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Organization of the
United Nations

Evaluation of the project
“Strengthening institutions
and capacity of the
Ministry of Agriculture
and State Veterinary
Inspection Service for
Policy Formulation”



**Project Evaluation Series
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**Evaluation of the project “Strengthening
institutions and capacity of the Ministry of
Agriculture and State Veterinary Inspection
Service for Policy Formulation”**

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Abstract

The project 'Strengthening Institutions and Capacity of the Ministry of Agriculture and State Veterinary Inspection Service for Policy Formulation' (GCP/TAJ/013/EC) was part of the European Union-financed Rural Development Programme I and it was implemented by the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), specifically the FAO Tajikistan Office. The total budget contribution by the European Union was EUR 5 million. The intended outcome of the project was to strengthen institutions and capacities for strategic decision-making, planning, regulation, quality control and management in the food and agriculture sectors, including livestock. The project aimed to: i) finalize, endorse and implement plans for the institutional reform of the Ministry of Agriculture; ii) formulate selected agrarian reform and food security policies and regulations with active contribution of Ministry of Agriculture staff, through an inclusive participatory process; iii) strengthen Ministry of Agriculture capacities for analytical and technical competence; iv) improve the availability of quality agriculture and food security data; and v) strengthen private and public institutional and implementation capacities for delivering animal health services. The project duration was planned to span from January 2016 to December 2019 for a period of 48 months; due to various non-cost extensions, it was finally implemented until March 2022. The data collection for this evaluation concluded in September 2021.

The evaluation approach was qualitative and included extensive documentation review, semi-structured interviews with key stakeholders and institutions involved in the project. The evaluation was conducted with a hybrid approach, partly remotely, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, with a field mission carried out by the national consultant.

Among the findings, the evaluation found that the project was well aligned with the needs and priorities of national stakeholders, with FAO's strategic objectives and with community beneficiaries. In the framework of the project, several strategies, assessments and policy papers were developed, pilot initiatives were started, and in the process, the Ministry of Agriculture was sensitized to reform processes and its changing role in the context of a market economy. Furthermore, thanks to the project, capacities for delivering animal health services have improved considerably and are used in practice. The project managed to navigate across institutional changes, although it suffered from delays that impeded the complete implementation of the pilot initiatives on agrarian reform. Finally, an effective monitoring and evaluation (M&E) system would have allowed to capture lessons learned in a more systematic way.

Acknowledging FAO's comparative advantage in assisting the initiation of agrarian reform, the evaluation makes a number of recommendations for a successful policy reform, which include continuing to work closely with all involved ministries and stakeholders at all levels, to guide and steer the process from the start through endorsement; alongside a systematic approach to capacity building and training for involved ministries.

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The evaluation team was composed of two independent consultant, Ms Petra Geraedts, team leader and Ms Lola Mukhtorova, team member. Carolina Turano, evaluation specialist, managed the evaluation from FAO’s Office of Evaluation (OED). Martin Corredoria provided administrative assistance from OED.

Abbreviations and acronyms

AoH	Agency on Hydrometeorology
AoS	Agency on Statistics under the President of the Republic of Tajikistan
ARS	Agrarian Reform Secretariat
CFS	Committee for Food Security (Republic of Tajikistan)
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
FGD	focus group discussion
FSP	Food Security Programme
GMO	genetically modified organism
KII	key informant interview
M&E	monitoring and evaluation
NFSS	National Food Safety Strategy
NIP	National Investment Plan
PVS	Performance of Veterinary Services
RDP	Rural Development Programme
SUE	State Unitary Enterprise
SVIS	State Veterinary Inspection Service
TAU	Tajik Agrarian University
TVA	Tajik Veterinary Association
TWG	technical working group
WOAH	World Organisation for Animal Health

Executive summary

Introduction

1. The purpose of this final evaluation is to provide accountability for results achieved to resource partners, Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) management and national government agencies, as well as to draw lessons from the implementation processes that could inform future projects and decisions by the operational partners, project teams and FAO at all levels.
2. The evaluation team was composed of two independent consultants, while FAO's Office of Evaluation (OED) managed the evaluation and provided administrative assistance. The evaluation was structured around the following areas: relevance; effectiveness; efficiency of delivery; sustainability of project outcomes; and gender equality. The evaluation adopted a consultative and transparent approach, both with internal and external stakeholders, throughout the evaluation process. To conduct this evaluation, the following evaluation instruments were developed and applied: i) evaluation matrix: it provided overall guidance to the evaluation and was used as a basis for interviewing key stakeholders and reviewing project documents; ii) documentation review; and iii) key informant interview (KII) guides: semi-structured interviews were conducted, and information was gathered either through individual interviews or focus group discussions (FGDs). Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, most of the interviews were conducted through virtual meetings, in which both the team leader and national evaluation expert participated. The evaluation team ensured full participation of women during interviews; v) field missions have been conducted by the national evaluation expert to interview selected stakeholders in three of the four project pilot initiatives on the agrarian reform. i.e., Dangara, Nurabod and Shahrinav. The evaluation team reviewed more than 100 documents and a total of 125 informants were consulted, including through 82 KIIs both virtually and face-to-face, and nine FGDs.
3. The project was part of the European Union-financed Rural Development Programme I. The total budget contribution by the European Union was EUR 5 million.
4. The intended outcome of the project was strengthened institutions and capacities for strategic decision-making, planning, regulation, quality control and management in the food and agriculture sectors, including livestock; and the five outputs were as follows: i) plans for the institutional reform of Ministry of Agriculture are finalized, endorsed and implemented; ii) selected agrarian reform and food security policies and regulations are formulated with active contribution of Ministry of Agriculture staff through an inclusive participatory process; iii) Ministry of Agriculture capacities for analytical and technical competence are strengthened; iv) availability of quality agriculture and food security data is improved; and v) private and public institutional and implementation capacities for delivering animal health services are strengthened.
5. The project duration was planned to span from January 2016 to December 2019 for a period of 48 months; due to various non-cost extensions, it was finally implemented until March 2022. The data collection for this evaluation concluded in September 2021.

Main findings

Relevance

6. The project is well aligned with the needs and priorities of national stakeholders, including the government and community beneficiaries.
7. The agrarian reform process and the priorities especially related to food security, support to smallholder farmers, and value chain promotion are highly aligned with FAO's Strategic Objectives¹ and overarching strategic direction. Furthermore, Tajikistan participates in FAO's Hand-in-Hand Initiative.
8. The project result matrix is consistent, and the outputs, outcome and goal/impact are well aligned. The project result matrix was reviewed in 2018 and considerably improved by adding measurable indicators. However, the number of indicators (36), activities and sub-activities (97) is quite high. Activities and indicators are not always well aligned with related outputs (results) and the outcome (specific objective).
9. The scope of the initiatives of the pilots for agrarian reform packages was too ambitious vis-à-vis the implementation time.

Effectiveness

10. The project team and the Agrarian Reform Secretariat (ARS) have worked very closely with the Ministry of Agriculture on a restructuring proposal for the Ministry of Agriculture. This work however, was not completed by the end of the data collection phase of the final evaluation.²
11. The ARS work comprised a broad range of activities. ARS experts actively responded to the demands of the Ministry of Agriculture and project team within the available capacity in a satisfactorily manner.
12. The project supported in developing the draft documents of the Regulation of Committee for Food Security (CFS), the Food Security Programme (FSP) 2020–2024, the 'Action Plan for investment increase in the agribusiness sector of Tajikistan', National Strategy for Food Safety (NFSS) to 2030, and the National Investment Plan (NIP).
13. From 2020 the project focus shifted towards delivering results at grassroots level with the implementation of the pilot initiatives. Within this scope, lower involvement of the Ministry of Agriculture's technical working group (TWG) and CFS was evidenced.
14. The conducted training activities and study tours were well appreciated by the participants, who stated that acquired skills and knowledge were highly relevant and useful to their work. Although, inconsistency was found with regards to the number of training participants.
15. The project was successful in providing tools and increase capacity of the agencies for improved quality and availability of agricultural production data for the Ministry of Agriculture, CFS and other potential users. The Agency on Statistics under the President of the Republic of Tajikistan (AoS) presented those data on their website and potential users had open access to the data. The Agency on Hydrometeorology (AoH) provided the Ministry of Agriculture access to the general meteorological data which AoH gathered. However, AoH was reluctant to share the data from the three pilots on agrometeorological forecasting of crops with the Ministry of Agriculture, private extension service providers, and other potential users.

¹ Alignment is considered with the former Strategic Framework, in place when the project was formulated. FAO has adopted a new Strategic Framework 2022–2031 (FAO, 2021).

² September 2021.

16. The veterinary strategy was developed and CFS started to review it; while the question remains whether this strategy will be implemented, a success story of the project was the work of the Tajik Veterinary Association (TVA) on training almost 1 000 public/private veterinarians as well as undergraduate and newly graduated students in cooperation with the Tajik Agrarian University (TAU).
17. Due to delays in project implementation and the changes in the ministry, the institutional reform of the Ministry of Agriculture was not endorsed nor implemented within the project duration up to the evaluation project.
18. Policies, strategies and the restructuring proposal were submitted to the Ministry of Agriculture and the CFS without the required guidance on the endorsement process. At the moment of data collection, only the FSP for 2020–2024 had been endorsed, and the Ministry of Agriculture and CFS had started to implement the programme. The NIP was officially endorsed by Ministry of Agriculture and presented to donor community in February 2022 and the FSP is under the final stage of endorsement by the Ministry of Economic Development and Trade.
19. It emerged from interviews that the Ministry of Agriculture trained staff are using the gained knowledge in their work. However, within the scope of documents reviewed, there is no evidence to measure the percentage of the Ministry of Agriculture staff that have improved and used the acquired skills in agriculture and food security policy formulation. In this context, the project would have benefitted from having a systematic approach to skills development and capacity building within the Ministry of Agriculture.
20. The project benefited from FAO's long-standing expertise in working with various stakeholders, while it had to deal with the constraining factors of a turnover in its senior management, the TWG in the Ministry of Agriculture and of project staff, often with protracted staffing gaps. And the COVID-19 pandemic.
21. A monitoring and evaluation (M&E) plan was available. The progress was updated annually in the project result matrix and annexed to the annual report. However, the M&E system was not fully appropriate for monitoring and supporting the implementation of the targeted results of the project. The focus of the M&E system lay too heavily on monitoring activities and outputs and not sufficiently on measuring results. A field monitoring system was in place through field visits, specifically for provided equipment, for the selection of land for the logistical centres, and for the selection of pilot initiatives' cooperative members. Means of verification were only partially stored and available. The M&E set-up did not have a functioning knowledge management system.

Efficiency

22. The equipment provided to the Ministry of Agriculture, AoH, TAU, TVA and CFS supported the implementation of activities in an efficient manner. However, the delays experienced in the construction of the logistical centres and in the purchase of the agricultural machinery for the four pilot initiatives on agrarian reform affected an efficient implementation of the pilot activities.
23. Considering the ratio of human resources to total budget vis-à-vis the outcome obtained, the evaluation team found that the capacity building could have been conducted more efficiently. Clearly defined responsibilities among project staff, and short-term international and national experts could have increased efficiency. Limited use of formal communication channels also decreased efficiency.

24. The project made use of existing knowledge and experience on agrarian reform in Tajikistan by employing project staff and experts coming from previous agricultural international projects. Furthermore, during implementation, ARS supported meetings with resource partners and lessons learnt were always considered within the project. However, there was space for additional use of previous experience in agrarian reforms from other initiatives in the country.
25. Establishment of the CFS changed institutional settings. However, the project managed to navigate these changes in a successful way.
26. The COVID-19 pandemic restricted the availability of international experts in the country and negatively influenced the tendering process for construction of logistical centres.

Sustainability

27. In relation to all trained stakeholders, the evaluation team found that target-oriented capacity development in the Ministry of Agriculture, AoS, TAU and AoH – with a combination of software and equipment – was reported as highly successful, ensuring positive effects after project closure. There was limited evidence at time of the evaluation for an increased capacity for policy formulation on the part of the Ministry of Agriculture. Training of CFS members by TVA was reported as successful and well appreciated. Participants stated to be confident in applying gained knowledge and skills.
28. Despite the intention of implementing the pilot initiatives using a participatory approach, limited ownership by cooperative members and the TWG emerged.
29. Equipment supplied to the four pilots' cooperatives will remain with the latter and will be used in future, contributing to the sustainability of project interventions. While technical support and training is still required by the farmers.
30. There is a risk that developed strategies and policies developed by the project may remain 'shelved'.

Gender

31. Project M&E data provide disaggregated numbers of men and women among training participants and cooperative members. The project stimulated participation of women in cooperatives, despite gender equality not being specifically included in the project design.

Conclusions

Conclusion 1. The project was and remains highly relevant and aligned with the needs and priorities of national stakeholders, including the government and community beneficiaries. However, the project's management put an excessive focus on achieving outputs, while the government's ambition was for a structural change in the system, with strengthened institutions and increased capacity to adapt to the changing environment. Furthermore, the Project Results Matrix, having an excessive number of indicators, activities and sub-activities, was not effective in providing an overall picture of the structural change that the project was aiming for.

Conclusion 2. Several strategies, assessments and policy papers were developed by the project, pilot initiatives were started, and in the process, Ministry of Agriculture was sensitized to reform processes and its changing role in the context of a market economy. A start has been made with the institutional and capacity development of Ministry of Agriculture, although the newly developed Ministry of Agriculture

structure still requires adaptation and improvement before its approval by Ministry of Agriculture and the Government.

Conclusion 3. Capacities for delivering animal health services have improved considerably and are used in practice. However, there remains a long way towards enabling well-functioning private veterinary services. The strategy for the development of veterinary services, which has not been endorsed yet, is needed to accelerate this process.

Conclusion 4. The project management team established an effective relationship and regular contact with Ministry of Agriculture and its focal point. However, the lack of regular communication and continued engagement of other involved stakeholders contributed to the non-achievement of the endorsement of the proposed Ministry of Agriculture institutional reform, as well as policy and strategy papers, delaying the overall project implementation.

Conclusion 5. The M&E system was insufficiently used as a project management tool. The project missed the opportunity of jointly monitoring the progress of the pilot initiatives in cooperation with Ministry of Agriculture's TWG and capturing lessons learned in a systematic way.

Conclusion 6. The project very efficiently navigated across the institutional changes determined by the establishment of the CFS. Nevertheless, it suffered from delays that impeded efficient implementation of the pilot initiatives on agrarian reform. This was caused by a range of factors, most notably by the COVID-19 pandemic, which negatively influenced the construction process of logistical centres. It was also concluded that given the ratio of human resources to total budget, capacity development could have been implemented more efficiently with clearly defined responsibilities among project staff.

Conclusion 7. Target-oriented capacity development will contribute towards the project sustainability ensuring positive effects after its closure. However, there was a tendency for project management to take on the implementing rather than the guiding role to overcome the impacts of incurred delays which sometimes resulted in limited involvement of national stakeholders. As a result, the levels of ownership and commitment from government as well as beneficiary stakeholders decreased throughout the project implementation.

Conclusion 8. It emerged that the project stimulated participation of women in cooperatives despite not being specifically included in the project design.

Recommendations

Short term recommendations – for the remaining period of project implementation³

Recommendation 1. Ensure that a roadmap for endorsement is included when finalizing and submitting the remaining strategies to the Ministry of Agriculture and the Ministry of Economic Development and Trade.

Recommendation 2. Ensure that a working coordination unit is available for implementation when finalizing the NIP and submitting it for approval.

Recommendation 3. Prepare an exit strategy for the four pilot cooperatives based on an in-depth analysis of the situation in each site and present it to the European Union Delegation before closure of project.

Recommendation 4. Consider applying to FAO internal funds, such as Technical Cooperation Programmes (TCP), and ensure that funding is available to continue providing assistance to cooperatives.

³ These have been presented to the project team and government counterparts in a virtual session in October 2021.

Long term recommendations – For future projects on policy work

Recommendation 5. For a successful policy reform, a mechanism of stakeholder involvement at all levels needs to be in place to guide and steer the process from the start through to endorsement. This would help to address the risk of interruptions of the policy processes caused by changes in the ministries, among senior management and in the TWG.

Recommendation 6. Policy development cannot move forward without insights into new concepts and international standards. It is important to hold preliminary awareness raising sessions to create an environment that enables participants to translate concepts into policy interventions.

Recommendation 7. It is recommended that a clear definition of roles and responsibilities, as well as an effective distribution of tasks between international and national staff that carry out short-term assignments, are ensured. Furthermore, such tasks should be well planned, time-bound and monitored to ensure successful implementation. Additionally, instead of hiring individual national consultants for short-term assignments, it is recommended to engage more local non-governmental organizations (NGOs) that have experience working with projects and may continue to be engaged after project closure.

