

Annex 6: Assessment of Technical Cooperation Projects

TCP/SRL/3101: Formulation of a national agricultural biotechnology research and development programme and investment plan

July 2007 – June 2009

\$163,413

Background and relevance

Realizing the potential of biotechnology, the Council for Agricultural Research Policy of the Ministry of Agriculture in Sri Lanka took the initiative to obtain FAO assistance in the formulation of the national biotechnology research and development (R&D) programme and investment plan. The purpose of the project was to facilitate the application of biotechnologies in Sri Lanka to improve agricultural productivity and production and to contribute to the enhancement of food security in the country. The objectives were: to develop a national agricultural biotechnology R&D programme based on the assessment of current capacities and on the needs and priorities of the country; develop an investment plan for 2010-2016 for biotechnology R&D for presentation to potential funding agencies and/or the Government; and strengthen human capacities in agricultural biotechnology R&D.

The Government of Sri Lanka (GoSL) pinned hopes on the development of biotechnology to increase agricultural productivity, given that its population is to expand by 5 million in the next 30 years without a similar gain in cultivable land area. Moreover, the GoSL viewed agricultural biotechnology as a strategic industry to deal with an agricultural labour supply that is increasingly scarce or expensive. For these reasons, the project was relevant.

Design

A national survey was to be designed for assessment, which would deliver SWOT analysis presented in workshop form to relevant scientists, public/private technicians, managers and other stakeholders.

The project design included the following activities and outputs:

- Analysis of current R&D, which would prioritize needs;
- Investment plan through 2014;
- Five training courses to 30 national scientists to lay the groundwork to build capacity in the country;
- “Incentive scheme” to stimulate scientific interest in agricultural biotechnology.

The revised project budget included more than \$100,000 on expenses for consultants; \$20,000 for trainings; \$12,000 for equipment; and another \$50,000 for tech support and operating costs. Midway through the project, \$11,000 was reallocated from international to national consultant assignments, and the project was extended from one year to two years, ending in June 2009. Several international and national consultants facilitated several workshops and awareness creation sessions on biotechnology and the legal background needed for implementation by both the state and private sectors. Several ministries were to draft the national biotechnology R&D program plan, then prepare a matching plan for investment.

The design appears to have been far too ambitious given the budget and time available and the dearth of expertise within Sri Lanka. The government’s lack of enthusiasm in seeking funding also indicates that investment planning may not have been sufficiently participatory.

The project appears to have been supply-driven without sufficient needs assessment and ownership by government authorities.

Results

Many of the expected outputs were achieved including the development of an investment plan, which was submitted to the relevant authorities in 2009 to seek external donor and/or local funding. However, very little change has taken place: the government has neither received external funding nor implemented the plan.

Impact and sustainability

The project had a negligible impact and few, if any, sustainable results. Given how few people in Sri Lanka are adequately trained to undertake even basic conventional research in a vastly segregated and compartmentalized agricultural research system, Sri Lanka would have been ill-prepared to undertake a project such as this. FAO should have assessed the available human resource base for agricultural research at pre-design phase before embarking on this project.

Evaluation criteria	Score
Relevance	4
Design	2
Results/effects	3
Impact & sustainability	2

1=very poor; 2=poor; 3=inadequate; 4=adequate; 5=good; 6=excellent; n/a: not possible to assess/not applicable

TCP/SRL/3102: Strengthening national capacity for hybrid rice development and use for food security and poverty reduction

October 2007 – December 2009 \$263,847

Background and relevance

Rice is a staple crop in Sri Lanka, and the government believed that a relatively low rice yield and high production cost were key contributors to persistent rural poverty. In 2006 when the project was conceived, Sri Lanka was experiencing stagnant gains from high-yielding varieties of rice. With evidence from China and other Asian contexts, the idea of hybrid rice was advanced as a potential novel source of increased productivity, which could help achieve national food security and self-sufficiency goals and to avoid a need for greater imports of food grains. On this basis, the GoSL requested a TCP to strengthen national capacity in hybrid seed technology and its transfer to farmers. Government also saw the potential for greater water-use efficiency in group farming schemes through the use of hybrid varieties. In this way, the project was highly relevant to the GoSL and to FAO's mandate.

Design

The project was designed to stimulate national capacity in seed production research and commerce and for up-scaling technology transfer to farmers. The objectives of the project were to improve the knowledge and skills of national researchers, extension workers, seed production supervisors and seed growers on hybrid rice development and usage through training and participation in on-farm evaluations, and to strengthen the facilities for hybrid rice development and hybrid seed production.

Demonstration in farmers' fields and field schools would strengthen awareness and spread knowledge. The workplan for the first year called for training sessions and publications; overseas tours on hybrid seed production in Southeast Asia; field days; and workshops for farmers, policymakers, donors, private sector representatives and community stakeholders. Outputs in the second year included hybrid seed production for demonstration and field days, a concluding national workshop, and the completion of a medium-term national plan for hybrid rice production.

