

**Livelihood Restoration and Protection
and Sustainable Empowerment
of Vulnerable Peasant Communities
in Sindh Province**

OSRO/PAK/206/UNO

Prepared by

**Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations,
International Labour Organization,
and UN Women**

with the cooperation of

**Sindh Provincial Department of Agriculture,
Sindh Provincial Department of Labour, and
Sindh Provincial Women's Development Department**

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Livelihood Restoration and Protection and Sustainable Empowerment of Vulnerable Peasant Communities in Sindh Province

Mid-Term Review Report

Project Title	Livelihood Restoration and Protection and Sustainable Empowerment of Vulnerable Peasant Communities in Sindh Province
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We also want to thank the project team and all project stakeholders met and interviewed in the two districts visited by the MTR team. Through discussions and exchanges, we deepened our understanding and appreciation of the local situations and the opportunities and challenges faced by the project.

This final report presents our major findings, recommendations, and lessons learned—drawing much from our interactions with key stakeholders of the project.

We hope that this MTR report will contribute to the recognition of the challenges and the appreciation of the important progress made in project implementation. This could help provide the impetus for accelerating project implementation and further improving, where appropriate, achievements in the remaining project period. It is hoped that the recommendations in this report will help FAO, ILO, UN Women, and the various stakeholders in developing future projects for the continuation, possible expansion, and strengthening of provincial capacities that implement programmes for the vulnerable peasant communities in Pakistan.

The MTR Team

January 2015

Composition of the MTR Team

The MTR team was composed of Dr. Robina Wahaj, technical officer (irrigation), Land and Water Division, FAO; Mr. Edgar Guardian, FAO consultant, land tenure and management; Mr. Saad Gilani, representative from ILO; Ms. Uzma Quresh, representative from UN WOMEN; and Mr. Riaz Ahmed Abbasi, representative from the Sindh provincial government.

Table of Contents

Acknowledgements	3
Acronyms	5
1 Executive Summary	6
2 Project Background	9
3 Mid-Term Review Background	11
4 Project Progress against Stated Outputs	12
5 Main Findings	15
5.1 Relevance and Strategic Fit	15
5.2 Efficiency	17
5.3 Effectiveness	17
5.4 Implementation and Management Arrangement	19
5.5 Stakeholder Involvement and Project Ownership	21
5.6 Sustainability of Project Actions	22
5.7 Areas for Corrective Actions	24
6 Recommendations	26
7 Lessons Learned	30
8 Annexes	31
8.1 Annex 1 -Terms of Reference of the Mid-Term Review	
8.2 Annex 2 - Key Review Questions	
8.3 Annex 3 - Itinerary of the Mid-Term Review Mission	
8.4 Annex 4 - List of Persons Met	
8.5 Annex 5 - Aide Memoire	
8.6 Annex 6 - Progress/Achievements against Outputs, Feb. 2013–Nov. 2014	
8.7 Annex 7 - Consolidated Financial Summary Report	
8.8 Annex 8 - Proposed Project Work Plan for 2015	

Acronyms

BISP	Benazir Income Support Program
CBO	Community-Based Organization
CNIC	Computerized National Identity Cards
DoA	Sindh Provincial Department of Agriculture
DoI	Sindh Provincial Department of Irrigation
DoL	Sindh Department of Labour
DCC	District Coordinating Committee
DRR	Disaster Risk Reduction
ECU	Emergency Coordination Unit
EOBI	Sindh Employees Old-Age Benefits Institution
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
FBS	Farmer Business School
FFS	Farmer Field School
FMWC	Farmer-Managed Watercourses
GAP	Good Agricultural Practice
GNP	Gross National Product
HBW	Home-based worker
IDP	Internally Displaced People
ILO	International Labour Organization
IP	Implementing Partner
IPDM	Integrated Pest and Diseases Management
IPSNM	Integrated Plant Soil Nutrient Management
NADRA	National Database and Registration Authority
NGO	Non- Government Organization
NDMA	National Disaster Management Authority
OCHA	Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
OFWM	On-Farm Water Management
PCU	Project Co-ordination Unit
PDMA	Sindh Provincial Disaster Management Authority
PMG	producer marketing group
PSC	Project Steering Committee
RFERP	Pakistan-Revised Floods Emergency Response Plan
SESSI	Sindh Employees Social Security Institution
SIDA	Sindh Irrigation and Drainage Authority
TEVTA	Sindh Technical Education and Vocational Training Authority
UN	United Nations
UNCT	United Nations Country Team
UNTFHS	United Nations Trust Fund for Human Security
USD	US dollar
VAM	Vulnerability Analysis and Mapping unit of the WFP
WDD	Sindh Provincial Women's Development Department
WFP	World Food Programme
WOS	Women Open Schools
WUA	Water Users Association

1. Executive Summary

This report presents the main findings of the mid-term review (MTR) mission on the progress of implementing the project “Livelihood Restoration and Protection and Sustainable Empowerment of Vulnerable Peasant Communities in the Sindh Province” executed by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), International Labour Organization (ILO), and UN Women financed by the United Nations Trust Fund for Human Security (UNTFHS).

The mission visited the project sites on 10-15 November 2014 and held meetings and dialogues with key stakeholders in the districts of Dadu and Mirpurkhas in the province of Sindh.

The MTR mission used the elements of the guidelines for project evaluation, employing the following criteria: (i) relevance and strategic fit, (ii) efficiency, (iii) project effectiveness, (iv) effectiveness of implementation and management arrangement, (v) stakeholder involvement and project ownership, and (vi) sustainability of project actions. Particular attention was paid to the challenges facing project management due to the complex nature of the implementing arrangement of the project. This report concludes with key recommendations and some lessons learned.

Main Findings

- (i) The project has strong relevance to the human security challenges faced by the beneficiaries. While the project’s overall intervention logic remains valid, the complex project design has posed major challenges in implementing the project activities.
- (ii) The project was clearly disadvantaged due to the very late start. Many of the FAO activities were lagging behind while a significant number of activities under the ILO and UN Women components appeared to be relatively on track. Project disbursements were at low levels.
- (iii) Notwithstanding the delay in project implementation, so far, the beneficiaries were generally satisfied with the outputs and most of the project stakeholders consider the project intervention in line with their needs.
- (iv) The delays and the inability of the project to be fully staffed have contributed to the challenges in coordinating project implementation. There have not been enough joint field visits and monitoring organized.
- (v) The project has not yet properly communicated the project concept and human security approach to the stakeholders and information dissemination of project activities was inadequate
- (vi) Each of the three UN agencies has its own monitoring and evaluation system. There is no unified project-wide monitoring and evaluation system.
- (vii) The establishment of the District Coordinating Committee (DCC) and its operation has been a major accomplishment of the project. Stakeholders’ involvement has been enhanced and the Committee provides a unique opportunity to forge strong partnership with government agencies and other stakeholders.

(viii) The sustainability of project actions is variable across the project components according to the distinct methodological approaches, institutional arrangements and strategies employed by the three UN agencies.

Areas for Corrective Actions and Recommendations

- (i) The project will not be able to complete all activities by 31 December 2015. The project should be extended for 6–8 months, at a no-cost basis.
- (ii) A joint workshop should be conducted to modify and revise targets, outputs, and activities, where necessary. Some portions of the logical framework should be revised accordingly. Budget for new activities, such as the Farmer Business School, which are not included in the project document but are deemed important, should be provided.
- (iii) There is a need to establish a joint project-wide monitoring and evaluation system to facilitate the accurate and timely tracking of accomplishments, consolidation of data, and delivery of prescribed progress reports, among other things.
- (iv) To ensure a focus on the human security element of the project, the three UN agencies need to jointly develop and adopt a concrete strategy and checklist, which facilitate reporting of the results achieved on this aspect.
- (v) On the selection of beneficiaries, the project management should jointly develop specific criteria for the respective families who could benefit from various project interventions. The project should look into the necessity of preparing a master list of beneficiaries covered by the project.
- (vi) The project should recruit all the staff and consultants required at the soonest time possible. These include the posts identified in the project document and the additional consultants identified by the mission.
- (vii) Appropriate technical, monitoring, and backstopping expertise from the regional office and headquarters of FAO should be provided.
- (viii) To improve coordination, the three UN agencies should increase the frequency of joint planning, implementation, and reporting exercises and undertake joint field visits. The operation of the DCC should be enhanced and other relevant stakeholders should be involved. The implementing partners should always consult with relevant departments.
- (ix) To address the language problem, the project should engage facilitators who know the language spoken in the villages.
- (x) The project could make the farmer field school (FSS) and/or women open schools (WOS) as the institution in the village that would assist in establishing linkages to access extension services.
- (xi) To assist in eliminating bonded and child labour, the project should undertake a programme on Adult Functional Literacy and the Non-Formal Basic Education, in areas where educational facilities are inaccessible.

