



Food and Agriculture
Organization of the United
Nations

Office of Evaluation

**Food Security through Commercialization of
Agriculture (FSCA) / Programme Italien pour la
Sécurité Alimentaire (PISA) FSCA-PISA
programme - GTFS/RAF/426/ITA,
GTFS/SEN/060/ITA, GTFS/MLI/030/ITA,
GTFS/GAM/025/ITA, GTFS/GBS/028/ITA,
GTFS/GUI/019/ITA, GTFS/SIL/028/ITA,
GTFS/LIR/010/ITA**

Management response to the evaluation report

Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations

Office of Evaluation (OED)

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FSCA/PISA Programme
Food Security through the Commercialization of Agriculture
Programme Italien de Securite Alimentaire

Introduction

We thank the evaluation team for their careful and thoughtful review of the FSCA/PISA Programme: 5 National projects and the Inter Country Coordination project were thoroughly assessed and evaluated.

The team definitely made a great investment of time and consultations in the research and preparation of the report. The two international consultants, assisted by 5 national consultants, were able of identifying the main points of a complex Programme.

The conclusions resulting from the evaluation were in general accepted and will be taken in due consideration for future projects and programmes dealing with complex issues like the processing and commercialization of agricultural and fisheries products in rural context within the sub region and elsewhere.

It has to be stressed the historical, social and ecological diversity of the 7 countries involved, from forest, coastal countries like Liberia and Sierra Leone to Sahelian conditions in Mali and Senegal.

It is remarkable to see that all the recommendations were accepted by National managements, with only one partially accepted in Liberia. The issue raised by the evaluation team needed unavailable additional funds to be addressed. The possibility of redeploying funds within the program (Mali?) was explored; however the conditions did not materialize up to now. Internal funds were sourced to finalize pending activities and recently (10/2012) a new project building on the FSCA experience has been signed and will start activities soon.

One of the major issues resulting in the conclusions is related to the performance of the Monitoring & Evaluation systems that were set up. Various reasons, including the human capacities available at national level proved to be a challenge. Again, countries like Liberia, Sierra Leone were experiencing long periods of civil war, skilled people left the counties and only recently some are moving back. Guinea and Guinea Bissau are politically unstable since many years and Mali experienced a coup in March 2012, not favoring a conducive environment for trade.

This situation needed to be better considered and the FAO, at sub regional level, has since a few years reinforced the M&E skills, while FAO Representations are now employing, (Sierra Leone, or started the process, Senegal) M&E specialists to reinforce current projects implementation.

We appreciate the team's recognition that the overall performance of the national projects can be considered Satisfactory, with an average score of 4,1 on a scale of 6. Projects scores are generally low on Design and on Sustainability/Impact, while they score quite well on Relevance and Partnership. Implementation quality, Results/Effects and Capacity Building are, on average, Satisfactory.

The evaluation mission recognized that despite many implementation drawbacks, all the FSCA Projects have significantly promoted and supported small-holders groups in piloting initiatives of production intensification, value addition and commercialization, although it is still premature to assess the effects of the Projects' initiatives, which are in most cases at an early stage.

The fact that Policies and institutional capacity at national level are generally insufficient for supporting the private sector, including small producers, to face new market demands and opportunities has been rightly pointed out by the evaluators.

The case of Sierra Leone and the ABCs is rightly pointed out as an example where several favorable factors concurred to achieve good results, leading to a positive impact, and that is worth following, in order to add value to smallholders' production, processing, commercialization and finally food security.

More in general the projects have shown that strategies based on agro-processing (e.g. threshing, milling, grinding, etc.) have a quick effect on market development, production and revenues boosting.

We also strongly concur with the evaluation that another issue to take in consideration for future planning is the regional dimension of the initiatives, which was an important aspect of the programme conceptual framework, and has been regrettably not fully developed in the programme's design, so that the programme in practice evolved to seven distinct national projects with seven different log frames, budgets and budget holders. However the diverse context and advancement of the 7 countries has to be taken in account when considering the possibilities of integration at regional level, with the involvement of national institutions proving to be crucial for projects' effectiveness and sustainability. Too many factors of success or failure (agriculture and trade policies, prices instability, weak national markets, road and transports situation, etc.) are well beyond the direct control of any single project or programme.

