Sida Evaluation 00/20

An Evaluation of FARMESA and RELMA

Farm-level applied research methods in eastern and southern Africa and regional land management unit

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Table of Contents

Abbreviations & Acronyms

AGROTEC	Agricultural Operations Technology for Smallholders in Southern and Eastern Africa
ALCOM	Aquaculture and Local Community Development
ARPT	Adaptive Research Planning Teams (Zambia)
CGIAR	Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research
CU	Co-ordination Unit
EAC	East African Co-operation
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations
FARMESA	Farm-Level Applied Research Methods in Eastern and Southern Africa
FFS	Farmer Field Schools
FSA	Farming Systems Approach
FSWG	Field Site Working Group
FTPP	Forest, Trees and People Programme
GTZ	Deutsche Gesellschafl fuer Technische Zusammenarbeit
ICRAF	International Centre for Research in Agroforestry
IFAD	International Fund for Agricultural! Development
IIRR	International Institute for Rural Reconstruction
IMF	International Monetary Fund
JFO	Junior Professional Officer
LAMP	Land Management Programme
LMNRP	Local Management of Natural Resources Programme
LoA	Letter of Agreement
MFS	Minor Field Studies
NARO	National Agricultural Research Organisation (Uganda)
NCC	National Co-ordinating Committee
NF	National Facilitator
NFT	National Facilitation Team
NGO	Non-Government Organisation
PPIP	PIant Protection Improvement Programme
PRA	Participatory Rural Appraisal
RAC	Regional Advisory Committee

RAFA	FAO Regional Office for Africa, Accra
RCC	Regional Co-ordinating Committee
RELMA	Regional Land Management Unit
RSCU	Regional Soil Conservation Unit
SADC	Southern Africa Development Conference
Sida	Swedish International Development Co-operation Agency
Sida/DNRE	Sida's Department for Natural Resources and the Environment
SPFS	Special Programme for Food Security
SUAS	Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences (SLU)
T&V	Training and Visit
TAC	Technical Advisory Committee
ULAMP	Uganda Land Management Programme
UNFA	Uganda National Farmers Association
USCAPP	Uganda Soil Conservation and Agroforestry Pilot Programme
ZNFU	Zambia National Farmers Union

Currency Equivalents

SEK 8.75 = US $ 1.00

Fiscal Years

Sida	1 January to 31 December
FARMESA	1 January to 31 December
RELMA	1 January to 31 December
FAO	1 December to 30 November

Executive Summary

The Evaluation Assignment

1. Sida has decided to conduct a joint independent evaluation of FARMESA and RELMA since their objectives are complementary and they serve similar categories of clients. The current implementation cycles also end almost at the same time – on 31 December 2000 in the case of FARMESA and on 30 June 2001 for RELMA. It is the first independent evaluation to be undertaken although FARMESA was subject to a mid-term review in February 1999 by representatives nominated by the project, FAO and Sida.
2. The purpose of the evaluation is to analyse the relevance of their strategies together with past implementation performance and impact. The evaluation report shall discuss the merits and disadvantages of continuing support to the projects, including in that discussion also the FARMESA proposal for a second phase, review the alternatives for channelling Sida funds for advancing working methods of support services in the natural resources sector and for promotion of better land management practices, and present recommendations to Sida on the design of future support to methods development in Eastern and Southern Africa. The evaluation shall cover the activities of RELMA since its initiation in January 1998; the evaluation of FARMESA shall concentrate on events since February 1999 (the project commenced operations on 1 July 1996), when the Mid-term Review was undertaken.
3. The fieldwork was conducted in two rounds in April and May through visits to Zimbabwe, Zambia, Tanzania, Kenya, Uganda and Ethiopia. A brief visit was also paid by the mission to FAO in Rome. The preliminary findings and conclusions of the mission were presented and discussed with representatives of FARMESA and RELMA in Mombasa, Kenya, on 13-14 June.

Guiding Policies and Main Features of the Projects

4. **Sida Policies and National Policies.** FARMESA is guided by Sida's general regional strategy, which implies support to methods development and dissemination of experience with regional relevance through networks or institutions, and the specific Sida directives for Special Programmes that aim to develop and promote working methods of relevance for Sida projects, strengthening of institutional capacity to formulate and execute methods development, co-operation with UN organisations and development of the Swedish resource base.
5. Within the regional strategy, Sida's particular guidelines for RELMA emphasise long term support under unbureaucratic management within a flexible strategy to regionally relevant, catalytic activities that could benefit Sida supported projects as well as field services of other organisations.
6. The projects are also subjected to Sida policies and national policies on sustainable development, poverty reduction and gender equality.
7. **Main Project Features.** Both projects are guided by food security objectives and are concerned with participatory working methods for support service staff and with farming technology with RELMA focusing on land management aspects. They disseminate information and knowledge through similar means. They serve roughly the same member countries which have similar policies and experience common economic and institutional trends. Their primary clients partly

overlap and include decision-makers within field support services and projects in the public sector and in the private sector. FARMESA commands in-house subject matter capability on participatory service approaches and methods while RELMA possesses comprehensive expertise on land management technology. The operations of FARMESA are directed by national committees and a small co-ordinating unit with administrative support by FAO while RELMA administratively falls directly under Sida.

Achieved Impact

8. **FARMESA (1999/2000).** Successful efforts have been launched to expose decision-makers in the public sector to different service approaches through field visits, seminars and training activities. In addition, the project has had a direct impact on production resources, skills and knowledge at its selected field sites.

9. **RELMA (1998–1999).** The handbooks on land management matters have had a significant impact on extension and research staff in the region and the offered advisory services are generally highly valued.

Implementation Performance

10. **RELMA** is benefiting from the past experience and goodwill of RSCU. FARMESA is more uncertain of its pedigree; its performance has also been afflicted by the repercussions from a prolonged start-up period (almost two years), it has only enjoyed a brief operating period with uninterrupted fund disbursement flow, and it has functioned with a minimum of technical assistance and activity funding at the regional level.

11. **FARMESA.** Methods development within a dispersed regional context is a complex and difficult task. It is hard to establish unambiguous definitions of concepts and cost-effectiveness criteria and activities are prone to capture by special interest groups.
12. Little attention has so far been paid to the demand for improved service approaches among Sida supported projects: in the absence of formal surveys, FARMESA has relied on overstretched Swedish Embassy staff to represent them as *ex-officio* members of National Co-ordinating Committees.
13. Similarly, FARMESA has given limited attention to the demands and potential contributions by private sector agents despite their increasing importance as providers of advisory services, input supply, finance and marketing services.
14. Development and adaptation of working methods for support service staff has primarily been undertaken through a mini-project approach that suffers from: (a) incomplete assessment of similar activities elsewhere; (b) lack of application of cost-effectiveness criteria prior to project preparation; (c) methodological difficulties in assessing methods success in relation to introduced technology and cultural and socio-economic factors; (d) weak links in the sequence for transformation of site-specific experience to general (regional and national) application; and (e) cumbersome management arrangements. Few corrective actions have been taken by FAO or Sida to address these weaknesses but a concept of national "ownership" appears to have been accepted in spite of the absence of a counterbalancing regional host institution or explicit criteria for assessing the regional relevance of mini-project activities. Instead, the planning and implementation of mini-projects has been influenced by a technical research bias that has been manifested through

foci on esoteric farm level problems, prioritisation of testing of technical solutions before methodological approaches, lack of inputs by social scientists in project planning and evaluation, and overly technical reporting on project experiences.

15. Past support to capacity building has primarily been directed at universities and in-service training programmes and at research organisations. Support to establishment and operations of regional networks on service approaches has been limited.
16. The sustainability of the project depends heavily on Sida funding.
17. **RELMA.** This project has also been struggling to maintain the concept of regional relevance for development and dissemination activities in face of national interests and has frequently resorted to a role of "gap-filler", making up for funding defaults by the implementing organisations.
18. Initiatives and projects supported by Sida have usually received due attendance by RELMA.
19. RELMA has assisted development of land management techniques and extension service approaches within ongoing projects as well as initiating its own trials. However, its overall implementation strategy suffers from lack of perception on how increased food security is to be achieved, including the role of marketing initiatives.
20. Efforts to disseminate experiences to project clients have received due emphasis and the RELMA publications are appreciated to the extent that they are sometimes resold commercially. As for FARMESA, there has been little contribution to network establishment or operations.

Lessons Learned

21. The Project Documents for FARMESA and RELMA indicate that it is difficult to achieve good definitions of regional projects at the planning stage. In particular, it appears problematic to establish a sound balance for project activities between:
    (a) Sida interests and national priorities: this may require an institutional mechanism that allows governance with full formal Sida representation;
    (b) national interests and regionality relevance: this may require commonly accepted criteria or co-funding arrangements that secure the desired multi-country benefits;
    (c) government and private sector clients: this may require proportional representation on governing bodies and perhaps also proportionate funding contributions;
    (d) "upstream" and "downstream" clients: this may require earmarked allocations of funds to training institutes, research organisations and field support services, respectively; and
    (e) development and dissemination efforts: this may require effective mechanisms for monitoring of related past and ongoing efforts as well as earmarked allocations of funds for both kinds of activities.
22. Regional projects that lack a host institution or explicit criteria for "regionality" appear to face constant risk of fragmentation of activities. Certain project activities appear to continue happily without obvious demand by clients but with justification only on the basis of "requirements". Private sector clients run the risk of becoming marginalised at the expense of government clients. The interests of clients involved in development or adaptation efforts are frequently stronger than the interests of clients at the receiving end of dissemination efforts.
23. Preferably, the backstopping and supervision responsibility should be assumed by a qualified representative body incorporating the interests of the major stakeholders, including the financing organisation. The experience of FARMESA indicates that it may be unfeasible to surrender the supervision responsibility for a complex project that involves methods development in a re-

gional context to an "executing agency" and expect that this agency, in face of strong special interests, will be able to rectify the shortcomings in project design.

Anticipated Scenario for Farm Support Services in the Region and its Implications for Future Support Needs

24. The trends that have been emerging since the preparation of the support to FARMESA and RELMA – contraction and decentralisation of public support services and expanding private support services – are likely to continue in the future. Public extension services need help on how to operate effectively with fewer staff within district environments with little access to subject matter expertise on technical and methodological subject matters. Inexperienced private sector entrants need help on effective approaches for communicating with farmers, considering variations in terms of gender, age and socio-economic position, as well as technical knowledge on production technologies that are new to them, not least on land management aspects.

25. **Priority Clients.** The most important clients for future support would be farm support services organisations – public and non-governmental extension services at local and national levels and commercial organisations offering advisory support, input and implement supply services, finance services and marketing services – together with farmers groups, research organisations and training institutions.

26. **Required Services.** The main functions of regional projects concerned with farm production and service approaches should be to collect, organise and disseminate information and knowledge about gained experiences by actual practitioners rather than to attempt their own testing and adaptation. Dissemination should be through three principal means:
(a) sharing of experiences on application of technology and working methods through various kinds of networks among policy makers, field staff managers and subject matter specialists;
(b) publication of manuals and handbooks for field staff and handouts and videos for use by the farmers themselves; and
(c) training of policy makers, managers and field staff through in-service interaction, workshops and formal courses.

27. At the regional level, the dissemination and development work requires:
(a) functional specialists on (i) databases/networking/electronic communication, (ii) printing and publishing and (iii) training, to facilitate dissemination as well as the building up of capacity in the participating countries; and
(b) subject matter specialists on service approaches and farming technology. Subject matter knowledge on service approaches should encompass extension–farmer group interaction as well as farmers group dynamics while subject matter knowledge on farming technology within the land management sub-sector should focus on aspects of soil fertility, conservation farming, water harvesting and management, and approaches for livestock integration.

28. **Organisation and Management.** Networks are particularly effective mechanisms for monitoring methodological and technical developments and for disseminating information about their application because: (a) many institutions can be in direct contact with each other instead of being dependent on a central provider; (b) two-way exchanges are facilitated – a recipient of information on development advances may simultaneously be a provider of information about application experiences; (c) networks are practical for assessing demand for information or services since potential recipients can easily indicate if they are genuinely interested; (d) networks facilitate influence by all members, not just special interest groups; and (e) networks facilitate sustainability

by encouraging members to contribute financially to developments or services that they are interested in and by becoming “memory repositories”.

29. Unfortunately, the proposal for a second phase of FARMESA activities suffers from the same shortcomings as the current Project Document. The imbalance between the national level and the regional level would even be accentuated in the new proposal by further reducing the size and the competence of the Co-ordinating Unit.

Recommendations for Further Regional Assistance by Sida

30. It is recommended that the activities of FARMESA and RELMA be rectified (the proposed actions to address identified shortcomings have been summarised in 15 points), aligned and eventually integrated to bring about the following advantages: (a) better services to common clients; (b) better utilisation of in-house specialists on adaptation/development/application/ backstopping and dissemination of information and knowledge; (c) savings on costs for dissemination by using common media, channels and equipment; (d) savings on governance and management costs; and (e) affordable and effective technical backstopping and supervision, hence reducing demand on Sida follow-up resources.

31. The process of bringing FARMESA and RELMA closer together is proposed to proceed through three stages: (i) a convergence phase that would extend to 31 December 2001; (ii) a medium term stage between 2002 and 2004; and (iii) an ultimate stage when the integrated functions of FARMESA and RELMA would have been assumed by a number of partly self-sustaining networks.

32. **The Medium Term Stage.** The medium term stage is characterised by the following features:

- the client countries would include the presently supported countries plus the FARMESA associate countries Botswana, Malawi, Mozambique and South Africa;
- the main functions would include:
  - (a) monitoring, sponsoring and backstopping of promising participatory and gender-sensitive approaches of regional interest within advisory services, finance services, input supply services and marketing services on effective, participatory methods for working with farmers in the public and private sectors within the new environment of uncertain commercial services, reduced government resources and decentralisation of public services to district level; and
  - (b) monitoring, sponsoring and backstopping of promising advances of regional interest on crucial/strategic land management practices – including soil fertility, conservation farming, water harvesting and livestock integration approaches – within Sida supported initiatives as well as among other initiatives;
  - (c) dissemination of information, knowledge and skills on land management and field services approaches through electronic means, published material and videos and through training;
- the regional management function would be exercised through a Sida administered unit with functional specialists on electronic dissemination of information, publishing and training together with subject matter specialists on participatory approaches and land management practices;
- the national level management would be conducted through selected Contact Points at headquarters and the district levels in the public sector and at NGOs and commercial companies;

- guidance would be provided by a Regional Committee with elected and nominated members from the public and private sectors and from Sida;
- supervision and backstopping of the project activities would be undertaken by a Management Support Team with representatives from the participating countries, Sida and technical specialists from UN and other organisations;
- the Sida support would include technical assistance, consultant services, complementary operational support to ongoing development/adaptation initiatives on technology and participatory extension approaches, and material support to network establishment, publishing and training; and
- the financial contributions by the clients may be directed towards operational costs for Contact Points, computerised network operations, and publishing and training activities.

33. **Longer Term Perspective.** Ultimately, the Sida support may facilitate self-sustaining networks for development and dissemination of important farming technologies and field service approaches, encompassing interested organisations and projects in all countries in eastern and southern Africa. The networks may form one or several formal associations, assisted by a small secretariat with in-house expertise on support service approaches and dissemination techniques. The association members would elect representatives to a governing Member Committee. The development and dissemination activities may be financed jointly by the network members and donor organisations, including Sida.

34. **The Convergence Phase.** The convergence period would serve to align the activities of FARMESA and RELMA in anticipation of common operations during the medium term stage:

	2000		2001		2002		2003		2004	
FARMESA		Second	extnsn	Cnv Prd						
FARMESA/RELMA						Medium	term	stage		
RELMA	Current	Phase	Convrg	Period						

Proposed Timetable for Alignment of FARMESA and RELMA Activities

35. Sida, FARMESA and RELMA would together: (a) arrange a seminar to discuss the evaluation findings and the Sida views and appoint a Task Force to guide the alignment process (September 2000); (b) participate in the Task Force work together with facilitators to prepare guidelines for the alignment process (October 2000); and (c) co-operate in the continued work of the Task Force to prepare a joint Project Document for the consolidated implementation stage 2002–2004 (February–March 2001).

36. FARMESA would phase out the remaining mini-projects by 31 December 2001 and RELMA would prepare an Annual Workplan and Budget for 2001 in anticipation of the upcoming consolidated project phase (October–November 2000).

1. The Context and Main Features of the Projects

1.1 Sida Strategies, Policies and Project Initiatives

A. The Regional Strategy for Support to Southern and Eastern Africa

101. Unlike bilateral projects and programmes, that are planned, implemented and monitored in accordance with standard procedures, Sida offers little guidance in support of their regional projects such as FARMESA (Farm-Level Applied Research Methods in Eastern and Southern Africa) and RELMA (Regional Land Management Unit). The *Guidelines for Regional Co-operation in Africa South of the Sahara 1999–2000*[1] are primarily intended for initiatives that foster security, peace and stability in the region and promote national and regional economic growth and development. However, two of the categories of regional activities listed in the Guidelines have relevance for FARMESA and RELMA, namely:

- support to institutions and networks (whether African or externally initiated and maintained by donors) with mandates to disseminate experiences within a specific area of competence to more than one country; and
- support to policy development or methods development undertaken by international organisations operating in Africa.

102. Past experiences indicate that the following aspects are particularly important for geographically dispersed regional projects: (a) clear objectives that can be easily understood by planners and implementers in different countries who may not be able to interact continuously; (b) few and well defined target group/client categories for the project efforts so as to facilitate retention of the focus also among newly joined stakeholders; and (c) a well defined and comprehensible strategy that clearly indicates to everybody involved how the project components and activities are expected to interact with each other.

B. The Special Programmes for Methods Development

103. **The Purpose of Special Programmes.** FARMESA was from the beginning funded under *Special Programmes for Methods Development*[2]. The Special Programmes are designated to identify, assess, document and disseminate experiences of new development approaches and technologies. Although Sida has not issued formal guidance for utilisation of Special Programme funds, the following objectives can be extracted from the available documentation:

- development and improvement of methods for activities within areas prioritised by Sida and with particular focus on the needs of bilateral programmes. The methods to be developed should be appropriate in the context of the partner countries;
- strengthening of institutional capacity in partner countries to formulate and execute methods development;
- support and utilisation of local/regional human resources and facilitation of co-operation between individuals, institutions and countries within a region;
- establishment and maintenance of collaboration with UN organisations; and
- facilitation of competence and capacity development in Sweden and in partner countries.

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[1] Swedish Ministry for Foreign Affairs, February 1999

[2] The predecessors of FARMESA – FSP, AGROTEC, PPIP and ALCOM – were co-financed under the same arrangement

104. The directives for *Special Programmes for Methods Development* are retained in the Sida guidelines (September 1999) for *Programutvecklingsmedel,* that is now the source of funds for FARMESA. The areas of strategic significance outlined in the specific instruction issued by Department of Natural Resources and the Environment (October 1999) also refer to development of methods and policy in relation to significant cross-sectoral issues such as poverty reduction and gender equity.

105. Unfortunately, the guidelines for the utilisation of funds under *Special Programmes for Methods Development* and *Programutvecklingsmedel* do not offer a clear definition of "methods". The absence of a more precise definition of this concept in relation to the utilisation of Sida funds has sometimes caused misunderstandings and confusion and forced projects to make their own interpretations.

106. **Merits and Shortcomings of Past Projects under Special Programmes.** The experiences from *Special Programmes for Methods Development* in the natural resources sector are summarised in two reports issued in relation to a seminar organised by Sida and the Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences (N.I Isaksson, March 1998; Sida, September 1998). With reference to the experience from AGROTEC, FSP and PPIP, the reports conclude that Special Programmes have made a substantial contribution to a change in attitudes, approaches and methods – in Sweden as well as in partner countries. The reports make it clear that although none of the programmes have invented new methods, they have contributed to the adaptation of existing methods to new situations. The regional focus has provided opportunities for the establishment of contacts and for mutual learning as a basis for regional networking.

107. The reports also identify several shortcomings and problems in relation to the *Special Programmes for Methods Development,* including:

- contradictory and vague directives provided by Sida;
- limited interest/time devoted by Sida to monitor the projects and put the results to use;
- poor contacts and collaboration with Sida offices and bilateral projects/programmes in the countries expected to benefit from the Special Programmes;
- marginal involvement of the Swedish resource base; and
- tendency of Special Programmes to evolve into implementation programmes.

108. The reports do not, however, outline how the above shortcomings and problems should be addressed by Sida and future implementers of projects under *Special Programmes for Methods Development*.

C. Guidelines for Regional Land Management Unit (RELMA)

109. RELMA is financed under a separate budget for bilateral development co-operation in Africa (*Bilateralt utvecklingssamarbete, delpost Afrika*). Different from FARMESA, the source of funding for RELMA is not tied to specific requirements other than those applying generally to Swedish development co-operation. However, the Sida documentation which form the basis for the establishment of RELMA stipulates certain conditions that shall guide the operation of the project: (a) Sida's support is long-term (minimum 10 years), (b) RELMA is operated by Sida directly and Sida is explicitly recognising as a beneficiary, (c) RELMA is not an implementation project, but a regional initiative without a formal recipient, (d) activities should be based on demand, have a catalytic effect and be of regional relevance, (e) research and methods development should be closely linked with regular field extension services, and (f) decision-making and operation should be guided by a flexible approach in relation to Sida and other stakeholders.

D. Sida Supported Projects in the Natural Resources Sector in the Region

110. Sida supported projects in the natural resources sector in eastern and southern Africa have typically been concerned with support to services on land, water and crop husbandry utilising group approaches for interaction with farmers. Interesting experiences have emerged on adaptation and use of participatory methods, including hands-off facilitation approaches (Economic Expansion in Outlying Areas, Zambia). Dissemination of improved methods for working with natural resource users has primarily been internal within the projects through printed manuals and in-service training sessions**.** The following Sida supported projects appear to be of particular interest as sources of valuable experiences and as recipients of information and knowledge about improved methods.

111. **Kenya**. The *National Soil and Water Conservation Programme* implemented by MOA is currently being transformed into an extension support project, promoting an integrated and participatory approach to crop, land and animal husbandry. The programme offers interesting methodological experience on methods for problem diagnosis and transfer of farming technology ("catchment approach") as well as on land management techniques *per se*.

112. The new project will face the triple challenges of training staff to apply the appropriate techniques in interacting with farmers on crop, livestock and land husbandry; deal with the implications of continued devolution of extension responsibilities to the district level where technical capabilities are still limited; and adjust to intensified co-operation with non-governmental and commercial agencies so as to maximise the effects of scarce support resources.

113. **Tanzania**. The *Land Management Programme* (LAMP) implemented by the Ministry of Regional Administration and Local Government in Arusha and Singida regions supports participatory individual and community management of cropland, water, pastures, forests and wildlife in a sustainable manner. It offers valuable experience on successful empowerment of villagers to protect former government forest reserves as well as on conservation farming technology.

114. LAMP forms part of the *Local Management of Natural Resources Programme* (LMNRP) together with *Soil Conservation and Agroforestry Programme–Arusha* (SCAPA). The latter programme originated as a pilot project in 1990 in Arumeru and Arusha districts in Arusha Region. It was initiated by the RELMA predecessor RSCU with the intention to be the first step towards a broader Tanzanian programme on land management. SCAPA has been successful in establishing improved land management practices in the higher potential project areas in the two districts but has so far failed to spur wider land management initiatives by the Ministry of Agriculture and Co-operatives in Tanzania. Together with RELMA, SCAPA has conducted conservation farming trials, prepared a conservation farming handbook for animal traction, promoted unified extension messages, and arranged demonstrations, exchange visits and training services to organisations, groups and individuals in other countries in the region.

115. An integrated district development programme with natural resource management as one of its core activities is under planning in *Bunda* and *Serengeti* districts.

116. The programmes are attempting to respond to the implications of the recent devolution of the responsibility for agricultural extension service from the Ministry of Agriculture to the district administration and to devise effective ways of working together with the private sector to facilitate better supply of farm inputs and rural finance as well as services for marketing and processing of agricultural produce.

117. The *National Environment Management Council* (NEMC) is the Tanzanian national advisory and co-ordination body for the environment. Sida support to NEMC is focusing on capacity building and technical support in relation to natural resources management, environmental education in school programmes, public awareness, legal issues and pollution prevention. NEMC has experience

to offer in the field of environmental impact assessment and represents one of the few Sida-supported initiatives in the region with direct links to policy formulation.

118. **Uganda**. The *Uganda Land Management Programme*, ULAMP (that has evolved from a pilot project initiated by the predecessor of RELMA), is expanding from its initial base in Mbarara District to support public and private services related to land, water, crops and livestock in three additional districts (Arua, Kabarole and Kapchorwa).

119. The enlarged programme is going to operate within the new Ugandan policies of district decentralisation, curtailment of government agencies and creation of an enabling environment for the private sector within which farmers are encouraged to look upon farming as a business under family management without undue dependence on government services.

120. **The Lake Victoria Initiative**. The strategy for this envisaged joint effort by the East African Co-operation (EAC) and Sweden has as its most important elements: (a) inspiring and strengthening emerging networks in the region; (b) developing knowledge and capacity through strengthening of institutions; (c) mapping of unsustainable uses of natural resources; and (d) establishing priorities and a framework for investments in agriculture, infrastructure, industry, fisheries and tourism. The activities under the programme will be designed to accommodate the new realities of district decentralisation, reduced government manpower resources and increased reliance on private investors for channelling capital into agricultural services and processing.

121. **Zambia**. The Sida supported *Conservation Farming Unit* offers valuable experience on methods for transfer of effective low cost production technologies to resource poor farmers as well as on services for micro-finance and marketing of produce. The *Multiplication and Distribution of Improved Planting Materials* project has accumulated knowledge and experience since 1995 on how to support local seed production and marketing in commercially sustainable ways without resorting to distorting subsidy schemes.

122. Both projects are operating within environments of shrinking government support services to farmers, decentralisation of public resources to the district level and expanding, privately initiated schemes for contract production by small scale farmers.

123. **Zimbabwe**. Currently, Sida does not directly support activities in the natural resources sector although there are plans to offer assistance to water management, land reform activities and poverty reduction initiatives within a local watershed management programme framework.

124. **Ethiopia**. The Sida support to the *Amhara Rural Development Programme*, which commenced in 1997, benefits agricultural extension, including the use of radio broadcasting, research, soil and water conservation, rural credit and facilitation of gender awareness. It operates within a regional framework to which most planning and implementation responsibilities have been devolved from the federal level.

125. **Eritrea**. Sida does not currently support activities in the natural resources sector.

126. The Sida supported activities in the region face challenges that are common also to most other development projects in the natural resources sector: (a) decentralisation of decision making and human and financial resources in the public sector from central levels to the levels of districts and communities; (b) an environment of shrinking government contributions to the natural resources sector and increased roles for the private sector; and (c) encouragement/facilitation of farmers to actively seek information and external services as part of a process to become self-reliant managers instead of remaining as passive recipients.

E. Policies on Poverty Reduction, Gender and Sustainable Development

125. **Poverty Reduction.** Sida's *Poverty Reduction Programme* dates back to 1962 when the Swedish Parliament established as the overall aim of its development co-operation "to improve the quality of life of poor peoples". Following most other donors and the World Bank, Sida views poverty as a complex, multidimensional and context-specific phenomenon. Lack of income is identified as a basic characteristic of poverty. Other dimensions include lack of reliable sources of livelihood (land and other assets, labour, social safety nets) and hence poor food security, and few possibilities to make use of expanding economic opportunities in the society at large due to low status and lack of power.

126. In addition to constituting an overall goal of Swedish development co-operation, poverty reduction has relevance for FARMESA and RELMA in the following regards: (i) it is increasingly recognised as a primary development objective in partner countries in the South, including the Eastern and Southern African region, (ii) the interrelationship between poverty and the environment, both positive and negative, is widely recognised, and (iii) the instructions for Sida support to policy and methods development identifies poverty reduction as an area of strategic significance.

127. **Equality Between Women and Men.** In May 1996, the Swedish Parliament endorsed the promotion of equality between women and men in partner countries as one of the overall goals of Swedish development co-operation. Sida's *Policy and Action Plan for Promoting Equality between Women and Men in Partner Countries* (April 1997) emphasises the importance of a shift from a specific focus on and special efforts for women towards a mainstreaming gender strategy (i.e. making it an integral part of the project), taking social and cultural variations into account,. The policy underlines the interrelationships between the goal of gender equality and the specific goals of different sectors, as well as the linkages between gender equality and other priority areas within Sida – poverty reduction, human rights and democracy and environmentally sustainable development.

128. Based on the agency-wide initiative, the Department for Natural Resources and the Environment has developed its own *Action Plan for Gender Equality* (April 1997). The Action Plan identifies the need for participatory approaches, gender analyses and gender reporting in the preparation, follow-up and evaluation of projects, production of sex-disaggregated statistics and gender sensitive impact indicators, continued support to the adaptation of extension systems to the needs of small producers of both sexes, gender sensitive adapted research and methods development and financial services to poor women and men in rural areas.

129. **Sustainable Development.** Sida's *Policy on Sustainable Development* (January 1996) presents sustainable development as a multidimensional concept that integrates ecological and environmental issues with economic, social, cultural and political dimensions of development. The policy refers to the special environmental allocation to be utilised primarily for methods development, for experimental and pilot projects, and for strategically important environmental projects for which the country frame allocation cannot readily be used.

1.2 Recent Developments in the Agricultural Sector

A. The Effects of the Economic Liberalisation at Farm Level

130. Since the FARMESA and RELMA projects were formulated in 1996–1997, farming as a business, in contrast to farming as a rural occupation for meeting basic livelihood needs, has become gradually more important. Positive effects continue to emerge as the result of the economic liberalisation initiatives in the majority of countries in eastern and southern Africa. More individuals and

organisations are starting to supply agricultural inputs and market farm produce, thereby increasing price competition and expanding transport capacities to the advantage of small-scale producers. It is expected that farmers will become more adept at monitoring prices for farm inputs and for produce in neighbouring markets as they continue to accumulate experience from operating in a liberalised market environment.

131. However, in recent years is has also become clear that the withdrawal of farm subsidies in combination with increased competition from imported produce has meant a squeeze of profit margins of both efficient and less efficient farmers. Simultaneously, produce price fluctuations between years have become wider than in the past. Many producers, particularly in outlying areas, have become poorer as measured by average annual disposable income and less secure financially. In the future, farmers, in order to survive and prosper, will have to become more adept as managers by producing more with less inputs while also becoming better businessmen and businesswomen by finding the cheapest sources for farm inputs and the most profitable markets for their produce.

