

EVALUATION
of the
ROLES OF AGRICULTURE PROJECT
(ROA)

**Project funded by the Government of Japan and managed under the
supervision of the FAO Agricultural and Development Economics Division
(ESA)**

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Executive Summary

- i) This evaluation of the “Roles of Agriculture” (ROA) Project was undertaken at the end of Phase I of the project in order to: (a) inform and provide guidance for the design of Phase II; (b) provide insights for strengthening related FAO work; and (c) provide accountability to FAO and the donor on the outcomes of the project.
- ii) The three members of the Evaluation team participated in the ROA International Conference which took place in Rome (20-22 October 2003) and met with donor and FAO representatives as well as with the eleven Country team leaders, FAO staff and consultants involved in ROA. During the Conference a questionnaire was distributed to the Country team leaders and researchers to capture their views on the project. Thereafter, the three Evaluation team members went to Ethiopia while only two (the team leader and the FAO Senior Evaluator) went to India and Morocco. In the three countries, they met with the ROA team, government officials and development partners. It is on these bases along with the review of the massive ROA documentation that this report has been elaborated.
- iii) The Evaluation team assesses the ROA project as very relevant and timely, as well as having developed a very adequate project design within the limits set by FAO management (in particular in relation to trade). Given the relative newness - for FAO and the research community - of the research on the roles of agriculture in developing countries, the methodological framework built by the ROA central team was adequate in terms of the modules selected, although the delays in some of the work had implications at country level. Work could now be improved along a more systemic approach in a second phase at the sub-national level so as to illuminate better the relationships between modules and, as a consequence, inform better the roles of agriculture at the national level while offering a stronger basis for national syntheses and international comparisons.
- iv) The project did suffer some delays and budgetary problems, but overall it is assessed as efficient and effective, particularly at the country level, with no major implementation issues identified. The project benefited from technical support from FAO Headquarters and the ROA consultant team. Communication between ROA researchers is seen as adequate, in spite of English being used as the dominant language.
- v) The outputs of ROA are impressive. Due to the very limited time granted to the Evaluation team to review the documentation, only a few observations and suggestions are made in the report on the syntheses of the modules made available for the October Conference. They are reflected in the recommendations, particularly on the module on “culture”, which has triggered many discussions among ROA researchers.
- vi) Answers to the questionnaires filled during the ROA October 2003 Conference by ROA researchers and discussions by the Evaluation team in the field point out the great importance to be given in a second phase to the policy implications of ROA research and the necessity of policy dialogue. Increasingly complex situations in a globalising world require research on the possible/likely consequences of the options offered to policy-makers as well as an increase in the range of options as a result of creative research. This tendency of building more intense communication between policy-makers and researchers is reinforced in a project of systemic ambition such as ROA which attempts to go beyond individual subject matter research and self-contained sectoral or sub-sectoral policies to identify in relation to

agriculture, environment and rural life the ripple effects of policy interventions throughout the fabric of society.

- vii) The Evaluation team, accordingly, recommends a second phase oriented towards policy issues, with research addressing those aspects which are necessary to strengthen the opportunities of systemic analysis offered by ROA. Instead of financing pieces of research relatively isolated from each other, ROA should, in the view of the team, be an opportunity for FAO to revive and take further in the context of globalisation the heritage of institutional economics including social, political and cultural analyses too long neglected by development institutions. The greatest danger is that Phase II could become more rather than less fragmented in its approach than Phase I, diminishing the greatest potential contribution from ROA of examining the linkages and inter-actions between policies.
- viii) As well as research becoming more integrated it is essential to ensure increased linkage to actual and potential policy setting and the communication and the interface with policy makers this requires. Integrated with other ESA work, attention to communication, synthesis and inter-country analysis should all occupy a more prominent place in Phase II than has been the case in Phase I.
- ix) It is recommended that both from the point of view of integrating the research on the various roles into a systemic framework and from the perspective of addressing the effects of policy changes, the research focuses in Phase II on, at least, two representative agro-ecological zones in each country, one in a relatively low productivity area, with extensive poverty and weak infrastructures, and the other in an area where there is already a relatively high level of intensification or a good prospect for intensification and employment generation from agriculture and agriculture related industry. In many cases the higher potential area will be irrigated and thus, the research is, for instance, likely to juxtapose and compare the environmental issues of irrigation and intensified input use against those accompanying over-exploitation of a marginal fragile resource within the same policy framework, present or future. Such choices of areas should also, to a greater extent than in phase I allow cross-country comparisons. When the building blocks for in-country and cross-country comparisons are not available from phase I adjustments need to be made.
- x) It is recommended that Phase II should not artificially exclude trade and foreign exchange earning. Further study of the buffer role may not be justified. Instead of dissolving module 7 on “culture” into module 6 on “social viability”, it is recommended to develop a separate module on the agriculture and rural life related perceptions by different socio-economic categories, so as to better understand their social, economic and political behaviour for consideration in those contexts where national researchers consider it appropriate. This would help to better understand in various societies/countries how and why decisions are taken which reinforce positive or negative roles of agriculture as a whole or of types of agriculture.
- xi) It is recommended to give more importance to off-farm employment and migration (including seasonal migration), and to disaggregate more systematically the respective roles of women and men by type of work, as well as by age-groups and educational background.
- xii) In general a more flexible and tailored approach to the work to be carried out at country level is recommended for Phase II, while maintaining a framework for inter-country comparison.

- xiii) The Evaluation team lists at the end of this report, under the heading “concrete steps to be taken”, a number of suggestions as well as a sequence of actions to be taken ranging from the necessary synthesis study and stock taking by the central team to consultations and discussions with the country teams and relevant policy makers, conduct of national research, national policy seminars, international debates, widespread distribution of the main conclusions and dissemination of the most innovative work.
- xiv) The Evaluation team recommends that a project manager be available full time (or almost full time) and was pleased to gather from ESA that it is the intention to make a P4 officer under Regular Programme funding responsible for day-to-day management. While the majority shareholder of ROA will remain ESA, other divisions (ESC, SDA, TCA) should be involved to benefit from their experience and publicise ROA conclusions.
- xv) Given the scope of phase II, stemming from the preceding recommendations, extending the project over four years with no increase in budget and Regular Programme integration are discussed, as well as certain economies in research from a changed basis for funding, and reductions in modules and countries. The potential for South-South and South-North cooperation between research institutions at no cost to the project should be explored as well as the mobilisation of complementary resources.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

1) The Roles of Agriculture Project is funded by the Government of Japan and is managed under the supervision of the FAO Agricultural and Development Economics Division (ESA). The original budget for the project was USD \$3,490,870. In the fall of 2002, an extra USD \$909,130 was requested to cover costs for an International Conference, bringing the total project budget for Phase I to \$4,400,000.

2) The original project proposal included two three-year periods: Phase I and Phase II. Phase I is the subject of the present evaluation. A request for Phase II funding has been made to the Japanese government and is pending approval. The project began in August 2000 and was scheduled originally to be completed in July 2003. In order to conclude all project activities, a request was made and granted to defer the project termination date to December 2003.

3) The project's objective is to provide policy-makers with insights and information for analyzing the various roles of agriculture within their societies and for making better informed policy decisions conducive to sustainable agricultural and rural development. The ROA project is interdisciplinary in nature and draws from concepts and methodologies of welfare economics, environmental economics, sociology and anthropology.

4) The project document defines the following outputs:

- methodologies for the identification and quantification of the roles of agriculture in developing countries, and for analyzing their policy implications; and
- a series of case studies of the roles of agriculture in developing countries conducted on the basis of the methodology cited above.

5) The major activities and outputs of the project include:

- a) *Analytical Tools*: The preparation of an *Analytical Framework* defining research issues, analytical concepts and methodological and theoretical guidelines for identifying, qualifying, quantifying and valuing the diverse roles of agriculture.
- b) *Country Case Studies*: Eleven country case studies (Chile, China, the Dominican Republic, Ethiopia, Ghana, India, Indonesia; Mali, Mexico, Morocco, and South Africa) to carry out research on seven topics.
- c) *Conferences, Workshops and Symposia*: Key meetings organised include the March 2001 "First Expert Meeting on the documentation and measurement of the roles of agriculture in developing countries"; the July 2002 "ROA Team Leaders Meeting", eleven "National Inception Workshops" at the beginning of the country case studies; eleven national country workshops at the end of the country studies; a regional workshop for the Latin American Region (May 2003); two symposia at the International Association of Agricultural Economics in Durban South Africa (August 2003); a joint OECD/FAO workshop comparing the OECD Multifunctionality Project with FAO's ROA project; and an International Conference in Rome, where all eleven country case studies were presented

(October 2003).

- d) *ROA Website*: The ROA project created and maintained a website to inform the general public about its activities. The URL is www.fao.org/es/esa/roa.
- e) *ROA Forum*: A ROA Forum website was established to allow central ROA team members and country case study team members to share information among themselves through a moderated chat room. Documents relevant to case studies as well as case study module reports are posted regularly on the site.
- f) *Publications*: Completed publications include as of November 2003
 - Expert Meeting Proceedings
 - Expert Meeting Summary Report
 - Analytical Framework
 - National Proposal Compilation
 - Team Leaders' Meeting Report
 - Approximately 65 module reports
 - Ten National Synthesis Country Reports
 - Six Module Overview Reports
 - Miscellaneous notes and methodological contributions

1.2 Purpose of the Evaluation

6) The purpose of the evaluation is: (a) to inform and provide guidance for the design of Phase II; and (b) to provide insights for strengthening related FAO work, including the formulation of specific recommendations and (c) provide accountability to FAO and the donor on the outcomes of the project. The detailed Terms of Reference of this evaluation are given in Annex A.

1.3 Evaluation Instrument

7) The three members of the Evaluation team participated in the ROA International conference which took place in Rome (20-22 October 2003). After hearing the views of the Alternate Permanent Representative of Japan to FAO-WFP, they met with the Assistant Director General, Economic and Social Department, the Director, Agricultural and Economic Development Analysis Division (ESA), the Chief, Comparative Agriculture Development Service (ROA Project Supervisor), the ROA Project Coordinator, the eleven Country Team leaders as well as with the other ESA Service Chiefs, FAO staff and consultants involved in the project. During the Conference a questionnaire was distributed to the team leaders and researchers so as to capture some of their impressions and reactions to the project. Field visits were limited by budgetary constraints to three countries not involving too high travel costs: Ethiopia, India and Morocco, however representative of a diversity of situations of the roles of agriculture. The three evaluation team members went to Ethiopia while only two members (the team leader and the FAO evaluation staff) went to India and Morocco. The team was provided with an impressive amount of material but, unfortunately, was given only a few days to review it and write this report. The evaluation being thus constrained by the time made available to the team, will, therefore, focus only on a few aspects which, in the team's opinion, need further thinking and adjustments.

2 RELEVANCE AND TIMELINESS OF ROA

8) The ROA project is clearly relevant to the priorities of FAO as specified in its Strategic Framework, adopted at the 1999 Conference, and which stresses the need to improve policy environments and institutional frameworks in developing countries in order to generate sustainable increases in the availability and accessibility of food and other agricultural products. It also closely relates to the Strategy Workplan 2000-2015, Strategy D, “Supporting the conservation, improvement and sustainable use of natural resources for food and agriculture” (paragraph 76), particularly those aspects which concern comparative analysis of the various roles of agriculture in terms of their contributions to equitable development. This objective has been mandated in the FAO Medium-Term Plan Programme 2.2.4 under the contribution to poverty alleviation, rural development and food security (p.2) which calls for “reports and technical publications providing comparative analysis of the economic and other roles of agriculture for equitable development”. The project also relates to Programme 2.5.3 on rural development.

