Evaluation of the project “Capacity Development for Agricultural Innovation Systems (CDAIS)”
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Project code: GCP/GLO/626/EC
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**Acronyms and abbreviations**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Acronym</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AIS</td>
<td>Agricultural Innovation System</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CD</td>
<td>Capacity Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CDAIS</td>
<td>Capacity Development for Agricultural Innovations Systems</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DeSIRA</td>
<td>Development Smart Innovation through Research in Agriculture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DG DEVCO</td>
<td>European Commission’s Directorate General for International Cooperation and Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EEIG</td>
<td>European Economic Interest Group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FAO</td>
<td>Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MEL</td>
<td>Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NIF</td>
<td>National Innovation Facilitator</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TAP</td>
<td>Tropical Agriculture Platform</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>USAID</td>
<td>United States Agency for International Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Terms</td>
<td>Definition in CDAIS Project</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
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<tr>
<td>Agricultural innovation</td>
<td>The process whereby individuals or organizations bring new or existing products, processes or ways of organization into use for the first time in a specific context in order to increase effectiveness, competitiveness, resilience to shocks or environmental sustainability and thereby contribute to food security and nutrition, economic development or sustainable natural resource management.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agricultural Innovation System (AIS)</td>
<td>AIS may be defined as complex networks of actors (individuals, organizations and enterprises), together with supporting institutions and policies that bring existing or new agricultural products, processes, and practices into social and economic use.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Capacity</td>
<td>The ability of people, organizations and society as a whole to manage their affairs successfully.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Capacity development</td>
<td>The process of unleashing, strengthening and maintaining such capacity.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Capacity needs assessment process in CDAIS project</td>
<td>Jointly assessing human and institutional capacities, jointly designing appropriate capacity development interventions to address the needs, and jointly defining the results and tracking progress.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CDAIS innovation coaching process</td>
<td>A process where facilitator/s accompany/ies farmers and other to work together. The process involves: i. identify share innovation goals and measures of progress towards these goals; ii. identify and address capacity development needs; iii. consolidates shared learning through cyclical process of planning, action and reflection.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Functional capacities</td>
<td>These are capacities to: i. navigate complexity; ii. collaborate; iii. reflect and learn; iv. engage in strategic and political processes; and v. be able to adapt and respond in order to realize the potential of innovation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Innovation niche partnership</td>
<td>The locus of learning and experimentation and micro-level transformation – developing innovation that has the potential, if managed strategically, to lead to seed sustained transformation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Innovation Support Services Providers</td>
<td>An activity conducted between or among providers and beneficiaries through regular interaction to address a specific demand emerging from a joint analysis of a situation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marketplace</td>
<td>The marketplace in the CDAIS context aims to broker partnerships for effective capacity development (CD) for agricultural innovation. The CDAIS Marketplaces have the general objective of facilitating the matching of initiatives of capacity development for agricultural innovation systems (capacity development supply) with the real capacity development needs of the major agricultural innovation actors (capacity development demand).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Innovation Facilitator (NIF)</td>
<td>National Innovation Facilitators play a key role in the implementation of the CDAIS project. Their main roles are to: i. interact effectively with stakeholders at innovation niche partnership level to reach an agreed list of functional capacity needs, and an agreed plan to address those needs;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Policy dialogue</td>
<td>The objectives of the CDAIS policy dialogue are the following:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------------</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>i. to reach a common understanding of the relevance of innovation and role of policy development and institutional issues in promoting agricultural innovation;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>ii. to strengthen the capacity of stakeholders involved in the innovation niche/partnership to influence strategic and political processes relevant to their objectives;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>iii. to recommend improvements in the institutional mechanisms and enabling environment, that promote agricultural innovation in each country.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

ii. interact with AIS stakeholders at system/organization level to reach an agreed list of functional capacity needs, and an agreed plan to address those needs;

iii. with the help of specific capacity development specialists, facilitate capacity development at niche and system level through a series of learning cycles.
Executive summary

Introduction

1. In 2012, as part of a G20 initiative, the Tropical Agriculture Platform (TAP) was established to improve the global coherence of capacity development (CD) for agricultural innovation. The Capacity Development for Agricultural Innovation Systems (CDAIS) project was launched in January 2015 to support TAP. The CDAIS project was jointly implemented by Agrinatura and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), and funded by the European Union.

2. One of the first actions the project took was to support a CD Expert Group, established by TAP, to develop a Common Framework to underpin a practical approach to CD for agricultural innovation. This should aim at harmonizing the diversity of existing strategies through an Agricultural Innovation Systems (AIS) perspective. The Framework provided concepts, principles, methodologies and tools to better understand the architecture of AIS, to assess CD needs and to plan, implement, monitor and evaluate CD interventions. CDAIS then piloted applications of the Common Framework in eight countries in Africa, Asia and Latin America – Angola, Ethiopia, Rwanda, Bangladesh, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Honduras and Guatemala.

3. This final evaluation was planned at project formulation stage. The evaluation's purpose is two-fold: fulfil accountability requirements and generate lessons learned. The intended users are the project implementing partners, including country counterparts, the main donor – the European Commission’s Directorate-General for International Cooperation and Development (DG DEVCO), Agrinatura Network, TAP partners and Secretariat and FAO technical departments, in particular the Inter-Departmental Working Group on Capacity Development.

4. The evaluation was guided by the following overarching questions:
   i. **Relevance:** To what extent is the Common Framework, as piloted under the CDAIS project, relevant to donors’ priorities, global and national development objectives, FAO Strategic Framework, as well as TAP priorities?
   ii. **Communication and internal cohesion:** Is there a common understanding and clarity on the Common Framework and approach among resource partners, Agrinatura, FAO and country counterparts?
   iii. **Partnership and coordination:** How does the project engage in partnerships and to what extent is the project’s operational modality and governance structure, including the Agrinatura-FAO-national government partnership at country level, effective and sustainable?
   iv. **Efficiency:** To what extent has the project been efficient in delivering its results?
   v. **Gender:** To what extent has the project contributed to gender equality and social equity in the niches, organizational and national AIS in which it worked?
   vi. **Effectiveness and sustainability:** What have been the contributions of the project under each result area, and what are the spill overs/catalytic effect/sustainability prospects of the results?

5. The evaluation questions constituted the reference for the development of the evaluation matrix, including evaluation sub-questions, methods for data collection, and source of data for each question.
Main findings

6. **Relevance.** The TAP Common Framework was relevant to most of the 40 TAP members by helping to improve the coherence and impact of their capacity development activities. Globally, the Framework has a strong potential for adoption beyond TAP members.

7. **CDAIS** was relevant to DG DEVCO, and this is proven by the granting of USD 5 million to continue supporting TAP for five more years through the Development Smart Innovation through Research in Agriculture (DeSIRA) programme.

8. **Communication and internal cohesion.** The project’s capacity building efforts focused on strengthening four functional capacities: i) to navigate complexity; ii) to collaborate; iii) to reflect and learn; and iv) to engage in strategic and political processes that together built a fifth capacity: the ability to adapt and respond in order to realize the potential of innovation. Several of the capacities proved to be somewhat abstract and difficult to grasp, in particular at country and niche level. Differences of opinion emerged about the meaning of terms and how to build the capacities in practice. Yet, the evaluation team believes that much of the confusion and frustration was inevitable given that the Common Framework approach to CD challenged the mainstream CD paradigm.

9. **Partnerships.** The project’s approach to partnership proved effective at strengthening the relationships among niche actors, and in some cases allowed new institutional arrangements to emerge. Different countries took different approaches to setting up or strengthening national platforms suggesting no single right approach in all contexts. Policy dialogues – a CDAIS project tool – were able to usefully link niche to district and national level.

10. **Governance structure.** Project implementers – Agrinatura and FAO – learned to appreciate each other’s strengths, which allowed the project to work effectively at niche, national and global level, including engaging with TAP as the Secretariat. However, the evaluation team concurs with the findings of the results-oriented monitoring (ROM) review and the mid-term evaluation that the project was complex and the relationship was at times challenging. The main difficulty emerged at country level where Agrinatura, FAO and national partners did not always work well together as a team. There was a tendency to work according to budget allocation, with Agrinatura and FAO focusing on providing their own set of deliverables. The national partner did not receive a budget allocation and as a result sometimes felt side-lined. Nevertheless, concerted efforts were made to forge integrated project teams that were more or less successful, depending on the country and personalities involved.

11. The project took a number of steps at national level to improve project governance and cohesion. Despite improvements, it appears that the partnership between Agrinatura and FAO will not continue after the end of the project. However, both organizations have put in separate proposals to continue CDAIS work.

12. **Efficiency.** The project was ambitious and complex: it sets out to test a conceptually challenging framework at global, national and subnational levels in eight countries working in 34 niches with two budget holders responsible for delivery, within 48 months. Delays are almost inevitable in projects of this scale and complexity. That the CDAIS project delivered on most of its planned targets is commendable, albeit with an eight-month extension. Delays did happen as a result of complicated financial reporting requirements, staff turnover and governance issues already discussed. In retrospect, the project would have greatly benefited from a more indepth, comprehensive and fully-funded design phase.
13. **Gender.** While gender was a consideration in the niches, it is difficult to draw any firm conclusions about the project’s contribution to enhancing gender equality. By not making gender explicit in the design and testing of the Common Framework, the opportunity to test gender mainstreaming in capacity development for AIS was missed.

14. **Effectiveness.** There is evidence that the project’s theory of change was valid. At country level, progress was made towards three mutually reinforcing outcomes:
   i. niche partnerships tackling commonly agreed issues and becoming strengthened in the process;
   ii. national level mechanisms supporting CD in AIS; and
   iii. key organizations supporting CD in AIS.

15. At global level there was also evidence of the emergence of a positive feedback loop in which:
   i. TAP partners have a better understanding where and how the Common Framework works (from country level work); and
   ii. TAP partners are promoting the Common Framework in their respective organizations and platforms.

16. **Sustainability.** Project work at global level will continue through EU-DeSIRA funding to TAP for the next five years. However, niche work is at risk in most countries after a proposal for a second phase was unsuccessful.

**Recommendations**

17. Based on the findings, the evaluation recommends promoting greater national ownership of any future CDAIS projects by co-designing them with governments.

18. There should be a better link between functional capacities and technical capacities to ensure new CDAIS projects are more relevant to beneficiaries.

19. The Project Oversight Committee, Agrinatura and FAO should document lessons learned on joint governance and project management so as to inform similar projects in the future.

20. More time should be taken to ensure more inclusiveness in the design of complex partnership projects, in particular by allowing more time and funding for an inception phase, and fully consulting with in-country partners.

21. Agrinatura and FAO should continue to implement and support the plan to complete the transversal analysis and ensure its use by TAP; and they should find the relatively small amounts of funding required to keep niche partnerships working.

22. Lastly, gender mainstreaming should be strengthened in the next cohort of projects on capacity development of AIS, so as to learn lessons on how to do it better in the future.
1. Introduction

1.1 Purpose of the evaluation

1. This final evaluation was foreseen in the Capacity Development for Agricultural Innovation System (CDAIS) project document. It was conducted for both accountability and learning purposes for the main donor, the European Commission as well as the two implementing organizations, Agrinatura and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the Project Oversight Committee, the project team and project partners (participating institutions and national governments).

2. The Tropical Agriculture Platform (TAP) is a multi-stakeholder platform established in 2012 through a G20 Initiative to improve the global coherence of capacity development (CD) for agricultural innovation. TAP set-up the CD Expert Group in April 2014 and, through the CDAIS project, developed the Common Framework which was endorsed by the TAP Global Task Force in 2015 and approved by the TAP Partners Assembly in January 2016 to guide future CD for agricultural innovation. The purpose of the project was also to pilot the operationalization of the Common Framework and its further development.

1.2 Intended uses

3. The main uses and intended uses of the evaluation are reported in Table 1.

Table 1: Main audience and intended uses

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Primary audience</th>
<th>Intended use</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Implementing partners and national counterparts</td>
<td>Identify actionable lessons useful to carry on CDAIS work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The European Commission’s Directorate General for International Cooperation and Development (DG DEVCO)</td>
<td>Inform strategic investment decisions in the future</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Government counterparts in the eight pilot countries</td>
<td>Future planning</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Secondary audience</th>
<th>Intended use</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Agrinatura network</td>
<td>For strategic decision-making on future Agricultural Innovation System (AIS) interventions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tropical Agriculture Platform (TAP) partners and TAP Secretariat</td>
<td>Future decision-making on the TAP Action Plan as well as use and adaptation of the Common Framework concepts and principles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FAO technical departments, including participants of the Inter-departmental Working Group on CD</td>
<td>Improve ongoing and future CD interventions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other national governments for which the Common Framework approach is relevant</td>
<td>Pilot the Common Framework approach in their countries</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other donors and organizations</td>
<td>Inform strategic investment decisions in favour of projects aimed at improving AIS and practices through CD</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Evaluation team
1.3 **Scope and objective of the evaluation**

4. The evaluation assessed project results throughout its implementation period (January 2015 to August 2019), covering activities that have been implemented in all project components and at both the global and national level. In addition, the evaluation assessed the effectiveness of the project’s governance mechanism.

5. In terms of geographical coverage, activities in all eight participating countries were considered. The countries were: Angola, Bangladesh, Burkina Faso, Ethiopia, Guatemala, Honduras, Lao People’s Democratic Republic and Rwanda. However, given the evaluation budget and time constraints, field missions for data collection purposes were only conducted in four countries. The suggested selection criteria for the countries to be visited by the evaluation are presented in the methodology section.

6. The evaluation has the following objectives:
   
i. assess the relevance of the CDAIS project and its underlying approaches;
   
ii. assess CDAIS contributions under each result area; and
   
iii. identify lessons learned as well as causes of successes and failures.

7. In order to achieve these objectives, the evaluation answered the following evaluation questions:

   i. **Relevance**: To what extent is the Common Framework, as piloted under the CDAIS project, relevant to donors’ priorities, global and national development objectives, FAO Strategic Framework, as well as TAP priorities?

   ii. **Communication and internal cohesion**: Is there a common understanding and clarity on the Common Framework and approach among resource partners, Agrinatura, FAO and country counterparts?

   iii. **Partnership and coordination**: How does the project engage in partnerships and to what extent is the project’s operational modality and governance structure, including the Agrinatura-FAO-national government partnership at country level, effective and sustainable?

   iv. **Efficiency**: To what extent has the project been efficient in delivering its results?

   v. **Gender**: To what extent has the project contributed to gender equality and social equity in the niches, organizational and national agricultural innovation system (AIS) in which it worked?

   vi. **Effectiveness and sustainability**: What have been the contributions of the project under each result area, and what are the spillovers/catalytic effect/sustainability prospects of the results?

1.4 **Methodology**

8. The Evaluation Manager participated in the Global Team meeting organized in Lisbon from 20 to 22 February 2019, during which he met with key stakeholders involved in project implementation, including the eight country teams, and discussed their expectations from the evaluation as well as their readiness to receive the evaluation mission in April 2019. The meetings contributed to the formulation of the evaluation Terms of Reference (TOR) (see Annex 1) and the selection of the countries to be visited by the evaluation team. The following criteria were taken into consideration in the country selection:
i. countries visited during the mid-term evaluation, to avoid to the extent possible selecting these same countries;
ii. volume of the CDAIS activities in the country;
iii. at least one country from Africa, Asia and Latin America;
iv. information-rich cases to generate lessons learned from the implementation of CDAIS-related work, as suggested by the Project Management Team;
v. concurrence of other evaluation missions (FAO and European Union) to avoid evaluation fatigue.

9. The evaluation team conducted an inception mission in Rome and Montpellier from 1 to 5 April 2019, where they met with the Project Management Team as well as key stakeholders involved in CDAIS in Agrinatura and FAO. The inception mission contributed to the finalization of the evaluation methodology as well as the development of the evaluation tools.

10. The evaluation was guided by an evaluation matrix made of the evaluation questions listed above, sub-questions, judgement criteria and a description of the methods for data collection, and source of data for each question. The evaluation team evaluated success using the judgement criteria in the evaluation matrix. The team developed an interview protocol to guide the semi-structured interviews of key stakeholders. Both were contextualized according to the countries and stakeholders involved. Responses are attributed to interviewees in this report by using footnotes to allow double checking while keeping their identities hidden.

11. The evaluation was also guided by innovation concepts laid out in the TAP Common Framework and the newly-developed Office of Evaluation (OED) Capacity Development Evaluation Framework.

