

Project Evaluation Series

**Evaluation of the project
“Strengthening the adaptive capacity
and resilience of rural communities
using micro watershed approaches to
climate change and variability to attain
sustainable food security in Cambodia”**

**Project code: GCP/CMB/036/LDF
GEF ID: 4434**

Management response

Management response to the Evaluation of GCP/CMB/036/LDF					03/2021
Evaluation Recommendation	Management response Accepted, Partially Accepted or Rejected	Management plan			
		Actions to be taken, and/or comments about partial acceptance or rejection	Responsible unit	Time frame	Further funding required (Y or N)
Recommendation 1. To FAO and national implementing partners Projects should start as soon as possible after approval and effort / activities should be spread as evenly as possible throughout the implementation period, avoiding periods of inactivity when momentum is lost and rushing to reach outputs towards project completion. (Conclusion 2, 10) Project periods and funds are by definition limited, while the expectations of beneficiaries and stakeholders are by definition high, based on agreed ProDocs. FAO and implementing partners are recommended to ensure that in future projects, all possible measures are taken to ensure that staff and appropriate offices are in place and field activities make a swift start after project approval. An early start and even spread of project activities contribute to enhanced prospects for effectiveness, impact and better project management.	Partially Accepted At current conditions for FAO, it is not possible to start a project before it is signed. Country offices do not have resources to initiate a project early before it is operational in FPMIS.	Advanced seed funding should be made available to Units to be able to start activities before the project becomes operational. This would allow early recruitment of key staff, for example. This seed money would then be charged back to the project, effectively a zero cost operation for FAO.	FAO management/ GEF unit	Future projects	Yes
Recommendation 2. To GEF project formulators and FAO Projects need to be thoroughly reviewed in terms of their ambitions vis-à-vis the country context and capacity before finalization and approval. Before including a policy- related Outcome (such as the original Outcome 1 in this project design), national partners should be fully aware of the implications and the enormity of the task involved, also that ultimately a PMU cannot achieve this without full Government support. (Conclusion 2)	Accepted	More consultations at field level. The arguments made by field implementation units and staff should be given more attention. Instead, we tend to always be mostly donor driven.	FAO corporate and field offices	Future projects	No

Management response to the Evaluation of GCP/CMB/036/LDF					03/2021
Evaluation Recommendation	Management response Accepted, Partially Accepted or Rejected	Management plan			
		Actions to be taken, and/or comments about partial acceptance or rejection	Responsible unit	Time frame	Further funding required (Y or N)
<p>None of the TE informants felt that the original Outcome 1 of this project was appropriate. This may be due to changes in staff between the Project Preparation Grant and project start-up, as following standard procedures during the Project Preparation Grant they should have been closely involved, contributing to and approving the design.</p> <p>Based on the lessons learned, future projects need to be thoroughly reviewed in terms of their ambitions vis-à-vis the country context and capacity before finalization and approval. GEF project formulators must ensure that Project Preparation Grant activities are participatory at all levels and FAO should ensure that the Objectives / Outcomes / Outputs of new projects are correctly understood by the key stakeholders.</p> <p>Furthermore, during the Inception Phase all those involved and particularly the Project Coordination Committee should be aware that even after approval the Inception Workshop can and should be used to catalyse necessary changes / fine-tuning of the project design to reflect changes in circumstances etc. (Using adaptive management, a project can be revised at later stages).</p> <p>Should a project plan to include such a policy Outcome, it should provide adequate human resources that can fully support its implementation (LNP budgeted for two Law and Policy Experts, but only for 14 weeks for an international and 96 weeks for the national consultant – the former was never recruited).</p>					