Recommendation 8. FAO has a comparative advantage through its approach from a decade ago in assisting the initiation of agrarian reforms in Tajikistan, which is found to be still valid. FAO should continue working closely with all involved ministries to achieve effective results. This would also contribute to having continuous support from donor agencies.

Recommendation 9. It is strongly recommended that FAO, in future projects, together with other key development partners in the sector, develops a systematic approach to capacity building and training for involved ministries. One-off, short-term and ad-hoc capacity building in the past decade have failed to develop a 'critical mass' within ministries that could handle the change and reform processes. The design of such a systematic approach must envisage the creation and further development of a solid group of professionals within a given ministry over a period of two to three years that could manage the transition away from the current mindset, attitudes and behaviour towards a market-oriented and privately led agricultural sector.

Recommendation 10. During the project implementation it emerged that generated information in the context of the project, was not always available to interested stakeholders, i.e. AoH was reluctant to share the data from the three pilots on agrometeorological forecasting of crops. It is recommended that before investments are made, project management agrees with the organization or entity that is to generate tools and information within the framework of and finance by the project, that these will be available – within the project's scope – to interested stakeholder.

1. Introduction

1.1 Purpose of the evaluation

1. This final evaluation aimed at providing accountability for results achieved to resource partners, FAO Management and national government agencies. The evaluation sought to draw lessons from the implementation processes that could inform future projects and decisions by the operational partners, project teams and FAO at all levels.

1.2 Intended users

2. The main audience and intended users of the evaluation are:
 - i. The FAO Representation in Tajikistan, the project teams at FAO headquarters and at FAO the FAO Regional Office for Europe and Central Asia that will use the evaluation findings and lessons to finalize the project, plan for sustainability of results achieved, and improve formulation and implementation of similar projects.
 - ii. The Tajik counterpart, including the Ministry of Agriculture and the Committee for Food Security (CFS), and other relevant partners that could use the evaluation findings and conclusions for future planning and, if necessary, corrective action.
 - iii. The European Union, as the donor, will benefit from the evaluation for future planning and strategic positioning in the country and in the region, and in future projects with similar objectives.

1.3 Scope and objective of the evaluation

3. This final evaluation was conducted to assess the implementation performance and results achieved. It assessed the results of the project as specified in the Project Document and the project result matrix provided in the amended contract December 2018 and their value to identified stakeholders at different levels. The evaluation also reviewed the processes followed, while taking into consideration the pre-conditions, linkages and/or partnerships or other arrangements in place that have contributed to – or hindered – the implementation of project activities. The final evaluation covered the implementation period until September 2021, including all project components. The planned closure date of the project was 31st December 2021, further extended to September 2021 and then to March 2022.

Figure 1. Timeline



Source: Elaborated by the evaluation team.

4. The evaluation covered the following areas: relevance; effectiveness; efficiency of delivery; sustainability of project outcomes; and gender equality. It generated short-term recommendations for the remaining period of project implementation, as well as recommendations for the improvement of future projects.
5. The following key evaluation questions guided the overall assessment. An evaluation matrix has been elaborated to refine the questions and can be found in Appendix 2.

Table 1. Evaluation questions

Relevance	<p>To what extent is the project relevant to the needs and priorities of the national stakeholders, including the government and community beneficiaries, such as farming communities?</p> <p>To what extent is the project relevant to the broader sustainable development initiatives, i.e. Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development, and to the FAO Strategic Framework?</p> <p>Was the project design and the logical framework appropriate for delivering the expected outcomes?</p>
Effectiveness	<p>To what extent has the project achieved its outcome and related outputs, and were there any unintended results?</p> <p>What are the enabling/constraining factors influencing the achievement and non-achievements of the outcome and outputs?</p> <p>To what extent was the monitoring and evaluation (M&E) system appropriate for monitoring and supporting the implementation of the targeted results?</p>
Efficiency	<p>How did the project activities, the institutional arrangements, the partnerships in place and the resources available contribute to, or impede, the achievement of the project's results and objectives?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Has the project been implemented in an efficient and cost-effective manner? • How efficient is the current project governance structure and operational modality, including management arrangements, in contributing to the overall achievement of the programme objectives? • How efficient is the collaboration among partners and project beneficiaries? <p>Were there any complementarities or duplication with other activities in the country?</p> <p>To what extent was the project able to adapt its management, based on learning, and to the changing context, including the COVID-19 pandemic?</p>
Sustainability	<p>What is the likelihood that the project results will continue to be useful or will remain even after the end of the project?</p> <p>To what extent has the project increased the capacity of Ministry of Agriculture staff?</p> <p>What are the risks that may affect the sustainability of the project results?</p>
Gender	<p>To what extent were gender considerations taken into account in designing, monitoring, implementing and reporting on the project?</p> <p>Was the project implemented in a manner that ensures gender-equitable participation and benefits?</p>

Source: Elaborated by the evaluation team.

1.4 Methodology

6. Overall approach for the final evaluation: the evaluation adopted a consultative and transparent approach, both with internal and external stakeholders, throughout the evaluation process. In addition to the FAO's guidance for project evaluation, the evaluation team applied its knowledge of evaluation methodologies and approaches and its expertise in agrarian reform and economical rural development in countries in transition. The evaluation team applied methodological principles such as the validity of information (that is to say, multiple measures and sources have

been sought out to ensure that the results are accurate and valid), and respect and anonymity (in that all participants had the right to provide information in confidence). The evaluation provides evidence-based information that is credible and reliable. The findings were triangulated through the concept of “multiple lines of evidence” using several evaluation tools and gathering information from different types of stakeholders and at different levels of management.

7. To conduct this evaluation, the following evaluation instruments were used: i) Evaluation matrix: an evaluation matrix was developed based on the terms of reference (TOR; see Annex 1), the project results framework, and the review of key project documents. This matrix can be found in the Appendix 2 and is structured around the evaluation questions presented in the TOR. The matrix provided more detailed questions and sub-questions as well as assessment indicators, methods and sources to answer each question. It provided overall guidance to the evaluation and was used as a basis for interviewing key stakeholders and reviewing project documents. ii) Documentation review: the evaluation team started to review some key documents during the inception phase and continued conducting a documentation review during the interviews and field visits. iii) Key informant interview (KII) guides: based on the evaluation matrix, interview guides for each stakeholder group were developed and utilized to solicit information from key informants. As part of the participatory approach, the evaluation team ensured that all parties viewed these tools as balanced, unbiased, and structured. iv) Semi-structured interviews were conducted, and information was gathered either through individual interviews or focus group discussions (FGDs). Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, most of the interviews were conducted through virtual meetings, in which both the team leader and national evaluation expert participated. The evaluation team ensured full participation of women during interviews. During FGDs women and men were interviewed separately. Interviews were documented in KII notes and confidentiality was guaranteed throughout the interviews. v) Field missions: additionally, the national evaluation expert conducted field missions to interview selected stakeholders face-to-face in the regions (*oblasts*), districts (*nohiya* or *rayon*) and *jamoats*. The main purpose of the field missions was to involve the different management levels, as well as to observe and assess results in the field, contributing to adding evaluative evidence. The planned programme of the field missions can be found in Appendix 3. The evaluation team assessed project achievements according to the indicators as per the officially approved Project Intervention Matrix of December 2018.
8. The evaluation team reviewed more than 100 documents and a total of 125 informants were consulted, including through 82 KIIs both virtually and face-to-face, and nine FGDs. Three out of four project pilot initiatives on the agrarian reform were visited in Dangara, Nurabod and Shahrinav, respectively.
9. On 21 October 2021, the preliminary results were presented by the evaluation team during a virtual meeting. All involved stakeholders had the opportunity to provide feedback, both verbally during the presentation and in writing.
10. Finally, the evaluation team also considered the mid-term evaluation (MTE) conducted by FAO Tajikistan as a useful data resource to inform the final evaluation.

1.5 Limitations

11. The evaluation process was affected by travel restrictions imposed by the COVID-19 pandemic, which impeded international travel for data collection. Consequently, most of the key informant interviews have been conducted virtually. Connectivity issues and additional logistical efforts required are among the limiting factors that affected the virtual data collection and caused delays.

As a mitigation measure, it should be noted that the national consultant was able to visit selected project sites and conduct face-to-face interviews and focus group discussions.

12. The evaluation process experienced delays in the identification of key stakeholders by the project team and in scheduling the interviews, which extended the data collection phase compared to the timeframe initially allocated to it. Additional administrative delays and consultation processes considerably affected the finalization of the evaluation.
13. The evaluation team experienced difficulties in accessing relevant documentation of the project. Furthermore, in some cases, additional time and effort were required to locate the needed data, such as lists of participants in training activities.

1.6 Structure of the report

14. This final evaluation report documents the achievements of the project and includes six chapters. Chapter 1 briefly describes the objective, scope, methodology, evaluation users and limitations of the evaluation; Chapter 2 presents the background and context of the project as well as the theory of change of the project; and Chapter 3 presents the evaluation findings, structured according to the four key evaluation criteria and gender-related questions. Conclusions and recommendations can be found in Chapter 4. The report is accompanied by the following appendices:

Appendix 1. People interviewed

Appendix 2. Evaluation matrix

Appendix 3. Rationale and planned programme of the field missions

2. Background and context of the project

15. This section presents the developmental context in which the project was formulated and its theory of change (TOC) to provide an overall understanding of the project, including its logic and results chain.

2.1 Context of the project

16. In December 2012, the Government of Tajikistan approved the 2012–2020 Agrarian Reform Programme. The prime minister was given the responsibility for inter-ministerial coordination and implementation of initiatives within its mandate and reporting. The working group was responsible for monitoring the implementation of the Programme, reporting quarterly to the relevant ministries.
17. Based on an overall agreement among Tajikistan’s development partners, it was identified that external support was needed for the Agrarian Reform Programme and its Action Plan,¹ especially in the implementation of initiatives. Areas in need of further capacity development for Ministry of Agriculture staff included policy formulation and analytical guidance, especially for staff responsible for formulating agricultural policies and supporting the implementation of the Food Security Law.
18. It was further identified that functions and structures of the entire Ministry of Agriculture would also need to be revisited and reformed in order to be best placed to support the country’s policies and plans for reducing poverty, enhancing food security, and for moving towards a market-based economy.
19. Institutional support was identified to be particularly required in public monitoring of veterinary services, and in the support system to the private sector’s provision of veterinary services. Therefore, restructuring the State Veterinary Inspection Service (SVIS)² along international standards was seen as a means to enabling the Tajik veterinary service to fulfil its obligations as the Competent Authority for implementing and monitoring animal health and welfare measures, international veterinary certification and other standards in the World Organization for Animal Health (WOAH) Terrestrial Code.
20. The project ‘Strengthening Institutions and Capacity of the Ministry of Agriculture and State Veterinary Inspection Service for Policy Formulation’ (GCP/TAJ/013/EC) was part of the European Union-financed Rural Development Programme I. Tajikistan’s government policy is lead by the National Development Strategy. Tajikistan has developed and adopted programmes for Agrarian Reform (approved in 2012) and Water Sector Reform (approved in 2015). Both programmes required substantial support be fully implemented. Two EU financed interventions were envisioned to support the implementation of these reforms. These are: 1) the Rural Development Programme I (RDP I) and 2) the Enhanced Competitiveness of Tajik Agricultural Business Project (ECTAP). RDP I reflects the main policy directions of the Ministry of Agriculture and the Ministry of Education and Water Resources. At *policy level* the programme aims to strengthen the capacity of strategic decision making, planning, regulation, quality control and management in the food, agriculture, livestock and water resources sectors. The three related programme interventions are: 1) “Strengthening Institutions and Capacity of the Ministry of Agriculture and SVIS for Policy Formulation” (subject of this final evaluation); 2) Provision of Technical Assistance to the

¹ The Agriculture Reform Programme of the Republic of Tajikistan for 2012-2020 and its Action Plan, 1 August 2012.

² In late 2017 the SVIS restructured into new government body - Committee for Food Security (CFS).

Government of Tajikistan to build institutional capacity in Integrated Water Resource Management; and 3) "Zarafshon Irrigation Rehabilitation and River Basin. At the *practical implementation level* of RDP 1 in the Zarafshon River Basin the programme supports sustainable management and protection of water and natural resources, while also improving livestock productivity and resolving village level energy supply deficit problems. The Enhanced Competitiveness of Tajik Agricultural Business Project (ECTAP) focuses on the development of high-quality agricultural food production, processing and marketing in Tajikistan. ECTAP supports value chain development through support for agricultural extension, machinery services, processing, enhancing food quality and certification. A specific component in the project is to support grant credit arrangements for purchase of machinery for farmers and other investments for agribusiness actors in the value chain.

21. Initially, the project duration was planned to span from 1 January 2016 to 31 December 2019 for a period of 48 months. On 25 December 2018, a first addendum to the contract with the European Union was signed to extend the project until 31 December 2020. An adapted project result matrix was included in this addendum. A Technical Cooperation Programme (TCP) on genetically modified organisms (GMO) was added to support the CFS. Another addendum to the contract was signed in December 2020, which comprised a no-cost extension until 30 September 2021. In August 2021, a last no-cost extension was granted until 31 December 2021 to work on the remaining activities, namely: completion of the construction of the logistical centres of the four pilots on agrarian reform, finalization of the NFSS and its submission to the working group, and final review of the National Investment Plan (NIP) with Ministry of Agriculture. Therefore, in the end the actual project duration amounted to 72 months, or six years. The total budget contribution by the European Union was EUR 5 million (equivalent to USD 5 817 468).³ After the first project revision it was modified to a multi-donor project by adding a TCP project with a budget of EUR 82,777 as co-finance. The evaluation team used the latest officially approved project result matrix as at December 2018 as a reference for the final evaluation. However, at the time of the finalization of the present report, information was provided regarding an additional non- cost extension of the project granted by the European Union until March 2022.
22. The main changes in the project result matrix made during the course of the project consisted in the adaptation of indicators and activities, while the project impact, outcome and outputs remained the same. The overall logic of the project was aimed at restructuring Ministry of Agriculture and SVIS/CFS, supporting Ministry of Agriculture and SVIS in policy formulation and implementation, and building capacities of Ministry of Agriculture and SVIS/CFS to accelerate the agrarian reform process, as foreseen in the Agrarian Reform Programme 2012–2020.
23. The intended outcome of the project was strengthened institutions and capacities for strategic decision-making, planning, regulation, quality control and management in the food and agriculture sectors, including livestock; and the five outputs were as follows: i) plans for the institutional reform of Ministry of Agriculture are finalized, endorsed and implemented; ii) selected agrarian reform and food security policies and regulations are formulated with active contribution of Ministry of Agriculture staff through an inclusive participatory process; iii) Ministry of Agriculture capacities for analytical and technical competence are strengthened; iv) availability of quality agriculture and food security data is improved; and v) private and public institutional and implementation capacities for delivering animal health services are strengthened.
24. FAO was contractually responsible for the overall project implementation and all its outputs, and worked directly with the Ministry of Agriculture and the CFS/SVIS. FAO Tajikistan bears the overall

³ Information from FAO Finance as at 30 September 2021.

legal responsibility for the project implementation.–Internal to the project, a Project Task Force (PTF) was been established, chaired by FAO Representative in Tajikistan and consisting of FAO Lead Technical Officer (LTO) and other Technical Officers based in FAO Subregional Office for Europe and Central Asia (Ankara), FAO Regional Office for Europe and Central Asia (Budapest), FAO headquarters, Rome, operational and administrative staff. PTF has the role to facilitate technical, administrative and operational discussions, as well as information exchange. A Project Management Committee (PMC) was also established to provide guidance and decision making on major issues of the project.

2.2 Theory of change

25. In the monitoring and evaluation (M&E) plan the evaluation team found the description of the TOC well derived from the project result matrix from 2018. The following text is copied from the M&E plan (FAO, 2018)

“At the output level, the project will provide technical support to Ministry of Agriculture on a number of key areas: institutional reform (Output 1); agrarian reform and food security policies (Output 2); analytical and technical competence (Output 3); availability of quality agricultural data (Output 4); and animal health services (Output 5). It is expected that these outputs will result in strengthened institutions and capacities in strategic decision-making, planning, regulation, quality control and management in the food and agriculture sectors (including livestock). As an outcome, the relevant staff in Ministry of Agriculture and CFS (former SVIS) will have strengthened capacity to formulate, implement and monitor policies and programmes in the food and agriculture sectors including livestock. Considering that more than 70 percent of the country’s population lives in rural areas where agriculture is one of the main income sources, with higher rural poverty rates, it is expected that in the long run improved policies and programmes in the food and agriculture sectors including livestock (once properly formulated, implemented and monitored), will contribute to improved food availability and accessibility and increased competitiveness in agriculture, which in turn will contribute to reduced rural poverty and improved people’s livelihoods in rural communities.”

