

**Oxfam Management response to the review of *Policy influence in the Russian Federation: Evaluation of advocacy and campaigning on climate change (Effectiveness Review Series 2013/14)***

<b>Prepared by:</b>	<i>Dmitri Medlev</i>		
<b>Contributors:</b>	<i>Jonathan Puddifoot</i>		
<b>Signed off by:</b>	<i>Jonathan Puddifoot</i>		
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**1. The context and background of the review**

As per Oxfam Great Britain's (OGB) Global Performance Framework (GPF), samples of mature projects are being randomly selected each year and their effectiveness rigorously assessed. Project "Advocacy and campaigning on Climate Change in the Russian Federation" was selected in this way under the policy influence thematic area according OGB GPF standards.

The project began as a climate change campaign in the lead up to UNFCCC COP15 (United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change Conference of the Parties) in Copenhagen in 2009. Re-launched in June 2011, the project focused on raising awareness of Climate Change impacts on food production and expanding the space for civil society activism on these issues in Russia.

Three key project outcomes for the investigation were identified:

**Outcome 1:** Developed Internet community network in support of climate change and food security issues in Russia.

**Outcome 2:** Leading environmental, farming/agriculture organizations and activists in Russia are mobilized by Oxfam Campaign to promote climate change and food security issues among general public.

**Outcome 3:** Increased input from civic organizations and activists into developing governmental policies on climate change and food security issues through promotion of scientific reports, policy recommendations to the government, and participation of experts in the official meetings at national and international levels, specifically G20 and G8.

**For each outcome, the evaluation assessed the extent to which:** a) the outcomes have materialised; b) whether there is evidence that the project contributed to these outcomes; and c) the significance of the project's contribution in light of other contributing factors.

## 2. Summary main findings and recommendations

Summary of main findings:

Outcome	Rating	Short Commentary
<b>1. Developed Internet community network in support of climate change and food security via on-line events: discussions, competitions, and on-line campaigns.</b>	<b>5</b>	Outcome is fully achieved. It is enough evidence that intervention made a crucial contribution.
<b>2. Leading environmental, farming/agriculture organizations and activists in Russia are mobilized by Oxfam Campaign to promote climate change and food security issues among general public.</b>	<b>4</b>	Outcome is partially achieved. It is enough evidence that intervention made a crucial contribution.
<b>3. Increased input from civic organizations and activists into developing governmental policies on climate change and food security through lobbying scientific reports, policy recommendations and participation of experts into meetings at national and international levels, specifically G 20 and G 8 meetings.</b>	<b>4</b>	Outcome is partially achieved. It is enough evidence that intervention made a crucial contribution.

### Scoring key: Specific contribution of intervention

<b>5</b>	Outcome realised in full Evidence that intervention made a crucial contribution
<b>4</b>	Outcome realised in part & evidence that intervention made a crucial contribution Outcome realised in full & evidence that intervention made an important contribution
<b>3</b>	Outcome realised in part & evidence that intervention made an important contribution
<b>2</b>	Outcome realised in part & evidence that intervention made some contribution Outcome realised to a small degree & evidence that intervention made an important contribution
<b>1</b>	Outcome realised, to any degree, but no evidence that the intervention made any contribution

**Recommendations:**

**Theme focus of future work for Oxfam in Russia office:**

- Continue addressing Climate Change issues through promotion of social justice, fairness and equality, and eliminating poverty.
- Continue Climate Change awareness programme, targeting young audience and reinforcing Youth Climate Network.
- Promote analytical reports for the development of regional adaptation plans in agriculture and food security.

**Policy advocacy recommendations:**

- Continue participating in international summits like to G8, G20, and APEC.
- Continue dissemination of the best international and national experience.
- Deepen their work on elaborating detailed recommendations on food security and adaptation to climate change ready to be used by Russian government.
- Discuss and develop joint plans of activities between Oxfam and the Russian Grain Union on the development of recommendations for Russian food security policy.
- Build stronger connections with government bodies by itself. Oxfam should participate in the activities of Working Groups at the Russian Government on the developing policy documents on food security and climate change issues.
- Coordinate with regional authorities on regional low-carbon development plans involving different stakeholders.
- Consider the following ideas for grassroots projects:
  - Capacity building of Russian grass-root organisations on the issues of climate change, food security, and local green economy development.
  - Projects aimed on development of self-governance in the rural regions.
  - Projects aimed to restoration and development of farmer cooperatives – would have great importance for rural regions of Russia.
  - Grants to the grass-root projects on regional adaptation of agriculture to climate change, sustainable development of agriculture and food security.
  - Educational courses for rural women on computer and internet literacy, as well as development of farmer cooperatives.
  - Organise seminars similar to those conducted for NGOs under the Climate Change campaign, on the problems of food security under the GROW campaign in the Russian regions.