B. Restructuring, Decentralisation & Privatisation of Government Services

132. Since the formulation of the FARMESA and RELMA projects, the restructuring and reduction of government support services in the agricultural sector has accelerated. In most countries in the region, government involvement in supplying farm inputs and credit and in providing marketing services has ceased altogether. Within the agricultural extension services, the sole remaining public responsibility at field level, government's presence has been severely curtailed through retrenchment of frontline, management and subject matter staff.

133. Simultaneously, the implementation of policies for decentralisation of public services has meant the transfer of the responsibility for agricultural extension services from the ministry headquarters to district authorities. While this transfer has generally been accompanied by an upgrading of staff capabilities – many more university graduates are now found at district and sub-district levels than in the past – it has also weakened the organisational links between the technology "nodes" (centrally placed subject matter specialists and research stations) and training centres and the staff at the field level without adequate compensation for the field staff by better means of communication, organisation of information on technology and extension methods in data banks, or training programmes designed to be conducted on the basis of self-study material in the absence of specialist trainers at the district level.

134. The gap left by governments' withdrawal from input supply, finance and marketing services is, with some delay and at a slow place, being filled by an expanding private sector (Figure 1, below). The effectiveness of the private sector organisations is, however, frequently hampered by lack of knowledge about successful practices among other practitioners. In particular, there are information gaps about how to operate in a cost-efficient manner by interacting with groups of farmers rather than with individuals and by anticipating the specific requirements of smallholders (as opposed to those of large-scale commercial farmers).

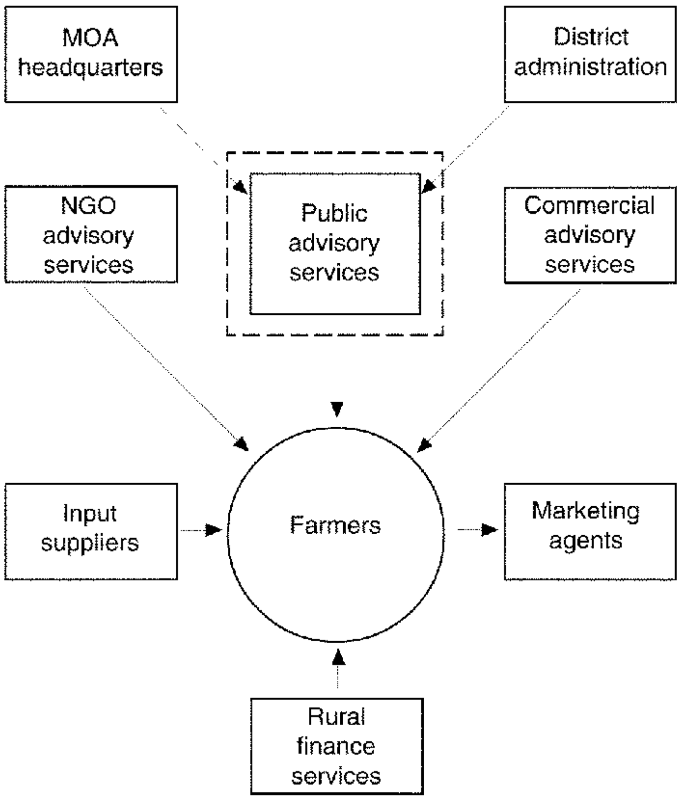

Figure 1: Support Services Available to Farmers

135. In several countries, most notably Uganda, deliberate steps have been taken to make public extension services and private sector advisory, input, credit and marketing services work better together at the district level where the potential synergies are particularly evident. It is expected that the experiences being gained in Uganda will be of significance to the other countries in the region in the coming years.

C. Development and Introduction of Innovative Extension Approaches

137. **Development or Adaptation of Improved Farming Technology.** Improved farming technologies are being promoted by FAO and Intermediate Technology Development Group (ITDG) together with commercial agents, particularly as they concern farm inputs and implements. Initiatives related to farm technology that are supported by FAO include Integrated Programme for Pest Management: Southern and Eastern Africa and Livestock and Poverty Alleviation (feeds). Within the field of land management, several donors and many NGOs are assisting efforts on conservation farming, soil fertility restoration and green water utilisation and management.

138. **Promotion of Participatory Techniques in Interacting with Farmers.** Participatory approaches have proved effective in enhancing adoption rates in some cases (in other cases, contractual arrangements with detailed stipulations on the obligations of the producer and the buyer have proved equally successful in ensuring the necessary output volumes and quality). During the last thirty years, the Training and Visit approach greatly influenced government extension services. Originally developed for monoculture settings in Asia, its concentration on a few impact points is now, however, increasingly being seen as irrelevant to the needs of diversifying African farmers.

139. Participatory approaches have in the course of the last decade become increasingly accepted by development agencies, NGOs and by governments as a requirement for attaining general development objectives (e.g. democratic and equitable development) and as prerequisites for more efficient project planning and implementation. The growing acceptance of participatory methods and techniques has gone hand in hand with the common reversals from top-down to bottom-up perspectives in working with smallholder farm families, and from planning based on blueprint to a learning process approach. The by far most common set of participatory techniques applied in development planning and practice is *Participatory Rural Appraisal* (*PRA*). The widespread acceptance of PRA has formed the basis for further methodological development and refinement to fulfil specific needs in relation to the project cycle – e.g. *Participatory Learning and Action*, *Participatory Diagnosis* and *Participatory Monitoring and Evaluation* – variations in agro-ecological conditions, and requirements of specific groups and categories in local communities – e.g. *Participatory Gender Analysis* and *Participatory Poverty Analysis* – in consideration of the rapidly changing macro-economic and political environments.

140. The principal steps in the sequence from adaptation to adoption are outlined in Figure 2 (below):

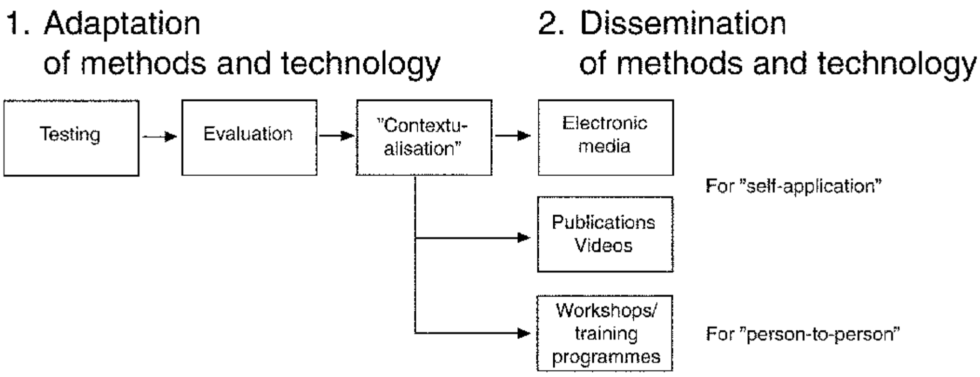

Figure 2: Schematic Sequential Steps from Methods Adaptation to Dissemination

141. The rapid acceptance of PRA as a mechanism for fostering "participation" has its advantages as well as drawbacks. Several Ministries of Agriculture in the eastern and southern African region have today formally adopted and (to varying extent) institutionalised PRA as an integral part of the planning and implementation of rural extension services. PRA has also increasingly been accepted as one among several methods for data collection, analysis and mobilisation of the farming community for collaborative efforts in agricultural research using a Farming Systems Approach. For practitioners as well as researchers, the experience of using PRA has contributed to an increased understanding of and respect for the wealth of knowledge and capabilities available in local communities, not the least in the area of natural resources management.

142. On the other hand, the use of PRA may prove counterproductive to the ambition of providing a sound basis for planning and as a mechanism for establishing trust and facilitate empowerment in the community. There are many examples of PRA being used as a one-shot approach to bring in the "cultural" dimension and to "ensure participation", when as a matter of fact a more comprehensive process approach would be warranted. There is often a far-fetched relationship between the general information on problems and opportunities experiences by local people resulting from the accomplishment of single PRAs as a diagnostic devise, and the ensuing

detailed and technical specification of project activities or experiments which are based on the initiative of external agents (practitioners as well as researchers). Under such conditions, the initial PRA may not only raise expectations in the local community that might never be fulfilled, but it may also serve as an excuse for undertaking specific (often pre-determined) operations on the pretext that they are carried out in response to local demands.

143. Depending on the characteristics and complexity of the local livelihood situations, the alternative to single PRAs may be to undertake a long-term study as a basis for planning and impact assessment, or to carry out several PRA in sequence to enable participatory monitoring and modifications in approach and operations based on the experiences gained. The use of PRA must always be based on thorough training, including the often neglected dimension of applying appropriate selection criteria to ensure an accurate representation of relevant target groups, such as poor sections of the community or women farmers. Experiences also show that the interpretation of information generated through rapid inquiry such as PRA must be based on a firm understanding of the social, economic, cultural and political context.

D. New Approaches on Input Supply, Finance & Marketing Services

144. The Rural Business Groups being promoted by the Co-operative League of USA (CLUSA) in Zambia represent one of the most interesting initiatives to enable local farmers to form procurement groups on *farm inputs* and negotiate quantity discounts and bulk transport discounts with competing suppliers.

145. Within rural *finance services*, interesting approaches are being promoted within almost every country in the region, including novel ways to assist farmers to save regularly.

146. There are a number of interesting group *marketing initiatives* coming into fruition in different countries in eastern and southern Africa. Some of these initiatives have been launched by groups of farmers with little outside support while other efforts are being supported by higher echelon bodies within the farmers' association structures and by local and international NGOs (including CLUSA). The co-operating farmers have proved that group marketing and buying are highly viable concepts also in a liberalised environment. Their planning and implementation strategies display several common characteristics, including improved access to up-to-date information about prices and actors outside the local market area, in-situ training in business and management skills in a changing commercial environment for the majority of the group members, and substantial facilitation while sound governance practices are becoming established among all group members.

147. A large number of NGOs operate in the FARMESA and RELMA member countries, focusing on *subject matters and crosscutting issues* of relevance for the FARMESA and RELMA mandates. Some of the organisations contacted by the evaluation team already form part of the networks of the projects. Others were approached with a view to get a comprehensive picture of the broad spectrum of actors involved in subject matters of the two projects. Out of the approximately 20 non-governmental organisations visited or met by the team, the following are mentioned as examples of interesting approaches, either because they have something substantial to offer to FARMESA and RELMA as real or potential partners, or because they themselves would benefit from a collaboration with those projects:

- **Sasakawa African Association/Global 2000 Partnership (SG 2000)** supports projects in a dozen African countries, including eastern and southern Africa. Through collaboration with ministries of agriculture, NGOs, the private sector and international development agencies, the aim is to help overcoming widespread food shortage by bringing science-based crop production methods to small farmers. Activities include improving the knowledge of field-level extension workers and farmers about new production (food crop) technologies (including e.g. crop production, animal draft power, on-farm post harvest handling, agro-processing, private seed enterprise and input dealer development, and farmers' association development). A basic philosophy of Sasakawa is that no inputs shall be provided free of charge to the farmers (e.g. farmers purchase seeds to be planted for demonstration purposes). Sasakawa has benefited from training undertaken by RELMA.

- **Africa 2000 Network** is a regional African NGO, established in 1989 and funded by EU, UNDP and Italian development co-operation, among others. The objective is to contribute to poverty reduction, through training of government staff and community groups on subject matters such as soil and water conservation, water harvesting, agroforestry, improved crop and animal husbandry and energy conservation. Training packages include gender analysis and gender planning, as well as participatory techniques. Although Africa 2000 Network has well established contacts both in the eastern and southern African region and beyond (including contacts with RELMA in Nairobi, and with FARMESA in Tanzania), the organisation experience problems in keeping trace of recent developments (manuals and other materials) which can be used in training. While Africa 2000 Network can potentially assist in undertaking training in FARMESA and RELMA member countries (particularly in the field of gender analysis and gender planning in relation to natural resources management), it would also itself benefit from partnerships which could help them to keep trace of recent developments and publications on crosscutting issues as well as subject matters.
- **Intermediate Technology Development Group (ITDG)** is an international organisation working in Africa, Latin America and Asia. The aim is to help poor people to develop and use skills and technologies (e.g. food production, agro-processing, water and sanitation and mining) of importance for sustainable community development. Strategies are promoted to ensure equal assess of women and men to resources, services and training, based on the recognition that women's technical knowledge and skills are undervalued. ITDG strives to inform and influence decision-makers and the public through e.g. publications, provision of education material and advice. The IT Publications issues a wide range of practical handbooks, manuals, case studies etc. available at affordable cost through mail order. The principal aim of the Technical Enquiry Service (world-wide, free of charge) is to supply local development initiatives with high quality technical information and processional advise on request. ITDG constitute a real or potential partner for actors in the region who are interested in networking on rural technology, gender planning and participatory techniques, and in the establishment and development of publication activities.

E. Networks for Dissemination of Knowledge on Innovative Approaches

148. Information and knowledge about innovative approaches is spread through publications, workshops, seminars, training sessions and other personal interaction among the practitioners. In recent years, several networks for formal and regular interaction have emerged. Most networks fall within the research sector while there are as yet few networks among extension/advisory services, input supply services, rural finance services or marketing services. Some of the existing networks are briefly referred to in the following paragraphs.

149. **SAAFSR-E and AAFSRET.** The Southern African Association for *Farming Systems* Research and Extension (SAAFSR-E) and the African Association of *Farming Systems* for Research, Extension and Training (AAFSRET) were founded on the initiative of the Sida/FAO Farming Systems Programme (one of the predecessors of FARMESA). SAAFSR-E has around 700 members and operates from Botswana through national contact points.

150. **WOCAT.** The World Overview of Conservation Approaches and Technologies (WOCAT) was established in 1992 as a global network of *soil and water conservation* specialists, planners, decision-makers, regional and national institutions and donors. It is organised as a consortium of international and national institutions, co-ordinated by a Management Board and guided by an annual Steering Committee. WOCAT supports regional and national institutions in data collection and in the compilation of databases. It provides a common frame and methodology for the monitoring and evaluation of soil and water conservation operations and has set up an Information Management System designed to collect, analyse, present and disseminate experiences from soil and water conservation activities. Operations in eastern and southern Africa were initiated in the mid-1990s. RELMA is one of the 23 collaborating institutions in the region.

151. **ASARECA.** The Association for Strengthening Agricultural *Research* in Eastern and Southern Africa (ASARECA) was established in October 1994 by the National Research Institutions (NARIs) of ten countries in the region. Funding was initially provided by USAID. Recently, multi-donor funding has been available through EU, Danida and Sida. ASARECA as a research network has three broad objectives: (a) to improve the relevance, quality and cost effectiveness of agricultural research; (b) to establish and support regional mechanisms to reinforce and improve research collaboration among National Agricultural Research Systems (NARS) and with international agencies; and (c) to improve the delivery of new appropriate information and technology. A Newsletter is provided to members. The association is guided by a Steering Committee (11 NARO Directors) and operates in accordance with five-year plans. ASARECA currently co-ordinates 19 networks, each involving 40–120 natural scientists with little participation so far of social scientists. Funds are offered on a competitive basis for research and training. ASARECA attempts to maintain a clear demarcation against downstream farm support services. A similar network exists for agricultural researchers in West Africa (CORAF).

152. **SACCAR.** Another network, as well as a formal institution, is the Southern African Centre for Co-operation in Agricultural and Natural Resources *Research* and *Training* (SACCAR) which was established in 1984 under SADC (located in Gaborone, Botswana). The aim of SACCAR is to co-ordinate research and training activities, to promote co-operation between member states, to strengthen the capabilities of national agricultural research systems (NARS), to disseminate information and to generate new technologies needed by farmers in order to raise production and productivity. SACCAR offers research grants and promotes and sponsors studies, workshops and conferences on themes of regional relevance.

153. **Other Networks.** In 1978, the African Forestry Research Network, AFRONET, was formed. In 1989, the Association of Forestry Research Institutions, AFREA, was established. ANAFE is a formal education agroforestry network.

F. Government Policies and Initiatives to Improve Food Security

154. Food security is a strategic issue in most countries in the South, including the eastern and southern African region. In addition to the production and supply of food produce, food security as a concept encompasses such things as adequacy (nutritional quality), access (income and availability), distribution within the family (e.g. based on relations of gender and age) and the availability of social capital and networks (food entitlements). The approach to food security must be based on an understanding of the ecological and economic conditions affecting food production, the distribution of food, wealth, land and income at different societal levels as well as the traditional social networks, institutions and cultural features that shape and influence food entitlements (Denninger et al, July

1996, p.8). A food security approach must also be based on a thorough understanding of the contribution to food production made by women, men and children/young people of both sexes.

155. A broad definition of food security implies that a wide range of development initiatives (both public and private) can be accommodated under this heading. A conducive national policy environment for food production and marketing, as well as mechanisms to establish secure access to natural resources, are essential preconditions for the attainment of food security. The same applies to support to higher education and research, including efforts to ensure close links between research and national extension focusing on the natural resources sector and operating in participatory way.

156. In addition to donor-funded projects and programmes under bilateral agreements, there are several multilateral initiatives in the eastern and southern African region that operate in the area of food security. Two major regional initiatives are the United Nations System-wide Special Initiative on Africa and the FAO Special Programme on Food Security. The latter programme (covering 60 food deficit countries) applies a pilot-national programme approach to promote proven technologies, market awareness and grassroots participation. Water control, crop intensification/soil fertility and diversification into livestock and fish production are some of the technical entry points used.

G. Government Policies and Initiatives to Reduce Poverty

157. The governments in the countries which form part of the FARMESA and RELMA regional initiatives have exhibited will and commitment to implement anti-poverty policies and to achieve sustainable development in economic, social and environmental terms. The increased recognition of the merits of participatory approaches to poverty assessments (including the appreciation of definitions of poverty used by the poor themselves) and to poverty reduction measures based on local initiatives should be viewed in this perspective. Yet, the attention paid to poverty reduction varies and the practical outcome has so far been rather limited. The general tendency still prevails, of lack of concord between individual sector policies and initiatives and overall policy guidance with a focus on poverty reduction as an overriding development objective. Donor funded projects and programmes in the region will continue to play a significant role in supporting initiatives within and outside government to improve the livelihood situations of poor individuals and groups.

158. Sustainable livelihoods represents a more recent and comprehensive approach to and framework for poverty reduction. The following key issues have been identified by the Department for International Development (DFID): (a) poor people's livelihood systems and coping strategies, (b) productive capacity and access to resources and infrastructure, (c) equity (including gender equity) in production and distribution, (d) environmental conservation and sustainability, and (e) capacity and knowledge of stakeholders. The outcomes of sustainable livelihoods include, among other things, improved income, increased well being, reduced vulnerability, improved food security and more sustainable use of the natural resource base.

1.3 Main Features of the Two Projects

A. Common Characteristics

159. **Aims and Clients.** The development objective of FARMESA and the mandate of RELMA serve to improve food security and incomes among smallholders in the region. The immediate clients are staff in support organisations in both the public and private sectors who work directly with farmers.

160. **Origin and Evolution.** Both projects are transforming themselves from earlier working concepts. FARMESA is progressing from a heritage of introducing novel technical practices among smallholders, derived from the application of a farming systems perspective, to operationalising and spreading of novel ways for support organisations to work with smallholders. RELMA is moving

from a focus on land husbandry inherited from the Regional Soil Conservation Unit (RSCU) to a broader range of subject matters – land management – that include marketing aspects.

161. **Geographical Constituency.** The projects operate in four common countries – Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda and Zambia while FARMESA[3] also serves Zimbabwe and RELMA serves Eritrea and Ethiopia. The majority of the countries exhibit similar ecological, socio-cultural, institutional environments and have adopted similar policies on food security, poverty, gender and government support service matters. With the exception of Eritrea and Zimbabwe, Sida supports well-established bilateral projects and programmes serving the natural resources sector in the member countries. These projects can be drawn upon as empirical testing ground for innovative approaches while they are also interested in acquiring knowledge about successful participatory approaches and land management practices.

162. **Core Service Functions and Subject Matter Capabilities.** The services provided by FARMESA and RELMA are summarised in the following two matrices:

Figure 3: FARMESA and RELMA Service Functions and Subject matter Capabilities

FARMESA

Service Functions	*In-house (Regional) Subject Matter Capability*
1. Development/adaptation/ backstopping application of:	
Methods for interaction with farmers for:	
Extension & research services	X
Input supply services	X
Finance services	
Farming technology	
2. Dissemination through:	
Electronic media	X
Publications	X
Training of trainers	X

RELMA

Service Functions	*In-house (Regional) Subject Matter Capability*
1. Development/adaptation/backstopping application of:	
Methods for interaction with farmers for:	
Extension services	X
Marketing services	X
Farming technology	
Soil conservation	X
Green water conservation	X
Blue water conservation	X
Agroforestry	X
Livestock husbandry	X
2. Dissemination through:	
Electronic media	
Publications & videos	X
Training of trainers	

[3] FARMESA also has four associate countries – South Africa, Mozambique, Malawi and Botswana.

163. The prime functions of the two projects are development/adaptation and dissemination of information and knowledge on working methods and on-farm technology, respectively. FARMESA has in-house subject matter capability on working methods for extension and research services and on website establishment and maintenance, publishing (technical documents and working papers), training (source book, advice on curriculum development and training of trainers) and finance services. RELMA has in-house subject matter capability on working methods for extension services and marketing services and on key land management aspects together with subject matter capability on publications (reference material, handbooks and videos).

164. **Conceptual Challenges.** The common challenges to FARMESA and RELMA as regional projects promoting working methods and farm technology include :

- remaining attuned to changing demands among the clients for outputs and services;
- avoiding duplication of efforts with other organisations and utilising synergy effects among clients in different countries;
- balancing the regional and national aspects in the absence of regional host institutions;
- establishing and maintaining criteria for assessment of the cost–benefit relationship for project activities;
- maintaining a sound balance between the adaptation and dissemination functions; and
- increasing the financial contributions by the clients (and thus help to better align the provided outputs and services with the clients' demands).

165. **Resource Inputs Funded by Sida.** The projects benefit from funding for similar resource inputs and activities, i.e.: technical assistance, consultancies, travel, workshops and farm inputs and equipment (in the case of FARMESA).

166. **Implementation Phasing.** The two projects are coming to the end of its current phase almost at the same time:

	1996		1997		1998		1999		2000		2001	
FARMESA		Build-up	stage					First	ext.	Second	ext.	
RELMA												

Figure 4: Phasing of FARMESA and RELMA Activities

167. The operations of FARMESA did in practice not start until mid-1997 while the activities in the field reached their anticipated level only in mid-1999. The Sida support was extended from the first three-year period by one year, 1999/2000, followed by a second one-year extension up to 30 June 2001. The RELMA three-year project phase will end on 31 December 2000.

B. Modus Operandi

168. **Development and Adaptation.** FARMESA undertakes special adaptation work through mini-projects. RELMA primarily monitors ongoing development/adaptation processes among services

and projects or supports services, projects and individuals to undertake adaptation work, partly as a capacity building effort.

169. **Dissemination of Information and Knowledge.** FARMESA supports training through advising on curriculum development and training of trainers. RELMA has been able to benefit from the efforts by RSCU that built up training capacity on land husbandry in particularly Kenya that is now serving client organisations in all six countries of operation.

C. Governance and Management Arrangements

170. The arrangements for governance and management represent the most important difference between the two projects.

171. RELMA as an institutional unit is an extension of Sida headquarters, hosted on ICRAF premises in Nairobi, with activities implemented in phases with much flexibility between the years. The management of the unit co-ordinates activities and makes decisions on implementation priorities and annual budget allocations. It benefits from a wide range of in-house subject matter capabilities. RELMA is advised by a committee meeting annually with two representatives from the public sector services on land management from each country.

172. FARMESA is a project implemented under the aegis of FAO. Implementation of field activities is facilitated by salaried national facilitators in each country while regional activities are directed by a Project Co-ordinator at the Co-ordinating Unit housed outside the FAO premises in Harare. In-house subject matter capability is restricted to three staff members. Decision-making on implementation priorities and budget allocations within country ceilings is vested with national co-ordinating committees with members from the public as well as the private sector that meet twice annually. The chairpersons of the national committees, representing "host institutions", constitute a regional co-ordinating committee that allocates funds among the countries and approves national work plans through semi-annual meetings.

D. Findings of the Mid-term Review of FARMESA 1999

173. The report from a joint Sida-FAO Mid-term Review (C. Lightfoot, W. Wapakala and B. Tengnäs, Sida, April 1999) highlights some of the major results attained so far, e.g. the establishment of national and local bodies (National Co-ordinating Committees (NCC) and Field Site Working groups as a basis for national decision making and field activities, the experiences of Farmer Groups and Farmer Field Schools as mechanisms for joint learning, the existence of cadres of trainees and the wealth of information available through FARMESA publications and reports.

174. The report also expressed concern about the lack of operationalisation of some of the mechanisms for governance and supervision that are specified in the Project Document and in the Agreement between Sida and FAO (i.e. the Technical Advisory Committee and the annual supervisory visits by FAO). Doubts were raised about the sustainability of efforts and achievements in terms of e.g.: (i) the establishment of viable networks that can catalyse method development in the region, (ii) the prevalent field-site focus which reduces the possibilities for the involvement of a wider range of actors, and (iii) the concentration of "method development" to the Co-ordinating Unit with little involvement of the national actors.

175. Based on these and other findings, the recommendations forwarded by the Mid-term Review included, *inter alia*, the following points:

Design

- more attention to development of working methods for support services and less attention to on-farm technology development,

- inclusion of mechanisms for FARMESA to link with the frontier of recent thinking on participatory approaches,

Focus of work in relation to objectives:

- focus on publishing a few key documents rather than issuing large numbers of reports,
- more attention to farming systems approaches in university level education,

Cost effectiveness:

- FAO and Sida to examine the potential for improved cost effectiveness,
- examine options for ensuring effective technical backstopping from FAO, and

Governance and ownership:

- separation of NCC and Regional Co-ordinating Committee (RCC) staff from practical implementation of field activities, and
- social science institutions to be represented in the NCCs and RCC.

176. The corrective actions taken by FARMESA in response to the Mid-term Review recommendations are described under 4.1, below.

2. The Evaluation Assignment

201. **Rationale for Evaluation.** The present evaluation assignment follows from the standard practice of Sida to assess the performance and impact of projects before the end of their implementation periods as a prelude to appraisal of proposals for future implementation phases. It is the first independent evaluation to be undertaken of either FARMESA or RELMA although FARMESA was subject to a mid-term review in February 1999 by representatives nominated by the project, FAO and Sida.

202. It has been decided to conduct the evaluation jointly for the two projects since their objectives are complementary and they are serving similar categories of clients; their current implementation cycles also end almost at the same time – on 31 December 2000 in the case of FARMESA and on 30 June 2001 for RELMA. The time for the evaluation is also auspicious since Sida is welcoming alternatives for future support to regional projects in addition to the proposal already submitted by FARMESA (which closely resembles the current project).

203. **The Terms of Reference.** The purpose of the joint independent evaluation of FARMESA and RELMA is to analyse the relevance of their strategies together with their past implementation performance and impact (the complete Terms of Reference are attached as APPENDIX 1). The evaluation report shall discuss the merits and disadvantages of continuing support to the projects, including in that discussion also the FARMESA proposal for a second phase, review the alternatives for channelling Sida funds for advancing working methods of support services in the natural resources sector and for promotion of better land management practices, and present recommendations to Sida on the design of future support to methods development in Eastern and Southern Africa. Specifically, the evaluation mission shall assess the:

- relevance of project objectives, concepts, design and priorities, including the balance between regional and national level activities, in relation to Sida policies and projects, national policies and demands, and the current frontier on methods development;
- overall progress of the projects and whether the expected output targets will be achieved;

- impact of the outputs and services of the projects on organisations in the public and private sectors that provide support services to smallholder farmers and on FAO together with the prospects for future uptake;
- impact of the projects on the Swedish "resource base", including associate experts and university students;
- linkages between the projects and the public and private support organisations in the agricultural sector, including research and higher learning institutions;
- appropriateness and effectiveness of the organisational and management arrangements, including the mechanisms for learning from experiences of other actors and the functions for administration and backstopping; and
- balance between regional and national ownership.

204. Based on the above assessments, the evaluation mission shall make technical and organisational recommendations on the design of possible future Sida support, including priorities, geographical coverage, design and roles and responsibilities of involved stakeholders.

205. The evaluation shall cover the activities of RELMA since their initiation in January 1998; the evaluation of FARMESA shall concentrate on events since February 1999 (the project commenced operations on 1 July 1996), when the Mid-term Review was undertaken, while also taking into account the recommendations of that review and the responses that they have prompted.

206. **The Evaluation Team.** The evaluation team fielded by HJP International comprised Mr. Jan Erikson (Economist/Team Leader), Dr. Gilbert Mudenda (Development Specialist; first round of country visits only), Dr. Eva Tobisson (Social Anthropologist) and Mr. Ian Walton (Agronomist).

207. **Schedule for the Evaluation Work.** A first round of country visits, that were all arranged through the offices of FARMESA and RELMA, included Zimbabwe (6–11 April), Zambia (12–15 April) and Tanzania (17–18 April). Interim Notes, reflecting preliminary findings and emerging issues after the first visits were discussed with Sida on 4 May and subsequently disseminated to FARMESA and RELMA. A second round of country visits was conducted in Tanzania (9–11 May), Kenya (11–14 May), Uganda (15–18 May) and Ethiopia (19–23 May).

208. During the country visits, the evaluation team met with representatives of the projects; government extension, research and training services; NGOs; commercial organisations; other projects; Sida, FAO and other donors; and other regional support organisations together with a large number of farmers and farmer representatives. In spite of the compressed time schedule, one FARMESA field site and one RELMA field activity were visited in each country, an arrangement made possible through good preparations by FARMESA and RELMA and generous contributions of time outside the regular working hours. When feasible, the country visits were concluded by briefing sessions with FARMESA and RELMA representatives to share the initial findings and issues. In all, about 15 personweeks or 60 percent of the mission time was devoted to country visits. A brief visit was paid by the mission to FAO in Rome on 8 May to discuss the work undertaken to that date and to benefit from briefings on FAO activities related to FARMESA (the itinerary and people met are shown in APPENDIX 2).

