



Food and Agriculture  
Organization of the United  
Nations

## **Improving Food Security and Nutrition Policies and Programme Outreach (Phase I and Phase II) Project in Malawi – GDCP/MLW/001/FLA**

### **Management response to the mid-term evaluation report**

October 2014

# Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations

## Office of Evaluation (OED)

This report is available in electronic format at: <http://www.fao.org/evaluation>

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## **A: Overall response to the evaluation**

The report is comprehensive and provides a clear picture of the results achieved and the challenges encountered. The recommendations are concrete and realistic. Unfortunately the project is coming to an end and therefore some of the recommendations (in particular related to the management of the project) will be difficult to put in place. However given the fact that there is another project that will start in 2015 in Kasungu and Mzimba, these recommendations will be extremely useful and have already been incorporated in the formulation of the new project.

This Management Response was prepared under the leadership of FAOR for Malawi, in close collaboration with concerned units.

The Evaluation Report contains four recommendations. Management response varied from partially to fully accept of the recommendations.

## B. Context of the management response and Implementation challenges

Management response to the Mid-term evaluation of project GDCP/MLW/001/FLA					Date
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)
<b>Recommendation 1:</b> A Different project structure is needed to overcome the lack of communication and coordination observed by the evaluation team between management, policy and outreach components. A proposed solution is: Project manager might be based in Lilongwe, at the FAO Country office. That way the project manager would be able to liaise with the two country assistant representatives for programme and administration, with different line ministries at national level, the two agricultural divisional offices, the two district agricultural offices, as well as the policy advisor of the project.	Accepted,	<p>This is well noted and we will try to implement it. However it means a change in the contract of the Project Manager as the duty station will have to change. This will be discussed with the Project Manager.</p> <p>It should be noted that this recommendation has been taken into account and is already been proposed for a new project that will take place in Kasungu and Mzimba for 4 years, starting in 2015</p>	FAO office in Malawi	From September 2015	N
<b>Recommendation2:</b> There is an urgent need to establish the Steering Committee to provide guidance and advice to the project management. This Steering Committee, (composed of members from different stakeholders including Ministries), will support the project and will ensure the take up of successful project activities and lessons learnt. The Steering Committee would also be responsible for periodically reviewing project performance and providing operational advice when needed. This steering committee could be linked to or drawn from ASWAP Technical Working Groups.	Partially accepted	<p>From the start of the project there was a Government policy to have one steering committee for all projects within the Ministry of Agriculture. This committee would meet every six months and is chaired by the Secretary for Agriculture. It has phased out about two years ago and because of that, the donor has organized every six months review meetings led by the Ministry of Agriculture (chaired by Controller of Agricultural Services with the participation of Director of Extension Services Department). The objective of these meetings is similar to that of project steering committee meetings with the difference that they review all projects supported by the same donor at the same time.</p> <p>In addition the Project Manager will make a presentation of the lessons learned to the most appropriate ASWAP Technical Working Group at one of their meetings.</p>	Ministry of Agriculture and Irrigation and Project Manager	Before the end of the project	N

<p><b>Recommendation 3:</b> Establish effective M&amp;E capacity and processes to guide project implementation and enhance learning. The project should engage an M&amp;E expert for the remaining months to work with and adapt the existing M&amp;E framework. In a first step, the expert should try to enter data into the existing framework to test its applicability so far. A second step should be to design a report outline which includes formats of tables for monitoring of project data. Gender disaggregated data analysis should be included.</p>	Partially accepted	<p>The project will not recruit an M&amp;E officer as it will imply to abandon some of the remaining activities that have already been planned with the Government. However the FAO Malawi Office has recruited an M&amp;E officer who is in charge of following all projects.</p> <p>Data entry into a project database that has been developed is in progress. However it is clear that the information collected during the life of the project does not allow for a rigorous monitoring of the project.</p>	FAO office in Malawi	In process	N
<p><b>Recommendation 4:</b> Streamline project interventions to fewer, manageable ones, moving towards integration based on nutrition objectives and the value chain development approach, and strengthening the group approach.</p> <p>Promising interventions include small-scale livestock, irrigation farming, skills development, value addition, marketing support, and nutrition education to help translate agricultural diversity and improvement into enhanced dietary diversity.</p> <p>In choosing interventions for future projects it is important to write up the micro-projects into technical proposals with guidelines that will define the objectives and analyze all interventions with regards to their capacity to contribute to sustainable improvement of food and nutrition security. This will help to streamline project interventions to be few and manageable.</p> <p>For each micro project there should be an adaptable implementation guideline, which should ideally be developed with the government of Malawi and be based on policy guidelines. Those guidelines should include some advice on targeting and M&amp;E so that the whole nation can build up a common strategy and monitoring system. These guidelines should be used by all stakeholders in the country, contributing to harmonized targeting, implementation and training curricula.</p>	Accepted	<p>In the remaining time of the project, the focus will on a few key interventions.</p> <p>The project will continue with these activities.</p> <p>This will be incorporated in the future projects.</p> <p>In the remaining project time these guidelines are being prepared</p>	<p>FAO office Kasungu and Mzimba</p> <p>FAO office Kasungu and Mzimba</p> <p>FAO office Kasungu and Mzimba</p> <p>FAO office Kasungu and Mzimba</p>	<p>Already implemented</p> <p>Already implemented</p> <p>Already implemented</p> <p>Already implemented</p>	<p>N</p> <p>N</p> <p>N</p> <p>N</p>

<p><b>Recommendation 5:</b> FAO should advise the government on the revision and update of school programmes and curricula. For future nutrition education projects it is of utmost importance to link the contents of education to realities on the ground. Education in dietary diversity should always go hand in hand with an investigation of which inputs would be needed to put knowledge into practice. In the case of the present project, vegetable gardens and small livestock provided to beneficiaries of nutrition education could have made a great difference. However, these efforts require substantial inputs and need to be planned accordingly. They could constitute a separate project.</p>	Accepted	What has been learnt in the field will be shared with Government with a view to informing school program and curriculum development.	FAO Malawi together with ESN	Immediately	
<p><b>Recommendation 6:</b> An overall organogram of the project should be produced, including the Steering Committee, the FAO Country office, the Regional Office and HQ. The responsibilities and reporting mechanisms of each component of the organogram should be clarified, so that recommendations of backstopping missions will be effectively taken up by the project and not constantly neglected, as in the case of the current project.</p> <p>Collaboration with other organizations and stakeholders in the districts should be strengthened in order to complement those areas that are not being served by the comparative advantage of FAO. The project should establish more effective collaboration with organizations and projects promoting irrigation (e.g. RIDP), market development and farmer group strengthening (e.g. National Smallholder Farmers' Association of Malawi (NASFAM) and Farmer Union in Malawi (FUM).</p>	Accepted	<p>The present organogram for the project and the country office will be revised to reflect this recommendation.</p> <p>Continue to further strengthen the collaboration with stakeholders and other organizations.</p>	<p>FAO office in Malawi</p> <p>FAO project Team</p>	<p>By end of October 2014.</p> <p>By the remaining time of the project.</p>	<p>N</p> <p>N</p>