Early in the project, priority was given to overall hybrid seed production output, and it was recommended that a national extension agronomist be brought on board. The expert reported in August 2008 that *no* commercial operation was ready to produce hybrid seeds; no private companies was able to market the seeds throughout Sri Lanka; seed growers were not skilled enough for large-scale production, hybrid seeds were unpopular among farmers, the extension system appeared uninterested in promoting hybrid rice, and few quality control mechanisms were in place. The extension agronomist also highlighted shortcomings in the market for hybrid rice, including the perception that most companies believed it would be unprofitable.

It would appear from the agronomist's analysis that the project design was based on many false assumptions, and that much more time should have been devoted to a broad-based assessment prior to commencement. As well, the capacity development aspects of the project were far too ambitious given the limited time and resources available.

Results

By March 2009 a hybrid rice expert reported improvements in national rice research facilities and a correlate improvement in breeding systems, germplasm, and varieties of rice; and increased farmer interest. However, complaints were voiced about the purity of the breeding lines, and the private sector showed relatively little interest in hybrid rice seeds. Intra- and inter-institutional cooperation was reportedly low, contributing to a lack of innovation. The training level and conceptual awareness of most young scientists was also inadequate. A lack of responsibility/accountability in government agencies stymied progress in seed production.

A FAO seed consultant reported at the end of the project that although farmers' knowledge of the advantages of hybrids had increased as result of the project, they preferred a different variety of hybrid seed, one of shorter duration.

The project produced a final "medium-term plan" which consisted mainly of recommendations and best practices in large-scale hybrid seed production, with a projected budget of roughly \$4.5 million over its 5-year span.

Even though many of the project's outputs were achieved, little documented change occurred, other than raised awareness and knowledge, according to project reports.

Impact and sustainability

The TCP had relatively little impact and even less sustainability of results for the following reasons. At present, the national average paddy yield is sufficiently high with the use of conventional rice varieties to provide a reasonable level of income to farmers. In the high potential dry zone where most paddies are found, yields derived from conventional rice varieties are much higher than in the intermediate and wet zone areas. The popular conventional varieties are time-tested and have assured markets because of their consumer

preference and palatability. In comparison, the hybrid rice varieties produced locally and test-grown in farmers' fields are reported to be inferior in yield levels, despite marginally high yields reported in research trials. Researchers would have to address these issues before farmers could be convinced about hybrid rice.

Marketing the hybrid rice for consumption was another obstacle faced by the farmers owing to the lower palatability and consumer preference. The project's hybrid rice technology is unlikely to improve the food security of the country and alleviate poverty.

Hybrid rice seed production technology is new in Sri Lanka and is technically and resource-wise cumbersome and rice researchers have yet to evolve sustainable hybrid rice seed technology for the country. Private seed companies experience these difficulties in their own farms and have resorted to contracting seed farmers, often with mixed results. Given the commercialization initiatives and incentive packages the GoSL offers to the private sector through its Seed Policy of 1996, hybrid rice seed would have been an ideal candidate for the private sector if the seed production technology were better. Given the dearth of trained human resources in agricultural research, the project's goals to improve yield levels of hybrid and to perfect seed production technology remain distant.

Evaluation criteria	Score
Relevance	5
Design	3
Results/effects	2
Impact & sustainability	2

1=very poor; 2=poor; 3=inadequate; 4=adequate; 5=good; 6=excellent; n/a: not possible to assess/not applicable

TCP/SRL/3103: TCP Facilities (Fishery)

February 2007 – September 2008 \$149,561

Background and relevance

The TCP consisted of three components: 1) a review of aquaculture in Sri Lanka and advice to the MFAR on the formulation of a Master Aquaculture Development Plan; 2) support for the planning and implementation of the tuna long-line sector under the Ten-Year Development Policy Framework of MFAR; and 3) the formulation of a proposal for the project "Minimum standards for fish handling and reduced post-harvest losses in selected tsunami-affected communities" (GCP/SRL/056). The documents providing an in-depth description of the outputs and the processes by which they were formulated were unavailable for components 1 and 3, making it difficult to assess the TCP.

The TCP was relevant in that it sought to meet specific requests for assistance of the MFAR and because the components, particularly 1 and 2, were aligned to the GoSL's strategic aims for the fisheries sector. Regarding component 1, aquaculture for rural livelihoods improvement and commercial marketing has had significant scope for development in Sri Lanka. The MFAR has sought to expand offshore fishing for tuna and other export-market species, and under component 2, FAO provided targeted advice in a study to encourage greater environmental sustainability in the sector. Component 3 was relevant because post-harvest losses in fisheries, both before and after the tsunami, have been high, reducing the benefits in the form of revenue to fishers and consumer access to fish. However, it should be

noted that the evaluation of relevance of the planning done under components 1 and 3 should be distinguished from the assessment of the relevance of the projects to which it led.

