

Management Response to the Evaluation Report on Phase II of the Roles of Agriculture Project

Prepared by
Keith Wiebe, Chief
Comparative Agricultural Development Service
Agricultural Development Economics Division
Food and Agriculture Organization
Rome

16 July 2007

Background

The Roles of Agriculture (ROA) Project was funded by the Government of Japan and implemented by FAO's Agricultural Development Economics (ESA) Division in two phases. From 2000 to 2003, Phase I sought to identify, describe and quantify the indirect roles of agriculture with externality characteristics, such as poverty alleviation, food security, environmental services, out-migration control, provision of buffer in times of economic crisis, and cultural identity. Phase I was evaluated in May 2004.

Phase II began in 2004 with a budget of \$3.4 million dollars and sought to draw policy implications and deliver policy guidance and tools to take best advantage of these indirect roles of agriculture in development strategies, with particular emphasis on (1) poverty alleviation and food security, and (2) environmental services. Phase II concluded on 31 March 2007, and was evaluated by Eirik Romstad (team leader, Norwegian University of Life Sciences, Norway), Yasuo Ohe (donor country representative, Chiba University, Japan), and Agnes Rola (University of the Philippines, the Philippines). The evaluation team met with ROA staff and donor country representatives in Rome and also visited project collaborators and government officials in two case-study countries (Morocco and Indonesia).

Overview of the findings of the evaluation team

The evaluation team concluded that the ROA Project has helped increase understanding of linkages between agriculture, environmental services and poverty alleviation. The team argued that "the ROA Project introduces a new paradigm for FAO, a focus on the broader issues of economics and the environment, beyond agriculture; and potentially, technical assistance on policy development, and not just agricultural technology advice." The team also noted that the project would not have materialized as it did without the generous financial support provided by the Japanese government, and that the funds for ROA Phase II were used in accordance with donor objectives.

To build on the insights and lessons learned in the course of the ROA Project, the evaluation team recommended that FAO continue efforts to disseminate project results, increase awareness of enhanced analytical capacities in developing countries that had participated in the project, and secure additional funding to conduct further research on how to connect environmental services to income generating processes for poverty alleviation in a more

sustainable manner. Specific recommendations are identified and addressed in the table below.

FAO management response to recommendations in the evaluation report

Management response to recommendations								
Recommendations	Further donor funding required (yes or no)	Acceptance by Management			Comment on the Recommendation	Action to be taken		
		Accept	Partially Accept	Reject		Action	Timing	Unit Responsible
1. Results should be formally tested and shared by submission to peer-reviewed journals.	no	√			Agree.	Prepare articles for submission to peer-reviewed journals	2007-2008	ESAC and collaborators
2. Increase developing country decision-maker/advisor awareness of the increased analytical capacity in their own country.	no		√		This was part of the intent (and achievement) of the original project.	Further efforts will be made as suitable opportunities arise.	2007-2008	ESAC and collaborators
3. Secure long-term external funding to build on ROA insights and lessons learnt.	yes	√			ROA insights already incorporated into other ESA activities, including FNPP/PES project and SOFA 2007.	Propose projects to value environmental services and implement incentive programmes	2007-2008	ESA
4. Until long-term funds are available, secure internal funds to allow keeping good existing staff and attract new staff.	no		√		Some project staff have already taken other positions.	Support Regular Programme staff in activities that build on ROA insights and lessons.	2007-2008	ESA

Conclusions

The ROA Project enhanced our understanding of the multiple roles of agriculture and the variety of outputs it produces—above and beyond the familiar outputs like food and fibre. These additional outputs can include poverty alleviation and food security as well as environmental services, if appropriate policy measures are taken. The evaluation report suggests several concrete steps which can help enhance the contributions of the project. ESA is committed to addressing those recommendations as outlined above, as well as to integrating the lessons and insights from the ROA Project in its ongoing activities in support of economic research and policy analysis for food security and sustainable development.