



منظمة الأغذية
والزراعة
للأمم المتحدة

联合国
粮食及
农业组织

Food
and
Agriculture
Organization
of
the
United
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Organisation
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pour
l'alimentation
et
l'agriculture

Продовольственная и
сельскохозяйственная
организация
Объединенных
Наций

Organización
de las
Naciones
Unidas
para la
Agricultura
y la
Alimentación

EVALUATION OF FAO ACTIVITIES IN TAJIKISTAN (2004-2009)

FINAL REPORT

October 2009

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Acronyms and Abbreviations

ADB	Asian Development Bank
AFC	AgroFood Centre
AFF	FAO Finance Division
AFS	FAO Administrative Services Division
AKF	Aga Khan Foundation
AKDN	Aga Khan Development Network
AI	Artificial Insemination
ALMGC	Agency for Land Management Geodesy
AOS	Administrative Overheads and Support
ATAC	Agricultural Training and Advisory Service
CAMP	Central Asian Mountain Group
CAWMP	Community Agriculture and Watershed Management Project (OSRO/TAJ/3102/WB)
CBO	Community Based Organisation
CERF	Central Emergency Response Fund
CIDA	Canadian International Assistance Agency
CIG	Common Interest Group
CIMMYT	Centro Internacional de Mejoramiento de Maiz y Trigo (International Research Centre for Maize and Wheat)
CIP	Centro Internacional de la Papa (International Potato Research Centre)
CIS	Commonwealth of Independent States (ex USSR)
CGIAR	Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research
CRI	Crop Research Institute
CTA	Chief Technical Advisor
CAWMP	Community Agricultural and Watershed Management Project
DCC	Donor Coordination Council
DFID	U.K. Department For International Development
EC	European Commission
ECHO	European Commission Humanitarian Organisation
EFSSIP	Emergency Food Security & Seed Import Project
ELISA	Enzyme-linked immunosorbent assay
EU	European Union
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations
FAOR	FAO Representative
FAS	Field Office Accounting System

FBA	Field Budget Authorisation
FDRS	Farm Debt Resolution Strategy
FFS	Farmer Field School
FFW	Food For Work
FP	Facilitating Partner
FMD	Foot and Mouth Disease
FSIP	Food Security Investment Programme
GAA	German Agro-Action
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GOP	General Operations Expenses
GoT	Government of Tajikistan
GPS	Global Positioning System (s)
GTZ	German Technical Cooperation Agency (Deutsche Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit)
HH	Household
HPAI	Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza
HR	Human Resources
IA	Impact Assessment
IPM	Integrated Pest Management
IDA	International Development Association
IFAD	International Fund for Agricultural Development
IFC	International Finance Corporation
INGO	International Non Government Organisation
IP	Implementing Partner
IPM	Integrated Pest Management
IT	Information Technology
JDC	Jamoat Development Committee
JICA	Japan International Cooperation Agency
LA	Land Agency
LAC	Legal Advisory Centre
LIFDC	Low Income Food Deficit Country
LoA	Letter of Agreement
LRWG	Land Reform Working Group
LSC	Local Service Contract
LTO	License to Operate
MoA	Ministry of Agriculture
MoEDT	Ministry of Economic Development and Trade
MSDSP	Mountain Societies Development & Support Programme (Aga Khan)

NC	National Correspondent
NDS	National Development Strategy
NDP	National Development Plan
NPFS	National Programme for Food Security
NGO	Non-government Organisation
NMTPF	National Medium-Term Priority Framework
NPFS	National Programme for Food Security
NPO	National Project Officer
NPP	National Project Personnel
NR	National Responses
NSF	National Security Fund
OCD	Office for Coordination of Normative, Operational and Decentralized Activities
O&M	Operation and Maintenance
PBEE	FAO Evaluation Office
PCO	Project Co-ordination Office
PCU	Project Coordination Unit
PISU	Programme Implementation Support Unit
PIWMP	Participatory Integrated Watershed Management Project (TCP/TAJ/2903)
PMFSU	Project Monitoring and Food Security Unit (now known as the AgroFood Centre)
PMU	Project Implementation Unit
PRSP	Poverty Resolution Strategy Paper
PRA	Participatory Rural Appraisal
PES	Payments for Environmental Services
PPR	Peste des Petits Ruminants
SAT	Seed Association of Tajikistan
SDC	Swiss Development Corporation
SEC	FAO Sub-regional Office for Central Asia
SENAS	Support to the Establishment of a National Agricultural Advisory Service
Sida	Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency
SSC	State Steering Committee
SSA	State Statistical Agency
SVD	State Veterinary Department
SVI	State Veterinary Inspectorate
TAAS	Tajikistan Academy of Agricultural Sciences
TACIS	EC - Technical Assistance to the Confederation of Independent States (CIS)
TCE	FAO - Emergencies and Rehabilitation Division
TCEO	FAO - Emergencies Operations Service

TCP	Technical Cooperation Programme (FAO)
TiP	Tokhum-i-Parwar (Seed Production – a potato seed organisation)
TOC	Theory of Change
TVA	Tajikistan Veterinary Council
UNCT	United Nations Country Team
ULV	Ultra Low Volume
UNICEF	United Nations Children’s Fund
UNDAF	United Nations Development Assistance Framework
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNIFEM	United Nations Development Fund for Women
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
UTF	Unilateral Trust Fund
VAM	Vulnerability Assessment and Mapping
VAT	Value Added Tax
VDC	Village Development Committee
VFU	Veterinary Field Unit
VMRF	Veterinary Medicines and Remedies Fund
WB	World Bank
WDC	Watershed Development Committee
WFP	World Food Programme
WUA	Water Users Association

Glossary of Local and Other Terms

Aylaq	Summer grazing in the mountains
Chakka	Yogurt with most of the liquid drained off through a cloth
Chalma	Dried dung pats used for fuel
Dekhan / Deqan	Small hold farmer
Dekhan / Deqan farm	Type of group farm leasehold under the present system
Goskomstat	State Statistical Agency
Hukumat	Administration (Tajiki)
Jamaot	District (Tajiki)
Kishlak/Kishlaq	Village (literally, a winter quarter from Turkish word for winter)
Kolkhoz	Collective Farm (Under USSR)
Lalmi	Rainfed/dryland agriculture
Lucerne	Alfalfa (<i>Medicago sativa</i>)
Oblast	Province (Russian)
Ogarod	Household vegetable garden
Qurut	Small balls of dried buttermilk

Raion	District (Russian)
Rais-e-mahalla	Village/community head
Rais-e-zanon	Head women of community women's group
Sainfoin	Important fodder legume (<i>Onobrychis viciifolia</i>)
Somoni	Tajikistan currency (about 4.45 / USD at time of mission).
Sovkhoz	State Farm (under USSR)
Vezerat	Ministry viz. "Vezerat e Kesharwarzi" (MoA) Tajiki Ministerstva selskova khezaistva – Russian - MoA
Viloyat	Province (Tajiki)

Executive Summary

a) The Programme and the Evaluation Report

i. The evaluation reviews FAO activities in Tajikistan for the five-year period 2004 to 2009, with a view towards improving the relevance, effectiveness, efficiency and impact of its work; providing accountability about performance and assessing the role of FAO in a transition from emergency assistance to a more normal development mode. Throughout the period, and despite increased economic growth as the country emerged from the effects of civil war, the economy of Tajikistan remained fragile. The country faces a number of challenges, including in the agricultural sector. There has been a chronic absence of reliable household income for the rural population which has been exacerbated by periodic years of drought, the last being 2007/2008. There is a continuing high level of rural poverty. The poorest groups of the population spend over 70 percent of their income on food and a sizeable level of the population is subject to chronic or seasonal food insecurity.

ii. Within the context of this challenging environment, the evaluation examined 42 projects that were implemented by FAO in Tajikistan during the review period. Of these, 30 were purely national projects and 12 were global or regional projects in which Tajikistan participated to various degrees. The nature of FAO activities in Tajikistan has changed over the years from almost exclusively input distribution to more development-oriented activities such as establishment of veterinary field units, livestock and pasture rehabilitation, land reform, watershed management and food security issues. The evaluation also examined the work of the FAO Coordination Office in the country. One of the chief reasons for undertaking the Tajikistan country evaluation was to assess the performance of FAO in a period of transition from emergency to development. In addition this was the first country evaluation where there has not been a resident FAO Representation.

b) The FAO Office in Tajikistan

iii. The FAO programme in Tajikistan is one of the largest without an accredited FAO Representative. The Project Coordination Office (PCO) is funded almost entirely from emergency resources and is administered by the Emergency Operations and Rehabilitation Division (TCE). Staff are funded from project contributions and there is no criteria for apportioning costs among projects. The PCO handles a volume of work comparable to a medium sized FAOR. The evaluation found an imbalance between project support costs retained by TCE in Rome and those devoted to the Project Coordination Office. It concludes that there is a strong *prima facie* case for examining the distribution of support costs in order to provide more predictable support for the Dushanbe office.

iv. Over the evaluation period improvements have been made to the financial administration of the office. Conditions of service for staff have been improved. Under the present Coordinator, advocacy and programme development have been stepped up, in areas where this fits with FAO's mandate. FAO has also increased its activity as part of the UN Country Team (UNCT).

v. The evaluation made suggestions to further decentralize authority for decision-making to the PCO, including to make the Coordinator the Budget Holder for all national projects, similar to what is done for FAO Representatives.

c) Livestock Health and Production

vi. Livestock health and production have been a major focus of FAO's attention during the evaluation period and projects have covered a number of key areas, including support to setting up private veterinary services, brucellosis control, preparedness for and control of new and emerging diseases, pasture management, fodder production and livestock-related input distribution. The evaluation report stresses the following points:

- For interventions to be considered successful and ensure sustainability, it is essential that they are embedded in local institutional structures. A good example of this has been the development of private veterinary practice through the Tajikistan Veterinary Association (TVA).
- Many of the activities engaged in by FAO would have been better managed as long term development programmes rather than as short term projects with 'emergency' funding.
- There has been a range of distribution and training activities more or less complementary to the other ongoing projects.

Support to the setting-up of private Veterinary Field Services

vii. Over a period of ten years, FAO has implemented a series of projects that have achieved ever increasing national coverage with privatized veterinary service. These have been highly relevant to national needs and these projects have in general been effective in achieving their objective of building a private veterinary service in rural Tajikistan. The Tajik Veterinary Association (TVA) now takes a leading role in training veterinarians and in the provision of drugs. However, the privatization is being done without any well-defined and agreed policy or strategy and without any legal framework to provide regulations and protection.

viii. The interventions have led to a steady, albeit limited income for participating vets. Through training and provision of equipment and drugs, veterinary services in the country have improved and farmers are now willing to pay for these services. Significantly, the incidence of diseases (e.g. brucellosis in areas where the vaccination programme was carried out, and PPR) has noticeably decreased.

Brucellosis Control

ix. The FAO has managed two Brucellosis control projects over the evaluation period mainly funded by the EC. These projects have effectively lowered the incidence of Brucellosis in small ruminants from 10% to less than 2% in the locations where it has been focused. However, the projects' real effectiveness is reflected in the fall in the incidence of brucellosis in the human populations where the project has operated.

x. The aim should now be to cover the whole country if it is to be really effective. To achieve this, external support is necessary as it is unlikely that the GoT will have sufficient funds to budget for this unassisted.

Preparedness for Control of New and Emerging Diseases (PPR & HPAI)

xi. These projects have all been relevant to the development of the veterinary field services and have been the driver for restructuring, investment and capacity building in the veterinary service at all levels and have opened up avenues for regional collaboration. PPR has been dramatically reduced since the vaccination campaigns started but this does not guard against new outbreaks. The effectiveness of HPAI has not yet been effectively tested. Improving laboratory capacity has been carried out but there does not seem to have been any overall plan to develop the national veterinary diagnostic capacity.

xii. Discussion on a compensation fund in response to outbreaks of HPAI have not been conclusive. Such a fund would help the sustainability of the programme.

Pasture Management and Forage Production Livestock Production and Pasture Rehabilitation

xiii. Since the collapse of the USSR there has been a need to develop new pasture management and access policies and strategies. The strategy of introducing legume seed into existing pastures has been ineffectual and does not solve the problem of how the pasture land is managed. The project has not concentrated pasture work in locations known to have serious problems of degradation. The project's long term impact is unlikely to be significant and without settling basic issues of pasture management, ownership and access is unlikely to be sustainable.

Livestock-related Input Distribution (distribution of fodder seeds, minerals, stock feed & vaccines)

xiv. These interventions were for the most part not really in response to emergencies (i.e. threats to mortality if no action is taken). Fodder seeds are part of a medium term strategy; vitamins and minerals do not save animals' lives; vaccine for FMD is not justified as an emergency measure in countries where FMD is endemic. Vaccine for PPR or Newcastle disease may, however, be justified as emergency interventions.

xv. **Distribution of Animals to Poor Families** Poultry are a good means by which poor rural households can help to feed their families. However, high production type layers were provided, without improvements in housing and feeding and also without any cockerels to ensure that they reproduced. Losses were quite high as a result. The principle of the programme was not bad, but its technical implementation was flawed.

xvi. The Hissar breed ewes could be seen as a long term asset, but do not provide food or income to the beneficiaries in the short term, especially as recipients were obliged to give away the first two lambs to a poor neighbour.

d) Seeds and Other Agricultural Emergency Inputs

xvii. Over the past ten years FAO has managed a number of emergency seed/fertilizer distribution projects under the emergency programme of TCE, the largest of which was in response to the drought and harsh winter of 2007/2008.

xviii. The relevance of this intervention was questioned. In spite of the previous harsh winter and drought of 2007/2008 the snow and rainfall of the winter, spring and early summer of 2008/2009 turned out to be very good for wheat cultivation. Insufficient understanding of traditional farmer to farmer exchange of seed meant that there was in reality no shortage of seed *per se* as evidenced by the farmers' perception that the project was not aimed at filling a need for seed but to introduce better and improved varieties of wheat.

xix. Nonetheless, the project was implemented and monitored very efficiently. The majority of potential beneficiaries fitted the criteria laid down by the project leading to an egalitarian distribution and remarkably little dissatisfaction.

xx. Little was actually known in advance about the performance of the varieties distributed by the project. Those of Russian origin at best performed no better than what the farmers already had and at worst performed less well. The project was also widely criticized by other agencies operating in Tajikistan for being a 'free' input distribution that undermined the objective of stimulating local markets.

e) Strengthening National Seed Systems

xxi. To date, little has been done by FAO to support the development of local seed production. One project assisted in the production of virus-free potato seed. The programme has continued quite successfully under the management of the national project staff who formed an NGO.

f) Locust Control

xxii. These interventions have helped to control a recurring and serious pest that affects not only Tajikistan but the surrounding countries. Unfortunately, requests for assistance have often come very late. Furthermore, doubts remain as to the accuracy of the estimations of the areas protected, and 2/3rds of the applications of pesticide are recorded from areas planted with cotton which raises doubts as whether locusts were actually targeted.

xxiii. The Locust control techniques used in Tajikistan need to be brought up to date. Locusts are a recurring problem also in Tajikistan's neighbouring countries, which indicates need for a regional approach including monitoring, management and control on a regular basis.

g) Watershed Management and Community Mobilization

xxiv. About 93% of Tajikistan is mountainous, much of it degraded and subject to erosion. The good management of the country's watersheds and catchments is important but neglected.

xxv. An FAO-TCP pilot project in "Participatory Integrated Watershed Management" was successful in deriving lessons for management that are still applied today. However, the lessons learned and the examples demonstrated have not been replicated elsewhere in the country.

xxvi. FAO acted as a Facilitating Partner for a World Bank funded project on Community Agriculture and Watershed Management. After a slow start, the project is now proving to be an effective instrument for community mobilization, motivation and development through the formation of Community Interest Groups (CIG) for small agricultural/horticultural/livestock enterprises and land improvement schemes. The sustainability of these CIGs once the FAO support as 'Facilitating Partner' for the WB ends remains to be seen.

h) Land Reform

xxvii. Between 2004 through 2008 FAO implemented three projects related to land reform. Major outputs of these projects included: the establishment of a working group on land reform made up of Government bodies, civil society organizations and donors; the establishment of five legal advisory centres offering legal consultations and information on farm reorganization and land reform to rural citizens and farm members the establishment of information and legal consultation centres in 16 districts in partnership with the State Committee on Women and Families to raise awareness among women on their land rights; and the conduct of public awareness campaigns in over 45 communities to explain the process of farm reorganization and monitor progress in completing reorganization of collective farms.

xxviii. FAO's work was found to be largely relevant. The most significant impact of FAO's work has been the development of partnerships between government and donors by establishing the Land Reform Working Group (LRWG), which became the model for the future. Also the public awareness raising efforts and legal consultative assistance had a positive impact where these activities were conducted.

xxix. While the FAO model for the LRWG has proved sustainable over time and is still used by both Government and donors as the accepted model, the FAO's legal advisory services have proved more difficult to sustain in the long term without continued support. A Land Strategy was developed by FAO without the involvement of key Government bodies such as the Land Agency, who are reported to have been unwilling to participate.

i) Food Security (Information, Statistics and Early Warning)

xxx. FAO assisted the Government through three projects to develop its capacity in food security information, data gathering and analysis, statistics and the development of early warning systems.

xxxi. It is difficult to assess the degree to which FAO's work improved national food security assessment capacity. Certainly some skills remain in the MoA at provincial and district level in accurate grain crop assessment and farm production data collection. However, there remains only limited capacity in Government to address food security policy issues and the mechanisms to effectively use crop assessments and farm surveys have not yet been developed.

j) Gender Mainstreaming and Women in Development

xxxii. FAO projects in Tajikistan have made special efforts to include women as beneficiaries and indeed in a number of projects women and female headed households have been the primary focus of project attention. But much more needs to be done and some of these projects would/could have been more effective had they been designed after consultation with the potential beneficiaries to better ascertain their real needs. The evaluation makes suggestions about how gender could have been better considered in projects relating to livestock and crop production.

k) FAO Functions in Tajikistan

xxxiii. The evaluation addressed FAO's overall performance in five areas where the Organization claims to have comparative advantage.

xxxiv. **Policy assistance:** The evaluation found that engagement on policy issues was limited, due in part to it being handled from the Regional Office that must cover many countries with limited resources. Recently, there has been increased dialogue on policy issues through the Project Coordination Office. FAO is appreciated by both the GoT and the donors as a potential source of unbiased technical advice and there is scope for it to play a more significant role in assisting with the development of policy and agricultural strategy.

xxxv. **Sharing and Applying Knowledge:** The evaluation found little knowledge in Tajikistan about the information materials produced by FAO. This was attributed to several factors including the country's level of development, which makes adaptation of information without accompanying technical assistance difficult; few materials in Russian; and poor Internet access generally in the country. A positive example of applied knowledge was the establishment of the VFUs, which drew on lessons gained from a similar programme implemented in Afghanistan.

xxxvi. **Resource Mobilisation:** For much of the period FAO has not been active in donor forums and has generally been more reactive to opportunities for project funding, as opposed to developing programmes. Future prospects for resource mobilization from external sources are largely tied to the success of Government reform efforts.

xxxvii. **Capacity Building:** Capacity building represents a considerable challenge in Tajikistan, as the country faces many of the problems found in other nations at similar levels of development. These include low levels of salary paid to Government employees and a high turnover of staff. There are few incentives for good performance. The evaluation found a mixed picture with regard to capacity building activities – some successful, others less so. The challenges involved to effective “upstream” capacity building in Tajikistan need to be carefully weighed when planning such activities.

xxxviii. **Partnership Development:** Possibilities for partnership development in Tajikistan are more limited than in many countries. Some good examples were noted, but cooperation with the UNCT was weak for some of the period. The FAO country office (Project Coordination Office in Tajikistan) plays a decisive role in the image of FAO at country level and is almost entirely responsible for the development of partnerships.

l) Conclusions and Recommendations

i) FAO In-country Presence

xxxix. The FAO Project Coordination Office has performed with variable quality throughout the evaluation period but is presently under strong leadership. There is uncertainty about the future of the Office due to present funding mechanisms.

R. 1. Tajikistan should have a secured, full-time residential FAO presence.

R.2. The Project Coordinator should be designated as Budget Holder for all national projects in Tajikistan

R.3. A significant percentage of AOS income from both development and emergency projects should be assigned to the Project Office, to allow it to operate without depending on allocations from individual projects.

ii) Focus of FAO Activities and Transition from Emergency to Development

xxxx. Some projects were less effective because they were implemented in the absence of a policy framework. It was difficult for FAO (as well as other international organizations and donors) to engage the Government on policy issues, even when this was part of project strategy. Effective transition work requires greater involvement of other technical Divisions and

Departments, besides TCE. The NMTPF presents an opportunity to articulate transition work in a more formal and detailed manner.

R.4: FAO should provide support aimed at a better understanding of the economic background of production and promoting agriculture as a profitable business, thus enhancing the appeal of agriculture as a means of livelihood. Emphasis should be on creating an effective legal framework (e.g. market reforms, appropriate trade regulations; land tenure; micro-credits). This support should aim at ensuring that agricultural enterprises, when undertaken, represent an acceptable return on investment.

R.5: Policy dialogue and formulation is an area where FAO should assist the Government of Tajikistan. Key areas of FAO comparative advantage include: definition of public and private responsibilities in animal health; grazing rights; upland conservation and management.

R.6: A new National Medium-Term Priority Framework should be prepared that clearly specifies FAO's comparative advantages to undertake areas of work in Tajikistan and includes outcomes to be achieved.

iii) Sectoral Work

Livestock (animal health, production, feeding and restocking)

xxxxi. The animal health interventions have been relevant and the establishment of a private veterinary service effective but most of the interventions would have been better as part of a long term development programme.

R.7: FAO should seek means to assist the Government in development of appropriate veterinary policy and legislation which should have as main objectives to foster an enabling environment for improving food security, reducing poverty and increasing availability of safe livestock products.

Crops and Seed, including Emergency Interventions

xxxxii. Projects for the distribution of free seed and other agricultural inputs are no longer warranted in Tajikistan. FAO has a role to assist Tajikistan in producing high quality seed for wheat and a variety of other crops.

R.8: FAO should assist the development of commercialized seed production in Tajikistan.

R.9: FAO should negotiate a revised grant with the World Bank away from free seed distribution in order to support greater sustainability.

Locust Control

xxxxiii. The locust control techniques used in Tajikistan need to be brought up to date. At regional level, locust control capacity should be increased and a culture of cooperation across borders encouraged.

R.10 FAO should encourage adoption of modern methods of locust control and prevention and support the creation of a properly staffed and funded unit dedicated to locust control.

R.11 Continue the development of a regional approach to locust control

Watershed Management and Community Mobilisation

xxxxiv. The Got recognizes the need for an integrated approach to the management of upland watersheds and catchments. The success and sustainability of such management systems will only be achieved with the full participation of the local rural communities.

R.12 A second phase of the CAWMP in the Toirsu watershed Danghara should be developed as an appropriate platform for an 'Integrated Participatory Watershed Management' project.

Land Reform

xxxxv. Land reform is a critical and highly politicized issue in Tajikistan. A major achievement by FAO was its role in establishing the first working group on land-reform, thus creating a partnership between Government, civil society, and donors.

R.13 FAO should play a leadership role on land and agricultural policy.

Gender Mainstreaming and Women in Development

xxxxvi. In general, FAO projects have made efforts to include women. In some projects women and women headed households have been the primary focus of attention. However, some projects, particularly those distributing inputs, did not effectively consider or understand the gender dimension.

R. 14: Specific strategies should be developed to address gender considerations, particularly in projects aimed at restoring and improving livelihoods.

I. Introduction

1. At its May 2005 session, the FAO Programme Committee recommended that FAO should undertake “an evaluation drawing conclusions on the basis of ... the totality of FAO’s work in individual countries”. Country evaluations respond to General Assembly Resolution 59/250 of 2004, which stresses that the operational activities for development of the United Nations system should be valued and assessed on the basis of their impact on the recipient countries as contributions to their capacity to pursue poverty eradication, sustained economic growth and sustainable development.
2. FAO began evaluating its work at country level in 2006 and presented a synthesis of evaluation findings, based on the first four country evaluations carried out¹ to the Programme Committee in May 2008. The Committee found that the synthesis contained many good lessons. It requested that country evaluations should continue as a regular evaluation activity of FAO and that future evaluations should focus on countries at different levels of development.
3. Since 2007, FAO has begun evaluations in countries where the bulk of its activities are financed under emergency programmes. These country evaluations have been requested by TCE and are funded through a Trust Fund established for evaluation of FAO’s emergency and rehabilitation-related activities. One has already been completed in DR Congo and another is scheduled in Sudan later this year.
4. The nature of the FAO activities in Tajikistan has changed over the years, from almost exclusively input distribution to development-oriented activities such as establishment of veterinary field units, livestock and pasture rehabilitation, land reform and watershed management. One of the chief reasons for undertaking the Tajikistan country evaluation was to assess the performance of FAO in this type of transitional country. In addition, Tajikistan was the first country evaluation where there was not a resident FAO Representation.
5. The main purposes of the Evaluation are:
 - a) to improve the relevance, design, implementation, results and impact of FAO cooperation with Tajikistan;
 - b) to provide accountability to the Government of Tajikistan and to other FAO member countries about FAO performance at country level;
 - c) to identify the factors affecting the relevance, efficiency, effectiveness and impact of FAO cooperation at country level; and
 - d) to assess FAO performance in assisting the country in its transition from emergency to development.

