

PROJECT EVALUATION SERIES

**Mid-term evaluation of Integrated
Food Security project in Kassala,
Sudan**

MANAGEMENT RESPONSE

**FOOD AND AGRICULTURE ORGANIZATION OF THE UNITED NATIONS
OFFICE OF EVALUATION**

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GCP/SUD/069/CAN

Mid-term evaluation of Integrated Food Security project in Kassala, Sudan GCP/SUD/069/CAN

– January 2015

Overall response to the evaluation

In this section, Management presents its overall views on the evaluation, the report and its conclusions.

On 13 June 2014, it was agreed that OED team would launch a full- fledged Mid-term evaluation of GCP/SUD/069/CAN, based on preliminary discussions via skype, during which time the team in Kassala prepared the ToR, in line with OED guides and with their consultation. The evaluation team was recruited and the schedule of the mission finalised by 08 July for the mission to commence in Khartoum on Sunday, August 10, 2014.

OED received the draft evaluation from the team on 24 September 2014 and the draft report was shared with the team on 03 November 2014 for comments/clarification, which was returned to OED on 17 November 2014.

The final report of the Mid-Term Evaluation of project GCP/SUD/069/CAN "Integrated Food Security Project in Kassala, Sudan (IFSP-Kassala) - GCP/SUD/069/CAN", was sent to FAO Sudan on 22 January 2014.

Overall, the mid-term evaluation provided good conclusions and recommendations, however, due to the long delays in receiving the final report the exercise was not useful. The reason is because the Donor, communicated their decision not to extend the project before the final report was released. FAO Sudan was only able to informally advocate for the no cost extensions (NCE), since we did not have the final mid-term evaluation to share with the Donor. Concerns were raised with OED on several occasions but due to the internal processes could not be released sooner.

Therefore, although the process of the evaluation was done extremely well – including well qualified staff, flexibility and excellent engagement from OED - the delay in the final report resulted in the exercise being of minimal value.

That being said, since the team knew what the main recommendations were, action was taken by the project team to initiate them as outlined below, before receiving the final version. Moreover, management accepted most of the recommendations but was unable to implement them fully or even partially due to the closure of the project on 31 March 2015.

In summary, we strongly recommended that a shorter turn around period with a fixed date for finalising any evaluation is enforced. This will help to ensure that the recommendations of evaluations can be implemented to ensure maximum benefits.

Management response matrix¹

Evaluation Recommendation (a)	Management response (b) Accepted, partially accepted or rejected	Management plan			
		Actions to be taken, and/or comments about partial acceptance or rejection (c)	Responsible unit (d)	Timeframe (e)	Further funding required (Y or N) (f)
<p>Recommendation 1: To FAO to advise the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA)</p> <p>It is recommended to extend the project for another 16 months without additional costs. A request for a no-cost extension should be submitted to CIDA.</p> <p>ES1: To implement recommendation 1, the ET suggests that the request for a no-cost extension should include: a budget revision, a modified work plan and a clear exit strategy to cover the remaining 23 months of implementation</p>	Accepted	FAO accepted the recommendation but the Donor, communicated their decision not to extend the project before the final report was released on 22 January 2015. FAO Sudan was only able to informally advocate for the no cost extensions (NCE), since we did not have the final mid-term evaluation to share with the Donor. FAO Sudan exploring opportunities with other Donors to continue project activities as well as coordination with other programmes to benefit from the work already done with the projects.	FAO Sudan	From 31 March 2015 onward.	Y
<p>Recommendation 2: To the project Team to advise the Federal MAFIL</p> <p>The project team should advise State MAFIL's Development Planning Unit in integrating result-based indicators produced by the project in the development of national and federal food security plans.</p> <p>ES2: The ET suggests to invite the Federal MAFIL to participate as an observer in the final evaluation of the project to capitalise</p>	Accepted	The Federal MAFIL received a copy of the MTE report in late January 2015. The state minister and the federal minister have not integrated results based indicators for the development of a national food security plan. However, both travelled to Brazil on a study tour with FAO and WFP and have initiated discussions on setting up a school feeding programme in Kassala. There is great interest from both the federal and state ministers to use the women's groups	FAO Sudan	Project 2016 onward.	Y