209. In addition, the evaluation team reviewed agreements, policy and guideline documents, plans of operations, annual work plans and budgets, progress reports, minutes from committee meetings, technical reports, reports of seminars and past project reviews (APPENDIX 3).

210. The findings and conclusions of the mission were presented and discussed with representatives of FARMESA and RELMA in Mombasa, Kenya on 13–14 June. The comments received on both the Interim Notes and the Mombasa draft have facilitated the preparation of the Draft Final

Report. The conclusions and proposals presented in this report, however, solely reflect the opinion of the evaluation team.

211. **The Layout of the Evaluation Report.** The layout of the report conforms to the standard Sida format. It presents the findings on FARMESA and RELMA together under design and implementation headings, respectively, in order to facilitate the readers' appreciation of the similarities and differences of the two projects. Since most of the shortcomings perceived by the mission stem from problems with the strategies and approaches prescribed in the project documents rather than from implementation shortfalls, the findings on the design aspects are reviewed in its own chapter (Ch.3) where they are compared to the guiding Sida policies and national policies described in Ch.1, above. The findings on the implementation aspects in Ch.4 should in turn be seen in relation to the description of the project designs in Ch.2. The conclusions and recommendations on future support to methods development in the region are presented in Ch.5 while the more general lessons from the FARMESA and RELMA experiences are reviewed in the concluding Ch. 6.

212. **Anticipated Next Steps.** It is expected that Sida will complete its review of this draft final report by mid-August after which the final report will be printed. In the meantime, RELMA awaits guidance for the preparation of a work plan for 2001, preferably within a more comprehensive project document. If the recommendations by the mission on closer co-operation between RELMA and FARMESA are accepted by Sida and other stakeholders, it is proposed that a joint task force be set up to prepare the required vision to guide FARMESA and RELMA planning for 2001 together with a framework for the alignment process.

3. Findings on the Design of the Projects

3.1 FARMESA

A. Project Origin and the Formulation Process

301. **Evaluation Findings on the FARMESA Predecessors.** The FARMESA project is based on the experiences of four previous Sida-funded regional programmes in Southern and Eastern Africa, i.e. Farming Systems Programme (FSP), Agricultural Operations Technology for Smallholders in Eastern and Southern Africa (AGROTEC), the Plant Protection and Improvement Programme (PPIP) and the Aquaculture for Local Community Development Programme (ALCOM; continues as a separate programme under SADC).

302. The evaluations of the predecessors reported, in addition to the achievements, similar shortcomings, e.g.:

- a tendency to concentrate upon field experiences generated from within the programmes rather than taking advantage of knowledge and experience derived from a wider context of national and international initiatives;
- concentration of programme activities on a limited number of individuals who tended to share and reinforce the same attitudinal problems and lack of vision and who therefore served to prevent the exploitation of real or potential national and international centres of excellence; and
- limited collaboration with NGOs.

303. **Identification.** The report from the Identification Mission in preparation of the new project (L. Lundgren and M. Hall, 1994) concluded, among other things, that:

- the new project should capitalise on the momentum built up through the previous individual programmes with the aim to improve research and extension for smallholder farming,
- the farming systems approach using social science expertise should be the basis for the formulation and development of the project, and
- the focus should be on changing attitudes and work practices of researchers and extension staff through long-term training – rather than on the development of new technologies.

304. The identification mission noted with concern that the previous programmes had tended to interpret field activities quite narrowly, in terms of small projects concerned with aspects of technology research and development, which were favoured by members of co-ordination/advisory committees (especially those engaged in research). The new project would counteract such tendencies.

305. The report outlined an integrated project focusing on the integration of Farming Systems Approaches FSA into education and training at university, diploma and certificate levels; networking (creating and supporting networks, dissemination of relevant experience, workshops, study tours, fellowships, etc.) and field activities (studies of previous and ongoing field projects, support to pilot activities based on a farming systems approach). Sida was recommended to contract FAO as the lead executive agency and the Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences as the key international partner in the implementation of the new project.

306. **Preparation and Appraisal of the Project Document.** Sida invited FAO to prepare a draft project proposal (1995) and a Project Document for the first three years of operation. The FAO proposal was appraised by a Sida appointed mission in March 1996 (L. Leander and R. Purcell). The appraisal concluded that although there had been considerable progress in the regional assimilation of farming systems approaches and methodology into government agricultural research and development for at least fifteen years, the operationalisation of farming systems approaches was still limited and many practitioners remained to be trained in the region. It was projected that a five-year support to FARMESA would be sufficient to sustain ongoing farming systems activities in the region (including curricula reform of agricultural teaching institutions) and that the networking functions would be taken over by regional and national private farming systems associations within the same period.

307. In addition to sanctioning the main features of the proposed Project Document, the mission endorsed the Sida view that the results and lessons learned from FARMESA should be fed into the planning and implementation of Sida's bilateral agricultural programmes and projects in the region. The executive role of FAO was identified as critical for the success of the project, in terms of ensuring administrative effectiveness and feedback from other FAO managed projects in the region as well as technical backstopping. The FAO sub-regional office in Harare was expected to enhance the technical backstopping capacity at headquarters.

308. In April 1996, Sida took a decision to fund FARMESA under the budget frame *Special Programmes for Methods Development* (SEK 36 million over three years; 1 July 1996–30 June 1999) and to contract FAO as the Executing Agency (the first phase has subsequently been extended by two one-year periods up to 30 June 2001). The agreement with Sida stipulates that FAO shall co-operate with the Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences on terms to be agreed upon by the three parties. It also specifies that FAO shall provide Sida's Department of Natural Resources and the Environment with yearly reports, including accounts of difficulties and shortcomings as well as suggestions for remedial action. The Agreement does not contain any references to FAO's role as a technical back-stopper to FARMESA.

309. In Sida's documentation it is clearly spelled out that although the overriding responsibility for contacts with and monitoring of FARMESA rests with the Sida headquarters, the Swedish Embassies in FARMESA core countries are expected to closely follow the activities and ensure that the experiences are fed into other Sida-funded initiatives in the region.

B. Special Project Concepts

310. FARMESA is influenced by several concepts, including the Farming Systems Approach (FSA), Technology Development and Transfer (TDT), methods adaptation and development, "mini-projects" as mechanisms for testing and assessing methods, and national "ownership" of the project activities. The meanings and implications of those concepts are reviewed in the following sections.

311. **The Farming Systems Approach.** The farming systems approach (FSA) was conceived as an agricultural research tool. It was introduced in the eastern and southern African region in the 1970s, particularly in association with CIMMYT-sponsored research programmes. The approach was designed to encourage those agricultural researchers with a narrow commodity or disciplinary focus to: (a) appreciate more fully the overall farming context in which the outcomes of their work would be used; and (b) recognise that this improved understanding must strongly influence the content and future direction of their work. It was anticipated that newly developed technologies aimed at solving farming problems and increasing farm productivity would thereby be better tailored to farmers' varying socio-economic circumstances, perceived needs, potentials and ambitions and hence be more readily adopted among the farming community.

312. The underlying assumption of the FSA remains that systems-oriented research will generate technologies or packages of technical recommendations which farmers will be keen to adopt. However, many of the constraints faced by farmers have less to do with a lack of agricultural technology *per se* than with farmers' inadequate financial or physical access to available technology, and with their frequent lack of incentive to invest in alternative farm enterprises or modified farming practices. Accordingly, the trend in rural development circles is to develop mechanisms for interacting with client farmers and rural communities on a broader basis in an attempt to deal with the complex of issues involved in improving rural livelihoods.

313. While FSA can play a role in this regard, few rural development practitioners outside the agricultural research and extension services would consider FSA to be all-encompassing in providing the necessary methodologies. Nevertheless, experience with the use of the approach, including its farmer-focused, diagnostic elements, has contributed to the continuing evolution of a toolbox of client–oriented, participatory methodologies. This is available for use by a wide range of practitioners involved in agricultural and rural development, including agricultural extension agents in both the public and private (non-government) sectors and social scientists concerned with the dynamics of rural households and rural livelihoods improvement.

314. The extent and manner of FSA incorporation into mainstream agricultural research, advisory systems and teaching institutions varies widely across the region and among the member countries of FARMESA. After almost thirty years, and "despite the considerable efforts made……the impact of FSA in sub-Saharan Africa has not been significant"[4] in terms of the application and rates of adoption of technologies developed by research institutions. Wide variations in the interpretation and application of the approach may have contributed to the difficulties experienced in its institutionalisation and hence its overall effectiveness. Perhaps as a way of attempting to popularise the approach among a wider circle of rural development practitioners, the term FSA is increasingly inter-

[4] Anandajayasekeram, P., *Farming Systems Approach to Technology Development and Transfer*. A Sourcebook. FARMESA, 1999.

preted by its proponents as being virtually synonymous with 'demand-driven, farmer-focused, participatory rural development'. However, the FSA more commonly maintains an agricultural research-oriented bias. As such, it is primarily concerned with technology development based on field diagnoses of problems and potentials, and often leads in a linear fashion to formalised experimentation by researchers of agricultural research or higher learning institutes, the evaluation of results, and the subsequent generation/dissemination of technical recommendations.

315. FARMESA as currently implemented can be viewed as attempting to follow the trend of a broader interpretation of FSA. Whilst this may be a logical step in the evolution of FSA, the project is arguably becoming involved as a result in aspects of rural development outside its specific area of expertise (e.g. delivery of rural financial services) and inconsistent with the originally anticipated focus and mandate of the project (project role interpreted in the field sites as that of an area-based development agency). Such changes of direction need to be taken with due deliberation among host countries, donor and the executing agency of the programming implications, and should not be introduced as a matter of short-term expediency. If FARMESA is to establish itself as a regional entity, it will need to be perceived by its clientele as a key source of methodological information and distilled experience of techniques for improved interaction with farmers and rural communities in dealing with smallholder farming issues.

316. **Technology Development and Transfer (TDT).** FSA is viewed as an approach to Technology Development and Transfer – TDT. The TDT approach claims to combine available scientific and indigenous technical knowledge in addressing priority problems as perceived by the communities. The problems are identified through participatory diagnosis, using interactive and visual techniques such as PRA. Although the term TDT refers to the application of participatory approaches throughout the entire sequence of research and development (including diagnosis, planning, implementation, evaluation, eventual adoption and feedback), problem analysis and selection of appropriate technologies are identified as the most crucial steps in the participatory process.

317. TDT emerged in response to the negative experiences of the earlier Transfer of Technology (TOT) orientation of FSA. The latter was developed in relation to agriculture under industrial and green revolution conditions and hence it was found to be less suited to the complex, diverse and risk prone agriculture characterising most part of the tropics. The principal difference between TOT and TDT is that the former stresses "transfer" of technology (without involving the intended beneficiaries), while the latter requires technologies to be "developed" before being "transferred" ("development" presupposing an active involvement of the intended beneficiaries). The TDT paradigm advocates on-farm trials based on collaboration between farmers, extension staff and scientists, as an alternative to the scientists' trials on research stations and in laboratories.

318. The reflections that can be made in relation to the FARMESA adoption of the TDT approach to FSA include the following: The "technology development" focus of TDT partly explains FARMESA's problem of separating technologies from the methods used for interacting with and mobilising farmers for change. Also, while the TDT approach attaches primary significance to participatory approaches to both problem diagnosis and selection of feasible technologies, FARMESA appears to have dealt only with the former. The information on livelihood problems obtained from the participatory community diagnosis undertaken in FARMESA field sites as a basis for mini-project activities is bound to be fairly general (e.g. "poor soil fertility", "lack of food", etc.). The information is used as a basis for inviting researchers to formulate proposals that can be funded as mini-projects. This implies that it is the scientist rather than the farmers who select the appropriate technology to address the problem identified through the community diagnosis. In practice, therefore, FARMESA can be said to operate in accordance with the more conventional FSA Transfer

of Technology (TOT) approach, through which the scientist is "deciding what would be good for the farmers, and what experiments should be designed and executed[5]". By labelling the TDT approach "participatory", while limiting the participation to problem diagnosis, scientists are free to focus their research on technology development (as in the case of many FARMESA mini-projects). The fact that the research is carried out on individual or community farmland – rather than on research stations – does not make it any more participatory than research that forms part of more conventional FSA.

319. **Methods Development, Adaptation and Application.** The concept of "method" in relation to "technology" is a matter of concern in relation to FARMESA, although the project staff themselves do not seem to find this issue problematic. The problem of separating methods from technologies was brought up in the report from the Mid-term Review. It was noted that the mandate of FARMESA does not specify if the project shall deal with technology testing and adaptation as a 'primary' activity, or if it should be restricted to the development of work methods in the meaning of field methodologies for interacting with and mobilising farmers. The same problem remains an issue of principal concern for the present evaluation assignment.

320. In spite of the fact that Sida expects FARMESA to focus on "methods", the Sida documentation does not provide any guidance as to what is implied. Sida's implicit notion of methods in the context of programmes such as FARMESA seem to refer to approaches and work methods applied by e.g. government extension staff, field employees of NGOs and others (increasingly also field staff of commercial agricultural firms) who are interacting with smallholder farmers (i.e. groups of farmers, farm families as well as individual women and men). By supporting "methods development" through Special Programme funds and through other means, Sida expects to gain experiences as a basis for improving its approaches and methods for working with small farmers in its development co-operation generally.

321. Although Technology Development and Transfer (TDT) apparently constitute the primary "methodological" focus of FARMESA, the project documentation implicitly brings forward at least three different notions of methods. In the first respect, "method" is loosely used in a generic sense to encompass a mixture of what in effect constitute approaches, procedures, and activities. Thus, "method" is a way to "go about" doing things in a more or less organised manner. Secondly, "methods" are equated with techniques for promoting participation – usually for a specific purpose such as undertaking a community diagnosis in the FARMESA field sites, or occasionally with a view to attain the more long term objective of empowerment of groups and individuals in those areas. Thirdly, "method" is used to refer to applied research methods, with reference to the Farming Systems school of thought in relation to Technology Development and Transfer.

322. The list of "Applied Research Methods being adapted/tested through mini-projects in FARMESA member countries" contains the following:

- Farming Systems Approach to Technology Development and Transfer (FSA-TDT)
- Participatory Diagnosis
- Participatory Planning
- Participatory Impact Monitoring
- Participatory Evaluation
- Farmer Groups, on-farm research (implementation)
- Farmer Field Schools (technology dissemination)

[5] Anandajayasekeram, P, Torkelsson, A., Dixon, J., *Emerging Participatory Approaches to Technology Development and Transfer: What is New?,* p.3, FARMESA, January 2000.

- Saving and Credit Schemes (technology adoption)
- Farm-level Multiplication and Distribution of Germplasm (technology adoption)
- Training for Transformation
- Agribusiness Development (Rural Input Dealership)
- Technology Transfer through Primary Schools
- Handover of Irrigation Schemes for Community Management
- Community Videos
- Participatory Rural Communication Appraisal.

323. The list illustrates two principal problems: (a) the difficulty of separating methods from technology, and (b) the lack of clarity of what is meant by "methods". The first problem reflects the general bias inherent in the Farming Systems Approach, towards technologies rather than the methods used for interacting with (and mobilising) farmers for development (see above). Regarding the second problem, few of the "methods" listed could be classified as *research* methods. In the literature, research methods are commonly defined as a comprehensive set of approaches to gather data and to analyse specific problems. While methods (qualitative and quantitative) are the nuts and bolts (or mechanics) of data collection–research methodologies shape and inform the process of research through bringing in different dimensions (e.g. personal, financial, time, institutional and political) that will influence the selection of methods. The difference between participatory research (using e.g. PRA) and more conventional research approaches is not the methods but the methodological contexts of their application including the attitude of the researcher. Similar methods can be used quite differently according to the choice (methodological) that the researchers make.

324. Among the issues appearing in the FARMESA list of so called applied research methods, and in consideration of the common research vocabulary, it is only FSA-TDT that could be classified as a research methodology (rather than method). Most of the items listed represent *approaches* to reach farmers with improved technologies for the object of promoting development, e.g. organising farmers in Farmer Groups or Farmer Field Schools, conducting Training for Transformation sessions or Participatory Rural Community Appraisals, using Community Videos or carrying out Farm-level Multiplication and Distribution of Improved Seeds as an activity. Yet other items represent *channels* to reach farmers with improved technologies, e.g. through using "Micro-finance Institutions" or Primary Schools.

325. While the evaluation team agrees that FARMESA is correct in making use of available participatory approaches and tools in pursuing its objectives, regardless of whether or not these can be labelled "methods" and in spite of the overall technological bias, it appears less obvious that the programme should devote time and other resources to testing and adaptation of such "methods" considering that they are already well-known and widely applied in the region. Examples of the latter are diagnostic surveys and participatory monitoring in preparation and follow-up of field oriented activities. Farmer Groups and Farmer Field Schools are other illustrations of well known and established approaches which ought to be sufficiently well developed to be considered for use in the appropriate setting, rather than requiring further testing, adaptation and fine-tuning to suit each and every local-specific condition. While the latter may be justified in a project having a specific area development focus (e.g. a district or sub-district), the comprehensive regional mandate of FARMESA implies that such an approach would have to take into account an indefinite variety of local specific situations – an impossible venture.

326. **The Mini-Project Approach.** "Mini-projects" are devised as the major means of FARMESA to adapt methods (rather than through monitoring other methods development efforts). Under this approach, farmers' problems are initially identified through diagnostic surveys in small localities

within two pre-selected areas (Field Sites) in each country. Staff associated with FARMESA, or more commonly researchers who are invited to apply for funds for mini-projects, suggest suitable technologies to the farmers to address their problem. Based on the technology to be adopted, an appropriate "method", most commonly Farmer Groups of Farmer Field Schools, is selected for conveying the technology to the farmers. FARMESA sponsors the implementation of mini-project by financing inputs, implements, transport and research grants. Upon completion of the mini-project, typically after 12–18 months, the experience gained is documented and reviewed at a national scientific workshop together with the experiences from other mini-projects. Based on the findings and discussions at the workshop, the experiences are expected to be translated into guidelines for the work of other extension and research staff in the region or become inputs into a training programme. The Proceedings from National Scientific Workshops are written and compiled in such a way that they are hardly accessible to others than researchers in the natural sciences. FARMESA does not yet seem to have established clear mechanisms and procedures for translation of scientific reports into more user-friendly and practical material.

327. The mini-projects have the advantage of allowing technologies that have remained on the research shelves to be tried in farmers' fields by use of participatory approaches while at the same time "leaving things on the ground" for the communities at the Field Sites. However, the mini-projects also suffer from conceptual and practical weaknesses: (a) their links to the fairly general statements about livelihood situations and problems resulting from the initial community diagnosis of problems are often far-fetched, implying that it is questionable if at all the mini-projects are responding to local demands; (b) their links to the demand for more effective methods elsewhere in the region are tenuous; (c) their cost-effectiveness is not assured compared to alternative means for acquiring knowledge on adaptation of methods; (d) the stages of progress from testing at Field Sites to dissemination to other organisations in the region are not immediately comprehensible; and (e) the mini-projects are deemed to require a cumbersome management arrangement.

328. While generally speaking the FARMESA approach to farmer participation is preferable to the one pursued under one of its predecessors (AGROTEC) dealing with technology testing and transfer, the "systems approach" of the latter was in effect more developed than what can be said about FARMESA. The identification of "mini-projects" under FARMESA is largely based on the initiative and interests of researchers, with little regard about rationale in relation to the programme at large (both regionally and nationally). The selection of field sites and trials on specific technologies under AGROTEC appeared more strategic. Activities were selected with a view to address the various points in the chain of farm operations, in order to obtain a more complete coverage of farming systems operations applicable to the region.

329. **"Ownership" of Project Activities.** By "ownership" FARMESA implies the ability of the national co-ordination committees and the Regional Co-ordinating Committee to determine policies, implementation priorities and operational guidelines (but apparently not a significant role in financing). This interpretation of ownership, while ensuring a legitimate interest of the nominated committee members to influence project planning and implementation, presents problems of various kinds. First, the fact that all Regional Co-ordinating Committee (RCC) members are representing national FARMESA interests implies that the national "ownership" in practice takes precedence over the regional mandate, i.e. the regional dimension amounts to little beyond the sum of FARMESA's national interests and activities. The situation would be different if the RCC (in addition to the national representatives) had accommodated individuals who were assigned in their capacity to represent regional rather than national interests (e.g. government, civil society and research interests) and who had no vested interest in individual country activities. Through such an arrangement, the national progress reports and workplans could be discussed and appraised during RCC meeting with respect to their actual and potential contribution to the fulfilment of FARMESA's

objectives on a regional scale. Secondly, the composition of national and regional co-ordination committees presents problems in relation to clients not represented in the committees, including Sida as a client and a financing agency. Potential clients in the non-governmental sector are finding it difficult to nominate committee representatives while Sida is only represented as an *ex-officio* member. As a financier, Sida is not in a position to ensure that cost-effectiveness is considered prior to implementation of activities or that the activities conform to the objectives of Swedish development co-operation. The issue of legitimacy in relation to the clients of the FARMESA is all the more important since the project does not have an institutional host with a recognised mandate to represent its members in an impartial way.

C. Rationale for the Project

330. According to the Project Document, FARMESA is justified on the basis of: (a) a perceived gap between crop yields at research stations and farmers' fields; (b) a need among advisory staff of NGOs for assistance with technical aspects and work methods; (c) needs among teaching and research institutions to upgrade their capabilities in relation to "new smallholder approaches"; and (d) a perception of the above problems being common to several countries.

331. While this rationale may well make perfect sense, the Project Document does not include an analysis of the problems that emanate from use of poor methods in Sida projects or in other project and services and there is no assessment of the demand for knowledge about improved methods among support organisations or their interest in adopting novel ways. Further, there is neither assessment of the policy environment in the five countries nor a review of which other projects, services or networks that are adapting and disseminating better working methods.

D. Objectives and Outputs

332. **Objectives.** The *development objective* of FARMESA is formulated as follows in the Project Document:

> "To contribute to the sustained rise in the standard of living of smallholder families in East and Southern Africa through improved household food security, rising real family incomes and appropriate management of natural resources".

333. Based on the development objective, the *intermediate objective* has received the following wording:

> "To promote and consolidate participative, holistic, interdisciplinary, gender sensitive and farmer focused work-methods within smallholder development institutions in order to increase the availability and uptake of appropriate smallholder technology within a facilitating policy environment".

334. Further, FARMESA has been endowed with four additional *immediate* objectives to provide more operational guidance:

1. To develop and utilise improved field methodologies for the identification, prioritisation, testing and adaptation of appropriate smallholder technologies.
2. To gather and document project field experience and other relevant national experience, and to disseminate it within participating and associate countries within the region.
3. To improve in-serve training and formal education for strengthening human and institutional capacity to apply the new perspective.
4. To support collaborating institutions in applying the methodologies and technologies development under Objective 1 on a wider basis within ongoing research and field activities.

335. The objectives do not reflect the requirements and potential contributions of Sida supported projects. While they may not be regarded as clear and easily understood by planners and

implementers in different countries, they also deviate from good practices in other ways. It is usually recognised that the use of one development objective and one immediate objective (the latter of which defines the expected achievements through use of project resources within the specified time frame), is ideal to express the project's intentions while simultaneously allowing for a certain leeway in implementation. In the case of FARMESA, the four immediate objectives have unfortunately been formulated as activities to be performed rather than as desired states of affairs to be attained. It appears that, as a consequence, the immediate objectives have locked FARMESA into specific approaches instead of allowing it to adjust its strategy to encountered problems and new circumstances. On the other hand, the objectives do not appear to preclude other approaches than mini-projects as mechanisms for improving field methodologies.

336. **Output Categories, Progress Indicators and Targets.** Common output categories are support to field sites, completed workshops, printed publications and revised documents. The outputs are not linked towards higher goals such as attained knowledge or acquired skills among the client groups (through methods testing, evaluation, adaptation and dissemination) but rather appear as presumably desirable but isolated achievements within each of the four immediate objectives. The progress indicators are typically expressed as deadline dates for completion of the required activities.

E. Project Clients

337. According to the Project Document, the principal target group of FARMESA is middle-level professionals (technical specialists, scientists and planners) concerned with smallholder development, with a certain bias towards the research services at the expense of the field level support services (i.e. extension/advisory, input supply, finance and marketing services). Small-scale farmers are designated as the ultimate beneficiaries of the project activities.

338. Presumably, the middle-level professionals are designated as a principal target group since their involvement is deemed important for the adoption of improved working practices by the front line staff of public and private sector support services. However, the Project Document does not include a description of the envisaged process – from dissemination of improved practices from FARMESA via middle-level professionals at headquarters and at district level in advisory services, research institutions or training institutes to the practitioners who are interacting with farmers – nor does it attempt to identify and analyse the obstacles that prevent the middle-level professionals from performing their required duties today. The Project Document also omits explicit references to Sida projects and to NGOs and commercial sector organisations.

F. Project Strategy and Modus Operandi

339. **Core Elements.** FARMESA's intention is to promote a farming systems and participatory approach to agricultural technology development and transfer, support services and policy making. The FARMESA documentation helpfully describes the project strategy as participatory, farmer-focused, holistic (re. systems approach), interdisciplinary and gender sensitive. The primary focus is upon "techniques that allow field workers, researchers and policy analysts to collaborate with farmers in solving their immediate farming problems". The core elements of the strategy are identified as: "search for effective promising field methods and testing in new situations; synthesis and dissemination of methods knowledge; training in these methods; and replication/institutionalisation of these methods". In addition, the Project Document and the *Implementation Framework* contain detailed descriptions of what is termed strategies (but should perhaps more adequately be called approaches or sequences of activities) for achieving the individual immediate objectives. Operationalisation of new systems and participatory perspectives in agricultural technology development and

transfer is held to require the identification, testing, adaptation and fine-tuning of both new and established methods (including application of existing methods in new contexts). The methodological pilot undertakings are to be assessed and documented, as a basis for capacity building, institutionalisation and networking.

340. The project strategy may not in all respects be well defined and comprehensible but it conforms with several of the guidelines for *Special Programmes for Methods Development* by supporting and utilising local/regional human resources and facilitating co-operation between individuals, institutions and countries within the region and by establishing and maintaining collaboration with UN organisation. Unfortunately, it is not explicit on how support to institutions and networks with mandates to disseminate experiences should be organised (cf. *Regional Strategy for Support to Eastern and Southern Africa*) and makes no reference to development and improvement of methods for activities within areas prioritised by Sida (with particular focus on the needs of bilateral programmes) or to facilitation of competence and capacity development in Sweden.

341. The Implementation Frameworks and the annual workplans do not refer to any particular priorities or themes among the improved working practices (or the farming technologies for that matter) but all methods have presumably high priority. It is also silent on how the right balance between activities at the regional level and activities at the national levels should be maintained to prevent a complete devolution of all responsibilities to the individual countries

342. **Gender Focus.** FARMESA is making efforts in the direction of improving its focus on gender equity issues. A decision was taken during the 7th RCC meeting in November 1999 to formulate *Guidance on Gender Reporting* to be used in the compilation of the progress report for 1999. Although the guidance (dated 10/12/1999) represents a step in the right direction, the information requested is confined to *numbers* of women participating in various FARMESA groups (e.g. NCCs and Field Site Working Groups) and activities (e.g. workshops, training and study tours). The information does not include such things as the feasibility of mini-projects from a gender equity point of view, or the relevance of training material as a basis for understanding gender relationships or undertaking gender analysis and planning.

343. The *Implementation Framework* (July 1999) refers to "gender sensitivity" as well as "empowerment and full participation of farm women, men and youth" as part of the twelve FARMESA Operational Principles. The Project Selection Criteria to be applied for the screening and selection of mini-project proposals refers to the Operational Principles, but does not include gender equity as part of the ten criteria listed. However, "gender equity" is included among the criteria for field site "project scoring" in two examples from Kenya and Zambia that were made available to the Evaluation Team.

344. A *FARMESA Gender Strategy* is available in draft version for circulation among RCC members. With reference to the "FARMESA philosophy", gender equity is described in terms of facilitating equal opportunities and benefits for men and women and mainstreaming gender concerns in project activities and in the project cycle. The strategy envisage that improvements will be made with regard to; (a) the reporting format and Management Information System (by including gender disaggregated data), (b) FARMESA publications (attention to gender issues), (c) gender balance in training (trainers as well as participants) and in the management and governance structures, and (d) linkages with institutions dealing with gender policies and gender training in relation to technology development and transfer. It is unfortunate that the strategy forwards the impression that improved gender equity is primarily a matter of changing *attitudes* through training and sensitisation, and through improving the reporting format. While the Evaluation Team appreciates the efforts made by in response to the RCC request, additional efforts are required to ensure that gender analysis is undertaken as a basis for problem identification and planning of programme activities.

345. **Environmental Focus.** To the extent that the FARMESA mini-projects deal with the sustainable management of farm resources, the overall short- to medium-term environmental impact of the project is likely to be neutral to positive. The continued incorporation of a 'systems approach' in the curricula of higher education facilities and the heavy emphasis on in-service training provided through FARMESA is expected to increase the understanding among present and future generations of agriculturists of the importance of sustainable management of the resource base by smallholder farmers and to equip service providers with the tools (as part participatory methodologies) for encouraging efficient resource management during their dealings with client farmers.

G. Major Activities

346. **Testing and Adaptation of Methods.** The mini-projects constitute the most important mechanism for testing and adapting methods for support staff to interact with farmers (cf. para. 331–332, above). In addition, the Project Document refers to monitoring of other projects as a complementary means to gain knowledge of effective methods. There is only fleeting reference, however, to the possibility of materially and professionally supporting methods development or adaptation work within other projects and services. This is unfortunate since the latter approach has several advantages over FARMESA implementing its own mini-projects: (a) they are commonly planned in full cognisance of important previous efforts as a result of systematic pre-project inventories; (b) their emergence is likely to be the result of genuine demand for methodological advance rather than the result of a technical response to farmers' problems; (c) the generated results are likely to be more reliable since they are generally allowed to go on beyond the 12–18 months allotted to mini-projects; and (d) they are more cost-effective since the management arrangements are already in place through the project or institutional set-up.

