup>1</sup> FAO, IFAD and WFP, 2018. Memorandum of Understanding between Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) and World Food Programme (WFP). Rome: FAO, IFAD and WFP, June 2018.

of Working,<sup>2</sup> and are actively exploring the opportunities and approaches implicit in the humanitarian-development-peace nexus.

### **C. Subject of the evaluation**

9. The RBAs share a headquarters location, a commitment to food security, and an evolving interest in sustainable food systems. They are also significantly different institutions. FAO is a specialized agency of the United Nations, combining normative and operational functions in food and agriculture, food security and nutrition across the humanitarian – development continuum. Its funding combines assessed contributions by each Member State with voluntary contributions of extra-budgetary resources. IFAD is an international financial institution, funded to date through periodic Member State replenishments, that provides finance for combating rural poverty and hunger to the governments of developing countries, mainly through loans. WFP delivers emergency food assistance and uses food assistance to support economic and social development. It is financed entirely by voluntary contributions.

10. The objective of RBAC has always been to enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of the agencies' contribution to food and nutrition security. Since 2016, this objective has been framed in terms of a stronger contribution by the three agencies to the 2030 Agenda and, in particular, the achievement of SDG 2. The RBAs have committed to collaboration to deliver more efficient and effective field operations; stronger policy development at national and international levels; more effective participation and advocacy in international fora and the creation of globally recognized frameworks and tools; improved mobilization of resources and overall performance; and increased capacity to operate in multidisciplinary contexts.

11. RBAC occurs at country, regional and global levels. At all levels, it may include the provision of joint corporate services. The variously defined categories of RBAC also include joint work on policy, strategic and thematic advice, advocacy, knowledge, monitoring, and the implementation of projects and programmes. The latter mode of joint operations requires the formal sharing of resources and the detailed harmonization of procedures, whereas joint work in such fields as advocacy, policy and knowledge is less administratively demanding. Most of the collaborative activities that the evaluation could identify are at country level, with 42 percent also involving at least one non-RBA organization, most commonly the United Nations Children's Fund. Although RBAC is common, it is only a small part of each RBA's portfolio.

## **II. Evaluation findings**

### **A. Relevance**

12. RBAC is largely relevant to the agreements that guide the strategic direction of the UNDS. It is highly relevant for the overall direction of the latest phase of United Nations reform concerning repositioning of the UNDS. It is most relevant at the country and regional levels. The Secretary-General's efficiency agenda now makes RBAC in the joint delivery of core corporate services at country level less relevant.

13. RBAC is relevant to the strategic objectives and goals of the three entities. The RBAC agreements state the comparative strengths of the RBAs but do not adequately specify the fundamental differences between them and the implications of these differences for collaboration.

14. RBAC, as currently designed through various agreements, is not aimed at specific global targets. Rather, these agreements set a framework and strategic direction to facilitate and encourage collaboration at all levels. While this may be appropriate, the lack of ambition has implications for the ability of RBAC to make a meaningful contribution to the 2030 Agenda.

### **B. Results**

15. RBA collaborative efforts have had mixed results in strengthening co-ordination over the review period.

- In some countries, a strongly collaborative spirit has developed. In many, the RBAs collaborate effectively where there is a clear advantage in doing so; and in some others, there is little or no evidence of strengthened collaboration.

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<sup>2</sup> United Nations Office for the Co-ordination of Humanitarian Affairs, 2017. *New way of working*. New York: OCHA.

- Co-ordination is generally easier around thematic and advocacy work than in formal operational project settings, where transaction costs are higher and arranging joint action may be slower.
- The formal global structure and processes of RBAC do not significantly strengthen coordination.
- There has been some strengthening of common messaging and communication.
- Although joint corporate services are often arranged where they offer clear practical benefits, co-ordination has not become stronger in this regard.

16. The RBAs have made limited progress in reducing overlap, competition and duplication of work. In some projects, countries and thematic areas, the complementarity that the RBAs can achieve is recognized and exploited; nutrition is one of the best examples of successful efforts (by the RBAs and other United Nations entities) to end duplication. At all levels, however, misunderstandings over mandates and competition for funds between FAO and WFP persist, sometimes alongside good technical collaboration on certain themes and tasks.

17. Practical and effective steps have been taken to reduce overlap and duplication through some joint corporate services; but the opportunities to do this on a significant scale are limited.

18. RBAC has enhanced the sharing of knowledge, lessons and good practice at all levels. Given the three agencies' mandates, it is a natural part of their corporate mindsets to recognize and share each other's knowledge and experience. The depth, quality and practical value of the sharing vary, but in many fields there is significant technical interdependence between the RBAs. Joint knowledge management and learning are simpler to arrange than joint operations, and the RBAs have strengthened their performance in this regard. Mutual technical respect and support are widespread across the three agencies, but this sharing of knowledge, lessons and good practice often occurs in wider United Nations frameworks.

19. The results of RBAC reflect and embed the three agencies' commitment to gender equality and women's empowerment, although the extent to which these commitments carry through to operational practice is varied. RBAC around gender is well established at headquarters level. Protection principles are well embedded in RBAC, within the broader frameworks of humanitarian action. Commitment to environmental safeguards and sustainability is clear, but the evidence on practical mainstreaming in RBA collaborative activities is mixed.

### **C. Factors affecting RBAC**

20. The global, regional and country contexts present a spectrum of support and constraints for RBAC.

- Emergency response contexts provide a clear and conducive framework for RBAC within broader United Nations response structures.
- Two developments combine challenge with opportunity.
  - United Nations reform and the introduction of the UNSDCF reconfigure the institutional environment for RBAC, but do not make it irrelevant.
  - Countries' shift to middle-income status means the RBAs may collaborate in different kinds of work with better-resourced governments, beyond the conventional aid paradigm.
- Government attitudes range from strong support for collaboration to indifference, or dismay about perceived duplication and competition.
- Donor support for RBAC is not as strong or coherent in practice as donor advocacy of it implies.
- Similarly, RBA leadership expresses a spectrum of support and scepticism about collaboration: recognizing its many benefits, but in some cases doubtful about system-wide requirements and procedures.

21. Interactions between the RBAs and their Member States through governance processes reveal mixed understandings, motives and priorities with regard to RBAC. Member States urge stronger collaboration, but many RBA staff consider this pressure too general, and insufficiently attuned to the range of operational realities. The lack of clarity and consensus means that, despite appearances of regular meetings and reporting, the strategic and governance foundations for RBAC are weak. Explanation and understanding of RBAC strategy and procedures are also incomplete. Overall, RBAC is not a high priority in the Governing Bodies or in RBA management, and under-resourced co-ordination units often struggle with the time-consuming complexities of their task.

22. The evolving character and context of IFAD's operations are reshaping its contribution to the RBAs' shared objectives, but not diminishing its importance.

23. The significant differences between the RBAs do not always obstruct meaningful collaboration. As communications improve and the significance of physical proximity declines, the structure and geographical distribution of RBAs' representation around the world are becoming less important in determining the progress of their work together.

24. The interaction between the three agencies' organizational cultures and business models is much more significant. The differences are important, but the RBAs do have common food security objectives. The multiple difficulties in achieving constructive interfaces between the three structures and cultures of the RBAs can be overcome through the often-displayed ability of technical colleagues to work together where they perceive clear mutual interest and benefit, and where the personalities in question align well.

25. One key element of a joint way of working remains largely absent: a shared system of monitoring performance against planned results. It would be very challenging to develop such a system.

26. Administrative and programming processes and procedures are a significant obstacle to RBAC. The more tightly structured and managed a collaborative activity needs to be, the more time-consuming, costly and sometimes insoluble the administrative challenges become.

27. The biggest challenges normally arise in the programme/project format, when resources are budgeted for a specified implementation period and a team of personnel are employed to focus on project activities and results over that time. The detailed and intricate arrangements that must be made between RBAs' systems and procedures take time and resources, often at the cost of effectiveness (although some joint projects do achieve satisfactory results).

28. Although some administrative collaboration does occur and the Common Procurement Team has had some success, the transaction costs of achieving workable interfaces between administrative systems are typically high.

29. Insufficient resources are provided for RBAC.

- At the global level, donor funding for RBAC does not match donor calls for it to be strengthened. Co-ordination capacity at headquarters is constrained by lack of resources.
- At the country level, RBA offices note the lack of funding from their headquarters for planning or co-ordinating collaborative action, and the preference of some donor offices to continue working with single RBAs. But RBA country offices themselves occasionally compete for funding from the same donors.
- IFAD's loan portfolio is well resourced, but the funds it directly controls at country level are limited.

30. The resourcing context for RBAC is evolving as countries achieve middle-income status, and as IFAD's profile and business model evolve.

#### **D. The added value of RBAC**

31. The use of the knowledge created through RBAC has, in some cases (such as aspects of the work of the Committee on World Food Security), led to an increase in the effectiveness of collaborative efforts. But challenges remain to increase utilization, especially at the country level where it can make the most difference.

32. Although RBAC may have made a positive contribution to effectiveness and may add value compared to single-agency interventions, there is little quantitative evidence of this.

33. RBAC can lead to cost savings in corporate services as well as additional funds from some donors, but overall the costs of collaboration can be significant. Expectations for reducing cost burdens are high, but in practice RBAs often find that joint work requires additional effort. The data for cost-benefit analysis are limited. Estimates of the value added of RBAC are therefore often subjective.

### III. Conclusions

34. Collaboration between the RBAs is a daily reality, reflecting the shared strengths and commitment of these distinctly different organizations. RBA staff routinely act on the advantages of collaboration where they see it makes sense. Although competition for resources continues in some contexts, there is widespread recognition of complementarity. Part of the widely adopted pragmatic approach also involves collaboration with other United Nations entities.

35. Despite the daily reality of RBAC, there is widespread ambivalence about the concept. Beneath the strong official commitments to collaboration lie complex layers of doubt and reluctance, and diverse mixtures of motives for urging RBAC or appearing to believe in the official version of RBAC that is formally agreed between the agencies and their Governing Bodies. Not all donors fund RBAC as strongly as they advocate it.

36. The formal systems and procedures to promote, co-ordinate and report on RBAC add little value, are often not followed through usefully, and frustrate staff more often than they inspire them. The RBAs do not consider these collaborative management and reporting processes to be the best way to stimulate joint work or achieve their shared objectives more effectively. Their planning of their collaboration gives insufficient direction to country offices. The fundamentally half-hearted way in which these formal arrangements are pursued is unlikely to enhance their contribution to SDG 2. It would be more constructive to recognize and flexibly support the many pragmatic ways in which the RBAs do collaborate, whenever they see feasible and effective ways to do so.

37. Sometimes there are better ways for the RBAs to achieve their shared objectives than to focus on collaboration with each other. The situation outlined above results from confusion and misunderstandings about what RBAC can and cannot achieve – and, above all, from the misapprehension that RBAC is always appropriate. In fact, any idea for collaboration must be tested against its practicability, its likely effectiveness, and the level of transaction costs that it will impose. In many cases, these tests yield a negative result. Alternative arrangements, such as separate but complementary activities or collaboration with other partners, may prove more advantageous. Realism and pragmatism are the keys to meaningful and effective RBAC.

38. Collaboration and the achievement of the RBAs' shared objectives are still impaired by misunderstandings about the mandates of FAO and WFP. At all levels, many stakeholders still perceive WFP as primarily a humanitarian organization. Confusion and sometimes resentment remain common among host governments and RBA personnel about WFP's supposed mandate creep into developmental work. The prospects of efficient and effective RBAC are still clouded at country level – and sometimes in the Governing Bodies - by these uncertainties.

39. Some types of collaboration usually impose higher transaction costs. At all levels, 'upstream' and technical work may be an easier area for effective RBAC than formal project formats.

40. The operating context for the RBAs is dynamic. The way they work is changing too. RBAC is just one of the ways for them to contribute to their shared objectives. None of these changes need diminish the importance of IFAD in working alongside the other RBAs at country level. They may strengthen its collaborative role. Middle-income governments still value IFAD's presence as a leading and expert player in development finance, linked as it is to the technical competence of FAO and WFP.

41. Current United Nations reform restructures modalities for RBAC at country and regional levels, but does not diminish the value of this collaborative effort. The RBAs can promote the achievement of SDG 2 by engaging jointly and proactively in CCAs and related preparatory procedures for UNSDCF's and by striving together (and with other partners in the United Nations Country Team) to achieve effective implementation

of UNSDCF priorities that further their shared objectives. However, other United Nations reforms aimed at enhancing operational efficiency make the RBAs' work on joint corporate services largely irrelevant, particularly at country level.

42. Collaboration between the RBAs has significant potential, but the rationale for it is not stated in an appropriately realistic way. At present, efforts to promote RBAC are not fully grounded in an accurate understanding of the conditions in which it is most effectively pursued. The formal statements of corporate commitment to collaboration reflect this. But there is real potential for the RBAs jointly to enhance the world's progress towards SDG 2, if the genuine commitment of these agencies' staff to work together in the right circumstances is allowed to take their collaboration forward in productive directions.

#### IV. Recommendations

43. Recommendations 1-5 are of equal high priority and are the equal responsibility of the three RBAs.

44. Bullets below a recommendation show elements of the recommendation. Letters (a), (b) etc. show points for consideration in implementing the recommendation.

Recommendation	Deadline, responsibility
<b>Recommendations to the Rome-Based Agencies</b>	
<p><b>Recommendation 1. Update the MOU between the RBAs.</b> Although the current five-year MOU was only signed three years ago, significant changes since then make an update necessary. The updated MOU should include the following elements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The strategies set out by FAO in its Strategic Framework 2022-2031 and Medium-Term Plan, 2022-2025; in the IFAD12 Results Management Framework 2022-2024; and by WFP in its Strategic Plan, 2022-2026.</li> <li>• Through updating the MOU, the RBAs should reset their strategy for collaboration in a proactive manner – based on the reflections that this evaluation may stimulate – and to move beyond simple reaction to calls for stronger collaboration.</li> <li>• Emphasize the potential benefits of RBAC, including through strong performance in various areas of thematic collaboration, and joint promotion of the food systems approach – including follow-up to the Food Systems Summit. The MOU should also emphasize that RBAC is not a universally applicable principle: collaboration will only be pursued where it makes clear practical sense to do so, and may often include work with other United Nations entities. While the 'Rome' label might be retained for reasons of familiarity, the emphasis should be on the three agencies' shared commitment to common food security objectives.</li> <li>• A revised statement on 'mutual engagement' to explain how RBAC complements and is structured by the United Nations development system reform process and, specifically, the UNSDCF at country level, under the leadership of the United Nations Resident Co-ordinator.</li> <li>• United Nations reforms at regional level, building on the Regional Collaborative Platforms and the implications for regional RBA collaboration, and recognizing the potential contribution of the RBAs to the emerging regional knowledge management hubs.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Deadline:</b></p> <p>October 2022 (draft updated MOU to be ready for the informal meeting of the RBA Governing Bodies)</p> <p><b>Responsibility:</b></p> <p>FAO - Deputy Director-General, Partnerships and Outreach Stream</p> <p>IFAD - Associate Vice-President, External Relations and Governance Department</p> <p>WFP - Assistant Executive Director, Partnerships and Advocacy Department</p> <p>With the support of the Senior Consultative Group (SCG.)</p>

Recommendation	Deadline, responsibility
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>In the light of administrative elements of the United Nations reform, the updated MOU should remove its commitments to collaboration on joint corporate services that are covered by the United Nations Business Operations Strategy and other Business Innovation Group initiatives at country level. The MOU should acknowledge that these commitments are largely subsumed by the system-wide enhancements to business operations – to which it should commit the RBAs’ support.</li> <li>Emphasizing the RBAs’ commitments across the humanitarian-development-peace nexus, the updated MOU should clearly state FAO’s commitment and roles in humanitarian response, as well as those of WFP in sustainable development. It should commit all RBAs to work at all levels to clarify and explain the relationships between their mandates; ensure that they do not conflict over roles or compete over resources; and convert competition into collaboration.</li> </ul>	
<p><b>Recommendation 2. Restructure and reinforce the co-ordination architecture for RBA collaboration within the framework of UNDS reform</b> to ensure that at all levels, the co-ordination and evaluation of RBAC includes more proactive efforts to develop and disseminate lessons and knowledge about how to optimize collaboration among and beyond the RBAs, about the costs and benefits of RBAC, and about technical experience that can be usefully shared.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The RBAs should retain and strengthen capacity for co-ordinating RBAC at their headquarters, with financial support from Member States. The co-ordination function should in future focus on optimizing the RBAs’ engagement in and contribution to the UNDS reform process.</li> <li>In each country where it has adequate capacity, each RBA should appoint a focal point whose primary task should be support for and facilitation of RBAs’ engagement in the UNSDCF.</li> <li>RBA regional offices and hubs should play a stronger role in supporting country offices’ redefined collaborative engagement in UNSDCFs through capacity strengthening.</li> <li>The RBAs should not continue with a global action plan for their collaboration. Instead, they should jointly monitor and report on their contributions to the overall efforts of the United Nations to achieve SDG 2 through the reformed United Nations development system, through the UN INFO portal.</li> <li>The RBAs should monitor the finalization and implementation of their three pilot joint country strategies, assess their value in the context of the UNSDCF, and formally review whether the preparation of more such strategies is warranted.</li> </ol>	<p><b>Deadline:</b></p> <p>(a) – (d): June 2022 (e): June 2023</p> <p><b>Responsibility:</b></p> <p>FAO - Deputy Director-General, Partnerships and Outreach Stream</p> <p>IFAD - Associate Vice-President, External Relations and Governance Department</p> <p>WFP - Assistant Executive Director, Partnerships and Advocacy Department</p> <p>With the support of the SCG.</p>
<p><b>Recommendation 3. Further embrace the new joint programming mechanisms at the country level and ensure constructive, collaborative RBA engagement with these mechanisms.</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The RBAs should develop and deliver consistent guidance to their country offices on:</li> </ol>	<p><b>Deadline:</b></p> <p>December 2022</p> <p><b>Responsibility:</b></p> <p>FAO - Deputy Director-General, Partnerships</p>

Recommendation	Deadline, responsibility
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. jointly preparing to engage in UNSDCF planning processes;</li> <li>ii. jointly contributing to Common Country Analyses and UNSDCF preparation;</li> <li>iii. harmonizing their respective country multiannual plans with each other and with the UNSDCF;</li> <li>iv. jointly participating in UNSDCF implementation under the leadership of the UNRC.</li> </ul> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>b) Where appropriate and feasible, RBAs should harmonize their resource mobilization efforts with those of the UNRC for the UNSDCF.</li> <li>c) Particularly in countries where they do not all have offices, the RBAs should be more proactive in supporting the UNRC to reinforce collaboration within the United Nations Country Team, and in collaborating with each other to promote effective action to strengthen food systems and achieve SDG 2.</li> <li>d) The RBAs should engage wherever appropriate and feasible in joint strategic advocacy to country governments about issues related to SDG 2 with the UNRC and other members of the United Nations Country Team.</li> <li>e) The RBAs should encourage more of their senior staff to apply for UNRC positions.</li> </ul>	<p>and Outreach Stream; Director, Office of Strategy, Programme and Budget</p> <p>IFAD - Associate Vice-President, Programme Management Department</p> <p>WFP - Assistant Executive Director, Programme and Policy Development Department</p> <p>With the support of the SCG.</p>
<p><b>Recommendation 4. Focus administrative collaboration efforts on further embracing the United Nations efficiency agenda.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Except for those limited areas of administrative collaboration between their three headquarters in Rome that clearly have practical value and cut costs for all the agencies, the RBAs should integrate their efforts at administrative collaboration with the overall United Nations efficiency agenda, specifically the workstreams of the Business Innovation Group, to which they should make a joint, proactive commitment at global, regional and country levels.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Deadline:</b> December 2022</p> <p><b>Responsibility:</b> FAO - Deputy Director-General, Corporate Logistics and Operational Support stream</p> <p>IFAD - Associate Vice-President, Corporate Services Department</p> <p>WFP - Assistant Executive Director, Resource Management Department</p>
<p><b>Recommendation 5. In considering the development of joint projects and programmes, assess the costs and benefits of the proposed collaboration and only proceed if the benefits outweigh the costs.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) The RBAs should jointly prepare simple guidance for assessing the benefits and costs of proposed joint projects and programmes that captures the likely higher transaction costs and potential</li> </ul>	<p><b>Deadline:</b> December 2022</p> <p><b>Responsibility:</b> FAO - Deputy Director-General, Partnerships and Outreach Stream</p>

Recommendation	Deadline, responsibility
<p>reputational risks of this type of collaboration, alongside the benefits of joint RBA action.</p> <p>b) The RBAs should streamline inter-agency administrative arrangements and charges, as well as procedures for the delegation of authority to country level where feasible and appropriate, in order to reduce some of the transaction costs of joint projects and programmes.</p>	<p>IFAD - Associate Vice-President, Programme Management Department</p> <p>WFP - Assistant Executive Director, Programme and Policy Development Department</p> <p>With the support of the SCG.</p>
Recommendation to the Member States of the RBA Governing Bodies	
<p><b>Recommendation 6. The Member States of the RBA Governing Bodies should reappraise and adequately resource their position on RBA collaboration.</b></p> <p>Through their various representative RBA governance structures, the Member States should confirm to the RBAs that they:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• recognize that RBA collaboration is an important objective in some circumstances but not all;</li> <li>• recognize that RBA collaboration should be pursued within the framework of reformed United Nations co-ordination at country level;</li> <li>• recognize that RBA collaboration on joint corporate services should largely comprise proactive commitment to the overall United Nations efficiency agenda, rather than administrative harmonization and efficiency initiatives focused on the RBAs only;</li> <li>• will give priority to resourcing collaborative RBA action on the principles set out above, to be reflected in the updated MOU that they should endorse.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Deadline:</b></p> <p>End 2021, in response to this report.</p> <p><b>Responsibility:</b></p> <p>Member States.</p>



# 1 Introduction

## 1.1 EVALUATION FEATURES

### 1.1.1 Rationale

1. The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) and the World Food Programme (WFP) are the three Rome-based agencies (RBAs) of the United Nations system. In 2019 their respective evaluation offices agreed on conducting a joint evaluation of RBA collaboration from November 2016 to the present. Data collection was undertaken from October 2020 to May 2021. A summary of the terms of reference (TOR) for the evaluation is at Annex I.

2. There are many interrelationships among the RBAs' functions and operations, and collaboration among these agencies has been a long-standing expectation of United Nations Member States and of the RBAs' respective Governing Bodies. Since 2008, there have been growing calls for RBA collaboration (RBAC) to be intensified and optimized in order to strengthen global progress towards food security for all – or zero hunger, to use the title of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 2. Over the years, these calls led to the joint adoption in 2009 of Directions for Collaboration of the Rome-Based Agencies (the Directions paper);<sup>3</sup> the joint publication in 2016 of a paper on Collaboration among United Nations Rome-Based Agencies: delivering on the 2030 Agenda (the Collaboration paper);<sup>4</sup> and the signature in 2018 of a five-year tripartite memorandum of understanding (MoU).<sup>5</sup>

3. As explained in the evaluation terms of reference, there is persistent strong interest in the respective Governing Bodies that the RBAs' commitments to collaborate be fulfilled in a way that best supports achievement of SDG 2. To date there has been no evaluation of RBAC that can provide credible evidence of the extent and quality of joint RBA performance towards their shared objective, or explanation of the reasons for that performance – which could lead to recommendations on how to enhance RBAC. Nor has the potential value added by RBAC been systematically assessed.

### 1.1.2 Objectives and scope

4. The objectives of the evaluation are:

- To assess whether and to what extent collaboration among the RBAs is contributing to the achievement of the 2030 Agenda, particularly at the country level
- To assess the approach to RBAC
- To generate evidence on the enablers and constraints to effective RBAC
- To identify lessons and good practice in bipartite and tripartite RBAC that can be used to enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of RBAC and potentially enhance joint resource mobilization
- To make recommendations on the future strategic direction of RBAC.

5. This is thus a strategic evaluation, intended to generate evidence for the RBAs' global collaboration strategy while focusing particularly on improving results at the country level. It covers the period from November 2016 (when the joint paper on collaboration was published) to May 2021, with due consideration of earlier history, in particular from the 2009 Directions paper. It covers bilateral and tripartite RBAC, as well

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<sup>3</sup> FAO, 2009. *Directions for Collaboration among the Rome-based Agencies*, presented to the 137th session of Council, Rome, 28 September – 2 October 2009, CL 137/INF/10. FAO: Rome 2009. IFAD, 2009. *Directions for collaboration among the Rome-based agencies*. Rome: IFAD: EB 2009/97/R.39. WFP, 2009. *Directions for Collaboration among the Rome-Based Agencies*. Rome: WFP: WFP/EB.2/2009/11-C.

<sup>4</sup> FAO, IFAD and WFP, 2016. *Collaboration among United Nations Rome-Based Agencies: Delivering on the 2030 Agenda*. Joint paper. Rome: FAO, IFAD and WFP 30 November 2016.

<sup>5</sup> FAO, IFAD and WFP, 2018. *Memorandum of Understanding between Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) and World Food Programme (WFP)*. Rome: FAO, IFAD and WFP, June 2018.

as collaboration between two or among more RBAs and one or more other United Nations partners. It spans RBAC at country, regional and global levels, including thematic collaboration and collaboration on corporate services.

6. The main focus of the evaluation is on programmatic activities (at country, regional and global levels (with a focus on the country level), although careful attention is also given to joint corporate services and related administrative collaboration. Annex II gives more detail on the definitions of programmatic activities and joint corporate services, and the evaluation's approach to them.

### 1.1.3 Intended users

7. The principal users of this joint evaluation are the decision makers in the Governing Bodies and the global, regional and country management of the RBAs who are responsible for optimizing the structure, programming and performance of the three agencies' work in order to help the world achieve SDG 2. The findings, conclusions and recommendations that the evaluation develops should also be of practical value to those in national governments, other United Nations entities, humanitarian and development partners, and in operational roles in the RBAs who are similarly committed to enhancing the coordination and delivery of their work in support of SDG 2.

### 1.1.4 Timing of the evaluation

8. Following development of the terms of reference by the Evaluation Management Group (EMG), the evaluation team (ET) mobilized in September 2020. Building on the terms of reference, it developed its methodology and approach during an inception phase that concluded with a final inception report on 15 February 2021. The subsequent data collection phase (February–May 2021) has led to preparation of this evaluation report, which is due for presentation to the RBAs three Governing Bodies from October to December 2021. The detailed timeline for the evaluation is at Annex III.

## 1.2 CONTEXT

### 1.2.1 The Rome-based agencies' interpretation of "collaboration"

9. Given the significance that the Governing Bodies of the RBAs attach to RBAC, it is important to understand how the RBAs perceive the concept of collaboration, and to state (in Section 1.4.2 below) the specific way in which this evaluation defines it. The 2009 Directions paper did not define collaboration, but "agreed on a four-pillar framework for collaboration: A) Policy advice, knowledge and monitoring; B) Operations; C) Advocacy and communication; and D) Administrative collaboration". It also used the terms "partnership" and "collaboration" interchangeably, emphasizing that "partnerships are an integral part of the mandates of the three agencies".<sup>6</sup> The latter principle has since been underlined by the United Nations' adoption of SDG 17: "revitalize the global partnership for sustainable development".<sup>7</sup> The 2016 Collaboration paper did not define collaboration either, and did not refer to SDG 17 – although it gave many examples of current or potential RBAC. Again without definitions, the memorandum of understanding spoke of "collaboration" and stated that "the RBA partnership will be of strategic priority and will leverage the comparative advantages of each". Specifically, it said, this would involve reciprocal exchange of expertise and "mutual engagement".<sup>8</sup>

10. It is notable that, while referring primarily to collaboration among themselves, the RBAs' own policy statements refer to partnerships, sometimes using the terms interchangeably (Table 1). Partnerships (sometimes with explicit reference to SDG 17) are central to all three RBA strategic plans.

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<sup>6</sup> FAO, 2009. *Directions for Collaboration among the Rome-based Agencies*, presented to the 137th session of Council, Rome, 28 September–2 October 2009, CL 137/INF/10. FAO: Rome 2009: np [no page number]. IFAD, 2009. *Directions for collaboration among the Rome-based agencies*. Rome: IFAD: EB 2009/97/R.39: p 2. WFP, 2009. *Directions for Collaboration among the Rome-Based Agencies*. Rome: WFP: WFP/EB.2/2009/11-C.: p 5.

<sup>7</sup> United Nations, 2020. *Sustainable Development Goals. Goal 17: revitalize the global partnership for sustainable development*. <https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/globalpartnerships/> [accessed 21 November 2020].

<sup>8</sup> FAO, IFAD and WFP, 2018. *Memorandum of Understanding between Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) and World Food Programme (WFP)*. Rome: FAO, IFAD and WFP, June 2018: p 4.

**Table 1. The Rome-based agencies' approaches to collaboration and partnerships**

FAO	IFAD	WFP
<p><b>The FAO Strategy on Partnerships</b> (2012) defined them as “cooperation and collaboration between FAO units and external parties in joint or coordinated action for a common purpose. It involves a relationship where all parties make a contribution to the output and the achievement of the objectives rather than a solely financial relationship.” The FAO strategy goes on to underline that “the existence of a mutual will among the partners to pursue a common goal is a necessary condition for the success of a partnership”.<sup>9</sup></p>	<p><b>The recent IFAD Partnership Framework</b> (2019) drew on its 2012 partnership strategy in defining partnerships as “collaborative relationships between institutional actors that combine complementary strengths and resources to achieve common goals and objectives”.<sup>10</sup></p>	<p><b>The WFP Partnership Strategy</b> (2014) blends the concepts of collaboration and partnerships, defining partnerships as “collaborative relationships between actors that achieve better outcomes for the people we serve by: combining and leveraging complementary resources of all kinds; working together in a transparent, equitable and mutually beneficial way; and sharing risks, responsibilities and accountability”.<sup>11</sup></p>
<p>Partnerships are central to <b>the new FAO Strategic Framework</b>.<sup>12</sup> Its previous strategic framework identified the facilitation of partnerships as one of the organization’s core functions,<sup>13</sup> although it makes only very brief reference to the RBAs.</p>	<p>Partnerships are one of the five principles of engagement to which the <b>IFAD Strategic Framework (2016-2025)</b> is committed. The document emphasizes the essential role of partnerships at global and country levels in achieving the 2030 Agenda, and says that they will remain central to IFAD work. It also states that collaboration among the RBAs “will be of strategic priority”.<sup>14</sup></p>	<p>To “partner for SDG results” is one of the five strategic objectives of the <b>WFP Strategic Plan (2017-2021)</b>.<sup>15</sup> The strategic plan also states that “enhanced synergies among the Rome-based agencies (RBA) are paramount to achieving SDG 2... WFP is committed to working with FAO and IFAD by capturing all available synergies and complementarities and avoiding overlaps to contribute to collective results across humanitarian and development contexts, and to enhance RBA advocacy on food security and nutrition at the global level and within the broader United Nations system.”<sup>16</sup></p>

## 1.2.2 United Nations reform

11. Since 2018, the drivers of RBAC have been significantly reshaped by the current phase of the United Nations reform process: specifically, the reform of the United Nations development system (UNDS): “a set of far-reaching changes in the way the [UNDS] works to help countries around the world in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals”.<sup>17</sup> Among the multiple consequences of this evolving context for RBAC, the most significant are at the country level, under the auspices of a strengthened United Nations Resident Coordinator (UNRC) role.

12. Each RBA multiannual country strategic planning is now expected to be clearly linked into a United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF), which is intended to be the tightly coordinated programme through which all United Nations agencies contribute to achievement of the

<sup>9</sup> FAO, 2012. FAO organization-wide strategy on partnerships. Rome: FAO: np.

<sup>10</sup> IFAD, 2019. *IFAD Partnership Framework*. Rome: IFAD: EB 2019/127/R.4: p 6.

<sup>11</sup> WFP, 2014. *WFP Corporate Partnership Strategy (2014-2017)*. Rome: WFP Partnership, Policy Coordination and Advocacy Division: p 8.

<sup>12</sup> FAO, 2021. *Strategic Framework (2022-2031)*. Rome: FAO: C2021/7: pp 24-25.

<sup>13</sup> FAO, 2016. Reviewed Strategic Framework and outline of the Medium-Term Plan 2018-2021. Rome: FAO: CL 155/3: p 28.

<sup>14</sup> IFAD, 2016. *IFAD Strategic Framework (2016-2025)*. Enabling inclusive and sustainable rural transformation. Rome: IFAD: pp 20-21.

<sup>15</sup> WFP, 2017. *WFP Strategic Plan (2017-2021)*. Rome: WFP: pp 15, 25.

<sup>16</sup> WFP, 2017. *WFP Strategic Plan (2017-2021)*. Rome: WFP: p 15.

<sup>17</sup> United Nations, 2020. *United Nations development system reform 101*. <https://reform.un.org/content/un-development-system-reform-101> [accessed 21 November 2020].

national government's Sustainable Development Goals.<sup>18</sup> Supported by a reinforced United Nations common country analysis (CCA), the UNSDCF "now guides the entire programme cycle, driving planning, implementation, monitoring, reporting and evaluation of collective United Nations support for achieving the 2030 Agenda".<sup>19</sup> It replaces the weaker coordination mechanism and performance of the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF), which was more focused on "channelling donor support to collective United Nations results".<sup>20</sup> At the country level, it becomes the primary driver for RBAs to collaborate not only with each other, but also with the whole UNDS.

13. As part of a more strongly coordinated UNDS role in support of national Sustainable Development Goal objectives and in support of SDG 17, United Nations Regional Collaborative Platforms are also being established, to "unite all United Nations entities working on development for the 2030 Agenda".<sup>21</sup>

14. The ongoing United Nations reform process also includes measures that have the potential to achieve cost savings that could be redeployed into development activities. These savings could emerge from multiple initiatives, including common back-offices and premises and country business operations strategies that aim to help United Nations Country Teams (UNCTs) enhance the quality and cost effectiveness of joint business operations. These efficiency interventions are supported by three key enablers, defined as (a) standardized client satisfaction principles to safeguard minimum quality standards of services provided; (b) standardized pricing and costing standards to establish common standards defining how the price and costs of a service are established across the United Nations system; and (c) mutual recognition, which, once endorsed, allows one United Nations entity to obtain services from another United Nations entity if the latter can provide services more efficiently.

### 1.2.3 Humanitarian context

15. FAO and WFP co-lead the global Food Security Cluster (gFSC), established in 2010.<sup>22</sup> The 2016 Collaboration paper quoted this as "an excellent model of successful collaboration within the RBA partnership".<sup>23</sup> The World Humanitarian Summit (WHS) took place in 2016, and saw the launch by the European Union, FAO and WFP of the Global Network Against Food Crises (GNAFC), "to respond to the WHS call for new approaches to tackle protracted crises and recurrent disasters, reduce vulnerability, and manage risk, by bridging the divide between development and humanitarian partners" (see also paragraphs 115, 158 below).<sup>24</sup> Two years later, the RBAs' 2018 memorandum of understanding focused more specifically on SDG 2 and did not refer directly to RBAC in the humanitarian sphere.

16. In the broader context of United Nations collaboration (but stretching beyond the United Nations system), the "Grand Bargain" that was launched during the World Humanitarian Summit was a significant step. Key elements of the Grand Bargain include: greater transparency; increased collaborative humanitarian multiyear planning and funding; reduced earmarking of donor contributions; harmonized and simplified reporting requirements; and enhanced engagement between humanitarian and

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<sup>18</sup> United Nations Sustainable Development Group, 2020. *The Cooperation Framework*. United Nations Sustainable Development Group (UNSDG). <https://unsdg.un.org/2030-agenda/cooperation-framework> [accessed 21 November 2020].

<sup>19</sup> United Nations, 2019. *United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework: internal guidance*. New York: United Nations: p 6.

<sup>20</sup> United Nations, 2019. *United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework: internal guidance*. New York: United Nations: p 8.

<sup>21</sup> United Nations Sustainable Development Group, 2021. *RCP: Africa*. <https://unsdg.un.org/un-in-action/rcp-africa> [accessed 24 January 2021].

<sup>22</sup> WFP, 2021. *Food Security Cluster*. <https://www.wfp.org/food-security-cluster> [accessed 8 June 2021].

<sup>23</sup> FAO, IFAD and WFP, 2016. *Collaboration among United Nations Rome-based Agencies: Delivering on the 2030 Agenda*. Joint paper. Rome: FAO, IFAD and WFP, 30 November 2016.: p 10.

<sup>24</sup> FAO, 2021. *Resilience. Global Network Against Food Crises*. <http://www.fao.org/resilience/global-network-against-food-crises/en/> [accessed 10 February 2021]. The GNAFC has adopted a '3x3' approach of "working at the global, regional and national levels to support partnerships within existing structures and to improve advocacy, decision-making, policy and programming along... three dimensions: understanding food crises..., leveraging strategic investments in food security, nutrition and agriculture..., going beyond food... to foster political uptake and co-ordination across clusters/sectors..." (Food Security Information Network, 2021. *2021 global report on food crises. Joint analysis for better decisions*. Rome: FSIN: p 4.).

development actors.<sup>25</sup> Representing an increasing emphasis on collaboration between these two sectors, the New Way of Working that was introduced at the same time aimed “to offer a concrete path to remove unnecessary barriers to such collaboration in order to enable meaningful progress”.<sup>26</sup> These developments reflect the growing concern with protracted crises and the increasing commitment to integrate humanitarian support and development progress where circumstances permit, for example through the concept of a Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework (CRRF) – which some, but not all, governments have endorsed under the 2016 New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants.<sup>27</sup> A CRRF is intended, among other things, to ease pressure on host countries and, by extension, host communities; and to enhance refugee self-reliance.<sup>28,29</sup> Meanwhile, the humanitarian-development-peace (HDP) nexus is increasingly recognized by the RBAs and other United Nations agencies as an important paradigm for strengthening humanitarian, development and peace-related interventions. In fulfilling their combined humanitarian and development mandates, FAO and WFP play key roles in this more integrated approach, although so far only WFP has formally accepted the Recommendation on the HDP Nexus recently issued by the Development Assistance Committee of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD DAC).<sup>30</sup> More specifically, the two agencies have been active in raising the issue of conflict and hunger with the United Nations Secretariat and the Security Council.<sup>31</sup>

### 1.2.4 Gender, equity and inclusion

17. As part of the United Nations system, the RBAs are committed to combating all forms of discrimination. This is an important part of the context for RBA collaboration. Key United Nations commitments in this regard include the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (1948),<sup>32</sup> the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW, 1979),<sup>33</sup> the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (2007)<sup>34</sup> and the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (2007).<sup>35</sup> Another pertinent United Nations commitment, following the World Summit for Social Development in 1995, is social inclusion and the achievement of an inclusive society.<sup>36</sup> Of these various issues, gender is the one on which the RBAs have undertaken most joint work.

18. Pursuant to CEDAW, the RBAs are all strongly committed to gender equality and women’s empowerment (GEWE), and have policies in place to this effect.<sup>37,38,39</sup> A long-established RBA headquarters gender working group meets quarterly and coordinates a range of activities including participation in global forums for policy and advocacy purposes, awareness raising and capacity strengthening. The agencies’ commitments in this regard span all their operations and should thus span all their collaborative activities

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<sup>25</sup> WFP, 2018. *Strategic evaluation of the WFP pilot Country Strategic Plans*. Prepared by Mokoro Ltd.: Stephen Turner, Michael Reynolds (OEV), Jim Grabham, Elizabeth Hodson, Nick Maunder, Ruwan de Mel, Javier Pereira, Enrico Piano (OEV) and Muriel Visser. Rome: WFP OEV: p 4.

<sup>26</sup> United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, 2017. *New way of working*. New York: OCHA.

<sup>27</sup> Felleson, M., 2019. From roll-out to reverse: understanding Tanzania’s withdrawal from the Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework (CRRF). *Journal of Refugee Studies* 2019.

<sup>28</sup> UNHCR, 2016. *Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework: from the New York Declaration to a global compact on refugees*. New York: UNHCR: CRR Task Team, 5 December 2016.

<sup>29</sup> UNHCR, 2018. *Two year progress assessment of the CRRF approach, September 2016–September 2018: evaluation report*. Geneva: UNHCR Evaluation Service: p 1.

<sup>30</sup> OECD DAC, 2021. *DAC recommendation on the Humanitarian-Development-Peace Nexus*. Paris: OECD DAC.

<sup>31</sup> FAO, 2021. *Evaluation of FAO’s contribution to the humanitarian-development-peace nexus*. Rome: FAO *Programme Evaluation Series* 05/2021: pp 8, 30.

<sup>32</sup> <https://ask.un.org/faq/306811> [accessed 20 July 2021].

<sup>33</sup> <https://www.ohchr.org/en/professionalinterest/pages/cedaw.aspx> [accessed 20 July 2021].

<sup>34</sup> <https://www.un.org/development/desa/disabilities/convention-on-the-rights-of-persons-with-disabilities.html> [accessed 20 July 2021].

<sup>35</sup> <https://www.un.org/development/desa/indigenouspeoples/declaration-on-the-rights-of-indigenous-peoples.html> [accessed 20 July 2021]

<sup>36</sup> <https://www.un.org/development/desa/socialperspectiveondevelopment/issues/social-integration.html> [accessed 20 July 2021]

<sup>37</sup> FAO, 2013. *FAO policy on gender equality: attaining food security goals in agriculture and rural development*. Rome: FAO.

<sup>38</sup> IFAD, 2012. *Gender equality and women’s empowerment policy*. Rome: IFAD.

<sup>39</sup> WFP, 2015. *Gender Policy (2015-2020)*. Rome: WFP: WFP/EB.A/2015/5-A.

in the same way. Covering all aspects of RBA collaboration since 2016, this evaluation is therefore pertinent to the three agencies' policies, strategies and objectives on GEWE – as well as on equity and inclusion, although these themes have a much lower profile in the RBAs' documentation and operations.

19. In 2012, the RBAs and UN Women launched a Joint Programme on Accelerating Progress towards the Economic Empowerment of Rural Women (JP RWEE), which is implemented in seven countries in Africa, Asia and Latin America,<sup>40</sup> and was recently evaluated.<sup>41</sup> In 2019, the RBAs launched the Joint Programme for Taking Gender-Transformative Approaches (GTAs) to Scale for Impact on SDG 2 to End Hunger, Achieve Food Security and Improved Nutrition and Promote Sustainable Agriculture (JP-GTA). Its goal is “to contribute to the achievement of SDG 2 by addressing the root causes of gender inequalities primarily in rural areas. Moreover, the initiative aims to embed GTA in RBA policy dialogues, programme design, implementation and monitoring, and other working modalities over the period 2019 to 2022”.<sup>42,43</sup>

20. Despite the importance of gender in each RBA policy and the fact that gender is one of the most long-standing fields of RBA collaboration (informants refer to joint activities from 2002), the subject is not mentioned in the 2009 Directions paper. The 2016 Collaboration paper refers to gender as one of the areas on which the RBAs have established thematic teams and working groups. It mentions the ongoing JP RWEE, as well as the RBAs' 2015 peer review of their performance in implementing the United Nations System-Wide Action Plan on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN SWAP). The 2018 memorandum of understanding makes no mention of gender, apart from committing to joint advocacy around events like International Women's Day. The three guiding documents make limited reference to joint commitments or action in the equity and inclusion dimensions of their mandates.

21. FAO and IFAD developed policies on indigenous peoples at about the same time.<sup>44,45</sup> WFP has a well-developed policy and strategy on social protection;<sup>46,47,48</sup> but evidence of joint action on equity, inclusion or social protection is limited.

22. Operational-level documents discuss performance on cross-cutting issues, but offer no or very limited evidence about how RBA collaboration has affected this performance. In addition, coverage of cross-cutting issues is variable. While gender and climate change are often included in evaluations and assessments, protection, equity and other cross-cutting issues have a much lighter presence in the available documentation.

## 1.3 COLLABORATION AMONG THE UNITED NATIONS ROME-BASED AGENCIES

### 1.3.1 FAO, IFAD and WFP

23. The direct historical reason for basing United Nations agencies concerned with food and agriculture in Rome is the decision in 1949 to transfer the headquarters of FAO from Washington, DC to that city. That decision may have been influenced by the choice in 1905 of Rome as the seat of the new International Institute of Agriculture. When it was established in 1945, FAO took over the assets of the International Institute of Agriculture, which was dissolved.<sup>49</sup> When WFP was established in 1961 by the FAO Conference and the United Nations General Assembly, it was agreed that it would be implemented “by a joint FAO/United Nations Administrative Unit located at FAO Headquarters in Rome”.<sup>50</sup> The 1976 agreement

<sup>40</sup> FAO, IFAD, UN Women and WFP, 2017. *The JP RWEE Pathway to Women's Empowerment*. Rome: JP RWEE.

<sup>41</sup> FAO, IFAD, UN Women and WFP, 2021. *Global End-Term Evaluation of the Joint Programme on Accelerating Progress towards the Economic Empowerment of Rural Women in Ethiopia, Guatemala, Kyrgyzstan, Liberia, Nepal, Niger and Rwanda from 2014 to 2020 – Decentralized Evaluation*. Rome and New York: FAO, IFAD, UN Women, and WFP.

<sup>42</sup> FAO, IFAD and WFP, 2020. *Joint Progress Report on RBA Collaboration*. Rome: FAO, IFAD and WFP.

<sup>43</sup> FAO, 2020. *Transformative approaches to advance gender equality for food security and nutrition*. <http://www.fao.org/gender/news/detail/en/c/1330138/> [accessed 25 November 2020].

<sup>44</sup> FAO, 2010. *FAO policy on indigenous and tribal peoples*. Rome: FAO.

<sup>45</sup> IFAD, 2009. *Engagement with indigenous peoples: policy*. Rome: IFAD.

<sup>46</sup> WFP, 2012. “Update of WFP's Safety Nets Policy. The role of food assistance in social protection”. Rome: WFP: WFP/EB.A/2012-5A.

<sup>47</sup> WFP, 2017. *WFP and Social Protection. Options for framing WFP assistance to national social protection in country strategic plans*. Rome: WFP Safety Nets and Social Protection Unit.

<sup>48</sup> Avenir Analytics, 2019. *Update of WFP's Safety Net Policy: policy evaluation*. Rome: WFP OEI.

<sup>49</sup> Phillips, R.W., 1981. *FAO: its origins, formation and evolution, 1945–1981*. Rome, FAO: pp 3-4, 7, 47-48.

<sup>50</sup> WFP, 1993. *Basic documents for the World Food Programme*. Rome: WFP: p 3.

establishing IFAD said that “the provisional seat of the Fund shall be in Rome” – where it has remained. The IFAD website describes that city as “the UN’s food and agriculture hub”, and in 2013 the three agencies were declared honorary citizens of Rome.<sup>51,52,53</sup>

24. The RBAs were successively established in “the UN’s food and agriculture hub” with related but differing characters and mandates. Eight days older than the United Nations itself, **FAO** is the United Nations specialized agency in food and agriculture that combines normative and operational functions in all sectors of food and agriculture, food security and nutrition across the humanitarian–development continuum.<sup>54</sup> It thus combines contributions to sustainable agricultural development and humanitarian assistance in emergencies.<sup>55</sup> Its funding combines the required biennial assessed contributions of each Member State with voluntary contributions of extra-budgetary resources that greatly expand the work it is able to do around the world. It has important knowledge management functions and provides technical expertise across its thematic mandate. It is now repositioning itself to support the global community in achieving SDG 2 (as well as SDG 1 and SDG 10), noting that the concept of food security underpins the whole of the 2030 Agenda.<sup>56</sup>

25. **IFAD** is an international financial institution (IFI). It is also a United Nations specialized agency, but outside the direct authority structures of the United Nations – its President does not report formally to the Secretary-General. Its mandate is to eradicate poverty and hunger by “investing in rural people and enabling inclusive and sustainable transformation of rural areas, notably through smallholder agriculture-led growth”.<sup>57</sup> It is focused on contributing to the achievement of SDGs 1 and 2, with contributions also to SDGs 5, 8, 10, 13, 15 and 17 (see also paragraph 105 below). Its motto is “investing in rural people”, and its Strategic Objective 3 is to “strengthen the environmental sustainability and climate resilience of poor people’s economic activities”. It functions mainly as a development fund, making soft loans to the governments of developing countries for programmes that combat rural poverty, primarily through sustainable agricultural development. It also provides grants, sometimes to its fellow RBAs. Its lead contact in developing country governments is the ministry of finance rather than of agriculture. Its loans, although typically designed and managed with strong IFAD input, are used at the borrowing government’s discretion (within the terms of the loan). Governed by its 177 Member States, it is funded through periodic replenishments with contributions from them: the most recent IFAD 12 replenishment covers 2022-2024. While IFAD has fewer regional and country offices in developing countries than FAO or WFP, its current decentralization process seeks to increase their numbers and the proportion of all staff posted at these levels.

26. As noted above, **WFP** has its roots in FAO, with which it still has formal constitutional ties: for example, its Executive Board is “jointly established by the United Nations and FAO”, with its members representing States Members of the United Nations or Member Nations of FAO, elected by the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations and the Council of FAO.<sup>58</sup> Financed entirely by voluntary contributions, its programmes, projects and activities are required, among other things, to “aid in economic and social development, concentrating its efforts and resources on the neediest people and countries”; “to assist in the continuum from emergency relief to development by giving priority to supporting disaster prevention, preparedness and mitigation and post-disaster rehabilitation activities”; and “to assist in meeting refugee and other emergency and protracted food relief needs, using this assistance to the extent

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<sup>51</sup> United Nations, 1976. *Agreement establishing the International Fund for Agricultural Development*. Rome: United Nations Conference on the Establishment of an international Fund for Agricultural Development: p 12.

<sup>52</sup> IFAD, 2020. *About*. <https://www.ifad.org/en/about> [accessed 21 November 2020].

<sup>53</sup> <https://www.ifad.org/en/web/latest/-/news/rome-based-un-agencies-are-honorary-citizens-of-rome> [accessed 3 August 2021].

<sup>54</sup> FAO, 2020. *Outline of the Strategic Framework (2022-2031) and outline of the Medium-Term Plan (2022-2035)*. Rome: FAO: CL 165/3: p 31.

<sup>55</sup> FAO, 2020. *Outline of the Strategic Framework (2022-2031) and outline of the Medium-Term Plan (2022-2035)*. Rome: FAO: CL 165/3: p 19.

<sup>56</sup> FAO, 2021. *Strategic Framework (2022-2031)*. Rome: FAO: C2021/7: pp 7, 14.

<sup>57</sup> IFAD, 2016. *IFAD Strategic Framework (2016-2025)*. Enabling inclusive and sustainable rural transformation. Rome: IFAD: p 5.

<sup>58</sup> WFP, 2014. *General regulations; general rules; financial regulations; rules of procedure of the Executive Board*. Rome: FAO: p 7.

possible to serve both relief and development purposes”.<sup>59</sup> While the global reputation of WFP is as a humanitarian agency, it increasingly emphasizes its development function too: its motto now is “saving lives, changing lives”. Its Strategic Plan (2017–2021) commits it to support the achievement of SDG 2 and SDG 17.<sup>60</sup> Building on its earlier emphasis on support to food security, it now focuses more explicitly on food systems.<sup>61</sup>

**Table 2. Rome-based agencies staffing, country presence and 2019 annual budgets**

Organization	Number of staff <sup>62</sup>	Country presence (offices)	Budget, 2019
FAO	2,945 <sup>63</sup>	130+	Regular budget: USD 500 million Total programmes: USD 1.25 billion
IFAD	632.5 <sup>64,65</sup>	40	Regular budget: USD 158.2 million Total programmes: USD 8.6 billion (ongoing)
WFP	7,448 <sup>66</sup>	83	Programme support and administrative budget: USD 445.8 million Total contributions <sup>67</sup> : USD 7.97 billion

Sources: Data provided by FAO, IFAD and WFP including footnotes <sup>68, 69, 70, 71, 72</sup> .

27. Table 2 shows summary data on the staffing, country presence and annual budgets of the RBAs. It shows that FAO has the largest number of country offices, and IFAD the fewest, reflecting the fact that most IFAD personnel were, until recently, stationed at headquarters in Rome. FAO and WFP have longer-established networks of regional (and, in the case of FAO, subregional) offices. FAO subregional offices in Dakar, Johannesburg<sup>73</sup> and Nairobi also serve as resilience hubs. There is little congruence among the agencies with regard to which countries are covered by which regional offices or hubs. Cairo is the location for regional offices/hubs for all three RBAs’ operations in Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Palestine, Syria and Yemen. Panama City hosts regional or subregional offices or hubs that support all three RBAs’ work in Cuba, Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Honduras, Nicaragua and Panama. According to available data, there is no other co-location of RBA regional or subregional offices or hubs for any country.

<sup>59</sup> WFP, 2014. General regulations; general rules; financial regulations; rules of procedure of the Executive Board. Rome: FAO: pp 5-6.

<sup>60</sup> WFP, 2017. WFP Strategic Plan (2017–2021). Rome: WFP: pp 4-5.

<sup>61</sup> WFP, 2017. WFP Strategic Plan (2017–2021). Rome: WFP: p 29.

<sup>62</sup> Staff/employees in the field: FAO: 49 percent; IFAD: 31 percent; WFP: approximately 90 percent.

<sup>63</sup> Excludes consultants. FAO classifies the following as “staff”: Professional and above, and general service; both at headquarters and decentralized offices.

<sup>64</sup> Increased from 364 in 2015. This number includes national professional officers in country offices.

<sup>65</sup> Excludes consultants. The “staff” figure represents full-time equivalents funded by the IFAD regular budget, based at headquarters and decentralized offices in the professional and above, as well as general service categories.

<sup>66</sup> Excludes consultants. WFP classifies the following as “staff”: higher categories (D-2 and above); international professionals (P-1 to D-1); junior professional officers; national professional officers; and general service. Also included in the total of 18,346 people working for WFP are short-term international professionals and consultants, interns, those on service contracts, and those on short term general service and special service agreements. WFP, 2020. Annual Performance Report for 2019. WFP: Rome, 2 June 2020: p 184.

<sup>67</sup> WFP equivalent of a regular budget. The WFP budget is prepared on a commitment basis, and its financial statements on an accrual basis. The 2019 contribution revenue includes monetary contributions and in-kind contributions, but not other revenue.

<sup>68</sup> FAO, 2020. Provisional Outline of the new Strategic Framework. Rome: FAO: PC 128/2.

<sup>69</sup> FAO, 2020. Outline of the Strategic Framework (2022-2031) and outline of the Medium-Term Plan (2022-2035). Rome: FAO: CL 165/3.

<sup>70</sup> IFAD, 2020. *IFAD Annual Report 2019*. Rome: IFAD.

<sup>71</sup> IFAD, 2020. IFAD’s Field Presence. IFAD Member States Corporate Induction Seminar. PowerPoint Presentation. Guoqi Wu, Associate Vice-President. Corporate Services Department. Rome: IFAD, 27 February 2020.

<sup>72</sup> WFP, 2020. Annual Performance Report for 2019. Rome: WFP, 2 June 2020.

<sup>73</sup> In Johannesburg, FAO and WFP work in the same premises as other humanitarian agencies, in a deliberate effort to increase collaboration in the framework of the Regional Inter-Agency Standing Committee (RIASCO).

28. As of 1 May 2020, FAO had 194 Member Nations. The European Union is also a member, and there are two Associate Members (the Faroe Islands and Tokelau).<sup>74</sup> IFAD has 177 Member States.<sup>75</sup> WFP has 195 State Members.<sup>76</sup> Voting mechanisms in the agencies' Governing Bodies differ. FAO and WFP use the one country one vote principle, although in practice the WFP Executive Board reaches decisions by consensus.<sup>77,78</sup> IFAD, as an international financial institution, follows the Bretton Woods principle of proportional voting weight according to countries' gross domestic product (GDP), as well as historical financial contribution to IFAD.<sup>79,80</sup> While the proportion of representatives on the Executive Board of IFAD is based on this, Executive Board decisions are reached by consensus in practice.

29. Over the decades since their founding, each of the RBAs has developed and changed through a series of evolving strategies. Many factors have affected their strategic directions and performance, and many issues have arisen as a result of the inevitable shifts and transitions – forming a backdrop to the evolving collaboration among them. Recurrent and significant themes that this evaluation examines (along with the factors influencing them) include the dynamic interfaces between the mandates of FAO and WFP in humanitarian and development work, and the evolving character of IFAD as an international financial institution.

### 1.3.2 Theory of change

30. The need for collaboration and clarity in working relations among the RBAs has been recognized for many years, with explicit commitments to strengthen RBAC in the Directions and Collaboration papers of 2009 and 2016 and the memorandum of understanding of 2018 (as mentioned in paragraph 2 above). In 2009, the RBAs confirmed that “partnerships are an integral part of the mandates of the three agencies”.<sup>81,82,83</sup> Significantly, the 2016 Collaboration paper focused on the RBAs' role in achievement of the 2030 Agenda, and specifically on “a common vision, opportunities and challenges” around SDG 2. It notes that the Sustainable Development Goals are country-driven and nationally led and that resources are limited, increasing the need for RBA collaboration, synergy and convergence; it does not explicitly confirm the increased importance of RBAC at the country level.<sup>84</sup> The 2018 five-year memorandum of understanding was signed in response to the United Nations reform process “and the repositioning of the UNDS”, as well as the growing challenges around the humanitarian-development-peace nexus. It made a specific commitment to reinforcing collaboration at the country level. It indicated that each RBA would continue to be guided by and accountable for its country strategic plan and results framework; that more coherent and effective collaboration would be based on the strengths and comparative advantages of each RBA; and that there should be no automatic assumption that tripartite RBAC is the best, or a feasible, approach.<sup>85</sup>

31. In broad terms, the objective of RBAC has always been to enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of the agencies' contribution to food and nutrition security. Since 2015, this objective has been framed in terms of a stronger contribution by the three agencies to the 2030 Agenda and the achievement of SDG 2. Specifically:

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<sup>74</sup> FAO, 2020. *Membership of FAO*. <http://www.fao.org/legal-services/membership-of-fao/en/> [accessed 12 December 2020].

<sup>75</sup> IFAD, 2020. *A global network of committed Member States*. <https://www.ifad.org/en/member-states> [accessed 12 December 2020].

<sup>76</sup> WFP, 2020. *State Members and distribution of seats*. <https://executiveboard.wfp.org/state-members-and-distribution-seats> [accessed 12 December 2020].

<sup>77</sup> WFP, 2014. *General regulations; general rules; financial regulations; rules of procedure of the Executive Board*. Rome: FAO: p 65.

<sup>78</sup> WFP, 2020. *About the Board*. <https://executiveboard.wfp.org/about-board> [accessed 12 December 2020].

<sup>79</sup> IFAD, 2021. *Governance*. <https://www.ifad.org/en/governance> [accessed 20 May 2021].

<sup>80</sup> IFAD, 2021. *Voting rights of IFAD Member States*. Rome: IFAD.

<sup>81</sup> FAO, 2009. *Directions for Collaboration among the Rome-Based Agencies*, presented to the 137th session of Council, Rome, 28 September – 2 October 2009, CL 137/INF/10. Rome: FAO: np [no page number].

<sup>82</sup> IFAD, 2009. *Directions for collaboration among the Rome-based agencies*. Rome: IFAD: EB 2009/97/R.39: p 2.

<sup>83</sup> WFP, 2009. *Directions for Collaboration among the Rome-Based Agencies*. Rome: WFP: WFP/EB.2/2009/11-C: p 5.

<sup>84</sup> FAO, IFAD and WFP, 2016. *Collaboration among United Nations Rome-based Agencies: Delivering on the 2030 Agenda*. Joint paper. Rome: FAO, IFAD and WFP, 30 November 2016: pp 3, 5.

<sup>85</sup> FAO, IFAD and WFP, 2018. *Joint Progress Report on RBA Collaboration*. Rome: FAO, IFAD and WFP: pp 3, 4.

- The 2009 Directions paper identified a number of “mutual benefits” that would result from RBAC. These included: more efficient and effective field operations; strengthened policy development at national and international levels; more effective participation and advocacy in international forums and the creation of globally recognized frameworks and tools; improved mobilization of resources and overall performance; and increased capacity to operate in multidisciplinary contexts.<sup>86,87,88</sup>
- In 2016, the RBAs expressed the objectives of their collaboration differently, focusing (as noted above) on their overall intention of supporting countries in their efforts to achieve SDG 2.
- The 2018 memorandum of understanding similarly focused on the intention that RBAC should enhance the RBAs’ contribution to the achievement of SDG 2, on the explicit assumption that “achieving food security, nutrition and sustainable agriculture requires comprehensive and sustainable approaches to this set of closely interlinked issues, as well as their strong linkages to many other parts of the 2030 Agenda”.<sup>89</sup>

32. In the absence of a detailed results framework or theory of change (ToC) for RBAC, the evaluation team constructed one (Figure 1 below), to help conceptualize the subject of the evaluation and specifically to develop a set of assumptions and risks associated with the movement from inputs into collaborative activities (CAs) through to improving the lives of people at the community level and, in so doing, contributing to the 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals. Although it uses the same continuum from inputs to impact as a logical framework, it adds a set of assumptions and risks that explain the causal link between the different elements. The very broad scope of the evaluation means that the individual collaboration activities will have a wide variety of specific pathways to impact, which an overall theory of change cannot represent. But this theory of change, and this evaluation, are of the collaboration itself, not the activities. The theory of change is therefore based on the idea that the value added by RBAC will come from a combination of increased effectiveness and efficiency.

