



Food and Agriculture Organization
of the United Nations

Office of Evaluation

Enhancing the Contribution of Non-Wood Forest Products to Poverty Alleviation and Food Security in Central African Countries - GCP /RAF/441/GER

Management response to the mid-term evaluation report

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For further information, please contact:

Director, OED
Viale delle Terme di Caracalla 1, 00153
Rome, Italy
Email: evaluation@fao.org

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Enhancing the Contribution of Non-Wood Forest Products to Poverty Alleviation and
Food Security in Central African Countries (GCP/RAF/441/GER)

Management Response to the mid-term evaluation

29 November 2012

The mid-term evaluation of the project was conducted in January and February 2012 with a final report being published in July 2012. The management response briefly comments on the utility of the report and illustrates management's position on the evaluation.

1. Overall response to the evaluation:

In this section, Management presents its overall views on the report and its conclusions; it sets the perspective for the remainder of the response.

The budget holder and the project team agree in most cases with the recommendations of the mid-term evaluation report. As the key elements of the recommendations have been presented by the team leader during the 2012 planning workshop held in Bangui in February 2012, many recommendations were already taken into account in the 2012 work plan of the project.

2. Response by recommendation:

Management then should address all the recommendations, discussing each of them in order. This should be done in the format below, with columns that include the recommendation number and text; whether the recommendation is accepted fully, partially, or is rejected; action to be taken; and the responsible party or FAO unit for follow-up action. In the case of a rejected recommendation, reasons should be indicated. In some cases it will be necessary to supplement the list of actions and timing in the management response with an implementation schedule. Where implementation of a recommendation is dependent upon further donor or additional Regular Programme funding this should be made clear.

Please note that recommendations in this table are presented in a shortened way based on the executive summary of the report.

Recommendations	Further funding required (yes or no)	Acceptance by Management			Comment on the Recommendation	Action to be taken		
		Accepted	Partially Accepted	Rejected		Action	Timing	Unit Responsible
To the project								
1. Analyze the project's starting conditions (favorable factors, constraints) and self-evaluate its operational mechanisms established and decisions taken during the first months of project implementation.	No	X			This recommendation is important for FAO's learning as an organization.	- Prepare self-evaluation, - Present and discuss starting conditions and lessons learnt.	Prior to and during final workshop	Regional project coordination
2. Set-up a smoothly running communication system with clear rules and delegation of power for decision making.	No	X			An internal communication system is already set-up for the project but we do agree that improvements are necessary in regard to the frequency of communication between regional and national level as well as the delegation of power. In regard to the delegation of power, experiences have shown that the technical advice and the	- Communicate more often (monthly) and in a more systematic way with national project coordinators (e.g. via Skype), - Call the regional project coordination before and after field trips to discuss details of the trip,	From now on From now on	Regional project coordination National project coordinators

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					financial and budgetary approval of field missions, workshops/trainings and contracts by the regional coordination are very important. Exchange about technical approaches allows the project to benefit from FAO's institutional memory (somewhat based at the regional coordination) and to give feedback to the national coordinators who are not part of a team (except the focal points). In addition, exchanges between regional and national co-ordinations on budgets for national activities (proposed by national team) are important in order to reduce costs of some activities with unnecessary or unreasonable expenditures.	Respect the implementation of national activities listed in the annual work plan.	Since the mid-term evaluation in February 2012	Regional project coordination	
3. (a) Intensify local activities and their follow-up; (b) increase investments benefiting producers groups; (c) correct biases at the expense of vulnerable groups.	No	X			(a) The project's work plan for 2012 is in line with this recommendation and focuses on local activities (output 5 and 6). (b) Producer groups have benefited/ will benefit from equipment financed by the project (e.g. Shea butter seedlings, more Gnetum spp. propagators, 15 esses-sang grain cracking machines, Shea butter press, beehives, additional bush mango slicing machines). Finalized enterprise development plans help producer groups to define their investment needs that should be covered	Continue implementation of the work plan for 2012 and continue to be aware of possible biases in the use of project services at the expense of vulnerable groups.	Continuously	Regional and national coordinations	

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					through micro-credits (community development funds). (c) We do agree that the project should pay special attention to vulnerable groups, especially indigenous people in Abala, Congo and Lobay, CAR. In the single case known to the project of biases to indigenous people, the national coordination in CAR was reminded of the project's vision and responsibility towards these people.						
4. In the event of project extension, continue respectively start demonstrating domestication of <i>Gnetum</i> spp. and <i>Irvingia gabonensis</i> in nurseries.	No	X			The project's annual work plan is in line with this recommendation. The follow-up of <i>Gnetum</i> spp. nurseries in Congo and CAR is assured through letter of agreements or individual contracts and part of field missions conducted by the national co-ordinations. Further material is provided to producer groups in CAR. In Gabon, trainings are planned.				- Conduct training on <i>Gnetum</i> spp. domestication in Gabon, - Conduct training on <i>Irvingia gabonensis</i> domestication in Gabon.	August 2012 August/September 2012	National coordinations
5. In the event of project extension, accompany producer groups in a second cycle of NWFP production.	No	X			The project's annual work plan emphasizes the importance of local activities. It is inherent for the MA&D approach that SMEFs are accompanied over a longer period that covers more than one production season of specific NWFP that are not year-around-available products. Producer groups already supported in 2011 benefit from continuous support in 2012 e.g. essessang in CAR (training in				Continue implementation of the work plan for 2012	Continuously	National coordinations