347. **Dissemination of Information and Knowledge About Improved Methods.** The experience extracted through the mini-projects is scheduled to undergo assessment at national and regional scientific workshops after which the most valuable insights are to be categorised and stored in regional and national data banks. Dissemination of information and knowledge is expected to take place free of charge through three principal means:

- *Electronically through the FARMESA web-site*: this is a reliable, instant and inexpensive way to disseminate newsletters, technical documents and management reports to clients with computer access;
- *Publications*: these might include both prints – manuals, technical reports and reference documents – for use by field support services staff and videos intended for use by farmers' groups; and
- *Training*: this is the best means for conveying more complex knowledge and for building skills among the clients in participatory approaches and methods. According to the Project Document, FARMESA would, after identifying training needs in universities, colleges and other training services, develop training materials based on field site experiences and train trainers.

H. Organisation, Management and Administration

348. The organisational structure of FARMESA is shown in Figure 5 (below):

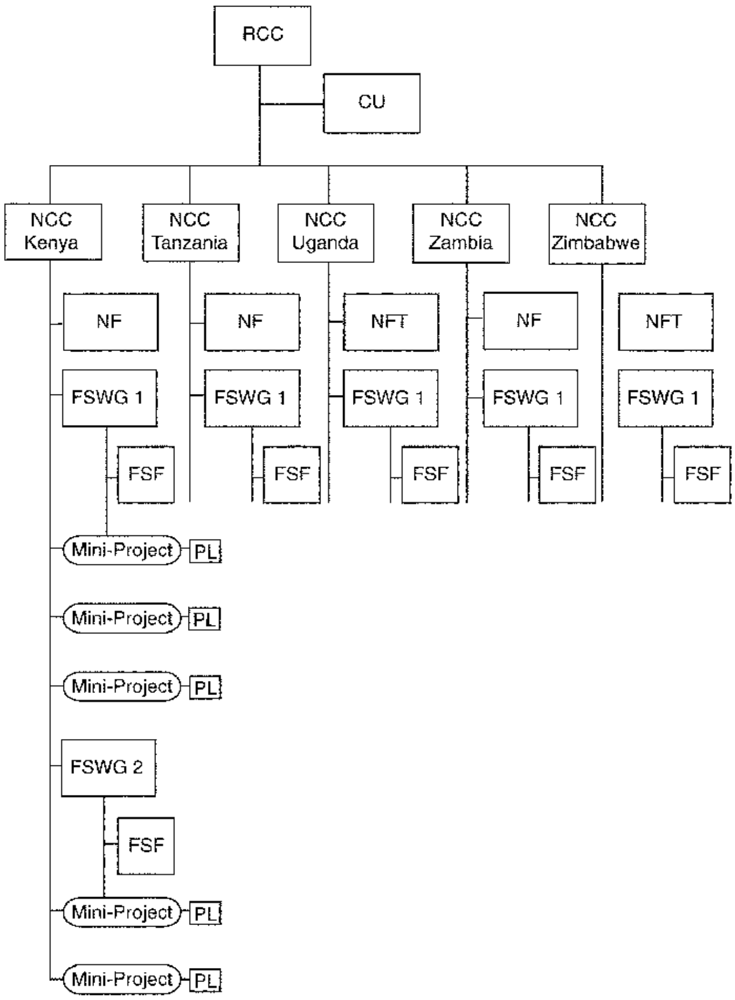

Figure 5: FARMESA Organisation

349. **Governance.** The decision making body in each core country is the *National Co-ordinating Committee* (NCC), composed of some six to nine members representing public institutions, including research and higher education institutions, a few private sector organisations and representatives of FAO and Sida (Swedish Embassies) as ex-officio members. The NCC is headed by a chairperson, elected by its members, representing a host institution and meets at least twice a year. The host institution (through its head) provides overall policy guidance on national policies and priorities within which FARMESA should be implemented. The NCC reviews and approves projects and workplans for submission to the Regional Co-ordination Committee and assists in the monitoring and evaluation of field site activities.

350. The membership of the NCCs Committees lends legitimacy to the governance arrangement although the private sector is under-represented in relation to public research and training institutions. Sida representatives are only *ex-officio* members but should be able to exercise the required

influence to serve Swedish supported projects and the Swedish "resource base". Project "ownership" is ensured through delegation of responsibility for establishing implementation priorities, budget allocations and modus operandi.

351. At the regional level, the *Regional Co-ordination Committee* (RCC), the apex body of FARMESA, meets twice per year and is composed of the chairpersons of the NCCs, National Facilitators, and the Project Co-ordinator at the Co-ordination Unit at FARMESA headquarters in Harare, as well as representatives of FAO and Sida as ex-officio members. The RCC Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson (rotating among the five core countries) are elected among the RCC members for a term of one year. The RCC approves mini-projects, workplans and annual recurrent budget allocations to participating countries, approve regional level projects and promote the exchange of relevant experience on a regional scale.

352. The Regional Co-ordination Committee is in a position to safeguard the regional aspect of the project by ensuring that the methodological work at the national level contributes to rather than replicate other efforts in the region and that mini-projects serve to benefit not only the farmers at the field sites but the public and private sector organisations in the country and in the region that are interested in improving their working methods.

353. **Linkages to Project Clients.** FARMESA is connected to its clients through the national committees, through memberships in networks and through personal interaction with the staff at the Co-ordinating Unit and the national facilitators.

354. It is not clear what routines that are employed by FARMESA to assess interest among clients to adopt improved working methods (as opposed to assessing gaps between applied and available techniques). Support to establishment and operations of networks on methodology development and dissemination were expected to be important outputs of the project at inception.

355. **Managerial and Technical Capabilities.** At the national level, an FAO-employed *National Facilitator* (in the case of Uganda and Zimbabwe National Facilitation Teams, NFTs, comprising 3-4 people), commonly based in the host institution that oversees implementation, acts as the technical and administrative arm of the project on behalf of the NCC. The National Facilitator manages and accounts for project funds and prepares reports and other required information. The facilitators prepare Letters of Agreement between the project and the organisation responsible for the implementation of the mini-projects approved by the RCC as a basis for the release of funds by the national FAO office. There are no specific methods specialists at national levels (e.g. sociologists/social anthropologists).

356. A *Field Site Working Group* (FSWG) is co-ordinating the planning and implementation of the mini-projects in each of the two field sites. The members (9–11 persons) include farmers, researchers, extension staff, local leaders, NGO representatives and other stakeholders. The Field Site Facilitator can attend NCC meetings and should be a member of the National Facilitation Team.

357. At the regional level, the *Co-ordinating Unit* (CU) is the co-ordinating office of FARMESA and the technical and administrative arm of the RCC. The CU is manned by a Project Co-ordinator (Chief Executive of the project), a Methods Specialist, an Information and Communication Specialist, a socio-economist (Associate Expert) and support staff. It is responsible for supplying the required subject matter capability – from in-house or through consultancies – for methods adaptation while also disseminating information and knowledge. It is responsible for procurement and recruitment of consultants and for monitoring and reporting on project activities to the executing agency FAO. The work of the Co-ordinating Unit is guided by a work programme but its budget is kept modest in the interest of national "ownership".

358. **Administration.** Funds are *disbursed* from the FAO Regional Office for Africa (RAFA) in Accra via the FAO country offices to the host institutions in the respective countries from where they are routed directly to mini-projects or through the office of the National Facilitator. In most countries, expenditure receipts are kept by the host institution while *accounts* are submitted via the FAO country offices to RAFA in Accra for reconciliation against Sida allocations. *Procurement* of goods and services is usually done through the Co-ordinating Office in Harare while *international recruitment* of staff or consultants would involve the Agricultural Support Systems Division at FAO in Rome.

359. **Technical Backstopping and Supervision.** The Project Document prescribed that a Technical Advisory Committee be set with representatives from FAO and the Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences in Uppsala to supervise and backstop FARMESA. In addition, the Agricultural Support Systems Division at FAO in Rome was expected to provide technical guidance and backstopping at the meetings of the RCC, where it is an *ex-officio* member together with Sida, and upon request from the RCC or the NCCs.

I. Proposed Draft Project Document for a Second Implementation Phase

360. A draft Project Document for a proposed FARMESA Phase II (four years, beginning July 2001) was submitted in September 1999 to Sida for consideration. The document was prepared with substantial input from the RCC. Sida commented on the proposal and a revised Project Document (28 March 2000) was available at the time of the evaluation mission.

361. The proposal is for FARMESA to retain the same development, intermediate and immediate objectives that have guided the project under the current period. The principal changes refer to the decentralisation of decision-making and technical and management functions from international and regional to national and local level bodies and to an expansion of the geographical mandate by including Malawi and Mozambique as core member states.

362. The Co-ordinating Unit would be downsized and transformed into a Regional Project Unit/RPU staffed by professionals from the region, thereby releasing more funds for activities at the national level. The RPU would focus on areas in which the project will use mainly a regional approach (e.g. curriculum reviews and development of strategies for strengthening educational programmes at universities, development of training material and establishment of information bases on improved methods), or which involve multi-country collaborations, i.e. regional activities of cross-cutting interest and benefit. The RCC will remain the top decision-making body of the project, with functions mainly in the areas of broad policy guidelines, strategies and review of experiences on a regional scale.

363. The proposed devolution implies a progressive transfer of CU and RPU functions (e.g. management and technical support) to the national programmes (NCCs and NFs). National host institutions will assume overall responsibility for the project. The role of NCCs and National Facilitating Teams (NFTs, replacing the NFs under Phase I) will be expanded. NCCs will formulate national guidelines, priorities, strategies, workplans and budgets; be responsible for the co-ordination and management of national programmes; review and approve national projects (incl. workplans and budgets); undertake technical reviews and provide technical support; manage in-service training; and finally, reproduce and disseminate publications. The mandate of Field Site Working Groups will remain as before.

364. The activities would be financed by Sida with a 2% annual gradual increase in contributions by the FARMESA member countries.

3.2 RELMA

A. Origin and Evolution

365. **The Regional Soil Conservation Unit.** The Sida-funded Regional Land Management Unit (RELMA) represents a further development and broadening of the mandate of the Regional Soil Conservation Unit (RSCU). The RSCU was established in 1982, based on the experience of the Sida-funded National Soil Conservation Programme in Kenya. The first step towards the transfer of RSCU to RELMA was taken 1 July 1994 when, following the recommendations of an evaluation in 1992 (J. Erikson, W. Critchley, E. Michanek), RSCU became an independent programme with direct administrative links with the Department of Natural Resources and the Environment at Sida headquarters, replacing the previous link through the Sida office in Nairobi. RSCU moved out from the Sida office to its own office premises in the Nairobi ICRAF building.

366. The RSCU mandate was "to promote soil conservation, broadly defined as activities and techniques of environmentally sound production of food, wood and other commodities based on sustainable use of land, species and ecosystems". Activities included: (i) technology development together with technical advice and backstopping, (ii) production and dissemination of publications, and (iii) training and manpower development (incl. fellowships with the dual purpose of ensuring in-depth studies on relevant topics and providing training for the fellows). Participation in pilot activities (SCAPA in Tanzania, SCAFE in Zambia and USCAPP in Uganda) enabled RSCU to identify, develop, adapt and introduce new and improved soil conservation practices. The success of RSCU was reported to be due to its unconventional mode of operation (small, flexible and highly responsive unit), its competent professional staff and hands-on experience derived from the focus on pilot projects.

367. The geographical mandate of RSCU was Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania and Zambia. A Regional Advisory Committee (RAC) composed of two representatives from each member country assisted the RSCU in defining relevant activities of regional as well as country-specific interest.

368. **Transformation into RELMA.** The transformation of RSCU to RELMA was founded on the combination of a forward-looking Review of RSCU in May 1996 (D. Saunders et. al), and an Sida-initiated *Committee on Food Security in East and Southern Africa* (M. Denninger, K. Havnevik and M. Brdarski, Sida, July 1996). Both the review and the Committee on Food Security recommended a transformation of RSCU into a unit with an expanded subject matter mandate.

369. The primary concern of the Committee on Food Security was sustainable development in relation to a broad definition of food security (including production and supply, quality and access in terms of income and distribution within the household). The committee identified "the natural resource base and agricultural production" as one of the specific subject areas requiring increased attention. The sub-issues identified under this theme included soil conservation, water efficient rain-fed agriculture, research and development of techniques to improve soil fertility, and support to urban agriculture. Support to government agricultural extension (with a focus on high potential areas, low external inputs, small scale farming, participatory approaches, women's situations, nutritional aspects and farming systems approaches) was held to be central to this work.

370. The committee recommended the establishment of a Sida-funded Regional Food Security Unit (headquarters in Nairobi) that would provide professional support to personnel at the Swedish Embassies and to Sida-funded projects and programmes in the region. The Unit was to be based on the experiences from RSCU, with a gradually expanded mandate from soil conservation to adopting a more comprehensive food security approach. In addition to providing professional backup support to Sida funded programmes in the region, the mandate would include the creation of networks

and competence building within relevant disciplines in the natural resources and agricultural sector (not necessarily confined to Sida supported activities). The committee envisaged co-ordination with other ongoing regional activities, such as FARMESA.

371. The 1996 forward-looking review of RSCU concluded, among other things, that:

- RSCU should be transformed into a Regional Unit for Land Management (RELMA). The mandate should be broadened to include both technical issues related to land management and institutional, social and economic aspects;
- the expansion of the subject area should proceed gradually, building carefully on the mandate and the experiences of RSCU;
- the Regional Advisory Committee (RAC) should continue to play a major role;
- the Unit may continue initiating pilot projects, but with the understanding that there be no presumption that Sida funds automatically will be available for up-scaling; and
- the expanded Unit should continue to interact with and support a variety of actors and institutions (government agencies, NGOs, other projects/programmes – the Sida funded bilateral programmes in particular – and the Swedish Embassies in the region).

B. Special Concepts

372. The particular concepts of RELMA are stated in the Project Document as: (a) regional relevance of undertaken activities with an expected catalytic effect; (b) avoiding duplicating the efforts of other organisations or projects; and (c) interaction with a broad range of actors through formal networking. In addition, RELMA states the intention of assuming the flexible modus operandi of RSCU and of continuing to combine research outputs with practical applications.

C. Rationale

373. The Project Document justifies RELMA on the basis of the challenge posed by the prevailing food insecurity in the region and the fact that none of the numerous actors in this field appear to spread information and knowledge about ways to improve food security but are solely concerned with their own implementation activities.

374. However, the Project Document does not include a review of the projects, services or networks that are concerned with food security and there is no assessment of the demand for knowledge about ways to improve food security among support services or projects in the region. The Project Document also lacks analyses of the relationship among the technical, institutional, social and ecological factors that contribute to food insecurity as well as an assessment of the policy environment in the different countries in the region

D. Mandate, Objective and Expected Outputs

375. **Geographical Mandate.** RELMA has retained the same regional coverage as RSCU – Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania and Zambia.

376. **Institutional Mandate.** The institutional mandate of RELMA is formulated, rather modestly, as follows:

> "To contribute towards improved livelihoods and enhanced food security among small-scale land users in the region".

377. **Project Objective.** The objective for the present three-year support phase (=project) 1998–2000 is formulated as follows:

"Increased quality and technical and institutional competence through improved contents of both Sida supported activities and other programmes, projects and institutions in the land management sector in the region".

378. The objective implies that RELMA should assist and complement Sida bilateral co-operation in the natural resources sector through interaction at the implementation level as well with Swedish embassies and the Department of Natural Resources and the Environment. However, the objective is cryptic to the extent that it raises the possibility of a case of reversed causality: should not the contents of Sida supported activities be improved through increased technical and institutional competence instead of the other way around as stated above?

379. **Output Categories, Progress Indicators and Targets.** In the Annual Workplans, which are broken down into six country workplans and one regional workplan, the terminology is somewhat unorthodox. Common output categories are "method development", "information and documentation" and "technical advice", i.e. more or less synonymous with the RELMA service functions, instead of expressions of particular results that the project is expected to produce – for instance number of people trained or number of reports printed and distributed. Progress indicators and actual targets for the achievement are frequently expressed as "document ready" and "video produced" with the actual target stated as a deadline date.

E. Clients

380. The target groups have remained the same as for RSCU and are defined as:

- key people with implementation responsibility in relevant projects and programmes, including programme officers concerned at the Swedish Embassies;
- extension workers;
- government officers in relevant positions, both technical and planning;
- relevant NGOs;
- policy makers concerned with land management;
- researchers in relevant institutions; and
- local and regional consultants.

381. In addition to providing technical advice to Sida-supported activities in the region, RELMA is also expected to link up with other relevant institutions and actors. However, the Project Document does not identify and analyse the obstacles that are faced by the clients in their striving towards increased technical and institutional competence nor does it attempt to show how the different clients are interacting with each other today.

F. Project Strategy and Modus Operandi

382. The Project Document states that the objective is to be attained through "support to environmentally sustainable, socially and economically viable land management practices, to improved production and utilisation of food and other commodities". The RELMA immediate objective will be achieved through the provision of "complementary, catalytic and facilitative support, through hands-on experience to disseminate and develop technologies and extension approaches". The Project Document distinguishes between technical aspects and methods for sustainable land management – soil and water conservation, agro-forestry and fodder production, i.e. the same technical areas that were covered under RSCU – and institutional, social and economic dimensions of land management – land tenure, gender aspects, indigenous institutions and social networks, and marketing and commercialisation of agricultural produce. In addition, the Project Document defines

several "approaches" that should guide the implementation, for instance, flexible working approach, practical hands-on experience and thorough professional competence and experience.

383. The project strategy can hardly be called well defined but is perhaps better regarded as an expression of a project philosophy. The Project Document does not define the elements of the strategy nor does it explain how the institutional, social, economic and technical "aspects" are expected to interact. It thus offers little guidance on how the enlarged mandate from land husbandry to food security will be fulfilled. However, the arrangements for governance and management (cf. below) facilitate that a reasonable balance between national interests and the regional perspective is maintained. The Project Document does not specifically refer to field activities implemented by RELMA as part of the modus operandi but emphasises the complementary, catalytic and facilitative nature of its support.

G. Major Activities

384. **Testing and Adaptation of Land Management Technology and Methods for Interacting with Farmers.** The two most important means for development and adaptation of technology and methods are pilot activities and case studies undertaken by RELMA staff, consultants or researchers through fellowships.

385. Case studies are the most cost-effective means to gain incremental knowledge. Support to limited pilot activities with clear purposes might be a cost-effective means for acquiring missing experience.

386. **Dissemination of Information and Knowledge About Land Management Technology and Working Methods**. The Project Document makes no reference to dissemination of information by *electronic means* but is more explicit on dissemination of *printed and audio-visual materials* produced in-house or by others – manuals, reports, books and videos. Dissemination of knowledge and skills through *training and other ways of personal interaction* would include support to curriculum development at learning institutions and to in-service training programmes courses, study tours, workshops, seminars, supervision and backstopping of fellows, Junior Professional Officers and Swedish university students together with advice and backstopping on policies, project preparation and monitoring and on field activities.

H. Organisation, Management and Administration

387. **Management, Administration and Governance.** The operations of RELMA are the responsibility of a Director who works closely together with (currently) eight subject matter specialists and ten support staff, including two administrative officers, two secretaries and one accounts clerk, within the premises of ICRAF in Nairobi. The staff of the Unit, which organisationally is a part of Sida and falls under the Department of Natural Resources and the Environment, are responsible for supplying the required subject matter capability – from in-house or through consultancies – for *adaptation* of technology and methods and for *disseminating* information and knowledge.

388. Unit staff are also responsible for *procurement* of goods and services and for *recruitment* of consultants while regional and national staff recruitment is delegated under a contract arrangement to the host institution ICRAF (about half the staff are employed under ICRAF terms). Funds are *disbursed* from Sida in Stockholm directly to a RELMA account in Nairobi but no accounts are kept in the client countries. Expenditure receipts and *accounts* are kept by RELMA in Nairobi.

389. The Unit is supported by a Regional Advisory Committee (RAC). The RAC is composed of two key persons from each member country, expected to represent both the public and non-governmental land management sectors. It meets annually to exchange experiences, advise on

policy and operational aspects and to endorse annual *country workplans* based on proposals prepared by RAC members and their networks in individual countries. The country workplans are developed on the basis of National Network Meetings attended by two or more RELMA subject matter specialists, two RAC members and representatives of institutions, departments and agencies (within and outside government) invited by the RAC members to take part in a brainstorming of ideas without the restriction of preconceived budget ceilings. Programme officers from the Swedish Embassies are invited to attend the meetings of RAC members, both the annual regional meeting and the informal network meetings in each country. The country workplans are subsequently supplemented by an annual workplan for activities at the regional level prepared by RELMA staff. The total annual budget is reconciled with the overall ceiling stipulated by Sida and, if necessary, adjusted before being submitted to Sida headquarters for approval together with the consolidated annual workplan.

390. The Regional Advisory Committee does not lend full legitimacy to the governance arrangement since its members are not formally elected or nominated by the client organisations but appointed by Sida from within public sector institutions with little influence by private sector organisations (following country consultations). However, in the absence of regional host institution, the RAC and the Unit management together provide for a reasonable balance among the interests of the individual participating countries, the region as a geographical and institutional entity, and the Sida supported projects.

391. **Technical Capabilities.** The previous core RSCU subject matters of erosion control, water harvesting, soil fertility, agro-forestry, increased production, gender and biodiversity have been expanded under RELMA to also include marketing aspects and socio-economic aspects. The Project Document foresaw RELMA employing specialists on the following subject matters:

- extension methodology,
- soil conservation,
- soil fertility and water harvesting/conservation,
- agro-forestry extension (a joint position with ICRAF),
- agriculture/crop husbandry,
- animal husbandry and range management,
- water and sanitation,
- agricultural economics and marketing,
- socio-economics, and
- publishing and information.

392. RELMA has no specific training specialist but has recruited a specialist on communications/network support who will join the organisation in September this year.

393. **Linkages to Clients.** RELMA is connected to its clients through the Regional Advisory Committee, through memberships in formal networks and through personal interaction between the Unit staff at the client organisations. RELMA is also a member of several subject matter networks in the region.

394. **Technical Backstopping and Supervision.** The Project Document did not prescribe any particular arrangement for technical backstopping and supervision but expected monitoring to be performed largely by the staff of the Unit.

I. Sustainability of Activities

395. In the Sida documentation, the support to RELMA is described as a long-term (minimum 10 years) commitment. The fact that RELMA is fully funded by Sida implies, from a Sida point of view, that RELMA as an organisation will cease to operate when the Sida support terminates.

4. Findings on Implementation Performance and Impact

4.1 FARMESA

A. Actions on the Recommendations by the 1999 Mid-term Review

401. **FARMESA's Assessment of the Recommendations.** The Mid-term Review, presented in April 1999, made a series of recommendations related principally to aspects of: methods development, project cost-effectiveness, project governance and ownership, sustainability, work focus, design, and management (cf. para. 172–174, above). The recommendations were discussed at the Sixth Meeting (July 1999) of the Regional Co-ordinating Committee and the implementation status of the recommendations summarised in the minutes of the Seventh RCC Meeting (November 1999) and in the Annual Report January-December 1999. As will be noted, the RCC disagreed with many of the Mid-term Review findings. It decided to implement about ten of the associated recommendations while about six recommendations were deferred for further consideration and/or implementation during the anticipated Phase II.

402. **The Causes of the Shortcomings Identified by the Mid-term Review.** Several of the implementation shortcomings identified in the Mid-term Review may be traced back to internal inconsistencies in the design of FARMESA as presented in the Project Document, and to a continuing inadequacy in the provision of policy, methodological and technical guidance to national and regional programme authorities by the donor and executing agency. Associated problems of design interpretation and operational difficulties have been further compounded by the failure of the project to establish the Technical Advisory Committee envisaged in the Project Document. In the interests of project ownership and empowerment of local institutions, National Co-ordinating Committees have been able to exercise considerable autonomy in determining the content of FARMESA-supported activities in their respective countries. However, there is not yet a 'meeting of minds' in relation to establishing a medium- to long-term strategy for FARMESA evolution based on the project's longer-term objectives, which would take into account the governance, and sustainability issues raised in the Mid-term Review.

403. Aspects of the project which have proved particularly difficult to reconcile include:

- FARMESA as a regionally-oriented project which at the same time aims to promote 'ownership' through decentralised decision-making and empowerment of national and local institutions;
- the Intermediate Objective and Objective 1 clearly stating the project's intended focus on methodologies for technology development and transfer rather than the development and testing of technologies themselves, whereas the description of anticipated activities and expected outputs partly contradict the objectives and do not necessarily contribute to their fulfilment; and

- divergent views on the intended client group for the project, despite the clear statement in the Project Document that "….the main target group has been designated as those middle-level professionals (technical specialists, scientists and planners) concerned with smallholder development."

404. **The Corrective Actions Taken.** In an effort to resolve these dilemmas, the FARMESA Co-ordinating Unit and the RCC prepared several Implementation Frameworks to complement the Project Document and clarify the project's approach and operational methods for implementers and potential partners at regional, national and field levels. These frameworks were approved by RCC in June 1998, November 1998 and July 1999, respectively at its scheduled meetings. It is not clear if the amendments have been formally approved by Sida although the responsible programme officer at headquarters in Stockholm attended at least one of the meetings.

405. The latest Implementation Framework (November 1999) allocates a central role to the financing of mini-projects developed in designated work areas under the co-ordination and implementation responsibility of Field Site Working Groups. With the exception of Zimbabwe, which elected to operate in multiple sites, two such sites have been selected in contrasting environments (medium/high agricultural potential and low agricultural potential) in each participating country.

406. The Implementation Frameworks made a number of departures from the Project Document. While the Project Document should certainly be viewed as a guideline and not as a blueprint for implementation, its basic principles and design concepts should be maintained in order to retain the intended purpose and integrity of the project. The Implementation Frameworks do not, however, address a number of issues that were identified during the formulation process but not dealt with in the Project Document, namely: (a) the required approach for FARMESA to benefit Swedish supported projects in the region; (b) the need to reduce the field activities (mini-projects) in favour of monitoring and assessing what is being achieved under other initiatives in the region; (c) the need to engage more social science expertise in setting up and assessing adaptations of participatory methods; (d) more involvement by NGOs; (e) more emphasis on networking and support to networks; and (f) a more decisive role for FAO in project backstopping and reporting to Sida.

B. Utilisation of Resource Inputs

407. The budgeted project costs for the period 1996–1999 are as follows:

Budgeted and Actual Expenditure 1996-1999 for FARMESA ('000$)

	1996		1997		1998		1999	
	Budget in *Project Document*		Budget in *Project Document*		Budget in *Project Document*		Budget in *Project Document*	
Expenditure/Item	(Base Costs in '000$)	Percentage of Base Costs	(Base Costs in '000$)	Percentage of Base Costs	(Base Costs in '000$)	Percentage of Base Costs	(Base Costs in '000$)	Percentage of Base Costs
1. Mini-projects	**50**	**6%**	**540**	**29%**	**350**	**22%**	**200**	**22%**
2. Service Functions	**249**	**31%**	**498**	**26%**	**498**	**31%**	**269**	**29%**
Methods Specialist	69		138		138		69	
NPO Info	20		40		40		20	
Consultants	60		120		120		60	
Training	100		200		200		120	
3. Management & Adm	**256**	**31%**	**543**	**29%**	**508**	**32%**	**269**	**29%**
Co-ordinator (CU)	85		170		170		85	
National Facilitators	60		120		120		60	
Administrative staff	18		36		36		18	
FAO Support Cost	93		217		182		106	
4. Common Expenditure	**260**	**32%**	**305**	**16%**	**230**	**15%**	**180**	**20%**
Official travel	70		100		100		60	
Operating Expenditure	35		75		75		40	
Supplies and Materials	55		45		25		25	
Equipment	100		50		30		20	
Evaluation			35				35	
5. Contingencies			**75**		**127**		**110**	
Total	**815**		**1 961**		**1 713**		**1 028**	

C. Attainment of Project Objectives and Output Targets 1999/2000

408. FARMESA had a hesitant start: most of 1996/97 was spent to establish the project as an entity and the better part of 1997/98 was used to put the governance and management structures into place. Implementation gradually picked up pace in 1998/99 but the expected level of operations was not reached until the second half of 1999. At the end of this period, activities unfortunately had to be cut back since it was discovered that most of the available Sida funds for 1999/2000 had already been disbursed – the US$ bookkeeping practised by FAO was not able to properly account for the decline of the value of the Swedish kronor against the US currency.

409. **The Development Objective.** The FARMESA Project Document distinguishes between Development, Intermediate and Immediate Objectives (para.333–334, above). Being necessarily of a general and long-term nature, the development objective provides little guidance in terms of a strategic framework for the project and no practical guidance to project implementers of the detailed activities that should be carried out under the project. While the majority of the activities supported to date can be interpreted as being consistent with the overall development, it is not yet clear how the impact of FARMESA's contribution to improved food security, rises in income levels and appropriate management of resources will be measured. Administrative effort has focused more on the shorter-term monitoring of implementation progress than the establishment of suitable indicators/techniques for the evaluation of activity or project impact.

410. **The Intermediate Objective.** The intermediate objective gives a more explicit indication of the anticipated content of FARMESA as a project dealing with 'work methods'. The methods are clearly expected to provide the main focus for the project despite their being simply a means to achieve increased understanding of farmers' perspectives and circumstances and ultimately an increased use of relevant technology among smallholders.

411. Examination of FARMESA reports, observations in the field and discussions with collaborating institutions and agencies suggest that the project has made some progress in relation to its intermediate objective, at least in the localities of its direct involvement with Field Site Working Groups. National Facilitators have actively pursued the stated development principles when designing work programmes at the selected sites. By working together with representatives of the respective host institutions (mainly district-based extension personnel) and a range of public and private sector collaborating agencies (research institutions, NGOs, and farmers organisations), National Facilitators have been instrumental in exposing others to a number of work methods with which they may previously have been unfamiliar. Since middle-level professionals constitute the main target group for the project, it will be important in evaluating project performance for FARMESA to assess the degree to which their exposure to alternative work methods and the concept of a farming systems approach has influenced their subsequent dealings with farmers.

412. **The Immediate Objectives.** The four Immediate Objectives may be expected to give the clearest indication of the type of activities to be anticipated in FARMESA work programmes. Project activities linked to Objectives 2, 3 and 4 have proved least controversial whereas those geared to Objective 1 continue to be the source of considerable confusion and have generated differing views on how the project should evolve. There appear to be four main points of contention:

- First, the term 'method' (or 'methodologies') continues to be very loosely applied and is often applied to broad topics or themes, rather than a means of interaction with the client or mechanism for technology transfer. For example, 'savings and credit', 'marketing analysis' and 'farmer germplasm multiplication' are said to constitute methods;
- Second, differing views have emerged concerning the feasibility of testing methods as distinct from technologies. Methods for diagnosis can certainly be divorced from specific technologies.