26. In this description the result (Strengthened institutions and capacities in strategic decision-making, planning, regulation, quality control and management in the food and agriculture sectors (including livestock) and the outcome (The relevant staff in Ministry of Agriculture and CFS (former SVIS) will have strengthened capacity to formulate, implement and monitor policies and programmes in the food and agriculture sectors including livestock) are partly overlapping.
27. Following the project result matrix more precisely, the TOC has been understood by the evaluation team as follows: an institutional reform of Ministry of Agriculture and SVIS, combined with selected agrarian reform and the formulation of food security policies, supported by i) strengthened Ministry of Agriculture analytical and technical competence, ii) strengthened capacities for delivering animal health services, and iii) improved data availability of quality agriculture and food security data and information, is expected to lead to strengthened institutions and capacities for strategic decision-making, planning, regulation, quality control and management in the food and agriculture sector (including livestock). In the longer term, this would lead to reduced poverty in rural communities in Tajikistan by improving people’s livelihoods in terms of food security through improved food availability and accessibility, and through improved competitiveness of agriculture (as the overarching goal or impact). This is considered a logical pathway and coherent approach for an institutional reform and policy project.

3. Evaluation findings

3.1 Relevance

Finding 1. The project is well aligned with the needs and priorities of national stakeholders, including the government and community beneficiaries.

1. The project plan and implementation are aligned with the Agricultural Reform Programme Action Plan 2012–2020, extended until 2022. The Agrarian Reform Programme 2012–2020 was endorsed by the government on 1 August 2012 (Decision No 383), taking into account government priorities and addressing challenges indicated in the National Development Strategy (NDS), Poverty Reduction Strategy (PRS) and the concept of the Agrarian Policy of the Republic of Tajikistan.
28. The overall project objective was to support the agricultural reform agenda by providing assistance for restructuring and strengthening institutions and capacities for strategic decision making, planning, regulation, quality control and management in the food and agriculture sectors (including livestock) and is very relevant to achieving the priorities of the government.⁴
29. The Agrarian Reform Programme Action Plan responds to the needs and priorities of the farming community, including through a ‘freedom-to-farm’ approach (whereby farmers make crop choices themselves rather than being instructed by local authorities), value chain development, crop diversification and high value crop use, input supply and marketing, mechanization services, financial services, creating and enabling a well-managed animal health environment, and ensuring food safety.⁵
30. In 2011, the last WOAHP evaluation mission on the veterinary sector, recommended to reform the veterinary sector in Tajikistan by revising the veterinary law and amending the veterinary service structure in alignment with international standards. Therefore, Output 5 (strengthening of public and private institutional and implementation capacities for delivering animal health services) is highly relevant, particularly so considering that in 2017 the government adopted a regulation to restructure the veterinary services and to unite several inspection services within Ministry of Agriculture under CFS.

Finding 2. The agrarian reform process and the priorities especially related to food security, support to smallholder farmers, and value chain promotion are highly aligned with FAO’s Strategic Objectives⁶ and overarching strategic direction. Furthermore, Tajikistan participates in FAO’s Hand-in-Hand Initiative.

31. Most of FAO’s Strategic Objectives (SO1, SO2 and SO3) are reflected in the agrarian reform process and the priorities related to food security, smallholder farmer support, value chain promotion and the Hand-in-Hand Initiative in particular. The related aspirations of the FAO Strategic Framework and overarching strategic direction are: i) ‘better production’, i.e. ensuring sustainable consumption and production patterns through efficient and inclusive agri-food

⁴ The National Development Strategy 2016–2030 is focused on economic diversification and competitiveness, sustainable jobs, improving energy supply and transport connectivity, ensuring food security, enhancing public administration and developing human resources.

⁵ Annual report 2020, part of the discussion of the multi stakeholder platform in Dangara and Shahrinav: “Farmers and other participants shared their problems and challenges: access to quality inputs (e.g. seed etc) and affordable finances; sustainable use of natural resources (e.g. irrigation, pastures etc); support to private sector, extension, processing and marketing”. Further sources on farmer communities’ priorities were the interviews.

⁶ Alignment is considered with the former Strategic Framework, in place when the project was formulated. FAO has adopted a new Strategic Framework 2022–2031 (FAO, 2021).

supply chains at local, regional and global level, ensuring resilient and sustainable agri-food systems in a changing climate and environment; and ii) 'better nutrition', i.e. ending hunger, achieving food security and improved nutrition in all its forms, including promoting nutritious food and increasing access to healthy diets (FAO, 2021)

32. The Hand-in-Hand Initiative adopts a robust 'match-making' approach that proactively brings together beneficiary countries, donors, private-sector organizations, international financial institutions, research institutions and civil society organizations to mobilize means of implementation that support accelerated action. During the development of NIP, new tools on database collection were introduced, including information for investors on farmers, processors and other agri-food actors, based on the Hand-in-Hand Initiative.

Finding 3. The project result matrix is consistent, and the outputs, outcome and goal/impact are well aligned. The project result matrix was reviewed in 2018 and considerably improved by adding measurable indicators. However, the number of indicators (36), activities and sub-activities (97) is quite high. Activities and indicators are not always well aligned with related outputs (results) and the outcome (specific objective).

33. The indicators of the original project result matrix were updated several times: i.e. during the inception phase; at the stage of the producing the project's 2016 Annual Report; and at the stage of the new project team starting mid 2018, as documented in the extension of the contract with the European Union in Addendum 1. The amended Results Matrix had measurable indicators successfully used to monitor progress. The new circumstances resulting from the establishment of CFS are also reflected in the updated intervention logic, and the according fields of priorities in the agrarian reform agenda were adapted to the needs and priorities of Ministry of Agriculture senior management at that time.
34. The project formulated five outputs (or results in line with the European Union logframe methodology) and one outcome (or specific objective). In most cases, output indicators measure an activity (e.g. the number of policies updated/developed) and an outcome indicator measures a result (e.g. the number of policies endorsed and their implementation having started).
35. It would have been more straightforward to formulate the outputs directly as results, with the indicators as the measurement units. Project implementation would have consequently followed a results-based approach with a focus on the implementation of policies and the use of improved data, or the use of gained knowledge and skills, instead of an activity focus (e.g. organizing training, study tours, document formulation, etc).
36. Furthermore, in the case of Output 5 "*Private and public institutional and implementation capacities for delivering animal health services are strengthened*", several of its output indicators are directly connected with outcome indicators, while others are not. For example, the output indicator "*Number of veterinary undergraduate and newly graduated students, faculty staff, Tajik Veterinary Association (TVA) members and CFS staff trained*" is directly connected with the outcome indicator "*Percentage of trained vets using new skills*". On the other hand, the output indicator "*Project proposal for further strengthening of CFS is prepared*" simply stays as an activity under this output. Furthermore, the output indicator "*Performance indicator or competency level based on WOAHP Performance of Veterinary Services (PVS) Tool gradually improved*" would be a good indicator for the specific objective/outcome of the project, requiring a longer term. Another relevant indicator under the specific objective/outcome, that was included in the earlier versions of the project result matrix, would have been "*Geographic coverage of animal health services by private vet services in selected districts*".

37. Output 3 (Training) and Output 4 (Tool development by agencies) are supporting activities to reach Output 1 and Output 2. There were no or only limited activities planned to relate these outputs. For example, no activities were planned to stimulate the use by Ministry of Agriculture and CFS of available, improved data produced by the Agency on Statistics under the President of the Republic of Tajikistan (AoS).
38. The Project Results Matrix was rigorously updated by the new team in 2018 as stipulated by Amendment 1 of the European Union contract that extended the project to December 2020. In the project synopsis and workplan, the newly defined activities are not logically connected to the indicators under the outputs. This applies especially to Outputs 1 and 2 and is further elaborated in this report under the respective outputs.

Finding 4. The scope of the initiatives of the pilots for agrarian reform packages was too ambitious *vis-à-vis* the implementation time.

39. During the project design and inception phase, the possibility of piloting measures was envisioned. This was to enable the project and its stakeholders to field test or understand the effects of policies and refine them as needed, leading to smooth exit provisions for the project.⁷ At the end of 2018, after the project received positive feedback from Ministry of Agriculture, pilot initiatives were planned to prepare and adapt policies. The project started with pilot activities on agrarian reform packages, comprising several reform aspects of the Agrarian Reform Programme 2012–2020, including cooperative development, crop diversification, value chain development and food security.⁸ The pilots designed were too ambitious within the remaining project implementation period, as the pilots included processes such as cooperative development which takes at least two to three years to evolve. Furthermore, each pilot included too many aspects to be elaborated and learned from in such a short time.

3.2 Effectiveness

Outcome: Strengthened institutions and capacity in strategic decision-making, planning, regulation, quality control and management in the food and agriculture sectors, including livestock.

Output 1: Plans for the institutional reform of Ministry of Agriculture are finalized, endorsed and implemented.

Output 2: Selected agrarian reform and food security policies and regulations are formulated with active contribution by Ministry of Agriculture staff through an inclusive participatory process.

Output 3: Ministry of Agriculture capacity for analysis and technical competencies is strengthened.

Output 4: Availability of quality agriculture and food security data is improved.

Output 5: Private and public institutional and implementation capacities for delivering animal health services are strengthened.

⁷ Inception Report, page 5: "Once policy support measures are drafted, the project may consider the phase of piloting measures with technical assistance or small investment support for local action groups, farmers and farmers' associations".

⁸ The Annual Report 2020 mentioned the main topics as cooperative development, crop diversification, value chain development and food security; and the Annual Report 2019 mentioned the main topics as cooperatives, private sector development, institutional reform and diversification. These were all key areas of the Agrarian Reform Programme 2012–2020.

40. Section 3.2 on effectiveness assesses outputs against their indicators and targets first, as they constitute the foundation to achieving the outcome; and the outcome against its indicators and targets subsequently.

Table 2. Output 1 and associated indicators and targets

Output 1. Plans for the institutional reform of Ministry of Agriculture are finalized, endorsed and implemented		
Indicators	Target	Achievement
1.1. Proposal with Ministry of Agriculture functions, organigram and staff/job descriptions is finalized through an inclusive, consensus-based process (with functional analysis prepared) and approved.	3	2*
1.2. ARS under Ministry of Agriculture is established, functional and institutional (measurement unit: number of biannual high-level coordination meetings conducted by ARS).	5	ARS established and functional; lack of evidence of the measurement unit.
1.3. Number of staff in ARS, CSF, Ministry of Agriculture's Agrarian Policy and Food Security Department and other Ministry of Agriculture staff trained on M&E functions to monitor Agrarian Reform Programme implementation.	25	30**

Notes: * Stages of development: 0 – Functional analysis of Ministry of Agriculture (conducted by FAO in 2012); 1 – current structure and functions of Ministry of Agriculture are analyzed and previous analyses are reviewed; 2 – the proposal and roadmap for the institutional reform of Ministry of Agriculture are drafted; and 3 – the proposal and roadmap are finalized through an inclusive consultation process. ** This number is based on consultations.

Source: Elaborated by the evaluation team.

Finding 5. The project team and the Agrarian Reform Secretariat (ARS) have worked very closely with Ministry of Agriculture on a restructuring proposal for Ministry of Agriculture this work however, was not completed by the end of the data collection phase of this final evaluation in September 2021.

41. Indicator 1.1 Proposal with Ministry of Agriculture functions, organigram and staff/job descriptions is finalized through an inclusive, consensus-based process (with functional analysis prepared) and approved. With the support of the international institutional expert, the draft proposal for Ministry of Agriculture restructuring was prepared through an inclusive, consensus-based process from October 2018 until December 2019. ARS facilitated and coordinated the entire process. The expert worked closely with Ministry of Agriculture's technical working group (TWG) and conducted training workshops where the process of institutional reform was the central subject. The project organized study tours to Kyrgyzstan and Turkey which were well integrated in this institutional reform process. Considering the sensitivity of the process and expected outcomes, the expert involved the Minister of Agriculture on key issues to ensure a common understanding of both the processes and the outcomes. A consultation and ratification process with other key state ministries and agencies was also included in the roadmap for institutional reform. In June 2019, the Minister agreed on the proposed Ministry of Agriculture structure and gave the green light to move forward. The international institutional expert concluded in his report of June 2019 that the process of institutional reform was cumbersome for all stakeholders as well as time-consuming. Nonetheless, once convinced of the benefits of the reform, in particular after the exposure visits to Kyrgyzstan and Turkey, Ministry of Agriculture took a courageous decision, and this was a great achievement of the project. But the draft structure was not finalized as planned in the updated workplan on the institutional reform process. In that workplan all detailed activities were elaborated to prepare for submission of the final draft of Ministry of Agriculture structure by November 2019. The momentum of change in June 2019 was not sufficiently used to actually finalize and introduce the new Ministry of Agriculture structure by the intended date. As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic and change of minister in March 2020 and subsequent such changes, the restructuring process was postponed and remained unapproved by Ministry of Agriculture at the time of the final evaluation.

42. The structure of the Agricultural Departments in the provinces, districts, cities and *jamoats* is not yet aligned with the designed new Ministry of Agriculture structure at national level. A member of the TWG who worked closely with the sub-national branches explained that: *"in my opinion, the mechanism of the whole chain [relationship between Ministry of Agriculture and the Agricultural Departments in the districts] is not elaborated. I proposed to elaborate how to make the vertical chain more effective, but it has not been fully elaborated"*.
43. The scope of Ministry of Agriculture restructuring envisaged a reorganization of six selected state unitary enterprises (SUEs) for piloting through the public-private partnership (PPP) approach for a period of three years, 2019–2021. Prior to launching the implementation of pilot SUEs, the project assisted Ministry of Agriculture in undertaking an assessment of these SUEs and distinguish specific functions of Ministry of Agriculture and functions that should be performed by the private sector. The assessment of the Capacity Development Center was finalized mid-2019. The assessments of the other five SUEs (fishery, seeds, nurseries, honey and poultry) were improved and finalized by December 2020.
44. Activities relating to Output 1 that were to be completed by the end of 2018 were: i) finalize a proposal for Ministry of Agriculture institutional reform; ii) assist senior staff in making the restructuring proposal submission and gaining endorsement for it; and iii) assist Ministry of Agriculture's Department of Agrarian Policy and Food Security in implementing the endorsed restructuring reform. The second activity was removed during project implementation, notwithstanding that Ministry of Agriculture was expecting more support from the project in the development of strategies and endorsement of the new Ministry of Agriculture structure. Indeed, endorsement was a precondition for implementation and achievement of the outcome.
45. Activity 1.4 *"Prepare a Country Investment Plan (or NIP) as part of the agricultural reform process"* was not logically underpinning Output 1. It would fit better as an activity under Output 2, as it included sector analysis, and NIP would support the implementation of policies and programmes.

Finding 6. The ARS work comprised a broad range of activities. ARS experts actively responded to the demands of Ministry of Agriculture and project team within the available capacity in a satisfactorily manner.

46. **Indicator 1.2. ARS under Ministry of Agriculture is established, functional and institutional.** By decision of the Government of Tajikistan dated 26 May 2018, ARS was established under Ministry of Agriculture. The main functions of ARS were to serve as a dialogue platform between stakeholders in the agriculture sector; facilitate and coordinate activities in the agriculture sector and implement reforms; support strengthening Ministry of Agriculture capacity. In 2018 and 2019 ARS developed an intense cooperation with the TWG during the preparation of Ministry of Agriculture institutional restructuring, as well as attending training seminars (value chain development, global gap, and investment planning) and co-developing investment plans. In spring 2020, the two main ARS experts (the coordinator and the agrarian policy expert) left the project. One expert was replaced in June 2020 and the second expert was replaced only a year later, i.e. mid-2021. This sudden change coincided with the appointment of a new minister in spring 2020 and the start of the COVID-19 pandemic. During interviews TWG members could easily explain and remember only the development process of Ministry of Agriculture restructuring proposal and the training activities jointly conducted by the project and ARS, which took place up until early 2020. At the request of Ministry of Agriculture, the project supported a series of agrarian reform awareness campaigns organized throughout the country. The events were led by ARS/Ministry of Agriculture, involving academia and research experts. Such workshops were conducted in all districts of the country, except for Gorno-Badakhshan Region.

The key topics covered important areas of the agrarian reforms and advanced technologies of agricultural production.

