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Community level legal education and support to help rural women secure and exercise land and resource rights, and address HIV-AIDS related tenure insecurity – GCP /MOZ/086/NOR

Validation report of the Project Terminal Report

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Acronyms

AMUDEIA	Associação das Mulheres Desfavorecidas da Indústria Açucareira
CFJJ	Juridical & Judicial Training Centre (Centro de Formação Jurídica e Judiciário)
CTA	Chief Technical Adviser
CTV	Centro Terra Viva
DNPDR	National Directorate for the Promotion of Rural Development (Direcção Nacional de Promoção do Desenvolvimento Rural)
HACT	Harmonized Approach to Cash Transfer
HIV-AIDS	Human immunodeficiency virus infection - Acquired immunodeficiency syndrome
HQ	Head Quarters
ITC	Community Land Initiative (Iniciativa para Terras Comunitarias)
LEGN	FAO Legal Office Development Law Service
LoA	Letter of Agreement
Logframe	Logical Framework
LTU	Lead Technical Unit
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
MR	Management Response (to the mid-term evaluation report)
MTE	Mid Term Evaluation
N/A	Non Applicable
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
OED	FAO Office of Evaluation
ProDoc	Project Document
RBM	Results Based Management
STA	Senior Technical Advisor
TA	Technical Assistance
TORs	Terms of Reference

Executive Summary

ES 1. The project "Community level legal education and support to help rural women secure and exercise land and resource rights, and address HIV-AIDS related tenure insecurity - GCP/MOZ/086/NOR", hereinafter abbreviated as GCP/086, is the most recent of a series of FAO initiatives implemented, to a large extent, in partnership with the Juridical and Judicial Training Centre (CFJJ) of the Ministry of Justice of the Republic of Mozambique as well as in partnership with a number of National NGOs. GCP/086 started in March 2010. After a number of revisions and no-cost extensions, the Project has been extended from 36 to 50 months and is expected to be finally concluded in April 2014.

ES 2. In August 2012, a Mid Term Evaluation (MTE) of GCP/086 was carried out, managed by FAO Office of Evaluation (OED) and the Management Response (MR) was finalised in September 2012. In early 2013, considering the proximity of the MTE to the final evaluation and overlap of report deadlines as well as the limited financial resources available, instead of a final evaluation, the FAO and the donor agreed on a validation exercise of the Terminal Report (TR). The validation, carried on by an Independent Expert, took place in March 2014, upon completion and clearance of the GCP/086 Terminal Report, and included a mission to Mozambique.

ES 3. It is important to stress that the validation process of GCP/MOZ/086/NOR was to be a test for all parties concerned, and OED above all. All parties were well informed that this was not going to replace an evaluation in terms of depth and breadth of data gathering and analysis. The main role and purpose of a project validation process is to be a cost-effective exercise that confirms the reliability of the Terminal Report. The analysis is built on and continuously refers to the Terminal Report and its added value is largely informed by the quality of the Terminal report itself.

ES 4. The Validation included an "Overall assessment of the Terminal Report quality" for its compliance with standard guidelines and the stakeholder's expectations, against a six-point scoring scale. Overall, the TR was found adequate / satisfactory (scoring 4/6). The Validation also confirmed the progress registered since the MTE and found that eight (8) out of the nine (9) valid MTE recommendations have been fully implemented.

ES 5. Regarding the main project achievements, the Validation has observed that both the MTE and the TR mostly addressed achievements at activity level: these were undoubtedly many and in fact exceeded the established quantitative targets. However, the TR in general does not provide solid evidence on results achieved beyond activity level, apparently due to the absence of systematic information collected at the level of output indicators. Strengths and weaknesses, too, were not explored in sufficient depth, which represents a missed opportunity for learning.

ES 6. Regarding the five core evaluation criteria, the validation exercise has permitted to fully endorse the conclusions of the TR on Relevance, Efficiency and Effectiveness. It also aligns with the TR and the MTE when pointing out that Impact could be assessed over a longer period of time by an ex-post evaluation. Regarding Sustainability, the Validation has found that a number of concerns raised by the MTE have since then been addressed, yet, the long-term financial sustainability of the CFJJ courses as well as the institutional framework underpinning paralegals remain a main challenge requiring further action.