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					2011, awareness rising on production in 2012 and first and second group sale in 2012), bush mango (MA&D training in 2011, domestication training in 2012). Being accompanied over more than one harvesting period consolidates entrepreneurial and technical knowledge.						
6. Better disseminate project related information to government agencies and organisations at provincial, national and sub-regional level as well as to NGOs and SMEs.	No	X			We do agree that publications have to be made available in hard copies to different stakeholders as this is the preferred way in receiving information in contrast to digital copies. As normally done by FAO's NWFPP projects, all important documents will be printed at the end of the project and distributed to relevant stakeholders. We do agree that this should be done more systematically during project implementation and not only at the end of the project.				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Translate a summarized version of the half-yearly progress report into French, - Distribute printed copies of finalized reports to national stakeholders (university, ministry, NGOs etc.) during meetings of the national advisory groups and any other technical meetings, - Prepare a list of stakeholders receiving printed documents at the end of the project. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Done for July-Dec. 2012 Continuously Together with the preparation of the final report 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regional coordination National project coordinators Regional and national coordinations
7. Examine the possibility to use the taxation scheme as a tool protecting responsible user groups against the competition	No		X		The project activity "internalisation of COMIFAC's sub-regional guidelines on NWFPP" into national legal frameworks also takes the improvement or set-up of a NWFPP taxation scheme into account. The				Continue the implementation of the work plan 2012	Continuously	National coordinations

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of anarchical and unsustainable use of NWFP resources.					guidelines suggest a different taxation of endangered and abundantly available NWFP in this regard. Technical, it seems to be difficult to establish a different taxation for NWFP extracted from differently managed sources due to the lack of quantitative inventories for NWFP in specific regions. FAO lobbies for such inventories for many years but governments are very reluctant to it taking related costs into account. In summary, the project already works on the technical aspect described in the recommendation and will continue to pursue this aspect.				
8. Use lists of pending tasks and problems at the regional and national co-ordinations.	No	X			We fully agree with this recommendation.		- Make a list of pending tasks and problems, - Do a monthly follow-up of that list.	August 2012 onwards	Regional with national co-ordinations
To the countries and to COMIFAC									
9. Intensify monitoring of and support to the project until its end for a better project implementation.	No	X			This recommendation concerns COMIFAC and the countries. The regional project coordination participates at COMIFAC's technical coordination meetings. In Congo and CAR, the project participates at few meetings organised by the national coordination of COMIFAC		Continue participation at COMIFAC's meetings	Continuously	Regional and national project coordination
10. Pay particular attention to a consolidation and long-term use of project achieve-	Yes	X			This recommendation concerns COMIFAC and the countries. At sub-regional level, the project is		Participate at the review of COMIFAC's Convergence Plan	Depends on COMIFAC	Regional and national project coordination

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ments.					ready to assure a better integration of NWFP in COMIFAC's Convergence Plan. In CAR, a GEF project is being initiated to consolidate project achievement. In Congo, the World Bank has contacted the national coordination of the project for a possibility of funding the activities of small and medium forest enterprises initiated through the project.			tion
11. Start to examine possible follow-up actions of countries and COMIFAC after the end of the project, especially on national level.	Yes	X			This recommendation concerns COMIFAC and the countries. See recommendation 13 for action taken by the project			
To FAO and other donors								
12. Examine a possible six-month project extension (with or without additional funds).	No	X			The possibility of an extension was technically and financially examined and a four-month-extension within the same budget requested.	Be available for donor comments on the request for extension.	July and August 2012	SFC (BH) and regional project coordination
13. Examine the possibilities of a new phase of the sub-regional project or new national projects.	Yes and no		X		In Congo, Gabon and CAR, national NWFP sector strategies are available allowing the countries to design national projects and activities of the ministry in charge of forests. In CAR, the possibility of a GEF-financed project is examined and financially supported by the project. In Congo, the project lobbies for the use of HIPC funds for NWFP projects. In this regard, FAO prefers national projects to new phase of the cur-	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Continue to examine the possibility of a GEF-financed project in CAR, - Continue to lobby for the use of HIPC funds for a NWFP project in Congo. 	Ongoing	Coordination CAR/ Congo with regional co-ordination and LTO

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					rent sub-regional project. In addition, purely sub-regional activities will be finished by the end of the project and/or could be continued by the new FAO NWFP project financed by the CBFF.					
14. Improve the follow-up and follow-through of pending tasks and problems (list/record) at FAO Representations.	n/a		x		The recommendation tends to generalize an internal communication and follow-up problem between the regional coordinator and the national coordinator in CAR. However, we agree with the recommendation for CAR only and think that the action to be taken under recommendation 8 provides solution for the CAR problem.	n/a	n/a	n/a		
15. Suggest at the end of the project the distribution of project material (especially vehicles) to the Government agencies in charge of NWFP or to NGOs or other NWFP-related projects.	No	X			We underline the importance that material is transferred to the benefit of NWFP-related governmental and/or non-governmental institutions/organisations in Congo, Gabon and CAR. This includes other NWFP-related FAO projects in line with FAO's guidelines on asset disposal. In this regard, material at the regional project coordination was either purchased or received from earlier NWFP-projects and will probably be transferred to a new sub-regional NWFP-project (CBFF).	-	Prepare a list suggesting the beneficiaries of material to be transferred, - Organize transfer.	November 2012 At the end of activities	Regional and national project coordinations with the help of FAO Representations	