12. In answering the evaluation questions, the evaluation relied on multiple sources of primary and secondary data, and used mixed-methods approach for data analysis, triangulation and validation. Sources of data and collection methods included the following:
   
i. **Interviews:** were conducted with the project team, Agrinatura and FAO staff, representatives of the donor and/or Steering Committee members, government officials, European Union delegations, development partners, civil society, and the private sector at global, regional and national levels. Interviewees were implementers and/or beneficiaries at individual/niche, organizational and enabling environment levels, sometimes at more than one level. For example, training that project facilitators received benefitted them as well as their respective organizations. This makes it difficult to say exactly how many people were interviewed at each level, except that more than 100 people were interviewed altogether. The list of respondents is provided in Appendix 1. The interviewees were identified by the evaluation team based on the document review, and together with the evaluation counterparts during the evaluation process. Protocols for interviews were developed by the evaluation team prior to the evaluation data collection phase. Information provided by interviewees and used in the report is referenced with footnotes. Interviewees’ identities are kept anonymous by giving each respondent a unique number.

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1 Exception was made to visit one country already visited during the mid-term evaluation to assess progress made since then.
2 The project coordination is based in Montpellier, France.
ii. **Document review**: the evaluation team reviewed the project’s specific documents, including the Partnership Agreement, inception report, annual progress reports, mid-term evaluation report and the European Commission’s results-oriented monitoring (ROM) evaluation report. Key corporate and global documents were also examined, including the FAO Strategic Framework, FAO Policy on Gender Equality, donors’ strategy documents, regional and national development plans, and relevant CDAIS publications. The list of documents consulted is provided in the Bibliography.

iii. **Online Survey**: the evaluation team developed and administered an online survey of TAP members, using the same questionnaire used during the mid-term evaluation. The survey was sent to 43 members of which 13 replied. Three reminders were sent. The low response rate may be due to survey fatigue as the TAP Secretariat also sent an online survey to the TAP Partner Assembly in May 2019, answered by 28 members. The evaluation team also drew on the results of this survey.

iv. **In-depth country studies**: to complement the methods already mentioned, the evaluation team visited four pilot countries to gather country level evidence and provide an in-depth assessment of outcomes and achievements using selection criteria. The following countries were identified for in-depth analysis: Angola, Bangladesh, Ethiopia and Guatemala. The evaluation team was able to travel to the field to visit one or two niches per country. Information on niche outcomes for all eight countries was also taken from two project publications in particular: ‘Conversations of Change’ and ‘Stories of Change.’ (CDAIS, 2018). The publications are based on the testimonies of niche level participants. The evaluation team cross-checked the testimonies and sentiments in the niches they visited and found that the two documents are reliable.

13. At the end of each country visit, a debriefing session was carried out to validate preliminary findings at country level and gather complementary data to further support the analysis.

14. The evaluation report underwent an internal quality assurance process to ensure it met the United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG) Norms and Standards (UNED), and the Office of Evaluation’s (OED’s) evaluation requirements as set in its evaluation manual. It also benefited from suggestions and comments from the CDAIS project team and main partners, including the CDAIS Project Oversight Committee, TAP Secretariat member, and Project Coordination Team and stakeholders in the participating countries.
Box 1: Key concepts used by the project

The CDAIS project developed and piloted the use of the Common Framework to guide more effective capacity development for agricultural innovation. This Box outlines and explains the main concepts used by the project.

The Common Framework combines concepts from AIS and systems thinking, and capacity development literature. Important for this evaluation is that it specifically includes FAO’s approach to capacity development, in particular the idea that to achieve a long-lasting development of capacities and to obtain measurable impact and changes in peoples’ lives CD needs to be addressed at the levels of individual, organizational and enabling environment. Neglecting one level will undermine the effectiveness of the intervention. The TAP Common Framework is structured on these three levels.

An agricultural innovation system (AIS – CDAIS, 2018) is “a network of actors or organizations, and individuals, together with supporting institutions and policies in the agricultural and related sectors that brings existing or new products, processes, and forms of organization into social and economic use.”

Another concept underpinning the Common Framework is the idea that the health of an agricultural innovation system is crucially dependent on ‘4 + 1’ functional capacities shown in Figure 1, that hitherto have been under emphasized in capacity development efforts. The capacities are ‘functional’ rather than ‘technical’ because they deal with the functioning of AIS rather than the technologies used in AIS. Functional capacities can be thought of as relating to ‘soft’ people skills while technical capacities relate to the ability to use ‘hard’ technologies, e.g. machinery or new crop seeds.

The third key concept used by the project is that of an innovation niche partnership, defined as “a space where CD takes place around a specific innovation agenda.” A niche partnership can also be understood as an agricultural innovation system. The niche partnerships that the project supported are listed in Table 4.

A fourth concept was the importance of system facilitators and brokers to articulate demand, link between people and organizations and to negotiate between different perspectives and cultures. The project employed National Innovation Facilitators (NIFs) who played a key role in supporting the niche partnerships.

Source: Evaluation team

Figure 1: The 4 + 1 capacities

Source: TAP, 2016

15. The evaluation was guided by FAO’s recently-developed Capacity Development Evaluation Framework. The Framework suggests that evaluations meet four criteria, which are shown in Table 2, together with how the evaluation complied with them.
Table 2: How the evaluation complied with FAO’s Capacity Development Evaluation Framework

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criteria</th>
<th>Compliance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Evaluate capacity development at three levels: individual, organizational and enabling environment</td>
<td>The evaluation worked on these three levels (similarly to the project)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Identify virtuous connections driving outcomes</td>
<td>The evaluation team sought to validate the ‘positive feedback loops’ in the project’s theory of change</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discuss CD in the relevance and outcome sections</td>
<td>CD is covered in all sections of the evaluation report</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Have dedicated CD evaluation questions</td>
<td>As the project was piloting an approach to CD, all evaluation questions relate to CD</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Evaluation team

1.5 Limitations

16. One limitation was that the evaluation team could not visit all pilot countries for data collection purposes because of limited time and budget. The evaluators visited four of the eight pilot countries, and six niches in the visited pilot countries. While the key actors were interviewed by phone, or face-to-face at the CDAIS Global Forum in Gembloux (13-14 May 2019), in the other four countries, at the end, this evaluation inevitably draws more heavily on the four countries the evaluators visited.

17. In addition, since the project worked at three levels - individual/niche, organizational and national/enabling - there was a limit to the amount of direct data the evaluation team could gather at any one level. Nevertheless, the team interviewed over 100 people covering niche to global level outcomes.

1.6 Structure of the report

18. Following this introduction, Chapter 2 presents the background and context of the project, as well as the theory of change; Chapter 3 presents the findings, grouped by evaluation question; while conclusions and recommendations are presented in Chapter 4.
2. **Background and context of the project**

2.1 **Context of the project**

19. The CDAIS project was jointly developed and implemented by Agrinatura-(European Economic Interest Grouping (EEIG) and FAO. It was conceived to support the implementation of the TAP Action Plan (TAP, 2013). As TAP partners, and in line with their visions, Agrinatura and FAO collaborate towards a coherent approach to strengthening AIS. As such, the project aims at fostering more demand-driven and effective agricultural research and development investments, and CD interventions that better respond to specific needs of local and national stakeholders.

20. The four-year project started in January 2015 and ended in August 2019, with an eight-month no-cost extension. It has a budget of EUR 13 356 851, including a EUR 12 000 000 grant from the European Union and combined contributions from Agrinatura-EEIG and FAO of EUR 1 356 851. It includes activities at a global level as well as in eight pilot countries (Angola, Bangladesh, Burkina Faso, Ethiopia, Guatemala, Honduras, Lao People’s Democratic Republic and Rwanda).

21. The project’s overall objective was to promote AIS that are efficient and sustainable in meeting the demands of farmers, agribusiness and consumers. Its specific objective was to establish a global partnership on CD in AIS on a sustainable footing, with needs assessed and approaches validated in the pilot countries. To achieve the stated objectives, the project envisaged activities both at the global level (Result 1), and at the national and subnational level in eight countries (Results 2 and 3). The expected results and outputs per result, as stated in the project’s logical framework, are presented in Table 3.

**Table 3: Project expected results and main achievements (at the time of evaluation)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Targets</th>
<th>Extent of delivery</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 1.1 TAP mechanisms coordinate and harmonize a global effort on CD for AIS | - TAP Steering Committee and TAP Secretariat in place and functioning.  
- TAP Action Plan I (2014-2017) covered development of Common Framework; testing Common Framework in eight pilot countries; convening policy dialogues; and developing TAPIpedia to support information sharing and knowledge exchange objectives of TAP.  
- Co-organized and participated in International Symposium on Agricultural Innovation (Rome, Italy, November 2018), and the LAC Regional policy dialogue on Enabling Agricultural Innovation (Panama City, Panama, September 2018). TAP members participated in the Global Forum organized by Agrinatura, Gembloux, Belgium, May 2019.  
- TAPIpedia launched in 2016, as in March 2019 it had 486 registered users from 63 organizations, covered 67 topics and hosted 1767 resources (Document provided by FAO on TAPIpedia analytics as of 29 March 2019). |
| 1.2 The diversity of approaches for the development of AIS is analysed and understood and a Common Framework | - Common Framework was developed following extensive research and analysis of different approaches; document on Conceptual Background and Guidance Note on |
Evaluation of the project “Capacity Development for Agricultural Innovation Systems (CDAIS)”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Output/Result 2: CD needs and existing provision for strengthening AIS in eight pilot countries are defined accurately through inclusive country-led multi-stakeholder processes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2.1 Partners in eight countries share a vision of CD in AIS</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| 2.2 Country-led assessments, AIS-CD action plans available in eight pilot countries |
- Assessments and coaching plans were completed for 34 niche partnerships in eight countries, and implemented with varying degrees of success.
- Capacity needs assessments of 24 national organizations were conducted in six countries and action plans were developed, but not implemented fully in some countries. (Burkina Faso did not do organizational CD needs assessment and Lao People’s Democratic Republic opted for establishing a national platform instead of CD for individual organizations).

| 2.3 Mechanism/platform for advocacy, dialogue and action on AIS CD established/ strengthened in eight countries |
- Concept note was developed to guide marketplace activity. Marketplace events held in all pilot countries (last one in 2018).
- Three/four ‘Stories of Change’ were documented and published for each of the eight pilot countries to serve, among other things, as means for advocacy on CD in AIS in the pilot countries.
- Three/four ‘Conversations of change’ based on interviews with CDAIS country teams and partners were documented and published for each of the eight pilot countries to, among other things, promote dialogue on AIS.
- The establishment of national platforms for CD of AIS or strengthening existing national platforms for ongoing advocacy and dialogue did not progress in all pilot countries. Lao People’s Democratic Republic established a national platform and Guatemala launched its national platform in May 2019. Honduras made unsuccessful attempt in 2018, and indicated intention to try again in 2019.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Output/Result 3: CD interventions in AIS within eight pilot countries are demand driven and efficient, integrating the development of individual competencies, organizational capacities and enabling policies around priority themes and value chains.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3.1 Twenty persons in each of the eight countries with enhanced skills for facilitating capacity development in AIS</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
- A total of 50 National Innovation Facilitators were trained in facilitating CD for AIS in niche partnerships and 24 facilitators were trained to facilitate organizational coaching processes.

| 3.2 Two/three local/national value chain/innovation partnerships in each of the eight countries demonstrate improved capacity for joint innovation |
- Seven pilot countries each have three/four innovation partnerships that demonstrated improved capacities, with changes at farm/cooperative level and individual level changes, and one country had two innovation partnerships demonstrating improved capacities (Agrinatura and FAO, 2019). Changes also observed in field missions to four pilot countries.

| 3.3 Four/five key stakeholder organizations in each of the eight countries exhibit improved organizational culture, practices and procedures for joint innovation |
- Eight countries initiated the organizational strengthening process in 24 organizations.
3.4 Lessons learned from the selected innovation platforms in the eight pilot countries are reviewed, analysed, documented, synthesized and exchanged at global level to further promote tools, skills, approaches, procedures, etc. to strengthen AIS.

- Lessons learned from the pilot countries were documented and the Global Forum of May 2019 provided a platform for knowledge exchange at the global level.
- Transversal learning through the systematic analysis and synthesis of data/lessons from the MEL system – analysis was in progress at the time of the evaluation.

Source: CDAIS Annual Report 2017 and CDAIS Interim Annual Report 2018

22. In addition, the project document identified its main target groups and final beneficiaries, listed in Box 2.

Box 2: Target groups and final beneficiaries

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Target groups</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- 44 International and National Agricultural Research and Innovation Organizations (TAP partners).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Other National Agricultural Research and Innovation Organizations and stakeholder groups in the pilot countries.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Core group of National Innovation Facilitators selected in the pilot countries.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Members of selected innovation partnerships in the pilot countries.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Final beneficiaries</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- Smallholder farmers, agricultural food related enterprises and consumers in the pilot countries.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Smallholder farmers, agricultural food related enterprises and consumers in countries where TAP partners are active.

CDAIS governance structure and implementation arrangements

23. CDAIS is the first experience of joint implementation between Agrinatura and FAO. Both are beneficiaries of the European Union grant with Agrinatura-EEIG acting as Coordinator. Both are co-leaders in the implementation with FAO (through its Research and Extension Unit, AGDR) leading the implementation of activities under Result 1 and Agrinatura leading the implementation of activities under Results 2 and 3. The evaluation covers all three results.

24. The Project Oversight Committee (POC) consisting of two Agrinatura-EEIG and two FAO representatives in addition to the TAP Chair, provides fiduciary and strategic oversight of the project. The project coordinator is an ex-officio member of the POC. Agrinatura-EEIG is the grantee and Coordinator of the project with FAO as its main implementing partner, through its Research and Extension Unit (AGDR).

25. The Project Management Team (PMT) comprises the Agrinatura-EEIG Coordinating Organization (International Centre for development-oriented Research and Agriculture, iCRA), the FAO AGDR Office and the Agrinatura EEIG Financial Controller (Centre de Coopération Internationale en Recherche Agronomique pour le Développement, CIRAD).

26. At a global level (Result 1), the TAP Secretariat and the TAP Global Task Force are responsible for convening and overseeing the TAP Expert Group responsible for the development of the Common Framework on CD for AIS, that includes development of concepts, synthesis of methods for needs assessment and development of implementation guidelines. The TAP Partners’ Assembly guides the development of the Platform, with a smaller TAP Steering Committee to oversee the Platform activities and advocate at international level for the common framework. The project funds this work.
27. At a national level (Results 2 and 3), activities are implemented by the Agrinatura focal organization and the FAO Country Office. The work is closely coordinated with the respective national counterpart organization that hosts the National Project Coordinator chosen by the National Steering Committee (including a representative from Agrinatura-EEIG, FAO, national counterpart organizations and European Union Delegation). In each country, Country Project Management Unit (CPMU) was established. The CPMU was chaired by the National Project Coordinator and consisted of the FAO Country Representative or assistant FAOR, designated Agrinatura-EEIG Focal Person, Country Project Manager (employed by FAO), Lead National Innovation Facilitator (NIF, employed by Agrinatura) and a representative of the European Commission country delegation. The CPMU worked in close coordination with the Global Project Management Team and was responsible for: i) ensuring the project speaks with one voice, avoiding conflicting messages to stakeholders, and disconnected implementation of activities; and ii) coordinating all activities and ensuring integration with ongoing activities, including those of the European Union. Figure 2 summarizes the project’s governance mechanism.