Design

Sufficient information is unavailable to assess the design of the components, the first and third of which were scoping efforts to plan how FAO would provide assistance on the issues in question in the future. Regarding component 2, the study was technically in-depth and wide in its coverage of the sector and issues, according to the report produced and interviews with staff. Its objectives directly addressed the potential of tuna long-lining, outlining the various challenges and proposing recommendations.

Results

For component 1, a consultant assessed the successes, opportunities and constraints for aquaculture for selected areas and species, provided recommendations and formulated three project concepts for GoSL's and FAO's consideration. These were: 1) Southern Province Aquaculture Development; 2) Aquatic Resources and Livelihood Improvement in the Eastern Province of Sri Lanka; and 3) Improving the Management and Market Competitiveness of Shrimp Farming in the Northwestern Province of Sri Lanka. Under component 2, a consultant team produced a study of export fishing and tuna long-lining in the country, along with a set of well-conceived and detailed recommendations and strategies for the development of long-lining in alignment with IOTC and national conservation, management and compliance requirements. The result of component 3 was a GoSL-approved project for post-harvest loss reduction to benefit tsunami-affected fishers.

Impact and sustainability

Based on the concept for a Southern Province Aquaculture Development project, and with the support of the President of Sri Lanka, the GoSL and FAO developed a TCP project for it. Regarding component 2, sustainability and impact appear to have been modest; FAO submitted its recommendations on tuna long-lining to the MFAR under the Ten-year Fisheries Development Framework, but the Ministry did not appear to adopt any or provide a response to the report. The outcome of component 3 was sustained in that the proposal formulation effort led the Government of Spain, FAO and the GoSL to agree to a project (GCP/SRL/056/SPA) valued at over \$521,000 for improved standards for fish handling and reduced losses for selected tsunami-impacted communities.

Evaluation criteria	Score
Relevance	5
Design	n/a
Results/effects	5
Impact & sustainability	5

1=very poor; 2=poor; 3=inadequate; 4=adequate; 5=good; 6=excellent; n/a: not possible to assess/not applicable

TCP/SRL/3203: Aquaculture development in the Southern Province

January 2010 – December 2011.....\$37500

Background and relevance

The project was partly relevant to the goals of the GoSL and to the needs of the country in that it sought to develop commercial aquaculture when this sector had been relatively small in

the past. There has also been potential to utilize aquaculture in the country to improve rural incomes. However, the contextual assessment underlying the project and its location in the South could have been stronger. The TCP could have been more relevant for rural livelihoods improvement and had a greater impact on lower-income households had it been located in a region with higher aquaculture potential and levels of practice, such as in the east or northwest, where there is greater abundance of reservoirs and tanks. Though the interventions were largely at a strategic level, the focus of the project could have been improved. It was unclear whether it was aimed at smallholders or commercial aquaculture. The outcomes reflected little attention to livelihoods improvement.

Design

The lack of clarity regarding project's focus and relevance is reflected in the wide range of planned outputs. These ranged from supporting smallholder freshwater shrimp farming and studying the feasibility of commercial inland and coastal aquaculture to developing a master plan for the sector. In this sense, the project was overambitious. The project's stated objective was to improve the livelihoods of rural farmers-fishers. But several outputs, though valuable, had minor bearing on this objective. The ProDoc identified stakeholders and intended beneficiaries, though it is unclear how the project involved them in implementation or design. The ProDoc might have also outlined how NAQDA and the smallholder beneficiaries would follow up on the outputs. It also failed to provide a monitoring and evaluation plan to show the project outcomes would be tracked and measured.

Results

The project developed a freshwater shrimp demonstration facility, disseminated improved techniques to farmers, improved the capacity and knowledge of NAQDA to expand or introduce cultivation of shrimp, sea bass, milkfish and other species, developed several public-private partnerships, and formulated business plans for various aquaculture species, an aquaculture master plan and a country aquaculture investment plan. Given that the project operated at a higher level of feasibility assessment and planning for the sector's development in the south, and based on the outputs, it would be worth examining in the future the longer-term effects of the project.

Impact and sustainability

The impact and sustainability of the project are yet unknown. However, the extent to which the project is likely to bring a direct benefit on poorer households is limited. Only freshwater shrimp is within the financial reach of smallholders among the aquaculture species the project promoted. Cultivating the commercial fish species would be difficult for poorer households given the technology and feed costs they involve. Moreover, these species are not inland but coastal. The project will more likely lead to benefits for better-endowed private entities. The aquaculture investment plan was also designed to promote commercial aquaculture, though farmer organizations have some potential to participate. The long-term changes the master and investment plans bring to rural livelihoods remain to be seen.