- (xii) To help highlight the human security aspect, the project could develop an integrated model on skills development.
- (xiii) The beneficiaries who have undergone skills training should be provided with continuous mentoring and backstopping.
- (xiv) The project should look into the possibility of conducting a pilot and short 3 – 6 months literacy and numeracy programme to enable illiterate beneficiaries to have maximum benefit from project interventions, subject to availability of funds.
- (xv) UN Women should establish facilitation and redressal mechanism to assist women who are home-based workers (HBWs) and registered with social security programme but unable to access these services.
- (xvi) Women belonging to the category of HBWs who want to start business enterprises should be assisted in accessing credit and provided with skills enhancement training and access to markets.
- (xvii) The practice of providing training to one member from each family (male or female) in the FFS or WOS and using this same group for trainings related to gender should be reviewed if found ineffective in gender mainstreaming.
- (xviii) To facilitate the formalization of tenancy agreements, a strategy should be designed to engage both parties and to sensitize and convince them to enter into such agreements.
- (xix) Since, in many instances, the share of the *haris* and tenants is not enough to improve their living conditions, the project should further assist in looking for ways and means to diversify livelihood options.
- (xx) The design of the latrines, stoves, and grain storages should be revised to withstand heavy rains and floods, and to be culturally suitable.
- (xxi) The project should hasten the implementation of the Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) component and a project-specific joint DRR strategy should be developed to integrate the activities of all agencies.
- (xxii) The project should develop a communications plan for implementation.
- (xxiii) The project should form a small in-house group or hire a short-term consultant to develop a plan to ensure the sustainability of project actions. Incorporating participatory approaches in project activities, having capacity-building programmes for government officials and other stakeholders, and involving the DCC in addressing the sustainability issues are initiatives that should be pursued by the project.
- (xxiv) Project management needs critical project support. Recruiting a short-term international consultant could provide such support or if this is not possible, appropriate technical backstopping should be provided by FAO on this aspect.

2. Project Background

In July 2010, monsoon rains caused a significant magnitude of flooding, affecting the entire length of Pakistan. Sindh Province was the most severely affected province with some 970,000 households suffering agricultural losses estimated at US\$2,301.6 million. In August 2011, widespread heavy rains again resulted in devastating floods across Sindh Province, affecting millions of people. Housing and standing crops suffered the most with thousands of hectares of cotton, sugarcane, pulses, rice, and maize crops were severely damaged and productive assets were lost, including poultry, livestock, and feed and seed stocks. For many communities, the 2011 floods have compounded losses from 2010. These losses had a direct negative result on the already tenuous food security and recovery capacity of households.

The project OSRO/PAK/206/UNO seeks to benefit the human security of some 11,800 rural families of 120 targeted villages located in the command areas of the Daulat Pur Minor-Jamrao and Goraki Minor-Mithrao Canal of Mirpur Khas District, and the “tail end” of the command area of the Dadu “Rice Canal” of Dadu District, both in Sindh Province. This area coverage translates into approximately 64,000 *haris* and 22,000 *non-haris* (men, women, boys, and girls) benefiting from the project’s agricultural production and marketing skills and business development, social security, social empowerment, and capacity building. The project duration is from February 2013 to January 2016.

The project is targeting landless farmers and sharecroppers. It has three main objectives that focus on (i) improving the livelihoods and economic security of rural communities by restoring their farm production capacities and off-farm income-generating activities of vulnerable peasant families and well-targeted progressive landlords, (ii) providing access to social security schemes, (iii) improving people’s access to microfinance, (iv) enhancing technical skills of landless persons, and (v) empowering peasant organizations.

The overall goal of the project is “to restore and protect the livelihoods and empower the poor and vulnerable peasants (men, women, boys, and girls) [who are] dependent on feudal and tribal landholding and farming systems and affected by droughts, floods and insecurity”. It is anticipated that this project goal be achieved through the following three objectives and 11 outputs:

(i) To improve the livelihoods and economic security of rural communities through in-kind support to restore and/or protect farm production capacities and off-farm income-generating activities of vulnerable peasant families and well-targeted progressive landlords, which would, in turn, have a positive impact on their resilience to disasters. Among the outputs would be the following:

- Water-efficient good agricultural practices (GAPs) are adopted by 6,300 men and women *hari* farmers in the target communities;
- On-farm capacities and income-generating opportunities created for 1,000 marginalized men and women *hari* farmers;
- Increased access to microfinancing for 500 excluded men and women *hari* farmers; and
- Improved access of 2,000 women home-based workers from peasant families to social security schemes.

(ii) To enhance the skills and knowledge base of men and women peasant farmers, landless people, and unemployed youth through technical support in GAPs, post-harvest management, and vocational skills. Among the outputs would be the following:

- Improved quantity and quality of agricultural production by 3,000 men and women peasant farmers through the sustained practice of water-efficient GAPs, conservation agriculture, and integrated home-stead gardening;
- Improved post-harvest management and product-marketing skills of 1,000 men and women peasant farmers;
- Strengthened technical capacities and skills of 500 landless and unemployed men, women farm labourers, and youth in culturally sensitive occupations by identifying income-generating and employment opportunities, combined with appropriate vocational training; and
- Increased off-farm income-generating opportunities for 100 landless, unemployed, and marginalized men, women, and youth.

(iii) To empower peasant organizations, farmers' organizations, water users associations (WUAs), farmers, women groups, their constituent *hari* members, and others to enhance their natural resource base (land, water, vegetation, etc.) while strengthening their resilience to future shocks. Among the outputs would be the following:

- Improved landholding security of 2,400 men and women peasant farmers and *haris*;
- Enhanced capacity of 120 peasant organizations, two farmers' organizations, and 60 WUAs to manage natural resources and resolve conflicts over land and water use; and
- Strengthened existing community-based disaster risk reduction (DRR) and the introduction of new community-based DRR practices for demonstration and replication.

The project has to work in 120 villages in both districts—Dadu and Mirpur Khas—and that these villages will be identified through baseline survey.

Implementation Arrangements and Main Stakeholders

The FAO is the lead agency responsible for coordinating the implementation of the project, with ILO and UN WOMEN taking the role of executing partners. The project is funded by the UN Trust Fund for Human Security (UNTFHS).

The other project stakeholders are the following: district governments of Mirpur Khas and Dadu; Planning and Development Department of Sindh; Sindh Provincial Department of Agriculture (DoA); Sindh Provincial Department of Irrigation (DoI); Sindh Provincial Department of Labour and Human Resource (LHRD); Sindh Provincial Women's Development Department (WDD); Sindh Technical Education and Vocational Training Authority (TEVTA), Sindh Chamber of Agriculture and Sindh Abadgar Association; Sindh Agricultural and Forestry Workers Coordinating Organization, Sindh Employees Social Security Institution (SESSI); Benazir Income Support Programme (BISP); Sindh Employees Old-Age Benefits Institution (EOBI), peasant organisations, farmers organisations, WUAs, community-based organizations (CBOs); and international and local NGOs.

A Project Steering Committee (PSC) provides overall guidance, coordination, and facilitation to project implementation. It is responsible for overall project oversight and high-level policy guidance and is required to review and approve the annual project work plans and budgets.