**Figure 2: Governance mechanism for CDAIS project**

![Governance mechanism for CDAIS project](image)

*Source: CDAIS project governance, communication and management document*

28. Table 4 presents the Agrinatura focal organization, national counterpart and selected innovation partnerships or niches. The effectiveness of this structure and project implementation arrangements is analysed under section 3.3 (Partnerships and Coordination).
### Table 4: Implementing organizations and selected innovation niches/value chains

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Agrinatura Member</th>
<th>National Counterpart</th>
<th>Prioritized innovation partnerships/niches</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Angola</td>
<td>Instituto Superior de Agronomia, Universidade de Lisboa – ISA / Ulisboa</td>
<td>Instituto de Investigação Agronómica (IIA)</td>
<td>- Production and commercialization of quality seeds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Rice improvement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Associations for rural entrepreneurship³</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bangladesh</td>
<td>Natural Resources Institute (NRI)</td>
<td>Bangladesh Agricultural Research Council (BARC)</td>
<td>- Mango</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Pineapple</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Fish</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Burkina Faso</td>
<td>Centre de Coopération Internationale en Recherche Agronomique pour le Développement (CIRAD)</td>
<td>Ministère de l'Enseignement Supérieur, de la Recherche Scientifique et de l'Innovation (MESRSI)</td>
<td>- Sunflower</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Digitizing agricultural advisory services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- BioSPG organic agricultural label</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Local property charters</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Micro-irrigation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Family food processing micro-enterprises</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethiopia</td>
<td>iCRA</td>
<td>Ethiopian Institute of Agricultural Research (EIAR)</td>
<td>- Demand stimulation for pasteurised milk</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Livestock feed safety and quality</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Malt barley seed system</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Community seed production system</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Chickpea seed production and marketing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guatemala</td>
<td>International Development Cooperation Agency (AICS)</td>
<td>Ministerio de Agricultura, Ganadería y Alimentación (MAGA)</td>
<td>- Avocado: increased productivity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Beans: increase adoption of fortified variety</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Cocoa: improvement of production and organizational capacities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Honey: strengthening of producer’s entrepreneurship capacities</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

³ The innovation partnership of “Producer associations for vegetables, peanuts and cassava” did not continue after the capacity needs assessments were conducted.
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Agrinatura Member</th>
<th>National Counterpart</th>
<th>Prioritized innovation partnerships/niches</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Honduras</td>
<td>International Development Cooperation Agency (AICS)</td>
<td>Secretaria de Agricultura y Ganadería (SAG)</td>
<td>- Cocoa: improved post-harvesting management</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Potatoes: integrated pest management</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Beans: Improved organizational capacities for the value chain</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Coffee: commercialization of specialized coffee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lao People’s Democratic Republic</td>
<td>Centre de Coopération Internationale en Recherche Agronomique pour le Développement (CIRAD)</td>
<td>National Agriculture and Forestry Research Institute (NAFRI)</td>
<td>- Integrated rice and aquaculture system</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Better quality process and marketing strategies for organic vegetables</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Pork value chain development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Enhanced cattle productivity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rwanda</td>
<td>Natural Resources Institute (NRI)</td>
<td>Ministry of Agriculture and Animal Resources (MINAGRI)</td>
<td>- Cassava value chain</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Dairy value chain development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Rwangingo-Karangazi catchment development</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Evaluation team

29. At national level, the FAO Country Office was allocated budget to fund inception workshops, policy dialogues⁴ and marketplaces⁵ while the Agrinatura focal organization was provided budget to carry out capacity building at niche and organizational levels. The selection of NIFs that facilitated the work at niche and organizational level was carried out jointly by Agrinatura and FAO in most countries. The levels (individual/niche, organizational, enabling environment) correspond to those identified in the Common Framework.

2.2 Theory of change

30. The mid-term evaluation of CDAIS (FAO, 2017) developed a theory of change in two parts: i) a global level theory of change showing how results of piloting the Common Framework in eight countries is expected to have an impact; and ii) a theory of change at country level whose results and outcomes feed the global level theory of change and vice versa (see Figure 3).

⁴ A policy dialogue allows people working in niches to discuss their issues with decision makers with the hope that policy may change as a result.

⁵ A marketplace allows people working in niches to identify and better understand the innovation support organizations who might be able to help them.
Figure 3: Project theory of change

a) At country level

b) At global level
Evaluation of the project “Capacity Development for Agricultural Innovation Systems (CDAIS)”

Key:
White – Inputs provided by project
Dark grey – Immediate outcomes
Light grey – Intermediate outcomes

Assumptions:
a. Project is able to carry out transversal learning and synthesis to describe how CF works in different contexts in ways that are approachable and convincing
b. Understanding informs practice and increases the likelihood of positive results
c. Understanding and positive results are captured and communicated in ways that are convincing to national and TAP partners
d. Positive feedback loop drives process

Source: Evaluation team
31. The national level theory of change shows how the project operationalized the Common Framework in eight pilot countries. The project provides a number of inputs such as capacity needs assessment, facilitation and policy dialogues at the three Common Framework levels (niche, organizational, national/enabling environment). These, it is assumed, work to foster a positive feedback loop shown inside the Box. This dynamic in turn leads to increased appreciation of the Common Framework, in particular the building of functional capacities, and increased use of the Common Framework approach to capacity development. Both of these outcomes lead to the intermediate outcome of improved system capacity to innovate at niche, organizational and national level.

32. The global level theory of change shows that the piloting of the Common Framework in the eight countries and the support provided to TAP drive a similar positive dynamic in which national and TAP partners better understand how and where the Common Framework works and as a result use it more widely themselves and promote its use through their own networks. The global theory of change has the same intermediate outcome as the country level theory of change of improved system capacity to innovate.

33. A key assumption in the global level theory of change is that the project is able to carry out transversal learning and synthesis across the eight pilot countries to describe how the Common Framework approach works in different contexts to be understandable and convincing.
3. **Findings**

34. This section presents the evaluation findings in response to the six main evaluation questions (EQs).

3.1 **Relevance**

**EQ 1.** To what extent is the Common Framework, as piloted under the CDAIS project, relevant to donors’ priorities, global and national development objectives, FAO Strategic Framework, as well as TAP priorities?

The findings under this question are presented according to the main project stakeholders.

**EQ 1.1.** To what extent is the TAP Common Framework and approach aligned with the European Commission’s policies and mechanisms at global and country level?

**Finding 1.** The TAP Common Framework and approach are well aligned with the European Commission’s policies and mechanisms at global level, confirming the findings of the mid-term evaluation. At country level, European Union Delegations in the pilot countries demonstrated more support in the second half of the project.

35. The European Commission sees capacity development as an essential factor in the effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability and impact of the Commission’s development cooperation, going well beyond technical assistance and training. The TAP Common Framework resonates with the approach outlined in the European Commission’s Capacity Development Toolkit (EC, 2010) that emphasises ownership of capacity development by those whose capacities are to be developed. Like the Common Framework approach, the European Commission approach is an open systems approach to capacity development that recognizes that individuals and organizations form part of a wider system, and capacity development as a means to change, rather than as an end in itself.

36. Interviews with the European Commission’s Directorate-General for International Cooperation and Development (DG DEVCO) confirm the relevance of the Common Framework to the Organization. There is a clear commitment from the European Commission to support the scaling out and/or deepening of CDAIS interventions in the pilot countries through the Development-Smart Innovation through Research in Agriculture (DeSIRA) programme. When drafting this report, Burkina Faso and Rwanda had submitted concept notes to DeSIRA for strengthening results achieved through the CDAIS project, Angola was in the process of finalizing its concept note. Bangladesh and Ethiopia both submitted concept notes unsuccessfully.

37. The mid-term evaluation found that European Union Delegations at country level were not involved in the design of the CDAIS project, and had little or no ownership of the project. There has been some improvement in European Union Delegation participation in some of the pilot countries more recently with discussions between the CDAIS project at country level and the European Union Delegation in the preparation of concept notes for the DeSIRA programme. The fact that these concept notes are being developed at country level and routed via the European Union Delegation in-country can foster greater participation

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6 A European Commission and Bill and Melinda Gated Foundation initiative aimed at addressing climate change in the context of research and innovation in agriculture and food systems running from 2018 to 2020 with a budget of USD 570 million.
on the part of the European Union Delegation in the implementation of the DeSIRA programme.

38. Interviewees (DG DEVCO and European Union Delegations) emphasized the importance of ensuring sustainability of the results that have been achieved to date through supporting a ‘second phase’ of the capacity development. They also emphasized the need to ensure greater ownership of the process at country level, hence the requirement for concept notes for DeSIRA to be country-led rather than imposed from the global level.

EQ 1.2. To what extent is the Common Framework and approach aligned with the priorities of TAP members, including the priorities of Agrinatura and FAO?

Finding 2. The Common Framework borne out of the desire of TAP partners to harmonize and coordinate the diverse approaches to capacity development in support of agricultural innovation is well aligned with the priorities of TAP partners. Several TAP partners actively promoted the Common Framework, and suggested areas for improvement.

39. TAP Partners surveyed in the mid-term evaluation were positive about the effectiveness of the CDAIS project in supporting the TAP Action Plan, and this positive perception was sustained towards the end of the CDAIS project. Of the 13 TAP partners that responded to the survey (out of 44 sent surveys), 8 rated the CDAIS project as quite effective in supporting the implementation of the TAP Action Plan, and 3 thought that it was very effective. There were positive perceptions about the CDAIS project contribution to strengthening TAP as a multilateral dynamic facilitation mechanism that aims to foster better coherence and greater impact of capacity development for agriculture in tropical countries: six respondent TAP partners believe that the CDAIS project contributed to coherence and impact, and four believe that the CDAIS project contributed to coherence.

40. Testing the Common Framework through the CDAIS project is one of the TAP outputs/activities. Although the overall perception of the contribution of the CDAIS project in supporting the TAP Action Plan is positive, interviews revealed some concerns about the positioning of TAP in relation to CDAIS. In particular, concern was expressed that TAP and CDAIS are often conflated, leaving the impression that TAP is a project of CDAIS, rather than CDAIS being a project to support the implementation of the TAP Action Plan. Furthermore, the high profile of the CDAIS project was seen to give the erroneous impression that CDAIS was the only project of TAP. As a respondent to the TAP members’ survey said ‘CDAIS has taken on a life of its own when it is really about testing the framework’.

41. A member of Agrinatura senior management said that CDAIS has been extremely important to helping ensure that the quality research carried out by the 4 000 Europe-based scientists is relevant to farmers from the Global South and comes into societal use. CDAIS provided a valuable platform by which researchers could interact with the farmers they seek to benefit to help ensure their research questions are relevant to development.

42. Another member of Agrinatura said he became convinced of the relevance of CDAIS during the International Symposium on Agricultural Innovation for Family Farmers in 2018 when Common Framework concepts such as agricultural innovation systems and functional capacities kept coming up.

7 These points come from interviews with DEVCO, European Union in Angola, Guatemala and Rwanda.
43. Agrinatura leadership also said that CDAIS, as their first project with FAO, was important in building a relationship with FAO.

Finding 3. The Common Framework is aligned with FAO’s Strategic Objectives and is relevant to FAO’s priorities at global level. Perceptions of the relevance of the Common Framework to the priorities of FAO country offices have fluctuated over the project implementation period with changes in FAO Representatives.

44. Capacity development is a critical element in ensuring the effectiveness and impact of FAO’s programmes at country level, and having a common framework for agriculture innovation systems has the potential for enhancing FAO’s effectiveness in capacity development. As reported in the mid-term evaluation, the Common Framework is aligned with FAO’s Strategic Objective 2 (Increase and improve provision of goods and services from agriculture, forestry and fisheries in a sustainable manner), in particular Output 2.1.3 (Organizational and institutional capacities of public and private institutions, organizations and networks are strengthened to support innovation and transition towards more sustainable agricultural systems – FAO, 2017). Furthermore, FAO hosts the TAP Secretariat and has played a leading role in the development of the Common Framework.

45. Although there is alignment with FAO priorities at the global level, this has not translated into alignment with priorities of FAO country offices, not surprisingly as they were not substantively involved in the design of the Common Framework and the CDAIS project (finding of the mid-term evaluation). As a FAO Representative observed: "...the relevance for FAO only emerged once we began to understand the project. We didn’t get time at the beginning to reflect. We just got the project document from Rome with insufficient orientation or explanation about the project and its approach."

46. Interviews for the final evaluation found that the level of support for the project changed with the changes in FAO Representatives. Another FAOR felt strongly that the lack of involvement of the FAO Country Office and national partners in the design of the project was a major weakness. This, together with the lack of clarity on roles and responsibilities between Agrinatura and FAO, was seen to make implementation very difficult. A third FAOR thought that the project challenged the regimented way the government worked, but could have been more effective if the project had “got the protocol right” (consulted government) and had been “better anchored” in existing processes and platforms.
**EQ 1.3. To what extent is the Common Framework and approach aligned with the policies and mechanisms of pilot countries?**

**Finding 4.** The Common Framework and approach were aligned with the policies and mechanisms of the pilot countries to some extent. Countries began seeing the relevance of the Common Framework to national priorities as work in the niches unfolded. The need to explicitly link or integrate development of functional capacities with development of technical capacities was raised by many interviewees at country level.

47. The CDAIS project was designed with no substantive involvement of the Governments of the eight pilot countries in the initial design phase. Although the inception phase of the project in each of the pilot countries provided scope for adaptation of the project to the country context, there was limited scope for tailoring to suit the country’s mechanisms. This restriction is to be understood as testing or piloting across different countries means, having to limit variability across the pilot countries. It was therefore not feasible to design the pilots at country level to be fully aligned to national policies and mechanisms from the outset.

48. Interviews with counterparts in government institutions found that the governments saw capacity development and innovation as priorities for the agriculture sector. They also provided examples of alignment with national priorities, e.g. in the case of Rwanda, the development of capacities in the dairy value chain, and in Angola, the production of rice to reduce the high volume of imports were national priorities, and recently in Ethiopia the focus on agro-industrial parks. The relevance of the CDAIS project was not immediately obvious to the governments of the pilot countries, but evolved over time as the niches began to implement action plans, and as a result of the communication and outreach activities of the project.

49. A common theme emerging from the interviews at country level was that working on functional capacities was important, but this approach responded only partially to their capacity development needs. There was a very clear message of the need to link the development of the functional capacities with technical capacities and have tangible outputs. This message came from government officials, participants in the niches, and those providing support to the niches (National Innovation Facilitators and consultants). The absence of tangible outputs, they argued, made it difficult to promote the Common Framework to others outside the CDAIS project, including decisionmakers/policymakers in government. A small number of surveyed TAP Partners (4 out of 13) hold similar views on the primary focus of the Common Framework on functional capacities, and argue for an approach that combines strengthening of functional capacities with addressing gaps in technical capacities. Feedback from groups to the plenary at the Global Forum identified the need to link or integrate functional capacities with other capacities such as a broader set of ‘soft skills’ required for running agribusinesses (also see Finding 5 and Finding 23).

50. The approach of the Common Framework that focused on functional capacities represented a departure from conventional approaches to capacity development, and participants at the country level (governments and niche participants) said this was not always well understood. The CDAIS project did not come with ‘things’, for example, vehicles, equipment and agricultural inputs to support the work in niches, and this, according to
interviewees at the country level, made it difficult to persuade some government officials and community members to participate in the CDAIS project.

3.2 Communication and internal cohesion

EQ 2. Is there a common understanding and clarity on the Common Framework and approach among resource partners, Agrinatura, FAO and country counterparts?

Finding 5. Different stakeholders have a different understanding of the Common Framework and approach, depending on how they engaged with it, which is to be expected. The main confusion has been with the definition of innovation. The Common Framework urged to distinguish between invention and innovation but this advice has not been heeded. This may not be a bad thing as ambiguity allows people with different world views to engage to try and reduce the confusion and in so doing better appreciate each other’s points of view. Working with ambiguity is part of the functional capacity being able to navigate complexity.

51. The Common Framework was one of the first outputs developed by the CDAIS project. Three publications underpin the Common Framework: a synthesis document; a conceptual background document; and a guidance note on operationalization (FAO). Country projects were expected to use the Common Framework to guide implementation.

52. Given the Common Framework is described in three places, ranging from conceptual to practical, it is not surprising that project participants have struggled to come to a common understanding of the Common Framework and approach. Different stakeholders have come to understand the Common Framework in different ways depending on how they engaged with it.

53. For TAP partners, Agrinatura and FAO, a common view is that the Common Framework is simply a common framework to reference, inspire or challenge their work, to be used alongside other frameworks. From this perspective it does not matter if the Common Framework is theoretical or complicated. Over half of the respondents to the TAP survey thought that the Common Framework was neither too theoretical nor the approach too complicated. Another interviewee felt that the Common Framework reflected the ways in which her organization was already conceptualizing innovation systems and working on them.

54. Because of the theoretical and conceptual nature of the Common Framework, decisions on how it should be implemented in practice in pilot countries were made by project thematic working groups, in the first instance. Thematic working groups were made up mainly of Agrinatura and FAO staff working at the global level. This meant that country counterparts engaged with operationalization, not directly with the Common Framework themselves.

55. The understanding of the Common Framework of country counterparts has been shaped by what has been implemented and what has worked. Hence, as reported elsewhere in this report, country participants generally saw the CDAIS approach as one with the following characteristics:

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8 This view came from Country Programme Managers, NIFs, FAO focal points and National Project Coordinators in Angola and Guatemala.
9 A response from the survey of TAP members.
i. trains people in a range of soft skills, including but going beyond the 4+1 functional capacities;

ii. does not supply cash handouts or technical inputs;

iii. works at different levels, including individual, niche, organizational, district, network and national;

iv. works through five stages: galvanizing commitment; visioning; capacity needs assessment; CD strategy development and action plan; and implementation;

v. puts a lot of emphasis on facilitation and coaching;

vi. monitoring, evaluation and learning (MEL) is also an approach to help bring about change, not just for reporting to donors.