II. Approach and Methodology

6. As with previous country exercises, the evaluation took place in three phases. The first phase was for information gathering, which included consultations with FAO staff in Rome, Ankara and Budapest that had been dealing with activities in Tajikistan over the past five years. The culmination of this phase was an Inception Mission to Tajikistan, which took place from 30 November-8 December 2008, undertaken by two members of the Evaluation Service. The Inception Mission met with FAO staff in Tajikistan, Government officials, key donors and members of the UNCT. The Inception Mission produced a report that included issues to be covered in the evaluation, identification of the technical expertise needed and a proposal for an impact assessment to be carried out as part of the evaluation.

¹ Mozambique, Sierra Leone, Cambodia, Honduras.

7. The second phase of the evaluation was the impact assessment of Veterinary Field Units (VFUs), the establishment of which had been an important focus area for FAO's work throughout the period covered by the evaluation. The impact assessment, conducted by a staff member of the Evaluation Service and two consultants (one international, one national) took place over four weeks in April-May 2009 (see Annex III).

8. The third phase was the final evaluation mission, which took place from 4 June – 1 July 2009. The evaluation included a two-day briefing in Rome, a three week mission to Tajikistan, a one day debriefing in Ankara for staff of the FAO Sub-regional Office for Central Asia by the Team Leader and Evaluation Manager and a one-day debriefing in Rome for FAO HQ staff.

9. The members of the evaluation team and their areas of coverage were:

- Mr Anthony Fitzherbert (UK) – Team Leader plus food security and watershed management
- Mr Robert Moore (USA) – Evaluation Manager (FAO Evaluation Service), Administration and Management of FAO office in Tajikistan
- Mr Olivier Cossée (France) – Agronomy (FAO Evaluation Service)
- Mr Stevan Dobrilovic (USA) – Land Reform
- Mr Anton van Engelen (Netherlands) – Livestock
- Mr Najmidin Jamolidinov (Tajikistan) – Rural Development
- Ms Nouchine Yavari d'Hellencourt (Iran) - Gender

III. National Context

A. THE COUNTRY'S RURAL AGRICULTURAL BACKGROUND

10. Tajikistan is a landlocked Central Asian country with an area of 143,000 sq. km, of which almost 93% is mountainous with only about 7% suitable for cultivation. About half of the land lies at over 3,000m. The mountain ranges with their snow and numerous glaciers are the origin of significant water resources. This has allowed the development of elaborate irrigation systems that support intensive irrigated agriculture in the plains and valleys. However the irrigation and drainage systems developed under the USSR are in poor repair and in considerable need for rehabilitation and maintenance. The cultivation of cotton dominates the cropping system in the irrigated lowlands. Cotton production is still dominated by vested interests that constrain effective reform of land ownership and the development of more flexible and varied cropping/farming systems. The farmers have been locked into an ever spiralling cycle of debt by the financing system for cotton production.

11. More than 73% of the country's 7 million population lives in rural areas and about 2/3 of the total labour force are employed in the agricultural sector, but only 20.6% of the GDP is produced by this sector of economy².

12. The first seven years of independence between 1991 and 1997 were marked by civil war and economic hardships caused by the sudden collapse of the Soviet Union's centralized command economy. Between 1990 and 1997, GDP fell by 60% and rural poverty was widespread. Since 1998, with the advent of a political settlement and despite occasional serious drought, the economy has improved and the agricultural sector has made a considerable contribution. Between 1998 and 2004, the agricultural sector output increased by 65% in real terms and it is now reckoned to have returned to the level of 1990. Rural poverty, although still significant, fell to 65% of the rural population by 2006 compared to an estimated 82% in 1999. However, the present global economic crisis continues to have a detrimental effect. A significant effect of the current global economic situation is the return of thousands of Tajik migrant workers from Russia.

² Food security and poverty information bulletin of the Republic of Tajikistan. 3/2008. Dushanbe.

13. Tajikistan is the poorest country in Central Asia, with at least 65% of the population living below the poverty line of USD 2/person/day. The country ranks 122nd out of 177 on the UN Human Development Index. Compared to other Central Asian countries, Tajikistan has the highest numbers of female-headed households due to the labour migration³. The poorest groups of the population spend over 70 percent of their income on food. Around 10% of the rural population are estimated to be chronically food insecure and a further 17% are vulnerable to food insecurity. National agricultural policies are widely acknowledged to have contributed to declining productivity.

14. The food security situation in Tajikistan during the last year is believed to have deteriorated further due to the global increase in food and energy prices and the reduction in the remittances of Tajik migrant workers from Russia and other countries. The food security situation was exacerbated by the drought and severe winter of 2007/2008 and locust infestation in the south, with consequent losses in crop production.

15. The economic situation remains fragile due to uneven implementation of structural reforms, widespread unemployment, the high level of external debt and the country's geographical location in a region highly prone to natural disasters. The country's already fragile economy was destroyed by civil war and the disintegration of its industries and other sectors of national economy after collapse of the Soviet Union, in 1990/1991. This led to massive unemployment. There has been no clear agricultural development strategy. The command economy remains largely intact in the agricultural sector, which functions very inefficiently. There has been a chronic absence of reliable household income for the rural population which has been exacerbated by periodic years of drought, the last being 2007/2008. The combination of these factors has contributed to the continued high level of rural poverty.

16. The basic food production sector has suffered seriously during the 18 years. There has been no clear agricultural development strategy. The agricultural production base has suffered from a lack of high quality agricultural inputs, deteriorating agricultural infrastructure including irrigation and drainage systems and absence of processing facilities. There has been only limited freedom to farm and conduct profitable agricultural business. Veterinary and agricultural extension services have been poor. Although the country's veterinary services are still to a large extent within the state sector, they are effectively operating on a commercial basis and livestock owners are increasingly accustomed to paying for services and inputs such as remedies and vaccines.

17. The rural population depends to a high degree on household garden plots (*ogarod*) for their household subsistence. These plots are largely free of state interference; farmers can choose what they produce, consume, or sell. The size of household plots is about 0.10–0.15 ha for irrigated land, and about double that for non-irrigated land. Household plots are also by far the most productive segment of agriculture, accounting for well over 50% of the value of agriculture production on about 12% of arable land. There is also more incentive for those in the possession of 'presidential' plots to invest in better production.

18. There has been limited access to agricultural credit services although a number of agencies and NGOs are providing some assistance with rural credit and agricultural advisory services. The farm machinery base, most of which dates back to the last years of the USSR, is in very poor condition. The monoculture of cotton and the cotton debts has locked many lowland farmers into a cycle of debt, dependency and poverty. There has been a general lack of technical and economic/business expertise among the farming population who have had little access to advice or extension services except through various NGO managed projects. It is generally acknowledged that there has been inadequate coordination among development partners, donors and others, including the GoT.

³ UN Flash Appeal 2008.

Crop Production

19. The main irrigated crop in the lowland plains and valleys is cotton. But in recent years more grain (wheat and maize) and some other crops such as melons and potatoes are being cultivated. Orchards and plantations of fruit and nut trees are found in the upland valleys, mainly dating from the Soviet era, although there is some evidence of new private plantation. Extensive crops of rain-fed (*lalmi*) wheat, barley, flax and some dryland melons are cultivated on the medium elevation mainly 'loess' foothills as well as semi irrigated and or rainfed crops of lucerne (*Medicago sativa*) and sainfoin (*Onobrychis viciifolia*) Vegetable production mainly occurs in household plots (*agarod*) and on Presidential land. The main irrigated crop in the lowland plains and valleys is cotton. But in recent years more grain (wheat and maize) and some other crops such as melons and potatoes are being cultivated. Orchards and plantations of fruit and nut trees are found in the upland valleys, mainly dating from the Soviet era, although there is some evidence of new private plantation. Extensive crops of rain-fed (*lalmi*) wheat, barley, flax and some dryland melons are cultivated on the medium elevation mainly 'loess' foothills as well as semi irrigated and or rainfed crops of lucerne (*Medicago sativa*) and sainfoin (*Onobrychis viciifolia*) Vegetable production mainly occurs in household plots (*agarod*) and on Presidential land.

20. Crop production, which accounts for 74 percent of agricultural output, is dominated by cotton. Cotton is grown on more than half of the country's irrigated farmland and is undertaken by three-quarters of farm households. Low producer incentives, distorted markets and inappropriate policies have led to declining outputs and yields and perforce some reduction in the area planted in recent years. Some local governments have required farmers to grow cotton, or lose their land rights. Quotas have been imposed for the minimum production of cotton on irrigated land on a district (*jamoat*) basis. Credit, sales and trading are non-transparent and focused on production volumes, not profit. Presently, cotton debts amount to \$US 548 million. Of this, \$US 435 million is credit investment and \$US 113 million is debt to commercial banks. These debts will now be written off, subsequent to the approval of a Farm Debt Resolution Strategy developed with donors, culminating in a Presidential Decree signed 30 May 2009.

Livestock

21. Since independence the Tajik livestock sector has gone through a number of significant changes, which have had a profound effect. The profoundest change was a shift from state to private ownership of livestock. Table 1 below illustrates the speed with which this has taken place. After an initial reduction in the years following the collapse of the USSR, numbers are steadily increasing. This calls for forward planning and interventions to guarantee that there is sufficient feed and fodder produced. This change has also led to a situation in which animals are now kept in mixed herds and flocks. Managed breeding and the possibility for performance testing and genetic selection no longer exists.

Table 1: Ruminant Numbers and Distribution over Different Owners (*1000, source CSO)

	1991	1997	2000	2005	2008
Cattle					
Total inventory	1390,5	1050,2	1061,7	1303,3	1702,5
State farms	515	174,3	134,2	95,7	63,4
Households/family farms	875,7	869	907,8	1143,8	1547,5
Dehqan Farmers	-	6,9	19,7	63,8	91,6
Sheep & goats					
Total inventory	3354,9	2221,6	2221,7	2816,5	3798,4
State farms	1557,3	732,6	572,5	529,2	438,4
Households/family farms	1797,6	1460,5	1565,8	2100,2	3058,8
Dehqan Farmers	-	28,5	83,4	187,1	301,2

22. The state and collective farming system played an important role in the provision of essential livestock services and inputs for the family farms and households. With the decline of the state and collective farm system, service provision collapsed. Government veterinary services, which had been fully responsible for the control of more than 40 diseases, now limits itself to the control of only eight and does this poorly due to budgetary, institutional and human resource constraints.

23. There has been a general decline in animal productivity and production. This is not primarily the result of “genetic erosion” as is often claimed but mainly an increased incidence of disease and the sub-optimal nutrition of the animals. Serious weight losses during winter have to be recuperated in spring.

24. Livestock fodder production has declined drastically during the last 10 years. This is a result of the large area of irrigated land under enforced cotton production and the reduced area under irrigation due to the deteriorated irrigation infrastructure. The large-scale import of feed from other republics during the Soviet period to compensate for the shortfall of feed during winter in Tajikistan stopped with the collapse of the USSR and animals are now mainly dependent on locally available feed and fodder resources.

25. Under the Soviet system, small individual herds and flocks were assisted in their seasonal passage to the summer pastures (*ayloq*) in the high mountains along with the state owned animals and the herdsmen. Although there is anecdotal evidence to show that many animals are still being taken to the summer alpine pastures, the collapse of the old system has meant that it is more difficult for owners of only a few sheep or cattle to make the annual migration unless they combine with neighbours and hire herdsmen. In some places, this is reported to have led to the overuse of the lower elevation grazing close to the settlements and the underutilization of the higher elevation summer pastures in other places. However, this is a situation that requires much closer study as the true picture is not clear and as the present (2008/09) season has shown, when snow and rainfall are plentiful, even the most apparently worn out pastures have remarkable powers of regeneration.

26. Intensive commercial poultry production collapsed with the break down of the Soviet supply system, high grain prices and competition from large-scale, often subsidized, import of eggs and poultry. The commercial pig industry declined rapidly with the departure of the ethnic Russian population and is now virtually non-existent.

Land Reform

27. Land reform in Tajikistan began in 1992 with passage of the Law on Land Reform. Presidential Decrees No. 342 of 1995 and No. 874 of 1997 transferred a total of 75,000 hectares of state and collective farm land to private household plots.⁴ By June 1, 2004 the reorganization of 567 state and collective farms had resulted in the formation of 2,914 collective Dehqan (peasant) farms and 21,281 individual or family Dehqan farms using privately held land.⁵ By June 1, 2009 the total number of Dehqan farms reportedly has reached over 39,000, the majority of which are individual and family farms. Nevertheless, land reform has progressed slowly due to State interests in maintaining control over agricultural, mainly cotton production, and the failure of the State to equitably distribute land and offer security of land tenure to private farmers. For example, collective Dehqan farms still hold the majority of irrigated land and informal cotton plans are implemented each season with local authorities typically requiring a farmer to plant 70 percent of irrigated land under cotton.

28. The State's hold over agriculture has been slipping as difficulties in financing farm production have increased. In 2008, commercial banks made TJS 195.7 million (approximately USD 46 million) in loans to farms producing cotton, but the banks have resisted large scale lending due to the perceived risk in the sector.⁶ The lack of working capital financing has further driven down the production of cotton over the last few years, making the pressure of local authorities on farmers to plant cotton unsustainable. In 2006, land planted under cotton totalled 263,000 hectares; in 2009 only 172,000 hectares of cotton have been planted.⁷

29. These recent developments present a new opportunity for meaningful reform in agriculture and more equitable distribution of land to occur. Presidential Decree No. 663 of May 30, 2009 on Additional Measures to Support the Agricultural Sector provides for the resolution of cotton debt of Dehqan farms. This Decree provides the opportunity for Dehqan farms to eliminate their debt burden and secure greater freedom to farm outside of the command economy. The Government has since developed an Action Plan to implement the Presidential Decree and specify how the Government will resolve the debt crisis and improve conditions for market oriented agriculture.

B. CONSTRAINTS AND POTENTIAL FOR AGRICULTURE DEVELOPMENT

30. *Crop production, diversification and technology:* Irrigated crop land in Tajikistan has the potential to be highly productive. Both climate and soils are suitable for the production of a wide variety of crops, including fodder as well as fruits and nuts. The country should be capable of not only feeding itself, but producing a surplus of horticultural and other crops for export. The fact that much of the country's agricultural production is from individual garden plots (*ogarod*) indicates the country's greater potential if the policy conditions were right. With a view to the development of private farming, there is a need to rebuild the agricultural sector, from appropriate adaptive agricultural research to the commercial production of high quality seeds. Cotton would still have a place in a more balanced rotation based cropping system. There are also opportunities to produce high value crops, herbs and spices for niche international markets. The country's

⁴ Land Legislation in the Republic Of Tajikistan, USAID ARD/Checchi Commercial Law Project, Renee Giovarelli, 2004.

⁵ Report on the Results of the Land Reform Audit in the Cities and Districts of the Republic of Tajikistan, Bulletin of the Land Committee of the Republic of Tajikistan, 2004.

⁶ Data from Ministry of Agriculture.

⁷ 2006 data from State Committee on Statistics of the Republic of Tajikistan; data for 2009 from Ministry of Agriculture.

worn-out farm mechanization base, much of it dating back to the last round of inputs from the USSR in the 1980s, needs to be re-established with more appropriate equipment. Systems of integrated pest management need to be encouraged and improved on and off-farm post harvest management practices introduced. The present attempts to introduce effective agricultural technical support and extension services under various donor /NGO initiatives need to be strengthened and expanded as do inputs supplies, agricultural credit and marketing.

31. There is a considerable need to discourage cultivation of steep mountain slopes both for rain-fed and irrigated farming. Much of this is the result of rural poverty and the economic struggles of upland communities. This is particularly evident on the medium elevation loess hill land and is a cause of increased landslides with sometimes catastrophic consequences. Such practices are destructive to both the environment and rural livelihoods and should be replaced by more sustainable land management.

Table 2: Agricultural land per capita in the Republic of Tajikistan, 2006

	Total 000 hectares	Hectares per capita
Irrigated arable	498.1	0.070
Rain-fed arable	231.5	0.030
Sown to cotton, 2005	288.7	0.041
Sown to cotton, 2006	263.0	0.037

Source: Land Fund of the Republic of Tajikistan, 1 January 2007

32. *Irrigation:* Many of the extensive systems of irrigation and drainage established under the USSR are in a poor state of repair. The capital investment required to put these systems back into good working order would be huge and some parts, especially systems dependant on pump stations may never again be economically viable. There is a need for the country's irrigation systems to be reviewed and rationalized with rehabilitation investment concentrated where it is likely to be most cost effective. There is also a considerable need to train farmers in the more effective use of irrigation water and rural communities in the management of their systems through the formation of water users associations (WUA).

33. *Livestock:* There is potential for more development of livestock production, especially in the peri-urban districts to supply the towns with meat, milk and eggs. Self-sufficiency of poor rural households could be increased through encouraging the raising of poultry (chickens, turkeys and ducks) and highly productive small stock such as rabbits or milking goats, or encouraging traditional household activities such as silk production or beekeeping which can be done in or close to the home.

34. With assistance from FAO and others, some progress has been made to assist the effective privatization and commercialization of the veterinary services, but much still needs to be done. Assuming this is to continue and expand, the government would need a policy for the strategic provision of viable and effective veterinary services based on public/private collaboration, cost recovery and paid services. There is need for clear new policies and strategies for veterinary services, pasture access and management, the provision of support services and the private supply of inputs.

35. Generally there is a poor understanding of good animal husbandry, feeding practices, pasture and grazing management and fodder production and preservation among the new private farming population. These new farmers need extensive guidance on all aspects of livestock husbandry including the recognition of diseases and the need for their animals to be vaccinated without relying on a free government service.

36. Poor pasture management and inefficient feed and fodder production contribute to low animal production. It is not so much a question of current livestock numbers being beyond the present carrying capacity and feed resources of the country, as is sometimes maintained but rather

the country's intrinsic inability to produce sufficient pasturage, forage and fodder. This situation is unlikely to improve unless there is a rationalization of pasture use and better management of fodder and feed production⁸. Any efforts aimed at improving livestock breeding will only pay off if feed and fodder of the right quality is produced. There needs to be better access to pasture land with grazing rights protected within an equitable legal framework and better management of the seasonal grazing and forage.

37. Some improvement in fodder production could be achieved by reducing the present cotton acreage and the introduction of fodder legumes into the rotation without any loss in overall yield, as this would help improve soil fertility and soil structure.

38. *Lack of market infrastructure and remoteness:* Access to markets is problematic, although slowly improving. There are few established input suppliers. The lack of adequate storage facilities and a local processing industry forces most farmers to sell their agricultural output at local markets or along the road at harvest time, further depressing prices. Tajikistan's topography means that many rural communities are very remote and even if the land is productive, their inaccessibility makes marketing a real challenge that is likely to remain so.

39. *Access to capital:* Cash to finance operations is largely unavailable in the rural economy. Credit for working capital and investment in farming operations is difficult to obtain partly because of the existing legal ambiguities, but also because commercial banks deem agriculture as risky.

40. *The potential for agro-industry:* At present, such agro-industry as remains after the collapse of the Soviet Union is mainly focused on cotton. But the country has a huge and largely unfulfilled potential for the processing, drying, packaging and export of things such as dried fruit and nuts as any visit to one of the urban or rural markets indicates. There are other potential for the revival of traditional industries such as silk and possibly also for the production of high value crops such as herbs and spices that should be investigated.

41. *Land reform:* The ambiguous existing legal framework related to land and agriculture in Tajikistan is often misinterpreted and can be easily manipulated. The laws governing a Dehqan farm contain numerous ambiguities which complicate its operation and legally prevent it from engaging in many contractual relations. For example, Article 7 of the newly passed Law on Dehqan Farms provides that the Dehqan farm is not a legal entity which according to the Civil Code prevents it from entering into credit agreements and output sale contracts. The principles of the Law on Dehqan Farms also conflict with the Land Code, which allows only citizens to possess land use right certificates, making it practically impossible for the Dehqan farms to possess land and use it as collateral for credit. The legal framework also inadequately protects individual rights of farm members by not providing them adequate opportunity to participate in governance of the farm enterprise and leaving key decisions solely in the hands of the farm manager. Procedurally, obtaining a land use right certificate is unnecessarily complex and time consuming, requiring some 25 steps and numerous approvals to complete. It is reported to cost between USD 300 and 800 to obtain a certificate to agricultural land. Adding to the high cost is frequent rent seeking from local officials who are required to approve issuance of certificates.

42. The Government is actively soliciting support from donors to implement the recently adopted Action Plan. Working through the Donor Coordination Council, the donors have already assisted in development of the Action Plan, are expected to help assess and recommend policy and legislative changes, and should support implementation of needed actions. In this environment, FAO technical capacity on agricultural policy and land reform could offer valuable expertise and experience to structure and implement these reform initiatives.

⁸ Visual observations made by the evaluation team indicate that in a year such as the present one when plentiful rainfall has led to an abundance of vegetative growth on the medium-altitude hills, it is more a question of the local population's inability to manage these resources.

C. DONOR ASSISTANCE

43. With the assistance of the international development partners the Government of Tajikistan has developed a medium and long term National Development Strategy (NDS) and Poverty Reduction Strategy (PRS). These documents were intended to provide the Government with a platform for development, implementation of economic reform, and a set of priorities for international assistance working towards achievement of the Millennium Development Goals. The NDS was accepted by the international development agencies and financial institutions, which provided funding for assistance and rehabilitation programmes.

44. Among main donors who have provided assistance to Tajikistan are: the International Monetary Fund (IMF); the World Bank, the Asian Development Bank (ADB), the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD), USAID, the European Union (EU), the Swedish International Development Agency (Sida), the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA), the Japan International Co-operation Agency (JICA), The UK – Department For International Development (DFID), the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), Islamic Development Bank, the German Government - GTZ, the Swiss Development Corporation (SDC) and other smaller institutions all provided substantial financial support to Tajikistan.

IV. FAO Office in Tajikistan

A. THE HISTORY OF FAO'S PRESENCE IN TAJIKISTAN

45. As was the case for all the newly independent states that emerged from the break-up of the USSR, FAO was slow in establishing a working presence in Tajikistan. The first engagements were mainly in response to emergency requests for agricultural inputs and assistance for returning refugees, ex-combatants and the victims of drought and an Emergency Coordination Office was opened in 1996. Donor support at this time was primarily from UNHCR, Sweden and Norway.

46. In January 2002, a Project Coordination Office was opened in Dushanbe with an international Coordinator. Between January 2002 and October 2004, the position of Country Project Coordinator was held by one person on consultancy contracts. Although essentially set up to manage an 'emergency' programme, this established FAO as an organizational presence in Tajikistan and there was some vision of gradually moving from 'emergency' to 'rehabilitation' and 'development' particularly in respect of Animal Health and Land Reform.

47. The position was again filled in January 2005 by a new Coordinator who held the position until May 2006. The second incumbent continued to encourage an emphasis on 'rehabilitation' and 'development' as is clear from his 'hand over notes' written in May 2006. But at that time most donors were only interested in providing funds for short term 'emergency' type projects in Tajikistan - a problem that continues to the present time. These two incumbents established FAO as a credible presence in Tajikistan as evidenced by the consistency with which donors sought out FAO as their implementing and technical partner.

48. From July 2006 to March 2008, FAO became less proactive, as the incumbent Coordinator reportedly saw his role as being one of an implementer for on going projects that were developed and designed elsewhere. During this period, improvements were made in administrative and financial systems in the Project Office. However, FAO was largely absent from the donor community in Dushanbe and did not play much of a role in the UNCT. This Coordinator was relieved of his duties in March 2008.

49. There then followed a series of rather short inputs by a series of 'temporary' Coordinators. The first was the desk officer from Rome. She was succeeded by a Coordinator who was supposed to be long term but served for only 4 months before resigning to take another job. A temporary Coordinator (retired FAOR) filled the post from September to December 2008 and a

senior CTA acted as Coordinator until February 2009. The present Country Project Coordinator was appointed and took up his position in February 2009.

B. STRUCTURE AND FUNDING OF THE FAO OFFICE IN TAJIKISTAN

50. With the exception of a few countries with special conditions (e.g. Saudi Arabia with a large UTF programme, Somalia), Tajikistan is the country with the largest FAO project portfolio without an accredited FAO Representative.