47. During interviews it was expressed that the work of ARS was well appreciated by Ministry of Agriculture staff, while there was no evidence that Ministry of Agriculture will continue to maintain ARS utilizing Ministry of Agriculture budget.
48. The indicator for ARS measurement of functioning is “*Number of biannual high-level coordination meetings conducted by ARS*”, However, questions are raised whether this is the right indicator for the work of ARS, which comprised a broad range of activities. Based on the interviews and the project annual reports the evaluation team found that ARS experts actively responded to the demands of Ministry of Agriculture and the project team. The unit assisted minister and deputies in preparing for negotiations with partners and government agencies.
49. Indicator 1.3⁹ Number of staff in ARS, CSF, Ministry of Agriculture’s Agrarian Policy and Food Security Department and other Ministry of Agriculture staff trained on M&E functions to monitor Agrarian Reform Programme implementation. Trainings on this topic have been implemented and according to consultations, around than 30 experts have been trained.
50. Related to this topic the following training courses were planned in 2018–2019: “Sectorial policies: sectorial analysis, development of policies and programmes, implementation plan, M&E (this course should include tasks for development)” and “Food security and nutrition (with focus on situation analysis, development of food security and nutrition policies and programmes, implementation planning, M&E)”; and planned special training workshops and joint work was “Maintenance of Food Security Monitoring System (FSMS) database, preparation of food security monitoring reports” and “National and donor-supported programme monitoring system and preparation of reports”. Lists of participants or training reports on these topics were not available for review.
51. Training activities related to M&E have been implemented on monitoring Food security program and Agrarian reform program and a training on M&E under a letter of agreement (LOA) with Moscow HSE.

Table 3. Output 2 and associated indicators and targets

Output 2: Selected agrarian reform and food security policies and regulations are formulated with active contribution of Ministry of Agriculture staff through an inclusive and participatory process		
Indicators	Target	Achievement
2.1. Number of policies and regulations updated/developed with project assistance to support agricultural sector development and improvement of food security and food safety	6	11 (with evidence for 5): Regulation CFS, FSP, NFSS, ‘Action plan for the investment increase in Agribusiness sector’, and NIP (including sector studies).
2.2. Number of policies, situational and sectorial analyses and assessments on the agriculture sector and food security conducted with project assistance	7	18 as mentioned by project M&E information.
2.3. Number of selected pilot reform initiatives in support of the implementation of the agricultural reform process	3	4

Note: The evaluation team found evidence for one document prepared by the stakeholders with project assistance.

Source: Elaborated by the evaluation team.

⁹ This output is to be viewed in fact as part of Output 3 (Ministry of Agriculture Capacity for analysis and technical competencies is strengthened), rather than Output 1. Under Output 1, in the workplan, there are no activities planned for Output indicator 1.3.

Finding 7. The project supported in developing the draft documents of the Regulation of CFS, the Food Security Programme (FSP) 2020–2024, the ‘Action Plan for investment increase in the agribusiness sector of Tajikistan’, the NFSS to 2030, and the NIP.

52. Indicator 2.1. Number of policies and regulations updated/developed with project assistance to support agricultural sector development and improvement of food security and food safety. According to the project’s M&E information, 11 policies and regulations were developed, while the evaluation team found evidence for five documents.
53. On 29 May 2017 the Government of Tajikistan adopted Decree #266 ‘On further reforming of control sphere of activities of economic entities’. The Decree envisaged implementation of a plan of measures to establish a State Service of Food Security of Ministry of Agriculture on the basis of Ministry of Agriculture State Veterinary Inspection Service, the State Inspection Service for Phytosanitation and Plant Quarantine, the State Breeding Service and the State Inspection on Seeds Control. The project team supported Ministry of Agriculture in the preparation of a new regulation for the Service to be established. On 29 December 2017 the Government of Tajikistan established CFS directly under it, and many proposed functions were included in the Regulation of CFS.
54. Food security programme (FSP): A draft FSP for the period up to 2020 was submitted to Ministry of Agriculture on 7 February 2017 for review. In 2018, Ministry of Agriculture continued to review both documents making necessary changes and adjustments. In October 2019, upon collecting and incorporating the comments provided by ministries and agencies, Ministry of Agriculture had compiled the final version and submitted it to the Government of Tajikistan, and it was endorsed by the latter in 2020 as the FSP 2020–2024.¹⁰
55. The draft Action Plan for investment increase in the agribusiness sector of Tajikistan was submitted in 2017 for review by Ministry of Agriculture internally and to be discussed with the donor community. In 2018 and 2019 Ministry of Agriculture continued to review the document, making necessary changes and in 2020 the adjusted document was submitted to the Consultative Council under the President during the 16th Session; it was then passed on for further elaboration, specifically to introduce more proactive means in the field of extension and mechanization development. The finalized draft was approved by the council at the 19th Session. In the meantime, the follow-up 20th Session was dedicated to identifying the approaches for enhancing cluster development in the agricultural sector. In 2020, the document was endorsed by the Government (FAO, 2017, 2018, 2019, 2020).
56. In 2018 the initial draft of the NFSS was prepared with project support and was submitted to the Ministry of Economic Development and Trade for further review of the Inter-Ministerial Working Group (IMWG). In 2019 several workshops were held to present draft versions and feedback was received from the respective stakeholders involved in the process. The whole process was guided by an international expert. A mission to Tajikistan in spring 2020 was cancelled due to the COVID-19 pandemic. In September 2021 the international expert finalized the draft document for final review of the focal point for NFSS in the Ministry of Economic Development and Trade. A change of the name to the ‘Strategic Roadmap’ was done to meet the requirements of the ‘Tajikistan Law on State Programs, Strategies and Forecasts’.
57. The NIP was successfully completed and handed over to Ministry of Agriculture on 30 January 2021. The document outlines: i) main directions for development of key sectors/sub-sectors of

¹⁰ Annual report 2017-2018-2019-2020. It is worth mentioning that the Committee for Food Security prepared the Food Security Programme (FSP) for 2019-2023 endorsed by the government resolution No 520 dated 31 October 2018.

agriculture; ii) investment needs (government, donor, and private sector); and iii) roles and responsibilities of key stakeholders.

58. Indicator 2.2. Number of policies, situational and sectorial analyses and assessments on the agriculture sector and food security conducted with project assistance. According to project M&E information, 18 sub-sectoral analyses were prepared as part of NIP by the NIP team. ARS supported Ministry of Agriculture in the preparation of several documents, although this was not systematically documented nor presented to the evaluation team. An international expert prepared an assessment report on the food security situation in Tajikistan and policy recommendations in 2016, which were used to develop FSP.
59. Within the frame of the pilots on cooperatives, the project recruited one international expert on cooperatives and two national experts (lawyers) to carry out an analysis of the law on cooperatives (Activity 2.1).¹¹ In late 2020 a set of proposals for amendments of the cooperative law of the Republic of Tajikistan was finished. The proposals were divided into three categories: proposals to eliminate contradictions in the legislation of the Republic of Tajikistan; proposals to improve the organization and activities of cooperatives; and proposals to exclude provisions of the law that could negatively affect the taxation procedure for the cooperatives' activities. The document was presented to Ministry of Agriculture for review and further submission to the government for adoption. Members of the TWGs directly involved in the pilot initiatives were not involved in the process of developing proposals for amendments to the cooperative law, neither were they informed about the results.

Finding 8. From 2020 the project focus shifted towards delivering results at grassroots level with the implementation of the pilot initiatives, with limited involvement of Ministry of Agriculture's TWG and CFS.

60. Indicator 2.3. Number of selected pilot reform initiatives in support of the implementation of the agricultural reform process. Four pilots were established in Dangara, Nurobod, Shahrstan, and Shahrinav.
61. All cooperatives were registered as commercial cooperatives with between 11 and 32 members.¹² The members of the Shahrinav cooperative were very proactive in the provision of pruning training for their members, they met regularly on a monthly basis and attended a number of fairs to promote their cooperative. Furthermore, the cooperative signed a number of memoranda of understanding (MOU) to purchase blueberry seedlings from Belarus, as well as a memorandum of cooperation with the Academy of Science, receiving water pipes to irrigate their apple orchards. The level of awareness among the communities in Shahrinav is advanced and with proper project support it is expected to be able to export products of cooperative members. Cooperative members in Nurabad took the proactive decision to rent a space in the district to store their seed potatoes and utilized project information to handle post-harvest activities, practicing manual sorting and calibration to ensure the seeds were stored properly in labelled boxes until the following year; as a result, cooperative members stored their seed potatoes without losses.
62. The project prepared a business model for pilots very thoroughly. This model describes approaches to piloting, expected results of piloting, mechanisms for implementing the pilots,

¹¹ Annual Report 2020 under Activity 2.1. Analysis of legislation and enforcement and implementation mechanisms on cooperatives and associations, and development of recommendations for improvement: "the project recruited one international expert on cooperatives and two national experts (lawyers) to carry out analysis of the law on cooperatives".

¹² Shahrinav cooperative has 32 members, including six women members and a female head of cooperative appointed in September 2021. Danghara cooperative has 11 members, including one woman member. Shahrstan cooperative has 17 members, including one woman member who previously was head of cooperative. Nurabad cooperative has 23 members, including three women members.

technical aspects such as selection of location, area requirements, organization and management, production programmes, marketing strategy, product sales channels, main problems and priorities of chosen locations, project interventions, budgets and calculations of product sales, cost of services, and volume of services provided. For each cooperative a business plan was also developed. However, during the field visits no evidence was found that members are using those business plans.¹³

63. In Nurabad, the action plan developed by the project for 2020-2021 was in place and used. The cooperative members in the other two visited pilots sites were not aware of and did not have available the action plan at the time of the visit.
64. At the time of the evaluation mission, there was only little progress in the construction of the logistical centres and members expressed their concerns and disappointment. There is a risk that members lose trust in the concept of cooperatives.
65. When starting the cooperatives, farmers felt attracted by the logistical centres, the mechanized agricultural services (MTS),¹⁴ and seed potatoes to be provided – tangible assets that unite them under one roof. However, it emerged a lack of understanding of the mechanism of cooperatives to work together. In Nurobod, for example, sales of seed potatoes were done by the members individually. Similarly, In Shahristan all members sold themselves the produced seed potatoes individually.
66. With regards to training for cooperatives, the project provided one-to-one consultation for seed potato growers in Nurabad and Shahristan, gave advice on agricultural technologies for potatoes, including harvesting and post-harvest operations. The TWG contributed also to these one-to-one consultations combined with monitoring the potato crop and assessing the expected yields. Planned capacity building interventions did not take place in Dangara and Sharinav due to the delays in constructing the logistical centres. During the field visits members expressed the need for further technical support and training.
67. Within the project synopsis, as well as in the annual report, the pilot activities were related to and described under Activity 2.3 *"Assist Ministry of Agriculture in launching, coordinating and monitoring pilots of selected agriculture reforms"* and Activity 2.4 *"Support Ministry of Agriculture in preparing analyses for selected value chains, including mapping i.e. identification of the key value chain actors, linkages, existing bottlenecks, gross margins, and propose solutions"*. While the intention was that the project would assist Ministry of Agriculture, the evaluation team found that there was limited involvement by local authorities, Ministry of Agriculture TWG and CFS. Members of the TWG were involved in the launch, especially in discussing the priority areas and analysis of the value chains. However, the TWG members that proposed value chains to be supported in Dangara based on a spot analysis were later not informed what value chain was eventually selected. After the mobilizers were appointed, involvement of TWG members was very limited, with the exception of the seed potato pilots. Monitoring of seed potato development and subsequent certification was carried out during 2020–2021 in close cooperation with the TWG members of the Seed Department, while CFS was not involved in official certification of the seed potatoes that were produced by the cooperative members.
68. Despite having pilots on cooperatives, it emerged a lack of common understanding about cooperatives within Ministry of Agriculture. Farm size was a selection criterion in the pilots on

¹³ When asked about the business plans, Sharinav cooperative members showed a document that did not look like the business plan developed by the project.

¹⁴ MTS is the Russian abbreviation.

cooperatives as the project wanted to reach smallholders, and the project applied rigorously this criterion. The maximum size of a member's plot was 0.2 to 1 hectare (ha). On the other hand, the evaluation team was also told by an interviewed stakeholder from Ministry of Agriculture that *"...for farmers that have small plots of land, for example one or five ha, there is no need to establish a cooperative or association because they only produce for their own consumption as small farmers; but for large farmers who have 5, 10 or 20 ha it is necessary to establish cooperatives or associations"*. The Evaluation team agrees with the view of the project of selecting smallholders for the cooperatives. However, more efforts should have been made to find a common understanding on the cooperatives with the Ministry of Agriculture.

Table 4. Output 3 and associated indicators and targets

Output 3: Capacity of Ministry of Agriculture is strengthened for analysis and technical competence		
Indicator	Target	Achievement
3.1. Training needs assessment of Ministry of Agriculture staff is conducted and a training plan is developed.	3 ¹	3 Training plan updated annually and approved by Ministry of Agriculture by 2019.
3.2. Number of staff (male/female) of Ministry of Agriculture, CFS, the Tajik Agrarian University (TAU) and other relevant national stakeholders trained on priority policy and technical areas, as well as computer, communication and language skills, and other topics.	250	Trainings conducted and indicator widely achieved (and exceeded). ²
3.3. Number of staff (male/female) of Ministry of Agriculture, CFS and other relevant national stakeholders participated in study tours on the agrarian reforms process and other priority policy areas.	28	31 (30/1).
3.4. Mapping of activities implemented in the agriculture sector by all national and international stakeholders is carried out.	2 ³	2
3.5. Ministry of Agriculture email domain (@moa.tj) is established and operational for improving communication and information sharing.	3 ⁴	2; of all Ministry of Agriculture interviewees one person used the Ministry of Agriculture email address.
3.6. Ministry of Agriculture website (moa.tj) is upgraded for effective awareness raising about activities in agriculture sector and for disseminating advisory information.	2 ⁵	2 Website contains advisory information for crop production, livestock, and seed production; names of legislation and documents are included, and news section are constantly updated.

Notes: ¹ Stages of development: 0 – n/a; 1 – training needs assessment is conducted; 2 – Training Plan is developed; and 3 – training plan is updated annually.

² Consistent information on the definite number of participants unavailable.

³ Stages of development: 0 – no development; 1 – carried out; and 2 – updated.

⁴ Stages of development: 0 – current email boxes of Ministry of Agriculture in different domains; 1 – parameters of the email domain are agreed; 2 – new email domain for Ministry of Agriculture is created and installed; and 3 – functional.

⁵ Stages of development: 0 – current website of Ministry of Agriculture; 1 – design and parameters are agreed; and 2 – website of Ministry of Agriculture is upgraded.

Source: Elaborated by the evaluation team.

Finding 9. The conducted training activities and study tours were well appreciated by the participants, who stated that acquired skills and knowledge were highly relevant and useful to their work. Although, inconsistency was found with regards to the number of training participants.

69. Indicator 3.1: Training needs assessment of Ministry of Agriculture staff is conducted and a training plan is developed. A training needs assessment was conducted in 2017, and to this end a questionnaire was developed in consultation with Ministry of Agriculture, and interviews were conducted with four deputy ministers and 25 ministry staff from seven departments and branches. The training plan, i.e. 'Consolidated Capacity Strengthening Plan 2018–2019', was then approved by Ministry of Agriculture.
70. At the end of 2019, the international institutional expert prepared a Capacity Building Plan for Agriculture – Conceptual Framework. This framework provided a wider list of skills and areas of

knowledge that Ministry of Agriculture should consider over the medium and longer term to enable its managers and professionals to effectively address issues in the sector. The expert further recommended that Ministry of Agriculture should endeavour for broad-range, continuous and integrated systematic capacity and institutional development as part of its institutional mandate. Considering the remaining lifespan of the project of less than a year at that time, it was advised to concentrate on a few vital key skills to be developed until project end that would be retained and sustained and enable Ministry of Agriculture to create a critical mass of managers and professionals who would move forward the reform processes but also contribute to the further development of the sector in the medium term. Based on the priorities of the agriculture reform strategy 2012–2020 and priorities identified at that time by TWG members and Ministry of Agriculture senior managers, an implementation training plan for 2020 (i.e. until project closure), was proposed.

