

**Project Evaluation Series**

**Cluster evaluation of the projects  
"Enhancing Agriculture Production  
through Irrigation System Improvement  
and Strengthening Institutional Capacity"  
and "Dairy Industry Development in  
Kabul, Logar and Parwan provinces"**

**Project codes: OSRO/AFG/502/JCA and  
UTF/AFG/080/AFG**

**Follow-up report**

Cluster evaluation of the projects "Enhancing Agriculture Production through Irrigation System Improvement and Strengthening Institutional Capacity" and "Dairy Industry Development in Kabul, Logar and Parwan provinces" – Follow-up report					10/2022
Evaluation recommendations	Management response <b>Accepted,</b> <b>Partially accepted</b> or <b>Rejected</b>	Management plan			
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<p><b>Recommendation 1.</b> <b>(OSRO/AFG/502/JCA)</b></p> <p>Projects need to have integrated outputs and outcomes in order to produce a consolidated impact on project beneficiaries in a realistic timeframe considering the contextual constraints in Afghanistan. OSRO/AFG/502/JCA extended with a one year no cost extension.</p>	<b>Accepted</b>	The suggestion is appreciated. It is fully agreed that clear roles and responsibilities and better coordination among water related institutions would have positive impact and lead to sustainability of the project results. The extended period of the project (Jan to Dec 2019) was planned and implemented with a more integrated approach.	Projects were designed with an integrated approach e.g. GCP/AFG/096/JCA, GCP/AFG/097/JPN and OSRO/AFG/123/WB. With the recent restructuring of FAO-AFG tuned its structure to programmatic approach and the technical team of WRI is heading overall project Irrigation related project implementation.	Excellent	It is a holistic approach and ensured the life of irrigation structures, and ownership of communities and certainly contributed to the project's sustainability.
<p><b>Recommendation 2.</b> <b>(OSRO/AFG/502/JCA)</b></p> <p>Irrigation rehabilitation projects should include training to demonstrate improved cropping practices to drive productivity improvements; and livelihood support activities to help farmers diversify their livelihoods, assist them to grow alternative crops and help build their resilience to external shocks.</p>	<b>Accepted</b>	The project team fully agrees with this suggestion. The project followed this suggestion and carried out O&M trainings for the communities during the extended period. These trainings can be continued through the regular program of the government. The project was linked with livelihoods projects in MAIL including RIPA.	MAIL and FAO followed this integrated approach to the best possible extent.	Good	In most cases, the production and farmers increased.
<p><b>Recommendation 3.</b> <b>(OSRO/AFG/502/JCA)</b></p> <p>Capacity building activities of government staff should be based on an assessment of needs, available resources (before and after project) and aim to build applicable skills to ensure sustainability of results.</p>	<b>Accepted</b>	The project has taken positively this suggestion of assessed the training needs of the training participants prior to conducting the training during the extended period.	Capacity-building projects and components are always based on the assessment reports and capacity-building assessment in close consultation of line entities. But new demands aroused with the passage of time.	Good	It is effective to boost the technical capacities of line entities to deliver efficiently and effectively.

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<p><b>Recommendation 4.</b> <b>(OSRO/AFG/502/JCA)</b></p> <p>GIS should be considered a necessary tool to support evidence-based decision-making, and more accurate monitoring and assessment of project progress and results.</p>	<b>Accepted</b>	This was a good suggestion. It should be in-built in all the future similar irrigation projects.	It has been made mandatory in all irrigation projects.	Good	The pixel will not tell lie – It improved the quality of reports and the trust of resource partners in FAO projects in Afghanistan where the accessibility to the project sites sometime not easy.
<p><b>Recommendation 5.</b> <b>(OSRO/AFG/502/JCA)</b></p> <p>All stakeholders should critically evaluate and validate the PMS approach, screen best practices and document lessons learned and experiences.</p>	<b>Partially accepted</b>	The success of PMS approach is evident by the greenery that PMS has been able to establish in the Gamberi area. However, the project team does agree that that the approach is relatively new and that the best practices of the approach and its experiences and lessons learned needs to be properly documented for future references and follow-up projects to come along its line.	PMS approach was remain best for specific geography. It was well documented and extended.	Good	Based on the assessment; new PMS is extended to Kunar, Laghman, Takhar provinces.
<p><b>Recommendation 6.</b> <b>(OSRO/AFG/502/JCA)</b></p> <p>Gender inclusiveness in irrigation rehabilitation projects could be addressed through targeting women's participation in project through a range of agriculture-based livelihood activities and/or</p>	<b>Accepted</b>	It is accepted that the current project was not designed with any specific gender empowerment component. Future project should be designed and developed in alignment with the National Women's Economic	Gender inclusiveness in irrigation rehabilitation projects was addressed to some extent but local culture, security situation, current de facto authorities are real challenge to	Advancing	Gender equality is part of sustainability of the project.

