Project Evaluation Series
23/2025

Evaluation of the project "Transforming the Indus Basin with Climate Resilient Agriculture and Water Management"

Interim report
Project code: GCP/PAK/146/GCF

Management response

FOOD AND AGRICULTURE ORGANIZATION OF THE UNITED NATIONS
Rome, 2025

Evaluation of the project "Transforming the Indus Basin with Climate Resilient Agriculture and Water Management" – Interim report Management response					10/2025
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		Actions to be taken, and/or comments about partial acceptance or rejection	**Responsible unit**	**Time frame**	**Further funding required (Y or N)**
Recommendation 1. Request for extension and restructuring of the co-financing agreement. We recommend requesting an extension of the project timeline from 18 to 24 months, with the new completion date in March 2028, rather than March 2026. The project, initially planned to be implemented from March 2020 to March 2026, has faced several external challenges, including the COVID-19 pandemic and severe floods. Additionally, the mandatory requirement to receive cofinancing in USD has financially constrained the project due to the significant devaluation of the local currency (PKR) against the USD. As of December 2024, the project has achieved less than 50% of the expected progress, despite only receiving 33% of the committed financial resources for this period. This indicates that the project has made notable advancements given the financial constraints, with progress in specific components as follows: i. Component 1: 43.5% progress, ii. Component 2: Reached 62 635 households, or 31.3% of the target of 200 000 households. iii. Component 3: 41% progress, However, the remaining project duration (one year and four months, representing 22% of the total project time) is insufficient to complete all planned activities, even with the full disbursement of the remaining funds. In addition to the extension, we recommend addressing the cofinancing challenges by restructuring the cofinancing agreement	**Accepted**	1. Revised/restructured UTF agreements with consultation of Provincial Governments that consider currency fluctuation risks for flexible co-financing mechanisms. 2. Facilitate to Provincial Government for revision of the PC-1 documents for getting approval from CDWP (Punjab) and PDWP (Sindh) 3. Request a formal 24-months extension of the project timeline. 24 months NCE 4. request for one source funding for each activity 5. Develop a financial risk mitigation framework for implementation.	FAO Implementation team, GCF and Provincial Governments (Punjab & Sindh)	Immediate	No

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between the Green Climate Fund (GCF) and the governments of Punjab and Sindh. Given the ongoing issues with currency devaluation, we suggest a more flexible cofinancing strategy that is resilient to exchange rate fluctuations. Specifically, the revised agreement should allow for a mix of financial contributions and in-kind payments from the governments. Furthermore, some activities are currently funded from three different sources; we suggest having a single funding source for each activity to streamline the implementation process. This new agreement must be endorsed by all relevant stakeholders to ensure that the cofinancing commitments are achievable for all parties, ensuring the project's successful completion.					
Recommendation 2. Increase the visibility of the project's purpose, scope and approaches with local stakeholders. The analysis of project coherence highlights that local stakeholders, especially among local governments officials, would appreciate a higher level of collaboration and coordination, including being assigned clear tasks and responsibilities from the FAO implementation team. For this reason, the evaluation team recommends: Increasing engagement of stakeholders through field visits, progress-sharing discussions, and reflection sessions to update stakeholders about the project journey and lessons learned. This will improve stakeholders understanding of project's scope, purpose and approaches, and will allow them to contextualize better how Farmer Field School activities align within the government's effort of climate change mitigation. Moreover, showing more clearly the effectiveness of training activities on beneficiaries increased resilience will help shift the emphasis from in-kind assistance as the preferred approach, through agricultural	**Accepted**	1. Increasing engagement of stakeholders through field visits, progress-sharing discussions, and reflection sessions to update stakeholders about the project journey and lessons learned. This will improve stakeholders understanding of project's scope, purpose and approaches, and will allow them to contextualize better how Farmer Field School activities align within the government's effort of climate change mitigation. Moreover, showing more	FAO Implementation team, GCF and Provincial Governments (Punjab & Sindh)	Medium-term	No