Evaluation criteria	Score
Relevance	4
Design	4
Results/effects	4
Impact & sustainability	n/a

1=very poor; 2=poor; 3=inadequate; 4=adequate; 5=good; 6=excellent; n/a: not possible to assess/not applicable

TCP/SRL/3204: Dairy cattle and buffalo improvement

March 2010 – December 2011 \$335,000

Background and relevance

The purpose of this project was to improve dairy productivity in Sri Lanka, under the government development framework '*Mahinda Chintana*' which aims to make Sri Lanka 50 percent self-sufficient in milk by 2015. *Mahinda Chintana* gives the Ministry of Livestock and Rural Community Development's Department of Animal Production and Health (DAPH) the mandate to improve the efficiency of dairy production. Only about 20 percent of demand is supplied domestically; most milk powder and dairy products are imported. Sri Lanka's dairy sector has the following characteristics: relatively low productivity; low demand for liquid milk because of its poor keeping quality and the fact that people are now used to the convenience of powdered milk (though this appears to be changing); farmers' lack of information about their own animals' milk production and reproductive potential; mediocre breeding programs featuring poor quality sires; and limited records. Sri Lanka's dairy production is dominated by small scale producers with 2-5 cows. The government recognizes that a vibrant small holder dairy industry could support large numbers of poor rural households.

The project sought to obtain high quality bulls for artificial insemination (AI) and to establish a system for testing quality of milk and the production of registered cows. AI is relevant to small scale farmers who cannot afford to keep a bull. Selecting animals that are adapted to produce well in particular agro-ecological conditions is an efficient use of genetic resources, more so than importing live high producing cows from foreign countries at high cost.

Improved genetic potential needs to be matched by improved feeding and herd fertility management. The project addressed this need. By giving farmers information on management and the quality of their cows the project aimed to increase the value of the best quality animals.

Design

Proposed outputs included a database for recording lactation data; selection of superior dams and sires for mating; training DAPH staff and participating farmers in genetic/reproductive improvement and feed management; as well as reviewing, with stakeholders, the national strategy for cattle. Dairy cooperatives were to be among those involved in data recording, and district veterinarians were to report to a data management coordination unit at the national level.

The December 2009 project appraisal stated: "As this project has a component on feed management, the risk of cattle consuming unsafe feed should be considered and awareness raised and improved best practices as necessary." DAPH dealt with this perceived risk by contracting Department of Animal Science of Faculty of Agriculture, University of Peradeniya to survey project farms prior to developing training courses on dairy cow nutrition. A similar contract was signed with the Faculty of Veterinary Medicine and Animal Science (FVMAS) to work on cow fertility issues.

Project implementation began slowly with lengthy intervals between sample collection and analysis. Data recording was inaccurate at first. FAO utilized a national consultant to improve project activities by monitoring milk recorders. Milk analyzers had to be trained and equipped. FAO provided an international expert to provide training and advice on the data

analysis. The project began to improve its pace of implementation from March 2011. Technical oversight by FAO's Regional Asia and Pacific Office was crucial to improving the quality of implementation and increasing the profile of the project within DAPH. Awareness of the project was, however, poor and the project had no gender component.

Results

The project established a "Pedigree and Performance Recording Scheme". The scheme registered 2,900 milking cows (400 over target) from farms having five or more cows in milk, from 132 herds where a total of 4406 animals were sampled. The project established a data collection network covering 12 milk recording clusters, three milk analysis points and one data entry point. There were 9,010 data sets, 1,193 matings reported during this period and the time between data collection and entry was reduced from 95 days in June 2010 to seven by November 2011.

Training was carried out for milk recorders and for farmers though on farm field days. The University of Peradeniya trained mid-level technicians, including veterinary staff, on aspects of nutrition and fertility. There is no documented feedback from trainees on the usefulness or results of the training.

A system for feeding back information on milk fat and protein levels to farmers was established. This has resulted in farmers retaining higher performance cows or selling them for a premium. DAPH established a contract mating scheme where top producing females are artificially inseminated and bull calves bought for semen production.

The project did not engage with stakeholders to discuss national strategy for dairy production. Sixty people participated in the project's closing workshop but this was primarily to review results. The project did not engage with broader stakeholders such private sector milk collection and processing companies or feed manufacturers.

Impact and sustainability

The project has shown good impact in the district where it has been implemented. Farmers are reported to be selling high-producing cows for a premium. This indicates that the farmers and the milk purchasing companies value the higher quality milk. It also suggests that farmers may be willing to purchase semen from improved bulls in the future, and this could pay for the costs of the AI service.

DAPH has committed Rs 13.1 million to continue funding the "Pedigree and Performance Recording Scheme" for the remainder of financial year 2011-2012. The department has submitted a proposal for Rs 250.0 million of extra funding to the Cabinet of Ministers to expand the scheme over the next five years to 12 districts, allowing the department to increase the use of certified improved stud bulls adapted to local conditions. Cabinet has yet to approve this initial proposal, submitted in July 2011.

