

FARMESA

**Farm-level applied research methods
in Eastern and Southern Africa**

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**Department for Natural
Resources and the
Environment**

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Sida Evaluation 99/27

**Department for Natural
Resources and the
Environment**

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Acronyms

AA	Allotment Advice
AAS	African Academy of Science
AGROTEC	Agricultural Operations Technology for Smallholders in Southern and Eastern Africa
ALCOM	Aquaculture and Local Community Development
ARPT	Adaptive Research Planning Teams (Zambia)
ASARECA	Association for Strengthening of Agricultural Research in East and Central Africa
CGIAR	Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research
CU	Co-ordination Unit
DSA	Daily Subsistence Allowance
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
FSP	Farming Systems Programme
FSRE	Farming Systems Research and Extension
FSRE	Farming Systems Research and Extension
FSWG	Field Site Working Group
FTPP	Forest, Trees and People Programme
GRZ	Government of the Republic of Zambia
GTZ	Deutsche Gesellschaft fuer Technische Zusammenarbeit
ICRAF	International Centre for Research in Agroforestry
IFAD	International Fund for Agricultural Development
IFS	International Foundation for Science
IMF	International Monetary Fund
LoA	Letter of Agreement
NARO	National Agricultural Research Organisation (Uganda)
NARS	National Agricultural Research System
NCC	National Co-ordinating Committee
NF	National Facilitator
NFO	National Facilitation Office
NFSP	National Farming Systems Programme (Tanzania)
NFT	National Facilitation Team
NGO	Non-Government Organisation
PACO	Provincial Agricultural Co-ordinator (Zambia)
PLA	Participatory Learning and Action
PPIP	Plant Protection Improvement Programme
PRA	Participatory Rural Appraisal
RAFA	FAO Regional Office for Africa

RCC	Regional Co-ordinating Committee
RELMA	Regional Land Management Unit
RO	Recipient organisation
SADC	Southern Africa Development Conference
Sida	Swedish International Development Cooperation 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
UNFA	Uganda National Farmers Association
ZNFU	Zambia National Farmers Union

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After our field visits in the countries we had an opportunity to meet the RCC, representatives from Sida and from FAO together with the staff of the CU for further discussions. Those discussions helped to clarify issues which we had failed to fully understand earlier.

It is our hope that readers of our report will find our comments relevant and useful, and that they will assist FARMESA in its preparations for a continuation beyond the current phase of the programme.

Nairobi, Montpellier and Torsaberga
April 1999

Clive Lightfoot
William Wapakala
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Summary of Main Findings and Recommendations

The Farm-level Applied Research Methods in Eastern and Southern Africa (FARMESA) was launched in July 1996. The programme is a regional collaborative initiative of Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia and Zimbabwe, with financing of about US \$ 5.5 million from the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida). Originally to be undertaken for a period of three years, it was subsequently extended by one year to end in June 2000. FAO is facilitating the implementation of the programme, but a significant degree of national ownership and responsibility has been built into the design.

In the programme document, it is envisaged that the progress of the project should be jointly examined by representatives of the core countries, FAO and Sida during a mid-term review. This report covers the findings of that review.

Conclusions

FARMESA is needed

The need for method development and institutionalisation of integrated and participatory approaches for improved land use is not disputed. The mission also regard the competitive funding of activities as an important feature of the programme. Competitive grants have the potential of providing encouragement to centres of innovation in the region for the development of proposals for activities that can be implemented with financial support from FARMESA. Further, the training need in this field is huge..

FARMESA's achievements

FARMESA has, during its short life span made progress in several areas that can be used as a platform for further developments:

Institutionalisation and ownership

The formation of NCCs and Field Site Working Groups has enabled FARMESA to get field activities going and to establish national mechanisms for the necessary decision making.

Platform for a farming systems approach

At the field level linkages have been established with local communities, and the various actors have interacted through the diagnostic surveys and planning exercises that have been carried out. Farmer Field Schools are being tested as an approach to joint learning and signs of success are emerging.

Training

A large number of people have already been trained and the cadre of trainees now equipped with additional knowledge constitutes an important resource.

Information and documentation

A wealth of information is contained in the numerous draft reports and other drafts that have been produced by FARMESA.

The challenges ahead

The mission has noted not only the achievements made but also areas where there are important challenges for FARMESA during the remaining part of phase 1 and beyond.

Focus on method development

There is, in the opinion of the mission need to further develop the work on method development and more clearly distinguish this work from general technology testing and dissemination. The following areas will be important to address:

- Application of the method development aspect on the field activities
- The need to widen the methods that are being studied
- Bridging the gap between the existing knowledge on methods within FARMESA and the frontier of thinking in the region and internationally.

Cost effectiveness

The mission has argued that the costs for administration and management of FARMESA are high, and that the organisation of FARMESA is complex. The mission has also argued that there is a case for further devolution of responsibilities to the national and lower levels. The mission is of the opinion that changes in the organisational design could result in increased cost-effectiveness.

The similarities in mandate and to a certain extent with regard to the activities result in some overlap between RELMA and FARMESA. Resources could be better used if there was a more clear division of work between the two regional projects.

At the field level better scrutiny of proposals could generate savings.

Governance and ownership

The mission has noted that important mechanisms are in place for decision making and ownership. The mission has, however, also noted that there is a need for NCC and RCC to distance themselves from activities where they end up having dual roles; both decision making and implementing.

The mission has noted that some mechanisms for governance and supervision that were intended in the programme document and in the agreement between FAO and Sida have not been operationalised, e.g. a technical advisory committee and annual supervisory visits by FAO.

Sustainability

The structures that are essential for the execution and decision making are heavily supported by the project. It is essential for all actors to consciously embark on a path that ensures sustainability in terms of continued existence of networks that can catalyse method development in the region.

The field-site focus is, in the opinion of the mission, less fortunate, since it reduces the opportunities for a wide range of organisations to get involved.

The work on method development seems, unless changes are made, to become the work of the CU. To ensure success and sustainability of this important work the mission is of the opinion that such work should be a core activity that involves many actors at the national level.

Focus

It is the opinion of the mission that more valuable outputs could be expected of FARMESA if the work was more focussed. Currently the CU is charged with a significant role especially regarding method development, training and information dissemination. It is essential that the process of devolution to the national level is coupled with a clear focus on the most important activities. Reference is made to the recommendations in the next section for details.

Recommendations

Method development

The following recommendations are made with regard to method development, responding to the three important areas that need attention as per the conclusions of the mission.

Recommendation:

The national facilitators ought to carry out a systematic review of existing mini-projects from the viewpoint of their design and expected contribution to method development. Technical leadership should be provided by the methods specialist. Time: During 1999.

Recommendation:

Resource people from FAO, possibly from SUAS and possibly from other organisations should meet with the National Facilitators and the staff of the Coordination Unit to discuss how best FARMESA can link up with the 'frontier' of recent thinking on participatory approaches. Responsible: Method Specialist. Time: As soon as possible and to precede the national workshops indicated in recommendation 3.

Recommendation:

National Workshops to be organised to help identify sources of innovation in the country on the topic of innovative participatory methods. The aim is to start creating effective national networks on method development, and to identify additional methods that are suited for studies within FARMESA. Responsible: National Facilitators. Time: During 1999.

Recommendation:

To allow for increased attention to method development the mission recommends that technology development receives less attention, and that Objective 4 (Replication) continues to receive little attention.

Cost effectiveness

The mission is of the opinion that FAO and Sida are best placed to look into details with regard to how best the organisation of FARMESA can be made more cost-effective.

Recommendation:

It is recommended that FAO looks into how better cost-effectiveness can be achieved with FAO as an implementor. Further, it is recommended that Sida looks into if better cost-effectiveness can be achieved with alternative implementation arrangements.

The mission suggests that the geographical mandate be considered in connection with the organisational review. Division of responsibilities between FARMESA and RELMA should also be looked into.

The mission recommends the following changes, preferably implemented latest by the beginning of phase 2 and irrespective of the implementation arrangement:

- Host institutions to assume full responsibility for the execution of the programme in the country, similar to the role of NARO in Uganda but further developed such that the need for NFs on the FAO payroll, and separate NF offices is eliminated. Donor financial follow up secured through external audits.
- An operational audit is carried out in e.g. Kenya and Uganda aimed at development of recommendations for the in-country administrative arrangements and to identify criteria that a host institution has to meet to successfully assume its new role.

- The CU should be reduced to one nationally recruited and one internationally recruited professionals, and share office and other infrastructure with the FAO Sub-regional Office or another suitable organisation depending on the overall arrangements.
- Technical backstopping is to a larger extent than hitherto secured through hiring of short-term consultants, primarily from the region but when required from outside the region.
- Possibilities for securing effective technical backstopping from FAO should be examined. An option that FAO may consider in its investigation is whether 1–3 % of the overhead costs should be earmarked for AGSP and/or other sections of the Agricultural Department of FAO.
- Possibilities for and potential usefulness of technical interaction with SUAS should also be examined.

Responsible: CU in consultation with AGSP to look into cost effectiveness with FAO as an implementor and Sida/DNRE to look into alternative administrative arrangements. CU to initiate operational audit. NCCs to take on the challenge of reviewing the host institution capacity in all countries relative to the NARO model and clarify implications, modalities and alternatives for phasing out FAO recruited National Facilitator positions. Time: April–June 1999. Reporting to RCC-6 in late June 1999.

Governance and ownership

Recommendation:

The following measures are recommended in order to reduce unnecessary centralisation of authority and risks for conflicts of interest and to strengthen the oversight function in the project:

- As a general rule, NCC and RCC members should not be involved in practical implementation of field activities and should not take on tasks that generate consultancy fees or other remuneration.
- To ensure that the NCCs and the RCC remain active and to facilitate broader participation in the project decision making bodies over time, the NCC and RCC members should rotate with a third of the members replaced annually. Some priority should be given to institutions representing social sciences with regard to representation in NCC and RCC.
- RCC, AGSP and CU should suggest how to get the TAC operationalised and how to ensure resources for an annual FAO supervisory visit.
- RCC to assume an advisory role since there is little justification for RCC to make detailed decisions on the country programmes.

Responsible: CU and RCC. Time: Proposals ready to be discussed at RCC-6, June 1999.

Sustainability

It is envisaged in the programme document that the initial arrangement with a CU would be changed towards the end of 1999 into a small liaison office staffed by two National Professional Officers.

Further it is envisaged that the project will operate without a central office from 2002.

A conscious approach to gradual transformation of the CU into a less costly liaison office and eventually a phasing out of the same and a reduced role for the RCC is in the opinion of the mission a way to allow for capacity building at the national level where more sustainable administrative structures are found.

Recommendation:

The mission recommends that

- the transformation of the CU to a liaison office is postponed until the end of phase 1, i.e. mid year 2000. It is also recommended that the plans in the project document are changed in such a way that the liaison office comprises one internationally recruited and one nationally recruited professionals from the beginning of phase 2.
- the CU approaches its tasks in such a way that a continued devolution of responsibilities to the host institutions is facilitated.
- the outlook in the longer term could be that the RCC meetings will be financed for another two years after the phasing out of the liaison office, i.e. until 2004. The RCC should thus consciously plan for its continued existence in the future without external support.

Responsible: CU and RCC. Time: Continuous

Focus of work

In addition to what was mentioned above the mission makes the following recommendations specifically to the immediate objectives:

Recommendation:

- Immediate objective 1 should be understood to focus on methods.
- Immediate objective 2:
 - Carry out a readership survey to determine whether the newsletter is sufficiently much appreciated to justify the input from the CU to its production.
 - Reduce the amount of reports produced and disseminated and focus during 1999 and 2000 on finalization of 2–3 key documents to be produced in a book form.
- Immediate objective 3: Focus on support to education at University level.
- Immediate objective 4: Continue to receive little attention, and from next phase eliminated as an objective. The mechanism for replication should be support to training covered under objective 3.

Responsible: CU, NCC and RCC. Time: Continuous

Design

Several of the recommendations above have a bearing on the contents of the programme document and on the 'FARMESA Implementation framework'.

Recommendation:

It is recommended that the programme document and the implementation framework are revised reflecting the recommendations made by the mission especially with regard to

- The mandate on method development rather than technology development/testing.
- The roles of Host institutions, RCC, NCC and CU.
- Shared responsibilities relative to RELMA.

It is envisaged that the revision should result in a project document that is comprehensive enough to make the implementation framework redundant.

Responsible: FAO/AGSP and CU in consultation with Sida.

The final evaluation of FARMESA

Recommendation:

In the programme document a final evaluation of FARMESA is envisaged towards the end of the project period. The mission recommends that the final evaluation is based on studies of the documentation yielded through the process suggested above. It is recommended that field visits are restricted to one or two field sites as orientation.

Time plan and responsibilities for the main elements in preparation of a second phase

Recommendation:

The mission recommends the following sequence for the main elements of the preparation for a second phase:

April–June 1999: Organisational reviews by Sida and FAO to suggest more cost-effective arrangements (Recommendation 5). Operational audit to set criteria for host institutions (Recommendation 5).

July–August 1999: Review of host institutions (Recommendation 5)

August–October 1999: Development of a revised programme document detailed enough to make the implementation strategy redundant, and taking the above recommendations and findings into account.

November–December 1999: Final evaluation that will recommend funding level and arrangements for a second phase.

Early 2000: Sida decision.

1. Introduction

The Farm-level Applied Research Methods in Eastern and Southern Africa (FARMESA) was launched in July 1996. The programme is a regional collaborative initiative of Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia and Zimbabwe, with financing of about US \$ 5.5 million from the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida). Originally to be undertaken for a period of three years, it was subsequently extended by one year to end in June 2000. FAO is facilitating the implementation of the programme, but a significant degree of national ownership and responsibility has been built into the design.

In the programme document, it is envisaged that the progress of the project should be jointly examined by representatives of the core countries, FAO and Sida during a mid-term review. This report covers the findings of that review, which was carried out during March 1999 by a team consisting of Mr. Bo Tengnäs, team leader, nominated by Sida, Mr. William Wapakala nominated by the Regional Coordinating Committee (RCC) and Dr. Clive Lightfoot nominated by FAO.

The team visited all countries of the region and some team members also visited FAO Hq. and Sida Hq. The team wishes to mention that the hectic schedule did not allow it to acquire any deeper understanding of the processes that the project has sparked off at the village level. Based on that observation the team would like to emphasise that similar reviews of regional programmes ought to be designed in such a way that field level activities can be well understood. There may be two ways of achieving this; either through separate studies carried out as a preparation for the review, or by allocating more time for interaction with villagers and less time for travel by road or air.

The mission noted some differences in the interpretation of the Terms of Reference between Sida and FAO. The mission decided to not regard the differing perceptions as a problem, but as an opportunity for the mission to approach its task in the way it found most useful for FARMESA, FAO and Sida. Thus, the mission has focussed attention to the immediate issues that need to be addressed, but also taken the liberty to discuss issues relating to a possible continuation of the programme beyond the current phase.

It is difficult to get a clear picture of all details in a regional programme like FARMESA. It is the sincere hope of the mission, though, that the findings presented in the report by and large can be regarded as a fair description of how the programme has progressed so far and the difficulties it has encountered.

Although the mission has not been asked to recommend whether or not there should be an extension of the programme, it is noted that farming systems research and development are activities that take time, and it would be premature to regard the FARMESA task as accomplished.

2. Background and Context

In recent decades agricultural production in most countries in East and Southern Africa has increased significantly in terms of total production. However, the population has generally grown more rapidly than the agricultural production resulting in declining per capita production, declining food intake and increased dependency on food imports and food relief.

The economies of most countries in Sub-saharan Africa depend heavily on the agricultural sector. A majority of people derive their living from small scale farming or related activities. Thus, progress in key areas of general development; poverty eradication, food security, education and ultimately peace and stability depend on the performance in the agricultural sector, being the main engine for economic growth.

Smallholder-focused and production-oriented investment in the sector is thus crucial.

The macro-economic environment in the countries of the region has changed rapidly in recent years through various types of structural adjustment programmes. A major trend in agricultural development has been the Governments' ambition to reduce the degree of state control of markets and instead focus on creation of an enabling environment for the various actors involved in agricultural activities and marketing of agricultural produce. In the processes of structural adjustment the role of research and extension has also changed. A new approach to smallholder development is called for and gradually emerging; one based on low cost for the public sector, active collaboration with the farm families and joint planning and action with farmer groups who manage communal resources.

The FARMESA programme was designed to respond to the new challenges and to build upon four earlier Sida-financed regional programmes:

- Farming Systems Programme (FSP)
- Agricultural Operations Technology for Smallholders in Southern and Eastern Africa (AGROTEC)
- Plant Protection Improvement Programme (PIIP)
- Aquaculture and Local Community Development (ALCOM).

FARMESA is financed from the Sida budget vote for 'Special Programmes for Methods Development'. Such programmes aim to identify, evaluate, document and disseminate experiences of new development approaches and technologies. It is intended that the methods to be developed should relate to areas prioritized by Sida in the course of implementing the organisation's bilateral projects. They are also meant to influence other bilateral and national projects, by feeding back knowledge of successful techniques, methods and approaches. Programmes funded from this budget vote are intended to be of short duration. In the opinion of the mission this feature does not apply on FARMESA, which, if the goals are to be achieved, will be a medium to long-term undertaking as has been indicated by the goals set.

Even though Sida's financing comes from a methods development vote and FARMESA's first immediate objective is methods development the four Sida projects on which FARMESA was to build did not have such a strong methodology mandate. Changing over from technology development focus to method focus cannot be immediate. It is within such a context that the team assesses progress to date.

Although the current phase of the programme started already in 1996 the mission noted that the start up was slow, and the current phase was therefore extended for one year to end by mid 2000. Field activities did not start in a significant way until the second half of 1997, and it should therefore be recognized that the period of effective operation has been short. The mission has noted a significant increase of activities during 1998 and 1999, and also noted the strategy of the project to focus on acceleration of activities during 1998 and consolidation during 1999.

3. Assessment of Project Objectives and Design

3.1 Justification

The team believes that strong justification exists for FARMESA. The last twenty years of Farming Systems Research and Extension (FSRE) while pioneering participatory and systems approaches failed to demonstrate adequately wide-scale adoption of technologies generated through its process of diagnosis, design, testing and dissemination. FSRE impact studies, however, suggest that prices, markets, inputs, and policies often played an overriding role in reducing adoption levels. The business of methods development has become much more complex. Despite the unsatisfactory performance of FSRE, Governments throughout Southern and Eastern Africa are still committed to policies of farmer participation and systems approaches in agricultural research and development. This is because they see the food security, poverty and natural resource degradation facing their countries as extremely complex problems. Such problems they believe require system approaches and the participation of farmers in the design of solutions. Many want new farming systems, and especially for small-holders, that are at the same time economically competitive and environmentally sound. The project concept of participation that seeks farmer empowerment, systems approaches that analyze farming and livelihood systems, and research that encompasses micro-macro linkages involved in policy analysis, offers considerable chance for success.

A further challenge faces FARMESA and that is the rapidly changing institutional environment. In many countries the old FSRE teams have been dismantled. These researchers are now back with their 'mother' disciplines or commodity groups. The social scientists are now asked to service commodity programs. While the special structures for FSRE have disappeared the functions have not. Indeed, the fact that most researchers must now use farmer participatory and systems approaches, means that FSRE function are even more widespread than before. In addition to the challenge of enhancing the skills of more researchers structural adjustment forces new partnerships between government and non-government organizations, between research-extension service providers and farmers. Such partnerships will require new attitudes, skills, procedures and job descriptions for research and development workers.

The challenges of improved farming systems and new partnerships put considerable stress on national capacities. FARMESA could help enhance those capacities through training, information sharing and catalyzing the many small, disperse and unconnected sources of innovation that exist in the region today. With additional effort in collaboration and working together some permanence in local innovation could be realized. Perhaps, even reaching a level of self-confidence to reduce the need for importing methods like T&V ever again.

3.2. Objectives

Stated objectives

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.'

There is also an intermediate objective:

‘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.’

The programme document indicates that neither the development objective, nor the intermediate objective will be widely attainable within the first phase of the project.

Further, FARMESA has four immediate objectives:

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

General comments on the stated objectives

The mission finds the development objective relevant and clear, and agrees with the statement in the project document on the long-term nature of the objective as far as widespread impact is concerned.

The mission has experienced that the first immediate objective has generated considerable discussion with regard to what FARMESA is mandated to do. Some lack of clarity seems to originate from the relationship between the intermediate and immediate objectives on the one hand and on the expected outputs and activities related to the first immediate objective on the other hand. It is not very clear if FARMESA is mandated to deal with *technology* testing and adaptation as a ‘primary’ activity, or if the mandate is restricted to development of methods. The intermediate objective indicates development of ‘*work methods*’ and the immediate objective 1 indicates ‘*develop and utilize improved field methodologies*’. The mission understands this as an intended mandate to work on *method development*, but not technology development.

However, activities related to output 1 and objective 1 include ‘Field testing by collaborating institutions of approaches, *technologies* and methodologies’. Thus, field testing of technologies is an activity of the project, but it is the opinion of the mission that this activity *per se* does not contribute to the fulfillment of the immediate objective 1 or the intermediate objective (method development).