71. Indicator 3.2: Number of staff (male/female) of Ministry of Agriculture, CFS, the Tajik Agrarian University (TAU) and other relevant national stakeholders trained on priority policy and technical areas, as well as computer, communication and language skills, and other topics. Evidence that trainings were conducted and indicator widely achieved (and exceeded).
72. In 2018, the following training courses were delivered: English language, computer skills (Excel), 'World Trade Organization and export of agriculture and food products' (eight trainees) and on 'Sustainable Value Chain analysis (18 trainees). Each training included a field visit. In 2019, the following training courses were delivered for Ministry of Agriculture staff: 'PPP and investment and business planning', Global good agricultural practices (GAP) (11 participants) and HACCP (16 participants). In 2020, training courses were delivered (e.g. English language, and awareness on agrarian reforms among others) until the full lockdown was imposed due to the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic in March/April 2020. It was planned that these courses would be continued with an improving situation, with staff intended to visit offices of partner institutions and beneficiaries. Interviewees indeed confirmed that those training activities were conducted. The evaluation determined a total of 53 participants (excluding English and computer skills training).
73. Despite the fact that the indicator was widely achieved (and exceeded) it was not possible to determine the exact number of participants. The last overview of achieved indicators by September 2021 showed a considerably higher number of participants, namely 1 063 (905 men and 158 women). This is the same number given in Annual Report 2020, while an explanation provided as comment mentions a total of 655 – comprised of 102 participants for the training on export promotion, 114 for Excel, 114 for Global GAP, 200 for agrarian reform priorities, 90 for cooperative development pilots, 20 from the Agency on Hydrometeorology (AoH), and 15 from CFS (555 men and 100 women).
74. Indicator 3.3: Number of staff (male/female) of Ministry of Agriculture, CFS and other relevant national stakeholders participated in study tours on the agrarian reforms process and other priority policy areas. Study tours were organized to Georgia (for Ministry of Agriculture and AoS), Belarus (for Ministry of Agriculture), Kyrgyzstan & Turkey (for Ministry of Agriculture) and to Italy (for CFS). Individual visits and participation in training sessions or conferences were organized to Ethiopia, FAO headquarters in Italy, to FAO's Regional Office for Europe and Central Asia in Hungary. In total 31 persons participated in the study tours, including one woman. Study tours and visits were directly related to the topics relevant for the project and lessons learned could be applied for the institutional reform of Ministry of Agriculture and CFS.
75. Indicator 3.4: Mapping of activities implemented in the agriculture sector by all national and international stakeholders is carried out and updated on a quarterly basis by ARS. This is

implemented annually for the meeting of donors with the purpose to inform the Minister and prepare his speech with a presentation. Data is updated on a quarterly basis.

76. Indicator 3.5: Ministry of Agriculture e-mail domain (@moa.tj) is established and operational for improving communication and information sharing. The project supported the development of a common email domain for Ministry of Agriculture, and about 50 email accounts were created and technical capacity of selected staff on how to manage emails was improved. From the list of email addresses of Ministry of Agriculture staff to be interviewed that the evaluation team received, however, only one interviewee used the Ministry of Agriculture email address.
77. Indicator 3.6: Ministry of Agriculture website (moa.tj) is upgraded for effective awareness raising about activities in agriculture sector and for disseminating advisory information. The website has been updated. In reviewing the website, the evaluation team found that the part of the website on advisory information was well developed and provided useful information on crop production, cattle breeding and seed production. The news section was also well developed and constantly updated. However, there is still room for improvement. For instance, the Tajik version of the website's "Legislation" tab had a list of 20 developed legislations, but did not grant access to these legislations. Information on Ministry of Agriculture management was not updated, nor was the structure of Ministry of Agriculture, which was last updated in 2018. According to the structure on the Ministry of Agriculture website, the First Deputy Minister was responsible for the Department of Agrarian Policy and Food Security, while in fact these duties were transferred to another deputy minister. Many tabs were not working, including in the English version.
78. The website requires further support to enhance the content and interactivity with potential users and clients. This became especially evident during the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic when all stakeholders (including farmers) needed to access online information and the need for further promotion of e-agriculture and related services became apparent.

Table 5. Output 4 and associated indicators and targets

Output 4. Availability of quality agriculture and food security data and information is improved		
Indicator	Target	Achievement
4.1. Sample survey of dehkan farms is finalized and implemented.	3 ¹	3
4.2. Number of AoS staff trained in implementing the sample survey of dehkan farms according to the new methodology.	110	113 (96 men and 17 women) ²
4.3. 2013 Agriculture census reports are prepared, published and distributed.	2 ³	2
4.4. Methodology and parameters for preparation of food balance sheet is improved and adopted.	2 ⁴	2
4.5. Number of Ministry of Agriculture and AoH staff and other stakeholders trained on forecasting for major crops.	50	89 (61 men and 28 women) ⁵
4.6. Pilots on agrometeorological forecasting of crops are established and implemented in selected areas.	3 ⁶	2-3; established and functional for AoH, not yet for Ministry of Agriculture and farmers.

Notes: ¹Stages of development: 0 – sample survey of dehkan farms is developed, 1 – survey is updated and finalized, 2 – software for data collection and processing is developed, 3 – survey is implemented.

²From latest achieved numbers provided by M&E expert in September 2021, including 88 district staff, based on lists of training participants provided by M&E expert.

³Stages of development: 0 – current agriculture census reports developed by AoS, 1 – revised reports of agriculture census are prepared, 2 – revised reports are published and distributed.

⁴Stages of development: 0 – current methodology of food balance sheet, 1 – revised methodology and parameters for food balance sheet, 2 – food balance sheet is launched according to new methodology.

⁵From overview provided by M&E expert.

⁶Stages of development: 0 – current system of crop forecasting, 1 – feasibility study and training delivered, 2 – automatic agrometeorological stations delivered, 3 – pilots are established and functional.

Source: Elaborated by the evaluation team.

Finding 10. The project was successful in providing tools and increase capacity of the Agencies for improved quality and availability of agricultural production data for Ministry of Agriculture, CFS and other potential users. AoS presented those data on their website and potential users had open access to the data. AoH provided Ministry of Agriculture access to the general meteorological data which AoH gathered. However, AoH was reluctant to share the data from the three pilots on agrometeorological forecasting of crops with Ministry of Agriculture, private extension service providers, and other potential users.

79. Indicator 4.1: Sample survey of dehkan farms is finalized and implemented. The sample survey method was applied and the visited districts were successfully able to reduce the number of dehkan farms surveyed by 20 percent.
80. Indicator 4.2: Number of AoS staff trained in implementing the sample survey of dehkan farms according to the new methodology. Based on lists of training participants, four training sessions were organized, which were attended in total by 88 participants from Khujand–Sugd Region (29 participants), Khorog–Gorno Badakhshan Autonomous Region (20 participants), Kurgantube–Kulob Region (18 participants) and Khatlon Region (31 participants).¹⁵ Stakeholders in the visited districts expressed their satisfaction with the level of training and the imparted skills and their application, and believed that, with the development of digitalization, farmers would be able to log into the system and enter their data.
81. Indicator 4.3: 2013 Agriculture census reports are prepared, published and distributed. The project assisted in finalizing and publishing the Agricultural Census Report 2013.
82. Indicator 4.4: Methodology and parameters for preparation of food balance sheet is improved and adopted. The work was improved, and data were directly entered to the online programme. Notwithstanding the above, it was still necessary to collect the physical data sheets first, and owing to lack of internet access including devices for farmers, district statistics staff received lengthy documents filled out by farmers and had to enter the data into the system. When the internet and devices will be widespread, the farmers should be able to access and enter the information in the online system; for now, they submit physical food balance sheets.
83. Indicator 4.5: Number of Ministry of Agriculture and AoH staff and other stakeholders trained on forecasting for major crops. The international expert responsible for these activities provided several training seminars which were highly appreciated by the interviewed training participants. The evaluation team found a difference in the numbers of participants determined in the reports of the international expert (i.e. 73 participants), in the annual reports (81 participants), and by the M&E expert (89 participants). While all these figures surpass the target of 50 participants, it gives an indication of the robustness of the data on participant numbers.
84. Indicator 4.6: Pilots on agrometeorological forecasting of crops are established and implemented in selected areas. Three pilots for an Agrometeorology Network were established and implemented on specialized crops: grapes in Tursunzoda district and Hissar, apricots in Konibodom district, cotton in Jaloliddin Balkhi district, and cotton in Vakhsh; these pilots are established and functional at the level of AoH, but not yet at the level of Ministry of Agriculture, private extension providers or farmers.
85. One of the key issues was the dissemination of agrometeorological information to end users. The pilot exercise showed promising results that were to be used by farmers. At the same time the agrometeorological data needed to be interpreted properly and recommendations for farmers

¹⁵ Data provided by M&E expert.

developed. To this end, the project continued to facilitate the cooperation between the AoH (provision of agrometeorology data), and Ministry of Agriculture and private extension providers (interpretation and dissemination of agrometeorology information).

86. The project was confronted with the reluctance of AoH to share the information of the pilots with other stakeholders, so as to reach farmers or utilize the data for other purposes. In December 2019 a two-day workshop on 'Strengthening Agrometeorological Services for Farmers in Tajikistan' was conducted. At the end of the workshop, according to a subject specialist, the AoH showed readiness in sharing information with a wider spectrum of farmers. However, interviewees confirmed that the plans for cooperation did not work out in practice.

Table 6. Output 5 and associated indicators and targets

Output 5. Private and public institutional and implementation capacities for delivering animal health services are strengthened		
Indicator	Target	Achievement
5.1. New organigram with functions described for CFS/SVIS is completed in accordance with WOAHA recommendations, and CFS/SVIS performance indicators based on WOAHA PVS tools are discussed and adopted.	1 ¹	1
5.2. Number of CFS/SVIS staff trained to design modern disease control strategies and policies.	10	10 (10 men and 0 women)
5.3. Number of new policies, regulations and strategies.	1	1
5.4. Number of trained veterinary undergraduate and newly graduated students, faculty staff, TVA members, and CFS staff.	1 000	930 (872 men and 58 women) according to project M&E information; TVA reported 1 050 (971 men and 79 women)
5.5. Strategy and roadmap for monitoring GMO products and capacity building plan for CFS are prepared.	1 ²	0–1 (only roadmap prepared)
5.6. A project proposal for further CFS strengthening is prepared.	1 ³	0
5.7. Assessment of needed equipment and training for CFS is prepared.	1 ⁴	1

Notes: ¹0 – no, 1 – CFS organigram is developed.

²0 – no, 1 – prepared.

³0 – no, 1 – yes.

⁴0 – no, 1 – assessment is prepared.

Source: Elaborated by the evaluation team.

Finding 11. The veterinary strategy was developed and CFS started to review it; while the question remains whether this strategy will be implemented, a success story of the project was the work of TVA on training almost 1 000 public/private veterinarians as well as undergraduate and newly graduated students in cooperation with TAU.

87. Indicator 5.1. New organigram with functions described for CFS/SVIS is completed in accordance with WOAHA recommendations, and CFS/SVIS performance indicators based on WOAHA PVS Tools are discussed and adopted.
88. The project provided the necessary technical assistance during the restructuring of SVIS, which resulted in the establishment of the CFS in late 2017. During the preparation of the restructuring proposals for SVIS it was foreseen that the changes would happen under the umbrella of Ministry of Agriculture. However, the government decided on a sharp change, with CFS no longer under Ministry of Agriculture and staff was reduced by 60 percent; this created frustrations among stakeholders at all levels.
89. Consequently, there is still a long way to go to make CFS functioning, as the evaluation team found during the interviews at central and district levels. For instance, *"The new structure of CFS was developed by removing four departments from Ministry of Agriculture as approved by the government, including state veterinary inspection, state breeding services, state phytosanitary and*

quarantine control, and state seed inspection; but it is difficult to work with the current structure, with increased workload and a reduced number of staff". Further, "We are still working based on the old system and there were no training activities to explain the new roles of CFS. Instructions/manuals based on the objectives and aims of the organization have not reached us yet; for example, it is not clear what the intended functions of the departments on control and anti-epidemics are. Furthermore, there are other departments, such as phytosanitation, that do not match the organization. We are gathered under one organization but our duties and the final aim of CFS are unclear".

90. Indicator 5.2: Number of CFS/SVIS staff trained to design modern disease control strategies and policies. The activity was completed in 2017. All courses on disease control strategies for four priority diseases were successfully delivered. The international veterinary policy consultant and the national policy and epidemiology consultant delivered two rounds of two-day, in-country short courses on drafting of modern disease control strategies for policy staff. During this training new strategies for controlling bovine brucellosis, rabies, Foot-and-Mouth Disease (FMD) and *Peste des Petits Ruminants* (PPR) were prepared. Another workshop was planned in 2018 to discuss the implementation of new strategies for controlling of up to four priority diseases, however the evaluation team did not find any documentation of this activity in any annual report.
91. Indicator 5.3: Number of new policies, regulations and strategies. A strategy for the development of veterinary services was prepared and submitted to CFS for approval.
92. The veterinary strategy was elaborated by an international expert with support of a national expert. During his first mission in December 2019, the international expert prepared a first draft strategy. In February 2020 he discussed the draft veterinary strategy with representatives of all institutions involved in veterinary issues and finalized the draft strategy. The finalized Russian version was translated into English and after improvements was ready by July 2020. In July 2021, all clearances were received and the draft veterinary strategy was submitted to CFS, who was expected to disseminate it among government agencies for feedback following its review.
93. An involved interviewee explained the strategy apply as follows: "The strategy for the development of the veterinary services to 2030 is a necessity. The aim of the strategy is improvement of the structure of the veterinary services. Implementation and control are currently both done by CFS with reduced number of staff, and the new strategy includes the organization of new chamber that will regulate the work of private veterinarians".
94. There is no certainty whether the veterinary strategy will be implemented. The evaluation team found obstacles as voiced during stakeholder interviews: it emerged limited ownership for the strategy as it was only discussed once during a workshop in February 2020. Furthermore, for the strategy to be implemented, the CFS veterinary/breeding department would need to be reorganized handing over vaccination tasks fully to private veterinarians. Further donor support would be needed.
95. Indicator 5.4. Number of trained veterinary undergraduate and newly graduated students, faculty staff, TVA members, and CFS staff. TVA reported 1 050 overall trainees with 79 women. Over the course of the project 100 undergraduate students were trained and 50 faculty staff were involved in guiding the undergraduates.
96. Working as a private veterinarian is not very attractive because they need to apply for a license for private activities, which is expensive, involves a lot of paperwork and taxation procedures are complicated. This notwithstanding, private veterinarians do work, albeit not officially. The first year of implementation of the first agreement was 2018, and TVA was not allowed to invite private

veterinarians for training. However, with the second agreement in 2019, TVA devised a method to cover all veterinary specialists, regardless of the type of activity and form of ownership. Even many private veterinarians on the list were indicated as specialists or employees of CFS centrally or in the districts. The overall ratio was 80 public vs. 20 private veterinarians.

97. Indicator 5.5: Strategy and roadmap for monitoring GMO products and capacity building plan for CFS are prepared. Only a strategy was developed.
98. During the project a seven-day training on GMO was conducted in December 2020, and January, February and September 2021 for laboratory and CFS staff. These training events were conducted by an international and a local GMO specialist. The training was theoretical as it was not possible for consultants to travel to Tajikistan and purchase items for the practical training. The GMO courses were not complete, as this is wide topic that requires further training sessions and workshops.
99. Indicator 5.6: A project proposal for further CFS strengthening is prepared. This activity at the moment of the evaluation was delayed. CFS planned to request training activities for determining heavy metals, aflatoxins and antibiotics for the National Diagnosis Centre; with support of the International Trade Centre a monitoring plan for heavy metals and antibiotics in agricultural products was to be established in order to open up the European markets for Tajik agricultural products as well as improve food security in the country. It should be noted that the necessary equipment is expensive. CFS hopes that donors will support the provision of quality training so as to prepare staff to utilize the equipment and demonstrate the anticipated results.
100. Indicator 5.7: Assessment of needed equipment and training for CFS is prepared. This activity was implemented; a two-day training course on the use of equipment (including meat analyzers, express milk analyzers for laboratory use, radiation detectors and nitrate testers for food, infrared distance thermometers, thermos-boxes, and egg candlers) was provided to 20 CFS specialists. The training consisted of a theoretical and practical part.
101. There is still a need for training and capacity building for usage of modern equipment. Since CFS is a newly established agency with major objectives, continuous support for equipment and capacity building is needed to undertake quality work for the improvement of food security.
102. As mentioned at the beginning of this section, the project formulated one main outcome with several outcome indicators to measure its achievement. In the paragraphs below, it will be assessed the level of achievement of the project's outcome against its indicators and targets.