One threat to future sustainability is the government's uncertain strategy on how to expand dairy production. On the one hand, DAPH is supporting the continuation of this project; on the other, the National Dairy Development Board is importing 4,500 high-producing dairy cows from Australia and the Army has recently proposed to import a further 10,000 dairy cows to be managed on army farms. This introduction of exotic genetic material to large farms has the potential to undermine the upgrading of local genetic potential for use by small- and medium-scale producers. There is urgent need for FAO and its RAP office to engage on

dairy policy and strategy issues within Sri Lanka. An opportunity for this engagement will occur in October 2012 when the thirty-fifth session of the Animal Production and Health Commission for Asia and the Pacific will be hosted by Sri Lanka. RAP is the secretariat of APHCA.

Evaluation criteria	Score
Relevance	6
Design	4
Results/effects	4
Impact & sustainability	5

1=very poor; 2=poor; 3=inadequate; 4=adequate; 5=good; 6=excellent; n/a: not possible to assess/not applicable

TCP/SRL/3301: TCP Facilities (Component #1) Preparation of inland fisheries sector development program and implementation strategy
April 2010 – December 2011....\$34,454

Background and relevance

The GoSL requested FAO to assist in preparing a comprehensive inland fisheries and aquaculture development programme for the Northern Province and to identify measures to ensure its quick implementation following a similar FAO needs assessment for agricultural and fisheries development in the Northern Province once the protracted conflict ended. FAO prepared the strategy for inland fisheries and aquaculture during the period from May to July 2010, involving field visits, consultations in the Northern Province and Colombo, and a workshop in Vavuniya on 17th June 2010 for around 40 participants from fisher societies and local government.

In light of the GOSL's goals to develop the country's aquaculture sector and its accelerated development plan for the north to assist populations returning after the civil conflict, this component was highly relevant. Aquaculture development also has a high natural potential in the north, has a history of smallholder practice there, and could contribute to the improved nutrition of poor, returning households.

Design

The program would have been better designed had it included an analyses of: 1) local institutions, including fisheries groups and households, and whether the returning families particularly female-headed ones, had the ability to participate in community-based aquaculture institutions; 2) the capacity of provincial and district government and aquaculture extension services; and 3) the region's markets for aquaculture products and supplies. The region's institutions, capacity and markets are known to be weak at present and their assessment would have helped to show how aquaculture for livelihoods improvement could be developed under the circumstances.

Results

FAO together with WorldFish and NAQDA produced the strategy document, *Inland Fisheries and Aquaculture in the Northern Province of Sri Lanka*, which outlines how technically, socially and institutionally aquaculture can be reintroduced and expanded commercially in the northern districts to improve rural livelihoods after the civil conflict. The plan, general in nature, could have benefited from a more detailed strategies for how the

different institutional, capacity and market challenges could be overcome in order to allow for more concrete implementation.

Impact and sustainability

An assessment on these criteria is difficult, owing to incomplete information. NAQDA states that it has adopted the strategy though some government staff from the region report that significant steps for aquaculture have not been pursued there. At the same time, FAO-Sri Lanka staff report that they are using the plan to guide their recovery work in the North.

Evaluation criteria	Score
Relevance	6
Design	4
Results/effects	4
Impact & sustainability	n/a

1=very poor; 2=poor; 3=inadequate; 4=adequate; 5=good; 6=excellent; n/a: not possible to assess/not applicable

TCP/SRL/3301: TCP Facilities (Component #2) Restructuring of National Institute of Plantation Management

April 2010 – December 2011....\$31,674

Background and relevance

The National Institute of Plantation Management (NIPM) has been an important training organization for the plantation industry involved in tea, rubber and coconut production. The NIPM has trained personnel in plantation companies and small holders to become planters of large companies and good managers of small estates, which dominate the landscape. However, shortage of government funding adversely affected the organization in recent times and a lack of qualified trainers specializing in the major crops also negatively affected training operations. The number of people seeking to upgrade their knowledge had declined and the relevance of the institution was in question. Many plantation companies were reluctant to utilize the services of NIPM when the project began.

The government wanted to resuscitate the NIPM by creating a public-private partnership that would evolve into a self-sustaining body and requested FAO's assistance.

The TCP supported an FAO international consultant and a national consultant who were tasked with assisting in developing a methodology for assessing the future role of NIPM. Their work was to contribute to the development of a framework for reform of the NIPM. The international consultant visited Sri Lanka where he met with stakeholders from May 9 to 13, 2011. He submitted his report to the Board of Management of NIPM. The Board has accepted the report on 19th March, 2012.

It is apparent from the available documentation that the TCP was relevant to the GoSL. It is, however, somewhat surprising that the GoSL did not hire its own consultant to undertake the assessment. The work of the NIPM is relevant to FAO's mandate.

Design

A positive aspect of the design was to pair the international consultant with a national consultant. However, it was unclear from the documentation how they delineated their roles

and whether the international consultant helped to strengthen the capacity of the national consultant. In hindsight, it may have been more effective to have taken a longer-phased approach to technical assistance, given the likelihood of a gap between this short study and the recommended follow up studies stemming from this brief consultancy.

