



Food and Agriculture  
Organization of the United  
Nations

## Office of Evaluation

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### **Initiating Participatory Forestry in Support to Sustainable Livelihoods in Afghanistan – GCP /AFG/052/GER**

*Management response to the evaluation report*

May 2013

## Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations

### Office of Evaluation (OED)

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## **MANAGEMENT RESPONSE TO THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF EVALUATION MISSION FOR**

### **“Initiating Participatory Forestry in Support to Sustainable Livelihood in Afghanistan-GCP/AFG/052/GER”**

**Evaluation Mission dates: 08- 28 November 2011**

#### **Overall Objective of the Evaluation Mission:**

The three-year project ‘**Initiating Participatory Forestry in Support to Sustainable Livelihood in Afghanistan**’ (GCP /AFG/052/GER) started in January 2009 with a budget of US\$ 2,667,547 and completed in June 2012. This project was part of a series of projects executed by FAO in Afghanistan, funded through the bilateral trust fund financed by the German Ministry of Consumer Protection, Food and Agriculture (BMVEL). The ministry relies on support of the German Cooperation Agency (GIZ) for administering the trust fund and progress monitoring.

The evaluation was conducted as a joint GoA - FAO final evaluation. The in-country component of the evaluation took place between November 09 and 22, 2011. Between 14-11 and 20-11-2011<sup>1</sup> the mission conducted project field visits in selected districts of Balkh and Nangarhar Provinces<sup>2</sup>. A two day visit by the mission Team Leader (TL) took place on December 20 and 21, 2011 with the actual debriefing session scheduled on 20 and 21 December 2011. Aside from evaluation specific discussions with OEDD staff and the formal de-briefing session, the visit was also used to complement the evaluation with a number of additional individual HQ staff interviews, whom had past direct or indirect involvement with the project.

The evaluation conducted to appraise the overall contribution of the project towards the set goals and objectives. The main objective of the evaluation mission was to assess the approach of these projects and the outcomes and to provide recommendations to support designing and implementing similar projects in the future.

In particular, the evaluation must have focused on the following aspects:

- To document the lessons learned by the project stakeholders and the effectiveness of the project in creating conducive environment to ensure continuation of the project approach beyond project life.
- To evaluate progress made by the projects in the institutionalization of the participatory forestry approach and its integration into the national, provincial and district development plans.
- To assess the project contribution to improved forestry governance particularly supporting MAIL in review and drafting of forest laws and regulations.

The report and recommendations of the Evaluation Team Leader looks useful but quite general and beyond the scope of his Terms of reference of the mission. The evaluation report and recommendations focus to a great extent on FAO policies and procedures, rather than on the particular project.

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<sup>1</sup> Excluding travel time this amounted to about 2.5 days on the ground presence in each visited province.

<sup>2</sup> Sholgara, Khullam (Bakhh) and Surukhrod (Nangarhar)

Management response to the Evaluation of the project-GCP/AFG/052/GER							
Evaluation Recommendations	Management Response and comment on the Recommendation			Management Plan			
	Accept	Partially Accept	Reject	Action to be taken	Responsible Unit	Timeframe	Further funding Required (Y or N)
<p><b>1:</b> <i>Project Formulation and Framework Planning must be based on sound Institutional Analysis, especially so if the ambition of the project is to influence national institutional set-up, policy, legislative and/or regulatory development. It is recommended to the <b>Technical Cooperation Department</b> to introduce mandatory project proposal screening through employment of dedicated public administration capacity by the Organization.</i></p>	<p><b>Partially accepted.</b> Under last output (Output 6), It was expected that appropriate institutional, legal and policy framework will help scaling up the successful models demonstrated by the project. Which makes it clear that the demonstration of successful models was the only key to mobilize beneficiaries for institutional and policy reforms. Since the project has demonstrated participatory forestry in its 3<sup>rd</sup> and last year, it was not possible to continue efforts to institutionalize the approach without funding beyond project life. Project was also itself as seeding project for GEF funded community forestry project. Hence, This recommendation is partially accepted.</p>			<p>In accordance with new project life cycle, project proposal screening is already administrated based on RBM.</p> <p>Further resource mobilization is required.</p>	OSD in consultation of FAO Afghanistan	1 year 2013-14	Y
<p><b>2:</b> <i>For FAO to help increase effectiveness and impact of its normative, policy and legal support projects, it must systematically review results obtained from interventions relying on standard pilot project modalities contributing to such expressed national support objectives. It is recommended that such a review involves the Technical Cooperation Department jointly with the Legal Office and the Office of Evaluation. Besides establishing the relevance of proposed pilot project results, the review should also concentrate on proposing alternative strategies to project-based pilot activities.</i></p>	<p>The recommended review is in practice and country evaluation planned for 2013.</p> <p>With the latest restructuring of the TC Department and transfer of certain functions, OSD is now responsible for the provision of the accountability and quality assurance framework for FAO programmes/projects – in consultation with other involved units throughout the house and in decentralized offices. Within this framework, the division now provides standard setting for RBM, performance assessment and a reporting framework for FAO projects. As handled before by TCDM, OSD will continue to consult with OED on TOR for evaluation missions of either a country or thematic nature.</p>				OSD, LGN OED		N