The Project Coordination Unit (PCU), which is based in Hyderabad, is responsible for overall coordination, supervision, management, and reporting of project activities and evaluation of project interventions. The PCU comprises consultants employed by the FAO, ILO, and UN Women and supported by technical staff seconded from counterpart agencies and contracted through implementing partners (IPs).

A national senior project coordination specialist, recruited by FAO, heads the PCU and supported by two national project coordination specialists appointed by ILO and UN Women. Project staff includes full-time national consultants in agriculture, water management, agribusiness, training and extension, rural sociology, land management and monitoring and evaluation, adult education, vocational training and microfinance, social security and gender training, and part-time national consultants specializing in soil and water conservation, social development, and gender equity. The PCU is also administratively supported by an administrative and finance specialist, two administrative assistants, a secretary, and three drivers.

The project is a good example of One UN programme in Pakistan where three UN agencies are working together to bring change in the lives of poor women, men, boys, and girls.

3. Mid-Term Review Background

In November 2013, FAO commissioned a mid-term review (MTR) mission to assess the progress of the project against stated outputs as of October 2014, and recommend course corrections. The MTR report will highlight issues and challenges affecting the effective implementation of activities and efficient achievement of outputs; assess their contribution to project outcomes and impact; and recommend whether results obtained thus far warrant an extension of the project.

The review was undertaken at the midpoint of project implementation. It is expected to facilitate and pave the way for improved project delivery for the remaining project duration and in the achievement of expected impact by proposing some amendments and recommendations in project design, implementation strategy and arrangements, and/or institutional linkages, where needed, in order to effectively and sustainably achieve the outcomes of the project. The mission also assisted in finalizing the project's updated outputs at mid-term and the proposed work plan for the remaining period. The terms of reference (TOR) of the MTR is shown in Annex 1.

Constraints of the Review Mission

The work of the review mission was constrained by the following, among other things:

- the inability of the lead technical officer of the project to join the mission when the mission was about to begin,
- the short duration of the review,
- the absence of a more current comprehensive project progress report during the course of the MTR mission's work other than the progress report of 2013,

- the absence of a complete mid-term progress update of the project logical framework during the course of the MTR mission's work,
- the inability of some team members to join some parts of the mission's itinerary, and
- the questionnaires distributed by the mission to key project stakeholders were not filled in and returned/submitted.

Review Methodology

The MTR mission was mainly focused on identifying the key challenges faced by the project and on providing key recommendations on how to address these challenges in order to lay the path for a way forward.

The MTR mission assessed the project according to the following standard criteria: (i) relevance, (ii) efficiency, (iii) project effectiveness, (iv) effectiveness of implementation and management arrangement, (v) stakeholder involvement and ownership, and (vi) sustainability. Once the mission started, a set of key review questions to facilitate the review process was agreed among the mission team. These review questions were supplemented by a set of questions provided by the FAO country office after the end of the mission's field work. The two sets of review questions are shown in Annex 2.

The MTR team undertook desk review of key project documents and conducted a five-day field visit. During the field work, the project management arranged for the MTR team focused group dialogues and meetings with various groups, and interviews with key project stakeholders were undertaken. A structured questionnaire prepared by the MTR team was also administered to key project implementers and partners. The MTR team's itinerary is shown in Annex 3 and the list of persons and organizations met is shown in Annex 4. An aide memoire was submitted by the MTR team on 21 November 2014. The aide memoire, which is shown in Annex 5, presents the mission's preliminary findings and recommendations.

4. Project Progress Against Stated Outputs

Output 1.1 Water-efficient good agricultural practices (GAPs) are adopted by 6,300 men and women *hari* farmers in the target communities through the rehabilitation of farmer-managed watercourses (FMWC) and tube wells and the demonstration and extension of conservation agriculture, on-farm water management (OFWM), integrated plant soil nutrient management (IPSNM) technologies, improved food quality and safety, and decent farm employment.

Progress: As of October 2014, aside from the 500 home-based women *hari* farmers who were provided with integrated homestead gardening packages, no other beneficiaries benefited and adopted GAP. Preparatory activities, however, have been undertaken to enable more beneficiaries to start adopting GAP in 2015. Of the rural communities, 120 have been selected for project intervention while 120 community organisations/village organisations have been established in the two districts of Dadu and Mirpurkhas. The identification and selection of 30 FMWCs and 30 tube wells for rehabilitation are being finalized. Of the WUAs, 30 have been identified and formed in Mirpurkhas. SACAN, a consulting group, has been commissioned to conduct a feasibility study to identify appropriate conservation agriculture schemes and prepare a strategy document for

implementation. The project has been able to organize 20 informal women farmers' groups, which are being assisted in the establishment of homestead village gardening.

Output 1.2 On-farm capacities and income-generating opportunities created for 1,000 marginalized men and women *hari* farmers through improvements in horticulture, poultry, dairy and meat production, processing, and marketing.

Progress: Request for proposals has been sent to relevant consulting firms that will carry out the needs assessment and beneficiary listing. Under this project output, 40 producer marketing groups (PMGs) will be formed and will be made operational. The project management, however, decided to first undertake the FFS/WOS and then transform the FFS/WOS into farmer business schools (FBS). PMGs would then be formed out of the FBS. While the strategy appears to be sound in terms of helping ensure that the business that will eventually be developed by the farmers would succeed, this component of the project would go beyond 2015.

Output 1.3 Increased access to micro financing for 500 excluded men and women *hari* farmers through the establishment of informal group-based revolving funds, savings, and loan schemes.

Progress: Target beneficiaries have been identified and all FFS/WOS are acting as informal savings and credit groups. Around 100 beneficiaries have received loans and an innovative microfinance scheme is being designed for *haris* and peasants.

Output 1.4 Improved access of 2,000 women HBWs from peasant families to social security schemes, including National Database and Registration Authority (NADRA) identification cards, Benazir Income Support Program (BISP), etc.

Progress: Baseline survey has been done and the 2,000 women HBWs have been identified. So far, a total of 1,007 women HBWs have been organized into 45 groups. A total of 619 Computerized National Identity Cards (CNIC) had been provided to them as of October 2014. In Mirpurkhas, 250 women HBWs have been registered with the Pakistan Bait-ul-mal social security scheme. The registration of an additional 250 women HBWs with Zakat and Ushr social security schemes are under process. In Dadu, 70 women HBWs have been registered with the BISP social security scheme and 60 more cases are under process. The project has also conducted 45 sessions to educate these HBWs on social security programmes, and on the process of establishing linkages with concerned organizations and departments. Several meetings and coordinative initiatives have been conducted with the Department of Labour, NADRA, Zakat and Ushr Department, BISP, and Bait-ul-mal Department to facilitate the processing and registration of women HBWs. A policy advocacy workshop was also conducted to sensitize policy makers for the adoption of a policy for HBWs.

Output 2.1 Improved quantity and quality of agricultural production for 3,000 men and women peasant farmers through the sustained practice of water-efficient GAPs, conservation agriculture, and integrated homestead gardening systems.

Progress: The listing and identification of beneficiaries, as well as needs assessments, have been conducted among men and women peasant farmers willing to test and demonstrate new and improved crop production technologies through FFS. Some 26 Department of Agriculture (DoA) staff, FFS and WOS facilitators, social mobilisers, government officials, including subject matter specialists were already trained on new and improved GAPs,

adaptive research, and participatory extension approaches. A total of 125 facilitators/specialists are to be covered by the project. So far, a total of 1,5000 men and women peasant farmers have received agricultural inputs after undergoing FFS/WOS. Of the FFS/WOS, 60 have been conducted so far out of 120 targeted for project implementation.

Output 2.2 Improved post-harvest management and produce marketing skills for 1,000 men and women peasant farmers, as well as their progressive landlords, respective middlemen, and other buyers.

Progress: No substantial progress as of October 2014.