51. The vast bulk of FAO's work in Tajikistan is administered through the Project Coordination Office (PCO, formerly Emergency Coordination Office), reporting to TCE in Rome. Besides the PCO, the FAO establishment includes a Government employee posted in the Ministry of Agriculture (MoA) who receives a supplementary stipend paid by the Regular Programme to act as FAO's National Correspondent. The National Correspondent reports to the FAO Sub-Regional Coordinator in Ankara. Friendly and cooperative relations are maintained between the PCO and the National Correspondent. Additionally, some of the larger projects operating in the country have dedicated administrative staff, who initiate project-related administrative and financial matters and interact on these with the PCO.

52. The PCO staff includes the Coordinator, a Finance Officer, a National Programme Officer, an Administrative Officer, two Finance and Administration Assistants, an IT specialist, three drivers, a receptionist and a cleaner. The Coordinator and Finance Officer hold fixed-term contracts as FAO employees; all the others serve with National Project Personnel (NPP) contracts. This is a recent innovation and restored improvements (e.g. medical coverage) compared to the situation that prevailed since 2006. These improvements in conditions of service were decided after Audit and HR missions in 2008.

53. The FAO programme in Tajikistan has changed considerably over time. When the Emergency Coordination Office of FAO was established in 1996, all projects were of the traditional emergency type, i.e. emergency needs assessments, distribution of agricultural inputs. As mentioned above, starting around 2002, under the guidance of a new Coordinator who arrived at that time, FAO began to take on projects with a greater developmental orientation. While there have been projects exclusively for emergency input distributions in recent years, most recently after the extremely cold winter of 2007-08, most projects have had a rehabilitation and development focus, where input distribution has played a minor role if any.

54. The unusual situation of the FAO Project Coordination Office in Tajikistan is that it finds itself financed and administered as if it were a temporary, emergency coordination office, while in fact it is supporting what is essentially a development portfolio. Although mainly performing the same tasks as an FAO Representation, it does so from a position of dependency for financial survival on projects that contain specific provisions for staffing the Project Office, or else having to finance staff salaries from General Operating Expenses (GOE, see Section D below). This uncertainty about office funding is highly prejudicial to staff morale and sends a message of uncertainty to other actors about FAO's intentions in Tajikistan.

55. There are no set criteria for apportioning staff costs, which is done opportunistically on the basis of project size and donor willingness to shoulder costs. Budgeting for staff posts in the PCO is a complex exercise, handled by the Coordinator and the Finance Officer⁹. Staff can be charged to several projects in any given year and the duration of staff contracts is thus uncertain. Contracts can only be extended when new projects are approved, or old projects extended. Other costs of running the Office, e.g. rent, utilities, are also charged to the GOE budget in projects.

56. The sustainability of the office is further compromised by the fact that none of the project support costs (AOS) earned by FAO from projects operated in Tajikistan are returned to the

⁹ An exception is the Coordinator's costs, the apportionment of which is decided by TCE at HQ.

Office. The entire sum is retained by FAO HQ, and 60% of this is directed to TCE, with 21.25% allocated to other units of FAO HQ¹⁰ and 18.75% to a reserve fund.

57. For emergency projects administered through offices where there is an FAOR, 7% of the AOS is given to the FAOR for administrative support. Additional resources are sometimes also given on an *ad hoc* basis. For development projects, which are administratively generally more complex than emergency projects (greater number of administrative actions per dollar spent), 50% of the AOS is given to the FAOR. In the case of Tajikistan, none of the AOS goes to support the Project Coordination Office.

58. Table 3 below was prepared to compare the costs of the Project Coordination Office with total HQ overheads, including the TCE share. The costs of the Project Coordination Office are comprehensive, including staff costs, office rent, vehicles, internet access, etc.

Table 3: Project Delivery and Overheads (Jan. 2007-May 2009)

No	Description	2007	2008	May-09	Total
1	Total Project Delivery	2,269,053.00	8,269,472.00	2,717,866.00	13,256,391.00
2	Local Project Delivery	801,693.00	2,743,703.00	1,432,758.00	4,978,154.00
3	Cost of Coordination Office	305,057.00	336,057.00	136,902.00	778,016.00
3	TCE share of HQ Overheads (60%)	136,143.18	496,168.32	163,071.96	795,383.46
4	Total HQ Overheads	238,304.25	858,638.06	285,881.47	1,382,823.78

59. In addition to the overheads mentioned above, some funding of Headquarters Operations Officers is also funded from project budget lines (e.g. five months from OSRO/TAJ/805/EC).

60. The Evaluation does not have all the elements at hand to recommend what should be the proper ratio between costs of the Coordination Office and the amount spent on overheads for TCE. Although the evaluation did not examine the HQ support structure (this was already being done by another evaluation on FAO's Operational Capacity for Emergencies), it noted the very heavy organizational structure for Tajikistan in TCEO (the Service Chief, a Senior Officer with multiple country responsibilities, a Budget Holder with multiple country responsibilities, an Operations Officer and Operations Clerks). The TCE HQ structure contains an additional two bureaucratic layers, compared with the previous situation for FAO development projects, when all were implemented from HQ. This unwieldy structure may have been a contributing factor to some of the administrative problems noted by the evaluation team. It is also very costly, as shown clearly by the fact that the TCE share of support cost income is higher than the total expenditure on the FAO Office in Dushanbe. The evaluation finds that there is a strong *prima facie* case for examining the distribution of support costs, and to direct a certain amount of support cost funds to the Office in Dushanbe. This would provide more predictable funding for the Office's posts. Furthermore, if the evaluation recommendations are accepted for decentralizing operations in Tajikistan, and as staff costs are much lower in Dushanbe than in Rome, there would be a possibility to enhance technical capacity and increase efficiency at no additional cost.

¹⁰ Of this 21.25%, nearly one-third (7%) is allocated to the Administrative Services Division and the same amount to the FAO Representations. However, since Tajikistan has no FAOR, it receives none of this.

C. WORK OF THE PROJECT COORDINATION OFFICE

Project Administration

61. The PCO Office provides a variety of services to FAO operations in Tajikistan. These include preparation of new projects and budgets, tendering and procurement for purchases of USD50,000 or below, preparation of project budget revisions, preparation of field budget authorizations (FBA), preparation of financial reports to donors, preparation of financial statements, issuance of contracts, making requests for imprest account replenishments, and servicing visitors to the country. With local disbursement of \$US 2.7 million in 2008 and a similar amount expected in 2009, the Office handles a volume of expenditure comparable to a medium-sized FAO Representation.

62. TCE is involved in many of the administrative processes, but only to check the work that has been initiated by the Project Office Administrative and Finance Unit and then approved by the Coordinator. After examination by TCE, documents are passed to AFF or technical divisions, depending on the subject matter. This includes project documents, budgets and revisions, procurement requests above \$US 50,000, FBAs and financial reports.

63. Over the period covered by the evaluation, major improvements were made in office administration. Before 2006, financial administration in the Office was described as 'chaotic', with controls lacking, no access to corporate accounting systems and most operations conducted on a cash basis. After a mission by TCE, an imprest account was opened in early 2007. Previous to this, non-cash payments were made through UNDP, which resulted in delays and lack of accountability. Around the same time, the Office gained access to corporate systems such as Oracle, Data Warehouse and the Field Accounting System (FAS). Despite the improvements, there are problems related to the use of Oracle system for project managers. Complete expenditure information from Oracle is made available to project managers with some 1-2 months delay. Project staff often have to translate Oracle expenditures into the required donor format and this takes up much time and effort. An improved tracking system would be required to enable managers to make timely decisions.

64. Some in-country training was provided on corporate systems and the Finance Officer received a week's training in Rome. In December 2007, the Project Coordinator was granted a procurement approval authority to \$US 50,000, the same as that granted to most FAO Representatives. Although uncertainty over the duration of staff contracts remains a problem, conditions of service have been improved through the use of NPP contracts since 2008. The problem of delayed issuance of contracts and payments has been largely solved through decentralization of authority to the FAO Project Coordinator.

65. The Evaluation noted that the results of all measures due to decentralization of authority have been positively received by the FAO Project Coordination Office and have led to greater efficiency in operations. Based on this, further decentralization of operational authority should be encouraged.

Advocacy, Programme Development and Participation in the UNCT

66. Advocacy and responsibility for programme development are not normally tasks carried out by an Emergency Coordinator, because in most countries there is also an FAO Representative who carries those remits.

67. Part A above deals to some extent with this topic. The evaluation had most information about the work of the present Coordinator, who clearly sees that it is his role to engage in advocacy and programme development in areas where FAO has an appropriate mandate and is deemed to have a comparative advantage. He has actively engaged in donor cooperation forums, participated in the UN Country Team and consulted with Government departments related to agriculture and rural development. FAO is now pursuing initiatives in the following areas:

- a) *Development of a long-term agricultural strategy.* Working through the Donor Coordination Council, where FAO now represents the UN system on agricultural issues, the Office has been advocating an approach involving donors (USAID, DFID, EC), NGOs (German Agro-Action) and the Government. The idea is to pull together existing policy documents and assemble an implementation tool for national agricultural policies (e.g. right to land, right to water), to be applied on a pilot basis in 6-7 districts.
- b) *The Green Initiative.* In December 2008, the UNDP Resident Coordinator proposed the launching of a Green Initiative for Tajikistan, similar to what had been done previously in Afghanistan. The Green Initiative, a partnership between the UN, donors and Government, would include aspects of reforestation, livelihoods improvement, watershed management, alternative fuel use and fruit tree propagation. FAO was requested to make specialist inputs for the preparation of a Concept Note; its contribution is being backstopped by the Forestry Department in Rome and the FAO Coordinator. The two-month FAO consultancy input is being financed by UNDP.
- c) *Information system for crop assessment and agricultural marketing.* This would be for food security information needs and would likely involve a project commitment of 2-2 ½ years. The EC would be a likely funding source for such an initiative.
- d) *Irrigation.* Work has begun to address the perceived need to coordinate the diverse activities currently being implemented related to Water Users' Associations (WUA) and develop a coherent national strategy for irrigation management.
- e) *Seed multiplication.* After years of free seed distribution as humanitarian aid, the Government and donors are moving towards development of a national seed production capability. Sida, which has started an initiative in this area but is now withdrawing from Tajikistan, is looking for another agency to build on its initiative. There have also been some discussions with the World Bank.
- f) *Locust monitoring and control.* The Office has been involved in discussions to set up a regional locust control programme, which is being promoted by AGPP.

68. FAO is now an active member of the UN Country Team (UNCT), a fact that is acknowledged by other members. Because of the turnover in Coordinators, FAO did not play a strong role the development of the current UNDAF, which covers the period 2009-2015. This being said, agriculture is recognized by all parties as a key driver of economic development in Tajikistan. As a result, the new UNDAF includes agriculture as a UN system priority, as did the previous one.

D. TECHNICAL BACKSTOPPING (From Headquarters, Regional and Sub-regional Offices)

69. Information made available to the Evaluation indicates that FAO staff from HQ technical divisions and Regional and Sub-regional offices spent a total of 465 person-days in Tajikistan during the period January 2005 – May 2009. Of this amount, HQ technical divisions (AF, ES, FI, FO, NR, LEGN) accounted for some 65% (302 days) with the balance from the Regional and Sub-regional Offices (163 days). These missions represented about 40% of the total visits by FAO to Tajikistan in the review period; the balance was from Administration and Finance, TCE, the Investment Centre and others (including the Evaluation Service).

70. The Sub-regional Office in Ankara was established in September 2006. According to available information, staff from that office have spent some 75 days in Tajikistan since then, including three visits by the Investment officer and two each by the fisheries and forestry officers, the latter in connection with TCP projects being implemented in the country.

71. Nearly all the technical visits were project-related and funded, except for a very few days related to attendance at meetings. It has proved difficult to assess the quality of the backstopping,

due to lack of institutional memory in both the FAO Project Coordination Office and in Government departments. However, the overall impression is that greater familiarity with FAO's technical services is needed. The Government has not actively solicited FAO's technical assistance outside of projects. Should some of the programme initiatives mentioned previously begin to develop, demands for FAO technical services are likely to increase.

E. IMAGE OF FAO IN TAJIKISTAN

The FAO Coordinator

72. Previous country evaluations have shown that the FAO Representative is the most important factor in determining the image of FAO in a country¹¹. As the FAO Project Coordination Office has effectively served as the face of FAO in Tajikistan, the person serving as Project Coordinator has served as the "face" of FAO in the country.

73. Throughout the evaluation period, the image of FAO in Tajikistan has had its ups and downs, as noted above. Coordinators have had differing levels of engagement with the Government, donors and the UNCT. The new Coordinator, aware of the damage done to FAO's reputation by the "revolving door" of Coordinators over the previous year, immediately set out to repair the image of FAO in Tajikistan, by establishing and maintaining contacts with Government and donors, and active participation in donor forums and the UN Country Team (see C.2 above). For example, previously UNICEF was the UN representative for agriculture in the Donor Coordination Council (DCC). FAO has assumed this role since March 2009. He also has actively sought to improve communication within the PCO through regular meetings, so that the various projects are aware of each other's activities and objectives and to ensure a coordinated approach to programme implementation that had been lacking previously.

74. The results from this active engagement are apparent from discussions with UN, donor and Government representatives met by the mission. Unanimously, they note the improvement in FAO's engagement in development issues and state that FAO has now assumed a prominent role in the agriculture sector among the international actors. The evaluation notes, however, that this engagement has largely been due to the effort and character of the Coordinator and not to the increased delivery of technical services by the rest of the Organization. It will be a key task for the rest of the Organization to support the initiatives being launched, particularly at the programme development stage.

Problems and Issues

75. FAO enjoys a good reputation in Tajikistan for the technical competence of its work and there is a clear desire on the part of both donors and the Government for greater involvement of FAO. FAO is seen as particularly valuable for the neutral role it can play in very sensitive issues related to agricultural reform that are currently being discussed.

76. This being said, FAO's operational capacity was criticized on numerous occasions. Implementation delays and long periods in which administrative and financial matters have been left pending without resolution, have led to a negative picture of FAO's capacity among key donors.

77. The most serious situation, and one with the most urgent need of repair at the time of the evaluation in June 2009, was with the EC. Despite numerous requests and promises, FAO has been unable to provide financial reporting at the necessary level of detail for the first EC-funded brucellosis project (OSRO/TAJ/501/EC), some 2 ½ years after the project completed its operations. It is understood that the difficulties stem from poor reporting by the NGO implementing partner for the education component of the project and problems in the transfer of

¹¹ "FAO Effectiveness at Country Level – A Synthesis of Country Evaluations" (PC 99 3b), May 2008.

equipment. Despite repeated requests, FAO has not addressed the issue with the EC in a forthright way. The EC is exasperated that funds remain unused and/or unaccounted for in a project that ended its operations such a long time ago.

78. At the time of the evaluation, the relationship had been further hampered by actions subsequent to the EC awarding a Contribution Agreement for a third brucellosis project earlier in 2009. The Call for Proposal of the EC required a 20% co-financing of the total eligible cost. When the Agreement was sent to the Director, TCE for signature, a clause was inserted in the letter accompanying the signed agreement “reserving FAO’s right to withdrawal from the same, should co-financing funds not materialize”. This was unacceptable to the EC, since secured co-financing was a pre-condition for submitting a Proposal. Subsequent to the evaluation visit, co-funding was provided through the approval of a TCP project.

79. FAO’s credibility was also tarnished by a perceived commitment from a visiting staff member for support to the Head of the unit for Donor Coordination, which had the effect of delaying a search for funds from other potential sources at a critical time for negotiations between the Government and donors. This unfortunately added to FAO’s credibility problem with the EC, which is a prominent member of the donor group. FAO subsequently provided \$US 10,000 (out of approximately \$US 500,000 being sought) as a contribution to stopgap funding.

80. There is a general perception among project staff that FAO HQ takes too long to respond on matters and this complicates project implementation. The evaluation compiled anecdotal evidence on a variety of matters, including delays in response to tenders that had been submitted, delays in processing of reports (another source of irritation for donors) and overdue payments to drivers. In these cases, there was an absence of evidence of proactive measures being taken by HQ. This has given the appearance that nothing was done.

81. The Evaluation believes that communication between FAO HQ to the FAO field office about actions being taken or contemplated needs to be improved. For the matters mentioned above, it is the country office that has had to bear the brunt of donor criticism, for decisions or actions made in HQ that have not been its responsibility. There is a clear need for FAO HQ to be more responsive and attentive to the needs of the PCO.

F. THE FUTURE OF THE FAO OFFICE IN TAJIKISTAN

82. At present, the FAO Project Coordination Office is operating better than it had been for some time. Despite the improvements, there is a great deal of uncertainty about the future of the Office. As noted previously, the emergency projects that are the source of funding for the office, are coming to an end.

83. By the time of the evaluation, there had been no corporate level discussion to consider the role of FAO in Tajikistan. The parties currently involved include TCE, OCD and the Sub-Regional Office for Central Asia in Ankara. This Evaluation gives the opportunity to consider the role of FAO in Tajikistan, as part of the management response process. An informed corporate decision is required on FAO’s future presence in Tajikistan and the evaluation puts forward the following suggestions for consideration:

- The type and form of the FAO institutional presence in Tajikistan will depend on both country needs and the likelihood of a continued active field programme. Because of the food security situation and due to the potential for a vibrant programme of FAO assistance in Tajikistan, the evaluation feels that a residential presence for FAO in Tajikistan is justified. Tajikistan has social indicators that are worse than many countries where FAO has a full representation. It is a land-locked LIFDC. There is considerable potential for agricultural development as a vehicle of economic growth and the agricultural sector is a key Government priority. At the present time, all the projects being implemented by FAO in Tajikistan, with the exception of the new Brucellosis III project, have NTE dates not later than April 2010, with the majority ending in 2009.

Thus, under the present arrangements, the FAO Project Coordination Office will have very limited funds for operations, unless new projects can be found¹². The Project Coordinator is well aware of this, and he is actively working with the donors based in Dushanbe to identify viable development oriented opportunities for FAO to implement. The ability to participate in these processes and develop project initiatives depends on a residential presence in the country. The new Coordinator has begun a number of activities that could result in projects and a full-time country presence is required to bring these initiatives to fruition. It is highly unlikely that they could be nurtured from Rome or Ankara.

- An arrangement with the Sub-Regional Coordinator as FAO Representative and a resident Assistant Representative does NOT correspond to the role expected from FAO in Tajikistan. The Sub-Regional Office for Central Asia serves six countries (Azerbaijan, Turkmenistan, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan), besides Turkey where the Office is located. The Sub-Regional Representative has already been accredited as FAOR in Azerbaijan and Kyrgyzstan and in these countries, a resident Assistant FAOR has been or will be appointed. It is understood that consideration is being given to extend this arrangement to other countries of the sub-region, should they request FAO representation. The Evaluation feels that this arrangement would not be suitable for Tajikistan. The level of interaction with Government and donors is such that an experienced, senior officer with broad international experience is required to carry out the job successfully. This will require investment of resources and autonomy of responsibility, in order for the person representing FAO to carry out this task. The Evaluation feels that an Assistant Representative will not be able to perform this task.
- The role and authority of the Project Coordinator should be further strengthened. Over the past year, the position of the Project Coordinator has been enhanced through a number of worthwhile measures, such as increasing the level of authority to approve purchases, ability to issue NPP contracts and the fact that the new Coordinator has been given a fixed-term staff contract. In order for the Coordination office to play the role expected for it, the Evaluation feels that it should resemble, in terms of responsibility and authority, a FAO Representation. The next logical step in the transition would be to designate the Project Coordinator as Budget Holder for all national projects in Tajikistan and assign a percentage of AOS income from both development and emergency projects, to allow the Office to operate without entirely depending on allocations within individual projects.

V. Activities and Results by Theme of Intervention

A. PRIORITY FRAMEWORK AND ACTIVITY PORTFOLIO

National Medium-Term Priority Framework (NMTPF)

84. The first National Medium-Term Priority Framework (NMTPF) was prepared for Tajikistan in 2007¹³, covering the period 2007-09. It was prepared under the responsibility of the Regional Office for Europe.

85. The NMTPF is intended to give direction to the development of FAO's interaction with a country. It is a priority-setting mechanism, agreed between FAO and the country. In the case of Tajikistan, it proved difficult to achieve the desirable level of buy-in from Government institutions on the process. While Government bodies made suggestions for projects when they were consulted, there was little active participation in the elaboration of the document, which was

¹² One project (GCP/TAJ/001/SWE) is likely to be extended to Dec. 2010 with no additional budget.

¹³ Dated 5 December 2007.

done by the responsible Senior Policy Officer. The NMTPF was never formally endorsed by the Government, as per normal procedure for the NMTPF.

86. The NMTPF defined three thematic priorities for FAO cooperation with Tajikistan (policies and activities to enhance growth of individual agriculture; management of natural resources in the rural sector with an emphasis on prevention of disasters; and governance and regulation of the rural sector focused on the basic public good functions of government for market agriculture) and three operational priorities (building more effective partnerships with major development partners in the framework of the UN reform; strengthening working relations with government institutions through capacity building; and proactively exploring opportunities for further resource mobilization both for bilateral and multilateral cooperation). The evaluation team endorses these broad priorities as being important for Tajikistan. Most of the subject matter areas were those where FAO had intervened in the past, i.e. land reform and land management; farmer group formation for management of natural resources and marketing; livestock health; locust control; pasture and grazing land management; rural development; food security information; food safety and policy advice. The main new idea was for studies on markets for horticultural crops and high-value livestock products, which were to be financed under the TCP facility.

87. Perhaps the most serious weakness of the NMTPF is that it does not discuss outcomes in the intervention areas. As FAO moves toward Results-Based Management, specification of outcomes should be an important part of an NMTPF. It also does not contain information on the activities of other actors (donors) and therefore it is difficult to assess the degree to which FAO's priorities are harmonized with them. The NMTPF called for the establishment of a steering committee to monitor its implementation. This never moved beyond an idea on paper.

88. The current NMTPF expires this year but a new one is not yet under preparation. From discussions in Dushanbe, it seems that several new priorities will need to be considered, where FAO could in principle interact with other donors. These include joint development of a long-term agricultural strategy and participation in the new Green Initiative, which will be part of the new UNDAF and involve other members of the UN Country Team. There is thus a prospect of greater partnership in a revised NMTPF.

FAO Project Portfolio for Tajikistan in the Period 2004-09

89. The evaluation examined 42 projects that were implemented in Tajikistan during the review period. Of these, 30 were purely national projects and 12 were global or regional projects in which Tajikistan participated to various degrees. Thirteen of the projects were funded by the FAO TCP; of these eight were national and four were regional or inter-regional. Six of the eight national TCPs (i.e. all except two for the TCP Facility) are separately reviewed in Annex II.

90. Of the 22 donor-funded projects, 20 carried "OSRO" prefixes in the project designation, meaning that they were implemented as "Emergency" projects (i.e. Budget Holder responsibility with TCE). The two exceptions were the latest version of the project to establish and strengthen private veterinary services in the country (GCP/TAJ/001/SWE) and the largest agricultural input distribution project implemented in the evaluation period (UTF/TAJ/004/TAJ), which is World-Bank funded. However, for both these projects the Budget Holder is also TCE. TCE was also the Budget Holder for three of the TCP projects that were classified as "Emergency"; for the other projects the Regional or Sub-Regional FAO Office was the Budget Holder. The full list of projects examined by the evaluation appears in Annex I.

91. The sections that follow review FAO's interventions by sector.

B. LIVESTOCK HEALTH AND PRODUCTION

92. Through a number of mainly short-term projects, FAO has assisted the Tajik farmers and the national veterinary system adapt to the profound changes that have taken place since the collapse of the USSR. Livestock are important assets that provide rural people with capital,

income and food security. They are thus a vital component of the country's rural livelihoods and require support and protection.

93. Livestock health and production was the major intervention area for FAO during the evaluation period. Projects covered a number of key areas, including support to setting up private veterinary services, brucellosis control, preparedness for and control of new and emerging diseases, pasture management and fodder production and livestock-related inputs distribution.

94. In addition, there has been a range of distribution and training activities, which have been more or less complementary to these ongoing projects. In general it can be said that most of the livestock projects executed by the FAO created synergy between one another. The fact that the project staff of all these different projects have been based together in the same office in Dushanbe has undoubtedly contributed towards this synergy.

95. Many of the activities would have been better managed as long-term development programmes. However, donor funding was only available for short term 'emergency' type projects. In these circumstances it is commendable how FAO has managed to find resources for a succession of short term projects for the development of the various livestock-related initiatives.

Support to the Setting-up of Private Veterinary Field Services (GCP/TAJ/001/SWE)

2.1 Background and context

96. GCP/TAJ/001/SWE is the latest in a series of projects implemented over a period of 10 years, aimed at ever increasing national coverage of private clinical veterinary service provision. The projects, which involve material and technical support to veterinary staff, were deemed necessary for providing an effective clinical veterinary service to the numerous individual small farmers that have emerged since the collapse of the *kolkhoz / sovkhov* system and the old state veterinary service (see also Annex III – Impact Assessment of Veterinary Field Units in Tajikistan).