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inputs and tools, favoring the adoption of more sustainable solutions, such as the introduction of CRA and OFWM practices, that contribute towards paradigm shifts. • **Improving infrastructure management and ownership clarity**: To ensure the long-term functionality of critical infrastructure, such as weather stations and groundwater sensors, establish clear maintenance and ownership responsibilities with local meteorological agencies and other relevant bodies. Integration into national data systems will also support sustainability, as it links project infrastructure to ongoing government operations. To address potential maintenance challenges, especially for complex equipment, consider formalizing partnerships with local technical institutions and agencies that can provide expertise and resources to maintain these systems over time (Advancing the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding to define responsibilities between the government and institutions, ensuring the sustainability of investments in portals, meteorological stations, and other assets once the project is completed). • **Map and engage relevant stakeholders at all levels:** Begin by systematically identifying and mapping relevant stakeholders across national, provincial, district, and local levels. This includes government entities, research institutions, community-based organizations, and local authorities, particularly those with roles in climate change, agriculture, and water management. o Develop a stakeholder matrix that defines roles, responsibilities, and relevance to different components of the project.		clearly the effectiveness of training activities on beneficiaries' increased resilience will help shift the emphasis from in-kind assistance as the preferred approach, through agricultural inputs and tools, favoring the adoption of more sustainable solutions, such as the introduction of CRA and OFWM practices, that contribute towards paradigm shifts. 2. Improving Infrastructure Management and Ownership Clarity: To ensure the long-term functionality of critical infrastructure, such as weather stations and groundwater sensors, establish clear maintenance and ownership responsibilities with local meteorological agencies and other relevant bodies. Integration into national data systems will also support sustainability, as it			

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○ Prioritize the inclusion of local authorities, who are essential for long-term ownership and policy uptake. • **Establish a multi-level information and coordination mechanism:** Set up a communication strategy that ensures all stakeholders are regularly informed of project progress, lessons learned, and coordination opportunities. ○ Develop a quarterly project newsletter, brief progress reports, infographics, community radio messages, or district-level coordination platforms (e.g., WhatsApp groups) — one or more of these optional tools can be selected based on relevance and capacity. ○ Tailor communication products to different audiences, ensuring accessibility at the local level (e.g., through translation, visual materials, or in-person briefings when necessary). ○ Host annual coordination meetings to reinforce alignment and provide a platform for dialogue and feedback among stakeholders.		links project infrastructure to ongoing government operations. To address potential maintenance challenges, especially for complex equipment, consider formalizing partnerships with local technical institutions and agencies that can provide expertise and resources to maintain these systems over time (Advancing the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding to define responsibilities between the government and institutions, ensuring the sustainability of investments in portals, meteorological stations, and other assets once the project is completed). "3. Map and Engage Relevant Stakeholders at All Levels: Begin by systematically identifying and mapping relevant stakeholders across national, provincial, district, and local			

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		levels. This includes government entities, research institutions, community-based organizations, and local authorities, particularly those with roles in climate change, agriculture, and water management. 3.1. Develop a stakeholder matrix that defines roles, responsibilities, and relevance to different components of the project. 3.2. Prioritize the inclusion of local authorities, who are essential for long-term ownership and policy uptake." 4. Establish a Multi-Level Information and Coordination Mechanism: Set up a communication strategy that ensures all stakeholders are regularly informed of project progress, lessons learned,			

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Recommendation 3. Enhance integration with existing Climate Actions to foster a Paradigm Shift. To address the identified need for stronger integration with existing climate actions and improve sustainability, the project should further enhance its alignment with national climate priorities, including the recently approved Climate Change Policy (October 2024). While most project activities already align with national priorities, especially in the agriculture and water sectors, a perception remains that integration could be strengthened. Additionally, the project should improve its coordination with climate finance mechanisms and multilateral initiatives, particularly where other actors are implementing similar interventions. Organizations such as the Asian Development Bank, World Bank, Green Climate Fund, Global Environment Facility represent strategic partners that could enhance the project's visibility, coherence, and potential for replication. **Key strategies for enhancing integration and sustainability include:** 1. **Organize collaborative workshops and information sessions** Facilitate regular multi-stakeholder events to showcase how project activities align with national and international climate frameworks. These sessions should also promote shared understanding and buy-in from other institutions. o Co-host sessions with ministries and development partners to build ownership and foster strategic synergies. o Use these events to identify new opportunities for policy influence and operational partnerships.	**Accepted**	1. Organize Collaborative Workshops and Information Sessions: Facilitate regular multi-stakeholder events to showcase how project activities align with national and international climate frameworks. These sessions should also promote shared understanding and buy-in from other institutions. 1.2. Co-host sessions with ministries and development partners to build ownership and foster strategic synergies. 1.3. Use these events to identify new opportunities for policy influence and operational partnerships. 2. Strengthen Partnerships for Replicability and Sustainability Deepen collaboration with international agencies already active in the region.	FAO Implementation team	Short term	No

