



Food and Agriculture  
Organization of the United  
Nations

## Office of Evaluation

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### **Regional Fisheries Livelihoods Programme for South and Southeast Asia (RFLP) - (GCP /RAS/237/SPA)**

*Management Response to the mid-term evaluation report*

## Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations

### Office of Evaluation (OED)

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## **Regional Fisheries Livelihoods Programme for South and Southeast Asia (RFLP) (GCP/RAS/237/SPA) - Management Response to the Mid-term Evaluation**

### **Overall response to the evaluation:**

The MTE addresses a complex programme operated in highly diverse institutional and situational contexts, making a comprehensive assessment difficult, but the programme management appreciates the results achieved by the MTE team in producing this report.

The MTE has identified many shortcomings of the programme and has provided important recommendations; other aspects of the programme have not been fully analyzed i.e. some of the project successes and strengths. While the report has met most of the indications of the TOR, the analysis of the project success stories and strengths would have provided additional useful information to build upon and maximize RFLP final impact. The findings of the MTE report are therefore very important and will be used to improve the achievement of the project objectives.

Some selected examples of RFLP successes could have been:

- Learning from and building on the co-management experiences of other projects within the region;
- Strengthening the understanding and ability to address safety of fishers.;
- Practical, locally appropriate post-harvest activities;
- Institutional strengthening of fishery agencies.
- Learning from specialist international consultants and livelihoods projects worldwide.
- Bringing coastal fishing communities into the line of sight of financial institutions.
- Dissemination of this knowledge to a broader community of development practitioners.

Whilst many of the observations of the MTE are accurate, it is the consideration of management that in a few occasions they do not fully reflect the situation of the project. Maybe the report could have described with more details the institutional context within which the programme is operating. We think that the MTE report could have assessed with more details the RFLP livelihoods programme strategy, the modality of FAO field operations and FAO project relationships with member countries and implementing agencies, however the recommendations provided will certainly help in better focusing on this important aspect of the programme.

At the time of the mid-term review, the RFLP had only been fully operational in the field for a little over a year, having invested significant effort, time, and resources in fostering government ownership of the planned programme of activities and establishing appropriate structures for implementation. Probably the use of the performance ratings for a mid-term evaluation was premature, especially since the application of a rating is likely to be considered by the hasty reader as "the final judgment" of the MTE

The project management accepts 7 (and partially accepts other 2) of the 10 recommendations made by the MTE, many of which have already been taken on board during the current planning cycle. In some cases the recommendations are a bit generic, and do not take into consideration that the programme is not a single entity.

The project management is grateful to the MTE team for the work carried out and the results achieved.

*Management response matrix*

Management response to the RFLP (GCP/RAS/237/SPA) Mid Term Evaluation					
Evaluation Recommendation	Management response Accepted, partially accepted or rejected and comment on the Recommendation	Management plan			
		Action to be taken	Responsible unit	Time frame	Further funding required (Y or N)
1) Focus RFLP implementations on a smaller set of selected, more promising sites for more comprehensive work to produce substantial livelihood impacts and solid lessons for sharing and up-scaling, while still maintaining some level of activity in the other communities, and pursue the Safety at Sea and microfinance access outputs further only if rigorous analyses reveal that they will contribute significantly to improved livelihoods and reduced vulnerability and communities request these interventions.	<p><b>Accepted</b></p> <p>Noting that the RFLP has made agreements with and has commitments to its communities, local and national governments and other institutions, some level of activities will be maintained in those communities, however, as recommended, the project will focus on successful initiatives and reduce those activities which are proving to have limited impact on livelihoods or which are likely to have little substantive adoption</p> <p>As the RFLP has a process approach to its engagement in communities, an important aspect of RFLP is to seek ways of working with local government staff and communities. This involves a continuing hands-on mentoring in sustainable livelihoods approach to livelihoods enhancement and diversification</p>	<p><b>Action(s)</b></p> <p>National lesson learned consultations initiated in May.</p> <p>The first of a series of regional workshops to collate and document lessons learned is ongoing.</p> <p>Based on these workshops and a strengthened M&amp;E feedback and lessons learned process, there will be greater understanding of the impact, application and sustainability of interventions.</p> <p>As recommended, the micro-finance and safety at sea activities will be continued strategically only where there are demonstrated signs of sustainability and follow up, particularly where this directly supports strengthened co-management.</p> <p>This stocktaking information will be used, as part of process for de-prioritization of activities which are not contributing to the intermediate outputs of the project.</p> <p>Early implementation of the project exit strategies will be initiated in communities where low impacts or little progress is being made.</p>	PMO and LTU	Q2 – Q4, 2012	No
2) Pursue livelihoods diversification, including post-harvest and marketing promotion in a more integrated manner with fisheries resource co-management so as to ensure that livelihoods development and post-harvest projects do not have negative consequences for coastal resources. And, at the same time broaden the co-management framework, as some RFLP country teams are doing, to include livelihoods enhancement by	<p><b>Accepted</b></p> <p>This recommendation is already on-going. At the RFLP regional M&amp;E workshop held 01 March 2012 in Manila, immediately following the 3rd PSC meeting, the national teams developed strategic matrix diagrams for the programme second phase, indicating and illustrating the interconnections between RFLP outputs for each country and how they contribute (positively and negatively) to the</p>	<p><b>Action(s)</b></p> <p>The strategic matrix diagrams developed in Manila and in subsequent country planning follow up, will be used to ensure that there will be greater integration of programme activities into a dialogue on resource management with beneficiary groups.</p> <p>National Coordinating Offices will implement</p>	RFLP PMO and NCOs	On-going until NTE	No

