



Food and Agriculture  
Organization of the United  
Nations

## Office of Evaluation

### Land Degradation Assessment in Drylands (LADA) - EP/GLO/502/GEF

**Management Response to final report**

## Office of Evaluation (OED)

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For further information, please contact:

Director, OED  
Viale delle Terme di Caracalla 1, 00153  
Rome, Italy  
Email: [evaluation@fao.org](mailto:evaluation@fao.org)

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## LADA Terminal Evaluation Report

### Management Response from the LADA management team

16 November 2011

#### **1. Overall assessment:**

##### **1.1. Attainment of project objectives and results**

The evaluation is very positively assessing the achievements of the main outputs of the project at all levels, despite its recognized inherent complexity, and the very ambitious objectives for the time frame. (para 211,212). It also recognizes that several activities, not originally foreseen by the project, were implemented to strengthen the results (GLADIS, extensive training outside the pilot countries) and some others were outstanding (Web sites, together with their comprehensive data bases and manuals).

Thus, overall, the report gives the feeling the project was successful in achieving its results, despite the inherent difficulties of the task. However the overrating table on attainment of project objectives and results somehow diminish this very good result, and ends up with only a satisfactory rating (S), where we think the project should have deserved the Highly Satisfactory (HS) scoring, considering the above. The main reason of this lower rating seems to be that the evaluation mission considered that the LADA project was too weak on the institutional up-take, which is mentioned as the first comment in the overall rating table, and repeated many times in the evaluation report. We strongly object that assessment (see below under 1.5), which, according to us, is giving an unfair negative bias to the final evaluation of the LADA project.

##### **1.2 Sustainability of project outcomes**

Similarly, the evaluation recognizes good sustainable results in a number of its comments, but suggests a low rating, averaging to Moderately Likely (ML). This contrasts with the overall rating, table page 53, which mentions:

- *Financial:* *“National and FAO commitments high. Pilot countries are middle-income countries and depended on LADA income, but created good capacity in many disciplines”*. Despite these good comments, rating is ML;
- *Institutional:* *“Overall good. LADA country stakeholders are pro-active and motivated but sustainability depends on their capacity to establish and maintain effective partnerships with “development-oriented” institutions, particularly at decentralized level”*. Again, despite these favorable comments, rating remains at ML.
- *Stakeholder involvement:* *“High involvement of main LADA stakeholders, especially at national and provincial level, but uneven or less at local level. Awareness raising high. Involvement of NGOs and CBOs could have been higher”*, and is rated S. These good

results are confirmed by the other section E, mentioning a good country ownership and drive.

In conclusion, we consider that a more appropriate scoring would have been Likely.

### **1.3 Achievement of outputs and activities:**

The table says that:” Expected outputs almost completed. Six month extension will determine if targets have been reached.””and is proposing a MS rating, which again seems low compared to these comments, and to the conclusions of the report, under para 211 ad 212 , which recognize the high achievements of the project.

Also, we wish to confirm, although some doubts were raised, that all the six month extension activities were successfully executed.

We consider that a more appropriate scoring would have been **S, or HS**, under these activities .

### **1.4 Monitoring and evaluation.**

The table assessing M&E under J, is mentioning that there is a “confusing and ill-defined in the ProDoc design”. Mainly “activity-” and not “result-oriented”. No SMART indicators applied. No M&E plan at national level, but regular reporting to FAO and UNEP.”” In other words, at the time the prodoc was prepared, the M&E proposed by the project document was not at the standard that is required by M&E activities in 2011. However, the evaluation recognizes that the project was duly monitored ,and activities regularly and well reported, that is also confirmed by the good comments given to UNEP supervision and reporting. Again, we wish to stress that the assessment of this M&E activity is not made according to the project TORs and work, but according to recent M&E standards, not requested by the project document. It should be emphasized that at the time of the project preparation, GEF had not adopted results-based management, and that the logframe was designed to respond to the GEF-3 LD Strategy, which had very different requirements from today's. It is our opinion that the M&E activities of the project should be reassessed according to what it was asked to do when it was conceived, and not to what it could have been asked to do, if it would have been reformulated today.

We consider that a more appropriate scoring would have been **at least MS** for the M&E activities.

### **1.5 The issue of the “institutional uptake” of LADA**

The evaluation report is emphasizing all along the text, a recurrent criticism of the LADA project, quoted as an insufficient “institutional uptake”.

We consider that **this declared weakness is overall incorrect, and strongly biases the overall evaluation of the LADA project.** It is also noted that the technical content of this “institutional uptake” concept remains rather vague, and little explained in the evaluation report.

- The institutional uptake is not an objective of the project, neither an output nor an activity, as can be seen in the table 1 of the report. Objective 2 is not calling for institutional uptake of

LADA products by decision makers, but for “enabling national regional and global capacities to enable to design planning and implementation of interventions to mitigate land degradation and SLM.” That could be interpreted as “building capacities to produce and use LADA products”, which was largely and well done by the LADA project, as mentioned by the paragraph 102 of the evaluation report .

- Institutional uptake is primarily based on political will, for which the project has not control.
- Some activities related to the institutional uptake were implemented during the 6 months extension of the project, and therefore not been assessed by the evaluation team. In particular, a series of national LADA policy reports, , were produced during the 6 months extension of the project in 2011, and therefore could not be reviewed by the evaluation mission. These policy reports provide a detailed description of the LADA results and their institutional mainstreaming and use, and respond therefore in large part to the objection of institutional uptake.