This lack of clarity has significant implications on the on-going activities. Currently, many of the actors in the field are fully occupied with field testing, adaptation or just dissemination of technologies. These are activities that many other organisations are engaged in, and it is critically important for actors in FARMESA to achieve consensus on this fundamental issue.

However, the mission also notes that FARMESA was formed as a *method*-development project by a merger of four earlier projects that were oriented towards *technology* development, and the merger of the four was to be implemented in such a way that FARMESA could build on the achievements of the earlier projects. There is thus an inheritance of work on technology development, which may have contributed to difficulties in finding the new identity in method development.

FARMESA's relevance in relation to countries' priorities

Agriculture is the key sector in the economies of participating and associate member countries. It provides employment and incomes for the majority of the rural population, materials for the industrial sector, and contributes over 50 percent of total export earning in most of these countries; and more importantly it provides food, which is the basis for national food security.

Over the years, governments have provided the lead in developing agriculture, through funding agricultural research and extension, providing marketing outlets through state marketing boards, providing subsidies for fertilizers and other agricultural inputs used in the sector. Despite this paternalistic support to the agricultural industry, agricultural production has continued to fall behind the needs of these countries; particularly in the face of rapidly increasing population. Periodic incidences of draughts have exacerbated the poor performance of the sector, leading to famines and poverty.

The operating environment has changed with the World Bank and the IMF prescribing Structural Adjustment Programmes which have imposed conditionalities for donor aid to these countries. As a result of these conditionalities, governments have been called upon to cut down on numbers of civil servants, including those working in agricultural research and extension; do away with subsidies; reform marketing boards, and reduce funding for most social services. The overall effect on the agricultural sector of these measures is to put in place a new strategy which calls for changes in the attitudes and work methods of all agricultural extension and research personnel. These changes must involve closer cooperation with hundreds of NGOs, which have come up in the countries and are providing services to smallholder development. Their staff often need assistance with regard to the technical aspects of their work.

Educational institutions also need to upgrade their teaching and research in line with the new small holder development approaches. The agricultural staff must understand the rural livelihood systems within which they operate. This calls for curriculum development, in-service training of lecturers and development of new teaching materials.

While the above noted changes are taking place in the region, in the world at large globalization in research is progressing, and our research and development systems are integral part of this globalization; global trade liberalization and formation of trading blocks is taking place, research networks are being formed and many institutional changes are taking place.

One of the overall effects of these changes and reforms is a need to give special attention to smallholder agricultural development, as it is the basis of economic advancement. This calls for smallholder development-oriented programmes for increasing agricultural productivity through farmers access to new and improved technology, information, finance and infrastructure.

Thus to accelerate agricultural development, to alleviate poverty and to improve food security, the governments have adopted a set of priorities that are quite similar in all of the FARMESA countries. Thus, they all are attempting to modernise agriculture, liberalize marketing by removing price controls, they are emphasizing demand-driven research and extension services, they are planning for rational use of natural resources, adoption of a farming system approach to agricultural research and development.

In this rapidly changing environment a programme targeting innovation and development of methods for change of farming and livelihood systems is highly relevant for the countries in the region.

FARMESA's relevance for a regional approach

All over the world financial resources for agricultural research are scarce. It is thus obvious that there is need for mechanisms that ensure effective use of the resources available. One option to ensure effective use of resources is a well designed regional approach to research, that ensure that efforts are not

duplicated but rather that knowledge generated somewhere can easily be utilized in other areas and other countries. It can be argued that the FARMESA subject area is well suited for a regional approach, since conditions both in terms of human cultures, government priorities and in terms of geography are fairly similar over large areas.

The need for new methods for learning are felt all over the region. The collapse of the T & V system is commented on elsewhere in this report. New experiments are made for establishing links between different stakeholders in natural resources management. There are no simple solutions at hand ready for wide application. Therefore, the innovative work that is required can be cost effective if efforts are not duplicated but shared between the countries in the region.

But on the other hand, it can be noted that the FARMESA region may not have as much in common from a political point of view as have e.g. the countries within the emerging East African Community or the SADC. The FARMESA region cuts across other regional political ambitions.

Developments within FARMESA have not clearly been towards strengthening of the regional dimension of the programme although there is a good case for regional cooperation. Currently, the strategy for the regional dimension is mainly reactive, i.e. when commonalities are emerging they are noticed and perhaps utilized for assessments using the activities in the different countries as replications of experiments. There are, in the opinion of the mission, few signs of a pro-active strategy where priority themes are set at the regional level that will have a bearing on the activities in the countries.

Examples of the reactive strategy are found in technology testing, e.g. on experiments on striga management, studies on draft power, irrigation and distribution of mosaic tolerant cassava planting materials. With regard to methods the farmer field schools are tried in several countries as are micro-credit and savings schemes. Much of the training has been conducted through national events.

The mission is of the opinion that the reactive strategy is satisfactory for the time being. This implies that the regional dimension may not be a strong feature in the programme and there may not be a strong case for promoting a strengthened regional dimension from outside the programme until the programme itself develops a clear proactive strategy.

FARMESA's relevance in relation to FAO priorities

The team notes a high degree of commonality between FARMESA's objectives and those of FAO. Common concern for food security, poverty alleviation and natural resource degradation exists. What struck the team more forcefully were the commonalities at activity levels. For example, many of the Farmer Field Schools now supported by FARMESA were in fact started under FAO's Special Programme for Food Security. Every FAO office we visited was using or supporting participatory methods in its programmes. Moreover, many of the programme areas for the Africa region as shown in RAFA's policy statement, match those of FARMESA. Indeed, the team believes greater interaction with FAO's regional and HQ programs would benefit the project. The team sees opportunities for greater contact in the areas of small scale farming competitiveness, agricultural marketing and rural finance, and perhaps others mentioned by FAO Agriculture Department shown below.

FAO Agricultural Department themes:

- Small scale farming competitiveness
- Meeting urban food needs
- Market-oriented agriculture: Increasing the efficiency of services to producers
- Agri-business development
- Agricultural services: Database development and information systems

- Farm economics and decision support
- Agricultural engineering; ergonomics and the environment
- Agricultural marketing and rural finance support products
- Small scale food and agro-industry promotion
- Post-harvest systems analysis and technology transfer
- Pro-active marketing
- Rural finance outreach
- Technical support to field projects and direct support to member governments

Within FAO, the Agriculture Departmental Group in the Regional Office for Africa is, however, responsible for providing overall advice and technical assistance to FAO member countries in the region and other interested parties. The priorities of the agriculture departmental groups are shown below.

The Agriculture Department Group in the regional office provides advice and assistance to foster:

- Improved management and conservation of land and water resources for food and agriculture, including policy and technical interventions in this respect
- Adoption of improved land, crop and livestock production technologies, including more efficient and profitable use of the limited resources available to farmers, prevention and control of losses arising from mismanagement, pests, diseases and improved protection methods
- Wider availability and access to essential inputs and services, including financial and engineering services, and links with market outlet and supply sources
- Diversification and increased value-added in the rural economy, thereby expanding the supply of quality food as well as on-farm employment and income-earning opportunities.

FARMESA's relevance in relation to Sida's priorities

The Swedish Parliament has laid down six main goals for the development cooperation with countries in the south:

- Economic growth
- Economic and social equity
- Economic and social independence
- Democratic development
- Care for the environment
- Equality between women and men.

The six goals should interact with each other in order to achieve the reduction of poverty which is the overall goal of the Swedish Development Cooperation.

Support aimed at the development of improved small-scale farming systems generally has a potential to address all the mentioned goals.

Whether or not FARMESA in reality will address the goals will depend on the efficiency and effectiveness in implementation. This will be further elaborated in the following sections. The mission notes the long term nature of FARMESA and impact cannot effectively be judged now, after only 1.5 years of effective operation. Currently, therefore, the mission can only conclude that FARMESA has the potential to address the mentioned goals, but is yet to demonstrate that it will be doing so.

FARMESA operations are based on the execution of mini-projects, which have different contents and therefore address the different Swedish goals to different degrees. The general opinion of the mission is that most mini-projects that were visited addressed the mentioned goals for the Swedish development cooperation adequately. The mission notes, however, that some of the mini-projects aim at promotion of relatively capital-demanding technologies that will be difficult to replicate on a scale that will benefit a large share of the poor population in rural areas. This weakness was apparent in some of the mini-projects in Zimbabwe.

Since FARMESA is funded from Sida's vote for Special Programmes for Methods Development it should be intended that the methods to be developed should be relevant to areas prioritized by Sida in the course of implementing the organisation's bilateral projects. The mission notes that Sida supports bilateral projects in the agricultural sector in all countries where FARMESA operates except Zimbabwe, and there is thus a potential for direct application of FARMESA experiences in the bilateral programmes. It is however also noted that currently there are practically no linkages between FARMESA and the bilateral projects in any of the countries and, unless such contacts are established, early and effective use of FARMESA experiences is unlikely.

Similarities with other programmes in the region

RELMA

Sida's Regional Land Management Unit, RELMA became operational in January 1998. RELMA's mandate is to *contribute towards improved livelihoods and enhanced food security among small-scale land users in a region that consists of Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania and Zambia.*

RELMA's objective is to *enhance quality, technical and institutional competence through improved contents of both Sida-supported activities as well as other programmes, projects and institutions in the land management sector of the region.*

The main activities gravitate around:

- Technical backstopping and advice;
- Training and manpower development;
- Information and documentation;
- Methodology development.

RELMA and FARMESA have cooperated and shared costs on development and dissemination of water harvesting techniques, an area identified to be of mutual interest.

The mission notes a high degree of overlap in terms of technical and geographical mandate, but also notes some important differences in approach:

- RELMA has a strong central unit and no offices in the respective countries. FARMESA has country offices and a small coordination unit.
- RELMA is a project directly linked to and supervised by Sida's Department for Natural Resources and the Environment. FARMESA's implementation is technically and operationally facilitated by FAO, and with a high degree of responsibility decentralised to the countries in the region.
- In the region RELMA is guided by a regional advisory committee and national network meetings. FARMESA is guided by a Regional Coordinating Committee at regional level and by a National Coordinating Committee at national level. The FARMESA committees have greater decision-making powers than the RELMA committee.

- RELMA is in principle not an institution implementing projects, with the exception of a few pilot projects that have been aimed at method development. FARMESA is by and large based on implementation of mini-projects. It should however be noted that to a certain degree the difference is semantic rather than real. Many of the FARMESA mini-projects are in reality workshops and training events similar to the RELMA activities, but with another label.
- RELMA has no particular geographical focus within the countries, whereas FARMESA by and large operates in two field sites in each country.

FAO Special Programme for Food Security (SPFS)

The Special Programme for Food Security (SPFS) was launched by FAO in 1994. SPFS aims at supporting the low-income, food-deficit countries in their efforts to:

- improve their national food security
- reduce year-to-year variability
- improve people's access to food.

The implementation of the programme takes place in two stages, referred to as the pilot phase and the expansion phase. Each country that indicates an interest in participating in the programme engages itself to establish a National Programme to achieve national food security and to formulate a Plan of Action stipulating two or three years of pilot phase activities. These activities emphasise:

- Proven technologies
- Grass-root participation
- South-south cooperation.

The pilot phase is composed of four components:

- Introduction of small-scale water harvesting
- Intensification of sustainable plant production
- Diversification of production systems
- Analysis of constraints to food security.

The pilot phase is normally carried out at certain field sites within each country. One of the field sites in Kenya was Kakamega where the FARMESA field site is also located.

The expansion phase comprises three components:

- A food security and agricultural sector policy programme
- A three-year agricultural investment programme
- The preparation of project feasibility studies.

By November 1998 the programme was operational in all the core countries of FARMESA except Zimbabwe where it was under formulation.

The mission notes that there is some overlap in mandate, but perhaps more importantly that also this programme has committees at national level, similar to FARMESA and RELMA.

IFAD/FAO project assessing capacity needs of farmer organisations and NGOs

The mission has been informed of the existence of such programme, but no further details are known to the mission. The programme was not mentioned in any of the countries visited by the team.

East African Highlands Initiative and other activities coordinated by ICRAF

The International Centre for Research in Agroforestry, ICRAF coordinates the East African Highland Initiative. The activities are focussed upon technology development related to agroforestry, e.g. improved fallows. Research is carried out mainly on farm and with farmer participation at Embu and Maseno, Kenya and near Kabale in Uganda as well as in Rwanda. Technologies developed target increased production in the farming systems both directly and indirectly through improved methods for soil fertility maintenance.

The activities are based on participatory diagnosis and design plus procedures to engage a range of stakeholders. The On-farm research includes collaboration with the extension services for dissemination of findings.

African Academy of Sciences, AAS and International Foundation for Science, IFS

Both AAS and IFS provide scholarships for researchers, but the team is not sufficiently well acquainted with the specific rules for these scholarships to be able to determine whether the FARMESA top up grants for students or other mini-projects are overlapping with the support provided by AAS or IFS.

FTPP

The Forest, Trees and People Programme, FTTP, is implemented by SUAS and FAO with financial support from Sweden and other donors. The FTTP works on participatory methods applied on natural resources management and in particular focused on forestry. FTTP has a global mandate, and sharing of experiences between FTTP and FARMESA would be useful. There is not much overlap between the programmes. Potential links are probably strongest in Uganda where the NCC Chairman has also been involved in the FTTP activities in Uganda. With that exception it appears that there are no strong links between the two programmes.

ASARECA

The Association for Strengthening of Agricultural Research in East and Central Africa is an umbrella organisation covering Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania, Rwanda, Burundi, Ethiopia, Sudan and Eritrea. The association is supported by several donors, and among the activities it has engaged itself in are the eco-regional studies conducted by the CGIAR institutions.

3.3 Project Design

Description of the design

The FARMESA operations are concentrated at two field sites in each country with the exception of Zimbabwe where the activities are more scattered. A *Field Site Working Group (FSWG)* has been formed at each field site with farmers, local extension workers, mini-project leaders and usually also NGO representatives as members. In some instances the FSWG have been formed fairly recently. The mission has not had sufficient time to study the role of the FSWG in great detail, but noted that occasionally the FSWG expects to make decisions on e.g. who is to be granted loans from savings and credit schemes operated by FARMESA and expects to handle improved seeds from farmers involved in multiplication for further redistribution in the community and expects to handle bee-keeping equipment alternatively payment for such equipment from farmers. The team is of the opinion that these responsibilities need to be well discussed and understood in the community, to ensure transparency and appreciation of the FSWG by the community members. It appears also that occasionally the FSWG may have perceived its mandate as more extensive than the intentions reflected in the Implementation Framework for FARMESA.

Mini-projects are operational at all field sites. Each mini-project has a *project leader* who is responsible for the administration of funds and technical support to the farmers involved.

There are several actors at the national level. The main decision making body is the *National Coordinating Committee, NCC*. The NCC is assisted by the *National Facilitator, NF* who is a person employed by FAO. In Uganda and Zimbabwe the National Facilitator is replaced by a facilitation team, whose members are sharing the funds from FAO that were allocated for payment to the NF. The mission notes that the remuneration varies considerably between the NFs as a result of the UN salary scale's adjustments in relation to the cost of living in the different countries. Currently the NFs receive between US \$ 1,100 and US \$ 2,200, which is far better than the colleagues working in the host institutions. In the countries where NF teams have been formed the imbalances between the NFs and their colleagues are reduced since the remuneration is shared by several people. It appears that the team arrangement may be more sustainable and preferred to the arrangement with an individual as a NF.

The office of the *FAO Res. Rep.* is involved in administration of funds, is the signatory of Letters of Agreements on behalf of FAO and usually participates in the meetings of the NCC.

The *Swedish Embassies* have been invited to the NCC meetings, but have not attended such meetings.

At the regional level the most important decision-making body is the *Regional Coordinating Committee, RCC*. The RCC is assisted by the *Coordination Unit, CU*, which consists of staff on the FAO payroll, including two internationally recruited and one nationally recruited experts. The CU is based in Harare, where the *FAO Subregional Office* is also located, although in different office premises.

In the FAO structure, the whole programme is receiving operational backstopping through the *FAO Regional Office for Africa in Accra*, whereas the technical backstopping is mainly provided by the *Agricultural Department at FAO Hq*. The technical backstopping has officially not been decentralised due to lack of sufficiently qualified staff at the regional and sub-regional offices. At the end of the long chain of units involved in the implementation of the programme is the *Technical Cooperation Department of FAO Hq*, which is the FAO Unit responsible for the contacts with Sida.

Comments on complexity

The administrative system for the programme implementation is complex. In principle, Sida's contacts should be channeled through the Dept of Technical Cooperation, which is a unit not directly involved in the implementation. The spider's web of links between the different units hampers Sida's learning from FARMESA. It should be noted, though, that there are chances for Swedish Associate Experts to work with FARMESA, and that there are plans for posting up to six additional Associate Experts in the programme. Further, the Swedish Embassies in the region are regularly invited to participate in the meetings with the National Coordinating Committees, but seem so far never to have attended such meetings. The mission noted that there are no or weak links between FARMESA and the bilateral programmes that Sida supports in the region.

The mission wishes to mention that the Africa Division of Dept. of Natural Resources and the Environment at Sida Hq values the contacts it gets with FAO through FARMESA.

FAO as the main facilitator has chances to derive experiences from FARMESA. However, the mission notes that both the Regional and Sub-regional offices are involved in technical backstopping to a rather limited extent since officially the technical support is the responsibility of AGSP, Agricultural Dept., FAO Hq. According to AGSP, FARMESA has not actively requested for backstopping from FAO Hq, so the technical support from there has mainly been forthcoming through rather informal guidance from the Chief of AGSP to the Project Coordinator in the CU. Reviews of the mini-project proposals and 'Technical Clearance' of the same initially constituted a component of technical support but has

been discontinued since it was found impractical and not meaningful. The result seems to be that in practice only NCC and RCC have a clear role in approval of mini-projects, and it was reported to the mission that the RCC members often do not have time to read and assess the proposals in great detail.

It appears that the learning opportunities for FAO, which could be beneficial for FAO's normative development, could be further developed if more people were involved in the technical backstopping. There was earlier a task force in Hq to support the programme, but that task force no longer meets regularly.

The in-country arrangements do not promote effective networking. On the contrary, there are signs of the host institutions getting a dominating role with regard to implementation of mini-projects. That is particularly a feature in Zimbabwe.

Comments on chain of command

The complexity of the organisation results in a fairly unclear chain of command at various levels. Some NFs expressed frustration over having, as they experience it, several supervisors. In principle, since the NF is on the FAO payroll, one may expect the FAO Res. Rep. to be the immediate supervisor. However, the NF is the executing arm of the NCC, so the NCC chairman is the immediate supervisor, thus not the FAO Res. Rep. To make matters more complicated, the NF is usually on unpaid leave from the host institution, so there is an informal supervisor in that structure too, and finally, the project coordinator and the CU also have opinions on what duties the NF should perform, although their role is advisory.

At another level, it appears to the mission that there are slightly different opinions within FAO as to who has the supervisory role of the project coordinator. With regard to technical matters, the mission understands that AGSP has a leading or advisory role, whereas in terms of operations the FAO Regional Office in Accra clearly has the supervisory role. The Sub-regional Office, however, also indicates that it has certain responsibilities in terms of supervision of the project.

There are also some less ideal situations with regard to the flow of funds below the FAO Res. Rep. An example is that in some countries the division in the ministry assuming responsibility by signing the letters of agreement is not authorized to hold an 'official' bank account due to the Government regulations. Therefore, the signatory on the national side has no immediate control over the flow of funds. Disbursements are made in other directions, e.g. to research stations that implement mini-projects in collaboration with field staff of the host institutions. The mission noted signs of lack of awareness of the available funds among the staff expected to be responsible for the operation of the account for FARMESA activities at the field site level in Kenya.

Although it may not be possible to have a blue print solution for the disbursement of funds that is completely applicable in all countries, the mission is of the opinion that there is room for some streamlining of the existing system in some countries. It is also noted that some operations of the current 'flexible' system generates a lot of work for the Res. Rep. offices, i.e. when receipts are submitted directly to the Res. Rep. office. Occasionally, it seems also that some financial operations fall outside the regular FAO audit.

Comments on ownership, responsibilities and authority

The design of FARMESA allows a high degree of decentralization of power.

The arrangement with a person on the FAO payroll in each country contributes to efficiency, but does not contribute much to institution building and real ownership. This is especially true in the situations where the NF has been forced to resign from his Govt. position to take up the position as NF, e.g. in Kenya.

Administratively, it would have been far easier if some institution could assume responsibility for the in-country operations, using its own resources and charging an over-head cost. The role of NARO in Uganda is an example in that direction. The only change that would be desirable there would be elimination of remuneration to the facilitation team paid from the FAO office and instead introduction of payment of overhead costs from FAO to NARO, assuming that NARO is capable of paying its staff members.

