

Decentralized Evaluation Series

Terminal evaluation of the project “Dynamic Conservation and Sustainable Use of Agricultural Biodiversity to ensure Food Security and Ecosystems Services and Resiliency”

Project code: GCP/PHI/062/GFF

Management response

1. Based on the project's findings and conclusions, the evaluation has developed a number of recommendations. These are organized according to: Firstly, addressing the project's risk on environmental and social safeguards. Secondly, delivery of committed essential knowledge products, which could be use as tools to help sustain the project results; and as potential public goods. Thirdly, development of an exit strategy. Fourthly, given that this is a terminal evaluation, a set of recommendation is provided to FAO and GEF for future similar projects, and at systems levels to ensure the leveraging of institutional expertise in the context of One FAO. The timeframe for the first three sets of recommendations should take place immediately and within the project's second budget neural extension ending in June 2022.

Overall assessment

2. Overall, the terminal evaluation has achieved its goal to provide a comprehensive account of the project's performance by assessing its design, implementation, and achievement of objectives. In turn, the evaluation facilitated the assessment of the project's relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, and sustainability factors, as well as synthesis of its good practices, challenges and other lessons to come up with various recommendations, and contribute to the sustainability of the provided interventions.
3. Unfortunately there had been some missed opportunities during the evaluation which hindered FAOPH to provide elaboration on the evidences that were provided. Clarificatory sessions (or responses at the very least) to better understand if the provided evidence were insufficient, and particularly how so, could have provided FAOPH an opportunity to better elaborate and also for the evaluators get a better understanding of what the project is doing/has done. In line with these, it seems that the evaluators were not able to validate several findings which they included in this report nevertheless. There were findings that were reported inaccurate, misleading, or failed to take into context surrounding circumstances, and despite clarifications from FAOPH, these findings were still retained in the report.
4. As such, FAOPH deems that the conduct of the evaluation could have been improved and that the evaluation report needs further editing/packaging, noting that it will be read by partners. As how it is written now, it may diminish the good progress, accomplishments and recognition afforded by our partners to the project, which may dissuade further adoption of the ABD in general.

Assessment on findings, conclusions and recommendations

5. Generally, conclusions and recommendations are well taken and accepted.
6. The management is pleased about the overall results and achievements of the project which takes into account value for money, and fulfillment of its objective to FAO strategic Framework, and its obligation to international agreements, such as the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture. The project has demonstrated and raised awareness on the importance of traditional rice varieties (TRVs), agrobiodiversity (ABD) crops, and other ABD related interventions, supported by multi-stakeholder coordination, to attain the common goal of supporting dynamic conservation of agrobiodiversity, and inclusion of indigenous peoples, including youth and women.

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<p>Recommendation 1. Top Priority (ESS Risk). To FAO.</p> <p>Considering that the project and its partners, as a third party, have collected and stored samples of traditional varieties of the indigenous peoples, and is nearing the completion of characterization and is in the process of registration of some of these varieties; considering the international and national policies and laws and the indigenous peoples’ governing structures that protect the rights of indigenous peoples to their agrobiodiversity and indigenous knowledge, and their rights for access and benefit, including equal rights to all works, materials and project outputs; and considering that the project and its partners have not explicitly addressed such provision under the Free Prior Informed Consent – Memorandum of Agreement or any form of material transfer agreement (for seeds); the evaluation recommends as top priority that the FAO Country Office as the budget holder, and the Project Management Coordinating Unit, immediately undertake a consultation process with the indigenous cultural communities and indigenous peoples of Hungduan and Hingyon Ifugao, and Lake Sebu, South Cotabato to formulate equitable actions with the necessary provisions within three months. The project should develop a plan with timetable and allocate budget and should include:</p>					
Recommendation 1.A. Cease and disclosure measures					
<p>Recommendation 1.A.1. Cease all activities on the characterization and registration of the collected and stored samples, including if any, planned molecular analysis of samples.</p>	Accepted	FAO has informed DA-Philippine Rice Research Institute (PhilRice) to cease all the activities on the characterization and registration of the collected and stored samples. PhilRice has confirmed that there is no plan to conduct molecular analysis of the samples. The deposited seeds are protected through blackbox agreement.	FAO Philippines (FAOPH) in collaboration with respective government agencies PhilRice	N/A	No
<p>Recommendation 1.A.2. Disclose a full list to relevant stakeholders, specifically to, National Commission on Indigenous Peoples (NCIP), the Indigenous Cultural Communities/Indigenous Peoples ICC/IPs who signed the Free Prior Informed Consent (FPIC) the LGUs and the indigenous peoples, of the specific rice cultivars and other crops varieties collected and stored by the project and project partners. The list should specify, the name of the farmer from which the sample was collected, which samples have already been collected by previous projects (e.g., IRRI’s) and which samples are unique collection from the project.</p>	Partially accepted We accept the recommendation to disclose the full list to relevant stakeholders, but please take note that we cannot include/commit here the samples which have been collected by non-FAO projects (e.g. IRRI). The project does not have any control over the collection being conducted or done in other projects like IRRI.	<p>FAO will ensure that FAO-GEF project-facilitated TRVs deposits as duplicate in the genebank, will be disclosed. (These are TRVs deposited to PhilRice under a Blackbox agreement).</p> <p>FAO will advise through the DA and DA-Bureau of Agriculture Research (DA-BAR), on the evaluation recommendation.</p>	FAOPH, in coordination and collaboration with project partners and beneficiaries.	June to July 2022	No