In ToC terms however, the report’s findings at #127 provide a BC rating, which results in a ML assessment. Instead, we consider that the project steps towards Intermediate States have begun to produce results, not only in China and South Africa as recognized in the report (#124), but also in the other four countries, as well as in the international fora, through the involvement of LADA in the impact indicators process of the UNCCD.. Hence, we consider that a more appropriate scoring would have been BB, with a consequent L (Likely) as assessment for institutionalization.

## **16. Follow up activities**

FAO is contemplating to develop a new project , together with a number of interested countries (20 at present) and subregional programs, aiming at improving the decision-making process for the mainstreaming and the upscaling of SLM, for combating land degradation, food insecurity, and for mitigating and adapting to climate change.

Such a project would take into account the recommendations of the evaluation mission , and would capitalize on the best practices, tools and results of the LADA project.

It is intended to propose this new project to the GEF, for its consideration.

## 2. Follow up recommendations

Management response to the (Evaluation Title)					Date
Evaluation Recommendation	Management response <b>Accepted, partially accepted or rejected</b> and comment on the Recommendation	Management plan			Further funding required (Y or N)
		Action to be taken	Responsible unit	Timeframe	
<b>Insert title of section, if any</b>					
<p><u>Recommendation 1:</u> <i>The main strategic recommendation for the possible next phase of LADA is to consolidate the achievements in the pilot countries rather than “going global” right away with incomplete results.</i></p> <p><i>Emphasis should be put on the institutionalization of LADA outputs, so that different stakeholders (land users, land use managers, environmental planning and rural development institutions, and policy makers) in the six pilot countries can adopt the methods and tools into their national projects, programs, plans and policies</i></p>	<p>Rejected</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The results of the LADA project should be considered as complete, if assessed according to the objectives , outputs and activities of the LADA project document. In addition, at the time of the project preparation, GEF had not adopted results-based management, and the logframe was designed to respond to the GEF-3 LD Strategy, which had very different requirements from today's;</li> </ul> <p>There is no justification why the good results of LADA should not be transferred to other countries, considering in particular that already about 20 countries made an official request to FAO to benefit from the LADA tools and support, and are even ready to commit their own resources to produce LADA data; The proposed follow up activities under 231, are interesting ideas, which were already tackled in the policy and final reports prepared by the pilot countries during the last 6 months of the project implementation, and not reviewed by the evaluation team. However, those suggestions do not prevent to produce LADA data in other countries “going global”. On the contrary, they further justify the need of LADA data, if these are to be used within the land planning processes that are taking place at various levels in many countries..</p>		NRL	2012-2016	Y
<p><u>Recommendation 2:</u> <i>At the global level, the possible follow-up to LADA should work with the UNCCD and the GEF Secretariat... it should be incorporated into the other main UN Conventions.</i></p>	<p>Accepted</p> <p>This recommendation is well taken, and was already started to be implemented , in particular in cooperation with the UNCCD Secretariat for the production of the UNCCD impact indicators ( see CRIC 9 resolutions and CST 3 report).</p>	<p>An international technical meeting is being organized by the UNCCD in July in Mexico ( at the time of the writing of this FAO report) , where are reviewed and discussed the feasibility of the use of LADA data to support the UNCCD process , with the participation of several of the LADA pilot countries. Furthermore, LADA inputs and results were also shared to, and used by, the GEF Land</p>	NRL	2011-2016	Y

<p>The linkages between land degradation, climate change and loss in biodiversity need to be highlighted, not only in scientific terms, but also in the perception of land users.</p>	<p>Accepted That recommendation is also agreed upon.</p>	<p>degradation task force, to assist its Monitoring and Evaluation activities. Finally, a number of climate change and biodiversity issues and information are already incorporated within the LADA tools and data, at global, national, and local levels. It is however agreed that this work should be strengthened further in any LADA follow up program.</p> <p>Already LADA is including land users perception in several of its tools ( local survey) , but this may be increased.</p>			
<p><i>Recommendation 3: More peer reviewed scientific papers should be published regarding the achievements and approaches used by LADA in order to test the outputs, make them more justifiable and enhance its replicability.</i></p>	<p>Accepted This recommendation is again well accepted</p>	<p>As a matter of fact, the LADA management team already started 2 parallel peer review processes during the 6 months extension. The first one concerns the publication of scientific articles and papers in well known scientific journals , in cooperation with LADA partners . The second one is related to the organization of a proper peer review among a number of international and national partners of the GLADIS methodology, data bases and tools. ( see recommendation 4).</p>	<p>NRL</p>	<p>2011-2016</p>	<p>Y</p>
<p><i>Recommendation 4: A sustainable mechanism should be created and resources should be secured to regularly update the GLADIS database, to ensure a more reliable information system for global and national scale use. It should also be investigated how the gap between global and national scale data can be narrowed</i></p>	<p>Accepted. This recommendation is well taken and already started to be put into implementation</p>	<p>The GLADIS data base was significantly upgraded during the 6 months extension, to include comments received during the last LADA workshops. This new version is to be peer reviewed by main institutions and experts concerned.</p> <p>In addition, FAO Land and Water division is committed to implement a basic maintenance and updating of the GLADIS data base, from its regular program . However , any substantive or complex upgrading would need to be done with the support of external funding resources, coming from a follow up project, for example .</p> <p>Finally , a specific exercise is already taking place to do some comparative analysis between the GLADIS and the national data that should be completed in falls 2011.</p>	<p>NRL</p>	<p>2011-2016</p>	<p>Y</p>