

برنامج
الأغذية
العالمي



Programme
Alimentaire
Mondial

World
Food
Programme

Programa
Mundial
de Alimentos

Executive Board
First Regular Session

Rome, 21 - 23 January 1997

EVALUATION REPORTS

Agenda item 8



Distribution: GENERAL
WFP/EB.1/97/8/Add.3

9 December 1996
ORIGINAL: FRENCH

INTERIM EVALUATION OF PROJECT TUNISIA 4783

Assistance for the rural development project in the mountainous regions of the North-west

Total food cost	4 395 220 dollars
Total cost to WFP	5 448 140 dollars
Total cost to Government	16 609 551 dollars
Duration of project	Five years
Date of approval	13 December 1991
Date of first distribution	13 May 1993
Official date for completion of project	12 May 1998
Date of evaluation	10 - 27 April 1996
Composition of the mission	WFP/FAO

All monetary values are expressed in United States dollars, unless otherwise stated. At the time of evaluation, one United States dollar equalled 0.967 Tunisian dinar (TD).

ABSTRACT

Since 1992, Tunisia has progressively set up a participatory approach towards the management of natural resources in the North-west. This new approach has resulted in increasing the involvement in their own development of the population of the area. It aims at gradually integrating women into the development of their community. Landless peasants, however, will participate in the long-term benefits of this approach only to the extent that complementary rural activities are undertaken. Therefore, food aid to the project has had the effect of encouraging the population to engage in complementary activities on individually owned or public lands. With regard to workers at the sites of the Office for the Sylvo-Pastoralist Development of the North-west (ODESYANO), the majority of whom are landless peasants, food aid has represented surplus incomes of 25 percent. It has therefore played an important role in improving short-term food security.

This document is produced in a limited number of copies. Delegates and observers are kindly requested to bring it to the meetings and to refrain from asking for additional copies.

NOTE TO THE EXECUTIVE BOARD

This document is submitted for information to the Executive Board.

Pursuant to the decisions taken on the methods of work by the Executive Board at its First Regular Session of 1996, the documentation prepared by the Secretariat for the Board has been kept brief and decision-oriented. The meetings of the Executive Board are to be conducted in a business-like manner, with increased dialogue and exchanges between delegations and the Secretariat. Efforts to promote these guiding principles will continue to be pursued by the Secretariat.

The Secretariat therefore invites members of the Board who may have questions of a technical nature with regard to this document, to contact the WFP staff member(s) listed below, preferably well in advance of the Board's meeting. This procedure is designed to facilitate the Board's consideration of the document in the plenary.

The WFP focal points for this document are:

Director Evaluation Services: W. Kiene tel.: 5228-2029

Senior Evaluation Officer: J. Boisclair tel.: 5228-2027

Should you have any questions regarding matters of dispatch of documentation for the Executive Board, please contact the Documentation and Meetings Clerk (tel.: 5228-2641).



THE PROJECT AS PLANNED

Long-term objective

1. The long-term objective of the project is to reduce poverty by developing the most depressed regions of the country, in particular by promoting rural development in the outlying areas of the North-west (the Governorates of Béja, Jendouba, Kef, Siliana and Bizerte).

Immediate objectives

2. The project's immediate objectives are to:
 - a) reduce the isolation of farms dispersed in remote mountainous areas and improve the rural population's access to markets and social structures as well as to extension services;
 - b) prevent environmental degradation;
 - c) increase the productivity of small farms (less than five hectares);
 - d) increase livestock production through the rational management of pasture land; and
 - e) generate employment for the seasonally unemployed.
3. In order to achieve these objectives, project activities have been divided into four main sectors: infrastructure, agro-pastoral development, soil and water conservation, and training.

