



Food and Agriculture
Organization of the United
Nations

Office of Evaluation

Support to the EU Programme on Linking Information and Decision-Making to Improve Food Security for Selected Greater Mekong Sub- Regional Countries - GCP /RAS/247/EC

Management response to the evaluation report

Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations

Office of Evaluation (OED)

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For further information, please contact:

Director, OED
Viale delle Terme di Caracalla 1, 00153
Rome, Italy
Email: evaluation@fao.org

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Final Evaluation of FAO Project GCP/RAS/247/EC
Support to the EU Programme on Linking Information and Decision-Making to Improve Food Security for Selected Greater Mekong Sub-Regional Countries

Management Response

The Final Evaluation of the EC-FAO Food Security Programme entitled *Support to the EC Programme on Linking Information and Decision-Making to Improve Food Security for Selected Greater Mekong Sub-Regional Countries* (GCP/RAS/247/EC) began in mid-June 2012 and the final evaluation report was submitted on 5 October 2012. The evaluation was conducted by a two-person team with relevant technical expertise and experience in the region. The duration of the evaluation activities totalled 76 working days; each consultant spent approximately 25 days in the field visiting the project countries, while also consulting with FAO staff at the Regional Office in Bangkok.

Overall, the evaluation report is clear and covers the major points and questions outlined in the Terms of Reference (TOR). Efforts to incorporate and address comments made on the draft report are acknowledged.

At country level, the mission spent considerable time and effort to understand the overall food security situation, issues and major concerns from various stakeholder perspectives. Unfortunately, a number of people consulted had limited or no knowledge of the project. Although such discussions can be valuable, generally speaking, they may have taken valuable mission time away from obtaining a more comprehensive understanding of project activities, outputs and results.

The evaluation report mentions that all project activities were reviewed and evaluated; however, the report draws most of its conclusions and recommendations only from the most significant and successful activities. The criteria for identifying and selecting such activities, while not considering others, have not been specified. As a result, the evaluation is not fully comprehensive as it does not sufficiently reflect various aspects and activities implemented by the project.

The evaluation team has produced a detailed report and these efforts are greatly appreciated; nevertheless, the report emphasized issues related to weak project design that were already raised in significant detail by the mid-term evaluation report produced in 2011. Based on the recommendations of the mid-term evaluation, major design flaws were immediately addressed, as outlined in “Addendum 2” to the Project Agreement. The TOR for the final evaluation state that the progress and achievements of the project were to be evaluated against the goals and targets specified in Addendum 2. Unfortunately, the report does not give full recognition of the achievements made in line with the revised project design outlined in Addendum 2. This is unfortunate, given that important changes were made during over the past 12-18 months.

In its comments, conclusions and some of its recommendations, the evaluation team states (in line with the mid-term evaluation) that the project was overly ambitious (trying to do "too much, with too little, in too short a time"). In spite of this recognition, the evaluation covers domains of work that go well beyond the limited mandate of the project. Instead, it would have been useful if the report had reviewed in more detail the many achievements made and lessons learned, notwithstanding the limitations of funding, the short project time frame, and the fact that it covered work in three countries and one region (ASEAN). In summary, this final evaluation could have more useful had it focussed

more clearly on the project's more limited mandate rather than broader food security concerns of the three project countries and the ASEAN region.

Management Response Matrix

Management Response to the Final Evaluation of FAO Project GCP/RAS/247/EC					9 Nov 2012
Support to the EU Programme on Linking Information and Decision-Making to Improve Food Security for Selected Greater Mekong Sub-Regional Countries					
Evaluation Recommendation	Management response Accepted, partially accepted or rejected and comment on the Recommendation	Management plan			
		Action to be taken	Responsible unit	Timeframe	Further funding required (Y or N)
Recommendations to the EC-FAO Project Management					
<p>Recommendation 1 Before the end of the project the management should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Complete all outstanding reports - Ensure all key reports are translated into local languages - Disseminate results, and interpret policy implications, or make arrangements with the FAORs to do so after the completion of the project - Ensure all project documents are archived and available for reference - Develop detailed exit plans for the key processes that the project aims to institutionalize (including Monsoon Forums, price data flows, the analysis of household income and expenditure surveys, IPC pilots) and negotiate responsibilities for handover - Avoid taking on additional new activities 	<p>Partially accepted The final evaluation report was received after the project NTE, making it difficult to take action on most points. However, the points mentioned in the recommendation are common sense good practices and most were already included in the project work plan and were completed before the close of the project.</p>	<p>The final evaluation report should be shared according to normal FAO practices.</p>	<p>RAP Field Programme Group FAORs</p>	<p>As soon as possible</p>	<p>No</p>

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- Share the final evaluation report widely, specifically including implementing Ministries and national focal points					
Recommendations to FAO RAP and FAORs in Lao PDR, Cambodia and Myanmar					
Recommendation 2 The on-going revision of CPFs should draw on lessons and expertise of the EC-FAO programme to strengthen the framework for programming of future FAO policy support for hunger reduction and food security. Specifically the input of the outgoing CTA should be sought on the draft CPFs.	Accepted. The recommendation is relevant to the CPF process in all countries, and to all projects, which have valuable lessons to draw from and expertise to contribute to the formulation and updating of CPFs. It is well noted that an information project that aims to support food security related planning processes should be called upon to support the CPF process.	As the project has closed, it is not possible for the CTA to provide substantive input to the draft CPFs of the project countries. As an alternative, the draft Terminal Report, which includes recommendations for each country, should be shared with the FAO Representatives to contribute to the revision of CPFs.	RAP Field Programme Group FAORs OSD (over the longer term)	As soon as possible	No
Recommendation 3 Consideration should be given to formulate programmes, in conjunction with Ministries of Agriculture (and closely associated Ministries of Livestock, Forestry, etc.), on food security policy and programme formulation, dissemination, monitoring and review processes. Specifically, this should focus on <i>mainstreaming nutritional and resilience building approaches</i> into agricultural policy.	Partially accepted. To the extent food security information is being produced to support longer term policy and programme formulation, the recommendation is accepted. The Bangladesh National Food Policy Capacity Strengthening Programme provides a good example in the region of such an approach. The same approach was proposed by the project through the market information project proposals prepared for Lao PDR and Myanmar, in which the collection, analysis and reporting of market information was directly linked to policy and programme support. Food security related information for other purposes,	The FAO RAP ADG is well acquainted with the Bangladesh National Food Policy Capacity Strengthening Programme, and plans to present this in Bangkok as a model to RAP professional staff. It is suggested that select FAORs also be invited to this presentation.	FAO RAP FAORs	As soon as possible	Travel funds for FAOR participation.