33. Part A of the overarching theory of change sets out the inputs that all three entities provide to the collaboration process, largely in terms of human, financial, material, technological and information resources. Part B sets out the collaborative activities by level and category. The evaluation team established a matrix of three levels (global, regional and country) as well as five categories of collaborative activities (strategic, programmatic, thematic, advocacy/communication and corporate services), based on the assumption that activities in each category could be found at different levels.

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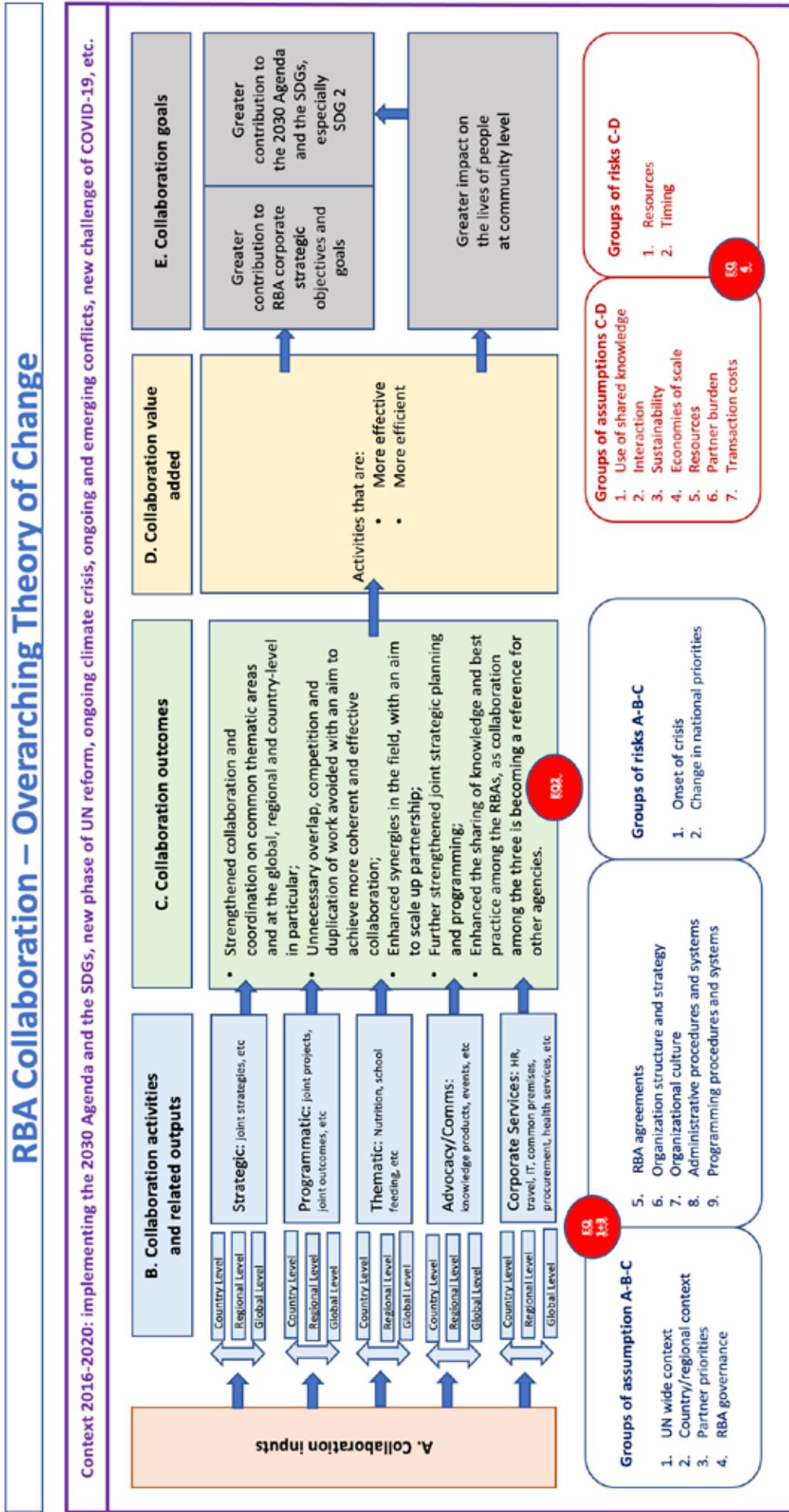
<sup>86</sup> FAO, 2009. *Directions for Collaboration among the Rome-based Agencies*, presented to the 137th session of Council, Rome, 28 September – 2 October 2009, CL 137/INF/10. Rome: FAO: np.

<sup>87</sup> IFAD, 2009. *Directions for collaboration among the Rome-based agencies*. Rome: IFAD: EB 2009/97/R.39: p 3.

<sup>88</sup> WFP, 2009. *Directions for Collaboration among the Rome-Based Agencies*. Rome: WFP: WFP/EB.2/2009/11-C: p 6.

<sup>89</sup> FAO, IFAD and WFP, 2018. *Memorandum of Understanding between Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) and World Food Programme (WFP)*. Rome: FAO, IFAD and WFP, June 2018: p 4.

Figure 1. Theory of change



Source: Evaluation team

34. The collaborative activities should lead to the immediate collaborative outcomes in Part C, drawn from the 2018 memorandum of understanding and the 2019 Plan of Action. The assessment of the effectiveness of RBAs in achieving these outcomes forms the basis of answering evaluation question 2 (What are the positive, negative, intended and unintended results of RBA collaboration to date?). The set of assumptions that are made in terms of moving from inputs to activities to outputs to outcomes can be tested, to contribute to answering evaluation questions 1 (How relevant is RBA collaboration in contributing to the achievement of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development?) and 3 (What factors have enabled or hindered the effectiveness of RBA collaboration?).

35. The theory of change is discussed in more detail at Annex IV, which includes a fuller statement of the assumptions.

### 1.3.3 Types of collaborative activity identified by the Rome-based agencies

36. The three guiding documents have outlined the types of RBAC in slightly different ways:

- In 2009, the Directions paper referred to “the four pillars of the framework for collaboration... A) Policy advice, knowledge and monitoring; B) Operations; C) Advocacy and communication; and D) Administrative collaboration. Joint action will be pursued at the global, regional, national and local levels, including in the ‘Delivering as One’ pilot countries”.<sup>90,91,92</sup>
- In 2016, the Collaboration paper proposed four “pillars” of collaboration: “i) working together at the country and regional levels; ii) cooperating at the global level; iii) collaborating on thematic knowledge and themes; and iv) joint corporate services”.<sup>93</sup> While the 2009 pillars were thematic, the 2016 ones took a matrix format, distinguishing geographic levels on one axis and the subjects of collaboration on the other.
- The 2018 memorandum of understanding adjusted the pillars again, without referring to them as such. It distinguished RBAC at the country level, regional level and global level (including joint advocacy and collaboration on thematic areas), as well as collaboration on corporate services.<sup>94</sup> This is the interpretation of pillars adopted in the terms of reference for this evaluation.

### 1.3.4 Collaborative activities undertaken

37. Across the variously defined pillars and categories, the RBAs have performed many collaborative activities during the review period. The evaluation team has developed a database of these collaborative activities, aiming to cover those operational during the review period, from 2016 (although start and end dates are not always clearly stated in the records). The RBAs’ annual reports on their collaboration have served as one source of information on collaborative activities, which range from conventional field projects with detailed design and performance documentation to much more general, sometimes global, joint work that may be specified in less detail. The database groups the collaborative activities according to the pillars as presented in these annual reports. Further information was gathered during the evaluation team’s 12 country studies (Section 1.4.4). However, equally detailed studies of all countries in which RBAC occurs would be needed in order to capture all RBA collaborative activities. Whereas this evaluation’s database should be reasonably complete at global and regional levels, it cannot be considered complete at the country level, beyond the countries on which the evaluation undertook case studies.

38. Summary data from the collaborative activity database are presented in Table 3. In total, it has captured 306 collaborative activities. The majority fall under the “country and regional” pillar, although very few are undertaken at the regional level. Table 3 shows that the most common categories are those

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<sup>90</sup> FAO, 2009. *Directions for Collaboration among the Rome-based Agencies*, presented to the 137th session of Council, Rome, 28 September – 2 October 2009, CL 137/INF/10. Rome: FAO: np.

<sup>91</sup> IFAD, 2009. *Directions for collaboration among the Rome-based agencies*. Rome: IFAD: EB 2009/97/R.39: p ii.

<sup>92</sup> WFP, 2009. *Directions for Collaboration among the Rome-Based Agencies*. Rome: WFP: WFP/EB.2/2009/11-C: p 3.

<sup>93</sup> FAO, IFAD and WFP, 2016. *Collaboration among United Nations Rome-based Agencies: Delivering on the 2030 Agenda*. Joint paper. Rome: FAO, IFAD and WFP, 30 November 2016: p 6.

<sup>94</sup> FAO, IFAD and WFP, 2018. *Memorandum of Understanding between Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) and World Food Programme (WFP)*. Rome: FAO, IFAD and WFP, June 2018: pp 5-6.

involving all three RBAs, and those involving FAO and WFP (129 collaborative activities each). Some collaborative activities involve one or more non-RBA organizations. Amongst many others, the non-RBA organization most commonly engaged in the collaborative activities shown in Table 3 is the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF), which is a partner in 43 of them. The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) is a partner in 17 of the RBA collaborative activities; the World Health Organization (WHO) is a partner in 14; UN Women in 11; and the World Bank in nine.

39. Table 3 also allocates the collaborative activities in the database into the four categories used in the preliminary mapping of collaborative activities at Annex 6 of the evaluation terms of reference. Of these, operations and programme activities are the most numerous, comprising 57 percent of those identified at country and regional levels and 46 percent of all collaborative activities identified. At the global level, administrative activities (joint corporate services) are the most common type.

40. Although the collaborative activity database includes a field for the budget of each collaborative activity, it was impossible to gather comprehensive and accurate information on this. Many collaborative activities are reported without any budgetary information, and those that are not in a formal project format may never have had a calculation of their total cost to the participating RBAs and/or other partners.

41. Given the emphasis of the RBAs on their collaboration at the country level, and the corresponding emphasis of this evaluation on RBAC performance at that level, the evaluation team has also created a country database in order to map and analyse the location of collaborative activities relative to factors such as the national income category in which they fall (low-income, lower-middle-income etc.). A sample of these data is given at Annex V. The database covers all countries classified as lower-income or middle-income by the World Bank.

**Table 3. Summary of Rome-based agency collaborative activities identified**

Pillar/Activities	Number of advocacy/communications activities	Number of strategic/policy activities	Number of operations/programme activities	Number of administrative activities <sup>95</sup>	Total	Number of activities involving at least one non-RBA organization
<b>Country/regional activities</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>46</b>	<b>112</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>196</b>	<b>86</b>
WFP & FAO	26	29	59	1	115	56
WFP & IFAD	1	2	6	0	9	2
IFAD & FAO	2	1	19	0	22	8
WFP, FAO & IFAD	7	14	28	1	50	20
<b>Global</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>62</b>	<b>24</b>
WFP & FAO	0	0	1	2	3	2
WFP & IFAD	0	0	1	1	2	1
IFAD & FAO	3	1	1	0	5	5
WFP, FAO & IFAD	14	9	5	24	52	16
<b>Thematic<sup>96</sup></b>	<b>17</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>17</b>
WFP & FAO	2	3	6	0	11	7
WFP & IFAD	0	0	2	0	2	0
IFAD & FAO	2	0	6	0	8	0
WFP, FAO & IFAD	13	8	6	0	27	10
<b>Total</b>	<b>70</b>	<b>67</b>	<b>140</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>306</b>	<b>127</b>

Source: ET analysis of RBA data.

42. There is a wide range of collaborative activities in the database; but this is still only a fraction of the three agencies’ total portfolio. In Kenya, for instance, a 2019 update on RBAC focused on two substantive joint programmes; both significant interventions, but in total just a small part of the three agencies’ operations in the country.<sup>97</sup>

<sup>95</sup> Administrative activities (joint corporate services) are also treated as a pillar in some categorizations.

<sup>96</sup> Refers to broad collaboration on shared thematic concerns, such as gender and resilience.

<sup>97</sup> FAO, IFAD and WFP, 2019. Rome-based agency collaboration in Kenya: supporting the Government to achieve zero hunger. Status update – August 2019. Nairobi: FAO, IFAD, WFP.

43. The 2019 draft RBA action plan for implementation of the 2018 memorandum of understanding refers to the development of joint country strategies (JCSs) “in at least three pilot countries... grounded on joint contribution to the UNDAF Common Country Analysis (CCA) with a view to deliver more impactful collective results within the UNDAF joint work-plans”.<sup>98</sup> The joint country strategies concept was already being developed in early 2018, at the time of the 11<sup>th</sup> Replenishment of IFAD’s resources.<sup>99</sup> After lengthy consultations, Colombia, Niger and Indonesia were selected for the pilot strategies. According to informants, Member States requested that joint country strategies be explored. The RBAs set up a working group that reviewed the options, taking many factors into consideration including regional spread and the degree of enthusiasm requested by country offices. The strategic plan for Indonesia<sup>100</sup> was approved by the Government in July 2021. The one for Niger<sup>101</sup> is in draft. The RBAs’ respective country offices are working in consultation with their respective governments to identify implementation arrangements. The plan for Colombia<sup>102</sup> is considered final, but implementation was halted by the COVID-19 pandemic. The RBAs are now developing a monitoring system and implementation plan for it.

44. At the country level, the RBAs make various other arrangements to structure their collaboration, either in general or with reference to specific projects. For example, the Kenya Cereal Enhancement Programme–Climate Resilient Agricultural Livelihoods Window (KCEP-CRAL)<sup>103</sup> was the subject of a project-specific memorandum of understanding among the RBAs. The memorandum of understanding expired, but the RBAs have arranged to renew it, and to agree an overall memorandum of understanding to frame their general collaboration in Kenya.<sup>104</sup> Against the background of the FAO Country Programme Framework (2018-2022), the IFAD Country Strategic Opportunities Programme (2020-2025) and the WFP Country Strategic Plan (2018-2023), the RBAs have identified ten priority areas for collaboration in 2021-2023, including promoting sustainable food systems, supporting smallholder agriculture and strengthening resilience in semi-arid lands, promoting socio-economic development and integration of refugees in host communities, and strengthening nutrition-sensitive programming.<sup>105</sup>

45. The database includes (again not exhaustively) many instances of collaboration between FAO and WFP in humanitarian activities. Such work is outside the mandate of IFAD, although IFAD does make loans for post-crisis development assistance to countries where its sister RBAs are sometimes active in humanitarian settings. FAO and WFP have worked closely together for over ten years as co-leads of the Food Security cluster, one of eleven clusters in the international humanitarian coordination system under the auspices of the Inter-Agency Standing Committee, of which the Director-General of FAO and the Executive Director of WFP are full members. (WFP also leads the Logistics and Emergency Telecommunications clusters.)<sup>106</sup> While WFP takes the lead in emergency food relief, FAO plays the complementary role of supporting the reconstruction of food systems damaged by natural and man-made disasters. It also leads emergency action to tackle crises arising from plant and animal diseases and pests, as in the major 2020 campaign to combat desert locusts in south-west Asia, Yemen and the Horn of Africa. Recently, the agencies have collaborated in many countries to support responses to the COVID-19 pandemic (see also paragraphs 120, 131, 151 below).

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<sup>98</sup> FAO, IFAD and WFP, 2019. Joint RBA Action Plan (2019-2020). Draft. Rome: FAO, IFAD & WFP, 25 March 2019: p 2.

<sup>99</sup> IFAD, 2018. Report of the consultation on the eleventh replenishment of IFAD’s resources. Leaving no-one behind: IFAD’s role in the 2030 Agenda. Rome: IFAD GC 41/L.3/Rev. 1: p 10.

<sup>100</sup> FAO, IFAD and WFP, 2020. UN Rome-Based Agencies’ Joint Country Strategic Plan (2021-2025) in Indonesia. Jakarta: FAO, IFAD and WFP. Final draft.

<sup>101</sup> FAO, IFAD and WFP, 2020. Joint Rome-Based Agency Country Strategic Plan: Niger . Niamey: FAO, IFAD and WFP: draft.

<sup>102</sup> FAO, IFAD and WFP, not dated. *Plan conjunto RBA en Colombia*. Bogotá: FAO, IFAD and WFP.

<sup>103</sup> Running from 2015 to 2022 with funding from IFAD and the European Union in partnership with the Government of Kenya, KCEP-CRAL works in 13 counties to build more climate-resilient, sustainable, commercially orientated agrarian livelihoods with 100,000 target households. Many of these beneficiaries (in the drier parts of the country) were intended to be recipients of WFP food assistance and cash transfers who would be assisted to move beyond this support. FAO provides a range of technical inputs, notably in the field of conservation agriculture.

<https://www.ifad.org/en/web/operations/-/project/1100001651> <https://www.kcepccral.go.ke/> [accessed 2 August 2021].

<sup>104</sup> FAO, IFAD and WFP, 2021. *RBAs: strengthening collaboration in Kenya*. Nairobi: presentation to RBA Representatives, 23 March.

<sup>105</sup> FAO, IFAD and WFP, 2021. Rome-Based Agencies in Kenya: strategic areas of collaboration. Nairobi: FAO, IFAD and WFP.

<sup>106</sup> United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, 2021. *What is the cluster approach?* <https://www.humanitarianresponse.info/en/coordination/clusters/what-cluster-approach> [accessed 15 May 2021].

## 1.4 METHODOLOGY, LIMITATIONS AND ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

### 1.4.1 Introduction

46. This is a theory-based strategic evaluation that used mixed methods to answer the four evaluation questions posed by its terms of reference. These questions (detailed in Section 1.4.3 below) were elaborated in an evaluation matrix (Annex VI) that was guided by the theory of change that the evaluation team developed (Section 1.3.2). The team assembled data from an extensive review of documents and data and from interviews and discussions with informants at global, regional and country levels. The evaluation is both summative and formative in nature and complies with the ethical standards prescribed by the United Nations Evaluation Group.

### 1.4.2 Definition of collaboration

47. As outlined in Section 1.2.1, the RBAs tend to use the concepts of collaboration and partnerships interchangeably. But the two terms are treated differently in much of the analytical literature and practical guidance (see Annex II). Partnerships are generally considered to be more focused and specific modes of relationship than the looser notion of collaboration, and to be based on more formal agreements, including “an explicit statement of comparative or collaborative advantage” and planning, programming and approval procedures that make them more agile when conditions change.<sup>107</sup>

48. In practice, collaboration among the RBAs spans simple, sometimes *ad hoc* consultation, coordination and sharing; longer-term, fully documented agreements around jointly committed programmes of action; and agreements for the sharing or joint procurement of services. Full integration or unification is never a formal intention of RBAC. Integration is not necessarily feasible or seen as desirable by each RBA at all levels, although some informants consider it an appropriate target.

49. The WFP Corporate Partnership Strategy (2014-2017) identified a “continuum of collaborative relationships”, from transactional ones to partnerships (Figure 11, Annex II, page 88). Review of United Nations definitions of partnerships (Annex II) shows that partnerships are collaborative relationships, but a certain type of collaborative relationship that has specific characteristics. Collaboration is therefore a wider concept than partnership and includes other forms of working relations that are not considered partnership.

50. The RBA collaboration agreements and progress reports implicitly use this wider concept of collaboration, as they include references to collaborative activities that are purely transactional in nature. For the purposes of this evaluation, this broad concept of collaboration will be used as a working definition. It is aligned with the dictionary definition of collaboration as “joint work”. Across the “continuum of collaborative relationships” envisaged by WFP, an example of a purely transactional arrangement is one entity “piggybacking” on the contract of another entity. Similarly, an example of a full partnership could be a joint field programme aimed at strengthening food security.

### 1.4.3 Evaluation questions and criteria

51. The evaluation is required to answer four evaluation questions (EQs).

1. How relevant is RBA collaboration in contributing to the achievement of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development?
2. What are the positive, negative, intended and unintended results of RBA collaboration to date?
3. What factors have enabled or hindered the effectiveness of RBA collaboration?
4. What is the added value of RBA collaboration (as opposed to single agency processes and results) across the different aspects and levels?

52. The evaluation uses the evaluation criteria of relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency, and sustainability, as indicated in Table 4. EQ 3 does not appear in the table because it explores the factors promoting or obstructing RBA collaboration, influencing its effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability.

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<sup>107</sup> MOPAN, 2020. *MOPAN 3.1. Methodology*. Paris: MOPAN: p 12.

53. During the inception phase, the evaluation team developed an evaluation matrix that elaborates on the evaluation questions and subquestions posed by the terms of reference. The matrix (shown at Annex VI) also specifies measures or indicators of performance with regard to each subquestion; sources of information; and data collection methods. Derived from the theory of change, it was used as the basis of the analytical process and provides the structure for the presentation of findings in Chapter 2 below.

**Table 4. Rome-based agency collaboration: evaluation criteria**

Criteria	Definition <sup>108</sup>	EQ
Relevance	The extent to which the intervention objectives and design respond to beneficiaries <sup>109</sup> global, country, and partner/institution needs, policies, and priorities, and continue to do so if circumstances change	1
Coherence	The compatibility of the intervention with other interventions in a country, sector or institution	2, 4
Effectiveness	The extent to which the intervention achieved, or is expected to achieve, its objectives, and its results, including any differential results across groups	2, 4
Efficiency	The extent to which the intervention delivers, or is likely to deliver, results in an economic and timely way	4
Sustainability	The extent to which the net benefits of the intervention continue, or are likely to continue	2

#### 1.4.4 Data collection methods

54. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, all data collection took place remotely. The data collection schedule is shown at Annex VII. Further details of data collection and analysis methods are given at Annex II.

##### Documentation

55. The evaluation team undertook an extensive review of documentation on RBA collaboration, starting with material sourced mainly at headquarters level in the inception phase and supplementing this with material collected during the country case studies, “deep dives” and other investigations carried out during the data collection phase. Table 20 (Annex X, page 146) shows that, of the 686 documents reviewed, 103 were about RBA collaboration in general, with a further 25 on joint programmes and progress reports. The evaluation team reviewed 245 evaluations, audits and assessments; 82 strategic plans and related documents; and 231 policy and operational documents.

##### Country case studies

56. As part of the inception phase, country case studies were carried out in Kenya and Niger. Additional data were collected in these countries during the data collection phase, when ten additional country studies were undertaken (Figure 2). Given limitations on evaluation resources, less time was allocated to some country studies. Those given slightly more person days were described as “in-country”, although ultimately no travel was possible. For some other “desk study plus” countries, less time could be allocated, and documentation was the principal source of data, although the evaluation team also undertook a limited number of interviews.<sup>110</sup>

##### Deep dives

57. The evaluation team undertook a series of more detailed deep dive studies of selected aspects of RBA collaboration at regional and global levels. The subjects were selected in intensive consultation with the Evaluation Management Group during the inception phase (Table 5). It proved difficult to identify appropriate deep dive subjects at the regional level; there are only 12 regional collaborative activities of any

<sup>108</sup> OECD DAC, 2019. *Better Criteria for Better Evaluation: Revised Evaluation Criteria Definitions and Principles for Use*, OECD/DAC Network on Development Evaluation, Adopted by the DAC: Paris, 10 December 2019.

<sup>109</sup> Beneficiaries are defined as “the individuals, groups, or organizations, whether targeted or not, that benefit directly or indirectly, from the development intervention.” Other terms, such as rights holders or affected people, may also be used.

<sup>110</sup> Further details on the categorization of country case studies are given at Annex II.

description among the total 306 in the database (paragraph 38, Section 1.3.4). All the selected topics involve all three RBAs, except the FAO Investment Centre, which does not involve WFP.

**Figure 2. Location of country studies**



Source: Evaluation Team

**Table 5. Deep dive studies**

Category of activity	Subject	
	Regional	Global/HQ
Strategic/policy		Nutrition
Programmes and projects	RBA resilience programme in the Sahel (Sahel Initiative)	FAO Investment Centre
Advocacy and communications		State of Food Insecurity report
Thematic		Resilience Gender
Corporate services		Procurement (including medical insurance) Evaluation

### Additional reviews

58. The evaluation team carried out additional focused data collection and analysis on RBA collaboration in areas of collaboration mentioned in the RBAs' 2020 progress report.<sup>111</sup> These did not receive as much attention as the deep dive subjects mentioned above, but useful information was gathered about the quality of RBA collaboration in the forums, networks and thematic areas shown in Table 6.

**Table 6. Additional reviews**

Global forums and networks	Thematic areas
Committee on World Food Security	Emergencies
United Nations Decade of Family Farming	Youth
The Food Systems Summit	South-South and triangular cooperation
The Global Network Against Food Crises	The climate crisis
	Responses to the COVID-19 pandemic

<sup>111</sup> FAO, IFAD and WFP, 2020. *Joint Progress Report on RBA Collaboration*. Rome: FAO, IFAD and WFP: pp 7-8. Version cited is as presented to FAO Council: CL 165/13.

## Key informant interviews and group discussions

59. In addition to the key informant interviews and group discussions carried out as part of all the studies outlined above, a series of meetings were held with key informants at senior levels in the RBAs and some other United Nations entities and offices, as well as with representatives of Member States. All the approximately 400 informants are listed at Annex IX.

## Online survey

60. In consultation with the Evaluation Management Group, the evaluation team sent a short online survey to 1,800 professional staff of the three RBAs at global, regional and country levels. It achieved a 23 percent response rate of 410, spread almost equally across the RBAs. Further details of sampling and survey methods, and the survey instrument, are at Annex X. A summary of survey responses is at Annex XI.

## 1.4.5 Data analysis

61. Data analysis was structured around the questions, subquestions and indicators in the evaluation matrix. The evaluation team developed a standardized findings matrix template, structured by evaluation questions and subquestions. Team members entered data from each of the country, deep dive and thematic studies into one of these matrices, and all matrices were then combined for easy analysis. Structuring the data in this way facilitated triangulation. Analysis of documentation and review of interview notes supplemented the combined findings matrices. The evaluation team integrated its understanding and analysis from all these sources through a series of workshop discussions.

## 1.4.6 Limitations and ethical considerations

62. The evaluation team identified a number of risks and challenges during the inception phase (Annex II). Their analysis proved largely accurate. Key limitations were as follows:

- The remote working necessitated by the COVID-19 pandemic made planning and carrying out data collection more complex and time-consuming.
- A related challenge was to achieve adequate engagement with RBA staff at the country level.
- Spanning these challenges was the fact that the more subtle dimensions of face-to-face contact with informants were lost, and the flexibility of in-country contact, such as quick follow-ups, could not be replicated.
- Working for three clients instead of one inevitably added time and complexity to the evaluation process.
- The evaluation team reviewed extensive documentation from many global and local sources. This review yielded comparatively little substantive evidence on RBA collaboration. Data on which a quantitative or even a qualitative analysis of efficiency and value added might be based, in answer to EQ 4, are particularly limited.

63. To the extent possible, the evaluation team addressed the challenges outlined above by devoting extra time and effort to their task. But it was not possible fully to overcome the limitations created by the pandemic and by the lack of evidence.

## Ethical considerations

64. The evaluation team's approach to the ethical issues that might arise during the evaluation was approved during the inception phase and is presented at Annex XII. As a fully remote exercise, the evaluation encountered fewer ethical challenges than might have been the case if extensive field visits (also at beneficiary level) had been possible. Other issues and risks remained pertinent, but the safeguards set out in Table 31 at Annex XII proved effective.

## 2 Evaluation findings

### 2.1 INTRODUCTION

65. Sections 2.2-2.4 below present findings to answer each of the four evaluation questions in turn. The subheadings in each section refer to the subquestions and indicators set out in the evaluation matrix (Annex VI).

### 2.2 THE RELEVANCE OF ROME-BASED AGENCY COLLABORATION

#### 2.2.1 Introduction

66. Evaluation question 1 concerns the relevance of RBA collaboration in contributing to the achievement of the 2030 Agenda. This section therefore examines the relevance of RBAC to the strategic direction of the United Nations, including the repositioning of the United Nations development system, as well as to the goals, mandates and strengths of the RBAs themselves. This analysis uses relevance as an evaluation criterion in the sense of whether an intervention, in this case RBA collaboration, is doing the right things.<sup>112</sup> In the final subsection, relevance is used in a different way, in the sense of the significance of RBA collaboration for addressing the overall challenges of implementing the 2030 Agenda and achieving the Sustainable Development Goals.

#### 2.2.2 Relevance to the United Nations strategic direction, including the reform agenda

67. **Finding 1. RBA collaboration has been and continues to be largely relevant to the agreements that guide the strategic direction of the United Nations development system. RBA collaboration is highly relevant for the overall direction of the latest phase of United Nations reform concerning repositioning of the United Nations development system. It is most relevant at the country and regional levels, although the regional element is not well captured in the 2018 memorandum of understanding. RBA collaboration is less relevant in terms of the Secretary-General's efficiency agenda, specifically in terms of RBA collaboration in the delivery of core corporate services at the country level.**

#### **The 2030 Agenda, the Sustainable Development Goals and the strategic direction of the United Nations development system**

68. A request from the membership of the three RBAs for a joint paper outlining specifically how the RBAs will collaborate to support achieving the goals of the 2030 Agenda led directly to the development of the 2016 RBA Collaboration paper. The common vision of the RBAs was presented in terms of SDG 2, which is at the “heart of the mandate” of the three entities. The paper goes on to note that:

The 2030 Agenda and the SDGs constitute the greatest opportunity ever presented for RBA collaboration. By capitalizing on the respective strengths of the RBAs, the joint vision represents a step forward to strengthening collaboration in support of Member States in implementing the 2030 Agenda. Finding the best way to work together is the only way forward.<sup>113</sup>

69. The broad scope of RBA collaboration means that it should be relevant to a wider range of Sustainable Development Goals beyond SDG 2.<sup>114</sup> Yet the collaboration agreements do not examine the value-added of collaboration to some key elements of the 2030 Agenda. Most importantly, neither sets out how RBA collaboration will help in one of the key approaches of the 2030 Agenda, leaving no one behind. Apart from this omission, RBA collaboration was also relevant for the 2016 Quadrennial Comprehensive Policy Review (QCPR) of operational activities for development of the United Nations system and remains relevant for the 2020 QCPR. Both QCPRs highlight the importance of partnerships and a coherent United

<sup>112</sup> OECD, 2021. *Applying evaluation thoughtfully*. Paris: OECD Publishing.

<sup>113</sup> FAO, IFAD and WFP, 2016. *Collaboration among United Nations Rome-based Agencies: Delivering on the 2030 Agenda*. Joint paper. Rome: FAO, IFAD and WFP, 30 November 2016: p 1.

<sup>114</sup> For an example of RBA work in support of SDG 12.3, see paragraph 147 in Section 2.3.3 below.

Nations development system. In 2016, United Nations system-wide coherence and Delivering as One were given emphasis in the QCPR resolution.

70. In the area of humanitarian assistance and responding to crises, RBAC is relevant for the New Way of Working (NWOW) that calls on humanitarian and development actors to work collaboratively together, based on their comparative advantages, towards “collective outcomes”<sup>115</sup> that reduce need, risk and vulnerability over multiple years. This notion of collective outcomes has been placed at the centre of the commitment to the NWOW, summarized in the Commitment to Action signed by the Secretary-General and nine United Nations Principals at the World Humanitarian Summit (including WFP and FAO).

71. On the financing side, the 2015 Addis Ababa Action Agenda<sup>116</sup> noted the importance of a coherent United Nations system to which RBA collaboration will contribute. Moreover, RBA collaboration is relevant for the agreements set out in the United Nations Funding Compact,<sup>117</sup> where the United Nations Sustainable Development Group (which includes the three RBAs) commits to accelerating results for countries through more collaboration.

### **United Nations reform and repositioning the United Nations development system at the country level**

72. RBA collaboration is relevant to the direction of the latest phase of United Nations reform, repositioning the UNDS, initiated by the Secretary-General in 2017 and approved by General Assembly resolution 72/279 in 2018. The reform introduces bold changes to the United Nations development system for the emergence of a new generation of country teams, centred on a strategic United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF) and led by an impartial, independent and empowered Resident Coordinator. The RBAs have strong commitment to engage in the implementation of the United Nations development system reform. They participated in the development of the revised UNSDCF guidelines, and are taking measures to align their country planning instruments to the UNSDCF. Of the 43 UNSDCFs currently under implementation, FAO is a signatory to 90 percent of them, IFAD to 49 percent and WFP to 53 percent<sup>118</sup> (partly reflecting the larger footprint of FAO – see Table 8 ). The priority areas of the FAO country programming frameworks are now derived directly from the respective UNSDCFs, and there are similar linkages between WFP country strategic plans and UNSDCFs. IFAD has developed and issued internal operational guidance to all country teams on how to ensure that its country strategic opportunities programmes (COSOPs) are fully aligned with the UNSDCF. Each UNSDCF strategic priority must have a corresponding results group that aims to improve internal coordination and ensure a coherent United Nations system-wide approach to address the priority. Under the leadership of the UNRC, results groups develop United Nations joint workplans to operationalize the cooperation framework and identify opportunities for closer inter-agency collaboration.<sup>119</sup>

73. Although it is too early to assess the effectiveness of the new cooperation frameworks and associated reforms, 72 percent of respondents to the survey of RBA staff members (paragraph 60 and Annex XI) believe that RBA collaboration is becoming increasingly important to strengthen the contribution of the RBAs within overall United Nations efforts. Country studies indicate that the process of repositioning the United Nations development system presents opportunities, especially in the area of developing the common country analysis that will lead to the design of the cooperation framework. Rather than replacing RBA collaboration, some believe the repositioned UNDS at the country level will in fact energize RBAC. Early evidence from preparation of the pilot RBA joint country strategies indicates that, by working together and presenting a consistent message, the RBAs have a better chance of getting the common issues related to SDG 2 and food security (such as resilience, climate change, capacity building) onto the UNCT agenda and into the cooperation framework.

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<sup>115</sup> A collective outcome is a concrete and measurable result that humanitarian, development and other relevant actors want to achieve jointly over a period of 3-5 years to reduce people's needs, risks and vulnerabilities and increase their resilience.

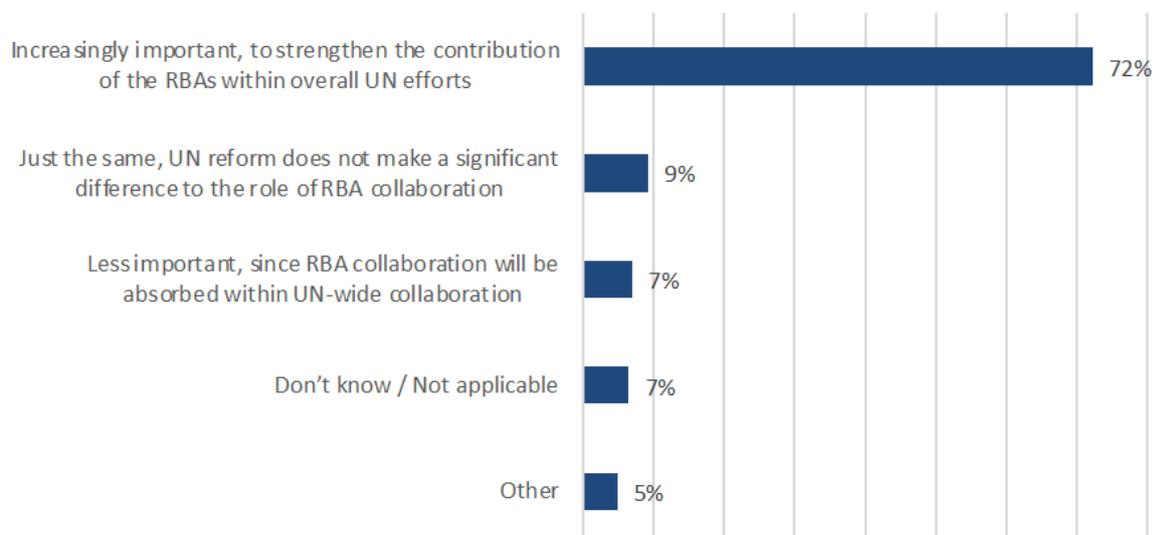
<sup>116</sup> United Nations. 2015. Addis Ababa Action Agenda of the Third International Conference on Financing for Development.

<sup>117</sup> United Nations. 2019. *Funding Compact. A/74/73/Add.1 -E/2019/4/Add.1*

<sup>118</sup> United Nations Development Cooperation Office.

<sup>119</sup> United Nations Sustainable Development Group, 2019. *The United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework: Internal Guidance*. New York: United Nations Sustainable Development Group (UNSDG).

**Figure 3. Survey: importance of Rome-based agency collaboration in future, given the ongoing United Nations reform process**



Source: evaluation online survey (Annex XI): 410 respondents.

74. Resident Coordinators and Resident Coordinators' offices have also been generally positive about RBA collaboration in the new context of the UNSDCF, although not all are aware of the nature and extent of the collaboration. The role of the Resident Coordinator is important for engagement with the RBAs in this process. Part of this role will be to understand the mandates and strengths of each RBA as well as its potential to collaborate. Having an RBA as the entity of origin of the Resident Coordinator is likely to promote a better understanding of potential RBA collaboration. Ten of the existing cadre of 130 Resident Coordinators come from the three RBAs. While for historical reasons most Resident Coordinators came from UNDP until the delinking of UNDP and the Resident Coordinator system in 2019, WFP is third in the list of agencies of origin with seven Resident Coordinators, and FAO ninth with three Resident Coordinators.<sup>120</sup> The majority of members of the UNDS, including IFAD, are not currently entities of origin for Resident Coordinators.

75. Country studies reveal that the view of partners at the country level is generally positive, and that RBA collaboration is perceived as important and relevant. Governments generally favour collaboration, recognizing that the RBAs bring complementary skills and address issues from different angles. They often expect a number of benefits from RBA collaboration, including lower transaction costs (as in Indonesia and Lebanon). At the same time, donors often expect more collaboration and less competition. These issues are discussed further in Section 2.4.

### United Nations reform and repositioning the United Nations development system at the regional level

76. Working together at the country and regional levels was one of the four pillars set out in the 2016 RBA Collaboration paper. While the paper often notes the importance of collaboration at all levels, in the subsection on collaboration at the global and regional levels only one short paragraph is devoted to the regional level, and this largely concerns regional support to the country level.<sup>121</sup>

<sup>120</sup> <https://data.uninfo.org/Home/LBRCStatistics> [accessed 26 May 2021].

<sup>121</sup> FAO, IFAD and WFP, 2016. *Collaboration among United Nations Rome-based Agencies: Delivering on the 2030 Agenda*. Joint paper. Rome: FAO, IFAD and WFP, 30 November 2016: paragraph 90.

77. The 2018 RBA memorandum of understanding contained one paragraph on collaboration at the regional level, stating that it “will continue to ensure that strategies, programmes, and activities are in line with global level RBA strategies and framework as well as the commitments that Governments have undertaken, to achieve the goals of the 2030 Agenda.”<sup>122</sup>

**Box 1 Rome-based agency collaboration in the context of United Nations reform: views of survey respondents**

- FAO, IFAD and WFP should collaborate when there are foreseen benefits. RBA collaboration at country level should be seen in the context of the UNSDCF. At country level, the RBA concept does not resonate with host governments, donors and other UN agencies (there is no NY-based agencies or Geneva-based agencies concept).
- I work in nutrition and programming, and for us other partners such as UNICEF, UNESCO etc. are equally important. IFAD has no presence here at regional level. Collaboration and partnerships are a means to achieve the common goal of SDG 2 and related SDGs. We engage with whom is needed to achieve and that is not limited to RBAs only because that coalition exists. UNICEF and WHO are key partners for us and probably more important than RBAs, so I find the existence and added value of the RBA coalition a bit questionable as it does not cover all key partners that need to sit at the table to achieve SDG 2.
- Overall UN collaboration has more weight than RBA collaboration.
- Difficult to say what the impact of the UN reform will be. However, given the shrinking 'development' space and available resources, as well as increasing expectations from Governments, RBA collaboration will become ever more important.
- I think we don't have a choice, not just for RBAs but for the UN system. To remain relevant, we have to present ourselves as a whole. That's what the SDGs are.

78. This is not in line with the emphasis placed on regional collaboration in the latest phase of the United Nations reform process. General Assembly resolution 72/279 of 1 June 2018 reaffirmed the role and functions of the United Nations development system at the regional level, including the Regional Economic Commissions and the regional teams of the United Nations development system. By 1 December 2020, all regions shifted previous coordination mechanisms into the new Regional Collaborative Platforms. Issue-Based Coalitions have been developed in all regions and progress has been made in rolling out Knowledge Hubs, in improving results reports, strengthening data systems and advancing efficiency efforts.<sup>123</sup>

79. Despite the lack of alignment of the 2018 RBA memorandum of understanding with UNDS reform at the regional level, the RBAs have engaged extensively in new collaboration mechanisms, although several regions report less engagement with IFAD. As at the country level, these new mechanisms provide an opportunity for even greater and more effective RBA collaboration. More detail on the collaboration is provided in Section 2.3.

### The United Nations Secretary-General's efficiency agenda

80. The 2016 and 2020 General Assembly resolutions on the QCPR outlined the need for the United Nations to implement changes to pursue “more cost-efficient support services, by reducing the duplication of functions and administrative and transaction costs through the consolidation of support services at the country level; and the requirement for integrated support across the United Nations system for the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development”.<sup>124</sup>

81. By the end of 2020, FAO, IFAD and WFP were among the eight United Nations entities that had signed the costing and pricing principles,<sup>125</sup> bringing transparency to the costing and pricing of services provided. The RBAs were also among the 20 United Nations entities that signed the Mutual Recognition

<sup>122</sup> FAO, IFAD and WFP, 2018. Memorandum of Understanding between Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) and World Food Programme (WFP). Rome: FAO, IFAD and WFP, June 2018: p 5.

<sup>123</sup> United Nations. 2021. Implementation of General Assembly resolution 75/233 on the quadrennial comprehensive policy review of operational activities for development of the United Nations system. (Advance Unedited Version) A/76/XX-E/2021/XX.

<sup>124</sup> UN. 2016. Quadrennial comprehensive policy review of operational activities for development of the United Nations system. A/RES/71/243; UN.2020. Quadrennial comprehensive policy review of operational activities for development of the United Nations system. A/RES/75/233.

<sup>125</sup> United Nations. 2021. Implementation of General Assembly resolution 75/233 on the quadrennial comprehensive policy review of operational activities for development of the United Nations system. A/76/75-E/2021/57.

statement, allowing UNDS entities to leverage each other's policies and practices for faster and more scale-efficient operations.<sup>126</sup>

#### **Box 2 The relevance of Rome-based agency collaboration: views of survey respondents**

- Yes, the benefits strongly outweigh the costs as at the policy/strategic level, RBAs will speak or act with one voice and as the main authoritative leader on food and nutrition security at country and local levels. The three nexus of: finance ([provided by] IFAD)- normative/technical know-how ([provided by] FAO) and emergency/crisis/humanitarian response ([provided by] WFP) should not be underestimated even if RBA collaboration are [is] not self-evidential. Rural/smallholder producers including food insecure households are [a] core target group of the RBA and this is even more relevant in the context of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development Goals... pressing now is the Food Security [Systems] Summit where RBA leadership is required more. Given that IFAD usually has a thin country office structure and personnel compared with FAO and WFP, a stronger RBA will be instrumental in bridging any time constraint gaps from IFAD, and this is also evolving given IFAD decentralization including deployment of regional technical specialists and other experts in... hubs. Both FAO and WFP tend to have strong political and diplomacy capital compared to IFAD which IFAD can leverage to unlock some key development issues.
- FAO, IFAD and WFP are three UN organizations that have three different mandates and functions with commonality regarding food security. FAO is a technical organization addressing agriculture and food security and does normative work. WFP is an emergency food aid agency that has strong logistical capacity. IFAD is an international financial institution that provides financing to developing countries to implement projects to reduce rural poverty and food insecurity. Where we work in countries and which ministries we work with differ. RBA collaboration is often forced and is very costly in terms of transaction and administrative costs with benefits related mostly to visibility and advocacy on food security issues. RBA collaboration is also costly in terms of time required to discuss and agree upon a way forward.
- We tried to collaborate with IFAD in developing programming in Africa -- made big efforts -- and it simply came to naught. The reasons vary and include IFAD going through a large restructuring process and very different perspectives within IFAD at different levels (headquarters and country offices) regarding the benefits of collaborating. That being said, if we could ever make it work, then the benefits could be significant.
- As long as management conceives RBA collaboration exclusively as a power/prestige game, I see no benefit and no reason to invest in it.
- The truth is that "collaboration between RBAs" are just words. Neither the three Heads of Agency nor the membership take it seriously. This is why the merging in[to] one institution with one governing body is the only way to realize the enormous potential in terms of effectiveness and efficiency gains.

82. The Business Operations Strategy (BOS) focuses on common services that are implemented jointly or delivered by one United Nations entity on behalf of other United Nations entities. The Business Operations Strategy is results-focused and structured around six common service lines: common procurement services; common finance services (including a harmonized approach to cash transfer - HACT); common information and communication technology services; common logistics services; common human resources services, and common administration services (including facility services). The development of the Business Operations Strategy includes a cost-benefit analysis that helps members of the UNCT decide whether potential common business operations would be cost-effective, based on either cost avoidance or enhanced quality of the proposed service. Data supplied to the evaluation team by the United Nations Development Cooperation Office (UNDCO) show that RBAs are responsible for managing just over 10 percent of all Business Operations Strategy services. Of this, WFP responsibility is high at 8.5 percent, while FAO is responsible for managing just 1.6 percent of Business Operations Strategy services. IFAD does not manage any Business Operations Strategy services.<sup>127</sup>

83. Although the efficiency agenda is broad and includes agency-specific efficiency initiatives, it is at the country level where it illustrates the need for RBA collaboration with the wider system. On average, each UNCT has 18 United Nations entities, of which 13 are resident entities.<sup>128</sup> Most resident entities will be

<sup>126</sup> United Nations. 2021. Implementation of General Assembly resolution 75/233 on the quadrennial comprehensive policy review of operational activities for development of the United Nations system. A/76/75-E/2021/57.

<sup>127</sup> United Nations DCO.

<sup>128</sup> Resident entities would have full country presence in the form of a formally accredited representative, a stand-alone country office or a full country programme. Non-resident entities are predominantly normative and specialized agencies, which often operate mixed models of country presence. UNESCO, for example, is a member of 114 UNCTs, although only resident in 54 of these countries. United Nations. 2018. *Proposals for a New Generation of UNCTs*. UNDS Repositioning Explanatory Note #1 February 2018.

managing or participating in the delivery of Business Operations Strategy services, depending on which is best suited in the specific country context to do so. In this context of UNCT team collaboration set by the efficiency agenda, it would not make sense for RBAs to collaborate among themselves outside the Business Operations Strategy. While the participation of individual RBAs in the provision and use of the Business Operations Strategy services is very important, a more introspective RBA focus at the country level would prove counterproductive and could even undermine the wider efficiency agenda. Further assessment of joint corporate services at headquarters level is presented in Section 2.3.

### 2.2.3 Relevance to the strategic objectives, mandates and strengths of the Rome-based agencies

84. **Finding 2: RBA collaboration is relevant to the strategic objectives and goals of the three entities. The RBA collaboration agreements set out the comparative strengths of the three entities but do not adequately set out the fundamental differences among them and the implications of these differences for collaboration.**

#### Strategic planning frameworks

##### Box 3 Bilateral and tripartite Rome-based agency collaboration: views of survey respondents

- Bilateral collaboration [is] more effective as you can focus on specific issues. For example, IFAD collaboration with WFP for cash transfers in its project, and with FAO on climate change. Not easy to have specific common issues for all three organizations.
- Bilateral collaborations are always easier but the current example of the preparation of the Food Systems Summit shows that a tripartite collaboration is critical to give more strength and visibility to our support to governments.
- A tripartite interagency dialogue facilitated by Government is usually a good practice, for driving and guiding the preparation of a concrete RBA collaboration action plan. Such a dialogue facilitated by Government was initiated in Cameroon in 2018, for the first time in the history of the RBA collaboration leading to a concrete RBA plan of action.

85. The IFAD Strategic Framework 2016-2025<sup>129</sup> states that collaboration among the Rome-based agencies will be of strategic priority. It goes on to note: “Their proximity and similar overarching goals, yet differentiated mandates and instruments, present a unique opportunity to reinvigorate their joint efforts to support realization of SDG 2”. Similarly, the WFP Strategic Plan (2017-2021)<sup>130</sup> recognizes the importance of RBA collaboration, stating that enhanced synergies among the RBAs are paramount to achieving SDG 2. For FAO, the approach is different in its main strategic planning documents, with both the FAO Medium-Term Plan (2018-2021) (reviewed)<sup>131</sup> and the 2017 FAO Reviewed Strategic Framework<sup>132</sup> stating that:

“One of the challenges of the 2030 Agenda for FAO is to think beyond the resources it uniquely controls to ask more challenging questions about how it can more effectively catalyze action by others and build key partnerships with development partners, including the Rome-based and other UN agencies.” (paragraphs 29 and 117 respectively).

86. The wide scope of RBA collaboration means that in practice, collaborative efforts between two or among three of the RBAs are relevant and potentially important for all the strategic goals of the three organizations. The scope of collaboration will be examined in more detail in Section 2.3. Yet while the importance of RBA collaboration is noted in the strategic plans of the three RBAs, albeit in different ways, none of the strategic plans provides a strategy for collaborative efforts. This has been left to the collaboration agreements made in 2016 and 2018.

#### Mandates and strengths

87. The importance of the mandates and comparative strengths of collaborating entities of the United Nations development system is made clear in the 2016 and 2020 QCPRs. Both recognize that collaboration

<sup>129</sup> IFAD. 2015. IFAD Strategic Framework (2016-2025): Enabling inclusive and sustainable rural transformation. Rome: IFAD EB 2015/116/C.R.P.1 Page 20.

<sup>130</sup> WFP. 2016. *WFP Strategic Plan (2017-2021)*. Rome: WFP/EB.2/2016/4-A/1/Rev.2\*

<sup>131</sup> FAO. 2019. The Director-General's Medium-Term Plan 2018-2021 (reviewed) and Programme of Work and Budget 2020-21. Rome: FAO C2019/3.

<sup>132</sup> FAO (2017) *Reviewed Strategic Framework*. Rome: FAO C 2017/7 Rev.1.

among UNDS entities “should be undertaken in a manner that recognizes their respective mandates and roles with consideration for comparative advantages, and enhances the effective utilization of their resources and their unique expertise”.<sup>133</sup>

88. Focusing on the country level, the WFP Strategic Plan (2017-2021)<sup>134</sup> also notes that “RBA collaboration is particularly relevant when adapted to country context to maximize each agency’s complementary capacities and strengths”. Similarly, the IFAD Strategic Framework (2016-2025) states that:

The partnership between the RBAs will leverage IFAD’s own comparative advantage in providing long-term financial investment for smallholder agriculture and rural transformation, the unique strength of FAO in technical and global policy issues for food and agriculture, and the unmatched capabilities of WFP in providing timely support to countries acute humanitarian disasters.<sup>135</sup>

89. The RBA collaboration agreements also attempt to set out the mandates and comparative strengths of the three RBAs. The 2016 Collaboration paper includes three paragraphs, one for each RBA, that include a brief idea of strengths. The strategic programmes, objectives and goals of the RBAs are presented in the 2018 memorandum of understanding according to the specific language used in each organization. However, the presentations are not consistent. For example, in the section on FAO, the strategic programmes are listed, as are the four cross-cutting dimensions “integral to the achievement of FAO’s five strategic objectives” (not listed). Gender is one such cross-cutting dimension. Similarly, gender is noted as one of four cross-cutting areas for IFAD. But for WFP it is not mentioned, even though the ongoing WFP strategic plan states that gender will be integrated into all its work and even though it is clearly an important area for potential collaboration.

90. The listing of strategic objectives or programmes only helps an understanding of the mandates from a very broad perspective. It does not address the fundamental issue of overlap and what that means for collaboration. It does not show how two organizations with a similar scope of work can complement each other through addressing different aspects of that work. Two or more organizations could have the same mandate but clearly could have different strengths in terms of addressing the issue (for example, policy development versus implementation or in development versus crisis contexts).

91. Moreover, interviews with RBA staff from all three organizations make it clear that mandates are not always clearly understood, implying that they may not have been fully or sufficiently clearly communicated. This is especially true of WFP, which is often seen as a humanitarian organization even if the 2018 collaboration paper recognizes its role in the humanitarian-development nexus. As noted in recent WFP strategic evaluations,<sup>136</sup> the WFP dual mandate is not clear to all partners and in the past the scope of the mandate has not always been communicated clearly.

92. While RBA collaboration agreements set out mandates and, to some degree, the comparative strengths of the RBAs, there is less on the challenges of collaboration and, importantly, the implications of these challenges for collaboration. Rather, the RBAs’ 2018 memorandum of understanding<sup>137</sup> suggests a very positive context where collaboration will directly lead to benefits without setting out the potential costs, even though the 2016 Collaboration paper does set out the challenges briefly, as follows:

- Current systemic and structural challenges to RBA collaboration include distinct governance structures, as well as different government counterparts, business models, funding cycles, donor-specific priorities, instruments of development finance, organizational cultures, levels of decentralization, and country presence that have impacts on country-specific operational processes.

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<sup>133</sup> UN. 2016. “Quadrennial comprehensive policy review of operational activities for development of the United Nations system”. A/RES/71/243; UN.2020. “Quadrennial comprehensive policy review of operational activities for development of the United Nations system”. A/RES/75/233. Paragraph 9.

<sup>134</sup> WFP. 2016. *WFP Strategic Plan (2017-2021)*. Rome: WFP/EB.2/2016/4-A/1/Rev.2\*.

<sup>135</sup> IFAD. 2015. *IFAD Strategic Framework (2016-2025): Enabling inclusive and sustainable rural transformation*. Rome: IFAD EB 2015/116/C.R.P.1 Page 20.

<sup>136</sup> WFP. 2018. *Strategic Evaluation of the Pilot Country Strategic Plans*; WFP. 2020. *Strategic Evaluation of Funding WFP’s Work*. Rome: WFP OEI.

<sup>137</sup> FAO, IFAD and WFP, 2018. *Memorandum of Understanding between Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) and World Food Programme (WFP)*. Rome: FAO, IFAD and WFP, June 2018.

- No matter how well funded they are, each of the RBAs will always face resource and time constraints that demand the setting of clear priorities and that may limit the incentives to invest in effective RBA partnership. This might also be constrained by the lack of systematic dialogue and coordination. Competition for resources, divergent priorities and the mixed scales of operation, as well as the inherent difficulty in setting criteria for when and when not to explore RBA collaboration, will inevitably pose additional challenges.

93. Table 2 in Section 1.3 above illustrates the differences between the three organizations in terms of size of budget and staff. As an international financial institution, as a fund and programme, as a specialized agency, these are fundamentally different organizations with clear differences in organizational culture among them, even if their mandates are based around similar goals.

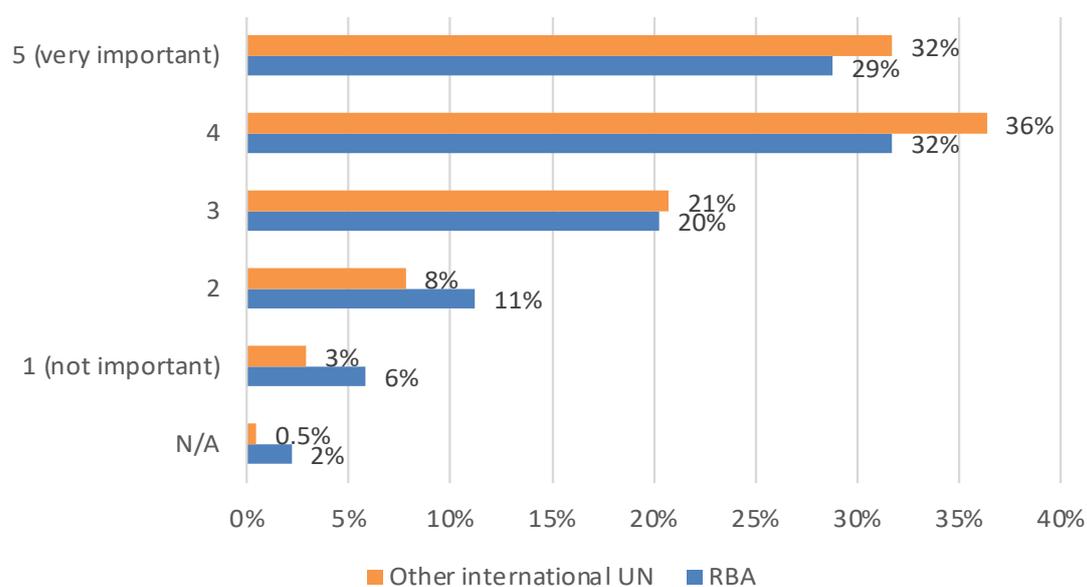
94. The different types of organization require different systems of governance, types of policies, staff skills and so on. The main implication of the different types of organization is that there may be transaction costs associated with addressing the differences among them, specifically concerning the degree of compatibility of administrative systems, policies, programming processes, funding arrangements, organizational culture and so on. Each of these challenges, and others too, are discussed in Section 2.4 on the factors that affect collaboration and in Section 2.5, which examines the inevitable trade-off between the benefits of collaboration and the associated costs.

95. Annual reports offer limited analysis of the challenges but rather focus on listing collaboration with little indication of benefits or costs. The lack of discussion and analysis of challenges may have contributed to the high and sometimes unrealistic expectations of the partners of the RBAs, including Member States, and subsequent disappointment when collaboration is not so frequent or successful as had been hoped.

#### Survey respondents' views on the importance of Rome-based agency collaboration

96. Respondents to this evaluation's online survey (paragraph 60 above) were asked how important RBAC is in their own work. They were asked to rate its importance on a scale from 1 (not important) to 5 (very important). Using the same rating scale, they were also asked how important collaboration with other United Nations and international agencies is in their work. As Figure 4 shows, the latter mode of collaboration was ranked slightly higher overall (an average score of 3.85) than RBAC (3.6). This suggests a perception that collaboration among the three agencies is not always the best way to strengthen RBA performance. Table 7 shows that WFP respondents put other modes of collaboration further ahead than respondents in FAO or IFAD, with respondents in the latter agency assigning virtually the same importance to RBAC and collaboration with other United Nations and international entities.

**Figure 4. Survey: importance of Rome-based agency collaboration and other collaboration in respondents' work**



Source: evaluation online survey (Annex XI): 410 respondents.

**Table 7. Survey: rating of Rome-based agency collaboration and other collaboration by respondent agency**

Importance of collaboration: Average rating	FAO	IFAD	WFP	Total
Rome-based agencies	3.69	3.45	3.67	3.60
Other United Nations and international agencies	3.99	3.49	4.14	3.85
Difference	-0.29	-0.04	-0.47	-0.25

Source: evaluation online survey (Annex XI): 410 respondents.

## 2.2.4 Relevance to reaching the overall goal of implementing the 2030 Agenda

97. **Finding 3: RBA collaboration as currently designed through various RBA agreements does not provide specific global targets for collaboration. Rather, these agreements set a framework and strategic direction to facilitate and encourage collaboration at all levels. While this may be appropriate, its lack of ambition also has implications for the ability of RBA collaboration to make a meaningful contribution to the 2030 Agenda.**

98. The ambitious 2030 Agenda requires transformation in the economic, social and environmental dimensions of sustainable development. By late 2019, it was clear that efforts to meet the 2030 Goals were not advancing at the speed or scale required, and in September the United Nations Secretary-General called for a Decade of Action for accelerating sustainable solutions to all the world's biggest challenges to deliver the Goals by 2030. Notwithstanding the call for action, the 2021 Report of the Secretary-General on progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals notes the serious challenges to achieving SDG 2, including that "the COVID-19 pandemic might have pushed an additional 83-132 million into chronic hunger in 2020".<sup>138</sup>

99. Individually, each RBA is contributing to implementing the 2030 Agenda and achieving the Sustainable Development Goals, but RBA collaboration agreements, as already noted, stress the additionality of collaborative effort. Yet despite the statements in the RBA collaboration agreements and the strategic plans of WFP and IFAD (see Finding 1), the agreements are unclear in their ambition; and where objectives are set out, they are very broad.

100. The 2016 Collaboration paper presents "a common vision, guiding principles for enhanced collaboration, the distinctive strengths of each organization, prerequisites, and commitments on how RBA country teams can support governments", but not any tangible goals. The 2018 memorandum of understanding sets out broad objectives. First, it is intended "to enhance collaboration, coordination and synergies between the Parties at global, regional and country levels in order to play a more strategic role in supporting Member States with the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, specifically SDG 2". Secondly, the memorandum of understanding seeks "to ensure that intentions and commitments on partnership and collaboration articulated at the headquarters level between the Parties translate into concrete collaboration and action at global, regional and country levels. The common objective is to avoid unnecessary overlap, (perceived and actual) competition and duplication of work".