Consider the following ideas for research projects:

- Continue special research and evaluate the current situation of food security and climate change issues in Russia.
- Continue research on food prices in Russia via interviews.
- Evaluate consequences of climate change on agriculture and food security in Russia using different

Global Circulation Models and scenarios.

- Strengthen position of Oxfam in Russia and add credibility to Oxfam reputation among its target groups via more publicity and PR of the Oxfam.
- Publish more problematic materials on <http://clcr.ru> (stories of farmers, articles about consequences of climate change in Russia, necessary changes in the agricultural and food security policies, etc.) than official information from the Ministry of Agriculture and other governmental web-sites.
- Oxfam GB to hire a GROW campaign coordinator in Oxfam headquarters to facilitate implementations of GROW programs in the countries.
- Project Coordinator **should undertake training** (on-line or off-line) on Results-Based planning, monitoring, and evaluation if he/she has no professional certification or relevant education in the project management like Project Management Institute certification <http://www.pmi.org/Certification.aspx>. Then, the coordinator will to be able to write SMART project design, develop realistic Monitoring and Evaluation Plan, and use RBM terminology correctly (Impact, Goal, Outcomes, Outputs, Outcomes' Indicators, and others).
- For new projects and campaigns the coordinator should **implement a situational analysis**, including stakeholder analysis and baseline data collection on Outcomes Indicators for monitoring and evaluation purpose.
- For new Campaigns the coordinator should **make Monitoring, Evaluating and Learning Framework operational** (Draft 7.0, OI Community of Practice on MEL in Campaigns, 01 October 2012). It may be done through delegating time for designing annual Monitoring Plan, collecting monitoring data according to outcomes' performance indicators by the end of each year and preparation of annual monitoring reports.
- The project coordinator should prepare **annual informational and financial project report**, including analysis of the pathways between the project activities, outputs, and outcomes. In the end of the project the coordinator should prepare a Terminal Report for all period of a project which includes outputs and outcomes (intended and unintended) implemented and achieved during the project time-line.

**Recommendations to MECIS Regional office :**

- Improve project planning templates in OPAL.
- Improve project reporting documents, and feedback providing mechanism on them.
- Implement a capacity-building training program for Oxfam country directors and project/campaign coordinators on the Results-Based Management and Oxfam Monitoring and Evaluation Framework use (on-line or off-line).
- Develop a guidance to conduct strategic planning sessions for country offices in order to define the niche (need) for a project/campaign in the this country in the context of political, social, and ecological urgencies; undertake POWER analysis and develop strategy of the project/campaign, including Conceptual Model and Results Chains; and develop annual plans.
- Set up a communication system between MECIS M&E experts and Oxfam in Russia office.



**Recommendations to Oxfam GB Effectiveness & Evaluation office:**

- Conduct a training session for the evaluation consultants on the use the Process Tracing Tool going through each step with them. .
- Improve an evaluation report format by including into the template such important evaluation areas as follows: processes affecting attainment of project results, project preparation and readiness, implementation approach and management, project monitoring and evaluation, project reporting, and project finance (measure of effectiveness of the project in terms of input and outcomes).
- Organise a webinar presentation of the results of the evaluation for the Oxfam in Russia office, MECIS office and Oxfam national offices in MECIS region.
- Include in future TORs making a presentation by the evaluation consultants to those who may benefit from the results of the evaluation. It is recommended after each evaluation to organise a webinar to present evaluation findings.

**3. Overall do the findings of the review concur with you own expectations or assessment of the project's effectiveness?**

Yes, they do, and even go further indicating gaps such as need for building climate change awareness among general public as well as educational courses for rural women on computer and internet literacy, and coordination with regional authorities on regional low-carbon development.

