

**Project Evaluation Series**

**Evaluation of the project  
“Increasing smallholder productivity  
and profitability”**

**Project code: GCP/KEN/082/USA**

**Management response**

Management response to the evaluation of the project “Increasing smallholder productivity and profitability”					04/2022
Evaluation recommendation	Management response <b>Accepted,</b> <b>Partially accepted</b> or <b>Rejected</b>	Management plan			Further funding required (Y or N)
		Actions to be taken, and/or comments about partial acceptance or rejection	Responsible unit	Time frame	
<p><b>Recommendation 1.</b> <b>To FAO project managers. Establishing a fit-for-purpose M&amp;E system.</b></p> <p>The project monitoring data could not answer basic questions such as number of beneficiaries per intervention per county. It also could not show annual disaggregation of achieved targets while the key learning on effectiveness of process and progress on outputs and outcomes were not evaluated both at mid-term and end-term. This was a missed opportunity for the project to address most of the issues highlighted in this report. The evaluation recommends that FAO requires all projects of similar size to ensure utilization and consistency of baseline, mid-line and endline studies for projects of similar size, with progress monitoring building on from baseline results. Although this project carried out such studies, its utilization in ongoing project implementation and monitoring could not be clearly established.</p>	<b>Accepted</b>	<p>During project formulation, FAO Kenya will define theories of change, results frameworks (with SMART indicators), provide monitoring and reporting narratives and/or evaluation plans and allocate resources for ME&amp;L in the life of the project.</p> <p>Learning component will be integrated into project implementation from the onset so that project teams can learn from the M&amp;E findings and improve performance and for management decisions.</p> <p>Capacity building of project staff and partners on M&amp;E functions will be part of project implementation.</p>	M&E in consultation with technical teams (staff and partners).	From the onset, M&E will be an integral part of the project implementation, thus learning-focused M&E will be implemented in the life of the project.	No
<p><b>Recommendation 2.</b> <b>To FAO project managers. Establishing a community-based collaboration platform to foster long-term sustainability of project results.</b></p> <p>FAO can leverage on its national and local footprint to create lasting collaboration and partnerships beyond the project life cycle. Farmer groups and other community-based organizations can collaborate better if there is a common platform that coordinates the</p>	<b>Accepted</b>	We shall support establishment and operationalization of such collaboration frameworks.	Head of programmes	In next Country Programming Framework	No

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interaction of various groups at local level. The evaluation recommends that FAO create a collaboration framework covering NGOs, the private sector, community-based organizations and communities at sub-county and ward levels as part of any project implementation structure to allow optimization of synergies at local level and coordinated response by all players working with the same communities and households. This would enable the projects to engage different implementing partners by leveraging their expertise, experience and continued presence on the ground to support in the implementation even beyond project lifetime.					
<p><b>Recommendation 3.</b></p> <p><b>To FAO project managers. Enhancing operational transparency and community accountability within and across projects operating in same areas.</b></p> <p>The programme management can maximize project impact by ensuring that all projects operating in the same communities and serving similar beneficiaries during the same time periods have value added, complementarities and differences well-articulated to enable appropriate apportionment of resources and contribution to outcomes or change. The evaluation found some difficulties in apportioning achievements or contribution to improvements in the lives of beneficiaries where more than one project had active operations with the same group of households within same time periods. Future</p>	<b>Accepted</b>	Conduct baseline to mark starting points. Also establish clear beneficiaries targets.	M&E	Before the onset of every project	No

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projects that intend to build on the gains of earlier projects should have a clear demarcation of their starting points, differentiation of beneficiaries and/or interventions as well as being explicit about the relationship between the different projects.					
<p><b>Recommendation 4.</b> <b>To FAO project managers. Ensure adaptive management of projects is encouraged and applied where necessary.</b></p> <p>The project implementation approach assumed that CPOs would be able to coordinate delivery of project interventions covering over 17 000 unique households on average per county without assured access to projects' own dedicated vehicle and dedicated office admin support services. Evaluation evidence showed that all CPOs in the five project sites were overwhelmed, and this impacted on the project negatively. The project management should test operational assumptions and make necessary adjustments early on to avoid compromised implementation quality.</p>	<b>Accepted</b>	Establish offices with adequate capacity to deliver of projects.	Head of programmes and Head finances and Administration	When establishing field offices	No
<p><b>Recommendation 5.</b> <b>To FAO project designers and managers. Establishment of an operational framework and implementation guidelines for gender mainstreaming.</b></p> <p>The project design did not clearly articulate how gender mainstreaming was to be carried out and as a result, operations and activity</p>	<b>Accepted</b>	Project managers shall mainstream FAO gender framework and gender marker during project design and implementation.	Project Managers	During project design and implementation	No