Table 7. Outcome indicators achievement

Outcome: Strengthened institutions and capacity in strategic decision-making, planning, regulation, quality control and management in the food and agriculture sectors, including livestock.		
Outcome indicators	Target	Achievement
1. Institutional reform of Ministry of Agriculture is endorsed and implemented to strengthen its role as the regulator and facilitator of agricultural sector development and the provision of food security.	2 ¹	0
2. Number of policies, regulations, programmes and roadmaps developed with project assistance that are endorsed and their implementation has started to contribute to the implementation of agrarian reforms, the development of agricultural sector and improving food security.	6	1.5 ²
3. Percentage of project-trained Ministry of Agriculture staff that used improved skills in agriculture and food security policy formulation.	60 per cent	N/A No evidence provided
4. Number of stakeholders using improved quality and availability of agricultural production data that resulted in better planning and decision making in the agriculture sector.	4	2
5. Number of stakeholders replicating good experiences from pilots on agricultural reforms. ³	8	0
6. Performance indicators or competency based on the WOAHPVS tool gradually improved.	3.30	Not clear.
7. Development strategy for veterinary services is endorsed.	Yes	Not yet endorsed
8. New regulation for CFS establishment is endorsed.	Yes	Yes
9. Percentage of trained veterinarians using new skills.	60 per cent	N/A Lack of evidence

Notes: ¹Stages of development: 0 – current structure and functions of Ministry of Agriculture; 1 – Proposal for the institutional reform of Ministry of Agriculture developed with project assistance is endorsed; 2 – Implementation of institutional reform of Ministry of Agriculture started.

²This score refers to the data collection for this evaluation. At that time, the NIP was not fully endorsed although already used, hence the scoring of 1.5.

³The evaluation team found that three agrometeorological pilots and four agrarian reform pilots had been established.

Source: Elaborated by the evaluation team.

Finding 12. Due to delays in project implementation and the changes in the ministry, the institutional reform of Ministry of Agriculture was not endorsed nor implemented within the project duration up to the evaluation project.

103. Outcome indicator 1. Institutional reform of Ministry of Agriculture is endorsed and implemented to strengthen its role as the regulator and facilitator of agricultural sector development and the provision of food security. Strengthening the role of Ministry of Agriculture as regulator and facilitator is a longer-term process. However, the restructuring process and its implementation combined with continuous capacity building, as planned for 2020–2021, would have empowered Ministry of Agriculture in terms of a group of skilled and knowledgeable people that can act as a critical mass to support this longer-term process.

Finding 13. Policies, strategies and the restructuring proposal were submitted to Ministry of Agriculture and the CFS without the required guidance on the endorsement process. At the moment of data collection, only the *Program of Food Security of the Republic of Tajikistan for 2020–2024* had been endorsed, and Ministry of Agriculture and CFS had started to implement the programme. The NIP was officially endorsed by Ministry of Agriculture and presented to donor community in February 2022 and the Food Safety Program is under the final stage of endorsement by the Ministry of Economic Development and Trade.

104. Outcome indicator 2. Number of policies, regulations, programmes and roadmaps developed with project assistance that are endorsed and their implementation has started to contribute to the

implementation of agrarian reforms, the development of agricultural sector and improving food security. The NIP was not yet endorsed at the time of the evaluation data collection;¹⁶ however, it was already successfully used in securing donor projects. It was officially endorsed by Ministry of Agriculture and presented to donor community in February 2022. An issue in this context was that the restructuring plan, as well as most of the developed policies and strategies, were endorsed (or in the process of being endorsed) by the government only at the time of this final evaluation.¹⁷ In the various reports and during interviews it was mentioned that involvement of more stakeholders would have facilitated endorsement.

Finding 14. It emerged from interviews that Ministry of Agriculture trained staff are using the gained knowledge in their work. However, within the scope of documents reviewed, there is no evidence to measure the percentage of the Ministry of Agriculture staff that have improved and used the acquired skills in agriculture and food security policy formulation. In this context, the project would have benefitted from having a systematic approach to skills development and capacity building within Ministry of Agriculture.

105. Outcome indicator 3: Percentage of project-trained Ministry of Agriculture staff that used improved skills in agriculture and food security policy formulation. It emerged from interviews that Ministry of Agriculture trained staff are using the gained knowledge in their work, e.g. on sustainable value chain development. One example was also provided of the use of gained knowledge in policy formulation. A clear result of capacity development was the development of the seed production strategy, which was also endorsed. However, it was not possible for the evaluation team to measure the percentage of Ministry of Agriculture staff that used the improved skills due to lack of evidence. In this context, it is interesting how the indicator was formulated and calculated; the evaluation team did not find any indication that the M&E system captured names of staff members attending the training activities, while the number of participants were counted. Furthermore, it is not clear how the percentage was calculated of project-trained Ministry of Agriculture staff that used improved skills. The M&E system did not provide evidence for measuring the use or application of the gained knowledge and skills by the staff in their work (see also under sub-question 2.3 related to M&E).
106. Interviews results were in line with the recommendation given by the institutional capacity building expert in 2019 as follows: reform and change are not easy and take time and patience; however, it also requires effective and efficient change management to ensure the process is not derailing from its ultimate objectives. The project cycle is limited but development at large cannot be limited and tied up to a project timeframe. The expert recommended in mid-2019 that the Chief Technical Advisor and FAO Management would have to concentrate on a strategic system and process that may not produce the ultimate results by the end of the project life hand, but that would empower Ministry of Agriculture in terms of a group of skilled and knowledgeable persons that could act as a critical mass to move forward the reform process. The project would have needed to develop a systematic approach to skills development and capacity building within Ministry of Agriculture.
107. Outcome indicator 4: Number of stakeholders using improved quality and availability of agricultural production data that resulted in better planning and decision making in the agriculture sector. AoS and AoH may be viewed as secondary stakeholders that were supported by the project so as to enable the agencies to provide improved data for Ministry of Agriculture, CFS and other agencies and organizations. Ministry of Agriculture and CFS needed these data for analysis, M&E and policy development. The evaluation team found no evidence that the project

¹⁶ Until end of September 2021.

¹⁷ Food Safety Program is under the final stage of endorsement by the Ministry of Economic Development and Trade.

undertook activities to stimulate the use by Ministry of Agriculture and CFS of the available improved data. Ministry of Agriculture and CFS stated during interviews that they still used their own data. AoS provided the data freely through their website. Ministry of Agriculture and other stakeholders experienced reluctance by AoH to share data of the pilots for weather forecasts for special crops (see also under output 4.6).

108. Outcome indicator 5: Number of stakeholders replicating good experiences from pilots on agricultural reforms. Two kinds of pilots were initiated during the project: the pilot agrometeorology network and the pilots on agrarian reform. Data from the agrometeorology network were not used, as mentioned above. The pilots on agrarian reform did not show the results required for replication in such a short period of time.
109. Outcome indicator 6: Performance indicators or competency based on the WOAHPVS tool gradually improved. The baseline value was 2.20, and the target 3.30. Project M&E information provided a score of 2.11, which is unlikely given it is below the baseline value.
110. Outcome indicator 7: Development strategy for veterinary services is endorsed. There is still a way to go before the strategy's endorsement as CFS received it only recently¹⁸ (in hardcopy) and requested the project to provide a softcopy also in order to make changes.
111. Outcome indicator 8: New regulation for CFS establishment is endorsed. The CFS regulation was endorsed and under implementation.
112. Outcome indicator 9: Percentage of trained veterinarians using new skills. Trainees confirmed during the interviews that they used gained knowledge and skills. The evaluation team considers this outcome as a success of the project, notwithstanding that the team did not receive quantitative evidence. The M&E system did not measure results such as the use of gained knowledge and skills, or the use of available improved data, etc.

3.2.1 Enabling and constraining factors in achieving results

Finding 15. The project benefited from FAO's long-standing expertise in working with various stakeholders, while it had to deal with the constraining factors of a turnover in its senior management, the TWG in Ministry of Agriculture and of project staff, often with protracted staffing gaps. And the COVID-19 pandemic.

113. Enabling factors were the political will to implement the Agrarian Reform Programme Action Plan 2012–2020 and the stakeholder demand to receive support in the implementation of the action plan; the long history of FAO working with TAU, TVA, Ministry of Agriculture, AoS, and AoH; and the leading role of FAO in agrarian reforms in Tajikistan, including initiating and facilitating a discourse among donors, ministries and the presidential office about a decade ago. Interviews suggested that formally established working groups given a special task facilitated the process, as compared to asking Ministry of Agriculture staff to contribute to activities without assigning special tasks.
114. Constraining factors included the turnover of senior management and TWG in Ministry of Agriculture, as well as of project staff and resulting lengthy gaps, and the heavy workload for FAO project staff, who were involved in various projects. It was challenging to deal with overlapping mandates of different government bodies especially in the inter-ministerial TWG on food safety,

¹⁸ The evaluation team was given this answer from project staff at the end of September 2021.

yet the project managed to deal with this situation successfully by organizing individual meetings, listening to the stakeholders, and following the pace of the participating bodies.

115. The COVID-19 pandemic¹⁹ was often mentioned as a constraining factor during the interviews. The evaluation team, however, also found arising opportunities. For instance, interviewees mentioned the increased efficiency in conducting online meetings and communicating through the Zoom software; TVA was well able to conduct most of its training activities in those difficult circumstances in 2020. The COVID-19 pandemic also accelerated the importance of food security. The project further managed very well to distribute seed potatoes in a short time in remote areas together with Ministry of Agriculture's SUE.

3.2.2 Monitoring and evaluation system

Finding 16. An M&E plan was available. The progress was updated annually in the project result matrix and annexed to the annual report. However, the M&E system was not fully appropriate for monitoring and supporting the implementation of the targeted results of the project. The focus of the M&E system lay too heavily on monitoring activities and outputs and not sufficiently on measuring results. A field monitoring system was in place through field visits, specifically for provided equipment, for the selection of land for the logistical centres, and for the selection of pilot initiatives' cooperative members. Means of verification were only partially stored and available. The M&E set-up did not have a functioning knowledge management system.

116. At the restart of the project in 2018 the new project team reviewed the project result matrix, and adapted the indicators (to render them achievable), means of verification and the workplan. At this stage an M&E plan was developed in accordance with FAO M&E guidelines. It defined the responsibilities for M&E, the reporting procedures and schedules, the guidelines for the mid-term and final evaluations, and the indicators to measure project progress.
117. The Project Results Matrix included a set of indicators – each one with a baseline and yearly targets – to monitor project performance at the objective, outcome and output level. The actual situation was updated yearly and attached as an annex to the annual report. In general, the indicators were SMART,²⁰ with limitations in the "T" for "timebound". The workplan did not define milestones to mark the final stage of an output.
118. The emphasis on measuring the capacities developed was usually on the number of people trained, as opposed to measuring the capacities acquired through these training activities and measuring their application at the respective workplace. Output Indicator 4 ensures the availability of improved quality agriculture and food security data, while the M&E system does not measure whether those data are used for better planning and decision making by Ministry of Agriculture.
119. The Project Results Matrix included clearly described means of verification and risks/assumptions; however, the means of verification were only partly stored and available. For example, the evaluation team only had limited access to lists of training participants, training programmes, training materials and evaluation reports (unless included in the reports of the international and national experts. Submitted strategies, action plans, comments on laws were mostly provided in draft versions, often without date. Furthermore, the evaluation team was unable to obtain access to the means of verification and expert reports. Documents, means of verification, reports and other information was kept by different staff members involved in the project, and there was not a functioning knowledge management system.

¹⁹ See section 3.3 on Efficiency of Delivery for additional information on constraints imposed by COVID-19.

²⁰ SMART: Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant and Time-bound.

120. The annual reports usually included an annex with the project result matrix indicating the progress made, which was found to be much valued and useful. Many means of verification in the project result matrix referred to progress reports, however the intended information was not easy to find in the annual reports. The annual reports provided limited information on the contribution of international and national experts: it could be useful to attach reports of short-term experts as annexes, for instance, as well as submitted strategies, regulations and recommendations. In such a way, the main body of the annual report would provide 'the bigger picture' and the annexes would give the opportunity for the interested stakeholders to get more detailed information on topics of interest – in this manner the annual report could be utilized to access project documents.
121. The M&E system contributed well to the monitoring of the use of provided equipment to Ministry of Agriculture in the districts, selection of potential members for the cooperatives in the pilots, the selection of land for the logistical centres and included comprehensive back-to-office reports. The results were used to inform management in terms of any needed action. While other equipment was delivered to the stakeholders, this was not monitored or evaluated.
122. The MTR recommended already in July 2019 to improve the M&E framework by adding formats and reports to capture study tours, joint monitoring plans, a learning and knowledge management plan and a methodology to conduct internal outcome/output evaluation before the projects would end. According to the evaluation findings, this recommendation was not followed up on.

3.3 Efficiency of delivery

Finding 17. The equipment provided to Ministry of Agriculture, AoH, TAU, TVA and CFS supported the implementation of activities in an efficient manner. However, the delays experienced in the construction of the logistical centres and in the purchase of the agricultural machinery for the four pilot initiatives on agrarian reform affected an efficient implementation of the pilot activities.

Table 8. Expenditure on equipment

Total budget	USD 5 817 468	
Sub-total for equipment for Ministry of Agriculture, AoH, TAU, TVA and CFS	USD 366 798	6 %
Sub-total for equipment for agrarian reform pilots	USD 952 194	16 %
Total equipment	USD 1 318 992	22 %

Source: Elaborated by the evaluation team.

123. Expenditures for equipment for the pilots amounted to 16 percent of the total budget. Until August 2021, cooperative members could only use a small portion of the equipment, such as boxes, bags, thermometers, pallets, and inputs for seed potatoes. The other equipment that was to be used in the logistical centres was bought in November 2020 and was still stored at the time of the final evaluation, due to delays in the construction of the logistical centres. These delays resulted in extra costs for equipment storage. At the end of August 2021, only 13 percent of the construction costs for the logistical centres was spent. It is noted that the equipment for field crop cultivation, i.e. the agricultural machinery, could have been distributed and used independently of the construction of the logistical centres, while it was not yet procured at the time of the final evaluation.
124. The expenditure for pilot equipment stood at USD 952 194 on 31 August 2021; this included USD 147 830 in 'soft commitments' for processing equipment and agricultural machinery. Construction

costs for the logistical centres were totalled USD 426 060, or 48 percent of the pilot equipment total. By the same date, USD 55 845 or 13 percent of the construction costs had been spent; the warehouse rental fee for agricultural equipment from November 2020 to August 2021 was USD 5 932. Expenditure for potatoes was USD 132 145 or 14 percent of all equipment expenditures for the pilots.

125. The equipment purchased for Ministry of Agriculture, AoH, TAU, TVA and CFS contributed to the efficiency of the work of stakeholders as well as project implementation. Total amount spent on equipment for these entities was USD 366 798 UD, of which USD 147 892 or 40 percent had been spent on motorcycles for CFS. The remaining of the expenses were for laboratory equipment for CFS, as well as computers, internet infrastructure, tablets and other items for the AoH pilots.

Finding 18. Considering the ratio of human resources to total budget vis-à-vis the outcome obtained, the evaluation team found that the capacity building could have been conducted more efficiently. Clearly defined responsibilities among project staff, and short-term international and national experts could have increased efficiency. Limited use of formal communication channels also decreased efficiency.

Table 9. Expenditure on human resources and capacity building

Total budget	USD 5 817 468	
Subtotal human resources (HR) short term consultants and technical support service	USD 1 174 396	42% of HR
Subtotal HR project staff	USD 1 648 074	58% of HR
Total HR	USD 2 822 470	48%
Total capacity building (study tours, training, workshops, meetings and policy dialogue forums)	USD 95 789	2%

Source: Elaborated by the evaluation team.

126. Almost half of the budget (48 percent) was spent on human resources. The cost of all short-term consultants and technical support service was USD 1 174 396, or 42 percent of the human resources expenditures, which also included USD 440 400 for the development of NIP. The cost of project staff was USD 1 648 074, or 58 percent of the human resources expenditures. This included all key admin/support and technical staff, including the project team, ARS, mobilizers, and the admin and finance team. The project team and mobilizers implemented a relatively high amount of management and organizational tasks, rather than technical tasks, which increased the overhead costs and decreased the efficiency in achieving the project outcomes. Expenditures for capacity building were relatively low, although it is noted that HR capacity building was not included in this two percent.
127. The extension of the project from four to six years increased the overhead costs. With regard to costs of key project staff, the contract of the chief technical advisor (CTA) was interrupted between January and August 2021 on the assumption of limited necessity during that period.
128. The evaluation team found that sometimes the short-term national experts were only organizers or were not well equipped to implement the tasks or were not keeping the process going during the absence of the international expert; the question also arose about who takes responsibility for the ongoing process and final product.
129. In general, the tasks among the project team members were well divided: one was responsible for Output 4, related to the availability of improved data and capacity building of TAU, and another was responsible for Output 5, related to the veterinary aspects and CFS. On the other

hand, several staff members were working on Outputs 1, 2 and 3, which despite involving good teamwork, questions arise regarding the eventual responsibility for the delivery of these outputs.