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2. **Strengthen partnerships for replicability and sustainability** Deepen collaboration with international agencies already active in the region. ○ Use the project's results to position it as a model intervention for scaling climate-resilient agriculture. ○ Seek co-financing or technical support for the maintenance of key infrastructure, such as flux towers and water monitoring systems. ○ Address risks (e.g., vandalism, theft) by incorporating local ownership models and co-management agreements with communities and district-level institutions. By implementing these strategies, the project will enhance its institutional anchoring, secure support from stakeholders at every level, and increase the chances of replication, sustainability, and policy influence. This inclusive approach can support a broader paradigm shift toward climate-resilient development in the Indus Basin and beyond.		2.1. Use the project's results to position it as a model intervention for scaling climate-resilient agriculture. 2.2. Seek co-financing or technical support for the maintenance of key infrastructure, such as flux towers and water monitoring systems. 2.3. Address risks (e.g., vandalism, theft) by incorporating local ownership models and co-management agreements with communities and district-level institutions.			
Recommendation 4. Strengthen staff retention and knowledge preservation strategies to mitigate impact of high turnover. The high turnover of staff has resulted in significant delays and loss of institutional knowledge, which negatively impacts project continuity and efficiency. To ensure project sustainability, it is crucial to address staff retention and mitigate the loss of key knowledge every time there is staff attrition (Finding 7). The project should implement strategies to enhance staff retention by offering greater stability for key positions. Additionally, establishing robust	**Accepted**	1.Identify Key Staff Roles: Prioritize the retention of staff in critical roles essential for the project's success 2. Mitigation Strategies: 2.1. Enhanced Contract Terms: Offer longer-term contracts or renewable agreements to key staff to provide job security and	FAO Implementation team	Short term	No

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knowledge management systems is crucial to ensure effective knowledge sharing, thorough handovers, and the use of centralized repositories where critical information is preserved and accessible to both current and incoming staff. 1. **Identify key staff roles:** Prioritize the retention of staff in critical roles essential for the project's success 2. **Mitigation strategies:** ○ *Enhanced contract terms*: Offer longer-term contracts or renewable agreements to key staff to provide job security and reduce turnover. We suggest having a single source of funding for all project staff positions, rather than relying on three sources of funding (GCF, Punjab Government, and Sindh Government), as this would allow the project to offer greater stability in contract terms for key staff. ○ *Succession planning*: Develop clear succession plans to prepare for any potential transitions. This includes identifying and training potential internal candidates to step into key roles when vacancies arise. ○ *Knowledge management systems*: Enhance the existing Knowledge Management System by regularly reviewing the information it contains to identify any gaps. Ensure that key project information, decision logs, and technical documentation are up to date. Implement a process to collect documentation from personnel at the time of their departure and classify and identify relevant documents for future reference. Emphasize accessibility so that both current and future team members can easily retrieve and		reduce turnover. We suggest having a single source of funding for all project staff positions, rather than relying on three sources of funding (GCF, Punjab Government, and Sindh Government), as this would allow the project to offer greater stability in contract terms for key staff. 2.2. Succession Planning: Develop clear succession plans to prepare for any potential transitions. This includes identifying and training potential internal candidates to step into key roles when vacancies arise. 2.3. Knowledge Management Systems: Enhance the existing Knowledge Management System by regularly reviewing the information it contains to identify any gaps. Ensure that key project information, decision logs, and technical documentation are up to			

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contribute valuable insights, supporting continuity and informed decision-making. By implementing these retention and knowledge management strategies, the project can ensure continuity, reduce the loss of institutional knowledge, and maintain momentum toward achieving its objectives.		date. Implement a process to collect documentation from personnel at the time of their departure and classify and identify relevant documents for future reference. Emphasize accessibility so that both current and future team members can easily retrieve and contribute valuable insights, supporting continuity and informed decision-making.			
Recommendation 5. Reassess and Reinforce Gender Equity Strategies for Direct Participation. To address the persistent gap between the current share of female direct beneficiaries (28%) and the established target (49%), the project should undertake a critical reassessment of its gender equity strategy, focusing on understanding and overcoming context-specific barriers to participation. Furthermore, the Evaluation team suggests revising the methodology currently adopted to estimate the number of direct beneficiaries, and hence the beneficiaries' female ratio, since it is likely to produce biased estimate.	**Accepted**	1.Conduct a Gender Barrier Assessment: 1.1. Undertake a participatory assessment at per district level to identify practical, social, cultural, or institutional barriers that may be limiting women's direct participation in WOS, and other field-level activities. 1.2. Consider including interviews or focus groups with both participating and	FAO Implementation team	Short term	No