Output 2.3 Strengthen the technical capacities and skills of 500 landless and unemployed men, women, farm labourers, and youth in culturally sensitive occupations by identifying income-generating and employment opportunities, combined with appropriate vocational training.

Progress: A training of trainers on flexible training approaches was organized and completed by ILO and the ILO International Training Center. Target unemployed beneficiaries have been identified and their vocational training needs assessed. Thirty-one vocational training courses in 20 vocational trades have been planned, designed, and conducted. A total of 662 beneficiaries have been trained in 20 vocational trades and almost all trainees have adopted their new skills to generate income. These 662 trainees received toolkits for their respective vocational trades.

Output 2.4 Increased off-farm income-generating opportunities for 100 landless, unemployed, and marginalized men, women, and youth and develop linkages required for small business development.

Progress: The identification of trainees for enterprise development and assessment of further skills required have not yet been completed; both activities are in progress. Related to these, a workshop on Green Jobs and Green Entrepreneurship Start Your Green Business (SYGB) was organized by the project. A programme for follow-up coaching and post-training support is being developed.

Output 3.1 Improved landholding security for 2,400 men and women peasant farmers and *haris* through the preparation of mutually agreeable landholding maps, and increased transparency in the implementation of tenancy agreements between landlords and sharecroppers/tenant farmers.

Progress: No progress can be reported as of October 2014, except for the 60 land tenancy agreements developed by the UN WOMEN for women peasants, which would be revised and improved due to some observed deficiencies.

Output 3.2 Enhanced capacity of 120 peasant organizations, two farmers' organizations, and 60 WUAs to manage natural resources and resolve conflicts over land and water use.

Progress: No substantial progress on these outputs, as of October 2014, except for the 43 on-site community-based gender mainstreaming training sessions in 50 villages conducted by the UN WOMEN for 653 landless women farmers on gender equality, sexual gender-based violence, and women's rights. A gender-responsive training manual has also been developed.

Output 3.3 Strengthened existing community-based disaster risk reduction (DRR) and the introduction of new community-based DRR practices for demonstration and replication in same 120 target communities as coping mechanisms against future disasters and human insecurity—as an integral part of the agricultural production, vocational training, and social security packages provided under Objectives 1 and 2, and benefiting an additional 3,000 non-*hari* farm families.

Progress: Assessment of existing community and household-based DDR practices covering thematic areas related to all three UN agencies is ongoing. ILO conducted integrated training on skills and DDR in three pilot villages in Mirpurkhas. The integration of basic DRR practices within all vocational training courses in target districts is also ongoing. All other planned activities under this component have not yet been undertaken as of October 2014. The table on the progress/achievement against outputs for the period February 2013–November 2014 prepared by the project is shown in Annex 6.

5. Main Findings

5.1 Relevance and Strategic Fit

The project has a strong relevance and strategic fit with the beneficiaries' requirements and with Pakistan's national and subnational priorities. It is directly contributing to the One UN Programme II (2013–2017) and to Pakistan's New Framework for Economic Growth.

The project is a good example of One UN Programme project and represents key elements of four priority areas: (i) inclusive economic growth through the development of sustainable livelihoods; (ii) food and nutrition security for the most vulnerable groups; (iii) increased national resilience to disasters, crises, and external shocks; and (iv) ensuring gender equality and social justice. The project is in line and complements FAO's five strategic objectives, ILO's four strategic objectives, and the UN Women's strategic plan (2014–2017).

The issues that are being addressed and the three project objectives are interrelated, interlinked, and complementary. The integration of the work of the three UN agencies in the priority issues is a major challenge due to the complexity of the project design. While the key interventions to be undertaken by various partners are quite specific, the activities are broad enough to accommodate new interventions—when the need arises during project implementation. For example, in order to strengthen the Producers Marketing Group, it was decided by the project management to conduct FBS after the FFS—instead of organizing the PMG right after the FFS as spelled out in the project document.

The project's human security approach offers solid possibilities to address the complex needs and demands of the beneficiaries. Given the enormous challenges faced by the already impoverished people in the Sindh province, the 2010 and 2011 floods further exacerbated the problems and vulnerabilities of the rural families. In the two districts, 79 percent of the farmers share crops under leasing, tenants, or sharecropper agreements. These agreements are mostly verbal, and lack clear and legally enforceable tenure, which perpetuates the deeply entrenched poverty of tenants. By emphasizing on the protection of individuals, the human security approach empowers the insecure *hari* farmers and their communities, provides them with the resources to mitigate some of the threats caused by the current situation, and develops their preparedness for future natural disasters.

The project document indicates some broad operating principles to implement the project and provides a list of outputs and activities. The project has taken into consideration these guiding principles in implementing the activities and has developed a detailed project implementation plan and annual work plan. These plans outline the activities and explain the implementation approaches that are being adopted.

The project coincided propitiously with the time when the Provincial Government of Sindh was in the process of provincializing labour laws as a result of the 18th Constitutional Amendment. The timing was right when the project raised the issue of the exclusion of 'agricultural workers' from labour laws; subsequently the Government of Sindh decided to extend labour laws to the 'agricultural and fishery workers' in the province under the Sindh Industrial Relations Act 2013. With this new legislative development, the agricultural workers can now form their unions, undertake collective bargaining, and demand for better working conditions. This law has provided new grounds for a decent work environment and the protection of agricultural workers including *haris* and farmers.

The project's logical framework and many of the project activities and indicators as designed in the project document have not been revised or enhanced. For components implemented by the project utilising implementing partners (IPs), additional and more specific indicators were developed. As an example, for UN Women, each implementing partner has developed their own logical framework, in consultation with UN Women matrix for assessing the progress against set objectives. The UN Women project and the programme team is responsible for conducting programmatic and financial monitoring of implementing partners. Usually, data is collected during monitoring visits and achievements are compared with targets and indicators as prescribed in logical framework. Results are shared with partner UN agencies and other IPs. The IPs are technically facilitated to redefine their strategies if progress is not up to the mark. Progress is also shared with the DCC members to ensure ownership and involvement of concerned stakeholders. The IPs are also developing a comprehensive database of project right holders/beneficiaries.

While the project's expected outcomes and impact, objectives, outputs, activities, and inputs are clearly linked with each other, having an exact count of the total number of direct beneficiaries covered has been a major challenge because one *hari* household is benefiting from more than one intervention—given the integrated, holistic, and demand-driven nature of the project.

As designed, the project would directly benefit the human security of 11,800 rural farm families of the 120 target villages located in the two districts, translating into 64,000 *haris* and 22,000 non-*haris* (men, women, boys, and girls). It was observed that during project implementation, an even larger number of beneficiaries are benefiting from more than one intervention, as previously anticipated. It is important that the project devise a system, which should be uniformly used by the three UN agencies to accurately count the number of beneficiaries since, in many instances, the three UN agencies are tasked separately to implement specific components of the project.

Notwithstanding the abovementioned concerns, the project's overall intervention logic remains valid and relevant.

5.2 Efficiency

The project suffered a setback due to a very late start. The project was scheduled to start in February 2013 but the FAO project coordinator was able to join the project only in June 2013. By the end of December 2013, only four of the FAO key staff were on board. By June 2014, two additional specialists were added. However, in July/August 2014, the project coordinator, together with two specialists, left the project. This has created a negative impact on project operations. The current project coordinator joined the project in the middle of August 2014.

It was brought to the attention of the MRT team that the late start of the project was due to the following reasons, among others: (i) difficulty in finding national consultants with appropriate expertise considering the relatively low level of compensation offered by the project compared to the rates offered by other foreign-assisted projects; (ii) many activities could only be started after the conduct of the baseline survey; and (iii) it took some time to put in place the PSC and the DCC.

As discussed in section 4 above, while many of the ILO and UN Women activities appear to be relatively on track, a significant number of project activities have lagged behind. The project cannot be characterized as having been efficient in the use of resources, rather it has low physical and financial accomplishment.