While the mission accepts that methods for technology development, testing and transfer will necessarily be linked to a specified technology, the project's primary concern should be to assess the effectiveness of the method(s) used in dealing with the situation rather than measuring the effectiveness of the technology per se;

- Third, the project's attention to the development, testing and transfer of specific technologies at field level (albeit using a range of participatory methods) has created a tendency for the project to function as an implementing agency in similar fashion to other area-based development projects operating in each country. This approach clearly reflects the preferences of the respective NCCs and has been endorsed in RCC meetings. However, it is not fully consistent with the view of FARMESA as a Methods Development project in the Sida context. These conflicting views in turn expose an internal inconsistency in design between the desire to promote national ownership, responsibility and capacity for project implementation, and the aim to develop a regionally focused initiative that complements national efforts while simultaneously serving Sida interests; and
- Fourth, Objective 1 has been interpreted as requiring that the project establish its own discrete work areas; the objective could equally be achieved through sponsoring and/or monitoring field activities associated with other, ongoing development programmes.

413. **Methodological Difficulties in Assessing Project Achievements.** The identification of pre-specified activities and establishment of quantified targets for the project at the design stage was rightly considered inappropriate for a project such as FARMESA. Instead, details of anticipated activities and outputs were to be provided in association with successive annual work plans and budgets. Proposals for incorporation were to be scrutinised first by the broad-based NCCs and subsequently endorsed for inclusion in the consolidated regional project by the RCC. While this approach has been broadly followed to generate an approved listing of activities, it remains difficult from Annual Reports and project proposals (e.g. the proposal for a Phase II) to quantify expected annual outputs and to allocate costs to discrete aspects of the project. Activities (including office administration, training courses, application of methods and small-scale projects with farmers/farmers groups for technology development, testing and transfer) are presented as individual 'mini-projects' and achievements subsequently detailed in relation to individual mini-project design. This leads to an unnecessarily awkward presentation of project operations and suggests a degree of over-anxiety to ensure that all activities are explicitly linked to the project logframe. There is, however, some evidence of recent internal attempts being made as part of a management information system to assess the overall impact of the project and the effectiveness/cost-effectiveness of different working methods in relation to the stated project objectives.

D. Implemented Activities 1999/2000 & Achieved Impact on Project Clients

414. A summary workplan for 1999 is included as an annex in the Annual Report for 1998. The summary is confined to two and a half pages of activities listed under each of the four objectives. All activities are coded as "operational mini-projects" – no distinction is made between new and on-going activities. Information about time perspective and budget for individual activities is lacking.

415. The (draft) Annual Report for 1999 is a 200-page document (including a 100-page section containing annexes). The bulk of the main document is made up of progress reports from individual FARMESA member countries. The country reports (organised in relation to the four objectives) contain brief accounts of each and every mini-project in terms of objective and activities undertaken. Although the document provides an overview of the wide range of activities undertaken as mini-projects, the lack of information about targets and stage of completion implies that it is not possible to use the information as a basis for assessing implementation progress. Also, the brief

accounts of individual mini-projects does not enable an assessment of the extent to which activities in the same field site are functionally related, or if activities are planned and carried out with a view to gain experiences of national and regional relevance.

416. The fact that the identification number of each mini-project indicates year of approval provide some ground for a rough assessment of the proportion of new and on-going activities. A good number of mini-projects were approved already in 1998 (in the case of Tanzania, 15 out of the total 20 mini-projects running in 1999 were initiated in 1998). Yet, as pointed out to the evaluation team by FARMESA staff in Zambia, the seemingly long "implementation phase" of some projects may be due to funds being approved at a point in time when activities had to be postponed to the beginning of the next crop cycle.

417. In addition to activities undertaken as part of mini-projects, the country progress reports include accounts of e.g. farmer exchange visits, national seminars and workshops and collaboration with national institutions with regard to technological or methodological aspects of field activities. One example of the latter is the collaboration between FARMESA/Kenya and the Kenya Agricultural Research Institute (KARI) in relation to participatory evaluation of soil and water conservation technologies.

418. The concluding section of the 1999-year Annual Report entitled "Overall Progress" does not (contrary to the heading) deal with progress of the project at large. It is a summary account of the activities undertaken by or with the assistance of the Co-ordinating Unit (CU). Similar to the country reports, the CU reports on activities in relation to each of the four objectives without references to target fulfilment. The accomplishment of national surveys of field methods, the regional level consolidation of survey findings and identification of FSA-related "core methods" are dealt with at length (Objective 1). Under Objective 2 it is reported that eight new documents and ten working papers have been issued in the course of 1999, that a third issue of FARMESA News has been printed and distributed and that a "knowledge and information base" for technical information has been established. National FSA-TDT workshops have been held in Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda. Moreover, two regional workshops have been accomplished; one in Zimbabwe (FSA/Training of Trainers) and one in Zambia (Information Officers, on Communication Materials Development). Activities reported under Objective 3 include top-up grants with the aim to enable university students to undertake on-farm research, and preparation of three major books on FSA, i.e. two source books for Degree level and for use at Farmer Training Institutes, and a teaching manual and tutors guide for Certificate and Diploma levels.

419. **Sida Supported Projects.** Contrary to expectations in the original design, there has been little or no interaction between ongoing Sida bilateral programmes in the agricultural/rural development sector in the participating countries and FARMESA (however, despite a marked lack of interest in FARMESA operations by Swedish Embassy and Sida project staff, FARMESA has persisted in inviting Sida representatives to NCC and RCC meetings and in maintaining informal contact). The intention was for the methods developed under FARMESA to relate to areas prioritised by Sida during implementation of its bilateral projects, and for the project to influence other bilateral and national projects through feedback of knowledge on successful techniques and approaches. Regrettably, Sida representatives in the host countries have very little formal influence over its implementation, principally as a result of executing authority for FARMESA having been devolved to FAO.

420. It was indeed unfortunate that the FARMESA field sites were located outside Sida supported areas and that no mechanism was established to recurrently solicit the demands for improved methods for interacting with farmers among Swedish assisted projects. Similarly, there is little evidence to suggest that experiences of other (non-Sida) projects and programmes operating outside the localities of the Field Site Working Groups are taken into account in the regional aspects of

information dissemination. FARMESA should be acquainting itself with other ongoing initiatives, distilling and analysing experiences in systems-based participatory development and updating the participating countries accordingly on the latest relevant developments.

421. FARMESA has a considerable geographical overlap and shares many technical areas of interest with Sida's other major regional initiative, the Regional Land Management Unit (RELMA). While there has been little formal interaction in the past between the two projects in their common countries of operation, efforts are now underway in establishing routines for sharing of information and experiences on national or regional levels. Thus RELMA may be dealing with the development of extension methodologies with the benefit of potentially useful inputs from FARMESA experience. FARMESA has mini-projects dealing with rain water harvesting, a topic in which RELMA has substantial experience, and a past collaboration in the development of a joint publication on water harvesting technique may be followed by other joint efforts.

422. **The Swedish Resource Base.** In addition to a Junior Professional Expert (socio-economist) at the Co-ordinating Unit in Harare, another JPO was recently recruited (June 2000) for stationing at Embu in Kenya. (It was also intended to recruit one more JPO to work at FARMESA in Harare but it was not possible to fill that post).

423. **Middle-level Professionals.** The underlying philosophy of the project, particularly with respect to the development goals of improving food security and alleviating poverty, fit well with agricultural sector priorities and policy frameworks in the member countries. In this respect, FARMESA is viewed positively by its host institutions.

424. At an institutional level, continual demands are placed on FARMESA to provide *training courses*, develop *training materials*, and prepare *publications* on a wide range of farming systems and agriculture-related topics. The project has responded well to these demands and as a result has contributed to a re-orientation of personnel towards a systems approach, and better informed the trained staff in the value of participatory methods in their dealings with client farmers and communities.

425. Despite the fairly broad-based stakeholder representation in NCCs and the positions of authority held by RCC members in their respective government institutions, FARMESA as a project has not been at the forefront in informing *agricultural advisory policy* and planning discussions. There is much common ground between the methods employed in the Field Site Working Groups of FARMESA and those being considered for more widespread application (e.g. in the emerging National Agricultural Advisory Service Programme in Uganda). However, FARMESA-sponsored field-oriented activities have not featured prominently as examples to be followed on a broader front as part of a modified national effort. In several cases, senior personnel associated with FARMESA have been involved in the policy debate in their capacities as senior public sector officers. Their experiences with FARMESA may influence their views during policy debates, but this does not constitute a strategic involvement of the project in influencing policy. In some cases (e.g. Zimbabwe and Uganda), FARMESA is viewed as a minor player supplementing the nation-wide efforts of the host institution (Dept. of Agricultural Technical and Extension Services (Agritex) and National Agricultural Research Organisation (NARO) respectively) rather than as a potential vehicle for influencing national policy.

426. **Research Services.** More visible impact has been achieved in terms of topping-up individual *research grants* from FARMESA funds. While this has helped researchers to continue existing lines of research or establish new investigations, it has tended to lead the project into areas of highly specific and to some extent esoteric technology development and testing (e.g. *Mange control through improved goat management practices*; *Increasing the understanding of the microbial and biochemical changes occurring during the production of* makumbi (an alcoholic beverage); *Farmers perceptions and adoption of new agricultural*

technology: Perceptions of characteristics of rock phosphate "fortified" Farm Yard Manure). It has also encouraged the view that FARMESA is a project for researchers (e.g. in the case of Zambia) dissociated from critical issues affecting practical service provision to farmers and having little direct bearing on the immediate and intermediate objectives of FARMESA. This suggests that more stringent eligibility criteria need to be applied in order to ensure that the research being supported is likely to help achieve the project's objectives.

427. Discussion has continued among agriculturists dealing with smallholder farming issues regarding the methods that may best be used to increase the relevance and acceptability of the products of agricultural research (such as modified varieties/breeds, crop/livestock husbandry practices, and techniques for natural resource management) to client farmers. In addition to its awarding of research grants, FARMESA has made a more positive contribution to this discussion at an operational level through its provision of *opportunities for researchers to become involved in farm and community-based activities* that in general terms respond to locally expressed development needs and priorities. For many researchers, trained to carry out more formal experimentation, their involvement with FARMESA activities represents a novel way of conducting research.

428. **Higher Learning Institutions.** The project has had some success in inducing curriculum changes in institutes of higher learning, although several universities consider that the farming systems approach is already dealt with in their agricultural degree courses.

429. **Farmers at Field Sites.** There is clearly a highly developed sense of ownership of the *mini-projects* among the host institutions in all cases. Much of the work is leading to positive results in terms of farmers' access to and adoption of alternative technologies and farming practices, although questions arise concerning the sustainability of the adopted procedures. FARMESA is acting as a catalyst for change with its national facilitators (facilitating teams in the cases of Zimbabwe and Uganda) and/or project team leaders entering new and effective collaborative partnerships with a range of stakeholders. The diversity of stakeholders involved varies between countries and between localities depending partly on the Governments' views of NGO and private sector organisations' roles and partly on their presence in the project work areas.

E. Effectiveness of Project Strategy and Approaches

430. FARMESA is expected to bring something extra to its host countries from its perspective as a regional entity. "…FARMESA is not just simply one more national project… It should be seen as a means of improving the performance of ongoing national activities by providing resources needed to introduce innovative dimensions." "The grant funds provided by FARMESA should not be perceived as simply filling resource gaps, but as a means of introducing new approaches into an ongoing set of activities" (Project Document 1996). There is a clear distinction between these stated intentions and the use of the project as a means of establishing additional technology demonstrations.

431. **Development and Adaptation of Methods.** FARMESA has undoubtedly had an impact upon farmers in the field sites, although neither always in ways consistent with the project's mandate. It should also be emphasised that the immediate client group of the project is technical personnel, not farmers. Strictly speaking therefore, the measures of project effectiveness should relate to the *changing attitudes and effectiveness of field personnel* and not the numbers of farmers encouraged to adopt alternative technologies. The mission recognises the importance to host institutions of being seen to generate direct impact on smallholder farmers. However, the project's emphasis on technology transfer through the vehicle of mini-projects has diverted attention from the stated role of FARMESA

as a regional initiative designed to focus on methods development and adaptation while complementing ongoing national programmes.

432. Many of the individual activities at the field sites have generated positive immediate benefits for the recipients: e.g. assistance with the establishment of a local traders' association (Zimbabwe); a contribution to the rapid multiplication of improved cassava varieties (Uganda); and introduction of the ox weeder to maize cultivation (Tanzania). Others, although being more closely related to methods testing than technology transfer, are clearly *duplicating existing efforts or reconfirming already well-established principles* (e.g. farmer-farmer exchange; the group-based approach to development). A particular cause for concern is that many of the field-based mini-projects appear to be 'started from scratch' and planned in isolation from existing experience and/or without reference to current conventional wisdom. As a consequence there are instances of past errors being repeated, inappropriate precedents being established and false impressions generated among the beneficiaries of the financial viability of technologies. This contradicts the expectation that FARMESA would be at the 'frontier' of methods development, well aware of past experiences and current developments, and as a result able to inform others of the relative benefits and disadvantages of alternative methods.

433. Documents developed during the course of implementation refer to FARMESA's introduction of a 'new approach' or 'new perspective' in its mode of operation with the Field Site Working Groups. This evidently refers to the intensive involvement in local development efforts of multiple stakeholders adopting a participatory, systems-based approach. It is unclear to the mission how this varies from *similar approaches adopted in other development initiatives* operating in the region. Nonetheless, the project has created additional opportunities for stakeholders to interact in novel ways albeit only in the localities selected for the field sites. Arguably, from the point of view of its methods focus, the project could have confined itself to the evaluation of experiences in existing development initiatives and assisted development agents, farmers and economic interest groups to share experiences and exchange views without the need to establish a new set of FARMESA-specific mini-projects.

434. The Project Document refers to "field site activities …. designed to teach and improve existing methods that enable development professionals to understand the motivations of farmers…. and the dynamics of the rural livelihood systems operated by farm families and communities." The switch from this concept to the current emphasis on technology testing and transfer by FARMESA Field Site Working Groups appears to have gone unchallenged until the Mid-term Review. Activities to be supported under the project should explicitly contribute towards the achievement of one or more of the immediate objectives. While each activity has been identified in successive work plans with one of the four immediate objectives, the range of activities listed suggests a liberal interpretation of project objectives.

435. Considerable efforts have been made from the outset of the project to establish objective criteria and a scoring/ranking method as the basis for approval/rejection of mini-project proposals. Criteria have been documented in the Implementation Framework (1997) and continue to be used in the deliberations of NCCs and the RCC. Again, in view of the emphasis now placed on technologies, the *assessment process relates more to the value of the technologies* than the mode of interaction and/or means of technology transfer. While this makes sense in the context of a more typical agricultural development project (including Sida's own bilateral projects in the agricultural sector), Sida may question its appropriateness in the context of a regional project of methods development designed to build skills among middle level professionals and through them to service ongoing projects.

436. FARMESA is laudably applying the technique of *Farmer Field Schools* (FFS) to several aspects of farming other than Integrated Pest Management, the purpose for which the technique was originally conceived. However, the project's close association with FAO may be leading to an overemphasis on FFS (a methodology initiated and widely promoted by FAO) as the means for improved interaction with farmers. While the technique can be usefully applied in increasing farmers' aware-

ness of a range of agronomic practices and farming techniques, the frequency with which it appears in national portfolios of mini-projects suggests that there is a danger of its being viewed as a necessary starting point in all technical dealings with farmers.

437. **Dissemination of Information and Knowledge.** FARMESA is intended to be and is in reality much more than a vehicle for carrying out mini-projects. However, the time, energies and management resources given to operations in the Field Site Working Groups gives a different impression. This is unfortunate in that other aspects of the project – information dissemination, publications, methodological and technical networking; development of training materials and training of trainers – are clearly responding to a previously unsatisfied demand among the main target group and reflect more closely the expected regional character of the project.

438. Efforts are underway to arrange accumulated experiences on methods development and adaptation in *databases* at the regional and national levels. Dissemination of information and knowledge has been through three principal means or media: electronic, publications and training. The well-managed FARMESA *web-site* has been a cost-effective medium for prompt distribution of short briefs with information about project activities to all clients with computer access. Among the FARMESA *publications* are a number of reports on experiences from development and application of methods, a comprehensive source book for use by practitioners at different levels, technical reports and a newsletter together with monthly, semi-annual and annual reports on project implementation progress. Several draft documents are awaiting publication as technical reports in the near future. Dissemination of knowledge and skills through *training* at various levels with a focus on systems and participatory methods and approaches has been the third means of dissemination. FARMESA attempts to build on the experiences of the earlier Farming Systems Programme by identifying training needs in colleges and universities, assist in curriculum development, develop training materials based on field site experiences and train trainers.

439. **Regional Co-operation.** The project has exhibited a promising degree of regional cooperation in terms of:

- exchange of information and technologies through the Co-ordinating Unit (e.g. wide range of technical publications; transfer of light plough design from Uganda to Zimbabwe);
- exchange visits between field site working groups (e.g. visit by Ugandans to observe Farmer Field School activities in Kenya);
- the hosting of regional workshops on FSA training of trainers, and Communication Materials Development;
- provision of regular opportunities for country representatives to meet during twice-yearly RCC meetings; and
- regional collaboration in the preparation of a detailed proposal for a Phase II project.

440. The Co-ordination Unit in Harare has proved a useful intermediary in arranging these interactions between participating countries and, despite its limited specialist resources, has responded well to the numerous requests for training and the production of training materials; evidence of FARMESA's being able to perform a useful function in relation to its intended regional orientation. Arguably more use could be made of contracted services (in Zimbabwe and elsewhere in the region), using existing, experienced agencies to develop specialised course materials thereby further broadening the range of publications to be made available to field operatives as a follow-up to their in-service training.

441. **Linking up with Frontier Thinking on Methods for Interacting with Farmers.** In the interests of project ownership and empowerment of local institutions, National Co-ordinating Commit-

tees have been able to exercise considerable autonomy in determining the content of FARMESA-supported activities in their respective countries. The Mid-term Review recommended that in making their decisions, NCCs, with the assistance of external resource persons (e.g. from FAO and the Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences), should link up with the 'frontier' of recent thinking on participatory methods, and in so doing consider the analytical framework for methods assessment, examine alternatives to more traditional extension approaches, and familiarise themselves with sources of methodological innovation and development in the region. Discussions were to be followed by a series of national workshops, to identify in-country sources of innovation as a basis for creating effective national networks on method development and by increased attention to methods rather than technology development.

442. External resource persons appear not to have been used in this manner and the aspect of national workshops has been deferred to Phase II. This is regrettable in that close attention to these recommendations could have encouraged FARMESA authorities to focus more on those aspects of the regional project which form the underlying justification for FARMESA to be funded.

443. With its present emphasis on being seen to respond to farmers' demands in the field sites, the project has become involved in activities that are already being worked on elsewhere in the member countries by more specialised and experienced agencies. For example, one may question why a project intended to operate at the frontier of methodological development, should continue to be involved in the delivery of subsidised credit at a time when specialists in the field (including in one case the project's collaborating NGO) have recognised the importance of putting rural financial services on a sustainable, fiscally sound footing. Similarly, the numerous examples of FARMESA providing initial inputs to 'kick-start' the use of a given technology contradicts emerging conventional thinking on the importance of viewing smallholder farming from a commercial perspective; particularly given the economic policy changes affecting the agricultural sector in countries throughout the region and the resultant changes in the respective roles of the public and private sectors in stimulating economic growth. Again, clearer project policy guidance could have avoided the problem.

F. Management and Governance Efficiency

444. Given the internal contradictions in the project document and the absence of strategic, policy guidance and technical backstopping available to the RCC, NCCs and National Facilitators from the originally expected sources (namely FAO Agriculture Department, Sida, the Swedish Agricultural University and the proposed Technical Advisory Committee), project implementers have done a commendable job in dealing with the complexities of project design. Problem areas largely derive from varying interpretations of design intentions and incompatibilities inherent in the design, and chiefly relate to the field-based activities as implemented under the project. Many of the perceived difficulties (highlighted in the Mid-term Review and in a number of cases reiterated herein) may have been resolved or avoided had more consistent guidance been made available early in the project life.

445. Individual NCCs and the RCC have made considerable efforts to respond constructively to the management and administrative issues and problems that have arisen during the course of implementation. The involvement of FAO as Executing Agency requires FAO financing procedures to be followed. These are rather inflexible, are not designed with project implementation in mind and have proved difficult to apply to the FARMESA situation, particularly in view of the focus which has emerged on field-based activities and the variations this implies across the region in terms of seasonality of funding requirements. To their credit, the RCC and the Co-ordinating Unit have successfully arranged a number of adjustments and plan further procedural modifications to streamline implementation of field activities during the proposed extension phase (July 2000–June 2001).

446. Sida and FAO carry a large responsibility for the fact that FARMESA has evolved without due recognition of the experiences gained by its predecessors, and that the conclusions and recommendations made by the two Sida appointed missions in preparation of the new project have not been taken into account.

447. **Sida.** There has been remarkable little effort by Sida to closely follow the establishment and evolution of the project. This applies to headquarters as well as to the Swedish Embassies in the FARMESA countries. The Programme Officer in charge of FARMESA in Sida-Stockholm has apparently done his best under the circumstances but has not succeeded in stimulating a broader interest in the project in the department at large, nor has he been able to establish and maintain a close contact with FAO headquarters.

448. There are several reasons why one would have expected Sida to pay more attention to FARMESA. One obvious reason is that FARMESA absorbs a substantial portion of the funds allocated to the Department of Natural Resources and the Environment as part of the *Sida Special Programme for Methods Development*. A principal idea behind Special Programmes is to provide opportunities for Sida to learn from initiatives funded under this budget frame, as a basis for improving methodologies and policies in relation to Sida-funded projects and programmes at large. Sida has done little to ensure that the criteria established for Special Programmes have been fulfilled in the case of FARMESA. Also, FARMESA is one of the few Sida-funded regional programmes in the natural resources sector, and as such it ought to receive specific attention as a basis for learning and dissemination of experiences. Another reason why we had expected Sida to pay more attention to FARMESA is the original anticipation that the project would collaborate closely with and feed its experiences into Sida-funded bilateral projects in the region (particularly on methodologies for working with farmers). The fact that FARMESA could go ahead in selecting *all* field sites in areas outside the domain of Sida-funded bilateral projects and programmes mirrors this lack of regard by Sida.

449. **FAO.** A plausible principal factor behind the disregard showed by Sida is that FAO was subcontracted as the executive agency. Although the contract between Sida and FAO does not specify FAO's role as a technical back-stopper to FARMESA, it is apparent that Sida took it for granted that FAO would assume this role in addition to its administrative functions. Also, Sida is likely to have viewed the original intention of involving the Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences (SUAS) as a collaborating partner of FAO as a manifestation of an active Swedish (Sida) presence in the project. The reasons why SUAS did not get involved are not entirely clear to the Evaluation Team. One probable factor is the major reorganisation within the university that took place at the time of the establishment of FARMESA, implying that it was unclear where the responsibility for contacts with FAO and FARMESA would be vested. There are also indications that SUAS had hoped for more leeway in using Sida funds for general internal research capacity building and that the proposed collaboration therefore was perceived of as a less attractive option.

450. On the other hand, the lack of FAO initiative to assume a technical backstopping role in relation to FARMESA is also surprising. One would have expected FAO to be more interested in using FARMESA as a field-oriented learning experience that would benefit other FAO operations in the region and beyond.

4.2 RELMA

A. Preceding Assessments

451. In contrast to FARMESA, there has been no previous assessment of RELMA in the form of a mid-term or a special review since the inception of the project in January 1998. Follow-up of project activities has been restricted to the annual reviews with participation by staff from Sida Department of Natural Resources and the Environment which normally take place in November as part of the discussion of the workplan and budget for the coming year.

B. Utilisation of Resource Inputs

Budgeted and Actual Expenditure 1997-1998 for RELMA ('000$)

Expenditure/Item	1997 Actual Expenditure (Base Costs in '000$)	1998 Actual Expenditure (Base Costs in '000$)
1. Field Projects	**155**	**190**
2. Service Functions	**589**	**370**
Intl & Ntnl Advisers		
Consultants	190	48
Publications [Info&Doc]	177	105
Training	222	217
3. Management & Adm	**115**	**220**
ICRAF Overheads	16	26
Administrative staff	99	194
4. Common Expenditure	**283**	**295**
Travel and Allowances	60	172
Operating Expenditure	130	113
Equipment	93	10
Other Cost		
5. Contingencies		
Total	**1 142**	**1 075**

452. In addition to the initial Sida allocation of SEK 45 million for the period 1998–2000, SEK eight million were allocated in 1999 to cover the increased costs associated with the transfer of the Sida Regional Advisor on Water and Sanitation from the Sida office in Nairobi to RELMA, and the Sida requests for RELMA services in relation to the Lake Victoria Basin Initiative and the Land Management Programme in Uganda (ULAMP).

C. Fulfilment of Mandate, Objective and Output Targets 1998–2000

454. RELMA fulfils its mandate through continued interactions with Sida-supported agricultural sector projects in the region and its increasing portfolio of collaborative arrangements with other institutions and organisations. It is beginning to establish itself as an organisation with a broader function and technical mandate than its predecessor RSCU and has expanded its in-house technical skills to deal with wider-ranging aspects of land management and the improvement of rural livelihoods. Its activities, as for FARMESA, are of two kinds:

1 Development/adaptation of land management technology and approaches to extension services and marketing services through monitoring of ongoing activities and undertaking of pilot projects;
2 Dissemination of information and knowledge through publications and videos, training and advice by subject matter specialists on land management technology and methods for interacting with farmers.

455. **Mandate and Objective.** No indicators are provided in the Project Document or in the annual work plans on the fulfilment of the mandate of the unit or on the objective of the project for the period 1998–2000.

456. **Outputs.** Output targets are difficult to define in advance for a three-year project such as RELMA where individual activities, and hence expected outputs, can only be determined with any exactness on the basis of the annual planning process. In the case of RELMA, the Annual Workplan and Budget comprises three main elements:

- a series of national activities approved in the annual RAC; the list being subsequently adjusted by the RELMA office to match financial and personnel resources;
- regional (technical) activities proposed in the annual planning process, approved by the RELMA office to match available financial and personnel resources;
- a planning reserve to be used very flexibly for unplanned activities, inside the mandate and objectives. initiated by Sida, RAC or RELMA staff; and
- administrative functions of RELMA and Sida, Stockholm (activities not specified, and only broad itemisation of RELMA Nairobi costs).

457. Project outputs may be measured in relation to the broad categories of activity outlined above and include:

- the nature and number of methodologies developed in relevant subject areas;
- the technical outcome, applicability, levels of participation in national and regional activities;
- the range, number and applications of published materials;
- the number and types of training programmes conducted and their effectiveness in terms of skills development and institutional capacity building;
- the quantity and quality of visits to/interactions with client projects and collaborating organisations; and
- the effectiveness of administrative procedures in servicing technical programmes.

458. To the extent that the activities presented are finally funded and implemented, it should be possible from the Annual Reports to compare outputs with the tentative targets (expressed in terms of activities) identified in the Annual Workplan. To some extent, this kind of information can be gleaned from the Annual Reports. However, although the Annual Reports are produced to a high publishing standard, they perhaps have greater value as publicity documents than as working documents for assessments to guide project management. They do not clearly indicate the extent to which the year's original workplan was completed as planned, nor do they identify any difficulties which may have been faced/overcome during the course of project implementation, nor do they necessarily identify why particular successes were achieved. Such information may have an important bearing on future project strategy, planning or management requirements. While individual advisers may be fully aware of the implications of experiences emerging from activities within their own areas of expertise, it would be helpful in terms of the overall project to develop a form of reporting more suited to management information requirements.

459. The Work Plan and Budget for *1998* lists activities and sub-activities under two broad categories, country activities and regional activities. Country activities are presented under the standard

headings Soil and Water Conservation, Soil Fertility, Rain Water Harvesting, Agroforestry, Extension Pilot Programme, Agricultural Economics, National Network, Bio-diversity and Gender. The regional activities are listed under RAC Meetings, Urban Agriculture, Rainwater Harvesting and Agriculture Education. Some activities have been issued a Progress Indicator – commonly of the type "workshop held" but not infrequently the Progress Indicator also includes a quantified target – and most activities have been given a time frame for implementation. In addition, collaborators, responsible officers at RELMA, and a budgeted amount are specified for most activities. The Annual Report for 1998 frequently highlights the implementation of individual activities – e.g. Lake Victoria Initiative, Impact Study of the National Soil and Water Conservation Project and Study of Impact of El Nino Rains – without referring to progress indicators, time frames or budgeted amounts. The majority of the activities are not categorised per country as in the Work Plan and Budget but are collated under "Studies", "Fellowships and Consultancies", "Training" and "Study Tours" and are commonly only issued a terse statement on outputs without reference to any target in the Work Plan and Budget.

460. The activities and outputs listed in the *1999* Annual Report appear to be those initiated by RELMA headquarters staff . Since the 1999 Workplan does not specify the anticipated regional activities, it is not possible to determine a level of achievement against an expected output. This raises a question of the nature of obligation placed by RELMA on both its own staff and the recipients of RELMA support in national programmes to report on the implementation status and effectiveness of their activities in relation to a planned output.

D. Implemented Activities 1998–1999 & Achieved Impact on Project Clients

461. In the case of RELMA the client base is especially broad, reflecting the expectation of RELMA as a source of information and technical support to implementers in the multiple disciplines associated with land management. Accordingly, the clients or target groups were identified as:

- key people with implementation responsibility in relevant projects and programmes, including programme officers concerned at the Swedish Embassies;
- extension workers;
- policy makers concerned with land management;
- government officers in relevant positions, both technical and planning;
- relevant NGOs;
- researchers in relevant institutions; and
- local and regional consultants.

462. As the listing of collaborating institutions in the Annual Reports and the portfolio of ongoing work programmes confirm, the project is associated to varying degrees with each of these categories throughout the region as well as with other organisations internationally through its increasingly wide networking arrangements.

463. Requests for RELMA services and outputs have been significant throughout the implementation period not least for its publications, several of which are now being updated for reprinting. In some cases, the requests for RELMA publications reflect a commercial demand – out-of-print RELMA books are being sold at second hand markets at high prices – but no thinking has yet been formed on charging and cost-recovery policies.

