

## **Management responses**

**Mid-term evaluation of the project  
“Sustainable Management of Agrobiodiversity and  
Vulnerable Ecosystems Recuperation in Peruvian  
Andean Regions through the Approach of Globally  
Important Agricultural Heritage Systems (GIAHS)”**

**GCP/PER/045/GFF  
GEF ID 9092**

## Introduction

A Mid Term Evaluation (MTE) is a milestone in the GEF Project Cycle aiming to promote accountability, learning, feedback and knowledge sharing.

The GEF Evaluation Policy highlights the utility of evaluations as they feed into management and decision making processes regarding the development of policies and strategies; and the programming, implementation, and reporting of activities, projects, and programs. It also points out, that evaluations contribute to institutional learning and evidence-based policy making, accountability, development effectiveness, and organizational effectiveness. Finally emphasizes that an evaluation informs the planning, programming, budgeting, implementation, and reporting cycle and aims to improve the institutional relevance and achievement of results, optimize the use of resources, and maximize the impact of the contribution provided<sup>1</sup>.

The Mid-Term Evaluation of the GCP/PER/045/GFF “Sustainable Management of Agrobiodiversity and Vulnerable Ecosystems Recuperation in Peruvian Andean Regions through the Approach of Globally Important Agricultural Heritage Systems (GIAHS)” project was carried out between January and April 2021 by a team of independent consultants led by the OED unit at FAO.

The preliminary version of the MTE report was presented to relevant project stakeholders on March 8<sup>th</sup> in a meeting organized with the support of the OED-FAO unit, and shared via email for feedback and validation.

The MTE final report was completed and shared with project stakeholders on May 7<sup>th</sup>. The final report describes the findings identified up to the second year of project execution (December 2020) detailing in a clear and specific manner the technical and operational aspects of the project that need to be improved to ensure an effective, cost-efficient and result oriented project execution.

## General Response to the Evaluation

FAO Budget Holder appreciates and welcomes the ten recommendations provided by the Mid Term Evaluation conducted for the project GCP/PER/045/GFF.

Due to mobility restrictions generated by the COVID-19 pandemic, the MTE of the GCP/PER/045/GFF project is product of a thorough and solid virtual exercise, with 88 project stakeholders interviewed and more than 150 project documents reviewed.

The overall rating given to the project is “*Unsatisfactory*”. Among external factors affecting project execution, the MTE highlights the amendment to the regulations of the Participatory Guarantee System, and the mobility and lockdown measures adopted by the government to respond to the sanitary crisis generated by the Covid-19 pandemic. Along these lines, the latter, required the suspension of project activities involving face-to-face meetings (e.g., trainings, workshops, courses, etc.) and those requiring the mobilization of teams at the subnational level.

The MTE report identifies as well important management, coordination and operational issues which affected project progress. Main issues identified include (i) important modifications carried out to the approved project budget and results framework; (ii) the priority given to agrobiodiversity management issues, leaving aside other important pillars of the GIAHS approach with greater impact on the dynamic conservation of ecosystems and quality of life of local communities; (iii) coordination mechanisms established for project operation not working properly; (iv) lack of a monitoring and evaluation system

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<sup>1</sup> The GEF Evaluation Policy, 2019 <https://www.gefio.org/sites/default/files/documents/reports/gef-me-policy-2019.pdf>

and a sound knowledge management strategy that facilitates the systematization and dissemination of experiences, good practices, and lessons learned; and (v) limited technical support and supervision during project execution, including monitoring of co-financing commitments.

Having received the preliminary version of the Mid-Term Evaluation report, on April 16 the Vice Minister of Strategic Development of Natural Resources of MINAM, the Vice Minister of Policies and Supervision of Agrarian Development of MIDAGRI and the FAO Representative in Peru, gathered together to agree upon the roadmap for implementing the total project reengineering recommended by the MTE in the report.

FAO Peru assigned a full-time professional to support the implementation of the MTE recommendations, and activated the FAO Project Task Force, under the technical leadership of the Lead Technical Officer (LTO), to ensure the participation and support of FAO technical experts in the reengineering processes.