ES 7. The Report also includes a final, succinct sub-chapter elaborating on "lessons learned with regard to the validation process".

1 Introduction

1.1 Background to the validation process

1. The project "Community level legal education and support to help rural women secure and exercise land and resource rights, and address HIV-AIDS related tenure insecurity - GCP/MOZ/086/NOR", hereinafter abbreviated as GCP/086, is the most recent of a series of FAO initiatives implemented, to a large extent, in partnership with the Juridical and Judicial Training Centre (CFJJ) of the Ministry of Justice of the Republic of Mozambique as well as in partnership with a number of National NGOs.

2. The initiative builds on two preceding projects, GCP/MOZ/081/NET, and GCP/MOZ/096/NET, funded by the Netherlands and implemented over almost a decade, which developed and consolidated the paralegal and district officer training programmes. GCP/086 aligned with this evolving programme to provide greater emphasis on women's rights and gender equality over land tenure, primarily through further training of paralegals nominated by community-based organisations and NGOs. GCP/086 worked alongside GCP/MOZ/096/NET for two years until that project closed in June 2012.

3. GCP/086 started in March 2010 and was due ending on August 2013, after 36 months. After a number of revisions and no-cost extensions, the project has been extended to 50 months and is expected to be finally concluded in April 2014.

4. In August 2012, a Mid Term Evaluation (MTE) of GCP/086 was carried out, managed by FAO Office of Evaluation (OED). The Management Response (MR) was finalised in September 2012. A follow-up report to the MR was due for August/September 2013, largely overlapping with the project closure and preparation of its Terminal Report (TR).

5. In early 2013, FAO project managers and the donor asked OED to carry out a final evaluation of the initiative, which would also include the assessment of the implementation of the recommendations made by the MTE. The evaluation was supposed to provide accountability and clear evidence on cost-effectiveness of project activities carried out. In consideration of the proximity of the MTE to the planned final evaluation and overlap of report deadlines, as well as the very limited financial resources available in the project budget for this purpose, OED proposed to carry out a validation of the project terminal report, clearly highlighting differences between the two exercises.

6. Validation of terminal reports is an innovation in OED. Until 2013, only validations of Follow-up Reports to Management responses to thematic and strategy evaluations had been carried out. However, it appeared that the same principle could be applied to project terminal reports. This would have a double purpose. First, a validation process should enhance the cost-efficiency and effectiveness of the evaluation function whenever the approach ensures sufficient evaluative coverage and assessment and a fully-fledged evaluation would not be feasible or cost-effective. Second, it is expected that validation processes could also contribute to improving the quality of project terminal reports, through greater transparency and accuracy of information.

7. It was thus agreed that OED would manage the validation processes of the Terminal Report of GCP/086. The purpose of the process was defined as two-fold: i) to enhance

accountability of reporting on project's results and achievements; and ii) to contribute to improving corporate learning and performance. Further, by being the first, the validation process would also contribute to the improvement of the approach and methodology for future similar exercises.

8. It is important to stress that the validation process of GCP/MOZ/086NOR was to be a test for all parties concerned, and OED above all. All parties were well informed that this was not going to replace an evaluation in terms of depth and breadth of data gathering and analysis. The main role and purpose of a project validation process is to be a cost-effective exercise that confirms the reliability of the Terminal Report and its added value is largely informed by the quality of the Terminal Report itself. The analysis is built on and continuously refers to the Terminal Report. Through the triangulation of additional data gathered, the validation process allows establishing strengths and weaknesses of the TR in reporting on what happened and what was achieved by the project. It can also support, or disclaim, the conclusions and recommendations included in the TR, if any. Last, a validation process may also contribute to identify areas and challenges for further action, if sufficient information is contained in the TR.

9. The validation took place in the month of March 2014 and included a mission to Mozambique. In compliance with the mandate of a validation process, the Terms of Reference (ToR) foresaw focusing on the assessment of the Terminal Report, which was to include explicit and detailed reference to the findings of the Mid-Term Evaluation, as well as to the progress made, and constraints met, in the implementation of the accepted recommendations.[1]

1.2 Methodology of the validation

10. The validation process started upon completion and clearance of the GCP/086 Terminal Report. The process included the following main steps:

- desk Review of the Terminal Report, the Mid Term Evaluation report, the Management Response and other background documents;
- field work in Mozambique;
- preparation of a draft report, circulation to stakeholders for comments and finalization.