464. **Sida Supported Projects.** In the majority of the countries, the Sida supported bilateral projects are the primary clients for the RELMA activities. In Kenya, the National Soil and Water Conservation Programme has probably remained a net provider rather than a net recipient of RELMA outputs and services but in Tanzania (LMNRP, including SCAPA), Uganda (ULAMP) and

Zambia (SCAFE) the Sida supported projects have all to varying degrees benefited from assistance by RELMA in the form of distributed publications and offered training opportunities through workshops, field sessions and in-service sessions. The exceptions are Eritrea, where Sida does not support any projects in the natural resources sector, and Ethiopia where the Sida supported Amhara Rural Development Project has been competing with other projects areas for limited RELMA services.

465. In Tanzania, RELMA has supported *SCAPA* to conduct conservation farming trials in Arumeru and Arusha districts to develop water saving tillage techniques for semi-arid areas. Based on this work and parallel work in three LAMP districts (Babati, Kiteto and Singida), a conservation farming handbook for animal traction has been prepared. RELMA has also supported the development of unified extension messages by the district subject matters specialists on agriculture, natural resources, water and community development that has resulted in a draft menu of "offers". The document will serve as a point of reference for the extension staff and as a basis for training frontline officers. RELMA has also supported demonstrations (on zero-grazing), exchange visits (farmers from Laikipia, Kenya) and training (zero-grazing and sustainable agriculture).

466. In Uganda, RELMA has supported the transformation of USCAPP (Uganda Soil Conservation and Agroforestry Pilot Programme) into *ULAMP* (Uganda Land Management Programme) that currently operates in Mbarara District in the southwestern part of the country. The support has been in direct form as assistance for preparation of the Programme Document and as technical backstopping during implementation, especially on water harvesting, livestock husbandry and agroforestry. RELMA has also provided indirect support through a consultant firm that assisted the programme management in developing the extension methodology and in training of field staff. Some of the responsibilities between RELMA and the consultant firm have been left undefined, particularly in relation to methodology development and staff training, and further clarification would improve cost-effectiveness. The major programme activities in the field include support to water harvesting – especially for banana production – and crop–livestock integration, in particular zero-grazing of cattle and goats in conjunction with soil fertility improvement and improved feeding regimes. Preparations have been made for an expansion of ULAMP to Kabarole District in the west, Arua District in the northwest and to Kapchorwa District in the east.

467. In Zambia, RELMA has supported *SCAFE* (Soil Conservation and Agroforestry Extension Programme) on methodology development, training in soil & water conservation, agroforestry and livestock husbandry, fellowships and study tours, and technical backstopping. Current RELMA assisted activities include training in rainwater harvesting and preparation of a handbook on indigenous grasses and fodder trees. RELMA is appreciated as an institution that both fills gaps and supplements the capabilities of the Land Management Section in the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Fisheries. However, the division of responsibilities between RELMA and SCAFE are experienced as opaque rather than clear. There is also an uncertainty about the criteria for approval of projects by the Regional Advisory Committee that has contributed to an impression that Zambia receives less attention than other countries supported by RELMA. The one-year limitation of duration of projects supported by RELMA is regarded as an unnecessary constraint; instead three-year projects with an annual review mechanism is a preferred option. Future priority support areas include water harvesting, women empowerment and marketing.

468. In addition, staff at the Swedish Embassies have drawn upon the subject matter knowledge within RELMA on both methodological matters and technical matters (the interaction by RELMA with FARMESA is referred to in para. 418, above).

469. **The Swedish Resource Base.** One Junior Professional Expert was employed between November 1998 and June 1999 and another JPO is since September 1999 working within the field of agricultural economics and marketing. Several Minor Field Studies have been undertaken by Swedish university students under RELMA guidance and supervision.

466. **Government Institutions.** RELMA has an increasingly wide range of collaborators in the private sector as well as the international donor community. Nevertheless it remains closely affiliated to the public sector, reflecting its heritage in the RSCU and its links to Sida supported projects. RAC members are mainly from the respective ministries of agriculture. However, the extent to which their influence at a *policy level* arises from an association with RSCU/RELMA varies markedly between countries. Thus in Kenya, RELMA is able to use its field experiences as a contribution to the ongoing planning for the proposed National Agricultural and Livestock Extension Programme. This reflects both a close collaboration between RELMA and the Sida office in Nairobi (which is directly supporting the planning process) and the historical relationship between RSCU and the Ministry of Agriculture (especially the Soil and Water Conservation Branch).

467. Since the Unit is directly funded by Sida it may be expected that the Swedish Embassies (some of which have Sida representation) will be in a position to assist in influencing policy makers in host governments with respect to the RELMA mandate areas. The extent to which this has been possible to date varies quite markedly between countries according to development priorities and policies of both the Swedish and host governments.

468. At a national level, RELMA's closest contacts (other than in Kenya) are with the Sida bilateral projects dealing with soil and water conservation or land management. Working relationships again can mainly be traced back to the RSCU which, together with the projects concerned, had mixed success in influencing ministries at a policy level and establishing the projects' approaches on an institutional level. Considerable policy influence is evident in Zambia and Uganda where Sida bilateral projects are expanding outside their original operational localities and where local skills in soil and water conservation practices have been enhanced. In contrast, soil and water conservation remains only weakly developed at ministry level in Tanzania, despite the extended inputs of the SCAPA project in Arusha and the more recent operations of LAMP. Ethiopia represents a special case where soil and water conservation issues are already prominently reflected in government programmes at federal level as well as in the Regional Agricultural Bureaux of the Autonomous Regions. Arguably there is scope in future for RELMA to influence policy in relation to broader aspects of land management.

469. **Non-Government and Private Sector Organisations.** Through its special relationship with ICRAF, the project has contributed to the Centre's increased attention on the community level and its recognition of the value of using a range of participatory tools in determining and implementing its research agenda to the extent that some 40–50% of its budget is now related to outreach activities associated with environmental management. The relationship between RELMA and ICRAF was further institutionalised by the recent decision to jointly finance (50/50) a new position within ICRAF on agroforestry extension from mid-2000 (the present subject matter post on agroforestry extension in RELMA was discontinued at the time of the departure by the past holder in June this year). The post transfer is likely to generate multiple benefits in that it incorporates the speciality of agroforestry into a regional institution, thereby securing permanence and a broad range of client contacts. It also creates an institutional base for expanding the agroforestry networks in line with the intentions of RELMA. The transfer also has positive judicial implications since ICRAF's status is legally recognised in all member countries in the region.

470. Through its collaboration with ICRAF, the Unit has been able to identify gaps, which it can help to fill in agro-forestry development as part of its overall perspective on land management. In addition to its support to ICRAF on management and extension aspects of agro-forestry, the Unit has become involved in broadening agro-forestry from its foundations in support of improved crop production to issues of environmental management and watershed functions, the commercial value of forest products, the compatibility of land use with the maintenance/destruction of watershed functions, feed security for livestock both on-farm and in communal grazing areas, and the effects of land use changes and downstream impact on water sources and user communities. Through its change of mandate and working methods, ICRAF may be expected to further influence its own network of collaborators at international and national levels as well as at a local level through its area-based programmes carried out in association with district extension personnel and partner NGOs.

471. **The Farming Community.** For the most part, the Unit has avoided becoming directly involved with the implementation aspects of land management projects. As a result its effects on farmers have (intentionally) been mainly indirect through its intermediary target groups. The line is however becoming increasingly difficult to draw as advisers become more intensively engaged in pilot testing of technologies and pilot area projects initiated by RELMA. As in the case of FARMESA, one problem of becoming involved in this manner is how subsequently to achieve any multiplier effect of potentially beneficial methods or technologies and/or how to translate a successful experiment into a practical and affordable solution for farmers. If the observable trend is to continue it needs to be followed as a conscious decision related to an agreed strategy and not as an *ad hoc* arrangement.

E. Effectiveness of Project Concepts, Strategy and Approaches

472. **Development and Adaptation of Methods and Technologies**. In Uganda, RELMA is testing guidelines for a participatory extension approach that would include: (a) participatory needs assessment by community members; (b) establishment of fora for interaction between subject matter specialists and villagers and informal village organisations on innovations and new enterprises; and (c) establishment of fora for interaction between the local administration and village organisations on creating a more enabling environment. Attempts are being made in Kenya to develop new approaches to processing and marketing tree fruits. RELMA also supports development of more cost-effective water tanks in Ethiopia, Kenya and Uganda through research fellowships.

473. **Dissemination of Information and Knowledge.** A fundamental principle of the project is its approach to making change through its support to intermediaries in the form of training courses, workshops, manuals and publications rather than as an implementing body in its own right. The extent to which its operating partners continue to request support and assistance is testimony to the effectiveness of the Unit in contributing to issues of concern to their respective client farmers.

474. RELMA has achieved perhaps most impact in an institutional, capacity building sense among its wide-ranging group of collaborators. Benefiting from the earlier successes of RSCU, RELMA continues to be perceived as a highly professional unit, particularly with respect to its involvement in soil and water conservation and agro-forestry. As such, it is frequently called upon to provide *technical backstopping to Sida bilateral projects* in the form of advisory visits, training courses and workshops, and technical documentation and information dissemination. In many cases the activities supported, although led by the bilateral project concerned, involve other collaborators in both the public and private sectors thereby extending RELMA's network of influence. Funding under these circumstances has been from the RELMA budget rather than that of the bilateral project. Similar services are provided to other projects and agencies in which case there may be an element of cost

sharing although the advisers' costs remain to RELMA's account. To the extent that services are fully supported by RELMA this contradicts the expectation that it will act as a link organisation, seeking partners rather than simply servicing demands.

475. Capacity building has also been tackled at an individual level through a system of *fellowships*. The term is used, somewhat misleadingly, for the financing of individual consultants to carry out specific tasks identified by the project and, more conventionally as a grant to finance research proposals, relevant to the RELMA mandate, which are submitted to RELMA by individual scientists. There have been mixed results from the former in terms of the timeliness of work completion and the quality of work. This is evidently due to some fellowships being assigned to young and inexperienced persons as an aid to broadening their experience, rather than seeking a possibly better qualified person through a competitive tendering procedure. There is a case for the Unit being more selective in allocating responsibilities with more critical, time-bound assignments given only to consultants (individuals or companies) and fellowships reserved as competitive awards to scientists of recognised standing and/or on merit to younger researchers/technical staff as a means of building their experience.

476. The project has achieved an excellent professional standard in its *publications*, which are widely appreciated by the recipients. Publications cover numerous relevant subjects in the form of technical handbooks, pamphlets, workshop proceedings, working papers, technical reports and, where appropriate video and audio-tape cassettes. Publication costs may be shared between RELMA and its collaborator or financed entirely by the Unit. In the case of books supplied to museums (Kenya) for subsequent sale, sale proceeds have been used to finance reprints. In general, however, publications are supplied free of charge and there is as yet no official project policy on cost sharing or cost recovery for any of the services rendered. While this may be satisfactory as long as Sida is prepared to continue to finance 100% of costs, it raises a serious issue of future sustainability of the project's activities. The workload on specialist staff in the RELMA office is considerable. One of the tasks of the newly appointed Information and Publications Officer is to improve planning of publications prior to editing and submission for publishing.

477. A key area in which the Unit has achieved impact as intended is through its promotion of *specialist networks* in aspects of land management within participating countries as well as regionally and on a wider international level. It has been instrumental in establishing a land management network in Kenya and subsequently been requested by SCAPA to assist in developing a similar network in Tanzania. Following its sponsorship of a scientist in Ethiopia to attend a workshop in South Africa on conservation tillage, the scientist is now a part of a region-wide conservation tillage network, Africa Conservation Tillage Network, which arose spontaneously from the workshop and is now functioning under South African leadership. As a result the researcher is readily able to exchange experiences with fellow scientists and keep up to date on technical developments elsewhere in the continent.

478. The Unit is similarly linking with existing networks in agro-forestry, e.g. African Network for Agro-Forestry Education with respect to feed security aspects of livestock management, particularly in arid and semi-arid areas, on conservation tillage (African Conservation Tillage Network) and national networks on rainwater harvesting in Kenya, Uganda and Zimbabwe.

479. Discussions are underway for RELMA also to become a network centre for 'green water' issues in Eastern and Southern Africa as part of the Global Water Partnership. While the global linkage is potentially highly beneficial, it will be important for the Unit not to be diverted from its regional focus.

480. **Strategic Linkages.** Activities identified in participating countries and subsequently selected for inclusion in the Annual Work Plan and Budget are heavily biased towards the needs of Sida projects dealing with soil conservation and land management. While many of the activities may have potentially broader implications for other projects and localities, they are not explicitly linked to a well defined, overall thrust for RELMA. Nor are they explicitly linked to current national policy, or regionally identifiable themes/issues of priority in land management.

481. The Project Document contains only a brief analysis of economic trends, and the institutional and development context in which the project functions in each of the participating countries across the region. There is insufficient information on the steps already being taken in participating countries to tackle land management issues (from both a technical and procedural point of view) that could have helped to guide the project towards key areas for further support. As a result, the activities financed are not well justified in relation to the development context in which they will operate.

482. In its earlier form of RSCU, dealing with a more discrete technical area, it was perhaps not unreasonable for the smaller Unit to manage its work programme as an aggregation of separate disciplines. Despite the expansion of the Unit under a broadened mandate, this approach has continued with technical agendas being set mainly on the basis of individual's preferences and perceived priorities. Individual advisers have become fully occupied in their respective areas of specialisation and have little time or opportunity to consider their work in an overall RELMA framework. The Project Document itself reflects this linear approach to technical responsibility. However, the approach is leading to a degree of fragmentation of effort and risks the project losing its perceived value among client groups as it becomes involved in a wider range of subjects increasingly removed from the Unit's traditional areas of expertise. RELMA does not need to become a 'centre of excellence' involved at a field level in all associated disciplines. There is however a case for developing sufficient in-house skills to monitor developments in critical but more peripheral subjects affecting land management as well as to hire consultants and evaluate their performance, prepare terms of reference for fellowships, and participate effectively in networks dealing with relevant specialist topics.

483. **Criteria for Prioritisation.** The Administrative Manual (1999) for RELMA does not define criteria for selecting activities for inclusion in the project, nor does it include a comprehensive guide to project monitoring and evaluation. As a result, activity selection appears to be rather ad hoc with reference to only the very broad guidelines implicit in the project mandate and objectives and the associated defined strategies in the Project Document. Selection should not be simply an automatic response to an expressed need in an apparently relevant subject. Reference is needed to past experience in similar fields, evaluation of the procedures to be employed during implementation, and the anticipated outcome and sustainability of the investment. For example, the desilting of a dam through the hire of suitable equipment with RELMA funds would appear to fit into a category of improving water use efficiency. Any financing decision however, should take into account details on the use, management and viability of the dam (currently and post-desilting).

484. **Implementation Themes.** Prioritisation of proposals identified for submission to RELMA is done by the RAC. This involves a limited number of views. Consideration is being given to introduce the concept of 'themes' to help place proposals into better order and improve the justification for proposal selection in a national and regional context, but the approach has not yet been fully adopted. The RELMA office in relation to the availability of financial and personnel resources do final selection. The resulting budget is generally top heavy with field activities, the assumption being that a number of proposals will not be implemented and a proportion of the resources thereby freed for use in regionally oriented activities under a "planning reserve". Advisers do not necessarily prepare written proposals for regional programmes as is the case for most national submissions.

Planning and budgeting in this manner is unsatisfactory and does not help to build planning capacity either nationally or within the RAC.

485. The presentation of national proposals in the Annual Work Plan and Budget varies between countries. Activities are (with the exception of Eritrea) grouped in a thematic manner. However, the thematic groupings are not consistent between countries. This makes it more difficult to detect differences/similarities across country programmes and implies a lack of strategic focus for activity selection within a regionally cohesive programme. There is evidently an assumption that not all activities on the national lists will be implemented, thus adding to the planning reserve that is available to help finance the regionally determined projects.

486. From an administrative point of view, the *Annual Report for 1999* shows a marked increase in the actual and proportional expenditures on field activities and contract staff costs. This is not surprising in view of the employment of additional personnel and incorporation of additional subject matters as part of the broadening of RELMA's mandate. However, since the proportional allocations of the budget to two key areas in the project (training and information) were thereby reduced, some statement in relation to the implications of expansion for overall future directions for the project would have been appropriate – it is understood that changes in accounting rules between 1998 and 1999 may have contributed to the expenditure increase.

487. **Independence and Flexibility.** Several associated institutions emphasise the value of RELMA as an impartial, independent regional unit. This derives from its degree of financial and managerial autonomy and resultant flexibility, enabling it to bring organisations together (e.g. national research institutions) in collaborative technical programmes which institutional jealousies, restrictive planning horizons and budgetary constraints may otherwise prevent or hamper.

F. Management and Governance Efficiency

488. **Management.** The management of RELMA has done well in keeping together a rather disparate project in terms of clients and subject matters. "Themes" have been introduced in order to lend more rationale to the many isolated activities and efforts have been made to make the technical subject matter specialists work together as small teams in the pilot settings in particular (ULAMP in Uganda and the Kusa initiative in Kenya), taking advantage also of the interaction between the in-house representatives of technical and socio-economic disciplines.

489. It has been difficult, however, to completely overcome the inherent complications of a diverse regional project like RELMA. The theme approach has not been sufficiently effective to make clients and potential clients in the individual countries to think about the regional perspective when proposing activities for support by RELMA. As a result, a large portion of the support to national activities still appears to be gap-filling in the absence of available national resources – for instance, in-country study tours by groups of farmers – rather than being elements of initiatives of regional importance.

490. Another management problem has been to draw up appropriate boundaries between the responsibilities of RELMA and the implementing organisation and between RELMA in-house staff and external consultants. In the case of ULAMP in Uganda, RELMA is lending support to the Ministry of Agriculture staff on extension methodology that is also one of the functions of the engaged consultant firm who assists the district authorities on implementation matters. In the future, the role of RELMA staff in relation to both implementing organisations and any potential consultants ought to be better clarified through expanded write-ups on the individual activities where the contributions by RELMA, the implementing organisation and any consultants are all clearly defined (not just as hitherto, the contributions by RELMA).

491. **Subject Matter Capability.** In relation to FARMESA, RELMA commands an impressive range of in-house subject matter capability. Their competence is much appreciated by its clients on both technical an methodological matters, sometimes to the extent that the services of other competent specialists in the region are overlooked. RELMA has to keep a good balance, based on considerations of cost-effectiveness and the desirability of local capacity building, between maintaining in-house staff capacity and engaging consultants from the region. In the longer term, it may be foreseen that functional specialists on networking, publishing and training be part of the RELMA core capability while specialists on some technical subject matters be engaged as consultants for specific tasks.

492. **Regional Guidance.** The broad mandate of RELMA suggests a need for involving a wider range of stakeholders in reviewing activities proposed for inclusion in the project, as well as monitoring and evaluating performance. Starting in 1999, work programme planning was initiated at national level with 'relevant key stakeholders' and Swedish Embassy representatives deliberating under the guidance of RAC members. The aim is to gain a broader perspective on potential subject matters prior to development of a priority listing of activities in the subsequent RAC meeting. This represents a step forward but the process needs to operate within clearer strategic, procedural and financial guidelines. The Logical Framework has been used as the basis of planning. While this tool can give structure to discussions it is not sufficient in itself as a means of selecting appropriate activities. RELMA has not established the equivalent of National Co-ordination Committees (as in FARMESA) to be involved in local planning. While this has perhaps given more flexibility to the project, countries are essentially recipients of the project outputs and services rather than true partners in its ongoing development.

493. **Backstopping and Supervision.** While RELMA has received much more attention by Sida than FARMESA, the backstopping and supervision services have not been sufficient to address all the problematic issues. Several of the difficulties referred to above – incomplete strategy and support themes, hesitation on support priorities, unclear policies on support to different categories of clients and balancing of trade-offs between in-house and external subject matter capabilities – are of a kind that cannot be resolved solely by the RELMA management and the Regional Advisory Committee

5. Conclusions and Recommendations

5.1 Main Conclusions

A. FARMESA

501. **Overall Progress and Achieved Results.** The implementation progress of FARMESA has been adversely affected by the prolonged start-up period 1996–1997 and the curtailment of expenditure in the first half of 2000 as a result of changes in exchange rates between US$ (the budgeting currency) and Swedish kronor (the disbursement currency). In fact, FARMESA has only been operating at the expected maturity level for part of 1999. In comparison with RELMA, FARMESA has operated with very little technical assistance and with a minimum of funding for regional activities directed by the Co-ordinating Unit.

502. For projects supporting methodological development like FARMESA, it is difficult to establish conventional quantified output targets as prescribed by the logical framework approach and it is thus not always possible to ascertain if planned individual outputs have been generated or attained. However, it is evident that FARMESA through direct personal contacts has exposed personnel at the Field Sites, extension staff, research personnel and NGO collaborators to work methods that they previously were less familiar with. Information about methods has also been disseminated through documents and working papers and through workshops and seminars. FARMESA is well-advanced on electronic dissemination of information and has a well-organised website with information about mini-projects, publications, services and achievements. The project has also contributed to capacity building by topping up research grants and participating in developing curricula for in-service training programmes and for higher learning institutions and by establishing a model database. In addition, the project has clearly succeeded in its ambition to "leave things on the ground" at the Field Sites by making available seasonal inputs, improved planting material, improved breeding livestock, equipment and finance for direct on-farm investments.

503. The impact of FARMESA on Sida supported projects and the Swedish resource base has been marginal. However, FAO expects that the ongoing testing and adaptation of service approaches in conjunction with different farming technologies will be of value to headquarters staff and field staff in the region as well as to projects supported by FAO.

504. The shortcomings of the project refer more to its design (cf. para.512, below) than to its implementation performance. In this context, it is bewildering, that so many of the original flaws in the project objectives, concepts and design have been left unattended by its governance structure and supervisory set-up through the four years of implementation.

505. **Relevance of Objectives, Clients, Concepts, and Design.** The formulation of the project *objectives* was not preceded by analyses of the problems that emanate from use of poor methods in Sida projects or in other project and services and there was no comprehensive assessment of the demand for knowledge about improved methods among support organisations in the region. There was neither an assessment of the relevant Sida policies or the policy environment in the five countries nor reviews of other projects, services or networks that adapt and disseminate participatory working methods. Partly as a result of those oversights, and an unfortunate confusion over the logical framework requirements, the objectives of FARMESA have locked the project into a narrow and rigid approach instead of allowing it to adjust its strategy to encountered problems and new circumstances.

506. The omission to review the Sida policy framework for the region and for the Special Programmes has precluded Sida supported projects to become a prime *client* category while the perfunctory national policy reviews have relegated NGOs and commercial organisations to a status below that of government research services, training institutions or extension services.

507. The particular *concepts* of FARMESA – the Farming Systems Approach, the Technology Development and Transfer approach, the generous definition of "methods", the mini-project approach and the pervading application of national ownership to virtually every activity – have tended to pull the project towards: (a) the interests of the research services rather than the field services closest to farmers; (b) a focus on technology rather than on methods, (c) the interest groups associated with the few field sites rather than the wider clientele of field services staff throughout the countries and the region; and (d) public interests at the national level rather than common regional interests among both private and public sector organisations. FARMESA has not interpreted its task to be in the forefront of development of participatory service approaches but rather to combine service approaches with novel farming technologies in the expectation of discovering particularly effective applications that have been hitherto unknown and that could make farmers more ready to adopt new farming practices.

508. The implementation *strategy* of FARMESA, while partly conforming with the Sida policy guidelines, is incompletely defined in the Project Document, a shortcoming that, in conjunction with the fragmented objective structure and an absence of regional themes, has blurred the focus of the project and allowed it to become interpreted as almost synonymous to the implementation of locally initiated mini-projects.

509. An assessment of the design and evolution of FARMESA in relation to the points raised by the *Identification Mission* and the Sida appointed mission *appraising the Project Document* for the current first phase raises several concerns. One principal concern is that FARMESA has evolved into a project that in terms of design and operations in fundamental regards is repeating the shortcomings of its predecessors (re. evaluations of FSP, AGROTEC, ALCOM and PPIP). Thus, contrary to the recommendations made in the report from the Identification Mission and in disregard of some of the conclusions from the evaluations of its predecessors:

- FARMESA has institutionalised a narrow conception of field activities in terms of small projects concerned with aspects of technology research and development;
- The project is concentrating on its own field activities (mini-projects) while only to a limited extent drawing on the experiences of other ongoing national and international initiatives (including Sida-funded bilateral projects and programmes);
- Through involving primarily a fairly limited number of individuals in government host institutions, FARMESA is restricting the participation of stakeholders outside the sphere of government and is thereby missing the opportunity to exploit other potential or existing centres of excellence;
- There are several examples showing that FARMESA has not capitalised on the momentum built up through the previous individual programmes. The Farming Systems Programme (FSP) established extensive contacts with regional as well as national Farming Systems bodies (e.g. SAAFSR-E, established by FSP) and also with individuals involved in Farming Systems research and training at the University of Zimbabwe (perceived of as a centre of excellence at the time). Those contacts seem only to a limited extent to have been maintained by FARMESA. The same applies to some of the subject matter networks supported under the previous programmes (one example is the Animal Traction Network for Eastern and Southern Africa/ATNESA);

- While generally speaking the approach to farmer participation adopted by FARMESA is preferable to the one pursued under AGROTEC, the "systems approach" of the latter was in effect more developed than what could be said about FARMESA. While the identification of "mini-projects" under FARMESA appear to be based on the initiative and interests of researchers, with little concern about rationale in relation to the project at large (both regionally and nationally), the selection of field sites and trials on specific technologies under AGROTEC appeared more strategic. In the latter case, the activities were selected with a view to address the various points in the chain of farm operations, so as to obtain a more complete coverage of the farming system. Thus, rather than repeating trials on animal traction by using the same technique in different locations, animal traction would be concentrated to one site, crop storage to another and food processing and so forth to yet other locations.

510. In spite of the conclusions based on previous experiences, FARMESA has not made serious efforts to involve social science expertise in project activities. In addition to contracted staff, the lack of professionals with training in the social sciences (e.g. sociologists) applies to the composition of NCCs and to the multidisciplinary research teams focusing on mini-projects. The fact that information about the possibility to obtain research funds for mini-projects is targeted at natural science departments, and that funds are not enough to cater for more than one researcher per mini-project, implies that the possibility of involving social scientists is more or less excluded.

511. **Linkages to Project Clients.** The national committees, the national facilitators, the memberships in networks, and the personal interaction of staff at the Co-ordinating Unit have primarily served public sector clients, most notably the researchers, while the contacts with non-governmental organisations and commercial companies have been much less extensive. The links to Sida supported projects via Swedish Embassies have been very weak as a result of poor interest by Embassy staff and lack of influence by Sida over decision-making at national and regional level.

512. **Appropriateness and Effectiveness of Organisation & Management Arrangements.** On the whole, project implementers have done a good job given the internal contradictions in the project document and the absence of strategic, policy guidance and technical backstopping (cf. below). However, the project has not employed formal routines for *assessing and learning* from the efforts of other actors in this field.

513. The concept of national [government] "*ownership*" has unfortunately taken precedence over the relevance of project activities in relation to regional issues and the requirements of Sida supported projects.

514. The inflexible and complex *administrative arrangements* employed by FAO as Executing Agency are more suited to technical assistance projects than to the decentralised modus operandi adopted by FARMESA.

515. Regional programmes and Special Programmes on methods development are more demanding on *supervision capacity* than bilateral projects since methods and regionality are complex concepts that can easily be misinterpreted. It is doubtful if their implementation can be "outsourced" to another organisation without regular inputs by Sida on issues related to project policies (concepts and rationale), strategy/modus operandi, management and governance ant to ensure feedback to Sida headquarters and field operations. Since supervision capacity is limited at Sida, Special Programme should be restricted to efforts that are central to the Sida supported projects without excluding other clients.

516. **Cost-effectiveness of Support.** The *adaptation of work methods through mini-projects* is an expensive approach compared to monitoring experiences generated from other endeavours – develop-

ment programmes and projects and regular operations of government and non-government advisory services – without necessarily generating more impact on the great majority of practitioners. The mini-projects, that rely heavily on FARMESA subsidised inputs and implements, are regarded by the project as requiring an extensive superstructure, including field site working groups, field site facilitators, national facilitators and national co-ordinating committees for planning, implementation, monitoring and assessment of outcomes. However, even if this superstructure was reduced to modest proportions by transforming it into low-cost networks, the mini-project approach is likely to be less cost-effective than monitoring of other projects and services.

517. The *dissemination of experiences* on methods application through publications and through the FARMESA website is probably cost-efficient, e.g. exhibiting a favourable relation between output and input quantities, although it is unclear how cost-effective the approach is. The demand and appreciation is high for several of the technical reports and working papers but it is more doubtful how useful the majority of the publications are to advisory services practitioners and to farmers. The FARMESA publications need to be reviewed according to at least the following three criteria: (a) demand by clients (number of countries, quantity and quality/usefulness); (b) substitutability by publications produced by other organisations involved in this field; and (c) ability of local publishing services to produce publications for local audiences that are without interest to other countries in the region.

518. As mentioned above, the *management set-up* for FARMESA has been elaborate for the kind of activities that have been undertaken although the size of the Co-ordination Unit itself has been modest (perhaps too modest a proper regional perspective). The complex national structure may have contributed to distort the balance between regional and national interests in favour of narrow local perspectives without adding much sociological insight on methodological subject matters.

519. **Sustainability and Implications for the Future.** The economic *policy environment* for agricultural development has recently changed substantially in FARMESA member countries, as outlined under *1.2 Recent Developments in the Agricultural Sector in the Region* above. As a result, field operatives dealing with agricultural and rural development face new challenges in serving their client farmers and communities. Similarly their clients must contend with a much altered investment climate and changed relationships with potential service providers. Structural adjustment, liberalisation policies, and reforms in public services (often involving substantial levels of staff retrenchment) require intensive efforts to alter the attitudes and work methods of all agricultural personnel as well as other change agents serving in rural areas. FARMESA should be well placed as a regionally oriented project not only to facilitate the sharing of experiences in dealing with these challenges, but also to be pro-active in influencing the continuing policy debate.