101. In May 2019, a two-year joint RBA action plan was collectively endorsed by the Senior Consultative Group (SCG), although it has only been possible to find the document in draft.<sup>139</sup> The action plan is a management working document that the Senior Consultative Group was to use to guide and further strengthen collaboration among the RBAs. Performance in delivering the activities contained in the action plan was to be monitored by RBA focal points, and updates on implementation were to be provided to the Senior Consultative Group.

<sup>138</sup> GA. 2021. Progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals. Report of the Secretary-General. New York: United Nations.

<sup>139</sup> FAO, IFAD and WFP, 2019. *Joint Progress Report on RBA Collaboration*. Rome: FAO, IFAD and WFP.

102. The action plan includes some specific actions with delivery dates. While many of the actions simply reflect what is ongoing (development of the State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World (SOFI) report, hosting RBA website, etc.), others were more ambitious and would enable progress in the direction set by the 2018 memorandum of understanding. For example, the action plan included a dedicated section on RBA collaboration in all country strategies of each organization. The action plan also looked to address the lack of effective monitoring of RBA collaboration beyond the annual updates, with the development of a joint RBA indicator for assessing collaboration. Moreover, it states that the action plan will be complemented by a suite of indicators that will allow the assessment of performance beyond inputs and outputs. This idea of a joint results framework for the RBAs did not achieve significant traction among the three entities and was not pursued. In practice, developing the common indicator and joint results framework was recognized as more difficult than originally imagined; nor was it considered as meaningful and useful as originally hoped. Another factor may have been the fact that IFAD provides finance for work implemented by others, under the authority of the borrowing governments. This alters the terms on which the results of IFAD-funded work are monitored. Another reason could be the growing number of UNSDCF, which have their own joint results frameworks against which RBA performance should be monitored.

103. Although intended to be a rolling plan, no new action plan has been produced, no report on its implementation has been prepared and it is not mentioned in the 2020 RBA update. Review of the transcripts from recent WFP Executive Board sessions where the RBA updates were discussed indicates that although the joint RBA action plan was raised in 2018, it was not discussed in 2019 or 2020.

### Potential for country-level collaboration

104. At the country level, membership of UNCTs indicates that there are opportunities for tripartite collaboration in strategies and programmes across 48 countries and for bilateral collaboration across a further 53 (Table 8). That represents nearly two-thirds of all UNCTs and a significant opportunity as RBA country programming cycles become more and more aligned to the UNDAF/UNSDCF. In addition, many interviewees across all three geographic levels identified specific examples where collaboration could take place or be strengthened, indicating good potential for growth.

**Table 8. Rome-based agency membership of United Nations Country Teams, 2019**

	Number	Percent of total
Total number of UNCTs	158	100
FAO membership in UNCTs	127	80
IFAD Membership in UNCTs	57	36
WFP membership in UNCTs	93	59
UNCTs with 2 RBAs, of which	53	34
FAO + IFAD	9	6
FAO + WFP	44	28
IFAD + WFP	0	0
UNCTs with 3 RBAs	48	30

Source: UN Development Coordination Office Information Management System (includes non-resident members of UNCTs).

### Rome-based agency ambition in the wider United Nations context

105. Finally, RBA collaboration needs to be put in the context of collaboration within the broader United Nations development system. While SDG 2 is at the heart of the mandates of the three RBAs, it is clearly not the only Sustainable Development Goal each RBA contributes to. FAO is the custodian of Sustainable Development Goal indicators across six Sustainable Development Goals (including SDG 2).<sup>140</sup> WFP focuses on SDG 2 and SDG 17, but recognizes that it makes a contribution to many others, as does IFAD, even if it focuses on SDGs 1 and 2.

106. The broad scope of work of the RBAs clearly opens opportunities to work with other entities in the United Nations and beyond. The different natures of the RBAs also mean that they will find partnerships not because of shared scope, but because of shared organizational structure. Examples include: WFP with other United Nations funds and programmes, such as through the joint Executive Board meetings with New

<sup>140</sup> <https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/dataContacts/?selectIndicator=&selectAgency=FAO>. Accessed 26 May 2021.

York-based agencies;<sup>141</sup> FAO with other specialized agencies on normative issues (such as with WHO on food standards and the One Health initiative); and IFAD with other international financial institutions, such as through its collaboration in the area of evaluation and co-financing of investment projects.<sup>142</sup>

107. The RBA collaboration agreements are very clear about the wider partnerships that exist beyond the RBAs. The 2016 Collaboration paper observes that “each RBA has developed its own constituency of partners and distinct and complementary networks, which extend outreach beyond Rome to include other United Nations agencies and national and local partners”. The latest RBA update from 2020 also sets out the role of RBA collaboration in the broader context of the ongoing United Nations reform, and especially the repositioning of the United Nations at the country level. Yet the progress report, as with earlier versions, does not place the specific examples of RBA collaboration in the context of the wider reform. In some cases there is nothing to compare, but in many others, RBA collaboration is overshadowed by larger United Nations-wide collaboration in the same area. For example, piggyback contracting among the RBAs is much less common than piggybacking arrangements with other United Nations entities (paragraphs 50, 131).<sup>143</sup> In other words, in certain areas, there is a large amount of collaboration between the individual RBAs and other United Nations entities, and some of that collaboration happens to be with other RBAs.

## 2.3 THE RESULTS OF ROME-BASED AGENCY COLLABORATION

### 2.3.1 Introduction

108. Evaluation question 2 concerns the positive, negative, intended and unintended results of RBA collaboration to date. As shown in the theory of change (Figure 1) and subquestions 2.1-2.4 in the evaluation matrix (Annex VI), the results that this strategic evaluation seeks to identify concern the character and quality of the collaboration rather than the practical programmatic results (such as improved food production, food security, capacity or policy). The following sections set out the evidence with regard to the four sub-questions.

### 2.3.2 Strengthened coordination

109. **Finding 4. RBA collaborative efforts have had mixed results in strengthening coordination over the review period:**

- **In some countries, a strongly collaborative spirit has developed. In many countries, the RBAs collaborate effectively where there is a clear advantage in doing so; and in some others, there is little or no evidence of strengthened collaboration.**
- **Coordination is generally stronger around thematic and advocacy work than in formal operational project settings.**
- **The formal global structure and processes of RBAC are of limited effect in strengthening coordination.**
- **There has been some strengthening of common messaging and communication.**
- **Although joint corporate services are often arranged where they offer clear practical benefits, coordination has not become stronger in this regard over the review period.**

#### Country level

110. In the three countries where pilot joint country strategies have been developed (paragraph 43 above),<sup>144</sup> there was significantly stronger coordination around the intensive joint planning process – although this has yet to result in coordinated implementation of any joint country strategy activities, and the process varied significantly between the three countries. The Government of Colombia did not engage

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<sup>141</sup> WFP already holds joint Executive Board meetings with UNDP, the United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS), the United Nations Fund for Population Activities, UNICEF and UN Women.

<sup>142</sup> From 2016 to 2020, out of a total 148 projects, IFAD received co-financing from WFP (5) and/or FAO (6) in 11 projects for a total of USD 25m. Co-financing with IFIs totaled 22 projects totaling USD 1.5 billion.

<sup>143</sup> FAO, IFAD and WFP, 2019. Common Procurement Team tracking data 2018. Rome: FAO, IFAD and WFP Common Procurement Team.

<sup>144</sup> Colombia, Indonesia and Niger.

in the preparation of that plan, and, after delays, a team from Rome finalized the Niger joint country strategy. In Indonesia, there was active consultation between the Government and the RBAs about the joint country strategy.

111. The joint country strategy work is just one element in the strengthened coordination and stronger joint spirit that has resulted from emphasis on RBA collaboration in recent years. This joint spirit is particularly evident in Indonesia. It is also strong in Kenya, where no joint country strategy is immediately planned but arrangements are now being finalized for a memorandum of understanding among the RBAs that might lead to one (paragraph 44 above). The draft Niger joint country strategy identifies potential as well as challenges (see Box 4), and other sources provide similarly positive evidence.<sup>145</sup>

#### **Box 4 Challenges and potential in Niger**

The draft joint country strategy for Niger identifies a number of challenges to RBAC in the country:

- Limited geographic coverage of joint efforts
- The need to scale up RBAC and to replicate successful models in more communes
- The lack of a common fundraising strategy for RBA joint programming
- The need to strengthen partnerships with other United Nations agencies to ensure more comprehensive packages of interventions and integrated approaches.

However, the draft joint country strategy also identifies real potential (FAO, IFAD and WFP, 2020. Joint Rome-Based Agency Country Strategic Plan: Niger (202x-202x). Niamey: FAO, IFAD and WFP: draft: p 5.).

Where the RBAs have joined forces in Niger, production has increased, people migrate less, livelihoods have begun to diversify for the poorest people. This has translated into more jobs and income for youth, strengthening social cohesion and empowering youth, women, and vulnerable cross border pastoral and agro-pastoral communities. People also increased knowledge on good dietary and nutritional practices and households were able to keep children in school thanks to increased access to food and income. It also makes for a safer and more prosperous community. The RBAs joint work together in Niger can have an impact on breaking the cycle of conflict and hunger and assist in the development of economies and increase stability.

112. In Burundi, good collaboration was reported between FAO and WFP, and between FAO and IFAD,<sup>146</sup> although a project involving all three RBAs proved extremely complex to set up and run.<sup>147</sup> FAO and WFP collaborate on school feeding in various countries, including Colombia, the Dominican Republic, Guatemala and Honduras.<sup>148,149</sup> In some other countries (such as Egypt, Cameroon,<sup>150</sup> Sierra Leone<sup>151</sup> and Timor-Leste<sup>152</sup>), there is little or no evidence of strengthened collaboration, although some joint activities have been undertaken. Elsewhere, as in Colombia and Nepal, FAO and WFP collaborate strongly in the broader frameworks of humanitarian response, but other collaboration is more ad hoc. In Sudan, FAO and WFP collaborated in a joint resilience project led by the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF). An evaluation found that coordination mechanisms were effective, with mechanisms for joint decision making at national and state levels. "All interviewees consider a joint programme better than different programmes implemented without coordination."<sup>153</sup> The extent to which RBA coordination (within a broader framework

<sup>145</sup> FAO, 2016. *Evaluation du programme de pays au Niger*. Rome: FAO OED. IFAD, 2019. République du Niger. Projet d'appui à la sécurité alimentaire et au développement dans la région de Maradi. Évaluation d'impact du projet. Rome: IFAD IOE. IFAD, 2020. République du Niger. Évaluation de la stratégie et du programme de pays. Draft. Rome : IFAD IOE. WFP, 2020. *Scaling up resilience in the G5 Sahel countries. BMZ-WFP partnership. Second annual report (September 2019 to August 2020)*. Dakar: WFP Regional Bureau for West and Central Africa. FAO, IFAD and WFP, 2020. RBA collaboration in Niger. Niamey: FAO, IFAD and WFP *Knowledge and Practice Briefs*.

<sup>146</sup> Collaboration in support to dairy cooperatives and school feeding: IFAD, 2021. *République du Burundi. Évaluation de la stratégie et du programme de pays*. Rome: IFAD IOE: final draft: pp 39, 64.

<sup>147</sup> FAO, 2020. *Evaluation du programme de pays de la FAO au Burundi (2012-2018)*. Rome: FAO OED: Série évaluation de programme par pays 01/2020: pp 30, 31. IFAD, 2021. République du Burundi. Évaluation de la stratégie et du programme de pays. Rome: IFAD IOE: final draft: p 63.

<sup>148</sup> WFP, 2020. *State of School Feeding Worldwide 2020*. Rome: WFP: p 148.

<sup>149</sup> WFP, 2020. *State of School Feeding Worldwide 2020*. Rome: WFP: p 3.

<sup>150</sup> IFAD, 2018. République du Cameroun. Évaluation de la stratégie et du programme du pays. Rome: IFAD IOE: p 62.

<sup>151</sup> FAO, 2021. *Evaluation of FAO's Country Programme in Sierra Leone 2012-2019*. Rome: FAO OED: p 17.

<sup>152</sup> WFP, 2020. *Evaluation of Timor-Leste Country Strategic Plan (2018-2020)*. Rome: WFP OEV: p. 49.

<sup>153</sup> FAO, 2018. *Final evaluation of the Joint Resilience Project in Kassala*. Rome: FAO OED: pp 8, 34.

of partners) has been strengthened by collaboration around the Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC) varies from country to country. Stronger coordination is not reported to have been achieved in Somalia, but it has resulted in Kenya and South Sudan.<sup>154</sup>

113. In some countries (such as Kenya and Niger), the RBAs have appointed an RBAC focal point or coordinator. The focal points are usually existing staff who are given this extra responsibility. But in Niger, drawing on their past experience in trying to promote collaboration, the RBAs conducted a joint recruitment exercise and appointed a coordinator on a fixed-term contract (funded by WFP). The coordinator is formally supervised by the WFP Country Director but works across all three agencies. In Kenya, the RBAs took part in consultations on each other's country strategic planning processes, and WFP created a reference group for annual feedback from FAO and IFAD on the implementation of its country strategic plan.

#### **Box 5 Parallel implementation in Burkina Faso**

We often see FAO and WFP do the same thing in the field, for example, in the support to "maraîchage" [market gardening] there was just one small stroke of land that separated beneficiaries which were supported for the same activity by WFP and FAO.

Informant, Burkina Faso.

114. Inadequate coordination around programme implementation at central and field levels was reported from Colombia, Mozambique, Niger and Rwanda (although in Rwanda technical cooperation between FAO and IFAD is reported in various technical areas). Joint projects generally strengthen collaboration; but in Burkina Faso, parallel implementation of similar activities in closely adjoining areas is seen as inappropriate (see Box 5). There was mixed experience with the FAO-WFP project for support to the resilience of vulnerable populations in northern Mali: some aspects of joint planning and management achieved strong coordination, while others at the regional level did not.<sup>155</sup> Donor pressure to collaborate is sometimes significant, as in Kenya (European Union (EU)) and in Lebanon (France), where FAO and WFP work well together in the Food Security and Agriculture Sector working group but project-level coordination is largely ad hoc. The Multilateral Organisation Performance Assessment Network's (MOPAN) case studies of RBAC similarly revealed a "practical demand- and issues-driven approach",<sup>156</sup> as did an earlier review of RBAC in Latin America and the Caribbean. The latter study reported that "in terms of organization and coordination, permanent mechanisms and institutionalized bodies could not be found".<sup>157</sup> An IFAD synthesis of evaluations regarding partnerships found that "United Nations Rome-based agencies cooperation has yet to produce tangible results. RBA collaboration has been a corporate priority for IFAD since 2009... However, despite RBAs being rated by [country programme managers] as the second most important partner, there was very limited evidence of results from RBA partnerships in the [country strategy and programme evaluations] under review."<sup>158</sup>

#### **Regional level**

115. There is little evidence on strengthened coordination at the regional level as a result of the RBAs' overall corporate commitments to collaborate. The established collaboration between FAO and WFP in support to food security information systems and vulnerability analysis often has a regional dimension, as in their support to the southern African Regional Vulnerability Assessment Committee<sup>159</sup> and to the Cadre Harmonisé early warning network in West Africa and the Sahel (along with various partners including the Comité permanent Inter-Etats de Lutte contre la Sécheresse dans le Sahel (CILSS)).<sup>160</sup> The Global Network

<sup>154</sup> FAO, 2017. Final evaluation of the Project: Food Security and Nutrition Analysis Unit for Somalia. Rome: FAO OED: p 19.

<sup>155</sup> FAO and WFP, 2018. Rapport final de l'évaluation conjointe FAO/PAM du projet "Appui à la résilience des populations vulnérables au nord du Mali. Bamako : FAO and WFP: p 41.

<sup>156</sup> MOPAN, 2019. Synthesis Report. Country-level collaboration between FAO, IFAD and WFP. Paris: MOPAN: August 2019: p 30.

<sup>157</sup> FAO, IFAD and WFP, 2018. Collection and analysis of bilateral or tripartite work collaboration – (2012-2017). Santiago: FAO, IFAD and WFP: p 11.

<sup>158</sup> IFAD, 2018. Evaluation Synthesis. "Building partnerships for enhanced development effectiveness – a review of country-level experiences and results". Rome: IFAD: p v.

<sup>159</sup> FAO and WFP, 2009. Joint Thematic Evaluation of FAO and WFP. Support to Information Systems for Food Security. Final report. Rome: FAO OED and WFP OEV.

<sup>160</sup> <http://www.ipcinfo.org/ipcinfo-website/featured-stories/news-details/en/c/1153009/> [accessed 26 June 2021].

Against Food Crises, of which FAO and WFP are co-founding and core steering members,<sup>161</sup> has supported some work at the regional level, including a 2019 report on the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) states.<sup>162</sup> The RBAs have collaborated on the SD3C Sahel initiative.<sup>163</sup> Implementation started with launch workshops in Niger and Senegal in June 2021, and working groups have been established at country and regional levels. However, this initiative has had negative results in terms of the affected governments' views of RBA intentions and credibility, after arrangements were made for IFAD funding for the programme to be channelled to the other two RBAs (Section 2.4.6 below). As one informant put it, "there was insufficient dialogue and understanding between HQ and RB [regional bureau] on one side and the countries."

116. The RBAs are members of all Regional Collaboration Platforms and have engaged in Issue-Based Coalitions in most of them, although, according to informants, IFAD is generally less active in this new architecture. Regional RBAC is challenged by the lack of programming instruments for work at this level. Understandably, IFAD does not make regional loans, although it has some limited trust funds and grants available for regional work. Its 2020 funding for the Sahel initiative consisted of multiple country loans.<sup>164</sup> For WFP, any regional initiative would have to be built as an assemblage of country-level operations.

### Global level

117. In terms of formal structure and process, RBA coordination has become somewhat stronger since 2016. RBAC is coordinated through the Partnerships Division in FAO; the Global Engagement, Partnership and Resource Mobilization Division in IFAD; and the RBAs and Committee on World Food Security Division in the Partnerships and Advocacy Department of WFP. A Senior Consultative Group of senior leaders from the three entities provides overall coordination and approved the joint action plan for 2019-2020 (paragraphs 101-102 above).<sup>165</sup> The three Governing Bodies (GBs) have held annual joint informal meetings since 2016 to review the progress of RBAC, receiving an annual progress report<sup>166</sup> for which regional and country offices are asked to provide updates. As noted above, however, the RBAs' 2019-2020 action plan for implementation of the 2018 memorandum of understanding is not used for the management or coordination of RBAC.

118. In the framework of the United Nations system, the RBAs have reinforced their joint action to promote food security and zero hunger. Their representatives hold monthly coordination meetings in New York, and the RBAs are engaged in various technical and consultative processes in support of the High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (paragraph 246 below) and in preparation for this year's Food Systems Summit. Along with the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), they lead global resource mobilization efforts to prevent famine, within the framework of the new High-Level Task Force that the Secretary-General has established for this purpose.<sup>167</sup>

### Survey respondents' views on trends in Rome-based agency collaboration, by organizational level

119. Respondents to this evaluation's online survey (paragraph 60 above) were asked what changes they had observed at their respective levels (country/regional/headquarters) in RBA collaboration since 2016. Figure 5 shows that a higher proportion of respondents at country or field level perceived an increase in RBAC, compared with respondents at global or regional level.

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<sup>161</sup> <http://www.fightfoodcrises.net/about/en/> [accessed 26 June 2021].

<sup>162</sup> Food Security Information Network, 2019. Regional focus on the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) Member States. Rome: FSIN.

<sup>163</sup> Emergency and Rural Development in Sahel: a Joint RBA-G5 Sahel+1 Response to the 3C Challenges: (COVID-19, Conflicts and Climate Change) - SD3C. The G5 countries are Burkina Faso, Chad, Mali, Mauritania and Niger. Senegal is also involved.

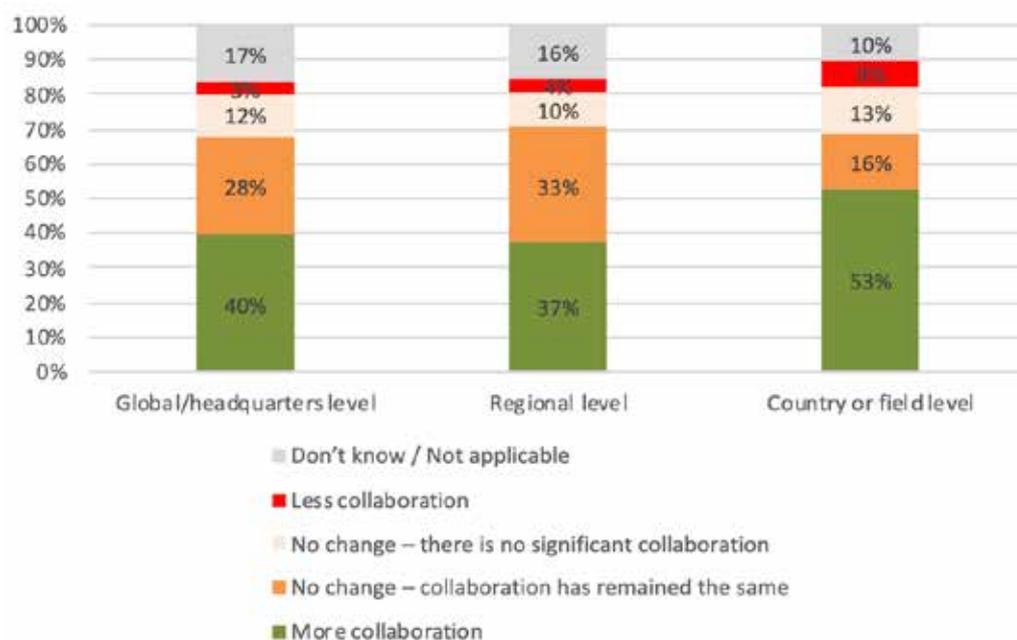
<sup>164</sup> IFAD, 2020. President's report. Proposed loans and grants under the Debt Sustainability Framework. Countries of the Group of Five for the Sahel and the Republic of Senegal. Joint programme for the Sahel in response to the challenges of COVID-19, conflict and climate change. Rome: IFAD: EB 2020/131(R)/R.8/Rev.1.

<sup>165</sup> FAO, IFAD and WFP, 2019. Joint RBA Action Plan (2019-2020). Draft. Rome: FAO, IFAD & WFP, 25 March 2019.

<sup>166</sup> See, for example, FAO, IFAD and WFP, 2020. *Joint Progress Report on RBA Collaboration*. Rome: FAO, IFAD and WFP.

<sup>167</sup> <https://www.un.org/press/en/2021/sgsm20619.doc.htm> [accessed 27 July 2021].

**Figure 5. Survey: changes in the amount of Rome-based agency collaboration since 2016, by organizational level**



Source: evaluation online survey (Annex XI): 410 respondents.

### Common thematic areas

#### Box 6 Rome-based agency collaboration in humanitarian work: views of survey respondents

- I think the positive strides made with regard to collaboration in emergency contexts (e.g. Yemen, Afghanistan) should be continued elsewhere. Most collaboration I've seen tends to be in emergency contexts because we can't afford to NOT work together; in contrast, in middle income countries or [least developed countries] LDCs that are not in crisis, the agencies seem to be more territorial.
- Particularly in emergency contexts, the benefits outweigh the admin/startup costs, since the added value of collaboration enables economies of scale with regard to outreach, logistics, etc.
- The Global Network against Food Crises is taking a positive direction towards collaboration between FAO and WFP in the emergency and resilience sector. More efforts into strategic joint programming like this need to be made so that both operational and resource partners see the benefits of each agency's contribution and avoid the competition over funds.

120. The RBAs collaborate in a number of common thematic areas, with strong working links between some technical units at headquarters level. The 2020 joint progress report identified 11 thematic areas: climate change, COVID-19 response, emergencies, the Food Security cluster, gender, nutrition, resilience, rural development, school feeding, South-South and triangular cooperation and youth.<sup>168</sup> The extent to which coordination has been strengthened since 2016 varies across these areas. Usually within a broader United Nations framework, the RBAs (particularly FAO and WFP) have tightened their working relationships through joint support to COVID-19 response in many countries. Coordination between FAO and WFP around emergencies and humanitarian response is traditionally strong (see Box 6), although there is room for improvement. In other fields, too, thematic collaboration is not necessarily only with other RBAs.

121. Resilience was the first thematic area for which the RBAs formally developed a common conceptual framework.<sup>169</sup> FAO is the most common partner to WFP in this field.<sup>170</sup> IFAD associated them

<sup>168</sup> FAO, IFAD and WFP, 2020. *Joint Progress Report on RBA Collaboration*. Rome: FAO, IFAD and WFP: p 7.

<sup>169</sup> FAO, IFD and WFP, 2015. *Strengthening Resilience for Food Security and Nutrition. A Rome-Based Agencies' Conceptual Framework for Collaboration and Partnership*. Rome: FAO, IFAD and WFP.

<sup>170</sup> WFP, 2019. *Strategic Evaluation of WFP Support for Enhanced Resilience*. Rome: WFP OE: p 46.

both in the design of the SD3C Sahel initiative, and FAO and WFP supported preparation of the United Nations Common Guidance on Resilient Societies.<sup>171</sup> But the potential for collaboration is less frequently converted into effective practice – and, when it is, may encounter challenges in fully defining and harmonizing roles and operational arrangements.<sup>172,173</sup> Several other United Nations entities are typically involved in collaboration around nutrition, as in Peru. In these two areas, RBAC has not achieved significantly stronger coordination.

#### **Box 7 Rome-based agency collaboration on gender: views of survey respondents**

- There is limited benefit to have the RBA singled out in the field. Better fit might exist with other UN partners depending on the country context. RBA could remain a pillar for rural and agricultural development, but in other areas (gender, climate, rural infrastructure,) other partners might be more strategic and dynamic and have a real comparative advantage.
- Collaboration on gender at the global level has always been very strong with the RBAs jointly holding their International Women's Day event (rotating hosting), joint publications and programmes.

122. Despite the low profile of gender equality and women's empowerment in the three guiding documents on RBAC (paragraph 20 above), coordination in this area was strengthened during the review period,<sup>174</sup> primarily through the experience of designing and implementing the seven-country Joint Programme on Accelerating Progress towards the Economic Empowerment of Rural Women<sup>175</sup> and the subsequent launch of the Joint Programme for Taking Gender-Transformative Approaches to Scale for Impact on SDG 2 to end Hunger, Achieve Food Security and Improved Nutrition and Promote Sustainable Agriculture (paragraph 19 above). The RBAs have also achieved a more strongly coordinated presence in global forums and events such as International Women's Day and the annual 16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence.

123. Food systems is a common thematic area of RBAC that is likely to be increasingly effective in strengthening RBA coordination. The three agencies were central to the genesis of the 2021 Food Systems Summit. Their joint country strategy in Indonesia is built around this theme, as is their collaboration on the KCEP-CRAL programme in Kenya.

124. In 2019, discussion started on establishing an RBA Youth Council as a valuable resource for the RBAs in the form of an inclusive, youth-led advisory team that advances practical innovations and policies focused on the unique needs and strengths of young people in agriculture. Working closely with the RBAs, this body is now known as the Youth Alliance for Zero Hunger: "a youth-led, youth-governed group to act as a conduit for evidence, examples, perspectives, and voices of youth to progress the goals of zero hunger and sustainable development".<sup>176</sup>

#### **Common messaging and communication**

125. In some but certainly not all countries, and on some but not all subjects, there is evidence of stronger common messaging and communication (see also Section 2.3.4). Some of the stronger coordination cited above around themes like gender, resilience and food systems reflects the RBAs' progress since 2016 in speaking with a clearer common voice. In the field of gender, there is clear evidence of stronger coordination and common messaging at the global level, for example, in advocating the incorporation of gender issues in the Committee on World Food Security. In Nepal, Rwanda and other JP RWEE countries, common messaging and communication on gender have been reinforced.

126. In Indonesia, the RBAs' development of their joint country strategy has strengthened their common message around food systems, but some informants still see them as speaking separately on some cross-

<sup>171</sup> United Nations, 2020. UN common guidance on helping build resilient societies. Draft. New York: United Nations.

<sup>172</sup> FAO and WFP, 2018. Rapport final de l'évaluation conjointe FAO/PAM du projet "Appui à la résilience des populations vulnérables au nord du Mali. Bamako: FAO and WFP: p 41.

<sup>173</sup> FAO, 2018. Final evaluation of the Joint Resilience Project in Kassala. Rome: FAO OED: p 3.

<sup>174</sup> WFP, 2020. Evaluation of the Gender Policy (2015-2020). Rome: WFP OE: p 36.

<sup>175</sup> FAO, IFAD, UN Women and WFP, 2021. Global End-Term Evaluation of the Joint Programme on Accelerating Progress towards the Economic Empowerment of Rural Women in Ethiopia, Guatemala, Kyrgyzstan, Liberia, Nepal, Niger and Rwanda from 2014 to 2020 – Decentralized Evaluation. Rome and New York: FAO, IFAD, UN Women, and WFP.

<sup>176</sup> <https://ypard.net/> [accessed 11 August 2021].

cutting issues, like climate. In Colombia, the RBAs built a close common profile to interact with the Government around the Committee on World Food Security and to support the country in preparing for this year's Food Systems Summit. In Niger and Peru, the RBAs are seen to have strengthened their common messaging and communication on nutrition<sup>177</sup> and food security. In Egypt, such work has been linked to the COVID-19 pandemic (see Box 8). Similarly, the RBAs have worked with UNICEF on common messaging about reinforcing food systems for COVID-19 recovery in the Pacific region.<sup>178</sup>

#### **Box 8 Common messaging and communication in Egypt**

FAO, IFAD and WFP conducted a rapid assessment on the impact of COVID-19 on agriculture and food and nutrition security in Egypt. With the Ministry of Agriculture and Land Reclamation, they launched a publicity campaign that emphasized the importance of healthy nutrition, and the food safety measures to be adopted during agri-food production and food handling. The campaign, that needed to be rapidly rolled out under difficult conditions, directed at rural areas was considered successful by RBA informants because of the good working arrangements among the organizations' teams.

127. The common joint actions for World Food Day do not always represent substantive collaboration in joint advocacy. In Lebanon, there is little evidence of RBA collaboration on advocacy and communication. The RBAs' resilience initiative in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Niger and Somalia was found to need more unified messaging by the three agencies.<sup>179</sup>

128. At regional and global levels, too, the picture is mixed. Clear joint messaging and communication have been lacking in work on the SD3C Sahel initiative to date. Outward-facing joint processes, like the annual State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World report, focus strongly on joint messaging, but during the review period coordination of this messaging has not become stronger than it was before. As noted in Section 1.2.3, FAO and WFP have worked together to raise the profile of the linkages between conflict and hunger with the United Nations Secretariat and the Security Council.

#### **Joint corporate services**

129. Many observers have believed that there are clear opportunities for the RBAs to become more efficient by sharing corporate services across their offices, at or between global, regional and country levels. Such services include security, procurement, information and communications technology (ICT), office premises and utilities, human resources, language and translation services, travel, health and – in some views – oversight and evaluation. Background discussions continue with the Government of Italy about a possible move of all three headquarters to a single complex, but this remains only a long-term possibility. In other cities, it is common for one or more RBA offices to be situated within a United Nations building or complex (as in Kenya), with consequent sharing of utilities and services; or for IFAD, which usually has the smallest country presence, to be hosted by one of the other RBAs (for example, FAO in Sierra Leone and Syria, and WFP in Nepal) or by another United Nations entity (for example, UNDP in Pakistan).

#### **Box 9 Joint corporate services: country-level informant views**

- Country offices are typically very stretched and have very limited bandwidth. There is much they still can do to improve quality programming within and across agencies. In this context seeking to achieve modest gains through corporate services collaboration/consolidation can become a distraction.
- It is very difficult to collaborate in the area of common services. We installed our office in this country in 2003. For ten years (2003-2013) we shared an office with another RBA, but we had to pay a lot. So far it has never been possible to establish concrete synergies for common services.
- The UNRC office was aware that one of the RBAs was leading global co-location efforts in context of [the Business Operations Strategy] BOS. However, that RBA moved offices in the capital in the middle of the process without informing about the process until a contract was signed.

<sup>177</sup> For example, the *Cocina con Causa* initiative that the RBAs have supported in Peru: <http://cocinaconcausa.com.pe>.

<sup>178</sup> FAO, IFAD, UNICEF and WFP, 2021. Reinforcing Pacific food systems for COVID-19 recovery. Key impacts, responses and opportunities to build back better.

<sup>179</sup> FAO, IFAD and WFP, 2020. Rome-Based Agencies Resilience Initiative. Strengthening the resilience of livelihoods in protracted crisis in the Democratic Republic of [the] Congo, Niger and Somalia. Annual report – year 3. Reporting period January 2019 – December 2019. Rome: FAO, IFAD and WFP: pp 7-8.

130. There are many instances when two or three RBA country offices share some space or services; such arrangements are made because they make local operational sense (in terms of cost, day-to-day convenience and local institutional relationships, as in the RIASCO arrangement in Johannesburg (mentioned in footnote 73)) - not because of any broader RBA collaborative effort. In other countries, such as Colombia and Mozambique, co-location of offices is not seen as feasible or cost-effective. Overall, there is no evidence of RBA collaboration having achieved significantly stronger coordination with regard to these common office-related services. The sharing is often significant and advantageous, but it is not a direct result of RBAC initiatives. It results from RBAs' pragmatic assessments of where sharing services with each other and/or with other members of the UNCT will enhance efficiency. Those assessments may be influenced by the fact that governments may provide office premises for FAO free of charge.

**Table 9. IFAD field offices: standalone and hosted**

Total offices	Standalone	Shared with RBA(s)	Shared with UNDP	Shared with another United Nations entity	Shared with an external agency
45	16%	22%	38%	9%	16%

Source: IFAD data.

131. There have been longstanding efforts to share procurement services through a Common Procurement Team (CPT), established in 2010. This has achieved some cost savings (estimated in a pilot study at 3 percent of contract value).<sup>180</sup> The Common Procurement Team is not expensive to operate. It is acknowledged to be useful and cost-saving in some joint tendering processes, and to provide a valuable forum for information sharing on upcoming opportunities for joint tenders and piggybacking, where one agency arranges to procure goods or services via a contract that another agency has secured. In 2018, there were eight such contracts involving RBAs piggybacking on each other, but 58 with an RBA piggybacking on another United Nations agency or vice versa.<sup>181</sup> During the COVID-19 pandemic, the experience of the Common Procurement Team has been useful in the quick and close RBA collaboration around the procurement of personal protective equipment and other supplies.

132. Overall, however, the Common Procurement Team covers only a small and declining fraction of total RBA procurement. The original expectation that the Common Procurement Team would manage joint procurement of USD 100m per year has not been realized. This is partly because tenders that might have been expected to be run jointly were pursued separately or through piggybacking, and partly because the RBAs gained a better understanding of what services lent themselves to joint tendering. There is also a cyclical element in that certain services are only tendered periodically, for example every three or five years. Following the original strong effort to exploit this mechanism, its limitations have become clearer. The Common Procurement Team does not decide whether joint tendering should be done; that is the choice of the respective technical units in each RBA, which sometimes have special preferences for a provider who is not necessarily the cheapest. Terms and conditions are not standardized across the RBAs (although some harmonization has been achieved), thus often leading to three contracts rather than one. Furthermore, the Common Procurement Team rarely handles tenders outside the three headquarters in Rome. Medical insurance is an instance of previously joint corporate services that are now contracted separately (paragraph 222 below).

### Survey respondents' views on trends in Rome-based agency collaboration, by respondent category

133. A full two thirds of directors and senior management responding to the evaluation's online survey felt that RBAC had increased since 2016, with smaller proportions of the other categories of staff perceiving an increase (Figure 6). These responses reflect the greater emphasis that has been placed on RBAC at all levels since 2016.

<sup>180</sup> FAO, IFAD and WFP, 2011. *Self-assessment of the 2010 pilot*. Rome: FAO, IFAD and WFP Common Procurement Team.

<sup>181</sup> FAO, IFAD and WFP, 2019. *Common Procurement Team tracking data 2018*. Rome: FAO, IFAD and WFP Common Procurement Team.

**Figure 6. Survey: changes in the amount of Rome-based agency collaboration since 2016, by respondent category**



Source: evaluation online survey (Annex XI): 410 respondents.

### 2.3.3 Reduced overlap, competition and duplication of work

134. **Finding 5. The RBAs have made limited progress in reducing overlap, competition and duplication of work. In some projects, countries and thematic areas, some progress has occurred, and the complementarity that the RBAs can achieve is recognized and exploited. Nutrition is one of the best examples of successful efforts to end duplication, through an effort involving the RBAs and other United Nations entities. At all levels, however, misunderstandings over mandates and competition for funds between FAO and WFP persist, sometimes alongside good technical collaboration on certain themes and tasks. Practical and effective steps have been taken to reduce overlap and duplication through some joint corporate services; but the opportunities to do this on a significant scale are limited.**

#### Overlap, competition and duplication of work at the country level

135. Many government informants still have a general perception that the RBAs overlap too much and are integrated too little. This view is notable among those in governments who themselves have integrated responsibilities for the rural and agricultural sectors and would prefer to be working with an integrated team of RBA partners rather than three separate ones. They have real and ongoing concerns about overlaps and redundancies. “Currently”, said one, “RBAs are approaching government bilaterally, and there is no joint positioning or discussions as such”. In Kenya, the RBAs are working to address such challenges. In Indonesia, the spirit of collaboration is strong following preparation of the joint country strategy, but work is still needed to define and differentiate FAO and WFP roles in the newly identified focus area of food systems. In Rwanda, on the other hand, the RBAs have developed a constructive sharing of tasks and roles, without necessarily designing joint proposals or sharing funding. This is facilitated by regular participation with the Government in the Agriculture Sector working group and the Joint Agriculture Review.

136. Progress is reported in Niger, too, but also ongoing separate interventions through each agency, working with their own implementation partners. In Burkina Faso, according to a group of RBA informants, “from the perspective of those outside of the RBAs there is a clear confusion of roles. External stakeholders do not understand who does what. Between IFAD, WFP and FAO things get very confusing with everyone doing everything.” Attempts to achieve a joint evaluation of country programmes in Cameroon failed due to disagreements about the required degree of integration among the three evaluation offices’ assessments. In the end, three separate reports were produced. The JP RWEE project encountered substantial initial

challenges with overlap and duplication across the seven countries that it covered, but detailed efforts over the years overcame most (not all) of these.<sup>182</sup> In Mozambique, however, despite donor interest in RBAC (from the EU), competition among the agencies persisted in the joint MDG 1 programme.<sup>183</sup> According to informants, a United Nations Multi-Partner Trust Fund for Sustaining Peace in Colombia stimulates joint programming and discourages competition for funds.<sup>184</sup>

### Competition for funding at the country level

137. There are varying degrees of competition between FAO and WFP for funding at the country level, and varying perceptions of funding strategy in a generally resource-scarce environment (see Box 10). As an international financial institution whose role is to provide development finance, IFAD has so far been less involved in this competition for resources. Its global and regional grant funding is often provided to FAO and WFP, and may also be provided at the country level in association with its much larger loans to governments, with the approval of those governments (paragraphs 203, and 234-236 below). However, co-financing is an increasingly important feature of the IFAD loan portfolio, for example in the more competitive fields of development and climate finance, and IFAD may become more engaged in competition for funding unless careful steps are taken to coordinate the mobilization of resources. More broadly, informants observe that the current United Nations development system reform does not focus on reforming the funding of the various entities, and that until funding is integrated, competition will persist.

#### Box 10 Competition for funding

An RBA informant in Pakistan acknowledged that the Government was encouraging complementarity.

- If we have the Government in the driving seat, we can focus on collaborating and not competing.

Informants in other countries were concerned about competition for funding:

- All agencies do appear to be extending their mandates and encroaching on other areas because they are looking for funding.
- Competition for resources is a natural phenomenon among agencies. It always has been and will continue to be. Even now with the preparation of the new UNSDCF, I do not see that this competition can be avoided. Agencies need resources and therefore compete for donors.
- The competition between WFP and FAO for funds is a reality. That competition could result in no cooperation at all.

138. In some countries (such as Indonesia), the dominant logic is that resource scarcity can, and does, stimulate closer collaboration in seeking funds. In others, competition for funding remains common – exacerbated in some countries by the shift to middle-income status and the reduction in the levels of conventional donor support. In Kenya, for example, informants refer to the need to progress from development funding to development finance, implying an expanded role for IFAD as an international financial institution and new challenges for FAO and WFP, along with many other United Nations entities. In Egypt and Burkina Faso, competition between FAO and WFP for funding remains common, with separate approaches to donors – who often say that they would prefer better coordinated or joint proposals, but also often prefer to work with the RBA that they know and have worked with successfully. An informant in Pakistan suggested that development partners should collaborate while developing their own strategies in a way that is aligned with government initiatives – which the RBAs were not doing, as they continued to promote their separate individual plans. Strong competition for resources in Colombia is a significant obstacle to RBAC. It is an issue in Peru, too, and there has been concern in Niger about perceived WFP encroachment on food security issues seen as the mandate of FAO.<sup>185</sup> Box 11 provides views from select survey respondents.

<sup>182</sup> FAO, IFAD, UN Women & WFP, 2021. Global End-Term Evaluation of the Joint Programme on Accelerating Progress towards the Economic Empowerment of Rural Women in Ethiopia, Guatemala, Kyrgyzstan, Liberia, Nepal, Niger and Rwanda from 2014 to 2020 – Decentralized Evaluation. Rome and New York: FAO, IFAD, UN Women, and WFP: p 32.

<sup>183</sup> IFAD, 2017. Republic of Mozambique. Country Strategy and Programme Evaluation. Rome: IFAD IOE: p 65.

<sup>184</sup> One of the first activities that it supported was the Programa de construcción de confianza y paz territorial en clave PDET para Chocó, Meta y Guaviare (2017-2019), in which FAO and WFP participated with other partners, although the two RBAs worked in different areas (the former in Meta and Guaviare, the latter in Chocó).

<sup>185</sup> FAO, 2016. Evaluation du programme de pays au Niger. Rome: FAO OED: p 30.

#### Box 11 Competition for funding: views of survey respondents

- Much of the RBAs is not well funded. Some areas of collaboration such as monitoring [the] impact of COVID-19 on food supply and demand are obvious and highly beneficial. Otherwise with resilience/agricultural livelihoods activities, I see WFP clearly competing with FAO for funding. It sets an uncomfortable working environment. Therefore I prefer to collaborate in clearly defined complementary activities (WFP: cash/ FAO: inputs and training).
- The agencies could provide joint pooled funding pots for the RBA. Like the [New York] NY pooled funds.
- I think and strongly believe that a lot could be done jointly by the RBA if we move away from the branding and competition for resources and instead focus on the huge comparative advantages that each of the three RBAs could bring on the table. Together we can achieve a lot and help the world and the people in need to achieve zero hunger and sustainable food security.
- Approaching large scale donors, such as the Green Climate Fund, when FAO can technically support the development and implementation of the project, and IFAD will provide the general political guidance and also will be main implementing partner. This arrangement is also preferred by the Government, when credit and grants are preferred for civil works, equipment, grants and other "hard" commitments.

139. Comparisons are made in many countries between the comparative affluence of WFP and the more restricted resources of FAO, although the bulk of the large WFP budget is the unhappy consequence of the large-scale food assistance that it is called on to provide in humanitarian emergencies, and it often finds it harder to raise funding for the more development-focused elements of its programming.<sup>186</sup> Across countries, joint funding proposals are the exception rather than the rule,<sup>187</sup> and are difficult to develop because of the challenges of reconciling funding cycles and budgeting and administrative procedures (including overhead rates and whether one agency's overheads are added onto those of another). Even the comparatively successful collaborative effort of the KCEP-CRAL project in Kenya, stimulated by donor pressure for joint programming, has faced many difficulties in this regard. Achieving joint funding for the technically well-regarded JP RWEE was an uphill struggle (over two years), and none has yet been secured for the proposed second phase of the programme.

#### Overlap, competition and duplication of work at regional and global levels

140. There is little evidence on RBAC reducing overlap, competition or duplication at the regional level. Deciding the allocation of RBAs' technical responsibilities in the SD3C Sahel initiative (paragraph 115 above) proved to be highly complex, with the ultimate solutions not seen as fully satisfactory by stakeholders – who were concerned that the corporate RBA memorandum of understanding of 2018 was insufficiently precise on mandates and technical roles.

141. FAO and WFP have been able to avert duplication by their joint work on "Hunger Hotspots" reports.<sup>188, 189</sup> They used to produce separate reports on food insecurity priority areas (see Box 12). The joint report is followed by a joint briefing to the Governing Bodies by WFP and FAO Emergency Directors. The RBAs attend meetings of the United Nations General Assembly as a group, which helps to harmonize their messages.

142. More broadly, however, competition between FAO and WFP around mandates is still often identified as a challenge at global level. Planning teams currently responsible for drafting the new FAO medium-term plan and strategic framework and the next WFP strategic plan have worked in close consultation over the last year. Although this has been genuine and constructive collaboration that has helped clarify the agencies' respective objectives and strategies, there is realism about the geopolitical considerations that influence the direction given to each of them, and about the fact that global strategies have only partial influence over RBAs' behaviour at the country level. Better coordination of global strategic

<sup>186</sup> WFP, 2020. Strategic Evaluation of Funding WFP's Work. Rome: WFP OEI: p 36.

<sup>187</sup> The database of collaborative activities (paragraph 38 above) contains 64 activities involving FAO and WFP only, and 65 activities involving FAO, WFP and other partners (excluding IFAD). However, joint implementation does not necessarily mean joint funding; participating entities may each be funding their own elements of the joint activity from different sources.

<sup>188</sup> FAO and WFP, 2021. Hunger hotspots: FAO-WFP early warnings on acute food insecurity. March to July 2021 outlook. Rome: FAO and WFP.

<sup>189</sup> <https://www.theguardian.com/global-development/2021/mar/24/over-30-million-people-one-step-away-from-starvation-un-warns> [accessed 22 May 2021].

planning thus does not guarantee reduction of overlap, competition or duplication in the field. An FAO strategic evaluation found that “following a gradual reduction in international aid, United Nations agencies had become more prone to competition. Interviewees from several institutions emphasized the need to communicate more extensively the differences in FAO’s role from that of the World Food Programme”.<sup>190</sup>

### Funding at the global level

143. As in matters of mandate, the principal questions around reduced competition and strengthened collaboration with regard to funding concern FAO and WFP. Section 1.3 above shows that these agencies’ modes of funding differ significantly. Table 2 (page 8) shows the substantially larger size of the WFP budget, due to its heavy humanitarian responsibilities. The persistent competition around mandates naturally leads to a degree of competition for funding between FAO and WFP, despite the different ways in which these funds are sourced. Increased joint programming could diminish competition over funds at the global level, as at other levels, but from the donors’ perspective this may imply the agreement of joint RBA results frameworks – which the RBAs have been reluctant to develop at the global level (paragraph 102).

### Overlap, competition and duplication of work in common thematic areas

144. At the country level, the JP RWEE brought the RBAs significantly closer together, reducing overlap, competition and duplication with regard to gender and, to some extent (on a small scale in Nepal), other cross-cutting issues such as social inclusion. It was funded by Norway and Sweden, with the resources divided equally among the agencies in a pragmatic decision to make the partnership work. For the RBAs this helped to strengthen the partnership and avoided conflict, but at the country level this had some consequences for implementation, for example with not all beneficiaries being reached with the same package of support. In Nepal the RBAs adopted IFAD’s Gender Action and Learning System (GALS) methodology for mobilizing and empowering women. JP RWEE is collaborating with the Government of Nepal’s IFAD-funded Rural Enterprises Remittances Programme (RERP) to disseminate the GALS methodology within JP RWEE women’s groups, to scale up its use in other areas, and to increase government ownership of the methodology. The coherence between GALS and RERP is an important consideration for sustainability.<sup>191</sup> The RBAs have also introduced GALS successfully in Guatemala, among other countries.

#### Box 12 Hunger hotspots reports

By collaborating to produce the Global Hotspots Report, (as opposed to the two separate reports that they previously produced) FAO and WFP have ensured greater visibility for the product.

- For sure there are benefits. If I ask my team they will say not sure about cost saving due to getting an agreement with [our partner agency], it’s labour intensive. It’s clear that these reports get higher attention now from the humanitarian community than when we did them separately.

RBA informant.

145. At the global level, collaborative efforts are seen to have reduced overlap, competition and duplication in the field of gender. Following the JP RWEE, which is now completing its first phase, the RBAs have successfully designed a new Joint Programme on Gender-Transformative Approaches, funded by the EU (paragraph 19 above). The programme aims at strengthening understanding of gender-transformative approaches of relevant staff and partners; by increasing collaboration, complementarities and synergies across the RBA interventions around gender-transformative approaches; and by promoting an “institutional mindset” shift within each RBA to engage with these approaches.

146. There have also been efforts to develop common approaches around resilience, building on the conceptual framework that the RBAs developed in 2015.<sup>192</sup> These have included the RBAs’ resilience initiative in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Niger and Somalia, coordinated by a team in Rome and

<sup>190</sup> FAO, 2019. 2019. Synthesis of findings and lessons learned from the Strategic Objective evaluations. Rome: FAO OED: p 32.

<sup>191</sup> Mokoro, 2021. Global End-Term Evaluation of the Joint Programme “Accelerating Progress towards the Economic Empowerment of Rural Women” 2014-2020. Presentation of findings of the Nepal case study. Finalized following validation feedback, 19 March 2021.

<sup>192</sup> FAO, IFD and WFP, 2015. Strengthening resilience for food security and nutrition. A Rome-Based Agencies’ conceptual framework for collaboration and partnership. Rome: FAO, IFAD and WFP.

not yet evaluated.<sup>193</sup> The project builds on the RBAs' comparative advantages. In addition to the 2015 conceptual framework, it is grounded in the Committee on World Food Security Framework for Action for Food Security and Nutrition in Protracted Crises, which embraces the contributions of a wider range of entities than just the RBAs.<sup>194</sup> WFP targets the most food-insecure people through food assistance for assets (FFA) interventions, providing food and/or cash transfers to cover households' immediate food needs so they can dedicate time to building assets that reduce the risk of climatic shocks and seasonal hardships. FAO supports farmer and pastoral field schools, along with training in climate-resilient agricultural practices, to help boost production, increase incomes, and diversify livelihoods. IFAD works to strengthen local producers' organizations; promote greater access to rural financial services; and improve the community-based governance of scarce natural resources. In general, however, RBA perceptions of the resilience theme are more about a shared commitment to address an important issue than about the need to reduce overlap or competition. Like many other aspects of the RBAs' work, the resilience theme will require repositioning if food systems are adopted as the core emphasis of their efforts outside the humanitarian sphere. The adoption of a food-systems approach implies collaboration with a wider range of partners, as a food system involves multiple sectors and actors (which the United Nations cannot address alone).

**Box 13 Rome-based agency working group on nutrition-sensitive value chains**

In 2015 an RBA working group on nutrition-sensitive value chains (NSVCs) was established. Having identified NSVCs as a key area of collaboration, the RBAs formed a working group on sustainable food value chains for nutrition, bringing together FAO, IFAD, WFP and Bioversity International and with contributions from the International Food Policy Research Institute. The working group was created to undertake joint actions in the area of NSVCs, and supported the generation of knowledge products, harmonized tools and guidance, and joint advocacy, all in the context of international policy forums. In 2016 it organized a special event during the Committee on World Food Security (CFS) plenary meeting, held in Rome. In March 2017, it organized an online consultation through the Global Forum on Food Security and Nutrition. The consultation allowed broader dissemination of the NSVC framework among development practitioners and researchers, and solicited feedback from them on the relevance of the framework. Concrete outputs from the working group have included the development of: "Nutrition-sensitive value chains: a guide for project design"; a home-grown school feeding resource framework; and an e-learning module on sustainable value chains for nutrition by FAO.

147. Nutrition is the common thematic area where the RBAs have made most progress in reducing overlap, competition and duplication of work – leading to the formal start of United Nations Nutrition on 1 January 2021. This body represents a merger of the United Nations Network for the Scaling Up Nutrition (SUN) movement (established in 2013 by FAO, IFAD, UNICEF, WFP and the World Health Organization) and the United Nations System Standing Committee on Nutrition (established by the United Nations Economic and Social Council in 1977).<sup>195</sup> The RBAs had played important roles in both the previous bodies, but shared the view of some other United Nations entities that, particularly in light of the United Nations reform process, the duplication inherent in operating the two structures was indefensible. FAO is hosting the new body, which is chaired by an Assistant Director General of WHO. UNICEF and WFP provide key staff. Especially while its Vice-President was chairing the Standing Committee, IFAD played a key role in advocating the merger, arguing that to continue the two parallel structures would be wrong; it is now contributing funding for United Nations Nutrition. During the review period, the RBAs at the global level have also collaborated through several working groups, for example on school feeding, minimum dietary diversity for women and nutrition-sensitive value chains (see Box 13), as well as a technical platform on the measurement and reduction of food loss and waste in support of SDG 12.3, which they originally launched in 2015.<sup>196</sup> These initiatives have helped to harmonize the agencies' work in nutrition and reduce the risk of overlap or duplication.

<sup>193</sup> FAO, IFAD and WFP, 2018. Rome-Based Agencies Resilience Initiative. Strengthening the resilience of livelihoods in protracted crisis in the Democratic Republic of [the] Congo, Niger and Somalia. Annual report – year 1. Rome: FAO, IFAD and WFP.

<sup>194</sup> Committee on World Food Security, 2015. Framework for action for food security and nutrition in protracted crises. Rome: CFS.

<sup>195</sup> <https://www.unnutrition.org/> [accessed 21 May 2021].

<sup>196</sup> <https://sdgs.un.org/partnerships/technical-platform-measurement-and-reduction-food-loss-and-waste-support-sdg-123> [accessed 11 August 2021].

## Overlap and duplication of work in joint corporate services

148. As outlined in paragraphs 129-131, numerous arrangements have been made at all levels to share or merge corporate services: less because of an official standard requirement to do so, and more because of the clear opportunities in some cases to avoid overlap and duplication of work and thus reduce operating costs. Because such joint services must interface with significantly different administrative and budgetary structures across the three agencies, however, the complexity of these arrangements can be daunting and the effects in terms of reduced overlap, duplication and costs relatively small. Sometimes the sharing involves other United Nations entities or the majority of a United Nations Country Team, rather than being the result of RBA-specific initiatives.

### 2.3.4 Enhanced sharing of knowledge, lessons and good practice

149. **Finding 6. RBA collaboration has enhanced the sharing of knowledge, lessons and good practice at all levels. Given the three agencies' mandates, it is a natural part of their corporate mindsets to recognize and share each other's knowledge and experience. The depth, quality and practical value of the sharing vary, but in many fields there is significant technical interdependence among the RBAs. Joint knowledge management and learning are simpler to arrange than joint operations, and the RBAs have strengthened their performance in this regard. Mutual technical respect and support are widespread across the three agencies, but this sharing of knowledge, lessons and good practice often occurs in wider United Nations frameworks.**

#### Enhanced sharing of knowledge, lessons and good practice at the country level

150. There are many instances of mutual learning among RBAs (particularly FAO and WFP) at the country level, sometimes involving broader thematic collaboration with other United Nations entities too – as in Indonesia, where the RBAs have shared knowledge and experience on gender, nutrition and humanitarian interventions with each other and with partners in the UNCT, and in Lebanon, where the RBAs are part of the Food Security and Agriculture Sector working group. In Kenya, Niger and the Sahel region, the RBAs are working together on resilience approaches. In Kenya, they are also sharing information and communications technology techniques: for example, lessons from the joint KCEP-CRAL programme were used in developing the digital vouchers now used by FAO in supporting the Ministry of Agriculture to establish a digital platform for input distribution; and the WFP R4 programme<sup>197</sup> provided a system of e-voucher cards for KCEP-CRAL to use. Through such collaboration, the RBAs in Kenya have avoided “reinventing wheels”. In Egypt, there is technical sharing among RBAs, including through their membership of the “Planet Working Group” under the United Nations Partnership Development Framework; but informants in government, donors and the RBAs themselves feel that much more should be done. Constructive knowledge sharing and joint learning are also reported from Nepal, in various fields including gender: this was one of the seven countries in which the JP RWEE approach enhanced the sharing of knowledge, lessons and good practice.

151. In Colombia, as in Indonesia and Niger, the preparation of the joint country strategy stimulated the exchange of knowledge and approaches, but – as in many countries – informants note that such sharing is not systematic or structured, and that more could be achieved in this regard. Fill the Nutrient Gap studies, using a methodology developed by WFP, together with partners including the International Food Policy Research Institute and UNICEF, have been a useful forum for joint learning and knowledge sharing in many countries (the WFP website currently lists 23<sup>198</sup>) and have been used to enhance the nutrition strategy in several countries (including Ecuador, Indonesia, Pakistan and Somalia<sup>199</sup>), as well as to provide inputs to UNSDCF formulation and national United Nations Food Systems Summit dialogues in some countries. Recently, the RBAs have been involved in joint United Nations assessments of the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on food security and agriculture in several countries, including Burkina Faso, Colombia, Egypt, Iraq, Nepal, Pakistan and Peru. This work has involved the rapid sharing of knowledge and emerging good practice, and RBA contributions to United Nations support for COVID-19 responses in countries including Nepal, Niger, Pakistan and Peru. Particularly focused RBA contributions have concerned school feeding,

<sup>197</sup> Risk reduction, risk transfer, prudent risk taking and risk reserves: <https://www.wfp.org/r4-rural-resilience-initiative> [accessed 11 June 2021].

<sup>198</sup> <https://www.wfp.org/publications/2020-fill-nutrient-gap> [accessed 27 July 2021].

<sup>199</sup> WFP, 2020. Maximizing social protection's contribution to human capital development. Fill the Nutrient Gap analysis. Rome: WFP Nutrition Division.

with FAO, UNICEF and WFP issuing early guidance on mitigating the effects of the pandemic on the food and nutrition of schoolchildren, leading to the conversion of school meals to take-home rations.<sup>200</sup>

152. Overall, sharing knowledge and learning together are simpler than designing, funding and delivering joint operations. As an RBA informant in Peru put it, “we develop many studies together. Much more than concrete interventions in field operations.”

#### **Box 14 Good Rome-based agency collaboration practice: thoughts of survey respondents**

- Staff loans between the two agencies are very good practice of RBA collaboration and should be incentivized.
- Good practices: management and coordination of RBA calendar of membership-related events; sharing of best practices - particularly on virtual platforms for RBA Governing Body meetings; coordination of annual RBA Governing Body meetings; access to premises through common badge reader system. Additional opportunities include joint Governing Body documents processing system and capacity, greater coordination on updating membership information and common IT platforms.
- Stronger collaboration earned our office an RBA Award.
- In Malawi there has been some good effort between FAO and WFP in joint programming around resilience where FAO handles the software skills development and WFP comes in with the FFA to establish some productive assets. This division of labour has been excellent.
- In Cambodia, WFP-FAO collaboration on Inter-Agency Social Protection Assessment for Home Grown School Feeding (HGSF) in 2018 provided concrete evidence that contributed to decision making from [the Government] to have a national HGSF programme from school year 2019-2020.
- In Kenya, the establishment of technical working group at national level with [an] annual rotational chair among the RBA with a permanent secretariat (project management unit) and this structure cascaded to regional level are great lessons.
- Implementation of Joint Programme on Women Economic Empowerment has produced better results on the ground and provided opportunities to all three agencies to learn more from each other. It has also contributed to the optimization of the resources and enhanced livelihoods of poor rural people.
- I have a good experience on coordination with RBA for conducting the "SABER" exercise in Bangladesh country office in 2019. It was very successful.

#### **Enhanced sharing of knowledge, lessons and good practice at the regional level**

153. There is limited evidence of this sharing at the regional level. Preparation of the SD3C Sahel initiative has involved the collation of experience and approaches from many years of RBA work in the region, with the intention of bringing this to scale. Examples of this foundational experience are the three RBAs' work on livelihood resilience in Niger, and the joint programme of FAO and WFP in Chad following the 2018 crisis there. The SD3C Sahel initiative has a component focused on knowledge management and monitoring and evaluation (M&E) for policy dialogue; but implementation of the programme has not started yet. In southern Africa, the RBAs held a regional consultative meeting in May 2021 about their collaborative experience and themes for potential further work together.