56. The main confusion was over the definition of innovation. For example, someone hired to carry out a scoping study said that at the start he was “completely in the dark about what was needed” partly because he thought the project was “bringing a different view of innovation.” Not all languages have a word for innovation. Where the word exists, it is usually understood as being synonymous with a new technology, while the Common Framework uses the word predominantly to mean the process by which an invention is put to use. The conceptual background to the Common Framework emphasizes the importance of distinguishing an invention - a novelty - from an innovation (TAP, 2016). Project staff had difficulty making this distinction clear.

57. What proved very hard was to get National Innovation Facilitators to see that they could support innovation through capacity development and not through the provision of technologies and technical advice, which for most of them was how they had always worked. However, this changed with time as NIFs engaged with Common Framework concepts in practice.

58. The project’s approach to coaching created some confusion particularly over the concept of progress markers (also see Finding 14). As with the last point, both required a change in mindset to focus on the innovation process and the people involved, and less on technologies.

59. The CDAIS Global Forum in Gembloux in Belgium provided a good opportunity for the evaluation team to gauge how the funder, DG DEVCO, understood the Common Framework and approach. A DG DEVCO Head of Sector made the following points in a plenary presentation:

i. the Common Framework approach works to bring partnerships alive;

ii. the Common Framework means that development has to tackle complexity, particularly when wanting to go to scale quickly;

iii. concepts need to be simpler.

60. On the last point, he gave the example of the European Commission’s definition of innovation as being simple: “Innovation is an idea that brings solutions to problems.”10 While simple, it is ambiguous because it could mean an idea that hopes to bring solutions to a problem that is more a definition than an invention. Rewording the definition to: “Innovation is an idea and process that is bringing solutions to problems for the intended beneficiaries” would remove the ambiguity.

10 Underlining added.
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61. The view of the evaluation team is that behind some of the apparent confusion over CDAIS terms is a difference in worldviews, in particular between the ‘hard’ view of innovation as technology and the ‘soft’ view of innovation as process. Both views are useful, as is some degree of ambiguity in definitions that lets both groups of people work together. Differences and difficulties in understanding should not be completely wished away as a ‘bad’ thing.

3.3 Partnerships and coordination

EQ 3. How does the project engage in partnerships and to what extent is the project’s operational modality and governance structure, including the Agrinatura-FAO-national government partnership at country level, effective and sustainable?

EQ 3.1. To what extent and how has the project fostered partnerships at niche, national and global scales?

Finding 6. The project’s approach to capacity needs assessment and subsequent capacity development proved effective at strengthening the relationships between niche actors. National Innovation Facilitators were critical, and without their continuing support to niche partnerships, the outcomes currently being generated are at risk.

62. The project’s approach to selecting niches was to choose coalitions of actors who were already trying to do something together, usually along a value chain. This was done in close collaboration with national partners. The project then carried out a capacity needs assessment workshop in each niche that also served to train NIFs through ‘learning by doing’. The workshop also prioritized what the niche partners most wanted to do, what the project could offer – facilitation and capacity development in the functional capacities – that would be of help. Further niche level meetings were held to agree, implement and review an action plan. The niches the project supported are listed in Table 4.

63. The approach strengthened relationships between niche actors and formed new ones. Examples of this can be found in the project publications ‘Stories of Change’ and ‘Conversations of Change.’ In Bangladesh, the evaluation team found that the approach resulted in groups of farmers formed into cooperatives with strong relationships to research organizations, government service providers and the private sector. In Ethiopia, the team were told that work in the chickpea niche led to much stronger trust and closer working relationships between chickpea farmers and staff at the local research centre. As a result, niche members accessed the seed they needed from 750 km away and successfully lobbied the local administration for land on which to reproduce it. This contributed to farmer adoption of new practices recommended by researchers.

64. Interviews suggest that the project’s niche approach appeared to work in a number of ways:
   i. by bringing actors trying to do something together to agree on a common vision and purpose;
   ii. by gaining a better understanding of each other’s organizational capacities and goals;
   iii. by working together to achieve common objectives;
   iv. by regular facilitated reflection and refinement (R&R) meetings that allowed for plans and objectives to be updated, and motivated participants to do their part;
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v. by building partnerships through all of the above.

65. Interviewees, and the aforementioned ‘Stories of Change’ and ‘Conversations of Change’, describe a number of instances where individuals and organizations became motivated and empowered to act as a result of participating in the approach. The niche approach often resulted in new, strengthened and formalized types of organization.

66. The key to the success of the approach were the NIFs. The project originally assumed that these would require less on-the-job training than was needed in practice. However, the future of NIF involvement in the niches, and the niche partnerships themselves, is uncertain without continuing support to pay for NIF time, travel and meeting expenses. The first recommendation of the ROM review was for DG DEVCO to consider funding a second phase to “consolidate and scale-up the important results that the project has delivered.”

67. NIFs came from different backgrounds and were contracted in different ways. The project can capture valuable lessons on how to best identify and motivate innovation facilitators given that few were employed on full-time contracts, and many were engaged in other work.

68. The project worked with existing coalitions of actors in seven of the eight pilot countries. In Bangladesh, the decision was made to set-up new groups of farmers. This meant it necessarily took longer before the groups were sufficiently organized to implement their action plans, which delayed outcomes.

**Finding 7.** Countries took different approaches to setting or strengthening national AIS platforms or mechanisms suggesting no single ‘right’ approach. Two country projects strengthened existing national mechanisms, two set-up new platforms and two tried to set-up new platforms and failed. Policy dialogues showed the value of linking niche to district and national level and can be seen as national level mechanisms in their own right.

69. At national level, the logframe target was that the project would establish or strengthen a "mechanism/platform for advocacy, dialogue and action on AIS CD established in 8 countries." Progress made is summarized in Table 5 and reported in detail under Finding 23.

70. Across all countries, policy dialogues showed the value of mechanisms that link niche to district and national level. They proved effective at bringing issues causing a block at niche level to higher levels where they could be tackled. Farmers found it empowering that people higher up in the government hierarchy would listen to their problems. It gave them confidence to ask for more help in the future. A number of respondents thought that holding policy dialogues should be an ongoing process rather than a one-off, a point that is also made in a guide to carrying out policy dialogues published by the project (FAO, 2019).
### Table 5: Progress made in establishing country level partnerships on AIS CD

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Progress made towards establishing national partnerships on AIS CD</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Angola</td>
<td>- No platform was established. The focus for now is on implementing actions from the policy dialogue. Suggestions were made in interviews that a national platform would be good for connecting new and existing CDAIS project activities across the country.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Bangladesh                    | - Plan to establish a new national platform did not come to fruition.  
- CPM has recommended that CDAIS be part of FAO’s support to the National Agricultural Technology Platform.                                                                                                                                         |
| Burkina Faso                  | - A planned second phase of the project will support the creation of an inter-ministerial cell to implement the National Innovation Strategy, a political instrument to strengthen capacity to innovate.  
- Considering supporting a new coordination platform for innovation service suppliers (also see EQ6.1)                                                                                                                                   |
| Ethiopia                      | The project initially planned to support the Agriculture Development Partners Linkage Advisory Council (ADPLAC). ADPLAC turned out to be too large for CDAIS to effectively engage with. Instead, a survey was carried out of national multi-stakeholder platforms in Ethiopia, finding 54 of them, of which ADPLAC was one. |
| Guatemala                     | Launch of the national AIS platform in May 2019 convened by Inter-American Institute for Agriculture Cooperation. Member organizations include large cooperatives, university research divisions, Ministry of Agriculture, FAO, bilateral donor (USAID) and European Union Delegation.          |
| Honduras                      | A plan to establish an "extension platform" to bring together experiences from the many donor/government/NGO approaches was discussed before CDAIS. CDAIS organized several meetings to build on these efforts, ultimately without success.                                                                                       |
| Lao People’s Democratic Republic | The projected has helped create a national level Agricultural Innovation Systems platform made up of about 26 mid-level professionals from 6 departments in the Ministry of Agriculture and the Lao National University.                                            |
| Rwanda                        | The national platform for AIS exists since 2008, before the CDAIS project was launched. It is co-chaired by the Minister of Agriculture and lead donor (currently the European Union). Other participants include other government ministries (e.g. trade and industry, environment), bilateral and multilateral donors, and civil society. The platform is reported to be supportive of CDAIS and committed to adopting CDAIS methodologies and approaches into other projects. |

*Source: Evaluation team*
Finding 8. The project successfully fostered partnerships at global level through its support to TAP and participation in the International Symposium on Agricultural Innovation for Family Farmers in November 2018. Project success likely contributed to DG DEVCO’s decision to fund TAP for five years that will help continue to strengthen CDAIS partnerships at all levels, in particular at global level.

71. TAP is a facilitation mechanism comprising 44 global, regional and national partners representing agricultural research, education, extension and international technical, development and funding agencies (TAP, 2018). TAP was established in 2012. The establishment of TAP was the project’s expected Result 1 that an effective global mechanism is established to promote, coordinate and evaluate CD approaches to strengthen AIS. The project supported the TAP Secretariat. TAP promotes the use of the Common Framework within and beyond its own membership.

72. A survey of TAP members (13 respondents out of 44) found that all agreed that the CDAIS project had contributed to strengthening the mechanism. Respondents thought that the project had contributed in a number of ways including:
   i. by supporting the implementation of the TAP Action Plan;
   ii. by creating interest in the Common Framework;
   iii. by developing an approach and toolbox to implementing the Common Framework at country level.

73. At a global level, the project was the first time that Agrinatura and FAO collaborated as partners. However, the difficulties that both organizations experienced working in partnership (see Finding 11) has resulted in going back to simpler projects between FAO and the individual organizations that comprise Agrinatura, not between Agrinatura and FAO. FAO has succeeded in winning a grant of EUR 5 million from DeSIRA and will engage Agrinatura member organizations as service providers.

74. A number of interviewees highlighted the project contribution to the International Symposium on Agricultural Innovation for Family Farmers held at FAO headquarters in Rome in November 2018. The project invested in bringing a large delegation of 40 project participants (FAO, 2018). Their participation provided balance to the “innovation as technology” view of innovation. The first two recommendations emerging from the symposium echoed key project and TAP messages: to strengthen the capacity of family farmers to innovate; and that bridging organizations (or innovation facilitators) be strengthened to enable their role as facilitators for networking and multi-stakeholder dialogue (International Symposium on Agricultural Innovation Systems). A senior DG DEVCO speaker at the project’s final Global Forum said that CDAIS had contributed to the success of the Symposium.

75. The evaluation team believes that the visibility the Symposium gave to the project, TAP and the Common Framework may have contributed to DG DEVCO’s decision to continue funding TAP for five years as well as confirming and strengthening the relevance of the Common Framework and approach for at least some TAP members. This will likely help strengthen partnerships that promote CD in AIS agenda at all levels in the future, particularly at global level.

EQ 3.2. To what extent has the project’s governance and implementation structures been appropriate for delivering results? What changes were made during the course of the project?
Finding 9. The evaluation team uphold the mid-term evaluation finding that the project’s governance and organizational structure produced results that neither of the lead organizations would have produced by themselves. The evaluation team also uphold the mis-term evaluation and results-oriented monitoring findings that the partnership between Agrinatura and FAO was challenging because of differing organizational cultures and the complex implementation modality. Difficulties led to impediments in implementation, including delays in starting country projects and the running of parallel Agrinatura and FAO efforts in some countries with a feeling on both sides of not being properly consulted.

76. A similar evaluation question on the appropriateness of the CDAIS governance and implementation structure was addressed by the mid-term evaluation and the fact that it is repeated suggests that issues relating to the question where not fully resolved. The mid-term evaluation concluded that the CDAIS governance and implementation structure was challenging because of Agrinatura and FAO’s different organizational cultures.

77. The results-oriented monitoring review of the CDAIS project carried out by the European Commission in 2018 agreed that establishing a partnership between Agrinatura and FAO had been challenging “due to the complex implementation modality and the different organizational cultures of the two implementing partners.” Similarly, the ROM review went on to say that the two organizations “complemented each other in securing links to farmers and political buy in.”

78. The evaluation team concurs that the partnership between Agrinatura and FAO forced each organization out of their respective comfort zones. The project was different to ‘business as usual’. Many participants only appreciated its value through ‘learning by doing’ during implementation. Participants initially struggled to understand the value of an initiative that only offered to build functional capacities and did not bring a technology. The project was also different in insisting on working at three levels – niche, organizational and enabling environment. The project was better understood when functional capacities were rebranded as ‘soft skills’ and broadened to include skills such as listening and coaching. Participants ‘got’ the project when they saw first-hand how empowering the soft skills could be as part of a collective process.

79. The main partnership challenge that emerged at country level was that the three partners (Agrinatura, FAO and the national partner) did not always work well together as a team. Perhaps not surprisingly they worked according to budget allocation. A rough characterization is that the Country Project Manager, supported by the FAO global Focal Point, led FAO’s work on policy dialogues and running marketplaces, while being expected to oversee all project activities. In parallel, the Agrinatura-employed Lead National Innovation Facilitator, supported by the Agrinatura Focal Point, ran the work in the niches. The host country organization did not have its own budget and as a result at times felt side-lined (e.g. Bangladesh, Ethiopia, Lao People’s Democratic Republic).

80. The mid-term evaluation found that partnership difficulties produced a number of problems, including delays, confusion over responsibilities and division of labour, and as a result frustration over not being properly consulted. Measures were taken after the mid-term evaluation that solved most of these problems.

Finding 10. The project made a concerted effort to improve and maintain good working relationships between implementing partners. These included more regular meetings
and greater sharing of roles and responsibilities. Despite residual negative sentiment and difficulties, teams generally worked well and produced good results.

81. Changes were made at country level to improve implementation and partnership between Agrinatura, FAO and the host organization. Perhaps the most effective was to increase the number of country project meetings to ensure better communication between parts of the Agrinatura and FAO project in particular. The meetings were attended by the Country Project Management, Lead NIF, Agrinatura Focal Point and in some cases the CDAIS Global Project Coordinator.

82. Other changes were to share roles and responsibilities between Agrinatura, FAO and National partners, and have core team members participate in various thematic training organized for niches. In some countries, efforts were made to better include the Country Project Management in the Agrinatura NIF team. For example, in Ethiopia the project created a National Coaching Team, chaired by the CPM including the Lead NIF and AFP. The National Coaching Team met with the NIFs once a month to track progress and plan. In Burkina Faso, the Agrinatura team made the CPM feel welcome and part of the team from the start. The CPM’s relationship with FAO was more as a consultant than full FAO staff member and so perhaps better able to share affiliation.

83. A fourth change was to set-up technical advisory groups (TAG) or equivalent (e.g. Bangladesh, Ethiopia) of people the project staff thought more appropriate to provide them technical guidance than the National Project Oversight Committee (NPOC) or National Project Steering Committee (NPSC). An indicator of TAG relevance in Ethiopia was that about half of the NPSC members were eventually hired by the project as consultants.

84. Despite the changes, the evaluation team found residual sentiment among some key staff that they could have been better informed of important decisions and were not been properly consulted. Also, some felt they should have been invited to key meetings and international training. Nevertheless, in most cases difficulties were largely overcome because people knew each other from other projects and could fall back on existing strong personal and professional relationships. From the evaluation team’s experience, some degree of complaint about not being properly informed is to be expected in a complex project such as CDAIS.

Finding 11. The project made changes at global level that improved partnership and implementation including the Project Oversight Committee becoming more proactive in solving partnership issues. However, the Agrinatura-FAO partnership modality is not being pursued after the end of the project. New FAO-led work on CD in AIS includes Agrinatura organizations as service providers. Under the DeSIRA call for country level CD in AIS, greater prominence is given to national organizations with Agrinatura and FAO as service providers.

85. At the global level, the project made a number of changes to improve partnership and implementation. From the start of the project, Thematic Working Groups (TWGs) were established, consisting of Agrinatura, FAO and sometimes national level staff. The first TWG was responsible for planning and implementing capacity needs assessment (CNA) at niche level. Other TWGs were set-up for: communication and publication, coaching, monitoring, evaluation and learning, transversal learning, organization, policy dialogue and marketplaces. FAO led the last two and Agrinatura the rest. The Global Project Coordinator thinks the TWGs were a valuable mechanism for ensuring collaboration between Agrinatura and FAO by providing spaces to plan and work together, complementing each other’s
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strengths and weaknesses. The evaluation team observed that the MEL Working Group had been able to resolve leadership issues evident at the time of the mid-term evaluation and found it commendable that Agrinatura and FAO co-presented the project’s new approach to MEL at an international conference on “Monitoring and Evaluation for Inclusive and Sustainable Food Systems” in Wageningen in April 2019 (Wageningen University and Research).