97. The private veterinary services network contributes towards the execution of regulatory veterinary services tasks such as sero-surveillance for HPAI and improvement of public health, through brucellosis vaccination on a contract basis. This could be expanded in future to Rabies and Echinococcosis control, both of which are increasing in the country. It also facilitates surveillance work for new and emerging diseases and is as an extremely valuable asset for the Tajik livestock sector. Besides regulatory veterinary services it provides farmers with curative veterinary services for which farmers pay a service charge and if they do not provide the drugs used themselves, they pay the veterinarian for the drugs used. Over 50% of all veterinary interventions are currently being carried out on a payment for service basis and private veterinary service provision is clearly there to stay for both public and private tasks.

Relevance

98. This project was relevant to consolidate the achievements of the earlier projects supporting private veterinary field services and to expand the coverage of veterinary field services in the country. When this project started the Tajikistan Veterinary Association (TVA) was not in a position to take the lead in supporting the existing VFUs as no decision had been made on which structure would manage the available funds for the purchase of veterinary drugs and vaccines. It also had to address the issue of developing an exit strategy that was not done in earlier projects, also because earlier projects had not been of sufficient duration to put the system on a sound footing to continue without project support. Private veterinary services are still not regulated by Tajik law. This still poses a threat to the sustainability of the system and would need to be addressed in the near future.

2.2 *Effectiveness*

99. After a slow start, the TVA has now taken a leading role in the training of veterinarians and the provision of veterinary drugs and other requirements. It manages a revolving fund and supervises the network with a staff of five in Dushanbe and 34 veterinarians positioned in various “bases” in the provinces and districts. The TVA should also be seen as the FAO’s ‘exit strategy’ as in two or three years it should be capable of taking on many of the training and coordinating tasks that FAO presently carries out.

100. The project has now reached full coverage of the country with VFU’s, which however in some areas are not as yet sustainable business propositions. The availability of quality assured veterinary drugs and services has increased dramatically. The veterinarians working with the programme use drugs of guaranteed quality and farmers appreciate the service. A recent survey has shown increasing willingness by the farmers to pay for services, vaccines and/or drugs¹⁴. This indicates increasing trust in the quality and effectiveness of the services provided by the private veterinarians.

101. The creation of a market for veterinary drugs has promoted the establishment and growth of private veterinary drug importing companies, which is an alternative to the TVA managed revolving fund and will assist in avoiding a monopolistic or oligopolistic market for veterinary drugs. In 2007 it was estimated that only 10% of the veterinary drugs required for an optimal livestock production are currently being used¹⁵. With decreasing poverty levels farmers will be more prepared to invest in the purchase of veterinary drugs to increase their livestock production.

102. Very little research has been done on the business aspects of private veterinary practice in Tajikistan. The large number of trained veterinarians who stopped private veterinary activities (a survey conducted in 2007 showed that over 60 percent of all trained veterinarians were inactive/dead/emigrated) should be reason enough to pay more attention to the business aspects of private veterinary practice. For private veterinary practice as a model to be effective the government will have to reconsider its licensing and taxation system of private veterinary services.

2.3 *Efficiency*

103. General project implementation efficiency suffered from sluggish decision making procedures in HQ and difficult communication between the Project Coordination office and TCE Rome. There have been various international coordinators involved in this project. Some were located far from the national staff doing the actual work. This led to delays in decision-making. The last international project coordinator with intricate knowledge of language, the country and the people, managed in a relatively short period to solve many of these issues and make the project work efficiently. His involvement in the project ended prematurely.

104. The veterinarians were given access to drugs and equipment on a basis of credit to initially the project/FAO and later the TVA. Through this revolving fund, veterinary association members originally had access to in-kind credit of around \$US 500 per person. This upper limit was eliminated in 2007 and some vets are now borrowing considerably more than that. With a total fund of around \$US 442.024 in February 2009¹⁶ in cash, stock and VFU debts, this should in theory give a reasonable amount of money for the approximately 400 VFUs making use of the fund. In reality the amount of cash actually rotating is far less (around \$US 140.000) because much of the total fund is tied up in stock. The total volume of sales of medicines in 2008 was

¹⁴ Vinod Ahuja et al (2009): Willingness to pay for disease prevention: Case of brucellosis control in Khatlon Oblast of Tajikistan (DRAFT- FAO).

¹⁵ Cummings G. (2007): Mission report (FAO)

¹⁶ Mehraban, Abdul Baqi (2009): Progress Report “Support to animal health sector in Tajikistan” GCP/TAJ/001/SWE (FAO).

\$US181.732, a 67 percent increase compared to 2007 although it is likely that there was a small additional capital injection into the fund through the project. This indicates increased efficiency in the use of the fund. It may have been more efficient to use part of the revolving fund as a guarantee to underwrite bank loans taken out by trusted veterinarians to purchase the necessities for the proper execution of their work, such as drugs, vaccines, equipment and transport. This would have meant a shift of the responsibility for credit monitoring from the TVA to a financial institution with access to more funds, thus opening the possibility for some veterinarians to expand the volume of their business, provided the drugs were available. Giving starting private veterinarians a kit of veterinary drugs also harbours the risk that he is provided with certain drugs and remedies, which do not have a ready market, thus locking up capital he could have used on faster moving drugs.

105. The TVA is increasingly responsible for the management of the network and the revolving fund. For efficient operation, it is necessary to take account of management costs, inflation, currency devaluation and the increase in the price of drugs, in order to preserve the buying power of the fund. In 2008, consumer inflation was 13.1 percent¹⁷. Shifting responsibility for the fund from (tax-exempt) FAO to TVA means that VAT and import duty now need to be paid. These add another 29 percent to the cost. There is also a small level of bad debts which must be recouped if the fund is to maintain its purchasing power. Efficiency in use of money requires that its cost be incorporated in its “price” without taking account of profit margins.

106. The TVA’s running costs are now largely covered by the various service contracts (LoA) it holds with the FAO managed projects. This is, however, temporary and in the long run its running costs should be paid for mainly from a mark up on the existing revolving fund business. There is thus need for a longer-term business plan for the TVA, taking into account its roles in educating its members, organizing and providing veterinary services for public tasks to the government, defending the rights of private veterinarians and running the input supply network. The sources of income would be from public-private contracting (which in most instances will be through projects), service provision and the mark up on drugs, vaccines and equipment.

2.4 Impact

107. The first impact has been the creation of a steady, albeit limited income for the private veterinarians. For some, the project has supported the establishment of small clinics, through a small loan of around USD 2500. Often a telephone is also provided. The loans given for the construction / rehabilitation of the clinics have had a great impact on visibility and almost certainly on the quality of work. Many other veterinarians would like to develop clinics, but funds are difficult to come by. As with the revolving fund the possibility of a guarantee fund to underwrite loans taken out by registered members for 1-2 years to fix up their clinics might have been considered as an option to facilitate more veterinarians to take out a loan for their clinics.

108. All contracted private vets have received training and equipment and have had access to the veterinary drug loans managed by TVA. This has been an important driver to become and/or remain active and has led to a great improvement in the level of veterinary activity during the last year. Together with the training these contracted private veterinarians should now be able to continue with their business in a sustainable way.

109. The impact of this programme on the livestock sector’s and indirectly the people’s health has been large and can be measured. The incidence of brucellosis in the 8 rayons where the control project was executed has gone down from above 10% to in some cases less than 2%. Although the Ministry of Health does not produce the statistics to show a decline in the incidence of brucellosis in people, this must be happening since the *Brucella* bacteria has become less widespread. The incidence of PPR in the country has been drastically reduced and thus the mortality due to this disease. Both diseases are being controlled through vaccination programmes

¹⁷ [http://indexmundi.com/tajikistan/inflation_rate_\(consumer_prices\).html](http://indexmundi.com/tajikistan/inflation_rate_(consumer_prices).html) accessed 8-7-2009.

executed by the network of private veterinarians. Through curative interventions, animal lives are saved and their production increased. These are all results of the programme which farmers notice and appreciate; they do not need serological evidence to notice less people with Brucellosis and more animals surviving.

110. The impact of the project on the government's way of thinking about private veterinary service provision is hard to measure. The fact that vaccines purchased with national budgetary funds are not channelled through the TVA and private veterinarians gives the impression that there are still elements in government who have not accepted the change in paradigm for the provision of veterinary field services.

2.5 Sustainability

111. Sustainability of private veterinary services as well as the sustainability of its support structures such as the TVA depends entirely on the possibility of private vets being able to make a living from private veterinary practice, provision of additional services such as AI and the sale of drugs, vaccines and other livestock requirements. The GoT also needs to facilitate the necessary changes in the system and legislation to make this possible. It is appreciated that there was first need to demonstrate that private veterinary practice can work in Tajikistan. The next step will be to ensure that it is thoroughly embedded within the system. This requires the service to be an integral part of development policy, strategy and legislation of the government for the livestock sector. Meaningful public/private contracting principles need to be developed for the "compulsory" vaccinations and surveillance work. An enabling environment for the further development of private veterinary practice should be developed through revision of the currently extremely expensive licensing system and the uncontrolled taxation and "rent seeking" by various government entities. Private veterinarians should pay tax to only one institution.

112. It is unfortunate that the private veterinarians have insufficient access to the eight "government controlled" vaccines and reagents¹⁸ when these are purchased from the national budget, as the amount of vaccine procured is insufficient to cover the total livestock population in the country. This mainly goes to serve the official livestock inventory, the number of which is generally much smaller than the real situation. These vaccination programmes usually achieve a high level of satisfaction from client farmers. If the vaccination campaigns were managed by the private veterinarians, it would undoubtedly increase their businesses. For this to happen, the government will have to rationalize its policies on vaccination and availability of vaccines based on accepted international standards, principles and experience. This would leave the government in the regulatory role for vaccination strategy for diseases with a public health aspect (brucellosis, anthrax and rabies) and quality assurance of all vaccines brought into the country by the licensed and registered private sector, supervised by the public veterinary services.

113. Most practicing veterinarians are still linked with the government and many VFUs are still situated in or near former government veterinary facilities. A private veterinarian doubling as a government vet still needs to obtain official sanction before he/she can charge money for services. The tax regime stifles private initiative and is one of the reasons why many opt to continue operating with "two caps", i.e. both government and private. Exemption from import duty and VAT is normal in many countries that want to promote local livestock production and private veterinary practice. This would send a powerful message that the GoT is serious about supporting the development of private veterinary practice. A clear definition of the division of responsibilities for public and private veterinary services and a civil service policy reform are necessary elements for the development of an effective and efficiently operating national veterinary service, consisting of a public regulatory and a private clinical veterinary service part.

¹⁸ Anthrax, Foot and Mouth Diseases, Brucellosis, PPR, Rabies, NCD, Sheep pox, tuberculin for testing

Brucellosis Control

(OSRO/TAJ/303/NOR, OSRO/TAJ/405/CAN, OSRO/TAJ/501/EC, OSRO/TAJ/805/EC)

3.1 Relevance

114. *Brucellosis melitensis* is an extremely debilitating zoonosis, leading to chronic human illness and disabilities. Its control in sheep and goats should be carried out primarily as a human health measure and secondly to increase animal production. After the collapse of the former system, many former Soviet republics have experienced a drastic increase in the incidence of brucellosis in both animals and people.

115. The project has piloted a “least cost maximum impact” approach, which is currently being copied in neighbouring countries. Serological evidence on the incidence of brucellosis in animals over the period 2003-2009 proves that this approach is effective, but also shows that there are still questions to be answered, which most probably are related to sufficiently high vaccination coverage, improvements in the cold chain and available manpower resources for an as complete and effective as possible vaccination campaign.

3.2 Effectiveness

116. The programme has been effective in terms of lowering the incidence of *Brucellosis melitensis* in small ruminants from 10% to less than 2% in some locations. In areas where the reduction in seroprevalence has been less dramatic, the vaccination rate was below 80%. This is seen as the minimum level of vaccination necessary for an effective campaign.

117. At some stage the brucellosis control programme needs to cover the whole country if it is to be truly effective. The sale and translocation of infected animals (e.g. through bride price, inheritance) and mixed grazing of vaccinated and non-vaccinated animals can be sources of a new spread of infection.

118. The programme is jointly managed by both FAO and SVI, which have developed a cordial working relationship. It is important to involve the TVA so it can eventually take over the role currently played by the FAO in assisting the SVI in planning and executing the campaigns.

3.3 Efficiency

119. For planning purposes it is important to have a good idea on existing livestock numbers in the various areas. There tends to be serious under-reporting of animal numbers. This leads to inefficiencies in planning and executing vaccination campaigns and discrepancies between the number of animals planned for and actually vaccinated.

120. As with the private veterinary services programme, the brucellosis programme has operated with a succession of short term projects. This could have led to inefficiencies if campaigns had been missed due to shortage of funds. Fortunately, FAO staff have been sufficiently trusted by the private veterinarians, who have done the work in a timely fashion, agreeing that payment could come later.

3.4 Impact

121. The most important impact indicator is the fall in the incidence of brucellosis in humans. There is evidence of a decline in the number of new cases reported in the 8 districts in the Rasht Valley, where the brucellosis control programme started first. Sero-surveillance in animals shows an overall decrease in infection in the locations where the projects have been operational. .

3.5 Sustainability

122. The sustainability of brucellosis control requires continuation of the programme for at least five more years, especially to expand it to areas not yet covered. This should include locations where the known incidence of the disease is lower than in Khatlon, where the programme started. If the incidence of brucellosis has been sufficiently reduced, the strategy could change to

'test and slaughter'. In this case funds would be required to pay for testing and the payment of compensation to farmers or the construction of a specialized plant that could process sero-positive animals.

123. It is unlikely that the government budget will ever be sufficient to buy enough vaccine to cover the whole country. Cost sharing and cost recovery mechanisms should be developed so that in future more animals can be vaccinated within the same government budget allocation. A recent study shows that farmers would be prepared to pay for brucellosis eye drop vaccination.

124. The role of Tajikistan's neighbouring countries in the control of brucellosis infection is critical. Regional agreements on the control strategies should be developed, particularly relating to the transboundary movement of animals. FAO is in a unique position to promote this as it is working in Uzbekistan, Afghanistan and will soon start providing TA to a WB/EU-funded veterinary programme in Kyrgyzstan.

*Preparedness for and Control of New and Emerging Diseases (PPR, HPAI)
(GTFS/INT/907/ITA, TCP/TAJ/3002, OSRO/TAJ/701/WBK)*

4.1 Relevance

125. These projects have all been extremely relevant for the development of the veterinary field and services in Tajikistan. They have been a driver for restructuring, investment and capacity building in the veterinary field. Staff were trained, contingency plans prepared, laboratory diagnostic capacity improved and international OIE standards have been adopted within the national system. The projects have opened up new avenues for regional collaboration. The experts involved with these projects have been instrumental in developing more interaction between the various national public veterinary services and familiarity and application of internationally agreed upon standards for brucellosis control, PPR control and HPAI preparedness and awareness.

4.2 Effectiveness

126. In its first year, project GTFS/INT/907/ITA worked towards OIE "*freedom from rinderpest disease*" status, which was verified. Then it started to work on PPR control and established a situation baseline before starting control measures. It created capacity for regular monitoring and response in case of new outbreaks. Although the incidence of the disease has decreased dramatically since the vaccination campaigns started, there are likely to be outbreaks that may go unnoticed if the cause of mortality is misdiagnosed as Pasteurellosis, which has happened before. PPR has been reduced as the result of the FAO work but has not been eradicated. Nonetheless the project introduced vaccination as a control measure and provided knowledge and diagnostic capacity to keep PPR under control. It is not clear from available information, whether SVI is capable to import sufficient PPR vaccine and organize an effective vaccination campaign to prevent future outbreaks and stop the spread of PPR.

127. The effectiveness of the HPAI projects has not been tested as there have been no outbreaks of the disease in Tajikistan to date. Simulation exercises can only test the effectiveness to a certain extent. A simulation exercise is reportedly planned for September 2009.

4.3 Efficiency

128. These projects have included a component to improve laboratory capacity. This is a laudable initiative and very necessary, but has been carried out in a haphazard fashion. Most of the investment in laboratories under the HPAI programme was for laboratories already established in the Foot and Mouth Disease Institute rather than to the Veterinary Laboratory, where major reconstruction has also been taking place, but with insufficient funds to complete the work.

129. There does not seem to have been an overall plan to develop the national veterinary diagnostic capacity, which would have helped establish a veterinary diagnostic system in the

country. The current 75 veterinary laboratories (52 in markets) are far more than the country needs or can afford.

130. Inaccurate statistics on animal numbers make efficient planning of vaccination campaigns difficult and lead to surplus vaccine in one place and inadequate supply in others, with the risk of spoilage. The efficiency of the system would be improved by the establishment of a database to monitor the movement of vaccines against zoonosis and places of storage. Accurate reporting of animals vaccinated would help keep track of the movement of vaccine and overall planning and control. The management of the other vaccines would most probably be more effectively and efficiently handled by the private sector than the government.

4.4 Impact

131. These projects have had impact at the level of improvement of laboratory infrastructure, equipment availability and training of laboratory staff. Farmers have received some information on HPAI and PPR and should be better able to protect themselves better against HPAI and their livestock against PPR, if there were sufficient PPR vaccine in country. Veterinarians have received training and some benefited from contract work for HPAI surveillance work and PPR contract vaccination. All these investments in infrastructure, equipment and human resources have however not lead to the setting up of a routine epidemiological surveillance system for PPR, HPAI and other diseases in the country and sufficient availability of PPR vaccine. Therefore the post-project impact of the investments in HPAI and PPR preparedness will be limited.

4.5 Sustainability

132. The state budget will not be able to maintain activities under these projects, which will continue to rely largely on outside funding. A better idea of the future requirement for veterinary diagnostic capacity and a plan for veterinary diagnostic laboratory development would help focus investment where it is most needed. It seems that at the moment there is the risk that laboratories are developing diagnostic capacity for the same diseases.

133. An important issue relating to all essential vaccinations is a system of cost recovery. The current quantity of vaccines available is not enough to achieve satisfactory vaccination coverage. A system of purchase, distribution and payment should be developed. The current practice of individuals and companies taking their own initiative to import vaccines is undesirable and potentially dangerous.

134. Preparedness to respond to an HPAI outbreak is nowadays increasingly dependant on a system of compensation funds. Discussion on a compensation fund in Tajikistan has thus far been inconclusive. This is unfortunate as such a fund could be the means of creating more sustainability in the control and prevention of HPAI and possibly other diseases such as Newcastle disease. This would be an ideal construction for a public/private partnership.

Pasture Management and Forage Production (OSRO/TAJ/605/EC Livestock Production and Pasture Rehabilitation)

5.1 Relevance

135. The previous system of controlling and managing pastures is no longer adequate for the current situation with many individual livestock owners. There is a need to develop new pasture management and access policies and strategies. The FAO project strategy of introducing legume seed (sainfoin and lucerne) into the existing natural vegetation without a clear idea of how the grazing land will be used or managed does not seem to be very relevant to future sustainable use.

5.2 Effectiveness

136. The interventions observed in the field do not seem capable of improving soil fertility or the quality of the hay or grazing to any significant extent. The work observed did not appear to have led to any demonstrable improvement.

137. The land sown with sainfoin and lucerne for seed production had very high infestation of weeds and a rather poor level of management. Assuming that a seed crop would be harvested, the mechanisms for subsequent seed distribution are confused. It was unclear why 10% of the forage crop seed harvested should be sold through the local VFU and the rest to be given to a seed bank to be redistributed to the 'needy'. It is unlikely that such an activity will have a lasting beneficial effect on the use and availability of forage seeds.

138. Forage seed production is important, but management through village development groups does not necessarily seem to be the most effective way to develop a sustainable production system. It would have been better if the project had identified interested and skilful individual farmers interested in producing good quality seed on contract for an agreed price.

5.3 Efficiency

139. This project suffered from an extremely slow start up. Only after the arrival of the present international project manager and his national coordinator in 2008 did implementation pick up.

140. The project has a number of design features which make it rather inefficient. Project activities are implemented in only one village in each jamoat, which has meant that project activities are widely scattered and logistically difficult to support and monitor.

141. Instead of concentrating the pasture improvement work in locations known to have serious problems of degradation, it was decided to confine project activity to 8 widely dispersed sites scattered over the Khatlon region. The plots were not based on any identified need for forage seed in any particular community. It is likely that these plots will serve as more of a demonstration rather than being an important source of forage seed for the village.

5.4 Impact

142. It is questionable whether it will have any impact in the long run.

5.5 Sustainability

143. Improvements in pasture management will only have an effect when there are mechanisms to protect the improvements against indiscriminate use by other parties. At the moment access to pastures, grazing rights and the management of grazing land are not well defined and thus effective technical pasture improvement measures are rather premature. It might be better for FAO to concentrate on assisting the GoT to review the present situation and help to develop and design policy, strategy and a legislative framework that establishes the rightful users of pasturage and meadows and protects their rights. Without this, technical interventions to improve management are unlikely to be very useful.

144. Seed production is a private good and should be promoted as such, linked into systems for quality control and the introduction of higher yielding varieties. The VDC can play a role in managing a forage promotion fund, but should not itself become engaged in seed production.

Livestock-related Input Distribution Programmes

Distribution of seeds, minerals, vitamins, stock feed, vaccines (OSRO/TAJ/801/SWE, OSRO/TAJ/802/EC, OSRO/TAJ/804/SWI)

6.1 Relevance

145. To be relevant, emergency interventions related to livestock should be in response to the threat of mortality if no action is taken. In practice, this means emergency vaccinations in the case of outbreaks of lethal diseases or the provision of feed and fodder to tide animals over a period of drought until there is again enough grazing and or feed available.

146. The distribution of minerals and vitamins does not save animals' lives. The distribution of fodder seed is a medium-term solution, which might even compete for limited land with human food crops where access to irrigated land is limited for the poor families.

147. Vaccination for FMD cannot be justified as an emergency measure in the absence of diagnosis of the disease. Vaccinations against PPR in sheep and goats and Newcastle Disease in poultry are some examples of vaccinations that do have an emergency justification because without immediate vaccination, large numbers of animals may die. It should be taken into account that such vaccination campaigns are a potential source of revenue for the local private vets and should only be executed with and through these local private veterinarians.

6.2 Effectiveness

148. It is hard to establish what happened to the distributed vitamins and minerals. Implementing partners indicated that they were used. It is unclear, however, how they were used if poor farmers had no grain or oil seed cake with which to mix it to feed their animals.

149. Post-distribution monitoring reports indicate that 93% of the beneficiaries planted the fodder seeds. However, in one of the villages visited, the evaluation team tried to find the plots of sanfoin and were eventually shown a field of 25 meter by 1 km in which the sainfoin seed had been under-sown in a crop of flax (linseed). This would produce its first hay crop only in 2010. This could hardly be described as an emergency measure to meet an immediate need for fodder at short notice. Also, because of the plentiful rainfall in 2009 there is an abundance of fodder of all kinds everywhere and in fact more than the capacity of the local population to harvest it in a timely fashion.

150. In the case of the projects where stock feed was distributed, a fixed amount per beneficiary was distributed, irrespective of the number of animals any individual owned. In any case, the quantity provided was not enough to carry the animal through the whole winter.

151. Of more potential use in educating farmers to improve the quality of their livestock husbandry has been the extension training and pamphlets that accompanied the distribution. Villagers spoken to were better informed about the need for vaccination, proper feeding etc. If the information and training took place in locations where such inputs are already available from the local VFUs or agro-shops the training should have had a positive effect not only on livestock production but on both veterinary and agro-shop business. If neither vaccines nor other useful livestock inputs are available in the locality, it will have made little difference.

152. Training has been contracted out to local service providers (e.g. the NGO ATAC). It also includes the formation and training of women's milk processing groups which follows a farmer field school (FFS) concept. For the other elements (pasture management and fodder production) a more traditional approach of training and information sessions has been followed.

6.3 Efficiency

153. It is very difficult to procure such inputs and deliver them in a timely fashion to the beneficiaries. Seed reportedly arrived too late or after farmers had already sown all their land. In future it might be better to work out a system whereby representatives of the agricultural input supplies networks are contracted to supply specified items and let farmers collect their package(s) against a voucher.

6.4 Impact

154. The direct impact of this type of distribution on preventing livestock mortality has almost certainly been very low. However, it has introduced villagers to technologies that were new to them. The training and extension brochures could well have had more effect and a longer-term impact.

6.5 Sustainability

155. Emergency distribution of inputs at no cost is by definition not sustainable. Sustained availability of these items can be achieved through supporting the local emerging agro-input supply businesses and through support for seed producers' association.