#### **Enhanced sharing of knowledge, lessons and good practice at the global level**

154. South-South and triangular cooperation (SSTC) is, by definition, an important platform for the sharing of knowledge, lessons and good practice. It is also a strong field of RBA collaboration: all three agencies have dedicated teams working in this area, and in 2018 they signed a roadmap to guide their work together.<sup>201</sup> RBAC on SSTC is strongly supported by China, and with that support WFP launched a first wave of four SSTC pilot projects in 2019, implemented with AO in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Ecuador, Kenya and Sri Lanka. These activities strongly emphasize the sharing of knowledge, lessons and good practice.<sup>202</sup> The concept and practice of SSTC are inevitably influenced by political considerations, which sometimes give prominence to the idea and sometimes make putting it into operation more complicated. Despite the commitment of the RBAs to collaborate in this field and the occasional prominent attention that

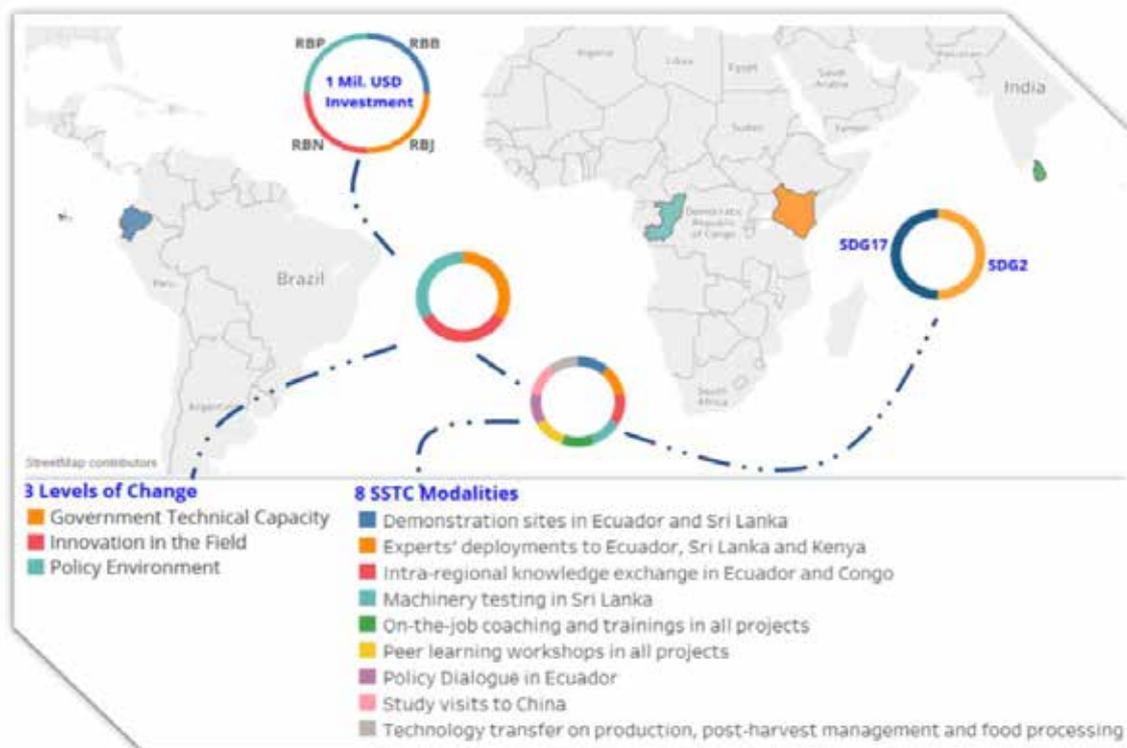
<sup>200</sup> FAO, WFP and UNICEF, 2020. *Mitigating the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on food and nutrition of schoolchildren*. Rome and New York: FAO, WFP and UNICEF. See also WFP, 2020. How are we compensating for the missing daily meal? Rome: WFP School Based Programme Service.

<sup>201</sup> FAO, IFAD and WFP, 2018. *Joint Roadmap towards BAPA+40*. Rome: FAO, IFAD and WFP.

<sup>202</sup> WFP, not dated. Key achievements and stock-take of lessons learned from WFP SSTC field pilot initiative in 2019. Rome: WFP.

it receives, SSTC operations are complex to organize and the resources available to the three RBA SSTC teams are limited.

**Figure 7. South-South and triangular cooperation implemented by WFP with FAO under the WFP-China South-South and triangular cooperation partnership portfolio**



Source: WFP.<sup>203</sup>

155. At the global level, the services that the FAO Investment Centre (CFI) provides to IFAD (and other clients) are more than simple service provision. Informants view the Investment Centre's work as an important way for FAO to share its technical experience with its clients. They described it as the provision of a knowledge "package" to IFAD and noted the degree of innovation that Investment Centre experts brought to the work of IFAD. However, despite the cost-sharing arrangement (see Box 15), IFAD must allocate an administrative budget (and occasionally grant funds) for Investment Centre services, and is not insensitive to the cost of these services. On balance, as Box 15 indicates, the collaboration built around Investment Centre services is more than purely transactional.

**Box 15 IFAD and the FAO Investment Centre**

The FAO Investment Centre is a key contributor to IFAD programmes. During 2017-2020, CFI participated in the design of 58 projects for IFAD, out of a total of 113 projects. Over the five-year period 2015-2019, it supported IFAD-financed investment projects for a total value of USD 4.3 billion. The parties have a cost-sharing arrangement, and some informants view the collaboration as a genuine partnership while others view it as more transactional. The parties have formalized their long-standing collaboration through a 2019 MOU.

- Working with the Investment Centre is a true joint partnership between IFAD and FAO, both contributing financial, technical and personnel resources to the achievement of a joint objective. Staff loans between the two agencies are very good practice of RBA collaboration and should be incentivized.
- The collaboration with FAO Investment Centre on project design and related services is a real, concrete one that delivers benefits to both parties. Beyond that, collaboration is hard work and offers limited results.

Online survey respondents from IFAD.

<sup>203</sup> WFP, not dated. Key achievements and stock-take of lessons learned from WFP's SSTC field pilot initiative in 2019. Rome: WFP: p 3.

156. The evaluation field is an active arena for building and using a community of global RBA practice. The Evaluation for Food Security, Agriculture and Rural Development joint initiative of the RBAs and the CGIAR which receives funding from all three RBAs, is a community of practice with over 900 members (up from 150 in 2018).<sup>204</sup> In 2020 it facilitated online discussion on 11 topics, which attracted 150 contributions. Eighteen of its 26 blog posts in 2020 were from RBA staff.<sup>205</sup> However, RBA informants stress the value of collaborating with other partners on evaluation too. For IFAD, this means that the Evaluation Cooperation Group of the international financial institutions may be a more useful partner than the United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG), which is the key apex body for FAO and WFP.

157. The annual report on the State of Food Insecurity and Nutrition in the World (SOFI), a joint product of the RBAs with UNICEF and WHO that is coordinated by FAO, is another opportunity for the RBAs to enhance knowledge sharing. Informants feel that this opportunity is not fully exploited, arguing that it should be made more than just an advocacy document and should instead inform policy and operations more directly. As one informant put it, the SOFI report “is written as a document with evidence but doesn’t make the ‘so what’ case”. However, another informant described it as “a success story of agencies which are very competitive at field level”, and the SOFI reports are a prominent platform for RBA advocacy and communications on food insecurity.

158. The RBAs provide the secretariat of the Committee on World Food Security (CFS), to which 138 United Nations Member States belong.<sup>206,207</sup> This is another important arena of knowledge and lesson sharing among and beyond the RBAs. In 2020-2021, the RBAs have been learning quickly and jointly, usually in broader United Nations frameworks, about the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on food security, and how to address them.<sup>208,209</sup> Under the auspices of UNEG, the RBAs and the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) worked to pool knowledge and evidence about COVID-19 and food security.<sup>210</sup> The RBAs also supported a study by a Committee on World Food Security high-level panel of experts on the impact of the pandemic on food security and nutrition.<sup>211</sup> Other RBAC in this area has included joint analysis of acute food insecurity hotspots by FAO and WFP and work by FAO, WFP and UNICEF on the effects of the pandemic on the food and nutrition of schoolchildren (paragraph 151). The FAO COVID-19 Response and Recovery Programme notes that “the Rome-based agencies’ partnership for resilience and the Global Network Against Food Crises... are critical coordination mechanisms for the programme.”<sup>212</sup>

#### Box 16 The Committee on World Food Security

I think if one does it on one’s own it lacks the richness of the perspective of the others. So, you’ll always lose the dynamic of the others. It’s important that the three are obliged to collaborate, it’s not easy, but it’s important. A bit like the CFS products themselves, we could write them on our own or like we have, the mechanisms require a consensus. The process is as important as the product itself. The safe space for governments to exchange ideas is important... You need multi-stakeholder thinking to make a huge difference in policy change. In CFS the RBAs coming together brings capacity, political buy in, that political consensus at the higher level is the value added. And it’s in the spirit of the UN reform... keep CFS in context. It’s a UN platform and the RBAs try to make it operational. It’s a UN body that is still trying to find its feet. The CFS is an example of RBA collaboration in the context of a UN platform. We need to keep it in a UN context.

<sup>204</sup> <https://www.evalforward.org/> [accessed 22 May 2021].

<sup>205</sup> EvalForward, 2021. EvalForward periodic report to Executive Group: looking back on 2020 and forward into 2021. Rome: EvalForward.

<sup>206</sup> <http://www.fao.org/cfs/about-cfs/secretariat/vn/> [accessed 22 May 2021].

<sup>207</sup> <http://www.fao.org/cfs/about-cfs/membership/en/> [accessed 22 May 2021].

<sup>208</sup> FAO and WFP, 2020. FAO-WFP early warning analysis of acute food insecurity hotspots. October 2020. Rome: FAO and WFP.

<sup>209</sup> FAO, WFP and UNICEF, 2020. Mitigating the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on food and nutrition of schoolchildren. Rome and New York: FAO, WFP and UNICEF.

<sup>210</sup> United Nations Evaluation Group, 2021. *Evidence summary on COVID-19 and food security*. Main report. New York: UNEG.

<sup>211</sup> Committee on World Food Security High-Level Panel of Experts, 2020. Impacts of COVID-19 on food security and nutrition: developing effective policy responses to address the hunger and malnutrition pandemic. Rome: CFS.

<sup>212</sup> FAO, 2020. Boosting smallholder resilience for recovery. Protecting the most vulnerable, promoting economic recovery and enhancing risk management capacities. Rome: FAO COVID-19 Response and Recovery Programme: p 3.

159. WFP, the United Nations Fund for Population Activities (UNFPA), the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and UNICEF have developed the UN Partner Portal, “a platform for civil society organizations (CSOs) to engage with the UN on partnership opportunities for the benefit of those we serve”.<sup>213</sup> The Portal aims to facilitate civil society organizations’ access to partnerships with United Nations entities and to help them submit concept notes to them for possible funding. To date, FAO and IFAD have not joined this initiative, although decentralization and localization trends (accelerated in some cases by the COVID-19 pandemic) might make it beneficial for them to do so.

### Enhanced sharing of knowledge and lessons on common thematic areas

160. As noted in paragraph 153, resilience is a thematic area on which there is extensive sharing of knowledge, experience and ideas – although this does not always lead to direct operational collaboration in a sector where climate change is making the need for action increasingly urgent. This was the case in Somalia, where FAO, WFP and UNICEF developed a joint resilience strategy; and in Syria, FAO and WFP worked closely together on resilience issues. In neither case did these collaborations lead to joint activity. RBA joint programming for resilience building in Kenya’s arid and semi-arid lands is seen as offering an institutional learning opportunity in terms of development outcomes and operational and institutional frameworks.<sup>214</sup> FAO and IFAD have undertaken joint learning over several years on pastoralism, including through their 2016 joint evaluation synthesis<sup>215</sup> and the Pastoralist Knowledge Hub, which includes a knowledge repository.<sup>216,217</sup> However, “the structure of the knowledge repository and more broadly of the knowledge management component of the project were not as detailed as necessary in light of the exceptional difficulties associated with the state of knowledge on pastoralism and the competing interests around it”.<sup>218</sup> A WFP evaluation found that “the RBAs have a long-standing resilience agenda, but... joint implementation has been of varied quality and driven by funding opportunities rather than agreements”.<sup>219</sup>

161. Linked to joint work on resilience, the monitoring of food (in)security is another thematic area in which FAO and WFP, in particular, collaborate within a much larger framework. They are leading members of the Global Partnership that leads the Integrated Food Security Phase Classification Global Strategic Programme, and are co-sponsors, with the international Food Policy Research Institute, of the Food Security Information Network (FSIN).<sup>220</sup> An evaluation found that work in this area had made valuable progress (see Box 17), primarily for allocating humanitarian resources; and that “the IPC [Integrated Food Security Phase Classification] is valued most for its collective and consensus-based approach. This is both its greatest strength and its greatest weakness”<sup>221</sup> (see Box 17 for more details). Through the Food Security Information Network (FSIN), FAO and WFP have engaged in work on methodology for the measurement of resilience,<sup>222</sup> although the two organizations do not yet have an agreed common approach on this issue. Their membership of the Global Network Against Food Crises (paragraphs 15, 115, and 158) underpins the production of annual Global Reports on Food Crises.<sup>223</sup> They are active in reporting on hunger hotspots (paragraphs 141, 158) and in the presentation of monitoring updates to the United Nations Security Council on food security in countries with conflict situations.<sup>224</sup>

162. Nutrition is an area where, through the various restructurings summarized in paragraph 147 above, the RBAs have retained strong technical relations, sharing knowledge and approaches and focusing,

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<sup>213</sup> <https://www.unpartnerportal.org/landing/> [accessed 23 July 2021].

<sup>214</sup> FAO, IFD and WFP, 2015. Collaboration for strengthening resilience. Country case study: Kenya. Rome: FAO: p 10.

<sup>215</sup> FAO and IFAD, 2016. FAO’s and IFAD’s engagement in pastoral development. Joint evaluation synthesis. Rome: FAO OED and IFAD IOE.

<sup>216</sup> <http://www.fao.org/pastoralist-knowledge-hub/en/> [accessed 22 May 2021].

<sup>217</sup> <http://www.fao.org/pastoralist-knowledge-hub/knowledge-repository/recent-releases/en/> [accessed 22 May 2021].

<sup>218</sup> FAO, 2020. Cluster evaluation of FAO’s contribution to the Pastoralist Knowledge Hub. Rome: FAO OED Project Evaluation Series 04/2020: p 12.

<sup>219</sup> WFP, 2019. Strategic Evaluation of WFP Support for Enhanced Resilience. Rome: WFP OEV: p 47.

<sup>220</sup> FAO, 2019. Final Evaluation of the Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC) Global Strategic Programme (GSP), 2014-2018. Rome: FAO OED: pp 14, 16.

<sup>221</sup> FAO, 2019. Final Evaluation of the Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC) Global Strategic Programme (GSP), 2014-2018. Rome: FAO OED: p 71.

<sup>222</sup> <https://www.fsinplatform.org/resilience-measurement> [accessed 28 July 2021].

<sup>223</sup> Food Security Information Network, 2021. 2021 global report on food crises. Joint analysis for better decisions. Rome: FSIN.

<sup>224</sup> <https://www.wfp.org/publications/monitoring-food-security-countries-conflict-situations> [accessed 28 July 2021].

among other things, on nutrition-sensitive value chains (see Box 413).<sup>225</sup> FAO, WFP and UNICEF have shared knowledge and lessons in the development of their respective strategies to enhance social protection.<sup>226</sup>

#### **Box 17 Integrated Food Security Phase Classification**

The growing influence of the AFI [Acute Food Insecurity scale] is primarily within the international humanitarian community. In many ways it has achieved its objective of becoming the international global standard for analysing acute food insecurity, and is highly influential at the global level. Despite the GSP's key objective to institutionalize the IPC within government in the countries where it has been rolled out, national governments are currently the least significant users of the IPC in terms of evidence of how they are using it in decision-making.

FAO, 2019. Final evaluation of the Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC) Global Strategic Programme (GSP), 2014-2018. Rome: FAO OED: p 70.

163. At the global level, joint evaluation synthesis can provide a good opportunity to share knowledge in a thematic area without the complications of conducting a joint evaluation. Joint RBA evaluations are likely to be a complex challenge unless they are assessing joint RBA programmes or projects – in which case there is a better chance that they will go smoothly. The 2016 joint evaluation synthesis of FAO and IFAD engagement in pastoral development is a good example. It covered 43 evaluations conducted between 2003 and 2013 as well as other relevant documents, and included a mapping of all relevant projects undertaken in this period by FAO and IFAD.<sup>227</sup> More recently, the three RBA evaluation offices, together with the evaluation office of UNIDO, have been working together to gather evidence on effective interventions to maintain or restore food security during or after times of crisis – such as the COVID-19 pandemic (paragraph 158).

#### **Enhanced sharing of knowledge and lessons for joint corporate services**

164. At the country level, there is little evidence of RBAC leading to enhanced sharing of knowledge or lessons around joint corporate services. As noted in paragraph 148, RBA offices at all levels do take the opportunity to share services where this makes practical sense, and they do in some cases refine the arrangements as they gain experience and find this necessary. At the country level, all such sharing and learning is often within broader frameworks of shared facilities and services across the UNCT. At the global level there is constant learning and sharing of mutually beneficial experience in the RBAs' Common Procurement Team, but the overall scale of the Common Procurement Team's work is relatively modest (paragraph 131 above) and the RBAs' deepening of knowledge about joint procurement is unlikely to increase it significantly. In the background of the Common Procurement Team's work is the much larger-scale effort of the High-Level Committee on Management Procurement Network, established by the United Nations in 2007 to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the procurement function within the United Nations system, through collaborative arrangements, simplification and harmonization of procurement practices.<sup>228</sup> The RBAs are among the 40 entities represented in the network, and some RBA informants consider it a more important platform for coordination, collaboration and learning in the field of procurement than the Common Procurement Team.

### **2.3.5 Cross-cutting issues in Rome-based agency collaboration**

165. **Finding 7. RBA collaboration has had varying results with regard to cross-cutting issues.**

- **The results of RBA collaboration reflect and embed the three agencies' commitment to gender equality and women's empowerment, although the extent to which these commitments carry through to operational practice is varied. RBAC around gender is well established at headquarters level.**
- **Protection principles are well embedded in RBAC, within the broader frameworks of humanitarian action.**

<sup>225</sup> MOPAN, 2019. Synthesis Report. Country-level collaboration between FAO, IFAD and WFP. Paris: MOPAN: August 2019: p 10.

<sup>226</sup> WFP, 2019. Update of WFP's safety nets policy. Policy evaluation. Rome: WFP OEV: p 21.

<sup>227</sup> FAO and IFAD, 2016. FAO's and IFAD's engagement in pastoral development. Joint evaluation synthesis. Rome: FAO OED and IFAD IOE.

<sup>228</sup> <https://unsceb.org/pn> [accessed 22 May 2021].

- **Commitment to environmental safeguards and sustainability is clear, but again the evidence on practical mainstreaming in RBA collaborative activities is mixed.**
- **The RBAs have given less explicit attention to social inclusion and equity.**

## Gender

### Box 18 Rome-based agency approaches to gender

The three Rome-based agencies use different delivery models and take different approaches to gender equality and women's empowerment. With a large proportion of its portfolio centred on humanitarian assistance interventions, WFP follows a direct-implementation approach for most of its programmes and places great emphasis on strengthening gender responsiveness in its country offices and non-government implementing partners. IFAD, as a development finance institution, does not implement programmes directly. Rather, it uses well-specified project design and approval criteria to promote gender-responsive and transformative approaches in programmes and implementing partner institutions. IFAD also makes specific allocations to awareness-raising and capacity-development activities in all of its projects and sets a quota for women beneficiaries in negotiations with national governments.

(FAO, 2019. Evaluation of FAO's work on gender. Rome: FAO OED: p 15.)

FAO contributes to reducing gender inequalities through its work on norms and standards, data and information, policy dialogue, capacity development, knowledge and technologies, partnerships, and advocacy and communication.

At the global and regional levels, FAO advocates for sharpening the focus of high-level dialogue and decision-making regarding food security and nutrition to ensure that gender equality and women's empowerment issues are adequately addressed.

<http://www.fao.org/gender/background/en/> [accessed 28 July 2021].

166. All three RBAs are strongly committed to gender equality and women's empowerment, although their approaches differ (see box below). Their commitment is reflected in each agency's work and in their collaborative activities, guided by their gGender working group (paragraph 17). At headquarters level, the work of this group (usefully supported by the Member States' gender group) involves joint learning and knowledge management as well as advocacy, enhancement of approaches, and training. For example, the working group's structured peer review process in the context of the United Nations System-Wide Action Plan (paragraph 20 above), monitoring against 17 gender indicators, has stimulated dialogue on strengths and weaknesses. A WFP evaluation describes "a strong GEWE relationship with the Rome-based agencies".<sup>229</sup>

167. Gender is a key common thematic area in which the RBAs have enhanced their sharing of lessons and knowledge, at both country and global levels – often with other partners as well. In Nepal, for example, IFAD shared its Gender Action Learning System with WFP and its rural development approach with FAO, WFP and UN Women. The Joint Programme on Accelerating Progress towards the Economic Empowerment of Rural Women, which the RBAs carried out with UN Women, was the flagship collaborative activity specifically focused on gender during the review period. The recent evaluation of this programme found that "there has been strong internal coherence between the agencies and between the JP RWEE objectives and agency mandates. The JP RWEE is built on comparative advantages of each agency and addresses the multifaceted issues around women's economic empowerment and is consistent with local demands and contexts. Working as one has been more challenging and took time to take off initially."<sup>230</sup>

168. Gender is a key dimension of the RBAs' resilience initiative in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Niger and Somalia. Interviews and programme documentation suggest strong attention to gender and results in terms of increased engagement of women in decision making, increased representation in groups, and increased enrolment of girls in schools. This cross-cutting issue is also integrated in the design of the SD3C Sahel initiative,<sup>231</sup> although neither the agreement between FAO and WFP (and later IFAD) with

<sup>229</sup> WFP, 2020. Evaluation of the Gender Policy (2015-2020). Rome: WFP OEV: p 36.

<sup>230</sup> FAO, IFAD, UN Women and WFP, 2021. Global End-Term Evaluation of the Joint Programme on Accelerating Progress towards the Economic Empowerment of Rural Women in Ethiopia, Guatemala, Kyrgyzstan, Liberia, Nepal, Niger and Rwanda from 2014 to 2020 – Decentralized Evaluation. Rome and New York: FAO, IFAD, UN Women, and WFP: p ix.

<sup>231</sup> IFAD, 2020. République du Niger. Programme conjoint Sahel en réponse aux Défis COVID-19, Conflits et Changements climatiques (SD3C) FAO/FIDA/PAM/ G5 Sahel + Sénégal. Niamey: IFAD.

the G5 Sahel Secretariat nor the action plan for the initiative specifically mentions gender. In Mozambique, an evaluation of the joint MDG 1 programme found that “the gender dimension in [the] programme’s design and planning is very weak” and “the programme periodic reporting system did not include explicitly gender disaggregated data... Surprisingly, despite [the fact that] women are the principal farmers, that provide most of the agricultural labour in Mozambique..., and increasingly are heading rural households, the agricultural components’ proposal documents do not mention women and gender inequalities, both in the situation analysis and in the actions proposed.”<sup>232</sup> The Integrated Food Security Phase Classification is also criticized for its “blind spots”, including “disaggregation by gender, socio-economic status and other determinants of marginalization”.<sup>233</sup>

### Social inclusion and equity

169. There is limited evidence of these cross-cutting issues being explicitly addressed in RBA collaborative activities. The RBAs have done some work together on indigenous peoples in Indonesia. In Colombia, FAO and WFP are active with regard to the challenges of social inclusion for Venezuelan migrants and to the broader national challenges of peace and reconciliation. The COVID-19 pandemic has created many new social and economic inclusion challenges as usual migration and trade patterns are disrupted (see Box 19). The RBAs’ resilience initiative referred to above emphasizes the importance of including and benefitting young people. GEWE and social inclusion are related concerns, and the recent evaluation of the JP RWEE found that the programme gave some, but not sufficient, attention to social inclusion. “The evaluation team has not been made aware of studies which assess the level of social inclusion and whether the selection criteria for participating in groups may have resulted in exclusion of some groups in some contexts. Overall, the RWEE targets marginalized rural women...”<sup>234</sup> In Guatemala, for example, it targeted rural women in some of the poorest localities in the country. FAO and IFAD have worked together on issues of equity, marginalization and the engagement of youth in agriculture – including through the creation (with the World Bank) of a Rural Livelihoods Information System.<sup>235</sup>

#### Box 19 Supporting COVID-19-affected groups in Burkina Faso

In Burkina Faso, FAO and WFP worked together to find solutions to the increased numbers of internally displaced people due to border closures resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic. The numbers and needs have increased significantly.

- Closure of borders did have an impact on food distribution and it also had an impact on availability on the markets, including the [internally displaced persons]. WFP did a quick assessment of impact and had to redirect their targeting strategy to incorporate the vulnerable populations. At the same time FAO worked with some of the women who were small traders who did not have support. They had to find a way to put together packages to support them. It’s an area we are reporting on for 2020 collective results – on impact of COVID on families, also.

Burkina Faso informant.

### Environment, natural resource management and climate change safeguards

170. Evidence is limited on this cross-cutting issue too. Environment and natural resource management are clearly major concerns in the agriculture sector in which FAO and IFAD (in particular) work, but they are not prominent in documentation or discussion about RBA collaboration. Some informants call for a much stronger joint response by the RBAs to the three planetary crises of climate change, the loss of biodiversity and ecosystem integrity, and pollution. In Indonesia, despite the importance of environmental issues in agriculture, government informants say that the RBAs are still speaking and acting separately on this and other cross-cutting issues.

<sup>232</sup> DAI, 2020. Final evaluation of the programme “Accelerate Progress Towards Millennium Development Goal 1C (MDG1.C Programme)”. Maputo: DAI: pp 38, 39.

<sup>233</sup> FAO, 2019. Final evaluation of the integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC) Global Strategic Programme (GSP), 2014-2018. Rome: FAO OED: p 68.

<sup>234</sup> FAO, IFAD, UN Women and WFP, 2021. Global End-Term Evaluation of the Joint Programme on Accelerating Progress towards the Economic Empowerment of Rural Women in Ethiopia, Guatemala, Kyrgyzstan, Liberia, Nepal, Niger and Rwanda from 2014 to 2020 – Decentralized Evaluation. Rome and New York: FAO, IFAD, UN Women, and WFP: p 31.

<sup>235</sup> FAO, 2017. Evaluation of FAO’s contribution to the reduction of rural poverty through Strategic Programme 3. Rome: FAO OED: pp 17, 21.

171. The three pilot joint country strategies emphasize environmental sustainability. One of the planned outputs of the draft Niger strategy is that “targeted populations benefit from adequate climatic services and awareness on climate related shocks to enhance their resilience”.<sup>236</sup> Resilience and climate change is one of the five areas of RBAC identified in the strategy for Colombia, and one of the outputs is intended to be a “joint action plan for joining initiatives on natural resource management, resilience, climate change and food security and nutrition”.<sup>237,238</sup> The Indonesia strategy’s thematic approach to sustainable food systems refers to “building resilience across the food system to mitigate and adapt to the risks of climate change and ensure environmental sustainability for future generations and ensuring all interventions are consistent with the Sustainable Food Systems approach of addressing environmental, economic and social parameters”.<sup>239</sup>

172. The RBAs’ resilience initiative in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Niger and Somalia has undertaken work to combat land degradation and support climate adaptation in Niger. Environmental and climate issues are integrated in the SD3C Sahel initiative through a focus on resilience to climate change, the distribution of kits, and activities focusing on skills and practices that promote climate resilience.<sup>240</sup> But the JP RWEE programme evaluation found that “environmental practices have been selectively pursued in some of the countries and by some agencies but have not been consistently incorporated in the design of interventions”.<sup>241</sup> An evaluation of the joint MDG 1 programme in Mozambique found that “the programme did not include a specific strategy to focus or to mainstream environment and climate change issues in its logic of intervention”.<sup>242</sup>

### Protection

173. As major actors in the humanitarian field, FAO and WFP subscribe to the four protection principles set out under the Humanitarian Charter (although they are not members of the Global Protection cluster – WFP is an observer).<sup>243</sup> However, collaboration around these principles occurs in the broader framework of humanitarian action coordinated by the Inter-Agency Standing Committee, of which FAO and WFP are full members. The two agencies’ humanitarian activities embed the protection principles as part of this global system, not because of any specific RBA collaboration.

### 2.3.6 Survey findings: overview of the outcomes of Rome-based agency collaboration

174. The evaluation’s online survey asked “in your experience, what outcomes has RBA collaboration achieved to date?” Respondents’ ratings of the potential achievements shown in the questionnaire are summarized in Table 10 and Table 11. They could answer with one to five stars, or no star, meaning that they did not know or considered the question inapplicable. One star meant RBAC had no effect, five meant it had substantial positive effects. The average scores in the tables exclude responses with no star.

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<sup>236</sup> FAO, IFAD and WFP, 2020. Joint Rome-Based Agency Country Strategic Plan: Niger. Niamey: FAO, IFAD and WFP: draft: p 12.

<sup>237</sup> FAO, IFAD and WFP, not dated. *Plan conjunto RBA en Colombia*. Bogotá: FAO, IFAD and WFP: p 1.

<sup>238</sup> FAO, IFAD and WFP, not dated. *Summary. RBA joint plan in Colombia*. Bogotá: FAO, IFAD and WFP: np.

<sup>239</sup> FAO, IFAD and WFP, 2020. UN Rome Based Agencies’ Joint Country Strategic Plan (2021-2025) in Indonesia. Jakarta: FAO, IFAD and WFP. Final draft: p 15.

<sup>240</sup> IFAD, 2020. République du Niger. Programme conjoint Sahel en réponse aux Défis COVID-19, Conflits et Changements climatiques (SD3C) FAO/FIDA/PAM/ G5 Sahel + Sénégal. Niamey: IFAD.

<sup>241</sup> FAO, IFAD, UN Women and WFP, 2021. Global End-Term Evaluation of the Joint Programme on Accelerating Progress towards the Economic Empowerment of Rural Women in Ethiopia, Guatemala, Kyrgyzstan, Liberia, Nepal, Niger and Rwanda from 2014 to 2020 – Decentralized Evaluation. Rome and New York: FAO, IFAD, UN Women, and WFP: p 57.

<sup>242</sup> DAI, 2020. Final evaluation of the programme “Accelerate Progress Towards Millennium Development Goal 1C (MDG1.C Programme)”. Maputo: DAI: p 44.

<sup>243</sup> WFP, 2016. *Protection guidance manual*. Rome: WFP Emergencies and Transitions Unit (OSZPH), Programme and Policy Division.

**Table 10. Survey: what outcomes has Rome-based agency collaboration achieved to date? Headquarters, regional and country levels**

	HQ	Regional	Country	Total
Stronger coordination between Rome-based agencies	2.72	2.81	3.06	2.88
Avoidance of unnecessary overlap, competition and duplication of work	2.33	2.57	2.69	2.52
Enhanced sharing of knowledge and good practice	2.95	3.17	3.03	3.01
More effective delivery of services for beneficiaries with better results in terms of food security, livelihoods, capacity-strengthening and resilience	2.57	2.80	2.91	2.75
Increased capacity to reflect cross-cutting issues such as gender, social inclusion and equity, and climate change	2.60	2.89	2.94	2.79
<b>Average rating</b>	<b>2.64</b>	<b>2.85</b>	<b>2.93</b>	<b>2.79</b>

Source: evaluation online survey.

**Table 11. Survey: what outcomes has Rome-based agency collaboration achieved to date? FAO, IFAD and WFP respondents**

	FAO	IFAD	WFP	Total
Stronger coordination between Rome-based agencies	2.89	3.00	2.69	2.88
Avoidance of unnecessary overlap, competition and duplication of work	2.37	2.68	2.47	2.52
Enhanced sharing of knowledge & good practice	2.86	3.28	2.82	3.01
More effective delivery of services for beneficiaries with better results in terms of food security, livelihoods, capacity-strengthening and resilience	2.63	2.89	2.71	2.75
Increased capacity to reflect cross-cutting issues such as gender, social inclusion and equity, and climate change	2.59	3.04	2.71	2.79
<b>Average rating</b>	<b>2.67</b>	<b>2.98</b>	<b>2.68</b>	<b>2.79</b>

Source: evaluation online survey.

(In these two tables, the number of respondents with an opinion on each of the five subquestions ranged from 345 to 367.)

175. Overall, these survey responses reflect the mixed picture and modest achievements summarized in Findings 4-7 above. Views about the outcomes become slightly more positive moving from headquarters through regional to country level. IFAD respondents rated performance slightly better than the almost identical scores given by FAO and WFP respondents. Of the types of outcome, enhanced sharing of knowledge and good practice achieved the most positive rating, and the avoidance of unnecessary overlap, competition and duplication of work was the area in which least progress was deemed to have been made.

## **2.4 FACTORS AFFECTING THE EFFECTIVENESS OF ROME-BASED AGENCY COLLABORATION**

### **2.4.1 Introduction**

176. Evaluation question 3 concerns the factors that have enabled or hindered the effectiveness of RBA collaboration. This section first addresses the enabling and impeding factors inherent in the global, regional and country context for RBAC. It then considers the influence of RBA governance arrangements, and then presents findings on the extent to which the organizational structure and culture in and between or among the RBAs have affected RBAC. The consistency and compatibility of administrative and programming processes and procedures are then assessed. Finally, this section presents findings on the resourcing of RBAC.

## 2.4.2 The context for Rome-based agency collaboration

177. **Finding 8. The global, regional and country contexts present a spectrum of support and constraints for RBA collaboration:**

- **Emergency response contexts provide a clear and conducive framework for RBAC within broader United Nations response structures.**
- **Elsewhere, government attitudes range from strong support for collaboration to indifference, or dismay about perceived duplication and competition.**
- **Two developments combine challenge with opportunity.**
  - **First, United Nations reform and the introduction of the UNSDCF reconfigure the institutional environment for RBAC, but do not make it irrelevant.**
  - **Secondly, countries' shift to middle-income status means the RBAs may collaborate in different kinds of work with better-resourced governments, beyond the conventional aid paradigm.**
- **Donor support for RBAC is not as strong or coherent in practice as donor advocacy for it implies.**
- **Similarly, RBA leadership expresses a spectrum of support and scepticism about collaboration: recognizing its many advantages, but in some cases doubtful about system-wide requirements and procedures.**

### Country context

178. Many aspects of country context influence the prospects for, and effectiveness of, RBA collaboration. In countries where the context is dominated by the need for emergency humanitarian response, RBA roles and RBAC are mainly framed by the broader United Nations response and the principal concern is clarity and efficiency in the working relations between FAO and WFP. There are other countries where humanitarian need is embedded in other complex issues and factors. RBA informants in Lebanon said that “we worked out all the areas of collaboration, but major difficulties then afflicted Lebanon: revolution, financial crisis, COVID-19, the Beirut blast, these all delayed implementation and keep changing the plans and priorities... everything we do in Lebanon is collaboration, you can't work in Lebanon without collaboration... It's a constantly changing environment, it is not a cruising altitude, it is a rollercoaster, all agencies have to deal with this”. In Mozambique, the current increase in emergency response need is refocusing the attention of the United Nations Country Team, meaning that other modes of collaboration may be neglected. “It is difficult to design collaborative activities because over the last years we have been jumping from emergency to emergency. Plans are constantly changing because we have to respond to different crises”, said RBA informants in Maputo (although the RBAs are now preparing a concept note and joint proposal for an intervention in the north of the country). Emergencies like the COVID-19 pandemic typically bring the RBAs into closer collaboration, regardless of countries' economic status or other humanitarian needs. But where a major humanitarian caseload greatly increases the budget of WFP, the framework for RBAC shifts. WFP may feel less need to engage actively with its sister RBAs, but may also be more able to meet the transaction costs of RBAC because it often has a much larger country office.

179. The position (if any) of the government on RBAC is an important element of country context. In some countries, such as Lebanon, there is no clear government position on the RBAs' roles or collaboration. Countries experiencing frequent changes of government (such as Lebanon and Peru) are unlikely to offer a conducive context for RBAC. An associated challenge is frequent turnover among the government personnel who interact with the RBAs. This may affect RBA leadership too, as in Niger (where FAO leadership experienced lack of continuity). Elsewhere, as in Indonesia and Rwanda, there is clear and strong government pressure for the RBAs to work together, even in the context of United Nations reform. The donor position is a significant part of the country context for RBAC. Canada and France have encouraged the RBAs to collaborate in Niger, and the EU urges RBAC in Kenya and other countries.

180. A related issue that should affect RBAC everywhere is the introduction of the United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework. This should place RBAC within a tighter structure of collaboration across the UNCT (paragraphs 12-13 and 72-73 above), reframing the challenges and

opportunities for the RBAs themselves. In some countries, such as Indonesia, the RBAs have engaged proactively with the preceding common country analysis and then with UNSDCF design, in order to ensure that their priority concerns are reflected and addressed. In Colombia, the Government has exerted strong influence on the content of the UNSDCF, leaving little space for any United Nations entity to work on its mandate within that framework. As with the previous United Nations development assistance frameworks in many countries, the consequence may be paper alignment by United Nations entities that in practice continue with their own separate programmes.

181. A range of other factors in the country context affect RBAC across the spectrum from low to upper middle-income nations. The need for and logic of collaboration may be clear in many poorer countries, such as Nepal and Niger – but may be confounded by ongoing competition for funding, resentments over mandates, incompatibility of administrative systems, or the simple but often vital factor of personal relations among RBA leadership at the country level. A key contextual factor is the steady shift of countries to middle-income status and the reduction in conventional donor funding. This may heighten competition or, more rationally, bring the RBAs closer together as they reappraise their roles and strategies to meet the continuing technical needs of increasingly well-resourced governments. As a senior RBA informant said in Pakistan, “for [us] to really remain relevant and to have a seat at the table in middle-income countries, we need to come together with the broader United Nations system and RBAs to show what our comparative advantage is and what we can contribute.” While IFAD finance may no longer be of vital importance to richer governments, IFAD technical presence – as part of the RBA grouping – may still be appreciated. In Kenya, the RBAs and the UNCT are reorientating themselves for an era where donor funding of development is replaced by the financing of development from a wider range of sources of capital.

### Regional context

182. The regional context is rarely homogenous enough for meaningful generalizations about its influence on RBA collaboration. The exception is in the Sahel, where challenges of climate change and conflict, aggravated by COVID-19 are gravely challenging rural livelihoods across several countries and there is a clear need for concerted action. The G5 Sahel Secretariat and the donors have encouraged a collaborative RBA response, as designed through the SD3C Sahel initiative (paragraphs 115 and 1201 above).

### Flexibility of Rome-based agency collaboration

183. Within the broader framework of United Nations Country Teams, the RBAs are generally flexible when it comes to emergency response. This is not so much a matter of RBA collaboration; it is more that the RBAs (in particular, FAO and WFP) have the experience and the will to play an efficient and constructive part in urgent humanitarian action. This often requires the rapid reprioritization of work programmes and the redeployment of staff. RBAs’ current participation in responses to COVID-19 around the world is a good instance of this flexibility – at country as well as global levels. More generally, as operational requirements and opportunities change, RBAs’ adjustment to the shifting context depends on their individual institutional characteristics. WFP is usually able to respond to new circumstances more quickly than FAO, whose decision-making and resource-allocation procedures are slower. IFAD may be able to respond quickly with modest grant funding from its own limited directly disposable resources, but the cycle of loan design and approval that shapes most of its funding is slower (although it has sometimes redirected existing loans during emergencies). In the field, FAO and WFP may make operational arrangements for WFP to front-load the resourcing and implementation of new activities for which FAO will pick up responsibility after the necessary approvals. Such arrangements depend on a constructive working relationship among the relevant RBA personnel, as achieved in Kenya.

184. Flexibility in the face of other kinds of change is more challenging. As noted above (paragraph 181), one important kind of change concerns countries’ transition to middle-income status. This requires the RBAs to adjust their profiles and roles (typically from delivery of assistance to policy support, technical support and advocacy as development aid is replaced by development finance), and to redefine the modes of collaboration that may be most feasible and constructive. Modes of RBAC are likely to shift from joint technical and implementation work to joint advisory, communication and facilitation activities. The required flexibility can be achieved; but the extent to which this has occurred so far varies from country to country. It requires multiple reappraisals, new agreements and new configurations, all in consultation with the government and the UNCT. The RBAs are making progress in this regard, but it is uneven.

## Donor support for Rome-based agency collaboration

185. The concept of donor support means different things from different RBAs' perspectives. FAO and WFP have traditionally looked to the donor community to fund their operations – although the ways this is done vary between them (paragraphs 24-256 above). The same donor nations are among the major contributors to IFAD replenishments, but at the country level IFAD operates as a donor itself – although technically it is mainly a lender, like other international financial institutions, and may or may not participate in donor groupings.<sup>244</sup> The question of donor support for RBAC mainly concerns the countries that provide the bulk of FAO and WFP funding.

186. A recent evaluation found that “donor support has occasionally hindered effective collaboration [between WFP and other United Nations entities at country level] and has driven it at other times”.<sup>245</sup> In general, donors are in favour of stronger RBAC. However, they call for it more strongly than they fund it. Donor informants at the country level speak of their preference for joint programme proposals and are particularly dismayed by competition among the RBAs for funds or for recognition of their roles, linking this concern to their perception of ongoing confusion and competition around the mandates of FAO and WFP. In Burkina Faso, for example, the two RBAs are reported to have approached the same embassy separately with virtually the same project proposal. But in practice the donors often continue to fund the work of a single RBA because of good prior experience and the consequent attractions of working with a familiar partner.<sup>246,247</sup> The common response of FAO and WFP is that, if donors are so strongly in favour of RBAC, they should fund it more generously. Some donors reply that they would do so if the RBAs could develop and work to an overall common results framework – which has not been achieved. The United Nations Post-Conflict Multi-Partner Trust Fund for Colombia is an instance of a funding source specifically requiring joint proposals. FAO and WFP are among seven organizations (six of them United Nations entities) participating in the *Programa de construcción de confianza y paz territorial en clave PDET para Chocó, Meta y Guaviare*, which is linked to the peace process. In Colombia too, however, RBAs sometimes prefer to work with a familiar United Nations entity that they know is a reliable partner and with which they have clearly defined lines of responsibility.

187. Some informants also suggest that the donors themselves should be better coordinated in the joint management of their support. Some donors (such as Canada, the EU and France) clearly emphasize their interest in closer RBAC and in more joint proposals from the RBAs, while others are less insistent in this regard, at least at the country level. At the global level, too, the RBAs are sometimes frustrated (as in gender initiatives like the JP RWEE) by the failure of donor funding for joint programmes, despite strong donor advocacy of RBAC. A recent evaluation found that “RBA collaboration on resilience at headquarters level has not been matched with the longer-term commitments required, although certain donors are encouraging greater collaboration with a view to reducing the need to fund humanitarian responses to recurrent crises. Other donors regard WFP's remit as primarily in humanitarian response and, therefore, do not expect enhanced resilience outcomes.”<sup>248</sup>

188. The issue of conventional donor support for RBAC is slowly losing importance as countries move into middle-income status, grant funding shifts to development financing, and programme country governments have stronger budgets to deploy for development activities to which RBAs might contribute. Those governments are themselves Member States of the RBAs' Governing Bodies, of course, alongside the governments that provide the bulk of IFAD replenishments and the traditional funding of FAO and WFP (but may provide less of the development finance flows to developing nations in future).

## Support for Rome-based agency collaboration from governments

189. The governments, whose support for RBAC is assessed here, are those of the lower- and middle-income countries on which this evaluation focuses. This summary refers to the levels of support for RBAC

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<sup>244</sup> IFAD, 2019. Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka. Country Strategy and Programme Evaluation. Rome: IFAD IOE: p 71.

<sup>245</sup> WFP, 2020. Strategic Evaluation of Funding WFP's Work. Rome: WFP OE: p 53.

<sup>246</sup> MOPAN, 2019. Synthesis Report. Country-level collaboration between FAO, IFAD and WFP. Paris: MOPAN: August 2019: p 24.

<sup>247</sup> WFP, 2020. Strategic Evaluation of Funding WFP's Work. Rome: WFP OE: p 55.

<sup>248</sup> WFP, 2019. Strategic Evaluation of WFP Support for Enhanced Resilience. Rome: WFP OE: p 61.

that governments express in country. A related but separate issue is how far these governments support RBAC as Member States represented in the RBAs' Governing Bodies (paragraphs 194-198 below).

190. As noted in paragraph 179 above, the attitude of these governments ranges from an inability to give RBAC much attention to positive encouragement of RBAC. The evaluation encountered this strong support in Egypt and in Indonesia, whose embassy in Rome is reported to have been a strong advocate of RBAC. Ranged across the middle of this spectrum of support are governments that are not so concerned about RBAC as such, but are concerned that United Nations entities should not duplicate activities or take up too much government time with separate efforts that could be integrated (as in Lebanon, Nepal and Pakistan). Governments' attitude to RBAC is sometimes influenced by the perception that FAO is a high-cost source of technical services (see Box 20), and that development resources could stretch further if such expertise is procured from other sources. This is not a universal perception, although it extends to WFP, too, in some technical areas.

### Rome-based agency leadership support for Rome-based agency collaboration

191. Support for RBA collaboration is as varied among the agencies' leadership at the various levels as it is among donors and programme country governments. At regional and country levels, interviews reveal three interrelated elements in RBA directors' degree of support for the concept. The first is the degree of willingness to work with sister RBAs. This varies from country directors/representatives who are distinctly lukewarm about RBAC and appear more engaged in competition for funding and/or concern about overlapping mandates, to those who believe that there is important and under-exploited potential in joint work by two or three of the agencies. The second element is pragmatism, coupled with resistance to blanket or standardized requirements from headquarters to find RBAC opportunities and report on RBAC activities. Many country and regional directors/representatives feel that RBAC is sometimes the best way to work, but that headquarters uses too much of their scarce time and resources with its demands for what they consider box-ticking exercises. The third element is the ubiquitous personality factor. When relations among directors and representatives are friendly, their support for RBAC is likely to be stronger.

#### Box 20 Government perceptions of FAO costs

Perceptions of FAO costing more than alternative sources of expertise for project design or delivery sometimes arise at the country level. Informants in Kenya, Mozambique, Nepal, Niger and Peru raised this concern, for example. In reality, FAO cost structures are complex and do not always pass the full expense on to the project or similar budgets on which host country governments may focus. The time of regular programme personnel is not always fully charged to project budgets even if FAO "technical support services" rates for this staff time may appear high. If full additional posts are allocated to specific projects, with their overheads, they may indeed be unattractively expensive. Instead, FAO often assigns "non-staff human resources", i.e. consultants, to such project tasks – at rates comparable to those of other international service providers. Overheads need to be analysed carefully, because what one agency includes in its basic overhead – internal common services and support, in FAO parlance – may be spread across other budget heads by another agency. Meanwhile, FAO core budgets for the operation of its country offices are usually very modest, meaning that some basic costs must be charged to projects. Governments' views of FAO costs may also influence their willingness to see the grants provided by IFAD in association with its loans used for FAO inputs, as part of RBAC arrangements.

Some country-level informants expressed the view that the FAO Investment Centre is an expensive source of services, and – if they have alternative networks – prefer to use local service providers and expertise.

192. At headquarters, the degree of genuine support for collaboration among RBA leadership is harder to read. Official statements certainly endorse and support the concept, which is not surprising given the overall emphasis that the Governing Bodies have put on it. As at other levels, there is widespread recognition of the technical benefits to be gained by collaboration across a range of issues and themes, of which gender and nutrition are among the best examples. Personal relations across the top of the three agencies, and the related institutional politics, are much improved compared with the situation at the start of the review period in 2016, when there were serious disputes about mandate between FAO and WFP as the latter introduced its Integrated Road Map.<sup>249</sup> But there are many in senior management who privately feel that too much attention, effort and resources are devoted to the principle and appearances of RBAC, rather than to the genuine practical advantages that may – or may not – accrue from specific areas of

<sup>249</sup> WFP, 2018. *Strategic Evaluation of the WFP Pilot Country Strategic Plans*. Prepared by Mokoro Ltd.: Stephen Turner, Michael Reynolds (OEV), Jim Grabham, Elizabeth Hodson, Nick Maunder, Ruwan de Mel, Javier Pereira, Enrico Piano (OEV) and Muriel Visser. Rome: WFP OEV: p 42.

technical and programmatic collaboration. Senior management in IFAD, particularly, are hard to convince that RBAC deserves much of their attention. The sense of disconnect between this international financial institution and its RBA sister agencies is growing as IFAD strengthens its profile in the world of development finance. Overall, the support for RBAC at headquarters thus combines what is deemed politic with what is deemed practical. Underlying this judicious approach is a less visible scepticism about whether the idea of RBAC has been optimally understood and expressed. As one senior informant put it, "if Member States expect too much, maybe the RBAs haven't been clear enough in their communications. We have to tell them what makes sense!"

### 2.4.3 Governance arrangements for Rome-based agency collaboration

193. **Finding 9. Interactions between the RBAs and their Member States through governance processes reveal mixed understandings, motives and priorities with regard to RBAC.**

- **Member States urge stronger collaboration, but many RBA managers consider this pressure too general, and insufficiently attuned to the range of operational realities. The lack of clarity and consensus means that, despite appearances of regular meetings and reporting, the strategic and governance foundations for RBAC are weak. Explanation and understanding of RBAC strategy and procedures are also incomplete.**
- **Overall, RBAC is not a high priority in the Governing Bodies or in RBA management, and under-resourced coordination units often struggle with the time-consuming complexities of their task (which have an opportunity cost in relation to other partnership and United Nations collaboration work).**
- **Ongoing confusion and resentment about perceived overlap between the mandates and roles of FAO and WFP are a major constraint on RBAC.**
- **The evolving character and context of IFAD operations are reshaping its contribution to the RBAs' purpose, but not diminishing its importance.**

#### Governing Bodies

194. Through various constitutional arrangements, the Governing Bodies of the RBAs represent the Member States that provide the bulk of the funding for RBA operations, as well as the Member States in which most of those operations take place. Some of those in the former group share responsibility for the RBAs among more than one ministry. For example, a ministry of finance may handle IFAD, while ministries of agriculture or development cooperation handle representation on the Governing Bodies of FAO and WFP. They may also manage funding separately, with different budgets and channels for humanitarian and development support. These factors complicate some Member States' engagement in RBA governance.

195. Both groups support RBA collaboration, for a range of reasons. Donor members of the Governing Bodies emphasize efficiency and value for money, reflecting their concern that the funds they contribute be used to maximum effect. Members from programme countries share the concern for cost effectiveness, but also advocate RBAC so that the competition and duplication that they perceive in RBA operations can be averted, and their governments can save scarce resources by working with the RBAs jointly rather than separately. Overall, donor countries raise the issue of RBAC more often in Governing Body meetings than programme countries.

196. Much of the impetus for RBAC thus comes from the Governing Bodies, and there is a sense among some Member State representatives that there would be less collaboration if they did not push RBA leadership to take it seriously. At the same time, many RBA informants feel that Member State expectations in this regard are unclear and unrealistic: that they call for collaboration without considering how relevant or practical that collaboration may be in some circumstances. The sense on both sides is that, however real some of the motives for advancing RBAC may be, the issue is treated superficially by the Governing Bodies in their meetings and their other interactions with RBA leadership. As one informant put it, "there is no real agenda for RBAC; not much specific discussion on strategies; there is an ongoing lack of clarity. We can't find the taste of RBAC! There is no real substance to it!"

197. RBAC does not have a high profile in Governing Body meetings and discussions. When it is on the agenda, notably at the annual informal joint meeting of the three Governing Bodies, discussions are relatively brief and not always well informed. There is more focus on specific events and activities than on

the strategic direction of RBAC. The RBAs' November 2019 annual progress report to their Governing Bodies on their collaboration said that "the RBAs have developed an action plan, which operationalizes the main provisions of the [2018] memorandum of understanding. The plan will cover a two-year period (2019-2020). At the May 2019 Senior Consultative Group meeting, the Group collectively endorsed the joint RBA Action Plan. The Group agreed that the Action Plan is a management working document that the Senior Consultative Group will utilize to guide and further strengthen the collaboration among the agencies." Arrangements for monitoring by RBA focal points and updates on implementation by the RBA Senior Consultative Group were specified.<sup>250</sup> As noted in paragraph 117 above, it has only been possible to find a draft of the action plan, which in practice is not used as a management or monitoring tool and was not mentioned in the 2020 progress report. Preparation of the pilot joint country strategies that were included in the action plan (paragraph 43 above) has not been tracked in any detail by the Governing Bodies, and there is little clarity yet about whether more such strategies should be launched.

198. The formal structure and processes of RBA governance (paragraph 28) are thus only partially effective in the practical reinforcement of global collaboration. Overall, both Member State and RBA informants feel that the other side does not take RBAC as seriously, or treat it as thoroughly, as they seem to suggest. In late 2019, Governing Bodies expressed concern that the annual progress reports on RBAC provided insufficient practical evidence of intentions being converted to action. They asked for reporting to "focus on strategic issues and lessons learned, challenges faced, impacts, concrete achievements and financial benefits arising from RBA collaboration".<sup>251</sup> The 2020 report just cited, prepared with consultants' input, was the RBAs' response. It set out a summary of progress across the four pillars of RBAC; presented some "lessons learned", based partly on a survey of RBA staff; and identified five priorities for "the path forward". But in 2021, some informants still feel that the progress reports are just an attempt to keep Member States satisfied, with insufficient analytical attention to challenges as well as achievements.

#### Rome-based agency coordination at headquarters

199. The Senior Consultative Group, comprising senior management from the three agencies, provides overall coordination at headquarters level. It normally meets three times a year to provide overall direction to RBA collaboration, for example in the development of the joint country strategy concept and selection of pilot countries for the approach. It provides briefings to the Member States after its meetings (see Table 13, page 76). There is a joint RBA website,<sup>252</sup> and a joint RBA calendar.<sup>253</sup>

200. As noted in paragraph 117, RBA coordination arrangements differ in the three headquarters of the agencies. They largely reflect the available resources. Within the many responsibilities of the FAO Partnerships and United Nations Collaboration Division, one staff member is tasked with RBAC matters. In IFAD, RBA collaboration is one of the responsibilities of the Global Engagement, Partnership and Resource Mobilization Division, with two staff working on this and other issues. There is a slightly larger RBA and Committee on World Food Security Division in the Partnerships and Advocacy Department of WFP, with one consultant working on RBAC and a staff member working on RBAC and the Committee on World Food Security. Concerns about inadequate capacity are common across many parts of all three agencies, but, with the possible exception of the WFP unit, RBAC coordination capacity is certainly inadequate at headquarters. The global spread of themes and issues across RBAC is immense, and the transaction costs are as high at headquarters as they are in the field. Although there is very little quantitative record-keeping about the person-days and other costs incurred for each meeting, coordinating action or RBAC decision, these costs are inevitably higher when three large organizations are involved than when one RBA is managing its own work internally. Informants did not pinpoint the three coordination units as bottlenecks in the progress of RBAC. But there are certainly limits to their effectiveness – within current structures and processes – with the modest resources at their disposal. The bigger question is whether the priorities and administrative approach that the RBAs deploy in their collaboration are the best way of using inevitably limited staff and budgets.

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<sup>250</sup> FAO, IFAD and WFP, 2019. *Joint Progress Report on RBA Collaboration*. Rome: FAO, IFAD and WFP: p 2.

<sup>251</sup> FAO, IFAD and WFP, 2020. *Joint Progress Report on RBA Collaboration*. Rome: FAO, IFAD and WFP. Version cited is as presented to FAO Council: CL 165/13: p 2.

<sup>252</sup> <https://zerohunger.world/web/guest/home> [accessed 28 June 2021].

<sup>253</sup> <https://executiveboard.wfp.org/rome-based-agencies-calendar> [accessed 28 June 2021].

## Mandates and comparative strengths

201. One senior informant summarized the RBAs as “an international financial institution, an aid organization and a knowledge organization”. There are many different perceptions of the RBAs’ respective characters, mandates and modes of working among RBA staff, governments, other United Nations entities and development partners. The lack of clarity and consensus is a major constraint on smooth RBAC. There are two major aspects to the uncertainty (see also paragraphs 87-95 above).

### Box 21 Mandates of FAO and WFP: views of country-level informants

- WFP admit that there is some confusion from the donor perspective on RBA mandates. They see their comparative advantage as providing an integrated package of activities which spans across sectors- social protection, agriculture, education etc. There is scope for the experience of these activities to inform policy and this is where FAO can get involved.
- The spirit of my team was that how come that WFP works in issues related to agriculture... These are the types of activities that everybody would expect FAO to take the lead rather than WFP.
- What we are seeing in this country is that WFP is going outside their requested mandate and going into agriculture development, taking part of IFAD’s work.

202. First, despite many efforts by WFP to emphasize the developmental part of its mandate, and the clearly evident evolution of many of its country strategic plans towards food security, livelihood resilience and food systems, many informants still see it as solely a humanitarian organization. FAO personnel at many levels around the world still perceive mandate creep by WFP, as do other observers. This leads to misunderstandings and sometimes resentment, and it heightens competition between the agencies. Some informants speculated, for example, that the growing emphasis of WFP on food systems is part of its ongoing reinvention of its mandate. As one put it, WFP “are looking anywhere for opportunities to justify their mandate. That is their motivation for wanting collaboration.” One evaluation saw the WFP series of national zero hunger strategic reviews ahead of country strategic plan formulation as a missed opportunity for collaboration, although in fact this collaboration did occur in some countries.<sup>254,255,256</sup> One country-level informant felt that “in the current context, all agencies appear to be going beyond their mandate and do everything that others do, encroaching on the mandates of other agencies”. The misunderstandings and resentment in turn cause concern among the governments of programme countries and among donors. At headquarters level, relations between FAO and WFP have significantly improved since 2016 (paragraph 192). Overall, however, the matter is far from resolved – even though there is more clarity about some of the comparative advantages of the two RBAs: FAO with its technical expertise and authority, WFP with its competence for quick action in the field, and much bigger budgets that are sometimes used to deploy FAO technical capacity. There are countries and themes where the complementarities are more significant than the competition, as in work on gender (including the JP RWEE), in resilience and in the RBAs’ work in Lebanon and Niger (the latter primarily on the resilience theme).

203. Secondly, IFAD shares the commitment and concern of its sister RBAs with regard to food security and rural poverty, but as an international financial institution it has a significantly different character – which has evolved recently with public credit ratings of AA+ that will expand its financing opportunities as it strives to maximize its contribution to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals. Meanwhile, growing numbers of the countries where the RBAs work are moving to middle-income status, altering their financing opportunities with IFAD and other lenders and reducing their access to conventional grant funding. As IFAD relations with programme countries are thus adjusted, its collaboration with FAO and WFP may alter too, particularly as the Fund and middle-income countries reappraise its role. So far, the indications are that, while finance from IFAD may not always be the most attractive option for such countries, an ongoing IFAD presence and role are still appreciated because of its technical and strategic strengths as a partner for governments – strengths that may be reinforced by continuing collaboration with

<sup>254</sup> FAO, 2020. Evaluation of FAO’s Contribution to Sustainable Development Goal 2 – “End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture”. Phase 2. Rome: FAO OED: p 34.

<sup>255</sup> WFP, 2018. *Strategic Evaluation of the WFP Pilot Country Strategic Plans*. Prepared by Mokoro Ltd.: Stephen Turner, Michael Reynolds (OEV), Jim Grabham, Elizabeth Hodson, Nick Maunder, Ruwan de Mel, Javier Pereira, Enrico Piano (OEV) and Muriel Visser. Rome: WFP OEV: pp 13, 42, 43.

<sup>256</sup> WFP, 2018. Country Portfolio Evaluation. Cameroon: an evaluation of WFP’s Portfolio (2012–mid 2017). Evaluation report – volume I. Rome: WFP OEV: p ix.

FAO and WFP. However, this evolving situation is only partly known and understood by governments, donors and sister RBA staff, constraining the clarity with which RBAC can be designed and delivered. The recent developments can also be seen as strengthening IFAD ties with the rest of the development finance community, and weakening its ties with the other RBAs. This may be reflected in the reportedly limited interest of many IFAD managers in RBAC,<sup>257</sup> and in uncertainty in some countries about the depth of IFAD engagement in United Nations coordination processes, notably the new UNSDCFs.

204. The issues outlined above concern the developmental aspects of the RBAs' work. In humanitarian efforts (in which IFAD is generally not involved), mandates and roles are much more clearly defined, and reinforcement by FAO of its humanitarian work has not been a contentious mandate issue.

#### **Understanding of Rome-based agency collaboration**

205. RBA personnel are generally aware of the agreements their agencies have reached about collaboration, although they may not know the details of the documents or how the overall RBAC strategy is meant to unfold. A senior RBA informant at country level said that "there was no concrete guidance on the [2018] memorandum of understanding, it was left to country offices to do what they wanted to do with it". The consensus among country-level informants is that, although the formal agreements exist at corporate level, detailed strategies and policies to support and guide collaboration have been lacking. Knowledge about how other RBAs work is limited unless there have been specific reasons to interact, for example at the level of country directors/representatives or in shared operations (notably humanitarian work). Vertical integration and coordination among global, regional and country levels are largely limited to general statements from headquarters that RBAC is a priority that should be reflected in strategic and operational planning and reported on accordingly.

