



# Evaluation of Niassa Food and Livelihood Security Programme in Mozambique

Executive Summary

Oxfam GB Programme Evaluation

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## **Executive summary**

Oxfam Great Britain (OGB) contracted two Consultants (one international and one Mozambican) to conduct an independent Final Evaluation of the Niassa Food and Livelihood Security Program (NFLSP). The evaluation took place from February 23<sup>rd</sup> through March 24<sup>th</sup>, 2007. Both consultants have long-term experience in Mozambique promoting smallholder business associations, association governance, rural extension and business services delivery, micro-credit, agro-livestock production, and marketing, and gender. The consultants followed the Terms of Reference as required by OGB. (See Annex 1).

The methodology the Consultants used to carry out the NFLSP Final Evaluation included: 1) site visits to 29 associations; 2) a survey questionnaire implemented with 28 associations in five districts in which the Project operates (Cuamba, Mecanhelas, Mandimba, Maúa, and Metarica); 3) accompanying statistical analysis of the survey data collected; 4) use of participatory action research in the association field visits; 5) visits to association members' fields and to seed multiplication sites; 6) structured and semi-structured interviews with key OGB personnel, UCASN leaders and operatives, and other key stakeholders / partners; and 7) a review of available Project and other related literature.

Despite shortcomings in project implementation, the stage is set for Southern Niassa smallholder associations to prosper as business entities. The Consultants foresee that the Southern Niassa smallholder association movement will improve sales and ensure long-term food security, assuming that professional business and marketing assistance is provided through support from other partners who are both knowledgeable and have a track record of successful implementation of transparent, business-based association management in Northern Mozambique.

The Consultants recommend that a Follow-On Phase be funded for the following reasons:

1. Southern Niassa lies within the Nacala Corridor, with excellent options for product transport via a revitalized, dependable railway system that is a linchpin for regional business expansion. Additionally, due to the relatively flat topography of Southern Niassa, road access for trucks is adequate enough to permit product transport to the multiple railway depots.
2. Southern Niassa has underutilized, fertile soils and abundant rainfall (annual precipitation ranges from 800mm to 1,400 mm). Rivers and streams can be utilized during dry periods to prolong the growing season.
3. There are ample opportunities for organized smallholder producers formed into serious, transparently-managed business associations to expand their sales volumes. However, intensified efforts in the Follow-On Phase will be required to build entrepreneurial, well-governed associations that are also positioned to distribute benefits and dividends equitably to their members.
4. Oxfam attempted to promote gender equity (both of its District Coordinators were female and they are both highly qualified and dedicated). These two women are the nucleus for Oxfam to implement a highly successful gender initiative in the future.

5. There are excellent opportunities to build synergies with competent partners who already operate in Southern Niassa, among them: IFAD, who manages the PAMA program, CLUSA, DDADR, Faculty of Agriculture - UCM. Other synergies for expansion into soybean production and marketing can be pursued with IITA
6. Continuing the Project would permit Oxfam to gain valuable institutional experience in procedures and “best practices” for transition from emergency activities to economic development activities.
7. There already exist excellent opportunities for smallholder associations to carry out regional exports (Malawi) and international exports (via the Port of Nacala).
8. Two private sector input suppliers are up and running and positioned to provide production inputs and technology. Access to inputs is facilitated by rail access to Nacala Port.
9. OGB supported initial efforts to provide micro-credit to the poor, and these experiences need to be consolidated and further built upon (GAPI, AMIREMO).
10. UCASN is a founding member of IKURU (a Producer-owned Trading Company). IKURU stands ready to offer opportunities for enhanced marketing (including Fair Trade premium prices paid and marketing finance).
11. Profitable, market-driven crops have been introduced (sesame, Nametil groundnuts, rice, soybeans, vegetables).
12. There is a need to continue with some food security interventions, focusing on:
  - Campaigns to introduce cassava varieties tolerant to mosaic streak virus
  - Control of the devastating *Striga* (witchweed) in maize fields
  - Campaigns to control rats
  - Possible introduction of grafted fruit trees (citrus, avocado, commercial mango varieties)
  - Crop rotation to control *Sclerotinia rolfsii* and other soil-borne diseases in leguminous crops
13. A new Mozambican law enormously facilitates legalization of smallholder associations at a fraction of the previous cost (200 Mts = 8 USD).

Notwithstanding, there are several caveats to achieving the aforementioned opportunities, and future Project interventions will require:

1. Harmonizing the presently frayed relationship between UCASN and Oxfam.
2. Formidable efforts to implement transparent management practices and good governance at the primary association level and within the unions.
3. Intensive work to strengthen business and marketing skills of the primary level associations and unions (something that did not occur during the present Project timeframe of 2004 - 2007).
4. Effective implementation of Project components in business association building, association governance, literacy, gender, and monitoring and evaluation (M&E).
5. Introduction and inculcation at all levels of the association movement critical business analysis skills and an assertive business mentality (presently most existing associative institutions and members are disappointingly accustomed to assistance in the form of donations).

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