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<i>3: FAO as a technical Organization must beware of the risk of under-utilizing its corporate technical knowledge by veering off into directions where the technical dimension does no longer play a significant role. It is recommended for FAO senior management to revisit the role of the Programme and Project Review Committee (PPRC) in this respect, to ensure that technical services are made explicit, institutionally linked and budgeted for during project design.</i>			In the light of New project cycle guide, the whole procedure has been thoroughly revised. A revision to the PPRC process – ‘successor arrangements’ for programme/project review and appraisal - has been proposed within the context of the new Project Cycle. The appropriate programming and adequate budgeting of required technical services are part of the overall appraisal process – currently handled during the technical and operational clearances; in the future under the revised guidelines for the Project Cycle.	PPRCs at HQ and country level	PPRC, LTU and TCSR	As per need	N
<i>4: To avoid situations where project design and approaches are not adjusted during the implementation phase despite significant changes in the project environment, it is recommended that the PPRC introduces mandatory project tri-partite review at least once during a project’s lifetime.</i>	<b>Accept</b>		It is standard procedure to include a mid-term review or evaluation of some type, dependant to some degree upon the wishes of the donor in this regard. Another opportunity for adjustments to the project are the mandatory submission of annual work plans and related budget revisions.	Always designed in the projects and conducted if seems mandatory	FAOAF LTU OSD OED		N
<i>5: Rather than concentrating on testing participatory methodologies in pilot project setting, FAO must focus on placing participation (community and institutional) in the context of national institutional mechanisms and budget allocation processes. It is recommended to systematically review of the use, benefits and improvement options for promotion of inclusiveness and participatory methodologies in FAO programmes and projects. This should be undertaken jointly by the Technical Cooperation Department, the Economic and Social Development Department and the Office of Evaluation.</i>			<b>In general Accepted</b>  In case of forestry project, it was the first participatory project implemented by FAO in Afghanistan. The experience gained and lesson learned through this project will help the organization and other stakeholders in Forestry Sector in designing and implementing such projects. This to be undertaken by OED and the concerned technical department, rather than the Technical Cooperation Department.	Based on project lessons learned MAIL/FAO Afghanistan should Develop strategy paper for community participation in NRM in upcoming forestry projects.	MAIL/FOE/OED/FAOAFG Country office with technical support from HQ	Pipeline projects	Y

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6: Because capacity building processes tend to be complex and of long duration, FAO Afghanistan is recommended to make project-funded institutional capacity building an integral part of the country strategy, to be developed in close coordination with relevant GoA counterpart ministries and in partnership with other Organizations having similar or complementing capacity building objectives.	<b>Accepted:</b>  FAO Afghanistan is well embedded in the MAIL and providing technical support to ministry in developing strategies, programs and projects. However, each project has its own capacity building packages which are directly or indirectly part of the country strategy.  In general, Capacity building is integral part of each project while the CPF is based on the assessment of capacity needs of the country in the FAO-mandated areas. As a UN agency, FAO has adopted a <i>Capacity Development Corporate Strategy and Agenda for Action</i> that offers the methodological elements for this assessment (CPF background paper III)			n/a	FAOAF and LTUs	n/a	N
7: It is recommended that FAO makes its project institutional, policy and legal support mandates proportional to the available (project) means. This requires wise use by the Technical Cooperation Department of limited available project resources (be they TCP of GCP). A mandatory criterion for project screening could be that FAO project initiatives are functionally linked to a larger national or internationally assisted investment programmes and are designed and implemented in partnership with other actors present in the (sub) sector.	<b>Accepted:</b> This project was a seeding project in particular.  In general, The projects are developed to harvest opportunities on ground, but it is not possible to harvest each and every opportunity. FAO in Afghanistan is developing and implementing projects in close collaboration with MAIL and other stakeholders in consonance of CPF.  While OSD (rather than the Technical Cooperation Department) supports the design of Country Programming Frameworks (CPF), it is up to the country offices in consultation with the concerned regional office and technical department(s) to formulate appropriate programmes/projects within the context of the country CPF.			n/a	FAO AFG , OSD and LTU	n/a	N
8: In line with the Afghanistan Country Programme	Accepted in line of FAO Decentralization.			It is already	FAOAFG	n/a	N

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<i>Framework, currently under preparation by FAO Afghanistan, it is recommended to renew FAO's commitment to a programmatic and partnership based approach in assisting the country and its national counterpart ministries. It is important that under new Representation leadership all required assistance is sought from the Office of Support to Decentralization, the Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific to ensure emergence of country programme with a high degree of transparency and operational focus which shall prevent the emergence of specific sub-programmes that are tied too closely to a single donor.</i>				considered in CPF signed on 05 Sept 2012.			

**Risk:** Recommendations subject to the commitments of MAIL and donor community in the forestry sector.