Two of the principal constraints to the achievement of greater efficiency have been the delay in hiring some key project staff and consultants and the absence of technical backstopping support. Under the FAO component, except for the component on FFS, almost all of the project activities were delayed and have lagged behind. For example, the land tenure and management component have not yet started. Specialists under this component have not yet been recruited. Timely request for and the provision of technical backstopping from FAO headquarters and the regional office would have accelerated project implementation and ensured that the project management and operation, activities, and technical inputs would have been of higher technical standards.

Project disbursements are low. Based on the October 2014 financial progress report shared with the MTR team, the overall delivery rate is 50 percent, with the UN Women having the highest at 56 percent, followed by ILO at 52 percent, and FAO at 48 percent. The consolidated financial summary report is shown in Annex 7.

5.3 Effectiveness

While a number of FAO activities were experiencing delays, the ILO and UN Women components appeared to be relatively well on track in achieving the desired outputs in terms of quantity. The UN Women has organized a total of 1,007 women HBWs into groups, out of 2,000 targeted as of mid-term. Additionally, of the total target of 1,000, some 619 women HBWs have been provided with CNICs. Awareness sessions on social security are ongoing and the formalization of tenancy agreements are also underway. On the social security component, the local government schemes do not seem to have the capacity to provide coverage to all the selected right holders. Hence, the UN Women is exploring alternate options and linking the right holders with private sector schemes. According to the baseline survey report, selected community women and men spend a considerable part of their meagre resources on health. The project is linking a select number of women and their families with group health insurance scheme on a pilot basis.

For its part, the ILO has achieved the number of beneficiaries to be provided with skills and technical capacities, as targeted for the mid-term. These beneficiaries benefited from the completion of the training of TEVTA trainers, and from the conduct of 31 vocational courses, among other activities. The MTR mission provided an opportunity to identify gaps in quality. In view of the various ongoing collaborative interventions, the mission suggests the development of an integrated model of skills development that combines (i) functional literacy, (ii) entrepreneurship, (iii) environment conservation, (iv) occupational safety and health, (v) rights as workers, and (vi) gender mainstreaming. This model should be shared with the relevant training authorities for wider replication.

It is important to note that during the field visits and in the meetings and discussions with the direct beneficiaries arranged by the project management, the MTR team found that the beneficiaries were generally satisfied with the outputs of the three UN agencies and considered the project intervention to be in line with their needs.

Before the project, both target districts had been badly affected by the 2010 Indus River flood and the widespread heavy rains in 2011 that also resulted in flood. These disasters have devastated housing, standing crops, and productive assets, including poultry, livestock, feed and seed stocks, and fishing gear. The negative impacts of the disasters have been felt more by the poorer and marginalized women and children. So far, the project outputs are starting to directly contribute to the reduction in food insecurity and in increased resilience to future shocks.

The FFS/WOS, which are well appreciated by all the stakeholders, appear to be a good vehicle in which to incorporate the other components of the project, including gender and nutrition. These are also good vehicles for establishing the foundation for good agricultural practices for those participants willing to join the PMOs, which are targeted to be formed after the conduct of FBS. In all sites visited, the beneficiaries expressed very positive impressions on what they have learned in the FFS/WOS. The major learnings that were often cited by the beneficiaries were on the use of bio-pesticides, rodent control, and rice cultivation on ridges, among other practical lessons. Many beneficiaries expressed the need to be further assisted in applying, sustaining, and replicating these technologies.

The UN Women is specifically working on gender mainstreaming and social security for women *haris* and women HBWs to improve the human security aspect of these disaster-affected population. The UN Women has been integrating gender within FFS/WOS and in ILO's off-farm trainings. Simultaneously, the UN Women—while engaging women HBWs and female tenants—has given preference to households with female heads, widows, and excluded women to benefit from project interventions. For this very purpose, IPs of the UN WOMEN conducted baseline studies in each district to identify relevant rights holders against set selection criteria. The UN Women is also promoting the women's empowerment agenda by ensuring women's participation at each level. The baseline survey conducted earlier and baseline studies organized by project implementing partners validated the project objectives and highlighted women's interests and needs to be synchronized with the proposed interventions.

The UN Women has already engaged the Strengthening Participatory Organization to implement DRR-related activities. This IP will engage local community members to establish "Village Disaster Management Plans". These plans will be gender-sensitive and would ultimately be reflected in the "District Disaster Management Plan". The UN Women has set a

criteria to ensure at least 50 percent women representation in establishing the village-level “Disaster Management Committees”. Women are also equally represented and included in each training and awareness programme.

Women HBWs are the permanent members of the DCC. This is considered as a first step to involving them in decision making at higher-level forums. They are already contributing in decision making at village level through various platforms established under the respective project components. These are village disaster management committees, women HBW groups, FFS, and WOS. The UN Women has also formulated a strategy to formalize tenancy agreements that is a challenging part of the project. IPs have conducted various meetings to convince both farmers and landholders to formalize their tenancy agreements. The IPs have made successful advancement on this front as around 60 land tenancy agreements have been developed in District Dadu. However, in order to completely align them with the “Sindh Land Tenancy Act 1950”, further deliberations are under process. Moreover, meetings with the Members of the Provincial Assembly are conducted to seek their support and build pressure on the district government to maintain farmers’ record in revenue record book.

The UN Women has also developed linkages through the registration of women HBWs with various social security schemes, including the BISP, Pakistan Bait-ul-mal, and Zakat & Ushr Department. All three programmes are run by the Government of Pakistan. Notwithstanding the delays in some components, the outputs, so far, are consistent and are already directly contributing to the achievement of project objectives.

5.4 Implementation and Management Arrangements

The project management arrangement followed the structure prescribed in the project design with the FAO as the lead UN organization responsible for coordinating implementation, with ILO and the UN Women taking the role as executing partners.

The full establishment of the PCU, however, was delayed as the FAO project coordinator joined the project only in June 2013. As discussed in section 5.2, a significant number of key project officers have not been put on board. Moreover, in July/August 2014, the project coordinator, together with two specialists left the project, which created a negative impact on project operations.

The current project coordinator joined the project only in mid-August 2014, just about two months before the MTR mission. It was brought to the attention of the MTR team that the previous project coordinator did not satisfactorily perform his duties and responsibilities.

The establishment of the Project Steering Committee (PSC) was also delayed. The PSC was established in 30 December 2013, almost a year after the project was supposed to start and the first PSC meeting was held only in April 2014.

These delays and the inability of project to be fully staffed have contributed to the failure to fully communicate the project concept and human security approach to many stakeholders. Also, the results of the baseline study and findings have not yet been adequately shared with implementing partners. The result of the baseline study is critical since there are new and more specific information that would have bearing in the planning and implementation of project activities. It was also observed that not enough joint field monitoring and field

visits were organized, project information dissemination have not been adequate, and the project and its activities have not been properly publicized.

To the project's credit, all three partner UN organizations and staff were fully aware that they are working under ONE Programme with equal partnership and with various counterparts, including the Sindh Provincial Department of Agriculture, Sindh Provincial Department of Labour, Sindh Social Welfare and Women's Development Department, other government line departments, the civil society, and local communities.

A three-tiered coordination mechanism with the government and other stakeholders has now been put in place that includes the following:

- (i) The PSC, which comprised the relevant government departments and other stakeholders. The committee is chaired by the Additional Chief Secretary of the Planning and Development Department; it has been meeting at regular intervals.
- (ii) The DCCs, which have been established in Mirpur Khas and Dadu (one each) and where all district-based government line departments, along with project partners, participate and share their project interventions.
- (iii) The PCU, through which the three UN agencies coordinate the work with relevant government departments, IPs, and other stakeholders. To support the PCU, Furthermore, two field offices have been established in both districts of Dadu and Mirpurkhas, manned by project facilitators and social mobilisers.

