

Project Evaluation Series

**Evaluation of the project
“Strengthening community resilience to climate
change in Blantyre, Zomba, Neno and Phalombe
districts”**

GCP/MLW/067/EC

Annex 1. Terms of reference

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Abbreviations and acronyms

CCA	Climate change adaptation
CDEF	OED's Capacity Development Evaluation Framework
CdR	"Les caisses de résilience"
CO	Country Office
CPF	Country Programme Framework
EM	Evaluation Manager
ET	Evaluation Team
M&E	Monitoring and evaluation
OED	FAO Office of Evaluation
TOC	Theory of change
UNEG	United Nations Evaluation Group

1. Background and context of the project

1. Malawi's ecosystems are particularly vulnerable to the impacts and effects of climate change, thereby further negatively affecting the livelihood of Malawians. The population's vulnerability is exacerbated by socio-economic and demographic factors such as slim economic base, dependence on rain-fed agriculture, heavy reliance on biomass energy, high levels of poverty and low adaptive capacity at the community and national level.
2. An analysis of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO)¹ of various climate related effects in Malawi over time and space indicated highly heterogeneous distribution of effects. For example, there have been significant differences in terms of rainfall and temperature variability across the four geographical regions of Malawi in the last 28 years, with the southern and central regions recording relatively low level of rainfall and higher variability in comparison with the North.² These climate effects have negatively affected food and nutrition security, availability of water for domestic and agricultural use including for watering livestock; forage availability; and has led to the conversion of originally perennial water bodies to being seasonal; loss of biodiversity and related ecosystem services; and overall environment degradation, especially soil erosion and siltation of water bodies.
3. The project "GCP/MLW/067/EC" titled "Strengthening Community Resilience to Climate Change in Blantyre, Zomba, Neno and Phalombe Districts" was initiated in June 2015 and will conclude in June 2020. The project set out to support vulnerable communities in southern Malawi, and to potentially strengthen their resilience to climate variability. The project was to target change through sound safety nets and productive investments, and was aligned with the holistic approach of Climate Change Adaptation (CCA), which addresses multiple threats to livelihoods with short- and medium-term interventions.
4. The project was implemented in the framework of FAO's innovative integrated community centred approach: *Les Caisses de Résilience* (CdR).³ This is an integrated approach designed to strengthen the resilience of farmers' groups to shocks and crises by developing their capacities in three areas: social, technical and financial.
5. Briefly, as stated in the project document, the project's objective was to increase the capacity of vulnerable Malawian communities to adapt to adverse effects of climate change and contribute to poverty reduction in rural areas. This was to be achieved through two specific objectives:
 - i. Increased resilience of vulnerable communities and households to climate variability and change. Four results are envisaged:
 - good agricultural practices and technologies for greater resilience to climate change adopted by 70 percent of targeted population;
 - HIV and gender sensitive nutrition practices improved;
 - diversity of sustainable livelihoods and regular income generating activities increased; and
 - conservation and safeguard of biodiversity enhanced.

¹ FAO EPIC's team computation based on Malawi IHS3 and ECMWF ERA INTERIM reanalysis model

² Project doc GCP/MLW/067/EC

³ French for "resilience fund"

- ii. Increased institutional adaptive capacities for scaling up and replication. Two results are envisaged:
 - institutional knowledge and advocacy for good governance on resilience to climate change improved; and
 - coordination and monitoring of actions on climate change adaptation and resilience programming streamlined.
6. The project was designed to consolidate linkages and synergies amongst ongoing resilience building and social protection programs led by government. The direct beneficiaries of the project are 240 Community outreach groups targeting 172 800 individual resource users and 440 community-based facilitators and district staff. The total budget of the project is USD 6 084 071 and was fully funded by the European Union.
7. Implementation of the action was to be coordinated by FAO in close consultation with Total Land Care (TLC), Evangelical Association of Malawi (EAM) and the Government of Malawi.

2. Evaluation purpose and scope

8. The main purpose of the final evaluation is to provide accountability to the donors and partners by assessing FAO's contribution to the *Strengthening Community Resilience to Climate Change* and to draw lessons from the implementation processes that could inform future decisions by the European Union and FAO on the formulation of a second phase or follow-up intervention. The intended audience for the evaluation are the donor, FAO management, government, project management team and project developers and implementers.
9. The evaluation will assess the entire implementation period of the project, from June 2015 to June 2020. The evaluation will cover all key activities implemented and planned, as described in the project document, at ministry, district and community level in the four project districts (Blantyre, Zomba, Neno and Phalombe). The evaluation will assess the efficiency, relevance and achievements of the project, identify its strength and weaknesses, and the lessons learnt.

3. Evaluation objective and key questions

10. The objective of the evaluation is to assess the appropriateness of the project design and approach, assess the project results and its achievements, and identify success key areas and lessons learnt. The FAO Office of Evaluation (OED) will lead the evaluation and put together an evaluation team.
11. The following questions will guide the evaluation:
 - i. To what extent was the intervention aligned (or has it adjusted over time) to FAO and national policies and strategies, and global goals of CCA, and the needs of the vulnerable communities / most vulnerable within those communities?
 - ii. Were project activities timely implemented, and were there sufficient management procedures to affect efficiency, including regular monitoring and evaluation? To what extent has the project built on existing agreements, initiatives, data sources, and synergies, complementarities with other projects and partnerships, etc. and avoid duplication of similar activities of other groups?
 - iii. To what extent did the project effectively address gender equity, decent labour and other human rights and equity aspects?
 - iv. What is the likelihood of achieving long-term and sustainable results through the project? *E.g. how has FAO collaborated with partners and to what extent did the project develop partnerships or enhance existing ones? Has the partnership strategy been appropriate and effective, or promoted stakeholder engagement in the project?*
 - v. Was the project design appropriate for delivering the expected outcome? E.g. what was the relevance of using the innovative integrated community centred approach - (CdR) for this project? Was it effective in linking the social, technical and financial dimensions in mutually reinforcing ways? Were there unintended results, either positive or negative?