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Recommendation 1.A.3. Disclose a full list of which samples of cultivars are being characterized (including molecular analysis if this has commenced) and by whom.	Accepted	The disclosure referring to Recommendation 1.A.2 and this will be done accordingly. As noted earlier, there is no characterization including molecular analysis being done.	FAOPH, in coordination with relevant units in FAO and with project partners and beneficiaries.	June to July 2022	No
Recommendation 1.A.4. Disclose a full list of which samples of cultivars are in the process of registration and by whom, all the documentation on the application for registration.	Accepted	Hungduan and Hingyon farmers (in Ifugao province), confirmed that they wanted to proceed with the registration. As such, disclosure will be done, accordingly.	FAOPH	June to July 2022	N/A
Recommendation 1.A.5. Ensure that the stored samples in the genebank are sealed in a physical black box, with keys in safekeeping by the communities, and ensure mechanisms for regular visits by community to check viability of collections and reporting mechanism by the genebank on the status of the black box.	Accepted	A Blackbox Agreement is being finalized between PhilRice and IP beneficiaries, for all samples collected from project sites with FAO-GEF project facilitation. The agreement specifies the rights of the IP farmers as depositors of the seeds for safekeeping. PhilRice will keep the deposited TRVs and adhere to reporting mechanism by the genebank. In addition to IP farmers consultations/dialogues that will be conducted by PhilRice, it will translate the Agreement in the local dialect of the IP farmers’ group.	FAOPH, in coordination with relevant units in FAO, PHILRICE, DA-Bureau of Plant Industry (DA-BPI), DA-Policy and Planning.	July 2022	Yes
Recommendation 1.A.6 Disclose a full list and provide summary in indigenous peoples’ language of all works, materials and outputs of the project published or communicated in any medium.	Accepted	The disclosure of knowledge products developed by the project shall be done accordingly.	FAOPH in collaboration with relevant national and local government partners, and ICCs/IPS.	June onwards until NTE of the project	No
Recommendation 1.B. Assess and redress measures					
Recommendation 1.B.1. Conduct participatory stakeholder consultations centred on indigenous peoples and the Local Government Units to take stock on the gaps that has occurred and lessons learned.	Accepted	The disclosure of knowledge products developed by the project shall be done accordingly. Participatory stakeholder consultation to jointly recognize and document success, experiences, gaps/challenges and lessons learned is on-going and will be delivered by project closure.	FAOPH, in coordination with relevant units in FAO, national and local partners and farming communities.	June onwards	No