206. The responsible managers are of course aware of the RBAC reporting requirements, typically seeing these as a chore rather than an opportunity. As noted above, governments and some donors are generally aware of the RBAs' intentions to collaborate, and endorse or even encourage them. In most countries, however, there is little detailed knowledge of how the RBAs are trying to strengthen their collaboration. The pilot joint country strategies have helped to clarify and consolidate understanding of RBAC, to some extent: most clearly in Indonesia, where the Government strongly supports the initiative but wants to see it carried through into field operations. In Niger, collaboration was ongoing through the resilience programme funded by Canada, and the Government was more interested in the development of an RBAC action plan than in strategic discussions. In Colombia, it was not possible to engage with the Government in the joint strategy process, which had to be largely internal to the RBAs. A new factor framing stakeholder understanding (or lack of it) about RBAC intentions and arrangements is the United Nations reform and the UNSDCF process. With the RBAs themselves still debating what this means for their collaboration, governments, donors and development partners are understandably unsure too. For example, it is not clear how the formulation of an RBA joint country strategy (paragraph 43 above) would relate to RBAs' country planning processes, since formulation of the latter should be guided by the UNSDCF, leading to the participation of each RBA in the relevant UNSDCF result groups.

#### **2.4.4 Organizational structure and culture**

207. **Finding 10. There are significant differences among the RBAs, but these differences do not always obstruct meaningful collaboration.**

- **As communications improve and the significance of physical proximity declines, the structure and geographical distribution of RBAs' representation around the world are becoming less important in determining the progress of their collaboration.**
- **The interaction among the three agencies' organizational cultures and business models is much more significant. The differences are important, but the RBAs do share a commitment to addressing hunger and rural poverty.**
- **There are multiple difficulties in achieving constructive interfaces among the three structures and cultures of the RBAs. But more important than those is the often-displayed ability of technical colleagues to work together where they perceive clear**

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<sup>257</sup> IFAD, 2018. Evaluation Synthesis. "Building partnerships for enhanced development effectiveness – a review of country-level experiences and results". Rome: IFAD: pp 13-14.

**mutual interest and benefit and (of course) where the personalities in question align well.**

- **One key element of a joint way of working remains largely absent: a shared system of monitoring performance against planned results.**

### **Representation at regional and country levels**

208. The geography of RBA representation around the world was outlined in Section 1.3 above. Due partly to the expansion of remote working during the COVID-19 pandemic, physical country presence is becoming less important for RBA collaboration – although, until very recently, the lack of a country office or director/representative was seen as a constraint, and informants in Lebanon and Colombia feel that it still is. This particularly affected IFAD, whose country managers and regional directors were mostly based in Rome until the current decentralization was launched.<sup>258</sup> Informants noted the time zone challenges that location in Rome created for some. Time zones aside, rapidly improving communications technology makes it increasingly feasible for the RBAs to collaborate at country and regional levels even if the location or coverage of regional offices differs or not all RBAs have a physical presence in a country capital. Joint planning and work with governments may still be difficult, however, if government officials' internet access is poor.

209. The size of RBAs' representation in countries is often significant. In some, such as Indonesia, all RBA offices are small, which may be an incentive to collaborate as they seek to gain strength in numbers during engagement with larger partners (such as UNDP or UNICEF) or with the UNCT as a whole in UNSDCF processes. In others, such as Jordan or Lebanon, the WFP office dwarfs the others because of a heavy humanitarian programme. The many liaison, representation and reporting tasks around RBAC fall more heavily on small country offices. Where one of the three agencies has a much larger presence, the other agencies may find it harder to engage in a balanced way with it, and/or the larger agency may not feel much incentive to collaborate. Another differential is that FAO tends to be associated closely with ministries of agriculture, often having offices within that ministry's building or compound, while the other RBAs may be housed (close) together, for example in a United Nations House or similar facility. In the field, WFP has a much more extensive presence, while FAO and IFAD representation is often restricted to the capital city.

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<sup>258</sup> Wu, Q., 2020. IFAD's field presence. IFAD Member States corporate induction seminar. Presentation: Rome: IFAD.

### Box 22 Factors affecting Rome-based agency collaboration and how to address them: views of survey respondents

- The collaboration bears certain obstacles that should be considered when defining future collaboration. This includes: - differences in mandates, with WFP and FAO also working in humanitarian assistance - differences in implementation modalities. IFAD employs the national implementation modality, meaning that the projects are implemented by the Government, whereas WFP and FAO employ direct implementation - differences in national partners - differences in financing mechanisms. IFAD uses loans, and FAO and WFP, grants - differences in programming cycles. The IFAD COSOP covers a six-year period, while FAO's Country Programming Framework (CPF) and WFP's CSP cover a three-year period. [FAO advises that its CPFs cover a four-year period.] - staff turnover, especially of country directors, which could affect the collaboration dynamic - Different priority intervention zones in the country humanitarian zone versus development zone.
- The most important obstacle for any UN collaboration, in my experience, is externally enforced requirements, procedures, accountabilities etc. Where there are local joint interests and where an organic collaboration can be forged along lines of what is locally required and feasible, collaboration happens. Enforcement by external entities of global aspirations stifles local initiative. Global and regional 'powers' (internal and external to the UN) need to be enabling and supporting not enforcing. Compatibility between agencies does help - interest wise as well as systems wise.
- Provide incentives (one way could be through smoother, more compatible administrative & planning systems) for collaboration, and highlight ways to collaborate without issues of funding competition (competition for resources). Focus on the shared/common goal and the complementarities/added value of each agency.
- Joint planning from the very beginning of the process. That said, RBA present incompatible planning systems & timeliness.
- Establish or re-clarify the exact mandates of each RBA and propose mechanisms to address disputes when one RBA is over-stepping its mandate and creating friction with its sister agencies.
- Concrete agreements among the RBAs with timelines and specific, realistic actions on concrete aspects (even if small), instead of generic statements and unrealistic commitments.
- All agencies need the staff resources (time and money) to develop a joint action plan and fundraising plan, aligned with the Cooperation Framework, that is updated at least annually.
- The benefits include better relationships with Government, avoidance of duplication, working on specific strengths of each organization to enhance overall objectives. Costs are in legal and administrative burden of collaborative efforts. This can be very disheartening.
- The partnerships I have seen successful were more spontaneous and almost opportunistically, and also around knowledge sharing, coordination and if a clear contract /payment did exist. Joint programming, or any sort of semi-hard collaboration is super difficult due to institutional incentives, administrative barriers, budget challenges and turn-over of staff (they take long and people rotate...).
- The obvious one is that collaboration has to be driven from a clear vision at the outset. It is nearly impossible to cobble it together after implementation has begun.

### Corporate values

210. More significant than any aspect of country or regional presence is the compatibility of RBAs' values and culture. There are several perspectives on this issue. First, they clearly share broad concerns and objectives about hunger and food security. Secondly, however, the working cultures of "an international financial institution, an aid organization and a knowledge organization" (paragraph 201) can reasonably be expected to differ – and they do. This report has already outlined the very different business models and working practices of the three RBAs. Key differentials include the formal procedures of IFAD as a lender, with most of its funding under the authority of borrowing governments; the different formalities, deep and wide-ranging technical expertise and mostly slow operational procedures of FAO, a specialized agency of the United Nations with almost 200 Member States; and the larger operational budget and swifter operating pace of WFP, an agency established to work fast through delegation of significant authority to country level (and often providing logistical support to FAO humanitarian operations). With the youngest of them now in its fifth decade, all three RBAs are solidly established in their institutional ways. It is inevitably difficult to change those ways, and to share approaches and operations with a different, equally complex organization - let alone two. Given the differences among the organizations just summarized above, there are limitations to the degree of sharing that is feasible.

211. According to informants, this challenge is felt particularly in the "Rome bubble". In the closer working proximity and sometimes less formal atmosphere of a country capital, it may be easier to break

down the barriers of working culture among the RBAs. But in some countries, the working environment (and occasionally the personalities) raise new obstacles. FAO and WFP, in particular, may not have achieved consensus about roles and mandates, and may be competing for funds. With a lack of clear direction from their headquarters (apart from annual requests for data to feed into the RBAC progress report), and with staff jobs depending on raising funds for projects, country managers may find competition more necessary than collaboration, and feel no incentive to break down the cultural barriers among RBA offices. In general, there are few incentives for staff to step out of their comfort zones and initiate or undertake collaboration. The normally biennial RBA Award of Excellence for Country-Level Collaboration (not given in 2020)<sup>259</sup> is welcome recognition of some RBA country teams' collaborative performance, but is not a core driver of collaboration.

212. A third perspective on working culture may be the most important. This is the shared technical interests and commitments of staff across the three RBAs in their respective fields. As noted above, gender is one such technical field in which experts at headquarters have collaborated constructively for some years; and, despite obstacles, valuable joint work was achieved in seven countries through the JP RWEE. A joint commitment to optimize the RBAs' contribution to improved global nutrition led to the rationalization of structures and programmes in this area (paragraph 147 above), overcoming many institutional and administrative barriers to do so. More recently, behind the scenes, planners at FAO and WFP have been engaged in intensive dialogue during preparation of the next FAO Medium-Term Plan (2022-2025) and WFP Strategic Plan (2022-2026); (see paragraph 142). Regardless of institutional formalities and real or imagined institutional barriers, they have found practical, constructive ways to add value to each other's planning processes. All these examples show that there is a genuine willingness across the RBAs to work together at technical levels. In this sense, corporate values are well aligned. Furthermore, as informants in Kenya pointed out, the shared technical interests and commitment of RBA staff can lead to fruitful RBAC when this develops from below – rather than being imposed from headquarters.

213. A widespread finding about the working culture of the RBAs is that, as in all organizational endeavours, personal relations have a major influence on the extent and nature of collaboration. From the highest levels in Rome through regional and country directors and representatives to technical colleagues, collaboration is directly influenced by whether the relevant personalities align well.

### Monitoring Rome-based agency collaboration

214. The RBAs have not developed a results framework, performance indicators, logic model or theory of change to explain or guide their intentions in strengthening collaboration. They have relied instead on shared assumptions about the efficacy of their collaboration, stating – for example – that “a holistic and systemic approach with multi-stakeholder partnerships, and innovative investments are needed to address the root causes of hunger and malnutrition”.<sup>260</sup> The RBAs' 2019-2020 action plan specifies activities/outputs to be undertaken and produced, and target dates across the four pillars of RBAC specified in the 2018 memorandum of understanding.<sup>261</sup> It does not show any performance indicators. The most recent annual report on RBAC tabulates selected highlights and presents case studies on joint performance in the same four areas, but does not refer to the targets set out in the action plan.

215. There are multiple perspectives on inadequacies in RBAC monitoring to date. One RBA informant stated that “RBA procedures, guidelines, instructions, reporting spreadsheets etc. don't really help. Reporting doesn't capture everything the entities do in terms of collaboration and is therefore not taken seriously. It's not seen as important.” The recent MOPAN<sup>262</sup> study found that “monitoring and evaluation of partnerships for learning or accountability was noted as a gap by many interviewees... More attention needs to be given to shared monitoring and evaluation to provide the solid evidence to assess how the RBA collaborations are contributing to the overall SDG results and UNDAF frameworks, and to support shared learning.”<sup>263</sup> WFP Management Plan (2020-2022) noted that “while WFP continues to engage with the Rome-

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<sup>259</sup> <http://www.fao.org/fao-awards/rba-award/en/> [accessed 28 June 2021].

<sup>260</sup> FAO, IFAD and WFP, 2020. *Joint Progress Report on RBA Collaboration*. Rome: FAO, IFAD and WFP: p 2.

<sup>261</sup> FAO, IFAD and WFP, 2019. *Joint RBA Action Plan (2019-2020)*. Draft. Rome: FAO, IFAD & WFP, 25 March 2019: pp 2-9.

<sup>262</sup> Multilateral Performance Assessment Network.

<sup>263</sup> MOPAN, 2019. *Synthesis Report. “Country-level collaboration between FAO, IFAD and WFP”*. Paris: MOPAN: August 2019: pp 25, 30.

based agencies on an appropriate methodology for measuring RBA collaboration, no indicator has yet been [developed]; it has therefore been removed [from] the 2020 management plan.”<sup>264</sup>

216. As already noted (paragraph 102), the idea of an overall joint results framework has not gained traction across the RBAs. Despite the strong interest of some donors in such a framework, it may not be a realistic ambition, given the differences between the agencies’ planning cycles, and their monitoring indicators and systems. The diversity of country contexts in which the RBAs work also makes a single joint results framework a less practical proposition. The three pilot joint country strategies include indicative operational plans and/or results frameworks, but it remains to be seen how systematically they are used. At the global level, there is no systematic approach to monitoring and reporting the performance of RBAC against targets, and, as noted in paragraph 197, there has been no systematic effort yet to learn from the protracted process of preparing the three pilot joint country strategies.

### Box 23 The compatibility of administrative systems and processes

One senior RBA informant in Peru said that “it is impossible to promote collaboration for common services. RBAs’ administrative systems and procedures are completely different”. Another in Mozambique said that “our systems are not compatible and this makes collaboration difficult. We saw this in the implementation of MDG 1 where something as simple as monitoring and reporting was very complicated. The internal systems and procedures are very different”. A Mozambican colleague said that “collaboration is not natural – each agency has a different form of operation and systems and procedures”. “The technical collaboration works, but the blockages come from the administrative and financial systems”, said an informant in Niger.

The comments below are from respondents to the online survey.

- Our procedures and rules often prevent collaboration. FAO and WFP spent ages trying to have the same consultant for the CCA assessment. A nightmare. We found a really absurd solution in the end, but we wasted a lot of time for something simple.
- While between us we have a good range of services and specializations, we need to work better together to deliver and work to the speed and accuracy of the most professional organization in the country and not [be] dragged down to the level of the least organized office.
- RBA collaboration is extremely time-consuming and hard work; and were it not for the fact we need to report back to our donors on the collaboration, it would be neither an efficient nor an effective use of our time.
- When effective, RBA cooperation leads to joint operations with clear added value if each agency does what they do better (FAO policy, WFP input and capacity building, IFAD value chain approach) with clear scaled up impact. However, getting there requires substantial admin work and [a] long time, and all this must be done at entry while it is not sure it turns successful, so sometimes all paperwork becomes useless, with high costs and time lost.
- There is a huge amount of admin involved when FAO and WFP are recipients of one grant, involving HQ and CO. Admin processes should be simplified to encourage joint projects.
- Time spent on coming up with a consensus plan is time we take away from actually delivering on the ground.
- Collaboration seems to be cumbersome and involves heavy transaction cost; aligning programme cycles and priorities takes considerable time; global frameworks do not currently help in reducing the transaction cost at the country level (no clear priorities, no resourcing for RBA collaboration, no discussion on how to align operational and admin processes).

## 2.4.5 Administrative and programming processes and procedures

217. **Finding 11. Administrative and programming processes and procedures are a significant obstacle to RBA collaboration. The more tightly structured and managed a collaborative activity needs to be – particularly in project format – the more time-consuming, costly and sometimes insoluble the administrative challenges become. The RBAs are three distinct and significantly different bureaucracies. Although some administrative collaboration does occur and the Common Procurement Team has had some success, the transaction costs of achieving workable interfaces across administrative systems are typically high.**

<sup>264</sup> WFP Management Plan (2020-2022). Executive Board Second Regular Session, 18-21 November 2019. WFP: Rome, 2019: p 69.

## Administrative systems and processes

218. The universal finding across the countries and sectors of RBA collaboration researched for this evaluation is that incompatibility of administrative systems and processes is a significant constraint at all levels (see Box 23). For anything more than planning, compatibility of administrative and related systems remains a challenge that advancing technology does not automatically overcome. Arguably the gradual move upstream moderates this challenge, but there are contrary forces calling for demonstration of, and lesson-learning through, RBAC that require the kind of practical implementation to which incompatible RBA systems remain an obstacle. Despite good collaboration around the KCEP-CRAL programme in Kenya, procedural difficulties can be frustrating or impossible to overcome. Attempts to arrange a socio-economic survey had to be abandoned because administrative procedures could not be reconciled. Work-arounds can sometimes, but not always, be arranged – for example, to take advantage of the WFP speedier procurement process at the country level. The more stringent and time-consuming procedures of FAO and IFAD (important for accountability, as one informant observed) can delay or derail collaborative activity. Informants in Pakistan and elsewhere cite major frustrations around attempts to transfer funds between RBAs. Governments may also become impatient (as in Rwanda) while RBA offices await clearance of joint initiatives from their headquarters. Some country-level informants call for FAO decision making to be more decentralized.

219. Nevertheless, various forms of administrative collaboration do occur. Among the simplest is the hosting of one RBA in the offices of another, for example IFAD in the WFP office in Nepal (although it is more common for IFAD to be housed by UNDP than by another RBA). For some modes of collaboration, like the current evaluation, the RBAs agree that one of them will handle all the administration. For this evaluation, whose cost is shared equally by the RBAs, WFP does the procurement and contract management. The budget for the RBAs' EvalForward programme (paragraph 156) is handled by FAO. The JP RWEE programme has faced multiple administrative difficulties among the RBAs, some of which can be solved by letting the quickest agency (IFAD is quoted) take the most urgently needed action while the partners come in later. The RBAs' resilience initiative in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Niger and Somalia has had to contend with similar problems, even in the supposedly simple task of producing a leaflet on the programme.<sup>265</sup> FAO and WFP work together closely in support of the Committee on World Food Security, but have never been able to set up a single administrative structure for that support – relying instead on FAO administrative and financial systems. "They work together but there is no administrative mechanism", said one informant.

220. There have been some attempts to overcome incompatibility of systems by merging them. The most prominent example is the Common Procurement Team, which has done useful work but not achieved the volume of joint procurement that was anticipated (paragraph 131). Overall, procurement illustrates many of the day-to-day challenges around the compatibility of administrative systems and processes. For example, two RBAs have contracted to use one brand of computer, but a third has a contract with a different manufacturer. Sharing across IT systems is sensitive at best, and often forbidden for security and/or stability reasons. Sharing courier and postal services, mobile communication arrangements and security services for the three headquarters have all been investigated and found to be impractical. The longer lead time on joint tendering means that it is sometimes impossible to wait, and separate tendering is necessary. There are issues also around the general requirement of FAO that it does its own contracting; its legal department advised they could not accept terms and conditions from other agencies because there are specific issues about arbitration and legal disputes on which FAO has to be more specific. This is a significant constraint on its ability to exploit the potential of the Mutual Recognition Statement that it, like IFAD and WFP, has signed (paragraph 14 above).<sup>266</sup> Full pursuit of the "enabler" principles and the related business consolidation opportunities across the United Nations system could reduce the need to focus specifically on the harmonization of RBA systems and procedures.<sup>267</sup>

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<sup>265</sup> FAO, IFAD and WFP, 2018. Rome-Based Agencies Resilience Initiative. Strengthening the resilience of livelihoods in protracted crisis in the Democratic Republic of [the] Congo, Niger and Somalia. Annual report – year 1. Rome: FAO, IFAD and WFP: p 4.

<sup>266</sup> The MRS is meant to overcome the challenges of inter-entity administrative compatibility. But, as an informant noted, "this requires provisions to be included in the respective policies and procedures for due MRS compliance".

<sup>267</sup> In February 2021, FAO launched an internal project to overcome the obstacles to MRS compliance within the organization.

221. Meanwhile, a joint feasibility study on the potential merger of some administrative systems has been delayed, and the evaluation team has not been able to see a draft. The study was requested by Member States and initially mapped out the relevant RBA joint corporate services for the 2020 progress report on RBA collaboration. The process of finding evidence of the added value of joint efforts has proved far more difficult than expected and has taken considerable effort by the staff of all three RBAs.

222. The RBAs' "divorce" (as one senior informant called it) around medical insurance is a prominent instance of the limits to RBAC on joint corporate services. For many years, the three agencies had a common medical insurance programme (managed by FAO) and provider for their staff. In 2019, when discussions began about a new joint tender, WFP quickly withdrew, calculating that it had the youngest overall staff age profile and would pay less if it arranged a separate insurance contract. FAO and IFAD then proceeded with the tender, but late in that process IFAD withdrew, on realizing that FAO had an older aggregate age profile (with many retirees in the United States) and that a separate contract would cost IFAD less (see Box 24).

#### **Box 24 Arranging medical insurance for the Rome-based agencies**

The medical insurance procurement process was initiated with the expectation of all three RBAs entering into a joint contract. Very early on, WFP went its own separate way. In the end, and despite considerable investment by all, IFAD also decided to withdraw from a joint contract. The three organizations then contracted separately with the same provider. The sequential withdrawals of first WFP from the process and then IFAD from the joint tender were a challenge for the Common Procurement Team. Nevertheless, each agency had clear reasons for its decisions.

The RBAs have now established a Joint advisory committee on medical cover. Notwithstanding the separate contracts, the committee meets quarterly, helps coordinate the services and has joined forces to establish and monitor key performance indicators. According to informants, the separate contracts increase flexibility, allowing each organization to shape cover to its particular needs, and providing comparative data to strengthen negotiating positions.

#### **Programming systems and processes**

223. Similar challenges to those outlined above arise when RBAs try to reconcile their programming systems and processes. There is a fundamental distinction between the IFAD primary mechanism of loans that are under borrower government authority, and the projects and programmes through which FAO and WFP package much of their work. The general problems across the agencies are exemplified in the working relations among them in Kenya, which are constructive and collegial but are constrained by the different budget and programming cycles, by separate staffing cycles and turnover, and by separate and incompatible monitoring systems. Informants in Egypt noted the challenges arising from the different food security monitoring methodologies used by FAO and WFP, and also noted that the long project preparation and approval processes of FAO and IFAD discouraged collaboration. The recent evaluation of the JP RWEE found that "lack of consistency and harmony of indicators between each country's results framework makes it difficult to see patterns and learn from those at the global level; it is not possible to compare contexts and draw lessons about what works well in what kind of context".<sup>268</sup>

224. Lebanon was among the countries where informants pointed to the challenges and delays around securing approval from legal departments at headquarters for proposed collaborative activity, and noted that FAO and WFP overhead rates differ. "If you want the RBAs to work together", said one, "then you need RBA rules and procedures".

225. In evaluation work, there is good technical collaboration, but formal joint evaluations are complicated by the RBAs' different modes of engagement, although they do take place (also at decentralized level). FAO and IFAD evaluation staff, for example, participate directly as team leaders, while WFP evaluation managers contract the task to external service providers. Formats for summary reports differ, and must be followed scrupulously, as they are presented to their respective Governing Bodies whose Secretariats have strict rules about length, format and style. A recent collaboration on evaluative evidence in relation to food security and COVID-19 began with the intention of producing a joint evaluation

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<sup>268</sup> FAO, IFAD, UN Women and WFP, 2021. Global End-Term Evaluation of the Joint Programme on Accelerating Progress towards the Economic Empowerment of Rural Women in Ethiopia, Guatemala, Kyrgyzstan, Liberia, Nepal, Niger and Rwanda from 2014 to 2020 – Decentralized Evaluation. Rome and New York: FAO, IFAD, UN Women and WFP: p 61.

synthesis, but after difficulties arose in aligning approaches to “synthesis”, the document was produced as an “evidence summary”.<sup>269</sup>

### Communications and knowledge platforms

226. FAO is sometimes described as a knowledge organization. As the RBAs’ work overall moves upstream, the importance of advocacy and communications based on their expertise is increasing. All three agencies are now accomplished communicators, and for comparatively simple communications events such as World Food Day and International Women’s Day, they collaborate at global and country levels. There has been less progress with joint knowledge platforms and communities of practice, although the evaluation offices’ EvalForward initiative with the CGIAR partnership is making useful progress. Gender is another field of strong communication and sharing of practice by the RBAs, which rotate in leading the annual 16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence (paragraph 122), organize joint events at the Commission on the Status of Women and undertake joint advocacy to incorporate gender issues in the work of the Committee on World Food Security. They have also produced or participated in joint publications on gender, such as the Gender in Agriculture source book that FAO and IFAD published with the World Bank.<sup>270</sup> See Box 25 for an additional example.

#### Box 25 Rome-based agency collaboration on communications in Egypt

WFP, IFAD and FAO cooperate successfully and often in the realm of communications. They approach World Food Day jointly and launched a COVID-19 awareness campaign targeted at the rural population in October 2020.

Communications is an area where there have been consistent and successful joint efforts. This was also echoed in the interview with FAO colleagues. Their COVID-19 campaign directed at rural areas required extensive planning and took place at a difficult time, but because of their good working relationships, it was a success.

RBA informants.

### Oversight

227. There have been various suggestions, including from Member States, that the oversight functions of the three RBAs be merged. The RBAs themselves do not consider this feasible. Informants also note the argument that some oversight issues, notably in ethics areas such as sexual harassment, should be approached on a single United Nations-wide basis. Joint audits and evaluations have been conducted, but not often, and only in circumstances where it makes sense. For evaluation, the different types of activity undertaken by the RBAs, from large multi-year loans to emergency response, have resulted in the development of specific methodologies, approaches, systems and capacities in each office. Focusing on collaborative evaluations is therefore not seen as a universal imperative for the three evaluation offices, which recognize the merits of a joint approach in some circumstances (notably evaluation of joint programmes) but may find collaboration with different partners more appropriate in other circumstances.

## 2.4.6 Resources

228. **Finding 12. Insufficient resources are provided for RBA collaboration:**

- **At the global level, donor funding does not match donor calls for collaboration to be strengthened. Coordination capacity at headquarters is constrained by lack of resources.**
- **At the country level, RBA managers note the lack of funding from their headquarters for planning or coordinating collaborative action, and the preference of some donor offices to continue working with single RBAs. But RBA country offices themselves often compete for funding from the same donors.**
- **The IFAD loan portfolio is well resourced, but its non-lending funds at the country level are limited.**

<sup>269</sup> United Nations Evaluation Group, 2021. Evidence summary on COVID-19 and food security. Main report. New York: UNEG.

<sup>270</sup> FAO, IFAD and World Bank, 2009. *Gender in agriculture sourcebook*. Washington, D.C.: World Bank.

- **The resourcing context for the RBAs' work, and for any collaboration, is evolving as countries move from development funding to development finance, and as the IFAD profile and business model evolve.**

229. There are several perspectives on the funding of RBA collaboration. Broadly, the perspective of the RBAs themselves is that, although donors regularly call for RBAC at meetings of Governing Bodies and elsewhere, the funding that they provide for it is not proportional to the emphasis that they place on it. At the country level, RBA informants say that donors often continue to fund separate activities by the RBAs, rather than joint ones. But RBA country managers also argue that their headquarters should do more to compensate them for the high transaction costs of designing, delivering and reporting collaborative activities. An argument made in Indonesia for leaving the pilot joint country strategy at a generic level, rather than detailing specific planned joint projects, is that it would be unwise to include details of planned activities that it then proves impossible to resource – although the joint country strategy is reportedly attracting interest from funders, and the Government appreciates the “catalytic function” of the joint country strategy in stimulating inter-ministerial coordination of food systems initiatives. No funding has been identified for the Colombia joint country strategy, although FAO helped to resource its preparation.

#### **Box 26 Funding challenges**

As one RBA informant put it, “a factor that is always controversial is funding. Because we are sometimes competing for funding. ...There is the question of who is the lead? Who will partner? Who is getting how much of the pie?” According to another informant, “the joint programmatic vision necessarily relies on funds for its operationalization. Unfortunately, this did not happen in Peru, where funds are limited, even if RBAs are in agreement and aligned with some sort of joint strategy.” In Niger, “the fact that there are practically no resources for RBA collaboration is a limiting factor”. In Mozambique, “agency funds are always ad hoc. There are no medium- or long-term strategies and that is why we are never able to know in advance what funds we will have available from the agencies. This also makes collaboration harder between the agencies, and between them and SETSAN [the national food security agency].”

230. A further perspective is that, with resources for most kinds of RBA work insufficient, it makes sense to pool what there is and work more closely together. Conversely, however, there is widespread competition between FAO and WFP as both strive for scarce resources (paragraphs 137-138 above). RBAs continue to approach donors independently of each other, as reported from Burkina Faso and elsewhere (although there is a joint FAO-WFP Peacebuilding Fund project in Burkina Faso).<sup>271</sup> Where joint proposals have been submitted, there is no indication that these are more successful than individual proposals for each agency. For example, in Nepal five joint proposals were developed, but none was successful, as donors had different priorities. The five-year joint JP RWEE project continues to face funding challenges (paragraph 139).

231. When collaborative projects can be resourced, problems arise around the differing budget cycles of the RBAs, which may or not match smoothly with those of the donor(s). Complex internal procedures are complicated further when more than one agency is involved, as in the case of the JP RWEE, where one donor transfer of funds took five months to traverse internal RBA systems and become available for use. Dealing with more than one donor is naturally more complex, and despite good intentions, informants stated that the multi-donor JP RWEE was severely underfunded. Joint work at the global level, such as the production of the State of Food Insecurity and Nutrition in the World reports, coordination of the United Nations Decade on Family Farming and the secretariat of the Committee on World Food Security, mostly suffers from inadequate and irregular funding.

232. Donor perspectives vary. Some, such as Canada and the EU, actively encourage RBAC, and fund it accordingly when appropriate opportunities can be developed. Other donors, notably the UK, argue that it would be easier to increase support for collaborative activities if the RBAs would develop a joint results framework against which performance could be measured and reported (paragraph 117 above). Meanwhile, the RBAs only prepare budgets at the level of specific collaborative activities, rather than any more aggregate level. At the same time, shifts from low- to middle-income status, and from development funding to development finance, are altering the character, prospects and modalities of resourcing for RBAC in many countries.

<sup>271</sup> United Nations, not dated. *The Peacebuilding Fund in Burkina Faso*. New York: United Nations Peacebuilding Fund.

233. A universal perspective is that the high demands on staff time that arise from all elements of RBAC design and management need to be adequately resourced, and they typically are not. This is true at country and headquarters level. Staffing in the three responsible offices in Rome (paragraph 200 above) is inadequate, and some informants question whether the limited human resources in these posts could do more valuable work on other aspects of global partnerships.

234. From a resourcing perspective, the different character of IFAD, as an RBA that is an international financial institution, is important. IFAD can be both resource-rich and resource-poor in funding terms. Its loan portfolio in a country, under the authority of the government, may total hundreds of millions of dollars; but IFAD Country Directors sometimes have fewer resources for engagement in RBAC than their FAO and WFP colleagues (as reflected in its administrative budget in Table 2 (page 8)). IFAD funds are often provided for FAO and WFP use through grants. IFAD makes Debt Sustainability Framework grants to lower-income countries (these are part of highly concessional loans), as well as a range of other global, regional and country-specific grants, with a maximum value of USD 3m.<sup>272</sup> IFAD grants are often channelled to FAO, and less often to WFP, for a range of technical assistance inputs, and for middle-income countries a grant of USD 1m is usually available (but not always acceptable to the government, as in a recent case in Lebanon) to accompany an IFAD loan. Indicative data from IFAD show that between 2016 and 2020, there were 23 IFAD grants to FAO with a total value of USD 9.05m (12 “contribution grants”,<sup>273</sup> nine global/regional grants and two micro grants). Over the same period, IFAD made two grants to WFP, with a total value of USD 1.95m (one country-specific grant and one global/regional grant).<sup>274</sup>

235. The key principle in IFAD funding is that its loans, although typically designed and managed with strong IFAD input, are used at the borrowing government’s discretion (within the terms of the loan: paragraph 25 above). IFAD cannot influence the allocation of these loan funds (which are the vast majority of its funding) so that they are used for activities by FAO and WFP, for example. Its grants can sometimes be used for this purpose, although in Indonesia even that is forbidden by government regulations. Co-financing is an alternative approach, notably through the use of FAO technical cooperation programme (TCP) funds alongside an IFAD loan. This was done, for example, to support FAO work on farmer field schools by an IFAD-funded project in Nepal. Overall, informants across the world display an incomplete understanding of the nature of IFAD funding and its implications for RBAC.

236. Particular problems arose around the resourcing of the SD3C initiative in the Sahel. Its budget totals USD 180m. So far, for the first of two three-year IFAD-financed phases, approximately USD 26m is available from an IFAD loan, with USD 12m in Debt Sustainability Framework grants. Over the full programme period, USD 71m will come from the Green Climate Fund, and USD 2m will be provided as regional grant funding by IFAD. The funding gap for the first phase is USD 11m.<sup>275</sup> The budget foresees contributions from FAO and WFP, but no amounts are listed for these at present. Programme design followed standard Unilateral Trust Fund processes and included country representation and consultation with international, regional and national partners in the relevant phases. It sought to maximize use of tested technical solutions that reflected the accumulated experience of the RBAs in the Sahel. The FAO Investment Centre led the process, playing a role of neutral adviser.<sup>276</sup>

237. However, despite adherence to these principles of consultation just mentioned in paragraph 235, programme design intended that part of the IFAD loan funding would be allocated to FAO and WFP for implementation. This decision was made by the three RBAs in the design phase, which was led by the combined headquarters and regional teams of the three RBAs. It failed to recognize the specific nature of IFAD funding: that governments are the owners of the loan money and have the responsibility for repayment. It has met with resistance by the governments of the countries concerned during the design phase, and with scepticism by other partners (non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and farmer

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<sup>272</sup> IFAD, 2015. *Policy for grant financing*. Rome: IFAD: EB 2015/114/R.2/Rev.1.

<sup>273</sup> IFAD’s ‘contribution grants’ are generally used for corporate-level partnerships, for example as a contribution to the Committee on World Food Security and other global platforms on which it is represented.

<sup>274</sup> IFAD Oracle Business Intelligence data [retrieved 14 June 2021].

<sup>275</sup> IFAD, 2020. President’s report. Proposed loans and grants under the Debt Sustainability Framework. Countries of the Group of Five for the Sahel and the Republic of Senegal. Joint programme for the Sahel in response to the challenges of COVID-19, conflict and climate change. Rome: IFAD: EB 2020/131(R)/R.8/Rev.1: pp 7, 11.

<sup>276</sup> It should be noted in this context that there are no specific guidelines available from any of the agencies for developing regional multi-agency initiatives of this kind, which could have facilitated the process.

organizations). Informants are concerned that this has damaged relations with the governments involved, and with some of the partners: FAO and WFP are perceived as caught in conflicts of interest. It has also had repercussions for the FAO Investment Centre, which led the technical design process. It is normally seen as a neutral technical institution, but was perceived in this case as siding with the RBAs. Discussions over the division of the budget became the heart of the design process and were reported to be very complex. The memorandum of understanding that FAO and WFP signed with the G5 Sahel<sup>277</sup> is not sufficiently specific to provide guidance or to serve as arbiter of discussions on which organization implements what component of the programme. Experience with the SD3C initiative shows that RBAC is set in a tense landscape – on the one side the drive to collaborate, and on the other side the imperative of resource mobilization, which is particularly strong at the country level, because salaries of staff are not guaranteed and there is a premium on the amount of resources mobilized – perhaps especially for WFP, which has no core funding. In the atmosphere that has developed around resourcing of this joint regional initiative, informants expect implementation to be challenging.

## 2.4.7 Survey findings

238. The online survey carried out for this evaluation presented respondents with a list of factors potentially enabling or enhancing RBA collaboration, and asked them to choose which they thought was the most significant. Figure 8 shows that an understanding of the relative strengths and complementarities of the three agencies was most often considered to be the most significant factor, with a shared vision on the purpose of RBAC the second most commonly mentioned. The survey also gave respondents a list of possible constraints on RBAC, and again asked them to say which they thought was most important. Competition among the agencies for resources was selected most often, followed by the lack of shared vision (Figure 9). The survey evidence on enabling and constraining factors confirms other findings by this evaluation: that effective collaboration depends heavily on a degree of mutual understanding that has not yet been achieved, and that it continues to be impeded by competition among the RBAs for resources.

**Figure 8. Survey: the most significant enabling factor for Rome-based agency collaboration**



Source: evaluation online survey: 410 respondents.

<sup>277</sup> FAO, WFP and G5 Sahel, 2018. Lettre d'entente de Partenariat Technique Entre le G5 Sahel, l'Organisation des Nations Unies pour l'Alimentation et L'Agriculture (FAO), et le Programme Mondial d'Alimentation (PAM).

**Figure 9. Survey: the most significant obstacle to Rome-based agency collaboration**



Source: evaluation online survey: 410 respondents.

**Table 12. Survey: the most significant obstacle to Rome-based agency collaboration, by agency**

	FAO	IFAD	WFP	Total
Competition for resources between the agencies	39%	19%	22%	27%
Lack of shared vision on the purpose of RBA collaboration	15%	18%	25%	19%
Incompatible administrative and planning systems	9%	18%	15%	14%
Lack of internal incentives for collaboration	17%	13%	12%	14%
Lack of resources/funding for RBA collaboration	8%	15%	16%	13%
Joint funding mechanisms or strategies	5%	7%	3%	5%
External factors, e.g. national context and government preferences	5%	6%	3%	5%
Donor preferences & strategies	3%	5%	3%	4%

Source: evaluation online survey: 410 respondents.

239. The problem of competition for resources was by far the most often mentioned constraint among respondents overall (Figure 9) and among FAO respondents to the survey (Table 12). For WFP respondents, the lack of shared vision was the most commonly mentioned obstacle to RBAC. IFAD respondents were more evenly split among the constraints mentioned by the survey.

## 2.5 THE ADDED VALUE OF ROME-BASED AGENCY COLLABORATION

### 2.5.1 Introduction

240. This section examines evaluation question 4: what is the added value of RBA collaboration as opposed to single agency processes and results, across the different aspects and levels? The inception report recognized that answering this question would be a challenge, as the limited data available would make any kind of cost-benefit analysis difficult (even if for some collaborative efforts either the costs or the benefits were available).

241. A two-pronged approach was suggested and used in developing these findings. First, to test the assumptions made in the theory of change, in order to see if they were valid and therefore that RBA collaboration was likely to be adding value. Specifically, testing assumptions derived from the RBA collaboration theory of change that would help move the outcome along the pathway to impact, in this case contribution to the Sustainable Development Goals. Secondly, the evaluation hoped to identify RBA efforts where there is a clear counterfactual, where the collaboration can be compared directly against separate

efforts. Unfortunately, this was not possible. It is also not possible to provide the total value added of all RBA collaboration. Instead, this section provides examples of value added from the different categories of collaborative activity and the different levels at which collaboration takes place, together with assessments of costs and benefits.

## 2.5.2 Knowledge utilization and effectiveness

242. **Finding 13: The use of the knowledge created through RBA collaboration has, in some cases, led to an increase in the effectiveness of collaborative efforts. But challenges remain to increase utilization, especially at the country level where it can make the most difference.**

243. The extent of RBA knowledge sharing and joint knowledge creation was set out in Section 2.3 and covers global, regional and country levels. In order to add value as a joint effort and contribute to the Sustainable Development Goals, this knowledge needs to be utilized. Although there is clearly a great deal of shared knowledge through RBAC in global forums and networks, utilization for effective contribution to the Sustainable Development Goals is often unclear or faces challenges. The following paragraphs provide examples of where utilization of knowledge has been captured.

### Global forums and networks

244. The 2017 evaluation of the Committee on World Food Security (CFS)<sup>278</sup> found that the RBAs play a key role in the committee. They: are members of its advisory group and plenary; provide technical/policy expertise to the committee; fund and staff its Secretariat, provide opportunities for the committee to disseminate its conclusions and recommendations, and support the use of its products at the country level. Although the evaluation recognized that the Committee on World Food Security ultimately has little control over the extent to which its policy products and recommendations are used and applied, it argued that it could more proactively seek to influence the use and application of these.

245. For the Committee on World Food Security, there are global policy products but no field presence to promote them. Although the primary audience of the committee's products is Member States, given that the committee has no field presence the RBAs are expected to play a key role in the implementation of these products in line with their mandates, particularly in low-income countries. It makes sense that this promotion is done by the RBAs, but it is challenging. While some of it has been done, the best-known products of the Committee on World Food Security have often been the ones where there has been ownership by one of the agencies and/or donor support to encourage uptake and use of a particular committee product. Utilization is not systematic, and there is still quite a lot of work to be done on the ownership of the Committee on World Food Security by the RBAs. Use of the committee's products is monitored annually (advisory group reporting exercises) where partner entities (including the RBAs) are asked to self-report on their activities, including success stories. FAO seems to have made a great effort to use the Committee on World Food Security Principles for Responsible Investment in Agriculture and Food Systems (RAI) as well as the Committee on World Food Security Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land, Fisheries, and Forestry. WFP has focused on dissemination of the committee's products and awareness building among its staff. Along with FAO, it has also made significant efforts to encourage utilization of the Committee on World Food Security Framework for Action for Food Security and Nutrition in Protracted Crises (CFS-FFA), approved in 2015 with the strong involvement and technical support of these two RBAs.<sup>279</sup> For IFAD, the strategy appears to be based around the expectation that the products will be used. IFAD has launched an online database where all committee recommendations are available<sup>280</sup> to facilitate utilization.

246. In some cases, the three RBAs have come together in the framework of the Committee on World Food Security. Examples include (a) the design, formulation and implementation of the Canada-funded RBA resilience initiative (in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Somalia and Niger), which used CFS-FFA principles, and (b) the joint CFS-RBA side event on "protracted crises and the CFS-FFA" at the 2017 High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development in New York.

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<sup>278</sup> Committee on World Food Security, 2017. *Evaluation of the Committee on World Food Security*. Rome: CFS.

<sup>279</sup> FAO, 2021. Evaluation of FAO's contribution to the humanitarian-development-peace nexus. Rome: *FAO Programme Evaluation Series* 05/2021: p 8.

<sup>280</sup> <https://cfs-products.ifad.org/> [accessed 31 May 2021].

247. The Global Network Against Food Crises also finds that it is at the country level where they need to improve, specifically in relation to investing in food security (the second dimension of the GNAFC). It becomes more challenging when it comes to coordinating investment, especially because the RBAs have decentralized decision making systems and country offices are autonomous. Integration of global products into country programming frameworks is also an ongoing process for the United Nations Decade on Family Farming (UNDF). Although there has been a lot of interest at the regional and country levels, funds are also needed to make sure that utilization of knowledge contributes to change.

### 2.5.3 Collaboration and effectiveness

248. **Finding 14: Although RBA collaboration may have made a positive contribution to effectiveness and may add value compared to single-agency interventions, there is little evidence of this.**

249. Here the evaluation team examines two ways that collaboration can lead to greater effectiveness: strategizing and problem solving together, and learning from each other on an ongoing basis. Both are likely to help collaborative activities become more impactful.

#### Strategizing and problem solving

250. At the country level, RBAs strategize and problem solve together within the framework of the UNCT and the development of an UNDAF or cooperation framework. FAO and WFP also collaborate within the structure of the Food Security cluster, although in Lebanon the Food Security and Agriculture working group is more focused on coordination than on solving problems together.

251. Yet beyond these formal structures, collaboration in this area is mixed. In some countries examined there was very little evidence of it, beyond selected collaborative activities (Egypt, Pakistan). In other cases, there was significant collaboration to find solutions, especially among technical staff (Nepal and Mozambique (see Box 27)). In Niger, there is good collaboration for strategizing together in the context of their joint support for common priorities across the humanitarian-development-peace nexus. The JP RWEE governance structure, with national technical advisory committees and a national steering committee for high level decisions, has helped bring together the agencies with counterparts to strategize.

#### Box 27 What Rome-based agency collaboration means in Mozambique

“RBA collaboration means more than just adding three agencies together, but multiplying their potential.”

FAO Representative, Mozambique, 2013: quoted in IFAD video produced after Mozambique won the first Award of Excellence for RBA collaboration.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=88yc4f5M3c> [accessed 28 June 2021.]

#### Ongoing learning

252. The findings regarding ongoing learning among the RBAs are mixed, but many country studies point to missed opportunities. In Kenya, as outlined in paragraph 150 above, ongoing mutual learning is inherent in the RBAs’ day-to-day collaboration in the implementation of KCEP-CRAL and the Kalobeyei Integrated Socio-Economic Development Plan for Turkana West (KISED) (FAO and WFP with other United Nations entities). Joint missions have helped with lesson learning across the three agencies in Niger. However, these could be more systematically done, and better used to improve programming.

253. In principle the Food Security and Agriculture working group in Lebanon should be the learning platform for RBAs as well as actors in the area of food security and agriculture, but how much lessons learned through the group feed back into the organizations is not clear. In Mozambique there could be more moments of interaction, both between representatives/directors, and at the level of staff. Staff feel that experience exchange is not being sufficiently explored for learning purposes. On the other hand, government counterparts believe that reporting to government has enabled a continuous learning process for everyone, supporting the improvement of interventions on the ground.

254. There is strong, consistent evidence of ongoing learning in the case of gender, globally through quarterly meetings and joint initiative and events, and through the joint work on supporting and implementing the JP RWEE and the Joint Programme on Gender Transformative Approaches for Food

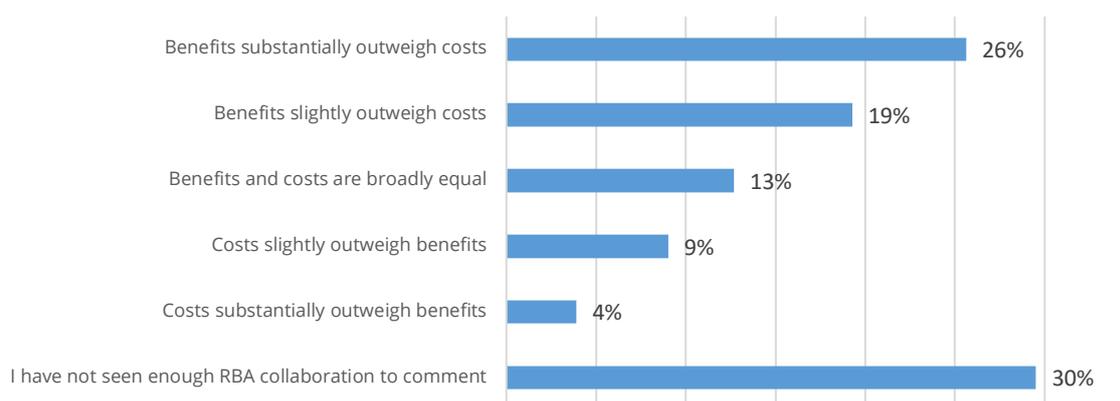
Security and Nutrition (paragraph 145). However, as noted in the JP RWEE evaluation report, opportunities were missed to learn more consistently and to have stronger evidence from implementation.

## 2.5.4 Costs, benefits and efficiency

255. **Finding 15: Although RBA collaboration can lead to cost savings in corporate services as well as additional funds from some donors, overall the costs of collaboration can be significant. Expectations for reducing cost burdens are high, but in practice partners often find that joint work requires additional effort. With the data to undertake cost-benefit analysis limited, estimates of the value added of RBA collaboration are often subjective.**

256. Give the lack of data on both costs and benefits using the same measurement, it is difficult to estimate the added value of RBA collaboration. Often a subjective assessment is made based on different units of measurement, such as comparing benefits in terms of beneficiaries reached and the costs in terms of extra time and effort taken to reach them in a collaborative way. Nonetheless, the survey conducted as part of this evaluation produced a positive assessment, with only 13 percent of respondents believing that costs slightly or substantially outweigh benefits and 45 percent saying that benefits slightly or substantially outweigh costs. Given the nature of this assessment, it is not surprising that the largest single category of responses at 30 percent was “I have not seen enough collaboration to comment” (Figure 10 and Annex XI). A range of other views on benefits and costs are summarized in the box below.

**Figure 10. Survey: respondent views on whether overall benefits of Rome-based agency collaboration outweigh costs**



Source: evaluation online survey: 410 respondents.

### Cost savings from joint procurement

257. Better prices are one of the main drivers of the Common Procurement Team and joint procurement, as recognized in the Common Procurement Team charter. Savings can be achieved through joint procurement, but there are also some limits. First, economies of scale are difficult to achieve when contractors can supply limited services or goods (for example, masks during the COVID pandemic). In these cases, large tenders can reduce competition (for example, in medical insurance, there are only four or five vendors globally who can provide this service to RBAs). Secondly, a joint tender does not mean better conditions for all. Joint tenders sometimes benefit some institutions more than others. The case of medical insurance also provides evidence of this, where the imbalance of benefits led to the end of the collaborative arrangement. There is no evidence of the resources saved being directly used for programme expenditures.

## Increased resources from donors for joint versus single entity efforts

### Box 28 Costs and benefits of Rome-based agency collaboration: views of survey respondents

- Potential benefits far outweigh the costs since we can do much more together than individually - also because of important complementarities. However, this potential remains latent since we often don't share common operational objectives and business processes/practices. Sometimes we manage to come together (for example with COVID-19) and the outcomes are great.
- The benefits are enormous particularly to our funders and beneficiaries.
- The complementarity of the RBA interventions has the potential to deliver results of greater value than the sum of the individual agency results. The greater value is largely the sustainability of the results and solutions.
- The benefit: increase in capacity and professional networks. The cost: the time and energy needed to find a good collaborator.
- It's always beneficial to share expertise, knowledge and other efforts to improve efficiencies. Working in a silo is not conducive, especially in an increasingly integrated UN.
- Benefits are clear but in absence of a corporate shared vision and earmarked resources, it is too much left to the good will of staff on the ground and interpersonal relationships. Depending on the latter the collaboration can flourish or not.
- Benefits outweigh costs in case of WFP; costs outweigh benefits in case of FAO.
- The main cost is in formalizing agreement and securing project budgets. Joint planning can also take time and should focused on task or project specific collaboration. Longer joint project funding would minimize transaction costs and provide more security in fostering collaboration.
- Costs: long meetings and time investment required to engage other RBA partners. Delays in moving ahead with much needed projects due to challenges in engaging partners. Benefits: Avoid duplication, cost efficiencies, learning of best practices, enhanced services for membership.
- FAO admin costs are very high and there is a level of inflexibility which deters RBAs collaboration in country. It is cheaper to work with an independent consultant than to work with FAO.
- Very high transaction costs. Also, some RBAs do not have much standalone resources for collaboration. As a result, when collaboration does happen it often involves a transaction of financial nature and services of RBAs such as FAO are often very expensive by national standards and governments don't like spending project resources. However, where complementary capacities and resources exist collaboration has been found to be fruitful.

258. Evidence from country studies suggests that some donors are more likely to support projects that are developed by more than one United Nations agency, as it enriches project capacity and tackles implementation from different angles (Egypt, Pakistan, Kenya, Peru, Mozambique, Niger). Some donors do actively encourage joint efforts (Pakistan) and can resource them (Kenya). In other countries, strong competition for resources suggests that this is not the case (Colombia).

259. It was also found that donors do not always make their preference for collaborative approaches clear (Mozambique). Moreover, there is not always a joint strategy among donors in this respect. Some joint programmes, developed with the encouragement of donors, have not been able to mobilize adequate resources once designed. The JP RWEE is a case in point, where it took some time to raise the required funds.

260. Certain global, regional or thematic donor funding mechanisms also encourage collaboration. For example, the RBA collaboration through the EU Madad Fund in Jordan and Lebanon<sup>281</sup> has collaboration as a criterion for funding. Similarly, some vertical funds, such as the Global Environment Facility (GEF), encourage or require collaboration for funding projects. The Global Environmental Facility recognizes that not only does collaboration allow "a more holistic approach to programming, it also reinforces the individual Agency's efforts to mainstream or incorporate global environment concerns into its internal policies, programs and projects".<sup>282</sup> However, in all these cases, the positive approach to funding collaboration by the RBAs was not restricted to the RBAs, and it is likely that collaboration with an RBA and other United Nations entities would also attract additional funds.

<sup>281</sup> European Union Regional Trust Fund in Response to the Syrian Crisis. <https://back-to-the-future.org/eu-madad-fund/>

<sup>282</sup> <https://www.thegef.org/partners/gef-agencies>. Accessed 16 June 2021.

## Cost savings and programmes

261. The financial savings that do exist from joint programmatic work are not well captured or quantified. But there are examples of collaboration leading to reductions in costs. For example, in Lebanon, FAO and WFP recognized the potential for collaboration between an FAO reforestation project and a WFP cash for work intervention. The two RBAs came up with a modality whereby WFP worked with the same non-governmental organizations as FAO to provide them with cash for work for afforestation. It was a win-win situation and together they were able to expand the area they planted. However, no monitoring data to quantify the cost benefits of this joint working were available.

262. In the RBA-Canadian resilience initiative, several agency design instruments were connected in complementary ways. WFP utilized the three-pronged approach (3PA) as a foundation for all projects, FAO used the Resilience Index Measurement Analysis (RIMA) for monitoring and evaluation purposes, and IFAD used its Social, Environmental and Climate Assessment Procedures (SECAP). The layering of these approaches reportedly was cost-effective, saved time and resources, and gave continuity to the country projects.

## The financial costs of programmatic collaboration

263. The 2014 United Nations Development Group (UNDG) guidance note on joint programmes<sup>283</sup> makes clear that joint programmes are not suitable in all situations. Going beyond the programmatic considerations, “there are also significant cost considerations related to preparation, development, management and coordination of a Joint Programme. For small programmes, these costs can be excessive”.

264. It is also not always cheaper to collaborate in a transactional way with other RBAs. When governments take IFAD loans, they are not always happy to pay what they see as the high overhead of the other RBAs, especially when it can be much cheaper to hire consultants or non-governmental organizations (Lebanon, Mozambique). Equally, an internal IFAD review of the FAO Investment Centre found that the services provided to IFAD are not the lowest-cost option.<sup>284</sup> A survey undertaken for the IFAD review shows that 84 percent of respondents consider that Investment Centre experts are more costly than independent consultant fees, even with the cost-sharing agreement (see Box 44).<sup>285</sup>

265. In the case of Latin America and the Caribbean in particular, Investment Centre experts were found not to be cost-competitive, even on remote missions, and hardly compatible with the available budget when travel is involved.<sup>286</sup> Despite this, approximately 50 per cent of Country Directors noted that in most cases it was a worthwhile investment to engage Investment Centre specialists. Recurring feedback addressed the costs of junior consultants, which, according to Country Directors, were very high for the level of experience and expertise provided. Most respondents asked for further clarifications on the way the FAO Investment Centre establishes fee rates and its cost-sharing policy.

## The cost of Rome-based agency collaboration architecture

266. In addition to the costs of funding the RBA coordination units and focal points across the three RBAs, the key elements of the RBA coordination architecture (paragraphs 199-200) require significant expenditure and allocation of time from other staff, beyond those with direct responsibility for RBA collaboration. The opportunity cost of staff working on RBA collaboration is significant. Moreover, there is a feeling among some staff that the funds would be better used for the benefit of people the RBAs are intended to serve. Some of the key elements of the coordination architecture are set out in Table 13.

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<sup>283</sup> UNDG, 2014. *Guidance Note on Joint Programmes. Standard Operating Procedures for Countries Adopting the “Delivering as One” Approach*. New York: UNDG. The UNDG is now the United Nations Sustainable Development Group.

<sup>284</sup> IFAD, 2020. *IFAD/FAO CFI partnership. Review of CFI performance in 2020*. Rome: IFAD.

<sup>285</sup> The long-standing agreement with FAO is based on the cost-sharing of services delivered by CFI. According to this arrangement, IFAD normally pays 67 percent of the cost of the CFI expert, while the remaining 33 percent is financed by FAO.

<sup>286</sup> IFAD, 2020. *IFAD/FAO CFI partnership. Review of CFI performance in 2020*. Rome: IFAD: p 6.

**Table 13. Some key elements of the Rome-based agency collaboration architecture**

RBA structure	Who	Frequency
Senior Consultative Group (SCG)	Deputies from 3 RBAs	Three times a year +
Post SCG debrief with Governing Bodies	Member States + RBA representatives	Three times a year +
Joint informal meeting	RBA President/Director-General/ Executive Director + Member States	Once a year
Three RBA Governing Body formal sessions, discussion on the RBA update	RBA President/Director-General/ Executive Director + Member States	Once a year

Source: evaluation team.

### Burden on partners

267. While governments want to ensure that collaboration does not affect budgets, timelines and the quality of implementation, they also want to ensure that the collaboration does not produce an extra burden for them. National government partners can have high expectations of the reduction in burden from joint work, but often these expectations are not met.

268. For the government, the supposed advantage of RBAs working together is the reduced transaction costs from working with one partner rather than two or three. But the reality is often different, especially when the collaboration simply involves each RBA implementing its own components leading to multiple focal points and more people to deal with. It is not just dealing with more people; partner governments also report the burden of multiple meetings and reports.

269. Yet this does not have to be the case. In the Canada-funded RBA resilience initiative there is one reporting template and combined field missions and support. There is also a more united front when approaching the government, and the government gets a more cohesive and coordinated engagement when these RBA programmes are being discussed with counterparts.

270. Some donors interviewed in country studies expressed frustration with the time taken for joint efforts, including the extra burden of reaching consensus and common positions and other aspects of the process that were perceived to be inefficient. One donor gave the example of six weeks spent on agreeing the position and order of RBA logos on a report (Mozambique).

### Additional time for design and implementation of collaborative activities

271. The additional time taken to undertake collaborative activities is almost universal (Kenya, Nepal, Colombia, Peru, Mozambique), especially with joint programmes or projects. The EU-funded Madad project in Lebanon took almost three years to negotiate and finalize. The process was delayed even more when the IFAD project that represented its component in the joint effort was not ratified by the Lebanese Parliament, leading to redesign of the intervention. More generally, the transaction costs of collaboration and coordination of any kind are seen as falling more heavily on small country offices (such as Indonesia) rather than on large ones (such as WFP and FAO in Colombia).

272. This joint evaluation of RBA collaboration led to considerable extra effort by the Evaluation Management Group, with one of the three members estimating that her input was twice what would be expected in a normal strategic evaluation. While another Evaluation Management Group member found it took less time managing the evaluation compared with conducting it, as would be the usual model for her RBA, and that the support of a dedicated coordinator was also required for the evaluation. The complex process also led to considerable extra effort on behalf of the evaluation team. Similarly, the work of the Common Procurement Team does require some additional resources in the initial stages both to plan (Common Procurement Team quarterly meetings) and in order to agree and coordinate a common set of technical criteria for joint tenders. Eventually, the process should lead to savings, as there will be only one lead agency and one tender instead of three tenders.

# 3 Conclusions and recommendations

## 3.1 CONCLUSIONS

273. **Conclusion 1. Collaboration among the Rome-based agencies is a daily reality, reflecting the shared strengths and commitment of these distinctly different organizations. RBA staff routinely act on the advantages of collaboration where they see it makes sense. [Findings 1, 6, 10.]**

274. Although they are significantly different organizations, the RBAs share competence and commitment in their support for the achievement of SDG 2. They regularly see ways to work together towards this common goal, and take action accordingly, building complementary contributions. From global to country levels, RBA staff across the three agencies recognize what they have in common. They do not need instruction or compulsion to identify ways of increasing their effectiveness by working together in advocacy, communicating on issues and achievements, sharing expertise, tackling emergencies, developing technical approaches and building knowledge. There are administrative challenges in building a working interface that unites three such different organizations; but it is a simple daily reality that the people of FAO, IFAD and WFP believe in working together where they see that it is useful and where the transaction costs are not excessive. Although competition for resources continues in some countries and contexts, widespread recognition of complementarity makes RBA collaboration a common reality. Part of the pragmatic approach that is so widely adopted also involves collaboration with other United Nations entities.

275. **Conclusion 2. Despite the daily reality of RBAC, there is widespread ambivalence about the concept. [Findings 2, 3, 8, 9, 12.]**

276. An assumption in the implicit theory of change for RBA collaboration (Annex IV) is that this collaboration is a priority to donors and partners at all levels. The assumption is not wholly correct. Other assumptions are that RBA Governing Bodies and RBA executive heads support RBAC, and that leadership at all levels is behind the collaboration. In practice, the nature and depth of this support vary.

277. Beneath the strong official commitments to collaboration lie complex layers of doubt and reluctance, and diverse mixtures of motives for urging RBAC or appearing to believe in the official version of RBAC that is formally agreed between the agencies and their Governing Bodies. The primary pressure to make collaboration a standard priority across the work of the RBAs comes from some Member States. These Member States require clear commitments by the RBAs to work together more closely, to explore all avenues of collaboration, and to report regularly on their progress. They may be influenced by the fact that all three agencies are concerned with food and the rural sector, or by the fact that they are all based in the same city, or by a belief that United Nations entities are generally more costly and inefficient than they should be. But not all donors fund RBAC as strongly as they advocate it. The governments of some programme countries believe that it would be much simpler to deal with the RBAs together than separately. But it is not uncommon for these governments – and donors in these countries – to continue collaborating with the single RBA with which they have the most productive working experience.

278. **Conclusion 3. The official systems and procedures to promote and coordinate RBA collaboration add little value, frustrating staff more often than they inspire them. [Findings 3, 4, 9.]**

279. Responding to the requirements of their Governing Bodies, the RBAs have developed a formal machinery for RBAC, with under-resourced units (or parts of units) at headquarters to coordinate it, as well as RBA focal points in some countries. In reactive more than proactive mode, they have taken a series of official steps, with the publication of strategic statements, the signature of a memorandum of understanding, the drafting of a plan of action, the preparation of annual progress reports (requiring inputs from country offices) and the introduction of pilot joint country strategies. All this remains a tiny fraction of the RBAs' aggregate strategic effort. At the same time, those who must work most directly on it are heavily burdened with other tasks that they often consider have a higher or more meaningful priority. The RBAs go through the official motions of their collaborative management and reporting processes, but there is little evidence that they consider this the best way to stimulate joint work or achieve their shared objectives more effectively.