¹ Each column is cross-referenced to the bullet letters above.

on best practices and lessons learned.		<p>established by the project, to establish the pilot programme. It is expected that post elections, Government will call a meeting to begin planning.</p> <p>Finally, as the project has ended there will not be a final evaluation.</p>			
<p>Recommendation 3: To FAO to advise the State MAFIL Include the representatives of NGOs and the beneficiary organizations into the PTC in order to prepare the exit strategy and facilitate the planning process. ES3: The ET suggests that the State MAFIL activates its Gender and Community Development Units and links them to the project.</p>	Accepted	<p>Recommendation is accepted but due to project closure there could not be fully implemented. Nevertheless, an exit strategy was developed in consultation with MAFIL, NGO and other stakeholders, which was also supported with a backstopping mission from HQ. The last PTC was held on 25 September 2014 at MAFIL. Discussions were held with MAFIL to establish a gender and community development unit upon receipt of the draft evaluation report, however due to the upcoming elections MAFIL could not commit resources at that time.</p>	IFSP Management in Kassala	<p>2016 onward (the establishment of the gender and community development unit could driven by the pilot school feeding programme, if it becomes operational) 2016 onward (FAO is seeking fund with other donors to continue IFSP related activities based on the exit strategy/work plan)</p>	Y
<p>Recommendation 4: To FAO and UNIDO management FAO and UNIDO should further strengthen their coordination at field level and continue providing information on food security and nutrition to FSPS and state institutions.</p>	Accepted	The recommendation was immediately implemented using the draft MTE report.	IFSP Management in Kassala	Immediately after the evaluation mission	N

<p>ES4: The ET proposes to organize quarterly PTC meetings between the two organizations and M&E unit to focus on result-based management, exchange of field reports and experiences, communication and advocacy on lessons learned</p>					
<p>Recommendation 5: To the UNIDO and FAO project teams Adopt a bottom-up participatory and gender sensitive process in the implementation of the VC.</p> <p>ES5: To implement Recommendation 5, the ET proposes to hire a number of consultants.</p>	<p>Partially</p>	<p>The project recruited a national gender expert at the initial phase of the project to develop a bottom up approach. Actions was taken to adopt a participatory and gender sensitive approach in the value chain-related interventions. More specifically, by targeting activities that could include women in the different clusters, such as planting of nurseries for fruit trees, training on kitchen gardening; fishing net repair and rearing of small animal through an horizontal coordination approach. Furthermore, a backstopping mission took place in April 2014 for which the recommendation and the Gender Mainstreaming Strategy. Furthermore, the national gender expert received gender focal point training in Cairo in October 2014 was further strengthened. This recommendation has been accepted, as there is always opportunity to improve gender mainstreaming across and within all of our programmes.</p>	<p>IFSP Team (FAO/UNIDO) in Kassala</p>	<p>Throughout the project implementation and beyond.</p>	<p>N</p>

		FAO also has two focal points at Khartoum level, that have been trained and support all FAO Sudan programmes. Recruitment of additional consultants is not required due to sufficient support and the closure of the project. The gender expert continues to support other programmes in the region.			
<p>Recommendation 6: To the UNIDO project team, Build a framework in favour of business development for youth and women in particular to provide information on markets and nutrition, skills-development, entrepreneurship capacity, agro-processing and provision of equipment (solar energy units for Vocational Training Centre).</p>	Accepted	The recommendation was adopted and letter of agreement was signed by UNIDO with Vocational Training Centre to provide services to youth and community based NGOs.	IFSP – UNIDO team in Kassala	Immediately after the evaluation mission	N
<p>Recommendation 7: To the FAO project team, Make the gender strategy operational by providing regular advice and support to the gender officer and the gender unit at the state MAFIL.</p>	Rejected	The Gender Mainstreaming Strategy was developed in March 2013 and operationalized throughout the project lifetime. Workshops and meetings have been organized with project staff and key stakeholders, including MAFIL. Finally, as outlined above, MAFIL has not established the gender and community development unit. Refer to recommendation 5 above.	IFSP Management in Kassala	Gender Mainstreaming strategy effective from March 2013 Gender and Community Development Unit pending (expected in 2016).	N