Management response to the Evaluation of GCP/CMB/036/LDF					03/2021
Evaluation Recommendation	Management response Accepted, Partially Accepted or Rejected	Management plan			
		Actions to be taken, and/or comments about partial acceptance or rejection	Responsible unit	Time frame	Further funding required (Y or N)
Recommendation 3. To GEF project formulators and FAO. Projects should include the development of an Exit Strategy around the time of the MTR, to ensure support is clear beyond the project closure for sustainability and to catalyse scaling-up. (Conclusion 4) Developing an exit strategy early on would ensure the sustainability of achievements and impact post-project, and a clear plan on how the communities involved in the on-the-ground interventions will continue to receive support (e.g. from extension services). The exit strategy should specifically address the application and utilization of relevant technical products and any related capacity development needs. Moreover, the Exit Strategy should explore the potential for greater integration with the local private sector inputs and market providers (particularly for woman saving and business groups) and more widely across the country for larger-scale replication.	Accepted	Guidelines on this important project phase neither seem to exist at GEF/FAO coordination level, nor at global GEF Secretariat. An effort should be made to create such guidelines to support the project manager in this phase.	Units in charge of the implementation GEF Coordination Unit	Future projects	No
Recommendation 4. To the Government and FAO. Continued support post project should be sought for the WSM, FFS and savings and loans groups established by the project. Good practises should be showcased (e.g. through study tours), and WSM plans should be scaled-up to other communes / micro watersheds. (Conclusion 4) Provincial and district Government agencies, including extension staff who benefited from the ToT for CSA/FFSs,	Partially accepted	Discuss with FAO Management on how to provide the necessary support to be able to fund such an initiative.	FAO Country Office	As soon as possible	No

Management response to the Evaluation of GCP/CMB/036/LDF					03/2021
Evaluation Recommendation	Management response Accepted, Partially Accepted or Rejected	Management plan			
		Actions to be taken, and/or comments about partial acceptance or rejection	Responsible unit	Time frame	Further funding required (Y or N)
<p>should continue to provide the project pilot communities with support, as many novel activities were catalysed late during project implementation.</p> <p>Capacity building support should continue to be provided to the savings and loans groups established by the project to strengthen their potential for sustainability. A cross-sectoral team and a microfinance advisor should be appointed to rapidly assess the current organisational status of these groups and the short-term capacity strengthening needs, and to draw out specific lessons learned regarding saving groups and relevant policy recommendations across the project.</p> <p>FAO Cambodia should ensure the lessons and learning materials are included in future projects.</p>	<p>a lack of understanding on the constraints and limitations imposed on CO. In the meantime, we often rely on stretching time and resources from other projects, but this is not a sustainable approach in the long run. Expecting funds from the Government for project follow is not realistic either, given the resource available to them.</p>				
<p>Recommendation 5.</p> <p>To the Government and FAO.</p> <p>Projects like LNP should have M&E systems that are anchored in a project theory of change, operate in (near) real time to increase management flexibility and indicate, as and when required, where the project and its partners are at, so that resources and support can be redirected according to needs in a timelier manner. Furthermore, relevant focal points (e.g. climate change, land degradation and GEF) should be given more prominent roles and training in M&E. (Conclusion 5, 11)</p> <p>M&E is fundamental to project implementation, not only to confirm to donors that the funds are being effectively utilised, but also for beneficiaries to help them appreciate the impacts of their project-catalysed activities and if positive, will enhance adoption of actions being promoted by the</p>	<p>Partially accepted</p> <p>Agreed but the reality is that the share of resources directed to M&E within a tight project budget is usually always not sufficient.</p> <p>M&E within GEF, and more broadly in development projects, has always been the shortest straw. LNP is not an exception. Much more attention should be given to M&E at the paramount level and guidance to field practitioners.</p>	<p>Assess M&E needs early on in the project cycle. Think of intensive events for the future to make M&E approaches and practices evolve.</p>	<p>Formulators and project team</p>	<p>Future projects</p>	<p>Yes</p>

Management response to the Evaluation of GCP/CMB/036/LDF					03/2021
Evaluation Recommendation	Management response Accepted, Partially Accepted or Rejected	Management plan			
		Actions to be taken, and/or comments about partial acceptance or rejection	Responsible unit	Time frame	Further funding required (Y or N)
<p>project (e.g. CSA technologies). This is best achieved through participatory M&E.</p> <p>National environment, climate change or other relevant focal points (e.g. land degradation and GEF) should be given more prominent roles and training in monitoring, oversight, tracking, and reporting on progress in project action plans implementation and impacts on climate resilience/ land degradation. They should be provided with project action plans, monitoring data collection and reporting forms, as well as tools or guidelines with a reporting structure, to ensure that these focal points are able to collect appropriate data (both quantitative and qualitative).</p> <p>The results of monitoring should be shared widely amongst stakeholders and other relevant partners, to document lessons learned, support a multi-stakeholder governance process that needs real-time feedback loops and evidence building and sharing.</p> <p>Projects should also develop knowledge management and communications plans and endeavour to ensure that outputs (such as for the LNP the policy briefs, various guidelines etc.) are completed translated, published and disseminated before project closure as these are important documents for post-project replication / scaling-up. Moreover, project information, project and financial data should be carefully stored, for the purpose of accountability, monitoring and evaluation, learning and sharing.</p>					