9) More generally, ROA is consistent with the FAO interest in the transversality implied in sustainable development and in the more recent broadening of the Special Programme for Food Security towards socio-economic and policy issues. The objective of ROA, as stated in the Project brief, “is to provide policy-makers with specific insights, tools and information with which to analyse the various roles of agriculture within their societies and from which to make informed policy decisions in pursuit of sustainable agricultural and rural development (SARD)”.

10) The objectives of ROA appeared extremely or very clear to 24 of the 39 researchers and team leaders who attended the October Conference and answered a questionnaire on a six-point scale (0, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5) where 0 is No and 5 is Extremely important, valuable, timely etc.

11) Question: How do you evaluate the clarity of the objectives of the ROA project?

	0	2	3	4	5	Grand Total
Leaders	1		3	6	1	11
Researchers	1	1	9	13	4	28
Grand Total	2	1	12	19	5	39

12) Further discussions pointed out that, for some researchers who gave lower ratings, the research objectives were clear but they were somewhat hesitant about the modalities of communication and uses to and by policy-makers. Furthermore, cross-countries comparisons, a valuable research goal, are not part of the objective as stated above. The relevance of ROA for their countries was found extremely high or very high by 35 respondents out of 39 and extremely or very timely for 27 respondents out of 38.

13) Question: Is this research addressing a major problem area for your country?

	1	3	4	5	Grand Total
Leaders			7	4	11
Researchers	1	3	13	11	28
Grand Total	1	3	20	15	39

14) Question: How do you evaluate the timeliness of the ROA project for your country?

	2	3	4	5	Grand Total
Leaders		2	4	5	11
Researchers	5	4	14	4	27
Grand Total	5	6	18	9	38

15) ROA relevance and timeliness were confirmed during the field visits in Ethiopia, India and Morocco by the researchers and policy-makers met by the evaluation team, although in Ethiopia and India the very few policy-makers met were not yet informed of the research results and expressed their opinion only in relation to the objectives of ROA. In Morocco key policy-makers were not only well informed but very keen about taking advantage of the research results for enriching the present discussions on agricultural reforms and looking forward to a second phase intensifying exchanges of knowledge, ideas and possible scenarios/options with their likely economic, social, environmental consequences.

16) The 11 national reports bear further testimony of the relevance and timeliness of the ROA objectives, in particular in their sections devoted to the latest policy developments related to the agricultural sector and sub-sectors as well as to rural development and urban/rural relationships, policies which all have a bearing on poverty, food security and environment.

- **In summary, the Evaluation team assesses the ROA Project as very relevant and timely.**

3 ADEQUACY OF THE PROJECT DESIGN

3.1 General Approach: Modules and Scope of the Project

17) It has been recognised for many years that agriculture in developing countries has both positive and negative impacts going beyond production and value added, especially in areas of food security, poverty and the environment. It appears that the original project concept was conceived as looking mainly at positive externalities from agriculture (excluding agricultural trade), which were thought to be less well documented, and less so at negative externalities/effects (which are admittedly better known in relation to environmental degradation). The early discussion of this concept, including the input of staff of the ESA division, led to a more balanced approach. The project thus, broke new ground in attempting to explore in an integrated way for developing countries the near totality of agriculture's major potential roles and trade-offs or interactions between them and with the economy and society as a whole.

18) It is thus, a remarkable achievement that in only three years the project was able to clarify the roles to be studied, the broad methodology, provide outline methodologies for use in

examining each of the identified roles and complete 11 country case studies of, varying but, generally good standard, which contributed not only to identification of the importance of the roles but to their economic quantification.

19) In completing the case studies there needed to be a balance between results of direct relevance for the individual countries and contribution to an international understanding of the roles of agriculture in developing countries. In the first phase of the project it was not even clear if all the potential roles identified would be found to be of major significance across a range of countries, so it was correct to emphasise the achievement of internationally comparable results through providing a framework of seven modules with their attendant methodologies:

- Module 1: Recent Economic and Agricultural Policy Development
- Module 2: Environmental Externalities
- Module 3: Poverty Alleviation
- Module 4: Food Security
- Module 5: Buffer Role of Agriculture in Times of Crisis
- Module 6: Social Viability
- Module 7: Cultural Studies and Perception Survey

20) The inclusion of “culture” was an important addition to previous economic work on the roles of agriculture. As a general observation on the overall approach of ROA, the Evaluation team commends the project designers to have brought economics in a field which has often been dominated not only by political discourse but also by production specialists and engineers on the one hand and by sociologists and anthropologists on the other.

21) Team leaders and researchers involved in individual modules were asked the following question: “If you had been designing the project, would you have excluded any modules and would you have included any different or new modules, if so what and why?” Out of the 27 respondents, 5 would have excluded module 7 on culture, with no explicit reasons stated for 2 of them. As for the 3 others, one answer is qualified: “exclude culture as originally designed”, which implies that another approach to the module would eventually be acceptable; another respondent gives the following explanation: “I do not see the difference between social viability and culture”; a third respondent, involved in module 1, and therefore likely to be an economist, excludes module 7 “because it involves too much value judgment”, an answer typical of the difficulties of accepting each other’s paradigms in interdisciplinary projects involving economists and sociologists or anthropologists. One respondent only would have excluded the social viability module. The buffer module was not found fitting national circumstances in some countries. In the three countries visited by the Evaluation team let us simply note that the buffer module was not found relevant by the country team to the situation in Morocco, and, accordingly, not dealt with. As for the module on culture, a succession of difficulties did not allow its completion in Ethiopia; in India it was treated independently from the other modules while in Morocco good interactions took place between the researchers involved in the module on culture and the rest of the team.

22) A respondent to the questionnaire distributed during the Rome October 2003 ROA meeting suggested “to bring in the rural non-farm sector as it affects projects for agriculture and for small farmers”, thus raising indirectly an important issue of a territorial approach versus sectoral and sub-sectoral approaches. While the overall policy synthesis for the countries

selected did to a greater or lesser extent address agriculture' role in economic growth, the decision to not comprehensively include as an area of focus the core function of sectoral value added and other economic roles such as agriculture as a source of investment for other sectors and contribution to the tax base could only lead to an incomplete picture in examining the relationships between roles.

23) The only other inclusions mentioned related to the “international environment” for one respondent and to an “international trade module” for another. The Evaluation team does not support the addition of such a module for a second phase but considers that trade issues should be dealt with when warranted in order to accommodate the views of some countries, including some Cairns Group countries, fearing that the documentation of the varied roles of agriculture in developing countries could be used as an argument for protectionism. These fears have not been borne out by the findings of the country studies. Several of the studies demonstrated, indeed, some value from trade liberalisation for job creation and growth of the agricultural sector and none of the studies demonstrated benefits from continued protectionism. These fears did, however, lead the project management to exclude issues related to trade from the scope of the study. Thus, a key role for many countries was deliberately excluded, i.e. foreign exchange earning. Foreign exchange is a critical brake on the development of most, if not all, developing countries, and is also critical for food deficit developing countries in their national food security. This also meant that aspects of the policy environment related to trade and direct and indirect subsidies were given inadequate attention in a few countries, although in general their sheer importance led to their consideration in the overall policy study (module 1 and sometimes others).

24) In the second phase the project should also, on the basis of the research results, examine where appropriate the different scenarios and options of various gradual subsidy reduction schemes and their likely consequences for different socio-economic groups and /or areas as well as the eventual compensation mechanisms to be devised for those negatively affected during a transition period.

25) Another problem revealed by the questionnaire addressed to team leaders and researchers is the definition of agriculture applied by country teams. Agro-industry was clearly excluded from agriculture in ROA guidelines but in fact some of the modules in some of the countries included parts of agro-industry within selected aspects of their studies. Thus, Chile included fruit and vegetable packing when examining employment and income generation effects of agricultural growth. Mexico on the other hand reported high levels of non-agricultural income in rural/farm households without breaking it down in any way as to how much was agriculturally related. The exclusion of agriculturally based industries can be justified if effects on poverty, food security and environment, urbanisation, etc. are examined through backwards and forwards linkages, but this will still tend to undervalue the contribution of agriculture, as these industries can only develop strongly from domestic production. Also, with agricultural development, operations for value added, and even inputs such as seeds, tend to be transferred off-farm.

26) While livestock was included in the definition of agriculture but somewhat neglected in the studies, fisheries and forestry were excluded “except when these were locally very closely associated to and integrated within agricultural activities (e.g. farm ponds, agro-forestry)” (footnote 7, page 17 of the Analytical Framework, version 2, July 2002). The evaluation team recognizes the difficulty of drawing boundaries, but nevertheless raises the

question of possible consideration, where appropriate, of coastal artisanal fisheries from which revenues sometimes complement, farm incomes as well as of forests providing food and feed resources at critical times of the year, thus contributing to food security.

- **The Evaluation team considers the project design as very adequate within the limits initially decided by FAO management, limits to be reconsidered as stated below in the recommendations.**

3.2 Methodological Issues

27) Some methodological weaknesses were corrected during the course of the study, although they do seem to have sometimes led to a certain amount of confusion at country level. The loose use of the “externalities” terminology persisted well into the project when effects and impacts or costs and benefits could have been more appropriate. The suggestion that the project would mainly address positive externalities/ effects was dismissed fairly early on as providing a too imbalanced basis for analysis. This initial impulse however, did affect the line of some research. In the area of food security the guidance for work at regional and household levels was developed late in the process, leading to an imbalance in favour of national food security.