11. The key stakeholders listed below were fully included in the process:

- the Government of Mozambique, namely the Ministry of Justice and the Juridical and Judicial Training Centre;
- the Norwegian Embassy in Mozambique, in its capacity of donor;
- FAO Lead Technical Unit (LTU) and the project task force;
- FAO Mozambique;
- the project field team; and
- participants into project activities.

[1] See Annex 1, Terms of References and Annex 4, actual programme of the field mission.

12. The validation process was carried out by an external consultant, who had not been involved in any capacity, in the project or in the MTE. The Consultant was recruited by OED and funded from Project's budget.

13. The validation exercise was mostly based on an attentive review of the following documents:

a. the MTE report;
b. the Management Response;
c. the Terminal Report; and
d. the Project Document (ProDoc).

14. Further, in order to gain an overall understanding of the context, extensive meetings were organized with relevant stakeholders (see Annex 4) and additional background documentation (see Annex 3) was analysed. Collaboration was particularly close with project staff and the Chief Technical Adviser (CTA) in Maputo.

15. The validation process followed a fairly precise mandate, paying adequate attention to properly interpret and implement the spirit of the exercise, judiciously avoiding a de facto equivalence between validation and evaluation. Therefore, the validation exercise has largely relied on the Terminal Report and its mainstream standpoint. It is also in this sense that data triangulation has to be interpreted. The validation mostly looked at data coherence within the Terminal Report and between this, the MTE report and the ProDoc.

16. Communities participating into project activities could not be visited by the Validation Consultant although this had been initially foreseen and was included in the validation methodology. The reason for this was the incompatibility of the validation mission agenda with the paralegals' and community's activities. Interviews with participants into project activities have been carried out to fill this information gap: in the view of the validation team, this change did not undermine the validation process and its results.

2 Overall assessment of the Terminal Report quality

17. This section analyses the quality of the terminal report. This assessment is a precondition for all future analysis. The quality of the terminal report, the value of its analytical content, the logical causalities between activities and results and clear evidence and verifiable information sources provided in the document are the starting point for the validation of any statement included in the report itself.

18. According to the FAO Guidelines employed for this TR "*a terminal report should be a concise statement of the main findings, conclusions and recommendations of the project in relation to its stated objectives and the work done should be assessed rather than described (...) A terminal report is not intended to provide a descriptive account of the history of the project, as all stages of the project are systematically documented in the progress reports. (...) Although the project may have finished, the development process of which it was a part neither started nor finished with the project. The point of the terminal report is to contribute to this continuing process by looking forward while drawing on the*

lessons of the past".[2] It is worth mentioning that in late 2012, FAO issued a new Project Cycle Guide proposing a completely revised template for Terminal Report. The document, further updated in November 2013, was made available to all FAO country offices and Divisions in HQ.[3]

19. As mentioned above, as agreed by all concerned parties, the GCP /086 Terminal Report was to include explicit and detailed reference to the findings of the Mid-Term Evaluation, as well as to the progress made, and constraints met, in the implementation of the accepted recommendations.

20. The TR was assessed for its compliance with the standard description and the stakeholder's expectations, against a six-point scoring scale.[4] More specifically the TR:

a. complies with the core requirement of follow-up on MTE recommendations and reports to a good level on the MTE follow-up (5/6);
b. provides detailed information on activities although data reference is not always fully consistent and comprehensive (4/6);
c. provides weak casual analysis and critical approach as well as weak reporting on outputs and outcomes (3/6)

21. Therefore, the TR was scored at 4 out of 6, thus considered adequate. A number of formal features however could be improved. The TR tends to be descriptive and repetitive and does not allow easy navigation and quick identification of relevant information. Information sometimes remains vague. For instance, it does not clarify who conducted the "Impact Assessment on the Paralegals work in Gaza, Inhambane and Maputo's Provinces" under 2.1.7, Monitoring and Evaluation. Further editorial weaknesses undermine the strength of the report.[5] Overall, although the TR layout follows the reporting guidelines, it does not fully meet the spirit and purpose of the latter.