The team has noted that the Letters of Agreements stipulate that all rights to the information yielded by the mini-projects rests with FAO. In the opinion of the mission that is unacceptable considering that Sida is providing financial support, the member countries are providing the human resources and finally, considering recent trends with regard to intellectual property rights.

4. Assessment of Project Implementation, Efficiency and Management

4.1. Project Budget and Expenditure

Overall allocation and disbursement from Sida

The total approved budget by Sida is US \$ 5,628,000 for the project period, i.e. up to 30.6.2000.

According to information from Regional Office for Africa, Sida has disbursed US \$ 3,509,487 as per 11.3.1999. The cash balance per the same date is US \$ 868,143, and actual payments made per the same date is thus US \$ 2,641,344.

It is the understanding of the mission that part of the cash balance is committed through mini-project Letters of Agreement.

'Allotment balance due' is as per the same source of information US \$ 2,051,450. This amount represents what Sida is yet to disburse during phase 1.

Most available resources that can be committed to mini-projects have been committed during 1999 while only some US \$ 50,000 has been budgeted for mini-projects for 2000.

There is some delay in the implementation of mini-projects with 58 out of the 96 mini-projects approved during 1997 and 1998 ongoing by March 1999. Almost half of the completed mini-projects were dealing with establishment and management of national facilitation offices, and many of the other were support to workshops or to other organisations. Few mini-projects that involves field activities have been completed so far.

It is noted that if all funds are to be utilized before June 2000, it seems that the actual delivery will have to be larger during the remaining 16 months than during the earlier life time of the project (32 months). Although the CU claims that the delivery in relation to the available resources was very high during 1998 (around 95%) it will still be important to carefully analyze the forecasts made by the CU every quarter regarding the expected expenditures. Currently, it seems there is room for some re-allocation of funds and the CU agrees to that.

Shares of financial resources utilized at different levels

The latest budget revision is reflected in 'Budget Revision E' which was availed to the mission. If actual expenses are added to the budgeted expenditure for the rest of the duration of phase 1, and mini-projects dealing with the NF offices are separated from more 'real' mini-projects, the total resource allocation for the period is as follows:

Unit or activity	% of total FARMESA budget
FAO Overhead costs	11
CU (1)	33
National facilitation (2)	16
Mini-projects (3)	22
Training, fellowships, consultancies, eval., unallocated	18
Total	100

Notes:

- (1) Budget vote for equipment has been divided equally with 1/6 of the cost on the CU and each NF office as per estimate of the CU. It should be noted that the work of the CU is not only supportive to other 'technical work', but encompasses activities that directly contribute to the achievement of objectives. This is elaborated in section 5.5.
- (2) Includes costs for NFs salaries and NF offices
- (3) Excludes the NF offices, but includes other activities, e.g. training, sensitization workshops etc. All of the 22% thus not directed to field activities.

It is noted that most actors involved in FARMESA at the national level regard the mini-projects as the main activity through which the FARMESA objectives will be met.

A question raised in the field is whether the allocation of only 22% to the mini-projects reflects too costly arrangements at the levels above the countries, or if it reflects that the project was designed to be a much more 'regional' undertaking, but has ended up being by and large five national programmes with some degree of regional coordination.

The CU notes that the CU costs include all travel by CU staff to support country activities as well as regional activities carried out by CU on behalf of the project including regional training, regional workshops, determination, publication, distribution etc. This division of costs does thus not represent functional areas.

The mission is of the opinion that there will be room for reduction of costs at the regional level during a phase 2. It is also noted that there is a healthy trend with the amounts set aside for mini-projects steadily increasing during 1997-98-99. The reduction of the CU that is planned in the programme document will, if implemented, result in decreased costs at the regional level.

4.2 Activities and Outputs

The initial period of FARMESA was characterized by slow recruitment of staff both for the CU and for the positions as NFs. The real take off in the programme was towards the middle of 1997.

The programme document had outlined a series of activities which were to be implemented in order to deliver the outputs expected to lead to the achievement of the immediate objectives of the programme (See Annex 2: Logical Framework Analysis).

Activities related to output 1 (relevant methodologies and technologies developed) covered development of proposals for field site activities, approval of mini-projects by the NCC and endorsement or modification of the same before being presented to FAO. On approval these were followed by implementation of field activities by collaborating institutions and with farmer participation. Testing and adaptation of methods were far less elaborate than the work on technology development. Methods adapted include Farmer Field Schools and Farmer Groups. These are being adapted, organised and monitored in most field sites for a number of technologies. Sustainable farmer multiplication of improved germplasm is being tested in four countries, while some form of participatory diagnosis and planning have been carried out in all countries. Community video is another area that has received attention.

Further methods for testing have been identified through national and regional reviews of innovative methods which will feed into the method-testing process with emphasis on six methods prioritized in the regional workshop.

Regarding objective 2, information acquisition and dissemination, links have been established with institutions in some of the participating countries. The results of the national and regional reviews of methods and technologies are being fed into the information base. The initial focus in documentation involved information on soil and water conservation technologies which came out of the preceding regional projects. A data base on bibliographic references on farming systems approaches has been finalized and distributed to the participating countries.

Numerous reports have been produced, some of which are drafts subject still to further editing. Some mini-projects have specifically targeted development of training materials, e.g. a guide on farming systems approach for the educational system in Kenya. That undertaking has resulted in a draft document which is still being worked on.

FARMESA also produces a newsletter. Most of the contributions to the newsletter seem to originate from the staff of the coordination unit.

Objective 3 which relates to training is critical to sustaining the results of methods testing and information dissemination. Gap analysis survey for University and college training on Farming Systems Approach was undertaken in Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia and Zimbabwe. Other training activities focussed on building capacity of FSWG and mini-project teams in participatory diagnosis, planning, monitoring and evaluation. Strategies have been developed for the institutionalisation of FSA training at degree, diploma, certificate as well as farmer training institutions.

Limited activities were undertaken to further objective 4; support to collaborating institutions to adopt the methods and technologies developed under objective 1. The operation of the National Facilitation Offices has been administratively handled as mini-projects targeting this objective.

4.3 Government Support

In all countries the Governments supports FARMESA by providing e.g.:

- Personnel for implementation of field activities
- Personnel for support activities, e.g. accounting and other services
- Office space for NF or NF teams

The Kenyan Government provides an assistant National Facilitator. In some countries, and in particular in Zambia and Tanzania, the Government support has not been forthcoming to the extent that was expected due to restructuring of the Government accompanied by retrenchment of staff.

4.4 Project Management

The implementation framework and the programme document

The Implementation Framework has been compiled in a FARMESA Working Paper 98/8. In the framework the roles and responsibilities of the various bodies are elaborated, and strategies for fulfillment of the FARMESA objectives are discussed.

The mission has generally observed that FARMESA has a complex structure. There are overlapping mandates, e.g. with regard to setting policy guidelines, development objectives and priorities which the host institution as well as the RCC and NCC are mandated to do.

Although the CU is the technical and administrative arm of the RCC the job descriptions for the Method Specialist and for the Information and Communication Specialist include a research and development mandate. This makes the role of the CU somewhat unclear with regard to whether it has its own research agenda or if it is entirely a service function to assist in implementation of the national programmes.

The framework is explicit in its statements that the Programme Coordinator is to

- undertake overall responsibility for the execution of the programme, and to
- take responsibility for the disbursement of funds.

It appears to the mission that these are inappropriate responsibilities. The flow of funds is not through the CU, but through the Res. Rep. Offices, and the project coordinator cannot be held responsible for those flows. Further, the real power is not vested with the project coordinator but rather with the RCC, host institutions and NCCs, therefore, the project coordinator can also not be held responsible for the overall execution of the Programme.

The programme document stated that a Technical Advisory Committee should meet annually to review the overall progress of the programme and to suggest new policy directions. It was to consist of eight people from the region and elsewhere who are eminent in various fields related to smallholder development. Members were expected to serve in a voluntary and personal capacity and to be available to review proposals for field site activities. The mission notes with concern that this committee was never operationalized. The lack of such committee has resulted in a weak oversight function in the project. Since FAO/AGSP is no longer clearing mini-project proposals and the RCC has had limited time to assess proposals in detail most of the responsibility rests in practice with the NCC. The mission has noted that the NCC members and their institutions have often been involved in the development of proposals and in implementation of mini-projects. It appears, that there is need to introduce a system with independent peer reviewers. According to the project document it was intended that the Technical Advisory Committee could have such a function.

The proposal for a strategy framework for FARMESA Phase II Programme Development developed by the NCC chairpersons in January 1999 does not mention formation of a TAC. It is further noted, that the programme document has a recognition of the authority of the three parties; RCC, FAO and Sida, by indicating that the RCC will act as the executive body of FARMESA within the limits set by Sida and FAO. In the implementation framework the RCC has been mandated to set broad policy guidelines, strategies and priorities with no mention of limits.

The programme document mentions under 4.1.5 that funds have been earmarked for backstopping visits from FAO Hq. Further, according to the Project Agreement, FAO should have arranged for yearly supervisory visit to the project, to be financed from project costs. These supervisory visits seem have not materialized, reportedly due to lack of funds allocated for that purpose.

It appears that there has been a trend towards increased powers for the RCC and reduced oversight functions as compared to what was indicated in the programme document. Failure to get the TAC established and lack of supervisory visits by FAO Hq are examples that support the statement.

Mini-projects as an administrative tool

All activities in the countries are designed as mini-projects with a specified budget and a specified lifetime. The mission notes that the mini-projects cover a range of activities, some of which are far from real 'projects'. The offices of the National Facilitators are such examples. These are largely to be regarded as costs for administration and management but are now appearing as mini-projects which

may be misleading. Other mini-projects may be activities like sensitization workshops for senior policy makers or support to production of newsletters at the national level. Not all of the mini-projects are thus real projects operating at the farmers' level.

Abolition of the term 'mini-projects' and instead use of e.g. 'activities' may be considered as a means for clarification that the 'mini-projects' are not and should not necessarily be field level projects.

Although the 'mini-projects' are good administratively as they are clear entities in terms of finance and with a stipulated life span, they are cumbersome to administer. It appears too demanding for the FAO administration to deal with all these activities as 'projects' that require formalized procedures as e.g. Letters of Agreement.

Guidelines for mini-project selection and formulation

In the team's view the project has made the first steps towards a transparent and rigorous process for mini-project selection. The project, however, still has a long way to go. While we were impressed with the project selection criteria and operational principles laid out we noticed that the NCC's were having difficulty putting them into practice. Some difficulties arose over the similarities between criteria like shareable products across the region and potential for networking. Others arose from the sheer difficulty of considering so many complex criteria. As far as we could see projects appear to be selected on three main criteria: a) relevance to project objectives, b) relevance to diagnosed farmer problems in the field site and where appropriate c) extent of farmer participation in the work. Lastly, the already difficult job of selecting proposals has been made harder by the proposal format itself. The categories chosen for proposals did not directly correspond to the selection criteria.

In addition to simplifying selection criteria the project needs to develop scoring and weighting so that more transparent priority setting methods can be used. The team was made aware of a few attempts to score proposals, though this appears not to have taken root widely. Although the team believes improvements related to simplifying selection criteria and scoring and priority setting could be made rapidly, we see a further challenge. The team felt that there was too much room for conflict of interest to arise when selecting a project. The NCC and RCC are challenged to introduce mechanisms for independent 'scoring' of proposals and distancing themselves and their institutions from 'direct' involvement in mini-proposals.

Financial administration

The arrangements for the in-country financial administration vary between the countries.

In Uganda it is now agreed that funds will be disbursed as block grants for all approved mini-projects and based on one Letter of Agreement to NARO, which, in turn passes on the funds to the organisations that will implement the activities. The implementing organisations will report back to NARO, receipts and accounts are kept there, and financial statements submitted to the FAO Res. Rep. This arrangement will significantly reduce the workload for the office of the Res. Rep.

In the other countries separate Letters of Agreement are signed for each mini-project. Disbursement procedures may either be

- directly to the organisation implementing the mini-project, which keeps accounts and receipts and submits statements and further requests to the FAO Res. Rep. or
- through imprest to the project leader who settles the imprest against receipts that are submitted to the FAO Res. Rep. office, usually through the NF office. This is the common arrangement for e. g. running the NF office.

- directly to e.g. a research station that implements the activity and submits the receipts to the NF office. The NF submits copies of audited accounts and copies of the receipts to FAO and CU in due course.

The exact arrangements with bank accounts etc. vary, but the above are the main features of the common arrangements.

Usually accounts are audited by the regular Government auditors. In some instances no audit has been carried out. When NGOs or private companies are implementing projects it has been assumed that the implementors have appropriate procedures for accounting and audit. A financial statement certified by the person in charge of finance in the implementing organisation is a requirement in the Letters of Agreement.

The mission has the impression that the ambitions with regard to auditing at the national level are lower in FARMESA than in most bilateral projects supported by Sweden in the region. In most instances the bilateral projects are subject to regular external audits commissioned by Sida.

Shortcuts to mitigate the complexity of the design

The chain from the farmers field where activities are implemented to the Sida office in Stockholm is very long. The mission has noted that certain shortcuts tend to occur, which cause some friction.

Several examples of such shortcuts were reported to the mission. These may be useful or of little importance so long as friction is not accumulating too much in the system. The mission notes that there are many actors in the process and the flow of information may not be very effective if always formal channels were to be used.

4.5 Technical and Operational Backstopping

Operational backstopping from FAO Regional Office

In all countries delays in the flow of funds has been mentioned as an obstacle to smooth implementation of activities. This has especially been emphasized in the countries located in the area with a unimodal rainfall pattern. There, delays due to administrative obstacles are especially severe since projects that cannot start timely with the rains will have to be delayed for one year until the next rainy season.

Since the mission had no opportunity to meet the staff of the Regional Office in Accra the allegations that delays in flow of funds mainly depend on the Accra office could not be verified.

Operational backstopping from FAO country offices

The support from the offices of the FAO Res Rep. offices has generally been appreciated, and it has been felt that the FAO Res. Rep. and his/her staff generally has taken on the considerable administrative burden with a high degree of dedication to assist the FARMESA activities.

Technical backstopping from FAO Hq

The nature of the technical backstopping from FAO Hq has mainly been a fairly continuous dialogue between the Chief of AGSP and the project coordinator in the CU. No other backstopping was requested according to AGSP.

Technical backstopping from FAO Regional and Subreg offices

So far, the FAO Regional Office and the Sub-regional Office have provided some informal technical support in the areas of gender, irrigation, soil management and agronomy. The responsibility for technical backstopping rests with AGSP at FAO Hq. A farming systems specialist is being recruited to the Sub-regional Office. At the Regional Office in Accra such a position is already staffed.

Technical backstopping from the CU

The opinions of the effectiveness of the technical support from the CU vary considerably between the countries. The lowest mark is that there was no added technical value at all from the CU, whereas in most other countries assistance with e.g. training has been appreciated.

Even more appreciated, though, has been the critical administrative support that the CU has offered at times when the FAO administrative system has not functioned well. In such instances, the CU has effectively intervened and solved problems. In principle, the mission notes, however, that the CU should primarily be a technical support unit and not directly involved in the administration.

5. Assessment of Results and Effectiveness

5.1 Effects and Impact

Potential impact of FARMESA

Our assessment of potential impact is based on a number of important achievements. Most of these, as elaborated below, concern the institutionalization and training. The team had insufficient time, however, to explore the potential impact of the technologies being tested. Judging from other experiences, however, we would be surprised if the farmer managed seed multiplication work did not have some impact soon. Similarly, revolving credit schemes, if they can be made to work, can bring rapid impact.

Turning to early achievements that suggest potential for impact the team notes the following.

FARMESA's operational structures of NFO, NCC and FSWG have successfully engaged staff from existing institutions at national and district levels. This is, no doubt, in part due to National and District leadership support for FARMESA's focus on farmer participation. They see FARMESA as supporting their own mandates and on-going work.

FARMESA's training through sensitization, diagnosis and planning, and monitoring and evaluation workshops has touched over three hundred people. Indeed, Uganda's DANIDA supported Livestock Systems Research Project has contracted FARMESA to conduct PRA training for its collaborating researchers.

Headway is being made in formal education as well. Vigorous discussions are underway at Makerere's Faculty of Agriculture and Forestry on how to include farming systems and participatory research into the university's curriculum at B. Sc. and M. Sc. levels. Assessments have been made in each country of university teaching in farming systems.

FARMESA's development of farmer groups has progressed rapidly. What impressed us most was the gender balance in leadership and membership, size of membership, and level of collaboration between groups. The team notes that not all countries have reached the same level of achievement. Kenya appears to have had greatest impact from its work in Farmer Field Schools. Rapid progress was made possible by building on existing local dynamics or, in the case of Kenya, on the work of FAO's Special Program for Food Security. Not only has the project helped train other to set up schools but also District authorities are encouraging establishment of farmer field schools in several places. Since many projects are using farmer groups for the transfer of technology we see considerable potential for their spread throughout the region.

Effectiveness of FSWG for method development

The team understands field site working groups (FSWG) to be committees lead by farmers and comprising extension staff and mini-project leaders from a range of organizations. As a form of organization for site work the team agrees that such committees are a good idea. The team supports the idea of such committees, but has some reservations about the idea of field sites. While the team appreciates that field sites have enabled the project to get activities going on the ground; we see field sites only providing a partial mechanism for method development. We have two reasons for this: one concerns the establishment of FSWG and the second concerns the nature of innovation.

FSWG must go through a process of relationship building between the many collaborating partners and capacity building of local staff, including the researchers, before they can be sufficiently skilled to test and adapt field methods. Moreover, we run the risk of 'research fatigue' as more and more 'tests' are conducted with the same farmers.

We believe that innovation in methods, like all form of innovation, relies in part on serendipity. The right people, the right question, the right problem and the right circumstances are hard to set up and plan for.

The team agrees that some ‘pilot’ sites are useful, but we feel that the project needs sufficient flexibility to seek out other sites where methodological innovation is going on. We conclude that FSWG’s are not sufficient in themselves to adequately develop new methods. The challenge of methodological innovation requires building collaborative partnerships with sources of innovation wherever they may be found.

Environmental impact

The team notes that at the time of the evaluation technology testing was in its early stages. Indeed, in the oldest cases only one season had been completed. It is premature, therefore, to talk of environmental impact in terms of what the project has done. Looking at the technologies being tested however the team regards most of them as either environmentally benign or environmentally beneficial.

Those we consider environmentally benign include germplasm multiplication, dairy and animal introductions, ploughs and mechanical weeders. Those we consider environmentally beneficial include soil and water conservation techniques, green manure, and water harvesting.

In our view should very rapid and extensive adoption occur then some technologies should be looked at from the environmental standpoint. For example wide-scale and heavy use of pesticides in rodent control, post harvest storage, and crop production especially in vegetables, soybeans and groundnuts could lead to environmental problems. Similarly, should wetlands be extensively converted to fish ponds negative environmental impacts may result. The team notes that these may be remote possibilities, nevertheless a watch should be kept.

5.2 Sustainability of Results

The team examined the question of sustainability of results at three levels – the local level, the national level and the regional level. In its examination the team considered both strengths and weaknesses – what is likely to be sustained and what is unlikely to be sustained. At the local level we discuss structural issues and technology, at the national level structure and human resource development, and at the regional level structure and function. The team draws attention to the fact that at this stage in the project’s life its assessment can only be provisional.

At the regional level the team found it difficult to see what structure and functions could be sustained. The fact that FARMESA directly funds all coordination unit and RCC functions suggests that these bodies are not sustainable. Nevertheless, senior managers in the project have been discussing how some functions of the coordination unit like information and dissemination could be devolved to national agencies. Similarly, the many Research Councils, Technical Advisory Committees that exist in all the countries today could provide the needed technical assistance. How a regional dimension could be sustained was however less clear to the team. We did note though that there are a number of professional associations like SAFSRE and regional bodies like ASARECA and SACCAR that could sustain a regional dimension.

Indicators that suggest potential to sustain major elements of the project’s structure and functions at the national level include the following. The project operates entirely through existing institutional structures using staff who see project activities as supporting their regular tasks. Moreover, the leadership at national and district levels see FARMESA activities supporting their new policies and work challenges. However, that the project directly funds the national facilitation office and the national

committee meetings challenges sustainability of these structures. The team senses that existing institutions could be found to fulfill these functions in most countries. A further strength observed was the attention given to human resource development through in-service training and formal education. We were impressed with the discussions on inputs to the development of university curricula in Uganda and the incorporation of systems and participatory principles and practices into Diploma and Certificate training institutions in Tanzania. These are important steps towards sustaining the projects work. The team also believes that training of field level staff in PRA and FSA when combined with the sensitization of their supervisors creates a culture of support and reward for participatory research that will be hard to reverse. This is especially true as many other projects and organizations in the countries of concern are training their staff in the same skill sets and for the same purposes.

