



Gender Transformative and Responsible Agribusiness Investments in South East Asia (GRAISEA)

MID-TERM EVALUATION

MANAGEMENT RESPONSE AND PLAN OF ACTION

Overall

The mid-term evaluation has been comprehensively completed. It was well organised and well presented by the consultants. It shows they have understood the context, complexity, and ambitions of the programme. The findings, conclusions, recommendations are nuanced and constructive – if not a little too detailed for a mid-term review in places. Some more general conclusions and recommendations may have been more appropriate and supported a holistic management response more easily; and reduced the risk of fragmentation of conclusions based on outputs over ‘programmatic impact’.

There seems to be a strong emphasis on the performance of Oxfam and the Oxfam technical support – but less so on the performance of partners and their delivery. The programme’s assessment and tracking of risks and assumptions is not been given sufficient attention in the analysis either.

Gender approaches, impacts, capacity and support is referred to across the document in different ways. Conclusions for all results regarding gender technical support and approach shows excellent success at the ‘bottom of the pyramid’, but need to broadly strengthen the rest of the pyramid. i.e. how we enhance our work at the enterprise, larger agribusiness, and policy levels (influencing).

Considering the importance of the working groups to the coordination, knowledge management, strategising, and learning agenda of the programme, the strengths and weaknesses of the *methodology* of working groups is not probed in great detail.

Methodology for the evaluation:

The evaluation followed the terms of reference for the exercise well; assessing relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, and impact of the programme – wherever possible and appropriate. Evaluators used desk research with analysis of secondary information such as reports, meeting minutes, publications, and other relevant documents. Sufficient numbers of key informant interviews, focus group discussions and field visits were conducted across the region. Unfortunately, due to the limited budget and timeframe, as well as the broad scope of a regional programme and the stakeholders involved; there was limited time to conduct additional interviews with external parties to the programme e.g. SMEs that received impact assessment support.

Evaluation recommendation 1.

1. Overall design and implementation

- 1.1 Increase human resources capacity to manage and coordinate
- 1.2 Consider trialling technical coordination in Management Unit
- 1.3 Make effective use of Communications budget in time left
- 1.4 Develop a convening/partnering TOR for the programme
- 1.5 PSC should support PMU more proactively from now
- 1.6 WGs need to set joint deliverables to achieve Results
- 1.7 GOG requires stronger coordination to identify need

Management response:

Overall Agreed.

The conclusions here neither strongly commend nor criticise the programme structure and implementation modality so far. They do however recognise the complexity of the intervention, and the importance of the technical support services provided. The Oxfam management agrees with most recommendations; in some cases these are continuations of actions already initiated.

The management recognise the need for greater staffing within the Programme Management Unit (PMU), and a full time finance assistant has already been recruited. A Communications /knowledge management staff recruitment is underway. Though there is need for an additional coordinator role (perhaps a programme coordinator, rather than technical coordinator), there is a challenge with limited budget availability for such a position at present. With reference to 1.3, a consultancy to collect stories, photographs and videos for the programme outreach is underway already. Communications outputs do need to be stepped up for the remainder of the programme.

There is no reference to widening membership of the PSC in the recommendations, yet this is noted in the report. The PSC will consider the practicability of this. It will also assess the best mechanism by which it can have a more structured and ongoing engagement in the programme to support the PMU including in managing key risks.

For coordination and working group (WG) structures (1.4, 1.6), a number of actions on defining learning proprieties and joint activities have already been developed. With greater capacity, the PMU can work with leads to ensure these are built on and followed up. A partnering ToR may not be relevant as it is defined already in the working group ToR, and the remaining functions of convening lie within programme management structures. Never-the-less, there is room to track the effectiveness of this better, and to review the structure and specificity of the existing linking and learning structures in place.

For the Gender Overview Group (GOG) (1.7), there is already a clear and functioning structure in place; however, the GOG faces a limitation in the time available for its members to support varied demands from the many partners in the programme. Whilst we agree there is a need for proactive action and a

clear plan of engagement for the GOG, Oxfam is keen to identify alternative opportunities from within the region. This could be through independent technical support, partnership with organisations that can provide gender technical expertise, tools, analysis. Engagement with gender focal points is already provided in Indonesia, Vietnam and to some extent, Philippines. GOG support needs have already been clearly defined in some work plans for WGs, such as WG1.