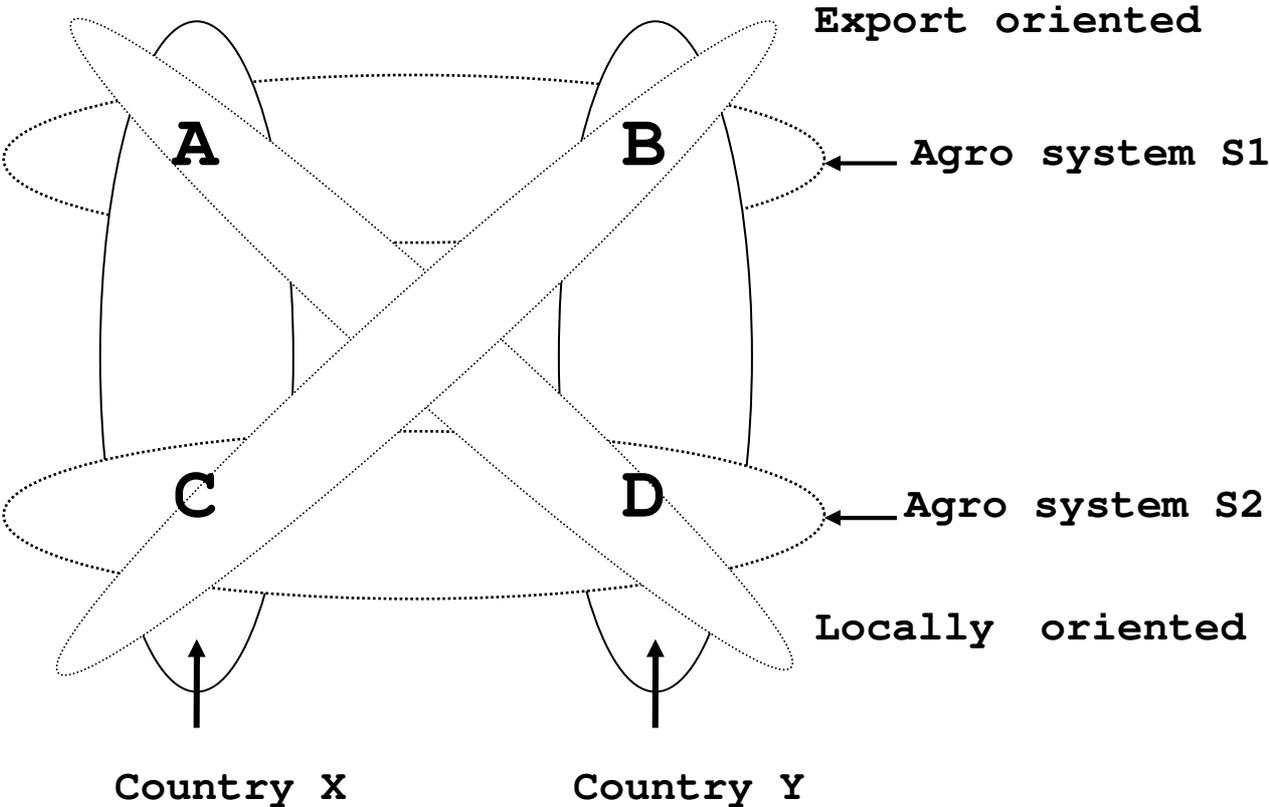
28) Some of the methodologies proposed have been criticised for being either too complex or inappropriate, for example use of the CG model and in the environmental work the non market measurement technique was said to be both untried and difficult for the non economists often working on this module to apply. In the event it was little used.

29) The development of a framework study at the start of the research would have been useful in guiding and designing the remaining work under the six identified roles. Such a framework study would have generally included the ground covered under the policy module, but also other important aspects, such as those relating to institutions and programmes. It would have also provided the dates of major significant events and policy decisions against which the other modules time frames could have been adjusted taking into account rhythms of implementation, as well as effects and impacts and their respective time-lags. This framework would then ideally have been elaborated as module 1 at the start of the research and finalised on completion of the other modules which could be expected to provide further information.

30) Greater methodological attention has been devoted by the ROA management team to the national level than to the sub-national level. The national assessment for each module is often built more as a summary of what is already known than as a perspective opening linkages with other modules. While the spirit of the project is holistic or systemic, the various methodological approaches proposed to the research team do not reflect systemic thinking, with, as a result, a real difficulty in building linkages/interactions between modules, to make real syntheses and not juxtaposed summaries, and to derive useful and innovative comparisons at the international level. The Evaluation team is conscious of the considerable complexity of the task and recognises the very valuable achievements of the project. It, however, feels that at least at the sub-national level, a more systemic approach could have been attempted. It is at this level that interactions could have been more easily identified and analysed, thus opening the possibility to test their possible relevance at the national level.

31) Let us take the case of four areas at the sub-national level: A, B, C and D, with A and B belonging to the same agro-ecosystem S1, while C and D belong to a different agro-

ecosystem S2. In addition A and C are within a country X and B and D in country Y. We might compare A (in country X) and B (in country Y), that is the same broad agro-ecosystem S1 in the two different macro-economic, policy and social environments of countries X and Y, repeat the analysis for S2 across countries X and Y and draw some hypotheses from such a comparison. Or we might compare the impact of the same policies of country X on two different agro-eco-systems A and C, repeat the analysis in country Y and cross-check results. Furthermore, if B and C are both export-oriented, while A and D are more oriented towards their local markets, other comparisons are possible. What should have been avoided was, at the minimum, to have selected one area for one study and another for a different research, as in Chile for the module on environment for which one area was chosen for quantitative economic analysis and another for a perception study thus depriving this module from mutual enrichment.



32) Taking as the main framework for analysis selected cropping systems did mean that the ROA study captured several of the world’s major agro-ecological systems but these were represented by rather few examples, weakening the basis for international comparability. National case studies in fact adhered to this framework with varying degrees of rigour and this did mean that in some countries the more dynamic aspects of agriculture were captured and in others the problems of more marginal and poverty affected areas. According to the scheme alluded to above choices of “farming systems” could have been directed for instance to contrast two farming systems, one dynamic and eventually export oriented and one representing more marginal areas, with a third intermediate farming system, thus increasing the overall representativity.

33) ROA insistence that countries were selected to represent particular farming systems did lead to certain distortions and made it more difficult to in fact examine the totality of the roles of agriculture in a particular country. For example in Morocco the main job and wealth creating sector is irrigated agriculture which draws labour from other areas and thus emphasis on only dryland wheat was distorting while the original submission included irrigated agriculture. In Chile the weight given to the export sector could be said to have lead to an opposite distortion while in Ethiopia the non-inclusion of the coffee sector deprived the research of important elements for understanding the roles of agriculture in the country and of comparative elements with the Dominican Republic.

34) In India, the broad schematic approach referred to above could have led to a comparison of the differential effects on a few selected policies, in particular of some subsidy policies on the same farming system across the border of two adjacent states, thus reducing the variability of some parameters at the local level as well as at the macro-level: in the same macro-economic all-India framework, States have, indeed, different policies related to agriculture as well as to energy, employment, marketing, food security (e.g. school meals), education etc. For instance State Electricity Boards have various subsidy policies which impact in different manners the operating costs of electric irrigation pumps and, through different levels of water use, water resources and the environment; public irrigation water costs and subsidies vary according to each irrigation scheme etc. (See Ashok Gulati and Sudha Narayanan – *The Subsidy Syndrome in Indian Agriculture*, Oxford University Press, 2003). The India study could thus, have benefited from a systemic approach in this particularly favourable methodological framework offered by States specific policies inserted in the overall All-India policies and impacting on the same farming systems present in different States.

35) A systematic use of mapping could have also helped to identify possible interactions between modules to be further tested, for example through econometric models. India could have been an example of such an approach with the vast data resources of the country and the high level of expertise available. The Food Insecurity Atlas of Rural India (WFP, New Delhi, 2000) could have been used as a reference for ROA as it is based on dozens of indicators related to environment, agriculture, food availability, health and demography, income distribution, social characteristics etc. Overlay techniques do not give readily causal links but point out areas for further research of non linear causal relationships to be further investigated. While this Atlas and its companion volume on Urban India (2002) do not go below the state level, WFP has also produced Vulnerability Analysis and Mapping (VAM) at more disaggregated levels (districts), for instance in the States of Orissa and Rajasthan. Such VAM exercises as well as Food Insecurity and Vulnerability Mapping Systems (FIVIMS) have been carried out in many countries and even if some of their methods are open to question where available, they could have been reviewed, possibly used and eventually improved by ROA researchers as they spatially link poverty, food security, environment and demographic data. The paucity of cartographic methodology is, striking in an interdisciplinary project such as ROA as it could have helped to better illustrate spatially possible relationships between economic, environmental and social factors, opening some avenues for interdisciplinary research, confronting the paradigms of each discipline/school of thought in a mutually enriching manner.

36) The analytical framework provided to the country teams has, however, certainly triggered new research opportunities. Researchers could experiment with tools they were not used to and have been prompted to think more in terms of interrelationships and linkages in an

interdisciplinary spirit. The following answers demonstrate their relatively high degree of satisfaction, with not very different ratings given to the four questions; if ratings 4 and 5 (the highest on this scale of 6, from zero to 5) are lumped together the former statement might be nuanced as the appropriateness of the analytical framework to the country is rated somewhat below the others, 21 respondents choosing this option against 26/27/28 for the other three questions.

37) Was the analytical framework (guidelines) provided by the project:

- Available in adequate time ?

	1	2	3	4	5	Grand Total
Leader	1		1	7	2	11
Researcher		1	7	10	9	27
Grand Total	1	1	8	17	11	38

- Appropriate to the country ?

	1	2	3	4	5	Grand Total
Leader	1	1	2	3	2	9
Researcher		2	9	13	3	27
Grand Total	1	3	11	16	5	36

- Comprehensive ?

	1	2	3	4	5	Grand Total
Leader		1		6	2	9
Researcher	1	2	5	15	3	26
Grand Total	1	3	5	21	5	35

- Scientifically rigorous ?

	2	3	4	5	Grand Total
Leader		2	5	3	10
Researcher	2	6	13	6	27
Grand Total	2	8	18	9	37

- **In summary, given the relative newness – for FAO and the research community - of the research on the roles of agriculture in developing countries, the methodological framework built by the ROA central team is very adequate in terms of the modules selected but could be improved in a second phase at the sub-national level so as to illuminate better the relationships between roles and, as a consequence, inform better the roles of agriculture at the national level while offering a stronger basis for national syntheses and international comparisons.**

4 EFFICIENCY AND ADEQUACY OF IMPLEMENTATION

4.1 Expenditure

Expenditure Summary by Purpose US\$ (000)												
	Management and Administration		Technical Development and Support		Case Studies		Evaluation		Meetings		Total	
	US\$	%	US\$	%	US\$	%	US\$	%	US\$	%	US\$	%
Staff	519	13	346	8	-		15	0	273	7	1,153	28
Consultants	88	2	687	17	-		21	1	88	2	885	21
Contracts	58	1	39	1	1,110	27	13	0	12	0	1,232	30
Travel	-		287	7	-		37	1	216	5	539	13
Other	113	3	137	3	-		2	0	91	2	342	8
Total	778	19	1,496	36	1,110	27	87	2	680	16	4,151	100
Estimates provided by ESA												

4.2 Efficiency

38) It was reported to the team by the current ESA divisional management that the project substantially overspent the budget initially intended for the preparatory work and that there were weaknesses of budgetary control during the first two years. Although the Evaluation team is of the view that overall the project was efficient and effective, the above summary does also bring out certain weaknesses. The team understands that the newness of the project required the advice of high level consultants, who additionally gave legitimacy to the ROA endeavours. This resulted in raising the “non-country” costs. It noted in this connection that the use of staff, consultants and contracts for staff work accounted for 42% of the total costs, while country studies accounted for 27% and meetings which also directly concerned the countries 16%. Overall it is noted that management and administration was nearly 20 percent of total expenditure. Thus, the team has the impression that there may have been excessive expenditure on consultants at central level as well as on professional and general service staff, although the financing of a full time coordinator was absolutely necessary.

4.3 Institutional Arrangements

39) The criticism of the project by some member countries in the FAO Council, in particular Australia, led, as reported by the then Director, to an initial management decision to run the project relatively separately from the other activities of the Agriculture and Development Economics Division (ESA). It had its own coordinator, utilised a team of external consultants to provide guidance and support in the development of methods and was located in a different part of the FAO building from ESA. As discussed elsewhere in this report, fears that the project would serve a protectionist agenda have proved unfounded and this factor should no longer be a criteria in the way Phase II is designed.