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Furthermore, agree on objectives, steps, participation, governance, principles of engagement, outputs and criteria to measure the achievements of objectives.					
Recommendation 1.B.2. Agree and document equitable provisions for the material transfer agreement/black box agreement and access and benefit sharing, protection of indigenous knowledge; in line with the UN Declaration Rights of Indigenous Peoples, Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture, (ITPGRFA)s, and IPRA. This should include provisions for the plant materials and data regarding the collection, storage, characterization and registration that protect the rights of indigenous peoples.	Partially accepted On MTAs: Neither the blackbox agreement nor the project design include MTA. Thus, this recommendation is partially accepted. It may be noted that inclusion of MTA in any agreement in country will take more significant work. At any rate, FAO will facilitate relevant government agency to work on MTA in partnership with ITPGRFA secretariat.	The TRV seeds deposited by the IP Farmers in PhilRice genebank is covered by a Blackbox Agreement in accordance with the rights of farmers (see above responses). Any other required processes will be done accordingly.	FAOPH, in consultation with ITPGRFA Secretariat and other relevant units in FAO, together with relevant government units and bodies.	N/A	Yes
Recommendation 1.B.3. Agree on how to acknowledge the equal rights of indigenous cultural communities and indigenous peoples on all works, materials and outputs of the project.	Accepted	Disclosure of knowledge products developed by the project including all works, materials and outputs of the project, will be done, accordingly.	FAOPH through the Project Management and Coordination Unit (PMCU) in collaboration with National and Local government agencies, and IP/ICCs.	Consultations to be done until June	No
Recommendation 1.B.4. Ensure that any agreements are addressed to and respects the collective rights of the respective indigenous communities.	Accepted	Under the Philippine law Republic Act 8371 of 1997, and its Implementing Rules and Regulations , the NCIP will administer and lead the process, following the principles of the Free and Prior Informed Consent (FPIC), and the Memorandum of Agreement (MOA), which were executed with the IPs, and stipulates the rights of the respective IPs.	FAOPH in collaboration with lead coordinating partners and relevant FAO units.	Conducted between August to September 2021	No

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Recommendation 1.B.5. Design a communication plan to document and communicate the results particularly targeted to the wider indigenous communities of Ifugao and Lake Sebu.	Accepted	This is embedded in the project design and workplan. Enhancement of the project’s existing communication plan will be done following the recommendations.	FAOPH, in collaboration with ICCs and LGUs.	June to July 2022	No
1.C. Coordination and support measures					
Recommendation 1.C.1. At FAO, strengthen coordination and engagement with the secretariat of the ITPGRFA to ensure organisational support in addressing these risks.	Accepted	Continuous coordination of FAOPH with the PGRFA National Focal Point (NFP) from the Philippine Government, and ITPGRFA secretariat, to strengthen the engagement of the country on ITPGRFA. The project benefits from the support of the ITPGRFA Secretariat.	FAOPH to strengthen collaboration with ITPGRFA Secretariat-HQ.	June onwards	No
Recommendation 1.C.2. In the Philippines, strengthen coordination and engagement with the Treaty’s National Focal Point from the Philippine Government to ensure a shared understanding of the issues arising and commitment for their resolution.	Accepted	The project has established a strong coordination and collaboration with the Philippine Government, the Policy and Planning office of the Department of Agriculture (as the project’s Co-chair of the PSC), including with the Treaty National Focal Point and other offices/official delegates to FAO Governing Bodies of relevance to Biodiversity.	FAOPH with relevant units in FAO HQ/RAP.	June onwards	No
Recommendation 1.C.3. Appoint a global honest broker to oversee the whole procedure, preferably with/from the secretariat of the ITPGRFA preferably before project closure.	Accepted In the spirit of the recommendation, (to have external advice from global expert), FAOPH has been already coordinating with the ITPGRFA Secretariat thru the participation of the HQ Technical Officer and consultation with the ITPGRFA Secretariat, including	FAOPH will continue to seek advice from the Secretariat of the ITPGRFA. Will be included in the exit strategy, and foster linkage with DA to maintain this arrangement beyond the project life.	FAOPH, ITPGRFA Secretariat and other relevant units.	June onwards	Yes

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	the actual Secretary of the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture at FAO. Although it may be noted that there will not be any formal appointment, this will be done nevertheless.				
Recommendation 1.C.4. At local levels, with approval of the indigenous people, appoint an honest broker to support indigenous communities from Ifugao and Lake Sebu, preferably before project closure.	Accepted The NCIP has already the mandate of protecting indigenous peoples’ rights, and as such, already serves the purpose of a broker. Thus, there is no need to formally appoint an “honest broker”. Once the terminal evaluation has been completed, discussions will continue in few months time, to review the outcomes and present it to the PTF/PSC, to ensure that every one is in agreement.	FAO will work closely with NCIP and executing/implementing partners for the remaining project activities.	FAOPH, FAO-RAP in collaboration with HQ’s Partnership Unit – Indigenous Peoples and ITPGRFA Secretariat.	June onwards	Yes

