

Country Programme Evaluation Series

Evaluation of FAO's contribution to Cabo Verde

2018–2022

Annex 4: Lessons learned and promising practices

Lesson learned:¹

Both small-size projects (e.g. Technical Cooperation Programmes [TCPs]) and medium/large projects (e.g. Government Cooperative Programmes [GCPs], unilateral trust fund [UTFs]) have positive aspects to benefit from and relevant challenges to be considered when shaping a CPF portfolio of projects.

Learning from the experience: small-size projects

1. The findings of the evaluation highlight the risks of fragmentation and dispersion from the high number of small-size projects, such as TCP or emergency projects, and the high transaction costs related to their management in comparison with their supposed limited effectiveness and impact (not very cost-effective).
2. At the same time, there are findings showing the catalytic effect of small projects in opening significant opportunities for a larger and more programmatic action, which is, in fact, one of the main purposes of TCP projects. There are also encouraging aspects regarding the sustainability of these “small” actions and their effective up-take and real ownership by the national partner, due to their more “workable” size, which is compatible with the limited human and material resources that the Ministry of Agriculture and Environment can provide. This is a relevant lesson learned to consider for results sustainability in a small country like Cabo Verde and that could possibly be applied in other small countries (e.g. SIDS), or in decentralised action of bigger countries.
3. For instance, the emergency response to the fall armyworm has been an opportunity for national stakeholders to build a more comprehensive and structural programme of integrated pest management including relevant capacity development activities for laboratory upgrading, staff and farmers training, farmer field schools (FFS) organization, and the setting of the FAO FAW Monitoring and Early Warning System (FAMEWS) global platform.
4. Another case in point regards the livestock sector. The serious and urgent problems caused by recurrent drought years and the poor health conditions of the livestock were tackled by relief measures (water and feed supply, animal health care, etc.) that made evident the need for a more structural programme to rehabilitate and revitalise the whole sector. That was recently made by designing a concrete feasibility study for the improvement of traditional livestock farming, as well a comprehensive Strategic Plan for Livestock Development in Cabo Verde, both currently being discussed with the stakeholders in view of their implementation.
5. There is also the case of two small projects that are considered highly cost-effective by relevant national staff of the Ministry of Agriculture and Environment: the project TCP/CVI/3701 to reinforce resilience capacity of small farmers through the “*Caisses de résilience*” (budget: USD 276 000) and the small project UNJP/CVI/048/UNJ (budget: USD 50 000) to strengthen the FFS approach in the country through renewed capacity development activities² of the Ministry of Agriculture and Environment staff. These two “small” projects are considered positive and promising initiatives that are being effectively monitored and supported by the National Service of Rural Extension and the national non-governmental organization in charge of the technical and methodological support for the management of the resilience fund.

¹ The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) defines Lessons Learned as “Generalizations based on evaluation experiences with projects, programs, or policies that abstract from the specific circumstances to broader situations. Frequently, lessons highlight strengths or weaknesses in preparation, design, and implementation that affect performance, outcome, and impact.” (“Glossary of Key Terms in Evaluation and Results Based Management”, OECD-DAC).

² FFS had been introduced in Cabo Verde in 2010 by a previous FAO project

Learning from the experience: medium and large-size projects

6. There are two medium and large-size projects in the current CPF portfolio, i.e. UTF/CVI/047/CVI (budget: USD 1 073 600) - for the establishment of the main programmatic instruments and mechanisms of the Blue Economy in Cabo Verde, supported by FAO and the African Development Bank (AfBD) - and the GCP/CVI/046/EC (budget: USD 5 464 726) - for building capacity and resilience of the forestry sector, financed by the European Union (the so-called Reflor project). No doubt that both projects have been highly and strategically instrumental to deliver remarkable results in two key-sectors of the sustainable development of Cabo Verde, as discussed in this report.
7. Projects of this type, for their inherent dimension and scope, provide many opportunities. We highlight the setting of large and diverse partnerships, inter-sectorial approach and complementarity (as discussed in the findings of the report), a more evident linkage between project outputs and medium-long term results (outcomes and development objectives). Capacity development may also be tackled at different levels with evident possibility of synergies (individual, institutional and sociopolitical). All these aspects represent evident assets that medium and large size projects can provide to FAO and national stakeholders, including the ultimate beneficiaries.
8. Large-size projects like the Reflor project also come with budget to cover administrative and operational costs including human resources (e.g. a dedicated financial assistant) - hence alleviating the administrative burden of the overloaded country office - and make large use of external consultants (national and international) hence providing supplementary human resources that may support the implementing agency and the national counterpart. Of course, large-size projects also give more visibility and credibility when accessing potential donors.
9. The concrete experience of these two projects in Cabo Verde, however, provides relevant elements of concerns regarding results sustainability and national ownership.
10. Large cooperation projects are usually concerned with time-bounded results to be delivered, work-plans to be respected, budget rate-delivery and timely reporting to the donor. National counterparts do not always own sufficient specialised technical resources to constantly be present in project activities, since their tasks and functions usually go well beyond the monitoring of any single project under their coordination. It has also to be admitted that projects do not always promote the meaningful involvement and participation of national stakeholders alleging "time consuming" processes, delays in decision-making, deadlines to be respected, etc.
11. As a result, the solution of having strong project teams composed by national and international consultants becomes a "usual" practice and is normally foreseen in project budgets. This was also the case in both FAO projects mentioned above (with two different ministries: the Ministry of the Sea and the Ministry of Agriculture).
12. As a result, the beneficial boundary between "implementing" and "executing" agency is trespassed and the implementing agency (FAO) slightly becomes executing as well. National ownership fades-out and when the project comes to end, sustainability appears to be low.