The team observed both strengths and weaknesses in the local level work. A number of strengths emerged from our discussions with members of the farmer groups and field schools. Firstly, farmer field schools were often built on existing local dynamics or groups. Local dynamics are an important source of sustainability. A further indicator of sustainability in the field schools is the increasing self-confidence farmers' exhibit in their own knowledge and ability to teach others. The team also felt that the micro-credit schemes could pay for school operations to impart even greater sustainability. The weakness we found at the local level was the FSWG. While farmer groups can sustain themselves Governments have shown over the last ten years that they cannot afford field site teams like the FSWG. Stories of the demise of ARPT's in Zambia and NFSP field teams in Tanzania support this assertion. Of the many technologies the team saw in the field how sustainable they were was difficult to determine. Our best indicator was where the farmers themselves were thinking about how to sustain the technology. We found such indicators in two areas. The utilization of rolling strategies for seed supply indicated a concern for the sustainability of supplies at the local level. The team also felt that the micro-credit scheme would, if successful, enhance the sustainability of input supplies.

5.3. Gender Equity in Project implementation and results

Practical measures in implementation

The team was satisfied by the efforts made to incorporate gender perspectives and sensitivities into the FARMESA project. The people in FARMESA have thought about gender balance in their committees at national and local levels. While in absolute terms the number of women involved are still fairly few there are moves to bring more women on to these committees. Indeed, in Tanzania the NCC was increased so that gender perspectives could be assured.

Stakeholder representation on NCC. Number of female members in brackets:

Country	Govt	NGOs	Univ.	Farmers	Priv. sect.	Total
Kenya	5	1(1)	1	1	1	9(1)
Tanzania	3	3(2)	2	–	–	8(2)
Uganda	5(2)	1	1	1(1)	–	8(3)
Zambia	5	3(3)	1	1	–	10(3)
Zimbabwe	3	1				4

Still we have no female RCC members.

At the FSWG gender balances are much better not only from the point of view of membership, but also from the point of view of leadership. Here we found women and men chairing the groups. Perhaps the best achievement in gender balance has been made by the farmers. Farmer groups in an overall way comprise equally of men and women. Again leadership by women is not uncommon.

The major area of weakness in gender balance noted by the team was in the leadership of mini-projects. Men vastly outnumber the women when it comes to mini-project leadership. The team notes that this is partly a function of the gender balances within the institutions submitting proposals. But whether more could be done to encourage women to lead projects was not explored.

Looking at the major actors in FARMESA one can only be impressed with not only how many women are involved but also with the sensitivity shown by men of the importance of gender perspectives. Unfortunately, this fine record is not mimicked in the technology testing work.

Gender Equity in results

The team had insufficient time to analyze where women benefit more, where men benefit more and where women are disadvantaged by the use of technologies. The team found few examples of where gender implications of technologies was explicitly studied. The best example was a trial to test a light plough that had been designed for small draft animals. The trial was also testing whether women found this plough easier to handle. This is not to say that women were not engaged and benefiting from many studies. They were, particularly in those trials concerning dairy cattle, goats and chickens, seed multiplication, and credit schemes. Women were also attending the farmer field schools. Unfortunately, in the time available we could not dig deep enough into the work to identify potential negative impacts on women.

The team was disappointed in the small number of mini-projects examining gender or focusing on women. Moreover, it appeared to us that the 1998 studies of the potential for improving production technology for farm women in Uganda, Zambia and Zimbabwe were fairly superficial. This left only two projects focussing on women: The Ugandan 1998 study on the effect of gender in agricultural technology adoption and utilization, and a 1999 study on strengthening women's participation in agricultural production to enhance household food security in Zimbabwe. The team felt that out of a total of 151 approved projects more could have focussed on gender.

5.4 Scientific and Technical Issues

The team assessment of scientific and technical issues resides at a fairly basic level as in-depth study at either field sites or of mini-projects was not possible. Neither was it possible to adequately explore aspects of inter-disciplinarity or regional dimensions in the mini-projects. Various reasons were given for the low number of studies in which both social and biological scientists were engaged. Sometimes there are not enough social scientists in the collaborating institutions, they being much occupied with other work. On other occasions project partners were unable to link with institutions having social scientists. There is a challenge to FARMESA to contact such institutions and individuals and get their representation in both NCCs and RCC.

Another important area the team was unable to explore properly was the regional dimension of FARMESA's work. The current strategy for this might be characterized as 'reactive'. The RCC reacts when it notices similar studies are being undertaken or common problems are emerging. Their reaction takes the form of enabling linkages between countries. Thus opportunities to discuss common problems like Striga and Cassava mosaic virus are being created. Opportunities for technology sharing have already been identified. For example the light plough and treadle pump technologies designed by Agritex in Zimbabwe was shared with Uganda. The team thinks that this reactive strategy of looking for research similarities and technology sharing opportunities provides a good basis for future elaboration of more 'proactive' strategies for the regional dimension.

While team work and regional dimensions were superficially examined we were able to explore with greater satisfaction scientific and technical issues related to farmer participation, systems analysis and method testing.

Farmer participation

The team was impressed with the high level of commitment to farmer participation in FARMESA. We found the right attitude and talent in the people we interviewed.

We were however, surprised to hear of the general lack of familiarity with farming systems research approaches and participatory rural appraisal methods. While one might expect this from countries with less experience in FSRE, but even in Tanzania, Zambia and Kenya where FSRE has been around for many years field staff needed training in PRA methods. We understand that much of the FSRE expertise has moved up in the national agricultural research and extension system.

Given the level of unfamiliarity with FSRE and PRA it would be unreasonable to expect advanced levels across all countries. So we did find cases where PRA's were done within training exercises and not as part of a research activity, where the products and findings of PRA's were not left with the farmers, and where PRA's were conducted after technical interventions had already been developed.

Similarly, with the exception of Kenya, researchers were learning for the first time about Farmer Field Schools. Notwithstanding, the team found active field schools with regular attendance and practical experiences in how to apply fertilizer, inoculate animals, construct trash lines, etc, being offered. Farmer input into the curriculum, and the stimulation of farmer's own experimentation were harder to find outside Kenya. As far as we could see the 'Asian' focus on ecological principles utilizing learning instruments, like the insect zoo had been dropped. Perhaps, more disturbing for the team was the lack of application of more modern approaches to participatory learning and action (PLA). The team concludes that FARMESA needs to widen its range of contacts and consultants to bring in these newer methods.

Systems Analysis

The team appreciates that progress in developing the systems dimension of FSA will be hard. Over the last year and a half most of the project collaborators have moved from looking at crops or livestock in isolation to looking at farms as comprising several components each having linkages with each other. Thus, we see a number of mini-projects concerning crop-livestock linkages.

FARMESA's technical advisors see the next step as looking at nutrient recycling within all the components of the farming system. This is a far cry from the holistic, systems approach to farm-household and community level analysis that studies livelihood systems requested in the project document. This situation needs attention. Somehow ways must be found to raise the level of farmer discussion to larger questions of future farming systems, future income streams, and future food security strategies. Somehow ways must be found to support government strategies to generate 'new' farming systems, to promote household food security, and to better livelihoods. FARMESA needs to be developing methods to meet these strategies. Methods to analyze livelihood strategies, methods to test multiple simultaneous interventions, methods to experiment at the whole farm system level, methods for analyzing complex systems and messy problems, methods for multi-stakeholder negotiation and partnership are just a few of the urgent ones. Our concern is how to enable the project to move quickly on this pressing agenda.

Method Development

FARMESA has defined its role in methods development as one of adapting and fine tuning existing practices. The pressing need from FARMESA's view is to define good practice and raise the level of current practice. Pushing ahead the state of the art and methodological innovation is left to others. The range of methods to be developed follows the technology development and transfer process as follows: technology development, technology transfer, technology adoption and impact evaluation. Technology development includes participatory methods for diagnosis, design, planning, testing, and assessment. Farmer Field Schools, primary school demonstration plots, farm level multiplication of

seed, and revolving micro credit are seen as methods for technology transfer and adoption. Impact and assessment methods include participatory impact monitoring methods.

The process for developing methods starts with national inventories from which promising methods are selected at a national level workshop. Methods to be assessed, refined and adapted are chosen from the country selections at a regional workshop. Assessment and adaptation occurs through field work in mini-projects and through analysis in case studies. Cross-country analysis of case studies and field work and systematic documentation completes the method development process.

So far the project has reached the stage of assessment and adaptation through mini-projects and case studies. Thus mini-projects are focusing on: farmer field schools, farm level multiplication and distribution of improved genetic material, training for transformation, use of primary schools for technology transfer, farmer groups, and farm level group savings and credit schemes. The case studies will examine experiences outside the FARMESA sites in all the same methods plus a case of agri-dealer training. The commissioned case studies will examine the cost effectiveness, implementation problems, and lessons learned. The team would like to comment on three issues regarding the FARMESA methods development work.

The first issue concerns the understanding of analytical frameworks for testing methods. This concern arose because the team found no hypotheses relating to method and no data gathering related to method in the mini-projects. What data gathering we saw focussed on yield and other parameters associated with technology performance. This is not to say that methods are not being adapted within mini projects. The farmer field school method of technology transfer, for example, has been adapted from the 'Asian model' in several countries. Unless the kind of data being gathered in the methods case studies for instance is also gathered in the mini-projects this work will not realize its potential contribution to methods development.

The second issue concerns the selection of methods for testing. We felt that much work has already been done on PRA, farmer groups, and farmer seed multiplication over the last ten years. While we appreciate that these methods may have been new to some of the project collaborators they are not new in the region. What new knowledge was being generated was not clear to us. Given that the project concept requires an initial analysis of livelihood systems the team felt that methods for system analysis might receive greater attention. In a project dedicated to bringing farmers, extensionists and researchers closer together one would expect to see some of the tools associated with institutional and knowledge system analysis being tested. Even the work on participatory communication lacks methods for knowledge flow and information network analysis.

The third issue concerns the role of method development. The team feels that the focus on refining existing practice should be balanced with seeking out 'state-of-the-art' methods. We have two reasons for this. Firstly, there is a danger that the project will refine techniques that have already been superseded. For example, PRA techniques for diagnosis and planning have already been replaced by PLA tools for community visioning and stakeholder analysis. Secondly, there is a danger that the project will not contribute to the new challenges of new farming system development, small holder competitiveness in the market place, and watershed scale natural resource degradation. FARMESA's method development strategy should include some way of keeping in touch with the innovators.

5.5. Cost-effectiveness

Administration and backstopping

During the mission's visits to the different countries most of the NFs were asked to assess how much time they regarded themselves being involved in administration and logistics on one hand and in technical matters on the other hand. They were also asked to assess how they regarded the support from the CU; to what extent was it administrative/logistics and to what extent was it technical. The answers varied, but the mission makes the assessment that according to the view of the NFs the CU is 50 % administrative/logistics and 50 % technical whereas the NFs are 70 % administrative/logistics and 30 % technical.

The CU estimates the purchase of equipment to be 50 % for technical purposes and 50 % for administrative/logistics.

Based on these assessments and based on the 'Budget revision E', i. e. actual figures on expenditures in the past and budgeted expenditures for the rest of the programme phase the following approximate picture of the funding emerges:

Type of expense	US \$ 1996–2000	%
Mini-projects except NF Offices	1,200,000	22
Administration/logistics	2,100,000	37
Techn. backstopping & support, training	2,000,000	36
Unallocated, evaluation	300,000	5
Total	5,600,000	100

It has been mentioned earlier that the mini-projects are regarded as the core activity by people involved in FARMESA at the national level. If that is accepted, the mission is of the opinion that the share of resources allocated to mini-projects is too small, and that the administration and technical support is too costly.

It should be noted, though, that the 'Technical backstopping and support, training' includes elements that could be regarded as activities of their own. The staff of the CU are involved in research, training and information that they do not regard as direct support activities for the execution of mini-projects, although from the national level the perception appears to be different.

Based on such arguments the CU did not accept the above breakdown of expenses as fair, and in response analysed the expenditures from their end. From the breakdown made by CU, the mission derived the following figures for comparison with the table above:

Type of expense	US \$ 1996–2000	%
Mini-projects except NF Offices	1,200,000	2
Governance, managem., adm.	1,800,000	32
Techn. work apart from mini-projects	2,300,000	41
Unallocated, evaluation	300,000	5
Total	5,600,000	100

The mission notes some differences which by and large depend on to what extent the CU is regarded as a support structure for the field activities executed mainly as mini-projects, or if CU is regarded also as a 'primary centre' for e.g. method development.

Apparently the CU is looked at differently in this respect from the NFs perspective as compared to how the CU staff looks at themselves.

The mission notes that the programme document indicates a planned phasing out of the CU starting by the end of 1999 and to be completed by 2002. It seems, therefore, as if the intention in the project document was that the CU is a support function to get activities going and mainly to be executed at the national level.

The mission is of the opinion that costs for governance, management and administration and technical support are high, and that the reason for this is the administrative design of the set up, not in-efficiency caused by the workers in FARMESA. A critical point is the need for the CU to eliminate its involvement in administration and management which should be handled by the regional office in Accra in collaboration with the FAO country offices. This has to be achieved fairly rapidly to allow for a planned reduction of the CU. Another possibility for saving costs is to use short term consultants for technical support to a higher degree than hitherto.

Overlaps with other initiatives

In a larger regional and Sida-perspective some inefficiency is caused by the overlap of mandate and activities between FARMESA and RELMA. Capacity in both offices to deal with publications is one example, and different committees at the regional level is another. It can also be noted that the FAO special programme for food security is guided by other committees at the national level.

Cost effectiveness in the mini-projects

The mission has noted that the current approach to the administration of mini-projects generates a lot of work with Letters of Agreements and accounting procedures in the FAO Res. Rep. offices.

At the implementation level, the mission notes long distances in some countries, notably in Tanzania, between the NF duty station and the field sites, and also between the duty stations of the mini-project leaders and the actual field site. This may be one of the factors explaining that a mini-projects with similar design ends up being four times more expensive in Tanzania than in Zambia.

900 km between the NF duty station and a field site, and 130 km from the duty station of the staff involved in the research to the actual research site result in high travel costs and poor use of staff time.

5.6 Major Factors Affecting the Project Results

It has already been pointed out above (see 4.2) that the programme was characterized by slow recruitment of staff both for the CU and for the positions of national facilitators. Therefore, it took time before FARMESA became effective. During 1998 FARMESA activities have expanded significantly.

The mission has noted current challenges in several areas which will be elaborated in the conclusions in 6.1 and leading to the mission's recommendations in 6.3.

6. Conclusions and Recommendations

6.1 Conclusions

FARMESA is needed

The need for method development in the area of participatory systems approaches to the development of farming systems is fully recognised. The demand for more economically competitive and environmentally sound small holder systems cries out from every government in the region. The mission regards with equal weight the need for wide scale institutionalization and education in these approaches. Indeed, had FSRE projects made greater investments in university degree training ten years ago FARMESA would no doubt have made greater progress.

The mission also regard the competitive funding of activities as an important feature of the programme. Competitive grants have the potential of providing encouragement to centres of innovation in the region for the development of proposals for activities that can be implemented with financial support from FARMESA.

Further, the training need in this field is huge. It may appear as if the Farming Systems Approach to research and development is in a state of decline in several countries since the specific institutional arrangements have been suffering in the context of structural adjustments and general shortage of public funds. However, participatory approaches and systems thinking have made progress and is now to a certain extent adopted as a basis for agricultural research. The need for specific institutional arrangements may thus no longer be there, but the need for further strengthening of training on participatory and integrated approaches is still huge to ensure that the next generation of researchers and field workers are well equipped.

FARMESA's achievements

FARMESA has, during its short life span made progress in several areas that can be used as a platform for further developments:

Institutionalisation and ownership

The formation of NCCs and Field Site Working Groups has enabled FARMESA to get field activities going and to establish national mechanisms for the necessary decision making.

Platform for a farming systems approach

At the field level linkages have been established with local communities, and the various actors have interacted through the diagnostic surveys and planning exercises that have been carried out. Farmer Field Schools are being tested as an approach to joint learning and signs of success are emerging.

Training

A large number of people have already been trained and the cadre of trainees now equipped with additional knowledge constitutes an important resource.

Information and documentation

A wealth of information is contained in the numerous draft reports and other drafts that have been produced by FARMESA.

The challenges ahead

The mission has noted not only the achievements made but also areas where there are important challenges for FARMESA during the remaining part of phase 1 and beyond.

Focus on method development

There is, in the opinion of the mission need to further develop the work on method development and more clearly distinguish this work from general technology testing and dissemination. The following areas will be important to address:

- *Application of the method development aspect on the field activities:* A framework for how to go about description and analysis of different methods have been developed, but so far mainly applied in the context of separate case studies. If that framework, while gradually refined, was used for data gathering on methods used in the FARMESA field activities too, the method development aspect would get better attention at the field level. It is noted in this context that much of the research on methods relates to parameters such as expanded learning networks, strengthened community organisations, increased knowledge and ultimately empowerment of local communities. When such studies are to be conducted it is apparent that there will be a great need for multi-disciplinarity with strong involvement of social scientists.
- *The need to widen the methods that are being studied:* As of now farmer field schools in an adapted fashion are receiving attention and so are methods for diagnostic surveys and planning. Better linkages between FARMESA and centres of innovation within and outside the region would enable FARMESA to capture a wider range of interesting methods. The need for cost effective methods that suit both the government and private sector agricultural support services is urgent after the general collapse of the T & V system and retrenchment of staff in the Governments.
- *Catching up with the frontier:* FARMESA has a challenge in bridging the gap between the existing knowledge on methods within FARMESA and the frontier of thinking in the region and internationally.

Cost effectiveness

The mission has argued that the costs for administration and management of FARMESA are high, and that the organisation of FARMESA is complex. The mission has also argued that there is a case for further devolution of responsibilities to the national and lower levels. The mission is of the opinion that changes in the organisational design could result in increased cost-effectiveness.

The similarities in mandate and to a certain extent with regard to the activities result in some overlap between RELMA and FARMESA. Resources could be better used if there was a more clear division of work between the two regional projects. Indirectly, a clearer division of work may also be useful for both projects as it would allow a more precise focus on fewer activities.

At the field level better scrutiny of proposals could generate savings. The mission has noted the often long distances between field sites and the National Facilitation Office, and occasionally also between the actual field activities and the duty stations of the researchers involved in the work. This generates costs for travel and in-effective use of staff time.

Governance and ownership

The mission has noted that important mechanisms are in place for decision making and ownership. The mission has, however, also noted that there is a need for NCC and RCC to distance themselves from activities where they end up having dual roles; both decision making and implementing.

The mission has noted that some mechanisms for governance and supervision that were intended in the programme document and in the agreement between FAO and Sida have not been operationalised, e.g. a technical advisory committee and annual supervisory visits by FAO. It is also noted that the staff of the Coordination Unit have been charged with responsibilities for the overall execution of the project, but currently lack the authority required for assuming such responsibility.

Sustainability

The structures that are essential for the execution and decision making are heavily supported by the project. It is essential for all actors to consciously embark on a path that ensures sustainability in terms of continued existence of networks that can catalyse method development in the region.

Creation of governance structures and administrative arrangements that can ensure continued existence of networks beyond the life time of the project is critically important. National support is of course essential if activities at all levels; local, national and regional, are to be sustained in the future.

The field-site focus is, in the opinion of the mission, less fortunate, since it reduces the opportunities for a wide range of organisations to get involved.

There is no strategy for method development known at the field site level. In fact, few of the stakeholders at that level are aware that the field site is a 'laboratory' where experiences on method development are being generated. By and large, the 'method development strategy' is unknown also at the NCC level, and it was only during the discussions at the CU that the mission realized that such strategy exists. The work on method development seems, unless changes are made, to become the work of the CU. To ensure success and sustainability of this important work the mission is of the opinion that such work should be a core activity that involves many actors at the national level.

Focus

It is the opinion of the mission that more valuable outputs could be expected of FARMESA if the work was more focussed. Currently the CU is charged with a significant role especially regarding method development, training and information dissemination. It is essential that the process of devolution to the national level is coupled with a clear focus on the most important activities. Reference is made to the recommendations in the next section for details.

6.2 Lessons Learned

After just about a year and a half of effective operation it is still early to report on lessons learnt in any depth. A few points may however be noted:

Once the various structures had been put in place a wide range of activities could start in all countries. As mentioned by the NCC Chairmen in the proposed 'Strategy framework for phase II' careful selection of priorities is essential in order to achieve the stated objectives. There is now a need to consolidate experiences, and to enhance quality rather than expand in quantity.

Some weaknesses highlighted by the mission originate from the formulation of the programme with e. g. weak coherence between immediate objective 1 and expected outputs.

The development in Uganda with a host institution assuming more responsibilities has been found more effective and could be further developed as a way to decentralise ownership and administration.

The strong focus on few field sites has restricted the effective networking with other actors. The identification of activities based on field level problems has also built in some bias against strategic activities as pointed out in the 'Strategy framework for phase II'.

The mission is of the opinion that stronger involvement of social scientists, both in the implementation and networking, and in the governing bodies of FARMESA would be advantageous.

6.3 Recommendations

Method development

The following recommendations are made with regard to method development, responding to the three important areas that need attention as per the conclusions of the mission.

Recommendation 1.

The national facilitators ought to carry out a systematic review of existing mini-projects from the viewpoint of their design and expected contribution to method development. The framework developed for the description and analysis of methods in the case studies can be a point of departure. Technical leadership should be provided by the methods specialist. Time: During 1999.