Role and Function of Food aid

4. The role and function of food aid are to:
 - a) encourage farmers to adopt new agro-pastoralist practices and to compensate for profit losses from the reduction of land under cereal cultivation set aside for the production of new crops;
 - b) favour training for farmers in new agricultural techniques and encourage them to form groups and associations, as well as promote community participation in project activities;
 - c) supplement cash incentives paid by the Government to temporary workers engaged in the construction of rural roads and in soil and water conservation activities; and
 - d) ensure an income transfer to project beneficiaries, and enable families to increase their investments in productive activities.

Monitoring and evaluation (M&E)

5. M&E of project activities is carried out by the monitoring and evaluation service of ODESYPANO, the government office responsible for project implementation. This service, which will receive support from the WFP unit at ODESYPANO, will monitor the achievement of the project's quantitative objectives, and assess the adoption and response of beneficiaries and project agents to the participatory approach. In addition, it will monitor beneficiaries in order to determine the extent of their involvement in the planning of project activities and in voluntary work.



The innovative element of the project

6. The innovative factor of this project is that it introduces the participatory approach to the management of natural resources in the North-west of Tunisia. This new approach has received the support of numerous donors: the German Government (GTZ and KfW), the World Bank and the European Union. It aims at setting up an integrated development programme for the rural communities in this region of Tunisia.

Objectives of the evaluation mission

7. With the aim of drawing a lesson from the Tunisian experience in the field of integrated rural development and the participatory approach in particular, the mission essentially concentrated on three specific areas: the participatory approach, the integration of women and landless peasants, and food aid. The following points were analysed:
- a) the fulfilment of project objectives;
 - b) the effectiveness of the project's strategy as defined in the plan of operations;
 - c) the participatory approach: established mechanisms for integrating the population in programming the community development plans (CDPs), the manner in which activities have been undertaken, and links between the CDPs and the regional development plan;
 - d) the project's impact on women: their contribution to the preparation of CDPs; activities carried out by women; their income and their role within groups;
 - e) the integration of landless peasants in the participatory development process;
 - f) the project's effects on increasing incomes for the target population; and
 - g) the project's impact on the environment.

EVALUATION OF PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION

Concept and objectives

8. In its concept, project Tunisia 4783 is in accordance with the policies of the Tunisian Government and the mandate of WFP, which give priority to reducing poverty and promoting food security, particularly in areas where populations live below the poverty line. The mission confirms the importance of the zones and target groups identified as the specific beneficiaries of WFP assistance, i.e., the unemployed, landless peasants and small farmers defined in the plan of operations.
9. The immediate and long-term objectives appear to be realistic and feasible. They are clearly expressed in verifiable terms. Logical correlations have been established between these objectives and expected results, corresponding activities and necessary inputs. However, it should be pointed out that the long-term development activities supported by WFP do not generally involve either landless peasants or the unemployed.

The participatory approach

10. The integrated participatory approach (IPA) is a means of structuring and organizing rural communities in order to make farmers responsible for territorial development and the establishment of partnerships. It allows for a priority-based identification of individual and



community problems in order to determine collective responsibilities for formulating a concerted programme of action.