40) The project was intended to have an inter-divisional steering committee, chaired by the Director of the Policy Assistance Division (TCA) which is the Division concerned with actual policy support to countries. This committee would also have brought in participants from the Sustainable Development Department, which deals with some aspects of environmental policy and addresses institutional policy in its Rural Development Division (SDA). This committee

met only once; this underlines that for the future more dynamic mechanisms of integration need to be sought. ESA reports that arrangements have been made with the Commodity and Trade Division (ESC) and for work with ROA in its second phase (TCA management was less clear on this).

41) At the initial conceptual phase of the project ESA staff were involved in discussion of the approach. The then Division Director as noted above decided to keep ROA relatively separate also as regards staff involvement. In addition staff themselves reported that they were often not in agreement with the approach being adopted by ROA and felt that their suggestions were not given sufficient weight or, at times, even ignored. Some also questioned the validity of its methodologies and so they preferred to keep a distance.

42) The new management of ESA which took up office in September 2002 and assumed direct management of ROA in November of the same year decided to have a greater staff involvement; as a result management has estimated that 14 months of staff time which was not charged to the project were contributed between November 2002 and January 2004. This included work on backstopping country studies, attending six of the nine national workshops and one regional workshop as well as a mini-symposium for the meeting of the International Association of Agricultural Economists and preparing summaries for the ROA Round-up Conference.

4.4 Arrangements for Country Case Work

43) The country selection is considered satisfactory by all parties consulted by the Evaluation team. Egypt was initially included but after the selection of the country team, its leader withdrew for personal reasons but too late in the process to be replaced. The process followed of getting at least three institutions in most countries to make proposals and then awarding the contract to the best of these is considered desirable and a departure from common FAO practice for this type of work. An important element immediately identifiable for even greater cost-efficiency, worth bearing in mind for Phase II is the differentiation of payments for country study work on the basis of local costs and the work actually to be done. Although politically safe there is no other strong justification for providing each country a standard amount of US\$ 100,000.

44) Delays in developing the guidelines for the food security and social viability modules (two of the six) meant that work in these two areas started off on a very mixed footing and was subject to later changes.

4.5 Implementation Issues at Country Level

45) It was found that in those countries where a mechanism was not found to give a significant financial incentive to the researchers (e.g. India), research suffered. Also it was noted that the members of country teams generally operated rather independently. Apart from the impact of this upon the quality of the research and the extent to which linkages and trade-offs were examined, this also led to some inefficiencies especially in data collection. But, overall, given the very large amount of quality material produced by the country teams in one year or so at the cost of about US\$ 100,000 per country, **it can be safely stated that the cost-efficiency at the country level, which benefited from the work done at the central level, is very high.**

46) The questionnaire on the main difficulties encountered not surprisingly singled out budget and time constraints, although availability of funds as compared to the budget was never mentioned as a problem in the interviews or in the free comments offered in the questionnaire responses and during country visits. Both India, and especially, Ethiopia agreed that the work was relatively well funded by the standards for the country.

▪ Budget

	0	1	2	3	4	5	Grand Total
Leaders	1		2	3	3	2	11
Researchers	2	2	1	12	8	3	28
Grand Total	3	2	3	15	11	5	39

▪ Time constraints

	0	1	2	3	4	5	Grand Total
Leaders	2	1	1	3	2	2	11
Researchers	2	4	4	7	7	4	28
Grand Total	4	5	5	10	9	6	39

47) Time constraints were raised as a major difficulty during the meetings of the evaluation team with the country teams. But the virtue of deadlines was also acknowledged as time pressure is a necessity in research to ensure results. There were in fact no significant delays, except in the case of India for reasons mentioned below related to insufficient motivation and blurred lines of reporting and authority

48) More interestingly the availability of secondary data comes next, if ratings 4 and 5 are combined, followed by the collection of primary data, the problems of interactions between modules or of systems (in terms of computers, software, etc.).

▪ Availability of secondary data

	0	1	2	3	4	5	Grand Total
Leaders	2	1		4	2	2	11
Researchers	2	3	5	7	6	5	28
Grand Total	4	4	5	11	8	7	39

49) When disaggregated by modules, the difficulties in getting secondary data were the highest for the poverty and the social viability modules, followed by the food security and buffer modules, then by the environment module; the module on culture did not face this problem, probably because it was understood from the start that it could not rely on secondary data and had to get fresh evidence. Similarly, but for opposite reasons, module 1 did not seem to have been ridden with problems in relation to secondary data, readily available in the selected countries, at least for what was deemed necessary by the research teams once they have made their methodological choices. But it should be observed that these choices themselves were made in relation to data availability, not only for module 1 but for other modules as well, the most striking example being the recommendation of the use of a CGE approach for the buffer module. Obviously such a use requires, in addition to skills not always easily available, the appropriate data base. If such data are not available other quantitative and qualitative methods needs to be chosen in accordance with secondary data availability and the possibilities to gather primary data in the short time allocated to the project at the country level.

50) Given the pluri-modular nature of the project, communication and exchanges between team members were particularly important for satisfactory project implementation. Half of the team leaders found that they had no or little problem of communication with other researchers; ratings 4 and 5 (respectively serious and very serious problems) were selected by only one leader each. But these ratings were the choice of nearly half (13) of the 27 researchers.

▪ Communication between team leader and researchers involved in the different modules

	0	1	2	3	4	5	Grand Total
Leaders	4	1	3		1	1	10
Researchers	7	1	3	3	9	4	27
Grand Total	1	2	6	3	10	5	37

51) Such results have to be put in perspective as difficulties of this nature are inherent in a project relying on researchers belonging to different institutions and with different methodological orientations and working styles. The evaluation team found in the three countries visited different situations in this respect. In Ethiopia and India the research was driven by a single institution with only few external researchers. But while lines of responsibility were clear in the case of Ethiopia, they were blurred in India by the appointment of a “Coordinator”, who was also in charge of two modules, alongside a “Country Team Leader and Coordinator”. Furthermore, the ROA research carried out within the lead institution in India did not bring any financial rewards to researchers who had also other work to do. The lack of clear leadership as well as of material and intellectual incentives resulted in reports not only delayed but of not much added value to what was already known in the country. Policy-makers were not aware of the research and are not very likely to be interested by its present results. In Ethiopia there was strong leadership by the Director of the Institute entrusted with the ROA research (the Ethiopian Economic Policy Research Institute) who kept himself informed of the research progress through bi-monthly meetings during which he shared his views. While this activity – through his own admission - did not take more than 10 to 15% of his time, it contributed to getting the most out of the researchers working on the ROA project, themselves stimulated by material and financial incentives.

52) Communication between the team leader and the researchers involved in the different modules was exceptionally strong in Morocco, because of the commitment and competence of the team leader who was successful not only in building at the personal level a good rapport with all researchers involved and in giving them the necessary impulse and drive but also in crystallizing around ROA the three public institutions involved, namely his own research institution, INRA (Institut National de la Recherche Agronomique) but also the two other learning institutions, IAVH and ENA (Institut Agronomique et Veterinaire Hassan II and Ecole Nationale d’Agriculture). Professors and lecturers at IAVH and ENA have been for a long time involved in research and interacting at the personal or official levels with INRA researchers. But the Evaluation team was impressed by the importance given to ROA by the three Directors of these institutions who made a point in meeting together the team and made clear that the collaborative agreement built around the ROA project should become a model for future joint endeavours of the three institutions. Furthermore, the public nature of these institutions gives them an obvious advantage in relaying research findings to decision-makers.

- **In summary, while in one of the countries visited the internal arrangements made by the national team resulted in a loss of efficiency, ROA participants who answered the**

questionnaire handed over to them did not generally identify major implementation difficulties.

4.6 Communication and Meetings

53) Country studies were prepared in English in Latin America, but in French in Mali and Morocco. No countries complained about this and some of the Latin American countries welcomed it. Only one country which does not use English as its main language of international communication seems to have been seriously disadvantaged in communication by the total dominance of English (Mali). The evaluation team is of the view that, overall, the use of English only was certainly cost-effective but that some assistance should have been provided during the meetings to the participants in need of it, for instance to some members of the Mali team. Increased costs could have been justified by better communication between teams.

54) The two Conferences held in Rome were undoubtedly valuable as a means of interaction. A regional meeting was held for Latin America in Santiago (Chile) thanks to the commitment of the Assistant Director General in charge of the FAO Regional Office. Country teams in other FAO regions would have valued a similar opportunity for more exchange around subjects of common interest during the research and once the country results had emerged. At the October 2003 meeting an extra-day could have also fostered communication between teams in a less formal way, a knowledge exchange which would have been highly beneficial to such an international research project, even if at higher costs.

55) ROA was presented at the 25th International Conference of Agricultural Economists (16-22 August, Durban, South Africa), an appropriate setting to make the project better known, particularly as the title of the conference was: “Reshaping Agriculture’s Contribution to Society”.

56) ROA has taken the worthwhile initiative of maintaining a website on which all the project methodological documents are posted as well as the final papers and the synthesis documents for the October 2003 Conference. An effort was also made to provide an electronic notice board for discussion between national teams. The latter did not prove a particular success but these types of discussion fora are very difficult to organize and moderate meaningfully.

57) As regard the interest taken in the website ROA attracted an average of 59 enquiries a day in the period March to September 2003. This compares with an average of 107 for the Agricultural and Development Economics Division (ESA), demonstrating thus, a relatively high level of interest in ROA. By far and away the majority of enquiries originated from North America and Europe (48% and 32% respectively) but these figures are not in themselves very revealing in that many developing country users access through developed country providers. Among the developing countries, enquiries were mostly from Latin America and Asia and within these predominantly from case study-countries involved in the ROA study. In November 2003, the ROA website received up to 104 visits daily, of 17 minutes average duration; this high consultation rate was probably linked to the October conference.

58) It is expected that the second phase will contribute to disseminate widely the final research results. The use of languages other than English and dissemination in other FAO for a

and publications, as happened to some extent in Phase 1, could usefully help in reaching a wider audience.

- **In summary, communication between ROA researchers was rather adequate, in spite of English being used as the dominant language.**

4.7 *Technical Support*

59) The technical support and advice available from FAO during project implementation were judged in very favourable terms by all persons interviewed in Rome and in the field. Answers to the questionnaire support further this finding as 21 of the 35 respondents found it adequate or very adequate:

- What was the adequacy of the technical support and advice available from FAO?

	1	2	3	4	5	Grand Total
Leaders	1		2	6	1	9
Researchers		2	10	9	5	26
Grand Total	1	2	12	15	6	35

60) The guidelines developed centrally for the research on the various modules are discussed below, and all countries found them useful. However, there were also comments during the country visits that there had not been enough flexibility left in their application. In general national research teams could have benefited from closer support when it came to finalising the data sets they would work on and writing up their results.