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Key actions should include: 1. **Conduct a gender barrierassessment:** o Undertake a participatory assessment at per district level to identify practical, social, cultural, or institutional barriers that may be limiting women's direct participation in WOS, and other field-level activities. o Consider including interviews or focus groups with both participating and non-participating women to gather diverse insights on obstacles and potential enabling factors. 2. **Evaluate feasibility of overcoming identified barriers:** o Analyze which barriers the project can realistically address within its operational scope and timeframe. o For barriers outside the project's control (e.g., deep-rooted cultural constraints or regional safety concerns), engage with community leaders and local institutions to explore possible partnerships or mitigation strategies. 3. **Adjust the gender target if justified and contextually grounded:** o Based on the results of the assessment, re-evaluate the direct beneficiary gender target using evidence from national or regional benchmarks on women's participation in agricultural extension services. o If maintaining the 49% target proves unrealistic given local conditions, propose a revised but ambitious target grounded in documented experience from similar contexts in Pakistan.		non-participating women to gather diverse insights on obstacles and potential enabling factors. 2. Evaluate Feasibility of Overcoming Identified Barriers: 2.1. Analyze which barriers the project can realistically address within its operational scope and timeframe. 2.2. For barriers outside the project's control (e.g., deep-rooted cultural constraints or regional safety concerns), engage with community leaders and local institutions to explore possible partnerships or mitigation strategies." 3. Adjust the Gender Target if Justified and Contextually Grounded: 3.1. Based on the results of the assessment, re-evaluate the direct beneficiary gender target using evidence from			

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4. Revise methodology currently adopted to count the number of direct beneficiaries, and hence the female beneficiaries' ratio: ○ Collect basic household information for each beneficiary enrolled in each project activity, such as household size and number of male and female beneficiaries ○ Estimate the number of direct beneficiaries, and the share of females, using this information rather than fixed assumptions which are likely to produce biased results		national or regional benchmarks on women's participation in agricultural extension services. 3.2. If maintaining the 49% target proves unrealistic given local conditions, propose a revised but ambitious target grounded in documented experience from similar contexts in Pakistan.			
Recommendation 6. Strengthen Post-Training Support and Monitoring to Improve Knowledge Retention and Practice Adoption. While project interventions are associated with increased awareness and interest in climate-resilient practices, the current knowledge improvement rate (66%) and adoption rate (42%) fall short of log-frame targets. Moreover, inconsistent attendance in key districts and limited evidence of routine application underscore the need for enhanced post-training support and adaptive monitoring systems. To ensure that knowledge translates into practice, the project should reinforce its capacity development strategy by introducing structured mechanisms for identifying areas of practical relevance, providing field-level accompaniment during the initial implementation of new practices, and monitoring dropout risks in near real-time.	**Accepted**	1. Identify Priority Use-Cases During Training (Component 1): 1.1. During training sessions for institutional staff, systematically document the specific activities and job functions where trainees expect to apply the new knowledge and tools. 1.2. Use this information to tailor follow-up support. 2.Provide Accompaniment During Initial	FAO Implementation team	Medium-term	No

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Key actions include: 1. **Identify priority use-cases during training (Component 1):** o During training sessions for institutional staff, systematically document the specific activities and job functions where trainees expect to apply the new knowledge and tools. o Use this information to tailor follow-up support. 2. **Provide accompaniment during initial implementation (Components 1 and 2):** o Establish a structured accompaniment mechanism where project staff or local facilitators follow up with beneficiaries the first time they apply the knowledge or practices learned. o This accompaniment could include on-site coaching, virtual check-ins, or peer support groups to troubleshoot challenges and reinforce correct application. 3. **Introduce follow-up contact to monitor use and barriers:** o After the initial use of new practices or tools, reach out to beneficiaries to determine whether they faced obstacles in applying what they learned. 4. **Digitalize FFS attendance monitoring and trigger alerts (Component 2):** o Introduce a digital attendance tracking system to monitor FFS participation in near real-time. o Incorporate attendance data into the project's monitoring system and trigger an alert when a participant misses		Implementation (Components 1 and 2): 2.1. Establish a structured accompaniment mechanism where project staff or local facilitators follow up with beneficiaries the first time they apply the knowledge or practices learned. 2.2. This accompaniment could include on-site coaching, virtual check-ins, or peer support groups to troubleshoot challenges and reinforce correct application. 3. Introduce Follow-Up Contact to Monitor Use and Barriers: 3.1. After the initial use of new practices or tools, reach out to beneficiaries to determine whether they faced obstacles in applying what they learned. 4.Digitalize FFS Attendance Monitoring and Trigger Alerts (Component 2):			

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multiple consecutive sessions. Prompt a follow-up contact to: ▪ Understand the reason for absence (e.g., FFS content, delivery, logistics). ▪ Provide encouragement and problem-solving support to re-engage the participant.		4.1. Introduce a digital attendance tracking system to monitor FFS participation in near real-time. 4.2. Incorporate attendance data into the project's monitoring system and trigger an alert when a participant misses multiple consecutive sessions. Prompt a follow-up contact to: 4.3. Understand the reason for absence (e.g., FFS content, delivery, logistics). 4.4. Provide encouragement and problem-solving support to re-engage the participant.			

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