The 10 recommendations made in the Mid-Term Evaluation final report are clear and specific. Based on the roadmap agreed in the meeting of April 16, the Project Directorate Team composed of the Director of the General Directorate Office of Biological Diversity of MINAM, the Director of the General Directorate Office of Agrarian Policies of MIDAGRI, the Director of PROFONANPE, and the Task Manager of the FAOPE GEF Project Portfolio, is currently leading a joint effort to implement the corrections and improvements recommended by the MTE final report.

The findings and recommendations of the Mid-Term Evaluation final report will be used to guide the implementation of improvements and corrective actions in the GCP/PER/045/GFF project, ensuring the identification and documentation of lessons learned for their dissemination and use in projects of similar characteristics and scope.

## Feedback to the Management Response from Project Stakeholders

To ensure ownership and transparency on the responses provided to each MTE recommendation, the Management Response was shared for feedback with members of the Project Directorate (MINAM, MIDAGRI and PROFONANPE) for contributions and comments.

This section of the Management Response details the feedback received from project stakeholders as well as clarifications shared by the Independent Evaluation Team to observations and comments regarding the evaluation process.

### **Ministry of Agricultural Development and Irrigation (MIDAGRI)**

MIDAGRI endorsed the Management Response through the letter No. 253-2021-MIDAGRI-DVPSDA/DGPA-DIPNA (Annex 1) and suggested the inclusion of the Family Farming Brand initiative into the Project's communications plan, as one of the objectives of this initiative is to "recognize, value and safeguard the traditional techniques of family farming and guarantee food security and preserve the biological diversity of our country." The request was integrated as an action under Recommendation 4.

### **PROFONANPE (Operational Partner)**

PROFONANPE through letter PRFNP 351-2021 (Annex 2) requested the inclusion of the following two comments in the Management Response:

1. *According to the Project Technical Management Unit (PTMU), the OED-FAO consultants, responsible for the Mid-Term Evaluation, did not request for more details or information on the interviews conducted with the technical team regarding the execution of project components, and did not interview the person in charge of the forestry component of the Project.*

2. According to the Project Technical Management Unit, the MTE report did not take into account the feedback, details and support documentation provided by the PTMU to support/clarify MTE findings. These were, however, useful for the reengineering process.

These comments were shared with OED-FAO, for consultation and clarification with the head of the independent evaluation team. The following table summarizes the clarifications received for each observation:

Table 1: Contributions PROFONANPE

	PROFONANPE	Evaluation Team
1	According to the Project Technical Management Unit (PTMU), the OED-FAO consultants, responsible for the Mid-Term Evaluation, did not request for more details or information on the interviews conducted with the technical team regarding the execution of project components, and did not interview the person in charge of the forestry component of the Project.	<p>The Project has four components. Forestry is not a component by its own as stated by the PTMU. Forestry issues are part of Component 1, Outcome 1.2. As highlighted throughout the evaluation, understanding forestry interventions under the scope of activities planned under Component 1 is key to ensure an integrated landscape management approach.</p> <p>To analyze and triangulate evidence regarding findings of the evaluation a set of measures were taken, including:</p> <p>a) After the desk review, in the initial report, the list of stakeholders to be interviewed was presented. This document received comments, but none of them were from the project team or the operational partner. Neither had we received a request to include a specific person.</p> <p>b) The evaluation team met individually with the coordinators of the four project components: C1 Javier Llaca on February 9; C2 Guillermo Maraví on February 9; C3 Rosario Valer on February 10; and C4 Jorge Jordan on February 10. Likewise, meetings with the technical team were held on January 20, 21 and 26. The invitation was open to all, a large part of the project staff attended, and the activities and the scope of each component were presented.</p> <p>c) Additionally, the evaluation team met with the project staff at the beginning of the evaluation on January 10. The progress of the project was presented in that meeting and also during the final meeting held at the request of the project on April 21. Both meetings were opportunities to discuss about specific topics of each component.</p> <p>d) To triangulate the specific information on outcome 1.2, the evaluation team also met with Constantito Auca/project consultant and member of ECOAN (February 12) and with Julio Flores/project consultant at PCA Atiquipa. Finally, all project outputs were reviewed, giving special attention to project reports.</p>
2	According to the Project Technical Management Unit, the MTE report did not take into account the feedback, details and support documentation provided by the PTMU to support/clarify MTE	During the evaluation, more than 150 comments were received on the document, which were analyzed in detail (which can be verified in the response matrix). The evaluation is, however, an independent exercise and, therefore, not all the comments were included as they did not provide evidence or support to modify the conclusions,

