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Conservation and Adaptive Management of Globally Important Agricultural Heritage Systems (GIAHS) - GCP/GLO/212/GFF

Management Response to the Final Evaluation Report

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Management Response to the Final Term Project Evaluation of Conservation and Adaptive Management of Globally Important Agricultural Heritage Systems (GIAHS) – GCP /GLO/212/GFF

1 Overall Assessment

The Final Evaluation (FE) report presents findings, lessons learned, impacts and conclusions and recommendations. The FE analyses the theoretical and conceptual framework of agricultural heritage or GIAHS – a global patrimony that need to be cherished and nurtured for sustainable agriculture and rural development within which represents the intention and purpose of the project. The management appreciates the very positive assessment and findings and lessons learned on the implementation of the project, such as:

- GIAHS concept introducing paradigm change in the perspective and views about traditional agriculture – and its multitude of goods and services which humankind cannot afford to lose, thus need to be recognised, supported and safeguarded;
- the fundamental elements of GIAHS (i.e. biological and cultural diversity, knowledge systems, resilient properties, etc.) are important to the future development especially in terms of food security and sovereignty;
- GIAHS offers a unique learning opportunity into the way indigenous peoples have established and adapted their agricultural heritage systems in harmony with the landscape, the natural resources and the wider ecosystem;
- the high relevance of GIAHS (i.e. international commitments and alignment to current policies) at all levels witnessed by policy reforms and/or financial commitments to continue the GIAHS initiative;
- GIAHS facilitates dialogue between national government and indigenous communities on issues of mutual interest;
- GEF funding acts more as a catalytic resources allowing national and/or local governments to recognise the value of GIAHS;
- the pre-requisite of successful project implementation does not rely alone of the provision of funds, motivated and qualified staff/experts/officials is of paramount significance
- GIAHS strengthens local and national identity.

2 On Findings, Conclusions and Recommendations

The management fully agrees on the assessment that the project has an ambitious goal considering the time frame and the limited financial and human resources. Further to these limitations, the project encountered challenges beyond the management control which had caused delay or implication on the overall operationalization of the project. Moreover, the experienced limitations and challenges were consequently transformed to shortfalls or weaknesses of the project, as reflected in the evaluation criteria rating (Table 1). Nevertheless, the management is very pleased about the overall results of the evaluation, in particular, acknowledging and recognizing the project achievements which represents value for the GEF fund given - GIAHS project has obtained significant and important results at relatively low cost to GEF.

The management fully agrees on all nine (9) constructive recommendations stipulated in the final evaluation report. On the overall, the final evaluation gives the feeling that the project was very

successful in achieving results, despite the inherent complexities and operational difficulties endured by the management during the course of implementation. The project has demonstrated a legacy, created high awareness leading to strong GIAHS advocacy movement which is now supported by many FAO member states as well as anchored in the Strategic Framework of the FAO.

Management response matrix¹

Management Response to the Final Evaluation Report for the Conservation and Adaptive Management of Globally Important Agricultural Heritage Systems (GIAHS) GCP/GLO/212/GFF Project					Date: February 2015
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/N)
Recommendation to FAO Recommendation 1. The evaluation team supports the on-going discussion to incorporate GIAHS into FAO's RP and recommends that FAO seriously considers this proposal at FAO Conference in June 2015.	Accepted This is the ultimate objective of the Project and this process has been initiated since the mid-term of the Project implementation.	The formalisation of GIAHS would require sufficient informative materials and presentation to the Governing Bodies aimed to have a Conference Resolution on GIAHS be adopted.	Senior Management NR Department with support from the various secretariats of the Governing Bodies (CCLM, Programme, Finance, Council and Conference)	Target date of adoption of Conference Resolution is June 2015	Y
Recommendation to ISC Recommendation 2. To improve the transparency of the decision-making process concerning the designation of GIAHS sites, it is recommended the SAC members are allowed to receive and assess all GIAHS applications in an independent manner to determine their validity against a clear and coherent set of selection criteria and scoring system.	Accepted GIAHS has evolved from merely an initiative to a full pledge Programme, the selection process should likewise evolved and set an official procedures for review and approval process.	The GIAHS selection process including criteria must be revisited in consultation with GIAHS experts, practitioners and scientists. This process would very much benefits with pioneering GIAHS countries	NRL	2015	Y
Recommendation to ISC and iGS Recommendation 3. It is highly recommended NIAHS is promoted at the national level to facilitate the mainstreaming of GIAHS in national policies, strategies and plans and to strengthen the ownership and alignment of GIAHS at the local, national and, ultimately, global levels. It is also recommended lessons learnt from China are taken into account and specific funding is allocated	Accepted In mainstreaming the GIAHS concept, NIAHS is the concept that is being promoted at country or national level. Existing GIAHS projects are working on	This recommendation requires 3 main interrelated actions: (i) Setting up a GIAHS institutional process to come up with a NIAHS (ii) Documentation and scaling up of lessons	Senior Management	2015 onwards	Y

¹ Each column is cross-referenced to the bullet letters above.