The project teams from the three UN agencies are situated in the PCU in Hyderabad. Many of the interventions are regularly discussed and implemented in a collaborative manner. While a significant number of interventions such as baseline survey, inception workshop, steering committee meetings, and coordination meetings, are jointly planned and implemented by the three partner agencies, coordination remains to be a major problem area. At field level, the project has been able to collaborate in the implementation of interrelated activities such as FFSs, WOS, access to water, skills training, microfinance interventions, and DRR technologies. However, as more and more activities are to be implemented in 2015 and beyond, coordination would pose an even major challenge. The three UN agencies need to further strengthen coordination and collaboration by conducting more frequent joint planning, programming, funding, implementation, and information and advocacy activities.

It is clear to the MRT team that one of the most important aspects that needs support is in project management. The project is complex in terms of its implementation strategy and partnership approach. It is multi-disciplinary and has many interrelated components and activities and the challenge to coordinate the work of three UN agencies is a daunting task.

Monitoring and Reporting Mechanism

The project has to improve its monitoring and evaluation system and come up with enhanced results-based indicators against which the progress of the project interventions would be measured, along with their corresponding means of verification. The project has failed to prepare and develop a monitoring, reporting, and evaluation system, which would include a human security impact assessment, as indicated in the project design.

The project has not prepared semi-annual progress reports, as required in the project document. Related to this, FAO, ILO, UN Women, the Government of Pakistan and the Provincial Government of Sindh have not jointly reviewed the project every six months, which was specifically required in the project document.

The need to come up with a joint project-wide monitoring and evaluation system is essential. During the MTR mission, it was observed that each of the UN agencies had its own monitoring and evaluation system. For example, the UN Women has developed a project-based monitoring and evaluation framework and annual work plan. Monitoring visits by the UN Women to the indigenous peoples' project interventions is done quarterly. There is continuous coordination between the UN Women and IPs through phone and emails and the UN Women's project and programme team provides technical inputs to project IPs on all aspects of project implementation. IPs share their progress fortnightly against their targets and also share narrative reports on a monthly basis. The quarterly work plans of the IPs are developed as well. The UN Women prepares internal project progress report on a quarterly basis. This monitoring, reporting, and evaluation system is not uniform among the three agencies.

Although each partner agency should retain some unique elements in their own system, there is a need to develop a joint monitoring and evaluation framework and semi-annual report preparation and sharing process.

Support Provided by the Respective Country Offices

The three UN country offices provide technical, administrative, and financial support to the project. It was reported to the MTR team that weekly meetings via Skype are held between the country office's relevant team and the project staff to discuss project issues and strategies. Coordination is maintained between the respective Country Office and the project team through phone and emails on technical, administrative, and financial aspects to ensure quality assurance and due diligence. Monthly project meetings were organized with the PCU staff to discuss the project's progress and challenges. The MTR team was informed that the project staff also participates in team meetings at the Country Office fortnightly through Skype. The MTR team recommends that support from the country offices should be further enhanced through joint periodic meetings at the PCU, as well as joint field visits among the three UN agencies.

5.5 Stakeholder Involvement and Project Ownership

At the provincial level, the PSC is chaired by the Additional Chief Secretary of the Planning and Development Department, with the secretaries of all concerned departments as members. At the district level, the DCC is chaired by the Deputy Commissioners of the respective district, and all the relevant governments departments, IPs of all UN agencies, and project right holders as members. The political leaders and members of the Provincial Assembly from both districts are involved in the project activities. The members of the DCC and PSC are also involved in project activities. All these committees were established to ensure the government's involvement and commitment to the project.

The DCC reviews the project's progress, provides relevant technical assistance, and bridges the gap between the project beneficiaries and duty bearers. The platform is found to be effective as the Deputy Commissioners have taken actions on the issues and problems raised before the forum. The project is assisting the DCC in exploring further options to develop

linkages with other concerned stakeholders. One of the efforts taken through this forum is to register women right holders/beneficiaries with the Health Department under the Sindh government's Hepatitis Control Programme, which is free of cost. Due to lack of information, however, people could not access these services earlier. The project's IPs are already working on this component. In addition to this, under the community-based DRR component, around 3,000 male and female farmers will have increased understanding of disaster risk reduction and management.

While the project is also working with employers and trade unions, there is a need to assist them in reconciling their different agendas. The project is also in the process of engaging media representatives in both districts. In line with this, the project needs a coherent and a professionally designed communication strategy if the impact is to be maximised and taken to provincial and national levels.

Many of the stakeholders—women, men, government officials, partner UN agencies, and civil society organizations—are involved in almost all aspects of the project. The MTR team, however, received mixed reactions on the extent and quality of coordination with the government. A significant number of government officials met by the mission expressed appreciation on the close coordination and regular sharing of information undertaken by the project teams at district and provincial levels. However, during one of the meetings, the need to further enhance coordination was raised by some members of the DCC. Some of the members of the DCC expressed their interest to be shown actual results of the project through study visits or field missions. This MTR team supports this proposal.

During the mission, the MTR team was able to attend two separate meetings of the DCC in the two districts. There was wide participation during the meetings and both meetings were well attended.

The MTR team believes that the DCC provides a unique opportunity for the project to forge strong and lasting partnership with locally based government agencies and officials involved in project activities. The support of these government agencies to the beneficiaries is critical not only during the project duration but more importantly when the project ends. Strengthening the DCC would enable it to more effectively bring together key development-oriented institutions to provide support to the project beneficiaries, in an integrated and complementary manner. The active participation of these government agencies in project activities would go a long way in sustaining project initiatives.

The project employs the rights-based approach and many right holders met by the MTR team expressed a strong sense of ownership of the project activities. At the village level, the targeted right holders are part of small groups and are participating in project interventions; they are also represented in the DCCs. It has been observed that the participation of women is effective at the community level. However, active participation at the decision making, i.e., DCC level, needs to be improved. The right holders acknowledged the importance of the project interventions and how these brought change in their lives at various levels during the MTR team field visits.

5.6 Sustainability of Project Actions

The sustainability of project actions is varied across the project components, according to the distinct methodological approaches, institutional arrangements, and strategies

employed. The sustainability factor has been mentioned by the project team and a significant number of stakeholders as an important concern that needs special attention.

The FFS is recognized as one of FAO's leading approaches and methodologies for agricultural extension. There has been very positive feedback on FFS received from beneficiaries and other project stakeholders in all project sites visited by the MTR team. Increasing the number of FFS master trainers and facilitators and more joint planning, implementation, and information and advocacy with the relevant departments would further sustain the FFS results.

For example, the UN Women and its IPs have been working on various components to take care of the long-term development needs of the women HBWs. The UN Women, through its women's economic empowerment programme, has engaged the provincial Department of Labour and Human Resource (LHRD) of Sindh to draft the policy and act for HBWs. Subsequently, the policy will be adopted by the provincial government. The policy will support the recognition of HBWs as formal workers and, therefore, improve their access to formal social protection schemes. The women HBWs organized by the project will be registered with the LHRD. In both cases, HBWs will be eligible to claim minimum social protection services.

The project is facilitating women HBWs to obtain CNICs. This will make them eligible to apply for government social security services. This will also register them as voters and they will be eligible to exercise their right to vote and even contest in the elections. These initiatives are contributing to the long-term development and sustainability of the project interventions.

The FAO and UN WOMEN should develop a system to maintain the record of land tenancy agreements of both men and women farmers to ensure their social and economic protection. The project is making efforts to enhance the farmers' capacity by helping formalize and improve on the tenancy agreements even beyond project life.

The project has engaged local NGOs as IPs to directly work with selected community women, men, boys, and girls. The project is simultaneously enhancing the capacity of its IPs to continue their interaction with these community groups on a long-term basis.

There is a perceived need to scale up some project activities in the same districts or in other parts of the Sindh Province. According to informal estimates provided by the District Government, there are around 50,000 farmers in District Mirpurkhas alone. Unfortunately, sex/gender-disaggregated information are not available.