130. Information flow with and among partners was problematic. ARS worked with TWG, and project management worked with the senior management in Ministry of Agriculture. The evaluation team found that there was a missing link between lower and higher levels, especially in the ministry. The Team found that TWG members were not aware of the final decisions related to the topics in the discussion or elaboration of which they were involved in the TWG. Senior MOA staff and TWG members regretted that they were not well informed about the project and did not receive project reports, in some cases even not on request.

Finding 19. The project made use of existing knowledge and experience on agrarian reform in Tajikistan by employing project staff and experts coming from previous agricultural international projects. Furthermore, during implementation, ARS supported meetings with resource partners and lessons learnt were always considered within the project. However, there was space for additional use of previous experience in agrarian reforms from other initiatives in the country.

131. Agrarian reforms had already been going on for ten years in Tajikistan; much could have been learned from previous experiences to formulate improved policies. For example, value chain development including food safety had been practiced extensively by various projects, such as RDP 1 and the related 'Enhanced Competitiveness of Tajik Agribusiness Project' (ECTAP) financed by the same donor (European Union). The German Agency for International Cooperation (GIZ) implemented the 'Towards Rural Inclusive Growth and Economic Resilience' (TRIGGER) project and European Union-funded natural resource management projects within RDP 1, establishing informal farmer groups to organize common services and informal cooperatives. In Zerafshan ten seed potato producer groups were established, supported by the European Union Delegation through RDP 1.
132. The project strongly supported the establishment of a Donor Coordination Working Group in April 2017, chaired at the time of the evaluation by GIZ, with FAO as co-chair and with Ministry of Agriculture participation. The Working Group contributed to structuring and coordinating donors' assistance to the agriculture sector of Tajikistan in general, and their contribution to the reform process in particular. Capacity development was on the agenda of the Working Group. All members were aware of the prominent role of the FAO project in building institutional and human resource capacities of the institutional stakeholders in the sector and, particularly, of Ministry of Agriculture; therefore, they did not become active in this sphere while waiting for the results of the capacity building to be delivered by the FAO project.
133. There were many projects working on producer groups, with donors including the World Bank, the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) and the United States Agency for International Development (USAID). Overlapping target areas are avoided by donors focusing on different target areas; it was confirmed by stakeholders during the interview that "this is agreed on in Donor Coordination working group" and "it is more or less agreed among the development partners, and it works". For instance, FAO, USAID and GIZ supported storage facilities in producer groups in different geographical areas. And new projects factfinding missions to facilitate coordination among donors before project start. On the other hand, interviews indicated there was limited exchange of experience despite the efforts expressed by some interviewed stakeholders.

Finding 20. Establishment of the Committee for Food Security changed institutional settings. However, the project managed to navigate these changes in a successful way.

134. With the establishment of CFS in December 2017, institutional settings in Ministry of Agriculture changed, as Ministry of Agriculture's State Veterinary Inspection Service, the State Inspection Service for Phytosanitation and Plant Quarantine, the State Breeding Service and the State Inspection on Seeds Control became part of the new CFS directly under the government. It emerged that the project managed to equally involve both partners, Ministry of Agriculture and CFS.
135. The work of the CFS around food safety determined a significant institutional change expected to impact on many dimensions of the legal and economic framework of the food industry and farm production. This was a reform process where new elements would be developed to accommodate prevailing conditions, level of knowledge and demand by economic agents. Tajikistan was opened to the international market; economic agents were interested to export and hence meeting importing countries' product safety and marketing standards were a priority for exporters.

Finding 21. The COVID-19 pandemic restricted the availability of international experts in the country and negatively influenced the tendering process for construction of logistical centres.

136. The project staff mostly assumed coordination tasks and as well as maintenance of stakeholder relations. A planned mission of the international food safety expert in spring 2020 could not take place owing to the COVID-19 pandemic. The expert finalized the tasks remotely in August 2021.
137. As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic the range of choice of high-quality construction companies was limited and costs for construction materials increased in view of reduced competition on the market.

3.4 Sustainability

Finding 22. In relation to all trained stakeholders, the evaluation team found that target-oriented capacity development in the Ministry of Agriculture, AoS, TAU and AoH – with a combination of software and equipment – was reported as highly successful, ensuring positive effects after project closure. There was limited evidence at time of the evaluation for an increased capacity for policy formulation on the part of Ministry of Agriculture. Training of CFS members by TVA was reported as successful and well appreciated. Participants stated to be confident in applying gained knowledge and skills.

138. It is expected that equipment supplied in the AoH pilots will remain and continue to be used in the future, contributing to the sustainability of the project. However, there is still a need to establish a mechanism for the continued use by Ministry of Agriculture and farmers of the available improved data for crop forecasts and pest control.
139. Training of CFS and its members by TVA was reported as successful and well appreciated. Participants indicated their confidence in applying gained knowledge and skills.
140. The question specifically related to the increased capacity of Ministry of Agriculture staff has been discussed under Outcome Indicator 3 "Percentage of project-trained Ministry of Agriculture staff that used improved skills in agriculture and food security policy formulation".

Finding 23. Despite the intention of implementing the pilot initiatives using a participatory approach, limited ownership by cooperative members and the TWG emerged.

141. The evaluation team observed limited ownership of project results by Ministry of Agriculture stakeholders, i.e. TWG members involved in the restructuring process and TWG members involved in the pilots. Until the end of 2019 the TWG was well involved in developing the Ministry of Agriculture restructuring proposal and felt motivated and engaged in a moment of change.

However, the approval process stalled, TWG members were not informed about what had occurred and consequently lost their interest in the restructuring process. They were not entirely informed about the development of policy documents, such as legal documents on cooperatives and NIP, including sector studies. Selected TWG members were involved in the analysis of the value chains and the selection of pilots. When the mobilizers were appointed, TWG members were not (or to a limited extent) informed about and involved in further activities and developments relating to cooperatives, with the exception of TWG members being involved in the pilots on seed potato production, including monitoring of the potato crop, and felt a sense of ownership for these pilots.

142. Ownership of cooperatives by farmers did not fully materialize because the members were attracted around assets and tangible benefits such as logistical centres, seed potatoes, MTS and agrishops, and are therefore waiting for these assets to be in place before mobilization for collective buying and selling. Mobilizers and lawyers were actively helping with document registration and land allocation; while their role was to guide the process, it was found that they were in fact more involved in the implementation of these activities and handed the documents to the farmers.

Finding 24. Equipment supplied to the four pilots cooperatives will remain with the latter and will be used in future, contributing to the sustainability of project interventions. While technical support and training is still required by the farmers.

143. Farmers paid their shares but are still waiting for the logistical centres to be completed and equipment to be in place, which will then motivate them to make use of the assets. However, farmers still require technical support and training (evidence of members' capacities was only found in Shahrinav); members need learning-by-doing and to experience the cooperative mechanism.

Finding 25. There is a general risk that developed strategies and policies developed by the project may remain 'shelved'.

144. At the time of the final evaluation, no strategies, policies and other documents had been endorsed, with the exception of FSP 2020–2024, which was already under implementation during the evaluation. The evaluation team identified the risk that developed documents may not be implemented in the future, owing to a lack of endorsement. Certain developed documents need further improvement; for example, the strategy for veterinary services shows some omissions and gaps that should be gradually amended. Such improvements require experience and action by involved stakeholders, and therefore these are not fully assured.

3.5 Gender

Finding 26. Project M&E data provide disaggregated numbers of men and women among training participants and cooperative members. The project stimulated participation of women in cooperatives, despite gender equality not being specifically included in the project design.

145. The project stimulated participation of women in cooperatives. Shahrinav cooperative had a woman cooperative leader (since September 2021), and six of the 32 members were women. In Nurabod, three of the 23 cooperative members were women. Danagara and Sharistan cooperatives each had one woman member among their 11 and 17 cooperative members, respectively. The project organized training session targeted to women so as to enhance their capacity for diversified involvement in farm activities; TVA attracted the interest of women in the dairy value chain by providing training on dairy processing, which was highly valued by participants.

146. However, there is still a way to go to achieve gender equality and learn how a project might best address these issues, particularly in view of cultural norms that require a long process of change. Even though this was not among the objectives of the project.

4. Conclusions and recommendations

4.1 Conclusions

Conclusion 1. The project was and remains highly relevant and aligned with the needs and priorities of national stakeholders, including the government and community beneficiaries. However, the project's management put an excessive focus on achieving outputs, while the government's ambition was for a structural change in the system, with strengthened institutions and increased capacity to adapt to the changing environment. Furthermore, the Project Results Matrix, having an excessive number of indicators, activities and sub-activities, was not effective in providing an overall picture of the structural change that the project was aiming for.

Conclusion 2. Several strategies, assessments and policy papers were developed by the project, pilot initiatives were started, and in the process, Ministry of Agriculture was sensitized to reform processes and its changing role in the context of a market economy. A start has been made with the institutional and capacity development of Ministry of Agriculture, although the newly developed Ministry of Agriculture structure still requires adaptation and improvement before its approval by Ministry of Agriculture and the Government.

Conclusion 3. Capacities for delivering animal health services have improved considerably and are used in practice. However, there remains a long way towards enabling well-functioning private veterinary services. The strategy for the development of veterinary services, which has not been endorsed yet, is needed to accelerate this process.

Conclusion 4. The project management team established an effective relationship and regular contact with Ministry of Agriculture and its focal point. However, the lack of regular communication and continued engagement of other involved stakeholders contributed to the non-achievement of the endorsement of the proposed Ministry of Agriculture institutional reform, as well as policy and strategy papers, delaying the overall project implementation.

Conclusion 5. The M&E system was insufficiently used as a project management tool. The project missed the opportunity of jointly monitoring the progress of the pilot initiatives in cooperation with Ministry of Agriculture's TWG and capturing lessons learned in a systematic way.

Conclusion 6. The project very efficiently navigated across the institutional changes determined by the establishment of the CFS. Nevertheless, it suffered from delays that impeded efficient implementation of the pilot initiatives on agrarian reform. This was caused by a range of factors, most notably by the COVID-19 pandemic, which negatively influenced the construction process of logistical centres. It was also concluded that given the ratio of human resources to total budget, capacity development could have been implemented more efficiently with clearly defined responsibilities among project staff.

Conclusion 7. Target-oriented capacity development will contribute towards the project sustainability ensuring positive effects after its closure. However, there was a tendency for project management to take on the implementing rather than the guiding role to overcome the impacts of incurred delays which sometimes resulted in limited involvement of national stakeholders. As a result, the levels of ownership and commitment from government as well as beneficiary stakeholders decreased throughout the project implementation.

Conclusion 8. It emerged that the project stimulated participation of women in cooperatives despite this not being specifically included in the project design.

4.2 Recommendations

Short term recommendations – for the remaining period of project implementation²¹

Recommendation 1. Ensure that a roadmap for endorsement is included when finalizing and submitting the remaining strategies to the Ministry of Agriculture and the Ministry of Economic Development and Trade.

Recommendation 2. Ensure that a working coordination unit is available for implementation when finalizing the NIP and submitting it for approval.

Recommendation 3. Prepare an exit strategy for the four pilot cooperatives based on an in-depth analysis of the situation in each site and present it to the European Union Delegation before closure of project.

Recommendation 4. Consider applying to FAO internal funds, such as TCP, and ensure that funding is available to continue providing assistance to cooperatives.

Long term recommendations – For future projects on policy work

Recommendation 5. For a successful policy reform, a mechanism of stakeholder involvement at all levels needs to be in place to guide and steer the process from the start through to endorsement. This would help to address the risk of interruptions of policy processes caused by changes in the ministries, among senior management and in the TWG.

Recommendation 6. Policy development cannot move forward without insights into new concepts and international standards. It is important to hold preliminary awareness raising sessions to create an environment that enables participants to translate concepts into policy interventions.

Recommendation 7. It is recommended that a clear definition of roles and responsibilities, as well as an effective distribution of tasks between international and national staff that carry out short-term assignments, are ensured. Furthermore, such tasks should be well planned, time-bound and monitored to ensure successful implementation. Additionally, instead of hiring individual national consultants for short-term assignments, it is recommended to engage more local non-governmental organizations (NGOs) that have experience working with projects and may continue to be engaged after project closure.

Recommendation 8. FAO has a comparative advantage through its approach from a decade ago in assisting the initiation of agrarian reforms in Tajikistan, which is found to be still valid. FAO should continue working closely with all involved ministries to achieve effective results. This would also contribute to having continuous support from donor agencies.

Recommendation 9. It is strongly recommended that FAO, in future projects, together with other key development partners in the sector, develops a systematic approach to capacity building and training for involved ministries. One-off, short-term and ad-hoc capacity building in the past decade have failed to develop a 'critical mass' within ministries that could handle the change and reform processes. The design of such a systematic approach must envisage the creation and further development of a solid group of professionals within a given ministry over a period of two to three years that could manage the transition away from the current mindset, attitudes and behaviour towards a market-oriented and privately led agricultural sector.

Recommendation 10. During the project implementation, it emerged that generated information in the context of the project, was not always available to interested stakeholders, i.e. AoH was reluctant to share the data from the three pilots on agrometeorological forecasting of crops. It is recommended that before investments are made, project management agrees with the organization or entity that is to generate

²¹ These have been presented to the project team and government counterparts in October 2021.

tools and information within the framework of and finance by the project, that these will be available – within the project's scope – to interested stakeholder.

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Appendix 1. People interviewed

During the evaluation all participants had the right to provide information in confidence. To maintain respect and anonymity, names of interviewees are not disclosed in this report.

Overview of the interviewee groups:

FAO	27 (15 men/12 women)
Governmental organizations/agencies	33 (32 men/1 woman)
Non-governmental organizations	3 (2 men/1 woman)
Other organizations	6 (3 men/3 women)
beneficiaries	53 (43 men/10 women)

Appendix 2. Evaluation matrix

Sub-question	Indicators	End of project target	Methods and sources
Evaluation criterion: RELEVANCE			
Question 1: To what extent is the project relevant to the needs and priorities of the national stakeholders, including the government and any community beneficiaries?			
Sub-question 1.1: Do procedures for identification and prioritisation of the project ensure that they address important challenges? Is the project aligned to the national development priorities?	i. The project has been designed and has prioritized based on broad consultation of key stakeholders. ii. Key stakeholders consider that the project results address relevant challenges. iii. The project is aligned to the national development priorities.		KII; FGD; desk review. <u>Primary sources:</u> Relevant Stakeholders for priorities and needs. <u>Secondary sources:</u> i. Project documents; ii. National strategy and priorities documents.
Question 2: To what extent is the project relevant to the broader sustainable development initiatives, i.e. Agenda 2030, and to FAO Strategic Framework?			
Sub-question 2.1: How does the project support the objectives of FAO in this sector?	Indicators: Existence of clear relationship between project objectives and strategic programme objectives of FAO, as well as gender equality objectives and environmental and social standards.		KII; desk review. <u>Primary sources:</u> FAO stakeholders; <u>Secondary sources:</u> Project documents and FAO strategies and programme documents.
Question 3: Was the project design and the logical framework appropriate for delivering the expected outcomes?			
Sub-question 3.1: Is there a direct and strong link between project expected outputs and outcome (log frame) and the project design (in terms of project components, choice of partners, structure, delivery mechanism, scope, budget, use of resources, etc)? Sub-question 3.2: What changes have been made in the project intervention matrix since the project's start and why were they made? Did the changes support improved outputs/outcome of the project? Sub-question 3.3: What was the rationale in designing the	Indicators: i. Level of coherence between project expected outputs and outcome and project design internal logic. ii. Extent to which the reason to change relates to the project intervention matrix. iii. Level of coherence and synergy with other RDP 1 projects.		KII; FGD; desk review. <u>Primary sources:</u> Key stakeholders including those who were involved in the RDP 1 programme; <u>Secondary sources:</u> Programme and project documents.