280. Official procedures to coordinate RBAC add little value, and are often not followed through usefully. The drafting of the plan of action is a good example. It was prepared in compliance with a Member

State request. It was not finalized and has not been used for management or reporting on results. The current protracted feasibility study on the merger of some administrative functions is another. Member States requested it. The RBAs complied. It has proved to be complex and expensive. RBA management informants do not think it will be helpful, believing the types of business improvement and mergers that it is assessing to be manifestly impractical. Some point out that the United Nations business efficiency agenda should now be the framework for administrative streamlining. Overall, the RBAs' planning of their collaboration gives insufficient direction to country offices, beyond the instruction that RBAC is an important priority that they should pursue. Regional offices serve as links in the chain between headquarters and country office, but are unable to provide much additional coordination or support to RBAC efforts.

281. Whatever their official statements, RBA staff are mostly unconvinced that the official ways in which their collaboration is being structured and promoted are helpful. In some cases, they consider them a disincentive to efficient and effective sharing of their competence and commitment. The fundamentally half-hearted way in which these formal arrangements are pursued is unlikely to enhance their contribution to SDG 2. It would be more constructive to recognize the many ways in which the RBAs do collaborate, whenever they see feasible and effective ways to do so: to favour pragmatism over the automatic assumption that collaboration is the best way forward.

**282. Conclusion 4. Sometimes there are better ways for the RBAs to achieve their shared objectives than to focus on collaboration with each other. [Findings 10, 11, 14, 15.]**

283. An assumption in the implicit theory of change for RBAC (Annex IV) is that procedures and systems are compatible enough to allow collaboration. This assumption is, at best, only partially true.

284. The situation outlined above results from confusion and misunderstandings about what RBA collaboration can and cannot achieve – and, above all, from the misapprehension that RBAC is always appropriate. In fact, as those in the field are well aware, any idea for collaboration must be tested against its practicability, its likely effectiveness, and the level of transaction costs that it will impose. In many cases, these tests yield a negative result. Alternative arrangements, such as separate but complementary activities or collaboration with other partners, may prove more advantageous. Realism and pragmatism are the keys to meaningful and effective RBA collaboration. While high transaction costs may sometimes lead RBAs to conclude, rightly, that a collaborative venture should not be pursued, other factors also come into play. Large country offices – for example, the WFP office in a country with high humanitarian needs – may not feel much need to collaborate with smaller RBA offices, although in fact the larger offices are better able to carry the bureaucratic load of RBAC. Small country offices may see more advantage in collaboration, but find the transaction costs too high to bear.

**285. Conclusion 5. Collaboration and the achievement of the RBAs' shared objectives are still impaired by misunderstandings about the mandates of FAO and WFP. [Findings 5, 9.]**

286. The implicit theory of change for RBA collaboration (Annex IV) includes the assumptions that the agencies' respective mandates are understood and respected, and that their comparative strengths are understood and exploited. In many cases, these assumptions do not fully hold true.

287. Misunderstandings persist about the mandates and modes of operation of these three very different agencies. At all levels, despite years of supposed emphasis on RBA collaboration, many informants still speak of WFP as a humanitarian organization. Confusion and sometimes resentment remain common among programme country governments and RBA personnel about the supposed WFP mandate creep into developmental work that is thought to be the purview of FAO and, in a different modality, of IFAD. This also confuses understanding and expectations about resourcing for the two agencies' work at the country level. It would be unrealistic to aim for a perfectly clear delineation of the mandate boundary between FAO and WFP. Given their shared commitments, there is bound to be a degree of overlap. Properly managed, overlap can be acceptable or actually an asset, as can competition. But although the mandate disputes that arose between the two RBAs in 2016 have largely been laid to rest at headquarters level, the prospects of efficient and effective RBAC are still clouded at the country level – and sometimes in the Governing Bodies – by these uncertainties about what FAO does and what WFP does.

**288. Conclusion 6. Although RBA collaboration is a daily reality, some types of collaboration usually impose higher transaction costs. At all levels, "upstream" and technical work may be an easier area for effective RBA collaboration than formal project formats. [Findings 4, 11.]**

289. This evaluation has confirmed the view of the United Nations Sustainable Development Group that joint projects and programmes are not suitable in all circumstances.<sup>287</sup> They impose significant transaction costs, which the RBAs have not always adequately considered before starting work on them. In general, certain modes of RBA collaboration are likely to be more feasible and more easily effective than others. The biggest challenges normally arise in the programme/project format, when specific resources are budgeted and resourced for an implementation period (typically some years) and a team of personnel focus on project activities and results over that period. The detailed and intricate arrangements that must be made between RBAs' systems and procedures take time and resources, often at the cost of effectiveness (although some joint projects do achieve satisfactory results). What works more easily is upstream or technical collaboration among RBA personnel who do not need to step out of their established work environments to share efforts. Such collaboration is often spontaneous, or may be designed to achieve specific objectives in advocacy, planning, knowledge management or communications, for example. It may also be possible, within the framework of a UNSDCF, to develop complementarities between separate RBA projects (for example, distinct target groups or areas of intervention) without trying to create fully joint projects. With their mature monitoring and reporting systems, the RBAs are well placed to support United Nations Country Teams in strengthening their data analysis and knowledge management. In some cases, RBAs at the country level may informally agree that one of them takes the lead on an issue or initiative, with the others providing complementary inputs as required.

**290. Conclusion 7. The operating context for the RBAs is dynamic. The way they work is changing too. RBA collaboration is just one of the ways for them to contribute to their shared objectives. Other collaborations within the United Nations development system are also appropriate. [Findings 1, 8, 12]**

291. As an international financial institution, IFAD has long been a fundamentally different kind of RBA. Its profile relative to its sister agencies and its programme countries is evolving. Many countries are moving into middle-income status, meaning that their terms of borrowing from the Fund change and the attractiveness of IFAD financing may diminish. Meanwhile, as IFAD strives to maximize its contribution to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (its commitment to SDG 1 is strong, as well as to SDG 2), the enhanced credit status that it has recently achieved appears to shift it further from FAO and WFP and closer to other international financial institutions. Overlapping these trends is the new focus across many nations on development finance, replacing traditional modes of development funding. In fact, none of these changes need diminish the importance of IFAD in working alongside the other RBAs at the country level – in the tighter new frameworks outlined below. They may strengthen its collaborative role. The evaluation has found that middle-income country governments still value the presence of IFAD as a leading and expert player in development finance, linked as it is to the technical competence of FAO and WFP. Furthermore, IFAD can guide its sister agencies as they strive to resource more of their operations through new financing mechanisms – while it continues to benefit from technical collaboration such as that enjoyed with the FAO Investment Centre.

292. More broadly, the RBAs have long collaborated with many other United Nations entities and development partners, in addition to their own Rome-based relationships. That was, and will remain, appropriate. RBA-specific collaboration should be seen in this broader perspective. It is part of a much wider set of collaborations that aim to maximize the aggregate contribution of the United Nations development system to the 2030 Agenda.

**293. Conclusion 8. Current United Nations reform restructures modalities for RBA collaboration at country and regional levels, but does not diminish the value of this collaborative effort. It greatly diminishes the value of separate RBA pursuit of joint administrative efficiencies. [Findings 1, 8.]**

294. One of the assumptions in the implicit theory of change inferred for RBAC (Annex IV) is that the RBAs have adapted their collaboration to the new phase of United Nations reform. This assumption is not fully accurate.

295. The current programme of United Nations reform has created a new, centrally important context for collaboration among all three Rome-based entities of the United Nations system. The often-ineffective UNDAFs are being replaced by a new generation of frameworks – the UNSDCFs – that will require tighter

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<sup>287</sup> UNDG. 2014. Guidance Note on Joint Programmes. Standard Operating Procedures for Countries Adopting the “Delivering as One” Approach. New York: UNDG. The UNDG is now the United Nations Sustainable Development Group.

and more meaningful coordination and collaboration of all United Nations entities at the country level, under the reinforced authority of the United Nations Resident Coordinator. Each entity's overall planning for operations in a country is now required to link directly into the overall priorities of the UNSDCF. This is significant for the preparation of joint RBA country strategies, too. It could be argued that the new arrangements diminish or delete the need for the RBAs to focus on their own collaboration. This evaluation concludes the opposite. The RBAs can promote the achievement of SDG 2 by engaging jointly and proactively in common country assessments and related preparatory procedures for UNSDCFs and by striving together (and with other partners in the UNCT) to achieve effective implementation of UNSDCF priorities that further their shared objectives. At the regional level, the new Regional Collaboration Platforms and Issue-Based Coalitions offer expanded opportunities for RBA collaboration in support of the SDGs.

296. However, other United Nations reforms aimed at enhancing operational efficiency make the RBAs' work on joint corporate services largely irrelevant. The various initiatives being pursued with the support of the Business Innovations Group (BIG), including the Business Operations Strategy, mean that the RBAs do not need to pursue administrative coordination or merger separately, except in some very limited instances between their Rome headquarters. Administrative harmonization across three such different organizations is, in any event, unlikely to achieve more than marginal gains.

**297. Conclusion 9. Collaboration among the RBAs has significant potential, but the rationale for it is not stated in an appropriately realistic way. [Findings 1, 2, 3, 5, 8, 9.]**

298. At present, efforts to promote RBA collaboration are not fully grounded in an accurate understanding of the conditions in which it is most effectively pursued. The formal statements of corporate commitment to collaboration reflect this. But there is real potential for the RBAs jointly to enhance the world's progress towards SDG 2, if the genuine commitment of these agencies' staff to work together in the right circumstances is allowed to take their collaboration forward in productive directions. There is significant potential in the concept of RBA collaboration. But it needs to be developed in more constructive ways, and positioned in relation to the other priorities for collaboration, beginning with the United Nations development system reform process.

### 3.2 RECOMMENDATIONS

299. Strategic recommendations 1-5 are of equal high priority and are the equal responsibility of the three RBAs.

300. Bullets below a recommendation show elements of the recommendation. Letters (a), (b) etc. show points for consideration in implementing the recommendation.

**Table 14. Recommendations**

Recommendation	Deadline, responsibility
<b>Recommendations to the Rome-based agencies</b>	
<p><b>Recommendation 1. Update the memorandum of understanding between the RBAs.</b> Although the current five-year memorandum of understanding was only signed three years ago, significant changes since then make an update necessary. The updated memorandum of understanding should include the following elements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The strategies set out by FAO in its Strategic Framework (2022-2031) and Medium-Term Plan, (2022-2025); in the IFAD12 Results Management Framework (2022-2024); and by WFP in its Strategic Plan, (2022-2026).</li> <li>Through updating the memorandum of understanding, the RBAs should reset their strategy for collaboration in a proactive manner – based on the reflections that this evaluation may stimulate – and to move beyond simple reaction to calls for stronger collaboration.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Deadline:</b> October 2022 (draft updated memorandum of understanding to be ready for the informal meeting of the RBA Governing Bodies)</p> <p><b>Responsibility:</b> FAO - Deputy Director-</p>

Recommendation	Deadline, responsibility
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Emphasize the potential benefits of RBAC, including through strong performance in various areas of thematic collaboration, and joint promotion of the food systems approach – including follow-up to the Food Systems Summit. The memorandum of understanding should also emphasize that RBAC is not a universally applicable principle: collaboration will only be pursued where it makes clear practical sense to do so, and may often include work with other United Nations entities. While the “Rome” label might be retained for reasons of familiarity, the emphasis should be on the three agencies’ shared commitment to common food security objectives.</li> <li>A revised statement on “mutual engagement” to explain how RBAC complements and is structured by the United Nations development system reform process and, specifically, the UNSDCF at the country level, under the leadership of the United Nations Resident Coordinator.</li> <li>United Nations reforms at the regional level, building on the Regional Collaborative Platforms and the implications for regional RBA collaboration, and recognizing the potential contribution of the RBAs to the emerging regional knowledge management hubs.</li> <li>In the light of administrative elements of the United Nations reform, the updated memorandum of understanding should remove its commitments to collaboration on joint corporate services that are covered by the United Nations Business Operations Strategy and other Business Innovation Group initiatives at the country level. The memorandum of understanding should acknowledge that these commitments are largely subsumed by the system-wide enhancements to business operations – to which it should commit the RBAs’ support.</li> <li>Emphasizing the RBAs’ commitments across the humanitarian-development-peace nexus, the updated memorandum of understanding should clearly state FAO commitment and roles in humanitarian response, as well as those of WFP in sustainable development. It should commit all RBAs to work at all levels to clarify and explain the relationships among their mandates; ensure that they do not conflict over roles or compete over resources; and convert competition into collaboration.</li> </ul>	<p>General, Partnerships and Outreach Stream</p> <p>IFAD - Associate Vice-President, External Relations and Governance Department</p> <p>WFP - Assistant Executive Director, Partnerships and Advocacy Department</p> <p>With the support of the Senior Consultative Group (SCG).</p>
<p><b>Recommendation 2. Restructure and reinforce the coordination architecture for RBA collaboration within the framework of UNDS reform.</b> This will ensure that at all levels, the coordination and evaluation of RBAC includes more proactive efforts to develop and disseminate lessons and knowledge about how to optimize collaboration among and beyond the RBAs, about the costs and benefits of RBAC, and about technical experience that can be usefully shared. Specifically:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) The RBAs should retain and strengthen capacity for coordinating RBAC at their headquarters, with financial support from Member States. The coordination function should in future focus on optimizing the RBAs’ engagement in and contribution to the UNDS reform process.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Deadline:</b></p> <p>(a) – (d): June 2022</p> <p>(e): June 2023</p> <p><b>Responsibility:</b></p> <p>FAO - Deputy Director-General, Partnerships and Outreach Stream</p> <p>IFAD - Associate Vice-President, External Relations and Governance Department</p>

Recommendation	Deadline, responsibility
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>b) In each country where it has adequate capacity, each RBA should appoint a focal point whose primary task should be support for and facilitation of RBAs' engagement in the UNSDCF.</li> <li>c) RBA regional offices and hubs should play a stronger role in supporting country offices' redefined collaborative engagement in UNSDCFs through capacity strengthening.</li> <li>d) The RBAs should not continue with a global action plan for their collaboration. Instead, they should jointly monitor and report on their contributions to the overall efforts of the United Nations to achieve SDG 2 through the reformed United Nations development system, through the UN INFO portal.</li> <li>e) The RBAs should monitor the finalization and implementation of their three pilot joint country strategies, assess their value in the context of the UNSDCF, and formally review whether the preparation of more such strategies is warranted.</li> </ul>	<p>WFP - Assistant Executive Director, Partnerships and Advocacy Department</p> <p>With the support of the SCG.</p>
<p><b>Recommendation 3. Further embrace the new joint programming mechanisms at the country level and ensure constructive, collaborative RBA engagement with these mechanisms.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) The RBAs should develop and deliver consistent guidance to their country offices on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Jointly preparing to engage in UNSDCF planning processes</li> <li>ii. Jointly contributing to common country analyses and UNSDCF preparation</li> <li>iii. Harmonizing their respective country multiannual plans with each other and with the UNSDCF</li> <li>iv. Jointly participating in UNSDCF implementation under the leadership of the UNRC.</li> </ul> </li> <li>b) Where appropriate and feasible, RBAs should harmonize their resource mobilization efforts with those of the UNRC for the UNSDCF.</li> <li>c) Particularly in countries where they do not all have offices, the RBAs should be more proactive in supporting the UNRC to reinforce collaboration within the United Nations Country Team, and in collaborating with each other to promote effective action to strengthen food systems and achieve SDG 2.</li> <li>d) The RBAs should engage wherever appropriate and feasible in joint strategic advocacy to country governments about issues related to SDG 2 with the UNRC and other members of the United Nations Country Team.</li> <li>e) The RBAs should encourage more of their senior staff to apply for UNRC positions.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Deadline:</b></p> <p>December 2022</p> <p><b>Responsibility:</b></p> <p>FAO - Deputy Director-General, Partnerships and Outreach Stream; Director, Office of Strategy, Programme and Budget</p> <p>IFAD - Associate Vice-President, Programme Management Department</p> <p>WFP - Assistant Executive Director, Programme and Policy Development Department</p> <p>With the support of the SCG.</p>
<p><b>Recommendation 4. Focus administrative collaboration efforts on further embracing the United Nations efficiency agenda.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Except for those limited areas of administrative collaboration among their three headquarters in Rome that clearly have practical value and cut costs for all the agencies, the RBAs should integrate</li> </ul>	<p><b>Deadline:</b></p> <p>December 2022</p> <p><b>Responsibility:</b></p>

Recommendation	Deadline, responsibility
<p>their efforts at administrative collaboration with the overall United Nations efficiency agenda, specifically the workstreams of the Business Innovation Group, to which they should make a joint, proactive commitment at global, regional and country levels.</p>	<p>FAO - Deputy Director-General, Corporate Logistics and Operational Support stream</p> <p>IFAD - Associate Vice-President, Corporate Services Department</p> <p>WFP - Assistant Executive Director, Resource Management Department</p>
<p><b>Recommendation 5. In considering the development of joint projects and programmes, assess the costs and benefits of the proposed collaboration and only proceed if the benefits outweigh the costs.</b></p> <p>a) The RBAs should jointly prepare simple guidance for assessing the benefits and costs of proposed joint projects and programmes that captures the likely higher transaction costs and potential reputational risks of this type of collaboration, alongside the benefits of joint RBA action.</p> <p>b) The RBAs should streamline inter-agency administrative arrangements and charges, as well as procedures for the delegation of authority to the country level where feasible and appropriate, in order to reduce some of the transaction costs of joint projects and programmes.</p>	<p><b>Deadline:</b> December 2022</p> <p><b>Responsibility:</b> FAO - Deputy Director-General, Partnerships and Outreach Stream</p> <p>IFAD - Associate Vice-President, Programme Management Department</p> <p>WFP - Assistant Executive Director, Programme and Policy Development Department</p> <p>With the support of the SCG.</p>
Recommendation to the Member States of the RBA Governing Bodies	
<p><b>Recommendation 6. The Member States of the RBA Governing Bodies should reappraise and adequately resource their position on RBA collaboration.</b></p> <p>Through their various representative RBA governance structures, the Member States should confirm to the RBAs that they:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Recognize that RBA collaboration is an important objective in some circumstances but not all</li> <li>Recognize that RBA collaboration should be pursued within the framework of reformed United Nations coordination at the country level</li> <li>Recognize that RBA collaboration on joint corporate services should largely comprise proactive commitment to the overall United</li> </ul>	<p><b>Deadline:</b> End 2021, in response to this report</p> <p><b>Responsibility:</b> Member States.</p>

Recommendation	Deadline, responsibility
<p>Nations efficiency agenda, rather than administrative harmonization and efficiency initiatives focused on the RBAs only</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Will give priority to resourcing collaborative RBA action on the principles set out above, to be reflected in the updated memorandum of understanding that they should endorse.</li> </ul>	

# Annexes

## Annex I. Summary terms of reference

301. **Background.** The evaluation offices of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) and the United Nations World Food Programme (WFP), as part of their approved programmes of work for 2020-2021 are undertaking an independent joint evaluation on collaboration among the United Nations Rome-based agencies (RBAs).<sup>288</sup> The respective Governing Bodies of IFAD<sup>289</sup> and FAO<sup>290</sup> requested this evaluation.

302. **RBA collaboration framework.** In November 2016, the RBAs jointly published a paper, “Collaboration among United Nations Rome-based Agencies: Delivering on the 2030 Agenda”, which posits a common vision (SDG 2) of ending hunger and malnutrition and promoting sustainable agriculture and rural transformation through holistic approaches. The 2016 RBA Collaboration Paper identified four pillars of collaboration: working together at the country and regional level, co-operating at the global level, collaborating on knowledge and themes and joint corporate services. In June 2018, building on those same pillars, the RBAs signed a five-year tripartite Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) that sets out agreed objectives, principles and areas of collaboration.

303. **Evaluation scope.** The evaluation will cover collaborations between two or three RBAs under the four pillars set out in the RBA collaboration framework and the MoU (2018). The main focus will be on collaboration at country level, as this is where collaboration should ultimately impact on the lives and livelihoods of people and contribute directly to the SDGs and Agenda 2030. This focus is not to the exclusion of the other pillars of RBA collaboration.

304. **Evaluation approach and methodology.** The evaluation will comply with the UNEG Norms and Standards for Evaluation and adopt a rigorous approach to ensure the quality and credibility of the evaluation. The Joint Evaluation will address four key questions articulated around the following areas: a) Relevance, b) Results, c) Enabling and disabling factors, d) Added value of collaboration. The evaluation will use the criteria of **relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency, and sustainability**, applying the revised OECD-DAC criteria definitions.<sup>291</sup>

305. **Evaluation Team.** A competitively recruited independent evaluation company will form the evaluation team and ensure the evaluation’s independence and credibility. An Evaluation Management Group consisting of senior evaluation officers from the three RBAs will supervise and provide guidance and quality assurance of the evaluation process and products.

306. **Risks and mitigation strategies.** The COVID-19 pandemic represents the most serious risk to the completion of the entire evaluation by 31 December 2021. To address this risk, briefings, interviews and main data collection will be done remotely if travel restrictions are still in place.

307. **The findings of the evaluation** will be actively disseminated. The final evaluation report will be publicly available on the websites of FAO, IFAD and WFP.

308. **Full terms of reference** are available at <https://www.wfp.org/publications/joint-evaluation-collaboration-among-united-nations-rome-based-agencies>

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<sup>288</sup> WFP, 2019. WFP Management Plan. Executive Board Second Regular Session 18-21 November 2019. WFP/EB.2019/5-A/1 <https://docs.wfp.org/api/documents/WFP-0000108558/download/>

<sup>289</sup> The Council further “...requested FAO, together with WFP and IFAD to provide a first assessment regarding the feasibility of integrating administrative functions, and greater collaboration in some oversight functions to be submitted to the 2020 end-of-year sessions of the FAO Council and Executive Boards of IFAD and WFP for collaboration”. FAO. 2019. Report of the Council of FAO. Hundred and Sixty-third Session, 2-6 December 2019. Rome.

<sup>290</sup> FAO. 2019. Report of the Council of FAO. Hundred and Sixty-third Session, 2-6 December 2019. Rome.

<sup>291</sup> OECD/DAC Network on Development Evaluation. 2019. Better criteria for better evaluation: Revised Evaluation Criteria and Principles for Use. <http://www.oecd.org/dac/evaluation/revised-evaluation-criteria-dec-2019.pdf>

309. **For more information** please contact the respective members of the Evaluation Management Group: Chitra Deshpande ([c.deshpande@ifad.org](mailto:c.deshpande@ifad.org)), Deborah McWhinney ([deborah.mcwhinney@wfp.org](mailto:deborah.mcwhinney@wfp.org)) and/or Rachel Sauvinet Bedouin ([Rachel.Bedouin@fao.org](mailto:Rachel.Bedouin@fao.org)).

## Annex II. Methodology

309. The methodology for the evaluation has been based on the evaluation framework contained in the terms of reference together with the interpretation contained in the approved proposal by Mokoro. It has also been informed by the work undertaken in the inception phase (to be described below) and discussion with members of the Evaluation Management Group.

### Definition of collaboration

310. Collaboration among United Nations entities is not clearly defined in general, nor do the various agreements among the RBAs to further their collaboration clearly define the concept. All three RBAs have, or have had, partnership strategies but only the WFP Corporate Partnership Strategy (2014-2017) clearly defined partnership within the broader concept of collaboration.

Specifically, partnerships are collaborative relationships between actors that achieve better outcomes for the people served by the RBA:

- Combining and leveraging complementary resources of all kinds
- Working together in a transparent, equitable and mutually beneficial way
- Sharing risks, responsibilities and accountability<sup>292</sup>

311. This approach is consistent with that taken by the United Nations in its 2013 General Assembly resolution "Towards global partnerships: a principle-based approach to enhanced cooperation between the United Nations and all relevant partners". The resolution defines partnerships as:

Voluntary and collaborative relationships between various parties, both public and non-public, in which all participants agree to work together to achieve a common purpose or undertake a specific task and, as mutually agreed, to share risks and responsibilities, resources and benefits.<sup>293</sup>

312. From these two definitions it is clear that partnerships are collaborative relationships, but a certain type of collaborative relationship with specific characteristics. Collaboration is therefore a wider concept than partnership and includes other forms of collaboration that are not considered partnership. The WFP strategy goes on to make the distinction between partnerships and other forms of collaboration in a continuum from purely transactional collaboration to full partnership, as illustrated in Figure 11 below.

313. The RBA collaboration agreements and progress reports implicitly use this wider concept of collaboration, as they include references to collaborative activities that are purely transactional in nature. For the purposes of this evaluation, the broad concept of collaboration was used as a working definition and is aligned with the dictionary definition of collaboration as "joint work". Using the framework in

314. Figure 11, an example of a purely transactional arrangement is one entity piggybacking on the contract of another entity. Similarly, an example of a full partnership could be a joint programme aimed at strengthening food security.

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<sup>292</sup> WFP, 2014. *WFP Corporate Partnership Strategy (2014-2017)*. Rome: WFP Partnership, Policy Coordination and Advocacy Division. Page 8.

<sup>293</sup> United Nations General Assembly, 2013. *Towards global partnerships: a principle-based approach to enhanced cooperation between the United Nations and all relevant partners*. New York: UNGA: A/RES/73/254. Page 4

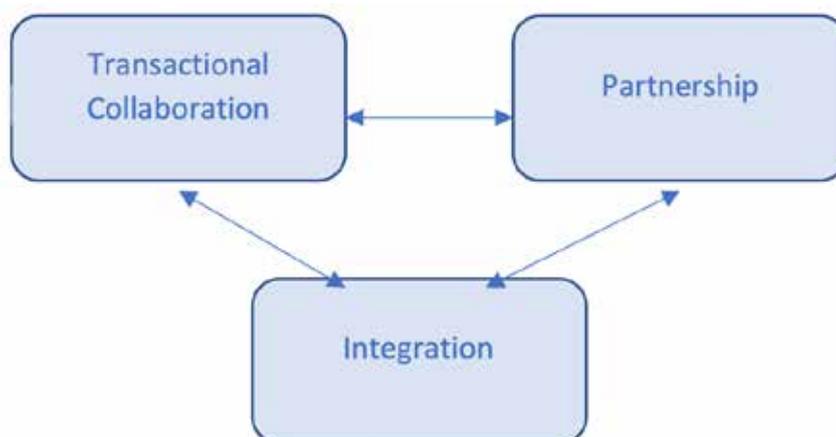
**Figure 11. The continuum of collaborative relationships**

Transactional ←		→ Partnership
One party decides on the programme based on their knowledge and experience	↔	Decision co-generation based on joint knowledge and experience
One party purchases a service from – or donates to the work of – another	↔	Partners bring together complementary resources
Fixed contractual arrangement, with clear activities and outputs decided at beginning	↔	Collaboration agreement, with agreed outcomes; flexibility over how to get there
Limited engagement with parties outside the contractual arrangement	↔	Engagement and commitment beyond the contractual arrangement
Partners stay in their comfort zones – each doing what they normally do	↔	Partners create new ways of working
One-way accountability	↔	Mutual accountability
Significant trust and transparency not essential	↔	Requires mutual trust and transparency

Source: <sup>294</sup>.

315. In addition, another dimension of collaboration became apparent during inception interviews. That is integration, which does not fit on the continuum and had elements of both transactional collaboration and partnership. While we can find examples of transactional arrangements (for example, WFP using the IFAD print shop or the FAO Investment Centre/IFAD collaboration) and full partnerships (for example, a joint programme), there are no examples of integration (for example, a single ethics or procurement unit servicing all three RBAs). But it is an idea that is raised in the context of furthering RBA collaboration, and it is therefore included in this definitional framework.

**Figure 12. An expanded illustration of collaboration**



Source: evaluation team.

316. Although the definition of collaboration is clear, for analytical purposes it is important to break down this broad concept. The 2016 RBA Collaboration paper proposes four “pillars” of collaboration:

- Working together at the country and regional levels
- Cooperating at the global level
- Collaborating on thematic knowledge
- Joint corporate services.<sup>295</sup>

317. The document also notes that the RBAs will use these four pillars when monitoring and reporting on the progress of RBA collaboration, and indeed this structure has been followed in the annual RBA

<sup>294</sup> WFP, 2014. *WFP Corporate Partnership Strategy (2014-2017)*. Rome: WFP Partnership, Policy Coordination and Advocacy Division: p 9.

<sup>295</sup> FAO, IFAD and WFP, 2016. *Collaboration among United Nations Rome-based Agencies: Delivering on the 2030 Agenda. Joint paper*. FAO, IFAD and WFP: Rome, 30 November 2016. Page 6

progress reports. Section 3 of the 2018 memorandum of understanding sets out slightly different collaboration levels in a structure that is also used in the 2019 plan of action:

- Country
- Regional
- Global (including thematic areas)
- Corporate services.<sup>296</sup>

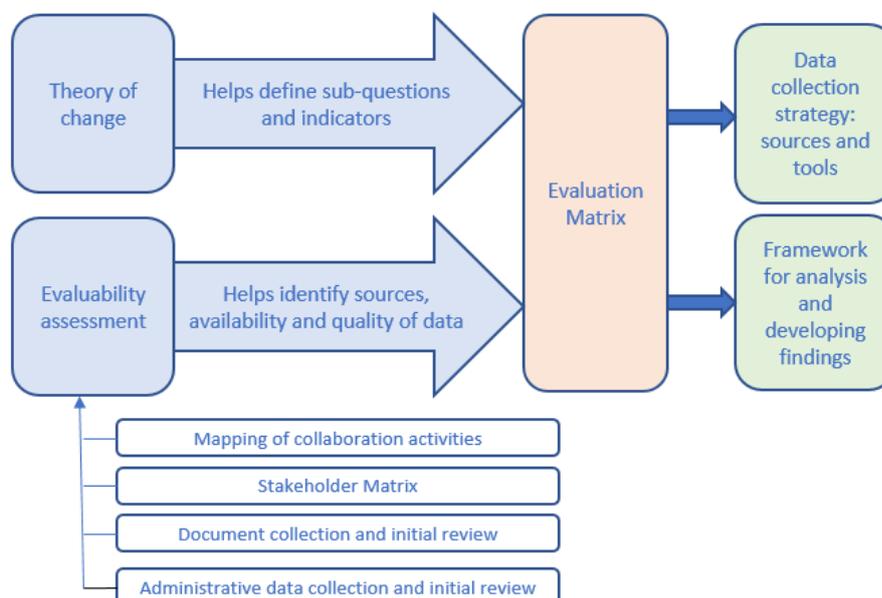
318. The evaluation team has kept a basic framework of three levels and developed different categories of activity that can cut across the three levels (including thematic and corporate services but also the categories identified in Annex 6 of the terms of reference).<sup>297</sup> The three levels would be country, regional and global, although an important distinction can be made between a global activity and one only dealing with headquarters. The following five categories, similar to those used in the collaboration agreements, have then been used for analysis:

- Strategic
- Programmatic
- Thematic
- Advocacy and communications
- Corporate services.

## Overall approach

319. There are a number of elements of the overall approach that together form the methodological framework that drives the conduct of the evaluation. These elements were developed during the inception phase and are interlinked, as illustrated by Figure 13.

**Figure 13. Elements of the overall evaluation approach**



Source: evaluation team.

<sup>296</sup> FAO, IFAD and WFP, 2018. *Memorandum of Understanding between Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) and World Food Programme (WFP)*. FAO, IFAD and WFP, Rome: June 2018. Page 5-6

<sup>297</sup> As agreed with the EMG in early October 2020.

320. **The reconstructed theory of change** (Figure 1, page 11 and Annex IV). An overarching theory of change was developed, based on Figure 1 in the terms of reference, in order to:

- Conceptualize the object being examined and allow for incorporation of basic elements of the framework, specifically the evaluation questions, the criteria
- Allow the identification of assumptions and risks that are used to define the subquestions and indicators in the evaluation matrix.

321. **The evaluability assessment.** This was undertaken to assess the clarity of the evaluation subject and the quality and availability of data to ensure that the evaluation questions are realistic. It also informed the methodology and specifically the data collection methods set out in the evaluation matrix.

322. **Stakeholder mapping.** A comprehensive stakeholder mapping exercise was undertaken to help identify the stakeholders for data collection, validation or engagement (for example, membership of reference group).

323. **Mapping RBA collaboration.** Based on an initial mapping of RBA collaboration activities in the terms of reference, a more comprehensive mapping exercise revealed the extent of the evaluation subject, the different categories of collaboration and the levels where the activities can be found.

324. **Evaluation matrix** (Annex VI). The evaluation matrix is at the core of the evaluation approach, setting out: (a) the overall analytical framework of evaluation questions, subquestions and indicators, and (b) setting the basis of the data collection strategy, indicating data sources, collection methods and the degree of triangulation that will be used.

## Data collection

325. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, all data collection took place remotely. The data collection schedule is shown at Annex VII.

326. **Documentation.** The evaluation team undertook an extensive review of documentation on RBA collaboration, starting with material sourced mainly at headquarters level in the inception phase and supplementing this with material collected during the country case studies, deep dives and other investigations carried out during the data collection phase. All documents are stored in a Microsoft Teams e-library that the Evaluation Management Group will retain. The evaluation team used MAXQDA software to analyse documents and catalogue key extracts, providing an important source of evidence for its findings (see Annex VIII, page 121).

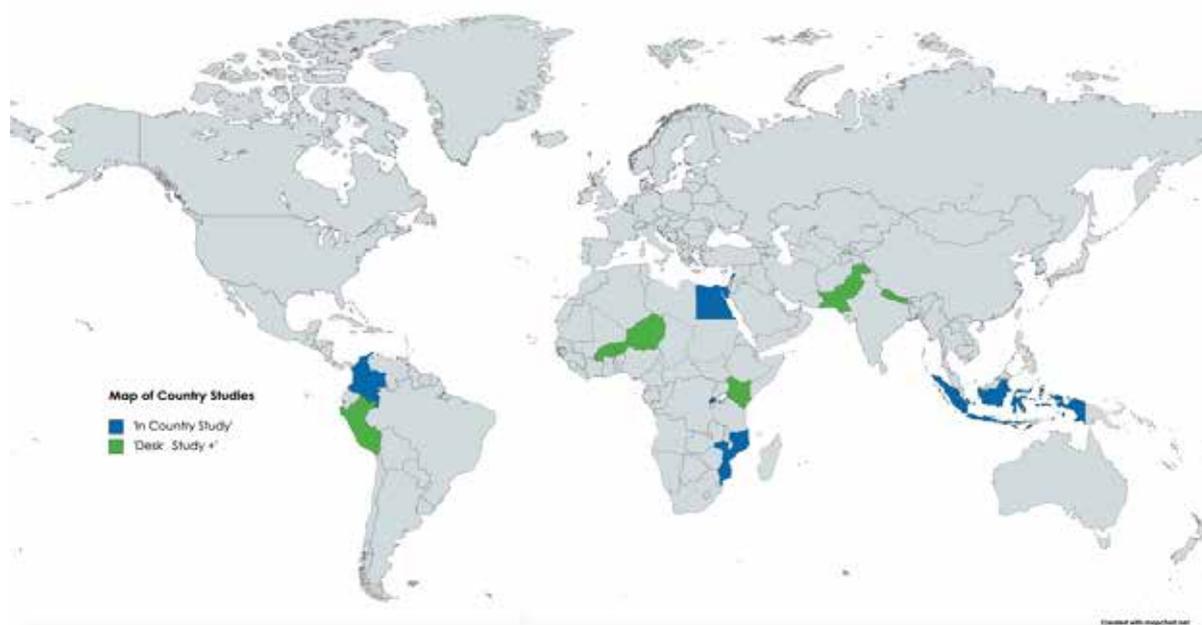
327. **Country case studies.** As part of the inception phase, country case studies were carried out in Kenya and Niger. Additional data were collected in these countries during the data collection phase, when ten additional country studies were undertaken (Table 15, Figure 14 below). Given limitations on evaluation resources, more time was allocated to some of the country studies (described as “in-country”, although ultimately no travel was possible). For some other “desk study +” countries, documentation was the principal source of data, although the evaluation team also undertook a limited number of interviews. One country case, Nepal, was planned to be reviewed by desk study of documentation only. In the end, the evaluation team interviewed some key informants there too. All country studies began with launch meetings and concluded with debriefings. Both sessions were attended by senior officers of the RBAs in country, as well as members of the Evaluation Management Team. Key informant interviews used guides developed for different categories of informant: RBA staff, government personnel, other United Nations partners and other informants (for example, NGO staff and academics). The evaluation team tried to arrange contact and interviews or focus group discussions with beneficiaries as part of the country studies. They only had limited success in this regard, due to the requirement for remote working.

**Table 15. Country case studies**

#	(a) 'In-country'	(b) Desk study +
1.	Indonesia	
2.		Pakistan
3.		Nepal
4.		Kenya
5.	Rwanda	

#	(a) 'In-country'	(b) Desk study +
6.		Niger
7.		Burkina Faso
8.	Mozambique	
9.	Lebanon	
10.	Egypt	
11.	Colombia	
12.		Peru

Figure 14. Location of country studies



Source: Evaluation team

328. **Deep dives.** The terms of reference required the evaluation team to undertake a series of more detailed deep dive studies of selected aspects of RBA collaboration, at regional and global levels. The themes were selected in intensive consultation with the Evaluation Management Team during the inception phase (Table 5). It proved difficult to identify appropriate deep dive themes at the regional level; there are only 12 regional collaborative activities of any description among the total 306 in the database (paragraph, 38, Section 1.3.4).

Table 16. Deep dive study themes

Category of Activity	Theme	
	Regional	Global/HQ
Strategic/policy		Nutrition (3 RBAs)
Programmes and projects	RBA resilience programme in the Sahel (3 RBAs)	FAO Investment Centre (FAO/IFAD)
Advocacy and communications		State of Food Insecurity report
Thematic		Resilience (3 RBAs) Gender (3 RBAs)
Corporate services		Procurement (including medical insurance) (3 RBAs) Evaluation (3 RBAs)

329. **Additional thematic studies.** The evaluation team carried out focused data collection and analysis on RBAC collaboration in the following areas:

- Responses to the COVID-19 pandemic
- Committee on World Food Security
- United Nations Decade of Family Farming
- The Food Systems Summit
- The Global Network Against Food Crises
- The International Digital Council for Food and Agriculture
- Youth
- Emergencies
- South-South and triangular cooperation
- The climate crisis.

330. **Key informant interviews and group discussions.** In addition to the key informant interviews and group discussions carried out as part of all the studies outlined above, a series of meetings (again using interview guides) were held with key informants at senior levels in the RBAs and some other United Nations entities and offices, as well as with representatives of Member States. All the approximately 400 informants are listed at Annex IX. All interviews and group discussions began with an assurance of confidentiality.

331. **Online survey.** In consultation with the Evaluation Management Team, the evaluation team sent a short online survey to 1,800 professional staff of the three RBAs at global, regional and country levels. It achieved a 23 percent response rate of 410, spread almost equally across the RBAs. Further details of sampling and survey methods, and the survey instrument, are at Annex X. A summary of survey responses is at Annex XI. Various references are made to these responses in presentation of the evaluation findings.

## Data analysis

332. Data analysis has been structured around the questions, subquestions and indicators in the evaluation matrix. The evaluation team developed a standardized findings matrix template, structured by evaluation questions and subquestions. Team members entered data from each of the country, deep dive and thematic studies into one of these matrices, and all matrices were then combined for easy analysis. Structuring the data in this way facilitated triangulation. For each subquestion and indicator, evidence from all sources could be reviewed side-by-side, with assessment of convergence or divergence and of credibility.

333. The computer-assisted analysis of documentation and review of interview and meeting notes have supplemented the combined findings matrices. The evaluation team integrated its understanding and analysis from all these sources through a series of workshop discussions.

## Gender equality

334. All aspects of context and performance were examined through a gender lens and analysed and reported accordingly. This will accord with, and exceed, UNEG Standard 4.7, which refers to the extent to which the United Nations commitments to gender mainstreaming strategy are incorporated in design.<sup>298</sup> The evaluation team also consistently ensured that conclusions and recommendations bring out gender dimensions of issues, and are formulated in a manner that allows the RBAs to take action on the challenges and areas of progress identified. As throughout the evaluation, the primary purpose in this regard will be formative, suggesting ways in which the RBAs can strengthen their performance with regard to GEWE. Although responsibility for the issue belongs to all team members, one experienced team member was assigned to assess responsiveness of approaches and tools to gender issues at each stage of the evaluation.

335. The evaluation matrix is in this context a key tool for further elaborating the evaluation questions and ensuring that aspects of gender equality, and related social inclusion concerns, are also translated into indicators for which primary data can be gathered through the data collection tools. In answering

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<sup>298</sup> United Nations Evaluation Group, 2016. *Norms and Standards for Evaluation*. United Nations Evaluation Group, June 2016. Page 24

evaluation question 2, one of the indicators is the extent to which gender equality is addressed in RBA collaborations.

## Limitations and challenges

336. The evaluation team identified a number of risks and challenges during the inception phase. Their analysis proved largely accurate. Key limitations were as follows:

- The remote working necessitated by the COVID-19 pandemic made planning and carrying out data collection more complex and time-consuming. For example, while a conventional country mission for an evaluation like this might have been undertaken during one working week, the country case studies for this evaluation typically took at least three weeks. Similarly, arranging interviews at other levels has been slower and more complex than would be expected in normal circumstances. As noted above, little beneficiary contact was possible. (It did take place in Colombia and Peru.)
- A related challenge was to achieve adequate engagement with RBA staff at the country level, primarily through one or more focal points who were identified (sometimes with difficulty) in each country. In some countries the response was enthusiastic and supportive. In others, the evaluation team had to make extended efforts to achieve sufficient contacts and data collection. In Burkina Faso, those efforts were not fully successful and it was not possible to arrange a debriefing.
- Spanning these challenges was the fact that the more subtle dimensions of face-to-face contact with informants were lost, and the flexibility of in-country contact, such as quick follow-ups, could not be replicated.
- Working for three clients instead of one inevitably added time and complexity to the evaluation process. Extended consultations between and with the Evaluation Management Team were necessary on some evaluation design and implementation issues, such as the selection of country studies, the identification of online survey respondents, arrangements to interview Member State representatives and the scheduling of country study launches and debriefings. These all impaired the efficiency of the evaluation process.
- The evaluation team reviewed extensive documentation from many global and local sources. This review yielded comparatively little substantive evidence on RBA collaboration. Despite the high profile that RBAC has had for many years, there is less detailed information and analysis in the documentation than might be expected. Data on which a quantitative or even a qualitative analysis of efficiency and value added might be based, in answer to EQ 4, are particularly limited.

337. **The challenge of evaluation question 4 and assessing value added.** There is little secondary evidence, for example from evaluations, that can help understand the added value of the RBA collaboration. RBA collaboration updates and progress reports tend to stop at description, occasionally moving towards the immediate outcome level. An attempt was made in the 2020 report to look beyond description, but it largely failed.

338. In answering the other evaluation questions, we will know what the results of collaboration are to the immediate outcome level and have identified the factors that can explain this performance. We will also have seen how RBA collaboration fits into the wider frameworks of the 2030 Agenda, the Sustainable Development Goals and United Nations reform. Yet, the leap from this level of performance to assessing if the RBA collaboration has contributed to, or is likely to contribute to, the 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals, or has made a contribution to improving the life of the poor and food insecure, is too great. By stopping at this level, RBA collaboration raises the question of “so what?”. EQ 4 on the added value of RBA collaboration is therefore at the core of the evaluation and the area where the evaluation can itself add the most value. The question is also the most conceptually complex with the least amount of data available to address it.

339. Two overlapping and complementary approaches were used to answer EQ 4 and the selection of the most appropriate depended on the availability of the right kind of data. Both approaches used the criteria of effectiveness and efficiency (the 2019 OECD-DAC definitions of each). These were:

- With and without analysis where there is a counterfactual. In terms of identifying the value added of collaboration, a with and without analysis is the most appropriate. But using this approach depended on the availability of a counterfactual, only available in some of the more transactional collaborations, mostly surrounding corporate services. The approach was better at showing value added in terms of efficiency, specifically the saving of financial resources as the result of the collaboration, and less useful in identifying the value added using other criteria where performance may not be quantified, and qualitative data of “with and without” may not be easy to compare.
- Testing the assumptions of the theory of change to see if they are valid. This was used where there is no counterfactual, for example where the collaborative activity is new and not undertaken by the individual RBAs before collaboration. The second approach is theory-based and uses the assumptions developed in the nested theory of change in Figure 15, Annex IV. The assumptions link the key immediate outcomes of collaboration with the value added.

## Annex III. Evaluation timeline

341. The original timeline for the evaluation was revised in close consultation with the Evaluation Management Team to ensure that all due review processes were incorporated.

Phase	Activity	Timeline
Data collection	Further document review and preliminary analysis; Survey preparation and launch and preparation for desk reviews and country missions.	Jan-Feb 2021
	Fieldwork, data collection and desk review. Internal briefings after each country visit	8 Feb-30 April 2021
	Team synthesis workshop	Thursday, 6 May 2021
	Overall debriefing with EMG & ESC and RBA stakeholders, followed by debriefing with EMG & ESC	Wednesday, 12 May 2021
Reporting	TL submits draft Zero Evaluation Report to EMG	Monday, 31 May 2021
	EMG comments on zero draft ER; compiled and consolidated comments provided to TL	Monday, 7 June 2021
	Draft 1 ER submitted – EMG shares Draft 1 with Directors (IFAD peer review)	Thursday, 17 June 2021
	EMG review and provide compiled and consolidated comments to TL	Thursday, 24 June 2021
	TL submits revised ER draft 2	Monday, 28 June 2021
	EMG shares ER draft 2 with stakeholders, including ESC and Management Advisory Group for review and comment	30 June 2021
	Commenting period for all relevant stakeholders	30 June–21 July 2021
	EMG sends compiled and consolidated comments on ER draft 2 to TL	23 July 2021
	RBA Stakeholders' workshop	5-6 July 2021
	Pre-Summit (FAO)	Week of 19 July
	TL submits revised ER draft 3 (addressing the stakeholders' comments) + draft 1 SER	Friday 6 August 2021
	EMG reviews ER draft 3 and SER draft 1 and provide compiled and consolidated comments to TL	Wednesday, 11 August 2021
	Mokoro revises SER and resubmits SER draft 2	Friday, 13 August 2021
	EMG/WFP shares draft 2 SER with Directors for clearance and issuance to the Oversight and Policy Committee for comment	Wednesday, 18 August 2021
	OPC commenting period	Thursday, 26 August 2021
	EMG share consolidated comments on SER draft 2 with Mokoro	Friday, 27 August 2021
	Mokoro to submit final SER (draft 3)	Tuesday, 31 August 2021
	EMG/ESC final review and submission to WFP Executive Board Secretariat and IFAD Evaluation Committee	Thursday 2 September 2021
	Mokoro to submit final ER (draft 4)	Friday, 10 September 2021
	IFAD submit final ER to SEC	Monday, 20 September 2021
Dissemination and follow-up	RBA Senior Consultative Group Meeting	September 29 2021
	Meeting of the Joint RBA Governing Bodies	5 October 2021
	Discussion IFAD Evaluation Committee	19 October 2021 <sup>299</sup>
	WFP Executive Board	Week starting 15 November 2021
	IFAD Executive Board	14-16 December 2021
	Dissemination of final Evaluation Report, posting on respective websites	January 2022

<sup>299</sup> 115<sup>th</sup> Session of the IFAD Evaluation Committee is scheduled for 19 October: <https://webapps.ifad.org/members/ec/115>

# Annex IV. Theory of change

## Introduction

342. The theory of change shown in Figure 1 is not designed for an evaluation of the performance of the individual collaborative efforts but is intended for an evaluation of the collaboration itself. Ultimately, it attempts to help assess the extent of the value-added of the collaboration in terms of increasing the RBAs' contribution to the 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals. In other words, to answer the question - what extra value do we get from the agencies collaborating versus doing something by themselves?

343. The theory of change takes into account the terms of reference, especially the basic collaboration framework set out in the terms of reference's Figure 1, the four existing evaluation questions (which are considered as given) and the subquestions that guide the thinking for the theory of change but, it is assumed, can also be adapted. They also draw on the 2018 RBA memorandum of understanding and the 2019 joint action plan. One challenge concerns the lack of consistency and clarity in RBA documents. Another relates to adapting some of the ideas in the terms of reference (such as evaluation criteria) to a strategic evaluation of collaboration.

344. As a first step, an overarching theory of change was developed (based on Figure 1 of the terms of reference) that shows the causal chain from inputs through collaboration activities to impact of people and contribution to the 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals. Although the theory of change uses the same continuum from inputs to impact as a logical framework, it adds a set of assumptions and risks that explain the causal links between the different elements. In so doing it moves away from the accountability objective of a logical framework to a learning approach, helping the evaluation team understand the main causal factors that explain how RBA collaboration can ultimately add value to the work of the three agencies. The very broad scope of the evaluation means that there will be a wide variety of specific pathways to impact of the individual collaboration activities. But the theory of change is of the collaboration itself (not the activities) and is based on the idea that the value added will come from a combination of increased effectiveness and efficiency. The second step was to prepare a nested theory of change that provides more detail on the assumptions concerning the move from immediate collaboration outcome to the value-added of that collaboration. This annex starts with describing the nature and evolution of the elements of the overarching theory of change and ends with more detail on the nested theory of change.

## Collaboration inputs

345. All three entities provide different types of inputs to the collaboration process, largely in terms of human, financial, material, technological and information resources. Using a different lens, three categories of input can be identified that may help us understand the overall cost of collaboration:

- Financial and human resources that would have been used anyway but that are now used for collaborative activities
- Additional resources mobilized as a result of the collaboration exercise
- Resources specifically used to support collaboration (for example, resources for RBA coordination units).

## Collaborative activities and related outputs

346. The 2018 RBA memorandum of understanding lists activities for each of the four levels of collaboration. The language is not always clear or coherent and the lists are probably not exhaustive. It may be that after mapping the activities through preparing the database of collaborative activities, the lists can be revisited so that they represent the actual collaboration taking place.

347. The memorandum of understanding uses four levels of collaboration – country, regional, global and corporate services – which will be used here. Thematic collaboration is included under global collaboration but in the 2016 RBA Collaboration paper regional and country levels are joined and thematic

collaboration is separate. The terms of reference talks of the four pillars set out in the two documents but does not indicate which one the evaluation should use.

348. Table 2 of the evaluation terms of reference (Table 17 below) presents four categories of collaboration using a different lens but does not explain what each one means (for example, the difference between corporate services/administrative and administrative categories). Some kind of categorization that cuts across the different pillars or levels would be useful (for example, advocacy could be at country, regional or global levels).

**Table 17. Mapping of sample of joint initiatives (2017-2019) presented in evaluation terms of reference**

Categories of collaboration	Level			Agencies			
	Global/HQ	Regional	Country	Tripartite	FAO-WFP	FAO-IFAD	IFAD-WFP
<b>Strategic/policy</b>	10	6	6	12	4	1	0
<b>Programme/operations</b>	1	4	65	24	34	5	10
<b>Corporate services/administrative</b>	22	3	4	21	2	1	0
<b>Administrative</b>	17	0	0	11	3	2	1
<b>ALL</b>	50	13	74	67	43	9	11

349. The evaluation team looked at two sets of categories: (1) three levels – global, regional and national; and (2) five types of collaborative activities: (a) strategic, (b) programmatic, (c) thematic, (d) advocacy and communications, and (d) corporate services.

350. To illustrate the types of collaborative activity, the following list of types of activity comes from the 2018 memorandum of understanding plus the evaluation terms of reference:

**Collaboration at the country level**

From the 2018 memorandum of understanding:

- Joint outcome formulation (UNSDCF outcomes?)
- Joint programme formulation
- Joint food security assessments
- Interaction in thematic groups
- Capacity development (joint?)
- Resilience initiatives (joint?)
- Emergency preparedness and response operations (joint?)

Additional activities in Figure 1 in the evaluation terms of reference:

- Joint strategies
- Collaborative advocacy

Additional activities listed on paragraph 52 of the evaluation terms of reference

- Knowledge products

**Collaboration at the regional level**

351. The 2018 memorandum of understanding is less clear about regional collaboration but focuses on ensuring collaboration at the country level:

- Ensuring strategies, programmes and activities are in line with global level RBA strategies
- Oversight of country planning to ensure country offices are engaging in joint programming etc.
- Seeking technical advice, using each other’s resources, identifying possible joint interventions.

Additional activities in Figure 1 in the evaluation terms of reference

- Regional platforms
- Regional action plans
- Regional projects.

### **Collaboration at the global level**

352. The earlier agreement 2016 RBA Collaboration paper had five pillars including thematic collaboration which in the memorandum of understanding was absorbed into the global collaboration pillar:

- Strategic dialogue
- Selective joint communications and awareness raising (including joint website)
- Joint advocacy on key issues around international events
- World Food Day
- International Women's Day
- Collaboration on thematic areas (joint approaches promoted, best practices and lessons learned documented and disseminated).

### **Collaboration on corporate services**

353. The memorandum of understanding lists areas of collaboration and these could presumably be at the country, regional or global levels:

- Security
- Human resources
- Health services
- Information technology
- Travel
- Common premises
- Joint and collaborative procurement services
- Corporate environment responsibility.

354. Figure 1 of the evaluation terms of reference also lists risk management. Paragraph 52 of the evaluation terms of reference also lists:

- Logistical collaboration in countries
- Collaboration on oversight functions, including evaluation activities.

## **Immediate collaboration outcomes**

355. The 2018 memorandum of understanding sets out the main objectives of the agreement and these represent two sides of the same coin:

- enhanced collaboration, coordination and synergies
- unnecessary overlap (perceived and actual), competition and duplication of work avoided.

356. The 2019 Joint RBA action plan sets out a wider set of objectives:

- Strengthen collaboration and coordination on common thematic areas and at the global, regional and country level in particular
- Avoid unnecessary overlap, competition and duplication of work with an aim to achieve more coherent and effective collaboration
- Enhance synergies in the field, with an aim to scale up partnership
- Further strengthen joint strategic planning and programming
- Enhance the sharing of knowledge and best practice among the RBAs, as collaboration among the three is becoming a reference for other agencies.

357. The terms of reference also have a specific subquestion, EQ2 (ii), that asks the extent to which the results of RBA collaboration reflect and embrace cross-cutting issues such as gender, social inclusion and equity, environmental safeguards and protection. This idea could relate to the relevance of the collaboration to RBA strategies.

### Assumptions for moving from inputs to activities to outputs to outcomes

358. The following is a list of assumptions for moving from inputs to activities to outputs, categorized in seven groups.

#### United Nations-wide:

- The 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals – the RBA agreements are aligned with the 2030 Agenda and that some types of collaboration can help those most left behind
- United Nations reform – that the RBAs have adapted their collaboration to the new phase of United Nations reform.

**Context and priorities.** RBA collaboration is a priority to donors and partners at all three levels and appropriate for any given context:

- Regional context and priorities
- Country context and priorities
- Donor priorities
- Partner priorities.

#### RBA governance:

- RBA Governing Bodies – support RBA collaboration
- RBA executive heads – support RBA collaboration
- RBA senior consultative group (SCG) – meets regularly and is effective in reviewing issues and making decisions
- RBA coordination units – are adequately staffed and financed and effective in supporting RBA collaboration.

#### Organization:

- Mandates – that mandates in humanitarian and development work are understood and respected by all parties, including Member States, donors and RBA personnel
- Comparative strengths – that comparative strengths are understood and exploited by all parties
- Guiding principles – that guiding principles are understood and respected by all parties
- Regional offices – are able to collaborate even if regions are different and regional offices in different cities
- Country presence – are able to collaborate at the country level even when no country presence of one or more RBAs.

#### Organizational culture:

- Values – that the values are broadly compatible and certainly do not conflict
- Leadership – at all levels is behind the collaboration and that it can bring along others
- Incentives – that there are incentives for staff to initiate and undertake collaboration.

**Administrative procedures.** Procedures and systems are compatible enough to allow collaboration. Covering at least the following but could include more programming areas:

- Planning
- Monitoring and reporting
- Communication
- Programme cycles.

## Assumptions for moving from outputs to outcomes

359. These are the assumptions surrounding the move from outputs to outcomes:

- Use of shared knowledge - shared knowledge is utilized for improved programme and administrative activities; shared knowledge is compatible across different systems and process of the RBAs
- Interaction - RBAs strategize and solve problems together; RBAs learn from each other on an ongoing basis
- Economies of scale - opportunities to obtain better prices for goods and services
- Resources - Resources saved through greater efficiency are used for funding programmes; donors and national governments respond to increased efficiency and reduced burden with more resources
- Partner burden - Less burden on national partners letting them get on with their work.

360. There are also associated risks:

- Extra costs of the collaboration as well as extra time taken in design and implementation of activities
- The focus on RBA collaboration may undermine other collaborations that could be more effective.

## Rome-based agency collaboration goals

361. The overall goal is simply a greater contribution to the 2030 Agenda and especially SDG 2 on ending hunger than would otherwise be the case (i.e. without collaboration). The evaluation would not examine the links between the outcomes and the goals but assume that a positive trend in the outcomes would lead to greater contribution to the goals as defined.

## Evaluation questions

362. The theory of change is also based on some assumptions about the evaluations questions and what they want to achieve:

EQ 1: How relevant is RBA collaboration in contribution to the achievement of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development?

Focuses on the overall RBA collaboration strategy and how it supports the 2030 Agenda and the ongoing United Nations reform process. It is about the strategic positioning of the collaborative effort and is set in terms of the relevance criterion.

EQ 2: What are the positive, negative, intended and unintended results of RBA collaboration to date?

The terms of reference state that the emphasis will be on results at the outcome level, which in the theory of change relate to the objectives of the RBA exercise as expressed in the 2018 RBA memorandum of understanding and the 2019 plan of action.

EQ 3: What factors have enabled or hindered the effectiveness of RBA collaboration?

In EQ 3 the set of assumptions related to the move from inputs to outputs can be tested and any factors that can explain the performance set out in EQ2 can be identified.

EQ 4: What is the value added of RBA collaboration (as opposed to single agency processes and results) across the different aspects and levels?

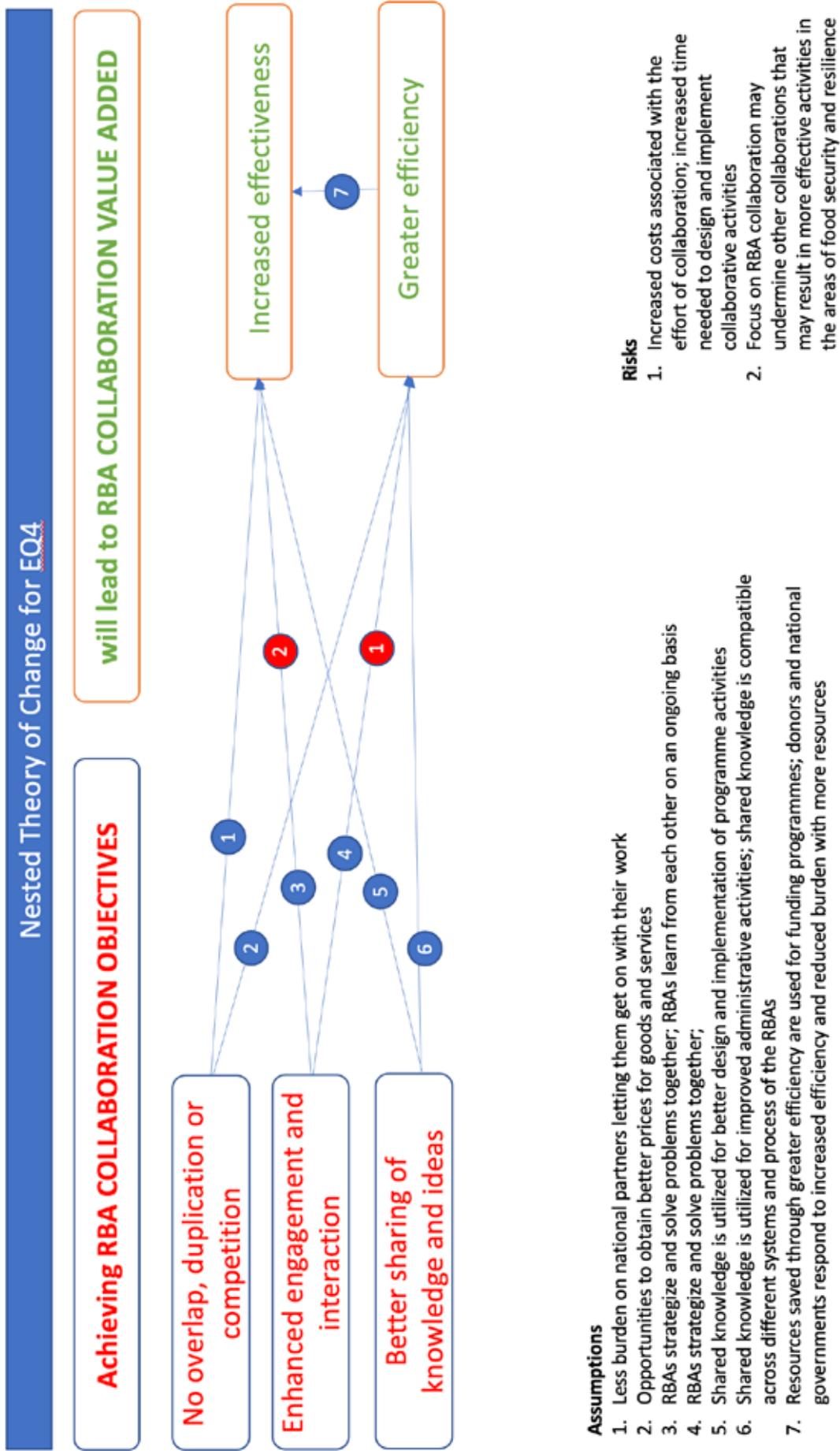
The move from outputs to outcomes reflects the value added from RBA collaboration and relates to EQ 4. It will test the theory of how value is added by collaboration.