86. A second change was that the global Project Oversight Committee, that met twice a year, became more proactive in sorting out relationship issues. CDAIS project management requested that a senior member of a key Agrinatura organization be the Agrinatura representative to the Project Oversight Committee to give extra weight to the Agrinatura perspective. The person thinks the POC helped with greater mutual appreciation of the two organizations’ cultures. Agrinatura came to better understand FAO’s protocol for operating in countries and the necessary bureaucracy that FAO country offices have to deal with.

87. Other changes included converting the Agrinatura Task Team meetings into Global Task Team meetings by including FAO and key country staff (CPMs, NIFs), and participating in international symposia, e.g. FAO’s Family Farming Symposium in 2018 where the project presented a united front.

88. The partnership between Agrinatura and FAO worked best in countries where the Agrinatura member organization had developed protocols for working in the country after a longstanding country presence, for example CIRAD in Burkina Faso and Lao People’s Democratic Republic. In some countries, e.g. Bangladesh, Ethiopia, Guatemala, the FAO Office at times felt proper protocol had not been followed and this might compromise project effectiveness. This improved by the end of the project.

89. Despite steps to improve the Agrinatura-FAO relationship, neither side intend to continue the current partnership into a second phase. Agrinatura submitted a concept note for Phase 2 of CDAIS to DG DEVCO which did not include FAO. FAO submitted a proposal to DG DEVCO that says that FAO, as lead Organization, will work with Agrinatura member organizations, therefore not with Agrinatura itself.

90. During the interviews, the evaluation team perceived that the partnership had been too complex, with too high transaction cost. For example, financial reporting was inordinately complicated and time consuming: the Agrinatura country lead organizations and FAO reported separately, using their own, different, formats. Reports had to be standardized before being consolidated into a single report. The project was required by the donor to account for foreign currency expenditure to be charged using the exchange rate on the day of transaction requiring that each receipt -- and there were thousands -- to be re-entered.

91. Both Agrinatura and FAO requested their partnership to have one leading organization, while the other Organization was contracted as service provider. This model is being pursued in concept notes submitted in response to a DeSIRA call for expressions of interest to European Union Country Delegations, with both Agrinatura and FAO Member Organizations as service providers to a lead national organization.

3.4 Efficiency

EQ 4. To what extent has the project been efficient in delivering its results?

EQ 4.1. To what extent did the project respond to and implement the recommendations of the mid-term evaluation?
Finding 12. The project responded positively to five of the six recommendations of the mid-term evaluation, and accepted one recommendation partially. Action has been taken on all accepted recommendations, and implementation is in progress.

92. The mid-term evaluation recommended that the project revisit the logframe in view of the revised theory of change, and amend the logframe accordingly (Recommendation 1). The project reviewed the logframe and identified adjustments, namely (CDAIS, 2018):
   i. Separating coordination and management activities as a separate result area, so that the Project Management Team and Project Oversight Committee could oversee the spending on different activities in a more efficient and transparent way.
   ii. Strengthening capacity of NIFs to undertake capacity needs assessment at organizational and niche levels, rather than have external consultants conduct these assessments; development of coaching plans at niche and organizational level, and an improved MEL framework.
   iii. Replacing the regional marketplace (Africa, Asia and Central America) with a global marketplace held during the FAO Innovation Symposium.

93. The project approached the European Commission in February 2018, with the proposed amendments to the logframe, and was advised that it should proceed with implementing the proposed changes without changing the logframe. The argument put forward by the European Commission was that i) the project was scheduled for completion by December 2018, and it made no sense to change the logframe. They were also of the view that logframes need not be amended as they provide the baseline against which expected and unexpected results should be measured (Email correspondence from the European Commission to CDAIS Project Manager, 7 March 2018). The Project Oversight Committee took the advice of the European Commission (Minutes of POC 6 meeting 21-24 May 2018).

94. The mid-term evaluation recommended that the project prioritize transversal analysis and requested a six-to-eight months extension Recommendation 2). The Project Oversight Committee accepted the recommendation, and the transversal analysis was considered an intensification of an existing activity under Output/Result 3. The extension was granted and the transversal analysis is in progress.

95. Recommendation 3 proposed that partnering capacities at organizational level be developed to ease the difficulties between Agrinatura, FAO and national level organizations. The project indicated that it would include partnering tools in the common toolbox and that this would also be a consideration in organizational capacity development activities. The Project Management Team did not see benefit in bringing in a partnering coach to work with Agrinatura and FAO as there was limited time left on the project. They believed that the strain between the two organizations was a result of structural issues that could be overcome with good project management practices. They also undertook to document lessons on the development of the partnership and make recommendations for similar partnership arrangements. A multi-stakeholder partnership assessment tool was developed in 2018 to enable the different actors considering entering the partnership to ask systematic questions to a potential partner to ascertain whether there is a good fit with the goal, vision and needs of the partnership (TAP, 2018).

96. The mid-Term evaluation recommended partnering with donors (TAP and non-TAP partners) to ensure success of the piloting of the Common Framework and the broader adoption and use of the Common Framework (Recommendation 4). The Project Oversight Committee accepted this recommendation and identified policy dialogues and the FAO
International Symposium on Agricultural Innovation for Family Farmers (2018) as forums for mobilizing resources. FAO has managed to mobilize funding from DG DEVCO for further work on capacity development for AIS.

97. Recommendation 5 called for prioritizing the building of national level ownership of the CDAIS approach to sustain the approach and results achieved. The Project Oversight Committee instructed the Project Management Team to increase efforts to promote policy dialogue and integrate CDAIS activities in country mechanisms and platforms, and increase efforts to encourage regular and documented meetings of national steering committees. Policy dialogues were held, and information from the Project Management Team indicates that countries were encouraged to hold regular meetings. The Project Management Team, agreeing with the recommendation, stressed the importance of involving national partners in project design and administrative framework in future projects, where possible.

98. The mid-term evaluation recommended that the project consider tracking progress on gender results and measure progress over time (Recommendation 6). It proposed that the monitoring, evaluation and learning provide an opportunity to do so, and that consideration be given to incorporating a gender perspective in the Common Framework. The Project Oversight Committee agreed with the principle, but did not think it was possible to track gender across all activities, as the project design did not include a gender analysis. It undertook to encourage the project to track gender in its activities wherever possible. FAO developed a gender analysis toolkit in 2018 to assist facilitators to integrate the specific needs and priorities of women and men in the planned interventions of the innovation partnership by examining the respective roles that women and men play in the partnership (TAP, 2018).

EQ 4.2. Was the design and implementation of the project's reporting and MEL system satisfactory?

Finding 13. The project reporting system generally worked well. However, a requirement on how trip expenses were to be reported required much additional work that could have been avoided if a financial officer had been included in the initial design. The additional work contributed to the overall narrative that CDAIS was more difficult to implement than it should have been.

99. The project's reporting system is determined by the European Commission grant contract signed by Agrinatura as the Project Coordinator. This requires Agrinatura to submit an annual narrative and financial report to the European Commission. According to the partnership agreement signed between Agrinatura and FAO, the latter agreed to submit narrative and financial reports for its activities to Agrinatura to produce a consolidated report.

100. Figure 4 shows the reporting flows, including the role of the Project Oversight Committee in reviewing reports.
The project produced the following annual reports as part of its accountability to the European Commission:

i. Interim Narrative Report (Global consolidation + Agrinatura-led activities)
ii. Interim Narrative Report (FAO-led activities)
iii. CDAIS Global Overview (global + compendium of the annual country reports, prepared by country teams)
v. Financial Report (FAO-led activities)
vii. Forecast budget for the following period (FAO + Agrinatura)
viii. Country Reports

Other Reports important for accountability were:

i. Project Oversight Committee biannual meetings
ii. Agrinatura Task Team monthly meetings
iii. Global Task Team biannual meetings

In addition, a mid-term evaluation was carried out by the FAO independent Office of Evaluation (OED) in 2017 and a results-oriented monitoring review in 2018. Both were generally positive. The ROM review said that the project had “very thorough procedures in terms of financial accounting for funds administered by Agrinatura” and that the reporting system based on the logframe was effective and allowed following up on progress at all levels of the intervention logic. The positive ROM review was acknowledged by staff responsible for the project in the European Commission.
The evaluation team agrees that project reporting generally worked well. However, one issue added to the overall narrative of the project being overly-complicated. This relates to the “very thorough” financial accounting procedures required of Agrinatura, specifically for CIRAD, responsible for project financial reporting, to validate and consolidate the financial reports sent to them by the Agrinatura project partners. Consolidation was very time-consuming because of the European Commission requirement that the cost of each travel receipt had to be charged at the monthly exchange rate on the day the expense occurred. As most of the partners did not provide their financial reports in this format, it required CIRAD to redo their financial statements, receipt by receipt, of which there were thousands due to the nature of the project (many of meetings and travel). Normally projects can use an average monthly exchange rate, as was the case for FAO’s financial reporting. FAO had less stringent financial reporting requirements placed on them because they had a Financial and Administrative Framework Agreement (FAFA) with the European Commission. Given the flexibility in financial reporting requirements, the Financial Officer at CIRAD pleaded for greater involvement of financial officers in the design of future multi-partner projects.

**Finding 14.** Ultimately the project’s approach to MEL was successful and may represent an international public good in its own right. However, introducing the coaching process as the backbone of the approach in 2017 did delay the implementation of some of the niche action plans. Once NIFs understood what was involved they thought the coaching process was valuable and said they were adopting aspects of it and receiving interest to use it from country counterparts.

In one of its conclusions, the mid-term evaluation said that "MEL has a critical role to play in supporting NIFs implement niche partnership action plans and that MEL data and lessons learned would pay a crucial role in transversal analysis.” (FAO, 2017) The mid-term evaluation raised the concern that the decision taken in 2017 to implement a coaching process as the backbone of MEL would delay implementing action plans.

The coaching process at niche level is shown in Figure 5. It involves carrying out a capacity needs assessment, designing a coaching plan, and setting up a coaching team before starting any collaborative work to achieve innovation. A key part of the work was the planning of facilitated reflection and refinement workshops in which participants review progress against progress markers and refine the work plan. The process finished with an outcomes evaluation workshop. Coaching was implemented in pilot countries starting in 2017. NIFs interviewed by the evaluation team generally said that developing niche coaching plans had delayed implementation of niche action plans, but ultimately it was worth it.
What NIFs said they liked about coaching included:

i. one-stop-shop, a tool that allows you to plan an intervention, monitor and learn;

ii. that partners (e.g. Ministry of Agriculture and Ethiopian Institute of Agricultural Research, EIAR) are interested in using it themselves;

iii. Reflection and refinement workshops and the flexibility they bring because you are not anchored to fixed milestones;

iv. the use of progress markers as they are set by the people as part of agreeing to be evaluated;

v. better use of evaluative findings, as they are used immediately;

vi. it was a good way of putting action research in practice.

Most NIFs said they would use coaching concepts in future work. They particularly mentioned progress markers and reflection and refinement workshops.

When first introduced, however, coaching did create confusion and delay.

i. People had difficulty with record keeping. They were provided with an Excel workbook to document MEL process and findings, but some found it hard to fill in sheet.

ii. The change from milestones to progress markers caused a lot of discussion because it required participants to understand outcome mapping concepts. Progress markers are changes participants wanted to see in the capacity and behaviour of themselves and boundary partners. Participants were used to fixed milestones expressed in terms of numbers of ‘outputs’ e.g. number of participants trained or amount of seeds planted. It required a mind shift to being more reflective about ‘internal’ changes in capabilities, motivation, opportunity and behaviour than ‘external’ technological contributions to change.
The outcomes evaluation workshops took place as part of the final project workshops that were taking place at the time of the final project evaluation (May 2019). The global monitoring, evaluation and learning team was gathering results from these workshops as well as MEL data from NIFs to carry out transversal analysis. The original idea was that the project’s Global Forum held in Gembloux, Belgium, in May 2019 would allow for country pilots to present and ‘transversally’ compare their learning. The Global Forum evolved to take on a broader set of objectives, although the intent was kept alive in some sessions.

At the time of the mid-term evaluation there were two competing views of MEL, championed by Agrinatura and FAO respectively. Since 2017 the MEL Working Group, made of both Agrinatura and FAO staff, has been able to agree on a common approach. Evidence of this is a joint presentation of project MEL as innovation at an international conference in the Netherlands in April 2019 (Wageningen University and Research, 2019).

Finding 15. The project has made progress carrying out transversal learning through hiring a staff member to work on it, establishing a working group (although not yet fully functional) and developing a plan in three phases. The plan will see transversal learning continue after the end of the project and help ensure learning from the project is used by TAP, a key part of the project’s theory of change.

The mid-term evaluation came out strongly to support transversal learning as a core part of the project’s theory of change. According to the leader of the MEL Working Group, transversal learning will take place in three phases:

i. carry out “transversal learning light” based on an initial analysis of coaching data to be shared with the European Commission in June;

ii. Explore with Agrinatura partners how to carry out a deeper analysis of coaching data, to be carried out without additional funding as it will be of interest to the researchers and institutions involved;

iii. MEL Working Group Leader is to be based in Rome to bring a research component to TAP (i.e. research on how the Common Framework works, for whom, in what context, to what extent) and to help ensure TAP take up learning from CDAIS.

Carrying out transversal analysis was part of the justification for a no-cost extension. The International Centre for development-oriented Research and Agriculture employed a staff member in 2018 to help carry it out. A concept note for a transversal analysis working group was written in November 2017 but the Thematic Working Group was not properly functional. Key staff responsible for transversal analysis are finding that in depth technical analysis requires quality time to be able to see the ‘wood from the trees.’ Hence it is likely that analysis will need to continue after the closure of the project in August 2019.

EQ 4.3. Did the project spend its budget as planned? Were the funding mechanisms for the niches fit for purpose?

Finding 16. The project spent its budget as planned, making adjustments to the budget to align with changes in the work plan, including the project no-cost extension. Countries experienced different problems with funding flows from the global level to the national level that impacted on some activities, but overall did not have a detrimental impact on the project.

It is beyond the scope of the final evaluation to conduct a detailed analysis of the finances of the project, and auditing of the finances is done by the respective audit functions of the
European Commission and FAO. From examination of the work plans and budgets for the CDAIS project, spending has been in line with what had been planned.

115. Interviews at country level revealed some difficulties experienced in the flow of funds, particularly in the earlier stages of project implementation. Some interviewees pointed to the parallel budgets and procedures of Agrinatura (bound by rules of the European Union) and FAO caused confusion and delays at the beginning of the project.

116. A deeper problem is that at country level the parallel budget and administration systems contributed to causing tension between the Agrinatura Focal Point and FAO Country Project Manager, as they were not required to consult or keep each other informed of financial issues. This lack of transparency on both sides did not help the working relationship between FAO at country level and Agrinatura Focal Points. Lack of transparency in general was raised as an issue in two other countries visited by the evaluation team.

117. National partners expressed concern that the budget allocations were not sufficiently sensitive to the cost drivers in the country. Since this was a pilot project, there is understandably very limited scope for tailoring the country budget allocations for each country. With support through DeSIRA, countries will be able to seek funding allocations that take their cost drivers into account.

3.5 Gender equality and social equity

EQ 5. To what extent has the project contributed to gender equality and social equity in the niches, organizational and national AIS in which it worked?

EQ 5.1. To what extent did the project follow European Union and FAO gender policies in the design of the project? If not, why?

Finding 17. The CDAIS project did not explicitly follow the European Commission and FAO gender policies that call for the mainstreaming of gender equality in the design of development cooperation programmes/projects, and the same finding was made in the mid-term evaluation.

118. Both the European Commission and FAO have gender equality policies that call for mainstreaming gender equality in development cooperation projects and programmes, as reducing gender inequalities is one of the key strategies for reducing poverty. Gender equality is also a human right. The FAO Policy on Gender Equality calls for gender analysis to be incorporated in the formulation, implementation and evaluation of all field programmes and projects, and using sex-disaggregated data to substantiate the importance of closing the gender gap (FAO, 2013). The mid-term evaluation found that the project did not include a gender analysis in the design phase, nor did it incorporate any gender-specific indicators or targets, and that the Common Framework did not incorporate a gender perspective. The European Commission’s results-oriented monitoring review made a similar finding on gender (EC, 2019).