Recommendation 2

Resource people from FAO, possibly from SUAS and possibly from other organisations should meet with the National Facilitators and the staff of the Coordination Unit to discuss how best FARMESA can link up with the 'frontier' of recent thinking on participatory approaches. Topics during this workshop would include the analytical framework for methods assessment developed for the case studies, alternatives to T & V in the government services, known sources of innovation in the region, recent methodological development with regard to participatory planning, visionary thinking as opposed to problem-orientation etc. Responsible: Method Specialist. Time: As soon as possible and to precede the national workshops indicated in recommendation 3.

Recommendation 3

National Workshops to be organised to help identify sources of innovation in the country on the topic of innovative participatory methods. The aim is to start creating effective national networks on method development, and to identify additional methods that are suited for studies within FARMESA. Responsible: National Facilitators. Time: During 1999.

Recommendation 4

To allow for increased attention to method development the mission recommends that technology development receives less attention, and that Objective 4 (Replication) continues to receive little attention. If financial resources are identified as a constraint, even after careful analysis of the implementation speed in the mini-projects, the activities recommended above should be awarded higher priority than starting additional activities for year 2000.

Cost effectiveness

The mission is of the opinion that FAO and Sida are best placed to look into details with regard to how best the organisation of FARMESA can be made more cost-effective.

Recommendation 5.

It is recommended that FAO looks into how better cost-effectiveness can be achieved with FAO as an implementor. Further, it is recommended that Sida looks into if better cost-effectiveness can be achieved with alternative implementation arrangements.

The mission suggests that the geographical mandate be considered in connection with the organisational review. It is noted that some of the associate countries have a strong interest in FARMESA and that the existence of Swedish bilateral projects is of relevance for inclusion or exclusion of countries from a Swedish point of view.

Division of responsibilities between FARMESA and RELMA should also be looked into.

The mission recommends the following changes, preferably implemented latest by the beginning of phase 2 and irrespective of the implementation arrangement:

- Host institutions to assume full responsibility for the execution of the programme in the country, similar to the role of NARO in Uganda but further developed such that the need for NFs on the FAO payroll, and separate NF offices is eliminated. Host institutions use their existing facilities and charge overhead costs. Preferably the host institution should be a Government institution, but if such institution cannot be found, an NGO or other private sector institution can be identified. Donor financial follow up secured through external audits.
- An operational audit is carried out in e.g. Kenya and Uganda aimed at development of recommendations for the in-country administrative arrangements and to identify criteria that a host institution has to meet to successfully assume its new role. Kenya and Uganda are suggested since the two countries are at different ends with regard to the present arrangements; NARO in Uganda takes a considerable responsibility, whereas the Research-Extension Liaison Division in Kenya has no bank account and thus has to rely on a range of other arrangements for the implementation of activities.
- The CU should be reduced to one nationally recruited and one internationally recruited professionals, and share office and other infrastructure with the FAO Sub-regional Office or another suitable organisation depending on the overall arrangements.
- Technical backstopping is to a larger extent than hitherto secured through hiring of short-term consultants, primarily from the region but when required from outside the region.
- Possibilities for securing effective technical backstopping from FAO should be examined. An option that FAO may consider in its investigation is whether 1 – 3 % of the overhead costs should be earmarked for AGSP and/or other sections of the Agricultural Department of FAO.
- Possibilities for and potential usefulness of technical interaction with SUAS should also be examined.

Responsible: CU in consultation with AGSP to look into cost effectiveness with FAO as an implementor and Sida/DNRE to look into alternative administrative arrangements. CU to initiate operational audit. NCCs to take on the challenge of reviewing the host institution capacity in all countries relative to the NARO model and clarify implications, modalities and alternatives for phasing out FAO recruited National Facilitator positions. Time: April – June 1999. Reporting to RCC-6 in late June 1999.

Governance and ownership

Recommendation 6

The following measures are recommended in order to reduce unnecessary centralisation of authority and risks for conflicts of interest and to strengthen the oversight function in the project:

- As a general rule, NCC and RCC members should not be involved in practical implementation of field activities and should not take on tasks that generate consultancy fees or other remuneration.
- To ensure that the NCCs and the RCC remain active and to facilitate broader participation in the project decision making bodies over time, the NCC and RCC members should rotate with a third of the members replaced annually. Some priority should be given to institutions representing social sciences with regard to representation in NCC and RCC.

- RCC, AGSP and CU should suggest how to get the TAC operationalised and how to ensure resources for an annual FAO supervisory visit. TAC membership could be comprised of one representative from each FAO and Sida, and another three members from outside the FARMESA region, i.e. total five members. The main function should be to review and advise on the country programmes. AGSP ought to suggest members in the TAC as was indicated in the project document.
- RCC to assume an advisory role since there is little justification for RCC to make detailed decisions on the country programmes.

Responsible: CU and RCC. Time: Proposals ready to be discussed at RCC-6, June 1999.

Sustainability

It is envisaged in the programme document that the initial arrangement with a CU would be changed towards the end of 1999 into a small liaison office staffed by two National Professional Officers. Further it is envisaged that the project will operate without a central office from 2002.

A conscious approach to gradual transformation of the CU into a less costly liaison office and eventually a phasing out of the same and a reduced role for the RCC is in the opinion of the mission a way to allow for capacity building at the national level where more sustainable administrative structures are found.

Recommendation 7

The mission recommends that

- the transformation of the CU to a liaison office is postponed until the end of phase 1, i.e. mid year 2000. It is also recommended that the plans in the project document are changed in such a way that the liaison office comprises one internationally recruited and one nationally recruited professionals from the beginning of phase 2.
- the CU approaches its tasks in such a way that a continued devolution of responsibilities to the host institutions is facilitated. In brief, this implies that the administration and management of the country activities is the full responsibility of the FAO country offices, NCCs and host institutions and that gradually the technical work now carried out at the CU is decentralised to the host institutions. The main function of the CU in the near future ought to be to build capacity in the host institutions through training.
- the outlook in the longer term could be that the RCC meetings will be financed for another two years after the phasing out of the liaison office, i.e. until 2004. The RCC should thus consciously plan for its continued existence in the future without external support.

Responsible: CU and RCC. Time: Continuous

Focus of work

In addition to what was mentioned above the mission makes the following recommendations specifically to the immediate objectives:

Recommendation 8

- Immediate objective 1 should be understood to focus on methods.
- Immediate objective 2:
 - Carry out a readership survey to determine whether the newsletter is sufficiently much appreciated to justify the input from the CU to its production.
 - Reduce the amount of reports produced and disseminated and focus during 1999 and 2000 on finalization of 2 – 3 key documents to be produced in a book form.

- Immediate objective 3: Focus on support to education at University level.
- Immediate objective 4: Continue to receive little attention, and from next phase eliminated as an objective. The mechanism for replication should be support to training covered under objective 3.

Responsible: CU, NCC and RCC. Time: Continuous

Design

Several of the recommendations above have a bearing on the contents of the programme document and on the 'FARMESA Implementation framework'.

Recommendation 9

It is recommended that the programme document and the implementation framework are revised reflecting the recommendations made by the mission especially with regard to

- The mandate on method development rather than technology development/testing.
- The roles of Host institutions, RCC, NCC and CU.
- Shared responsibilities relative to RELMA.

It is envisaged that the revision should result in a project document that is comprehensive enough to make the implementation framework redundant.

Responsible: FAO/AGSP and CU in consultation with Sida. National workshops could be organised followed by a regional workshop. The proposals from the national workshops feed into the regional workshop and the regional one is to develop a proposed design. Sida and FAO should participate in the regional workshop to ensure good representation and linkages to other programmes in the region. Time: A proposal to be presented to RCC-7, December 1999.

Management

Recommendation 10

The management information system should be reviewed and, where feasible, upgraded to enable breakdown of resource allocation by objectives.

Responsible: CU. Time: During 1999.

The final evaluation of FARMESA

Recommendation 11

In the programme document a final evaluation of FARMESA is envisaged towards the end of the project period. The mission recommends that the final evaluation is based on studies of the documentation yielded through the process suggested above. It is recommended that field visits are restricted to one or two field sites as orientation.

Time plan and responsibilities for the main elements in preparation of a second phase

Recommendation 12

The mission recommends the following sequence for the main elements of the preparation for a second phase:

April – June 1999: Organisational reviews by Sida and FAO to suggest more cost-effective arrangements (Recommendation 5). Operational audit to set criteria for host institutions (Recommendation 5).

July – August 1999: Review of host institutions (Recommendation 5)

August – October 1999: Development of a revised programme document detailed enough to make the implementation strategy redundant, and taking the above recommendations and findings into account.

November – December 1999: Final evaluation that will recommend funding level and arrangements for a second phase.

Early 2000: Sida decision.

The above time plan need to be carefully considered by Sida and FAO to ensure that there will be no gap between phase 1 and a possible phase 2.

Annexes

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Annex 1: Terms of Reference

*Terms of Reference for a
Joint Evaluation Mission of the Regional Programme on
Farm-Level Applied Research Methods
in Eastern and Southern Africa (GCP/RAF/334/SWE)
by SIDA, FAO and the Regional Co-ordinating Committee (RCC)*

1. Background

The Farm-level Applied Research Methods in Eastern and Southern Africa (FARMESA) programme was launched in July 1996. Originally to be undertaken for a period of three years, it was subsequently extended by one year to end in June 2000. The programme is a regional collaborative initiative of Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia and Zimbabwe, with financing of about US\$5.5 million from the Swedish International Development Agency (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 viz. 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-focussed 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:

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

To date, FARMESA has been establishing field sites in individual countries where integrated resource management practices are being developed, tested and replicated. In the process, farmers and research and development practitioners are being trained and national research and development institutions encouraged to adopt innovative practices and approaches. Best practices are being transferred between countries.

2. Purpose of the Evaluation

In the programme document, it is envisaged that the progress of the project should be jointly examined by representatives of the core countries, FAO and SIDA during a mid-term review. As a mid-term review, the evaluation is intended to provide a forward-looking assessment of the effectiveness of the programme in terms of management structure, modalities of operation, design and implementation of country as well as inter-country activities, and achievement of the programme objectives. The mission should make recommendations for any necessary changes in the design and orientation of the project.

3. Scope of the Evaluation

The evaluation will address the:

- Relevance and validity of the FARMESA programme concept, design, priorities, and stated objectives;
- Appropriateness and efficacy of the overall organization and management system, and of its constituent parts – Regional Coordinating Committee, National Coordinating Committees, National Facilitators/NF Teams, Field Site Working Groups, Coordinating Unit and the Regional Office (RAF) of FAO, and SIDA – with specific reference to ownership and sustainability;
- Efficiency and effectiveness of programme implementation and activities (including financial administration, modalities of operation, personnel management, etc.);
- Quality, relevance and timeliness of the technical and administrative backstopping provided through the Co-ordinating unit and by FAO;
- Relevance and attention to the operating principles of FARMESA including participatory processes, gender issues and environmental sustainability:
Impact of the programme through its outputs and services (in respect to both planned and unanticipated results) and prospects for widespread uptake and impact of the approach, methods and results.

Based on review and appraisal of the design, management, implementation and impact of the programme, the evaluation mission will make recommendations regarding future priorities, programme design, management, implementation and evaluation and the future roles and responsibilities of the various stakeholders involved in the implementation of the programme.

Specific questions for guiding the evaluation are identified in Annex A.

4. Composition of the Mission

The mission will comprise:

Team leader with experience of programme organization and management, to be designated by SIDA. This person should have expertise in (a) project and organization assessment and management, and (b) project evaluation.

Specialist in farming systems development programmes and field methods, to be designated by FAO. This person should have expertise in (a) farming systems approach to development, (b) research and development field methods, and (c) regional or national farming systems development projects.

Specialist in national agricultural research and development organizations, programmes and policies, to be designated by the FARMESA Regional Coordinating Committee. This person should have

expertise in (a) national agricultural research and development programmes, (b) strategy formulation in research and development, (c) agricultural development in eastern and southern Africa.

Mission members should be independent and thus have no previous direct involvement with the project either with regard to its formulation, implementation or backstopping. All should have an advanced university degree in agricultural science, management science, rural development, or related area and ten years of professional experience, including experience in sub-Saharan Africa. They should preferably have experience of evaluation.

5. Timetable and Itinerary of the Mission

The total time required for the mission will be 25 days including international travel, as follows:

Location	Purpose/Activities	Days	Total Days
Rome	Assembly, briefing, review materials, assignments, plan of work	3	3
Kenya	Country review and meetings; visit Kakamega or Mbeere site	3	6
Uganda	Country review and meetings; visit Mukono and Kumi sites	3	9
Tanzania	Country review and meetings; visit Isangati site	4	13
Zambia	Country review and meetings; visit Kabwe and Siavonga sites	3	16
Zimbabwe	Country review and meetings; visit Ngezi site	3	19
	Co-ordinating unit review and meetings	2	21
	Report writing; RCC Meeting to review and discuss report; incorporation of comments; FAO/SIDA debriefing	4	25

The sequence for country review, meetings, field trips is expected to be:

Purpose/Activities	Approximate Time
Courtesy visits; briefing by NCC Chair and NF/NF Team; Review national documents and working papers	1 days
Field trip to field site(s); meeting with site working group (including representatives from field sites not visited)	1 days
Focus group meeting with 8–10 relevant non-project stakeholders. Meeting with NCC; preparation of country observations.	1 days

If found necessary, the MTR team can propose and, in consultation with FAO and FARMESA, decide to change the itinerary of the Mission, including visiting schedule and team composition for visits/consultations.

6. Consultations

During country reviews, the mission will have consultations as follows:

briefing meeting with the NCC Chairperson and National Facilitator/NF Team;
focus group meeting with members of the Site Working Group in one field site and three representatives of the Site Working Group at the second field site;

additional meetings, as necessary, with implementation teams for mini-projects;
focus group meeting with non-project staff stakeholders, including representatives from diverse ministries, NGOs and universities;¹
final meeting and discussion with NCC.

The mission will maintain close liaison with the Representatives of SIDA and FAO and the concerned national agencies, as well as with national and international project staff. Although the mission should feel free to discuss with the authorities concerned anything relevant to its assignment, it is not authorised to make any commitments on behalf of the Government, SIDA, or FAO.

7. Reporting

The mission is fully responsible for its independent report which may not necessarily reflect the views of the Governments, SIDA or FAO. The report should be structured in accordance with the headings shown in Annex 2, however, additional headings could be added by the team. The report will be completed, to the extent possible, before leaving the region and the findings and recommendations fully discussed with all concerned parties and wherever possible consensus achieved.

The mission will also complete the FAO Project Evaluation Questionnaire.

The mission leader bears responsibility for finalization of the report, which will be submitted to FAO within two weeks of mission completion. FAO will submit the report to the Governments of the member countries and to SIDA together with its comments.

¹ The function of this meeting is to assess the spread, impact and relevance of FARMESA beyond people and organisations directly involved in programme implementation. The stakeholders invited to this meeting should not be on the NCC, should not have line responsibility for the programme in any ministry, and should not have participated in or contributed to any mini-project. At least some participants should be from universities and non-governmental organisations.

Specific Issues to Guide the Evaluation

a. Relevance and validity of the FARMESA programme concept, design, priorities, and stated objectives:

- 1) Are the programme's immediate objectives relevant to the region's and countries' priorities and suitable for inter-country action?
- 2) To what extent are the programme objectives similar or distinct from other programmes and governmental initiatives in the region?
- 3) To what extent are relevant governmental and non-governmental bodies being brought into the process of institutionalising systems approaches to integrated, participatory agricultural development at community level?

b. Appropriateness and efficacy of the overall organization and management system, and of its constituent parts with specific reference to ownership and sustainability:

- 1) What is the specific role and added value of different components of the coordination system?
- 2) What progress has been made in reinforcing capacity and sense of ownership?
- 3) How effectively do the participating countries coordinate their activities/work with one another?
How successful has been the process of regional exchange and learning?
- 4) How effective are working arrangements with national and regional institutions, organizations, programmes and projects?

c. Efficiency and effectiveness of programme implementation and activities (including financial administration, modalities of operation, personnel management, etc.):

- 1) A detailed implementation framework has been prepared to guide programme activities. Is it relevant and appropriate for attainment of objectives?
- 2) How effective are the mini-projects as vehicles for identifying and testing new field-level methodologies? Are the guidelines for mini-project selection and formulation adequate?
- 3) What major factors have facilitated or impeded programme effectiveness?

d. Quality, relevance and timeliness of the technical and administrative backstopping provided by FAO, particularly through the Co-ordinating Unit:

- 1) What has been timeliness and quality of inputs?
- 2) Are appropriate practices and standards being used?
- 3) To what extent are existing national and regional capacities and experiences in the farming systems approach being mobilised and utilised?

e. Relevance and attention to the operating principles of FARMESA including participatory processes, gender issues and environmental sustainability:

- 1) What are the roles and responsibilities of the various stakeholders involved in the implementation of the programme?
- 2) What practical actions are being taken to focus on gender issues?
- 3) What is the extent and characteristics of farmers' participation in the FARMESA programme?
- 4) Are farmers and communities being empowered with respect to programme priority setting, monitoring and evaluation?

f. Impact of the programme through its outputs and services (in respect to both planned and unanticipated results):

- 1) How successful has FARMESA been in terms of information dissemination, and the transfer of technologies, methods, techniques and approaches?
- 2) What contribution is being made to improvement, spread and institutionalisation of improved methods for the farming systems approach?
- 3) In what ways might the programme be changed in order to maximise impact on smallholder livelihoods?

Annex 2: Activities and outputs as per information from CU and related to the logical framework

OBJECTIVE	INDICATORS	OUTPUTS	ACTIVITIES	COMMENTS
Project Structure	Indicators	Outputs related to Objective 1. (to develop field methodologies)	Activities related to Output 1 (relevant methodologies and technologies))	
<u>Immediate Objectives</u> 1. To develop improved field methodologies for the identification, prioritization, testing, and adaptation of appropriate smallholder technologies.	#completed FSAs #completed case studies #specific methods and techniques modified/adapted as a result of FSAs #successful field site activities in different technology areas #methods field tested and adapted within specific farming systems #methods adopted by collaborating programme staff	i. Methodologies and technologies relevant to smallholder development identified, screened, field-tested and adapted.	i. Preparation of proposals for field site activities by Technical Committees. ii. Selection of field site activities by the NCC to form a draft national programme of field activities. iii. Endorsement/modification of draft national programmes by the RCC. iv. Field testing (with farmer participation) by collaborating institutions of approaches, technologies and methodologies. v. Modification, re-testing and adaptation by participating institutions and selected farmers.	i. Several cycles of proposal preparation were undertaken. All proposals related to technology testing and none on development of field methodologies. ii. All National Co-ordinating Committees carried out selection of Field Site activities and presented short lists to the RCC. iii. The RCC received proposals from NCCs and suggested modifications or endorsed them as necessary. iv. Field testing, with farmer participation, by collaborating institutions of technologies undertaken by all NCCs. v. As the Project was in its first 18 months of implementation, most technologies being tested have not reached a stage of modification and re-testing.