Distribution of Animals to the Poor (OSRO/TAJ605/EC Livestock Production and Pasture Rehabilitation)

7.1 Relevance

156. Livestock are an important asset with which people can gain food security, especially in areas where crop production is unreliable. The distribution of small, fast breeding livestock such as poultry (chickens, turkeys and ducks) or rabbits can quickly help poor families produce more food or generate cash income. The distribution of sheep or cattle is less relevant to assisting a poor family in distress. Such large animals require high maintenance, especially in the winter, and returns are delayed to when offspring can be sold, although there may be interim benefits from milk and manure. However, when funding is limited it is better to concentrate on small livestock such as poultry, rabbits or even milking goats, when providing assistance to poor rural families.

7.2 Effectiveness

157. The projects distributed chickens and sheep. The chickens selected were commercial layers, which were distributed without a cockerel, in contrast to what was reportedly suggested by project staff. This meant that if the beneficiaries (mainly female-headed households) wanted to produce chicks, they will have to use a local cockerel. As such types of layers have been bred not to brood, the eggs would have to be hatched under a local chicken or turkey. However, the chickens were given out with a supply of layers' mash, giving an immediate addition to the family diet in the form of eggs and possibly some income.

158. The Hissar sheep, also distributed to female-headed households, were a valuable long-term asset but only generate income after two years, at the earliest. The project demanded that the first two lambs were given away to a poor neighbour. This means that these large mutton sheep will need to be fed and maintained through two winters before providing any direct benefit to the poor household and will provide no immediate contribution towards poverty alleviation.

7.3 Efficiency

159. The FAO procedures introduced an element of inefficiency in the case of the sheep procurement. It might have been better to buy local sheep from the same area but this was impossible due to tender requirements. Another lot had to be rejected because they tested positive for brucellosis. It was finally decided to buy Hissar sheep from a government breeding farm.

160. The chickens were bought from a commercial outlet, just like the fodder and this process was very efficient. The layers were being kept as ordinary village hens would be kept, which was inappropriate for bird capable to lay 300 eggs or more per year under appropriate conditions. It would have been better if the project had also provided support for the construction of improved chicken coops to go with the hens. The high mortality experienced over the winter is an indication that some of the women were not ready and/or prepared to keep this type of better quality chicken. A hardier type of chicken would be more appropriate to village conditions and experience fewer losses.

7.4 Impact

161. The impact of the layers introduced is likely to be short-lived, considering the high mortality over winter and the inability of farmers to multiply them in the absence of cockerels of the same breed. The women beneficiaries are unlikely to be able to afford to buy replacement stock each year.

162. In some cases, the distribution of the Hissar sheep led to envy and possible further isolation in their society of the poor families who received them. It is important that it is the community decides not only who will be the first beneficiaries but also to whom second or third generations of animals are passed on.

7.5 Sustainability

163. Despite their high maintenance there is little doubt that the sheep are seen as a valuable asset and will be kept well. As such the introduction of this heavy mutton type sheep will now continue within the villages where they have been distributed. It is likely that male offspring will be kept and used as breeding rams by some people, possibly to improve their local animals. If the burden of maintaining them is too heavy, then the beneficiaries may sell them to wealthier neighbours.

164. The poultry activity as designed and executed is not sustainable and it is more than likely that after a second winter, when the birds stop laying eggs the families will choose to eat them. Without a suitable cockerel, they will produce no purebred chicks and that will be the end of these layers in the project villages.

C. SEEDS AND OTHER AGRICULTURAL EMERGENCY INPUTS

Emergency Input (seed and fertiliser) Distributions

a) Background and context

165. Under the Soviet command economy, wheat and other grains were mainly supplied from Russia, Ukraine and Kazakhstan. This integrated regional economy ended with the collapse of the USSR and since independence, agriculture in Tajikistan has become more diversified. Increasing the country's capability to produce its own supply of high quality seed is therefore required for crops such as wheat, potato, pulses, forage legumes, oil crops and vegetables.

166. Unfortunately, progress in this area has been slow. The seed production system is still largely characterized by varieties, standards and procedures inherited from the Soviet Union. The certification system in particular does not function. Few of the wheat varieties being used in emergency and development programmes by GoT, the NGOs or UN agencies have been officially released in the country. Organisations distributing seed (including FAO) rely upon *ad hoc* permission by the MoA to release imported seed from customs.

167. A few seed farms are still operating, most of which are under State control, but they do not satisfy national demand and are not operating efficiently. The MoA regularly procure seed from abroad, e.g. 742 mt and 1,298 mt of wheat seed were procured from Russia in 2008 and 2009, respectively.

168. Tajikistan also needs to introduce and disseminate new varieties that will result in better quality of the end product, such as high yielding rust resistant wheat¹⁹ with good bread making qualities and cotton with better lint quality.²⁰

169. Marketing agricultural inputs is in its infancy. There have been a few interventions by international and local NGOs to set up agro-shops in their areas of operation. At the national level, USAID has supported the creation of the Agribusiness Association of Tajikistan (AAT) while Sida has helped establish the Seed Producers Association of Tajikistan (SPAT).

¹⁹ It should be noted that a particularly virulent strain of stem rust – Ug99 that has spread from Africa through the Middle East, was observed in Iran in 2008 and it is thought to be only a matter of time before it reaches Afghanistan, Central Asia and the Indian sub-continent.

²⁰ Project document for TCP/INT/3102.

b) Interventions

170. The main project financing seed and fertiliser distribution during the period covered by the evaluation has been the WB-funded Emergency Food Security and Seed Import Project (EFSSIP - UTF/TAJ/004/TAJ). The project was implemented between September 2008 and July 2009, at a cost of USD5 ml. Other interventions in the area of seed and fertilizer distribution are all rather small components of more complex projects. The main example is project OSRO/TAJ/301/SWE which supported 4,100 female-headed households with 2,173 kg of vegetable seeds, 200 tonnes of potato seed and 4,100 tonnes of mineral fertilizer. OSRO/TAJ/602/CAN also distributed seeds and fertilizers to a small number of farmers. But these interventions were relatively small and completed several years ago. The evaluation did not have access to further information about these interventions. This section therefore focuses on the EFSSIP project.

171. Like some other emergency projects implemented by FAO, the EFSSIP was initiated in response to the harsh winter in 2007-2008, which was accompanied by drought that resulted in reduced cereal production. At the same time, Tajikistan was suffering from the sharp increase and volatility of global food prices. A food security assessment conducted jointly by WFP, UNICEF and FAO in April/May 2008 concluded that 7 to 9% of all households (and 17% of severely food insecure households) lacked wheat seeds²¹. Khatlon and the Rasht Valley were identified as severely food insecure and selected to be the foci of assistance under EFSSIP. The project has three components:

- a) Component A – Distribution of wheat seed and fertiliser to 70,000 food insecure households in selected districts in Khatlon.
- b) Component B – Distribution of a package of veterinary services (vaccinations and anti-worm treatments) and concentrates to food insecure households in selected districts in the Rasht Valley. It was later decided to change this component to the provision of lucerne (alfalfa) seed and fertiliser to 7,000 beneficiary households. Assistance was also extended to another 10,000 beneficiaries who received inputs (seeds and fertilizer) to produce maize on 0.1 ha per household.
- c) Component C – Project management.

172. The original project objective was to: “increase domestic food production and reduce the loss of livestock to help at least 28,000 of the poorest households in a timely manner to reduce the negative impact of high and volatile food prices.” During negotiations in July-August 2008, the GoT requested that local authorities manage the selection of beneficiaries and the distribution of project inputs, rather than NGOs as proposed by FAO. The local government authorities themselves were to cover the relevant distribution costs. GoT also asked that local NGOs be used to monitor beneficiary selection rather than international NGOs, as was originally intended. The resultant cost savings could then be used to increase the number of beneficiaries to approximately 77,000.

c) Relevance and design issues

173. The project took three months to negotiate, from June to end of August 2008. While the issue of whether to distribute free seed in a one-off emergency project was debated, the MoU between the GoT and FAO was the main point of discussion, in particular the percentage of funds to be utilized by the FAO PCO to implement the project (finally set at 8%).

²¹ Emergency Food Security Assessment in Rural Areas of Tajikistan - Joint Food Security, Livelihoods, Agriculture and Nutrition Assessment - WFP, FAO, UNICEF, Government of Tajikistan – April/May 2008. Interestingly, the same food security assessment concluded that 28% of the severely food insecure households lacked potato seed, i.e. a larger share than for wheat seed, but the EFSSIP project has so far not distributed any potato seed.

174. Another difficulty arose about who should select the beneficiaries and who should distribute the goods. Finally it was agreed that FAO would deliver the goods to the *jamoat* (sub-district) authorities. The *jamoat* officials and *rais-e-mahala* (village heads) would establish beneficiary lists under the supervision of the World Bank and supervise distribution. FAO's concerns that this might result in an unfair distribution were relieved somewhat when a condition was added that two independent NGOs would be selected to verify that beneficiary lists were drafted in accordance with selection criteria, that the listed beneficiaries actually received the goods, that they had sown the seed and that it was growing well. This would be carried out through three successive surveys. The sample varied according to the nature of the different components. It was largest for component A (15%, i.e. 5% in each of the three surveys).

175. In the end, the MoU was signed by the FAO coordinator on 1st September 2008, a few hours before her departure from the country.

176. Towards end of August, FAO became concerned that there would not be enough time for implementation before the planting season, and requested that its responsibilities for project implementation be qualified in the following way:

"The Recipient (government), aware of the possible delays, exonerates FAO of all responsibility, including yields and post evaluations of the project, in case, notwithstanding FAO's timely efforts, the inputs are delivered or distributed beyond the deadlines foreseen in the Emergency Project Paper on a Grant to the Republic of Tajikistan for the Emergency Food Security and Seed Import Project dated 27 May 2008. Furthermore, the recipient will hold FAO harmless for any eventual damage associated with late delivery and/or distribution of the inputs."

(Memorandum of Agreement UTF/TAJ/004/TAJ. Article II, para. 2.2)

177. The relevance of the project is probably its weakest point. In spite of the preceding harsh winter, most farmers found wheat seed to plant, as witnessed by the massive acreage planted in wheat during 2008/2009 (125,000 ha) on both irrigated and rain-fed land. As is often the case, coping strategies (particularly seed exchange within communities) were underestimated. Good snow and rainfall during the winter of 2008/2009 followed by exceptional rainfall in the spring of 2009 have ensured a very productive wheat crop.

178. In fact, the project was not perceived locally, by either farmers or *jamoat* officials, as meeting a shortage of seed *per se* but rather as introducing new improved varieties. Farmers met by the evaluation team routinely assessed the project in this light. Its success has been judged on the performance of the distributed wheat varieties when measured against the performance of farmers' own varieties.

179. Little information was available on the performance of some of the distributed wheat varieties before the project, as the variety list was approved by the MoA without extensive in-country testing. This highlights a serious technical weakness of the project design. It is simply not good practice to approve large scale distributions of seed of varieties which have not been tested as being suitable for the locations and environment to which they are being introduced, even in an emergency.

180. Even if one concedes that the poorest segment of rural society was in need of seed (as asserted in the WFP/FAO food security assessment), the distribution of free seed and fertilizer in a one-off emergency operation was not a sustainable response. Indeed it was perceived locally as a return to Soviet-style centrally-controlled economics, and thus contradicted the position that both the WB and FAO have been promoting for years to support the privatization and commercialization of agricultural services and input supply in Tajikistan.

181. FAO has successfully pursued this approach in the case of veterinary. There is no reason to believe that a similar commercial and cost-recovery approach would not work in the case of agricultural inputs and supplies.

182. Finally, the distribution of hybrid maize seed in the spring 2009 is very questionable on the grounds of sustainability. Provided the hybrid maize seed (PR39F58 imported from Pioneer-Austria) is distributed to farmers with good land, access to ample irrigation water and adequate fertilizer, it could well produce very high yields. However, providing most vulnerable beneficiaries with ‘hybrid’ maize seed contradicts the project objective as this will be a ‘one off’ result. There is no facility for this ‘hybrid’ seed to be reproduced in Tajikistan and grain produced from the crop cannot be re-planted with any expectation of achieving the same results.

d) Efficiency

183. If relevance was the weakest part of the project, efficiency in project implementation has been its strongest point. Close coordination between the MoA and FAO project staff was maintained throughout and rapid and sensible logistical decisions were taken. The long negotiations between FAO and MoA in July and August allowed FAO to prepare tender documents that were issued very quickly for component A (wheat seed and urea).

184. As a result, the project delivered its first package of inputs in the late autumn planting season, i.e. in early November (Table 4), i.e. slightly over two months after the signature of the MoU. FAO emergency projects typically take a minimum of three months to deliver inputs to farmers so this was quite fast. The EFSSIP was therefore very successful from the point of view of timeliness in implementation. Only in a few villages was the distribution delayed by *jamoat* officials to December or January. This was mainly in higher altitude villages due to lack of time and /or interest from farmers whose seed arrived too late for autumn sowing.

185. Transport became an issue for the urea (silitra) distribution during the winter, especially for *jamoats* located in highlands such as Baljovan and Khovaling. However, this delay was not a serious problem since nitrogen fertiliser is best applied as a spring top dressing.

186. The project was also cost-effective. Under the advice of the GoT, the goods were distributed by *jamoat* officials and *rais-e-mahala* without charge²². Cost calculations indicate that the packages of seed and fertiliser were worth \$US 36.95 per beneficiary household for component A, \$US 21.95 per beneficiary household for component B and \$US 33.44 per beneficiary household for component A extension. However, it must be pointed out that about 5% of all inputs – i.e. about \$US 142,000 – were used to pay for storage and transport costs incurred locally by the *jamoats*. Since FAO covered transport costs only up to *jamoat* centres, villages located far away from a centre had to incur greater transport costs and therefore beneficiaries tended to receive less per household than those located close to the centres.

187. The project contracted two national NGOs to monitor the distribution of inputs and the state of the wheat crop after planting, a very positive step. However, appropriate monitoring forms were not developed for the NGOs until monitoring had actually started. In some cases, the NGOs had already designed their own forms which they were then told to change. This led to some confusion and frustration.

²² NGOs typically distribute such inputs for a fee.

Table 4: Inputs Procurement and Delivery

Item	Volume	Source	Tenders Finalized	Delivery to Dushanbe	Distribution	Cost	Nb of Beneficiaries
Component A (Khatlon)							
Russian wheat varieties (Karsnodar 99, Starshina, Tanya, Yasaul)	765 mt	Tajikistan	Sep 2008	Oct 27, 2008	- First 19 Districts: Oct 27-Nov 11, 2008	\$916,200 (1,200 \$/mt)	71,353
Turkish wheat variety (Konya 2002)	500 mt	Turkey	Sep 2008	Oct 29, 2008	- 3 jamoats of Fakhor + 2 invalid societies: Nov 27, 2008	\$735,050 (1,470 \$/MT including transport)	
Urea	2102 mt	Afghanistan	Sep 2008	Nov 11-27, 2008	Dec 3-16, 2008	\$1,193,936 (568 \$/mt)	72,864
Component B (Rasht Valley)							
Urea	70 mt	Afghanistan	March 30, 2009	Mar 31-Apr 6, 2009	April 10-12, 2009	\$39,760	7,222
Super Phosphate (SSP)	210 mt	Pakistan	Feb 5, 2009	March 26, 2009		\$84,000 (300 \$/mt + 100 \$/mt for transport)	
Alfalfa Seed	13 mt	Tajikistan	Mar 20, 2009	Mar 31, 2009		\$74,520 (5,732 \$/mt?)	
Component A extension (Khatlon)							
Maize seed	30 mt	Austria	May 15, 2009	June 2009	June-July 2009?	\$115,609 (3,159 \$/mt + 695 \$/mt transport)	estimate: 10,000
Super Phosphate (SSP)	200 mt	Pakistan	May 18, 2009	June 2009		\$82,000	
Potassium Chloride	100 mt	Pakistan	May 18, 2009	June 2009		\$80,000	
Urea	100 mt	Afghanistan	May 17, 2009	June 2009		\$56,800	
Total							approx. 90,000

e) Appropriateness of beneficiary selection

188. Beneficiary selection was a hurried process, delegated entirely to the *jamoats* and village chiefs. While NGOs were contracted to verify 5% of the lists made by local officials, verification was interrupted by the start of distribution in the case of component A. In only a few instances was it possible to change defective lists before distribution. The process of checking lists was

sometimes hampered by a lack of communication between the NGOs and the *jamoats*.²³ The *jamoats* had little time or resources to allocate to the distribution and sometimes they resented being monitored. An additional irritation for the *jamoat* officials was that the NGOs were paid to do their work whilst the district officials were not.

189. The NGOs found that an overwhelming majority of potential beneficiaries (80% to 90%) fit the selection criteria. This being said, those criteria were rather vague since they did not define precisely who should be considered as “vulnerable”. The stated criteria were:

- i) vulnerable households with 3 or more children under 5 years old;
- ii) vulnerable households headed by females;
- iii) availability of more than 0.1 ha of land; and
- iv) minimum livestock of either 1 cow or 2 small ruminants (for Component B)

“In Kirov Jamoat, Octyabr village, the households that received wheat seeds did not get the fertilizer, given to people who did not receive wheat seed. This arrangement was agreed between the people and the village chief. People are happy because they are all equal.”

190. As observed by the evaluation team, the result was in fact a rather egalitarian distribution. The project supported small to average farmers, often excluding the richer farmers in the area. Sometimes the inputs were given to all farmers in a village by decreasing the amount given to each household, in order to avoid dispute.

191. In component A, some wheat seed and urea were kept by *jamoat* officials and village chiefs. This is well documented thanks to the work of the Sharvand NGO. Based on NGO reports, the evaluation team estimates that about 25 MT of wheat and 50 MT of urea were kept by *jamoat* officials and village chiefs, i.e. some 2% of delivered goods. FAO project staff are reviewing available documentation and are expected to come up with a more precise estimate of the quantities involved.

192. There was little dissatisfaction among beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries of component A. The mission met a number of non-beneficiaries. Some were resentful about not being selected as beneficiaries. However, generally the better-off have accepted the rationale that they have more resources than those who received the free inputs. The people who received only part of their normal entitlement (17.5 kg of wheat and 30 kg of urea) because the *jamoat* officials or village chiefs had kept some back were philosophical about it, explaining that this sort of thing is to be expected. In some cases they did not want to talk to the NGO monitors because they feared that the local officials might exclude them from future distributions.

193. Beneficiary lists were better prepared for the later distributions (component B, B Extension), after a distribution review in January 2009. Safeguards were introduced such as pre-packing of individual HH-entitlements. The distributions in 2009 also covered fewer *jamoats* than in 2008. Post distribution monitoring of August 2009 concluded that almost 100% of beneficiaries received their full entitlement.

194. Monitoring of beneficiary selection by an independent NGO is considered a good practice, particularly where distribution has been carried out by local government officials. However, such independent verification should be given sufficient time for the verification of beneficiary lists (one month) and for adjusting any lists that are found to be flawed (another month). This amount of time was simply not available in component A. FAO should also have sent observers / monitors to participate in the distribution, as is being done for the extension of component A (maize seed).

²³ The lists were supposed to go to from the *jamoats* to the WB then to FAO and finally to the NGO. In practice many *jamoats* directly gave the lists to the NGO in a spirit of good cooperation. However, some *jamoat* officials resented being monitored by an NGO.

f) Impact on beneficiaries

195. The wheat seed donated by the project represented about 2.5% of all wheat seed planted in the autumn of 2008 (255,000 ha) and 9.5% of seed planted on “presidential plots” (66,000 ha).

196. Approximately 20% of the beneficiaries had already sown all their household and presidential land (or what they could afford to cultivate) by the time the FAO wheat seed was distributed. They mainly opted to sow the FAO seed on Dehqan farms if land was still available there, or in the following spring. Sowing the seed on Dehqan farms was likely to result in poor yields, while sowing it in spring resulted in little or no yield as the distributed seed was of winter wheat varieties that required vernalisation.

197. The distributed varieties (Figure 1) were of two different origins: Russian varieties produced and procured in Tajikistan (Krasnodar 99, Starshina, Tanya and Yasaul), and CIMMYT varieties procured in Turkey (Konya 2002).

198. All of the distributed varieties were considered by farmers to be less susceptible to lodging than local varieties due to their short straw. Heavy rainfall as late as May and even into June 2009 caused a lot of lodging in the older, longer stemmed varieties. However, the shorter stem wheat was also more easily overwhelmed by weed competition than the older varieties, as observed by the evaluation team. Weeds are a very serious problem in wheat cultivation in Tajikistan, due to a lack of crop rotation and unclean seed.

199. The fact that the FAO seed was relatively well cleaned may have helped in this regard. According to superintendent’s reports, most lots had an acceptable content of “other seed” (see Table 5). However, the variety Tanya did not meet international standards and AGPS refused to technically clear it. Tanya was nevertheless distributed by FAO and the Government, under the explicit responsibility of the MoA which considered the seed clean enough. Beneficiaries received 18.5 kg each instead of 17.5 kg to compensate for the lower quality, and were advised to clean the seed by hand.

200. In the view of the evaluation mission and based on its limited field observation, the distribution of Tanya did not add an unbearable weed seed burden to fields that are already infested with all sorts of weeds. However, the fact that seed was distributed without the appropriate technical clearance raises an issue of principle. What is the purpose of asking for technical clearance if, when it is declined, it is ignored and the goods are distributed anyway? Another important issue of principle is: can FAO be associated with the distribution of seed of poor quality, even if this quality is acceptable by local standards? The evaluation feels that FAO should provide solutions to the weed problem, rather than perpetuating it.

Figure 1:
**Varieties of Wheat Distributed under EFSSIP
(Autumn 2008)**

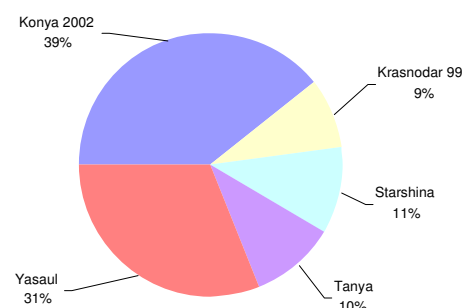


Table 5: Content of Seed Other than Wheat in Distributed Varieties

Varieties	Other Seed Content	
	SGS (international)	State Seed Control Inspection (national)
Yasaul	Convolvulus arvensis: 11/kg Galium spp. 2/kg	15/kg
Tanya	Convolvulus arvensis: 33/kg Galium sp. 3/kg Scandix sp. 1/kg	46/kg
Starshina	Avena fatua: 4/kg Galium sp.: 6/kg	17/kg
Krasnodar 99	Medicago sativa: 3/kg	0/kg
Konya 2002	Convolvulus arvensis: 2/kg	n.a.

201. From a varietal standpoint²⁴, all distributed varieties seemed to perform generally on a par with local varieties, sometimes producing slightly less or slightly more depending on the district. That project seeds achieved on average only about the same results as non-project seeds may be a result of the timing of distribution. Non-beneficiaries mainly planted their seeds at the optimum planting time in October while beneficiaries planted their seeds only in November and December. Nevertheless, Konya 2002 (Turkish variety originating from the CIMMYT programme) was much appreciated by those farmers who received it, who plan to keep the seed and/or sell or exchange it for grain with their neighbours, while Krasnodar and Tanya are awn-less varieties²⁵, which make them more vulnerable to bird damage than awned local wheat. This is particularly true of the early maturing Tanya. As well as grain losses, this causes extra labour and expense at harvest time to guard against birds.

202. The evaluation concludes that varieties of CIMMYT origin such as Konya 2002 may have a greater potential to help raise yields in Tajikistan than the varieties of Russian origin, which are already well-known and commonly cultivated in Tajikistan. Varieties selected from CIMMYT material suited to different local conditions have been very successfully used by FAO in Afghanistan for the last twenty years. FAO in Afghanistan has tested different lines over a wide variety of environments before selecting particular lines for multiplication through a network of contracted farmers and farmers groups. Interestingly, the use of some of these CIMMYT selections released and multiplied successfully in Afghanistan under very similar climatic and soil conditions was proposed by FAO for Tajikistan. But, the MoA did not agree to importing varieties until they had been tested in Tajikistan, a technically correct decision. The way forward is therefore to test CIMMYT and other genetic material in Tajikistan for comparison with local as well as Russian varieties.

203. The fertilizer distributed by the project (mainly urea, but also super phosphate and potassium chloride) was much appreciated by beneficiaries, who not only used it on their wheat crop but also on their other crops (e.g. potato, vegetables).

²⁴ These observations are based on the mission's direct observations and should be complemented with the result of an impact assessment currently ongoing.

²⁵ Awns are the long spines or "beard" on the ears of wheat.

g) *Effects of free seed distribution on national seed production and markets*

204. The project drew criticism from NGOs (Winrock International, Save the Children Fund and ACTED) that claim to set up more sustainable commercial supply lines for farming inputs. An evaluation report written by the World Bank²⁶ analysed the issue in some depth and identified three broad areas of concern:

- i) emergency seed aid was a disincentive to the development of sustainable markets for farm inputs;
- ii) the project had compromised seed production activities by other agencies; and
- iii) there was a general lack of coordination within EFSSIP.