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involving different government agencies (fisheries and non-fisheries) and private actors for the purpose of developing larger-impacting schemes and demonstrating to communities that benefits can come in the place of natural resource use.	intermediate and final outcomes.	the strategic plans and will be encouraged to broaden partnerships to involve other competent agencies, private sector partners in those countries where this is not already on-going.			
3) Focus its gender mainstreaming work in rigorously analyzing the effects, positive and negative, of potential livelihood enhancement/diversification (including post-harvest) schemes and fisheries co-management decisions (as some women participate in fishing), on women given their responsibilities, and on the relations between men and women, as a part of livelihoods options assessments and feasibility analyses. These assessments should of course be done with community participation, and as some gendered divisions of labor are likely to continue they should also be used to foster the men's respect for women and their tasks.	<b>Accepted</b>  This recommendation is already on-going.  The gender impact assessment of the RFLP interventions is only one part of the overall gender mainstreaming strategy of the RFLP, which also includes capacity building, screening of agreements with a gender lens, collection of sex-disaggregated data on project activities, knowledge sharing (e.g. through the organization of a workshop on Best Practices for Gender Mainstreaming in the Fisheries Sector and the publication of the field manual entitled "Mainstreaming gender into project cycle management in the fisheries sector"), advocacy, increased efforts to facilitate the quality participation of women in decision-making and livelihoods development in RFLP countries, among others.  This strategy is in line with the recently finalized FAO Policy on Gender Equality (March 2012).	<b>Action(s)</b>  The PMO has initiated the process of gathering data to assess the gender impact of the RFLP, (including potential changes on roles and relations between men and women at household level).  Part of the gender impact assessment will be undertaken as routine M&E missions (through mentoring provided to the M&E officers).  For an in-depth assessment or where more capacity building is needed, gender National Consultants will be mobilized to oversee the actions at country level.  The PMO has started to document the lessons learned of mainstreaming gender in the RFLP and this will be part of the overall lessons learned collation and communication process of the RFLP.	RFLP PMO IC gender, and RFLP national offices	On-going, until NTE	No
4) Invest more effort in educating SSFs on co-management, cultivating their understanding of their own practices on fisheries resources and how conserving these resources could benefit them in the long-term so fishers can take more responsibility in co-management; identify where co-management legislation and regulations need to be further improved to enable more effective co-management and SSFs more ownership and work with the partner governments to initiate a process of reform; and, engage fully the various public and private stakeholders (illegal/ commercial	<b>Accepted</b>  This recommendation is already on-going with the largest proportion of field activities and budget in the approved 2012 activity work plans and budgets targeted at output 1 on co-management.	<b>Action(s)</b>  Conduct national and regional lessons learned workshops in Q4 of 2012 for outputs 1 (co-management), and 2 (safety at sea and vulnerability reduction) respectively.  Identify strategic gaps that RFLP can address in areas of legislation, inclusiveness of stakeholders involved in CM process and making fishers and government staff more aware of the potential impacts of both fishing and livelihoods activities on resources and long	RFLP PMO and NCOs	Q4 until NTE	No