Details of the responses to every specific point raised by the Final Evaluation are provided in the following tables.

NB. An addition recommendation for the ICC was included in the report, related to the Mali project, as country visits were suspended for security reasons.

It was suggested that the ICC and the LTU organize a meeting in Bamako as soon as the situation allows it. A mission was therefore done in September 2012. An analysis of the current project situation has been performed and some recommendations provided, including the no cost extension of the project for six months (the Government was proposing 12 months), the reduction of current local staff and the deployment of the ICC Assistant on Commercialization in Bamako, from Dakar, in order to support the activities in the last months.

Recommendation 1: To FAO and to Governments, on the design and implementation of regional programmes

Manage Response to the Final Evaluation of the FSCA project					Date:
Evaluation Recommendations	Management Response	Action to be Taken	Responsible Unit	Time Frame	Further Funding Required Yes or No
1. In future regional programmes, the regional dimension should be the paramount factor to inform programme design and implementation. In practical terms, this means that regional programmes should include a regional Logical Framework, with common General Objective and Outcome(s), a strong regional coordinating team and an harmonised M&E system to be implemented since the very beginning. National interventions should be framed, designed and implemented accordingly.	Accepted in principle		FAO	On-going	No

Recommendation 2: To National Projects and ICCP Coordinator for the completion of the Project activities and the exit strategy

GTFS/GAM/025/ITA: Management response matrix

Manage Response to the Final Evaluation of the FSCA project					Date:
Evaluation Recommendations	Management Response	Action to be Taken	Responsible Unit	Time Frame	Further Funding Required Yes or No
1. The mission strongly recommends that the envisaged EU funded project (MDG1.c) to be implemented by FAO should give continuity to the FSCA project, so as to complete and consolidate the results achieved so far.	Accepted	The EU funded MDG1c project is designed to be implemented and up-scale most of the activities of the FSCA project to three other regions, namely Central River South, Lower River, and Upper River. This is to ensure that what FSCA achieved so far will be consolidated and expanded.	FAO, EU, and Government	2013 - 2015	No
2. The mission also recommends that a mission of the Regional Consultant in Commercialization based in Dakar Regional Office should be carried out before the end of the year to orient the national team for the implementation of strategic value chains in Gambia	Accepted	Discussions are on with the Regional Consultant on Marketing in Dakar and a Draft TOR has been developed for this mission.	FAO, ICC and FSCA-PMU	November 2012	No

and to assess the sustainability of the selected products.					
3. The project should also negotiate with the MoA the delivery of services from the Engineering Unit to provide technical assistance to the Processing Centers.	Accepted	MOA accepted the participation of the Engineering Services by providing technical assistance in training, inspection of equipment before purchasing and supervision of the installation of the machines.	FAO, GOTG, and FSCA_PMU	Continuous even after project lifespan	No
4. The mission believes that the value chain of groundnuts, originally included among the sector of intervention of the FSCA Project, should be given renewed relevance as a strategic product. For the purpose, provided that budget is available, some groundnuts pressing machines should be purchased, as a form to revitalize the groundnuts value-chain among the smallholders and their insertion in the national groundnut industry.	Accepted	To this effect a procurement process is in progress to purchase simple processing equipment for selected communities, considering the fact that project budget is currently on the low side.	FAO and FSCA	October to December 2012	No
5. The mission also recommends the dynamics of the Project Steering Committee (PSC) not to be lost after the end of the Project. For that purpose, under the initial support of FAO, the PSC should evolve into a National OVOP Steering Committee that should give guidance to the enhancement of the OVOP strategy in the country.	Accepted	A seminar is planned to bring all stakeholders together to review, discuss and set up a taskforce that will continue and mainstream the OVOP Concept in the National agenda.	FAO, FSCA, and GOTG	November 2012	No