	findings. These were, however, useful for the reengineering process.	findings or outcomes provided by the evaluation team. Some of them were useful to corroborate the statements and complement or clarify the report.
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### Ministry of Environment (MINAM)

MINAM validated the Management Response through the letter No. 00031-2021-MINAM/VMDERN/DGDB and annexed report No. 00189-2021-MINAM-VMDERN-DGDB/DRGB File No. 2021034242, prepared by the Project Coordinator and the Directorate of Genetic Resources and Biosafety of MINAM (Annex 3). In this letter MINAM requested to leave a written record that:

- *There are several pieces of evidence that were not taken into account by the MTE team.*
- *The MTE did not take into account the real dimension of the extraordinary circumstances in which the project had to be implemented due to the pandemic, with consecutive quarantines and a ban on trips to the communities due to the health emergency caused by the Covid-19 pandemic and biosecurity problems.*

MINAM's inputs were shared with OED-FAO, responsible for the Mid-Term Evaluation, for consultation and clarification with the Head of the Evaluation Team. The following table summarizes the clarifications received to above observations.

	MINAM	Evaluation Team
1	There are several pieces of evidence that were not taken into account by the MTE team.	All the evidence and comments were carefully analyzed; some comments were incorporated when additional evidence was provided. In the cases where evidence did not change the findings (e.g., elements that included actions or tasks that were carried out after the period evaluated in the report) the finding remained the same.
2	The MTE did not take into account the real dimension of the extraordinary circumstances in which the project had to be implemented due to the pandemic, with consecutive quarantines and a ban on trips to the communities due to the health emergency caused by the Covid-19 pandemic and biosecurity problems.	The Evaluation Report has indicated that COVID-19 affected the execution of the project and the communities involved. It is, therefore, recommended to promote the generation of livelihoods in the communities hit by the pandemic and consider the necessary measures to further decentralize the project team and strengthening the local teams. However, the mid-term evaluation also indicates that the Project modifications were made before the pandemic (such as the increase in salaries, the inclusion of a new target population, budget modifications and the scope of the indicators).

## 1. 1. RESPONSE TO EACH RECOMMENDATION

### Box 1: Management Response Matrix

Management response to the project's mid-term evaluation "Sustainable Management of Agrobiodiversity and Vulnerable Ecosystems Recuperation in Peruvian Andean Regions through the Approach of Globally Important Agricultural Heritage Systems (GIAHS)"					Date:
Evaluation recommendation (a)	Management response (b) Accepted, partially accepted or rejected (b)	Management plan			
		Actions to be taken, and/or comments on partial acceptance or rejection (c)	Responsible unit (d)	Period (e)	Additional necessary funding (Y or N) (f)
<b>Recommendations to Profonanpe as the Project Implementing Agency (operational partner), MINAM and MIDAGRI as implementing partners and FAO as the GEF Implementing Agency:</b>					
<b>Recommendation 1:</b> carry out a total reengineering of the project where the main objective and targets are validated, and activities and planned outputs are revised considering farmer communities as the main target group of the project. This will improve project management and ensure the attainment of outcomes and fulfilment of commitments made to the donor and society (accountability).	Accepted	<p>The reengineering process is led by the Project Directorate (MINAM; MIDAGRI, PROFONANPE and FAO). There is consensus that the reengineering process needs to ensure that project interventions contribute to the attainment of planned outputs and outcomes, considering farmer groups as the main beneficiaries of the project. The roadmap planned and agreed for implementing the reengineering process includes the following actions:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Alignment of project strategy and interventions with GIAHS Approach and GEF focal areas: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Revision and alignment of the Results Framework with indicators and targets approved in the PRODOC</li> <li>➔ Approval of the revised result framework by the Project Steering Committee.</li> </ul> </li> <li>2. PROFONANPE will develop a technical proposal to evidence the need for revising the targets planned for Outcome 1.2. FAO's thematic experts will evaluate the technical and financial feasibility of the proposal and,</li> </ol>	Project Directorate	April to August 2021	No