OBJECTIVE	INDICATORS	OUTPUTS	ACTIVITIES	COMMENTS
2. To document project field experience and other relevant national experience, and to disseminate it within participating countries.	#case studies documented and distributed #guidelines and manuals distributed #workshops and seminars plus attendance (person days) #study tours #people electronically networked #existing data bases, professional associations and networks assisted	Outputs related to Objective 2 (sharing of experience and of new approaches and methodologies) i. A knowledge and information base concerning successful technologies and methodologies that have been field tested and adapted within specific farming systems.	A. Documentation of experience i. Identification of successful methodologies and technologies (and major constraints and failures) through the capture of experience and institutional memory by literature searches, key informants, case studies and PRAs within ongoing activities. ii. Documentation of improved approaches, technologies and methodologies in the form of reports and manuals and the creation of an organized information base (data, reports manuals, etc). iii. Organisation of expert consultations and workshops to synthesis lessons learned and to formulate improved approaches and methodologies. iv. Documentation of the results of consultations and workshops (national) of selected components of the smallholder support system and the extent to which this demand is being met.	A. Documentation of experience i. Successful technologies were identified through literature searches and case studies. ii. Documentation of improved approaches and technologies, in the form of reports and manuals and creation of an organised information base satisfactorily implemented. iii. It is too early to undertake the synthesis of lessons learned from the Project, hence this activity was not carried out. iv. Results of workshops and consultations were documented.

		ii. A functioning system for accessing reference material and for disseminating successful innovative approaches, techniques and methodologies, through the creation/support of relevant regional networks, publications, workshops, study tours/visits, and through electronic means	B. System for accessing reference information i. Field studies to determine the specific nature and volume of demand for information at the farm-family and community level and the extent to which this demand is met. ii. A parallel needs assessment to determine the specific nature and volume of demand for information at various levels (village, district) iii. Modification to the Programme's information base and access to other information bases as result of the field studies. iv. Creation of a network for reference material between collaborating institutions and selected programmes operated by them. v. Assist participating institutions to have access to electronic communications.	B. System for assessing reference Information i. Studies to determine the specific nature and volume of demand for information at the farm-family level and community level planned for 1999. ii. Not yet programmed iii. Too early in the life of the Project iv. Network for reference material between collaborating institutions and the Project created at the CU. v. All National Facilitation Offices have access to electronic communication.
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			<p>C. Sharing relevant experience</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Identification of relevant international, regional and national networks. ii. Selection of collaborating networks and formulation of networking arrangements including provision of hardware and software plus related training. iii. Field testing, review and selection of auxiliary methods of information sharing and dissemination (Internet pages newsletters, radio broadcasts, videos, newspaper articles, workshops, visits etc). iv. Support to professional associations interested in the improved development perspective and it's accompanying techniques and methodologies. v. Maintenance and updating of the information base. 	
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OBJECTIVE	INDICATORS	OUTPUTS	ACTIVITIES	COMMENTS
3. To improve in-service training and formal education in order to strengthen this contribution to creating human and institutional capacity to apply to the new perspective	# Trainers/lecturers trained by the project # Training courses given in new approach and methods # Educational institutions with modified curricula	Outputs related to Objective 3 (strengthening human and institutional capacity) i. Sustainable educational programmes of colleges and universities with successful approaches, techniques. ii. Sustainable in-service training programmes with successful approaches, techniques and methodologies incorporated iii. In-service training programmes for information specialists and others concerned with communication/information targeted towards farmers. iv. National in-learning workshops to improve macro/micro linkages v. Improved communication between related institutions.	A. Training i. Assessment of training needs and training capacity related to the new concept and relevant methodologies and techniques. ii. Review of existing training materials in relevant fields and an assessment of their suitability for the purposes of the programme. iii. Adaptation or incorporation of existing training materials into those required by the programme's own training activities and developed on the basis of materials created within the programme's information base. iv. Pretesting of materials for training of trainers. v. Organisation of training courses for trainers. vi. Organisation of training courses for trainers. vii. Support to training courses undertaken in collaborating institutions. B. Education i. Assessment of	A. Training i. Assessment of training needs and training capacity related to the new concept for a number of institutions carried out. ii. Review of existing training materials in relevant fields and their suitability for the purposes of the project undertaken. iii. Has been done for Degree and Diploma Levels. iv. Already carried out for degree level. v. Successfully carried out training courses for trainers. vi. Support extended to training undertake in collaborating institutions. B. Education i. Gap analysis has been carried out for three countries and reports prepared (in Zambia, Tanzania and Uganda). ii. This is related to (i) and based on the

			<p>educational needs and teaching capacity related to the new concept and relevant methodologies and techniques, taking into account the supply and demand for this type of information within the region as a whole.</p> <p>ii. Review of existing educational materials (articles, manuals, textbooks, videos) in relevant fields and an assessment of their suitability for the purposes of the programme.</p> <p>iii. Inventory of relevant educational materials possessed by cooperating educational institutions and assistance with acquiring missing materials.</p> <p>iv. Assessment of related teaching capacity of cooperating educational institutions and organisation of training courses to improve capacity using field exercises and selected educational materials.</p> <p>v. Assistance with modifications to curricula and teaching methods related to the focus of the programme, with special attention given to</p>	<p>information, training requirements were identified. A generic handbook focusing on degree level training on FSA to technology development and transfer, including the evolving methodologies has been developed. Another handbook to facilitate training at Diploma and Certificate levels has been drafted.</p> <p>iii. Inventory completed for the 3 countries named above.</p> <p>iv. Covered in Gap analysis. Is complete for 3 countries and reports have been released.</p> <p>v. Based on Gap Analysis, a stakeholder meeting was held and training strategies were developed in the 3 countries, including curriculum content.</p>
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			field exercises in a smallholder setting.	
4. To support collaborating institutions in applying the technologies and methodologies developed under Objective 1 on a wider basis within ongoing research and field activities.	#projects and programmes to which improved methods introduced #cadres involved in this collaboration #farm families reached by the improved methods.	<u>Outputs related to Objective 4</u> (support in applying the approach) i. Ongoing GO and NGO field programmes improved through the application of successful approaches, techniques and methodologies generated within FARMESA.	i.	i. Identification carried out with some of existing bilateral (DANIDA) and regional (CIMMYT). ii. Too early to assess development impact of the Programme activities. iii. This has been done in the case of DANIDA, where, based on the training, strategies and priorities of the Programme were modified. iv. This has been going on with the University of Pretoria and research institutions in S. Africa. v. Not yet undertaken.

Annex 3: List of places visited and key persons met or contacted

16.2.99 Stockholm: Contacted but not met

Lill Lundgren

18.2.99 Stockholm: Sida Hq

Bengt Johansson, Sida

Inge Gerremo, Sida

Ola Möller, Sida

Lars-Peter Hertelius, Sida

Anders Höök, Sida

Bo Göhl, Sida

Katja Jassey, Sida

Christina Boman, Sida

Jan Runnkvist, Sida

Johan Toborn, SUAS

Eva Stephanson, Sida

Anita Ingevall, Sida

1–2.3.99 Rome: FAO Hq

Doyle Baker, Agr. Dept.

Bart van Ommen, Technical Cooperation Dept.

Bernd Bultemeier, Office of Programme, Budget and Evaluation

Lawrence Clarke, Agr. Dept.

Kanjobe Mwandemere, Sustainable Development Dept.

Peter Holmgren, Forest Dept.

Magnus Grylle, Forest Dept.

Dorrit Alopaeus Stahl, Swedish Res. Rep. to FAO, Swedish Embassy

Kotti Arnesson, Swedish Embassy

Martin Smith, Agr. Dept.

Malcolm Hall, Consultant

3–6.3 Nairobi, Kenya

Daniel Gustafson, FAO Res. Rep.

Wandera, National Facilitator, FARMESA

Gertrud Buyu, Ass. Nat. Facilitator, FARMESA

James Matata, KARI, Chairman, RCC

J. K. Ng'eno, Chairman, NCC

George Namwamba, Min. of Agr.

Francis W. Mbote, SWCB, Min. of Agr.

J. K. Kiara, SWCB, Min. of Agr.

Martin Grunder, CTA, SWCB, Min. of Agr.

Lotta Nycander, Socio-economic advisor, SWCB, Min. of Agr.

Mats Denninger, Director, RELMA

Johan Rockström, RELMA

5.3.99 Kakamega District, Kenya

D. Nyasani, Provincial Director of Agriculture
A.B. Orodho, Director Regional Research Center
Lynnette Kibisu, PDA's office (mini project leader-soils)
H.N.Juma, Livestock Production Off. (District) mini project leader – poultry
Jeremiah K. Langat, District Agricultural Officer (DAO)
W. Omutsani, District Livestock Officer (DLPO)
Esther Musyoka, FARMESA
Richard Musangi, Villa Maria Enterprises
Caleb Wangia, Villa Maria Enterprises (mini project micro-credit)
James Matata, KARI
E.O. Wandera, FARMESA (National Facilitator)
Godrick Khisa, Farmer Field School
Chris Siganga, Farmer Field School

6 – 8.3 Kampala, Uganda

JR Kamugisha, Director, GAF Consult
John Aluma. – Chairman, Director Forestry Research Institute, NARO
Augustine Mwendya, Executive Secretary, UNFA
Elly Sabiiti, Dean Faculty of Agriculture and Forestry, Makerere University
Wilfred Odogola, National Facilitator, Director AEATRI, NARO
Abner Syambi, Programme Officer, FAO.
Cyprian Ebong, National Coordinator Livestock Syst. Res. Progr. (Danida)
J. Sentogo-Kibalama, Makerere University
Amenet Justine, Root Crop Research Institute
Grace Kyomugisha, UTV
Martin Kiiza, Uganda TV
Alphonse Candia, Research Officer (AETRI)
E.M. Chitepa, – Resident Representative, FAO
Abler Syambi. – National Project officer, FAO

7.3 Mukono District, Uganda

Sarah Nabyonga, District Council Production Committee
Francis Lukoya, Chairman District Council Production Committee
Allen Kebba, DEC/DAO Mukono
Owori Wadunde, Research Officer Aquaculture
Charles Mutumba, Research Officer AEATRI
Jolly Kabirizi, Research Officer NAARI.
James Mugerwa, FSWG facilitator
Peter Kelongo, FSWG chairman.
At Kasenge Parish farmers group meeting attended by over 65 people

7–8.3 Kumi District, Uganda

Alphonse Candia, Research Officer, AEATRI/NARO
Martin Kiiza, Uganda TV
Grace Kyomugisha, Uganda TV
Florence Oumo, DEC/DAO, Kumi District
Janet Asege, Agric. Officer, Kumi District

William Acoda, Asst. Agric. Officer, Kumi District
J.J. Osere, DCO, Kumi District
Valdo Odeke, Dep. DAO, Kumi District
Peter Akomo, Charman, Production Committee, Kumi District
Ebwadel A. Adome, Member, Production Committee, Kumi District
Hajji Umari Okodel, Chairman, LC V, Kumi District
Margret Ilaborat, Vice Chairperson, LC V, Kumi District
Rose Ochom, CAO, Kumi District
Johnson Opolot, Asst. CAO, Kumi District
Mackay Imongit, Chairman, Field Site Workin Group
Pascal Omoding, Asst. Agric. Officer, Kumi District
Farmers from the area

12 – 13.3 Dar es Salaam, Tanzania

Lennart Bondesson, Swedish Embassy
Kalevi Tikkanen, Sida Hq
Per Giertz, ORGUT (Contacted but not met)
Mr. James Yonazi – National Prog. Officer, Directorat of res. and dev.
G. Mitawa, Chief Crops Res. Officer, Member NCC
T. Kirway. Asst. Comm. (FSR) Agric, Chairman NCC
Henry Mahoo, SUA, Vice Chairman NCC
A.M.Mbwaga Agrcultural research institute, Ilonga
E. Hillary Mwita
Faustin P. Lekule
Mr. Alex Nalitolela, National Facilitator

12.3 Mlali Field Site, Tanzania

Anderson Chibendera, Village Chairman
Marcelina Nyangeni, Village Executive Secretary
Mr. Kangwa, Mini-project leader, Maize /Pigeon pea intercropping
Mr. Mzeru, Mini-project leader, FFS
N.G. Maiseli, Mini-project leader, Ox weeding
E.P. Mrosso, Mini-project leader, Neem extract for pest management
Vicent Akulumuka, Mini-project leader, On farm Seed Prod

13–17.3 Lusaka, Zambia

Watson Mwale, Dep. Director, Chairman NCC
Mick Mwala, Prof. Univ of Zambia, Vice Chairman NCC
John C. Musanya, National Facilitator, FARMESA
Roy Chiti, SCAFE, MAFF Hq
Jonas Ackerman, SCAFE, MAFF Hq (Contacted but not met)
Hans Hedlund, Advisor, Econ. Exp. in Outlying Areas (Contacted, not met)
Björn Mothander, Sida Hq
Istvan Vukovich, Consultant
Charles Mulenga, MoA Hq
Mukeybai Ndiyai, Chief Agr. Res. Off., Farming Syst. and Soc. Sc. Div.
Margareta Sundgren, Swedish Embassy
George K. Mburathi, FAO Res. Rep.

M. R. Mulele, PS, MAFF
Ola Möller, Sida Hq
Toon van Eijk, IFAD mission

14 – 15.3 Kabwe and Muswishi Field Site, Zambia

Penias Banda, Forest Officer, Kabwe District
Abiud Mwale, Agric. Officer, SCAFE, Central Province Office
Joseph Banda, DACO, Kabwe District
Burton Lupobe, Block Extension Officer
Moses Musyanyi, Camp Officer
Kelvin Mukando, Vet. Ass.
Berrington Muteto, Farmers Rep. NCC
George Kalimbwe, Project Leader, Communication Support
Moses Mwale, Project Leader, Green maize project
Edwin Sikazwe, Project Leader, Control of local Chicken Diseases
David Munbia, Market study
Bernard M. Chomba, PFO, Project Leader, Beekeeping
Peter S. Chishimba, Project Leader, Seed Multiplication
Elizabeth Mweetwa, PACO
Morrison C. Kunda, DACO
Mrs. Mpofu, Farmer and host for groundnut seed multiplication
Mr Mangwendo, Farmer and beekeeper
Women group members, Kanakashiwa, Green manure project
Mrs. Njobvu, Farmer and host for cowpea seed multiplication

17–21.3 Field visits Zimbabwe

Ngezi; Mamina Irrigation Scheme

S. Madyiwa, Agritex; NFT
M. Gova, Agritex; NFT
N. Sithole, Agritex, Project Leader, Marketing)
E. Mbanje, Agritex, Project Leader, Draft-farm eq.
R. Gumbo, Agritex, Project Leader, Biogas techn.
A. Manjengwa, Agritex, Project Leader, Postharvest-Solar drier
A. Mafudze, Irrigation Scheme i/c
A. Chitsiko, Agricultural Extension Officer
A. Kaingidze, Extension Officer, Ext.2 B
W. Motto, Block Officer, Block EFG
D. Chiwawa, Block Officer, Block C
V. Tavengwa, Farmer and NCC member
O. Bwiti, Ministry of Water (farmer)
Mr. Matake, Chairman, Irrigation Management Committee
J. Shava, Farmer and Member NCC

Mwanza village

Mr. Mwozi, Vice-Chairman, Dairy Group
Mr. Majoka, Agritex, Extension Officer

Chinhamora area

Enos Mombe, Chairman, Horticultural group

Elias Chidarikira, Secretary

Mrs. Mukweshi, Extension Officer, Agritex

A. Manjengwa, IAE, Post Harvest

Chindera village

Muketiwa Murwira, Director, Cooperative Society, Horticultural Crops

17 – 21.3 Harare, Country programme meetings, Zimbabwe

G. H. Sigobodhla, Chairman NCC

Johannes Makadho, Director, Agritex, Team leader, NF

Simon Madyiwa, Agritex, Irrigation Engineer, NFT

Marjorie Gova, Agritex, Agronomist, NFT

O. J. Zishiri, Agritex, Ag. Deputy Director of Agric.(Field)

T. Takavarasha, Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Agriculture

Mini-project leaders

Ephraim Mbanje, IAE, Animal Draft

Ali Manjengwa, IAE, Post Harvest

Farayi Zimudzi, Agritex: Fisheries Unit

Ackulina Jonga, Agritex: Training and Information: Gender

Nothando Sithole, Agritex: Monitoring and Eval. ; Marketing

R. Gumbo, IAE, Biogas

John Mupangwa, Agritex: Dairy

17–27.3.99 Other meetings in Zimbabwe

Victoria Sekitoleko, FAO Subregional Representative, FAO Subreg. Office

Jan Olsson, Swedish Embassy

Per Ulf Nilsson, Swedish Embassy

Graham Farmer, FAO Subregional Office

John Dixon, Project Coordinator, CU

P. Ananda, Method Specialist, CU

Maragaret Zunguze, Information/Documentation Specialist, CU

Åsa Torkelsson, APO, CU

Doyle Baker, AGSP, FAO Hq

Bengt Johansson, Dept. for Nat. Res and Env., Africa Desk, Sida Hq.

Ola Möller, Sida Hq

Wilfred Odogola, NARO, Uganda

James Matata, Chairman RCC

O.J. Zishiri, Member NCC, Zimbabwe

Timothy Kirway, Chairman NCC, Tanzania

Annex 4. Notes from the Country Visits

1. Kenya

1.1. Activities and outputs

1.1.1. Brief description

A National Coordinating Committee representing a range of stakeholders has been formed to guide and direct the country activities. The National Facilitator ensures that activities are implemented by the mini-project leaders. Two field sites have been established; one in Kakamega and the other in Mbeera. The team was only able to visit the Kakamega site.

Much of 1997, FARMESA's start up year, was consumed in establishing governance and operational structures and setting up field sites. In addition to this, three mini-projects were started: two concerned training and sensitization and one a manual on the "Farming Systems Approach". Many more mini-projects were started in 1998, FARMESA's first fully operational year. Of the fourteen mini-projects started: three supported the National Facilitators office; three supported Farmer Field Schools including an evaluation of this approach; two were on training; one was a desk study, four concerned technology testing; and one was on participatory monitoring and evaluation.

The budget for 1997 and 1998 was US\$ 158,370. This year the budget is US\$ 100,000 although the number of mini-projects has dropped to nine from fourteen. Four of these mini-projects were directed at supporting the operational structure of FARMESA in Kenya. Support was provided to the National Facilitators office, Farmer Field Schools and training and sensitization workshops for project partners. Only two mini-projects could be called research in their focus – participatory evaluation of varieties and soil fertility management. The other three projects were demonstrations or development efforts including one in micro-credit.

1.1.2. Relevance in relation to country policy goals

The team found a high degree of relevance in FARMESA's work with country policies. Relevance was evident from the common interest in poverty alleviation, small holder agriculture, and farmer participation in both research and extension held by the Ministry of Agriculture and the FAO.

1.1.3. Relevance in relation to project objectives

The team experienced some difficulty interpreting some of FARMESA's objectives in light of what they saw in the field and how the staff allocated mini-projects to objectives. We did, however, appreciate and support FARMESA's linking of mini-projects to project objectives. After considerable discussion we now understand that objective one focuses on the *development and testing of methods* to identify, prioritize, test, and adapt technologies appropriate to small holders. We appreciate that such developments will use technologies and thus opportunities for confusion exist. We understand objective two focuses on *gathering, documenting and disseminating* relevant experiences within the region. Here we assume that each country would make its own contribution to this 'regional' effort. We understand objective three focuses on *improving* in-service training and formal education in the country. And we understand objective four focuses on *enabling collaborating partners* use what has been learned by FARMESA. This also includes enabling national facilitation and field site operation to undertake activities related to the first objective. Training others who are non-collaborating partners is considered here but also contributes to objectives two and three.

The team however was less certain about the contribution of mini-projects to the first objective of developing and testing of methods. A number of these mini-projects appeared to us in the limited time we had to study them properly to be demonstration efforts without any methodological component at all. The exceptions were mini-projects that explore participatory evaluation techniques. The team would like to stress that many of these research projects would be more relevant if their methodological dimensions were strengthened.

1.1.4. Active participation of intended stakeholders

The team was shown an impressive level of researcher, extension and farmer participation during its single visit to the field site in Kakamega. Well organized farmer groups, perhaps dominated by women in their membership and management operating under an umbrella farmer organization, articulated their achievements in the last year. Most of the membership could be classed as smallholders as farm sizes ranged between 2–3 acres with their group leadership having up to 10 acres. While the team was impressed with the level of support for Farmer Field Schools within the Ministry hierarchy it was difficult to gauge levels of participation beyond those immediately involved in mini-projects who were very active. We noted with some regret that NGO's appear not to have participated in the work. The team was not able to explore this dimension as no interviews with NGO's were held.

1.1.5. Duplication with other activities in country

The team suspects that there is considerable duplication of activities in the country. On the one hand this represents success for the project in that others start to do the same things. A good example here is the Farmer Fields Schools and work in farmer groups which is becoming widespread in Kenya. The team did not have sufficient time to draw any firm conclusions here, but would like to make a number of observations. In the brief time available it appeared to us that both the SWCB and RELMA were engaged in similar activities.

1.1.6. Scientific and Technical Issues

The team regrets that it had insufficient time to explore a number of scientific and technical issues that emerged during its visit. We feel that these should receive attention later. The team found active field schools with regular attendance and practical experiences in how to apply fertilizer, inoculate animals, construct trash lines, etc, being offered. Some other 'indicators' of the farmer field school concept were less evident. The learning of ecological principles utilizing learning instruments, like the insect zoo, is an important 'indicators' of farmer field school functioning.

The team also found it difficult to determine exactly how field methods were being tested. It appeared to us that everyone was trying the same method without much comparison between them or much data gathering to assess the method. What data gathering we saw focussed on yield and other parameters associated with technology performance. Sometimes, as in the case of the credit scheme it was difficult to uncover the 'experimental' dimension. This is not to say that credit is not a good subject for research. Indeed, the team feels that credit is a necessary component of household food security and poverty alleviation strategies. Moreover, we heard how lack of credit was one of the reasons why technologies had not been adopted in the past. We felt that, while the mini-project on credit was going well, there were some conceptual weaknesses in knowing just what was being studied and what were the generalizable findings.

Our last observation on scientific issues concerns the 'systems' dimensions. FARMESA seeks to institutionalize a farming systems approach but we did not see much in the way of systems investigations.

1.2. Government support

The team heard that government support for FARMESA was extensive. Support ranges from minor items like office space and working support for National Facilitator to making available government staff to implement mini-projects so long as costs for travel and subsistence are covered by project.

1.3. Management

1.3.1. Diffusion beyond the NCC

The team examined the point of diffusion with only two groups – RELMA and MoA-Soil and Water Conservation Branch. While RELMA had collaborated with FARMESA the SWCB had not. In fact SWCB had never been asked to be a partner in field research or even approached to provide technical guidance on a proposal. They noted that consultation would ensure no technical mistakes were made by FARMESA. They argued that FARMESA needs to have input on soil and water conservation from the Ministry both to learn from other field experience and to spread more widely the experiences of FARMESA. It became evident that neither RELMA nor SWCB were aware of the possibility of writing a mini-proposal for FARMESA.