61) A very useful initiative was taken by the ROA management to recommend to the country teams to make use of national advisors/readers/reviewers who could interact with them when deemed necessary. In Morocco, this possibility was not fully used. Some feedback was obtained but orally with no systematic and written review. In Ethiopia, the Evaluation team interviewed two reviewers. While one read the papers on poverty and buffer at the end of the process, participated at the national review workshop and provided written comments, the other adviser/reviewer was involved in the environment module at the initial stage, discussed issues and terms of reference, commented on the outline, guided the literature review and commented on the final draft. In India, high level scholars, including two national reviewers/advisors participated in the inception workshop. One of them, taking advantage of some of his visits to the Institute he had set up and directed for a long time, had episodic discussions with some researchers; the other did not give much attention to the work in progress. A stronger involvement of the advisors as well as of the Director of the Institute could have improved the team performance already weakened by the lack of a clear and strong leadership and of financial incentives. This particular situation should not detract the project from continuing to use and remunerate national advisers/reviewers/ readers in a second phase. Their role should even be strengthened provided that they are: not over committed, (which is often the case of high level scholars); that they are genuinely interested by the ROA project; and paid on delivery of written comments.

- **In summary, the Evaluation team finds that the project benefited from good technical support through a combination of the work of the project team, ESA staff and the consultants employed.**

5 OVERALL ASSESSMENT OF PROJECT OUTPUTS

5.1 *Main Outputs*

62) Before the actual start of the research at country level around mid-2002, considerable work had been carried out by the ROA Central Team in Rome, with as a first major output the “First Expert Meeting on the Documentation and Measurement of the Roles of Agriculture in Developing Countries” held from 19 to 21 March 2001 at FAO Headquarters with 47 participants. Twenty international experts from different regions, disciplines and policy backgrounds reviewed the project’s draft Analytical framework and country case studies profiles and suggested possible methods and tools. Five technical papers were presented and discussed. The meeting proceedings are published in a volume of 339 pages listed as ROA Project Publication No 2. The main methodological orientations of the project were defined during this meeting and subsequently refined after the final selection of countries and team leaders during a “Team Leaders Meeting” held from 1 to 4 July 2002 at FAO Headquarters. During this meeting the second version of the Analytical framework was discussed as well as methodological and theoretical notes related to the seven modules finally selected. These documents are published in a volume of 207 pages (ROA Project Publication No 3).

63) The Evaluation team commends this process of large consultations involving high level experts of different countries, experience, disciplines and schools of thought. As already stated the selection of countries was judicious as well as the selection of research teams through a competitive process of submission of proposals. The choice of the seven modules was appropriate although a systemic approach was missing. At the country level an inception workshop was organized to fine tune the research approach and in most cases a national workshop took place to discuss results before presenting them to the ROA International Conference which took place on 20-22 October, 2003 at the FAO Headquarters in Rome. This conference was attended by each Country Team Leader accompanied by a few researchers. National reports as well as module reports were presented and discussed; they were made available to all participants in seven volumes totalling hundreds of pages.

5.2 *Syntheses of the Modules*

64) The syntheses of the modules prepared for the October 2003 Conference are of variable quality. The Social Viability Cross Country Report stands out as the only report where the author made the effort to provide a real synthesis through additional analysis. The other cross-country reports offer summaries of the work done by the countries put together with varying skills but not much value added. Their authors obviously faced difficulties in identifying linkages across modules and drawing together lessons across countries in a significant comparative manner. These weaknesses may probably be, in part, attributed to the short time available to the authors between the receipt of the material and the deadline imposed by the Conference dates. But it reflects also the lack of in-built systemic thinking which often led to juxtaposition of pieces of agricultural economics research, environmental economics or poverty assessments with insufficient potential linkages, particularly at sub-national levels.

65) It is also notable that the authors of the syntheses did not comment on the quality of the work undertaken and the added value of the results. Given the very limited time offered to the Evaluation team to go through the massive documentation produced by the project and write the present report, it is not in a position to assess the quality of the work in the eleven countries.

References are, however, made through this report to the results in the three countries visited, with ROA research in Morocco standing out, as a whole, as quite successful in bringing new insights and having good prospects of sustainability of the ROA approach, the Ethiopia research being itself of good quality, in particular given the institutional environment, less conducive than in Morocco, and the research in India which did not add much value to the high-level knowledge base existing in the country.

66) The mini-case studies undertaken within the environment and cultural modules appear to have made a limited contribution to overall findings and similar or more profound examples could generally have been drawn from the literature of the countries concerned. It was noted that emphasis on the disaggregation by sex, age and educational status and the respective roles of the different groups was not insisted upon adequately with respect to work on food security, poverty and migration.

67) With regard to particular modules:

- a) it was unfortunate that not all country teams completed the policy module, several regarding it more as a national summary. It was also a constraint that given the limitations of time the policy module was not undertaken before the other work. The availability of a synthesis of policies for the countries, which must now be an urgent step, would provide an important input to the possibilities for cross country-comparison and in the definition of the research to be carried out under Phase II;
- b) as already noted the original methodology proposed for the environment module employed a controversial non-market measurement technique, which it was doubtful if many of the researchers employed could actually have applied. The environment module allowed the gathering of a considerable amount of information but is probably the module which would have benefited most from a more systemic approach, in particular in relation to the selection of areas/agro-ecosystems, in order to better identify and analyse inter-relations with the parameters of the other modules;
- c) a major contribution of ROA research was to document, assess and measure agriculture's ability to reduce poverty and to identify the channels/mechanisms through which poverty reduction takes place. This evaluation does not intend to go into the details of the methods used and results obtained in this module and others, but a few striking results need to be reported. For instance the Ravallion and Datt method when applied to Ethiopia found that a one percent increase in agricultural production would lead to a 0.24 decline in poverty reduction. The CGE model applied to Chile showed that an increase in labour productivity in agriculture had higher positive impact on the poorest deciles than a productivity increase in the industrial sector, thus contributing to improve income distribution. As for the channel identified, it was made clear that agricultural growth in Chile leads to a relatively higher increase in unskilled labour demand than non-agricultural growth. But while in the ROA countries agricultural growth undoubtedly contributes to reduce poverty to various extents, the channels and mechanisms vary from country to country, depending on a number of factors such as the macro-economic context, rural wealth distribution, including land distribution and tenure, infrastructures, including transport facilities and degree of openness to trade. Considerable work needs still to be done to carry out the comparative analysis of the empirical results of the 11 country case studies and arrive at a substantive synthesis;

- d) as previously noted, at the start of country level work, the food security analytical module was only in draft and there was no methodology. This guidance for household and regional work was developed late and may have contributed to the lack of balance in the eventual output which concentrated on national level food security. The food security module is also, the module for which a cooperation with other FAO organizational units would have generated mutual benefits, given, on one hand the considerable experience accumulated within the Organization in this field and, on the other hand, the innovative approach of ROA. It is therefore important to make the relevant institutional arrangements in a second phase so as to develop a synergy around food security within ES Department itself, particularly in the second phase, as recommended in this evaluation, focuses on linkages (between food security, environment, poverty reduction, etc.) and on policy dialogue;
- e) likewise the methodology was lacking for the social viability module at the outset of the country work. Research under the social viability module was originally envisaged as having three components rural-urban migration, social protection and social capital. In the event only rural urban migration was the focus of study, with the aspect of social protection being taken-up within this context to a greater or lesser extent. Some studies also took in elements of rural-rural migration. Demographic aspects and population policy should, however, have received more attention, in particular in the food security and poverty modules. The evaluation team found that although in some country studies elements of social protection were treated under the buffer module, it is unfortunate that this aspect was dropped. The area of social capital is however, more difficult to treat;
- f) while countries such as Chile, Dominican Republic, Ghana, Indonesia, Mali suffered from hard economic shocks giving a high relevance to the study of the possible role of agriculture in lessening their impacts, in other countries the buffer role of agriculture was not found very relevant and handled with difficulty or even not dealt with as in Morocco. If in Chile it was found that the agricultural sector softened the negative effects of the economic shock (increase of the imported petroleum price and decrease of the exported copper price) on household incomes by absorbing the wage loss and labour displaced from other sectors, in Ethiopia it was found that agriculture did not have the capacity to act as a buffer as it is a sector in permanent crisis. Insights which were gained from the buffer module in the first phase are useful but the pursuit, at the country level, of this line of enquiry does not appear warranted. What remains to be done is to synthesise further the results obtained, as the ability of agriculture to act counter-cyclically at times of crises differ considerably among countries;
- g) many researchers, and particularly economists, found it difficult to integrate the culture module and although the idea was generally welcomed, the individual mini-case studies may have been of less interest than the overall study of perceptions. A more systemic approach of ROA methodology could have helped, in addition to its own value for inter-modules linkages and cross-country comparisons, to give a more definite orientation to this module: without neglecting the cultural dimensions of agricultural production, and particularly of food products, as well as of rural life, the perception studies should have highlighted how perceptions by different socio-economic categories of their self interests today and in the imaginable/feared/desired future explain their social, economic and political behaviour and discourse. This would contribute to explain the strength/weakness of their bargaining power and of their actual influence on policy decisions, thus bridging

module 7 (which would then be not only “cultural” but also of a social/ political economy nature) to module 1 on economic and agricultural policies. Under the section 3.2 on methodological issues, it is stated in para 32: “ In some countries the more dynamic aspects of agriculture were captured and in others the problems of more marginal and poverty affected areas. According to the scheme alluded to above (i.e., a systemic approach) choices of farming systems could have been directed, for instance, to contrast two farming systems, one dynamic and eventually export oriented and one representing more marginal areas, with a third intermediate farming system, thus increasing the overall representativity.” Obviously, perceptions of agriculture and rural life are different in a dynamic area and in a marginal area. Expectations are different as well as rural organizations, farmers lobbies, and, *in fine* , actual influences on government policies. This is a neglected area of research, particularly in UN agencies which, on one hand, often refer to “political will” without analyzing its formation, content and constraints, and, on the other hand, deals with “participation” without taking this democratic process to its natural outcome in policy-making. While the sensitivity of these issues is recognized by the Evaluation team, ROA as an innovative research project could take them further, rather than concentrating in module 7 on agro-tourism or geographical indication.

6 PROSPECTS FOR EFFECTS AND IMPACTS

68) This evaluation has been conducted at the end of the first phase and therefore too soon to assess effects and impacts of the research undertaken, but some indications on the prospects for effects and impacts could still be detected. They could usefully serve as reference points for the second phase the modalities of which will *in fine* determine actual effects and impacts.

69) The immediate effects to date include some impact upon national research capacity. Each country employed 7-10 researchers on the project and many of them gained in knowledge experience and international exposure through the project. They also formed some links with researchers in other countries which may have some lasting benefits. It might be also that, even at this early stage, the research community is becoming more sensitised to the varied roles of agriculture. The ROA presentation at the Annual Conference of the International Association of Agricultural Economists could have contributed to this as well as international informal contacts between researchers. Immediate policy implications have emerged in some countries, for example in Chile ROA results have highlighted in government circles the extent of employment creation in return to investment in the dynamic export oriented sub-sector agriculture as compared with employment in other sectors. Although these cannot be expected to lead to immediate policy changes, they will gradually feed through into the policy debate.