205. The NGO operations are described in detail in the WB report. The present evaluation mission supports the WB's views expressed in points 1 and 3 above. Point 1 is particularly problematic. The project stakeholders (WB, FAO and the GoT) have sent the wrong message to the farmers. When they should be telling farmers that good seed and fertiliser come at a cost and have a value, they gave the impression that these will continue to be provided free as was the case under the USSR.

206. However, the evaluation team considers that Point 2 above is debatable in reality because on the whole the various organisations' programmes did not overlap geographically. SCF distributed seed free plus cash in a completely unsustainable fashion. The failure of Winrock to sell 600 mt of wheat seed to 400 small-scale farmers can hardly be blamed on FAO, as Tajik farmers are not in the habit of purchasing so much seed.²⁷

Strengthening National Seed Systems

a) *Description of interventions*

207. FAO sought funding for several initiatives in this area and two projects were actually funded:

- i) OSRO/TAJ/201/SWE - Post-drought agricultural assistance to ex-combatants and rural poor (\$US 468,998 - 2002-2004). This project contracted four farmers groups to produce 465 tonnes of improved wheat seed (Jagger and Stecklovidnaja varieties) and 1,100 kg of carrot seed. Part of the seed produced was distributed to additional households. The project also rehabilitated six irrigation pumps and 36.5 km of irrigation and drainage canals, and distributed wheat and vegetable seeds²⁸ to 1,330 and 1,670 households respectively. It also started the formation and support of rural women groups, an activity that would continue under 301/SWE and 404/CAN.
- ii) OSRO/TAJ/401/CAN - Establishment of disease-free seed potato production (\$US 545,519 - 2004-2006). This project helped to establish in-country production of virus-free potato seed through meri-stem tissue culture using a laboratory belonging to the Institute of Plant Physiology and Genetics, with multiplication of micro-tubers carried out by contracted farmers in a number of locations (Jirgatal, Muminabad, Qonchi and Faizabad). Clones were also imported from the CIP programme and tested in laboratory conditions for a variety of characteristics (drought, salinity tolerance, early maturity) and multiplied by the project. The project did not manage to complete the full cycle of micro-tuber multiplication before it ended. However, it was followed up by project staff and contract farmers who formed an NGO called Tukhm-i-

²⁶ Emergency Food Security and Seed Import Project - Preliminary Project Evaluation - June 8th, 2009.

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ Carrot, onion, turnip, kohlrabi, cabbage, pumpkin, tomato, cucumber and radish.

Parvar (TiP, meaning “seed production”) which has since continued to multiply and sell healthy potato seed.

b) *Relevance, efficiency and impact*

208. These activities were relevant in that they tried (and in the case of the potato seed project, succeeded) to establish sustainable seed production in the country rather than relying on imports. Moreover, potato is the second staple crop in the country.²⁹

209. FAO did not pursue the potato project because funds could not be mobilised. FAO included in the UN Tajikistan Appeal for 2006 a project profile entitled “Highland Agriculture and Potato Crops” designed as Phase II of OSRO/TAJ/401/CAN. A full-fledged project proposal was further prepared in 2006 as a donor encouraged FAO to submit a project proposal. Despite significant efforts and the strong lobbying of the Government of Tajikistan, no funding could be secured for the project. In addition to this lack of funding, the coordinator at the time had doubts about the in-country capacity for such a project. To be fair, the original project included a number of sophisticated activities for which there was little justification, such as ELISA and PCR viral testing and antiserum production, but the fact that seed potato production has continued without FAO support indicates that the basic concept of the project was not only sound but viable.³⁰

210. It is interesting to note that these interventions were started by a previous coordinator who was trying to use emergency funds to lay foundations for the rehabilitation of the agriculture sector in the country. They were later discontinued under another coordinator who preferred to revert to “classic” emergency projects involving mere procurement and distribution of seed and fertiliser. In the view of the evaluation mission, this was a retrograde step and contrary to the FAO mandate and to what would have been needed in Tajikistan, i.e. support to the country’s capacity to produce its own seed on a commercial basis.

211. The tissue culture laboratory in the Institute of Plant Physiology and Genetics is still working. The NGO Tukhm-i-Parvar continues to multiply micro-tubers from the Institute into healthy potato seed on 12 hectare of its own land and started to distribute seed to contract farmers for further multiplication in 2007. TiP sold its first seed to NGOs (GAA, OXFAM) in 2008³¹ and has applied for its first variety release (Dusti). Both the Institute and the NGO are being supported through training and new potato clones by the CIP Tashkent office.

212. The mission could not travel to Jirgatal to assess the impact of the potato seed project at the farmers’ level. In other locations the project impact cannot be observed yet since TiP started to sell its seed only recently. However, the mission interviewed the NGOs who had used potato seed from TiP and verified that they were satisfied with the quality of the product.

Regional Seed Activities in Central Asia involving Tajikistan

213. A small TCP is active in the region: TCP/INT/3102 - Strengthening seed supply in the ECO region, with specific emphasis on Central Asia (\$US 445,422; 2006-2009). It operates under the aegis of the Economic Cooperation Organization ECO), Tehran, Iran³²; and is implemented by the CGIAR-Project Facilitating Unit (PFU) in Tashkent, Uzbekistan. There is significant involvement by ICARDA through the provision of TA. This project funded the organization of

²⁹ See for instance: Role of potato vs. wheat in the countries of Central Asia and the Caucasus region before and after independence from USSR, Ibragimov, Z. and C. Carli, CIP-Liaison office for CGIAR-CAC, Tashkent, Uzbekistan.

³⁰ In contrast, an earlier effort by project OSRO/TAJ/102/IRE during the 1990’s to create a “Potato Seed Fund” under the MoA proved unsustainable. The seed fund disappeared soon after project termination.

³¹ The FAO project OSRO/TAJ/602/CAN also procured 69 mt of potato seed from Tukhm-i-Parvar in 2008.

³² ECO comprises Afghanistan, Azerbaijan, Iran, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Pakistan, Tajikistan, Turkey, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan.

the first ECO regional seed conference and the establishment of the Regional Seed Association (RSA) based in Ankara, Turkey. The association includes private and public-sector producers and covers all member countries of ECO. The project held three “Harmonization Workshops” in Islamabad (January 2007), Baku (May 2007) and Istanbul (June 2008) as well as a training course on “Seed Marketing and Promotion” (Istanbul, June 2007). Participants from Tajikistan included the Director of the Tajikistan Seed Producer Association established by Sida, who greatly appreciated the workshops. It is too early to analyse this project’s impact.

Future Outlook

214. Since April 2009, the World Bank has been engaged in preparing a further extension of the EFSSIP which would involve an additional \$US 6.25 million. WB have approached FAO with the proposal for another round of wheat seed and fertiliser distribution, this time for the autumn of 2009 and at a cost of \$US 1.65 million. Other components of the project would be implemented by the WB-established PMU in the GoT Working Group with 8 members including one representative of the MoA.

215. FAO participated in the formulation of EFSSIP Phase 2 (May-June 2009) by way of one TCI staff. The FAO Project Coordination Office was also approached to discuss the project content during May 2009. However, the project document was only sent to TCE on 17 June 2009 and copied to FAO Dushanbe with a request to participate in a “Negotiation Meeting” with the GoT on 19 June 2009. The meeting did not go very well. At the time of writing, differences between the WB and FAO on the need for and implementation modalities of the project extension have not been reconciled.

216. The evaluation mission feels that, in a year when there is likely to be the best wheat harvest for a very long time, there is no justification for distributing any amount of free wheat seed in Tajikistan. Tajikistan needs support in rebuilding its own capacity to produce good quality seed on a sustainable commercial basis.

D. LOCUST CONTROL

Background and Context

217. The country is mainly affected by the Moroccan Locust (*Doclostaurus maroccanus*) in the south, along the borders with Afghanistan and Uzbekistan. The Italian Locust (*Calliptamus italicus*) is also found together with the Moroccan Locust in the north of the country, along the Uzbek and Kyrgyz borders. To a lesser extent, there have historically been problems with the Migratory Locust (*Locusta migratoria*) in the south.

218. Eggs hatch from mid-March to the end of April. This is the best period for destroying the insects as only a relatively small area needs to be treated. The wingless larvae go through 5 instars (development phases), culminating in adulthood when they become winged, highly mobile and fertile. Depending on the conditions of the vegetation in their hatching areas, they may move on to cultivated areas to find food at various stages of this development. Adults start to lay eggs in June, usually outside the cultivated areas, and usually die off in July. If conditions are favourable and control fails, they can further reproduce in July and even August. Swarms regularly move between neighbouring countries such as Afghanistan and Uzbekistan, making effective control operations a challenge.

219. The “Republican Anti-locust Service” was disbanded in February 2003. A Department on Locust Management was created in its place under the State Agency for Plant Protection, with three staff members. Following the 2007 outbreak, a stronger, dedicated unit was re-created as a parastatal, the State Republican Unitary Enterprise for Locust Control (GRUP “Locust Control”) in November 2007 with 17 staff members. The GoT is thinking of setting up a fully public unit for locust control and management to replace the GROUP.

Description of FAO's Interventions

220. The collaboration of FAO with Tajikistan on locust control dates back to the large 1995 outbreak. A TCP project (TCP/TAJ/2902 – \$US 338,465 – 2002-2004) provided 18,000 litres of various pesticides and introduced ULV formulations.

221. During the period under evaluation, the following two emergency projects were implemented thanks to CERF funding:

- OSRO/TAJ/702/CHA - Emergency Assistance for food security and locust control in Tajikistan (USD 119,814 - 2007), which procured 6,085 litres of pesticides and treated 19,035 ha.
- OSRO/TAJ/803/CHA - Emergency assistance for controlling the 2008 locust outbreak in Tajikistan (USD 410,163 – 2008) which procured 13,250 litres of pesticides and treated 22,177 ha; 204 sprayers usable for both ULV and emulsifiable concentrates (EC) were also procured and used, as well as 350 personal protective suits/masks; 240 persons benefited from a training of trainers through 27 district-level sessions and a brochure explaining good treatment practices was printed and dispatched to the locust control brigades.

222. In addition, a regional TCP project (TCP/INT/3202 - USD322,000, 2009-2011) has recently started. Regional consultations were held to discuss the ways and means of strengthening regional cooperation and effective control programmes. Emphasis has been placed on establishing the most effective institutional set up and meetings have been held with donors to explore how this might be funded. Much remains to be done to achieve planned project outputs (e.g. standard forms for locust surveys, national information bulletins).

a) *Relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact and sustainability*

223. These interventions were found quite relevant, as their purpose has been to help Tajikistan respond to real and immediate crises. More than 100,000 ha were reported to be infested by locusts in Tajikistan in 2008. At the same time, the projects have provided TA to promote up to date management approaches and techniques. However, these sporadic projects based on responses to crisis and emergency requests do not amount to a comprehensive and systematic approach to locust control. Similarly, a more concerted approach is required at a regional level. During Soviet times, regular joint surveys and control operations were performed along the Tajikistan-Afghanistan and the Uzbekistan-Afghanistan borders by Soviet specialists. Soviet–Afghanistan conferences on the locust situation were held annually. The collapse of the USSR has translated into a lack of collaboration and a fragmentation of efforts. It is therefore highly relevant for FAO to help build regional collaboration to tackle what has become a trans-boundary problem.

224. Timeliness in dealing with the locust problem is the essence of success, and hence this has been a central issue. In 2007, a request for the provision of pesticides was received by the competent FAO technical service (AGPP) at HQ in mid-February. Discussions continued for several months and the project was eventually signed on 13 June. Control measures started towards the end of June, when the locusts were already winged and mobile. The final project report claims that insecticide for 19,035 ha was provided from the project out of the 223,190 ha treated for locusts in 2007. FAO's contribution to national efforts was therefore quite modest. Whatever the scale of this contribution, the project came too late anyway to contribute effectively to the control of the locust population.

225. For 2008, the GoT expected an even more important outbreak and submitted its request to FAO at the very end of December 2007. The proposal was further elaborated by FAO, submitted to the UN Resident Coordinator in April 2008 and quickly approved thereafter. The pesticides were procured immediately and treatments done during the second half of May, much better than in 2007 but still one month later than optimal time (from second half of April, just after hatching).

A total of 22,177 ha were treated with chemicals procured from the project, out of a total of 107,712 ha treated.

226. The delay in 2008 from the government request to the submission of a project to the UNRC was attributed to three factors: 1) climatic conditions (severe, prolonged winter) could have been detrimental to locust development so there was a risk to ask for funding before the emergency was manifest; 2) a tactical decision not to ask for CERF funding too soon since the funding was required from March to May³³; and 3) the departure of the FAO Emergency Coordinator in March which might have delayed the submission somewhat.

227. The 2008 campaign was stated to be much more successful than in 2007. However, it is unclear how precise and well-founded the estimates of areas protected are. The economic value of this impact was put at \$US 18 million based on the wholesale market price per ton of protected crops and pastures. The economic impact of the entire campaign (including national efforts) was estimated at \$US 100 million.

228. It appears that the GoT / MoA is primarily interested in protecting the cotton crop, while farmers are more interested in protecting other, more profitable crops. Two-thirds of the treatments during the 2007 and 2008 campaigns were reportedly on cotton.

229. The procurement by FAO of Dimilin (*Diflubenzuron*, a chitin synthesis inhibitor) in November 2008 with leftover funds from OSRO/TAJ/803/CHA met with resistance from the MoA, which asked that at least half of the funds be used to procure a more traditional pesticide such as *alpha-cypermethrin*. FAO procured only Dimilin because it considered it as more environmentally-friendly and more specific to locusts than other insecticides which can be used to control a wider array of insects. Cotton cultivation requires very significant amounts of insecticides and the temptation to use the wide-spectrum insecticides that were demanded of FAO on cotton pests other than locusts could have been present. However, the MoA claimed to base their complaint on the fact that the Dimilin formulation tends to precipitate, the packaging was too bulky (200 l. drums) and they had insufficient Ultra-Low-Volume sprayers for its use. This being said, some 1,800 litres were reportedly used out of the 5,750 l. procured in 2008. The rest has been stored for use in subsequent years.³⁴

230. Locust control techniques used in Tajikistan date back to Soviet time and need to be brought up to date. For instance:

- FAO has been recommending ultra low volume formulations for the past twenty-five years, while the Tajikistan government still uses “emulsifiable concentrates” (high volume formulations requiring a lot of water) and has just started using ULVs, with considerable reluctance.
- The process for information collection, transmission, follow-up and analysis – the primary component of any effective locust control strategy – leaves much to be desired. Egg bed locations are mapped on inaccurate sketch maps drawn by hand, while the rest of the world has been using much more precise GPS handsets for a decade.

E. WATERSHED MANAGEMENT AND COMMUNITY MOBILISATION

Background to Interventions and their Relevance

231. About 93 percent of Tajikistan is mountainous, and almost half of that is above 3,000 masl. The farming systems of the uplands include herding and pastoral activities with rain-fed farming and some irrigation. Since the break up of the Soviet Union, there has been a general breakdown in the seasonal management of pastures along with deforestation, an increase in

³³ CERF projects usually have a duration of three months.

³⁴ In 2009, the MoA sprayed 75,000 ha with chemicals left-over from the 2008 campaign, including Dimilin.

inappropriate rain-fed cereal cropping on steep hillsides, and leaking irrigation systems that are all leading to the degrading of the uplands and erosion. A combination of these factors, in particular the inappropriate cultivation of the middle altitude uplands (up to 2500 masl) for rain-fed agriculture is causing serious erosion leading to increasingly severe flooding, silting of reservoirs and irrigation systems, mudslides and a decrease in agricultural/pastoral productivity, with adverse consequences for livelihoods in these areas.

232. Since 1997, a number of agencies have been assisting the government of Tajikistan to undertake initiatives to encourage the sustainable management of upland resources and assisting the mobilisation of upland rural communities to identify and address their problems. These include the Aga Khan Foundation³⁵ programme in Gorno-Badakhshan (GBO); ADB support for forestation round Lake Sarez; the World Bank, UNDP³⁶, FAO and some INGOs such as German Agro-Action (GAA).

233. The GoT recognises the need for an integrated approach to the management of upland watersheds and catchments. The success and sustainability of such management systems will only be achieved with the full participation of the local rural communities. In December 2004, the GoT appointed the Soil Science Research Institute (SSRI) of the Agrarian Academy of Sciences, which is part of the MoA, as the lead institution in this field working in close collaboration with the Ministry of Environmental Protection and Forestry and the Land Commission.

234. FAO has been involved in two projects related to the above issues, one a TCP project (TCP/TAJ/2903) on Participatory Integrated Watershed Management Project (PIWMP) in Faizabad, which was concluded in 2005. The second (OSRO/TAJ/603/WB), still ongoing, is part of the World Bank's support to the development of rural communities in Tajikistan in the Toirsu watershed of Danghara in Khatlon Province entitled Community Agriculture and Watershed Management Project (CAWMP).

Description of Interventions

235. TCP/TAJ/2903 "Participatory Integrated Watershed Management in Upland Areas" (PIWMU) was intended to be a pilot project, in which the methodologies of Participatory Integrated Watershed Management would be implemented and tested. The experiences and lessons learned would then be replicated elsewhere in Tajikistan. In the true sense of the term, this was a project that involved the full participation of two adjoining rural communities sharing the Bodomo sub-watershed in the Sangbur catchment, Faizabad District, located to the northeast of Dushanbe. It was managed and implemented by a team of five national consultants drawn from the Soil Science Research Institute (SSRI) supported technically from FAO HQ. FAO worked in partnership with the INGO German Agro Action on the implementation of the project. GAA were particularly involved in community mobilisation and the formation of Common Interest Groups (CIG), with which they had considerable experience in Tajikistan.

236. Baseline studies and a PRA were conducted and common interest groups formed including women's groups. Good management practices for grazing and pasture were encouraged as were improved methods of crop and horticultural production. A workshop was organised in September 2005 to discuss the experience of the project with a wider audience with the intention of replication in other parts of Tajikistan.³⁷

237. Following the PRAs, CIGs were formed, including women's groups for income generation, agro-forestry, improved agricultural and horticultural practice, pasture and grazing

³⁵ Aga Khan – Mountain Communities Sustainable Development Support Programme (MCSDSP) in Gorno Badakhshan Autonomous Oblast (GBO); the Central Asian Mountain Programme (CAMP) in Khatlon.

³⁶ UNDP initiative – Tajikistan Reconstruction Rehabilitation and Development Programme (RRDP).

³⁷ Reference Bibliography under Watershed Management.

management. Training was given in soil and water conservation practices, integrated tree nursery management, surveying and participatory watershed management. Field trips were arranged for key project national staff to Nepal and India.

238. Almost four years after FAO and GAA ceased their direct involvement with the local communities, the evaluation found much of what had been established under the project still operating in terms of improved watershed, grazing, pasture and agricultural/horticultural management systems. Some, if not all, of the common interest groups (CIG) remain active especially when grouped around agricultural/horticultural and pastoral activities of common interest. Two women's groups still survive. An exception was the greenhouse assisted by FAO belonging to the SSRI intended for the early propagation of trees, which was in a state of neglect.

239. OSRO/TAJ/603/WB "Community Agriculture and Watershed Management Project" (CAWMP) is due to finish in December 2009. However, project activities will continue to the end of 2010 managed by the Project Management Unit (PMU) in the MoA in Dushanbe and the project coordination unit (PCU) at the District (*Jamoat*) level in Danghara (Khatlon province). This project is one of four funded by the World Bank in different geographical locations: FAO in Danghara district of Khatlon; Aga Khan Development Network (AKDN) in Vanj district in GBAO; with UNDP in Zarafshan in Soghd, and German Agro Action in Rasht in the Gharm valley. All share a common theme of assisting the development of community mobilisation through the formation of self help groups and approved community development projects assisted with block grants provided by the World Bank.

240. The project is misleadingly titled. Although FAO's involvement was stated in the prodoc to be based on the experiences and lessons learned during TCP/TAJ/2009, that project was not the main basis for the design of the CAWMP. Essentially OSRO/TAJ/603/WB is a Community Mobilisation and Development project with emphasis on the formation of common interest groups (CIG) established to implement activities related to agricultural enterprises (in its broadest sense), land use management and related subjects including rural infrastructure. It is not a participatory integrated watershed management project as such, albeit being situated within the Toirsu watershed in Danghara. This project's relevance, effectiveness, impact and sustainability must therefore be assessed on the basis of community mobilisation and development, rather than on improvements in watershed management.

241. The project got off to a slow start all through 2007 under rather weak management, which coincided with a period when the FAO's country coordination office in Dushanbe was also experiencing problems. Since 2008, it has caught up well under its present management, with much improved leadership provided by the Project Coordination Office. Achievements include:

- a) Formed 6 Jamaot Development Councils³⁸ in Pushing, Ismat Sharifof; Lolazor, Oqsu, Korez and Lahur in Danghara district.
- b) PRAs in 62 villages involving 2,820 beneficiaries of which 28% are women. Identified main needs.
- c) Formed 455 'common interest groups' (CIG) established for projects.
- d) Formed 69 CIG for credibility investment projects of \$US 1,000 each. Many of these CIGs are mixed groups of men and women and in 22 cases CIGs are headed by women.

Addressed the three main project components which involve activities relating to:

- e) agricultural, horticultural and livestock enterprises and production.
- f) land management (mainly small farm/orchard establishment).
- g) infrastructure projects of mainly general community interest – such as irrigation channels, drainage, drinking water, roads etc. These are moving slower than the other two components.

³⁸ Not to be confused with the official Jamaot administration (*hukumat*).

In addition, 68 Community Action Plans have been approved.

242. Both projects are entirely relevant to the need to assist the mobilisation and motivation of communities to identify their needs and address issues of common interest and importance. However, the PIWMU was more holistic in its approach, as it also addressed issues related to improving the sustainable management of the sub-watershed in which the two targeted communities are located.

Effectiveness, efficiency, impact and sustainability

243. PIWMU has successfully addressed both of community mobilisation and improving the management of a small sub-watershed/catchment through a participatory approach to integrated management and improved farming and pastoral practices. It has been very effective and its impact has been most noticeable within its own locality. Many of the improved agricultural, horticultural and pastoral management practices still remain. However, its impact is not as strong as it should be, because to date no serious attempt has been made to replicate the experiences and lessons learned in the Bodomo sub-watershed to other locations in Tajikistan.

244. CAWMP is now proving to be an effective instrument for community mobilisation, motivation and development. The projects developed by CIGs for small agricultural/horticultural/livestock enterprises as well as small land development and land improvement enterprises are going well and the communities are demonstrating great interest in them. But it remains to be seen how sustainable these will be once FAO facilitating support ends and more importantly once the WB grant funds are expended and there is no more outside support. Much will depend on the financial viability of the small agricultural enterprises and land management / farm developments supported with WB grant funds. Some of the small farm, horticultural, orchard enterprises have a good chance of survival as do such enterprises as beekeeping provided a good standard of technical management is maintained and future technical support can be guaranteed. This might be provided by one or other of the NGO supported extension services such SENAS. No doubt some CIGs will survive while the less viable will fade away.

F. LAND REFORM

245. From 2004 through 2008, FAO conducted three projects with components related to land reform. OSRO/TAJ/301/SWE “Emergency Agricultural Assistance to Food Insecure Rural Households in Drought Prone Border Areas of Western Tajikistan, with Particular Focus on Female Headed Households” focused on input distribution (seeds and fertilizer) and knowledge sharing related to seed planting, land rights, and farm reorganization. OSRO/TAJ/402/CAN “Monitoring Progress of Land Reform in Tajikistan through Establishment of a Participatory Monitoring System” addressed the need to develop land reform policy and legislation through building partnerships between the government, civil society, and donors and increasing knowledge of citizens in rural areas on procedures related to farm reorganization and issuance of land use rights. OSRO/TAJ/602/CAN “Improved Food Security and Enhanced Livelihoods through Institutional and Gender Sensitive Land Reform in Tajikistan” continued FAO’s previous work on development of policy, partnerships, and dissemination of knowledge about land reform while also seeking to build capacity within the Land Agency to implement land reform efforts of the government. These projects have provided FAO with a continuous presence in Tajikistan on land reform issues over the period of evaluation. Besides these projects, within the EC/FAO Food Security for Action Programme, a study was carried out (October 2008) on the Economic Effects of Land Reform in Tajikistan.

246. Major outputs of these projects included the establishment of a working group on land reform made up of Government bodies, civil society organizations, and donor projects; the establishment of five legal advisory centres offering legal consultations and information on farm reorganization and land reform to rural citizens and farm members; the establishment of information and legal consultation centres in 16 districts in partnership with the State Committee on Women and Families to raise awareness among women on their rights to land and the process

of farm reorganization; and the conduct of public awareness campaigns in over 45 communities to explain to farm members the process of farm reorganization and monitor progress in completing reorganization of collective farms in these areas.

a) *Relevance*

247. FAO support for land reform has been implemented in three areas: development of land policy; raising public awareness and monitoring of progress in implementation of land reform; and protection of citizens' rights to land. These activities are highly relevant in ensuring the equitable distribution of agricultural land under the reorganization of state and collective farms and securing the land tenure of rural citizens.