Sub-question	Indicators	End of project target	Methods and sources
intervention as a part of the Rural Development Programme I?			
Evaluation criterion: EFFECTIVENESS			
Question 4: To what extent has the project achieved its outcome and related outputs and were there any unintended results?			
<p><u>Outcome:</u> Strengthened institutions and capacity in strategic decision making, planning regulation, quality control and management in the food and agricultural sectors (including livestock),</p> <p>Related to the Ministry of Agriculture – Sub-question 4.1: What are the main improvements in the Ministry of Agriculture due to the institutional reform of the Ministry of Agriculture? Were there any unintended results?</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> i. Related to the Ministry of Agriculture: ii. Institutional reform of the Ministry of Agriculture is endorsed and implemented to strengthen its role as the regulator and facilitator of the agriculture sector development and provision of food security iii. Number of policies, regulations, programs and road maps developed with the Project assistance are endorsed and their implementation has started to contribute in implementation of agrarian reforms, development of agriculture sector and improving food security iv. Percentage of the Ministry of Agriculture staff trained with the Project’s assistance and used improved skills in agriculture and food security policy formulation v. Improved quality and availability of agriculture production data resulted in better planning and decision making in agriculture sector vi. Number of stakeholders who replicated good experiences from pilots on agricultural reforms 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> i. Stage 2: implementation of institutional reform is started ii. 6 iii. 60% (M/F) iv. 4 stakeholders used improved production data for planning and decision making v. 8 	KII; FGD; desk review. <u>Primary sources:</u> Ministry of Agriculture, Agroproms in the oblasts, districts, jamoat; AoS, AoH, stakeholders who replicated pilots, beneficiaries in the communities <u>Secondary sources:</u> Project documents; policies; regulations; programs and road maps developed with the Project assistance.

Sub-question	Indicators	End of project target	Methods and sources
<p>Related to the SVIS/CFS – Sub-question 4.2: What are the main improvements in CFS compared to SVIS due to the institutional reform? Were there any unintended changes?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Performance indicators or the levels of competencies based on WOAHP Performance of Veterinary Services (PVS Tool) gradually improved ii. A strategy for development of veterinary services is endorsed iii. A new regulation for establishment of CFS is endorsed iv. Percentage of the trained vets used new skills 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Average score 3 ii. yes iii. yes iv. 60% (M/F) 	<p>KII; FGD; desk review. <u>Primary sources:</u> CFS, CFS in the oblasts, districts, jamoat; TVA, private vets, beneficiaries in the communities. <u>Secondary sources:</u> Project documents, policies, regulations, programs and road maps developed with the Project assistance.</p>
<p>Output 1: Plans for the institutional reform of the Ministry of Agriculture are finalized, endorsed and implemented. Sub-question 4.3: How has the new Ministry of Agriculture structure been developed and what are the main changes? Were there any unintended changes?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Proposal with Ministry of Agriculture functions, organogram and staff job descriptions finalized through an inclusive consensus-based process (functional analysis prepared) and approved ii. The Agrarian Reforms Secretariat (ARS) under the Ministry of Agriculture is established, functional and institutionalized iii. Number of staff in Agrarian Reform Secretariat, CSF, Ministry of Agriculture Agrarian Policy and Food Security department and other respective Ministry of Agriculture staff, trained on M&E functions to monitor Agrarian Reform programme implementation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Stage 3: the proposal and roadmap are finalised through inclusive consultation process. ii. 5 biannual high-level coordination meetings conducted by ARS presenting results. iii. 25 (M/F) 	<p>KII; desk review. <u>Primary sources:</u> Ministry of Agriculture, CSF, ARS <u>Secondary sources:</u> Project documents; functional analysis of the Ministry of Agriculture; Ministry of Agriculture organogram (old and new) with Ministry of Agriculture functions, organogram and staff job descriptions; monitoring reports on agrarian reform; training reports</p>
<p>Output 2: Selected Agrarian Reform and food security policies and regulations are formulated with active contribution of the Ministry of Agriculture staff through an inclusive and participatory process. Sub-question 4.4: What policies, regulations, assessments and analyses on agricultural reform and food security are updated/developed/implemented with support of the project? What was the role of pilots in this process?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Number of policies and regulations updated/developed with the Project assistance to support the agriculture sector development and improvement of food security and safety ii. Number of policies, situation and sectorial analyses and assessments conducted on agriculture sector and food security with the Project assistance iii. Number of pilots for selected agriculture reforms to support implementation of reforms 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. 6 ii. 7 iii. 3 	<p>KII; FGD, desk review. <u>Primary sources:</u> Ministry of Agriculture policy staff; Agroproms in the oblasts, districts, jamoat; stakeholders in the pilots; beneficiaries in the communities <u>Secondary sources:</u> Project documents; policies; regulations; programs and road maps developed with the Project assistance.</p>

Sub-question	Indicators	End of project target	Methods and sources
<p>Output 3: Capacity of the Ministry of Agriculture is strengthened for analysis and technical competence</p> <p>Sub-question 4.5: On what priority policy and technical areas such as computer, communication and language skills and other topics new knowledge and skill have been gained and/or information has been shared/disseminated?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Training needs assessment of the Ministry of Agriculture staff is conducted, and Training Plan is developed ii. Number of Ministry of Agriculture, CFS, TAU staff and other relevant national stakeholders trained on priority policy and technical areas such as computer, communication and language skills and other topics iii. Number of Ministry of Agriculture, CFS staff and other relevant national stakeholders participated in study tours on agrarian reforms process and other priority policy areas iv. The mapping of activities, being implemented in agriculture sector by all national and international stakeholders is carried out v. The e-mail domain (@moa.tj) for the Ministry of Agriculture is established and operational to improve communication and sharing information vi. The website (moa.tj) of the Ministry of Agriculture is upgraded to effectively raise awareness about activities in agriculture sector and disseminate advisory information 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Stage 3 Training plan is updated annually ii. 250 (M/F) iii. 28 (M/F) iv. Stage 2 Updated v. Stage 3: The new email domain is functioning vi. Stage 2 Website of the Ministry of Agriculture is upgraded 	<p>KII; FGD; desk review.</p> <p><u>Primary sources:</u> Ministry of Agriculture, CSF, Tau and other relevant stakeholders trained on priority policy and technical areas such as computer, communication and language skills and other topics; Agroproms in the oblasts, districts, jamoat; beneficiaries in the communities</p> <p><u>Secondary sources:</u> Project documents; training reports; Ministry of Agriculture web site.</p>
<p>Output 4: The availability of quality agriculture and food security data and information is improved</p> <p>Sub-question 4.6: To what extent is the availability of quality agriculture and food security data and information improved? What tools have been developed for this purpose?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. The sample survey of Dehkan farms is finalized and implemented ii. Number of AoS staff trained in implementing the sample survey of Dehkan farms according to the new methodology iii. 2013 Agriculture census reports are prepared, published and distributed with the project's assistance iv. Methodology and parameters for preparation of Food Balance Sheet (FBS) is improved and adopted v. Number of staff of the Ministry of Agriculture and the AoH and other stakeholders trained on forecasting for major crops vi. Pilots on agrometeorological forecasting of crops are established and implemented in selected 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Stage 3 Survey implemented ii. 100 (M/F) iii. Stage 2 Revised reports are published and distributed iv. Stage 2 FBS is launched according to methodology v. 50 (M/F) vi. Stage 3 Pilots are established and functioning 	<p>KII; FGD; desk review.</p> <p><u>Primary sources:</u> AoS on national, oblast, district and jamoat level; AoH on national, oblast, district and jamoat level, involved staff in pilots on agrometeorological forecasting of crops, State Agency on Plant Protection and Chemicalization under Ministry of Agriculture; participants in training on forecasting of crops, users of the data (Ministry of Agriculture, advisory services, beneficiaries in the communities)</p> <p><u>Secondary sources:</u> Project reports; developed and improved forms (survey of Dehkan farms, Food Balance Sheets (FBS)); training reports.</p>

Sub-question	Indicators	End of project target	Methods and sources
	<p>areas</p>		
<p>Output 5: Private and public institutional and implementation capacities for delivering animal health services are strengthened</p> <p>Sub-question 4.7: To what extent are private and public institutional and implementation capacities strengthened for delivering animal health services? Where the any unintended results?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. New organigram with functions described for CFS (SVIS) is completed according to WOAH recommendations and CFS (SVIS) performance indicators based on WOAH PVS Tools discussed and adopted; ii. Number of CFS (SVIS) staff trained to design modern disease control strategies and policies; iii. New policies, regulations and disease control strategies are prepared; iv. Number of veterinary undergraduate and new graduate students, faculty staff, TVA members, CFS staff trained; v. A Strategy and a Roadmap for monitoring of GMO products and a Capacity Building Plan for CFS are prepared vi. A project proposal for further strengthening of CFS is prepared; vii. Assessment of needed equipment and training for CFS is prepared. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. CSF organigram is developed ii. 10 (M/F) iii. 1 iv. 1000 (M/F) v. Prepared vi. yes 	<p>KII; FGD; desk review.</p> <p><u>Primary sources:</u> CFS national and in the oblasts, districts, jamoat; TAU faculty staff, veterinary undergraduate new graduate students, private vets (TVA members), beneficiaries in the communities,</p> <p><u>Secondary sources:</u> Project documents; New organigram with functions described for CFS (SVIS);; new policies; regulations and disease control strategies; training reports; CFS performance indicators; strategies; TVA reports and strategy.</p>

Sub-question	Indicators	End of project target	Methods and sources
Question 5: What are the enabling/constraining factors influencing the achievements and non-achievements of the outcome and outputs?			
<p>Sub-question 5.1: What are the main achievements related to outcome and output? What were the enabling factors? What were the constraining factors?</p> <p>Sub-question 5.2: What were the non-achievements related to outcome and output? What were the constraining factors?</p>	<p>i. Enabling factors for success are adequately used.</p> <p>ii. Constraining factors are recognised.</p>		<p>KII; FGD; desk review.</p> <p><u>Primary sources:</u> FAO stakeholders Key stakeholders</p> <p><u>Secondary sources:</u> Project documents.</p>
Question 6: To what extent was the M&E system appropriate in monitoring and supporting the implementation of the targeted results?			
<p>Sub-question 6.1: What were the main M&E tools to monitor and support the implementation of the targeted results? How often and when did the M&E team inform the management for needed action?</p>	<p>M&E tools and M&E results are adequately used to make adjustments in approach, methodology and/or activities in the project.</p>		<p>KII; FGD, desk review.</p> <p><u>Primary sources:</u> relevant staff of Ministry of Agriculture M&E project</p> <p><u>Secondary sources:</u> Project Documents; monitoring reports</p>
Evaluation criterion: EFFICIENCY OF DELIVERY			
Question 7: How did the project activities, the institutional arrangements, the partnerships in place and the resources available contribute to, or impede, the achievement of the project's results and objectives?			
<p>Sub-question 7.1: Has the project been implemented in an efficient and cost-effective manner?</p> <p>Sub-question 7.2: How efficient is the current project governance structure and operational modality, including management?</p> <p>Sub-question 7.3: How efficient is the collaboration among partners and project beneficiaries?</p> <p>Sub-question 7.4: Were there any complementarities or duplication with other activities in the country?</p>	<p>i. The project choices are adequate in view of existing context, infrastructures and cost;</p> <p>ii. The outputs and outcomes justify the costs incurred;</p> <p>iii. The project was complementary to other projects, local non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and/or other organisations working on agrarian reform programme topics;</p> <p>iv. The project used lessons learned from other projects;</p> <p>v. There are no duplications with other activities in the country.</p>		<p>KII; FGD; desk review.</p> <p><u>Primary sources:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. FAO Project staff members, ii. Ministry of Agriculture, DCC and ARS representatives. <p><u>Secondary sources:</u> Project financial budget and expenses reports.</p>

Sub-question	Indicators	End of project target	Methods and sources
Question 8: To what extent was the project able to adapt its management, based on learning, and to the changing context, including COVID-19?			
<p>Sub-question 8.1: How has COVID-19 affected the implementation of the project and what adaptive measures have been taken?</p>	<p>The project has taken adaptive measures when needed.</p>		<p>KII; FGD; desk review. Primary sources: key stakeholders Secondary sources: Project documents</p>
Evaluation criterion: SUSTAINABILITY			
Question 9: What is the likelihood that the project results will continue to be useful or will remain even after the end of the project?			
<p>Sub-question 9.1: Is there evidence that project partners will continue their activities beyond project support?</p> <p>Sub-question 9.2: How is ownership ensured and what challenges have been encountered in achieving ownership of the project activities?</p> <p>Sub-question 9.3: To what extent has the project increased the capacity of the Ministry of Agriculture staff?</p> <p>Sub-question 9.4: What are the risks that may affect the sustainability of the project results?</p> <p>Sub-question 9.5: Does the project have an exit strategy and has it been followed?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Knowledge and skills introduced by project interventions have been adopted and practiced; ii. Developed policies have been disseminated to the target groups iii. Mitigation measures have been taken to avoid potential risk that may affect sustainability. iv. Existence of an exit strategy and consequent implementation of it. 		<p>KII; FGD; desk review. <u>Primary sources:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. FAO Project staff members; ii. FGD with beneficiaries in the districts/jamoats, i.e., trainings' participants and pilots' participants. <p><u>Secondary sources:</u> Analysis of exit strategy related documents.</p>

Sub-question	Indicators	End of project target	Methods and sources
Evaluation criterion: GENDER EQUALITY			
Question 10: To what extent were gender considerations taken into account in designing, monitoring, and implementing and reporting of the project?			
<p>Sub-question 10.1: Was the project implemented in a manner that ensures gender equitable participation and benefits?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Gender aspects are reflected in new policies. ii. Gender equitable participation in project activities. 		<p>KII; FGD; desk review.</p> <p><u>Primary sources:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. FAO Project staff members; ii. Government representatives; iii. FGD with women beneficiary in the districts/jamoats, i.e., trainings' participants and pilots' participants. <p><u>Secondary sources:</u> Gender disaggregated data; project reports; developed policies</p>

Appendix 3. Planned programme field mission

Two project pilots selected for comprehensive data collection through field visits conducted by the national consultant.

Criteria for selecting the pilots for field missions:

- i. Different climatic areas with different crops;
- ii. Level of functioning: one "fully" functioning (one growing season, good cooperative, but logistical centre not yet ready); one less functioning. Judgment based on information gathered from KII with mobilizers and with project manager;
- iii. Distance – at least one pilot in a remote area further from the capital.

Final selection based on the above criteria:

- i. **Dangara:** not far from capital; not "fully" functioning yet; fruits and vegetables.
- ii. **Nurabod:** remote area (170 km - not good roads); fully-functioning; seed potatoes.
- iii. **Shahrinav:** near to the capital, day trip.

Proposed number of days: 2 days in Dangara, 3 days in Nurabod and 1 day in Shahrinav.

Proposes mission plan:

Nurabod - 10,11,12 September 2021

10 September

morning	travel + lunch
1.00 - 1.30	Meeting with Hukumat Rayon
1.45 - 3.00	FGD with head of the agricultural department and agronomist
3.00 - 3.30	Visit information/consultation center -rayon
3.30 - 4.15	Meeting AoS data collectors - rayon.
4.15 - 5.00	Meeting with CFS rayon - food safety and veterinary staff.

11 September

9.00 - 10.00	FGD Jamoat with hukumat, agricultural department and agronomist.
10.00 - 12.00	Meeting with management board (chairman, cashier, secretary) - visit storage where they stored the potatoes last year, visit construction place, visit their fields. Meeting preferably at the place where all documents of the cooperative are stored.
12.00 - 1.00	lunch
1.00 - 2.00	Interview with the agronomist who visits the member farmers.
2.00 - 5.00	FGD with male farmers and visit their fields

12 September

9.00 - 11.00	Visit the two women member farmers individually at home*
11.00 - 12.00	Interview with public vets
12.00	Travel back to Dushanbe

Note: * Mobiliser confirmed that women will not commute.

Dangara - 14, 15 September 2021**14 September**

Estimation of 2-hour drive, leaving at 8 am

10.00 - 10.30	Meeting with Hukumat (Rayon)
10.30 - 11.15	Meeting with head of the agricultural department and agronomist
11.15 - 11.45	Visit information/consultation center
11.45 - 12.30	Interview AoS
12.30 - 1.30	Lunch
1.45 - 4.00	Meeting with management board in jamoat (request to have all documents, meetings and financial reports available) - visit construction place, visit their fields.
4.00 - 5.00	FGD in Jamoat with hukumat, agricultural department and agronomist.

15 September

9.00 - 11.00	FGD male farmers members and visit fields.
11.00 - 12.00	In Dangara is only 1 woman member but she is represented by her husband. Speak with the woman separately if possible
12.00 - 1.00	Lunch
1.00 - 2.00	FGD with stakeholders in district platform (50% who were in the meeting in December 2020)
2.00 - 3.00	Interview with CFS office: food safety and veterinary staff (about restructuring) plus public vet - trainee
3.00	Travel to Dushanbe

Shahrinav - 17 September 2021**17 September**

10.00 - 12.00	FGD with 6 women and field visits if possible
12.00 - 13.00	Lunch
13.00 - 15.00	Meeting the management of the cooperative and their fields/ documents/ contracts for export
15:00	Travel back to Dushanbe

Office of Evaluation
E-mail: evaluation@fao.org
Web address: www.fao.org/evaluation

Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
Rome, Italy