The Follow-up Report

After one year in the case of project and country evaluations, and two years in the case of thematic and strategy evaluations, the same Main Unit that prepared the MR, should coordinate inputs and prepare a Follow-up Report (FR) on the implementation of the accepted recommendations. The purpose of the Follow-up report is to enhance accountability and lessons learning by informing stakeholders about the outcomes achieved and impact originated through the implementation of the evaluation recommendations. The FR also informs about any variation between actions decided in the Management Response and those actually implemented. The Office of Evaluation contacts the Main Unit for the preparation of the Follow-up Report in due time.

In order to standardize reporting, based on the experience of other agencies and a test conducted in 2013-14 by OED, the tool called Management Action Record (MAR) was introduced in the Follow-up Report template. The MAR is the quantitative self-assessment by responsible units **of the progress made in the implementation** of each fully and partially accepted recommendation, through a six-point scoring scale, following the qualifiers in Box 2 below.

Qualifiers for the Management Action Record scoring

- 1 - None: no action was taken to implement the recommendation;
- 2 - Poor: plan and actions for implementation of the recommendation are at a very preliminary stage;
- 3 - Inadequate: implementation of the recommendation is uneven and partial;
- 4 - Adequate: implementation of the recommendation has progressed; there is no evidence yet of its results on the intended target;
- 5 - Good: the recommendation has been fully implemented and there is some initial evidence of its impact on the intended target;
- 6 – Excellent: there is solid evidence that the recommendation has had a positive impact on its intended target.

The MAR allows OED and FAO to gain a better understanding of good practices and obstacles in the implementation of evaluation recommendations, through the consolidation of quantitative information from all FRs. When OED carries out a validation process of a Follow-up Report, it will enter its own rating of progress made in the implementation of the recommendations. The MAR will also contribute to the tracking system of all recommendations and their implementation, for both accountability and learning purposes, that was established by OED in response to the 2012 External Audit recommendations.

The MAR score complements the narrative description and the evidence available about the progress made in implementing each recommendation, and their impact.

Furthermore, following a request by the Programme Committee at its 103rd session in April 2010 that Follow-up Reports to evaluations include *“the programme and policy impact stemming from the implementation of the recommendations of evaluation”*, the Impact column was added to the Follow-up matrix. Impact is here defined as the long lasting change directly generated by the actions carried out to implement the specific recommendation.

The Follow-up Report should be prepared using the format below.

Follow-up report of the Management response to the Evaluation (Title and date)

Overall progress in the implementation of all accepted recommendations

This section will provide a concise description of main achievements in the implementation of all accepted recommendations, fully and partially, as well as of the obstacles met in the process.

Detailed progress in the implementation of each accepted recommendations

In this section, Management should inform on the progress made in the implementation of each accepted recommendations, fully or partially, as well as on obstacles met in the process. This should be done in the format of the Follow-up report matrix below (see Box 3) and include:

- a. The recommendation number and text, copied from the Management Response;
- b. The actions agreed in the Management Response, in a summary version as required;
- c. Description of actions actually taken and any comment or information considered useful as supporting evidence to the self-assessment;
- d. MAR score; and
- e. The impact of those actions: impacts can occur at any level, including changes in policies, procedures, technical knowledge, livelihoods, state of natural resources, etc.