11. The main instrument of IPA is the formulation of a CDP. This entails four progressive phases:
 - a) priority-based identification of the needs of the community;
 - b) technical feasibility study carried out by ODESYPANO technicians in collaboration with the local population;
 - c) budgeting of selected activities; and
 - d) establishment, in collaboration with the local population, of a programme contract which contains a schedule of works to be carried out and defines the respective contributions (ODESYPANO, community, WFP).
12. In order to establish a partnership with the population concerned, ODESYPANO encourages local communities to set up development committees (DCs) which constitute the representative bodies of one or several homogeneous communities for the formulation of a CDP.
13. One of the objectives of the CDP is to include women in the planning and decision-making process with regard to community development. Several constraints (social and cultural traditions, disparate levels of education between sexes, heavy work burdens, displacement difficulties or reduced access to rural settlements) have made women social organizers necessary. In the presence of these organizers, women are able to discuss their specific problems and assume a degree of responsibility at the development committee level. This constitutes an important innovation in rural Tunisia.
14. Social organizers have used three models in order to integrate women in the development process:
 - a) Under favourable conditions - absence of social conflicts between men and women, good education levels for women and the presence of women in DCs - the CDP is entirely formulated in mixed groups.
 - b) When there are communication problems between men and women, each group determines its own needs separately. When this has been accomplished, the community as a whole prepares a common synthesis of the needs presented by both groups.
 - c) When there are no women in DCs or when their level of education is too weak with respect to that of the men, the work is carried out by separate groups in all phases of the process. In extreme cases, women's interests are defended by the social organizer in the synthesis sessions.
15. In the project area, landless peasants/herders constitute 30 percent of all households. The term "landless peasant" includes different categories, namely: households possessing no land; households with micro-farming opportunities on less than one hectare of land; families and young adults working on paternal land holdings but possessing no land of their own.
16. The land development strategy implemented through CDPs is aimed mainly at improving community farming practices in order to intensify agricultural production, safeguard natural resources and increase incomes. It is therefore difficult to situate landless peasants in actions jointly defined with ODESYPANO. Moreover, landless peasants are



generally regarded as an interest group rather than a target group in CDPs. Their integration and participation are essentially limited to public works schemes and specific sectorial actions (genetic improvements for livestock and off-site activities).

Beneficiaries

17. As at 31 December 1995, approximately 10,700 families (about 75,000 persons), including some 500 women heads of household, had received WFP rations for a total value of 2.2 million Tunisian dinars at local market prices.

Small farmers

18. Food aid, which was initially foreseen by the plan of operations for some 8,500 families living below the poverty line on holdings of less than five hectares, has been expanded in accordance with ODESYPANO practices to include all farmers who participate in the development programme.
19. Assessment differences in the targeting of beneficiaries result from the diverging mandates of WFP and ODESYPANO. The latter aims at encouraging all farmers in the project area to participate in the catchment area development programme by providing incentives to adopt new farming methods. WFP strives to support the least favoured population groups - farmers with less than five hectares of land and landless peasants - and to encourage the participation of women.

Landless farmers

20. The main source of income for the various categories of landless peasants is employment at ODESYPANO work sites and in the forestry services. The daily salary at government work sites is three TD (approximately three dollars). WFP food rations (with a value of one TD) distributed to complement the three TD paid to workers at ODESYPANO work sites constitute increased income for beneficiaries as well as improved food availability. In the final quarter of 1995, the number of beneficiaries at WFP-supported work sites amounted to 2,000, or one third of the total envisaged in the plan of operations, which included landless peasants (3,000) and the young rural under-employed (3,000).

Women

21. Judging from statistics, the number of women benefiting from WFP assistance appears to be extremely low.
22. According to distribution reports for the last quarter of 1995, women represented 0.5 percent of beneficiaries at work sites, while they were not included at all in the nine preceding quarters. This characteristic is not to be attributed to ODESYPANO but to the recruitment system of the local administration on which the Office relies for manpower at its work sites. Women are generally reluctant to accept hard labour, while they consider their husbands' salaries beneficial for the family as a whole.
23. At the farm level, 90 percent of the 2,866 beneficiaries of WFP assistance during the final quarter of 1995 were males, but this figure should be considered in the light of social and cultural factors. In actual practice, women participate in numerous activities on family farms. Food aid is most often assigned to the husband, as head of the household, while in reality the final beneficiary is the entire family. The women interviewed during the mission did not perceive this situation as negative.