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fishers, other communities, the range of government agencies) to develop more meaningful co-management arrangements.		term sustainability.			
5) The PMO should use its broad vision of the RFLP's aims to provide greater and higher-level, strategic guidance to the PCOs to help them focus their work in order to produce more substantive impacts in their respective contexts, and support them further in learning from the fields of livelihoods diversification/ development and natural resource co-management. It could do the latter by providing models and lessons from these fields, best-practice tools, methods and examples of needs assessments and feasibility analysis.	<p><b>Accepted</b></p> <p>This recommendation is already being implemented. Workshops are organized by the PMO with participation of the national teams and the implementing agencies with the aim of sharing the strategic RFLP vision with the PCOs and counterparts.</p> <p>Yearly regional workshops on specific outputs have been conducted with a similar objective. Recently, a workshop held 01 March 2012 in Manila, RFLP PMO and NCOs developed the strategic matrix diagrams for the programme second phase, which illustrated positive and negative (if any) links between outputs and their contribution to intermediate outputs.</p>	<p><b>Action(s)</b></p> <p>Continue to share best-practice tools, and methods via email, the staff forum, the e-newsletter and on the Facebook site "Asian Fisheries Livelihoods Network".</p> <p>Sponsor training of key NCO and government agency staff on the EAF modular course being rolled out by BOBLME.</p> <p>PMO to use the 6th NCC and the 4th PSC meetings to provide greater strategic guidance and for the delivery of appropriate sharing of experiences and training for NCO staff and NPDs, by invited guest presenters.</p> <p>RFLP regional lessons learned workshop for output 3 (post-harvest and marketing), 4 (livelihoods enhancement and diversification) and 5 (micro-finance services) scheduled in Bangkok 29 May – 01 June.</p> <p>Conduct a regional lessons learned workshop in Q4 of 2012 for outputs 1 (co-management), and 2 (safety at sea and vulnerability reduction). Identify strategic gaps that RFLP can address in areas of legislation, inclusiveness of stakeholders involved in CM process and making fishers and government staff more aware of the potential impacts of both fishing and livelihoods activities on resources and long term sustainability.</p>	RFLP PMO and NCOs	<p>Q1 to NTE</p> <p>To be confirmed</p> <p>Q3 to NTE</p> <p>Q2 2012</p> <p>Q4 2012</p>	No

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6) Formulate and implement an explicit, concerted strategy for the remainder of the programme to strengthen the technical, planning and management capacity of government partner institutions, and the coordination among these entities along with non-fisheries agencies (extension, forestry, small-business, infrastructure, etc.) and market and NGO actors to support larger-scale diversified livelihoods development and co-management and sustain the RFLP's work in the long-term and for the selected sites. To strengthen capacity and coordination, provide more in-depth, hands training through twinning arrangements between RFLP and government staff, which will also ensure quality delivery during implementation. Budget savings from reducing the geographic and thematic scope of the RFLP would allow such a capacity-building strategy.	<p><b>Partially accepted</b></p> <p>RFLP regional management instructed national staff to begin planning an exit strategy since the 4th NCC in Q3 of 2011. A process has already commenced to institutionalize RFLP activities within the relevant departments and specific staff of the implementing agency for fisheries and other government departments and institutions as appropriate.</p> <p>National 2012 RFLP activity work plans and budgets have already prioritized TOT training for both local government staff, and key staff from key institutions which support fishers and fisher communities to ensure sustainability of RFLP activities beyond the programme period.</p> <p>Budget savings from reducing the geographic and thematic scope of the RFLP could be strategically difficult.</p>	<p><b>Action(s)</b></p> <p>Intensification of mentoring with key government staff, and prioritization of TOT training for relevant staff.</p> <p>Sponsor training of key NCO and government agency staff on the EAF modular course being rolled out by BOBLME.</p> <p>PMO to use the 6th NCC and the 4th PSC meetings to provide greater strategic guidance and for the delivery of appropriate sharing of experiences and training for NCO staff and NPDs, by invited guest presenters.</p>	RFLP PMO and NCOs	<p>On-going until NTE</p> <p>To be confirmed</p> <p>Q3 to NTE</p>	
7) Develop a long-term strategic plan for the remainder of the programme for each country and for each of the three remaining country-level outputs and the regional lesson-sharing one, including steps that will allow for exit and sustainability. These plans should make explicit the theory of change that will be employed for each intervention, i.e. the logical sequence of intermediate results that will be pursued to achieve the desired outcomes.	<p><b>Partially accepted</b></p> <p>At the RFLP regional M&amp;E workshop held in Manila immediately following the 3rd PSC meeting, the national teams developed strategic matrix diagrams which have elaborated the "theory of change" approach of each national programme. These are being used to validate the national strategies and the interconnections between RFLP outputs for each country and how they contribute to the intermediate outcomes the programme.</p> <p>These plans are not necessarily confined to three country level outputs and retain the original project outputs. However the relevant linkages are indicated, and in particular the relationship to resource management and co-management is made more explicit.</p>	<p><b>Action(s)</b></p> <p>The country level TOC plans have been elaborated though the Manila workshop and follow up in-country mentoring. These will be available as a supporting project document. This was undertaken with the NCO staff and NPDs to identify and illustrate explicit linkages (positive and negative) between the five national level outputs and how they contribute to intermediate outcomes and within the Ecosystems Approach to Fisheries (EAF) management being promoted by the PMO and the LTU.</p>	LTU and PMO	Q2 2012	
8) Begin to share the experiences of the RFLP now, both the successes and shortcomings, internally among the PCOs, and with the RFLP governing bodies, ministry officials,	<p><b>Accepted</b></p> <p>This recommendation is already under implementation.</p>	<p><b>Action(s)</b></p> <p>The PMO has instructed to national offices to arrange lessons learned specific national</p>	RFLP PMO. Information Officer	On-going until NTE	No