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promote the inclusion of women as members in the existing water users' associations.		Empowerment Program and Plan and FAO Gender Policy.	fully address the recommendation.		
<p><b>Recommendation 1.</b> <b>(UTF/AFG/080/AFG)</b></p> <p>The project design encapsulates three distinct outputs that could not be inter-linked or integrated together to produce a consolidated project aimed at increasing (rice) productivity and water efficiency. The project had no inter-dependencies between each output's activities in order to produce outcomes and a consolidated impact. The project would be more effective as three individual projects related to three specific sectoral development targets. FAO has extensive experience implementing irrigation rehabilitation and capacity building projects in Afghanistan. The tried-and-tested model works effectively and in fact, roughly 75 percent of the project budget was devoted to Output 1. Yet, the project team needed to split their focus and efforts between three disparate fields of work in three geographically different areas of Afghanistan.</p>	<b>Partially accepted</b>	The project team fully agrees with the suggestion but there was not much that could be done about it as it was the way the project was originally designed. However, this was a very good lesson learned for future projects.	The projects are designed with inter-dependent output's activities in order to produce outcomes and a consolidated impact. Except some exceptional where projects handle emergency response activities.	Excellent	All future project formulation, implementation and evaluation were efficient and effective.
<p><b>Recommendation 2.</b> <b>(UTF/AFG/080/AFG)</b></p> <p>While Output 3 activities did not contribute to the project's impact on beneficiary growers, the output interventions did establish a foundation and clear path to the provision of certified high-quality potato seed to farmers. The problem for Output 3 results was the project duration was insufficient for introducing a new technology into Afghanistan such</p>	<b>Accepted</b>	In order to compensate the short project duration in up scaling the production and strengthen the venture, other ongoing FAO project and programs can continue to support similar project in the future and take up the efforts to bring the initiatives to a logical end. However, ministry staff has been trained and their	MAIL/Government Integrated its tissue culture Lab in the formal structure before the project closure. It was able to keep continue the business. But after the political upheaval in August 2021 the laboratory is not fully functional.	Excellent	The tissue culture laboratory and virus-free seed production were fully functional up to political upheaval in August 2021

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as building a virus-free potato industry - at least five years is needed to establish the venture and support entrepreneurs producing certified seed and growers utilising virus-free potato seed for at least one season.		linked was developed with micro tuber production entities in India and CIP. Of course, they can run the business.			
<b>Recommendation 3.</b> <b>(UTF/AFG/080/AFG)</b> Irrigation projects implemented in complex operational environments, such as north-eastern Afghanistan, need to be 4-5 years duration. Funds were not disbursed evenly over the duration of the project due to the length of time to complete the initial irrigation scheme surveys, diagnostic analyses, water management infrastructure designs, prepare tenders and contract companies for rehabilitation works, and establish and build capacity of IAs. Most of this work needed to be completed by project team members during their visits to project areas from Kabul. The project design generally over-estimated what could be achieved in the time available. The security situation also deteriorated in the three project provinces that added difficulties to fieldwork and achievement of results.	<b>Accepted</b>	The project team fully accepts this suggestion. From the allocated budget, it was able to make some saving to extend the project activities for one more year. However, the effectiveness of the project would have been much better if the team has been given a duration of 4-5 years as recommended by the Evaluation Team.	The project timeframe also depends upon the funding envelope of donors therefore, JICA usually doesn't approve the project for more than years. But usually extend the project once for a maximum of m one year to give four-year project life. That is why, capacity building are designed in a project to closely work with the counterparts in line entity and to ensure the project sustainability as well as scalability. Overall, every project needs a realistic exit strategy.	Advancing Excellent	The engagement of the stakeholders was increased to do more and ensure the sustainability of the project within four years.
<b>Recommendation 4.</b> <b>(UTF/AFG/080/AFG)</b> Output 1 interventions and the linkages with RIPA demonstration plots focused on increasing productivity and production of rice among farmers in the north-eastern project provinces. OSRO/AFG/502/JCA was fortunate to link	<b>Accepted</b>	This is again a good suggestion. The project did establish good coordination with RIPA during the extended period to produce the synergy between improved irrigation services and best agronomic practices.	This recommendation was fully implemented by MAIL and FAO and IFAD in most of the projects.	Excellent	It was reported that this holistic approach speed the project implementation and ensured the