GTFS/GUI/019/ITA: Management response matrix

Manage Response to the Final Evaluation of the FSCA project					Date:
Evaluation Recommendations	Management Response	Action to be Taken	Responsible Unit	Time Frame	Further Funding Required Yes or No
6. A thorough assessment of all the lowland areas under rehabilitation should be carried out as soon as possible and specific recommendations should be drawn for the most appropriate completion of the works.	Accepted	The lowland areas are being rehabilitated and work is almost completed, as 95% of them are delivered and beneficiaries have started working on it.	FAO, Program and national coordination units	By December 2012	No

<p>7. Taking into account the current low rate of budget and results delivery of the project, the duration of the Project should be extended, with no budget implication, by six months, until 30 June 2013. The extension would reasonably permit the project to achieve some tangible results, hence putting in value the resources invested so far.</p>	<p>Accepted, the project definitely need a no cost extension to achieve planned results</p>	<p>To elaborate justification for a no cost extension</p>	<p>FAO, Program and national coordination units</p>		<p>No</p>
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GTFS/LIR/010/ITA: Management response matrix

Manage Response to the Final Evaluation of the FSCA project					Date:
Evaluation Recommendations	Management Response	Action to be Taken	Responsible Unit	Time Frame	Further Funding Required Yes or No
<p>8. FAO and the MoA should jointly find a solution to provide the Project with the additional funding needed to the purchasing of the equipment, taking into account the possible alternative scenarios proposed by the ICCP for that purpose; no additional infrastructures should be funded.</p>	<p>Accepted</p>	<p>This possible solution was discussed during the tripartite review held in Liberia in 2011 with the presence of the Ministry of Agriculture. While the project asks the partners for additional funding, the government will also commit itself to sourcing additional funding.</p>	<p>FAO, MoA</p>	<p>By December 2012</p>	<p>No</p>
<p>9. The FAO and the MoA should jointly assess the possibility of new partnerships for consolidating the achievements so far in the agricultural sector, particularly the groups organization in clusters and the implementation of cooperative activities of crops processing and commercialisation, namely rice and cassava.</p>	<p>Partially Accepted</p>	<p>The consolidation of achievements and creation of clusters was being done during the project but without funding the activities cannot continue. Look for funding possibilities to finish the engaged activities related to that recommendation. Commercialization training was conducted, communication tools (cell phones) provided in order to facilitate market information sharing. This project was able to reunite the farmers to work together as group which served as one major strategy</p>	<p>FAO, MoA</p>	<p>By December 2012</p>	<p>Yes</p>

		of government for its reconciliation drive for unifying the country. I believe this was a great achievement and highly sustainable for future intervention.			
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GTFS/SEN/060/ITA: Management response matrix

Manage Response to the Final Evaluation of the FSCA project					Date:
Evaluation Recommendations	Management Response	Action to be Taken	Responsible Unit	Time Frame	Further Funding Required Yes or No
<p>10. By the end of the Project (December 2012), the Project should identify and implement a clear strategy for the sustainability of each of the infrastructures built.</p>	<p>Accepted</p>	Finalize infrastructures in Toubacouta (2 fish processing sites) and onions storage pole in Leona	FAOR / ICC	15/11/2012	No
		Finalize agricultural infrastructure management manuals and fish processing sites	FAOR / ICC	30/10/2012	No
		Establish and sign with stakeholders (Government, local authorities and beneficiaries) infrastructures transfer agreements (roles and responsibilities, arrangements for managing and maintaining infrastructures)	FAOR / ICC	15/11/2012	No
<p>11. Concerning the Agricultural component, it is recommended that:</p> <p>Project activities are linked, whenever possible, with new FAO projects that can provide adequate follow-up ;</p>	<p>Accepted</p>	(i) Capitalize and share lessons learned on storage and commercialization of agricultural products (cereals, onions) of FSCA from case studies.	FAOR / ICC	15/11/2012	No
		(ii) Support the POs for the 2013 - 2014 period in professionalizing the activities of its members and	FAOR / ICC	15/12/2012	