Key action(s)	Time frame	Responsible unit(s)	Tracking	
			Comments	Status
a. Finalise recruitment of a communications and learning officer (internal/external communications and knowledge management facilitation)	February 2017	PMU		
b. Review communications strategy and outline dissemination strategies for key materials Finalise stories/videos and publicise	March/April 2017 March	PMU (following Communications officer recruitment)		
c. Continue engaging programme stakeholders in learning and programme development discussion (through WGs, phase two design)	January 2017 onwards	PMU		
d. Communicate to Country management and finance officers to review capacity development plans and recommendations and update PMU	January to 17th March 2017	PMU , Oxfam Country Management Teams (Vietnam, Cambodia, Indonesia, Philippines, Thailand)	Not in recommendations but a matter noted in the report for action	
e. PSC to review its ToR and membership (look at support and oversight functions)	March 2017	PSC		
f. Define gender support actions in updated workplan for partners	January 2017	GOG		
g. Communicate with country focal points and gender leads in country on opportunities for support and agree any specific action within implementation workplan	February 2017	PMU (+GOG), Oxfam country representatives		
h. Training on facilitation methods for group leaders and relevant others Ensure WG groups have a clear joint plan	April 2017	PMU		
i. Investigate options for alternative regional support services (SIDA gender support service, WROs/gender partners, consultancies) – additional	January to March 2017	PMU, GOG	Budget may be a limiting factor	

support modality in place				
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Evaluation recommendation 2.

2. Result 1 and working group 1

- 2.1 Advocacy needs to be designed, funded and conducted
- 2.2 Cambodia to monitor legal reform including gender issues
- 2.3 ISEA gender benchmarks advocacy to contribute to Result 1

Management response:

Partly Agree.

We agree with most conclusions and recommendations. The conclusions have highlighted areas for improvement but also commended influencing work already done in the programme. Some recommendations relate to actions that have already been taken by the programme.

The management agrees with the need for a more comprehensive strategy for ASEAN level work on agriculture (2.1). This would also need to take into account other complimentary programmes of work ongoing in ASEAN, and define a GRAISEA longer term scope of work on agribusiness investment. It is also worth recognising the budget and human resource allocation available toward supporting agriculture advocacy and BHR advocacy at the regional level. The engagement had been very limited by April 2015, and there was only a small budget allocated to this work. Within 1 year there has be significant progress, and we have leveraged more resources to build on this further.

These additional funds will also support strengthening focus of, and the cross-linkage between national and regional engagement, to operationalise the existing programme ASEAN advocacy strategy for business and human rights. We would argue the focus should cover all three pillars of the UNGPs framework¹. Work of agencies such as UNDP and IWRAW may already cover some analysis needs on business and human rights (BHR) and specifically on gender as relates to BHR; therefore GRAISEA requires close collaboration with others. There are plans within WG1 to expand strategic focus and capacity on gender of programme stakeholders in its workplan for the remainder of the programme.

Key action(s)	Time frame	Responsible unit(s)	Tracking	
			Comments	Status
a) Updated strategy for agriculture investments in ASEAN	March 2017	GROW		
b) Develop and share a way forward brief for adoption of the benchmarks in ASEAN/AMS policy	January 2017 (?)	ISEA (support from WG3, and WG1)		

¹ UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights (UNGPs) framework pillars: i)The state duty to protect human rights, ii)The corporate responsibility to respect human rights, iii) Access to remedy for victims of business-related abuses

c) Updated strategy for BHR in ASEAN region	February 2017	GROW, focus country teams		
d) Refine and propose method of engendering policy advocacy	March 2017	Oxfam Cambodia		
e) Complete gender tool compendium	Jan	GROW		
Hold a webinar training	Feb	PMU		

Evaluation recommendation 3.

3. Result 2 and working group 2

- 3.1 Monitor gender inclusion for learning value chain lessons
- 3.2 Learning from Vietnam/Indonesia agribusiness engagement
- 3.3 SPKS should set specific objectives/activities for RSPO
- 3.4 Target Change Fusion mentoring to support Result 2

Management response:

Overall Agree.

Overall the conclusions are positive for this result and we agree with most observations and recommendations. Again, some actions are already being taken, for example, there is already a learning paper on gender transformation in value chains (currently shrimp sector specific), with a second in the series due. This can be expanded on to draw out links and cross-learning across other countries where appropriate.

Key action(s)	Time frame	Responsible unit(s)	Tracking	
			Comments	Status
a) Discussion paper series on gender and responsible business	ongoing	Advisors, PMU Oxfam Thailand, Vietnam and Indonesia		
b) Review MEL plan of partners – (inc. ASC monitoring in reporting too)	February 2017	Oxfam Indonesia, WWF, KIARA, SPKS		
c) Oxfam conduct an effectiveness assessment with SPKS and support strategy review	March 2017	Palm Oil Advisor(s), SPKS, Oxfam Indonesia		
d) Continue discussion paper series on gender in agricultural value chains.	Thailand paper – by May 2017 Shrimp Vietnam/Indonesia paper II – by June 2017	Advisors, PMU Oxfam Thailand, Vietnam and Indonesia		
e) Revisit learning plan and joint activities	By March 2017	WG2 and PMU		

schedule for WG2 [improving synergies within the group and with other working groups]				
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Evaluation recommendation 4.