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with RIPA to provide this training and demonstration support to farmers, although the effectiveness of these linkages between projects cannot be gauged at the time of the evaluation as the RIPA interventions were just starting in project areas. Nevertheless, all irrigation rehabilitation projects need to provide training and support to farmers to assist them adopt improved production techniques and drive on-farm productivity improvements as soon as possible after commencement of these projects. For irrigation rehabilitation projects, this training is better placed within the project framework rather than linking with other external training facilities or projects. This provides more control over this key activity and project teams will be more influential in driving benefits to achieve the project impact (i.e. productivity improvements and water efficiency gains).					sustainability of the projects.
<p><b>Recommendation 5. (UTF/AFG/080/AFG)</b></p> <p>Farmers growing cereals practise continuous cropping of their land, which leads to soil deterioration and higher probability of pest and disease problems (and an increased dependence on agro-chemicals). The effects of changing weather patterns, unpredictable rainfall and prolonged dry periods are also increasingly impacting farmers and some interlocutors, including the Deputy Minister of MEW, begin to question the long-term viability of growing rice in Afghanistan.</p>	<b>Partially accepted</b>	There is a natural phenomenon of soil nutrient depletion in agriculture if it is not managed properly. Farmer practice crop rotation and addition of supplemental plant nutrients to sustain the crop production to their best of available resources. Natural calamities are unavoidable and there are ways and means to address such issues and challenges at local level. Compared to rice there are other	Crop rotation one of the important agronomics practices for centuries, is recommended to farmers by extension workers of MAIL.	Excellent	Crop rotation one of the important agronomics practices for centuries, is regularly recommended to farmers by extension workers of MAIL and NGOs. FAO published National Agro-ecological

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		high value crops for specific rice growing environments but may not be applicable to all rice growing domain.			Zoning Part 1 and Part 2 considering both climatic changes and soil capacity for Afghanistan. MAII counterparts were also trained on the usage of ATLAS and implementation in the field.
<p><b>Recommendation 6.</b> <b>(UTF/AFG/080/AFG)</b></p> <p>The project training for improved cropping practices, such as crop diversification, should include a comprehensive package of activities that would help improve soils and longer-term cropping outcomes. Crop diversification depends on many issues including: the land size, farming experience, asset wealth, location, access to agricultural extension services, information on output prices, low transportation costs and general information access. Diversified cropping systems, in general, tend to be more agronomically stable and resilient mainly because they are usually associated with reduced weed and insect pressures, reduced need for nitrogen fertilizers (especially if the crop mix include leguminous crops), reduced erosion (because of cover crops inclusion), increased soil fertility and increased yield per unit area.</p>	<b>Partially accepted</b>	<p>This is a very nice idea but tends to go beyond the scope of the present project which is already loaded with specific activities. The follow-on projects to this project should certainly take this into consideration and propose it from the very beginning.</p> <p>A main challenge in crop diversification package is that the smallholders cannot afford the risk of the changes and face difficulty in adjusting due to their daily needs. Hence, they always go for staple crop/food like wheat, rice etc.</p>	Crop diversification is important for an agronomic and market standpoint which was always disseminated to farmers depending upon their ownership of land.	Good	FAO published National Agro-ecological Zoning Part 1 and Part 2 considering both climatic changes and soil capacity for Afghanistan. MAII counterparts were also trained on the usage of ATLAS and implementation in the field.