248. The idea for a working group on land reform was novel and relevant, to create a partnership among Government, civil society, and donors in implementation of farm reorganization and land reform. The public participation component was also necessary and relevant, given the lack of knowledge and information among rural populations concerning the issues and processes of land reform. The strategy pursued was appropriate: public awareness campaigns in over 45 communities where farm reorganization was ongoing to encourage and facilitate the involvement of farm members in the decisions on farm reorganization and land distribution and establishment of legal aid centres to provide free of charge legal consultative services and advice to farm members and citizens wishing to obtain formal rights to land and establish Dehqan farms. Gender mainstreaming activities were aimed at improving women's access to land and involvement in farm reorganization decisions (see Section VI. B). Monitoring of farm reorganization and land reform provided evidence of inequities in land distribution, prompting discussions among Government, civil society and donors on revision of existing legislation and procedures related to farm reorganization and land distribution.

b) *Effectiveness*

249. Implementation of FAO projects has generally been effective, but not without problems. Independent assessment of the effectiveness of OSRO/TAJ/301/SWE was difficult because interlocutors were not available. However, a desk review of the project indicated that major outputs were achieved in a timely manner.

250. The Land Reform Working Group (LRWG), established under OSRO/TAJ/402/CAN, conducted meetings on a monthly basis. Reports are that stakeholders regularly attended these meetings and participated actively. The working group analyzed and developed proposals for improved land legislation based on the monitoring of land reform and allowed for constructive discussion among stakeholders to improve the implementation of land reform.

251. Public awareness activities were well organized and conducted on a timely basis, usually coinciding with the general assembly meetings of state and collective farms undergoing reorganization. Public awareness was designed to raise understanding of the farm reorganization process and rural citizens' rights to land prior to initiation of the farm reorganization process. Its participatory monitoring approach provided reliable information on land rights and the process of farm reorganization under the law to rural populations and state authorities. Additionally, FAO offered training to the managers of newly formed Dehqan farms on farm management, focusing on basic, strategic, and financial management of farm operations. These trainings were timed to occur shortly after the new farm was formed.

252. Project OSRO/TAJ/602/CAN delivered its main expected outputs, including in areas begun on the previous project. FAO supported the protection of citizens' rights to land by establishing five legal aid centres which provide free of charge legal consultative services and advice to farm members and citizens wishing to obtain formal rights to land and establish Dehqan farms. FAO and UNIFEM also partnered with the State Committee on Women and Families to establish information and legal consultative centres in 16 districts offering women with access to free legal consultations relating to their rights in farm reorganization. These centres often

extended their services to neighbouring districts, expanding the access of rural citizens to legal advice and consultations on farm reorganization and land rights issues.

c) Efficiency

253. The main efficiency issues concerned implementation of OSRO/TAJ/602/CAN. Although the project delivered its outputs, it experienced some difficulties during start-up, taking some six months to complete the inception phase and sign its Letters of Agreement with UNIFEM (due to administrative and contractual issues), and in the implementation of some activities. During the inception phase, the project description was revised contributing to the delay in start-up and subsequent delays in implementing some project activities were caused by a lack of interest in the project by the FAO Coordinator. While initially there was interest to do so, FAO was unable to attract funding for a follow-on project due to the difficult institutional environment, even though additional work in land reform was clearly necessary and warranted.

254. On a positive note, efforts were made to coordinate regional coverage of legal centers and public awareness campaigns with other donor projects to avoid duplication, and to close gaps as much as possible.

255. The work to develop a Land Policy (renamed the Land Strategy) also raised implementation and design issues. It was developed with insufficient understanding on the part of key Government bodies such as the Agency for Land Management, Geodesy and Cadastre (ALMGC) about the nature of the project and their obligations. Consultants questioned during the evaluation reported that key personnel in the ALMGC and other government bodies were unwilling to participate in discussion on the Strategy and assist with its drafting. ALMGC personnel complained that work on the Land Strategy would consume much of their time and that they were busy with their normal work load. Moreover, the ALMGC staff was not getting paid to work on the drafting of the Land Strategy making it a low priority. Once FAO prepared a first draft, the ALMGC engaged in limited discussion and revision of the Strategy. In late 2008, the ALMGC submitted the Land Strategy to the Government for consideration, but prospects for its adoption in the near future seem poor.

d) Impact

256. FAO's most significant impact was its work to develop partnerships between government and donors by establishing the first LRWG. The LRWG became the model for future consultations among government, civil society and donor groups. FAO was a leader in creating this forum for dialogue on improving and monitoring the progress in land reform. The LRWG provided the Government with valuable technical assistance to improve the policy and legal framework related to land reform, resulting in proposals for legislative amendments, such as the amendments to the Land Code in 2004 and 2007 that were passed by Parliament. The LRWG was also instrumental in commenting on and revising the draft Law on State Registration of Immovable Property and the draft Law on Mortgage. All these activities helped improve the legal framework under which land reform is implemented and rights to land are secured. While the improvements have been modest to date, the working group has provided the main venue for ongoing discussion on the implementation of equitable land reform leading to improvements in the agricultural sector.

257. Public awareness-raising efforts and legal consultative assistance had a positive impact in areas where such activities were conducted. Over 39,000 individuals received reliable information on farm reorganization and rights to land from FAO activities. Some 12,000 citizens received legal consultations on issues related to obtaining rights to land and forming a Dehqan farm from Legal Advisory Centres established by FAO projects.³⁹ Some 74 radio programmes

³⁹ Project final reports (OSRO/402/CAN and OSRO/602/CAN) provided figures for public awareness campaigns (38,905 people received information on farm reorganization and land reform from the project) and legal consultations (11,848 people received legal consultations on land issues).

were broadcast nation-wide. However, impact was mainly limited to the geographic areas in which these activities took place (mainly in the 45 communities served by the FAO projects).

258. FAO efforts to build the capacity of the ALMGC on monitoring land reform were only moderately successful. A monitoring unit was established and trained within the ALMGC, but reports are that it was only moderately effective in completing its mission during the project. Once funding stopped, the monitoring unit reportedly ceased operation. The Director of the ALMGC reported that after the FAO project ended in 2008 the monitoring offices were closed and personnel reassigned within the Agency.

e) Sustainability

259. The FAO's model for the LRWG (established under Project OSRO/402/CAN) has proved sustainable over the long term. The Government and donors have used the FAO working group as its model for a number of other working groups on policy and legislative issues. For example, in 2007 the Government formed the Working Group on Structural and Land Reform under the Independent Commission on Farm Debt Resolution. Subsequently, the Government has sought to form additional working groups based on the FAO model in key sectors of the economy, such as water use, energy, and health to encourage constructive dialogue on key issues between the government, civil society and donors.

260. FAO legal advisory services have proved more difficult to sustain over the long term. Cost recovery measures that were intended to be part of the project proved difficult to implement. It was observed that at least three of the five FAO legal advisory centers are still open, but struggling to operate. The centres are operated by dedicated lawyers interested in helping citizens defend their rights to land, but the lack of money for transportation, rent, office equipment, supplies, and salaries limits the effectiveness of the work. It was reported by lawyers at several centres that without project funding, the centres are unlikely to remain open for more than another 6 months (through end 2009).

261. The women's information and legal advisory centres established by the last FAO project have proved to be sustainable, at least in Sughd oblast. Based on the results of the six centres established by the FAO project, the local administration in Sughd agreed to fund such centres in all 18 districts of the oblast. In other areas of the country the centres seem to have closed down when project funding stopped. The quality of service in the centres which still operate varies depending on the length of time the centre has been operating and whether the staff now employed in the centres was trained by UNIFEM. Over time, the focus of legal advisory services in many of these centres has drifted from land issues to general issues of concern to women in the community (e.g., domestic violence, divorce and property distribution, family law, etc.) to promote their sustainability.

G. FOOD SECURITY (INFORMATION, STATISTICS AND EARLY WARNING)

FAO Interventions and their Relevance

a) Background and context

262. Since its earliest involvement in Tajikistan, FAO has assisted the country in food security information, data gathering and analysis, statistics and the development of early warning systems. During the period covered by this evaluation, the assistance was mostly channelled through the global EC/FAO Food Security Programme (GCP/GLO/162/EC) that included a component for Tajikistan that amounted to \$US 360,000. Through this project, FAO provided technical and financial support to the State Committee for Statistics (SCS - Goskomstat) for the analysis and

validation of food consumption and income data from the 2005 Tajikistan Household Budget Survey (HBS).

263. The project also funded jointly with UNICEF and World Bank a '*Living Standard Measurement Study*' survey in 2007. The data from this is still being analysed. A study is being prepared on '*The impact of migration on Food Security*' and work is still in progress on a food security profile for Tajikistan. Also funded was a translation into Russian of a food security manual to be used for future training in Tajikistan and the region and a legal study of the institutional and legal food security framework.

264. A paper called "Longitudinal Analysis" using panel data for assessing seasonality effects on the food security situation in Tajikistan in 2005 was presented at the EC-FAO Food Security Programme's event at the Fourth International Conference on Agricultural Statistics (ICAS-4) in Beijing. Training was provided in the key concepts of food security and on conducting food security related analysis to experts responsible for drafting the National Development Strategy (NDS). Staff from the Goskomstat's Agriculture Unit received training in compiling food balance sheets.

265. Goskomstat stated that the technical training and advice from the project was useful and has led to more accurate FS surveys and presentation of information in monthly and quarterly bulletins. Goskomstat appreciated that the FAO training workshops included qualitative measures, compared to other FS training that was much more quantitative.

266. Between January 2004 and April 2006, TCP/TAJ/3001 played a part in helping to establish a Project Monitoring and Food Security Unit (PMFSU) later renamed the AgroFood-Centre (AFC) and formulating a National Programme for Food Security (NPFS). This is dealt with in more detail in Annex II TCP Projects.

267. Project OSRO/TAJ/604/CAN was intended to increase the GoT's capacity to formulate, implement and monitor food security policies in Tajikistan. This project provided some training in improved methodologies for data collection and analysis for staff from the MoA. It also supported the FAO/MoA grain crop assessment and farm production data collection in 2006. However, in 2007 the counterpart agency for the project was changed from the Ministry of Agriculture (MoA) to the Ministry of Economic Development and Trade (MoEDT). Soon after, the project ground to a halt due to a breakdown in cooperation between the two ministries and between MoEDT and FAO. The problem seems to have been as much one of clashing personalities as of institutions, although the MoA was not happy that the responsibility for agricultural data collection had been taken from them. These events also occurred during a period of particularly weak leadership in the FAO Project Coordination Unit. The donor (Canada), acting on the recommendation of a CIDA project review mission, asked that the project be closed and for all unspent project funds (\$US 230,000) to be returned, to which FAO agreed.

b) *Grain and crop/farm assessments*

268. Between 2000 and 2006, FAO assisted the MoA to conduct an annual grain crop assessment (pre-harvest & harvest) and farm production survey. FAO provided assistance in designing the assessment and survey and in training national consultants so they could then provide practical on the job training to officials from the ministry and provincial and district agricultural departments. The techniques were new to Tajikistan as in Soviet times such data had been gathered from the annual state and collective farms' returns. This work was supported by the projects referred to above including TCP/TAJ/3001, but was discontinued after 2007, when support from OSRO/TAJ/604/CAN was no longer forthcoming.

269. In the current season, 2009, after a lapse of two years FAO is again supporting the MoA to undertake a nationwide crop assessment and farm production survey using funds from three emergency seed (wheat and fodder crop), fertiliser and animal feed distribution projects.⁴⁰

270. This crop assessment and farm production survey, as well as serving a national purpose is also doubling as a beneficiary assessment of these three projects. This present crop assessment/farm survey was on going at the time of the evaluation mission in five provinces and 20 districts. Assessment teams are comprised of some five persons, including an FAO National Consultant and officials from the ministry and the provincial and district agricultural departments, assisted if possible by representatives from the farm units. The survey has the following coverage:

- Gorno Badakhshan (2 districts)
- Kurgan Tube (4 districts)
- Kulyob (5 districts)
- DRD (5 districts)
- Soghd (4 districts)

271. All types of farm unit are included – State farms, Dehqan farms; free Dehqan farms; Presidential land and household plots (*ogarod*). The evaluation team was positively impressed with the care and competence of the survey work.

272. In July, a small team will come from FAO GIEWS to assist in collating and analysing the information and data, which will then be published and circulated to all relevant GoT Ministries and Departments. The survey will be the subject of a seminar/workshop, to which donors and interested agencies will be invited.

c) *Relevance*

273. Improving the capacity and competence of the GoT to address food security issues, (including food security surveys, analysis of results and establishment of systems providing early warning of possible food shortages) are entirely relevant. This is particularly so for a country with such variable climatic conditions and subject to so many hazards, both natural and man-made. This being said, the interventions have not been part of an overall effort to strengthen capacity and this has undermined their relevance.

d) *Effectiveness, efficiency, impact and sustainability*

274. Because the assistance in this area has been fairly small, it is difficult to assess the degree to which improvement in Goskomstat's capability to accurately collect and analyse data is attributable to FAO's interventions. FAO's assistance has helped to train a core of national consultants and personnel of the MoA and the provincial and district departments of agriculture in accurate grain crop assessments and farm production data collection including livestock and a record of weed infestation, pests and diseases. The methodology has been developed in FAO HQ and followed up by in country training. The data being collected is very detailed and time consuming and how effectively it will be used and how it will be followed up remains to be seen.

275. There is still only limited local capacity by the GoT to address food security policy issues and a notable reluctance on the part of the GoT to accept the need for accurate statistics. The official national statistics are still generally perceived to be too inaccurate and manipulated, although improving to some extent.

276. Without continued external technical support, however, recent gains are likely to be lost. FAO has made a commendable effort to continue the work with unspent funds from three

⁴⁰ UTF/TAJ/004/TAJ–Emergency Food Security and Seed Imports; TCP/TAJ/3101–Emergency assistance to raise food security and reduce livelihood vulnerability of very poor households in the Khatlon Region; OSRO/TAJ/801/SWE–Emergency supply of animal feed to weather affected livestock farmers in Tajikistan.

emergency input distribution projects, which end this year. However, the previous donor – Canada - has withdrawn from Tajikistan and there would be a need for FAO to resolve other issues with the main potential donor for this kind of work (EC) before a further project would be seriously considered.

277. The mechanisms to effectively use crop assessments and farm surveys have not yet been worked out, beyond preparing a report and holding a workshop/seminar in the late summer / autumn. Longer term funding, including with participation by the GoT, should be sought to assure the sustainability and institutionalisation of such an annual assessment / survey in the future if it is to serve a useful purpose. At the time of the evaluation, negotiations were begun with the EC for possible funding of mid-term Food security Monitoring and Market Information System.

H. OTHER POLICY-RELATED INITIATIVES

278. Through the Regional Office for Europe, FAO has contributed to the policy debate in Tajikistan with several initiatives, financed either through the TCP Facility or the Regular Programme.

279. Under the TCP Facility, an AGNS officer undertook a mission in early 2008 to assess the food control infrastructure and define priorities for improving the overall system. The mission proposed a follow-up TCP project to address key gaps, including through capacity development, reviewing and assessing food laws and standards and assisting Tajikistan to prepare for WTO accession. The TCP is still under consideration; however, in June 2009 a national workshop on food safety was organized jointly by WHO and FAO as a follow-up to the mission's recommendation.

280. Also under the TCP Facility, FAO financed a study, published in October 2008, on crop diversification in cotton-growing areas, which could be relevant in the context of implementation of Presidential Decree 111. FAO also undertook a livestock sector strategic study, to define better the country's needs in this area and to use with donors. The study, also financed by the TCP Facility, has been completed and was being translated into English at the time of the evaluation.

281. Other studies carried out in the evaluation period included a Cotton Farmer Survey, conducted in November-December 2008 and published in February 2009 for the Donor Coordination Council Secretariat; a study on the Economic Effects of Land Reform published in October 2008 and a study on Farm Debt Resolution published in January 2009. FAO also made technical comments on the January 2008 Land Use Planning Law. The evaluation was not able to ascertain if any use had been made as yet of these studies, which were generally quite recent, but all of them did address issues of importance in Tajikistan.

VI. Gender Mainstreaming and Women in Development

A. BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

282. On the whole, at the time of independence, women in Tajikistan had a relatively high level of education, health care and opportunities when compared to some other countries in the region with similar historical cultures. However, the consequences of the civil war have set back the position of women, particularly rural women, in Tajik society in many ways. The increase of poverty and unemployment pushed many Tajik men to emigrate in Russia and neighbouring countries, with women remaining in the country to take care of the children, often while working in the state or collective farms for a very low salary.

283. FAO projects in Tajikistan have made special efforts to include women as beneficiaries and indeed in a number of projects women and female headed households have been the primary focus of project attention. This has notably been the case in FAO's support for Legal and Information Centres, in projects providing agricultural and livestock assistance and in those with

formation of Common Interest Groups. While this is commendable, some of these projects could have been more effective had they been designed with more consultation with the potential beneficiaries to better ascertain their real needs.

B. GENDER IN LAND REFORM

284. When the first UN project to facilitate access to land for rural women was designed in 2001⁴¹, the gender dimension of Land Reform was not considered an issue in Tajikistan and the worrying situation of rural women was not perceived as linked to their exclusion from access to land. The work of UNIFEM and, later FAO and other organizations on the Land Reform in Tajikistan revealed that the problem was not the text of the Law, but its implementation.

285. The Land Law gives equal access to land to women and men. However, the institutional resistance and the interference of local authorities made the implementation of Land Reform difficult: land distribution was not equitable. While over three-quarter of the members of Collectives and State farms were women, only very few women could get access to land and most of the time the Dehqan farms registered under the name of women were actually managed by their husbands or fathers.

286. Several reasons explain this low number of female Dehqan Farms at the beginning of the Land Reform implementation:

- Rural women were not aware of their rights and had no knowledge about land reform and land registration.
- They were also lacking resource and technical expertise in the agricultural sector and their traditional networking, rooted in family relations, was not adequate to address this.
- The heavy work burden of rural women in the fields and their traditional work at home was making them reluctant to accept additional responsibility.
- In addition, gender discrimination in social and family life led to a lack of self-confidence, therefore many Tajik women felt that being Head of a Dehqan farm was a male job and too difficult for a woman.

287. As a result of the limited access to land, feminization of poverty particularly in rural areas was dramatic.

288. The FAO work on land reform is reviewed in Section V.F. above. The key results related to gender are:

- The public awareness campaigns and monitoring of progress in implementation of the Land Reform informed and mobilized communities and particularly women to participate in the farm reorganization process.
- The Land Reform Working Group (LRWG) integrated a gender component in Land Policy.
- The Legal Assistance Centers (LAC) provided legal information on land rights and technical support for land registration and land-related conflicts. In partnership with UNIFEM and the State Committee on Women and Families, FAO contributed also through 16 District Task Force (DTF) and Information Centres to the monitoring and follow up of the distribution of agricultural land to secure land tenure for rural women.

289. Although baseline data is lacking, anecdotal evidence shows developmental impact subsequent to the implementation of these projects. In Vahdat where FAO worked in 4 villages of Guleston Jamoat, 400 Dehqan farms are headed by women and in Hisor, out of 100 complaints received by the District Task Force centre during the last 5 months, 85 were filed by women. The

⁴¹ A project focused on women's land rights was conceived in 2001 by UNIFEM to facilitate access to land for rural women in the course of the Land Reform. the implementation of the project started in 2002.

proportion was nearly the same in Legal Assistance Centres of Danqara where more than 200 (out of 800) Dehqan farm belong to women 104 out of 130 legal consultations were provided to women, for the same period.

290. However, the success of the FAO intervention has not been significant in the area where cotton constitutes the main crop⁴². The services provided by DTFs to women in the areas where cotton production dominates agricultural activities focused on private conflicts (domestic violence and family issues). The quality of the service is also different from one district to another depending also on the working conditions of the team members. The establishment of DTFs in Local Government buildings made it difficult for rural women to complain when the local authorities are involved in the conflict, particularly in land distribution/registration.

291. The poverty of rural populations, particularly women does not allow them to pay for services provided by the LAC. The independent LACs will become sustainable only if they work with big private farms which usually belong to men.

292. The situation is different for the District Task Force Centres (DTF) which have been established in the Local government office of Soqd region. While LAC have difficulties to continue their activities at the end of FAO projects, at the time of the evaluation mission, months after the end of the project, the 18 DTFs, financially supported by the local government, were still functioning.

C. WOMEN'S ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT AND FOOD SECURITY

293. Through project OSRO/TAJ/404/CAN during 2004-05, FAO sought economic empowerment of poor rural households in Khatlon and jointly with German Agro-Action in Faizabad.

294. As there had been no post-project monitoring, information was not available on the status of the groups formed under the project. The evaluation visited the heads of two groups in Faizabad. The revolving fund initiated by the project continues to operate. The money, usually given back within 8 months to the Head of the Women Group, is distributed among other woman and in a few cases where women were not able to return back the money, the group contributed collectively to solve the problem. The project started by involving 11 women in each visited village, at the time of the evaluation mission (June 2009) the number of beneficiaries had increased to 45 in one village and 91 in the other. The evaluation had no way to assess whether the positive image gained from the two visits could be generalized.

D. LIVESTOCK

295. Women mainly take care of the animals managed close to the house and the poultry. They feed them, clean their stables, make the dung pats for fuel (*chalma*), do the milking, and process the dairy products, look after the young animals and the sick. To address their concerns, programmes need to look beyond vaccination and include hygiene of the conditions in which animals are kept, fed, milked and in which dairy products are processed.

296. However, vaccination is also important and rural women tend to be less well informed about such programmes. They have different social networks and for instance do not attend Friday prayers in the mosque where such things are announced. Women do not have the same access to mobile telephones, do not have the same access to veterinary care and tend to be less well informed about such matters.

⁴² For example in Kan-e Badam, (in Soqd region) where Dehqan farms are huge and produce mostly cotton, only 6 out of 124 Dekhan farms belong to women.

297. Veterinary medicine – especially field practice – is an almost exclusively male profession. While there is no difficulty in a male vet visiting a woman's house to treat her animals, it is more difficult for a village women to visit the vet's house to ask for his help, particularly at night.

298. There is a need to develop better animal health communication and information networks such as through the *Rais-e-Zanon* system as well as trying to attract more women into professional positions in the TVA as vets, base managers and trainers.

299. The hygienic aspects of dairy production for household consumption are one thing. But, if the idea is to produce products for sale to provide an additional income for the family – a more careful study of the markets and local marketing systems is necessary. In many places a local marketing system already exists involving a network of middlemen traders and local entrepreneurs. Only if such local women's self interest groups can market their products more effectively and profitably than these existing market networks will they flourish and survive as business entities and there was not so much evidence that this aspect of the business situation was well understood or addressed.

300. In the traditions of local village life, it is not usually socially acceptable to sell surplus milk or eggs to neighbours. Such commodities are either gifted (particularly to poor neighbours) or exchanged in a reciprocal fashion of 'favours given and favours received'. This is a natural part of the cohesion necessary for rural community life, especially where people are in some way often related to each other or bound by ties of family and clan and dependant on each other in times of hardship. This means that 'marketing' means being able to sell such products in a local market to 'strangers' or to traders and middlemen rather than to neighbours.

301. The difficulties and dangers of preserving meat under village conditions without a reliable supply of electricity or refrigeration should be fully understood. Although there are certain traditional ways of cooking and drying meat for winter consumption, especially in the remoter mountain districts, these need to be carefully studied and understood for their possible health risks.

302. A number of 'emergency' input projects have provided either sheep or improved 'layer' hens. The issues relating to this have been referred to in detail in Section V.B. Before providing such assistance to such households, there should be a much better understanding of what is most appropriate. Poultry can provide immediate help to domestic food security and even some income. But, it is no good giving 'improved' layer hens to poor women without a cockerel to help them breed, some help with improved housing and feeding, health care/vaccination for the chickens and training. It would have possibly been more appropriate to have provided these village women with a hardier breed of chicken for the conditions in which they would live and be fed. If that had been the case there might have been fewer losses.

303. High maintenance animals such as 'Hissar' sheep only give a slow return in lamb sales and as they are not a milking breed, they will make no immediate contribution to domestic food security. Before implementing these emergency projects, FAO should better understand intended beneficiaries' circumstances of life.

E. CROPS AND SEEDS

304. The emergency projects in Tajikistan have provided funds for seeds (wheat, maize, fodder) and fertilizer. Whilst these may have filled a perceived 'need' to bridge a shortage of wheat seed after years of conflict or drought, there is the question of whether wheat or fodder seed is what most poor women headed households actually need most to help them feed their families. In many cases, the only land that a woman controls is her kitchen garden (*ogarod*). Evidence is that these kitchen gardens are far more productive than most other agricultural land. What may be needed most are seeds of other crops, vegetables - beans, onions, potatoes, cabbages, beets, carrots, as well as good fruit trees and berry bushes. When considering vegetable seed, notice should be paid to avoid providing 'hybrid' seed which must be replaced each year. It is better to

provide seed of open pollinated lines which provide the possibility for rural households propagating their own seed to replant the following year.