Management response to the Evaluation of GCP/CMB/036/LDF					03/2021
Evaluation Recommendation	Management response Accepted, Partially Accepted or Rejected	Management plan			
		Actions to be taken, and/or comments about partial acceptance or rejection	Responsible unit	Time frame	Further funding required (Y or N)
<p>Recommendation 6.</p> <p>To the Government and FAO.</p> <p>National Project Coordination Committees (PCC) should hold more regular meetings and members should be more engaged in project activities (including visiting project sites), with comparable committees set-up at decentralised levels as appropriate. (Conclusion 3)</p> <p>ProDocs should specify how frequently PCC meetings are held (ideally at least every 6 months). These should include the development and agreement of formal joint annual work plans including milestones in implementation and financing road map processes to deliver better coordination and decision-making functions. This will enhance communications and understanding of inter-sectoral projects between partners and staff.</p> <p>For innovative projects such as the LNP with many activities on-the-ground, the PCC should hold meetings close to pilot sites and include field visits. Apart from national PCCs, projects such as LNP would also benefit from equivalent provincial level PCCs.</p> <p>Ideally, someone in the PCC (or another appropriate individual, e.g. a national environmental activist, academic or teachers) should become a project “champion”, akin to Wangari Muta Maathai of the Kenyan Greenbelt Movement.</p>	<p>Partially accepted</p> <p>PRODOCs do in general provide timelines for PCCs.</p> <p>The rest is accepted and was actually proposed to have a PCC in the field (in Siem Reap in case of LNP), and plans were made to also include a field visit with the participation of FAO technical staff from RAP. COVID19 restrictions did not allow for this event to happen. However, it is accepted that this should be made the norm.</p>	Include field based PCCs in the PRODOC.	Formulators and Government	Future projects	No

Management response to the Evaluation of GCP/CMB/036/LDF					03/2021
Evaluation Recommendation	Management response Accepted, Partially Accepted or Rejected	Management plan			
		Actions to be taken, and/or comments about partial acceptance or rejection	Responsible unit	Time frame	Further funding required (Y or N)
Recommendation 7. To FAO. For more effective cross-sectoral cooperation and partnerships on key issues of mutual concern towards climate change adaptation, future projects should develop a detailed strategy for stakeholder engagement and clarify roles and responsibilities of implementing partners via LoAs. (Conclusion 3, 4, 6) Similar future projects should develop a detailed strategy for stakeholder engagement to guide and enhance the multi-sectoral coordination at all levels, expand the involvement of additional (co-) financing partners and the private sector, as well as with additional NGOs, donors (projects) to ensure sustainability, scaling-up and long-term impact. Letters of agreement with the implementing partners should specify the areas of collaboration, responsibilities, budgets and the working relationships. Work plans and activities of each of the implementing partners should be shared in the planning process so that all partners will understand each other works.	Accepted	Planning at formulation and inception phases.	Formulators and government	Future projects	Yes
Recommendation 8. To GEF and FAO. Projects including FFSs and CSA should use the many resources/training materials etc. that FAO has developed to speed up implementation of innovative activities and also share its lessons on widely available platforms. (Conclusion 11)	Partially accepted Existing tools and methodologies were used. In addition, local conditions require a lot of adaptability and often new approaches need to be devised. More efforts could have been set in motion in the initial phases of	Stock taking of existing tools early on during project implementation phase.	Project teams	Future projects	No