22. The Validation process also notes two key features of the TR:

- Strengths and weaknesses were not explored in sufficient depth, which represented a missed opportunity for learning. For example, the TR largely makes reference to exceeding targets regarding a number of activities undertaken, but lacks analysis and conclusions on final results and overall project cost-effectiveness.
- The TR focuses almost exclusively on activities: these were undoubtedly many and in fact exceeded the established quantitative targets. The text also provides some insights about the uptake and follow-up to the extensive trainings and awareness raising work. However, the TR in general does not provide solid evidence on results achieved beyond activity level.[6] This appears mainly to be due to the absence of

[2] "Field Staff Briefing Document"; FAO 2003; section 3.6. TF Terminal Reports; page 30.
[3] Guide to the Project Cycle Quality for Results Version, 8 November 2013.
[4] OED six-point scale: 1 Very Poor; 2 Poor; 3 Inadequate / Unsatisfactory; 4 Adequate / Satisfactory; 5 Good; 6 Excellent.
[5] Examples of editorial gaps are as follows: sub-chapter 2.1.7, Monitoring and Evaluation, is developed under chapter 2.1, Results; the list of acronyms is missing; paragraphs are not enumerated; references do not comply with standards and the list of publications / project's normative products does not contain reference to author and year of publication.
[6] The Output level in the project LogFrame corresponds to the outcome level in a typical logical framework language. In this respect, the MTE did raise the issue of RBM and the need for a logframe periodic updating, under Recommendation 9; this however did not require any action by the project. Considering that the MTE

systematic information collected at the level of output indicators. Therefore, albeit there is anecdotal evidence that the project is achieving at least a number of its intended output/outcomes, the TR cannot provide substantive evidence about these.

23. The Validation process undertook the standard exercise of comparison between actual and expected results as shown in Annex 5, "Matrix of Results' Validation", based on the ProDoc logframe, the MTE report,[7] the Management Response and the TR.[8] The matrix provides an overall picture of the Project achievements.. The MTE report had also raised some comments in this respect. The matrix also contains an assessment for each block of activities by Output (validated or not) and additional comments that may be useful to a critical / learning approach, including for future action.

24. The TR encompasses a specific section entailing valuable information on follow-up to the MTE recommendations. At the same time, on some relevant issues, the TR remains silent. For example, the project's functional and operational relations with GCP/MOZ/096/NET do not emerge[9] and the same applies to the HACT[10] modality of implementation. Thus, overall, there is a certain imbalance in the type of information provided and the TR lacks a concise assessment of the project's performance, based on the identification of the main results and underpinning elements of evidence.

3 Validation findings

3.1 Validation of the TR regarding the MTE Recommendations (action taken, implementation)

25. According to the TR, eight[11] out of the nine valid MTE recommendations have been fully implemented.[12] Significant and evidence based progress has been registered and successfully reported for a number of relevant issues raised by the MTE. The Validation process allowed confirming these statements in the TR without reserve.

26. However, for a small number of recommendations, the TR does not provide sufficiently strong evidence of compliance with the recommendations or information on their follow up. This is the case of Recommendation 6 regarding a regulatory framework on paralegals. The TR refers to the National Association of Paralegals whereas, the MTE, paragraphs 79 – 80, refers to an "accreditation" from the Ministry of Justice and "institutional support" for working at community level, considering such measures relevant to the "sustainability of the work initiated by the Project". Although the recommendation was addressed to the Government its implementation is still relevant for the project.

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did recommend a logframe revision yet at activities' level, the validation assumes the outputs foreseen as actual.

[7] MTE report, Annex III, List of Project outputs, iv, Summary of outputs and activities and evidence of achievement.

[8] TR, Appendix II (i), "List of Project Outputs".

[9] GCP/MOZ/096/NET is only mentioned under sub-chapter 1.1., introduction and it is totally missing under sub-chapter 1.2, official arrangements, whereas its weight has been much relevant as exposed in the MTE report.

[10] HACT: Harmonized Approach to Cash Transfers

[11] According to the TR, the fulfilled recommendations (R) are: R1, R2, R3, R4, R6, R7, R9, R11.

[12] According to MR, from the initial 11 R, one has been rejected and one is considered N/A.