70) In the course of the October 2003 ROA Conference, effects, impacts and sustainability issues were addressed through a series of questions, each with a different angle. The first group relates to the degree of interest in the research demonstrated by other researchers, policy-makers and the media (same six-point scale from zero to five, plus a category Not in a Position to Answer, NPA) :

71) What has been the degree of interest in the research from:

▪ Other researchers

	1	3	4	5	NPA	Grand Total
Leaders	1	2	5	3		11
Researchers		6	12	5	4	27
Grand Total	1	8	17	8	4	38

▪ Policy-makers

	1	2	3	4	5	NPA	Grand Total
Leaders	1	1		4	2	2	10
Researchers	1		1	15	2	8	27
Grand Total	2	1	1	19	4	10	37

▪ The media

	0	1	2	3	4	NPA	Grand Total
Leaders	1	2		1	1	5	10
Researchers	1	1	4	8	1	12	27
Grand Total	2	3	4	9	2	17	37

72) According to these answers, a very strong or strong interest (ratings 4 and 5) in ROA was demonstrated by other researchers (25 out of 34 opinions expressed) and by policy-makers (23 out of 27 opinions expressed), although in this later case the number of NPA increases from 4 to 10, that is almost a third of the respondents. The number of NPA increases further in relation to the interest shown by the media: 17 out of 37 respondents. These answers are typical of research groups which through informal discussions with other members of the research community get easy feedback while the interest demonstrated by policy-makers are more difficult to assess and largely depend on previous personal interactions. Even if some of them have participated in ROA meetings their real interest is not something that researchers are necessarily used (and interested) to decipher. It should also be added that the research results were generally presented at national meetings shortly before the October 2003 Conference, that is, immediately before the questionnaire was filled, with therefore insufficient time for feedback. This holds true also for the question on the interest of the media, with the added dimension of reluctance or clumsiness of many researchers in dealing with the media, particularly if the research results are not finalized and relate to sensitive issues.

73) The Evaluation mission found that in India, as already stated above, policy-makers were not aware of the research and are not very likely to be interested by its present results. In Ethiopia, some policy-makers were aware of the project and those who were made aware by the evaluation mission visits indicated their interest, although the Ethiopian Economic Policy Research Institute (in charge of ROA), itself an off-spring of the Ethiopian Economic Association, is part of a civil society not yet very influential in Government circles.

74) In Morocco, policy-makers were involved from the start and took active part in ROA meetings. In each of the meetings the Evaluation team had with a government official, the ROA project was said to fit crucial policy needs as scientific evidence was felt necessary to examine the likely consequences of policy options in particular those related to internal agricultural subsidy reductions and trade issues. The integrated nature of ROA was viewed as fitting inter-ministerial undertakings on agriculture, environment, employment, territorial policies etc. ROA

was also seen as having the potential to help redefining a new agricultural strategy oriented towards sustainable development. The World Bank country office indicated its interest in pursuing further collaboration with a second phase of ROA oriented towards policy work. ROA meetings were reported in the written press, with several articles mentioning substantive issues related to agriculture, environment, and bio-diversity.

75) A second group of questions addressed the value/lasting effect of ROA in relation to research results, progress on research methodology, future national and international research priorities and, policy lessons. Policy lessons and research results come first, with a slight advantage for policy lessons (for ratings 4 and 5, 30 respondents out of 36, against 32 out of 39 for research results).

▪ Policy lessons

	2	3	4	5	Grand Total
Leaders	1	1	5	3	10
Researchers		4	11	11	26
Grand Total	1	5	16	14	36

▪ Research results

	3	4	5	Grand Total
Leaders	1	6	4	11
Researchers	6	13	9	28
Grand Total	7	19	13	39

76) Other answers, by declining order of ratings 4 and 5 combined:

▪ Progress on research methodology (approach)

	0	1	2	3	4	5	Grand Total
Leaders	1		1	2	3	4	11
Researchers	1	1	1	7	9	9	28
Grand Total	2	1	2	9	12	13	39

▪ National research priorities for the future

	2	3	4	5	Grand Total
Leaders	1	4	3	3	11
Researchers	1	10	9	8	28
Grand Total	2	14	12	11	39

▪ International research priorities for the future

	1	2	3	4	5	Grand Total
Leaders		1	3	4	2	10
Researchers	1	1	12	8	5	27
Grand Total	1	2	15	12	7	37

77) The respondents being researchers, the importance given to policy lessons is an interesting finding. It clearly indicates that ROA is not seen as an exercise mainly geared to

publications in scientific journals, but as being very relevant to national policies which are demanding quantified evidence for the increasingly complex options they face in a globalizing world.

78) The importance of policy issues for ROA researchers is underlined by their answers to another question:

How do you rate the potential policy implications of ROA?

○ In your country

	2	3	4	5	Grand Total
Leaders	1		6	4	11
Researchers	1	4	11	12	28
Grand Total	2	4	17	16	39

▪ On the international scene

	1	2	3	4	5	Grand Total
Leaders	1	1	4	3	2	11
Researchers	1	1	9	10	5	26
Grand Total	2	2	13	13	7	37

79) The 33 answers (out of 39) giving high or very high policy implications – at the country level - of ROA work are indeed a clear indication of what is expected from ROA: research oriented towards policies, a result confirmed by interviews in Ethiopia and Morocco, and, indirectly, in India as the lack of interest by policy-makers was deplored by researchers. The much lower ratings given to potential policy implications at the international level demonstrate the realism of the respondents, thus giving further credit to their earlier responses. They also point out that the respondents are conscious of country specificities and not given to the political/ideological oversimplifications initially attached by non-researchers to ROA.

80) Answers to an open-ended question confirm the importance attached by ROA researchers to policy issues. The question was the following:

“In the future, should there be more focus on developing actual policy conclusions and the related policy instruments or on understanding the issues?”

Twelve answers, out of 19, were a straight yes on developing actual policy conclusions: for instance: “yes as a follow-up activity”; “policy conclusions in the context of ever-more liberalized economies”; “even though some issues should be better understood, like land tenure and poverty, we should more elaborate on specific policy implications”. The other seven answers were in favour of a balance between the two as they felt that, in their respective countries, some research was still needed before coming to policy implications or, interestingly, on the basis of the research already done, “developing policy conclusions will help a better understanding of issues” (project leader). The longest and most comprehensive answer was as follows: “The emphasis should be in developing actual policy conclusions, but it is necessary to be sure that policy conclusions are really supported by sound scientific evidence. It is necessary to show to the scientific and policy-makers community that we are not trying to justify certain paradigms or country positions in international fora. The analysis must show that the roles of agriculture are complex and dynamic” (project leader).

81) The emerging likely effects and impacts of the ROA project are thus viewed by the researchers so far involved more in the policy sphere than in narrow research academic circles where researchers address each other. For any researcher, recognition of the value of his/her work by the national and international research community is important. But for many social scientists (in the wider sense) from developing countries who live in their own country and experience every day the margin of progress still to be made, the policy implications of their research is at least as important as academic achievement, particularly when there is a social demand for it. This seems to be the case in ROA countries even when it is not made very explicit by policy-makers. They are, however, facing increasingly complex situations in a globalizing world and, accordingly, feel more and more the necessity to assess, if possible in quantitative terms, the possible/likely consequences of the options offered to them as well as to increase the range of options as a result of creative research. This tendency of building more intense communication between policy-makers and researchers is reinforced in a project with a systemic ambition such as ROA, which attempts to go beyond fragments of research and self-contained sectoral or sub-sectoral policies to identify in relation to agriculture and environment the ripple effects of policy interventions throughout the whole fabric of society.

7 THE NEXT STEPS

82) As a second phase is contemplated, the Evaluation team was requested to make recommendations for its design and implementation. A first set of recommendations addresses the general design and implementation approach. A second set of recommendations deals with detailed substantive issues related to research and priority areas. A third set of recommendations summarises the concrete steps to be taken.

7.1 General Design and Implementation Issues

83) The Evaluation team recommends a second phase mainly oriented towards policy issues, with research addressing those aspects which are necessary to strengthen the opportunities of systemic analysis offered by ROA. These two approaches are mutually reinforcing: policy-makers would be all the more interested by policy dialogue with ROA researchers because of its systemic orientation, and this orientation would in turn benefit from dialogue with policy-makers as rightly stated by the team leader quoted above (“Developing policy conclusions will help a better understanding of issues”).

84) This recommendation is based on the team’s belief that in many of the countries, sufficiently rich material was produced in phase one to allow starting policy dialogues at national level on this basis, a policy dialogue which has been identified as a priority by ROA researchers as reported in the preceding section. It is also based on the team conviction that, while every effort has to be made to improve the synthesis of each module and an overall synthesis, these efforts would meet with important difficulties stemming from the incomplete fulfilment of the systemic promises of ROA. The roles of agriculture are not isolated from each other and it is because they are intertwined through their economic, social and cultural, spatial and environmental dimensions within and across national boundaries, that this complexity needs a holistic/systemic approach. This does not mean that such an approach is easy, on the contrary. Examples have been given in this evaluation of missed opportunities, particularly at the sub-national level, to build linkages between modules. But, in the opinion of the Evaluation team, it is where the effort should now be made, that is towards more integration. To go in the

other direction, that is to finance pieces of new research relatively isolated from each other, certainly a more comfortable situation, would be to definitely miss the opportunity for FAO to contribute decisively to a new interdisciplinary approach directly supporting policy debates in developing countries and on the international scene.

85) Let us further note that dialogue between policy-makers and researchers requires a thoughtful communication policy of the research results. While in FAO the task of communicating and dialoguing at the global level on economic policy rest with ES Department and ESA has an important role in this, TCA is currently assigned the main task of translating that into dialogue at country and to some extent regional level. Phase II of ROA thus provides an opportunity to further foster collaboration with other FAO organizational units for communication, especially TCA but also within ES Department and SDA.

7.2 Approach to Research

86) The credibility of Phase II is highly dependent on it producing concrete results for policy making, a point much emphasised by the Governments of the countries participating in the project but also evident at international level. Phase II should thus be designed to produce pertinent policy lessons for the countries in which it takes place and increased information at global level to support national decision making in developing countries.

87) It is recommended that the project should aim to base its global results not only on the findings from the country studies, but also on any major economic work undertaken on linkages elsewhere in developing countries (for example on environment and poverty). Thus, it is suggested that an initial global synthesis and indicative framework for further study be circulated to a very wide group of knowledgeable persons requesting not only their comments upon the synthesis but also suggestions as to other important work which might be taken into account. This can also serve to raise interest in ROA Phase II and serve the purpose of enhancing communication referred to above. Those persons to whom the initial synthesis is circulated who provide useful inputs and information can be retained for consideration of the draft of the final synthesis, which should seek to incorporate results from other important work, including that by ESA itself as well as the country case studies.

88) Phase II country studies should concentrate within the overall study framework on those policy changes being contemplated by, or urged upon Governments, and their implications in terms of the synergies and trade-offs in the role of agriculture. Morocco for example is undertaking greater trade liberalisation and reductions in the subsidy regime but implications in the pace at which this is done and precisely how it is done, with what offsetting types of support, need further exploration. Similar concerns are evident in India, but in both countries the question is not one of whether to reduce tariffs and subsidies but how and, in view of some negative effects, particularly during transition, what to do to offset those effects. In South Africa major questions may surround labour law and certainly in both South Africa and Ethiopia land tenure are major issues.

89) The very large internal economies (India and China) have communalities of interest with regard to potential impacts on both internal and international markets and potentials for internal migration. Middle income fresh produce exporters also share common experience in job creation.

90) Work at country level will also deepen where necessary, understanding of roles identified in countries during Phase I, but inadequately understood; it might also elaborate on any other key roles identified in addition to those discussed above. This implies some relaxation in the consistency of the overall global framework but not foregoing all bases for comparison and analysis. Country study work should now be based upon a matrix of communalities between the countries for the various roles.