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implementation was gender blind. Future projects should consider a gender mainstreaming framework that covers design, implementation and monitoring of activities and measurable milestones to ensure specific gender-related outputs and outcomes can be achieved and demonstrated as well.					
<p><b>Recommendation 6.</b></p> <p><b>To FAO project designers and managers. Ensure project evaluability is maintained throughout the project’s lifetime.</b></p> <p>The project conducted a baseline study but did not use baseline results as the benchmark for progress monitoring, introduced new indicators but did not keep a data trail that ties the baseline and progress reports. Although the project baseline was done, subsequent (mid-term and end-term progress reports) and other monitoring data used different indicators, data points and methods, thereby negatively affecting the evaluability of the project. Future projects should ensure evaluability of project achievements and outcomes is maintained throughout the project lifetime, regardless of whether new indicators or benchmarks are introduced.</p>	<b>Accepted</b>	<p>At project inception, performance monitoring plans will be developed with clearly defined approaches on how project indicators will be monitored in the life of the project. Project indicator baseline and target values will be defined at the start of implementation.</p> <p>The performance monitoring plans will also articulate the approaches (method, data source, responsibility, frequency of data collection, reporting &amp; dissemination) for monitoring both output and output level performance indicators. The monitoring plans will be complemented by indicator manuals to provide indicator definitions, elaborate data collection and analysis methods for purposes of consistency and data quality control.</p> <p>At the design phase, FAO will make a deliberate effort to consult resource partners on donor-specific key performance indicators that ought to be included in the results frameworks</p> <p>In the event that a resource partner introduces new project indicators in the course of implementation, the original indicators in the project document must continue being monitored and new changes clearly</p>	Monitoring and evaluation in close collaboration with project technical teams.	The measures will be factored in all projects from the project formulation phase and throughout the life of the project.	No

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		documented (including in budget revision documents and FPMIS).			
<p><b>Recommendation 7.</b> <b>To FAO project designers and managers. Ensure project designs have a well-documented exit strategy with desired sustainability action plans.</b></p> <p>Although the project phase-out was well understood by all stakeholders, the responsibility for ongoing sustainability of project benefits to beneficiaries was unclear. Future projects should ensure that the exit strategy includes a sustainability plan endorsed by local actors and stakeholders with a clear and actionable commitment to support sustainability of the project benefits.</p>	<b>Accepted</b>	The project designers and managers shall ensure that the exit strategy includes a sustainability plan endorsed by local actors and stakeholders at the onset of the project with a clear and actionable commitment to support sustainability of the project benefits.	Project designers and managers	At the start of every project	No
<p><b>Recommendation 8.</b> <b>To FAO project designers and managers. Ensure support for access to markets is comprehensive and deep enough to address systemic barriers.</b></p> <p>The evaluation recommends interventions on market accesses to go beyond referrals and linkages to include facilitation of technical support to establish lasting collaboration and partnership building with all key players in selected value chains covering farmers, input suppliers, logistics suppliers and agro-dealers, microfinance providers and commodity brokers or buyers.</p>	<b>Accepted</b>	Project managers and implementing team shall ensure a holistic approach to promoting market access.	Project managers and implementing team	During every project implementation	No

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<p><b>Recommendation 9.</b></p> <p><b>To the project donor USAID. Ensure that accountability reporting requirements and introduction of new indicators does not significantly affect the project monitoring, learning and evaluability.</b></p> <p>Project progress reports are an important part of accountability tools but also help project teams to succinctly review project implementation achievements and challenges to inform adaptations where necessary. Combining accountability and fiduciary requirements with project learning and implementation progress review in project reports helps donor partners to maintain oversight on projects, especially where large portfolios are involved. However, the downside is that, often project teams focus more on donor reporting requirements than the project's own learning and adaptation needs and so was the case with ISPP periodic progress reporting. The evaluation recommends that, demonstration of project learning and adaptations in periodic project progress reports be elevated to be a priority accountability reporting requirement as well.</p>	<b>Accepted</b>	FAO will consistently monitor all key performance indicators agreed upon at the project design phase for learning purposes. In the event that a donor introduces new indicators or reporting requirements, all changes will be documented and if necessary budgetary adjustments are sought to enable meet the obligation.	Monitoring and evaluation in consultation with project technical teams	Continuous; throughout the project life	No

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