521. The establishment of Field Site Working Groups represents the project's strategy for operating at a local level with multiple stakeholders. A common question now being raised in the Field Site Working Groups concerns the procedure to be followed in '*scaling-up*', or moving from site-specific demonstrations of technologies and methods to achieving wider impact in accordance with project objective 4. The question arises as to what is to be scaled up[6]? Farmers in the field sites are requesting expanded financial support from FARMESA and have come to expect the project to provide inputs to initiate their adoption of technology (e.g. improved varieties/breeds, irrigation equipment, subsidised credit). In this respect, the project may be viewed as promoting continued dependency rather than encouraging farmers to make investment decisions based on real costs associated with economically viable enterprises. At the same time, collaborating personnel in public sector extension services are requesting FARMESA to expand its area of operation. Together these

realities suggest that the project be viewed simply as an additional development project aimed at directly serving the farming community. The project is faced with a dilemma that it has not yet resolved in terms of its future operating procedure.

522. Given the level of funding available, the solution to 'scaling up' cannot be a simple replication of FARMESA's involvement in field site activities through a geographical expansion within each of the participating countries. Nor should it be an increased level of funding to existing sites simply to increase the number of technology demonstrations in the area or the project would move even further towards being another development project. It could arguably be a replication of the role of the facilitator in other localities, bringing together relevant stakeholders according to identified needs. This brokerage function is gradually emerging as a key requirement in the re-designed national advisory service programmes. The approach is already adopted in a number of existing programmes and is likely to be more widely introduced in some form when redefined national agricultural advisory programmes are implemented.

523. Issues for debate would therefore be the extent to which FARMESA need be involved in technology testing and adaptation, the role it might play, and if it is to be involved whether there is a continuing need for project-specific mini-projects to achieve its aim. The critical requirements, as envisaged in the original project concept, is to establish an increased awareness among change agents of the range of techniques available for interacting with client farmers/communities and an enhanced appreciation of when a given technique may be most appropriately used in relation to clients' expressed needs and production potentials; i.e. the brokerage function should ultimately be the normal work mode of the field professionals. "To achieve the necessary multiplier effect, the main target group has been designated as those middle level professionals (technical specialists, scientists and planners) concerned with smallholder development."(Project Document 1996). Refocusing on the intended client group and their requirements would provide an opportunity to bring the project closer to its original perceived purpose.

524. In summary, the *mini-project* approach of FARMESA is questionable: experience on participatory methods to wanting field level clients could be more effectively made available through support to networks of practitioners than through a testing and evaluation apparatus dominated by research staff. The current scope of *clients* is too wide and should be narrowed down to recipients at the field level – government and private sector advisory services and farmers' groups together with Sida supported projects – while "upstream" researchers and training institutions, which are often benefiting from bilateral support programmes, should be regarded as subsidiary clients. Efforts should be made to adapt services and outputs to genuine *demand* and to reduce costs by *charging* for printed outputs and for support to training while networks on methodology adaptation, field applications and training services should be sustained by subscription fees from the membership.

525. **FARMESA Phase II Proposal.** This proposal, the contents of which are outlined in paras. 359-363, above, suffers from the same shortcomings as the current Project Document. Indeed, the imbalance in the current project between the national and regional levels would be accentuated in the new proposal: by further reducing the size and the competence of the Co-ordinating Unit. The views of the evaluation mission on the new proposal may be summarised as follows:

- *Relevance*: to Sida – little; to the region – marginal, if not reflecting common regional challenges such as the effects of decentralisation of extension services, the privatisation of an increasing share of support services and the need to encourage farmers to become better managers and businessmen/women;

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[6] It is noteworthy that FARMESA is emphasising the need for *adaptation* to site specific socio-economic, ecological and cultural conditions, a factor that makes the issue of "scaling-up" even more questionable.

- *Design*: (a) mini-projects would continue to serve as testing ground for improved technologies of interest to researchers in combination with tangible benefits to the selected community while still requiring an elaborate management structure without: (i) a clear assessment of the likelihood of these technologies being used outside the test areas, (ii) assessments of the cost-benefit ratio of the methods to be tested, and (iii) a clear procedure for how the field site experience will be transformed into outputs or services that can be applied by outside users; (b) the project would not exert much influence on government policy makers in relation to district decentralisation and privatisation issues; and (c) it would not offer much support to the establishment and initial operations of networks on development and application of working methods for extension services, input supply services, finance services and marketing services or networks on dissemination practices;
- *Management structure*: the proposed set-up would not ensure: (a) that regional priorities prevail over national interests, (b) adequate influence for Sida over planning and implementation, and (c) decisive contributions by social scientists in planning and backstopping adaptation of interactive working methods for support services;
- *Modus operandi*: the proposal does not allow for recurrent, systematic assessment of demand for adapted methods among private sector clients in the participating countries;
- *Effectiveness*: this has been reduced by: (a) the absence of a routine for assessing regional demand for application of adapted methods (cf. Modus operandi, above), (b) cost-inefficient mini-projects (selection criteria and management set-up), and (c) the absence of a clear strategy for cost-effective dissemination of information and knowledge on adapted methods through electronic, printed and film media; and
- *Sustainability (of project activities)*: this would not be significantly improved since there would be little charging for services and outputs from clients and only small financial contributions by the host countries.

B. RELMA

526. **Overall Progress and Achieved Results.** As for FARMESA, it has been difficult for RELMA to establish conventional quantified output targets and the information yielded in the Annual Reports has not always been commensurate with the level of detail and the categories provided in the annual workplans.

527. Among most client categories, there is appreciation of RELMA for being a long-term partner, an impartial institution, a "centre of excellence" in several fields and "gap-filler" that is able to respond to requests for support to singular activities with a minimum of requirements and bureaucracy.

528. As might be expected, implementation progress has been most solid on the old RSCU core subject matters and the project has during the past period been more successful in disseminating information and knowledge than in generating new land management technology or service approaches. *Sida supported projects* have by and large benefited from the RELMA services as expected in the workplans as has the *Swedish resource base* through engagement of JPOs and MFS students. The influence of RELMA on *national land management policies and services* has been noticeable in Uganda and Zambia while there has been little impact in Ethiopia and Uganda. Researchers and subject matter specialists have benefited greatly from several of the RELMA and RSCU publications as well as from the fellowships and consultancies that have allowed them to make contributions to knowledge about plants or land practices. The impact on *NGOs* and *commercial organisations* has been mixed while the close link with ICRAF has led to alignment and reconciliation of their services on agroforestry.

529. RELMA has not yet developed much capability for *electronic dissemination* of information on development/adaptation of improved on-farm technologies and work methods nor on their practical applications since most handbooks and manuals are only available in printed form (this capability gap is now being addressed). RELMA has thus not been able to support ongoing or emerging networks on adaptation or application with computer/communications specialist services (nor does it appear to have done much to facilitate such development through other kinds of facilitation such as preparatory workshops or subject matter oriented seminars). The *printed output* of RELMA in the form of technical handbooks, technical reports and technical pamphlets has probably been its most important contribution since it clearly fills a need not satisfied by other organisations. The support to *training* has often been indirect in the form finance for courses or programmes arranged by national institutions, frequently in Kenya and in the Arusha area in Tanzania. It has encompassed support to production of training materials and facilitation of training events, workshops and seminars. The future needs for training in land management are likely to remain significant; probably the time has come to make the beneficiaries pay a larger share of the cost.

530. **Relevance of Objectives, Clients, Concepts and Design.** The particular *concepts* of RELMA – regional relevance of undertaken activities with an expected catalytic effect, avoiding duplicating the efforts of other organisations or projects and interaction with a broad range of actors through formal networking – remain relevant. The formulation of the project *objectives* was, however, not preceded by reviews of national land management policies or requirements of extension services or Sida supported projects. Partly as a result, the outlined *strategy* remains incomplete and has not been sufficiently effective to prevent a certain fragmentation of the RELMA activities.

531. **Linkages to Project Clients.** Through the RELMA staff, the project maintains linkages with Swedish supported projects and with non-governmental organisations. Through the Regional Advisory Committee, whose members represent the public sector, the project has connections with extension services, research services and training institutions in the agricultural sector although its links to policy makers depend on the organisational positions and abilities of the committee members. Its links to other projects and initiatives in the land management sector are less developed and do not guarantee effective monitoring of similar or parallel development and dissemination efforts.

532. **Appropriateness and Effectiveness of Organisation and Management Arrangements.** The RELMA management has been successful at keeping together a number of complex activities although, as mentioned above, the project has not employed *formal routines for learning* from other actors in this field. Encountered problems apply to a difficulty in applying regionally relevant *themes* to counteract the natural fragmentation tendencies that occur in projects of this kind; to draw an appropriate line between the responsibilities of RELMA and those of the co-operating *implementing organisations*, and to develop criteria for the use of *consultants* and RELMA staff, respectively.

533. The *supervision* support provided by Sida headquarters has not been focussed on the strategic and management issues outlined above but has been more concerned with budgetary and administrative matters.

534. **Cost-effectiveness of Support.** It is difficult to assess the cost-effectiveness of *adaptation of land management technologies and work methods* in pilot projects and through singular activities. Presumably, there is a diminishing return to these undertakings as the most valuable advances are likely to have already been absorbed by the advisory services. The cost of the technical subject matter specialists in RELMA is high but the specialist staff members are also making significant contributions to the publishing and training service functions. However, the effectiveness of the present way of co-operating in this field would be enhanced by two developments: careful consideration of which subject matter inputs could be contracted from outside rather than retained in-house and support

to establishment and initial operations of computer-platform networks for exchange of information on development/adaptation experiences.

535. As mentioned above, there has been a tendency towards fragmentation rather than consolidation of efforts. Many activities originate as gap-filling proposals from the national levels without indication of development context. RELMA is attempting to compensate this deficiency by organising the proposals within organisational *themes* but without much success so far. Even the activity proposals from the regional level lack development purpose and context.

536. The *dissemination of experiences* on technology and methods application through publications is probably cost-effective in the sense that it displays a healthy balance between benefits to users and the production and distributions costs for the publications. There are cases, however, of publications intended purely for use in one country, which could advantageously be produced locally. In fact, there is evidence that many users are prepared to meet a substantial part of the actual cost for several publications. In the future, the publishing service would benefit from three changes: (a) the option to download certain handbooks and manuals through the Internet; (b) inclusion of capacity building support to local information/publishing services; and (c) the introduction of payment for some of the publications.

537. The *support to training* of field staff of advisory services appears to have been effective since many participants have returned favourable comments although it is more questionable how cost-effective the numerous study tours for field staff and farmers have been. However, no alternative has as yet been developed to the present arrangement of supporting the Kenyan training programmes: it is not inconceivable that capacity building support to localised training in individual countries or centralised training to say Arusha Region in Tanzania which commands excellent facilities for both field and classroom training could turn out to be more cost-effective.

538. The *management set-up* for RELMA is better balanced than for FARMESA but probably some of the subject matter capacity could advantageously be contracted on consultant basis. However, RELMA is weaker than FARMESA on service function capability: while FARMESA has an information/communication specialist to attend to the computer aspects of networking and dissemination of documents, RELMA is still waiting for such a post to be filled. RELMA also lacks a specialist who could appraise, supervise and backstop training activities and programmes. The set-up of two Regional Advisory Committee members from each participating country has the advantage of being inexpensive but the present member background displays a bias towards the public sector at the expense of NGOs and the commercial sector.

539. **Sustainability and Implications for the Future.** RELMA has taken initial steps to stimulate internal discussions of future strategy during a recent staff retreat and attempts to establish a more holistic approach for the project. Recurrent reviews of the strategy are needed with a view to establishing a clear focus for the project both within each participating country and in an overall regional sense; even with the establishment of an ‘holistic’ (all-embracing) approach there is a need for strategic focus. The term ‘land management’ is itself too broad to provide this and may lead to a tendency to focus more on the resource base than on the managers of the resource base (farmers) who are a major key to future economic growth. Having identified a source of programming cohesion it will be important also to establish procedures for maintaining the cohesion in an operational sense at the local level, bearing in mind the risk of RELMA becoming overly involved in implementation.

540. The recent employment of a socio-economist in RELMA provides the project with an opportunity to focus more closely on topics of concern to the resource managers and methods of interacting with them in a more participatory, gender sensitive and client oriented manner. The change

in emphasis should enable RELMA to increasingly support activities geared to creating efficiencies in existing production enterprises, with the farmer (resource manager) as the focus.

541. Arguably the discussion of future strategy should be formalised and opened up to include eminent regional and international specialists in aspects of land management. To engender regional ownership, the process should be led by the region, although with inputs from Sida. Specific resources should be allocated in the budget for the process and a specific time frame established for completion of the review. Clarification of the strategy and a restatement/redefinition of functions would help to identify the type of management and administrative structure required to best serve the project's interests.

542. The food security mandate is difficult to fulfil for a single-donor-supported unit like RELMA without a credible strategy or approach. In addition, the client base for RELMA is biased towards the public sector and needs to be broadened to include also farm level advisory services from the non-government sector. Efforts should be made to reduce costs by charging for printed outputs and for support to training while networks on methodology adaptation, field applications and training services should be sustained by gradual introduction of subscription fees from the membership.

C. Conclusions Applicable to Both Projects

543. **Relevance of Project Activities.** Regional projects are intended to complement ongoing national efforts. They are not intended to become substitutes or simple supplements for national programmes for agricultural research and extension. They are expected to have a catalytic role and lend a sobering regional perspective to issues of national importance.

544. **Potential for Reducing Poverty.** The potential for reaching poor individuals and groups in these and other development initiatives is first and foremost a matter of the extent to which the objectives, strategies and target group foci provide a supportive framework for reducing

545. Three general observations can be made with regard to FARMESA and RELMA. First, the objectives of both projects are phrased in such a way that although poor individuals and groups are not identified as specific foci of attention, they are represented in the group of ultimate beneficiaries of project activities (i.e. small-scale farmers of both sexes). Secondly, the changing policy and macroeconomic environments in the region implies that all farmers – regardless of differences in livelihood situations – are dependent upon farm technologies and new forms of collaboration that will help them to improve their production and on well-functioning markets for selling crop and livestock produce (however limited the surplus may be). Hence, for resource poor and relatively wealthy farmers alike, viable market links and a competent and client-oriented extension service are equally important. Thirdly, although generally speaking the land management technologies that form part of the current FARMESA and RELMA portfolio are relevant to the problems experienced by resource-poor farmers in the region, the affordability aspects need to be addressed – several technologies offered through FARMESA and RELMA are definitely beyond reach of many farmers. In addition to financial requirements, improved land management may also entail considerable investments in terms of labour and time which are often scarce resources in many farm households (particularly in *de facto* female headed households). It is important to note, however, that projects such as FARMESA and RELMA should not be expected to concentrate solely on technological investments that poor farmers can afford. What is significant is that project staff, extension agents, researchers and other actors take into account that there may be different client groups for different technologies and management solutions, and hence the need to apply feasible approaches to each group

546. **Potential for Redressing Gender Imbalance.** The Project Documents for RELMA and FARMESA reflect a commitment in general terms to gender aspects of project activities. FARMESA motivates the need for "gender sensitiveness" with reference to the fact that although women are often the principal actors in the farming systems in the region, they tend to be neglected due to e.g. a male bias in the agricultural support systems and to the "invisibility" of women in statistics and policy work. The RELMA documentation lists "gender aspects" among the crosscutting issues which the project is to address.

547. Three general reflections on gender aspects can be made in relation to FARMESA and RELMA: (a) the emphasis of "communities", "farmer groups", "households" and "families" implies a risk that individuals and social categories, based on e.g. gender, age or relative socio-economic position, are given less prominent positions in problem formulation, planning of project activities, implementation and follow-up, (b) the preoccupation with improved "family income" may serve to obscure an unequal distribution of benefits within the family, and (c) gender tends to be treated as a separate issue (under separate headings) and in essence being more oriented towards women than gender roles and responsibilities.

D. Summary of Conclusions

548. Both FARMESA and RELMA were set up to respond free of charge to demand for support among institutions in the agricultural sector in the southern and eastern African region. Food security is a common concern in both Project Documents. The two projects have common core functions: developing/testing/adapting improved institutional practices and farm practices; and dissemination of knowledge on improved practices through electronic media, printed outputs and through support to training activities. Both projects face the same conceptual challenges: (a) remaining attuned to changing demands among the clients for outputs and services; (b) avoiding duplication of efforts with other organisations and utilising synergy effects among clients in different countries; (c) balancing the regional and national aspects in the absence of regional host institutions; (d) establishing and maintaining criteria for assessment of the cost–benefit relationship for project activities; (e) maintaining a sound balance between the adaptation and dissemination functions; and (f) increasing the financial contributions by the clients and thus help to better align the provided outputs and services with the clients' demands. Fixed costs are relatively high: FARMESA engages full-time professionals in three countries together with three internationally or regionally professionals at the Co-ordinating Unit while RELMA currently employs 11 professionals at its Nairobi office. In addition, FARMESA relies on an extensive committee set-up for guiding a set of mini-projects for testing of improved farming and field staff practices.

549. While FARMESA has had an impact on some of its designated clients by facilitating their exposure to different services approaches, the design shortcomings revealed during the past four years of implementation need to be rectified before further Sida support is committed. Unfortunately, the current proposal for a second implementation phase does not address those difficulties but rather advocates a continuation of the present approach.

550. Although RELMA is unsure about its future path, its approach exhibits several of the traits that should apply also to FARMESA: (a) inclusion among the client base Sida supported projects and the Swedish resource base; (b) monitoring of development and adaptation efforts by other actors rather conducting its own trials, (c) allocation of significant resources for disseminating experiences among the clients, (d) a fairly modest management and governance structure that facilitates promotion of regional priorities rather than national interests and permits extensive linkages to non-governmental organisations.

5.2 Anticipated Future Scenario and Its Implications

A. Continuing Institutional Transformation

551. The trends that have been emerging since the preparation of the support to FARMESA and RELMA are likely to continue: contraction and decentralisation of public support services and a simultaneous but gradual expansion of private sector support services. As a result, farmers are being forced to become more self-reliant as managers and businessmen and businesswomen.

552. The public extension services need help on how to operate effectively with fewer staff within the district environments with only limited access to subject matter expertise on technical and methodological subject matters. In fact, it is unlikely that the decentralising advisory service will be able to adopt the new combinations of farming technology and service approaches that are emerging from the FARMESA mini-project activities. Instead, the reduced extension staff require simple rules for deciding on which of a limited number of group based approaches that should be applied in a particular situation and effective techniques for mastering those approaches.

553. Inexperienced private sector entrants need help on effective approaches for communicating with farmers, i.e. other agencies' best practices, as well as technical knowledge on production technologies that are new to them, not least on land management aspects.

554. In order to make the best possible use of the combined strengths of support services at field level – government extension services, NGO/private advisory services, commercial input and marketing services – novel ways of co-operation need to be introduced, for instance: joint farm visits, phased supply of services and common venues for inter-service meetings and meetings with farmers.

555. More guidance is required to farmers on how to handle the new situation of multiple source options for farming technology, input procurement, finance and marketing. Farmers need to actively seek out services from government and private sector organisations and novel approaches, including services catalogues and voucher systems, should be tested.

B. Primary Future Clients for Support

556. The future client base should be farm support services organisations – public and non-governmental extension services and commercial organisations offering advisory support, input and implement supply services and marketing services who are expected to take advantage of networks, publications and training – together with farmers/farmers groups who demand handouts and video material. It is not unlikely that savings and credit services are already well served by networks, publications and training programmes. Researchers would benefit directly from network services and publications and indirectly from potential project facilitation to link up with the networks facilitated by SACCAR and ASARECA. "Higher" training institutions currently targeted by FARMESA – universities, agricultural colleges and institutes – would benefit from network services and from publications while further work on curriculum development may draw upon the experiences of the subject matter specialists.

C. Anticipated Support Needs

557. The main function of regional projects concerned with farm production and service approaches should be to collect, organise and disseminate information and knowledge about gained experiences rather than attempting further testing and adaptation that should be left to locality specific initiatives, possibly with supplementary support to assess and document important experi-

ences[7] (the importance of the institutional memory/data bank may have been underestimated in the past). Dissemination should be through three principal means:

(d) sharing of experiences of application of technology and working methods through various kinds of networks[8] (employing the Internet or regular mail, or relying on personal exchanges during workshops or visits) among policy makers, field staff managers and subject matter specialists (preferably by forming associations with formal membership, annual fees and "lead institutions");

(e) publication of manuals and handbooks for field staff for use in their work with farmers and publication of handouts and videos for use by the farmers themselves (this is likely to be a growing field in the future); and

(f) education and training – from in-service person-to-person training to formal courses for policy makers, managers and field staff and researchers – requiring trained trainers, developed curricula and training material.

558. All three dissemination means would benefit by being facilitated by specialists (in-house or contracted) at the regional level:

(c) functional specialists on (i) databases/networking/electronic communication; (ii) printing and publishing; and (iii) training to facilitate dissemination as well as the building up of self-financing capacity in the participating countries on networking, publishing and training; and

(d) subject matter specialists on farming technology and service approaches to: (i) address difficult problems through experimentation or monitoring of others' experiences; (ii) assist the network members to interpret and apply the disseminated information, (iii) to assist the publishers to prepare good manuals and handbooks for field staff and for farmers, and (iv) to assist the trainers to incorporate technical and methodological aspects into the curricula of various training programmes and in training materials.

D. Priority Subject Matters

559. The current subject matter range of FARMESA and RELMA would need to be rationalised. Subject matter knowledge on service approaches – in-house or contracted – should encompass services–farmer group interaction (from participatory methods to contractual arrangements) as well as internal farmers group dynamics (self-study within groups and learning among groups). In-house subject matter knowledge on farming technology should be focussed on conservation farming aspects within the land management sub-sector since they are deemed to be most crucial for the majority of farmers in the region.

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[7] Crucial factors applying to development of participatory and gender sensitive methods for working with farming families by government extension services and other organisations are: (a) estimated future demand in the region for additional techniques—staff of which organisations are likely to apply further adaptations of already existing techniques in addition to the ones that they are already using?; (b) current gap between potential and existing techniques—are rapidly diminishing returns already evident here?; (c) the adaptation process—monitor ongoing adaptation processes in services and projects, stimulate adaptation in services and projects or undertake special adaptation work?; (d) the methods for assessing the effects of adapted techniques—how to separate the effects of an adapted technique for transfer of production technology from the technology itself and how to assess for which other circumstances an adapted technique would be suited?; and (e) selection of channels for dissemination/introduction—trade-offs between impact (practical teacher-student training probably most effective but also most costly), cost (electronic dissemination of techniques is least expensive but less effective than person-to-person training, and speed (electronic dissemination is fastest but today only benefits a small number of recipients).

[8] Networks may be formed and expanded around subject matters and technologies such as conservation tillage and animal traction but may also be concerned with participatory approaches and methods and with sources of finance and consultant rosters.

E. Management and Organisational Options

560. Networks are particularly effective mechanisms for monitoring methodological and technical developments and for disseminating information about their application because: (a) many institutions can be in direct contact with each other instead of being dependent on a central provider; (b) two-way exchanges are facilitated – a recipient of information on development advances may simultaneously be a provider of information about application experiences; (c) networks are practical for assessing demand for information or services since potential recipients can easily indicate if they are genuinely interested; (d) networks facilitate influence by all members, not just by special interest groups; and (e) networks facilitate sustainability by encouraging members to contribute financially to developments or services that they are interested in and by becoming "memory repositories".

5.3 Recommendations

561. It is recommended that the activities of FARMESA and RELMA be aligned and eventually integrated. The advantages of such an arrangement can be summarised as follows: (a) better services to common clients; (b) better utilisation of in-house specialists on adaptation/development/application/backstopping and on dissemination services; (c) savings on costs for dissemination by using common media, channels and equipment; (d) savings on governance and management costs; and (e) affordable and effective technical backstopping and supervision while reducing demand on Sida follow-up resources.

562. The process of bringing FARMESA and RELMA closer together is proposed to proceed through three stages: (i) a convergence phase that would extend to 31 December 2001; (ii) a medium term stage between 2002 and 2004; and (iii) and an ultimate stage when the joint functions of FARMESA and RELMA would have been assumed by a number of partly self-sustaining networks in the region.

A. The Ultimate Stage of Co-operation

563. There are as yet no regional bodies supporting, monitoring or evaluating developments among agricultural support services (with the possible exception of micro-finance). Further, there is no institutional memory/data bank on successful (and unsuccessful) land management practices, participatory approaches, practitioners or consultants in the region.

564. The ultimate stage or vision would thus be characterised by the following features:

- **Purpose and priorities.** Facilitating self-sustaining development and dissemination of important farming technologies and field services approaches within the region;
- **Geographical coverage.** Interested organisations, institutions and projects in all countries in eastern and southern Africa.
- **Design.** Support to establishment and operations of networks for:
  - development and spreading of important farming technologies, including crucial land management practices;
  - development and spreading of effective participatory and gender-sensitive approaches for farm support services, including advisory services, input supply services and marketing services; and
  - development and spreading of effective techniques for disseminating information and knowledge on farming technologies and service approaches, including electronic communications, printed material, video films and training activities.

The potential network configurations are illustrated through the following figure:

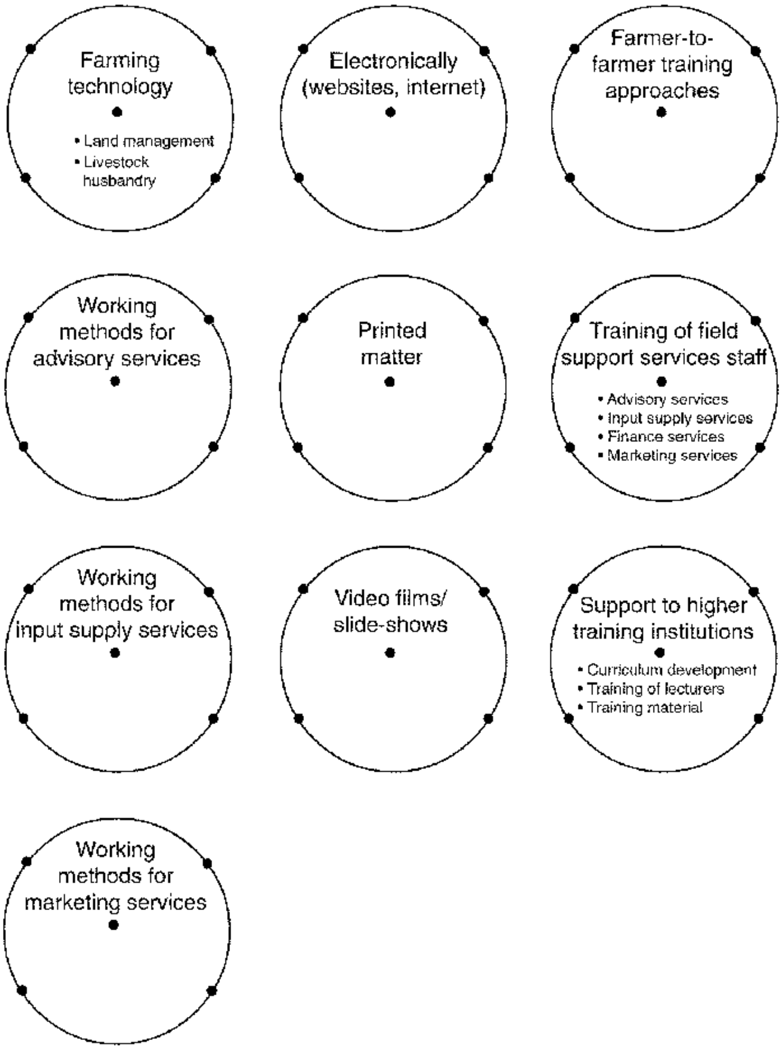

Figure 7: Potential Networks to be Associated with an Integrated FARMESA/RELMA

- **Organisation and management**. Existing and new networks would form formal association(s). The networks may be assisted by a small secretariat with in-house expertise (particularly for Swedish supported projects) and access to external consultants on farming technology, support service approaches and dissemination techniques (data bases/electronic communications, publishing and training). Although regional host organisations are not prerequisites for successful networks, it is conceivable that SADC and East African Co-operation become hosts for two interlinked circuits of networks[9]. The association members would elect representatives to a Member Committee.

The envisaged organisational arrangement is illustrated by the figure below:

[9] As a rule, regional institutions have better prospects than projects to become: (a) repositories of accumulated information/experiences by virtue of their permanence; (b) recognised monitorers of particularly interesting practices among ongoing development projects by virtue of their legitimacy; and (c) important nodes for networks and new forms of partnerships by virtue of their institutional position.

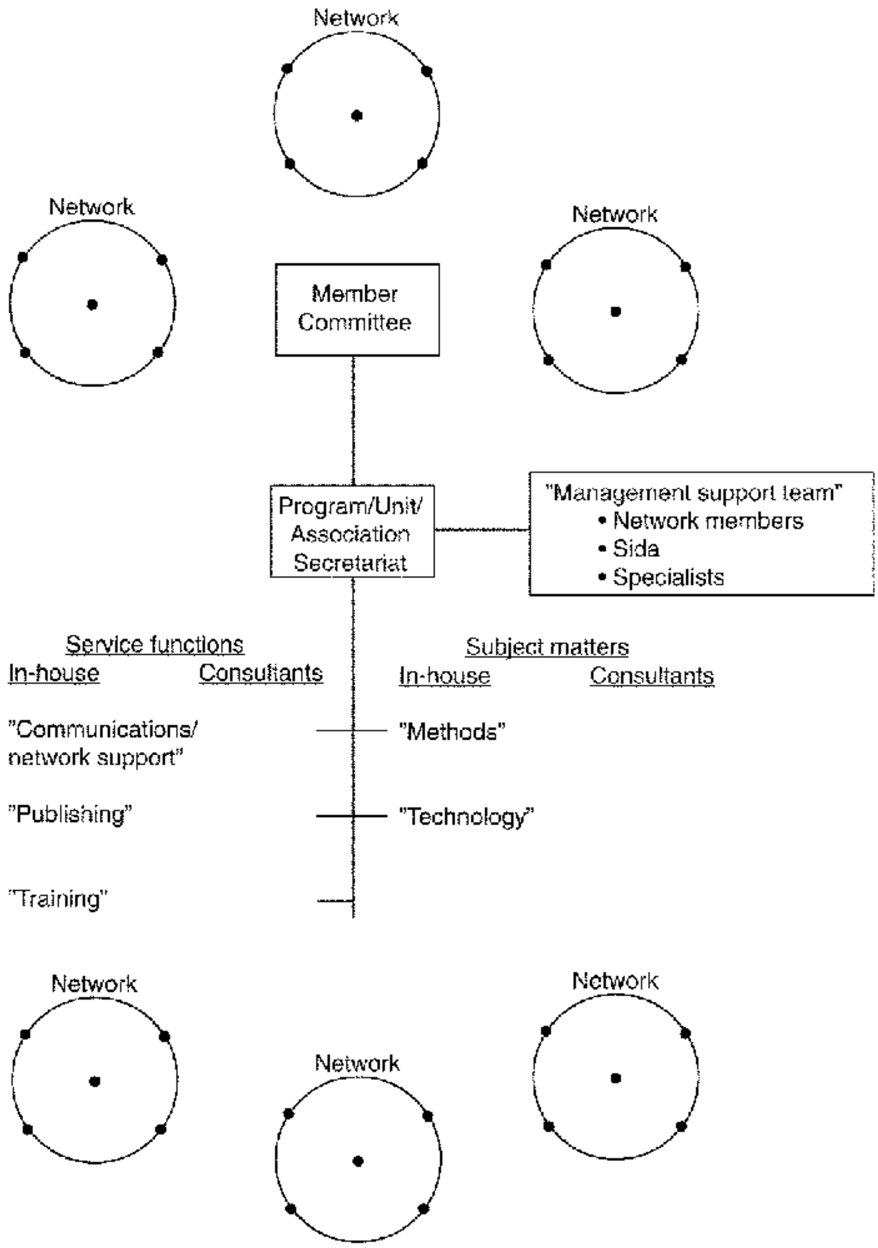

Figure 8: Envisaged Organisational Structure of Network Association

- **Roles and responsibilities.** The development and dissemination activities would be financed jointly the network members and donor organisations, including Sida.