The project is supporting women and men farmers to acquire land tenancy agreements on a pilot basis. The initial initiatives undertaken by the UN Women should be reviewed and enhanced and, if found functional and effective, could be replicated in other parts of the province and country. It took some time to start this project intervention, and it will take time to be able to draw lessons, identify successful models, and assess their impact on the beneficiaries and their communities. However, the trends are quite encouraging and change in women and men's behaviours and attitudes is visible at various levels. The project is optimistic that the models emerging under that could provide lessons and be replicated in the relevant project areas, considering the culture, and other relevant factors. Initial experiences here should be reviewed and the agreements improved and enhanced by involving other key government agencies working on land issues, e.g., the Revenue Department. The enforceability of the agreements should also be seriously looked into. The

FAO and UN Women should closely coordinate the implementation of this project activity especially when the project undertakes the participatory mapping activity in 2015. These activities are mutually reinforcing and interrelated.

Gender-awareness sessions are bringing out some good results at the household level in terms of changing people's perceptions toward women's role in decision making, and improving their access to health facilities. This needs to be capitalized on and more in-depth sessions need to be conducted in the communities to enable women to enjoy their rights.

The UN Women's effort to integrate its other programme interventions into this project should be pursued further to make it more holistic. An example is in their increasing awareness on the issue of violence against women and linking this with the global campaign to engage men and boys in this issue. Similarly linking at the provincial level the project interventions with ongoing advocacy efforts for the adoption of HBWs' policy and law is enabling the targeted women HBWs to voice out their concerns at the highest forums. Linkage of women HBWs with the associations/unions, such as HBWWF, can also be taken as a good example that would help improve project sustainability.

In terms of institutional sustainability, many of the stakeholders are acquiring significant expertise, which can help ensure multiplier effects to other beneficiaries, villages, and future projects. Managerial and technical expertise that will be acquired during project implementation could help ensure the sustainability of project results. These include on-the-job trainings by government officials, managers, subject matter specialists, master trainers and extension workers from the provincial government line agencies and community-based mobilisers, facilitators and technicians, civil society actors, and the project staff who would remain in the district.

The establishment of DCC in the two districts can be considered an important output emerging from the project interventions, which could assist the project achieve long-term impacts. It has great potential in facilitating project sustainability. This early, the DCC has shown improvement in coordination between the departments at the district, as well as at the provincial level (some DCC members are also represented at the project steering committee level). Hence, the three UN agencies should exert extra effort to improve the effectiveness of the DCC. The proposed work plan for 2015 prepared by the three UN agencies is shown in Annex 8.

5.7 Areas for Corrective Actions

The following problem areas that would require corrective actions include the following:

- (i) The project will not be able to complete all activities by 31 December 2015. Most of the activity level implementation started only after the baseline study in November 2013, some activities will only start in 2015, and a number of activities will spill over to 2016.
- (ii) The outputs and activities spelled out in the project document have not been modified or revised to incorporate the findings of the baseline study, the new activities introduced by the project, and the changes necessary to improve project implementation.
- (iii) The three UN agencies have their own monitoring and evaluation systems but without a unified project-wide system. This has negatively affected project operations and the

project has difficulty tracking accomplishments against targets, consolidating the data, and having a timely delivery of prescribed progress reports.

- (iv) The project has not adopted a specific mechanism to ensure the human security of the beneficiaries.
- (v) The three UN agencies are selecting beneficiaries from the same households, which will ultimately affect the overall number of beneficiaries. The project's aim to benefit 11,800 rural families, translating into 64,000 *haris* and 22,000 non-*haris*, would be difficult to attain.
- (vi) The project has not been able to recruit all the staff and consultants needed to implement project activities. This has resulted in underachievement in some project components.
- (vii) It was reported that no technical, monitoring, and backstopping expertise from FAO, in the regional office and headquarters, have been requested and mobilised to provide support and ensure that project management and operation, activities, and technical inputs are of high technical standards.
- (viii) Coordination is a major concern that needs to be enhanced among the three UN agencies, as well as within the DCC and with provincial and district stakeholders. There is also inadequate consultation by the IPs with relevant government agencies in a number of their project activities.
- (ix) Three main languages—Sindhi, Balochi, and Marvari—are spoken in the project sites. This has posed a major obstacle as beneficiaries, especially women, are unable to communicate in any other language other than their mother tongues.
- (x) There is a need to further enhance the potential and ensure the sustainability of the FFS/WOS.
- (xi) There is a need to undertake interventions for the elimination of bonded and child labour. Many landlords take undue advantage of the illiteracy of *haris* and engage them in work under debt bondage. Similarly, due to inaccessibility of educational institutions, children are compelled to work in agricultural farms.
- (xii) There is a need for an integrated model on skills development to highlight the human security aspect of the project.
- (xiii) The project should provide additional post-training support to ensure skills adoption in terms of employment and enterprise development.
- (xiv) A large number of beneficiaries, especially women, are illiterate and this is a major hindrance in bringing them in to participate in some project activities and into the mainstream development.
- (xv) Some women HBWs who have already been registered with the social security programme could not access these services.

- (xvi) Several women HBWs interested in initiating business enterprises lack capital, relevant skills, and mobility issues.
- (xvii) The project's practice of providing training to one member from each family (male or female) in the FFS or WOS, and that this same group is used for trainings on gender does not fully cater to women's issues and the expected change of behaviour may not be visible. This practice of not including the male counterparts (family members) of the WOS member and female counterparts of the FFS member appears not effective.
- (xviii) There is a perceived resistance from some landholders to formalize tenancy agreements.
- (xix) In many cases, ensuring an equitable sharing of produce between landowners and tenants is not enough to substantially improve the economic condition of tenants. Most of the tenants interviewed by the MTR team, including those who expressed satisfaction about the sharing arrangements, are saying that their share is not enough to meet their households need.
- (xx) The project is building structural mitigation measures for DRR that includes construction of latrines, stoves, and grain storages. These are mud constructions that could be badly affected by heavy rains and floods.
- (xxi) The DRR component needs to be implemented expeditiously and its linkage with existing local development initiatives needs to be established.
- (xxii) The project does not have a communication strategy and project publications and information materials for dissemination are inadequate. The media has not been properly engaged and the project has limited visibility.
- (xxiii) Line agencies lack capacity, both technical and financial, to sustain, replicate, or scale up project activities.
- (xxiv) There is an urgent need to provide support to project management. The project is complex in terms of its implementation arrangement, strategy, and partnership approach. It is multidisciplinary and has many interrelated components and activities. The challenge to coordinate the work of the three UN agencies appears to be a daunting task.

6. Recommendations

Based on the areas for corrective action earlier identified, the MTR team recommends the following:

- (i) Project implementation was delayed by at least 8 months, hence, there is a need to extend the duration of the project for 6–8 months, on a no-cost basis, to complete all project interventions. The additional time will enable the project to effectively implement, document, and come up with good lessons and models and provide sustainability features for the project initiatives. The proposed work plan for 2015 prepared by the project (shown in Annex 8) reflects the need for an extension to complete project activities.