Results

It is premature to determine the results of this TCP. The work funded by FAO under this TCP showed that problems related to NIPM are much broader than anticipated and that simply restructuring the Institute or improving its training courses would not necessarily resolve larger underlying problems.

Impact and sustainability

Although it is too early to assess the impact and sustainability of the TCP, the decision makers interviewed by the evaluation mission in Sri Lanka generally think that the resuscitation of the NIPM through restructuring is a steep order.

Evaluation criteria	Score
Relevance	4
Design	2
Results/effects	n/a
Impact & sustainability	n/a

1=very poor; 2=poor; 3=inadequate; 4=adequate; 5=good; 6=excellent; n/a: not possible to assess/not applicable

TCP/SRL/3301: TCP Facilities (Component #3) Backstopping the formulation of a Country Programme Framework for Sri Lanka April 2010 – December 2011....\$31,674

Background and relevance

Within the context of FAO reform stemming from the Independent External Evaluation (IIE) of FAO in 2007, FAO began paying greater attention to strategic programming at the country level. At the time, FAO was using the term National Medium-Term Priority Framework (NMTPF) for the country-level strategic programming documents. In 2010, FAO completed a strategic evaluation of FAO country programming which confirmed the important role of the NMTPF and recommended changing the name of the NMTPF to the Country Programming Framework (CPF). The evaluation called for a full integration of CPF planning with corporate planning and other country-level programming frameworks and pointed to the need for better harmonization and synchronization of the CPF with the country planning cycle and the UNDAF process.

The GoSL signed the original request for the TCP on December 1, 2010. TCP funds covered the costs of a Policy Officer's 3-day backstopping mission to Sri Lanka (April 27-29, 2011), as well as the costs associated with a national consultant who was tasked to lead the consultation process and draft the CPF over a period of 90 days.

The objectives of the TCP were not clearly articulated in the planning documents. The documents stated that extensive data collection and validation was needed in preparing the CPF because many different ministries were involved and many of the agricultural sub-sectors were the responsibility of provincial authorities. The three expected outputs were: 1) a

situation analysis, which includes analytical work aiming at identifying how to better position FAOR role and areas of intervention; 2) prioritization of FAO's assistance and constituency building through a consultative process with government counterparts, the UNCT and other development partners and FAO technical experts; and 3) draft CPF.

The CPF is highly relevant because, among other things, it “represents a milestone in the implementation of the decentralization reform of FAO and lays the basis for a more integrated and bottom-up approach to the FAO Programming Process” (FAO, 2012, *Guide to the Formulation of the Country Programme Framework*, p. vi). It is linked to the implementation of other components of the FAO reform, including the sub-regional and regional programming modalities, results-based management (RBM), the structure and functioning of decentralized offices, resource mobilization and the decentralization of the Technical Cooperation Programme (TCP).

Design

The evaluation mission concluded that TCP was poorly designed. The process used to develop the CPF was weak because the consultants:

- a) Met separately with four line ministries rather than with a national steering committee as suggested in the guidelines;
- b) Prepared no concept note during the initial phase, as required;
- c) Involved few programming staff in the development of the draft document, as recommended;
- d) Solicited little input from RAP during the early drafting of the CPF;
- e) Prepared an initial draft without substantive input from the FAOR; and
- f) Failed to meet timelines.

Results

Although it is too early to determine the results, impact and sustainability of the TCP, on the basis of the draft CPF which the evaluation mission examined in May 2012, members of the evaluation team concluded that it was deficient. Although the draft document was aligned with GoSL priorities in the four agriculture sub-sectors selected, it lacked vision and a clear strategy. Among the document's other weaknesses were an inadequate situation analysis, insufficient mapping of what other development actors are doing in the sector, no identification of FAO's comparative advantage, an incoherent theory of change, an absence of plans for partnerships with UN, NGOs and private sector groups, and little clarity as to FAO's focus, be it capacity development, direct household assistance and/or policy advice. The draft document was poorly written and showed no understanding of basic RBM principles and terms.

Evaluation criteria	Score
Relevance	6
Design	1
Results/effects	2
Impact & sustainability	n/a

1=very poor; 2=poor; 3=inadequate; 4=adequate; 5=good; 6=excellent; n/a: not possible to assess/not applicable

TCP/SRL/3301: TCP Facilities (Component #4) Damage and needs assessment in the flood affected eastern province

April 2010 – December 2011....\$19,795

Background and relevance

Severe floods in January and February 2011 affected more than a million people in 16 districts of eastern Sri Lanka, 190,000 of whom were forced to leave their homes. Overall damages amounted to \$50 million (Sri Lanka Flash Appeal, January 2011) with an indicative amount of \$22 million needed for the food security, agriculture and livelihoods sector. The TCP supported a rapid damage and needs assessment covering crops, livestock, inland fisheries and irrigation sub-sector in order to identify main economic and production constraints including input supply. The assessment was carried out in 2010 but the report was not completed in late April 2011.