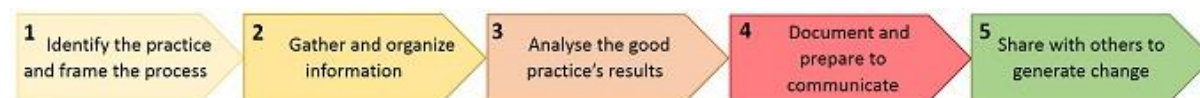
Promising practices

13. According to FAO, a practice usually evolves through four stages schematically reproduced here below:



Source: FAO. n.d. FAO Capacity development briefs. In: FAO. Rome. <http://www.fao.org/capacity-development/resources/capacity-development-briefs/en/>

14. There are some interesting field experiences that have already been mentioned along this report and that, according to the information collected during the evaluation exercise (interviews, field visit, reports analysis) could be considered as "promising practices".
15. We can outline the following:
- "Caisses de résilience"; and
 - "Farmer field schools": 29 FFS active in the Country in different islands.
16. Project experiences and practices should be followed-up, progressively documented and discussed all along project development, in order that knowledge is gradually built and taken-up by all actors involved. The process of planning, capturing, analysing and sharing a good practice can be schematised as follows:



Source: FAO. n.d. FAO Capacity development briefs. In: FAO. Rome. <http://www.fao.org/capacity-development/resources/capacity-development-briefs/en/>

Appendix 1. Systematisation of practices (Reflor project in Cabo Verde)

Descriptive title (Practice 1): Thematic working groups: a promising practice of participatory capacity development

1. When was the practice initiated (and completed, if applicable)?

The initiative of creating four thematic working groups was launched and promoted by the project in the last quarter of 2018 and became progressively and fully operational from the last quarter of 2019 onward. The participation of the groups to the activities of the project (Component 1) is ongoing and is conceived as an open-ended instrument supporting the participatory capacity development of the forestry sector and of forestry-related institutions.

2. Description of the practice: background, purpose and objectives, nature of the practice

The forestry sector in the country has experienced for years progressive and substantial limitations of human and financial resources. When the Reflor project was approved and started (mid-2017) many years had elapsed since the Ministry of Agriculture (currently the Ministry of Agriculture and Environment) benefited from a forestry-dedicated project and funding. As a result, it is currently very difficult for the Ministry of Agriculture and Environment (and particularly the Forestry Service) to cope with the increasing challenge posed to Cabo Verde by climate change, notably recurrent drought years in the last decade and increased risks of desertification. Specialised human resources and public budget are just too few.

The setting and implementation of four thematic working groups aims at establishing a participatory process of institutional strengthening for the sustainable development of rural forested areas. More specifically, the implementation of the working groups has the following objectives:

- i. to create and implement multidisciplinary groups with participants from different institutions directly or indirectly linked to agriculture, forestry and other land use (AFOLU);
- ii. to enable the horizontal, two-way flow of information - within each group and between the groups – so as to maximise existing resources and knowledge, hence fostering the sustainability of project results;
- iii. to build a network of key actors in view of a national climate change forum allowing a transparent and integrated approach for a climate change resilient forestry and regional (island) planning in Cabo Verde; and
- iv. to produce information and validate data able to support policy and technical decision-making for the integrated management of sustainable development plans.

3. Achievements/accomplishments – i.e. what makes this practice “good” and on what basis can one determine this (e.g. any formal or informal evaluations or assessments), what can one expect this practice to do?