- (ii) The project should conduct a workshop to review the findings of the baseline study and subsequently modify and revise targets, outputs, and activities where necessary. Some portions of the project's logical framework need revision and possible changes in implementation modalities need to be looked into. Also, budget for new activities not included in the project document, such as FBS, should be provided.
- (iii) The three UN agencies should establish a joint project-wide monitoring and evaluation system to facilitate accurate and timely tracking of accomplishments, consolidation of data, and delivery of prescribed progress reports, among other things. More results-based indicators should be developed. The system should also take into account whatever revisions are made as a result of the review of the findings in the baseline study, including possible changes in outputs and activities. It is also recommended that more frequent project updates are provided to FAO regional office and headquarters.
- (iv) The three UN agencies need to jointly develop and adopt a concrete strategy and checklist to ensure a focus on the human security element of the project, and to be able to report on the results achieved.
- (v) The project should develop specific criteria to select one beneficiary from each of the family by all project interventions. A master list of beneficiaries should be prepared showing the type of assistance provided to a particular beneficiary. Tracking the number periodically would provide project management with accurate and reliable information, which can be used for identifying problems and bottlenecks, planning future actions, and making reliable projection to meet target outputs and objectives.
- (vi) The project should recruit all the staff and consultants required at the soonest time possible. These are the national specialists on land management, soil and water conservation and rural sociology, and also international posts for participatory mapping, training and extension, and soil and water conservation. The MTR team is divided on whether the service of a rural sociologist is needed or to convert the post to a specialization that is of importance. The need for a short-term international consultant on project management is recommended. Also, a short-term international consultant for land tenure and management is of critical importance. This consultant should also provide guidance to the work of the participatory mapping consultant, the outputs of which have implications to other outputs and activities of the other components of the project. The need to recruit a rural sociologist; the international posts for training and extension, and water conservation; and the corresponding number of work months need to be weighed by the project management as against obtaining technical backstopping from the regional and headquarter offices.
- (vii) Technical officers from regional and headquarter offices of FAO should provide technical, monitoring, and backstopping expertise. The project needs backstopping on monitoring and evaluation, soil and water management, participatory mapping, and project management and operation, among other expertise that are required. The project management should identify backstopping requirement and its timing and schedule.
- (viii) To improve coordination, the three UN agencies should increase the frequency of joint planning and reporting exercises, and undertake joint field visits. The three agencies should also undertake systematic and micro-level detailed information-sharing

to ensure mutually reinforcing initiatives and avoid duplication of activities. In the DCC, efforts should be made to hold regular and frequent meetings, ensure the active participation of members, and follow up the agreed upon courses of action. The project should improve communication on field visits and other project activities and encourage members to join such activities. To address the problem of frequent changes in membership, proper briefing should be done by the outgoing officer to the successor by including that task in the TOR or operating guide. All irrigation-related bodies and the Revenue Department should be involved in the DCC as their mandates and functions are relevant in the activities of the project. The IPs should always consult with relevant government agencies in planning, operation, and monitoring of project activities. Proper synchronization with their plans, programmes, priorities, and concerns should be undertaken to obtain support, avoid duplication, explore complementation, and ensure the sustainability of activities.

- (ix) To address the language problem, the project should engage facilitators who know the language spoken in the villages and require the IPs to utilise staff who knows the required language.
- (x) The project should make the FSS/WOS as the institution in the village that would establish linkages to access extension services. To facilitate the transformation of the FFS to FBS and then to PMG, the FAO and ILO should collaborate in using the relevant tools already developed, including the 'Know-About-Business' tool of the ILO.
- (xi) To assist in the elimination of bonded and child labour, the project should undertake the programme on Adult Functional Literacy and the Non-Formal Basic Education where educational facilities are inaccessible. Raising the awareness on the consequences of bonded labour and child labour and the deprivation of rights are also recommended.
- (xii) To help highlight the human security aspect, the project could develop an integrated model on skills development, which combines (a) functional literacy, (b) entrepreneurship, (c) environment conservation, (d) occupational safety and health, (e) rights as workers, and (f) gender mainstreaming. This model could be shared with the relevant training authorities for wider replication.
- (xiii) The beneficiaries who have undergone skills training should be provided with continuous mentoring and backstopping. The project should assist in establishing sustainable business enterprises and strong market linkages.
- (xiv) The project should conduct a short 3–6 months literacy and numeracy programme to enable the illiterate beneficiaries to take maximum benefit from project interventions. This will also allow the project to further embed its human security component into its activities.
- (xv) The UN Women should establish facilitation and redressal mechanisms to assist women HBWs who are registered with social security programme but are unable to access these services.
- (xvi) Women HBWs who want to start a business enterprise, e.g., the group that is producing women's clothes, should be assisted in accessing credit and in enhancing their skills in colour combination, fabric selection, and product diversification to be able to (a) compete in high-end markets, (b) decrease the role of commission agents/middle men,

and (c) improve their access to markets. This initiative could pave the way for economic empowerment of these women HBWs and could serve as a model for possible replication. ILO should provide possible support and there is a need to link these HBWs with other local initiatives (public, private, and social sectors).

- (xvii) The practice of providing training to one member from each family (male or female) in the FFS or WOS and that this same group is used for trainings in gender should be reviewed and revised if found ineffective. For gender-mainstreaming sessions, an alternative approach would be to involve both the men and women from the families of the FFS and WOS members.
- (xviii) To facilitate the formalization of the tenancy agreements, and considering that the agreement is made between the farmer-tenant and the landholder, it is recommended that a strategy be designed that will engage both parties and to have them sensitized and convinced to formalize their tenancy agreements. The project should develop a system to maintain a record of tenancy agreements.
- (xix) Since in many instances, the share of the *haris* and tenants is not enough to improve their living conditions, the project should further assist in looking for ways and means to diversify livelihood options. These *haris* who do not own the land they are working on mostly rely on their share of the produce.
- (xx) The design of the latrines, stoves, and grain storages should be revised to withstand heavy rains and floods. Furthermore, latrines that are not culturally suitable models should be replaced by a ventilated improved pit latrine (VIP), which is more suitable. It is also recommended that the project follows the WHO guidelines for latrine construction.
- (xxi) The project should hasten the implementation of the DRR components. It should also assist in strengthening the district government's capacity to deal with disasters. The project should continue to include and expand the discussions on DRR initiatives in the regular agenda of the DCC meetings to achieve that objective. A project-specific joint DRR strategy should be developed for integrating the activities of all agencies.
- (xxii) The project should develop a communication plan. It should produce and disseminate project brochures, project publications, reports, case studies, and other communication materials. It should also establish a project website. The project should engage with the broadcast and print media to raise the visibility of project initiatives. The project staff should be required and guided to write project reports and case studies in their area of expertise. The project should hire a writer or engage with a mass communication firm to support implementation of the communication plan. The project should also obtain the assistance of the United Nations Information Center.
- (xxiii) The project should look into constituting a small team from the existing staff who would be responsible for ensuring the sustainability of project initiatives and benefits. The project could also hire a short-term consultant to undertake this task. The project should also always incorporate participatory approaches in project activities as participation remains a key strategy to sustaining the impact of project benefits. Furthermore, capacity-building activities should be conducted for those institutions with greater influence or institutional capacity to sustain the delivery of selected benefits after the project ends. The project should capitalize on the working relationship with the members of the DCC as the DCC is a critical body by which sustainability initiatives could be pursued and promoted. A major topic that should always be included in the meetings

of the DCC should be “sustainability” and the manner by which project initiatives can be mainstreamed into their regular programmes and budget.

- (xxiv) Project management needs critical support. A short-term international consultant on project management who has an experience in managing a similar multidisciplinary project should be recruited. If this is not possible, appropriate technical backstopping should be provided by FAO.

7. Some Lessons Learned

- (i) Efficient and effective coordination in this type of project is difficult because it tries to get three UN agencies—with their own set of priorities, strategies, programmes, management systems, monitoring and evaluation mechanisms, resources and capabilities—to work and pull their acts together. The difficulty is exacerbated by the use of the human security approach, which is comprehensive, holistic, multisectoral, multidisciplinary, interlinked, and cross-cutting. To succeed in this, coordination work takes more time, resources, and effort. Coordination must be developed in stages, nurtured step by step, and jointly undertaken by stakeholders, with common understanding and a lot of patience and persistence.
- (ii) At the start of a project, the preliminary logical framework in the project document should be revisited, revised, and finalized. The project-wide monitoring, reporting, and evaluation system should be developed, including the detailed elaboration of targets, indicators, and means of verification of project outputs. This logical framework and the monitoring and evaluation system should again be revisited according to the results of the baseline study.
- (iii) Provision of adequate and a timely technical, monitoring, and backstopping support is essential for the project to succeed.
- (iv) The sustainability of project activities and initiatives can only be ensured if these are mainstreamed into the regular programme and budget of the partner agencies. Thus, it is critical to build better working relationships with these agencies and to provide them with capability-building programmes and activities. The importance of a well-functioning DCC, or similar types of coordinating body for other projects, therefore, cannot be overemphasized.

Annexes