119. The mid-term evaluation survey of TAP partners found solid support for the inclusion of a gender perspective in the Common Framework with only 2 of the 21 respondents not supporting inclusion of a gender perspective and 2 who were uncertain. The survey conducted for the final evaluation found that 4 of the 13 respondents did not support inclusion of a gender perspective in the Common Framework, and 2 respondents were uncertain. The reasons were that “...gender is already present in the implementation” and
"...it is to some extent an integral part of the 4 functional capacities." Another point of view was that innovation was all encompassing and already takes gender and social inclusion into account, without needing to make it explicit. Most interviewees, including those in the pilot countries believed that it was important to consider gender in the project, but tended to reduce gender to counting the number of women in project activities. The point of a gender analysis and gender mainstreaming is to make gender considerations systematic and explicit, and not to leave it up to chance as is implied by the responses above. Mainstreaming gender equality “...involves the systematic consideration of the differences between the conditions, situations and needs of women and men in all policies and actions. Moreover, it recognizes that women and men have to be equally involved in setting goals, and elaborating strategies and plans so that development objectives are gender-sensitive. In this way, the priorities and needs of both sexes are addressed and taken into account.” The Gender Analysis Tool developed by FAO has the potential to strengthen gender mainstreaming in AIS.

**EQ 5.2. To what extent has the project taken gender into account in its work to support niches partnerships and national level platforms?**

**Finding 18. The project included gender considerations in the selection of the niches, and there were efforts to bring in a gender perspective into the niches. The project also mentored and encouraged some women facilitators. However, it did not apply these gender considerations systematically across the pilot countries. Gender was not explicitly taken into account in working with national level platforms, and did not systematically collect sex-disaggregated data.**

120. Gender, along with youth and the poor was one of the criteria that countries were required to use in selecting the niches. The interviews and field missions found that there was awareness of the importance of gender, but tended to focus on the representation of women in the niches, and did not necessarily consider gender dynamics in the niches. While there may be no rules prohibiting women’s participation, for example, women not expressing their views in the presence of men, or not expressing contrary views may inhibit women’s participation. Consideration of these issues was not evident from many interviewees’ responses (NIFs, government officials, final beneficiaries) to the questions on gender.

121. Collecting and analysing sex-disaggregated data is necessary for monitoring the impact of interventions on women and men. The mid-term evaluation recommended the project consider tracking progress on gender results and measure changes over time on this aspect. While the Project Oversight Committee agreed with the recommendation in principle, it foresaw difficulties in introducing systematic tracking or evaluation measures across all activities, but noted that there were possibilities to disaggregate data in some activities. NIFs and Country Programme Managers in some countries collected sex-disaggregated information on the niches and participation in CDAIS activities, but this was not done systematically for all niches in all pilot countries. Also, the annual reports of the CDAIS project prepared by the Project Management Team do not report on sex-disaggregated information. The project cannot systematically assess the impact of the capacity development interventions on women, men, girls and boys.

**EQ 5.3. To what extent has the project contributed to outcomes that benefit the poor and marginalized, including women and youth?**
Finding 19. The project targeted poor and marginalized people. Most niches did not explicitly target youth. The project contributed to immediate outcomes that benefited the target beneficiaries.

122. The ‘Conversations of Change’ captured the benefits of the project from the perspectives of the final beneficiaries in the niches, with personal accounts of how they experienced the project and the changes in their communities, organizations, and at a personal level. The people interviewed by the evaluation team in the niche partnerships confirmed the feeling that had been captured in the ‘Conversations of Change’.

123. Final beneficiaries, many of whom were poor, spoke of improved capacities. They mentioned learning how to solve problems, to negotiate for better outcomes, to plan and to listen. They also spoke of the changes in their personal lives, for example improving their family relationships as a result of their participation in the project. Final beneficiaries also identified tangible outcomes or benefits from their participation, e.g. the establishment of an association of avocado producers (Guatemala); registering as a cooperative (Bangladesh) that gave them better access to opportunities; or improvements in rice production (Angola). These organizational changes can be seen as important innovations. There is also evidence of benefit from the marketplace events (Ethiopia and Bangladesh), and the policy dialogues in countries served as a mechanism for the niche partnerships to raise their issues at the national policy level.

124. As mentioned in Finding 23, efforts were made to bring gender considerations into the work at niche level, and women benefited from their participation in the niches. However, it is not possible to assess whether they benefited to the same extent as men as the data for such analysis was not collected consistently across the project.

125. Most niche partnerships did not have an explicit focus on youth. Young people were encouraged to participate in the niches, but were not necessarily the focus of the niches. One of the results of the CDAIS project was that it developed the capacities of young people who were NIFs.

3.6 Effectiveness and sustainability

EQ 6. What have been the contributions of the project under each result area, and what are the spillovers/catalytic effect/sustainability prospects of the results?

EQ 6.1. To what extent has the project delivered on its expected outputs and targets?

Output/Result 1. An effective global mechanism is established to promote, coordinate and evaluate capacity development approaches to strengthen Agricultural Innovation Systems.

Finding 20. The project has supported a global mechanism for coordinating capacity development approaches to AIS, and has delivered and tested the TAP Common Framework that is one of the key outputs of TAP. TAP partners are largely committed to supporting the coordination and harmonization of their work through the TAP Action Plans. TAP’s knowledge platform TAPipedia is functioning and needs to be improved.

126. The TAP Action Plan (2014-2017) and TAP Action Plan II (2018-2021) have served as effective mechanisms for coordinating efforts of TAP partners on capacity development for AIS. The Action Plans, in setting out priority outputs for TAP, provide a framework through which TAP partners can harmonize their contributions (technical and financial) to
promoting and enhancing approaches to capacity development in AIS. Most TAP partners surveyed at the 2019 TAP Partners Assembly value TAP as a global mechanism that brings coherence in capacity development for AIS in developing countries while influencing policy at the national and international levels (20 out of 23 respondents – TAP, 2019). As is the case with partnership platforms, there is a tendency for some member organizations to be less engaged in the platform than others. Comments made in the survey of the final evaluation of TAP partners and the survey conducted at the TAP Partners Assembly in 2019 suggest there is a need for more TAP partners to participate in the implementation of the TAP Action Plan, and for TAP partners to work collaboratively to achieve the goals of the TAP Action Plan.

127. The Common Framework developed by the project under the auspices of TAP is based on extensive research and analysis of existing models of capacity development and innovation, and draws on the insights and diverse experiences of TAP partners through debate and consultation. The CDAIS project tested the Common Framework in eight countries and developed a set of guidelines and tools to enable the pilot countries to apply the Common Framework. The relevance of the Common Framework for TAP partners was discussed under Evaluation Question 1.2.

128. TAPipedia is an information sharing system launched by TAP in 2016 to enhance knowledge exchange on capacity development for AIS among TAP partners and beyond. As of March 2016, TAPipedia had 486 registered users from 63 organizations, covering 67 topics, e.g. capacity development, innovation systems, rural development, and multi-stakeholder process, and hosted 1,767 resources (TAPipedia analytics as of 29 March 2019, document evaluation team received from FAO). These resources include training and learning materials, policy briefs, journal articles, presentations and posters, and books and dissertations. TAP partners see TAPipedia as an effective tool for enhancing knowledge exchange on capacity development in AIS (8 of the 13 respondents) and seven respondents stated that their organizations had contributed to TAPipedia. Five respondents either did not know or believed that TAPipedia was not effective.11 TAPipedia experienced technical problems on several occasions in 2018 rendering the website inaccessible to users. Data analytics on TAPipedia show an increase in users from 3,151 in 2017 to 35,560 in 2018. However, the bounce rate (exiting the website landing page without visiting another page on the website) increased from 46 percent in 2017 to 70 percent in 2018, and the average duration of each session decreased from 7 minutes in 2017 to 2 minutes in 2018 (TAPipedia analytics as of 29 March 2019, document evaluation team received from FAO). There could be several explanations for the relatively high bounce rate, i.e. slow speed, the content of the landing page does not appeal users, or users are unsuccessful in exploring the site on their mobile devices. It would be useful for FAO, as the host of TAPipedia to investigate the reasons behind the data analytics on TAPipedia.

Output / Result 2. CD needs and existing provision for strengthening AIS in eight pilot countries are defined accurately through inclusive country-led multi-stakeholder processes.

Finding 21. The project enabled the eight pilot countries to define their capacity development needs in respect to AIS through a participatory process, and access the necessary services/support to meet them. The project met the target for capacity development needs assessment in the niches and implementation of the coaching plan. Policy dialogues were held in all pilot countries and generally viewed as positive. The

The CDAIS project envisaged policy dialogues as a vehicle for linking the niche partnerships with policy and decision makers, reinforcing the ongoing engagement that members of the national project teams have with those in the policy environment. Policy dialogues took place in all the pilot countries – four in 2018 and four in 2019 - and were preceded by preparatory dialogues at local/niche levels, while FAO provided guidance on the preparation and conduct of these dialogues. Overall, the experiences of the pilot countries with the policy dialogues were positive. There were interviewees who found the dialogues useful as they learned how an existing policy or gaps in policies are impacting small producers (niches) negatively. One example is the national body regulating the quality of seeds in Angola which found that the policy dialogue identified policy gaps and generated solutions. It also generated commitment from the Minister of Agriculture to expedite the development of a seeds policy and strategy. Lao People’s Democratic Republic produced policy briefs as outputs from its three policy dialogues, with the view to including
recommendations from the policy briefs in the government’s five-year plan. The policy dialogue in Guatemala reportedly was well attended and identified several policy-related issues for further action, though none of the actions had been implemented at the time of the evaluation. In Ethiopia, policy dialogues led to the approval of two policy instruments at national level (feed safety and quality) and at regional level (seed marketing directive).

While the picture for the policy dialogues conducted in 2018 appears positive, some interviewees raised concern about the lack of resources, including capacity, for the government to implement the recommendations of the policy dialogues. Countries that held policy dialogues in 2019 were not yet able to point to outcomes.

For sustainability, the CDAIS project activities included development and/or strengthening national AIS multi-stakeholder platforms in the pilot countries. Two of the pilot countries, namely Guatemala and Lao People’s Democratic Republic, established a national platform for AIS. Guatemala launched a multi-stakeholder platform for AIS in May 2019, under the leadership of the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture, IICA, a TAP partner) and the Observatory for Economic Sustainability. The platform includes the Ministry of Agriculture, large cooperatives, private and public universities, the European Union, USAID and FAO, and according to IICA, CDAIS influenced its decision to establish the platform. It plans to build capacities of its members and do advocacy on the importance of innovation for agriculture and development. The platform plans to serve as a mechanism for knowledge exchange, and is working on a methodology for systematic documentation of case studies and advocacy. It appears from the country missions and CDAIS reports that the other pilot countries have not established new platforms or worked on strengthening existing ones (see Finding 7).

Output/Result 3. **CD interventions in AIS within eight pilot countries are demand-driven and efficient, integrating the development of individual competencies, organizational capacities and enabling policies around priority themes and value chains.**

Finding 22. The CDAIS project implemented demand-driven capacity development interventions within the eight pilot countries, and individual and organizational capacities were developed in the niches. Challenges including the turnover of National Innovation Facilitators in some countries negatively impacted on the delivery of the capacity development interventions. The late start to the capacity needs assessments of organizations providing support services to the niches, and local dynamics contributed to the limited progress made with implementing the coaching plans for organizations.

The CDAIS project trained 92 NIFs in 2016 to strengthen their facilitation skills and to carry out capacity needs assessment in the niches. In some countries (Angola, Bangladesh, Ethiopia, Guatemala, Honduras, Lao People’s Democratic Republic and Rwanda, the training was used to select the NIFs, and so the numbers of traineed exceeded the number of facilitators finally appointed. Training of 50 NIFs continued in 2017 and 2018 as the project implementation proceeded, and included training in developing the coaching plans, and the monitoring, evaluation and learning. In addition, the project trained 24 facilitators to help capacity needs assessments of organizations (CDAIS, 2015). The global annual reports 2016 and 2017 give positive accounts of a range of capacities that have been developed, not only for NIFs but also for country project managers. While there were difficulties experienced in 2016 with NIFs understanding the concepts, these difficulties were less pronounced as they developed confidence. The NIFs interviewed raised the problem of the language of materials, and the short time between receiving new material and having to apply it in live settings.
Retention of NIFs proved to be a challenge for some countries. Angola lost four of its five facilitators in 2017 (CDAIS, 2017), and had to recruit and train replacements, while in Rwanda, six of the ten facilitators trained in 2016 (government officials) left and were replaced with consultants. Retention of facilitators was an issue for some of the niches in Bangladesh (e.g. fish niche). Also, the Country Project Manager left in 2018 and was replaced. Ethiopia lost its lead NIF in 2017.

The project identified 24 national level organizations to strengthen their capacities to provide innovation support services, and facilitators were trained to help with the coaching process for these organizations (CDAIS, 2015). Delivery on this activity did not progress as planned. Capacity needs assessments were conducted in all countries, but capacity development interventions in these organizations were either not implemented, or were implemented partially. Interviewees at the country level stated that the assessments started late in the project implementation period (2018) and that there was insufficient time to complete the implementation. Bangladesh and Ethiopia, although they started late, reported positive outcomes on the capacity development for organizations, including enhancement of ownership of CDAIS at country level and concrete actions to take forward into participating national organizations. Interviews at country level revealed some sensitivities on the part of government officials, that the capacity assessments reflected negatively on them, and so did not proceed with implementing the coaching plan. In another country the capacity needs assessments were postponed due to ‘internal dynamics.’

The mid-term evaluation, in its recommendation that the project prioritize transversal analysis, proposed that the project seek an extension as the analysis could only be conducted once the countries had completed and reported on their activities. The Project Oversight Committee approached DG DEVCO who approved a project extension to 56 months, from the original 48 months, effective on 8 November 2018 with no additional costs (EC, 2018). The extension was primarily to deal with the main outstanding activities/outputs that were essential for completing the project at the global level, e.g. policy dialogues, final rounds of capacity development and the cross-country transversal analysis of the CDAIS project. The aim of the transversal analysis is to validate the Common Framework and to provide recommendations to CDAIS project partners on future phases of CDAIS project (Cross-country transversal analysis of CDAIS project: Research proposal, draft dated 18/10/17). At the time of drafting the report for the final evaluation, work on the transversal analysis was in progress, and is not likely to be completed by 31 August 2019, the end date of the project. Part of the reason is that country projects had not completed reporting their results by May 2019 (also see Finding 15).

The mid-term evaluation also recommended that this final evaluation be “incorporated into the cross-country transversal learning as a mainly formative exercise to be carried out during the extension.” (FAO, 2017). In response, the evaluation team provides some suggestions as to frameworks and research questions to strengthen the transversal analysis based on findings and their own experience (see Recommendation 5).

The evaluation team notes that the project has already produced a number of publications, including journal articles and methodological guides that may be classified as international public goods in providing knowledge for use without cost and that is broadly useful.

*EQ 6.2. To what extent has the project achieved its immediate outcomes and what are the mechanisms that might sustain them?*
The project's immediate outcomes are detailed in the project's theory of change (Figure 3) at global level - corresponding to Result 1 - and country level - corresponding to Results 2 and 3. The theory of change postulates that the project will achieve its objectives through the production and interaction of the immediate outcomes. The extent to which the project achieved immediate outcomes at country and global level is reviewed. The existence of the positive feedback loops shown in the theory of change is then discussed as part of identifying mechanisms sustaining project outcomes.

**Finding 23.** The project made good progress towards achieving its immediate country level outcomes shown in its theory of change, in particular in establishing and strengthening niche partnerships to tackle commonly agreed issues. Country teams have come to understand CD in AIS more in terms of building a broad set of ‘soft’ skills than a practical application of the Common Framework enshrining the 4+1 functional capacities. Key organizations are supporting CD in AIS. Individuals with first-hand experience of the project are adopting tools and approaches. Two countries set-up a national level platform for CD in AIS, while others have focused on strengthening existing mechanisms and strategies.

The degree of achievement of the country level immediate outcomes shown in the theory of change (Figure 3) are discussed below.

**Niche partnerships tackling commonly agreed issues, becoming strengthened in the process**

The strengthening of niche partnerships is discussed under Finding 6. An indicator of strengthened partnerships are outcomes resulting from the niche work, many of which are described in the project’s published ‘Stories of Change’ and ‘Conversations of Change’. Others are described resulting from the other immediate outcomes in the rest of this section.

Much of the project’s effort went on working in niches and this is where the project has had most effect. At the time of writing, the project had not completed the transversal analysis that is making sense of the outcomes, linkages between them and their likely impacts, through developing niche impact pathways. A fuller analysis is beyond the scope of this evaluation and in any case would duplicate effort.