91) It is thus, suggested that both from the point of view of integrating the research on the various roles and from the perspective of addressing the effects of policy changes, the project research take in Phase II, at least two representative agro-ecological zones in each country, one in a more marginal area, which is likely to have a greater incidence of poverty and the other in an area where there is already a relatively high level of intensification (for instance through irrigation), or the potential for intensification and employment generation from agriculture and agriculture related industry. In many cases the higher potential area will be irrigated and thus, the project work is likely, for instance, to juxtapose the environmental issues of irrigation and intensified input use against those accompanying over-exploitation of a marginal fragile resource.

92) It is essential to define common units (or boundaries) of analysis to this work and thus, what become backwards and forwards linkages and what are externalities as a function of those boundaries. It is also important to define the degree of disaggregation within the boundaries. It would be desirable, for instance, to include off-farm employment but disaggregated as indicated above (by type of work and gender, age groups, educational level) as well as time-wise (e.g. seasonal). The unit of analysis should probably be the households which are in whole or in part dependent upon agriculture, including agriculturally based industries. Areas can be selected in part on the basis of data availability.

93) The effects of potential policy change scenarios can be tested through simulation and more qualitative analysis. India presents a particularly useful case in that there are differences in the subsidy regime and relative prices between states. For other countries the potential for cross-country comparison should be specifically considered in the design of the national studies and this is a particularly important role for ESA coordination. More intensive support to countries in the design and execution of individual research projects would thus be required.

7.3 Areas of Priority

94) The Evaluation team is of the view that the areas of priority for further in-depth research can only be defined adequately through the global synthesis analysis of the work to date and stock-taking referred to below, followed by in-depth discussion with country representatives. The team has formed certain views which it provides as an input into this discussion in the form of recommendations.

95) It is recommended that Phase II should no longer artificially exclude trade and foreign exchange earning, where such discussion is relevant, and that it should not neglect economic growth (for example, in Ethiopia foreign exchange earning is considered a key role of agriculture). Unless all roles and aspects of the policy environment are included, it is not going to be possible to comprehensively examine trade-offs, whether these be economic, social or cultural. Phase I has already demonstrated that such analysis is unlikely to provide a wide

spread case for import protection or generalised subsidies and

- a) The buffer role of agriculture as defined for the study is only of significance under a certain restricted combination of circumstances. Further in-depth study of this role in Phase II may thus not be justified;
- b) Agro-tourism did not appear as a critical area as yet, even in the most developed of the countries, with the possible exception of Morocco, although work on the environment needs to take account of any positive or negative effects on the landscape in tourist areas, etc. Tourism itself needs to be taken-up in the context of off-farm employment (see below);
- c) The work on culture was basically concerned with perceptions of agriculture and rural life. It is not believed that lessons have been learned which demonstrate that much more can be gained from this line of enquiry, as defined in Phase I. However, the Evaluation team believes that not enough is understood in various societies about how and why decisions are taken which reinforce positive or negative roles of agriculture. This includes the role and representation of lobbyists, the perceptions and influence of the media, the structure of national decision making and the perceptions and interest of those who make the decisions. These forces will have a profound effect on the extent to which research on the roles of agriculture can influence decisions and upon how and to whom research is communicated. This is not strictly speaking a role of agriculture but in the light of examining the feasibility of policy options, it should be an area of study during Phase II, provided the country teams are convinced of its relevance and importance;
- d) Off-farm employment and agricultural migration (including seasonal migration) were identified as playing an important role in the viability of rural communities (poverty, food security and implications for out-migration to urban areas) in most of the countries studied. However, these were not generally well documented in Phase I research. The importance of the disaggregation of the respective roles of women and men, as well as different age groups and educational background, referred to above, should also receive adequate attention. The inconsistency in the treatment of agro-industry which was not always excluded from agriculture or separately identified within agriculture, needs to be corrected. It is proposed that the documentation of off-farm employment within rural areas be fully integrated into the Phase II research including the clear identification of agriculturally dependent industries, separating input supply from post-harvest. Other off-farm employment could usefully be classified with standard categories for cross-country comparison and might include non-agricultural services; artisanal industries independent of agriculture, and tourist related industries and services;
- e) Work on rural-urban migration has produced important insights but, migration's role in the stability of rural communities and the potential for employment generation within agriculture and its relation to migration is worthy of further consideration (also in the context of off-farm employment and in relation with the encouragement of agro-processing in the rural areas). It is for example self-evident that packing in rural areas is dependent upon reliable energy supplies and a transport system which does not necessitate re-sorting due to deterioration in transport. This has costs and benefits. Benefits of employment generation off-farm and in more intensive seasonal agriculture elsewhere

could include reduced pressure on fragile farming environments and greater stability of rural communities.

96) This type of work thus, now needs to bring together in a more integrated way the study under the various modules, in particular that on agriculture's role in the environment, poverty reduction, food security, social stability (not inertia), contribution to overall economic growth and to foreign exchange earning. Linkages and inter-actions are a priority concern for Phase II. This should take place in the context of the examination of the implications of important policy options.

7.4 Concrete steps to be taken

97) As will be evident from the discussion above, the evaluation team is of the view that the output of Phase II should be an integrated understanding of the implications of potential and actual policy changes for the roles of agriculture in both the short and medium term, not excluding policy changes under different circumstances with respect to import protection and various forms of subsidy and price support. If Phase II is to produce relevant policy lessons while furthering the understanding of agriculture's roles and their inter-linkages, a number of considerations follow at both international and national level:

- a) a period of synthesis and analysis of the results of Phase I is essential at both the level of FAO and the individual countries before the work to be undertaken under Phase II can be adequately designed (synthesis should not be confused with simple summary, as has often been the case in the past);
- b) the synthesis must receive wide circulation for comments and suggestions on additional research results available from other sources and liable to be taken into account in drawing conclusions;
- c) policy-makers and advisers must be strongly involved in the identification and prioritisation of the research. There also needs to be an emphasis on the drawing out of policy lessons and their discussion with and communication to all those involved in policy-making;
- d) while dialogue and involvement in the formulation of research are important, it is also essential that the research itself be carried out in a scientifically sound manner, i.e. that policy dialogue not become mixed in the conduct and derivation of findings from the research itself;
- e) there has been a felt need by the national teams in Phase I for more discussion between teams on the formulation of research and on the research results. This will be more important in Phase II if there are to be internationally comparable results within a somewhat less rigid overall framework;
- f) Phase II will not achieve its objectives unless there is adequate attention given at national and global level to the concluding synthesis, analysis and drawing of lessons; and
- g) communication and dialogue must be strengthened throughout the process, especially with respect to defining priorities for research and in communicating the lessons.

98) The following sequence is thus envisaged:

- a) Synthesis study and stock-taking by the central FAO team;

- b) Consultation with national teams (where to be retained) and to the extent possible with country policy makers, of what has been achieved from each of the country studies and of policy issues, with a view to identifying potential research priorities;
- c) Discussion at national level with policy makers and adjustments where necessary in institutions country team leaders etc;
- d) Discussion at the international level between final team leaders, FAO specialists and invitees;
- e) Finalisation of the design of country studies and composition of country teams;
- f) Conduct of national research;
- g) International synthesis meeting(s);
- h) National policy seminars, workshops etc.;
- i) International analysis for common lessons with international expert debate; and
- j) Widespread distribution of conclusions in various forms at both national and international levels.

99) Also, in parallel with the above work, if possible within the regular budget of FAO, it is essential to prepare synthesis analysis of the existing work for both print and electronic distribution. As reported to be the intention by ESA, particularly interesting work should be summarised for publication in major academic journals, in addition to FAO or joint publication. It is essential that this aspect of the work (dissemination) should be given a high profile in the second Phase. Where ever possible such dissemination can be integrated with that of other aspects of FAO's work, but the donor's interest in visibility also needs to be borne in mind.

7.5 Institutional Arrangements

100) As already discussed with respect to implementation, the project was initially run largely separately from ESA Division and this contributed to a lack of ownership by the Division, loss of some intellectual input and reduced possibility for the divisional outputs to benefit from the project. As a result in November 2002 the new divisional management began a process of reintegration of the project which was placed under the management of a Service Chief.

101) A limited number of staff have been involved in the synthesis (summary) work for the various modules. Involvement of ESA staff in the final ROA Conference, with a few exceptions tended to focus on the staff members' area of disciplinary interest, rather than the cross-fertilization on roles of agriculture which in the view of the Evaluation team is a major value-added which could be expected from ROA.

102) As stated above, the Evaluation team is convinced that the greatest value added from ROA can come from building on the research to date to examine in a more systemic framework the inter-actions trade-offs and linkages between the various roles of agriculture in the context of actual national policy options.. It is clear that if FAO is to reap the full benefits of the work, for feed-back into organizational thinking, a larger audience than ESA staff will need to feel involved. It has also been noted that the Evaluation team does not feel that a Service Chief within ESA will have sufficient time to devote to ROA to act as project manager. The evaluation team was thus pleased to be informed that a P4 staff member will assume full-time responsibility for day-to-day coordination. If additional funds can be located the evaluation team recommends that ROA should have a separate project manager who should be available

full time to the project and undertake quite a lot of the synthesis and stock-taking work him/herself.

103) Staff of both ESA and other divisions should be involved in the project. This should include:

- ESC with respect to trade aspects;
- SDA with respect to land tenure and social considerations; and,
- Possibly, individual TCA staff, with respect to supporting work in individual countries, who could supplement the work of the scarce ESA out-posted staff (For example regional TCA economists are stationed in both Chile and Ghana) and policy dialogue.

To the extent possible costs for non ESA staff should be reimbursed to facilitate involvement, but payment should only be made subject to satisfactory delivery of product.

104) The Evaluation team considers this aspect of increased integration and improved management crucial. It is suggested that it be subject to formal consideration at each annual tri-partite review meeting.

7.6 Budgetary Implications and Time Framework

105) Although the budget for Phase II is less than that for Phase I, the scope of the work envisaged above, in particular for meetings, synthesis and analysis is greater, even when coordination and management costs have been largely assumed under the Regular Programme (RP). There is a possible trade-off between the cost reduction of not having a senior coordinator and project performance. While there will be little requirement for overall methodology development by experts, there will be an increased requirement for technical support and for consultation and inter-action between countries. Without very strong Regular Programme support, it is not possible to achieve all this within the agreed budget for Phase II. It is thus, suggested that, a vigorous effort be made to locate additional funds. However in the absence of such funds it is nevertheless suggested that the project time-frame be extended to four years without a budget increase, to facilitate proper phasing of the work, and the spread of RP funding, and:

- Country contracts be drawn up on the basis of the work to be done and national rates, not a standard amount;
- No new countries be included (it would also be difficult to integrate them as they will not have completed phase I work) and at least one and preferably two countries be dropped, where it is unlikely that there will be additional major lesson learning;
- Research be designed in a systemic and integrated way across themes (roles) with the emphasis on linkages but not losing the evidence of trade-offs through failure to separately identify the themes; no stand alone modular work be undertaken. Work on the buffer role, where warranted, and on culture (as revisited in this evaluation) should only be undertaken within this integrated context; and
- The international dialogue and communication strategy be fully integrated with FAO's other work.

106) In the conduct of Phase II country studies, the potential for South-South and South-North cooperation between research institutions at no cost to the project should be explored.