Given the circumstances, the TCP was highly relevant to GoSL and to FAO, which had already proven its ability to respond quickly to other disasters and emergency situations in Sri Lanka.

Design

The TCP had a number of design weaknesses, particularly the absence of a requirement to assess gender-based needs and to recommend ways to target the most disadvantaged. The design appeared to rely heavily on secondary data without rigorous quality checks.

Results

The mission reviewed the assessment report and found the findings to be non-convincing owing, in part, to the poor quality of the report and lack of adequate information on the reliability of the data. No systematic methodology appears to have been applied. The assessment focused less on the human consequences, but with no gender analysis, and more on crop area and animal and asset losses. It appears that FAO undertook the assessment without much collaboration with UN, Government or NGO partners.

Although the initial UN Appeal indicated 298,000 households required agricultural support, a WFP rapid assessment in January found that 146,000 farmers needed assistance. The FAO needs assessment estimated 126,000 households had been affected. FAO received \$4.2 million for the flood response in the east to assist 60-80,000 rice farmers. Although two needs assessments found that crop farmers, livestock keepers and fishers had all been affected by the floods, FAO appeals and funded activities only dealt with crop production and irrigation needs.

Impact and sustainability

The evaluation mission concludes that the impact of the TCP was generally positive but only partially in that it was completed late and resources for the recovery came too late to support planting in the immediate post-flood *Yala* season. No agriculture sector funding for flood victims was provided until February 2011 when the CERF granted \$500,000. Even FAO's own TCP funding for the response came late as illustrated in the table below.

Project Symbol	Project Title	Locations (districts) or national	Actual Start Date	Actual End Date	Budget (USD)	Donor
OSRO/SRL/10/CHA	Emergency agricultural assistance to newly resettled and flood-affected farmers in the Northern Province -11-FAO-032	Mullaitivu, Kilinochchi, Mannar, Vavuniya and Jaffna.	2011-10	2012-06	1,400,000	OCHA/CERF
OSRO/SRL/09/EC	Emergency assistance and agricultural recovery for flood victims in Eastern Province, Sri Lanka	Batticaloa	2011-08	2012-04	925,925	European Union
OSRO/SRL/06/USA	Emergency Agriculture Assistance to Flood Victims in the Eastern and Central Provinces of Sri Lanka	Ampara, Batticaloa and Trincomalee	2011-03	2011-08	800,000	USA
OSRO/SRL/01/CHA	Emergency Agricultural Assistance to Flood Victims in the Eastern and Central Province of Sri Lanka - 11-FAO-003	Batticaloa, Ampara, Trincomalee, Anuradhapura and Polonnaruwa	2011-02	2011-08	500,000	OCHA/CERF
OSRO/SRL/07/UK	Emergency Agriculture Assistance to Flood Victims in the Eastern and Central Provinces of Sri Lanka	Ampara, Batticaloa, Trincomalee	2011-03	2011-04	158,479	UK
TCP/SRL/3304	Emergency assistance and agricultural recovery to flood victims in Eastern and North-Central Sri Lanka	Ampara, Batticaloa, Trincomalee, Anuradhapura and Polonnaruwa	2011-04	2012-03	500,000	FAO

Source: FPMIS

Evaluation criteria	Score
Relevance	5
Design	3
Results/effects	3-4
Impact & sustainability	3-4

1=very poor; 2=poor; 3=inadequate; 4=adequate; 5=good; 6=excellent; n/a: not possible to assess/not applicable

TCP/SRL/3301: TCP Facilities (Component #5) Assistance for the Agricultural Census in 2012

April 2010 – December 2011....\$50,414

Background and relevance

The GoSL implemented its first truly national population census in 10 years in 2012.¹ The GoSL requested TCP funding to assist the Department of Census and Statistics (DCS) with its plans to conduct the Census of Agriculture in 2012. The assistance included (i) basic training on the latest WCA 2010 FAO guidelines for census of agriculture (September 2012) and (ii) basic training on crop forecasting (early 2012); and (iii) undertaking a feasibility study on the use of GIS/remote sensing for the census of agriculture in Sri Lanka (Sep-Oct 2011).

¹ Owing to conflict, particularly in the Northern and Eastern Provinces, a census covering all districts in the country has not been possible in the last decades.

Many individuals interviewed by the evaluation mission identified a need to strengthen agricultural monitoring and evaluation systems for planning and policy making. A recent regional assessment found Sri Lanka agricultural statistical systems weak. Thus the requested TCP in support of the 2012 agricultural census was highly relevant to the needs of the country. It was, as well, highly relevant to FAO, which has a long, successful track record of providing such assistance to countries and for setting global standards.