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<p><b>Recommendation 7.</b> <b>(UTF/AFG/080/AFG)</b></p> <p>Crop diversification is a viable climate smart agriculture practice that significantly enhances crop productivity and consequently resilience in rural smallholder farming systems. Project beneficiaries will remain predominately rice growers, however, development assistance projects should demonstrate the benefits of crop diversification through rotations and inter-cropping on climate smart agriculture through increased productivity (alternative crops, such as legume and cereal crop productivity) and enhanced resilience (household income, food security, and nutrition).</p>	<b>Partially accepted</b>	This also follows the same line as the previous one. The follow-on projects to this project should certainly take this into consideration and propose it from the very beginning.	Certainly, crop diversification is important as mentioned in previous response.	Good	FAO published National Agro-ecological Zoning Part 1 and Part 2 considering both climatic changes and soil capacity for Afghanistan. MALL counterparts were also trained on the usage of ATLAS and implementation in the field.
<p><b>Recommendation 8.</b> <b>(UTF/AFG/080/AFG)</b></p> <p>Capacity building of government institutions needs to be targeted at practical and sustainable outcomes. The project provided in-field training and mentoring for PAIL staff and IA members to competently manage, operate and maintain rehabilitated water control structures. Formal training courses in Afghanistan and abroad concerning Water Accounting and PMS approach to irrigation management did not always transfer into useful skills for government staff that would assist them in their daily work. Government staff met during the mission appreciated the training but were not utilising the full array of their newly-acquired skills and could not explain how these skills were directly relevant in their</p>	<b>Accepted</b>	The project included practical training during the extended period. The PMS approach dissemination during the extended period included hands-on training where that participants would learn by doing the task.	This is quite logical and the recommendation was considered in all projects.	Good	This was followed by FAO and donor agencies and the PMS approach was followed. We have still an PMS project in the active pipeline.



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work responsibilities. Without an opportunity to use these practical skills in their work, these government staff will likely quickly lose these skills.					
<p><b>Recommendation 9.</b> <b>(UTF/AFG/080/AFG)</b></p> <p>It is doubtful that any counterpart ministry has the resources or capacity to organise sufficient in-house training to maintain the technical skills of their staff developed through the project training courses. Therefore, project teams should critically assess the capacities and resources of government agencies, before- and after-project, and align training courses and equipment purchases accordingly, so that learned skills can be readily applicable to specific work areas of government staff responsible for those work areas.</p>	<b>Accepted</b>	The project teams has not only contributed to capacity building of the government staff but have also assessed their capacities and resources and aligned the training courses so that the learned skills can be readily applicable to their specific work areas.	The assessment of the capacities is the pre requisite of designing of CB projects or components. Resource partners and line entities will never agree on capacity-building activities without proper assessment and their prior agreement.	Good	Capacity building of MAIL staff was able to implement more projects, particularly the Irrigation related project up to August 2021.
<p><b>Recommendation 10.</b> <b>(UTF/AFG/080/AFG)</b></p> <p>GIS monitoring and evaluation of project progress needs to be included from commencement of irrigation support projects. Irrigation rehabilitation projects suffer from a lack of regular monitoring and evaluation. As the primary purpose of monitoring was to achieve efficient and effective project performance, GIS should be an integral part of the Management Information System and a regular internal activity in any irrigation project. GIS monitoring of irrigation canal rehabilitation and command areas would provide real time results on progress and early warning of problems, such as</p>	<b>Partially accepted</b>	The project team agrees with the suggestion but on the other hand it is also brought to the attention that the team is utilizing the approach of water accounting which also utilizes the Geographic Information System (GIS) technology.	Projects is utilizing GIS and now the approach of water accounting which also utilizes the Geographic Information System (GIS) technology.	Excellent	The five series of water accounting training for FAO, MAIL and MEW staff were accomplished under the world-class experts. The approach are used to measure the performance and impact of the projects. GIS Lab installed in MAIL and staff were

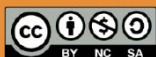
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canal damage and leakage. GIS can also be utilised for multiple tasks and monitoring indicators to provide an array of performance evaluation information – realisation of irrigation potential, production and productivity improvements (maximisation of crop yields), changes in land use, extent of double (or triple) cropping, efficient management of irrigation water, improvements or deterioration (salinity, water-logging) in irrigated lands.					trained to use GIS for their projects.
<b>Recommendation 11.</b> <b>(UTF/AFG/080/AFG)</b> There are methodological problems in developing cost-effective and reliable approaches that can be used with the resources and expertise available. GIS would assist in overcoming these problems and help establish baselines, monitor project progress, identify limitations, assist with work planning, and increase the irrigation potential of rehabilitated systems. There are several open source GIS software programmes and geospatial data is freely available. These solutions may now guarantee a more cost-effective and sustainable approach with the cost to projects reduced to capacity building and human resources.	<b>Partially accepted</b>	The project focused more on water accounting for which schematic maps of upstream and downstream linkages were identified and illustrated so that most suitable schemes can be selected in the given context.	In Afghanistan, we usually used a hybrid approach of GIS technologies and ground-proof survey for base line and progress of an activity related to irrigation.	Excellent	It minimized the weaknesses of the plan and improved the quality of reports.
<b>Recommendation 12.</b> <b>(UTF/AFG/080/AFG)</b> FAO supported establishment of a GIS monitoring unit in MAIL, but more support would likely be required to enable MAIL to monitor such activities	<b>Partially accepted</b>	As the project is ending so is not possible to be included in this project but can be considered in future similar projects. The	The capacity of MAIL, MEW and NSIA were enhanced in GIS and they were linked with leading institutes like international institute for Applied Systems Analysis (IIASA), University of	Excellent	Government of Afghanistan has enough capacity to applied GIS technology in Agriculture,