Follow-up report matrix²

Accepted evaluation recommendations (a)	Action Agreed in the Management Response (b)	Description of actions actually taken, or reasons for actions not taken (c)	MAR score (d) *	Impact of, or changes resulted from taken actions (e)
Recommendation 1	Summary of actions agreed	Short narrative		Short narrative
Recommendation 2	Summary of actions agreed	Short narrative		Short narrative
Recommendation 3	Summary of actions agreed	Short narrative		Short narrative

*: **1 - None:** no action was taken to implement the recommendation; **2 - Poor:** plan and actions for implementation of the recommendation are at a very preliminary stage; **3 - Inadequate:** implementation of the recommendation is uneven and partial; **4 - Adequate:** implementation of the recommendation has progressed; there is no evidence yet of its results on the intended target; **5 - Good:** the recommendation has been fully implemented and there is some initial evidence of its impact on the intended target; **6 - Excellent:** there is solid evidence that the recommendation has had a positive impact on its intended target

² Each column is cross-referenced to the bullet letters above.

Responsibilities and procedures for the Management Response and the Follow-up Report

OED monitors and facilitates the preparation of the Management Responses and Follow-up Reports. It will notify the Main Unit in due time for the preparation of these reports and will check that required standards of comprehensiveness and clarity are met. It will upload both the MRs and the FRs on its Web site; in the case of evaluations of extra-budgetary funded initiatives, the MRs and the FRs will also be uploaded in FPMIS.

In preparing the MRs and the FRs, the Main Unit must consult with and seek inputs as necessary from parties within and outside FAO to whom the evaluation recommendations were addressed. Nevertheless, FAO management takes the full responsibility for the contents of both MR and FRs and for the implementation of agreed actions within its mandate.

1. Operational responsibilities are as follows:
 - a. **Evaluation reports for the Programme Committee:** The Chair of the Evaluation Committee (Internal) designates, in consultation with OED, a senior officer who will have overall responsibility for coordinating the preparation of the Management Response and Follow-up Report. This will be done at the inception stage of the evaluation and indicated in the Roles and Responsibilities section of the evaluation Terms of References. This will enable the designated person to be part of the evaluation Reference Group. The MR should be completed within **four weeks** from the notification by OED and sent to OED Director (see Box 4). The FR should be submitted to the Programme Committee **two years** after the evaluation report and its MR have been discussed by the Programme Committee, unless otherwise decided by the PC itself. Six (6) months prior to the Programme Committee session for which it is due, OED informs the senior officer who coordinated the preparation of the MR about the schedule for the FR preparation and discussion.
 - b. **Project Evaluations:** The project Budget Holder will normally be responsible for leading the preparation of the Management Response and the Follow-up Report to the evaluation. The Management Response and Follow-up Report should be completed within **four weeks** of the notification by OED and sent to OED. The Follow-up Report will be prepared **one year** after the Management Response.
 - c. **Country Evaluations:** The FAO Representative will normally be responsible for leading the preparation of the Management Response and the Follow-up Report to the evaluation. The Management Response and Follow-up Report should be completed within **four weeks** of the request and sent to OED. The Follow-up Report will be prepared **one year** after the Management Response. Governments should be encouraged to provide their own response to the evaluation either separately or as part of the MR. In the case of the latter, it should be explained in the MR which actions were agreed by the Government to undertake.

Schedule for the evaluation management responses and follow-up reports to be submitted to the Programme Committee

Action	Responsibility for action	Deadline before PC meeting
Final report of the evaluation and request for the management response will be sent to the appointed senior officer.	Office of Evaluation	12 weeks
Draft management response/follow-up report will be provided by the responsible senior officer to the Evaluation Committee through the Director, Office of Evaluation.	Designated officer/OED	8 weeks
Comments by the Evaluation Committee to the responsible senior officer.	Evaluation Committee	7 weeks
Forwarding of the management response/follow-up report through the PC Secretariat to ODG for clearance before posting.	Designated officer/OED Director	6 weeks