		enhancing infrastructures established; NOTE Links are already effective with (i) the GCP/SEN/032/CAN project to support onion sector in Leona and (ii) the GCP/RAF/453/RAF project to support cereal sector (NERICA rice) in Wack Ngouna			
12. Strategies for commercialization should be developed particularly with the grassroots FBOs and their clusters, more than with second-level organizations and Local Frameworks of Coordination (CLCOP).	Accepted	Finalize business plan for agricultural products commercialization and processing facilities management; NOTE In Wack Ngouna the CLCOP has delegated the management of the infrastructure and equipment to local groupings (GIE Soucoute for seeds and RAPROMAF for onion). These POs are assisted in the development of business plan for the commercialization of their agricultural products	FAOR / ICC	15/12/2012	No
13. Regarding the Fishery component, it is recommended that the groups of women processors should be supported in finding new and more attractive markets for their products at national and sub-regional level.	Accepted	(i) Continue to support women processors in national markets prospection (Tambacounda, Kaolack and Kaffrine); (ii) Train women in semi-cured production and market research (iii) Strengthen sales force at unions levels for the commercialization of products at national (short term) and sub regional levels (medium term) (iv) Support women in obtaining certification to sell their products (FRA) ;	FAOR / ICC FAOR / ICC FAOR / ICC FAOR / ICC	20th October 20th October 30th October 15th November	No

		<p>NOTE</p> <p>The Dakar market has been explored with women and marketing tools have been developed with them;</p> <p>The sub-regional market could be explored in Burkina Faso for example after developing a sales force at unions level</p>			
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GTFS/SIL/028/ITA: Management response matrix

Manage Response to the Final Evaluation of the FSCA project					Date:
Evaluation Recommendations	Management Response	Action to be Taken	Responsible Unit	Time Frame	Further Funding Required Yes or No
<p>14. In future regional programmes, the regional dimension should be the paramount factor to inform programme design and implementation. In practical terms, this means that regional programmes should include a regional Logical Framework, with common General Objective and Outcome(s), a strong regional coordinating team and an harmonised M&E system to be implemented since the very beginning. National interventions should be framed, designed and implemented accordingly.</p>	<p>Accepted</p>	<p>FAO-SIL fully agrees with proposed action: Empower M&E system, seeking for new funding and financial partners</p>	<p>FAOSL</p>	<p>2012-2013</p>	<p>Yes</p>
<p>15. Priority should be given to the consolidation of the existing ABCs, by strengthening the capacities of their management and steering bodies and by enhancing the participation and the benefits for the most disadvantaged members of the groups.</p>	<p>Accepted</p>	<p>A list of ABC with proper ranking will be made to focus attention on the right one Two international NGO were contracted to ensure last round of trainings to empower ABC board's members. Project team is ensuring that all the needs are covered to propose to the government the next round of trainings. The project has concentrated on existing ABCs and strengthened the business and organizational set up of the current</p>	<p>FSCA Project Unit</p>	<p>Until Dec'12</p>	<p>No</p>

		ABCs in the project area. The new ABCs have significantly been reduced to a minimum of 4 in Koinadugu district and 4 in Kono. Emphasis has been put on empowering community members to be active in the managing the affairs of the ABCs.			
16. It is equally recommendable that FAO helps the Government in focusing on the improvement and consolidation of existing ABCs, FBO, and FFS rather than excessively scaling up the initiative.	Accepted	The new project GAFSP (Global Agricultural Food Security Project) is addressing the gaps and working with the Government to ensure sustainability FAO will support the Government coordinating the efforts of ongoing projects. FAO signed a contract under the GAFSP to provide capacity building of the existing ABCs and FBO structures. This support ranges from training in management, leadership, agribusiness, entrepreneurship, book keeping and other areas that will ensure sustainability of the project. The FSCA project has also conducted several exchange visits between existing ABCs to facilitate learning and exchange of good practices	FAOSL GAFSP project	Until Dec' 12 and until end of SCP	Yes
17. Linkages with market are essential and the project should increase efforts in the remaining months to explore and find commercial outlets for the ABCs products, as well as adequate forms of packaging and labeling. The creation of a network of ABCs also seems a strategic issue to be tackled as soon as possible in order to share information about markets, prices and available technology and inputs in different regions.	Accepted	Project team will explore new marketing possibilities linking farmers with potential buyer. The project has continued to consolidate the market of key commodities. The ABCs were also rated according to their ability to secure enough quantities of produce especially horticultural products, honey and rice. New markets have been explored with the mining companies and	FSCA project Unit	Oct' 12	No

		hotels in and around Bombali district. Farmers were also trained in value addition, and post harvest management. The Agribusiness component of the GAFSP project has continued to develop models that suit different ABCs			
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GTFS/RAF/426/ITA: Management response matrix