305. There has been insufficient attention paid to providing a choice. It is the rural women who are the primary guardians of their domestic food security and who need to be given a choice in such matters rather than having their seed needs decided for them by others in offices far away.

VII. FAO Functions in Tajikistan

306. The evaluation terms of reference call for an examination of FAO's roles and functions in areas where it claims to have comparative advantage. The following section looks at each of these areas across all the sectoral work carried out during the evaluation period.

A. POLICY ASSISTANCE

307. One of FAO's key roles is that of a neutral adviser to assist national governments formulate agricultural and related policy. FAO is intended to be a source of unbiased technical advice in this area.

308. During much of the last five years, the FAO Office in Tajikistan saw itself as being primarily responsible for implementation of an emergency and rehabilitation programme. Policy assistance was therefore largely handled from the Regional Office for Europe in Budapest, which in fact had the primary mandate for this type of work. Such engagement had to be limited; the office deals with a large number of countries and in the absence of dedicated project funding, staff and financial resources for dealing with Tajikistan or any other single country do not permit the presence that would be desirable.

309. Through the evaluation period, it was found that FAO's engagement in policy dialogue with the Government has been uneven, although it has improved since the arrival of the present Coordinator in February 2009. In general, most of the policy dialogue relating to agriculture and rural development has been within the donor coordination mechanisms. Many attempts to work with the Government have failed. Hence, FAO has tended to focus more on field-based activities. As was noted above in Section V.F., land reform and resolution of the cotton debt have been key areas of agricultural policy engagement for the donors. Through much of the evaluation period, FAO has not played a significant role in these forums. In fact, it was only in March 2009 that FAO began to represent the UN system on the Donor Coordination Council for Agriculture.⁴³

310. Perhaps the most significant agricultural policy adopted by the GoT during this period was Presidential Decree 111 of March 2007. This provides a road map for agricultural sector reform in Tajikistan, including Government withdrawal from the cotton sector and protection of land use rights. FAO's most ambitious attempt to engage the Government in the policy arena was through the development of a Land Strategy, undertaken in the context of project OSRO/TAJ/602/CAN. As already reported, the Strategy was intended to be prepared in conjunction with the responsible Government authorities. Unfortunately, this did not prove to be possible.

311. The evaluation believes that FAO would most effectively increase its role in policy assistance through a technically strong residential presence in Tajikistan. This would allow FAO to provide the GoT with better exposure to the types of policy assistance potentially available. It would also permit FAO to have better exchange with donors interested in funding the formulation of agricultural and related policy.

312. The evaluation found that FAO is appreciated by both the donors and the Government as a potential source of unbiased technical advice and there is a general wish for FAO to play a more

⁴³ Prior to this, Agriculture has been represented by UNICEF.

active role helping the GoT formulate agricultural policy. Indeed the evaluation team were repeatedly told that FAO would be better fulfilling this much needed role, rather than being a competing player with NGOs and other implementing partners for input delivery at the grass roots level.

B. SHARING AND APPLYING KNOWLEDGE

313. Another of the key functions of FAO is to make available knowledge and experience gained in other parts of the world. This can be done at field level, by adapting/replicating similar experiences gained elsewhere to conditions in another country. It may also be achieved through the provision of technical material, either in electronic or written form. The FAO website is increasingly the medium of choice for the latter method.

314. The use of FAO information materials is governed by several factors. The main one is a familiarity with what FAO has to offer and its perceived applicability at country level. On this count, the evaluation found that in Tajikistan there is little knowledge of the global public goods provided by FAO, at all levels. This is partly explained by the country's level of development. Without technical assistance there are difficulties in adapting information. Another constraining factor is explained by the fact that very few FAO publications are produced in Russian. Finally, Internet access is not well developed in Tajikistan especially in Government offices, and connection speeds are slow.

315. When it comes to adapting knowledge and experience at the field level, the best example is the VFU project. This programme has been built on experience gained in Afghanistan and other countries where FAO has helped to develop community-level, private commercialised animal health services. Transfer of knowledge from the Afghan experience was facilitated by having one of the experts who had served with the Afghan project as the CTA of the project in Tajikistan. The TCP project on participatory, integrated watershed management was developed and based on successful experiences in other countries transferred to Tajikistan as part of a pilot project.

316. Knowledge sharing has also taken place through participation of Government officials and technical staff in regional and global meetings. However, aside from general comments that such participation is appreciated and useful, it is not possible to attribute changes at country level to this.

C. RESOURCE MOBILIZATION

317. This refers to FAO's role in attracting funds and other inputs to development programmes in general and in the agriculture sector in particular. Apart from being involved in negotiating the projects in which it has been directly involved, FAO has not played a significant direct role in this respect during the evaluation period, although the Investment Centre has supported project preparation for the multilateral development banks. However, since the arrival of the present Coordinator and during the immediate pre-evaluation period, FAO has been much more active in this respect.

318. However, as already pointed out, for much of the period, FAO has not been active in donor forums and has been more reactive to opportunities for project funding, such as after the severe winter of 2007-08, than proactive in identifying and seeking funding for development initiatives. The GoT has not yet developed a national food security programme. This is something that FAO has helped to develop in a number of countries and which commonly serves as the pivot for FAO's resource mobilization efforts.

319. The prospect for resource mobilization for agriculture more generally is closely tied to the success of Government reform efforts, i.e. the resolution of the cotton debt issue and the implementation of Presidential Decree 111 and especially the provisions relating to freedom to farm. It is too early to evaluate progress in this area. However, it is being closely watched by the

donor community in Dushanbe. If the reforms are deemed to be effectively implemented, considerable international resources could be mobilized to support this effort.

D. CAPACITY BUILDING

320. Many of the FAO projects implemented in Tajikistan, although classified as emergency interventions and implemented within the emergency operation framework, have had a developmental orientation. Such projects all included elements of training and capacity building. However, the input distribution projects have had only minor capacity building elements.

321. Capacity building represents a considerable challenge in Tajikistan, as the country faces many of the problems found in other nations at similar levels of development. These include low levels of salary paid to Government employees and a high turnover of staff. There are few incentives for good performance. On the other hand, the country has a relatively high level of education and literacy and the overall potential capacity is high compared to many other countries at similar levels of economic development.

322. The main focus of capacity building in FAO projects has been on Government staff, both at central and local level. The largest capacity building effort has been through the VFU projects. These have targeted veterinarians who continue to draw a Government stipend but are also in the process of becoming independent delivery agents for animal health services. The work with the TVA illustrates the need to go beyond training and tackle institutional development. There is evidence that capacity building through these projects has been largely effective, although more efforts are needed.

323. Food security projects have been highly focused on capacity building, but there is less evidence that any lasting institutional improvements have been achieved due to implementation difficulties and official institutional conservatism. However, there is evidence that some successful capacity building has been achieved in training a small corps of officials in the MoA and provincial departments of agriculture to carry out accurate crop assessments and in the collection of farm production data.

324. Some FAO projects have focused on grass roots capacity building, i.e. making people aware of their rights under land reform legislation, setting up common interest (CIG) groups within watershed management and community mobilisation projects and credit activities for women. It is more difficult for the evaluation to assess the impact of this type of capacity building, as much of the available evidence is anecdotal and small scale. However, some of the women's credit groups are continuing without external assistance, as are some of the CIGs within the watershed management TCP project in Faizabad. The World Bank CAWMP – community mobilisation project in Danghara is still ongoing and it is too early to tell how sustainable the CIGs being established with WB grant funds will be once the project finishes.

325. Most of the activities being considered for development in the future are “upstream”, e.g. long-term agricultural strategy development, information system for crop assessment and agricultural marketing, development of a national strategy for irrigation. Such initiatives would surely include capacity building elements and it will be important to consider the challenges to carrying this out successfully in Tajikistan.

E. PARTNERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

326. The possibilities for partnership development in Tajikistan are more limited than in many countries. For example, whereas there are functioning international and national NGOs in the country, civil society organizations are virtually absent. FAO's partnership possibilities include the NGOs (international and national), together with the donor community and the UNCT. FAO has been actively supporting the Tajik Veterinary Association (TVA) and this partnership with a potentially key civil society organization will hopefully continue in the future.

327. FAO's profile within the UNCT became more active during the second half of 2008. This has continued and been enhanced by the present Coordinator since his arrival. This has been much appreciated within the UNCT. As noted earlier, FAO has played a strong supporting role in the elaboration of the "Green Initiative", which is expected to be a major contribution from the UN system in the coming years.

328. Similarly, and as noted above, FAO did not actively participate in donor forums for much of the evaluation period, although there was a strong demand for this, especially with regard to the land reform issue.

329. Among the NGOs, FAO has had particularly good cooperation with German Agro-Action and the Aga Khan Foundation, both of which are major actors in Tajikistan. Various NGO initiatives to establish agricultural extension services such as SENAS and ATAC have been used to provide technical training at field level.

330. The evaluation found that, as in previous country evaluations, the Organization's in-country presence (i.e. the Project Coordination Office in Tajikistan) plays a decisive role in FAO's image in the country. The in-country office is almost entirely responsible for the development of partnerships. While FAO's position has been generally weak for much of the evaluation period, the Organisation's position has been enhanced in recent times and there are very good prospects for future improvement.

VIII. Conclusions and Recommendations

331. The evaluation has examined the FAO interventions in Tajikistan in each sectoral area against the commonly accepted evaluation criteria of relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, impact and sustainability. It has also reached some general conclusions about FAO's work that are reflected here.

332. Compared to FAO's overall mandate relating to agricultural and rural development, the Organization has worked in a fairly limited number of areas in Tajikistan over the review period. This being said, the evaluation feels that the overall relevance of FAO's interventions has been high for those activities that have a development orientation. Land reform is certainly one of the key areas for Tajikistan's agricultural development and while this is a challenging area, FAO has been part of the debate. Its work has been credible and this is underscored by the desire of many interlocutors for more involvement in this area. The work on privatization of veterinary service delivery and animal health generally has also been highly relevant. Although on a much smaller scale, the work on natural resources management (particularly watersheds) has addressed a key problem in the country.

333. Agricultural input distribution activities have been less relevant. Although Tajikistan faced a number of challenges due to severe natural conditions during the evaluation period (most notably the harsh winter of 2007-08), there was less clear evidence that these interventions were necessary to alleviate food security concerns. Resources used for these interventions were not fungible, but if they had been, it is doubtful that agricultural input distribution would have been the highest priority at any time during the evaluation period.

334. The FAO interventions got mixed marks in terms of efficiency. The major inputs distribution project, which in terms of expenditure was by far the biggest during the evaluation period, was implemented very quickly once it was approved. The brucellosis vaccination programme, one of the major interventions in animal health, was also implemented efficiently, thanks to good relationships between programme administration and the veterinarians who had to administer the vaccinations.

335. Other projects were implemented less efficiently and one was even terminated early due to non-delivery. Some projects that started poorly did improve once changes were made in management, which underscored the need for effective leadership. There were also cases of

delayed decision-making on projects, which the evaluation believes could be addressed through greater decentralized authority to the Project Coordination Office.

336. Overall project effectiveness was variable. The main issue was that the FAO interventions were invariably partial responses to major problems, often undertaken within a limited time frame. In the most effective interventions, FAO has maintained a presence (e.g. private vets, brucellosis campaign) through repeated projects. However, a more critical issue is that some activities are implemented in the absence of a national policy framework and Government buy-in. These tend to be donor-driven: the development of the national land strategy is a good example of this. Indeed, the weakness of Government policy structures is perhaps the greatest evidence of the need for FAO's advice, but unless that need is identified by the Government itself, such initiatives are likely to be ineffective.

337. The evaluation examined impact most systematically through a special study on VFUs, where FAO interventions have been going on for the longest time. The evaluation found some key indicators of positive impact, e.g. improved animal health due to the increased availability of veterinary medicines through the VFU programme and anecdotal evidence of reduced cases of brucellosis in humans in the 8 districts after the vaccination programme. The evaluation also identified challenges to maintaining the impact of these initiatives. Unsurprisingly, little impact was found in the case of projects that were less effective or relevant.

338. It is too early to judge the sustainability many of the interventions supported over the evaluation period. For example, one can be optimistic that private veterinary services are now well established in the country, even though the operational environment needs further improvement to solidify the gains already made. However, for many activities the follow-up has been weak, due to lack of funds (national or donor), absence of a policy framework as referred to previously, or lack of public information about successful initiatives.

339. The evaluation has arrived at the following conclusions and recommendations for FAO's future work in Tajikistan.

A. THE FAO IN-COUNTRY PRESENCE

340. The FAO Project Coordination Office has performed with variable quality through the evaluation period, but now has sound leadership that hopefully will remain in place for several years. This is a key element to strengthening FAO's image and presence, with the Government, donors, the UN family, NGOs and civil society. Despite this improvement, there is uncertainty about the future of the office due to its funding mechanism.

Recommendation 1: Tajikistan should have a secured, full-time residential FAO presence.

341. The type and form of the FAO's institutional presence in Tajikistan depends on both the country's needs and the likelihood of a continuing active field programme. A combination of the on-going food security situation and the potential for a vibrant agricultural development programme indicates that a full-time FAO residential presence in Tajikistan to be based in Dushanbe is necessary and justified. The improvement of the agricultural sector is a key Government priority and there is considerable potential for agriculture as a vehicle of economic growth.

342. The long-term answer may be a full FAO Representation. However, in any case the evaluation recommends that the FAO Office be maintained with a resident Coordinator. The evaluation also concludes that an arrangement with the Sub-Regional Coordinator as FAO Representative and a resident Assistant Representative is not appropriate for FAO in Tajikistan.

Recommendation 2: The Project Coordinator should be designated as Budget Holder for all national projects in Tajikistan.

Recommendation 3: A significant percentage of AOS income from both development and emergency projects should be assigned to the Project Office, to allow it to operate without depending on allocations from individual projects.

343. Assuming recommendation 3 is implemented, some of these funds should be used to address the assessed training needs for Project Coordination Office staff, as an investment in maintaining the necessary capacity for FAO operations in Tajikistan.

344. The evaluation is aware that the proposed course of action would be an innovation for FAO, but is justified by the particular circumstances of Tajikistan. The country has a comparatively large FAO project portfolio and is in transition from emergency to development. The evaluation believes that these measures would be in keeping with the spirit of reform in FAO and would demonstrate how the Organization can consider tailoring solutions to fit specific circumstances.

B. FOCUS OF FAO ACTIVITIES AND TRANSITION FROM EMERGENCY TO DEVELOPMENT

345. The evaluation found that some of the projects were less effective because they did not have a policy framework in which to operate. While interventions can have a pilot aspect to them, long-term impact and sustainability depend on an appropriate level of policy and financial support. This was the case particularly for efforts aimed at developing market-based agriculture and support systems, as was done in the case of animal health.

346. The evaluation also found that it was difficult for FAO (as well as other international organizations and donors) to engage the Government on policy issues, even when this was part of project strategy. However, attempts at dialogue must be persistent and FAO needs to strengthen its efforts on a few, high priority issues. There appears to be limited demand for policy development from the GoT, which at times seemed more comfortable with an ambiguous legislative framework than with a clear and precise one, e.g. on land reform. In the case of animal health, the development of a proper legal framework has been postponed by FAO and SVI because it was deemed premature, but it is now becoming imperative to protect private veterinarians. FAO could support the policy debate to reform the state vet service, including rationalizing the number, function and location of diagnostic labs, their capacity / equipment / training including a cost recovery policy. This rationalization is long over due and would help immensely to reform and improve the state veterinary service and the control of animal diseases and zoonoses in Tajikistan.

347. Because of the type of funding available from donors in Tajikistan, FAO has channeled its support in various programme areas (e.g. land reform, animal health, women's self-help groups) through a series of short-term emergency projects. This is a practiced approach of FAO emergency programmes, to reconcile the need for longer-term involvement with the availability of short-term funding. However, so far these longer-term programmes had no formal existence in FAO planning instruments. Furthermore, effective transition work requires greater involvement of other technical Divisions and Departments, besides TCE. Ways and means of working together towards common ends must be found. The NMTPF presents an opportunity to articulate transition work in a more formal and detailed manner than would be the case without it. The NMTPF will need to be framed in the context of the planned national Agricultural Strategy now being developed.

Recommendations

Recommendation 4: FAO should provide support aimed at a better understanding of the economic background of production and promoting agriculture as a profitable business, thus enhancing the appeal of agriculture as a means of livelihood. Emphasis should be on creating an effective legal framework (e.g. market reforms, appropriate trade regulations;

land tenure; micro-credits). This support should aim at ensuring that agricultural enterprises, when undertaken, represent an acceptable return on investment.

Recommendation 5: Policy dialogue and formulation is an area where FAO should assist the Government of Tajikistan. Key areas of FAO comparative advantage include: definition of public and private responsibilities in animal health; grazing rights; upland conservation and management. Better means for engaging the Government should be developed and agreed.

Recommendation 6: A new National Medium-Term Priority Framework should be prepared that clearly specifies FAO's comparative advantages to undertake areas of work in Tajikistan and includes outcomes to be achieved.

C. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS ON SECTORAL WORK

Livestock

(Animal health, production, feeding and restocking)

Conclusions

348. The animal health interventions have been relevant. The most positive results have been achieved through supporting the development of private veterinary practice and the umbrella organization, the Tajikistan Veterinary Association (TVA). Less sustainable has been the free distribution of fodder seed and fertilizer, animal feed, vitamins and minerals.

349. Most of the FAO's activities in the Livestock sector would have been better managed through long-term development programmes. In the circumstances it is commendable that FAO has managed to source successions of short term projects for the development of various livestock-related initiatives.

Recommendation 7: FAO should seek means to assist the Government in development of appropriate veterinary policy and legislation which should have as main objectives to foster an enabling environment for improving food security, reducing poverty and increasing availability of safe livestock products.

350. Needs to be addressed could include:

- a) Better definition of public-private roles as part of the veterinary legislation. The government should be encouraged to clearly define which tasks and services are seen as a public task and which as private good and how they will be performed.
- b) Principles of cost recovery and payment for goods and services, whereby a clear division between vaccines for public and private good, based on economic and sound technical veterinary strategies is made and adhered to.
- c) Developing the partnership between SVI and TVA, in which the TVA will increasingly take over parts of the facilitating role currently played by FAO.
- d) Establishment of a National Development Plan for veterinary diagnostics. The development of an NDP for veterinary diagnostics would be an important instrument to help coordinate efficient and effective donor investments in laboratory facilities and capacity. An NDP would also help identify who should participate in training and study trips.
- e) Reform of the public veterinary service relating to the SVI staffing and funding policy, so that downsizing does not go together with proportional budget cuts, but at least maintains the same budget to improve the effectiveness of the SVI.
- f) Increase availability of quality assured livestock remedies and vaccines and veterinary services.

Crops and Seeds, including Emergency Interventions

Conclusions

351. FAO's 'emergency' projects providing free inputs of seed and other agricultural inputs may have been needed in the past, but this type of assistance is no longer warranted in Tajikistan.

352. Assisting Tajikistan to produce its own supply of high quality seed for wheat and a diversity of other crops in order to escape the country's dependence on imported seed should be a high priority. The national seed production system neither functions efficiently nor produces good quality products. There is no system of seed certification. FAO has the experience and comparative advantage to help with this.

Recommendation 8: FAO should assist the development of commercialized seed production in Tajikistan.

353. Possible intervention areas include:

- a) assisting the GoT with applied research and variety selection, establishment of seed laws, standards, an internationally acceptable system of seed certification and possibly the production of early generations of seed; and
- b) assisting the private sector in commercial seed production and multiplication. This could include clean virus free potato seed multiplication and commercialisation through a voucher and agro-shop system, as a follow-up to the successful CIDA-funded project for potato tissue culture.

Recommendation 9: FAO should negotiate a revised grant with the World Bank away from free seed distribution in order to support greater sustainability.

354. Elements of the new project could be:

- a) a pilot voucher scheme for a broader range of inputs according to farmers' choice- including potato and other types of seed;
- b) establishing trials of potentially good variety lines in a number of agro-ecological locations in the country; and
- c) selecting contract farmers and /or establishing farmer groups for commercial seed multiplication as has been successfully done under the FAO-led programme in Afghanistan.

Locust Control

355. **Conclusion:** Locust control techniques used in Tajikistan need to be brought up to date, e.g. use of ULVs, improved information collection, transmission, follow-up and analysis. The GoT has shown great reluctance to adopt up to date methods of controlling locusts. Part of that resistance is based on the misuse of broad spectrum insecticides donated for locust control for control of cotton pests.

356. FAO should continue efforts to establish a regional forum for coordinated information collection on swarms, egg bed location and the promotion of an effective prevention and control strategy. Priorities must include developing national capacity and a culture of cooperation across national borders.

Recommendation 10: FAO should encourage adoption of modern methods of locust control and prevention and support the creation of a properly staffed and funded unit dedicated to locust control.

Recommendation 11: Continue development of a regional approach for locust control.

Watershed Management and Community Mobilisation

357. **Conclusion:** The GoT recognises the need for an integrated approach to the management of upland watersheds and catchments. The success and sustainability of such management systems will only be achieved with the full participation of the local rural communities.

358. CAWMP is proving to be an effective instrument for community mobilisation, motivation and development. However, it has not addressed issues related to participatory integrated management of the watershed. A second phase could be used to develop an integrated watershed management system for the Toirsu watershed involving all the communities, building on the lessons from the TCP project on integrated watershed management in Faisabad.

Recommendation 12: A second phase of the CAWMP in the Toirsu watershed Danghara should be developed as an appropriate platform for an ‘Integrated Participatory Watershed Management’ project.

Land Reform

359. **Conclusion:** Land Reform is a critical and highly politicized issue in Tajikistan. A major achievement by FAO was its role in establishing the first working group on land reform, thus creating a partnership between Government, civil society, and donors.

Recommendation 13: FAO should play a leadership role on land and agricultural policy.

360. FAO has demonstrated how it can play a valuable advisory role by working within the structure of the Government-DCC agricultural working group. Given the new possibility for meaningful reform implemented by the Government as a result of Presidential Decree No. 663 of 2009, the FAO should:

- take a leadership role in the sector through technical advisory support to the Government-DCC working group;
- seek to develop strong working partnerships with key government institutions, such as the Agency for Land Management, Geodesy and Cadastre (ALMGC), to support development and implementation of new policy in the agriculture and land sectors by the key Government bodies responsible for implementation; and
- seek the means to provide technical assistance to address key policy and legal issues raised by the working group.

361. In this connection, FAO should focus on working with Government bodies on project design and defining project objectives. The Land Strategy was completed by FAO without sufficient understanding by the ALMGC of its role and obligations. To avoid similar problems in future land reform projects, FAO should:

- work closely with Government to structure objectives and activities, thereby clearly defining the roles of each partner, the resources (both human and material) that each partner intends to contribute to the project, and how the Government counterpart responsible for the project will take ownership over the project;
- make clear and explicit its rules concerning payments to Government staff;
- seek to build Government capacity by placing within the counterpart agency the advisors responsible for outputs under an agreement with the relevant counterpart agency that included the advisors’ terms of reference and methods of engagement with agency staff.

362. As part of the Government buy-in, FAO should secure dedicated Government resources to fulfil project activities. For example, if Government staff is needed to develop policy initiatives, FAO should ask the relevant Government Agency to assign staff to complete this work in cooperation with the project.

363. FAO should no longer fund legal aid services. Other donor projects will continue support for legal aid to rural citizens. FAO does not have strong technical expertise and experience in developing legal aid services and systems. Two donors, Swiss Development Corporation (SDC)

and USAID, will soon begin projects that will fill the need to support the continued development of legal aid on land issues, making it possible for FAO to exit this field. Both have a strong background in the subject and these donor projects should provide sufficient resources to help make legal aid to rural citizens and farmers sustainable at a high level of service.

Gender Mainstreaming and Women in Development

Conclusions

364. In general, FAO projects have made efforts to include women. In some projects, women and women-headed households have been the primary focus of attention. However, some projects, particularly those which distributed inputs, did not effectively consider the gender dimension.

Recommendation 14: Specific strategies should be developed to address gender considerations, particularly in projects aimed at restoring and improving livelihoods.

365. Possible activities in such projects may be:

- inclusion of crops on which the household food security depends such as vegetables and fruit;
- more training in processing, preserving and cooking of such crops;
- provision of women with low maintenance, high productivity poultry and small livestock and appropriate extension advice, as opposed to large animals that may give a slow return at high maintenance costs;
- training in other traditional skills that can be managed from the house and garden such as silk production or beekeeping; and
- more training in marketing, the management of small business and credit.