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around an irrigation rehabilitation project. Skilled GIS technicians are in high demand and often difficult to retain in government departments. Therefore, designers of agricultural irrigation projects may need to allocate sufficient funds to employ external GIS monitoring services that can complement any information provided by in-house GIS technicians, and provide a wide selection of monitoring and evaluation information relevant to irrigation rehabilitation projects to assist accurate decision-making processes.		GIS/MAIL has the capacity which needs to be used.	Southampton, Asian Institute of Technology/AIT etc.		National statistics, Mining etc
<b>Recommendation 13.</b> <b>(UTF/AFG/080/AFG)</b> The project team should evaluate, and document lessons learned from the PMS system operational in Nangarhar. The FAO team MAIL, PMS and staff from MEW and MRRD (if available) should evaluate and validate the PMS approach, screen best practices and document lessons learned and experiences. This could form the basis of an operations-type manual that describes the context that allowed PMS to work, institutional structures and responsibilities, transferability of certain PMS practices, technical considerations and sustainability of the PMS approach in order to understand the interventions that were most effective. The result of this analysis would prepare the foundation for training as well as other dissemination materials. Such a document could be invaluable for government staff and the intention to expand PMS into national irrigation rehabilitation projects.	<b>Partially accepted</b>	This is a very good suggestion. Given the workload of the project, it was not possible within the timeframe of the project. However, this point has already been realized by JICA and it is evaluating and validating the works under the PMS approach and developing a guideline in the process of following the approach. Of course, this effort needs support from all ministries (MAIL, MEW and MRRD) both in terms of developing the guidelines and also in terms of following it.	The PMS approach was well evaluated by JICA and the Government of Afghanistan.	Good	Late Nakamura unit was planned to established in the Ministry of Irrigation and Water with the initial support of FAO and JICA but unluckily Taliban took over Kabul in August 2021.

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<p><b>Recommendation 14.</b> <b>(UTF/AFG/080/AFG)</b></p> <p>An effective mean to incorporate gender inclusiveness in irrigation rehabilitation projects is through implementation of a broader range of alternative livelihood support activities. In this project, besides the involvement of women in activities associated to the production of virus-free potato seeds, limited alternative livelihood support activities were offered. Parallel activities could enable women to actively participate and could empower them as secondary earners.</p>	<b>Accepted</b>	<p>This suggestion is well received. An offer of a broader range of alternative livelihood support activities for women would enable them to participate actively and could empower them as secondary earners. Futures projects should be designed along this line.</p>	<p>An offer of a broader range of alternative livelihood support activities for women made them able to participate actively and empowered them as secondary earners in all livelihood activities of all type of projects at various level as per project classification from Gender Marker standpoint.</p>	Advancing	<p>Improvement of women increased the income per household and contributed to the sustainability of the projects.</p>
<p><b>Recommendation 15.</b> <b>(UTF/AFG/080/AFG)</b></p> <p>Another key element is to encourage communities to include women in the local water users associations to strengthen women's bargaining position as resource users within households and communities. An advocacy strategy for inclusion of women in community decision-making bodies should formally be consulted in the design of future FAO rehabilitation and infrastructure projects as well as community natural resource management projects.</p>	<b>Accepted</b>	<p>This suggestion is well received. In the future projects, communities can be encouraged to include women groups to strengthen their bargaining position as resource users within households and communities. The future FAO infrastructure and natural resources management projects should be designed to formally ensure their inclusion in the community decision-making bodies as much as possible.</p>	<p>In the projects, communities were encouraged to include women groups to strengthen their bargaining position as resource users within households and communities. It was well accepted in a few provinces like Herat. But the plan seems no more applicable due to the current de facto authorities.</p>	Advancing	<p>MAIL implemented this recommendation before August 2021.</p>

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