Manage Response to the Final Evaluation of the FSCA project					Date:
Evaluation Recommendations	Management Response	Action to be Taken	Responsible Unit	Time Frame	Further Funding Required Yes or No
18. It is recommended to extend the contract of the ICCP Coordinator of some months after NTE date (31/12/2012), in order to complete the work of systematization of Projects results and to facilitate the administrative closure of all the Projects. If necessary, the contracts of the two regional assistants should also be extended accordingly.	Accepted	<p>Current contract ICC ends 05/10/2012, could be renewed up to 31/04/2013.</p> <p>ICC Assistant Operations contract ends 05/12/2012; ICC Assistant Commercialisation ends 31/12/2012: renew contracts in accordance with decision on previous point.</p> <p>NOTE The current status of the Programme is to maintain the NTE of 31/12/2012 , with the exception of: GTFS/GBS/028 ended 31/12/2011; GTFS/GUI/019/ITA and GTFS/MLI/030/ITA would propose a no cost extension (6 Months?, still to be confirmed). The 3 additional months given to the ICC project would allow the technical and administrative closure. A mechanism to follow up the Guinea and Mali projects, if extended, should be decided (short</p>	TCSF/TCSR/ FAOR Dakar To start procedures	<p>By 14/11/2012</p> <p>31/12/2012 Contracts finalised</p>	<p>No</p> <p>No</p>

		missions?/TCSF/AGS)			
19. It is recommended that tasks and functions of the Regional Administrative Assistant are fairly reflected in her salary level.	Accepted	Current salary is in accordance with the <i>bareme</i> for national staff , a salary increase can be proposed with new tasks in the TdR. New ToR in contract should include field missions to projects in order to support administrative closing procedures.	TCSF/TCSR/ICC	By 31/12/2012 new ToR available	No
20. A Final Workshop should be organized to present and discuss the projects results, lessons learned and the way forward. The presence of national Ministries of Agriculture is imperative and that of national stakeholders, including representatives of FBOs, also advisable. To foster participation and inclusiveness, the ICCP and the BHs should assess whether National Final Workshops would be more appropriate than a Regional one.	Accepted	From November/December 2012 start preparing the WS while National staff is still working on projects.	TCSF/AGS/ICC and National Projects	02/2013	No
		The planned final publication on the programme should be available before the WSs		01/2013	No
		Considering effectiveness and the logistics, 1/ 1,5 day National Workshops seem better than 1 single 3 days Regional WS. Participation of high level National staff and stakeholders will be greatly facilitated.	ICC/National projects	11/2012	No
		The delays accumulated by most of the projects and the period of the NTEs are unlikely to allow the organization of the workshops before the end of the year.	National projects	10/2012	No
		A proper schedule will be set in the next months and WSs organized accordingly.			
		Budgets of projects should include money for the Final WS.			
		Time for the ICC staff would not became a major constraint as 4			

		projects are due to close in December 2012 while 2 are likely to close in 06 /2013 (to be confirmed), the results of the overall Programme could be presented by the ICC project's staff in the 6 countries.			
<p>21. In the framework of the on-going activity of systematization of Projects experiences, of knowledge sharing and of the enhancement of the regional potential and opportunities, it is recommended that the ICCP promotes, before the end of the Project, a compilation of the existing agro-processing technology available in the countries of the Region (equipment and material, producers, NGOs, etc.) to be circulated among the countries.</p>	<p>Accepted</p>	<p>Information, catalogues, plans, costs, pictures, etc. should be collected during the book preparation phase.</p> <p>NOTE The ICC project is planning to produce a small book, summarizing the sub-regional context, the main case studies and best practices from the 7 national projects. This book could include information on equipments, infrastructures, etc.</p>	<p>TCSF/AGS/ICC</p>	<p>01-04/2013</p>	<p>No</p>