		<p>through mutual agreement, it will be reflected in the project's monitoring and evaluation plan.</p> <p>3. The revision of technical progress, budget execution and project governance will include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Analysis of technical progress and financial execution per project component and a gap analysis in relation to targets (outcome &amp; output) set in the PRODOC.</li> <li>○ Assessment of the feasibility of a non-cost extension of the project (until September 2023)</li> <li>○ Development of a global project implementation plan (GPIP) and project acquisition and contracting plan (GPACP)</li> <li>○ Revision and adjustment of the project implementation plan (PIP) and project acquisition and contracting plan (PACP) for 2021</li> <li>➔ Approval of: GPIP, GPACP &amp; PIP, PACP 2021 by the Project Steering Committee</li> </ul> <p>4. Review and clarification of the roles and functions of project partners and governance structures:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Develop a governance manual based on the PRODOC</li> <li>○ Revise and finalize the Project Operational Manual (POM)</li> <li>➔ Approval of the governance manual and project operational manual by the Project Steering Committee (PSC)</li> </ul> <p>5. Administrative and financial:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Review and adjustment of i) technical and financial reporting and monitoring tools ii) approval processes, iii) financial and administrative management.</li> </ul>			
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		<p>→ Approval of the project operational manual by the Project Steering Committee</p> <p>5. Develop and implement a monitoring and evaluation system that (i) supports a result and impact based management, (ii) alerts and monitors risks related to technical and financial execution and (iii) supports the preparation of reports fulfilling contract reporting requirements.</p>			
<b>To Profonanpe (including the project team), MINAM and MIDAGRI as implementing partners and FAO as the GEF Implementing Agency:</b>					
<p><b>Recommendation 2:</b> maximize the benefits of the rural development approach (GIAHS) and integrate it into a joint working agenda that addresses issues such as the management of existing agrobiodiversity areas by local stakeholders to contribute to the improvement of their quality of life through the generation of income and the creation and formalization of new agrobiodiversity areas; a feasibility analysis to implement the new version of the PGS; and actions for the restoration of forest ecosystems</p>	<p><b>Accepted</b></p>	<p>The implementation of this recommendation will be addressed through three interventions that will be implemented simultaneously and continuously throughout the life of the project:</p> <p>Technical support:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identification of needs and requirements for capacity-building and technical support, taking into account those identified in the MTE and project reengineering process.</li> <li>• Workshops on technical issues. To date, a first workshop on strategic alignment on the GIAHS approach (05.04.2021) was delivered by a FAO Task Force HQ member responsible for the GIAHS.</li> <li>• Reactivation of the project's Task Force and secure allocation of time of thematic experts for the provision of technical support.</li> </ul> <p>Review and clarification of roles and functions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• After reviewing the roles and functions of the project's partners and governance structures, MIDAGRI is included as a member of the Project Directorate. MIDAGRI's participation at this management level will ensure and facilitate the coordination and participation of entities associated with the Sector (e.g., INIA, SENASA, SERFOR, among others), which is key to ensure the sustainability and spillover effect of the project.</li> </ul>	<p>Project Directorate</p>	<p>May 2021 until the end of the project</p>	<p>No</p>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The governance manual has defined how often the Project Directorate should meet (at least once a month) as well as the mechanisms and participation of the Project's Technical Advisory Committee. The clarification of roles and functions of these two governance structures will allow an articulated work among project partners and facilitate the involvement of, and collaboration with, private sector and institutions from other sectors.</li> <li>Under the leadership of the Project Directorate, a working agenda will be prepared jointly with the Technical Advisory Committee to allow the participation of the private sector and institutions from other sectors seeking to benefit local communities while promoting the sustainability of project interventions.</li> </ul> <p>Prioritization of activities for the main target group:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Throughout the reengineering process, the Project Directorate will ensure the identification of strategies, approaches and actions to secure the transferring of capacities to local communities, and that farmers from targeted project areas, remain as the primary beneficiaries of the project.</li> </ul>			
<p><b>Recommendation 3:</b> ensure that processes and outputs meet a minimum technical standard and contribute to project outcomes.</p>	<p><b>Accepted</b></p>	<p>The implementation of this recommendation will be addressed through three interventions that will be implemented simultaneously and continuously throughout the life of the project:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Optimization of planning and reporting tools (PIP, PACP) and financial and technical reports.</li> <li>Provision of technical support to the Project from the FAO Project Task Force (PTF) including the revision and validation of project outputs developed by the operational partner and/or subcontracted organizations.</li> </ul>	<p>Project Directorate</p>	<p>May 2021 until the end of the project</p>	<p>No</p>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Monthly monitoring of technical and financial execution of the project carried out by the Project Directorate.</li> </ul>			
<p><b>Recommendation 4:</b> improve communication, generation of knowledge and transfer of capacities among partners and stakeholders by promoting opportunities for the exchange of experiences (face-to-face, virtual, or mixed) among local stakeholders from different districts and regions, project team members and participating agencies and institutions in order to discuss learnings and difficulties in the implementation, development and consolidation of a network of pilot sites.</p>	Accepted	<p>Actions to address this recommendation include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Revision of the ToR of the Project's Communications Plan ensuring the inclusion of strategies and actions to (i) support the generation of knowledge, transfer of capacities among partners and stakeholders, and disseminate key messages and good practices, and (ii) raise awareness on the different areas/pillars of the GIAHS approach;</li> <li>Provision of technical support in the implementation of the communications plan from FAO;</li> <li>Assess the inclusion of the <i>Family Farming Brand initiative</i> in the Project's communications plan, taking into consideration that one of the objectives of this initiative is to "recognize, value and safeguard the traditional techniques of family farming to guarantee food security and preserve the biological diversity of our country."</li> <li>Revision of the knowledge management strategy to identify the improvements required to support the achievement of project outputs and outcomes, and based on this, commission a consultancy service for implementation.</li> </ul>	PROFONANPE (PTMU) FAO	May 2021 until the end of the project	No
<b>Recommendations to FAO as the GEF Implementing Agency:</b>					
<p><b>Recommendation 5:</b> improve the accountability process by requesting the Office of the Inspector-General to conduct an investigation of the project to analyze the impact of budget modifications in the components on project outcomes, the increase of salaries of the PMU staff, personnel expenses (including consultants) and payroll against</p>	Accepted	<p>In response to this recommendation, the BH of FAO Peru has requested the OIG to conduct an investigation to analyze:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the impact of budget modifications in the components on project outcomes,</li> <li>the increase of salaries of the PMU staff, personnel expenses (including consultants) and the payroll against investments in field actions,</li> </ul>	FAO	May to July 2021	No