27. With regard to Recommendation 7, during the validation exercise, several elements provided by the Project CTA as well as the main partners, i.e. the CFJJ and the two partner NGOs, clearly showed consistent progress in the establishment of a database related to the training activities. This was carried out by the project in collaboration with the partner NGO. This recommendation addressed to the CFJJ, was considered not applicable by the MR.

28. In relation to Recommendation 11, concerning Outputs and Activities, the TR is not sufficiently clear. Whereas complex and outstanding issues such as follow-up activities at community level cannot fully be addressed in short term, the validation exercise has clearly confirmed the efforts made and progress registered since the MTE. In practice and coherently with the MR, the TR refers to four Letters of Agreement (LoA) signed with two NGOs, for these to provide follow-up support to the paralegals.[13] Admittedly, some inconsistencies seem to exist on the concept of "follow-up". Moreover, the MTE referred to a "follow-up system", considering relevant the Project assistance to the NGOs, in order to develop such a system. The validation team is of the opinion that the building blocks exist, yet the system has still to be built and consolidated.

3.2 Validation of the TR regarding main project achievements

29. The validation found the TR to be consistent and coherent with the MTE. The TR fully adheres to the MTE also by quoting some of its sections, and reports accordingly.

30. As mentioned above, both MTE and TR mostly addressed achievements at activity level and consequently so did the validation.[14] In this context and in relation to the main project achievements, the TR is considered good, although there is some room for improvement as discussed in the following paragraphs.

31. In limited cases, reporting is not sufficiently clear and information provided on achievements is fairly generic, which undermines the overall credibility of the TR.[15] Some data do not adequately underpin evidence of performance. For example, point 2.2.2, community meetings and follow-up technical support for paralegals and communities, states that "*The project has fully achieved its objectives in this main activity area, and largely exceeded the targets established. The work of community based paralegal has proven to be very effective in promoting structural changes in negative and discriminatory aspects of*

[13] For instance, it is worth mentioning the work of CTV, including: a- the creation of a data base with all paralegals trained by the CFJJ/FAO paralegal training programme; b- In close collaboration with project staff, preparation of a refreshment training for paralegals – the Paralegal Training Level II (three-day workshop on land and natural resources rights and gender issues). These workshops were organized also to transmit practical information and tools to be used by the paralegal during the community meeting; c- - Field support for paralegals in community meeting; d- - Creation of a free call landline for those paralegals who need further assistance or support; and e- - In close collaboration with the project, creation of advocacy campaign materials.

[14] See Annex 5.

[15] For example: Page 41: hundreds of people were trained and thousands of people have been reached in community meetings carried out all over Mozambique; Page 50: From the paralegals side, different factors are highlighting the sustainability of their role and activities at community level. Paralegals associations have been created, cases of violations of community rights were brought to courts. Some of them were included in the communities' management structures, and other managed to obtain land titles with the knowledge they gained through the trainings. A deeper reflection about this leads to the conclusion that what was done by these paralegals can be replicated by others over time.

customary tenure systems". Although the validation exercise can confirm that targets have been more than met in terms of activities, and that some encouraging results were shown, the TR does not provide any consistent evidence of "structural changes" nor of a straightforward cause-effect relationship between Project's activities and any "behavioural change in negative and discriminatory aspects of customary tenure systems".

32. The same goes for point 2.1.8, Other outcomes from the work of paralegals, Land titles for vulnerable women. The TR does not provide sufficiently well-structured and consistent data that may constitute evidence supporting its statements on "underlying sustainability", replicability and impact and not all data presented are sufficiently strong and properly woven through causal relations.

33. Last, some weaknesses in reporting on achievements at output/outcome level rely on the lack of a well-structured logframe and a solid monitoring system. The MTE stated that "*Both GCP/096 and GCP/086 have encountered problems as a result of CFJJ's failure to put in place satisfactory M&E systems*" and considered that an impediment to a RBM approach. Although the project carried out some significant actions in this area, including three studies focused on impact, the Validation considers that the MTE's observation on M&E was still relevant due to a reporting gap on the overall M&E of the project.

34. Future programme action should therefore include the set-up and use of a simple yet solid monitoring system that relies on SMART indicators at the required level of results.