**4. Did the review identify areas that were particularly strong in the project?**

Yes, it did especially the operation of the project's internet sites including the work with Youth Climate Network. Interaction with Russian experts and think tanks on food security and adaptation issues is also a strong area well identified. Oxfam in Russia participation in the civil mechanisms of G-20 and G-8 is another one area of the project success with tangible results.

**5. Did the review identify areas that were particularly weak in the project?**

Yes, it did in a convincing way. Primarily, they are project design and development as well as monitoring and evaluation.

**6. Summary of review quality assessment**

Quality of the review is strong enough.

## 7. Main Oxfam follow-up actions

An action plan has been agreed to directly address the recommendations and findings of the evaluation report, especially design and development of project activities, as well as monitoring and evaluation skills and capacities of the office. The action plan also fits the new Oxfam in Russia country strategy.

The MECIS regional centre will set up a stronger communication system on Monitoring & Evaluation between region and country office through the development of an OPAL personal assistant.

**Response to recommendations addressed to Oxfam central M&E team:** The TOR for this effectiveness review specified that a predefined qualitative research protocol, *Process Tracing*, would inform the evaluation design. The ability of evaluators and/ or evaluation teams to understand process tracing and effectively undertake an effectiveness review using this evaluation design is critical. In support of this, Oxfam GB have sought to identify evaluators with the appropriate skills and experience, have developed an interactive e-platform for evaluators working on such evaluation which includes detailed further guidance from Oxfam's experience to date and links to the growing body of literature, as well as providing accompaniment to evaluators evaluation teams. Oxfam will consider whether in some circumstances a training session may be another useful activity in support of this goal.

Engagement with project teams at the end of an evaluation should go beyond a presentation of results, and should rather be a space where project stakeholders can engage with the findings in a more participatory way, helping to flesh out the analysis and identify the learning considerations. Although Oxfam GB currently includes a debrief session for project stakeholders to discuss the evaluation findings and agree recommendations for all of its 'large n' effectiveness reviews, such sessions are included in a more ad hoc way in the effectiveness reviews of 'citizen voice' and 'policy influence' outcome areas, responding to the demands of individual project teams. We agree that they are an important learning space, and will work to reflect this more consistently in future TORs. Oxfam agrees that sharing learning between projects is critical, and recognise that presentations to wider stakeholders can be one way to encourage such cross-site learning.

## 8. Any conclusions/recommendations Oxfam does not agree with or will not act upon

Due to the specific situation in Russia especially under the current economic sanctions it doesn't seem appropriate to continue research on food prices. It is also inappropriate to engage in projects aimed on development of self-governance in the rural regions. Taking into account the Oxfam Country Strategy with main focus on Russia in the world. And because of limited human resources it also looks irrelevant to engage in Projects aimed to restoration and development of farmer cooperatives. Putting more problematic stories on the klikr website will need to be done with caution, given that new legislation on web content is increasingly restrictive.

The recommendation to develop guidance to carry out strategic planning sessions has been covered through the Oxfam Country Strategy process over the last 6 months.

Training will not be conducted with the Project Coordinator, since the person in question has left Oxfam.



**9. What learning from the review will you apply to relevant or new projects in the future? How can the regional centre/Oxford support these plans?**

In implementing the current advocacy-oriented food and climate justice action MEL and reporting will be paid extra attention to in order to keep track of the progress and allow for timely adjustments.

Also, based on the ongoing power analysis, general public along with other influencing targets will be informed and awareness raised about the existing linkages between adverse climate change impact and food security.

**10. Additional reflections**

Often changing priorities in Oxfam global campaigns (shift from climate change to food security (GROW), which happened in the course of this project implementation, as well as low UR funding available (focusing on climate change) versus the donor funded project which offered more money for another set of goals (climate adaptation research and creation of food security expert platform) adversely affected the positive project results attained by the time the shift happened. Specifically, the Youth Climate Network of NGOs, which was the backbone of the project from its start, ceased to exist without Oxfam's support, when Oxfam had to respond to GROW agenda and change course towards adaptation of agriculture to climate change.