1.3.2. Roles and linkages of different participants

The team observed strong links between the national coordination committee, national facilitator and KARI. While FARMESA's entry point into the Ministry of Agriculture is through its Research-Extension Liaison Division this does provide a number of management hurdles. This Division does not have a bank account to channel funds. Moreover, the Division is small by usual standards and has insufficient command of resources and influence within the Ministry to effectively support FARMESA. The size of the Division also effects its ability to pass information on within the Ministry. At least that is how the SWCB accounted for their lack of information about FARMESA. FARMESA has a more impressive array of linkages with the institutions engaged in its mini-projects. This is partly due to FARMESA's farmer field schools building on the efforts of FAO's Special Program on Food Security. That building included using Villa Maria consultants who implemented the Farmer Field Schools under FAO's Food Security program. At the Kakamega field site District staff think of FARMESA as a continuation of FAO's Special Program. Good discussions were possible with RELMA but the team failed to meet anyone from the Swedish Embassy. The team however, suspects that few links exist between FARMESA and Swedish supported activities in Kenya.

1.3.3. In-country financial and management problems

The team notes with some concern the complex chains of command. First the Ministry of Agriculture Research-Extension liaison Division signs agreements with FAO but disbursements are made to KARI research station accounts. Second, mechanisms to follow up on the accounts and expenditures of the many mini-project holders especially where these are NGO's or Consulting companies appear inadequate to the task. Third, some projects operate on different disbursement arrangements. For example the Livestock Production Project (KEN 98-04) takes cash disbursements directly from the FAO country office.

The team heard from FAO that it can not adequately manage such projects from an accounting and auditing standpoint. These arrangements appear to be less well designed in terms of financial accountability than most Swedish bilateral programs. The team feels any further devolution of financial responsibility to the National Coordinating Committee or National Facilitator should be coupled with a check on accounting systems. Clearer accounting is important as some of FARMESA's financial constraints might be realized through block grants to National Coordinating Committee for its operations and that of the Field Site Working Groups. This might overcome problems associated with

project start ups and cropping seasons. It does not help if the funds arrive after the planting season has started. We agree that late arrival of funds reduces credibility of the National Coordinating Committee and National Facilitator. Other inefficiencies arise from the long procedures required for the development of Letter of Agreement. The team observed management challenges in the field site structure. Field sites of this nature require a more hands on management and communication style than can be given from a central location that is so far away from the local action.

1.4. Technical and operational backstopping

1.4.1. Support from CU

The team points out that the following discussion on support from CU rests on the comments of people in Kenya only. We did not have time to cross check information with the CU or with the written record. We make this point because we could gather no really clear appreciation of what the CU does from those we interviewed. The only exception to this was the training facilitated by the CU which was felt to be useful and relevant. Support to the functioning of the National Coordinating Committee was appreciated more by some than others as was the technical backstopping.

1.4.2. Support from FAO country office

The team observed that the FAO country office was putting considerable effort into facilitating the movement of funds. The Representative informed the team that following disbursements of so many Letters of Agreement is too much. FAO raised the question of why they must do so much financial management. For example: it was not clear why FAO has to decide on split disbursements once the Letter of Agreement has been signed. The FAO norm is for a National Facilitator to authorize second and third payments and not keep referring back to FAO. In the Representatives view the project has set up an overly cumbersome process even by FAO standards. Should the project continue in this mode then it will be difficult for FAO to service more than 20 or so mini-projects. The finance issues were his offices' staff time to follow up on reported expenditures with little ability to audit these. The FAO country office also supports FARMESA through its seat on the National Coordinating Committee.

1.4.3. Flow of Funds

The National Coordinating Committee and its National Facilitator complained about the slow arrival of funds. Delays of one to two months can have a significant effect on delivery of project outputs. Complicated procedures to get funds released and three time phased disbursements were cited as the main causes of delay. While the team heard accounts of funding delays all agreed that the current systems, flaws included, was better than using the national treasury system.

1.5. Impact and potential impact

1.5.1. Impact of FARMESA

The team appreciates that it is too early to examine impact from the point of progress towards the project objectives. We do, however, want to point out areas in which we think important achievements have been made. First among these is the impressive level of organization the team saw in the farmer field schools in Kakamega with chairpersons, secretaries and treasurers. These schools have gone so far as to set up an umbrella organization for themselves. The farmers now determine which topics will be covered in the field school. They are putting a demand draw on extension. It should, however, not be forgotten that FARMESA's field schools are building on the work of FAO's Special Program for Food Security which established the field schools.

1.5.2. Sustainability Potential

The team found a number of elements pointing towards sustainability of farmer field schools. Firstly the idea had survived the passage between two projects; starting in the FAO Special Program for Food Security and now being picked up by FARMESA. District officials were happy to report that this concept was further supported by FARMESA. We are mindful, also that farmer field schools themselves were built on existing local dynamics or groups.

Another element pointing towards sustainability were the National Coordinating Committee discussions on how information and communication functions could be devolved to agencies within the country.

1.6. Cost effectiveness

Cost effectiveness stemmed from the utilizing of current staff who give their time at no cost to FARMESA. We also noted that FARMESA is making use of research already done to develop technologies for on-farm testing. As noted earlier FARMESA also capitalized on past investments in farmer field schools. On the other hand the team was more concerned with allocations between national facilitation and field activities. In 1998 national costs represented some 10% of the mini-project budget total while in 1999 it rose to about 22%, and this excluding staff salaries. The team felt that for such a small office and small project twenty two percent is on the high side. We do appreciate however that heavy demands on the office in communications with FAO and travel to visit distant field sites using high FAO DSA rates inflate costs.

2. Uganda

2.1. Activities and outputs

2.1.1. Brief description

In their one and half years of operation Uganda has established a ten person National Coordinating Committee representing government and non-government, research and extension, and central and district interests. FAO is also represented on this committee. Gender perspectives are introduced in a balance of 7:3 men to women. A three person team, comprising the national facilitator operating from AEATRI and field site coordinators operating from Kumi and Mukono, facilitates FARMESA's activities. Field Site Working Groups established by FARMESA in Kumi and Mukono implement the projects' activities. Membership of Field Site Working Group includes farmer group leaders, district extension staff, researchers leading mini-projects and NGO representatives. The working group carries out its work using farmer groups. While FARMESA set up these groups most emerged from existing farmer groups. Twelve such groups have been formed in Mukono and eleven in Kumi.

Although much has been established to-date the project got off to a slow start with a few introductory activities in 1997 budgeted at US\$ 15,120. 1998 was the first full year of activity with nine mini-projects, resourced at a level of US\$126,210, started: two concerned national facilitation; one concerned documentation of methods and technologies; one concerned improvement of training; and five were research projects. The primary research objective was technology testing with the exception of the seed multiplication and gender adoption mini-projects which had methodological elements. 1999 saw the same pattern of mini-projects at a reduced budget of US\$ 94,000. Two build capability in the collaborating institutions to do this kind of work both at the NF and FSWG level. One looked at training and another at information dissemination. The remaining eight projects with the exception of farmer-managed seed multiplication methodology were adapting or demonstrating technology.

2.1.2. Relevance in relation to country policy goals

The team observed that FARMESA goals and objectives closely matched those of Government education, research and extension bodies at both national and district levels and also the Uganda National Farmers Association. The common goal for improved standards of living and poverty alleviation was also shared with the FAO country program. All recognized the low effectiveness of top-down research approaches and expected that closer direct interaction with farmers would bring greater relevance of research to farmers circumstances. FARMESA's objectives and approach were especially appreciated by NARO who now have a mandate to transfer technology and charge over the District Farm Institutes.

2.1.3. Relevance in relation to project objectives

Given the teams view that the objective to develop and utilize improved field methods should focus on methodology development rather than technology development greater clarity is needed in how mini-projects are to make their contributions. The team agrees that the utilization of farmer groups, field schools, primary schools, farmer-to-farmer learning through exchange visits and visits to research stations are all field methods to get technologies out to end users and as such require investigation. PRA's to inform joint planning and review workshops are also field methods relevant to diagnosis and priority setting. While we see much of the technology testing as less relevant this is partly a matter of presentation. Surely, there is a need to develop field methods around farmers self-sustained (or revolving) seed supplies, and surely these methods must cover a wide range of commodities including fish. What we fear is that important methodological contribution might be lost with the present emphasis on determination of technology performance.

The team has less reservation over the relevance of the project's efforts to gather, document and disseminate field experiences. Indeed, the production of reports, manual, leaflets, newsletter, cassettes and video for radio and TV coverage is highly commendable. Similarly, the team found the workshop on institutionalization of FSA in agricultural training institutions contributed to the in-service training objective while the workshops on PRA, sensitization, diagnosis and planning, project monitoring and evaluation, contributed to this objective as well as building capacity among collaborating institutions to apply farming systems approaches. The team thought that the efforts of the NCC and NF to link with other institutions in the country including other donor funded projects like DANIDA's Livestock Systems Research Project also contributed to building of capacity among collaborating institutions in the wider sense.

2.1.4. Effective participation of intended stakeholders

The team observed a culture of commitment to the concepts of farmer participation and among its stakeholders such that a lot has been achieved in a short time. For example in our meeting in Kumi with more than 100 stakeholders most appreciated FARMESA for the knowledge it brought over the inputs of planting material and tools.

2.1.5. Duplication with other activities in country

The team learnt that many other projects use participatory approaches aimed at alleviating poverty. Moreover, the team expects that a number NGO's, particularly church based organizations, do similar kinds of technology transfer work. Specifically, the team heard that the World Bank was promoting Farmer Field Schools in their soil fertility project.

2.1.6. Scientific and Technical Issues

The team found the range of participatory methods under test rather narrow and a little antiquated. PRA techniques for diagnosis and problem prioritizing have been supplemented with PLA tools for community visioning and stakeholder analysis. In a project dedicated to bringing farmers, extensionists and researchers closer together one would expect to see some of the tools associated with institutional

analysis and knowledge system appraisal. Much is happening in the way of social organization at the field site level yet there are no social scientists studying these phenomena.

The team appreciates that methods of farmer-to-farmer extension and farmer field schools are new areas of research for Uganda as NARO has been concentrating on technology development. With its new technology transfer mandate NARO is moving more vigorously into developing methods for technology transfer and dissemination. Indeed, the immediate adaptation of Farmer Field School with adjustments in initial training and start up processes indicates a strength in methodological investigation.

Lastly, the team noted the challenge of building a regional dimension to the project. At present the regional dimension is addressed through identifying countries that have proposals on the same or similar subjects. For example all countries are testing the Farmer Field School method of technology transfer. It is also addressed through using technologies developed in the other countries. Linking, sharing and looking for research synergies and efficiencies will continue to challenge FARMESA.

2.2. Government support

The team notes with some satisfaction the high level of government support enjoyed by FARMESA. FARMESA has been almost completely incorporated into government structures at national, district and local levels. Government staff give their time to the project, as it is often seen as part of their current duties.

2.3. Operational issues

2.3.1. Diffusion beyond the NCC

While the team appreciates that the project has become well known through its sensitization workshops and radio, TV and newsletter coverage those directly engaged are still few. That the project is only two years old partly explains this. The team appreciates the fact that it takes time for others to realize that they too can prepare mini-projects. Nevertheless we are concerned over the limitations to diffusion presented by the two field site operational structure.

2.3.2. Roles and linkages of different participants

We understand that the small size of the Swedish consulate limits its role and possibilities of interaction with FARMESA. On the other hand the team found good working relationships with FAO. The resident representative takes an active interest in FARMESA even though little technical assistance is provided by FAO. FAO, however, is learning from FARMESA in the areas of Farmer Field Schools. While the team was unable to follow up on linkages with NGO's we learned that linkages with UNFA, CARE and Heifer International exist.

2.3.3. In-country financial and management issues

The team detected a comparatively low level of financial and management problems in Uganda. While funding delays were experienced and split payments continue to present cash flow challenges much has improved. Improvement is largely due to the merging of all mini-projects into a single Letter of Agreement between FAO and NARO. This also provides a clearer accounting structure. Audits at NARO and FAO ensure high level of accountability. The team also supports the decision to manage the project through a team rather than a single facilitator. The placement of staff at the site greatly enhances decision making and delivery of project outputs.

2.4. Technical and operational backstopping

2.4.1. Support from CU

In addition to facilitating the flow of funds, the flow of information and development of mini-projects the team was told that the CU supports the production of project reports and other documents, and PRA training workshops. Indeed, many of these workshops are facilitated by the CU itself. In addition the CU identifies areas of expertise within the FAO that might be useful. This occurred in the areas of irrigation and animal draft power. Apart from improvements in the flow of information, apparently communication between Accra and Harare is unreliable, the team heard a number of other areas where support from the CU might be enhanced. The NCC would have liked to receive more support in learning about Farmer Field Schools.

2.4.2. Support from FAO country office

FAO's country office has worked hard with the National Facilitator to reduce workloads and streamline operational procedures. This has been affected largely by the merging of all mini-projects under one Letter of Agreement. The resident representative or his nominee attends the National Coordinating Committee meetings. While this allows FAO to keep abreast of FARMESA the country office lacks the technical expertise to provide much guidance to the committee.

2.4.3. Flow of Funds

The team learned that the flow of funds had been greatly facilitated by the single Letter of Agreement. This allows funds to flow to a single account held by NARO who then rapidly disburse funds to the various mini-project leaders. Nevertheless, funding delays do occur. These might be eased if flexibility across mini-projects was possible. The National Coordinating Committee has questioned the sense of holding 20% back for final payment. While we appreciate that some amount should be withheld to ensure final reports are presented in a timely manner 20% is excessive. This is especially true when funds must be advanced to complete the project. Moreover, few can see the sense of giving project implementers 20% of the funds after all costs have already been incurred.

2.5. Impact and potential impact

2.5.1. Impact of FARMESA

The team appreciates that after barely one and a half years in operation it is too early to assess impact, but the team did see some significant achievements. First among these is how well the project has been integrated into existing institutional structures. NARO would like to see FARMESA develop efficient cost effective methods of getting technology to farmers. There are also discussions at Makerere's Faculty of Agriculture and Forestry of incorporating the farming systems approach in their curricula. In its short time of operation FARMESA has already begun to benefit other projects. Danida's Livestock Systems Research Programme participated in FARMESA's PRA training. Lastly the team were impressed by the level of development of the farmer groups in terms of their organization and leadership.

2.5.2. Sustainability potential

A number elements of this program suggest to the team potential to sustain the project. The project operates entirely through existing institutional structures using staff who see Farmers activities as supporting their regular tasks. The leadership at national and district levels see FARMESA activities supporting their new policies and work challenges. Incorporation into the university curriculum would be an important step towards sustaining the projects work. At the field site level the project is building on existing local groups who are giving of their time and land.

2.6. Cost effectiveness

The team observed several areas in which project costs are shared thus enhancing cost effectiveness. Among these areas are using existing staff without extensive retraining to work on project at no cost. The project builds on past work utilizing technology already developed and building on existing farmer groups to create Field Site Working Groups.

Time was insufficient for the team to inquire fully into the wider application of project results. However, we were able to see that farmer groups and schools, and primary school as locus for groups are widely applicable. We heard of request from Zimbabwe, Malawi and Botswana to visit Uganda's field sites. We also heard that some themes like the Striga problems and mosaic tolerant cassava are common across a number of countries in the region.

3. Tanzania

3.1. Activities and outputs

3.1.1. Brief description

The country programme was launched early in 1997, with the appointment of the National Coordinating Committee. A National Facilitator was appointed in April 1997. The NCC met thereafter in May and agreed on the choice of two field sites. These were Isangati, in Insingati Division in Mbeya Region; a high potential area and Gairo/Mlali area lying between Kilosa District in Morogoro Region and Dodoma District in Kongwa Region. The NCC invited proposals from prospective investigators and received more than 60 such proposals. These were presented to the RCC for approval. The RCC rejected all the proposals as these had not been developed through a PRA exercise.

Following the guidance of RCC, a team consisting of representatives from Research, University, Extension, NGOs and farmers undertook a PRA in the Isangati area in April 1998. The Review team did not visit the field site but was given to understand that a number of technology adoption trials involving coffee; maize/beans/potato intercropping and livestock production have been initiated at the Field site.

At the Gairo/Mlali Field site a PRA to identify and prioritise constraints to crop and livestock production was conducted in July 1998 and the report of PRA exercise discussed by the NCC at their October 1998 meeting. The review mission visited the site and observed the approved mini-projects on technology testing with respect to the use of neem extract for the control of field and storage pests of maize; farm level production of improved maize seed; intercropping maize and pigeon pea and introduction of ox-weeder. The sixth mini-project involved the Farmers Field School for the design, implementation and adoption of technology. During the visit, the mission noted that the field site had been extensively attacked by army worm and it was apparent that no control measures had been recommended. The pest effect will confound the results of the Mini-projects at the field site.

Other activities included NCC members and NF participating in meetings and conferences and compilation of national experiences on participatory methods and technologies. A conference on rainwater harvesting for crops, livestock and domestic use was another activity.

A workshop was held at Isangati Field site to promote the exchange of experiences between farmers, policy makers and extension workers.

Other activities included holding a national workshop on the institutionalization of FSA, held in September 1998, invitation of applications from University students, both undergraduates and post-graduates for topping up grants.

In order to expose project teams to the latest participatory technology development tools, a training workshop on participatory dissemination, monitoring and evaluation was held in September 1998. As in the workshop on Institutionalization of FSA, CU provided resource persons.

3.1.2. Relevance in relation to country and regional needs

The project fits well with the country's current policy of promoting client-oriented, demand driven research which involved stakeholders in identifying problems, prioritizing the same and adopting technology. In TARP II, all research scientists are required to adopt the Farming Systems Approach in executing programmes. The former FSR teams/units that were a main feature of the NARS have been disbanded. However, the zonal level commodity scientists are expected to conduct PRAs to enable them develop their research agendas in collaboration with social scientists working in the respective zone. The scientists are expected to verify the technologies they develop through on-farm trials.

As regards to the regional needs, the fact that several similar activities are being undertaken in most of participating countries points to the similarity in problems of smallholder agriculture in the region, consequently there is a high probability that the countries will exchange promising improved technologies developed in the region.

3.1.3. Relevance in relation to project objectives

It is recognised that in many developing countries, the agricultural research system has generated a lot of improved production technologies which have not been adopted by the smallholder farming communities. What is required now is to develop new and improved field methods that will help the researchers, extension workers, farmers and policymakers to identify, prioritize and test these technologies so that they can be adopted by the farming communities. So far FARMESA in Tanzania is mainly dealing with technology testing and to a much lesser extent with the development of such new methods.

3.1.4. Effective participation of the intended stakeholders

At the time of the Review Mission, the NCC had not incorporated a farmer on to the committee. This has been so because the Field Site Working Group have only been constituted recently. It is expected that a representative will be identified soon. As regards to the FSWG, the mission was informed that the membership of these was predominantly (more than 50%) farmers and also the farmers provide the chairperson for the FSWG. It was noted that most of the project proposals came from the Research group in the Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperative and the Universities. The Agricultural Development Project, Isangati, sponsored by a Belgian NGO, COPIBO is executing the project proposals relating to Coffee Berry Disease and Coffee Leaf Rust Resistant varieties evaluation.

3.1.5. Scientific and technical issues

The fact that the initial 68 research proposals were developed by research scientists without the participation of the farmers would indicate that in the PRA exercise that followed, farmers were led to accept the directions developed by the scientists. The mission noted that the topics of the Farmers Field School were largely determined by the researcher principal investigator and farmers did not feel free to raise other topics for learning. Further evidence of researchers dominating the exercise was the non-availability of chart data etc. arising from the PRA exercises with the farmer groups.

There was a definite lack of understanding of the difference between a farmers training centre and the FFS. The principal Investigator admitted lack of knowledge of the running of the FFS. He had heard that some persons in Zanzibar had attended an FFS course but was not facilitated to have first knowledge of the methodology.

He initiated the FFS because the CU required all participating national programs to launch FFS. Even at the NCC FFS is a foreign concept not understood by any one on the committee. The CU should have ensured that national programs understood the FFS concept before demanding its implementation.

The mission noted that virtually all mini-projects were concerned with technology testing and with the exception of the FFS, there was no methodological testing. There was no research focussing on the whole farm level.

3.2. Government support

The Government has recognized the value of the Project through its actions which have involved releasing a senior research scientist to be appointed as the National Facilitator; has provided accommodation of the NFO in the Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperatives and has permitted its field extension and research personnel to work with the project.

3.3. Management

3.3.1. Diffusion beyond the NCC

The mission noted that there was little interaction with other agencies as the FSWG were busy getting their activities off the ground.

3.3.2. Roles and linkages of different participants

The NCC draws membership from the Universities, Departments of Research Development and Extension services, the Donor agency (Sida) FAO, NGO and the private sector.

