



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



Food and Agriculture
Organization of the
United Nations



IFAD

Investing in rural people



World Food
Programme

October 2021

Round Table

Introduction and scope

- Repeated calls from Governing Bodies to strengthen Rome-based Agencies collaboration (RBAC)
- First evaluation of contribution of RBA collaboration towards achieving SDGs
- RBA evaluation offices jointly appointed and supervised an independent external firm ([Mokoro Ltd.](#)) to review RBA collaboration
- **Scope:** 2016-2021
- **Evaluation questions:**
 - Assesses relevance
 - Results of RBA collaboration
 - Factors influencing results achievement
 - Value-added of RBA collaboration



Evaluation approach

Mixed-methods, theory-based approach:

- 12 country studies:
 - Remote missions: Colombia, Egypt, Indonesia, Lebanon, Mozambique, Rwanda
 - Desk review 'plus' (including limited number of interviews): Burkina Faso, Kenya, Nepal, Niger, Pakistan, Peru
- + 400 interviews;
- 410 RBA staff responses to online survey;
- 8 'deep dive' thematic studies

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)

Summary of findings: Relevance

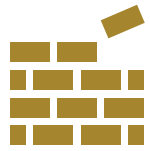
RBA collaboration:

- relevant to the strategic objectives and goals of the three entities in contributing to 2030 Agenda
- highly relevant for the overall direction of the latest phase of UNDS reform
- UN Secretary General's efficiency agenda reduces relevance of RBA collaboration in corporate services



Summary of findings: Results

MIXED RESULTS



Good progress in some projects, countries and thematic areas



Joint knowledge management and learning has been strengthened

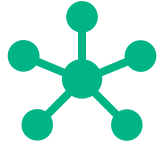


Limited progress in reducing overlap, competition and duplication of work



At all levels, misunderstandings over mandates and competition for funds between FAO and WFP persist, sometimes alongside good technical collaboration on certain themes and tasks

Summary of findings: factors influencing the effectiveness of RBAC



Context



Governance processes



Differences do not always obstruct meaningful collaboration



Clear obstacles include administrative and programming processes and procedures



Insufficient resources are provided for RBA collaboration

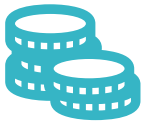
Summary of findings: the added value of RBAC



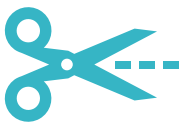
Potential for positive contributions to effectiveness and added value compared to single-agency interventions



Knowledge has enabled increased effectiveness of collaborative efforts in some cases



Evidence of cost savings in corporate services but the overall 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

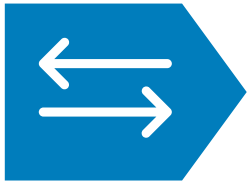
Conclusions (1)



Collaboration a daily reality, reflecting the shared strengths and commitment of these distinctly different organizations



RBA staff routinely see and act on the advantages of collaboration where they see it makes sense



Widespread ambivalence about the concept

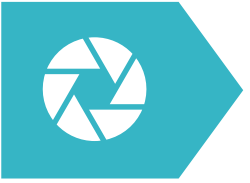


The official systems and procedures to promote and co-ordinate RBA collaboration add little value, frustrating staff more often than they inspire them

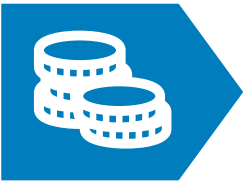
Conclusions (2)



There are better ways for the RBAs to achieve their shared objectives than collaboration with each other, at times



Collaboration impaired by misunderstandings about the mandates of FAO and WFP



Some types of collaboration usually impose higher transaction costs

Conclusions (3)



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



Collaboration between the RBAs has significant potential, but the rationale for it is not stated in an appropriately realistic way

Recommendations

1

Update the memorandum of understanding between the RBAs.

2

Restructure the co-ordination architecture for RBA collaboration within the framework of UNDS reform.

3

Further embrace the new joint programming mechanisms at the country level and ensure constructive, collaborative RBA engagement with these mechanisms.

Recommendations

4

Focus administrative collaboration efforts on further embracing the UN efficiency agenda.

5

Assess the costs and benefits of the proposed collaboration and only proceed if the benefits outweigh the costs.

6

The Member States of the RBA Governing Bodies should reappraise and adequately resource their position on RBA collaboration