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Food security information and analysis would an integrated component of such an approach, rather than an objective in itself.	such as to enhance market transparency, ensure emergency preparedness and manage climate risks will require a different approach.				
Recommendations to FAO RAP					
Recommendation 4 FAO should consolidate the budding relationship with ASEAN on food security analysis. Collaboration with ASEAN should focus on appropriate regional activities, such as information exchange, lesson learning, training and policy harmonization. Careful consideration is needed of which division(s) in ASEAN should be capacitated.	Accepted. The project worked hard to create institutional relations with ASEAN and AFSIS that would outlive the project. For example, capacity development and knowledge sharing activities were undertaken in close collaboration with OEKC. Support to policy information (FAPDA) was undertaken in collaboration with FAO/TCS and with RAP policy officers. The LTU (ESA) was directly involved in support to AFSIS, including through linkages with the global FSIN, and has developed strong working relations. The regional IPC project has picked up the discussion on the IPC in the region.	Three actions are suggested. 1. ESA should pro-actively follow-up with ASEAN, AFSIS and potential resource partners on the project proposal prepared by the project to support the three year AFSIS transition phase. 2. The recommended actions should be part of the job of the incoming RAP Senior Food Security Officer (already advertised). 3. FAO should seek to have an observer seat at the regular SOM-AMAF meetings (ASEAN).	ESAD RAP	Ongoing	No
Recommendations to FAO RAP and FAO OEK					
Recommendation 5 FAO should continue and expand on its basic food security training courses in the region. This includes the work of OEK in conjunction with ASEAN. Linkages with relevant national agricultural	Accepted. Continuation of basic food security training is planned through 2012. In 2013 FAO plans to help set up an e-learning platform. These will be supported by OEKC. In Lao PDR the project supported training on basic food security concepts in collaboration with (1) the	As the two year FAO-AFSIS Food Security Learning Programme draws to end, OEKC should consider additional requirements, and discuss a next phase with ASEAN and the donor. The EU-FAO Programme for Global Governance and Hunger Reduction	ESA OEKC FAOR, Cambodia FAOR	2013	Yes

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Universities should be further explored, in an effort to institutionalize courses in food security within regional tertiary education facilities.	Cambodia National Food Security Trainers Pool, which is very well placed to provide a high standard of basic training within the region; and (2) the National University of Lao PDR, which benefited from their collaboration with the Trainer Pool, and expressed an interest in setting up a similar training structure in Lao PDR, through the University.	should be approached for additional resources for capacity development, which could include a module on food security governance. The project proposal to support the three year AFSIS transition phase has a strong capacity development component, and further efforts should be built into this project. The opportunity to identify and work with a national university to develop a regional center of excellence on food security should be explored as part of the action.	Lao PDR		
Recommendations to Resource Partners and FAO Senior Management					
Recommendation 6 Resource partners should specifically consider supporting further work on the food security implications of the large-scale land concessions and changes to land tenure rights in the region. FAO should bring this message to its governing bodies, and promote the use of its already considerable in-house expertise on tenure issues.	Accepted. This is a very important issue for food security in the region, particularly for the project countries, and particularly for Myanmar as it opens up for foreign investment. Whether this is the most pressing food security issue in the region for FAO to focus on and draw to the attention of its governing bodies, and on what basis the evaluation identified and prioritized this topic to highlight in their recommendations is not clear. The relevance of this recommendation vis-à-vis the project and the evaluation terms of reference are also not clear.	The ongoing Lao PDR Food Security Risk and Vulnerability Survey (RVS) will identify the key determinants of food insecurity. The findings of the survey should be considered in the context of this recommendation, to get an initial understanding on the impact of large scale concessions on food security. On this basis, a proposal for further work to submit to resource partners could be prepared. The results of this could be submitted to the Committee on World Food Security.	FAO RAP ESAD FAO Lao PDR	Further work to be proposed based on the findings of the Lao PDR RVS, which should be available in March 2013	Yes

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Recommendations to FAO Senior Management					
Recommendation 7 Project formulation guidance should be reviewed to assess the adequacy of: - Standards for involvement of host Governments in project formulation - Procedures for reviewing projects, before submission to resource partners	Accepted. The principles underlying this recommendation and the need for high standards for project formulation and review are fully accepted.	FAO RAP will ensure that the newly-released Project Cycle Guidelines, developed by the Technical Cooperation Department, are implemented in projects for which they are responsible.	FAO RAP		No
Recommendations to FAO Asia IPC Project					
Recommendation 8 Within the limits of available resources the FAO-managed IPC Asia project should conduct further follow-up in country to explore national level interest in a pilot exercise in Cambodia. The relatively strong analytical and coordination systems present in Cambodia provide a fertile context for piloting the Integrated Food Security Phase Classification system (IPC).	Accepted. Cambodia has already been included in the IPC regional Asia project.	No further action required.			No