4. Result 3

- 4.1 Amend Result 3 Indicators/Targets to make them achievable
- 4.2 Cambodia to safeguard CSR Platform transition to companies
- 4.3 IDEALS needs to start contract re-negotiation process soon
- 4.4 Consider moving Philippines to Result 2 for linking/learning
- 4.5 GRAISEA and CSR Asia understand CSRA effectiveness better

Management response:

Party Agree.

Overall the findings and conclusions are positive and recognise the complexities of influencing agribusinesses changes in practices and the time, effort and resources it requires. There is useful learning in this result analysis for design of a second phase.

The report also identifies the ambition for influencing private sector actors exists, but the strategies need to be better defined and in some cases, relationships with target businesses, accelerated. The management agrees this is a need and the inter-linkages between regional and national partners work mapped.

In some cases relationships with target agribusinesses are being newly developed. As recommended, this should be translated into revised indicators that recognise the time investment to achieve changes (decrease in ambition). Internal capacity in the programme is not highlighted strongly, and is something that has also slowed some countries ability to proactively engage private sector in some cases.

CSR Asia’s contribution to the result could have been probed a little more considering their importance to the result impact. The analysis focuses more on services CSR Asia as an organisation provides and potential, rather than progress and achievements so far, and its regional scope of work against programme level outcomes.

Reference to GRAISEA and CSR Asia’s understanding effectiveness better, is appropriate, but the focus on CSRA’s MEL plan can be expanded to wider measurement of ‘private sector influencing’ in the programme. The management recognises that a range of approaches and tools can be applied depending on the type of engagement. It also notes the limitations of information access, measurements of some advocacy engagements, and public disclosure here too.

Key action(s)	Time frame	Responsible unit(s)	Tracking	
			Comments	Status
a) Review MEL framework against realistic deliverables with partners – including	March 31 st	PMU		

review of Result 3 achievement targets				
b) Refine methodology for engendering CSR policies	March 31 st	GOG, Cambodia, WG1		
c) CSR platform Steering Committee to facilitate dialogue and engagement on business case for BHR/CSR/gender	Up to January 2018	Oxfam Cambodia		
d) Provide technical advisory to IDEALS on CSR engagement including direct company linkage	March/April 2017	PS Advisory /CSRAsia		
e) Design a framework to better respond to and track private sector influencing (improve effectiveness measurements)	March 31 st	PMU, with support from Programme quality team, CSR Asia and private sector advisors		

Evaluation recommendation 5.

5. Result 4 and working group 3

- 5.1 Define a clear target audience and a focused target segment
- 5.2 Expand sources of financing and shift focus towards more country-level, long-term options
- 5.3 Focus on strengthening country-level GIN networks & leverage them to access capital.
- 5.4 Define a clear strategy and expectations for partners' collaboration.
- 5.5 Expand engagement to private sector stakeholders on Gender Benchmarks.
- 5.6 Invest more in knowledge creation.

Management response:

Overall Agree.

The analysis of this result and the working group 3 has been somewhat critical, but still recognises the relevance of the interventions, and the work of each partner. Oxfam agrees with the conclusions challenging it to focus on interventions that best leverage its value add. It also agrees with the need for a clearly framed influencing strategy for Result 4, with a stakeholder mapping, so that the ambitious goals can better achieve more focused implementation but bigger and measurable impact.

Overall we agree with the recommendations; however the expectation for all partners to hold gender expertise may be unrealistic; their ability to access to capacity building support, partners with gender expertise, and Oxfam or other tools and resources, may be more appropriate.

The recommendation to invest more in knowledge management is relevant for all aspects of the GRAISEA programme, where resources allow..

Key action(s)	Time frame	Responsible unit(s)	Tracking	
			Comments	Status
a) Draft and publish a white paper on GRAISEA interventions in R4 (why, what, who, when, impact)	February 28 th 2017	Advisor(s) – PMU support		
b) Accelerate engagement with country teams and with new and emerging partners such as AVPN	Ongoing	WG3		
c) Draft a R4 strategy – influencing investors to invest responsibly	February 28 th 2017	PMU, Advisors (support WG3 members)		
d) Review ISEA stakeholder mapping and complete a partnership scoping for gender benchmarks	March 2017	ISEA, Oxfam Advisors		
e) Review the Learning and KM approach through MEL framework and Strategic learning and Developmental Evaluation process. Incorporate into deliverables of advisory staff and the communications and learning officer	By March 2017 Ongoing	PMU		

Learning to be applied in the future from the evaluation:

As identified in the mid-term review report.