B. The Medium Term Project Stage 2002–2004

565. The medium term stage – proposed to extend for three years from January 2002 to December 2004 – would be characterised by the following features:

- **Purpose and priorities.** Facilitating farmers benefiting from Sida supported projects and other farmers to assume a more active role within changing institutional, economic and technical environments by making available information and knowledge about "best practices" for farm production, advisory approaches, agricultural trading and financing to their support organisations as well as to the farmers directly;

- **Geographical coverage.** Present countries plus FARMESA associate countries Botswana, Malawi, Mozambique and South Africa;
- **Clients.** Emphasis should be put on clients at the field level: government and private sector advisory services, input supply services, finance services and marketing services;
- **Design.** The consolidated projects would undertake three kinds of activities:
  (a) monitoring, sponsoring and backstopping of promising advances of regional interest on *crucial/strategic land management practices* – including soil fertility, conservation farming, water harvesting and livestock integration approaches – within Sida supported initiatives as well as among other initiatives;
  (b) monitoring, sponsoring and backstopping of promising participatory and gender-sensitive approaches of regional interest within advisory services, finance services, input supply services and marketing services on *effective, participatory methods for working with farmers* in the public and private sectors within the new environment of uncertain commercial services, reduced government resources and decentralisation of public services to district level; and
  (c) *dissemination of information, knowledge and skills* on land management and field services approaches through electronic means, published material and videos and through training[10].
- **Management and organisation.** The management and organisational arrangements may be characterised by the following features:
  - at national level, consensus selected Contact Points representing the public sector – central as well as district levels – and the private sector – NGOs and commercial companies – in the participating countries;
  - at regional level, Sida administered management unit with functional specialists on electronic dissemination of information, publishing and training together with subject matter specialists on participatory approaches/methodology and land management practices. The unit would be guided by a Regional Committee with elected, nominated and consensus selected members from the public sector – central as well as district level – and the private sector; and
  - supervision and backstopping of the combined project activities would be undertaken by a Management Support Team with representatives from the participating organisations, Sida and technical specialists from e.g. international UN organisations.
- **Roles and responsibilities.** The Sida support would facilitate:
  (a) technical assistance and consultant services for monitoring of ongoing development efforts, assessment of results, backstopping on dissemination (including training) on: (i) land management practices (farming technology); (ii) field service approaches ("methods"); and (iii) network/data base establishment, publishing and training (dissemination services);
  (b) complementary operational support to ongoing development/adaptation initiatives on technology and services approaches; and
  (c) material support to network establishment (computer hardware and software), publishing, and training workshops and programmes.

566. The mandate and orientation of the proposed new integrated project put specific requirements on follow-up at Sida headquarters. Sida may decide to appoint a 2–3 person advisory team

[10] Among the channels for dissemination of information and knowledge, there are trade-offs between impact – practical teacher-student training is probably most effective but also most costly – and – electronic dissemination of techniques is least expensive but less effective than person-to-person training – and speed – electronic dissemination is fastest but does only benefit a small number of recipients.

to follow the project closely through reviews of reports and other documentation and through recurrent visits

567. The *country contributions* may include: (a) sustaining contact points in member countries; (b) financing of computerised network operations; and (c) contributions to publishing and training activities.

C. The Convergence Period 2001

568. The proposed convergence period would serve to align the activities of FARMESA and RELMA in anticipation of common operations during the medium term stage:

	2000		2001		2002		2003		2004	
FARMESA		Second	extnsn	Cnv Prd						
FARMESA/RELMA						Medium	Term	Stage		
RELMA	Current	Phase	Convrg	Period						

Figure 9: Proposed Timetable for Alignment of FARMESA and RELMA Activities

569. **Sida.** The following activities are proposed to be undertaken by Sida:

- Review of the evaluation findings to decide whether the proposal on future directions for FARMESA and RELMA are acceptable (August 2000);
- Granting a one year extension of the present project phase for RELMA from 1 January to 31 December 2001 (August 2000);
- Arranging a seminar with FARMESA and RELMA participants to discuss the evaluation findings and the Sida views and to appoint a representative to a Task Force to direct the alignment process (September 2000);
- Participation in Task Force work together with FARMESA and RELMA representatives and facilitators to elaborate on the "vision" indicated above and to prepare guidelines for the alignment process (October 2000); and
- Participation in the continued work of the Task Force to prepare a joint Project Document for the consolidated implementation stage 2002–2004 (February–March 2001).

570. **FARMESA.** The following activities would be undertaken by FARMESA:

- Participation in the seminar together with RELMA representatives to discuss the evaluation findings and the Sida views and to appoint a member to the Task Force to direct the alignment process (September 2000);
- Preparations for phasing out the remaining mini-projects by 31 December 2001 (September 2000);
- Participation in Task Force work together with Sida and RELMA representatives to elaborate on the "vision" indicated above and to prepare guidelines for the alignment process (October 2000); and
- Participation in the continued work of the Task Force to prepare a joint Project Document for the consolidated stage 2002–2004 (February–March 2001).

571. **RELMA.** The following activities would be undertaken by RELMA:

- Participation in the seminar together with FARMESA representatives to discuss the evaluation findings and the Sida views and to appoint a member to the Task Force to direct the alignment process (September 2000);
- Preparations for an extension of the present project phase by one year to 31 December 2001 (September 2000);
- Participation in Task Force work together with Sida and FARMESA representatives to elaborate on the "vision" indicated above and to prepare guidelines for the alignment process (October 2000); and
- Preparation of Annual Workplan and Budget for 2001 based on the guidelines of the Task Force (October-November 2000); and
- Participation in the continued work of the Task Force to prepare a joint Project Document for the consolidated stage 2002–2004 (February–March 2001).

572. **Proposals for the Preparation of a Joint Project Document by the Task Force.** The Terms of Reference for the *planning* of a consolidated support project should take into account the following proposals that emanate from the findings on the design and performance of FARMESA and RELMA:

1: Conduct proper analyses of the problems that emanate from use of poor services approaches in Sida supported projects and the obstacles that prevent better methods to be adopted today (paras. 331, 374);

2: Assess the demand for support outputs and services, expressed as willingness to adopt improved service approaches and convey improved farming technologies, among public and private sector organisations (para. 331);

3: Review the outputs and services of other initiatives that intend to adapt and disseminate better working methods and assess any needs for incremental support that could make their work more effective (paras. 331, 374, 420);

4: Review the national policy and institutional environments within the individual countries (paras. 331, 489);

5: Formulate proper support objectives that clearly indicate what should be attained rather than what will be done (para. 335);

6: Introduce operational and verifiable indicators for project objectives and outputs (paras. 336, 379, 450);

7: Formulate explicit criteria for assessment of the regional relevance of support activities (para. 154, 164);

8: Formulate explicit criteria for assessing the cost-effectiveness of support activities (para. 413);

9: Introduce "themes" that reflect region-wide demand for services and outputs, link activities with their respective outputs and provide the framework for proper write-ups of project activities (paras. 341, 466, 489);

10: Formulate clear policies on the roles of in-house staff in relation to the implementing/co-operating institution and external consultants (para. 490); and

11: Formulate policies for charging for commercially attractive outputs and services (para. 476).

573. The proposals on the *implementation* of the support activities include the following:

12: Recurrently assess the demand for project outputs and services (para. 331);

13: Recurrently review the outputs and services of other projects, services and networks that adapt and disseminate better working methods (para. 331, 374, 420);

14: Improve the techniques for gender analysis and gender reporting, establish mechanisms for an assessment of implications for poverty reduction (para. 342); and

15: Improve reporting standards to mirror the categories and indicators used in the annual workplans (para. 415).

6. Lessons Learned

601. **Implications for Sida policies and projects.** The following lessons may be derived for Sida from the planning and implementation experiences of FARMESA and RELMA:

- *Unclear concepts* – the absence of a clear definition of "method" requires involvement by Sida to secure the interests of the intended prime clients;
- *Methodological difficulties* – the problems of separating "method" from technology tend to point in favour of adaptation through monitoring and sponsoring of methods adaptation in ongoing projects rather than through own locally initiated trials;
- *Diminishing returns from adaptation work* – there appears to be less difference between each additional adapted technique and its original model and fewer potential beneficiaries to apply the adapted technique as it gets matched with more esoteric technologies;
- *Usefulness of adaptation work* – free publications and invitations to workshops without financial obligations are always welcome but the true test of usefulness is the willingness of the beneficiary to pay for the output or service; and
- *Application of "ownership" concept* – in absence of regional host organisations and/or co-financing arrangement, national interests tend to neutralise the cost-effectiveness of a regional approach.

602. **Implications at regional, national and community levels.** The following lessons may be derived from the planning and implementation experiences of FARMESA and RELMA:

- *Relevance of adaptation work* – questionable if more adapted methods can be absorbed by the support service staff; it is perhaps more a matter of training staff in selecting the appropriate approach and in applying existing standard techniques;
- *Non-governmental organisations* – tend to become marginalised at meetings of committees dominated by government servants;
- *Gender equality and poverty reduction* – persistent application of participatory techniques should make it easier for women farmers and poor farmers of both sexes to get access to technology and support services; and
- *Sustainability of activities* – making benefiting organisations pay towards the cost of project services and outputs has the double advantage of aligning supply with demand and reducing the dependency on donor financing.

Appendix 1

Terms of Reference
for an Evaluation of the Regional Programmes FARMESA and RELMA

Background

RELMA
The Regional Soil Conservation Unit (RSCU) was established in 1982 in Nairobi with the objective to promote technology transfer between the countries in East Africa. The experiences from the National Soil and Water Conservation Programme in Kenya served as a model. RSCU was initially, formally, a part of the Sida-office in Nairobi. From 1 July 1994 RSCU moved out from the Embassy and became an independent programme, administratively linked directly to the Department for Natural Resources and the Environment (NATUR) at Sida-HQ. During the period 1990/1 – 1997, 73.3 MSEK was allocated to the programme.

Sida's committee on Food Security in East and Southern Africa recommended in 1996 that Sida should intensify its activities aimed at increased food security in the region. Following the recommendations of the committee and consultations within Sida it was proposed that the mandate and work of the current RSCU ought to be expanded, from soil & water conservation to cover a wider range of disciplines related to food security. RSCU was in 1997 consequently transformed to RELMA (Regional Unit for Land Management). At present RELMA consists of a director, 8 experts (out of which 6 are internationally recruited) and support staff. Initially 45 MSEK was allocated to the project for the period 1998 – 2000. Additional 8 MSEK was later allocated.

RELMA has been given the mandate *to contribute towards improved livelihoods and enhanced food security among small-scale land users in the region*. The geographical focal area (Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania and Zambia) remains the same for RELMA as previously for RSCU.

The Project objective is *increased quality of technical and institutional competence through improved contents of Sida-supported activities as well as other programmes, projects and institutions of the land management sector in the region*.

The guiding principles for activities within RELMA are that:
1. activities supported should have a catalytic effect and high leverage.
2. activities should have regional relevance and values outside the specific project.
3. support for regular activities, financing of institutions/long-term commitments should be avoided.

The main aim is to focus on the productive potential of the farm as in land husbandry rather than soil conservation alone. In that context, Soil and Water conservation, Animal and Crop Husbandry and Water Harvesting will remain as key technical subject matter areas. Farm Economy, Marketing and Socio-economics however, is now added as subject areas to enable the Unit address the reality of the market environment and socio-economic constraints to development.

RELMA's main activities gravitate around:
1. technical backstopping and advice.
2. training and manpower development.
3. information and documentation.
4. methodology development.

Each country within the geographical mandate area is represented with two persons in the Regional Advisory Committee (RAC). The Ministry of Agriculture identifies one of the two persons. The RAC and its network are the main source for ideas and suggestions in defining the activities of RELMA.

At the annual planning meeting possible future activities are discussed with the RAC and representatives from Sida. Following this meeting an annual workplan is prepared. The annual workplan has to be approved by Sida before any financial commitments can be made.

FARMESA
The Farm-level Applied Research Methods in Eastern and Southern Africa Programme (FARMESA) was launched in July 1996. Originally to be undertaken for a period of three years, it was subsequently extended one year to end in June 2000. The programme is a regional collaborative initiative of Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia and Zimbabwe, with financing of SEK 37.000.000 from Sida and executed by FAO. The goal of the programme is the improvement of food security, incomes and resource management of farming families, emphasising innovative systems and participatory methods for identifying, testing and adapting smallholder technologies.

FARMESA builds upon and continues the work of four earlier regional projects which were supported by Sida, i.e. Farming Systems Programme (FSP), Agricultural Operations Technology for Smallholders in Southern and Eastern Africa (AGROTEC), Aquaculture and Local Community Development (ALCOM) and the Plant Protection Improvement Programme (PPIP).

The development objective of FARMESA is to "contribute to the sustained rise in the standard of living of smallholder families in East and Southern Africa through improved household food security, rising real family incomes and appropriate management of natural resources". This is expected to be achieved by promoting and consolidating "participatory, holistic, inter-disciplinary, gender-sensitive, environmentally-friendly and farmer focused work methods within smallholder development institutions in order to increase the availability and uptake of appropriate technology within a facilitating policy framework".

Four immediate objectives are assigned the programme for attaining these goals:

1. to develop and utilise improved field methodologies for the identification, prioritisation, testing, and adaption of appropriate smallholder technologies;
2. to gather and document project field experience and other relevant national experience and to disseminate it within participating and associate countries within the region;
3. to improve in-service training and formal education for strengthening human and institutional capacity to apply the new perspective;
4. to support collaborating institutions in applying the methodologies and technologies developed under the first objective on a wider basis within ongoing research and field activities.

The objectives have been operationalised by FARMESA through support in comprehensive institutionalization of systems and participatory methods and technology development and transfer, and support services. The primary focus is on methods that allow field line staff to collaborate with farmers in solving their priority farming problems. To be of any use these new approaches must be tested and applied with farmers in a field context. It also seeks to increase the effectiveness of agricultural policy analysis by directing attention to the farm and community systems.

FARMESA seeks to develop human and institutional capacity in the above areas through field action, training and networking activities. At a national level, the programme is directed by National Coordinating Committees (NCC) representing stakeholders and managed by National Facilitators (NF). Field activities are identified and coordinated by Pilot Area Working Groups led by farmers and representing local stakeholders. At a regional level, the Programme is directed by a Regional Coordinating Committee (RCC) of representatives from NCCs and is managed by a Regional Programme Unit located in Harare, Zimbabwe.

1. **Reason for the Evaluation**
   The present phases for FARMESA (phase 1) ends June 30, 2000 and for RELMA (phase 1) December 31, 2000. The evaluation will constitute the "end of the project"-evaluation (according to Sida regulations) as stipulated in the Programme documents. The evaluation will form part of Sida's consideration for possible future support.

2. **Purpose of Evaluation**
   The purpose of the evaluation is to present an analysis together with recommendations to Sida regarding the design of future Sida support to methods development in the region of Eastern and Southern Africa. This shall include a discussion on the appropriateness of continuing to support the existing programmes. The evaluation shall also discuss other possible alternative procedures and/or programme designs to efficiently channel Sida funds for methods development in the agricultural sector.

   The base for the recommendations shall be made up of, but not necessarily limited to:

   a) an assessment and analysis of past and present performance of the Programmes, by using earlier internal and external evaluations, reviews, assessments etc.

   b) a forward-looking assessment and analysis of the relevance, effectiveness, management structure, modalities of operation, design and implementation of activities and sustainability of the programmes as presented in the proposed draft project documents for phase 2 of the programmes.

   c) a general discussion, based on various regional experiences, on the design, appropriateness; usefulness and sustainability of methods development in development work in the region.

   The conclusions and recommendations of the mission will also provide input to the Department for Natural Resources and the Environment (NATUR) at Sida for the updating of objectives for the Department's support to Research and Methods Development activities.

3. **Scope of Evaluation**
   The evaluation shall cover the RELMA Programme since its initiation, January 1, 1998. The evaluation of FARMESA shall concentrate on the period from February 1999 (when the Mid-Term Review/MTR was carried out). However, the evaluation shall take into consideration the results presented in, and comments on, the MTR and in the internal FARMESA reviews.

   The evaluation shall concentrate on, but not necessarily be limited to, the following issues (a comparison between FARMESA and RELMA shall be made when applicable):

A. Assessment of past performance.

1. Assess the overall progress of the programmes since the initiation.

2. Assess whether the objectives and results for the first phase of the programmes are relevant and realistic and will be achieved as planned. Explain the reasons for their variances and comment upon their validity and causes.

3. Make a summary of the costs for investment, operation and administration for the different components of the programmes. The summary should include possible external funding including community, national and foreign contributions.

B. Assessment on particular aspects of the Programmes.

1. Relevance and validity (including possible comparative advantages) of the concept of the programmes, the design, priorities and stated objectives in relation to:

a) governmental policies, strategies and priorities.

b) current frontier in research and thinking for methods development in the region and internationally.

c) other on-going activities, including bilateral programmes and projects.

2. Impact of the programmes through its outputs and services (in respect to both planned and unanticipated results) and prospects for uptake and impact of the approach, methods and results, including "spin-off" effects within participating organisations (e.g. private sector, GOs, NGOs and FAO).

3. Appropriateness and efficacy of the overall organisational and management system of the programmes and of its constituent parts including design, quality, relevance and timeliness of the structures for administrative and technical backstopping to the programmes.

3. Relevance of the programmes regional/national/community ownership and sustainability of the programmes together with assessment of the relevance of the work done in relation to the needs of the target group(s).

4. The balance between regional and national (including community) level activities and the mechanisms for structural learning between different institutions and countries as well as learning from the experiences of other actors. Comment on the design and means for sharing information both within the programmes and with other actors.

5. Linkage to research and development institutions and assessment of use and usefulness of research-input in the programmes.

6. Impact and development of the Swedish resource-base through the programmes, including APOs and MFS-students.

C. Lessons learned

1. Summarise the lessons learned in the programmes. Elaborate on the difficulties met, the results achieved, capacity/institutional building, problems identified and steps taken to solve these problems including possible changes to programme design and objectives. The lessons learned should be presented broken up for:

a) Sida (Stockholm and Embassies).

b) Sida supported bilateral projects and programmes.

c) Regional, national and community level.

2. Summarise the two programmes approach to (including definition of) methodology development in relation to community participation, NGOs, innovative technologies, gender, ownership and sustainability and possibly other relevant aspects.

D. Possible future Sida support.

1. Based on the evaluation, the mission shall make technical and organisational recommendations regarding the design of possible future Sida support to methods development in the region. This includes, e.g. future priorities, geographical coverage, programme design, management, implementation and evaluation and the future roles and responsibilities of the various stakeholders involved in the implementation of the activities.

4. **Methodology**

The evaluation shall be made through analysis of available programme documents and other documents deemed necessary by the team. Interviews with, but not necessarily limited to, representatives of the target group(s) in the field, officials from Sida (including embassies), FAO, RELMA, FARMESA, relevant GOs and NGOs and representatives from other relevant donors and actors in the small scale agriculture sector.

The evaluation shall be carried out based on a **gender perspective**; i.e. analysis made and findings presented shall consider both potential for involvement of men as well as women and the impact and consequences for men and women and their respective roles and responsibilities.

The evaluation shall include an assessment and analysis of the programmes for:

a) how environment impact assessments are applied and mainstreamed into the work;

b) how poverty reduction is defined and mainstreamed into the work.

The assessment and analysis should be reflected against:

1) Sida's Policy on Sustainable Development (including "Guidelines for Environmental Impact Assessments in International Development Cooperation").

2) Sida's Poverty Programme (Action Programme to Promote Sustainable Livelihoods for the Poor and to Combat Poverty).

5. **Composition of the Mission**
The evaluation team shall appoint a team leader. The team leader shall be responsible for the planning and co-ordination of the mission, the distribution of work and responsibilities among the team members and the finalisation and presentation of the report to Sida.

The team shall preferably have, but not necessarily be limited to, the following expertise and experience:

a) project and organisation assessment and management including financial aspects.

b) research and development issues, including methodology and methods development, social sciences (people's participation and gender).

c) national agricultural extension, research and development and strategy formulation and implementation in the Sub-Saharan Africa context.

None of the team members should have been involved in the implementation of the programmes.

6. **Reporting and Timetable of the Mission**
It is difficult to estimate the requirement in time for the mission given the programmes large coverage both in terms of technical and methodological as well as geographical mandate. A wellbalanced estimation would give a total of about 25 consultant weeks, required by the team for the mission. The field visits of the evaluation shall be completed not later than June 30, 2000.

The mission is fully responsible for its independent reports, which may not necessarily reflect the views of Sida or the programmes. The reports is to be the product and responsibility of all the team members, each one contributing certain sections as agreed within the team and in addition, offering professional views on all sections of the evaluation.

The evaluation report shall be written in English and should not exceed 30 pages, excluding annexes. Format and outline of the report shall generally follow the guidelines in Sida Evaluation Report – a Standardized Format (see Annex 1). A draft report shall be completed, to the extent possible, before leaving the region and the findings and recommendations shall be presented to and discussed with personnel responsible within the programmes, Sida and FAO. The evaluation report shall be written in Word 6.0 for Windows (or in a compatible format) and should be presented in a way that enables publication without further editing.

A draft final report shall be presented in 6 copies and on diskette to Sida not later than 2 weeks after finalising the field visits.

A final report shall be presented to Sida in 8 copies and on diskette not later than 2 weeks after receiving Sida's comments on the draft final report.

Subject to decision by Sida, the report will be published and distributed as a publication within the Sida Evaluations series.

The evaluation assignment also includes the production of a Newsletter summary following the guidelines in Sida Evaluations Newsletter – Guidelines for Evaluation Managers and Consultants (Annex 2) and also the completion of Sida Evaluations Data Work Sheet (Annex 3). The separate summary and a completed Data Work Sheet shall be submitted to Sida along with the draft final report.

7. **Consultations**
During country reviews, the mission will have consultations as follows:

a) briefing meetings with national representative(s) of the programmes;

b) group meetings with relevant project personnel;

c) group meetings with representatives of target group(s);

d) meetings with other relevant representatives and stake-holders, e.g. representatives from GOs and NGOs, universities, private sector and other donors;

e) meeting with Sida representative(s) at the Swedish embassies;

f) final meeting and discussion with national representative(s) of the programmes.

The mission shall maintain close liaison with the representatives of Sida, FAO, the concerned national organisations and other relevant national and international programme staff. The mission should feel free to initiate discussions with other persons and authorities concerned anything relevant to the evaluation. However, the mission is not authorised to make any commitments on behalf of Sida or the programmes.

Annex

1) Sida Evaluation Report – A Standardized Format
2) Sida Evaluations Newsletter
3) Sida Evaluation Data Worksheet
4) RELMA Programme Document phase I
5) FARMESA Programme Document phase I
6) Report on FARMESA Mid Term Review

Appendix 2

List of Persons Interviewed
Sweden

Sida
Bengt Johansson
Inge Gerremo
Ola Möller
Anders Höök
Bo Göhl
Katja Jassey
Christina Boman
Jan Runnquist
Eva Stephanson

Others
Mats Denninger
Lill Lundgrean, SCC
Bo Tengnäs
Johan Tobom, SUAS

FAO

Doyle Baker, Agr. Dept., Rome
P.V. Tesha, Accra
Andrew Froyd, Accra

Zimbabwe

H. Sigobodhla, Chairman NCC
Dr. Johannes Makadho, Director, Agritex. Team leader, NF
Simon Madyiwa, Agritex, Irrigation Engineer, NF
M. Gova, Agritex, Agronomist, NFT
J.G Mwaniki, IRED
O. J. Zishiri, Agritex, Ag. Deputy Director ofAgric.(Field)
Marja Brdarski, SCC
Prof. Chris Kamlongera, SADC
Fleming Winther Olsen, ASSP
Victoria Sektioleko, FAO Subregionai Rcpresen[a:ive, FAO Subreg. Office
Jan Olsson, Swedish Embassy
Lennart Hjelmåker, Swedish Ambassador
John Dixon, Project Coordinator, CU
P. Ananda, Method Specialist, CU

Maragaret Zurtguze, InformationiDocumentation Specialist, CU
Åsa Torkelsson, APO, CU

Zambia

Lusaka

Margareta Sundgren, Swedish Embassy
Dr. W. Mwale, MAFF
J. Musanya, FARMESA
Dr. J. Lungu, UNZA
Irene Nawa, UNZA
Richard Fuller, FAO
M,M Akayombokwa, MAFF

Field

Dr. Kebede Tato, SCAFE
B. Miyanze, MAFF
Dr. P. Nkunika, UNZA

Tanzania

A. Nalitolela, FARMESA
Lennart Bondesson, Swedish Embassy
Mary Mgema, MAC
Prof. T. Kirway, MAC

Kenya

Åke Barklund, RELMA
A. Kitalyi, RELMA
A. Oduor, RELMA
Gedion Shone, RELMA
T. M. Anyonge, Swedish Embassy
E. Wandera, FARMESA
F. Mbote Waweru, MARD
D.T. Thomas
Dr. Chin Ong, ICRAF
Dr. H. Jannicke, ICRAF
W.M. Mwangi, MARD
Alice A. Kaudia, KEFRI
Luca Alinori, FAO
Arne Eriksson, Agrisystems
D. Gustafson, FAO

Uganda

Charles G.A. Rusoke, MAIFF
Dr. J. R.W. Aluma, NARO
A.M. Qureshi, FAO
Prof. E.N. Sabiti, Makerere University
A.N. Syambi, FAO
C. Lukonji, UNFA
Hans Andersson, Swedish Embassy
A.M. Mwendya, UNFA
A. Akoi, NEMA
Dr. G.C. Mrema, ASARECA

Ethiopia

Aklog Laike, Swedish Embassy
L. Leander, Swedish Embassy
Mats Svensson, Swedish Embassy
Johan Holmberg, Swedish Ambassador
Tamiru Hapte, Ministry of Agriculture
Melesse Termesgen, NAMRP, Ministry of Agriculture

Appendix 3

List of Consulted Documents

General

Policy and Guidelines

Report on Seminar on Sida/Natur's Special Programmes (SPs), May 1998

Experiences of Sida/NATUR's "Special Programmes": AGRITEC, FSP and PPIP. Desk Study by Nils-Ivar Isaksson

Sustainable Agriculture: A Summary of Sida's Experiences and Priorities, May 1999

Riktlinjer för regionalt samarbete i Afrika söder om Sahara, 1 januari–31 december 2000

FARMESA

Policy and Guidelines

Re: Interimsrapport, Farmesa planering, Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences

Experiences of Sida/Natur's "Special Programmes: AGROTEC, FSP and PPIP, N-I Isaksson, March 1998

Plans

A Proposed Integration of Sida Programmes for Smallholder Technology Development and Dissemination in Eastern and Southern Africa, Lundgren & Hall, December 1994

FARMESA: Project Document 1996–1999

FARMESA: Report of A Sida Appraisal Mission, March 1996

Ministry Of Agriculture, Food And Fisheries Zambia: The Farm-Level Applied Research Niethods For East And Southern Africa

Follow-up

Annual Report 1998

Six-monthly Report, January–July 1999

Progress Report to RCC-7, January–November 1999

FAO: Agricultural Operations Technology for Small Farmers in Eastern and Southern Africa, Rome 1997

FARMESA: Achievements, Lessons and Opportunities, Matata, Dixon, Anandajasekeram (undated)

FARMESA: Report on the Mid-term Review, March 1999

Minutes

Minutes of Fourth RCC Meeting, Mombasa June 1998

Minutes of Fifth RCC Meeting, Pretoria, November 1998

Minutes of Sixth RCC Meeting, Arusha, July 1999

Minutes of Seventh RCC Meeting, Chegutu, Zimbabwe, November 1999

Special Reports

The Institutionalization Of The Farming Systems Approach (FSA): Training in Agricultural Higher Learning Institutions In Tanzania Prepared by P. Anandayasekeram, A. B. Torkelsson, A. Nalitolela , 1998/24 (Draft)

Proceedings of the National Workshop on the Institutionalisation of the FSA Training in the Agriculture and Natural Resources Training Institutions In Zambia. P.Anandajayasekeram, M. Mwala, J. Musanya , 1998/25 (Draft)

Current Status Of Institutionalization Of FSA Methods in Tanzania – Results From A Gap Analysis Survey by Anandajayasekeram, A. B. Torkelsson, A. Nalitolela, 1999/1

Current Status Of Institutionalization Of FSA And PRA Methods in Zambia – Results From A Gap Analysis Survey. P. Anandajayasekeram, A. B. Torkelsson, J. Musanya , 1999/2 (Draft)

An Appraisal Of Farmer Groups As A Vehicle for Agricultural Development. T. Dumisani, Mbikwa Nyoni

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