investments in field actions, and the management of responsibilities around the Operational Partners Agreement.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the management of responsibilities around the Operational Partners Agreement.</li> </ul>			
<b>Recommendation 6:</b> improve the project implementation and impact by clarifying roles and responsibilities and improving the project administrative processes with the development of a new Project Operations Manual based on the roles approved in the operational agreement, the commitments made to the donor and property rights of knowledge products. It should also become a guide to facilitate contract and procurement approval processes.	Accepted	<p>This recommendation is being implemented and includes the following actions:</p> <p>Revision of management tools:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Revision of the Project Operational Manual (POM) to standardize operations and facilitate efficient processes for contracting and procurement.</li> <li>Development of the Project Governance Manual to clarify roles and responsibilities of project stakeholders.</li> </ul> <p>FAO and the implementing partner will develop and implement a project monitoring system following a result and impact based approach to: (i) monitor project outcomes, (ii) ensure the timely identification of technical and financial risks; (iii) support the preparation of project progress reports. FAO will assess the need to share, technically and financially, the follow-up, monitoring and preparation of progress reports of the project.</p>	FAO PROFONANPE	April to July 2021	No
<b>Recommendation 7:</b> contribute to the achievement of project outcomes by monitoring the project reengineering process to improve the quality of daily support and technical assistance provided to the project, as well as supervision of activities including the follow-up of no objections, review and feedback on technical outputs, consulting reports, and technical and financial reports.	Accepted	<p>FAO, as implementing agency, is actively supporting the reengineering process of the project, ensuring that all activities contribute to the achievement of planned Outputs and Outcomes. Actions implemented include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Meeting organized with the Vice Minister of Strategic Development of Natural Resources of MINAM, the Vice Minister of Policies and Supervision of Agrarian Development of MIDAGRI and the FAO Representative to agree upon the roadmap for implementing the reengineering process of the project.</li> <li>FAO Peru activated the FAO Project Task Force led by the LTO, which is allowing the participation of FAO thematic experts in the reengineering processes of the project.</li> <li>FAO Peru has assigned a full-time professional for the reengineering process of the GIAHS project, and is</li> </ul>	FAO Project Directorate	April until the end of the project	No