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regional organizations and donors, to help improve performance, disseminate lessons and develop roots for the programme's sustainability. And, in the next three months, with the longer-term strategic plans developed (Recommendation 7), create and implement with the help of external training intervention-specific M&E plans that will capture outcomes for learning and lesson-sharing for the programme and its partners.	<p>Sharing of lessons learned has been on-going since RFLP contributed to the APFIC livelihoods workshop in Manila and has been continued with regional RFLP workshops, RFLP support to other regional events including APFIC, ASEAN, CTFF, RPOA, REBYC II etc., workshops and the RFLP committees, website, the Facebook site "Asian Fisheries Livelihoods Network" and the staff forum.</p> <p>As recommended, as more lessons learned from direct RFLP field experiences are gathered, efforts to share both positive and negative experiences will be intensified.</p>	<p>workshops for outputs 3 (post-harvest and marketing), 4 (livelihoods enhancement and diversification) and 5 (micro-finance services). The findings of the national workshops will feed into an RFLP regional lessons learned workshop for outputs 3, 4 and 5 scheduled in Bangkok 29 May – 01 June.</p> <p>A similar programme of national and regional lessons learned will be conducted in Q4 of 2012 for outputs 1 (co-management), and 2 (safety at sea and vulnerability reduction) respectively.</p> <p>A joint RFLP-APFIC regional workshop on livelihoods lessons learned for APFIC members, regional organizations, donors, NGOs and other interested stakeholders is planned in Q1, 2013.</p>			
<b>For AECID on effectiveness and sustainability</b>					
9) Provide a six-month, no-cost extension to the RFLP to better enable it to generate outcomes, impacts and models, and permit it to allocate some of its funds to: 1) address higher-level policy and legal gaps in national co-management frameworks so that small-scale fisher groups may be more empowered in the long-term, and (2) strengthen in a concerted manner the capacity of local government institutions to sustain the programme and develop improved livelihoods for SSF communities.	<p><b>Accepted</b></p> <p>Also this recommendation is welcomed, and it will be implemented provided that there are sufficient funds in the programme to cover the proposed no-cost extension.</p> <p>Some re-budgeting will be programmed by the PMU in order to prepare for this eventuality.</p>	<p><b>Action(s)</b></p> <p>Based on the outcomes of the next PSC meeting scheduled for September 2012, and provided there are identified project savings and strong endorsement from the participating countries, TCSR will be requested to approach AECID to consider a no-cost extension.</p>	TC	Jan 2012	N
<b>For FAO on project and programme design quality</b>					



**Management response to the RFLP (GCP/RAS/237/SPA) Mid Term Evaluation**

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		Action to be taken	Responsible unit	Time frame	Further funding required (Y or N)
10) Develop rigorous and clear standards and requirements for the design of projects and programmes (including for relevance, contextual assessment, government ownership, SMART14 objectives, the feasibility of strategies, M&E and other elements) along with guidance material for staff to meet them, and the institutional processes within FAO where the Project Review Committee will use the standards to review projects/programmes and OED will use them to evaluate the initiatives.	<p><b><u>Rejected by TC</u></b></p> <p>Since this point entails FAO procedures the project management has requested TC to provide a response which is being shared with the MTE team.</p> <p><i>Project Formulation in FAO is based on specific methodologies - Logical Framework Approach and Results-Based Management - and procedures defined in the Field Programme Circular 2003/04 on Project Cycle and the FPC 2007/02 on Standard Project Document Format (SPD). The formulation of a project is the responsibility of a project task force comprising the project formulator, a lead technical officer, the prospective budget holder as well as other officers with relevant expertise for the specific project.</i></p> <p><i>A project undergoes a series of clearances based on mandatory procedures (including technical, financial, and operational clearances) as defined in the Field Programme Circular 2003/04 on Project Cycle and in the Director General Bulletin (DGB) 2000/17 before approval. Thereafter a project proposal is reviewed before approval by the Programme and Project Review Committee (PPRC), consisting of representatives of all the technical divisions including the legal department and the gender division. In addition to the above described procedures, guidance materials are made available to FAO staff (e.g. the project formulation tool kit) and staff are given project cycle management training.</i></p>	<p>Action(s)</p> <p><u>None</u></p>	TC	Soonest	No