Results

A TCP sponsored workshop in September 2011 in Colombo presented the published FAO World Program for the Census of Agriculture 2010 normative framework. Sri Lanka participants (25) at the seminar agreed to implement FAO standards for inter-country comparability of statistical categories, and expressed their wish to use CountrySTAT software. FAO recommended that the Agriculture Census be linked to Population Census household-level data, as well as to other agricultural surveys. The evaluation mission confirmed that the workshop took place and was well appreciated by government. Similarly the feasibility study has been completed. However, although the evaluation mission can validate such outputs, there is, as yet, insufficient documented information with which to determine results.

Impact and sustainability

At this stage, beyond the delivery of the planned TCP activities, it is difficult to determine the TCP's impact and sustainable results. The agriculture survey has not yet taken place, but there is a clearly expressed need from the Ministry of Planning and Finance, Department of Census and Statistics for follow up assistance.

Evaluation criteria	Score
Relevance	6
Design	5
Results/effects	n/a
Impact & sustainability	n/a

1=very poor; 2=poor; 3=inadequate; 4=adequate; 5=good; 6=excellent; n/a: not possible to assess/not applicable

TCP/SRL/3302: Strengthening the agricultural extension system through agro-enterprise development

September 2010 – October 2012 \$405,000

Background and relevance

The project stemmed from an earlier project (TCP/SRL/3202) that delivered a plan for improving market-oriented advisory services. The project's needs assessment viewed small- and medium-scale enterprise development as a pillar for economic growth among farmers and traders. Strengthening public sector institutions was seen as crucial for shifting from low-value to high-value agriculture. Extension services were weak at the time for reasons that included: thin coverage and poor mobility of extension workers; lack of training; low motivation and lack of incentives; weak supervision and monitoring systems; and the absence of a national policy or framework. Interdepartmental infighting between various overlapping public agencies also contributed to weak service delivery.

FAO comparative advantage in this context was its considerable experience in developing small-farmer-oriented extension services, as well as knowledge in the areas of market access and value chain analysis, and capacity-building to integrate small farmers into an emerging local or regional commerce.

For these reasons, the project was relevant to the GoSL, to many farmers, and to FAO, despite the challenging environment and potential risks.

Design

The project planned to establish local enterprises and raise market awareness at both farm- and trade-levels through capacity development. It aimed to strengthen village-level agricultural extension by building the capacity of two categories of extension workers, Agricultural Instructors (AIs) who possess a Diploma in Agriculture, and Agricultural Research and Production Assistants (ARPAs) who possess qualifications to become market-oriented technology transfer agents. The two categories of officers belonged to the same ministry but under two separate departments: AIs under the Department of Agriculture and ARPAs under the Department of Agrarian Services. The disparity in the qualifications of the two categories of extension workers was striking, and there were turf wars between the two cadres. However, the project proposed no effective mitigation methods to rectify the differences other than training to impart some parity.

Outputs were to include the capacity-building of extension workers and lead farmers in enterprise development and marketing; capacity-building of promoters and instructors in market linkages and information about financial institutions; and any organizational changes needed to streamline market-oriented extension among policy and program management priorities in government institutions.

All of the above was to be accomplished primarily through training workshops, including: a trainer-training course 15 officers; a 10-day course in data collection for 15 public and private district and regional agro-enterprise stakeholders; six-day training for 200 agriculture instructors; three-week trainings for 1,000 extension workers; and 21-day training for 900 lead farmers. What appeared to be lacking, however, were assessments of the conditions trainees faced when returning to their work, as well as follow-up to ensure that skills developed through training were applied on the job. Furthermore, the training modules used were too advanced for the average farmer. The selected enterprising farmers found it too difficult to follow the regimented course of training. Twenty-one days of continuous training also seem unrealistic for busy farmers.

It appears that community-based organizations (CBOs) had little or no involvement at planning and implementation stages of the project and that the socio-economic behavioral aspects of the farming community was inadequately considered in the project design. As well, the project had to undergo a major revision, which adversely affected implementation.

For these reasons, the project design was far from ideal.

Results

As the project is ongoing, it is somewhat early to determine results. It appears, however, that many of the project's outputs were achieved. For example, in 2010, market linkages were identified in consultation with private sector actors and five "cluster" areas for

implementation were identified for each of nine districts. The inception workshop was attended by 60 participants. A March 2011 consultancy by a marketing extension expert, contributed one training manual and another training handbook, both on agricultural marketing and post-harvest handling for farmers.

Impact and sustainability

Although too early to assess the project's impact and sustainability, there is cause for concern owing to many design flaws. That the project selected the least risky sites for piloting raises questions about its sustainability.

Evaluation criteria	Score
Relevance	4
Design	1
Results/effects	2
Impact & sustainability	n/a

1=very poor; 2=poor; 3=inadequate; 4=adequate; 5=good; 6=excellent; n/a: not possible to assess/not applicable