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Recommendation 1.C.5. Provide the basic training and support to enable the indigenous cultural communities and indigenous peoples to engage in this process.	Accepted	The project has Provincial Coordinator and Community facilitators, who are tasked to engage and support the ICCs/IPs to enable them to benefit, contribute, empower and sustain the project objectives after its termination. Up the to extent feasible, the project will continue to conduct local training to support and enable farming communities to better engage in the process.		June to August	No
Recommendation 1.C.6. Document the entire process and draw up lessons as the whole exercise will be a significant best practice contribution.	Accepted	There is complete documentation of the FPIC process for all the pilot sites which were prepared by NCIP. Also, we have provided the chronology of the FPIC process to the evaluators, which can be a take-off point of the documentation to add the lessons and to supplement the NCIP documentation.	FAOPH and relevant FAO units.	June to August	Yes
Recommendation 2. Quality delivery of Knowledge products. To FAO. Considering that substantial budget has been allocated to knowledge products, which could be used as tools to help sustain the project results; and as potential public goods, the evaluation recommends that committed knowledge products, particularly training materials and policy briefs be delivered as finished products to the project stakeholders, particularly the indigenous communities and local government units by the end of the project closure.					
Recommendation 2.1. The training materials should include an adult learning participatory approach that solicits and integrates indigenous knowledge, proportional focus on agrobiodiversity conservation and sustainable use and gender and social inclusion. The materials should conform to the FAO FFS guidelines.	Accepted	The project adopts a participatory approach in designing the training materials which is based on the result of the needs assessment and tailored to fit specific audience (e.g. adult IP women and men farmers, youth). DA-ATI uses the FAO-FFS guidelines and tailored it to the local Philippine setting and identified needs.	FAOPH in collaboration with FAO-RAP, FAO-HQ.	By end of project	No
Recommendation 2.2. The production of knowledge products should include a system of peer review both for the technical content and communications aspects.	Accepted	The production of knowledge products undergoes system of peer review at all levels (stakeholders involved, the PMCU, country office through the Communications Specialist and technical/programme unit). This is already being done.	FAOPH through PMCU in collaboration DA-ATI, FAORAP, and FAOHQ.	By end of project	No

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<p>Recommendation 2.3.</p> <p>Encourage the Philippine government to document lessons learned on the innovative institutional formation of the project that involved the various governmental departments of Agriculture, Environment, Indigenous Peoples, Culture and Education and Tourism. This could be formulated as an official submission to the next Governing Body of the ITPGRFA regarding the implementation of Articles on conservation and sustainable use of plant genetic resources and realization of Farmers Rights.</p>	Accepted	<p>As reported, the project’s experiences were officially submitted by the Philippine government as one of the measures and best practices for the implementation of Farmers’ Rights, https://www.fao.org/3/ca8186en/ca8186en.pdf</p> <p>In the remaining timeframe, the project will continue to document its success, experiences, challenges and lessons learned on the implementation of sustainable use of crop genetic resources.</p>	FAOPH, executing and implementing partners, RAP, ITPGRFA Secretariat	On-going	No
<p>Recommendation 2.4.</p> <p>More importantly, ensure that indigenous cultural communities and indigenous peoples have joint rights to all works, materials and outputs resulting from the project/research, whether or not these are published or communicated in any medium. (Please refer to ESS recommendations.)</p>	Accepted	<p>Recognition, acceptance and declaration of joint rights to all works, materials and output of the project will be done accordingly.</p> <p>Finalization of knowledge products developed by the project, and their dissemination, will be carried out and ensure the dissemination to government counterparts (national and local levels), and indigenous beneficiaries (considering their local dialects), and other potential users.</p>	PMCU, LGUs, NCIP, ICCs	June onwards	No
<p>Recommendation 3.</p> <p>Exit strategy: policy work.</p> <p>To FAO.</p> <p>To ensure that the achievements in policy and institutional formation are sustained and enabled to further get through the various policy approval processes, the evaluation recommends that FAO CO and PMCU develop, by the end of the project, an exit strategy that includes:</p>					
<p>Recommendation 3.1.</p> <p>The PMCU and the Office of the Under Secretary of Operations of the Department of Agriculture map out the succeeding policy processes for the</p>	Accepted	<p>The project is finalizing the exit strategy, in collaboration with relevant government partners, which already indicates which agencies which will take over the monitoring of the status of approval of the policy instruments, supported by the project. This, specifically the Joint Memorandum Circular and Seed</p>	FAOPH in collaboration with partner agencies such as NCIP, Department of Environment and	On-going	Yes