to support countries who are officially committed to GIAHS/NIAHS or who wish to study its potential introduction as a pilot initiative. In the Americas, it is recommended FAO-RLC designates a person to act on the agreements reached in Cuzco at the international seminar on 04-07 November 2014 and follows up with FAO-Peru on the Aide Memoire prepared with the Evaluation team on 18 July 2014.	establishing this concept to facilitate NIAHS or GIAHS recognition	learned (iii) Institutionalization of GIAHS internally by designation of GIAHS focal person in decentralised offices, as well as in HQ			
To ISC and iGS Recommendation 4. It is recommended that the lessons learnt publication for the GEF-funded Project is prepared with a specific section on the benefits that derive from the designation of GIAHS sites as well as the associated risks. It is of particular importance to focus on the benefits and risks as perceived by the beneficiaries and the stakeholders. Risks should include any potential change in traditional rotation practices due to the increase in demand for selected crops and/or services and how far risk management strategies incorporate local knowledge, practices and technologies to promote resilient communities that are climate smart.	Accepted	From concept to implementation, there are indeed numerous experiences (positive and negative) and lessons learned to document and disseminate. Lessons that are not only on the fundamental values of agricultural heritage but also in terms of coming out from a complex operational, political and institutional conflicts.	NRL and FAO Representation	2015 onwards	Y
Recommendation to ISC iGS and SAC Recommendation 5. It is recommended to specifically review the selection criterion concerning the need for a management/master plan for GIAHS/NIAHS sites where there are IPs. It is important this criterion does not impose a “contemporary” condition on those systems that have been managed by “ancestral” planning methods incorporating their own cosmovision and rituals. Furthermore, in the interests of respecting the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, in particular their right to self-determination, the iGS and SAC should assess the possibility of including the provision that a “life plan” has been identified in accordance with traditional best practices and that this will be the basis upon which adaptive management, gender focus and dynamic conservation of the GIAHS sites will be assessed promoted and monitored.	Accepted	The GIAHS process follows the core principles of the international human rights norms and development policies pertaining to indigenous peoples, in particular, securing prior informed consent or approval and involvement of the relevant communities.	NRL	2015-2016	Y

Recommendation to FAO, ISC, iGS and all new partner countries Recommendation 6. It is recommended that FAO facilitates the involvement of appropriate Government authorities in all future activities relating to the establishment, implementation and consolidation of GIAHS (and NIAHS). This could lead to the establishment of a national committee including the Ministry of Agriculture and other relevant ministries as deemed fit (such as the ministries responsible for tourism, culture/heritage and tertiary economic development). To support this process, the FAO Country Representations should preferably designate one (or more) officials responsible to help facilitate this development and support iGS activities agreed with the national focal points.	Accepted The Regional office in Asia and the Pacific and LAC region have initiated launching and orientation in their respective regions as well as designating focal points. Technical support from the interim GIAHS secretariat is essential to assist the regions/country offices.	GIAHS familiarization workshops must be conducted internally (HQ and decentralised offices) to help designated GIAHS focal staff be oriented and equipped on GIAHS concept, processes and be able to integrate GIAHS in the existing programmes and similar initiatives within their respective region/country.	NR	2015-2016	Y
Recommendation to iGS and partner country focal points Recommendation 7. It is recommended the GIAHS (and NIAHS) sites incorporate an internal results-based monitoring capacity that reports to a national committee and the iGS. Results indicators should be set with beneficiaries and local and national stakeholders and concentrate on a limited number of indicators relating to ethnological, socio-cultural, environmental, infrastructure and economic issues. Indicators must be linked to base line data.	Accepted	Review and consolidate GIAHS indicators. Feedback and inputs from practioners, implementers, experts and scientists is necessary to come up with a practical results-based monitoring schemes for GIAHS/NIAHS sites.	NRL		Y
Recommendation to ISC, iGS and FAO-HQ Recommendation 8. It is recommended GIAHS (and NIAHS) is supported by an effective communication strategy that provides information and data on key findings and lessons learnt in accordance with the needs of different audiences. This information should include gender-specific findings and recommendations providing details on women and other marginalised groups' access to resources, training and information and should be based on clearly defined indicators and targets. Information on other cross-cutting themes, such	Accepted	Prepare and implement a Communication Strategy on GIAHS Programme	NRL and Decentralised Offices	2015	Y

as natural resource management and environment, should also be included.					
Recommendation to FAO Recommendation 9. FAO identifies a “financial bridging facility” as soon as possible from internal funds to cover the period until at least 01 July 2015 to show it is serious about supporting GIAHS as a RP at the Conference in June 2015.	Accepted The project is supplemented with other financing: IFAD, MAFF-Japan, Regular Programme budget. During the course of project implementation and based on the progress made, some countries had earmarked from their GEF Resources Allocation Framework.	There is an existing financial bridging facility both from Trust Funds and from the Regular Programme budget covering the cost of a skeletal GIAHS Secretariat (Coordinator, P-5 and support staff, GS4). The regional office in RAP, LAC has been allocating resources from their own means for GIAHS activities since 2013. At HQ, FAO-China South-South Cooperation Framework has allocated 2 M USD for the global activities. GIAHS is a big initiative under Strategic Objective 2, its activities are not limited to designation of sites but the important scope of work lies on the technical support to dynamically conserve the sites and build capacities of the GIAHS stakeholders.	NRL, Decentralised Offices	On-going	Y