3.3 Validation of the TR regarding the evaluation criteria (relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, sustainability and impact)

35. The TR includes sub-chapter 2.2.6, on the five core evaluation criteria; namely, Relevance; Efficiency; Effectiveness; Impact; and Sustainability. Here below, each criteria is commented upon.

36. **Relevance**: according to the TR, and by extensive reference to the MTE, the Project is clearly in line with the needs and priorities of beneficiaries at community level, with the Constitution, the MDGs (MDG 1, 3 and 6), the CFJJ policies, the donor's priorities and the FAO Strategic Framework. Hence, the Validation fully endorses the TR on this criterion.

37. **Effectiveness**: according to the TR, the training of district officials and paralegals, aimed at enabling them to work with communities in strengthening women's land rights, has "the potential for far-reaching, positive long-term effects". A number of underpinning elements provide solid evidence of Project's effectiveness; inter alia: a- the scope and content of the training as well as its adherence to the principles of non-formal adult education; b- a number of training publications; c- active involvement of trainees during the training; d- building, during the training, of constructive relationships between officials and paralegals; e- the number of training sessions well exceeded the targets. The TR is consistent with MTE also on this criterion, which is therefore fully endorsed by the Validation process.

38. **Efficiency**: the TR presents additional elements making a good effort to provide evidence of progress made on efficiency. The TR makes reference to the Project's start-up problems, both at FAO and at CFJJ level, and how these have been overcome, consequently ensuring "effective and efficient execution of all activities". The TR also makes detailed reference to financial management, purchase of equipment, training costs and the LoAs with

the implementing partners. The TR is consistent with MTE also on this criterion, which is therefore fully endorsed by the Validation process.

39. **Impact**: In relation to the MTE, the TR adds more elements. The validation confirms that several factors identified in the TR are relevant to long-lasting effects and positive impact of the Project's achievement. For example, training of human resources at the level of the public administration and the grassroots level typically has a long-reaching potential. Considering the positive "immediate impact"[16] observed at the level of trainees, there are reasons for trusting that the specific training contribution given by the Project will have a positive impact in the promotion and protection of land and natural resources rights in Mozambique. Of course its degree and character will much depend on the overall developments in the sector.

40. Moreover, the Project's relevant contribution to the "Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure Land, Fisheries and Forest in the Context of National Food Security (VGGT) and to the identification and dissemination of Lessons Learned and Best Practices at HQ and FAO Member States level provide clear evidence of impact.

41. At the same time, the Validation confirms the TR statement according to which "*it is only over a longer period of time that it will be possible to see a real change with more equitable access to land and natural resources*"[17] and aligns with the MTE, according to which, firm conclusions about long-term impact deserve time and consequently "*an ex-post evaluation should seek to determine the extent to which planned Outputs attributable to the Project are in place or expected to be in place in the longer term*".

42. **Sustainability**: the TR features a number of elements supporting paralegals' programme sustainability. The validation confirms the potential long-lasting effect the training may have to the end users, i.e. communities who benefit from better informed Administrators and from Paralegal support.[18] Additionally, the training packages developed and implemented with the Project support are pertinent and consistent with CFJJ mandate and consequently have fully been mainstreamed into CFJJ programme. Similarly, the project core elements have been mainstreamed into the programme of the partner NGOs, strengthening their capacity on gender and land and natural resources rights. All these are relevant underpinning factors of sustainability.

43. Indeed, the MTE had raised several concerns on sustainability, a number of which have since then been addressed (e.g. the national replacement for the international TA19 or the follow-up support of paralegals, currently ensured by a number of NGOs). Yet, the long-term financial sustainability of the CFJJ courses as well as the institutional framework underpinning paralegals remain a main challenge requiring further action.

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[16] See TR, MTE report and the impact study "Avaliação do Impacto dos Cursos e Seminários e do Apoio ao CFJJ e DNPDR no âmbito dos Projectos" GCP/MOZ/096/NET e GCP/MOZ/086/NOR Roland Brouwer; Felix Granados; Wim Neeleman; Andrea Serra EUROSIS, November 2012, commissioned by FAO.