## Nested theory of change

363. Figure 15 below aims to identify a series of assumptions related to the move from the immediate collaboration outcomes (Section C of the overarching theory of change in Figure 1) to the collaboration

value added (Section D). Most reporting on RBA collaboration stops at the level of immediate outcome but it leaves open the question – so what? There may be progress in collaboration but what difference is the collaboration making to the achievement of the 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals, especially SDG 2? And what difference is made to the people the RBAs are trying to serve?

Figure 15. Nested theory of change for EQ 4



## Annex V. Sample of country database

364. The simplified table below shows an extract of information stored in the country database, for the first five countries in alphabetical order. It shows a selection of the total 23 fields in the database. The database covers a total of 129 countries. Following completion of this evaluation, the Evaluation Management Group will make it available on the websites of the three evaluation offices.

Country		FAO	IFAD	WFP
<b>Afghanistan</b>	Country office	Yes	No	Yes
	Region / regional office	Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific, Bangkok	Asia and the Pacific Covered by ICO, Islamabad, Pakistan	RB Bangkok
	Presence (w/out CO): IFAD active loans in country FAO/WFP representation in country		3	
	RBAC (total)	7		
	RBAC (agency)	7	2	5
	UNDAF / UNSDCF participant?	Yes	No	Yes
	UNCT member? * = Non-resident member	Yes	Yes*	Yes
<b>Albania</b>	Country office	Yes	No	No
	Region / regional office	Regional Office for Europe and Central Asia, Budapest	Near East, North Africa, Europe and Central Asia	
	Presence (w/out CO): IFAD active loans in country FAO/WFP representation in country			
	RBAC (total)			
	RBAC (agency)			
	UNDAF / UNSDCF participant?	Yes	No	No
	UNCT member? * = Non-resident member	Yes	No	No
<b>Algeria</b>	Country office	Yes	No	Yes
	Region / regional office	Regional Office for Africa, Accra, Ghana / Regional Office for Middle East and North Africa, Cairo	Near East, North Africa, Europe and Central Asia	RB Cairo
		Subregional		

Country		FAO	IFAD	WFP
		Office for North Africa, Tunis, Tunisia		
	Presence (w/out CO): IFAD active loans in country FAO/WFP representation in country	No	No	No
	RBAC (total)	No		
	RBAC (agency)	No	No	No
	UNDAF / UNSDCF participant?	Yes	Yes	No
	UNCT member? * = Non-resident member	Yes	No	Yes
<b>Angola</b>	Country office	Yes	No	Yes
	Region / regional office	Regional Office for Africa, Accra, Ghana  Subregional Office for Southern Africa, Harare, Zimbabwe	East and Southern Africa Regional Hub Johannesburg, South Africa	RB Johannesburg
	Presence (w/out CO): IFAD active loans in country FAO/WFP representation in country	No	4	No
	RBAC (total)	No		
	RBAC (agency)	No	No	No
	UNDAF / UNSDCF participant?	Yes	Yes	Yes
	UNCT member? * = Non-resident member	Yes	Yes*	Yes
<b>Anguilla</b>	Country office	No	No	No
	Region / regional office	No	No	RB Panama  Subregional Office - Barbados
	Presence (w/out CO): IFAD active loans in country FAO/WFP representation in country	No	No	Covered under Caribbean Interim Multi-Country Strategic Plan (2020-2021)
	RBAC (total)	No		
	RBAC (agency)	No	No	No

Country		FAO	IFAD	WFP
	UNDAF / UNSDCF participant?	No	No	No
	UNCT member? * = Non-resident member	No	No	No

## Annex VI. Evaluation matrix

Key Question	Subquestion	Measure/indicator	Source of information	Data collection methods	Comments and triangulation approach
<b>Question 1: How relevant is RBA collaboration in contributing to the achievement of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development?</b>	1.1 To what extent does RBA collaboration complement and support the UN reform agenda?	1.1.1 RBA collaboration consistent with General Assembly (GA) resolution 72/279 and other relevant agreements	UN reform documents	Desk review	Triangulation across data collection methods and sources
			RBA collaboration agreements	Desk review	
			UNDCO	Interview	
			OCHA	Interview	
			RBA senior management	Interview	
			UNDCO Guidance documents	Desk review	
	1.1.2 RBA collaboration consistent with the UNSDG guidance on UNDS collaboration at the country level	UNDCO	Interview	Triangulation across data collection methods and sources	
		Country office (CO)	Interview country studies (CS) <sup>300</sup>		
		Resident Coordinator office (RCO)	Interview (CS)		
		National partners	Interview		
1.2 To what extent does RBA collaboration complement and support the priorities and expectations of national, regional and global partners?	1.2.1 Partners at all levels consider the collaboration complements and supports their work	Regional partners	Interview	Triangulation across data sources	
		Global partners	Interview		
			Interview		
1.3 How relevant is RBA collaboration for achieving the strategic objectives and goals of the respective UN Rome-based agencies?	1.3.1 RBA collaboration agreements consistent with the strategic plans of the three entities	RBA Collaboration agreements	Desk review	Triangulation across data collection methods and sources	
		RBA Strategic plans	Desk review		
		RBA Senior management	Interview		
			RBA collaboration activity documents	Desk review deep dives (DD) <sup>301</sup>	

<sup>300</sup> CS = Country studies

<sup>301</sup> DD = Deep dives

Key Question	Subquestion	Measure/indicator	Source of information	Data collection methods	Comments and triangulation approach
		1.3.2 RBA collaboration in practice consistent with the strategic plans of the RBAs	CO	Interview (CS)	Triangulation across data collection methods and sources
	1.4 To what extent is RBA collaboration as currently designed ambitious and potentially transformative in strengthening RBAs' contribution to the achievement of the 2030 Agenda, in particular SDG 2?	1.4.1 RBA collaboration ambitious enough to make a meaningful contribution to the 2030 Agenda	RBA collaboration agreement Financial flows (% of total) Staff time (% of total) Database of RBA collaboration activities RBA senior management Members of Governing Bodies	Desk review Data analysis Data analysis Desk review Interview Interview	Triangulation across data collection methods and sources
	1.5 To what extent do RBA collaboration agreements and frameworks build on and reflect the respective mandates and comparative advantages of the three agencies?	1.5.1 RBA collaboration agreements reflect the respective mandates of the three entities 1.5.2 RBA collaboration agreements reflect the comparative strengths of the three entities	RBA mandates RBA strengths	Desk review Desk review	

Key Question	Subquestion	Measure/indicator	Source of information	Data collection methods	Comments and triangulation approach
<b>Question 2: What are the positive, negative, intended and unintended results of RBA collaboration to date?</b>	2.1 To what extent have RBA collaborative efforts strengthened coordination on common thematic areas and at the global, regional and country levels in particular?	2.1.1 Stronger coordination at the country level	CO	Interviews (CS)	Triangulation across data collection methods and sources
			Country level collaboration activity documents	Desk review (CS)	
		2.1.2 Stronger coordination at the regional level	Regional office (RO)	Interviews	Triangulation across data collection methods and sources
			Regional level collaboration activity documents	Desk review (DD)	
		2.1.3 Stronger coordination at the global level	Headquarters (HQ)	Interviews	Triangulation across data collection methods and sources
			Global level collaboration activity documents	Desk review (DD)	
2.1.4 Stronger coordination on common thematic areas	CO	Interviews (CS)	Triangulation across data collection methods and sources		
	HQ	Interviews			
	Country level collaboration activity documents	Desk review (CS)			
	Global and regional level collaboration activity documents	Desk review (DD)			
2.1.5 Stronger coordination on common messaging/communication including engaging in various forums with a common voice	CO	Interviews (CS)	Triangulation across data collection sources		
	HQ	Interviews			
2.1.6 Stronger coordination on common services	CO	Interviews (CS)	Triangulation across data collection methods and sources		
	HQ	Interview			
	Country level collaboration activity documents	Desk review (CS)			

Key Question	Subquestion	Measure/indicator	Source of information	Data collection methods	Comments and triangulation approach
2.2 To what extent has RBA collaboration avoided unnecessary overlap, competition and duplication of work?	2.2.1 Overlap, competition and duplication of work avoided at the country level	2.2.1 Overlap, competition and duplication of work avoided at the country level	Global and regional level collaboration activity documents	Desk review (DD)	Triangulation across data collection methods and sources
			CO	Interviews (CS)	
			Country level collaboration activity documents	Desk review (CS)	
			CO	Interviews (CS)	
			Country level collaboration activity documents	Desk review (CS)	
			RO	Interviews	
Regional level collaboration activity documents	Desk review (DD)				
2.2.2 Competition for funding reduced and increase in joint funding efforts at the country level	2.2.2 Competition for funding reduced and increase in joint funding efforts at the country level	2.2.2 Competition for funding reduced and increase in joint funding efforts at the country level	HQ	Interviews	Triangulation across data collection methods and sources
			Global level collaboration activity documents	Desk review (DD)	
			HQ	Interviews	
			Global level collaboration activity documents	Desk review (DD)	
			HQ	Interviews	
			Global level collaboration activity documents	Desk review (DD)	
2.2.3 Overlap, competition and duplication of work avoided at the regional level	2.2.3 Overlap, competition and duplication of work avoided at the regional level	2.2.3 Overlap, competition and duplication of work avoided at the regional level	CO	Interviews (CS)	Triangulation across data collection methods and sources
			Country level collaboration activity documents	Desk review (CS)	
			CO	Interviews (CS)	
			Country level collaboration activity documents	Desk review (CS)	
			RO	Interviews	
			Regional level collaboration activity documents	Desk review (DD)	
2.2.4 Overlap, competition and duplication of work avoided at the global level	2.2.4 Overlap, competition and duplication of work avoided at the global level	2.2.4 Overlap, competition and duplication of work avoided at the global level	HQ	Interviews	Triangulation across data collection methods and sources
			Global level collaboration activity documents	Desk review (DD)	
			HQ	Interviews	
			Global level collaboration activity documents	Desk review (DD)	
			HQ	Interviews	
			Global level collaboration activity documents	Desk review (DD)	
2.2.5 Competition for funding reduced and increase in joint funding efforts at the global level	2.2.5 Competition for funding reduced and increase in joint funding efforts at the global level	2.2.5 Competition for funding reduced and increase in joint funding efforts at the global level	CO	Interviews (CS)	Triangulation across data collection methods and sources
			HQ	Interviews	
			Country level collaboration activity documents	Desk review (CS)	
			Global and regional level collaboration activity documents	Desk review (DD)	
			HQ	Interviews	
			Country level collaboration activity documents	Desk review (CS)	
2.2.6 Overlap, competition and duplication of work avoided in common thematic areas	2.2.6 Overlap, competition and duplication of work avoided in common thematic areas	2.2.6 Overlap, competition and duplication of work avoided in common thematic areas	CO	Interviews (CS)	Triangulation across data collection methods and sources
			HQ	Interviews	
			Country level collaboration activity documents	Desk review (CS)	
			Global and regional level collaboration activity documents	Desk review (DD)	
			HQ	Interviews	
			Country level collaboration activity documents	Desk review (CS)	

Key Question	Subquestion	Measure/indicator	Source of information	Data collection methods	Comments and triangulation approach
2.3 To what extent has RBA collaboration enhanced the sharing of knowledge and lessons learned including good practice among the RBAs?	2.2.7 Overlap, competition and duplication of work avoided for common services		CO	Interviews (CS)	Triangulation across data collection methods and sources
			HQ	Interviews	
			Country level collaboration activity documents	Desk review (CS)	
			Global and regional level collaboration activity documents	Desk review (DD)	
	2.3.1 Enhanced sharing of knowledge and lessons learned at the country level		CO	Interviews (CS)	Triangulation across data collection methods and sources
			Country level collaboration activity documents	Desk review (CS)	
	2.3.2 Enhanced sharing of knowledge and lessons learned at the regional level		RO	Interviews	Triangulation across data collection methods and sources
			Regional level collaboration activity documents	Desk review (DD)	
	2.3.3 Enhanced sharing of knowledge and lessons learned at the global level		HQ	Interviews	Triangulation across data collection methods and sources
			Global level collaboration activity documents	Desk review (DD)	
2.3.4 Enhanced sharing of knowledge and lessons learned for common thematic areas		CO	Interviews (CS)	Triangulation across data collection methods and sources	
		HQ	Interviews		
		Country level collaboration activity documents	Desk review (CS)		
		Global and regional level collaboration activity documents	Desk review (DD)		
2.3.5 Enhanced sharing of knowledge and lessons learned for common services		CO	Interviews (CS)	Triangulation across data collection methods and sources	
		HQ	Interviews		
		Country level collaboration activity documents	Desk review (CS)		

Key Question	Subquestion	Measure/indicator	Source of information	Data collection methods	Comments and triangulation approach
	2.4 To what extent and how do the results of RBA collaboration reflect and embed cross-cutting issues <sup>302</sup> such as gender, social inclusion and equity, environmental safeguards and protection?	2.4.1 Gender equality addressed in RBA collaborations	Global and regional level collaboration activity documents	Desk review (DD)	Triangulation across data collection methods and sources
			RBA gender units	Interview	
			RBA senior management	Interview	
			RBA collaboration agreements	Desk review (DD)	
			Global and regional collaboration activity documents	Desk review (DD)	
		CO	Interviews (CS)		
		Country level collaboration activity documents	Desk review (CS)		
		2.4.2 Social inclusion and equity addressed in RBA collaborations	RBA social inclusion and equity units	Interview	Triangulation across data collection methods and sources
			RBA senior management	Interview	
			RBA collaboration agreements	Desk review (DD)	
Global and regional collaboration activity documents	Desk review (DD)				
CO	Interviews (CS)				
Country level collaboration activity documents	Desk review (CS)				
2.4.3 Environmental safeguards	RBA environmental safeguards units	Interview			

<sup>302</sup> Some interviewees for the ToR mentioned the need to look at innovation and youth as well.

Key Question	Subquestion	Measure/indicator	Source of information	Data collection methods	Comments and triangulation approach
			RBA senior management RBA collaboration agreements Global and regional collaboration activity documents CO Country level collaboration activity documents	Interview Desk review (DD) Desk review (DD) Interviews (CS) Desk review (CS)	Triangulation across data collection methods and sources
		2.4.4 Protection	RBA protection units RBA senior management RBA collaboration agreements Global and regional collaboration activity documents CO Country level collaboration activity documents	Interview Interview Desk review (DD) Desk review (DD) Interviews (CS) Desk review (CS)	Triangulation across data collection methods and sources

Key Question	Subquestion	Measure/indicator	Source of information	Data collection methods	Comments and triangulation approach
<p><b>Question 3: What factors have enabled or hindered the effectiveness of RBA collaboration?</b></p>	<p>3.1 To what extent has global, regional and national context been appropriate for RBA collaboration?</p>	<p>3.1.1 Country context conducive to collaboration at the country level<sup>303</sup></p>	<p>CO Context documents Country level partners</p>	<p>Interviews (CS) Desk review (CS) Interviews (CS)</p>	<p>Triangulation across data collection methods and sources</p>
		<p>3.1.2 Regional context<sup>304</sup> conducive to collaboration at the regional level</p>	<p>Regional bureau Regional context Regional partners</p>	<p>Interviews (DD) Desk reviews (DD) Interviews (DD)</p>	<p>Triangulation across data collection methods and sources</p>
		<p>3.1.3 RBA collaboration flexible enough to adjust to changing contexts at the country level</p>	<p>CO Context documents Country level partners</p>	<p>Interviews (CS) Desk review (CS) Interviews (CS)</p>	<p>Triangulation across data collection methods and sources</p>
		<p>3.1.4 RBA collaboration flexible enough to adjust to changing contexts at the regional level</p>	<p>Regional office Context documents Regional level partners and other observers</p>	<p>Interviews Desk review Interviews</p>	<p>Triangulation across data collection methods and sources</p>
		<p>3.1.5 RBA collaboration flexible enough to adjust to changing contexts at the global level</p>	<p>HQ Context documents Global level partners</p>	<p>Interviews Desk review Interviews</p>	<p>Triangulation across data collection methods and sources</p>
		<p>3.1.6 RBA collaboration is supported by donors at all levels</p>	<p>Donors<sup>305</sup> EB transcripts from RBA updates</p>	<p>Interviews Desk review</p>	<p>Triangulation across data collection methods and sources</p>
		<p>3.1.7 RBA collaboration is supported by other partners at all levels including national governments and regional organizations</p>	<p>National government officials Regional organization officials Development organization officials</p>	<p>Interview Interview Interview</p>	<p>Triangulation across data sources</p>

<sup>303</sup> For example, a country in crisis may present too many challenges to collaboration

<sup>304</sup> Taken as meaning multiple country

<sup>305</sup> In capitals

Key Question	Subquestion	Measure/indicator	Source of information	Data collection methods	Comments and triangulation approach		
	3.1.8 RBA collaboration is supported by RBA leadership at all levels and not simply seen as policy compliance		HQ staff	Interview	Triangulation across data sources		
			RB staff	Interview			
			CO staff	Interview (CS)			
	3.2 To what extent do the governance arrangements for RBA collaboration facilitate the collaboration process and results?	3.2.1 Governing Bodies supportive of RBA collaboration and clear about expectations	EB transcripts from RBA updates segments 2016-2020 EB members <sup>306</sup>	Desk review	Desk review	Triangulation across data collection methods and sources	
				Desk review	Desk review		
				Interview	Interview		
		3.2.2 SCG meets regularly and is effective in reviewing issues and making decisions	SCG meeting minutes SCG members Staff of RBA support units		Interview	Interview	Triangulation across data collection methods and sources
					Desk review	Desk review	
					Desk review	Desk review	
	3.2.3 RBA coordination units are adequately staffed and financed and effective in supporting RBA collaboration	Data on finance and staffing ToR of units/staff job descriptions Staff of RBA coordination units/sections		Desk review	Desk review	Triangulation across data collection methods and sources	
				Desk review	Desk review		
				Interview	Interview		
3.2.4 The entity mandates are understood and respected	Review of collaboration documents Country office staff Regional bureau staff HQ staff		Desk review	Desk review	Triangulation across data collection methods and levels		
			Interview (CS)	Interview (CS)			
			Interview	Interview			
			Interview	Interview			
3.2.5 The comparative strengths are understood and exploited	Review of collaboration documents Country office staff Regional bureau staff HQ staff		Desk review	Desk review	Triangulation across data collection methods and levels		
			Interview (CS)	Interview (CS)			
			Interview	Interview			
3.2.6 The entity guiding principles are understood and respected	Review of collaboration documents Country office staff Regional bureau staff HQ staff		Desk review	Desk review	Triangulation across data collection methods and levels		
			Interview (CS)	Interview (CS)			
			Interview	Interview			
			Interview	Interview			

<sup>306</sup> Both donor countries and programme countries

Key Question	Subquestion	Measure/indicator	Source of information	Data collection methods	Comments and triangulation approach
	3.3 To what extent has the organizational structure and culture in each agency, and among the agencies, influenced RBA collaboration?	3.2.7 RBA collaboration agreements, frameworks, approaches and objectives are clearly understood by stakeholders	Country office staff	Interview (CS)	Triangulation across different sources
			Regional bureau staff	Interview	
			HQ staff	Interview	
			National partners	Interview	
			EB members	Interview	
			Database of activities	Desk review	
			Regional office mapping	Desk review	
	3.3.1 Regional offices are able to collaborate even if regions are different and regional offices are in different cities	3.3.2 RBAs able to collaborate at the country level even if no country presence of one of more of them	Database of activities	Desk review	Analysis of correlation of activities and types of regional presence
			Country office mapping	Desk review	
			CO	Interview (CS)	
	3.3.3 RBA corporate values <sup>307</sup> are broadly compatible and do not conflict	3.3.4 Entity leadership supportive of collaboration and clear about expectations	Mapping of RBA values	Desk review	Triangulation across data collection methods and sources
			CO	Interview (CS)	
RB staff			Interview		
HQ staff			Interview		
3.3.5 Strategies and policies support and guide collaboration	3.3.6 Systems are in place to monitor the performance of collaboration itself	Leadership statements	Desk review	Triangulation across data collection methods and sources	
		RBA senior management	Interview		
		Financial flows	Data analysis		
		Strategy and policy documents	Desk review		
		CO	Interview (CS)		
		RB staff	Interview	Triangulation across data collection methods and sources	
		HQ staff	Interview		
		RBA agreements	Desk review		
		RBA plan of action	Desk review	Triangulation across data collection methods and sources	
		RBA unit staff	Interview		

<sup>307</sup> Extracted from RBA strategic plans

Key Question	Subquestion	Measure/indicator	Source of information	Data collection methods	Comments and triangulation approach
		3.3.7 RBA staff have accurate knowledge about how other RBAs work (processes, cycles, culture etc.)	CO staff	Interview (CS)	Triangulation across data sources
			RB staff	Interview	
			HQ staff	Interview	
		3.3.8 Personal relationships between the leaders of collaborative activities are conducive to joint action	CO staff	Interview (CS)	Triangulation across data sources
			RB staff	Interview	
			HQ staff	Interview	
		3.3.9 There are incentives for staff to initiate and undertake collaboration	CO staff	Interview (CS)	Triangulation across data sources
			RB staff	Interview	
			HQ staff	Interview	
	3.3.10 Integration and coordination across country, regional and global levels	CO staff	Interview (CS)	Triangulation across data sources	
		RB staff	Interview		
		HQ staff	Interview		
3.4 To what extent are the administrative and programming processes and procedures sufficiently consistent and compatible to allow RBA collaboration?	3.4.1 Administrative systems and processes consistent and compatible (including business processes, HR, finance and procurement)	Policies	Desk review	Triangulation across data collection methods and sources	
		Guidelines	Desk review		
		CO Staff	Interview (CS)		
		RB staff	Interview		
		HQ staff	Interview		
			Interview		
	3.4.2 Programming systems and processes (including frameworks, tools, programmatic approaches, monitoring systems, programming and funding cycles, and operational modalities) consistent and compatible	CO staff	Interview (CS)	Triangulation across data collection methods and sources	
		RB staff	Interview		
		HQ staff	Interview		
		Policies	Desk review		
		Guidelines	Desk review		
			Desk review		
3.4.3 Communications and knowledge platforms consistent and compatible	Policies	Desk review	Triangulation across data collection methods and sources		
	Guidelines	Desk review			
	CO staff	Interview (CS)			
	RB staff	Interview			
	HQ staff	Interview			
		Interview			
3.4.4 Systems of oversight are consistent and compatible	Oversight policies	Desk review	Triangulation across data collection methods and sources		
	Oversight guidelines	Desk review			
	Oversight office staff	Interview			
	CO staff	Interview (CS)			
	RB staff	Interview			

Key Question	Subquestion	Measure/indicator	Source of information	Data collection methods	Comments and triangulation approach
	3.5 To what extent have adequate resources been made available for collaborative action?	3.5.1 Funds are available according to collaboration plan	HQ staff	Interview	Triangulation across data collection methods and sources
			Activity documents	Desk review	
		CO staff	Interview (CS)		
	3.6 What are the other factors that have enabled or hindered RBA collaboration?	3.5.2 Funds are available for follow-up phases of initial collaboration	RB staff	Interview	Triangulation across data collection methods and sources
			HQ staff	Interview	
			Activity documents	Desk review	
		3.5.1 Evidence of additional factors	CO staff	Interview (CS)	Triangulation across data collection methods and sources
			RB staff	Interview	
			HQ staff	Interview	

Key Question	Subquestion	Measure/indicator	Source of information	Data collection methods	Comments and triangulation approach
<b>Question 4: What is the added value of RBA collaboration (as opposed to single agency processes and results) across the different aspects and levels?</b>	4.1 To what extent does better knowledge sharing increase the effectiveness of collaboration activities? (including for gender equality and other common cross-cutting issues)?	4.1.1 Shared knowledge utilized for better design and implementation of activities	CO	Interview (CS)	Triangulation across data sources
			RO	Interview	
			HQ	Interview	
	4.2 To what extent does RBA interaction through collaboration activities increase effectiveness and efficiency?	4.1.2 Shared knowledge is compatible across the different systems, processes and platforms of the RBAs	CO	Interview (CS)	Triangulation across data sources
			RO	Interview	
			HQ	Interview	
		4.2.1 RBAs strategize and problem solve together	CO	Interview (CS)	Triangulation across data sources
			RO	Interview	
			HQ	Interview	
		4.2.2 RBAs learn from each other on an ongoing basis	CO	Interview (CS)	Triangulation across data sources
RO			Interview		
HQ			Interview		
	4.3.1 Opportunities to obtain better prices for goods and services		CO	Interview (CS)	
			RO	Interview	

Key Question	Subquestion	Measure/indicator	Source of information	Data collection methods	Comments and triangulation approach	
	4.3 To what extent do collaboration activities benefit from economies of scale?		HQ	Interview	Triangulation across data sources	
		4.4 To what extent does collaboration result in an increase in resources for improving the lives of target groups?	4.3.2 Procurement systems and processes compatible	CO RO HQ	Interview (CS) Interview Interview	Triangulation across data sources
			4.4.1 Savings from efficiency gains leading to programme resources	CO RO HQ	Interview (CS) Interview Interview	Triangulation across data sources
	4.4.2 Donors willingness to provide additional resources to collaborative efforts (vs single efforts)		CO RO HQ	Interview (CS) Interview Interview	Triangulation across data sources	
	4.5 To what extent does collaboration reduce burden on partners and other stakeholders?	4.5.1 National governments time spent engaging with activity administration and oversight.		CO RO HQ	Interview (CS) Interview Interview	Triangulation across data sources
			4.5.2 Donors time spent engaging with activity administration and oversight.	CO RO HQ	Interview (CS) Interview Interview	Triangulation across data sources
				4.6.1 Additional resources (human and financial) used for the collaboration process	CO RO HQ	Interview (CS) Interview Interview
	4.6 To what extent does the collaboration process impose additional costs on collaborative activities?	4.6.2 Additional time taken for design and implementation of collaborative activities		CO RO HQ	Interview (CS) Interview Interview	Triangulation across data sources

## Annex VII. Data collection schedule

365. The overall timeline is included at Annex III. This annex provides a brief description of the schedules for data collection at country, regional and global level.

366. All country studies began with either a joint kick-off meeting or joint introductory briefing, depending on whether it was an “in country” study or “desk study +”. Both the kick-off meetings and introductory briefings were attended by at least one Evaluation Management Team member, RBA representatives and technical staff in country, and relevant evaluation team members, including the evaluation team leader, the research coordinator and the respective country teams. In this introductory/kick-off meeting, the evaluation team:

- Provided an overview of the scope and objectives of the evaluation, in particular for the country studies
- Presented an overview of methods to be used and the people expected to be interviewed
- Highlighted the guiding principles of independency, confidentiality and other ethical considerations as provided for by the UNEG
- Explained the expected outputs of the country case studies.

1. The country studies were staggered between February and May 2021,<sup>308</sup> as follows:

**Table 18. Country study schedule**

Location	Timing	Kick-off meetings (KoM)/ Introductory briefings (IB)	Debriefing date
Indonesia	8–19 February	8 February (KoM)	5 March
Nepal	8–26 February	11 February (IB)	10 May
Kenya	15 February–5 March	22 October 2020 (KoM)	12 November 2020
Niger	15 February–5 March	13 November 2020 (KoM)	13 November 2020
Pakistan	1–19 March	3 March (IB)	22 April
Burkina Faso	1–19 March	2 March (IB)	Unfortunately a debriefing was not possible. But the debriefing presentation was prepared and shared.
Peru	1–19 March	3 March (IB)	14 April
Rwanda	8–26 March	9 March (KoM)	30 March
Mozambique	8–26 March	11 March	14 May
Lebanon	15 March–2 April	16 March (KoM)	20 April
Egypt	15 March–2 April	17 March (KoM)	26 April
Colombia	29 March–15 April	23 March	6 May

367. After the kick-off meetings/introductory briefings, a planning meeting was held with the RBA focal points (FAO, IFAD and WFP) for the purposes of providing further detail about the country mission, allocating responsibilities for making appointments and checking further available documentation for the country study. The RBAs appointed focal points to represent each of the three agencies who facilitated access to documentation and introductions to the necessary RBA internal as well as external informants. The ideal sequencing of interviews pursued was as follows: RBA staff, including Country Directors/representatives, senior management and technical staff, were spoken to first; this was followed by government informants; United Nations and non-governmental organization partners; and donors. In practice this sequencing was adjusted for the availability of respondents. All country studies were conducted remotely due to the COVID-19 restrictions in place, and the direct contact with beneficiaries that

<sup>308</sup> Kenya and Niger kick-off meetings and debriefing sessions were conducted during the inception phase in 2020, with a number of additional interviews and further analysis conducted during the main data collection phase.

would have normally been undertaken during a field mission in country was rarely possible. In Colombia (in Alta Guajira and Guaviare) and Peru (in Lima) the evaluation team spoke with beneficiaries remotely. Following the completion of all interviews, a debriefing meeting was held with the three RBA country offices, during which Mokoro presented an overview of the work, preliminary findings and conclusions, as well as provided an opportunity for RBA stakeholders to provide their feedback.

368. At global and regional levels, interviews and focus group discussions were conducted during the inception phase in October and November 2020 and then between March and May 2021. The data collection phase was completed with an overall debriefing for RBA staff at all levels on 12 May in which the team presented the work done and there was room for emerging findings and observations. Approximately 130 staff from RBA offices in all regions participated.

# Annex VIII. Analytical framework

## Overview

370. The evaluation matrix forms the basis of the analytical framework for the evaluation, setting out the questions, subquestions and indicators. All data were analysed using this framework and to facilitate analysis, data was also systematically collected using the same basic structure.

371. The process of triangulation across different methods of data collection and across different sources of data was facilitated by the common analytical framework used. For interviews, country studies and deep dives, the evidence collected was presented in the same format. Any administrative data collected as well as the survey were also put into this framework. For document analysis, the system used was slightly different but consistent and is described later in this annex.

372. The following table was used to present the data collected. By adding the source of data and collection method, the evaluation team triangulated by both. Context was included in the evidence section as appropriate.

**Table 19. Data presentation format**

<b>EVALUATION QUESTION 1:</b>
<b>1.1 Subquestion:</b>
<b>1.1.1 Indicator</b>
<b>1.1.2 Indicator</b>
<b>Subquestion finding statement</b>

373. Members of the evaluation team were tasked with analysing data and developing findings that address specific evaluation subquestions and/or specific categories of collaboration activity. A series of evaluation team meetings took place to bring together the findings and subject them to peer review. Due to COVID-19, these meetings were virtual. The evaluation timeline is shown at Annex III.

## Document analysis

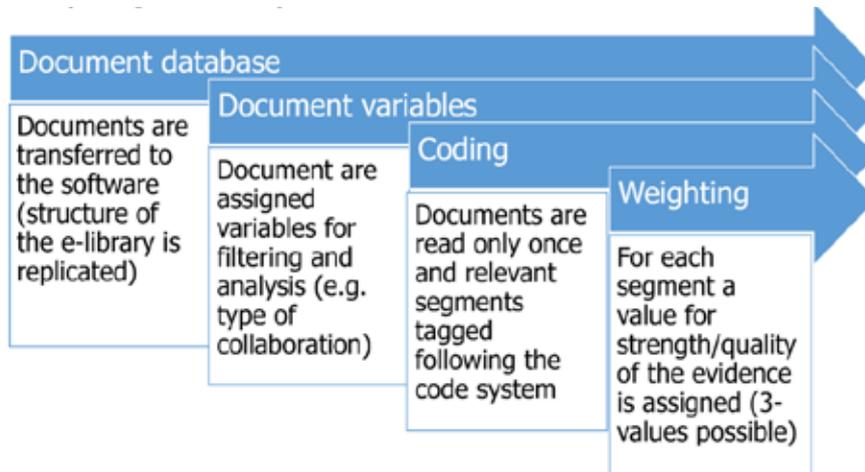
374. To facilitate the analysis of the large amount of documentation, Mokoro used a qualitative data analysis (QDA) software known as MAXQDA. The software was used to facilitate the analysis of the document database (e-library) and the minutes from the stakeholder interviews the team have started to produce. These sources of evidence share some features:

- Contain evidence about different EQs, often mixed, that needs to be mined
- Refer to different types of collaborations
- Have different authors/sources
- Display variable quality/strength of the evidence
- Have text/documents in different formats.

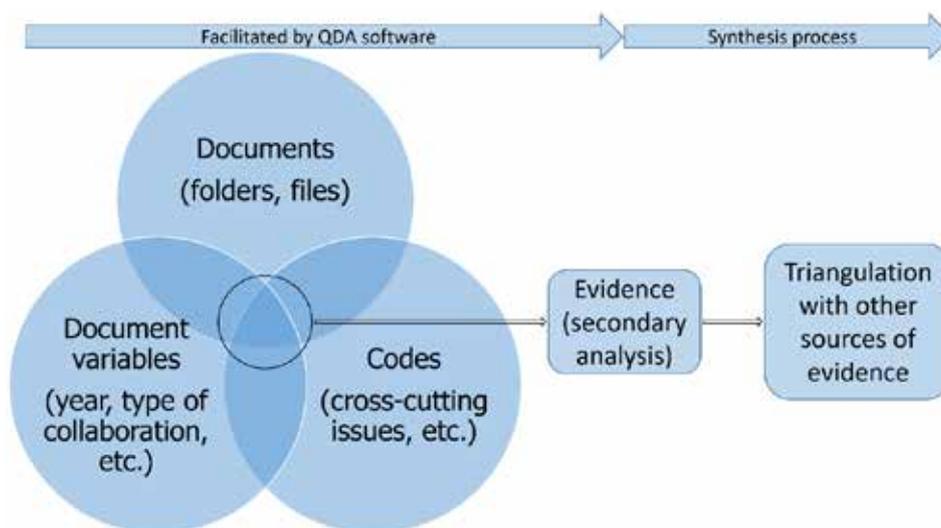
375. Based on Mokoro's experience in previous assignments, qualitative data analysis software helps to maximize the amount of evidence that can be extracted by the evaluation team from sources that meet the criteria above. The use of qualitative data analysis software involves four main steps, which are described in Figure 16. Documents are imported into the software to create a self-contained file with all the evidence. Subsequently, documents' variables are filled out. Codes are then assigned while reading the document and the segments weighted at the same time. More information of these different steps can be found in the next section.

376. The advantage of qualitative data analysis software is that once the process is completed, complex queries can be built using these different elements (documents or folders, variables, codes and weight). The evidence produced can then be reviewed or exported for secondary analysis (see Figure 17). Secondary analysis might be required in certain cases (for example, quantification). The resulting evidence can be triangulated with other sources of evidence during the synthesis phase.

**Figure 16. Key stages of the analysis through qualitative data analysis software**



**Figure 17. Evidence generation through qualitative data analysis software**



### Variables, coding and weighting

377. There are three different elements that can be combined to run queries on the underlying document database and extract evidence: variables, codes (tags) and evidence weight.

#### Variables

378. Variables are applied at the document level and are one of the main elements in any query performed through qualitative data analysis software. Variables can also be included when exporting segments/results and can be used during the secondary analysis. The following variables are filled for each document in the qualitative data analysis database:

- **Core evaluation categories** include the main units of analysis the team will have to address in the evaluation as per the terms of reference:

- **Level/pillar:** there are four levels/pillars of analysis: global, regional, country and joint corporate services/administrative.<sup>309</sup> This code also applies to interviews.
- **Type of collaboration:** the terms of reference also mention four different types of collaboration: strategic/policy; operations/programmes; advocacy/communications; and joint corporate services/administrative.
- **Descriptive categories** fields are used to facilitate or fine tune the analysis. Some of these are optional and the evaluation team only adopts those it needs.
  - **WFP Involved:** whether the file contains information about activities where WFP is involved in
  - **IFAD Involved:** same as above but for IFAD
  - **FAO Involved:** same as above but for FAO
  - **Others Involved:** other institutions involved.
  - **Type of document:** one of the options described below should be used. Additional options can be created if needed:
    - Guiding documents: strategy, plan, policy, guidelines or conceptual frameworks. This generally apply at the institutional level
    - Progress report: about the implementation of one or more projects/programmes
    - Case study: descriptive report of one or more projects/programmes
    - Evaluation/audit: internal or external evaluation
    - memorandum of understanding: formal agreement between two or more parties
    - Interviews: interviews conducted during the RBA evaluation.
  - Location in e-library
  - Year/date
  - **Geo:** specific country/region the evidence applies to. For interviews, this is the country of the interviewee. It can be a region or “global”.
  - **Domain:** main area the initiative is relevant for:
    - Gender
    - Food security and nutrition
    - Resilience
    - Social protection
    - South–South cooperation
    - Capacity building
    - Humanitarian- development nexus
    - Purchase for progress
    - Humanitarian response/ emergencies
    - Poverty
  - **Employer:** the employer/organization. To be used for interviews
  - **Reference:** a unique reference number from the database of collaborative activities
  - **Priority:** see weighting
- **Default variables in MaxQDA:**
  - **Document group:** folder where document is stored
  - **Document name:** file name as stored in MAXQDA
  - **Coded segments:** number of coded segments in the file

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<sup>309</sup> The latter code can be considered both a “level/pillar” and a “type of collaboration”. e

- **Memos:** number of memos.

### **Coding**

379. Codes are essentially “tags” that can be applied to parts of the document. Subsequently, relevant sections of the documents database can be extracted (a combination of codes is possible) for different types of documents and/or other variables. The software essentially allows you to look across the whole database - or a sub-set of it - using selected codes. Different codes/tags can be applied to the same segment. Several codes can be applied simultaneously to the same segment or a part of it (for example, a paragraph that discusses different drivers or hindering factors)

380. Following the development of the theory of change and the evaluation matrix, the team have developed a list of codes (see Figure 18). The final code structure was agreed after testing was conducted in a sample of document. There is a maximum of three levels of codes. The idea is to keep the first level to a manageable number to make coding easier, while the second and third codes provide additional nuance or detail. The second capture (Figure 19) shows the codes grouped by evaluation question. Note that grouped codes do not show sub codes. Grouped codes can be used to simplify coding. They also provide a more visual overview of the coding system.

Figure 18. Full list of codes

Sistema de códigos		88	
▼	Description & objectives	?	0
	Joint corporate services		0
	Country		5
	Regional		0
	Global		0
	UN reform	?	1
▼	Relevance	?	0
	Relevance to FAO/IFAD/WFP objectives and goals	?	1
	Relevance to national/regional/global partners	?	0
	Complementarity & comparative advantage	?	10
	Partnership/collaboration beyond RBAs	?	6
▼	Results	?	0
	RBA Coordination	!	12
	Overlap/duplication/competition		0
	Knowledge sharing		0
	Results other	?	1
	Lessons learned	?	3
	Cross-cutting issues	?	3
▼	External drivers and hindering factors	?	1
	Donor perceptions/attitudes/policies		2
	National government perceptions/attitudes/policies		4
	Funding/financial resources		4
	H-D-P Nexus		5
	UN system & coordinadion		2
▼	RBA corporate drivers and hindering factors	?	0
	Governance for RBA collaboration	?	0
	Structure/leadership/values	?	1
▼	Administration		0
	IT		0
	Business processes		1
	M&E & Knowledge		7
	Communication		2
	Procurement		0
	Human resources		13
	Programming & Operational modalities		1
	RBA added value	?	0
	External added value	?	0
	Efficiency & cost-benefit	?	1
	Sustainability	?	2
	Database collaborative act.	?	0

**Figure 19. Main codes by evaluation question**



### Weighting

381. A three-value scale was used to indicate the importance or level of interest of individual documents. For example, corporate policies/strategies or synthesis reports are generally consider more “important” than an individual project report. This variable makes it easier to identify core documents. Weighting is a subjective process, and a reduced number of options does help improve consistency:

- Low: Limited or no specific information in the document and very few examples are available. Sample is clearly not representative. For example: anecdotal evidence of a simple description affecting one project/example.
- Medium: Relevant and specific information and/or less focused analysis on the document. Clear examples occur less frequently, sample is not fully representative. For example: a project report that provides significant data over time, or a discussion based on several initiatives when evidence or sample is not very comprehensive.
- High: Extensive and substantial information, clear examples occur frequently, trends can be easily identified over time and/or a wide geographical scope, sample is representative. For example: the conclusions of an evaluation looking across different projects/countries.

382. In the quantitative data analysis software a weight can be assigned to individual segments. In addition, a similar variable has been included at document level (“Priority”) to identify the most relevant, interesting and evidence-rich documents.

### Secondary analysis

383. As described in paragraph 375 above, the results of the coding process were generally subjected to secondary analysis and triangulation. While it is possible to obtain some statistics directly from the codes using the existing variables (for example, frequency by type of document), the codes often contain evidence that is redundant or it is broader than what the evaluation team is looking for (for example, the code “complementarity and comparative advantage” can include multiple entries of a different nature). Secondary analysis generally includes one or more of the following steps:

- Export of coded segments (for example, Excel)
- Review to identify double entries (for example, cross references to the same document or similar segments in the same document)

- Further analysis and classification to identify relevant pieces of evidence for the analysis (for example, to establish different types of comparative advantage)
- Quantification of results and analysis along existing variables. This may include frequency analysis.

## Annex IX. List of people interviewed

First name	Last name	Sex	Designation	Organization	Location
Natalia	Alekseeva	f	Team Leader, National Climate Change Action	FAO	HQ, Rome
Sally	Berman	f	Partnerships Officer Partnerships and UN Collaboration Division (PSU)	FAO	HQ, Rome
Gabriel	Boc	m	Economist, FAO Investment Centre	FAO	HQ, Rome
Guilherme	Brady	m	Coordinator, Civil Society Organizations Team	FAO	HQ, Rome
Dominique	Burgeon	m	Director, Office of Emergencies and Resilience (OER)	FAO	HQ, Rome
David	Conte	m	Senior Strategic Programme Advisor	FAO	HQ, Rome
Irina	Curca	f	Programme Officer, South-South and Triangular Cooperation Division (PST)	FAO	HQ, Rome
Sara	Hassan	f	Family Farming Consultant	FAO	HQ, Rome
Lazare	Hoton	m	Credit and Rural Finance Officer, FAO Investment Centre	FAO	HQ, Rome
Masahiro	Igarashi	m	Director, Office of Evaluations	FAO	HQ, Rome
Eunji	Kang	f	Strategy and Planning Officer, Office of Strategy, Programme and Budget (OSP)	FAO	HQ, Rome
Susan	Karia	f	Senior Gender Officer	FAO	HQ, Rome
Thierry	Lassalle	m	Consultant	FAO	HQ, Rome
Victor	Leon	m	Strategy and Planning Officer, Office of Strategy, Programme and Budget (OSP)	FAO	HQ, Rome
Mark	McGuire	m	Deputy Director of the Committee on World Food Security, and Senior Food Security Officer	FAO	HQ, Rome
Jamie	Morrison	m	Director, Food Systems and Food Safety Division	FAO	HQ, Rome
Luca	Russo	m	Team Leader, Office of Emergency and Resilience	FAO	HQ, Rome
Rachel	Sauvinet Bedouin	f	Senior Evaluator	FAO	HQ, Rome
Maximo	Torrero Cullen	m	Chief Economist	FAO	HQ, Rome
Tomoyuki	Uno	m	Senior Strategy and Planning Officer	FAO	HQ, Rome
Marcela	Villarreal	f	Director of Partnerships, Advocacy and Capacity Development, PSUU	FAO	HQ, Rome

First name	Last name	Sex	Designation	Organization	Location
Peter	Wobst	m	Senior Officer	FAO	HQ, Rome
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Gloria	Wiseman	f	Deputy Permanent Representative to the UN Food and Agriculture Agencies	Government of Canada	Rome
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Jackeline	Yonga	f	Chairperson of the Regional Group for Africa, and Ambassador of Kenya to Italy	Government of Kenya	Rome
Benito	Santiago Jimenez Sauma	m	Representative of Mexico to IFAD	Government of Mexico	Rome
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Terri	Sarch	f	Ambassador, UK Permanent Representative to the UN Food and Agriculture Agencies in Rome	Government of the United Kingdom	Rome
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First name	Last name	Sex	Designation	Organization	Location
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First name	Last name	Sex	Designation	Organization	Location
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First name	Last name	Sex	Designation	Organization	Location
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Regional level					
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First name	Last name	Sex	Designation	Organization	Location
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Joachim	Ouibga	m	Expert zootechnicien	FAO Burkina Faso	Burkina Faso
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Karen	Jimenez	m	Specialist, International Development	FAO Colombia	Colombia
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Maija	Peltola	f	Country Director	IFAD Colombia	Colombia
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First name	Last name	Sex	Designation	Organization	Location
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Carlo	Scaramella	m	Country Director	WFP Colombia	Colombia
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First name	Last name	Sex	Designation	Organization	Location
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Nasereldin	Hag Elamin	m	Country Representative	FAO Egypt	Egypt
Myriam	Fernando	f	Head of Project, Agricultural Innovation	GIZ	Egypt
Hoda	El Shawadfy	f	Head of Global Environment, Ministry of Environment	Government of Egypt	Egypt
Saad	Moussa	m	Supervisor of Foreign Relations Central Department, Ministry of Agriculture	Government of Egypt	Egypt
Mohamed	El Ghazaly	m	Country Director – acting in (a.i.)	IFAD Egypt	Egypt
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First name	Last name	Sex	Designation	Organization	Location
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### Indonesia

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Inti	Wikanestri	f	Consultant	BAPPENAS	Indonesia
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First name	Last name	Sex	Designation	Organization	Location
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First name	Last name	Sex	Designation	Organization	Location
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First name	Last name	Sex	Designation	Organization	Location
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## Lebanon

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First name	Last name	Sex	Designation	Organization	Location
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### Mozambique

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Jose	Gaspart	m	Planning Division, SETSAN	Government of Mozambique	Mozambique
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Robson	Mutandi	m	Country Director	IFAD	Mozambique
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Custodio	Mucavele	m	Country Officer	IFAD	Mozambique
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First name	Last name	Sex	Designation	Organization	Location
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Maazou	Ranaou	m	Project Coordinator (support to FAO Niger Focal Point)	FAO	Niger
Mahamadou	Aboubacar	m	Coordinateur cellule nutrition	Haut Commissariat 3N	Niger
Lawan	Cherif		Country Programme Officer (IFAD Niger Focal Point)	IFAD	Niger
Jakob	Tuborgh	m	Country Director for Niger	IFAD	Niger

First name	Last name	Sex	Designation	Organization	Location
Aliou	Moumoni	m	Direction de la statistique agricole	Ministère de l'agriculture l'élevage	Niger
Harouna	Ibrahima	m	RBA Focal Point	Ministry of Agriculture	Niger
Hassane	Baka	m	Administrateur Maridi	NGO AREN	Niger
Ango	Omar	m	Administrateur Maridi	NGO IDB	Niger
Daniel	Ladouceur	m	Resident Coordinator's Office (RCO), Team Leader, UN Niger	Office of the UN Resident Co-ordinator	Niger
Khardiata	Lo N'Diaye	f	UN Resident Coordinator (interim)	Office of the UN Resident Coordinator	Niger
Amadou Mamane	Abdoulaye	m	Assistant technique agro-pastoral, RBA Focal Point	PRODAF	Niger
Ilaria	Carnevali	f	Deputy Representative,	UNICEF Niger	Niger
Mariama	Diallo Aitchedji	f	Development Assistance Specialist, Food for Peace	USAID	Niger
Koffi	Akakpo	m	Head of Programmes	WFP	Niger
Sidiki	Boubacar	m	L'unité Développement des Régions Rurales, chargé du programme	WFP	Niger
Jean-Noel	Gentile	m	Deputy Country Director	WFP	Niger
Idrissa	Issaabarchi	m	RBA Coordinator (FAO Niger Focal Point)	WFP	Niger
Mariama	Nouhou	f	Chargée du programme changement thématique au Programme Alimentaire Mondial (PAM): d'adaptation au changement climatique du programme	WFP	Niger
Sory	Ouane	m	Country Director	WFP	Niger
Raffaella	Policastro	f	Consultant, Resilience and Livelihoods Programme	WFP	Niger

## Pakistan

Nazia	Nur	f	First Secretary	Australian High Commission	Pakistan
Rebekah	Bell	f	Country Director - acting in (a.i.)	FAO Pakistan	Pakistan
Ahmed	Essa	m	Provincial Coordinator for Balochistan	FAO Pakistan	Pakistan
Aamer	Irshad	m	Assistant Representative	FAO Pakistan	Pakistan
Mujibur	Rahman	m	Provincial Coordinator for Khyber Pakhtunkhwa	FAO Pakistan	Pakistan

First name	Last name	Sex	Designation	Organization	Location
Faisal	Syed	m	Programme Officer	FAO Pakistan	Pakistan
Farrukh	Toirov	m	Deputy Country Representative	FAO Pakistan	Pakistan
Nazeer	Ahmed	m	Deputy Chief, Nutrition, Ministry of Planning Development and Special Initiatives	Government of Pakistan	Pakistan
Shandana	Gulzar Khan	f	Convener, Member National Assembly, Sub-Committee of the Special Committee of the National Assembly on Agricultural Products	Government of Pakistan	Pakistan
Sahar	Sulaiman	f	Legal Advisor to the Special Committee of the National Assembly on Agricultural Products	Government of Pakistan	Pakistan
Hubert	Boirard	m	Country Director	IFAD Pakistan	Pakistan
Fida	Muhammad	m	Country Programme Officer	IFAD Pakistan	Pakistan
Hamid	Jalil	m	Member, Food Security, Climate Change and Nutrition,	Planning Commission, Pakistan	Pakistan
Julien	Harneis	m	Resident Coordinator and Humanitarian Coordinator	UN Pakistan	Pakistan
Kunt	Ostby	m	Country Resident Representative	UNDP Pakistan	Pakistan
Aida	Girma	f	Country Representative	UNICEF Pakistan	Pakistan
Wisal	Khan	m	Chief, Nutrition	UNICEF Pakistan	Pakistan
Ayaz	Muhammad	m	Project Management Specialist, Office of Economic Growth and Agriculture	USAID	Pakistan
Ifthikar	Abbas	m	Head of Vulnerability Analysis Team	WFP Pakistan	Pakistan
Faaria	Ahsan	m	Head of WFP Provincial Office in Baluchistan	WFP Pakistan	Pakistan
Peter	Holtsberg	m	Head of Programme	WFP Pakistan	Pakistan
Arshad	Jadoon	m	Head of the SDG Unit	WFP Pakistan	Pakistan
Chris	Kaye	m	Country Director	WFP Pakistan	Pakistan
Manuela	Reinfeld	f	Senior Programme Officer	WFP Pakistan	Pakistan
Mahamadou	Tanimoune	m	Senior Programme Policy Officer and Head of Nutrition, School Feeding, Social Protection Units	WFP Pakistan	Pakistan
<b>Peru</b>					
Giovanna	Vasquez	f	Director	CONVEAGRO	Peru
Alberto	Garcia	m	Former Representative Assistant	FAO Peru	Peru

First name	Last name	Sex	Designation	Organization	Location
Enrique	Roman	m	Programme Officer	FAO Peru	Peru
Noemi	Marmanillo	f	Director, Office of International Cooperation (OCOPI) – Ministry of Agriculture (MIDAGRI)	Government of Peru	Peru
Victor	Mayorca	m	General Coordinator, General Office of Cooperation and International Affairs	Government of Peru	Peru
Carlos	Vilela	m	Director, General Office of Cooperation and International Affairs	Government of Peru	Peru
Jesus	Quintana	m	Former Director of Andean Regional Hub	IFAD Latin America and Caribbean (LAC) Regional IFAD Peru	Peru
Henrik	Franklin	m	Country Director	IFAD Peru	Peru
Liliana	Miro-Quesada	f	Senior Staff	IFAD Peru	Peru
Gabriela	Elgegren	f	Senior Staff	UNDP Peru	Peru
Maria Elena	Ugaz	f	Senior Staff	UNICEF Peru	Peru
Lena	Arias	f	Nutrition Officer	WFP Peru	Peru
Ivan	Bottger	m	Programme Officer	WFP Peru	Peru
Tania	Goossens	f	Country Director	WFP Peru	Peru

## Rwanda

Therese	Nduwamungu	f	Emergency Coordinator	Caritas Rwanda	Rwanda
Dirk	Deprez	m	Resident Representative	ENABEL	Rwanda
Amparo	Gonzael Diez	f	Team Leader, Agriculture and Environment	EU Delegation to Rwanda	Rwanda
Gualbert	Gbehounoi	m	Country Director	FAO Rwanda	Rwanda
Gaetan	Heri	m	Coordinator of UN Joint Project on Food Security and Nutrition	FAO Rwanda	Rwanda
Otto	Muhinda	m	Assistant Representative	FAO Rwanda	Rwanda
Josepha	Mukamana	f	National Project Manager	FAO Rwanda	Rwanda
Ahadu	Tekle	m	Country Officer	FAO Rwanda	Rwanda
Philip	Habinshuti	m	Director for Response and Recovery	Government of Rwanda	Rwanda
Sarah	Mukantaganda	f	Acting Women Economic Empowerment Specialist, Ministry of Gender and Family Promotion	Government of Rwanda	Rwanda
Octave	Semwaga	m	Director General of Planning, Ministry of Agriculture and Animal Resources	Government of Rwanda	Rwanda

First name	Last name	Sex	Designation	Organization	Location
Aimable	Ntukanyagwe	m	Programme Officer	IFAD Rwanda	Rwanda
Francesco	Rispoli	m	Country Director	IFAD Rwanda	Rwanda
Innocent	Karangwa	m	Director	Inades- Formation	Rwanda
Schadrack	Dusabe	m	Head of Programmes	UN Women Rwanda	Rwanda
Vincent	Gahamanyi	m	Social Policy Team	UNICEF Rwanda	Rwanda
Charlotte	Taylor	f	Head, Social Policy Team	UNICEF Rwanda	Rwanda
Inka	Himanen	f	Head of Programme	WFP Rwanda	Rwanda
Tiina	Hinkanen	f	Outcome Manager for Resilience and Social Protection	WFP Rwanda	Rwanda
Ahmareen	Karim	f	Deputy Country Director	WFP Rwanda	Rwanda
Ammar	Kawash	m	Head, Smallholder Agricultural Market Support Unit	WFP Rwanda	Rwanda
Patrice	Nzeyimana	m	Programme Policy Officer, Smallholder Agricultural Market Support Unit	WFP Rwanda	Rwanda

## Annex X. Data collection tools

384. The data collection tools are linked to the evaluation matrix, which sets out the sources of data and the related tool for collecting it. This annex describes each of the following sets of tools that was used in the evaluation:

- Documentary research and review
- Interviews (RBA HQ/Regional and external)
- Country Studies
- Deep dives
- Survey

### Documentary research and review

385. Documentary review and analysis of qualitative data sourced from the repository of documents collected by the evaluation team formed a major part of the total data collection effort (Table 20). The data management expert, research coordinator and other research staff on the Mokoro team were the central facilitators of analysis by colleagues on the team as they pursued their respective enquiries. To facilitate the ultimate preparation of the evaluation report, they created data capture tools that fed into structured matrices of emerging findings on each of the evaluation (sub)questions – linked to the evaluation matrix. During the inception phase, the Mokoro team set up tools for analysing large volumes of qualitative data, including textual analysis through the software MAXQDA (see Annex VIII).

**Table 20. Documents reviewed**

Type of document	No. of documents reviewed
<b>Documents on RBA collaboration</b>	<b>103</b>
<b>Joint programmes &amp; progress reports</b>	<b>25</b>
<b>Evaluations, audits &amp; assessments</b>	<b>245</b>
FAO	71
IFAD	59
WFP	103
Joint	12
<b>Strategic Plans &amp; related docs</b>	<b>82</b>
FAO	21
IFAD	25
WFP	34
Global/UN	2
<b>Policies &amp; operation documents</b>	<b>231</b>
FAO	11
IFAD	31
WFP	189
<b>Total</b>	<b>686</b>

386. The e-library for this evaluation was hosted on Microsoft Teams, administered by WFP, and managed by the evaluation team's research coordinator. At the time of submission of the draft evaluation report it comprises approximately 2,500 documents. These have been compiled with the help of the three research analysts from FAO, IFAD and WFP, as well as colleagues in the country offices. There is a limited amount of documentation on RBA collaboration specifically, compared to the overall number of reference documents compiled.

### Rome-based agency (headquarters/regional) and external interviews

387. Interviews were held with key RBA informants at headquarters and regional levels in addition to those that were covered by the deep dives and country studies. Specific groups were identified in the

evaluation matrix and, drawing on the database of key informants, the evaluation team undertook a series of semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions. The evaluation team developed a set of guidelines for interviews and focus group meetings with different categories of informant at global, regional and country levels.

388. The table below sets out the series of meetings that were conducted at global and regional levels. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic all meetings were undertaken remotely. The full list of people consulted is at Annex IX.

**Table 21. Rome-based agency headquarters, regional and external interviewees**

Group of interviewees	Sub-group of interviewees	Type of interview
RBA HQ staff	RBA senior management (partnerships)	Semi-structured interview
	RBA senior management (programme)	Semi-structured interview
	RBA senior management (operations)	Semi-structured interview
RBA RB staff	RB senior management	Semi-structured interview
	RB programme team	Focus group
	RB operations team	Focus group
Other UN	United Nations Development coordination office	Semi-structured interview
	OCHA	Semi-structured interview
RBA Governing Bodies	Selected members according to structures and responsibilities within each Governing Body	Semi-structured interview

389. The evaluation team undertook additional interviews of key staff as required and remained flexible as new informants and data gaps were identified.

390. The evaluation team followed their usual practice of establishing a confidential compendium of interview and focus group discussion notes at the start of the data collection phase. Assembling all these notes in a single large document greatly facilitates the identification of all informant statements on selected topics, ensuring that no information or opinions are missed and that evidence is fully triangulated.

## Country studies

391. In consultation with the Evaluation Management Group, it was decided to undertake 12 country studies in total. While initially three different types of country studies were foreseen, including pure desk studies, in the end two types of country studies were undertaken:

- Full country studies, largely conducted by a core member of the evaluation team and remotely due to the COVID-19 pandemic, but with the support of a national consultant. These are shown as in-country studies in Figure 2.
- Desk studies with a limited number of interviews but largely relying on secondary data (desk study + in Figure 2).

392. The number of interviews conducted in the first and second types of country study depended on the intensity of the collaboration at country level and the availability of evaluative studies and reporting documents. For the in-country studies, there were between 15 and 20 interviews conducted, whereas for desk study+, the range was between 5 and 10. The complete list of people consulted in each country is included in Annex IX.

393. Due to COVID-19 pandemic restrictions, no travel was possible for international and national consultants. Country teams spoke to a range of beneficiaries.<sup>310</sup> Table 15 and Figure 14 above indicate the 12 countries ultimately selected for country studies by region. Details of the selection criteria and process are given below.

394. **Selection criteria.** The following criteria for selection of country studies were agreed with the Evaluation Management Team.

<sup>310</sup> Beneficiaries are understood to be the individuals, groups, or organizations, whether targeted or not, that benefit, directly or indirectly, from the development intervention.

- Region (noting that all regions should be represented)
- Income level (low/medium/high in the World Bank classification)
- Least developed country classification
- Number of RBA collaborative activities identified (countries with none are a significant group: two should be included)
- RBA response to Level 2 and 3 protracted emergencies
- Whether a United Nations sustainable development cooperation framework is in place
- RBA joint country strategy
- At least two RBA country offices
- Duration of collaborative activities (if any): number in operation for more/less than two years
- As agreed with the Evaluation Management Team, countries where MOPAN studies have taken place were not included among the country case studies. The MOPAN studies were considered as additional evaluative evidence for the evaluation. Therefore, Bangladesh, Ethiopia, Jordan and Madagascar have not been included.

395. In some of the 12 country studies, collaborative activities were selected for focused attention. This analysis replaced the country-level deep dives envisaged in the terms of reference. The selected collaborative activities span the following categories and criteria:

- At least three tripartite collaborative activities; the others can be bilateral, and both types could include collaboration with other partners
- Strategic/policy activities
- Programmes and projects
- Advocacy/communications activities
- In operation for more/less than two years.

## Deep dives

396. The approach to country studies set out above meant that a number of country-level deep dives were covered within those studies. Other deep dive studies focused on RBA collaboration at the global level, as there are few regional collaboration activities.

397. Undertaking deep dives did not limit the scope of the evaluation to only those areas covered by the deep dives. All areas of collaboration were covered, but the deep dives provided an opportunity to learn more from specific cases to help deepen understanding of the challenges and the factors that influence them. In some cases deep dives are unnecessary as evaluative evidence is already available. For example, the Food Security cluster was evaluated in 2014,<sup>311</sup> and the Committee on Food Security in 2017.<sup>312</sup> In such cases, some additional document reviews and interviews were undertaken to update the body of evidence.