Four thematic groups have been formed and are operational on four main priority issues for the revision and strengthening of the forestry sector through a participatory approach, namely:

- i. planning
- ii. safeguard (social and environmental)
- iii. monitoring
- iv. governance

All in all, around 45 officials are involved, at a variable extent, in the activities of the groups. They belong to different national directorates and/or services of the Ministry of Agriculture and Environment, of the Ministry of Territorial Planning, to relevant national institutes (e.g. the Agrarian Research and

Development Institute, the Territorial Management Institute, the Meteorology and Geophysics Institute), to the National Agency for Water and Sanitation and to the University of Cabo Verde (UniCV).

The four working groups, though focussing on their specific priority, are working in tight coordination and with joint activities of capacity building (ensured by the project). Their initial job was to prepare four stakeholders mappings of forestry-related actors (one for each group) and to consolidate them in a comprehensive map and some diagrams identifying pivotal institutions, intersection of functions and links, and degree of relevance.

At national level, the main activity is the ongoing revision of existing legislation, regulations and policies (planning and governance groups). At regional (islands) level the priority focus is given to the elaboration of the regional (islands) forestry master plans (EDOF) for Santiago, Fogo and Boa Vista islands, including the updating of the National Forests Inventory of 2010 (concluded). These activities are led by the monitoring group. At the level of the six pilot areas of reforestation (four in Santiago, one in Fogo and one in Boa Vista), the safeguard working group is leading the participatory process of elaboration of six forest management plans (PGF), based on the ongoing rural survey at institutional and community level (sample of 407 families).

The participants to the thematic working groups are the main target group of a comprehensive and diversified capacity building program: "Strengthening capacities of adaptation and resilience in the forestry sector of Cabo Verde", which is described more in detail in another form (Practice 2).

Practice 1 is well-documented through the reports and technical papers prepared by the project consultant on forest planning and training for climate change adaptation, as well as through different tools prepared by the groups for the implementation of the activities of the project (e.g. stakeholders mapping, monitoring tools, updated forestry inventory, maps, survey questionnaire, etc.).

Expectations are indeed high regarding the technical and methodological support of the thematic groups to the planning and monitoring of the forestry sector, to the sustainable management of forests and adaptation to climate change. Actually, the multidisciplinary and inter-institutional working groups represent a possible solution – perhaps the only one - to the current limitations of human resources in the forestry sector, and a way to transform a problem into an opportunity.

4. Necessary conditions – what are the circumstances in which this practice took place and which it can be used, any cautions, limitations, or “words of advice” that might affect its applicability in other settings or situations, are there other factors that could support even further the use and impact of this practice?

Multidisciplinary and inter-institutional groups are usually considered as a suitable practice to foster horizontal learning, knowledge building and capacity development. The practice of the thematic working groups has been strongly promoted by the project, not only as a solution to existing technical constraints (as described above), but also as a key methodology to implement the participatory approach to forestry planning and management fostered by the Reflor project.

It is evident the key role of the project in promoting, setting and pursuing the capacity building and consolidation of the working groups. They are considered key drivers for the sustainability of project results. It is, therefore, legitimate, to speculate whether the practice could stay in place after the end of the project. This concern should be openly discussed both within the groups and with national stakeholders, and appropriate measures for giving continuity to the practice should be envisaged and tested.

5. Is there any particular emphasis on ideas or hints one could suggest to others who might be thinking about doing something similar?

Viability and sustainability concerns were present since the promotion and beginning of the practice. The institutions need to “appropriate” the working group methodology. On this respect, it is important to find

and foster institutional (not individual) “entry-points” for the creation of the working groups. The members of the groups need to work with the consensus and support of their respective Institutions and must inform and report to them about the planned, ongoing and finalised activities. Groups “focal points” may also play a key-role in warranting appropriate institutional frameworks to the work of the groups.

Regular interaction between the project and the institutions represented in the thematic working groups is relevant, as well. This makes the institutions real partners of the project and avoids the sentiment that the groups are a “a project business” with limited interest for the institution.

6. Replicability and/or upscaling: what are the possibilities of extending the best practice more widely? What are the conditions that should be met/respected to ensure that the best practice is replicated, but adapted to the new context?

Though surely promising, the practice of thematic working groups is still young and in need of consolidation. If a follow-up project is put in place, this aspect should be among the priorities.

Once forestry management in pilot areas and islands will become the focus of the activities in the field, it is likely that the concept of working groups would also evolve. Decentralised actors at regional (islands), municipality and community levels will also be key actors through direct activities related to planning and management of forested areas. The processes of decision-making, monitoring and follow-up, supervision and control, among others, will also become priority issues.

The need of extending/intensifying the practice at a decentralised level is surely challenging, and adaptive measures suitable to decentralized/local actions would probably be needed for maintaining the effectiveness of the working groups. For instance, a regional/municipality focal point of the working groups would probably be necessary.

Office of Evaluation
E-mail: evaluation@fao.org
Web address: www.fao.org/evaluation

Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
Rome, Italy



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