Role of food aid

24. During the formulation of project objectives, food aid is not directly linked to the elaboration and implementation of the IPA. It is considered a means of encouraging beneficiaries to perform the activities defined in the plan of operations.
25. The plan of operations does not envisage food aid during the formulation phase for CDPs. The mission therefore noted with satisfaction that, in the vast majority of cases, ODESYPANO technicians responsible for implementing the IPA felt WFP food aid was not needed to encourage the population to participate in the various formulation phases of the CDPs. Such a practice would go against the participatory spirit.
26. The various phases of analysis and experimentation which constitute the IPA formulation process covered the entire period 1990-95 in the form of sectorial action contracts with the population. During this period of transition, food aid played a traditional role of incentive, both for activities related to community infrastructure (feeder roads, water-supply) and farm improvement initiatives (nurseries, individual wells). During the second phase of the process, i.e., the establishment of programmes contracts, food aid will serve as an incentive to undertake activities of interest to the community.
27. Employment at Office and forestry services work sites constitutes an important source of income and is indispensable for the survival of farmers with little or no land. Food aid, which is distributed to ODESYPANO workers only, is a welcome complement to salaries (one TD in food aid in addition to a daily salary of three TD). It enables workers to settle in the area and increases their food supply.

Achievements

28. Project implementation has undergone serious delays. At the time of the present evaluation, the project (which initiated on 13 May 1993) had lasted two years and 11 months. As at 31 December 1995, the achievement rate for activities was 50 percent with regard to prorated targets and 22.7 percent in relation to overall targets at the end of the project. Hence, 77.3 percent of activities remained to be performed in a time span which amounted to less than half of the project's duration. By the same date, only 2,211,846 workdays had been recorded.
29. There are three main reasons for this situation: delays in starting up the World Bank project which finances the implementation of the participatory approach (the project only got underway in October 1994); delays in the flow of inputs from the Government (only 62 percent of planned resources as at 31 December 1995); and, since October 1994, a slowdown in the process of formulating DCs and the planning of activities in the framework of the CDPs.
30. If the schedule of activities in 1996 is met, the achievement rate will be 48 percent of the total by the end of 1996. In fact, a recent acceleration of activities following the implementation of DCs and CDPs justifies a certain degree of optimism. It would seem reasonable to expect an achievement rate in the order of 90 percent by the end of the project.
31. The difference between results obtained compared to targets set is explained by delays in the delivery and utilization of inputs. As at 31 December 1995, infrastructure showed a higher achievement rate than the targets set for that date (80.5 percent), followed by agro-pastoral activities (47 percent), soil and water conservation (32 percent) and training (2.2 percent). The weak performance with regard to training is explained below.



32. During the first phase of the project (i.e., the stipulation of activity contracts), farmers were given the choice of the activities they wished to carry out. Generally, they opted for activities which offered an immediate, personal interest. This explains the significant differences in achievement rates among the various elements of the infrastructure and agro-pastoral components. Hence, for the first component, the construction of wells, water points and reservoirs for drinking-water showed the highest rate, which illustrates the priorities of the population. With regard to the second component, the grafting of olive trees, the creation and maintenance of pasture land and the planting of multi-annual fodder crops (Sulla) stirred much interest. These few examples point to the need for certain adjustments. Accelerating the formulation and implementation of programme contracts which cover the overall needs of the community rather than individual needs will entail significant absorption of food aid in 1996/97, especially with regard to land improvement and development.
33. There are several reasons why only a small percentage of the financial resources earmarked for training has been utilized since the start of the programme. Since approval of the World Bank loan, training has been essentially oriented towards ODESYPANO staff, and men and women social organizers in particular. Training for small farmers has generally taken the form of brief lessons during agricultural extension visits by organizers to rural settlements (douars). Most of these sessions last one day. Incentives in the form of food are not considered suitable for these short sessions, as the potential beneficiaries (both male and female) are scarcely willing to travel to the nearest distribution centres for one or two rations worth one dinar a day.

Cooperation and coordination

34. One of the characteristics of the integrated development projects in the North-west is the number of partners participating as donors. Each partner intervenes in a specific project zone, and coordination is handled by ODESYPANO. However, cooperation between donors is not well developed, and there is a lack of efforts to harmonize interventions and strategies.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Distribution and assistance

35. In order to enhance the responsibility of DCs and reinforce the participation of women in the distribution process, it is recommended that the DCs participate in selecting food aid beneficiaries and transporting WFP commodities from the central warehouse to the douars.