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approval and implementation of the seed act and the Locally and Nationally Important Agricultural Heritage Systems (LIAHS and NIAHS, and agree on a course of action.		Industry Development Act (SIDA) amendment. This is through the DA-BAR and DA-BPI respectively.	Natural Resources (DENR), National Commission for Culture and the Arts (NCCA), DA Undersecretary for Operations, the Undersecretary for Policy and Planning, DA-BAR (as the secretariat) and DA-BPI.		
Recommendation 3.2. For the PMCU and the Office of the Under Secretary of Operations of the Department of Agriculture to make provisions to ensure that the policy progress of the project are reported to and reflected in the Philippine government compliance to the Philippine Plan to the CBD.	Accepted	Discussion with the DA Operations and Policy and Planning Office, and relevant offices to ensure that the policy draft will be followed up. This is also included in the exit strategy that is being finalized.	FAOPH through PMCU and in collaboration with partner agencies (NCIP, DENR, NCCA), DA Undersecretary for Operations and the Undersecretary for Policy and Planning, and the DA-BAR as Secretariat to the facilitation of mechanisms for NIAHS recognition/declaration.	June onwards	No
Recommendation 3.3. For the PMCU and the Office of the Under Secretary of Operations of the Department of Agriculture, liasewith and support the Philippine National Focal Point to the link and report the achievements of the project as part of the government’s compliance to the ITPGRFA.	Accepted	This is going to be part of the exit strategy through consultation with the concerned partners.	FAOPH in collaboration with partner agencies (NCIP, DENR, NCCA), DA Undersecretary for Operations, the Undersecretary for Policy and Planning, and the DA-BAR as Secretariat to the facilitation of mechanisms for NIAHS recognition/declaration.	June onwards	No

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<p>Recommendation 4. Exit strategy: pilot activities. To FAO. Considering the challenges on the functionality and sustainability of the community seed banks, demonstration farms, farm equipment and the agrobiodiversity enterprises; and recognizing that the project has already officially turned over the community seed banks to the local government units, the evaluation recommends, before the end of the project period, an exit strategy that includes:</p>					
<p>Recommendation 4.1. The PMCU to communicate clearly to the NCIP, ICC/IP and the LGUs and the communities that the project is definitely ending on June 2022. Discuss and document lessons learned; including sharing the results of the evaluation to the communities and across communities.</p>	Accepted	<p>Discussion of the lessons learned has already started with the local stakeholders, NCIP, ICC/IPs, LGUs during the scheduled participatory consultation.</p> <p>Project archives will be properly handed-over to relevant government partners to facilitate execution of the Exit Strategy/Sustainability plan.</p>	FAOPH through PMCU in collaboration with NCIP, ICCs, LGUs	June onwards	No
<p>Recommendation 4.2. The PMCU have a consultative dialogue with the 17 pilot communities and the respective NCIP, ICC/Ips and LGUs on the assessments of the viability, functionality and maintenance of the community seed banks, demonstration farms, farm equipment and the agrobiodiversity enterprises to assess what should be maintained and changes that needs to be done. Discuss the rationale and feasibility of the operations and maintenance of all the 15 remaining CSB; how the CSBs could be linked with one another and if it’s more realistic to reduce the number of the CSBs. For the two community seed banks that have been emptied, discuss the needs and prospects of the infrastructure to</p>	Accepted	<p>The guidelines on the utilization and management of the CSBs which was developed by the communities has been discussed including how the LGUs can support in maintenance in Hungduan and Hingyon.</p> <p>The assessments of viability, maintenance, and sustainability of the other provided interventions (demo farms, farm equipment and enterprises, among others), will be discussed during the participatory multi-stakeholder consultation meeting, and discuss adjustments/improvements, as necessary.</p>	FAOPH in collaboration with LGU (Municipal Agriculture Office, Municipal Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Office), NCIP, and ICCs.	June onwards	No

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continue as a seedbank or agree on re-purposing; as appropriate. For the remaining CSBs, explore how these can be part of the local climate adaptation plans by seeking technical assistance on utilizing agrobiodiversity as part of the community-based disaster risk reduction (DRR).					
Recommendation 4.3. For the livelihoods enterprise, facilitate linkages with the existing social enterprises or related LGU projects to gather continued support to the involved community members; as appropriate.	Accepted	With the limited existence of social enterprises in the pilot areas, linkages were established instead with the local restaurants and tourist destination areas through the Municipal Tourism Office particularly in Lake Sebu, while to be established with the one-stop shop in Ifugao. Linkages (and other potential opportunities) of the provided livelihoods enterprise interventions to other potential markets, will also be discussed during the consultation meetings, to sustain the beneficiaries’ sources of income, and even entice other interested farmers/communities.	FAOPH in coordination with agencies (e.g. Department of Trade and Industry Department of Science and Technology) and existing nearby social enterprises/commercial establishments (hotels, restaurants, local markets, supermarkets, among others).	June onwards	No

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