[17] Page 53, point 3.2

[18] See also, point 5D of 10.GCP/MOZ/081/NET; Decentralized Legal Support and Capacity Building to Promote Sustainable Development and Good Governance at Local Level, (GCP/MOZ/081/NET), Mid-term Tripartite Evaluation, Final Report, Rome, May 2007

[19] The TR accounts some positive developments at CFJJ level. Additionally, the major weight given to the NGOs and the implementation of the LoAs may be considered a valid alternative.

44. The validation team is convinced that the project substantially contributed to rebuilt and reinforce CFJJ training interventions by strengthening the gender component of CFJJ paralegals and district seminar courses. Tangible signs for this progress can be assessed in the considerable increase in women participation in paralegals training raised up to 48% against the 18% baseline. Clear evidence is provided by the inclusion of the full women rights module among the training of paralegals. All stakeholders consider these gender mainstreaming tools of high quality. Additionally, the Project contributed to setting-up of normative products such as training material and voluntary guidelines. Eventually, the validation considers that FAO has had a catalytic role on such positive progress; which clearly requires consolidation and further action

45. Furthermore, according to the validation team, the project achieved a considerable level of sensitization of both State and Non State Actors and thus contributed to the promotion of gender equality, as well to enhancing equity and securing the rights of women in land and natural resources.

46. In the view of the Validation team, any future action has to capitalize on the substantial research work developed in the context of the FAO programme on land and natural resources rights. Despite several shortcomings, clearly exposed in the TR, the intimate link between training and research has been a fruitful intuition of the CFJJ, fully coherent with the "twin-track" model of empowerment, fostered by the FAO Program on land and natural resources rights in general and by the Project in particular. Considering the several conditions already in place, for promoting women's rights by the communities, including the critical mass of paralegals, it is worth exploring how a "Research – Training – Action" approach could be consolidated to more effectively address the gender dimension, exploring the potential and opportunities offered through the engagement of a larger scope of stakeholders, including the civil society, the private sector and the academic world.

47. The Validation team also considers that several elements are now in place to largely embrace a comprehensive and inter-disciplinary approach on land and natural resources legislation. This should fully integrate the principles embedded in the Voluntary Guidelines for both Right to Food[20] and Governance of Tenure[21] and build on Project's achievements as well as on FAO's multi-year Programme on Land and Natural Resources Rights and working experience with SETSAN.[22]

48. Regarding behavioural change in gender equality, some encouraging results were attained by the project, although cultural changes cannot be attributed to a specific project action, being this a long-lasting and complex process.

49. Finally, the Validation Team believes that it is important to keep providing support to the GoM and to the paralegals to ensure growing and stabilization of results. However, evidence also shows that the long-term financial sustainability of the CFJJ trainings and the institutional framework underpinning paralegals remain a main challenge despite the series of

[20] Voluntary Guidelines to support the progressive realization of the right to adequate food in the context of national food security; Adopted by the 127th Session of the FAO Council November 2004

[21] The Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land, Fisheries and Forests in the Context of National Food Security; officially endorsed by the Committee on World Food Security on 11 May 2012

[22] SETSAN Technical Secretariat for Food Security and Nutrition

projects undertaken so far. It is not up to the Validation team to make specific suggestions on this, although it appears that a different type of intervention should be proposed and designed, in which the strong and clear commitment by the governmental institutions, should be the building block for future action, together with the inclusion in the process of both Civil Society and Private Sector.

50. The validation team believes that a similar type of approach would also contribute to reinforce and stabilize cultural changes and strengthening of women's land rights.

3.4 Lessons learned with regard to the validation process

51. This was the first time OED carried out a validation of a Project terminal report. Lessons learnt that will be fully integrated in any future similar exercise, included:

- The limitations of a validation process should be even more clearly stated from the beginning to all parties, to ensure that no expectations are raised that cannot be met;
- A validation process has very limited potential to expand on the evidence about project accomplishments, beyond what contained in the terminal report;
- A validation process can, in some circumstances, contribute to identify further areas for work and challenges.

Annexes to the evaluation report

Annex 1. Evaluation Terms of Reference
Annex 2. Brief profile of evaluation team members
Annex 3. List of documents reviewed
Annex 4. List of institutions and stakeholders met during the evaluation process;
Annex 5. Matrix of results' validation