Participatory approach

36. The mission recommends the continuation of the current policy of not distributing food during the formulation of CDPs.
37. An increase in the number of social organizers, especially women organizers, is recommended in order to improve the organization of beneficiaries.
38. In order to facilitate the training of DC members, the mission recommends the use of male and female assistant social organizers. These auxiliary positions will be held by local residents, each responsible for one to three communities. They will assist the organizers in



implementing the CDPs and, in particular, in developing complementary rural activities (beekeeping, market gardening, rabbit raising). WFP will support the training of these assistants by funding part of their salaries as food for work. The Government will cover cash salaries.

Access to production factors

39. Access to production factors (plants, improved seeds, fertilizer, etc.) remains impossible for many small farmers. The mission recommends that special attention be paid to studying solutions to this problem. For example, promoting nurseries at the community level would help to alleviate the shortage of plants noted during the mission.

Beneficiaries

40. The mission recommends that ODESYPANO follow the directives in the plan of operations with regard to project beneficiaries, i.e., small farmers (with landholdings of less than five hectares whose annual income is closely equivalent to or below the poverty line estimated at 700 dollars, or 731,500 TD); landless peasants/herders; and the seasonally unemployed.

Coordination and collaboration between partners

41. The mission recommends that periodic coordination meetings be organized under the initiative of ODESYPANO in order to facilitate an exchange of views between the various partners of the project (donors and Government). The frequency of such meetings will be defined by common agreement.

Monitoring and evaluation

42. The mission recommends that the CDPs include a section on envisaged effects and impact. This would serve to correlate additional efforts requested of the population and the advantages the population should expect. Moreover, this section would constitute a basis for future evaluation.

Activities

43. The mission recommends introducing the principle of flexibility in the various project activities in order to provide a better response to the priorities of the population.
44. The mission recommends that the training component be reoriented in such a way as to dedicate a part of resources to the training of the young (women and men), who represent the majority of the unemployed in the communities. Training should be aimed at income-generating activities considered useful for the communities. Resources dedicated to this component will also serve for the training and remuneration of men and women social organizers.
45. In view of the scarce utilization of WFP resources allocated to training, the mission recommends that the number of rations be reduced by 90 percent (900,000 rations). The remaining 100,000 rations will serve for training periods of a medium duration for community youth, as well as partial payment of salaries for assistant social organizers.



CONCLUSIONS

The Tunisian experience in integrated development

46. Compared to the interventionist strategy of the past, IPA offers numerous assets and advantages in terms of the participation and organization of the population. The active participation of the community in defining their own needs and their thoughts on the implementation of realistic, progressive solutions makes it possible to invert the vertical communication structure for interventions and to transfer a degree of responsibility to the population.
47. IPA is above all a communication and negotiation tool for programming the well-adapted implementation of a technical development project at the local level. The role of ODESYPANO is not to solve all of the socio-economic problems of the areas under consideration, but to integrate a certain number of technical activities aimed at agricultural development and the conservation of natural resources, as well as the improvement of living conditions for the population. The implementation of agricultural development activities is therefore directly linked to landholders in the areas to be developed. It remains difficult to integrate the differentiated interest groups within communities (landless peasants/herders, under-employed youth, women) in the framework of the current mandate of ODESYPANO.
48. Until World Bank financing for income-generating micro-projects becomes available, IPA will have to pay special attention to initiating activities for the interest groups least affected by the traditional extension efforts of ODESYPANO.

Management of commodities

49. The management of WFP commodities in Tunisia can be considered a successful model of clarity and efficiency, whether in terms of the management of stocks, bookkeeping and, above all, the precautions taken to avoid the possible negative effects of using food rations. In a middle-income country like Tunisia, such precautions assume special significance. In this regard, a lesson can be drawn from the decision taken by ODESYPANO not to distribute rations in order to generate the population's awareness of IPA, or after only one day of training.