Sida has other projects in Tanzania whose activities are related to the broad objective of the Project. It was interesting to note that NCC had no linkages with these projects and the explanation was that the SIDA representative on NCC had not attended a single meeting.

3.3.3. In-country financial or administration problems

The Mission learnt that the financial/administrative problems stem from the fact that all the funds for recipient organisations are channeled through the Department of Research Development where delays occur. The FAO official who spoke to the Review Mission suggested that in order to avoid disrupting services of the NFO all approved funds for the running of NFO should be held by the CU and released on request, rather than they be subject to the same procedures as the funds for mini-projects.

The NCC expressed concern with regard to FAO practice of releasing 80% of the approved funds, even for running of workshops, etc. Where are the organizers of such workshops expected to obtain the balance of the budgeted funds if the 20% will be disbursed long after the workshop is held?

3.3.4. In-country management problems

The mission was informed that the CU has a practice of interacting mainly with the NF and not sufficiently much with NCC giving the impression that the NF has two bosses; NCC and CU instead of the agreed principle that the NF is answerable to the NCC.

3.4. Technical and operational back stopping

3.4.1. Support from the CU

From time to time the CU is represented in meetings of the NCC, occasionally with up to three people at the same time. This is rather costly to the project.

3.4.2. Support from the FAO country office

The Review Mission was impressed with the cooperation that exists between NFO and the FAO country office.

3.4.3. Flow of funds

The current practice is that following the clearance of Letter of Agreement (LoA) by both Accra and Rome, the LoA is e-mailed to the FAO country office who may sign and pass on to the NF who will get in touch with the recipient organisation for the purpose of signing the document. After both signatures are appended to the document, the FAO Res. Rep. will fax the signature page to Accra. When this is done Accra will send an Allotment Advice (AA). The NF is informed of the receipt of the AA and the NF will request for the funds to be released to the recipient organisation (RO).

The LoA provides that the FAO Dar Es Salaam will release funds to the RO as soon as the Agreement is signed and the AA received. Contrary to this, funds are only released after the NF has been notified and has to request for the release of funds, a procedure that results in delays.

3.5. Impact

Tanzanian agricultural research services have for a long time encourages participatory approach, through FSR Units, to planning and implementation of field research activities. Indeed although the FSR units at research centres have been disbanded, there are still socio-economists/scientists at the zonal level. These are cooperating with the researchers in developing client-oriented demand-driven technologies. FARMESA mini-project outputs should feed into these and enhance the impact of participatory methods in developing improved technology for the smallholder farmers.

3.6. Cost effectiveness

The first mini-projects were funded in 1998. A total of 22 mini projects costing US\$ 192,475 were approved for implementation. Of these 3 related to the NFO, and cost US\$ 20,000 or 10 % of the budget. As has been indicated elsewhere in this report, the delay in approving the proposals and release of funds and the incidence of severe drought in parts of the country, the field activities were initiated late in 1998 and early 1999. Indeed when the Internal Program Review was carried out in Oct–Nov. 1998, it indicated that the only mini-projects that had been undertaken were PRA exercises at the two field sites.

In 1999, available records indicate that only seven mini-projects had been approved. The total cost of the seven projects is US\$ 89,532. The operations of the National Facilitators Office and other related activities have been allocated US\$ 39,200, which is 44 % of the budget. This is excessive. Perhaps provision has been made for vehicle maintenance and other running costs. The two field sites of Gairo/Mlali and Isangati are respectively 330 and 900 km from Dar es Salaam, distances that will have to contribute to high costs.

4. Zambia

4.1. Activities and outputs

4.1.1. Brief description

In Zambia the FARMESA programme was launched with the establishment of the National Co-ordinating Committee and the appointment of the National Facilitator in 1997. The office of the NF is located within the Soils and Crop Research Branch of the Department of Research and Specialist

Services; Ministry of Agriculture Food and Fisheries (MAFF). Two Field Sites have been identified; Muswishi Agricultural Camp in Chibombo District, Central Province as a high potential site, and Lusitu Agricultural Camp in Siavonga District, Southern Province as a site in a low potential area.

In 1988 Diagnostic surveys were carried out in the field sites and mini-projects were formulated to respond to the needs expressed by the farmers.

Field Site Working Groups (FSWG) have been formed at both sites. So far seven mini projects have been completed, including two that cover the running of the National Facilitation Office, the two diagnostic studies mentioned above and some studies and workshops. Nine mini projects are ongoing covering various topics related to farming and livestock production at the Field Sites, including a savings and credit scheme. Eight mini projects have been approved and are awaiting funding.

Out of the all in all 24 approved mini projects nine have been regarded as primarily targeting development of improved methods (Objective 1), ten target development of improved technologies (Objective 1), one targets documentation and dissemination of field experiences (Objective 2), two target training and education (Objective 3) and two (the NF offices) target institutional collaboration (Objective 4).

After lengthy discussions with both the Chairman and Vice Chairman of the NCC, it was agreed that there is not sufficient understanding in FARMESA on what FARMESA is supposed to do to meet the immediate objective 1. Currently a lot of technology testing is done, but strategies as to development of methods for technology transfer are not well developed.

4.1.2. Relevance in relation to country and regional needs

The choice of subject areas for the mini projects is relevant for the country needs since at least the Muswishi Field Site is representative for areas of Zambia where a fairly large rural population live. The Lusitu area is less representative, in particular from a socio-economic point of view, since it is a resettlement area where people who were evicted from the area of the Kariba Dam were resettled in the 1950s.

4.1.3. Relevance in relation to project objectives

All the mini projects, excluding the running of the NF Office are all related to the FARMESA specific objectives, with 19 out of 24 targeting objective 1. There is thus a clear bias towards method and in particular technology development. With the exception of the NF office, no mini-project specifically target institutional collaboration and networking (Objective 4).

4.1.4. Effective participation of intended stakeholders

There is representation of both men and women in the NCC as well as in the FSWGs. Farmers are represented the NCC, and the majority of members of the FSWGs are farmers. The impression during the field visit was that there was a certain imbalance at the field level, with a few farmer's spokesmen being very well informed whereas the majority appeared less informed. It should be noted, though, that the field activities have only been in operation for some months, and at a low level so far.

Generally it should be noted that few farmers are actively involved at this point in time. By the end of 1999 the National Facilitator's forecast is that 100 or so farmers in the country will be actively involved in any FARMESA activity.

4.1.5. Duplication with other activities in country

It is noted that there is a 'Rural Investment Fund' offering credit to farmers as well as other credit schemes, and that rural credit in Zambia generally is a very complex activity. Sida supports seed multiplication through PAM, Programme Against Malnutrition in the same area. The Sida supported SCAFE programme operates in the same District, but not in the same Camp.

ICRAF has conducted a considerable amount of research with Swedish support on improved fallows and green manuring, but located to other areas in the country. GTZ was earlier supporting various activities in the Lusitu area.

4.1.6 Technical and scientific issues

The report on Promising Methods in Smallholder Agriculture – Zambia, is available in a draft form. Contents include an overview of the methods used in Zambia for technology development/generation, dissemination and monitoring and evaluation. Being a presentation of used methods there is not much that can be regarded as innovative. The report on Promising Technologies for Smallholder Farmers–Zambia includes a presentation of the most important crops and the agronomic practices applied at the two field sites. It also summarises potential improved technologies available.

The reports from the diagnostic surveys at the field sites are also available in a draft form. The report from Lusitu is not very comprehensive.

There is need to gradually open up the project geographically. It will be hard to design more mini-projects in the two camps involved at the moment. The Provincial Agricultural Coordinator in Kabwe (PACO) also felt there is a need to expand, but preferably within the same Blocks and Districts as where the project currently operates. The PACO was of the opinion that there is need to limit participation of one farmer to e.g. maximum three mini projects.

4.2. Government support

GRZ was supposed to avail office space and support staff, and did indeed avail office space. Support staff has been availed on a part time basis, and not to the extent that the work of the National Facilitator has always been running smoothly. Availability of support staff became more limited than foreseen due to the general retrenchment of e.g. drivers in the GRZ system.

At the field level the GRZ makes a contribution to the implementation of the project by availing extension staff from the Ministry for execution of the mini projects. It should be noted that the general delay in project activities to a large extent has been due to the general restructuring of the Ministry. For some time the Government side was not able to act to get activities going.

4.3. Management

4.3.1. Diffusion beyond the NCC

It appears as if the FARMESA programme in Zambia is not particularly well known beyond the National Coordination Committee. The staff of the Sida-supported SCAFE programme are not familiar with what FARMESA is supporting, with the exception of their participation in a workshop on tilling practices in Harare. At the Province level in Kabwe, the SCAFE coordinator is not well informed although both SCAFE and FARMESA operates different agricultural camps in the same District. The National Facilitator attributes the limited awareness of FARMESA to the very localised approach working only in two camps, and two the recent start of the activities.

4.3.2. Roles and linkages of different participants

The linkages with the Farming Systems and Social Sciences Division, and with the local research stations have been hampered by the reduction of the staff in that Division and at the stations. There is now no involvement of scientists from the research station in Kabwe since the Adaptive Research Planning Team is no longer as strong as it used to be.

The role of the FSWG may require attention in the future to ensure that it retains a supportive and 'ownership' function at the local level with a good representation of the participating farmers.

The Swedish Embassy has not so far been invited to the NCC meetings, and has generally not been actively following the FARMESA activities. There has been very limited interaction with RELMA.

ZNFU, the farmers union has been invited but has not participated in the NCC meetings. There is a representative of the Zambia Association of Women in Science and Technology in the NCC, but so far no mini project that is implemented by an NGO. There is a certain fear that problems with accountability may arise with NGOs as implementors.

4.3.3. In-country financial or administrative issues

There are three different models for disbursement of funds:

- (i) Funds are disbursed to a 'FARMESA bank account' in either Kabwe, Chibombo or Siavonga for use for mini projects at the respective site. Project leaders are drawing imprests from these accounts through the Provincial or District Agricultural Coordinator. Receipts are submitted and the accounts forms part of the general accounting system and subjected to Government audit. Financial statements are submitted to the FAO office, and it is expected that by the completion of the project all receipts will be submitted to the FARMESA CU in Harare.
- (ii) For the National Facilitators Office expenses, for a project on mushroom cultivation and for other projects implemented by the University of Zambia: Imprests are drawn straight from the FAO offices, and receipts are submitted to that office.
- (iii) For a project on green manure: Funds are disbursed to Mt. Makulu Research Station in four installments. Copies of all receipts are kept at the NF office, and the CU/FAO will get copies of the accounts in due course. Accounts to be audited by the Govt. auditor.

All in all the above systems have been working well so far, although the FAO Res. Rep. notes that it generates a lot of work for his office.

4.3.4. In-country management

- (i) Planning is essential: Mini projects needs to be approved by RCC in June to become operational for the rainy season starting in November.
- (ii) The chain of command for the NF is a delicate issue. Immediate supervisor is the NCC, but since he is on the FAO payroll he also reports to the FAO Res. Rep. Further, often the NF is housed in an organisation from which he is granted unpaid leave. Therefore, there is another indirect boss in the host institution. With the project staff of the CU four more or less direct supervisors. The NF regards this as a problem.
- (iii) The PACO, Kabwe was of the opinion that a member of the FSWG should not also be a member of the NCC.

4.4. Technical and operational backstopping

4.4.1. Support from CU

The following types of support has been noted:

- (i) Publications
- (ii) Other information to the NF, e.g. on FARMASIA and copies of journal articles
- (iii) Visits for technical and administrative backstopping

- (iv) Support when funds are not forthcoming through the FAO system.
- (v) Support with other logistics, e.g. NF's permit to drive in the absence of a driver.
- (vi) Responses upon other requests from the NF.

It is recognised that the support from CU has sometimes been of critical importance for the operations.

4.4.2. Support from FAO country office

The following types of support has been noted:

- (i) Disbursement of funds
- (ii) The FAO Res Rep was instrumental for the survival of the project during the period of restructuring of the GRZ.
- (iii) Participation in NCC meetings.

4.4.3. Flow of Funds

Delays have occurred which are attributed to the system beyond the FAO national office, primarily to the FAO office in Accra. Such delays are especially detrimental for the Zambian and other operations in areas with unimodal rainfall.

4.5. Impact and potential impact

4.5.1. Impact of FARMESA

It is noted that there is no link in Zambia between FARMESA and the earlier programmes. In fact the FARMESA field sites were deliberately chosen in areas where the earlier programmes had not operated in order to enable FARMESA impact to be assessed without the influence of earlier programmes. The strong focus on field sites in FARMESA has generally limited the possibilities to build on the earlier programmes.

It is far too early to assess impact. The NF attributes various degrees of higher or lower expectations to the different mini-projects. Seed multiplication regarded as promising, whereas e.g. the project on control of diseases on poultry is regarded as fairly academic.

4.5.2. Sustainability

It is noted that the in-country operations are to a very significant degree depending on the NF on the FAO payroll. Without such arrangement, the ministry is unlikely to be able to run the activity effectively. The institutional arrangements are thus depending on donor support.

4.6. Cost effectiveness

For 1999 a total of US \$ 100,000 have been allocated to mini projects in Zambia. Out of this US \$ 25,000 is set aside for the NF office, US \$ 9,000 is set aside for printing the Agrisearch Quarterly Newsletter, and US \$ 7,000 is earmarked for sensitization seminars for policy makers. Thus, 41% of the available funds are utilized for projects that do not operate at field level and that do not directly involve farmers.

It is noted that ambitions in working on e.g. certain themes in a coherent way for the region is contradictory to the desire of relating the work at the field sites to the expressed needs of the farmers.

Generally, in FARMESA, it appears as if better scrutiny of budgets for mini projects is called for. Projects that seem to be fairly comparable requires sometimes only 25 % as much funds in Zambia as in e.g. Uganda.

5. Zimbabwe

5.1. Activities and outputs

5.1.1. Brief description

The FARMESA programme in Zimbabwe is hosted by the Ministry of Lands and Agriculture's Agri-tex. The programme started in 1997 when the NFT consisting of 3 members was constituted, the NCC was formed and field sites for activities selected.

During the first operational year a total of seven mini-projects were approved and implemented. Of these two related to Objective 1, three to objective 2 and one each to objective 3 and 4. A total sum of US\$ 54,800 was allocated for the implementation of these activities.

In the following year, 1998, ten mini-projects were approved. All except three addressed Objective 1 while two (NFO) addressed objective 4 and one, (compilation and assessment of new field methods and technologies) focused on Objective 2. In the current year, 8 mini-projects have been approved; funds released but actual field activities have yet to commence. Four of these activities address Objective 1, while Objectives 3 and 4 are represented by two activities each. In the latter Objective, all the activities are directed at the NFO.

Over the three years a total of 25 mini-projects have been approved. Of these 13 related to Objective 1, 4 to Objective 2, while 3 addressed Objective 3 and last objective was represented by 5 activities, all undertaken within the NFO.

From this account, it is evident that the national programme laid emphasis on testing technologies and improving the NFO. It is further noted that although the whole project team was advised to implement activities at two field sites, the Zimbabwe country programme was implemented at several sites. While one might question the logic of having only two field sites, once that was laid down as a project policy it is expected that participating country teams would abide by it, but this has not been the case.

5.1.2. Relevance in relation to country and regional needs

The Project fits well with the country's agricultural and development policies as enunciated in the Government's recent Policy papers, namely: Zimbabwe's Agricultural Policy Framework 1995 – 2000 and Zimprest – Zimbabwe Programme for Economic and Social Transformation, 1996 – 2000. It is, thus, government policy that agricultural research should be demand-driven and responsive to the needs of smallholder farmers, strive for improved co-ordination between public and private research institutions and other agricultural services. The policy further supports the enhanced role of women workers in extension services.

5.1.3. Relevance in relation to project objectives

FARMESA recognizes the fact that in developing countries there are many situations where technologies developed by the national agricultural research systems remain on shelves. Methods for identifying these unused technologies are required. PRA is one such a method of involving researchers, extension workers and farmers and policy makers in determining in a participatory manner constraints to increased agricultural production.

Using PRA, the programme identified problems associated with irrigation schemes, agricultural marketing, demand driven approaches to services; appraised farmer groups as a vehicle for agricultural development, adapted and disseminated biogas production technology and other issues being addressed include promoting use of agrochemicals in agricultural production, fodder and forage development and improving uptake of project innovations using communication strategies.

Gathering and documentation of field experiences and to disseminate them in the region is important. The programme had only four activities relating to information and documentation. In 1997–98, two such mini-projects were approved and implemented – the first one involved studying the potential for improving production technology for farm women in Zimbabwe. This study, although listed under Objective 2, belongs to Objective 1. The other one was “Compilation and Assessment of new field methods and technologies”, in the current year.

Only three activities targeting training were implemented. Training in gender awareness in agricultural extension was imparted to both male and female agricultural extensionists and farmer literature was produced.

Support to collaborating institutions in applying the methodologies and technologies developed under Objective 1 received little attention as all activities undertaken related to improving the NFT office.

5.1.4. Effective participation of the intended stakeholders

Farmers and other stakeholders, e. g. NGOs, are represented in the NCC and as the principle of only two field sites has not been followed in Zimbabwe, it was not evident whether FSWG has been constituted in all places where activities were being implemented. At Ngezi – Mamina irrigation scheme, the mission interacted with members of the FSWG who were initially the irrigation management committee. It was further noted that mini-projects were written and approved prior to the PRAs. This, in effect means that the farmers participation adds little to the design of the interventions.

5.1.5. Duplication with other activities in the country

Activities similar to the ones being implemented by the project are being undertaken by NGOs (e.g. ORAP in Zhombe and Ministry of Natural Resources, World Vision International and by FAO in the cotton production programme.

5.2. Government support

The Mission noted that the government had extended considerable support to the Project, as besides what other participating governments have provided to the FARMESA project, Zimbabwe also hosts the CU.

5.3. Management

5.3.1. Diffusion beyond the NCC

The NCC advertises for applications for grants for mini-projects. This has the effect of permitting a range of organisations to present their applications. The Project collaborates in an inter-institution Committee on Biogas development, works closely with the Horticultural Promotion Council and African Centre for Fertilizer Development, which in 1999 has one of its activities funded by the Project.

5.3.2. Roles and linkages of different participants

The NCC was initially composed of few members but has recently been expanded to include members from different organisations having interest in agriculture. At the field sites relating to irrigation schemes, irrigation committees have been transformed into FSWG and involve extension staff. In other activities like biogas, the Dairy Development Programme staff are involved, so are the Horticultural Promotion Council in solar drier demonstrations.

5.3.3. In-country financial or administrative issues

There is a general concern for delays in releasing funds to mini-project leaders. The present practice of allocation US\$ 100,000 per country without taking into account project needs has been questioned by the NCC and it is hoped that this subject will be receiving attention in future meetings of the RCC since it is RCC which has made this decision.

The NCC brought to the attention of the Mission that serious differences now exist between the CU and the NCC. The Mission has noted the seriousness of the matter and hoped that positive steps will be taken to restore fruitful relations in the interest of the project.

5.4. Technical and operational back stopping

5.4.1. Support from the CU

The NCC impressed upon the Mission that the CU had not been of any use to the national programme. The mission was told that all that the CU did was to attend NCC meetings. Of late, the NCC has decided to bar some of the CU staff from attending its meetings. The Mission noted that the NCC had not taken advantage of the Methods Specialist, resident in Harare, in training mini-project Leaders and others in new methodologies. This is not helpful to the project as these services are there to benefit the national programmes. The NCC has requested that the question of balance between technological investigations versus methodological approaches be discussed at the June RCC meeting.

5.4.2. Support from the sub-regional office of FAO

The NCC is satisfied with services provided to it by the Sub-Regional office of FAO.

5.4.3. Flow of funds

The NCC would prefer to see funds flowing in the system through the shortest route from donor to project implementation point. In the case of Zimbabwe, the funds should best be sent directly to the Ministry of Agriculture by the donor and thus avoiding the FAO bureaucracy.

5.5. Impact and sustainability potential

The country programme has utilized the mini-projects to implement some of the agricultural activities that were ongoing but were experiencing different operational problems. An example is the Mamina Irrigation Scheme, which was inaugurated in 1992. The project provided the opportunity to determine factors hindering the possibility of transforming authority and responsibility to farmers. The PRA exercise carried out for this scheme has provided opportunities to understanding developmental issues at other irrigation schemes earmarked to serve smallholder farmers.

As regards to improving animal drawn tillage implements, the light plough being tested provides opportunity for women farmers to be involved in tillage operations. This should be popular with women, who, while they are the operators on the smallholder farms, are not able to operate heavy ox-ploughs. Other technologies that have been tested include solar driers, biogas digesters and marketing strategies.

5.6. Cost effectiveness

It has been shown above that during the period under review a total of 25 mini-projects were approved. The total cost was US \$ 260,224. Of these, five activities at US\$ 52,623 or 20 % were related to the NFO and fifteen mini-projects address Objective 1 implemented in some of Agritex's on-going projects or by other agencies like Horticultural Promotion Council, Dairy Development Project and Department of Energy.

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