398. Although the deep dives helped address all evaluation questions and subquestions, each one focused on specific subquestions, especially where evidence has been found to be limited. Given the results of the evaluability assessment and the difficulty in obtaining evidence of the value-added of collaboration in some categories of activities, EQ 4 subquestions were a priority.

399. The following are the overall criteria for selection of subjects for a deep dive:

- Balance across categories of RBA collaboration (at least one from each)
- Balance across different levels of collaboration (at least one from each)
- Balance between bilateral collaboration and trilateral collaboration

<sup>311</sup> FAO and WFP, 2014. *FAO/WFP Joint Evaluation of Food Security Cluster Coordination in Humanitarian Action*. Rome: FAO and WFP.

<sup>312</sup> Committee on World Food Security, 2017. *Evaluation of the Committee on World Food Security*. Rome: CFS.

- Balance between initiatives that have been in place for three years or more and those that were established in the last year
- Possibility of obtaining adequate data (as a result of a rapid evaluability assessment)

400. Table 22 below shows the deep dive themes that were explored at the global/headquarter level and at the regional level, a distinction was made between themes and projects/programmes, where a theme allows a broader (but still deep) examination of an issue that may include several projects/programmes as well as strategy, policy and advocacy issues.

**Table 22. Deep dive study themes**

Category of activity	Theme	
	Regional	Global/HQ
Strategic/policy		Nutrition (3 RBAs)
Programmes and projects	RBA resilience programme in the Sahel (3 RBAs)	FAO Investment Centre/IFAD (FAO/IFAD)
Advocacy and communications		State of Food Insecurity report
Thematic		Resilience (3 RBAs) Gender (3 RBAs)
Corporate services		Procurement (including medical insurance) (3 RBAs) Evaluation (3 RBAs)

## COVID-19

401. In addition to the deep dives, the COVID-19 pandemic was important to take into account in the current evaluation. The team looked at two dimensions: first, the administrative dimension, where RBAs may have collaborated (perhaps also with other United Nations agencies) around such issues as staff guidance, staff safety, procurement of personal protective equipment and remote working arrangements; and secondly, the programmatic dimension: RBAs may have collaborated with each other, with other agencies and of course with governments and/or regional bodies in supporting responses to the pandemic.

402. Both these dimensions were fed into the country studies and the interviews at regional and global levels, identifying issues, data and reporting that was consolidated in a case study that fed findings into the overall evaluation matrix, with particular reference to the efficiency criterion and to EQ 4. COVID-19 was one of the common issues addressed across all relevant aspects of our enquiries. The findings are a highly topical example of how the concept of RBAC works out in practice when the three agencies are confronted with the need for urgent action on a new issue: the extent to which they collaborate with each other, and what the efficiency gains and other benefits of such collaboration are.

403. WFP is currently evaluating its response to COVID-19. From a WFP perspective, of course, EQ 3 in that evaluation's terms of reference is highly pertinent to the issues raised above: "How well has WFP fulfilled its role as a partner in the collective humanitarian response, at country, regional and at global levels?" At the time of drafting of this report, the COVID evaluation is not yet at a point where cross-learning is possible.

## Online survey

### Purpose of the survey

404. The purpose of the online survey is to probe a selection of emerging findings in contexts beyond the country case studies that have been covered through remote studies.

405. The survey complements the other methods of data collection used in the evaluation. In particular, it can:

- Enable the evaluation to reach a wider number of informants and countries than will be interviewed for the country case studies

- Collect information in a consistent manner, which can be aggregated and quantified where appropriate
- Give people an opportunity to contribute to the evaluation in a confidential manner.

406. The focus on the survey is on triangulating the preliminary findings identified by the evaluation team. This is to maximize the utility of the survey while minimizing its length. The aim is to have every core question contribute meaningfully to the evaluation team's understanding, and to provide wider evidence on the generalizability of these findings by its global coverage, as well as asking consistent questions across the three agencies at headquarters, regional and country levels.

### Survey design

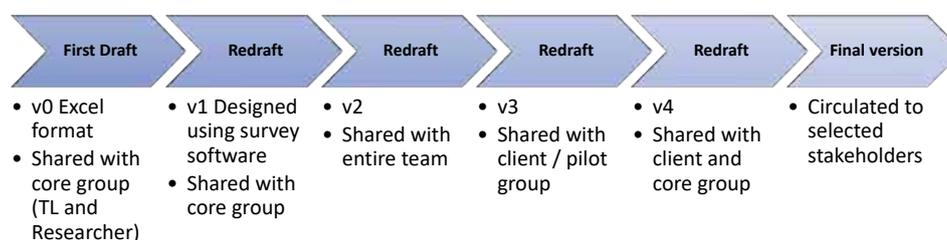
407. The findings tested through the survey were selected on the basis of their importance, the extent to which it would be useful to widen the geographic scope of the enquiry, and their appropriateness to be investigated using a survey. The types of information that are conducive to being collected by a survey include:

- Those that may be aggregated and thus quantified
- Those where consistency of inquiry would be useful, such as when it is desirable to make comparisons between groups
- Those where confidentiality may be relevant
- Those where people have a desire to provide their opinions and their opinions are likely to be relevant.

408. Detailed, in-depth information, and factual (particularly financial) information, or information which only concerns a specialist area is usually better gathered by other methodologies.

409. The questions for the survey were designed and refined through an iterative process. The number of stages may vary. Figure 20 shows a simplified overview of the process, but in reality the number of iterations was greater.

**Figure 20. Iterative survey design process**



410. As the diagram above illustrates, the survey creation is a collaborative event. The survey specialist facilitated this collaboration, and then drew the different inputs together to create the most effective survey for the project. A small core group internal to the team developed the initial draft, which was then tested on the wider team and redrafted. A meeting was then held with representatives from the participating agencies to review the survey and make suggestions and amendments to it, which was a helpful part of the process, allowing insights from within the target organizations to inform the design and phrasing of the survey.

411. We focused on designing the survey in such a manner that it invites responses and that questions follow in a logical flow without a feeling of repetition. In general, the early questions were designed to draw respondents into the survey itself and introduce the subject matter, the middle questions to focus in on areas that form the heart of the quantitative findings, while the final questions were more reflective, giving respondents a chance to contribute their perspective in a confidential environment.

412. The survey is targeted to individuals in order to reflect individual perspectives and opinion. This allows respondents to give their answers confidentially, and for evidence to be collected in a consistent manner, which will complement the other research methods used in the evaluation.

413. In order to encourage a high response rate and increase the quality of responses to individual questions, the survey was kept short at 12 questions and 18 answer fields. Of these, the majority were multiple-choice closed questions, all of which were all obligatory, but in addition, respondents had the option of spending more time on the survey and providing in-depth responses to the three open-ended questions. In our experience, this combination of a short survey with the opportunity for people to elaborate has proved successful in achieving a high response rate and in gaining thoughtful, qualitative responses on a limited number of questions. This enables the survey to bring additional insights over and above the information that is collected through the country studies.

### Sampling strategy

414. Sampling methodology was constrained due to difficulty in obtaining contact information from the three agencies.

415. WFP supplied a complete list of international staff (D and P grade) and national officers working at all levels globally across WFP, excluding those on unpaid leave or on secondment. Unfortunately, they were unable to provide further information on the respondents beyond their names and e-mail addresses and the level worked at, thus, we were limited in our ability to be purposive in our selection of relevant people. Instead, a stratified randomized sample was created by assigning each contact a randomly generated number from 1 to 13, and then contacts were selected on the basis of the random number, stratified according to level. The original list provided consisted of 3,172, of which two contacts lacked e-mail addresses, taking it down to 3,170. We selected a sample of 600, proportionately across the levels in order to obtain a sample that was representative of WFP given the information available.

**Table 23. Sampling of WFP staff for online survey**

Level	Contacts	Percentage	600 distributed	Sample	Proportion sampled
CO	2,174	69%	411	410	19%
HQ & WFP offices	627	20%	119	120	19%
RB	369	12%	70	70	19%
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>3,170</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>600</b>	<b>600</b>	<b>19%</b>

416. FAO gave us a larger list of initially 3,254 contacts with limited information about each contact. An initial stage of purposive sampling was undertaken where we selected the senior headquarters and regional staff recommended to us and excluded ground staff. This left us with 1,950 contacts. As with WFP, a random stratified sample was taken in proportion to each level for a total of 600 staff. When selecting the country-level contacts, only countries with at least one other RBA present were included, unless the country was a regional or subregional office.

**Table 24. Sampling of FAO staff for online survey**

Level	Contacts	Percentage	600 distributed	Sample	Proportion sampled
CO	551	28%	170	170	31%
HQ	1,044	54%	321	320	31%
Regional	251	13%	77	80	32%
Subregional	104	5%	32	30	29%
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,950</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>600</b>	<b>600</b>	

417. IFAD preferred not to share contact details and instead invited all relevant staff, sending a total around 612 invitations. These were sent manually by contacts within IFAD rather than automatically by the survey software as with WFP and FAO.

## Survey instrument

418. The online survey instrument is shown below. The Word version shown here does not reproduce the graphics, font etc. of the online layout.

### Collaboration between Rome-Based Agencies (RBAs)

The Evaluation Offices of FAO, IFAD and WFP have engaged Mokoro Ltd, an independent consultancy firm, to undertake an evaluation of collaboration between these three Rome-Based Agencies (RBAs). As the first evaluation on this subject, it aims to gather credible evidence on the contribution of RBA collaboration towards achieving the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals, to identify lessons learned and good practices in tripartite and bilateral collaboration, as well as to make recommendations on the strategic direction of RBA collaboration.

*Note: This survey is available in English, French and Spanish. Select your preferred language from the menu in the top, right hand corner of the screen.*

Esta encuesta está disponible en inglés, francés y español. Seleccione su idioma preferido en el menú desplegable de la esquina superior derecha.

*Cette enquête est disponible en anglais, français et espagnol. Sélectionnez votre langue préférée dans le menu déroulant qui se trouve dans le coin supérieur droit de l'écran.*

1) **a) Which agency do you work for?\***<sup>313</sup>

FAO

IFAD

WFP

**b) What is your role?** Please select from the following broad categories.\*

Operational & Programmatic staff

Administrative & Corporate services staff

Directors & Senior Management

Other - please state: \_\_\_\_\_

**c) Where has been the focus of your work over the last five years? If you have had experience of more than one level, please select where you have had the most recent experience\***

Global/headquarters level

Regional level

Country or field level

**If Country or field level is selected**

**Please state country (or countries):**

\_\_\_\_\_

**The following statement changes in line with the answer to question 1c**

Please answer the following questions from a global/ regional / country/field-level perspective.

Please answer the following questions based on your own experience of collaboration between the UN Rome-Based Agencies (RBAs) incorporating both bilateral and tripartite collaboration, since November 2016.

Please note: all individual responses are strictly confidential.

**The following question changes in line with the answer to question 1c**

**2) At the global/ regional / country level, what changes have you observed in the amount of RBA collaboration since 2016?\***

More collaboration

Less collaboration

No change – collaboration has remained the same

No change – there is no significant collaboration

Don't know / Not applicable

\_\_\_\_\_

<sup>313</sup> \* indicates mandatory question.

**3) a) How important is collaboration between the Rome-Based Agencies in your own work?** Please rate from 1 to 5, where 1 = not important and 5 = very important. Select N/A if you are unable to answer this question or if it is not applicable.\*

Not important      ( ) N/A   ( ) 1    ( ) 2    ( ) 3    ( ) 4    ( ) 5      Very important

**b) How important is collaboration with other UN and international agencies (such as UNICEF, UNHCR, the World Bank etc.) in your own work?** Please rate from 1 to 5, where 1 = not important and 5 = very important. Select N/A if you are unable to answer this question or if it is not applicable.\*

Not important      ( ) N/A   ( ) 1    ( ) 2    ( ) 3    ( ) 4    ( ) 5      Very important

**4) From the following list, what is the most significant factor for enabling RBA collaboration?** Please select one option only.

- ( ) Shared vision on the purpose of RBA collaboration
- ( ) External factors, e.g. national context, government preferences, UNSDCF
- ( ) Relationships with RBA colleagues
- ( ) Joint funding mechanisms or strategies
- ( ) Donor preferences & strategies
- ( ) Understanding of relative strengths and complementarities of each organization
- ( ) Resources/funding available for RBA collaboration

**5) From the following list, what is the most significant obstacle to RBA collaboration?** Please select one option only.\*

- ( ) Incompatible administrative and planning systems
- ( ) Lack of resources/funding for RBA collaboration
- ( ) Lack of internal incentives for collaboration
- ( ) Competition for resources between the agencies
- ( ) Joint funding mechanisms or strategies
- ( ) Lack of shared vision on the purpose of RBA collaboration
- ( ) External factors, e.g. national context and government preferences
- ( ) Donor preferences & strategies

**6) What could be done differently to strengthen future collaboration?**

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**7) In your experience, what outcomes has RBA collaboration achieved to date?**

Please rate the effects of collaboration on the following areas, where 1 star = no effect, and 5 stars = substantial positive effects, 0 stars = Don't know / Not applicable

	Effect of RBA collaboration
Stronger co-ordination between Rome-Based agencies	★★★★★
Avoidance of unnecessary overlap, competition and duplication of work	★★★★★
Enhanced sharing of knowledge & good practice	★★★★★

More effective delivery of services for beneficiaries with better results in terms of food security, livelihoods, capacity-strengthening and resilience	★★★★★
Increased capacity to reflect cross-cutting issues such as gender, social inclusion and equity, and climate change	★★★★★

**8) a) While collaboration may bring benefits for the agencies, partners and recipients, there are also transaction costs and opportunity costs, such as the time spent on administration, and the time that could have been spent doing other activities or building other relationships.**

**In your experience, do the overall benefits of RBA collaboration outweigh the costs?\***

- Benefits substantially outweigh costs
- Benefits slightly outweigh costs
- Benefits and costs are broadly equal
- Costs slightly outweigh benefits
- Costs substantially outweigh benefits
- I have not seen enough RBA collaboration to comment

**b) Please expand on the answer you have given above, noting specific benefits and costs where relevant**

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**9) How important should RBA collaboration be in future, given the ongoing UN reform process to increase UN-wide collaboration?\***

- Increasingly important, to strengthen the contribution of the RBAs within overall UN efforts
- Just the same, UN reform does not make a significant difference to the role of RBA collaboration
- Less important, since RBA collaboration will be absorbed within UN-wide collaboration
- Don't know / Not applicable
- Other - please state: \_\_\_\_\_

**10) Considering collaboration between the RBAs, whether on a bilateral or tripartite basis, are there any lessons learned or instances of good practice that you would like to contribute to this evaluation?**

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**Thank you for taking the time to contribute to our evaluation.**

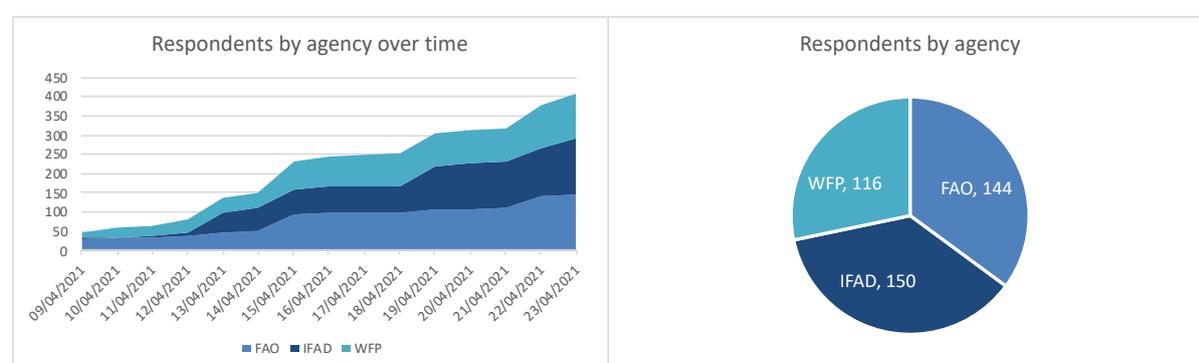
# Annex XI. Summary of online survey responses

419. This section sets out the responses received to the online survey, commencing with background information on the respondents, and then classifying the responses to the substantive questions according to the evaluation questions, though it should be noted that some of the answers have relevance to more than one evaluation question.

## Background of respondents

420. In total, 410 full responses were received, representing approximately 23 percent response rate from slightly over 1,800 invitations issued. Each of the three organizations returned over 100 responses, which represents a reasonable sample for analysis.

**Figure 21. Online survey respondents**



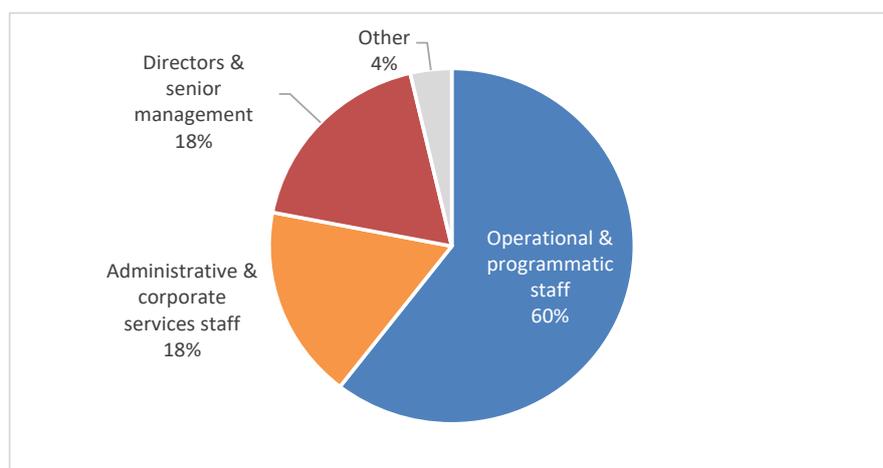
421. The sample received had a good coverage in terms of different roles of the respondents, and in terms of the different levels they worked at, whether at the country, regional or global level – though the number working at the regional level was predictably lower, reflecting, to some extent, the general population.

**Table 25. "Role" of respondents, initial and re-categorized**

Area	Initial	Revised
Operational and programmatic staff	217	248
Administrative and corporate services staff	57	72
Directors and senior management	70	75
Other – please state	66	15

Source: online survey; 'What is your role? Please select from the following broad categories.' The information within the "Other – please state" was used to reallocate many of those in "Other" to one of the stated areas, allowing for more meaningful analysis.

**Figure 22. "Role" of respondents by organization**

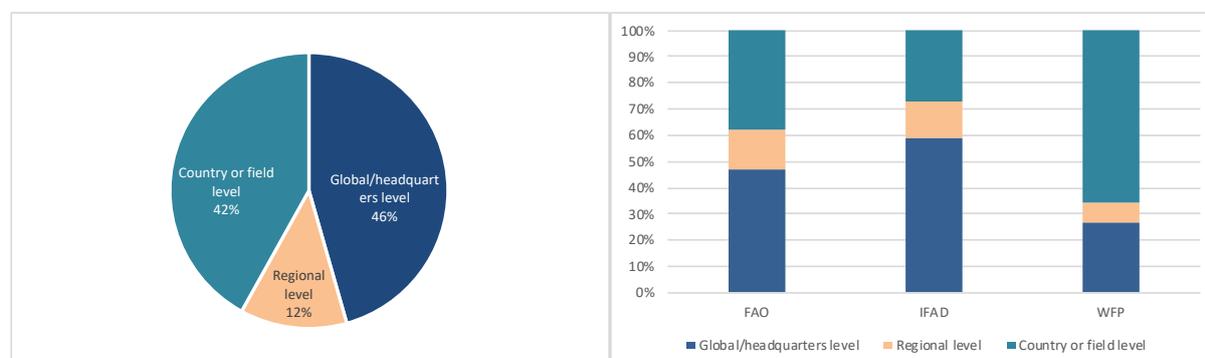


Source: online survey; 'What is your role? Please select from the following broad categories.'

**Table 26. Survey respondents by level and agency**

Focus of work	FAO	IFAD	WFP	Total
Global/headquarters level	68	88	31	187
Regional level	21	21	9	51
Country or field level	55	41	76	172
Total	144	150	116	410

**Figure 23. Level of respondents**



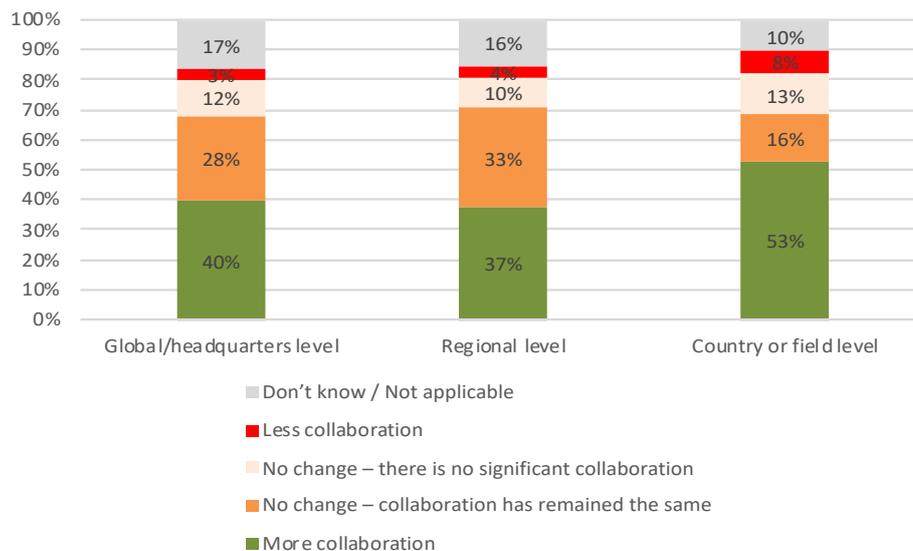
Source: online survey; 'Where has been the focus of your work over the last five years? If you have had experience of more than one level, please select where you have had the most recent experience'

## Survey responses

### Evaluation Question 1: How relevant is Rome-based agency collaboration in contributing to the achievement of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development?

422. The survey began by asking what changes respondents had observed in the amount of RBA collaboration since 2016 (question 2, page 152 above). In total, 45 percent of respondents reported an increase in collaboration at their level. Across the levels, approximately two-thirds majority believe that collaboration has increased or remained the same. More respondents at a country or field level found an increase in collaboration, but equally more at country level reported less collaboration.

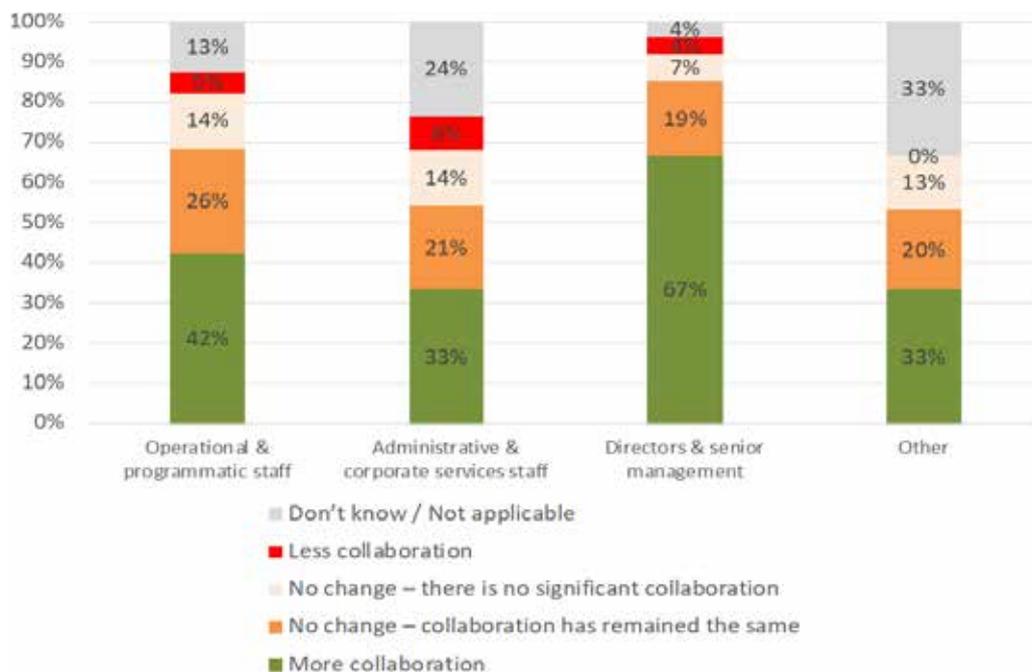
**Figure 24. Change in level of Rome-based agency collaboration (disaggregated by country/regional/global)**



Source: online survey; 'At your level, global/regional/country, what changes have you observed in the amount of RBA collaboration since 2016?' Total respondents: 410.

423. Directors and senior management were much more likely to report increased collaboration at 67 percent, more than double the figure for administrative and corporate services staff.

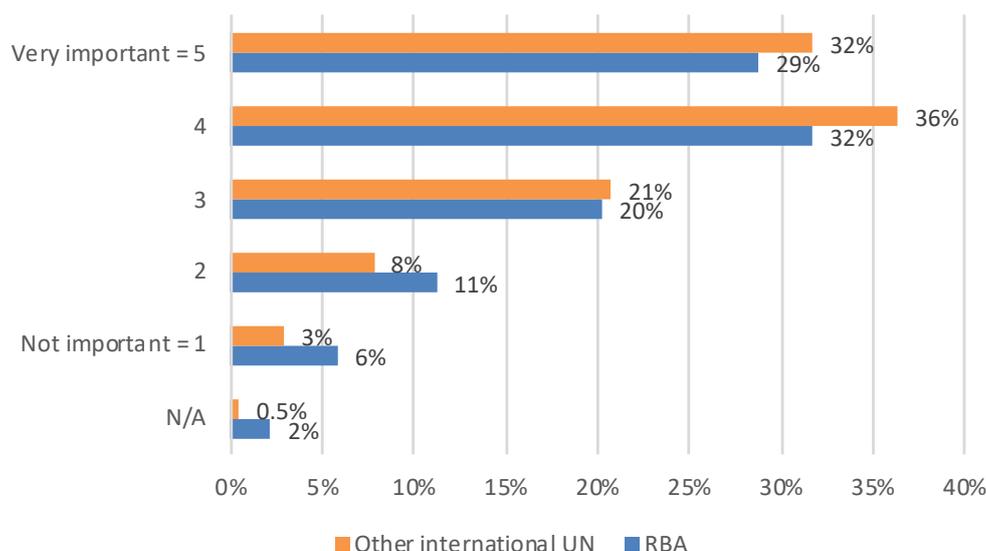
**Figure 25. Change in level of Rome-based agency collaboration (disaggregated by role)**



Source: online survey; 'At your level, global/regional/country, what changes have you observed in the amount of RBA collaboration since 2016?' Total respondents: 410.

424. Considering the importance of collaboration in their work, respondents were asked to rate how important collaboration with RBAs was in their work, and then, how important collaboration with other United Nations or international agencies was in their work. A total of 60 percent of respondents rated collaboration with RBAs as important or very important, while at 68 percent slightly more rated collaboration with other agencies as important or very important.

**Figure 26. Importance of collaboration with Rome-based agencies and Other United Nations and international agencies**



Source: online survey; 'a) How important is collaboration between the Rome-based agencies in your own work? Please rate from 1 to 5, where 1 = not important and 5 = very important. Select N/A if you are unable to answer this question or if it is not applicable.\* b) How important is collaboration with other UN and international agencies (such as UNICEF, UNHCR, the World Bank etc.) in your own work? Please rate from 1 to 5, where 1 = not important and 5 = very important. Select N/A if you are unable to answer this question or if it is not applicable.' Total respondents: 410.

425. Considering each individual response, across the agencies, the majority (62 percent–74 percent) thought RBA collaboration was as or more important in their work compared to collaboration with other United Nations and international agencies.

**Table 27. Relative importance of collaboration with Rome-based agencies compared with other United Nations and international agencies**

	FAO	IFAD	WFP	Total
Rome-based agencies more important	19%	32%	16%	23%
Equally important	51%	42%	47%	47%
Other UN & international agencies more important	28%	23%	34%	28%
Number of respondents	142	146	112	400

Source: online survey; average rating for: 'a) How important is collaboration between the Rome-based agencies in your own work? Please rate from 1 to 5, where 1 = not important and 5 = very important. Select N/A if you are unable to answer this question or if it is not applicable.\* b) How important is collaboration with other UN and international agencies (such as UNICEF, UNHCR, the World Bank etc.) in your own work? Please rate from 1 to 5, where 1 = not important and 5 = very important. Select N/A if you are unable to answer this question or if it is not applicable'.

426. Only IFAD had more respondents stating that RBA was more important than collaboration with others. However, the average IFAD respondent rated the importance of collaboration in their own work as being lower, compared with FAO and WFP.

427. On a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 = not important and 5 = very important, RBA collaboration was rated 3.60 on average, whereas collaboration with other United Nations and international agencies was slightly higher at 3.85. The table below summarizes the average rating by agency.

**Table 28. Importance of collaboration with Rome-based agencies and other United Nations agencies; average rating**

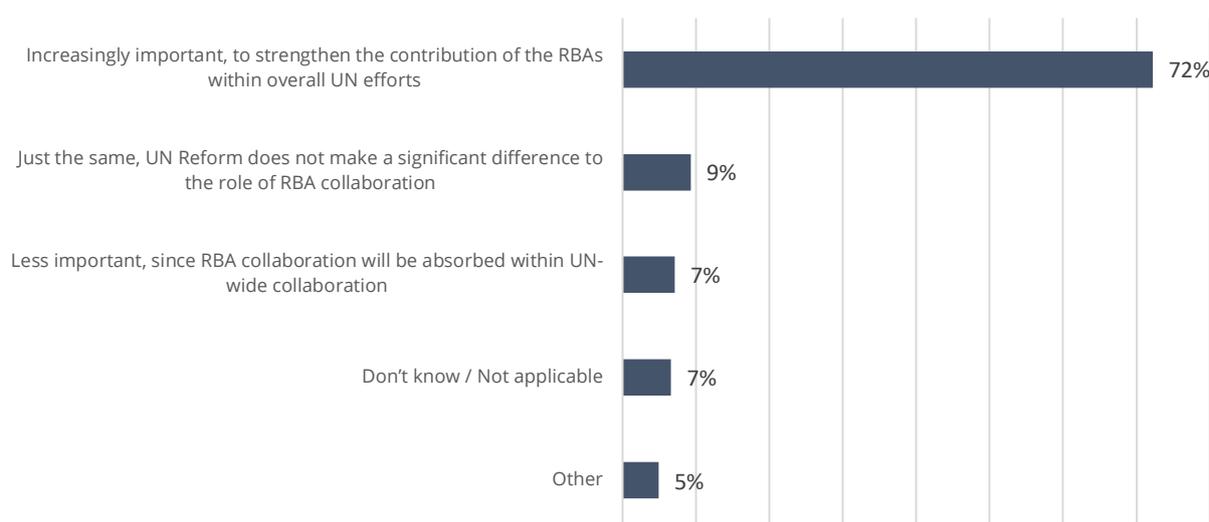
	FAO	IFAD	WFP	Total
Rome-based agencies	3.69	3.45	3.67	3.60
Other UN & international agencies	3.99	3.49	4.14	3.85
Difference	-0.29	-0.04	-0.47	-0.25

Source: online survey; average rating for: 'a) How important is collaboration between the Rome-based agencies in your own work? Please rate from 1 to 5, where 1 = not important and 5 = very important. Select N/A if you are unable to answer this question or if it is not applicable.\* b) How important is collaboration with other UN and international agencies (such as UNICEF, UNHCR, the World Bank etc.) in your own work? Please rate from 1 to 5, where 1 = not important and 5 = very important. Select N/A if you are unable to answer this question or if it is not applicable'. Total respondents: 400 (excludes 'not applicable').

428. IFAD respondents view collaboration as less important than FAO and WFP; however, for IFAD, RBA collaboration is of approximately equal importance compared with collaboration with other United Nations and international agencies, whereas for FAO and WFP collaboration with other agencies is more important.

429. Considering the role of RBA collaboration in the future, a strikingly high proportion of respondents (72 percent) believe that RBA collaboration should be more important in the future, with very few thinking it should be less important, or declining to answer.

**Figure 27. How important should Rome-based agency collaboration be in the future?**

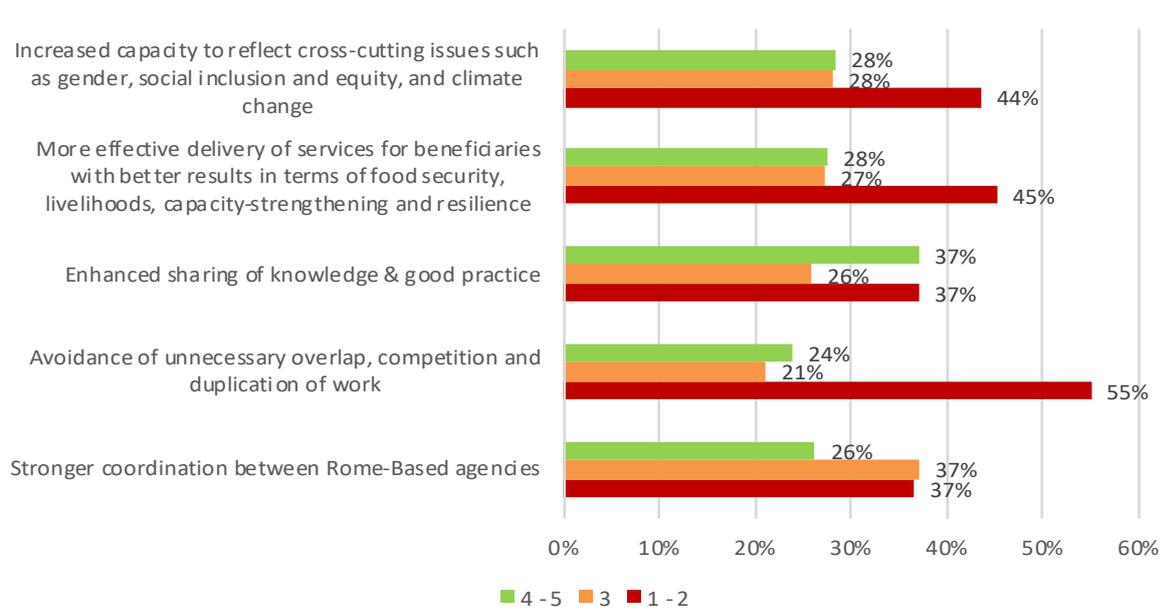


Source: online survey; 'How important should RBA collaboration be in future, given the ongoing UN reform process to increase UN-wide collaboration?' Total respondents: 410.

**Evaluation Question 2: What are the positive, negative, intended and unintended results of Rome-based agency collaboration to date?**

430. Respondents were asked to rate the effects of collaboration on a number of broad areas, giving each area a rating out of 5 stars, where 1 star = no effect, and 5 stars = substantial positive effects, 0 stars = 'Don't know / Not applicable'. The results are summarized in the following graph which, for ease of viewing, groups low ratings of 1 or 2 stars together in red, medium ratings of 3 stars in orange, and the higher ratings of 4 or 5 stars in green. Responses with no ratings, signifying N/A or 'Don't know' are excluded from this analysis, but represent between 10-16 percent of the sample.

**Figure 28. What outcomes has Rome-based agency collaboration achieved to date?**



Source: online survey; 'In your experience, what outcomes has RBA collaboration achieved to date? Please rate the effects of collaboration on the following areas, where 1 star = no effect, and 5 stars = substantial positive effects, 0 stars = Don't know / Not applicable'. 0 stars = Don't know / Not applicable is excluded from the above analysis. Respondent count varies: see table below.

431. As the chart above shows, the lower ratings are, in general, more numerous than the higher ratings, though only in one area (avoidance of unnecessary overlap etc.) do they represent the majority; in all other areas, if the high and medium ratings (3-5 stars) are added together they are more numerous than the low ratings (1-2 stars). It is also worth noting the variety of responses across the areas: there are large numbers of respondents who rank RBAC outcomes highly, and there are many who rank them lower.

432. This variation in response is useful to note, and to bear in mind when considering the table below which gives only average response. The table of averages does, however, allow for quick comparison of results between the different outcome areas and disaggregated by country, regional or headquarters/global levels.

**Table 29. Average rating of outcomes achieved by Rome-based agency collaboration, disaggregated by level**

Average rating 1 -5 stars	HQ	Regional	Country	Total	Count <sup>314</sup>
Stronger coordination between Rome-based agencies	2.72	2.81	3.06	2.88	358
Avoidance of unnecessary overlap, competition and duplication of work	2.33	2.57	2.69	2.52	360
Enhanced sharing of knowledge & good practice	2.95	3.17	3.03	3.01	367
More effective delivery of services for beneficiaries with better results in terms of food security, livelihoods, capacity-strengthening and resilience	2.57	2.80	2.91	2.75	345
Increased capacity to reflect cross-cutting issues such as gender, social inclusion and equity, and climate change	2.60	2.89	2.94	2.79	349
<b>Average rating</b>	<b>2.64</b>	<b>2.85</b>	<b>2.93</b>	<b>2.79</b>	

Source: online survey; 'In your experience, what outcomes has RBA collaboration achieved to date? Please rate the effects of collaboration on the following areas, where 1 star = no effect, and 5 stars = substantial positive effects, 0 stars = Don't know / Not applicable'. These averages exclude 0 stars = Don't know / Not applicable

<sup>314</sup> Number of respondents who expressed an opinion.

433. Enhanced knowledge sharing is rated most highly overall. 'Avoidance of unnecessary overlap...' has the lowest rating overall and consistently at headquarters, regional and country levels. Overall, outcomes are most highly rated at the country level, and least at headquarters/global level.

**Evaluation Question 3: What factors have enabled or hindered the effectiveness of Rome-based agency collaboration?**

434. A question on the main enabling factors drew on previous surveys to focus on those factors which had already been identified as important.

**Figure 29. Enabling factors for Rome-based agency collaboration**



Source: online survey; 'From the following list, what is the most significant factor for enabling RBA collaboration? Please select one option only.' Total respondents: 410.

435. All three agencies had 'understanding of relative strengths and complementarities of each organization' as garnering the most votes. The top three factors identified, together representing almost two-thirds of respondents, all fall under the soft skillset, focusing on understanding, vision and relationship. In contrast, external factors and donor preference garner relatively few votes at 10 percent, while factors relating to funding and resources together represent 25 percent of results received.

436. In contrast, the main hindering factors are given in the graph below. On this, the more concrete issues of 'competition for resources between the agencies' and 'incompatible administrative and planning systems' came to prominence.

**Figure 30. Obstacles to Rome-based agency collaboration**



Source: online survey; 'From the following list, what is the most significant obstacle to RBA collaboration? Please select one option only.' Total respondents: 410.

437. The table below summarizes the differences between the agencies. For FAO, the main obstacle is clear – 'competition for resources between the agencies', whereas IFAD and WFP are more dispersed in their answers, and WFP respondents voted for 'lack of shared vision' as their most frequent obstacle.

**Table 30. Obstacles to Rome-based agency collaboration, by agency**

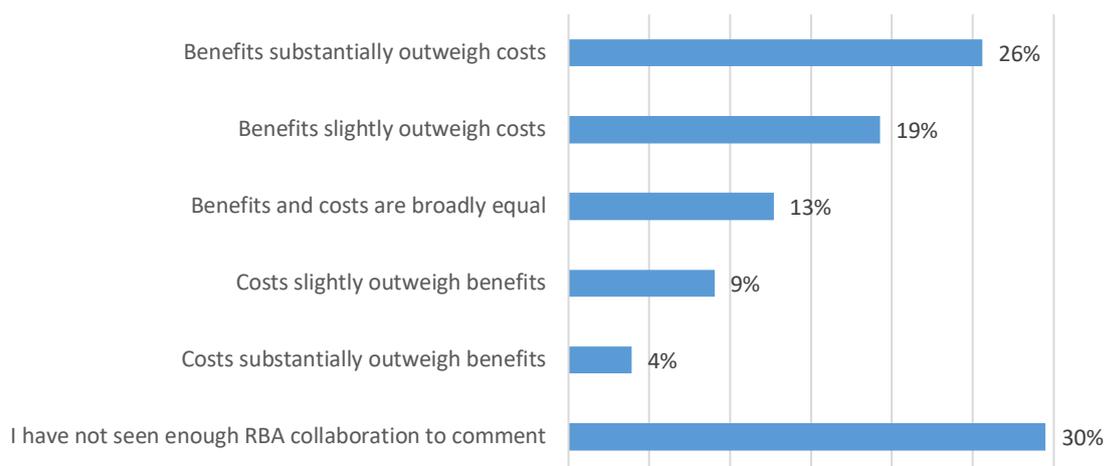
	FAO	IFAD	WFP	Total
Donor preferences & strategies	3%	5%	3%	4%
External factors, e.g. national context and government preferences	5%	6%	3%	5%
Joint funding mechanisms or strategies	5%	7%	3%	5%
Lack of resources/funding for RBA collaboration	8%	15%	16%	13%
Incompatible administrative and planning systems	9%	18%	15%	14%
Lack of internal incentives for collaboration	17%	13%	12%	14%
Lack of shared vision on the purpose of RBA collaboration	15%	18%	25%	19%
Competition for resources between the agencies	39%	19%	22%	27%

Source: online survey; 'From the following list, what is the most significant obstacle to RBA collaboration? Please select one option only.' Total respondents: 410.

**Evaluation Question 4: What is the added value of Rome-based agency collaboration (as opposed to single agency processes and results) across the different aspects and levels?**

438. The survey asked the direct question of whether the overall benefits of RBA collaboration outweighed the costs. Those who felt able to answer were inclined to answer positively, with 45 percent believing that benefits of RBA collaboration outweigh costs, 13 percent that they were equal, and only 13 percent that costs were greater than benefits. However, a large proportion, 30 percent, felt they had not seen enough RBA collaboration to comment.

**Figure 31. Benefits versus costs of Rome-based agency collaboration**



Source: online survey; 'While collaboration may bring benefits for the agencies, partners and recipients, there are also transaction costs and opportunity costs, such as the time spent on administration, and the time that could have been spent doing other activities or building other relationships. In your experience, do the overall benefits of RBA collaboration outweigh the costs?' Total respondents: 410.

439. Comments on this question were varied and illuminating. To give a selection:

"Potential benefits far outweigh the costs since we can do much more together than individually- also because of important complementarities. However this potential remains latent since we often don't share common operational objectives and business processes/practices. Sometimes we manage to come together (e.g. COVID-19) and the outcomes are great" IFAD country office

"Particularly in emergency contexts, the benefits outweigh the admin/startup costs, since the added value of collaboration enables economies of scale with regard to outreach, logistics, etc." FAO, country office

"The complementary of the RBA interventions has the potential to deliver results of greater value than the sum of the individual agency results. The greater value is largely the sustainability of the results and solutions." WFP, country office

"Benefits are clear but in absence of a corporate shared vision and earmarked resources, it is too much left to the good will of staff on the ground and inter-personal relationships. Depending on the latter the collaboration can flourish or not" IFAD, country Office

"The benefits include better relationships with government, avoidance of duplication, working on specific strengths of each organization to enhance overall objectives. Costs are in legal and administrative burden of collaborative efforts. This can be very disheartening." FAO, country Office

"It's always beneficial to share expertise, knowledge and other efforts to improve efficiencies. Working in a silo is not conducive, especially in an increasingly integrated UN." WFP, headquarters

## Annex XII. Ethical considerations

440. Table 31 below sets out the ethical issues, risks and safeguards that the evaluation team identified and proposed during the inception phase.

**Table 31. Approach to ethical issues, risks and safeguards**

Phases	Ethical issues	Risks	Safeguards
Inception	Confidentiality	Information and/or opinions collected by ET can be attributed to named individuals	The ET stores all interview and focus group discussion (FGD) notes in secure files not accessible to any other party
	Data protection	Data gathered during the evaluation are transferred to unauthorized users	The ET stores all data securely and confirms to the EMG at the end of the assignment that it has transferred all data to the EMG or destroyed them
	Political and cultural sensitivity	ET members cause offence during preliminary interviews and data collection through spoken or written statements that are insensitive to informants' or readers' political views or cultural beliefs	ET members, who are experienced evaluators, were given clear and firm orientation to remind them of the high importance of political and cultural sensitivity at all times, in accordance with the ethical guidelines and control systems of Mokoro Ltd
	Gender	ET members give insufficient attention to gender in their preliminary data collection and development of methods, either through gender-insensitive analysis and planning or through gender-insensitive preparation or conduct of preliminary interviews	The ET have been selected partly on the basis of their known sensitivity and proactive attitude to gender issues and concerns. Their performance in this regard is governed by the Mokoro Code of Conduct.
	Power imbalances	During preliminary data collection, the ET do not recognize or redress power imbalances that may mean less privileged, more marginalized groups in the potential informant population lack voice and are given insufficient attention	ET members were advised to be alert to potential power imbalances, even among the staff of RBA and government offices, and to act to counter them as required
	Carbon footprint	The carbon footprint of the inception phase is unnecessarily high, due largely to air travel that could be avoided	Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the inception phase involves no air travel. The carbon footprint of internet use for remote interviews is not insignificant but cannot currently be mitigated
	Clear and explicit approach to ethical issues	The ET are given insufficient guidance on ethical issues, and the EMG and other stakeholders are given insufficient evidence that these issues are being adequately addressed	The ET were given sufficient guidance on ethical issues
Data collection	Confidentiality	As above with regard to these issues	As above with regard to these issues. In addition, regular engagement between team members to assess progress and pay attention to these issues ensured that any challenges were promptly identified and addressed
	Data protection		
	Political and cultural sensitivity		
	Gender		
	Power imbalances		
	Protection	The ET's engagement with beneficiaries of RBA humanitarian action may not show adequate	ET members, who are experienced evaluators, were fully briefed, in the context of Mokoro's Code of Conduct,

Phases	Ethical issues	Risks	Safeguards
		respect for international protection principles	about the essential importance of full compliance with international protection principles in humanitarian contexts
	Feedback	Particularly at the country level, the ET collect data from informants but do not adequately inform them about the progress or findings of the evaluation	The ET ensured adequate debriefings at the end of country missions and ensured that informants were kept engaged and informed in the evaluation process, encouraging the EMG to ensure dissemination of the evaluation report to as wide a range of informants as possible
Reporting	Clear and transparent accounting of findings	Through inappropriate presentation style and/or distortion or omission of findings, the evaluation report does not generate confidence among readers that the issues have been understood, comprehensively assessed and presented in a neutral manner	The evaluation team leader, in consultation with Mokoro's quality support advisers, ensured that reporting was clear and transparent
	Quality assurance	Insufficient measures are in place to ensure that the final report fully represents the findings and conclusions of the evaluators and has not been amended without their consent	The EMG guaranteed this in consultation with the ET leader
	Balance	The findings of the report do not appropriately reflect the perspectives and voices of the various stakeholders	The ET leader, advised as required by the quality support advisers and the EMG, ensured that evidence on informant views was appropriately triangulated and balanced
Dissemination (responsibility of the EMG)	Communication of findings to relevant stakeholders	Findings of the evaluation are not clearly and sufficiently communicated to the wide spectrum of stakeholders concerned with RBAC	The EMG's communication and learning plan prevented this
	Public dissemination of evaluation products	There is no or insufficient public access to evaluation products	Through its communication and learning plan, the EMG will ensure sufficient public access
	Prompt dissemination	Evaluation products are not disseminated promptly, diminishing the utility of the evaluation	The EMG will ensure prompt dissemination
	Protocols for storage and destruction of data	Clear protocols for the storage and destruction of data are not in place and/or are not applied	The EMG, in consultation with the ET, will ensure that the required protocols are in place and are applied
	Presentation of findings in appropriate formats and channels	Not all stakeholders are able (easily or at all) to access and use the formats and channels in which evaluation findings are presented	The EMG's communication and learning plan will prevent this
	Communication of benefits arising from the evaluation	The benefits of the evaluation are insufficiently communicated, leading to scepticism or resistance about engaging with it or using it	The EMG's communication and learning plan will prevent this

## Annex XIII. Links across findings, conclusions and recommendations

Table 32. Links across findings, conclusions and recommendations

	Recommendation	Related conclusions	Related findings
1	Update the MoU between the RBAs	2, 3, 5, 7, 9	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 8, 9, 12
2	Restructure the coordination of RBA collaboration	3, 8	1, 3, 4, 8, 9
3	Further embrace the new joint programming mechanisms at the country level and ensure constructive, collaborative RBA engagement with these mechanisms	8	1, 8
4	Focus administrative collaboration efforts on further embracing the United Nations efficiency agenda	3, 8	1, 3, 4, 8, 9
5	In considering the development of joint projects and programmes, the RBAs should take careful note of the likely higher transaction costs that this mode of collaboration imposes	6	4, 11
6	The Member States of the RBA Governing Bodies should reappraise and adequately resource their position on RBA collaboration	2, 3, 7, 8	1, 2, 3, 4, 8, 9, 12

## Annex XIV. References

Short reference	Full reference	Location
ADE, 2019	Analysis for Economic Decisions, 2019. <i>Joint Evaluation of the Integrated Solutions Model in and around Kalobeyei, Turkana, Kenya</i> . Copenhagen: Evaluation Department, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Denmark.	2.8.1.7.1-2
ALNAP, 2016	Active Learning Network for Accountability and Performance, 2016. <i>Evaluation of Humanitarian Action Guide</i> , ALNAP: London, 2016	0.1.1
Avenir Analytics, 2019	Avenir Analytics, 2019. <i>Update of WFP's Safety Net Policy: Policy Evaluation</i> . Rome: WFP OEV.	2.3.3.4-10
Broadleaf Consulting, 2019	Broadleaf Consulting, 2019. <i>Tools for Measuring Collaboration</i> . <a href="https://broadleafconsulting.ca/uploads/3/5/3/5/35353475/tools_for_measuring_collaboration_-_nov_2019.pdf">https://broadleafconsulting.ca/uploads/3/5/3/5/35353475/tools_for_measuring_collaboration_-_nov_2019.pdf</a> [accessed 21 November 2020]	2.0.1-4
Busan, 2011	Fourth High-Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness, 2011. <i>Busan Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation</i> . Busan, Republic of Korea.	2.6.5-1
CFS, 2015	Committee on World Food Security, 2015. <i>Framework for Action for Food Security and Nutrition in Protracted Crises</i> . Rome: CFS.	
CFS, 2017	Committee on World Food Security, 2017. <i>Evaluation of the Committee on World Food Security</i> . Rome: CFS.	2.3.3.1-13
CFS, 2020	Committee on World Food Security High Level Panel of Experts, 2020. <i>Impacts of COVID-19 on food security and nutrition: developing effective policy responses to address the hunger and malnutrition pandemic</i> . Rome: CFS.	
DAI, 2020	DAI, 2020. <i>Final Evaluation of the Programme "Accelerate Progress Towards Millennium Development Goal 1C (MDG1.C Programme)"</i> . Maputo: DAI.	2.3.3.1-10
ENN, nd	Emergency Nutrition Network, not dated. <i>Multi-sector programmes at the sub-national level: a case study of the communes de convergence approach in Maradi, Niger</i> . Oxford: ENN.	2.8.2.7-1
EvalForward, 2021	EvalForward, 2021. <i>EvalForward periodic report to Executive Group: looking back on 2020 and forward into 2021</i> . Rome: EvalForward.	2.3.3.1-15
FAO, 2009	FAO, 2009. <i>"Directions for Collaboration of the Rome-based Agencies"</i> , presented to the 137th session of Council, Rome, 28 September – 2 October 2009, CL 137/INF/10. FAO: Rome 2009.	2.1.1-2
FAO, 2010	FAO, 2010. <i>FAO Policy on Indigenous and Tribal Peoples</i> . Rome: FAO	2.5.2-6
FAO, 2012	FAO, 2012. <i>FAO Organization-Wide Strategy on Partnerships</i> . Rome: FAO.	2.4.1-10
FAO, 2013	FAO, 2013. <i>FAO Policy on Gender Equality: Attaining Food Security Goals in Agriculture and Rural Development</i> . Rome: FAO.	2.5.2-2
FAO, 2016a	FAO, 2016. <i>Reviewed Strategic Framework and Outline of the Medium-Term Plan (2018-2021)</i> 1. Rome: FAO: CL 155/3.	2.4.1-12

Short reference	Full reference	Location
FAO, 2016b	FAO, 2016. <i>Evaluation du programme de pays au Niger</i> . Rome: FAO OED.	2.8.2.1.2-1
FAO, 2017a	FAO, 2017. <i>Evaluation of FAO's Contribution to the Reduction of Rural Poverty through Strategic Programme 3</i> . Rome: FAO OED.	2.3.3.2-51
FAO, 2017b	FAO, 2017. <i>Results Frameworks, comparing 2014-2017 to 2018-2021</i> . C 2017/3 Web Annex 11. Rome: FAO	2.4.1-17
FAO, 2017c	FAO, 2017. <i>Reviewed Strategic Framework</i> . C 2017/7 Rev.1. Rome: FAO	2.4.1-2
FAO, 2017d	FAO, 2017. <i>Final Evaluation of the Project: Food Security and Nutrition Analysis Unit for Somalia</i> . Rome: FAO OED.	2.3.3.2-49
FAO, 2018	FAO, 2018. <i>Final Evaluation of the Joint Resilience Project in Kassala</i> . Rome: FAO OED.	2.3.3.2-41
FAO, 2019a	FAO, 2019. <i>Report of the Council of FAO. Hundred and Sixty-third Session, 2-6 December 2019</i> . Rome: FAO.	2.4.1-4
FAO, 2019b	FAO, 2019. 2019. <i>Synthesis of Findings and Lessons Learned from the Strategic Objective Evaluations</i> . Rome: FAO OED.	2.3.3.2-38
FAO, 2019c	FAO, 2019. <i>Final Evaluation of the Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC) Global Strategic Programme (GSP), 2014-2018</i> . Rome: FAO OED.	2.3.3.2-34
FAO, 2019d	FAO, 2019. <i>Evaluation of FAO's Work on Gender</i> . Rome: FAO OED.	2.3.3.2-37
FAO, 2019e	FAO, 2019. <i>The Director-General's Medium-Term Plan (2018-2021) (reviewed) and Programme of Work and Budget 2020-2021</i> . C2019/3. Rome: FAO	2.4.1-5
FAO, 2019f	WFP, 2020. <i>State of School Feeding Worldwide 2020</i> . Rome: WFP.	
FAO, 2020a	FAO, 2020. <i>Provisional outline of the New Strategic Framework</i> . Rome: FAO: PC 128/2.	2.4.1-11
FAO, 2020b	FAO, 2020. <i>Outline of the Strategic Framework( 2022-2031) and outline of the Medium-Term Plan (2022-2035)</i> . Rome: FAO: CL 165/3.	2.4.1-13
FAO, 2020c	FAO, 2020. <i>Transformative approaches to advance gender equality for food security and nutrition</i> . <a href="http://www.fao.org/gender/news/detail/en/c/1330138/">http://www.fao.org/gender/news/detail/en/c/1330138/</a> [accessed 25 November 2020]	
FAO, 2020d	FAO, 2020. <i>Membership of FAO</i> . <a href="http://www.fao.org/legal-services/membership-of-fao/en/">http://www.fao.org/legal-services/membership-of-fao/en/</a> [accessed 12 December 2020]	
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## Annex XV. Abbreviations

3PA	Three-Pronged Approach
AAP	Accountability to Affected Populations
AFI	Acute Food Insecurity Scale
ALNAP	Active Learning Network for Accountability and Performance
AU	African Union
BIG	Business Innovations Group
BOS	Business Operations Strategy
C2C	Communes de Convergence
CA	Collaborative Activity
CAADP	Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme
CBT	Cash-Based Transfer
CCA	Common Country Analysis
CCS	Country Capacity Strengthening
CD	Capacity Development
CDC	Centres for Disease Control and Prevention
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women
CFI	FAO Investment Centre
CFS	Committee on World Food Security
CFS-FFA	CFS Framework for Action for Food Security and Nutrition in Protracted Crises
CILSS	Comité permanent Inter-etats de Lutte contre la Sécheresse dans le Sahel
CO	Country Office
CoE	Centre of Excellence
COMET	Country Office Tool for Managing Effectively
COSOP	Country Strategic Opportunities Programme
COVID-19	SARS-CoV-2 - coronavirus disease
CPT	Common Procurement Team
CRRF	Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework
CSO	Civil Society Organization
CSP	Country Strategic Plan
CT	Country Team
DAC	Development Assistance Committee
DFID	UK Department for International Development
EB	Executive Board
EM	Evaluation Manager
EMG	Evaluation Management Group
EQ	Evaluation Question
ER	Evaluation Report
ET	Evaluation Team
EU	European Union
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
FFA	Food Assistance for Assets
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
FSIN	Food Security Information Network
GALS	Gender Action and Learning System

GB	Governing Body
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GEF	Global Environment Facility
GEWE	Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment
gFSC	global Food Security Cluster
GNAFC	Global Network Against Food Crises
GPEDC	Global Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation
GTA	Gender-Transformative Approaches
GTP	Gender Transformation Programme
HACT	Harmonized Approach to Cash Transfer
HDP	Humanitarian-Development-Peace
HGSF	Home-Grown School Feeding
HQ	Headquarters
IBC	Issue-Based Coalition
ICT	Information and Communications Technology
IFAD	International Fund for Agricultural Development
IFI	International Financial Institution
IGAD	Intergovernmental Authority on Development
IOE	Independent Office of Evaluation [IFAD]
IPC	Integrated Food Security Phase Classification
IR	Inception Report
IRM	Integrated Road Map
JCS	Joint Country Strategy
JP GTA	Joint Programme on Gender-Transformative Approaches
JP RWEE	Joint Programme on Accelerating Progress towards the Economic Empowerment of Rural Women
KCEP-CRAL	Kenya Cereal Enhancement Programme - Climate Resilient Agriculture Livelihoods Window
KII	Key Informant Interview
KISEDIP	Kalobeyi Integrated Socio-Economic Development Plan for Turkana West
LAC	Latin America and Caribbean
LDC	Least Developed Country
LIC	low-Income Country
LMIC	Lower Middle-Income Country
m	million
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
MIC	Middle-Income Country
MOPAN	Multilateral Organization Performance Assessment Network
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
MRS	Mutual Recognition Statement
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
np	no page number
NSVC	Nutrition-Sensitive Value Chain
NWOW	New Way of Working
OCHA	United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
OECD DAC	Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development: Development Assistance Committee
OED	Office of Evaluation [FAO]

OEV	Office of Evaluation [WFP]
OPC	Oversight and Policy Committee (formerly Executive Management Group (EMG))
para	paragraph
QA	Quality Assurance
QCPR	Quadrennial Comprehensive Policy Review
QDA	Qualitative Data Analysis
QS	Quality Support
RAI	Principles for Responsible Investment in Agriculture and Food Systems
RBA	Rome-Based Agency
RBAs	Rome-Based Agencies
RBAC	Rome-Based Agency Collaboration
RB	Regional Bureau
RBC	Regional Bureau Cairo [WFP]
RBB	Regional Bureau Bangkok [WFP]
RBD	Regional Bureau Dakar [WFP]
RBJ	Regional Bureau Johannesburg [WFP]
RBM	Results-Based Management
RBN	Regional Bureau Nairobi [WFP]
RBP	Regional Bureau Panama [WFP]
RC	Research Coordinator
RCP	Regional Collaborative Platform
RERP	Rural Enterprises Remittances Programme
RIASCO	Regional Inter-Agency Standing Committee
RIMA	Resilience Index Measurement Analysis
RO	Regional Office
SABER	Systems Approach for Better Education Results
SCG	Senior Consultative Group
SD3C	Emergency and Rural Development in Sahel: a Joint RBA-G5 Sahel+1 Response to the 3C Challenges: (COVID-19, Conflicts and Climate Change)
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
SECAP	Social, Environmental and Climate Assessment Procedures
SER	Summary Evaluation Report
SIPRI	Stockholm International Peace Research Institute
SO	Strategic Objective
SOFI	State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World
SSTC	South-South and Triangular Cooperation
SUN	Scaling Up Nutrition
TA	Technical Assistance
TBC	To Be Confirmed
TCP	Technical Cooperation Programme
TL	Team Leader
ToC	Theory of Change
ToR	Terms of Reference
UN	United Nations
UNCT	United Nations Country Team
UNDAF	United Nations Development Assistance Framework
UNDCO	United Nations Development Cooperation Office
UNDF	United Nations Decade on Family Farming
UNDG	United Nations Development Group

UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNDS	United Nations Development System
UNEG	United Nations Evaluation Group
UNESCO	United Nations Education, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNFPA	United Nations Fund for Population Activities
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNICEF	United Nations Children’s Fund
UNIDO	United Nations Industrial Development Organization
UNOPS	United Nations Office for Project Services
UNRC	United Nations Resident Coordinator
UNSDCF	United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework
UN SWAP	United Nations System-Wide Action Plan on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
USD	United States Dollar
USDA	United States Department for Agriculture
WFP	World Food Programme
WHO	World Health Organization
WHS	World Humanitarian Summit





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