**Increased understanding of where and how Common Framework works in niches**

Project stakeholders came to understand the CDAIS approach as building ‘soft’ skills, the importance of NIFs and the usefulness of various tools and methods including developing problem trees, network mapping, coaching, action planning, policy dialogue and regular reflection and refinement. Stakeholders appreciated that more soft skills were needed than the 4 + 1 functional capacities listed in the Common Framework. For example, the International Centre for development-oriented Research and Agriculture has included the functional capacities into an agribusiness coaching programme as one of its main ongoing areas of work (iCRA). The Agrinatura Focal Point in Ethiopia introduced listening and negotiation skills and provided some individual mentoring to women NIFs. Both Bangladesh and Ethiopia included gender awareness in some of the capacity development workshops.

There was also a widespread appreciation that in practice it is often better to work on soft and hard (technology-based) skills at the same time. For example, in the chickpea niche in Ethiopia, work led to sourcing of improved seed and building of trust between researchers and farmers such that they understood and adopted improved cultivation techniques.
Angola, the development of functional skills was combined with development of technical skills in rice production.

**Key organizations and individuals supporting CD in AIS**

146. The response of organizations and individuals with first-hand experience of the niche partnership work was to adopt and use elements of the CDAIS approach rather than support the concept of CD in AIS. For example, a NIF in Bangladesh, who was a senior researcher in BARI, said that the soft skills he learned had transformed how he now engages with farmers and that he had adopted the new way of working in a new value chain project. The week before his interview he said he had trained 11 co-workers in the approach. A researcher in Bahir Dar University, who was an NIF for the chickpea niche in Ethiopia, reported she was using coaching tools, including reflection and refinement, in her approach to mentoring students, to good effect. One of the Milk Demand Stimulation NIFs said that she had completely revised how she runs fundraising events for the Bureau of Education School Feeding Programme to be like a project-run ‘marketplace’ and break from the standard formal presentations given by key speakers.

147. At the organizational level, the Department of Extension in Lao People’s Democratic Republic has adopted aspects of the CDAIS approach into its guidelines. The Bangladesh Agricultural University will include the Common Framework in a degree course on system studies for the same reason. The Vice Dean of Bahir Dar University in Ethiopia has included a course on networks and partnerships in a Bachelor of Arts course on Adult Education and Community Development. Also in Ethiopia, the Ethiopian Institute of Agricultural Research, who were originally sceptical of the project, became a supporter and have found a home for the approach in the Social Science Division.

148. Other evidence of support to CD in AIS is that on the behest of respective European Union Delegations, project partners in four countries – Bangladesh, Burkina Faso, Ethiopia and Rwanda – submitted proposals to DeSIRA to carry out CD in AIS.

149. In Ethiopia, the project’s work on organizational CD helped build understanding and cement support to CD in AIS. The work helped the Agricultural Extension Directorate identify capacity gaps that Directorate staff shared, including the Director, with their key stakeholders with the hope that they could help fill them. The training provided as part of CD went broader than the functional capacities to include communications, facilitation, stakeholder management, leadership and negotiation, which was highly valued. The Directorate is now recommending that new projects adopt a participatory CDAIS-like approach, in part so the very large number of development organizations operating in the country know about and talk to each other more.

150. While some organizations in two countries were sensitive to the findings of the organizational needs assessment, in Ethiopia the opposite was true. The evaluator was surprised at how open senior leadership had been in accepting constructive criticism from the process.  

**National level mechanism/platform supporting CD in AIS**

151. Two countries, Guatemala and Lao People’s Democratic Republic, set up national level platforms supporting CD in AIS. Five other countries supported existing mechanisms, while Ethiopia carried out a study of existing national platforms (see EQ 3.1 and Table 5).
In Lao People’s Democratic Republic, the project facilitated the formation of a national level Agricultural Innovation Systems platform made of 26 mid-level professionals from six departments in the Ministry of Agriculture and the National University of Lao People’s Democratic Republic. This was done by setting the participants with three tasks to complete, with some project funding. The tasks were chosen to build the capacity of the participants and cohesion of the platform as part of what the Agrinatura Focal Point saw as a coaching process. The tasks were to: identify the innovation support system in Lao People’s Democratic Republic; develop a nationwide database of innovation; and identify policies that support innovation. At the final project forum, the Department of Planning and Legal Affairs (DOPLA) agreed to take responsibility for the platform after the end of the project. The platform and its outputs are seen as potentially useful in giving more prominence to innovation systems in the next five-year plan for the country. Two respondents stressed the importance of having new ways of working written into the national five-year plan if they are to be mainstreamed.

In Burkina Faso, the project chose to support an existing mechanism than set-up a new platform because platforms are costly and a number already existed. The project identified the National Innovation Strategy as a promising mechanism for promoting CD for AIS in the country. The project identified the need of an inter-ministerial cell to implement the National Innovation Strategy, made of the Ministry of Higher Education, Research and Innovation (lead Ministry), the Ministry of Agriculture and the Ministry of the Economy. A second phase of CDAIS in Burkina Faso, likely to be funded through the DeSIRA call, will work at policy level to train and convince policymakers of the importance of such an inter-ministerial cell while at the same time push for the implementation of the strategy through linking to Deputies in the National Assembly responsible for questioning progress made.

Policy dialogues and marketplaces run by the project showed the potential of mechanisms that better link farmers to policymakers, and better link farmer organizations to innovation service suppliers. Finding 21 gives more details of how the policy dialogues and marketplaces worked, and the results they produced.

Finding 24. The project has made good progress in achieving its main (immediate) global outcomes shown in its theory of change. TAP partners are using and promoting the Common Framework, although some more than others. The Common Framework has found particular resonance with universities wishing to revamp their agricultural systems curricula.

The degree of achievement of the global level immediate outcomes are discussed in turn.

National level and TAP partners promoting and using the Common Framework in their respective organizations and platforms

Of the survey of TAP partners, 12 of the 13 respondents said their organizations were promoting and using the Common Framework in a number of ways including:

i. promoting it to constituents including through scientific communication;

ii. integrating it into guides and toolkits;

iii. integrating it into institutional capacity audits for national agricultural research systems;

iv. integrating it into a tool for assessing the capacity of agricultural innovation systems.
The Asia-Pacific Association of Agricultural Research Institutes ( APAARI )\(^\text{13}\) has found the Common Framework particularly useful. Engagement in TAP is one of its four main projects. It explains and provides links to TAP and the Common Framework on its website and promotes TAP and the Common Framework in its newsletter. It has found the Common Framework particularly relevant for its university membership. Under the auspices of TAP, APAARI held a webinar in November 2017 to promote the idea of incorporating the Common Framework in university curricula. The webinar was attended by 43 university representatives from Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Pakistan and the Philippines ( APAARI, 2018 ). More recently, APAARI has worked with the Tamil Nadu Agricultural University in India to include the Common Framework in the curriculum to serve as a model for other universities. TNAU is interested in the Common Framework because it wants to prepare and equip its graduates with the skills and capacities they need to address the current and future challenges of AIS ( APAARI, 2020 ).

USAID is also integrating the Common Framework into its own work and approaches. The organization has developed a CD in AIS guide and is developing its own toolkit. An USAID Capacity Development Adviser said that the Common Framework was a useful reference document for the development of their own materials. It was also useful in providing a common language to use with its development partners, e.g. FARA, that are also part of TAP. USAID has also developed its own “CDAIS” (same name) project, with includes actions in Ethiopia, although it is not clear if or how it will build on this CDAIS project.

FAO hosts the TAP Secretariat and is a member of TAP. Together with CIRAD, another TAP member, FAO is developing a tool to assess agricultural innovation systems that draw from elements of the Common Framework. This was the result of a request by the FAO Committee on Agriculture (COAG), one of its governing bodies, to do so.

In 2018, FAO had a CDAIS-like project funded in El Salvador by the Italian Government. FAO has also submitted a proposal for a regional project including Ivory Coast, Peru and Zambia to the International Fund for Agricultural Development ( IFAD ) together with official government letters expressing interest to join, waiting for a final funding decision by the third quarter 2019.

Positive results from using the Common Framework motivate its use

The ongoing promotion and use of the Common Framework by TAP partners suggest that they are experiencing positive results. The European Union has funded TAP (under DeSIRA) with EUR 5 million for the next five years, suggesting that the main funder of TAP so far believes it is worth continuing support.

The project invested in producing the publications “Stories of Change” and ‘Conversations of Change’ in an effort to provide stories of positive results from using the CDAIS approach in the pilot countries. Both publications have been acknowledged as useful by members of TAP.

Common Framework used more widely in more countries

TAP partners work beyond the eight pilot countries, so it is safe to conclude that the Common Framework is being used more widely. For example, Asia-Pacific Association of Agricultural Research Institutes’ work to include the Common Framework in university syllabus in Asia and the Pacific is based on work with TNAU, based in India. APAARI works in 21 countries.

\(^{13}\) APAARI is a network organization for research organizations in Asia and the Pacific with 80 members.
Findings

**EQ 6.3. What are the mechanisms (if any) that will sustain and scale these outcomes?**

**Finding 25.** Respondents involved in niche work said the experience had changed behaviours including their own, sometimes in profound and unexpected ways. A behaviour change model helps show why the CDAIS approach is potentially transformative. Despite positive feedback loops inherent in the approach, niche partnerships are unlikely to continue to deliver outcomes to participants without continued funding.

164. Most of the interviewees with first-hand experience of project CD said that it had changed behaviours, including their own. Several said the CD approach was “totally different” or “beyond normal” in working only on soft skills, providing no money or physical inputs. The CD approach was different in using tools that were much more participatory and inclusive than what respondents were used to.

165. A behaviour change model developed by Michie et al. (2011) can help explain the outcomes at the root of these positive experiences. The model, called the COM-B system model has recently been promoted by John Mayne, known for having developed Contribution Analysis (Mayne J., 218).

166. According to the model, behaviour change (B) occurs as a result of interaction between three conditions: capabilities (C), opportunities (O) and motivation (M). Figure 6 shows that both opportunities and capabilities can influence motivation and all three can not only influence behaviour change but can be affected by it as well.

**Figure 6: The COM-B system model**

![Diagram of the COM-B system model](source)


167. What makes the CDAIS approach different and potentially transformative is that it works on all four boxes at the same time. The niche work identifies coalitions already motivated to tackle an issue. Capacity needs assessment made clearer what the partners needed to do to achieve their goal and why, increasing motivation. The capacity needs assessment process itself, and other CD workshops and events, built participants’ capabilities to work together and engage with others. Regular, facilitated meetings provide opportunities to plan and work together. The reflections and refinements allowed participants to reflect on whether behaviour change was happening as expected, to renew commitments and refine plans as appropriate. Refining of plans might include seeking further capacity development to improve capabilities or write a project proposal or commission a study to explore a potential opportunity. The policy dialogues worked to remove constraints for farmers at district or national level as well as providing them with an opportunity to talk directly to

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14 Except in Bangladesh where the project chose to form new groups. It took time to build group motivation, hence Bangladesh being more delayed than other countries.
high-level officials, which some reported as very motivating. The marketplaces served to help farmer groups to learn what services were available to them from innovation service providers and make appropriate links.

168. As the niche work continued, a number of participants reported becoming empowered by their new capabilities, including self-confidence, to use the tools and take opportunities in other aspects of their lives.

169. While the COM-B system model represents a positive, self-reinforcing dynamic, interviewees thought that regular facilitated meetings would need to continue, and if project support for facilitators’ time and travel was withdrawn, the niche work would stop. The evaluation team agree that this is likely. Given the many and multifaceted outcomes that appear to be emerging from the niche work in all countries, it seems a great pity for the work to stop now. Participants are starting to value what they have and the outcome streams being generated. Transversal analysis is still needed to properly identify the types of outcome being generated, for whom, and the underlying dynamics explained in a more thorough and rigorous manner than is possible with the time and resources provided to this evaluation.

**Finding 26.** The project has been more successful in securing funding for its national- and global level work than its niche work. A proposal for a second phase of the project that would have continued to support project niche partnerships was unsuccessful, despite a recommendation by the results-oriented monitoring review that a second phase be funded, and broad acknowledgement of the relevance of the Common Framework and approach (see Findings 1 to 4).

170. FAO has been successful in winning funding for continued work on CD in AIS. Approved funding included EUR 5 million from DG DEVCO to continue to support TAP. Some of this funding may be used to support some CDAIS country follow-up, for example on policy dialogue work in Lao People’s Democratic Republic. FAO was also successful in securing funding from the Italian Government, to run a CDAIS-like project funding in El Salvador. On the request of COAG25, with inputs from TAP partners and national and regional experts FAO is developing guidelines for assessing agricultural innovation system at national level that draws on elements of the Common Framework. Proposals in the pipeline include a project with El Salvador, Nicaragua, Peru and Zambia to be submitted to IFAD. Other funding may come from concept notes submitted by Burkina Faso and Rwanda to DeSIRA to carry out CD in AIS.

171. The project developed an exit strategy for country teams which would take four to six years to gradually reduce external resources (financial, human, capital) and transfer responsibilities to local partners. The strategy was used to guide country projects in developing their action plans for work after the end of Phase 1 of the project. However, the exit strategies have not been funded through a second phase of the project, as originally envisaged.

172. Agrinatura submitted a proposal for a second phase, but this was unsuccessful. An European Commission representative said this was because the Commission had reached the end of its six-year funding cycle. However, the European Commission is providing support to TAP for the next five years.

173. One reason why funding is continuing for TAP at global level, but not across the board at country level, is that the implementing partners considered the transaction cost in supporting niche partnerships to be too high. For example, in some countries it involved
the Agrinatura Focal Point spending large amounts of time on contracting NIFs and dealing with expense claims. Tensions between Agrinatura and FAO components of the project added to the sense that the project was difficult (see Finding 10). International Centre for development-oriented Research and Agriculture staff held different views as to the desirability of a second phase under the same grant conditions because of a sense that the organization had lost money on the project.

EQ 6.4. What is the potential for the Common Framework and approach to benefit the poor and marginalized, including women and youth?

Finding 27. The Common Framework approach, with its emphasis on empowerment, has good potential to benefit the poor and marginalized, including women and youth. However, whether they do benefit will depend on how participants are enrolled in the process in the first place.

174. The COM-B model (Figure 6) and Finding 23 and Finding 25 suggest that the Common Framework approach works through empowering farmers at niche level. It does not require the purchase of technology or input to be able to bring about transformative change. This makes the Common Framework approach particularly suited to benefit the poor and marginalized who are less likely to have the capabilities and opportunities enjoyed by richer and better-connected farmers.

175. While the Common Framework approach may have the potential to benefit the poor and marginalized, there is some evidence that the farmers who benefitted from project intervention were better off. This was the case in Bangladesh where according to two service providers – International Development Enterprises (IDE) and Christian Commission for Development in Bangladesh (CCBD) – farmers in the groups they were hired to support were more progressive and literate than average, and as a result were able to form themselves into cooperatives faster.
4. Conclusions and recommendations

4.1 Conclusions

Conclusion 1. On the relevance of the Common Framework (EQ1).

176. The TAP Common Framework on Capacity Development for Agricultural Innovation Systems, through the CDAIS project, has demonstrated its relevance as a tool for achieving better coherence and impact of support of capacity development for AIS among TAP Partners at the global level, and has strong potential for adoption beyond TAP partners. There is scope for more TAP partners to promote the Common Framework in their own organizations and with their partners. As the Common Framework is rolled out to more countries, persuading governments of the relevance of the Common Framework with its focus on functional capacities will require greater attention on how they complement technical capacities than was given in the piloting of the Common Framework.

177. The Common Framework was the first major output of TAP and has garnered support from many TAP partners. This support has been demonstrated through the actions taken by several partners in promoting and using the Common Framework within their own organizations, and in other global and regional fora in which they participate. The financial commitment of the DG DEVCO to continue to support capacity development in AIS underscores the relevance of the Common Framework to the European Union.

178. The CDAIS project gave the Common Framework a prominent profile in the eight countries where its practical application was tested. Although the relevant ministries responsible for agriculture see the relevance of capacity development for AIS, they are not easily persuaded by an approach that gives primacy to functional capacities. The need to work on functional as well as technical capacities was a theme that emerged, not only from government officials, but also from the final beneficiaries and local partners.

Conclusion 2. On common understanding of the Common Framework (EQ2).

179. The Common Framework and approach meant different things to different stakeholders depending on how they interacted with it, which is to be expected. Ambiguous definitions of innovation that cater for different world views serve a purpose. Pushing for too much clarity can be counterproductive in building capacity to innovate.