Management response to the Evaluation of GCP/CMB/036/LDF					03/2021
Evaluation Recommendation	Management response Accepted, Partially Accepted or Rejected	Management plan			
		Actions to be taken, and/or comments about partial acceptance or rejection	Responsible unit	Time frame	Further funding required (Y or N)
<p>Where a project includes approaches such as FFSs and CSA, the project implementing team should work using the strong, proven foundations of approaches, resources and materials available on the FAO website (and elsewhere), rather than reinventing the wheel.</p> <p>For example in this project, a Master Trainer should have been contracted very early on to train groups of FFS facilitators in each province, then the FFSs methodology could have been scaled-up prior to the MTR, thus demonstrating clear results by project closure.</p> <p>It is recommended that the guidance documents the project prepared in English, are tailored in Khmer and/or pictorial versions, for local contexts where the local language is spoken and literacy rates are low.</p>	the project to identify existing tools and facilitate their adoption and adaptation during the implementation phase.				
<p>Recommendation 9.</p> <p>To FAO</p> <p>Projects should place greater emphasis on facilitating experience sharing, particularly in the later years of implementation. (Conclusion 6, 11)</p> <p>Projects such as LNP are repeatedly referred to as pilots. As a prerequisite this entails that they include exchange of experiences/lessons and cooperation with other government/donor projects for mutual learning and support on WSM, FFSs, CSA, CPAs, CFs, Savings and Loans Groups – to avoid reinventing the wheel in each project. This should also include enhancing coordination, communications and learning opportunities with other civil society organisations and the private sector.</p>	<p>Partially accepted</p> <p>It requires more funds, and specific expertise, such as Outreach and Communication officers, whose importance is often overlooked. It requires more funding allocations and the need often to cut down in other areas.</p> <p>We tend to forget that project beneficiaries and stakeholders might have a totally different mindset than that of the project formulators. This makes sharing of lessons</p>	Include these in planning and early implementation phases. More attention should be spent to understand the mindset of the project recipients, in order to communicate with them as peers. Can the way we communicate, share knowledge and make outreach be the most appropriate and effective in each location? Evidently not, therefore there is a need for understanding people mindset and communication	Formulators and project staff	Future projects	Yes

Management response to the Evaluation of GCP/CMB/036/LDF					03/2021
Evaluation Recommendation	Management response Accepted, Partially Accepted or Rejected	Management plan			
		Actions to be taken, and/or comments about partial acceptance or rejection	Responsible unit	Time frame	Further funding required (Y or N)
<p>The inception phase of future projects should include the development of communications and knowledge management (KM) plans to enhance understanding of the project. Clear and systematic communication and KM activities are vital for the effective functioning of projects during implementation (e.g. having an archive of project reports to help new staff) and contribute to the sustainability of activities, sharing of lessons learned and scaling-up which ought to continue after project closure.</p> <p>Project lessons should be widely shared – for example through the development of materials tailored for school children / teachers / youth groups using the wide range of media – and adding to web databases (e.g. WOCAT and HIMCAT, 2020).</p> <p>These plans should also be updated throughout a project, as aspects can change (e.g. the LNP ProDoc included development of a website, but this is no longer allowed by FAO).</p>	<p>learnt and good practices lengthy and sometimes even failing.</p>	<p>modalities in the different project locations.</p>			
<p>Recommendation 10.</p> <p>To FAO.</p> <p>FAO should systematically carry out assessments of gender, youth and other vulnerable group needs. Furthermore, it should integrate gender, youth and vulnerability specific indicators and targets relevant to project objectives and consistent with the FAO Policy on Gender Equity and Environmental and Social safeguard. (Conclusion 5, 7, 8)</p> <p>Within the results framework of any similar future project, FAO should systematically carry out assessments of gender,</p>	<p>Partially accepted</p> <p>This is useful but requires more funding and space within the usually tight budgets of similar projects.</p>	<p>Early planning.</p>	<p>Formulators</p>	<p>Future projects</p>	<p>Yes</p>

Management response to the Evaluation of GCP/CMB/036/LDF					03/2021
Evaluation Recommendation	Management response Accepted, Partially Accepted or Rejected	Management plan			
		Actions to be taken, and/or comments about partial acceptance or rejection	Responsible unit	Time frame	Further funding required (Y or N)
<p>youth and other vulnerable group needs, and integrate gender and vulnerability specific indicators and targets relevant to project objectives and consistent with the FAO Policy on Gender Equity and Environmental and Social safeguard.</p> <p>Involvement of youth (for example via school teachers) as project beneficiaries has been proven in other projects to be effective, particularly as training a small number of teachers can have a huge multiplier effect over a few years and contribute to sustainability.</p>					
<p>Recommendation 11.</p> <p>To FAO (in collaboration with recipient countries) and executing partners.</p> <p>Given the importance the GEF places on co-finance, FAO-GEF project teams should keep track not only of the amounts of co-finance materialised by GEF projects but also track what these funds were used for. (Conclusion 9)</p> <p>As highlighted in the latest GEF Guidelines on Co-Financing (GEF, 2018), it is advised that projects with co-financing <i>identify, document, monitor and report on sources and types of co-financing</i> as well as how the co-financing contributed to the achievement of the project objective and outcomes.</p>	Accepted	Increase M&E efforts and regular exchanges with co-funding partners during implementation.	Project teams	Future projects	No