		<p>coordinating with the project team and Project Task Force on a permanent basis.</p> <p>To date, the reengineering process has achieved the following outcomes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Result Framework has been aligned to targets planned under outputs and outcomes of the PRODOC.</li> <li>• The POM and Governance Manual has been revised and validated by the Project Directorate.</li> <li>• A workshop on the GIAHS approach has been implemented.</li> <li>• The need for technical support in specific thematic areas has been identified including the rescue of ancestral knowledge, gender, FFSs, climate resilience and gender mainstreaming, among others, as well as technical expertise available in the country office to support project execution.</li> </ul> <p>As part of the reengineering process, FAO will support the establishment of mechanisms to monitor the coordination, management, and project execution (technical and financial) adopting a results-based approach. Through the provision of technical and administrative supervision, FAO will ensure that issues and opportunities for improvement are identified and communicated in a timely manner to the Project Directorate and/or Project Steering Committee, for a prompt implementation.</p> <p>FAO will meet with the administrative and operational staff of the implementing partner on a regular basis to assess progress in project execution and ensure an adequate monitoring of project activities.</p>			
<p><b>Recommendation 8:</b> improve partnerships and involvement of stakeholders in the project by supporting</p>	<p><b>Accepted</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• FAOPE will coordinate meetings between the PTMU and the NGO Terra Nuova and IFOAM to establish links to</li> </ul>	<p>FAO PROFONANPE - PTMU</p>	<p>June to September 2021</p>	<p>No</p>

the project team in creating links with the initiatives of NGO Terra Nuova and IFOAM developed by FAO Peru to identify new opportunities for promoting agrobiodiversity in local markets.		<p>generate new opportunities for the promotion of agrobiodiversity through local markets.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>FAO will facilitate participation of experts/technicians within the Country Office, and other initiatives in Peru and RLC, to strengthen the project team and support the exchange of experiences and knowledge.</li> </ul>			
<b>Recommendations to MINAM and MIDAGRI as National Authorities and partners in the project execution:</b>					
<b>Recommendation 9:</b> contribute to the achievement of project outcomes by negotiating with SENASA and the National PGS Council a work agreement for the implementation or modification of Supreme Decree No. 002-2020-MINAGRI to prevent it from becoming an obstacle for local small-scale producers.	<b>Partially accepted</b>	Due to the amendment of the Supreme Decree No. 002-2020-MINAGRI on the Participatory Guarantee Systems (PGS) that hinders the attainment of outputs 2.1.3. and 3.1.3, MIDAGRI is exploring with SENASA the need to evaluate the relevance of such amendment and identify an alternative certification system that not affects small producers participating in the project.	MINAM MIDAGRI	May to December 2021	No
<b>Recommendation 10:</b> to FAO teams at headquarters or decentralized offices: identify lessons learned to improve the monitoring and technical support to projects in the countries:	<b>Accepted</b>	FAO Peru will prepare a report consolidating lessons learned from the implementation of the GIAHS project, including opportunities for improving processes and tools used for projects implemented under an OPIM modality.	FAO	July to September 2021	No