180. Attempting to come to a common understanding of innovation concepts can be worthwhile because it helps surface and make explicit different world views, the bridging of which is an important part of the functional capacity to navigate complexity. The difficulty that people had with the definition of innovation can be understood as a clash of two different world views. People with a technical training see innovation more in terms of the adoption of technology (hardware) while those with a social science background see it as an interactive experiential learning process. The two views are complementary, and the project helped participants appreciate this.
Conclusion 3. On partnership (EQ3.1).

181. Despite partnering difficulties, the project was able to deliver some impressive outcomes and achieve most targets. While a concerted effort was taken to improve and maintain relationships between the implementing partners, some residual issues remained. Projects as complex as CDAIS can expect some degree of breakdown in communication and understanding that cause stress on staff. Lessons should be learned from this project to avoid unnecessary stress on staff in similar partnership projects in the future.

Conclusion 4. On adequacy of the project’s governance structure (EQ3.2).

182. The country level governance structure remained problematic for some country teams, despite concerted efforts to better integrate the Agrinatura and FAO project components. In hindsight, a different governance structure based on an empowered Country Programme Leader and Project Management Unit based in the host organization would likely have reduced partnership difficulties. The following modality would have helped integrate national and niche level capacity development from the start and made it easier for the host organization to continue the work after the end of the project.15

   i. clear tripartite agreement between Agrinatura, FAO and host country organization making roles and responsibilities clear;
   ii. Project Management Unit, led by a full-time Country Programme Leader hired and paid for the job with oversight over the country budget, based in the host country organization with a deputy employed by the host country organization to eventually take over;
   iii. Country Programme Leader reporting semi-annually to a Steering Committee of commensurate size and seniority, more likely to be involved and develop ownership of the project, including representatives from the three partner organizations;
   iv. Project Management Unit supported by advisers from Agrinatura and FAO.

Conclusion 5. On delivery of project outputs and targets (EQ4 & 6).

183. The project managed to deliver on most of its planned targets within the extended project implementation period. Given the ambitious scope of the project, some delay is almost inevitable. Administrative arrangements and financial reporting made for high transaction costs and affected the overall efficiency of the project, as did turnover of project staff at country level and government counterparts.

184. The CDAIS project was undoubtedly ambitious in its scope. It is ambitious to test a seemingly complex concept/framework at global, national and subnational levels, in 34 niches in eight countries across three regions with two budget holders responsible for delivery, within 48 months. Delays are very likely in projects of this scale and complexity. That the CDAIS project delivered on most of its planned targets is commendable, albeit within the extension of time to 56 months. In retrospect, the project would have greatly benefited from a more in-depth, comprehensive and fully-funded design phase.

185. The project was required to follow a rigorous financial reporting that could have benefited from having a dedicated financial officer. The turnover of NIFs in a number of countries meant having to train new NIFs, thus incurring additional costs. Changes on other project team members, for example, country programme managers and national project coordinators also contributed to implementation delays. The project had two separate budgets – one for Agrinatura and one for FAO, each with different administrative rules or

15 Based on a recommendation made by a country Programme Manager.
requirements to be followed by countries. This contributed to a strong perception at country level that the roles and responsibilities of the two organizations were not clearly defined and that the project was administratively complex.

**Conclusion 6. On the integration of gender in the project (EQ5).**

186. While gender was a consideration in the niches, the absence of a systematic gender analysis within all niches and at all levels of the CDAIS project makes it difficult to draw any firm conclusions about the project’s contribution to enhancing gender equality. TAP partners and the project teams at global and national levels support the need for a gender perspective in the application of the Common Framework (there is an understandable concern about adding complexity to something that is already complex). However, by not making gender explicit in the design and testing of the Common Framework, the opportunity to test gender mainstreaming in capacity development for AIS was missed.

**Conclusion 7. On the importance and completion of transversal analysis (EQ4.3).**

187. Transversal analysis remains key to the CDAIS theory of change and the future scaling of the Common Framework and approach. The project plan to finish the analysis and ensure its uptake by TAP is sensible. The findings, conclusions and recommendations of this evaluation can and should contribute to the transversal analysis.

**Conclusion 8. On the validity of the project’s theory of change (EQ6).**

188. There is evidence that the project’s theory of change is valid. At country level, progress has been made towards three mutually reinforcing outcomes:
   i. niche partnerships tackling commonly agreed issues and becoming strengthened in the process;
   ii. national level mechanisms supporting CD in AIS;
   iii. key organizations supporting CD in AIS.

189. Most progress was made at the niche level through participant ‘learning by doing’. Least progress was made at the organizational level because organizational CD was delayed. Nevertheless, results in at least one country suggest organizational CD can be transformative if participants are open to constructive feedback.

190. At global level there was also evidence of the emergence of a positive feedback loop:
   i. in which TAP partners have a better understanding of where and how the Common Framework works (from country level work);
   ii. leading to positive results;
   iii. leading to TAP partners promoting the Common Framework in their respective organizations and platforms;
   iv. leading to wider use in more countries.
Conclusion 9. On the future of CDAIS work (EQ6).

191. Project work at global level will continue through funding support to TAP for the next five years. However, niche work is at threat in most countries after a proposal for a second phase to continue work in niches was unsuccessful. Given delays and that the project was in hindsight over ambitious, there was not enough time in Phase 1 to bring the niches to be self-supporting. It is in the niche work that the transformative nature of the Common Framework has been most evident and where compelling evidence still needs to be gathered.

192. It would seem that work can continue within niches with relatively small amount of funding, to support ongoing facilitation, relative to the streams of outcomes that can be expected. The evaluation team think that Agrinatura and FAO together should have done better at finding ways to continue to support niche work. The team suspect, as a result of conversations they had, that part of the reason is the transaction cost in supporting NIFs has been too high with respect to contracting and funding meetings and travel. Given the centrality of facilitation to CD in AIS, this issue needs to be looked at in greater depth.

4.2 Recommendations

Recommendation 1. To Agrinatura and FAO to promote national ownership and mutual accountability for results (Conclusion 1).

193. Processes should be put in place to promote national ownership of new CDAIS projects, for example those contemplated under DeSIRA, and mutual accountability for project results. FAO should put processes in place to ensure support for these projects by FAO country offices, and their incorporation into Country Programming Frameworks.

194. It is essential that these new CDAIS projects at country level are co-designed with the governments to ensure their buy-in to the projects, and mutual accountability for project results. Governments’ commitments to contribute resources to projects should be followed up. This means that the national steering structures in the pilot countries will need to be strengthened, and structures in new countries designed, based on lessons learned from the CDAIS project.

195. Obtaining support of FAO Representatives is essential. FAO headquarters should involve FAO country offices in the planning of the new CDAIS projects, very early in the design process. FAO should also consider more involvement of the FAO regional and subregional offices to support FAO country offices incorporate these projects into Country Programming Frameworks and reporting of results.

Recommendation 2. To FAO and TAP to link functional capacities with technical capacities in new CDAIS projects (Conclusion 1).

196. The Common Framework focuses on relevant functional capacities and should continue to do so. To ensure relevance to the needs of beneficiaries, many of whom require technical capacities, CDAIS projects should act as a catalyst for beneficiaries to access opportunities for developing or accessing technical capacities. This link between functional and technical capacities should ideally be part of the project design, as it would make the CDAIS projects tangible to beneficiaries and to the institutions and individuals involved in developing their capacities.
Conclusions and recommendations

Recommendation 3. To the Project Oversight Committee, Agrinatura and FAO to document lessons learned on joint governance and project management (Conclusion 3 and 7).

197. The CDAIS project generated several lessons on managing a project of this scale and complexity. The Project Oversight Committee, in its response to the mid-term evaluation, committed to document the lessons learned from the partnership between Agrinatura and FAO on jointly managing the CDAIS project. It is important that this is done as part of the project close out. Agrinatura, FAO and the members of the Project Oversight Committee could consider a facilitated review workshop to discuss the lessons learned on governance and management of the project, document these systematically, and make recommendations to DG DEVCO for the management of similar projects in future.

Recommendation 4. To TAP, Agrinatura and FAO to take more time and be more inclusive in the design of complex partnership projects (Conclusion 4).

198. Specific recommendations are:
   i. For donors to provide more time and funding for the design of complex partnerships.
   ii. To adopt a joint project governance structure that supports partnership and country ownership of implementation and results. Conclusion 4 provides details of a governance structure that in hindsight may have worked better than the one this project used.
   iii. To include a financial officer in the project design to ensure financial reporting is not unduly arduous.
   iv. For the European Commission to come to a Financial and Administrative Framework Agreement with Agrinatura to make financial reporting less arduous for implementing partners.

Recommendation 5. To Agrinatura and FAO to continue to implement and support the plan to complete the transversal analysis and ensure its use by TAP, taking into account findings, conclusions and recommendations from this evaluation (Conclusion 7).

199. In coherence with the mid-term evaluation recommendation that this evaluation should contribute to transversal analysis, the following suggestions are offered for consideration by transversal analysis thematic working group.
   i. Consider adopting a behaviour change framework, (e.g. the COM-B model as described in Finding 25) to help better understand how the Common Framework approach led to transformative change for some participants.
   ii. Carry out a deeper and more critical analysis of the outcomes (i.e. changes in behaviour, motivation, opportunity and capabilities) reported in the Stories of Change and ‘Conversations of Change’ project publications. This will add understanding, clarity and credibility to explanations of how the Common Framework approach produced them.
   iii. Capture lessons from the project experience of contracting and motivating NIFs, given the centrality of facilitation to building capacity to innovate.
   iv. Assuming the transversal analysis supports it, to market the Common Framework approach as one that benefits the poor and marginalized, including women and youth, and can potentially bring about transformative change. Doing so will require that gender and social analysis become a more explicit part of the approach.
v. Identify the tools and methods developed by the project that may qualify as international public goods, e.g. coaching process, policy dialogues and marketplace, and publish them in peer-reviewed journals so as to increase the chance of wider uptake.

Recommendation 6. To TAP, Agrinatura and FAO to strengthen the mainstreaming of gender into capacity development on AIS (Conclusion 6).

200. The next cohort of projects should test gender mainstreaming in capacity development on AIS in a small number of projects, and document lessons to inform how best to mainstream gender into capacity development on AIS. This testing could include conducting a gender analysis at country level and in targeted value chains/niches; incorporating gender in capacity needs assessment; training facilitators to use a ‘gender lens’ and providing support; and designing reporting to collect sex-disaggregated data. There are many useful resources that can assist, including the TAP Gender Analysis Tool and FAO’s work on gender-sensitive value chains.

Recommendation 7. To Agrinatura and FAO to find the relatively small amounts of funding required to keep niche partnerships working as part of funding the project’s exit strategy (Conclusion 9).
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## Appendix 1. People interviewed

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Surname</th>
<th>Name</th>
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<th>Role in the project</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Angola</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Barbero</td>
<td>Danilo</td>
<td>European Union Delegation in Angola</td>
<td>Attache, Cooperation</td>
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<tr>
<td>Caetano da Silva</td>
<td>Augusto</td>
<td>National Seeds Service</td>
<td>Director-General, participant in policy dialogue</td>
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<tr>
<td>CF Matias</td>
<td>Imaculada</td>
<td>Faculty of Agriculture and Natural Resources,</td>
<td>Dean of Faculty</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>University of Jose Eduardo dos Santos</td>
<td>(organization CD beneficiary)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Domingos</td>
<td>Mpanzo</td>
<td>Ministry of Agriculture and Agronomic Research</td>
<td>Former CDAIS National Project Coordinator, currently consultant in Ministry</td>
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<td>Institutions</td>
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<tr>
<td>Galvão Teles</td>
<td>Madelena</td>
<td>Instituto Superior Agronomia, Universidade de</td>
<td>Agrinatura Focal Point</td>
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<tr>
<td>Katiavala</td>
<td>Jose Maria</td>
<td>Action for Rural Development and Environment (ADRA)</td>
<td>NGO conducted training for niches</td>
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<tr>
<td>Kondo</td>
<td>Zeferino</td>
<td>CDAIS</td>
<td>National Innovation Facilitator (seeds niche)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kwa Nzambi</td>
<td>Vuvu</td>
<td>Institute for Agronomic Research</td>
<td>Technical Officer (rice niche)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Nascimento</td>
<td>Maria de Fatima</td>
<td>Institute for Agronomic Research/FAO</td>
<td>CDAIS Country Programme Manager</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ramón García Molina</td>
<td>Juan</td>
<td>Codespa (Spanish NGO)</td>
<td>Conducted training for niches</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Salumbo</td>
<td>Amilcar</td>
<td>Institute for Agronomic Research</td>
<td>Deputy Director-General and CDAIS National Project Coordinator</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Valente</td>
<td>Armando</td>
<td>Faculty of Agriculture and Natural Resources,</td>
<td>Lecturer, former CDAIS National Project Coordinator</td>
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<td>Zola</td>
<td>Agusto</td>
<td>FAO</td>
<td>FAO focal point for CDAIS</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Bangladesh</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Abjal</td>
<td>IDE</td>
<td>IDE provided market training to niches</td>
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<tr>
<td>Aminuzzaman</td>
<td>S. M.</td>
<td>Upazila Agriculture Officer, Shibgonj, Chapaingwabgonj</td>
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<td>Cooperative</td>
<td>Trishal</td>
<td>Members of the cooperative</td>
<td>15 members of the CDAIS fish farming niche</td>
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<tr>
<td>Das</td>
<td>Anil</td>
<td>FAO Bangladesh</td>
<td>Country Program Manager</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jamal</td>
<td>Senior Scientist, BARI</td>
<td></td>
<td>Pineapple NIF</td>
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<tr>
<td>Kabir</td>
<td>Weis</td>
<td>Executive Director, KGF</td>
<td>Former DG of BARC and supporter of Project</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
### Appendix 1. People interviewed

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Position</th>
<th>Organization</th>
<th>Role</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Khondaker</td>
<td>Nur</td>
<td>Deputy Rep., FAO</td>
<td>FAO focal point for the project</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rahman</td>
<td>Zulfikar</td>
<td>Professor at Bangladesh Agricultural University</td>
<td>National consultant, interim NPC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shamimn</td>
<td>Ismail Khan</td>
<td>President of Shibganj Mango Producers</td>
<td>President of the CDAIS mango producers niche</td>
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<tr>
<td>Simpson</td>
<td>Robert</td>
<td>FAO Rep., FAO</td>
<td>FAO Rep</td>
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<tr>
<td>Singha</td>
<td>George</td>
<td>CCBD (Christian Commission for Development in Bangladesh)</td>
<td>CCBD provided assistant national innovation facilitators</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Testa</td>
<td>Assunta</td>
<td>Attaché at European Union Delegation</td>
<td>European Union Focal Person for CDAIS</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wadud</td>
<td>Shila</td>
<td>Deputy Director, Department of Agricultural Marketing</td>
<td>NIF in fish cluster, then involved in organizational CD</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wahab</td>
<td>Roxana</td>
<td>Ascend, Dhaka</td>
<td>Lead NIF</td>
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<td><strong>Belgium</strong></td>
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<td>Bagdonis</td>
<td>Jessica</td>
<td>USAID</td>
<td>TAP Partner</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bheenick</td>
<td>Krishnan</td>
<td>Forum for Agricultural Research in Africa</td>
<td>TAP Partner</td>
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<tr>
<td>Francis</td>
<td>Judith</td>
<td>TAP Chairperson</td>
<td>Member of Project Oversight Committee</td>
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<td>Kayitare</td>
<td>Gilbert</td>
<td>FAO</td>
<td>Country Programme Manager</td>
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<td>Martinez</td>
<td>Erick</td>
<td>National Director Value Chains, Ministry of Agriculture, Honduras</td>
<td>National Project Coordinator</td>
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<td>Nkunzimana</td>
<td>Tharcisse</td>
<td>European Union, DEVCO</td>
<td>Funder</td>
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<td>Nick</td>
<td>iCRA Consultant</td>
<td>Writer of ‘Stories of Change’ and ‘Conversations of Change’</td>
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<td>Romney</td>
<td>Danny</td>
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<td>TAP Partner</td>
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<td>Spisiakova</td>
<td>Martina</td>
<td>APAARI</td>
<td>TAP Partner</td>
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**Guatemala**

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<td>Febres Huamán</td>
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### Appendix 1. People interviewed

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<td>Funda Sistemas (service provider)</td>
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### Evaluation of the project “Capacity Development for Agricultural Innovation Systems (CDAIS)”

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#### Lao People’s Democratic Republic

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<td>Lampheuy</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pongmala Chanthalath</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sonethavixay Sengphachanh</td>
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#### Rwanda

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Annexes

Annex 1. Terms of Reference