4. Methodology

12. These terms of reference (TORs) for the evaluation were developed based on a preliminary analysis of the project documents, and scoping interviews with the monitoring and evaluation team from FAO Malawi.
13. The project document does not propose any theory of change (TOC) but has a detailed results matrix. The work plan of the project also links activities to outputs. The evaluation team will construct a TOC which will be further refined and if possible tested during the inception mission. The TOC will be included in the evaluation report.
14. The evaluation team will undertake additional preparatory review and analysis which will result in further refinements in the scope, key issues, tools and methods to be employed in the evaluation which will be presented in the inception report. The evaluation questions will be contextualized and addressed further in an evaluation matrix that will define sub-questions according to the different activities, indicators, and the data collection methods. The matrix will then help identify the questions to address during data collection phase at field level.
15. The evaluation will adhere to the United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG) Norms & Standards⁴ and will be conducted in line with OED's Evaluation Manual and methodological guidelines and practices. To address the evaluation questions, the team will conduct a desktop review of the available documents from the project, including baseline and annual reports, monitoring and evaluation reports. The evaluation will rely on a variety of data collection tools per evaluation question. OED will also regularly consult with the project and the monitoring and evaluation (M&E) teams in FAO Malawi, and donors where necessary.
16. The evaluation will also rely on the extensive secondary data collected by FAO's M&E system and its reporting exercises, as well as the assessments and surveys conducted by an external research institution, the University of Greenwich. This will be complemented by field visits where qualitative data will be collected through focus group discussions and household interviews with project beneficiaries, and with key informants.
17. Several tools will be used to address the evaluation questions, as briefly explained below. To address the question on relevance and alignment of the project to people's needs, FAO and national, even global strategies and objectives, background documents such as the project documents, interim narrative reports and the Country Programme Framework (CPF) will be analysed.
18. To assess effectiveness, the evaluation will interview and conduct focus discussions with beneficiary groups, including the most vulnerable within those communities, and will take into consideration issues of gender, sex, social status, HIV and human rights issues.
19. To compare and contrast the project objectives and results, the evaluation team will also hold interviews with non-beneficiaries where possible. Separate discussions will be held with government officials, project and implementing partners and/or local NGOs involved in the project.

⁴ <http://www.uneval.org/document/detail/21>.

20. Considering the subject matter and the number of household beneficiaries, the evaluation team will rely on purposeful sampling strategies to the selection of beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries to avoid confirmation bias. This will be further detailed in the inception report.
21. To assess the sustainability of the project, the evaluation will conduct a desktop review of the national commitments, and secondary data and will conduct interviews with national counterparts. The team will also assess the synergies of the project with other ongoing FAO programmes/projects, national initiatives, or those of other implementing partners carrying out similar action. Interviews and focus group discussions with beneficiaries will also help to assess the projects sustainability and long-term results.
22. To assess the capacities that have been developed as a result of implementing the project (i.e. individual, organizational and functional capacities, outputs and outcomes), the evaluation will make use of OED's Capacity Development Evaluation Framework,⁵ which further enhances the incorporation of a systematic approach to evaluate capacity development in FAO.

⁵ <http://www.fao.org/3/ca5668en/ca5668en.pdf>.

5. Evaluation team composition and profile

23. The evaluation is managed by the Country Office with support from OED, and will be conducted by a team of external, independent evaluation experts (e.g. national and/or international) with relevant competencies in areas such as climate change adaptation, social protection, gender and human rights, microcredit and rural finance, HIV/AIDS and other crosscutting issues.
24. OED and the CO is responsible for the finalization of the TORs with inputs from the Evaluation Manager (EM) and the Evaluation Team (ET). The CO is responsible for the identification of the evaluation team in consultation with the OED EM. The ET and/or EM will finalize the evaluation inception report that details the evaluation process, evaluation matrix, methodology, mission plan, etc. The EM with the ET will also facilitate the mission planning and identify important stakeholders to be engaged with throughout the evaluation.
25. The CO in coordination with OED will review the final draft report provided by the EM for Quality Assurance purposes in terms of presentation, compliance with the TORs, timely delivery, inclusiveness and conformity of the evaluation process, quality, clarity, soundness of evidence provided and of the analysis supporting conclusions and recommendations in the evaluation report.

6. Evaluation products (deliverables)

26. The key evaluation products the evaluation team is responsible for are the evaluation matrix, the evaluation inception report, the draft and final reports. An evaluation brief or other knowledge products will also be produced if relevant.

7. Evaluation timeframe

27. The evaluation was launched in July 2019, but was delayed due to COVID-19 and currently it's aimed that the completion of the evaluation will be in March 2021. The timeline as indicated below will be reviewed periodically by the Evaluation Manager and adjusted as necessary.

Task	Dates
Development of TORs	September 2019
Identification and recruitment of evaluation team	4 December 2020
Inception report	15 December 2020
Data collection	16 – 30 January 2021
Data analysis and report writing	15 February 2021
First draft for circulation	15 February 2021
Final draft for circulation	28 February 2021
Validation of the recommendations	15 March 2021
Final report publication	30 March 2021
Management response	30 April 2021

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