This would also be facilitated by the longer time-frame of four years recommended above and could have the effect of mobilising some additional resources.

Terms of Reference

Evaluation of the Roles of Agriculture (ROA) Project (October-December 2003)

1. Background

The Roles of Agriculture Project is funded by the Government of Japan and is managed under the supervision of the FAO Agricultural and Development Economics Division (ESA).

Funding

The original budget for the project was USD \$3,490,870. In the fall of 2002, an extra USD \$909,130 was requested to cover costs for an International Conference, bringing the total project budget for Phase I to \$4,400,000.

Time Frame

The original project proposal included two three-year periods: Phase I and Phase II. Phase I is the subject of the present evaluation. A request for Phase II funding has been made to the Japanese government and is pending approval. The project began in August 2000 and was scheduled originally to be completed in July 2003. In order to conclude all project activities, a request was made and granted to defer the project termination date to December 2003.

Project Document

Objectives: The project's objective is to provide policy-makers with insights and information for analyzing the various roles of agriculture within their societies and for making better informed policy decisions conducive to sustainable agricultural and rural development.

The ROA project is interdisciplinary in nature and draws from concepts and methodologies of welfare economics, environmental economics, sociology and anthropology.

Major Outputs: The project document defines the following outputs:

- methodologies for the identification and quantification of the roles of agriculture in developing countries, and for analyzing their policy implications;
- a series of case studies of the roles of agriculture in developing countries conducted on the basis of the methodology cited above.

Major Activities and Outputs

The major activities and outputs of the project include:

- a) *Analytical Tools:* The preparation of an *Analytical Framework* defining research issues, analytical concepts and methodological and theoretical guidelines for identifying, qualifying, quantifying and valuing the diverse roles of agriculture.

- b) *Country Case Studies*: Eleven country case studies (Chile, China, the Dominican Republic, Ethiopia, Ghana, India, Indonesia; Mali, Mexico, Morocco, and South Africa) to carry out research on seven topics.
- c) *Conferences, Workshops and Symposia*: Key meetings organised include the March 2001 “First Expert Meeting on the documentation and measurement of the roles of agriculture in developing countries”; the July 2002 “ROA Team Leaders Meeting”, eleven “National Inception Workshops” at the beginning of the country case studies; eleven national country workshops at the end of the country studies; a regional workshop for the Latin American Region (May 2003); two symposia at the International Association of Agricultural Economics in Durban South Africa (August 2003); a joint OECD/FAO workshop comparing the OECD Multifunctionality Project with FAO’s ROA project; and an International Conference in Rome, where all eleven country case studies are to be presented (October 2003).
- d) *ROA Website*: The ROA project created and maintained a website to inform the general public about its activities. The URL is www.fao.org/es/esa/roa.
- e) *ROA Forum*: A ROA Forum website was established to allow central ROA team members and country case study team members to share information among themselves through a moderated chat room. Documents relevant to case studies as well as case study module reports are posted regularly on the site.
- f) *Publications*: Completed and expected publications include:
- Expert Meeting Proceedings
 - Expert Meeting Summary Report
 - Analytical Framework
 - National Proposal Compilation
 - Team Leaders Report
 - Approximately 65 module reports
 - Eleven National Synthesis Country Reports
 - Seven Module Overview Reports
 - Book Chapter
 - Executive Summary
 - Miscellaneous Publications
 - Two Externally published volumes (one on the national synthesis and one on the modules overview).

2. Purpose of the Evaluation

The purpose of the evaluation is: (a) to inform and provide guidance for the design of Phase II; and (b) to provide insights for strengthening related FAO work, including the formulation of specific recommendations and (c) provide accountability to FAO and the donor on the outcomes of the project.

3. Scope of the Evaluation

The evaluation will assess all aspects of the project, including:

- a) the relevance of the project to the development and implementation of a sounder conceptual framework for the role of agriculture in development and to the priorities of FAO as specified in its Strategic Framework;
- b) the comprehensiveness and consistency of the project design, including the clarity of objectives; consistency between activities, expected outputs and objectives; and the specification of project process and methods in the:
 - original project document;
 - subsequent modifications and clarifications of the project; and
 - theoretical, methodological and implementation approaches adopted by the project;
- c) Efficiency and adequacy of project implementation including: availability of funds as compared with budget; the quality and timeliness of activities; managerial and work efficiency; managing implementation difficulties; adequacy of monitoring and reporting; the extent of national support and commitment and the quality and quantity of administrative and technical support by FAO;
- d) The processes of the project including:
 - integration into FAO's work;
 - consultation in designing approaches, methods and coverage of work at the global and country levels; and
 - development and communication of the project's findings.
- e) Overall assessment of project outputs, with attention to gender and sustainability aspects, including an assessment of outputs produced to date (quantity and quality), with a particular attention given to the countries to be visited and considering the:
 - analytical framework and the related methodological notes, as overall guidance for the global study and the national country case studies;
 - selection, preparation and launching of the country case studies, national team selection and capabilities, and quality of country case study designs;
 - reports and publications from country case studies ("Modules" reports) available to date; and
 - workshops and meetings.
- f) The prospects for effects and impact of the project, including for the use of project results by policy makers, particularly in the countries to be visited. The evaluation will give attention to the extent to which the analytical framework has been pertinently applied for a better understanding of agriculture's role in development under different country situations, including issues of household food security and the prospects for:
 - the continuation of similar comparative, comprehensive and interdisciplinary studies within FAO;
 - partner institutions in charge of the national studies to continue similar studies and further elaborate on the findings of the project's first phase;
 - a contribution reinforcing FAO's normative capacity to address issues related to sustainable development.
- g) The cost-effectiveness of the project: Based on its knowledge of FAO and other major applied research studies the evaluation should draw specific conclusions on the cost-

efficiency and effectiveness of the work and how this might be enhanced in Phase II; and

h) In the light of the analysis of Phase I - Review of the proposals for Phase II.

4. Recommendations

Based on its analysis the evaluation team will make precise and operational recommendations for the objectives, coverage and modalities of Phase II.

5. Timetable and Itinerary of the Evaluation

Mid-October to mid-December, approximately 28 days of work.

- briefing at FAO Headquarters by ROA central team October 16;
- provide comments, suggestions for improving terms of reference;
- attendance at ROA Symposium – October 20-22, 2003, to meet country team members and to hear discussions on the preliminary results of a cross-module study of the different countries;
- visits to countries where ROA country case studies are taking place (the proposed countries are Ethiopia, India, and Morocco);
- report writing;
- receipt of comments on report;
- finalizing report.

6. Consultations

The evaluation team should feel free to discuss with all those it deems appropriate, including liaising with the representatives of the donor and FAO and the concerned national agencies, as well as with national and international project staff. Although the mission should feel free to discuss with anything relevant to its assignment. It is not authorised to make any commitments on behalf of the donor, or FAO.

7. Reporting

The evaluation team is fully responsible for its independent report which may not necessarily reflect the views of the participating countries, the donor or FAO.

The evaluation mission report will cover all the elements indicated under the terms of reference and while the exact format remains the responsibility of the evaluation team, it should in general conform to the order of headings in the terms of reference. The report will include an executive summary of an absolute maximum of three pages and annexes as deemed appropriate by the evaluation team. The evaluation report will be prepared in English in MS Word. The evaluation team will also complete the FAO Project Evaluation Questionnaire.

The team leader bears responsibility for finalisation of the report, which will be submitted to FAO by 20 December 2003* (*note; this date was revised to end of January 2004). FAO will submit the report to the donor together with its comments.

8. Composition of the Evaluation Team

The evaluation team will be lead by an independent senior consultant and include representation from Japan and the FAO Evaluation Service. It will be composed as follows:

- Team Leader: A senior economist with extensive experience of evaluation and of agriculture, rural development and the analysis of the various roles of agriculture in the context of policy development;
- Senior Economist from Japan with knowledge of the various roles of agriculture in the context of policy development;
- Senior representative of the FAO Evaluation service with extensive knowledge of evaluation and of third world agriculture and rural development as it relates to policy and practice.

LIST OF PERSONS MET

1) In FAO Headquarters

Mr. F. Kabuta, Alternate Representative of the Permanent Representation of Japan to FAO

Mr. H. de Haen, ADG, ES Department

Mr. P. Pingali, Director, ESA

Mr. R. Stringer, Service Chief, ESAC, ROA Supervisor

Mr. F. Dévé, Former Coordinator, ROA Project

Mr. F. Bresciani, Economist, ROA Project

Mr. J. Vercueil, Economist, Consultant, ROA Project, Former Director, ESA

Mr. G. Viatte, Economist, Consultant, ROA Project

Mr. P. Warren, Socio-anthropologist, Consultant, ROA Project

Mr. K. Tsubota, APO, consultant, ROA Project (former ESAC Service Chief)

Mr. J. Brossier, INRA, Consultant, ROA Project

Mr. A. Valdes, Economist, ROA Consultant, National Team Leader (Chile), ROA Project

Mr. I. Soloaga, National Team Leader (Mexico), ROA Project

Mrs. M. Lizardo, National Team Leader (Dominican Republic), ROA Project

Mr. D. Kebe, National Team Leader (Mali), ROA Project

Mr. S. Asuming-Brempong, National Team Leader (Ghana), ROA Project

Mr. J. Kirsten Johan, National Team Leader (South Africa), ROA Project

Mr. B. Nega, National Team Leader (Ethiopia), ROA Project

Mr. M. Moussaoui, National Team Leader (Morocco), ROA Project

Mr. S. Ray, National Team Leader (India), ROA Project

Mr. W. Budisantoso, National Team Leader (Indonesia), ROA Project

Mr. W. Tian, National Team Leader (China), ROA Project

Mr. K. Stamoulis, ESAE Service Chief

Ms. L. Lipper, Economist, ESAE

Mr. S. Broca, Economist, ESAE

Mr. B. Davis, Economist, ESAE

Mr. Croppenstedt, Economist, ESAC

2) In Ethiopia

Mr. George K. Mburathi, FAO Representative in Ethiopia, to OAU and ECA

Mr Berhanu Nega, ROA Team leader; and team members

Mr. Neway Gebreab, Chief Adviser to the Prime Minister

Mr. Jemal M. Omer, Economist, the World Bank

Ms. V. Lorenzo, Food Security/Rural Development Specialist, EU

Dr. Berhanu Nega, Director, Team Leader, EEA/EEPRI

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Mrs. Véronique Lorenzo, EU Food Security/Rural Development, EU, Addis Ababa

Mr. Pascal, EU Food Security/Rural Development, EU, Addis Ababa

Mr. Jean, Deputy Director, Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA), Addis Ababa

3) In India

Mr. D. Gustafson, FAO Representative in India

Mr. Shovan Ray, ROA Team leader; and team members

Mr. Mai, Agricultural Commission, Ministry of Agriculture

(incomplete list due to mislaid notes)

4) In Morocco

Mr. Ben Romdhane Amor, FAO Representative in Morocco

Mr. Bouchanine Abdelwahab, FAO Deputy Representative

Mr. Moussaoui Mohamed, ROA Team leader; and team members

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Mr. Guessous Fouad, Directeur de l'Institut Agronomique et Vétérinaire Hassan II

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Mr. Benabderrazig El Hassan, Secrétaire Général, MADR

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