



Progress report (Oct – Dec 2010)

Reporting UN Organization	:	United Nations Development Programme
Country	:	Lebanon
Project No.	:	00073450
Project Title	:	<u>Monitoring & Evaluation Team for the LRF</u>
LRF Signature date	:	December 15, 2009
Project Start date	:	December 15, 2009
Project Timeframe	:	Three years until December 2012
Reporting Period	:	Q4:October – December 2010

I. PURPOSE

Project Summary:

The M&E unit was designed to enhance the LRF monitoring mechanism, currently being carried out by PAG representatives, by incorporating the aforementioned activities into a more coherent and efficient framework. This framework will consist of:

1. An increased frequency of field trips and monitoring meetings;
2. Closer and more technical follow ups on project implementation and financial activities;
3. A continuous evaluation and objective re-assessment of project achievements against pre-set targets;
4. A support system to meet timely completion with the objective of raising the effectiveness of projects and ensure cost-efficiency in their implementation, and
5. A support system to examine the final evaluation of the projects implemented under the LRF.

Project Objective:

The development goal of the M&E Team is to generate a framework whereby the operation and delivery of current and prospective projects approved under the LRF are able to improve efficiency, recognize and prevent unnecessary expenditures and project delays that may arise over the present time frame of each individual project.

The immediate objective of establishing an M&E Team is to strengthen the existing LRF monitoring mechanism by improving the timeliness, cost efficiency and reliability of the current LRF project activities.

Project Outputs:

Main outputs include:

- Support Project Managers in achieving their pre-set deadlines in a timely manner, thus working in favor of the beneficiaries of each project, and
- Revisions made in the outstanding projects - such as a no cost time extension, a budget re-evaluation or change in scope - will be effectively assessed and evaluated by the M&E team. This will improve all decision making outcomes and will ensure compliance with the above revisions.

Project Implementation Partners and roles:

- Ministry of Economy and Trade: member of the Steering Committee
- Prime Minister's Office: member of the Steering Committee
- UNRCO: member of the Steering Committee
- Ministry of Finance: member of the Steering Committee
- UN Agencies (UNIDO, UNDP, FAO, UNFPA, ILO, UNESCO): implement the funds

II. RESOURCES

Total budget approved : USD 200,000

Total disbursements as for : USD 33,763.05
31 December 2010

Available Balance : USD 166,236.95

CATEGORY	TOTAL BUDGET (USD)	TOTAL EXP (USD) as of Dec 2010
1. Personnel (Incl. staff and consultants)	145,101.00	26532.9
2. Contracts (Incl. companies, professional services)		3,198.8
3. Training		-
4. Transport	USD	58
5. Supplies and commodities	USD 5,010	882.77
6. Equipment	USD 9,515	2,966
7. Travel	-	-
8. Miscellaneous	USD 27,289	124.58
9. Agency Management Support	USD 13,085	-
TOTAL	USD 200,000	33,763.05

III. RESULTS

Progress in Project Implementation:

An M&E strategy was developed and had established internal reporting formats for routine field visits, regular follow up and project review meetings. The adopted formats aim to improve the communication system, increase monitoring efficiency and will allow for a closer follow up on the project's progress and impacts. These reporting formats include draft templates for the external evaluation and will be used as a standard format by all UN agencies supported by the LRF to ensure consistency in the evaluations of projects. As well and to highlight the LRF results, outcomes and impact the M&E unit developed a TOR for the production of a documentary aiming to promote LRF achievements.

The M&E unit also supported project managers in achieving their pre-set objectives, by identifying the project constraints and limitations and recommending complementary measures when possible to face certain challenges and obstacles.

Adopted Strategy:

The M&E unit focus was on the LRF implementation progress and challenges following a particular priority to monitor the LRF projects based on the following criteria:

- (1) High priority projects;
- (2) Closing dates;
- (3) Projects with multiple non cost extensions;
- (4) Slow disbursement or under spending;
- (5) Multi-phased and problematic projects.

The M&E unit is steered and managed by a technical steering committee represented by the MOF, MOET, the UNRC and M&E unit. The TSG meets every six weeks to provide strategic advice and technical support to the unit.

Project outputs	Outcomes	Indicators
<p>Output 1: Support Project Managers in achieving their pre-set deadlines in a timely manner, thus working in favor of the beneficiaries of each project.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reviewed all project documents and progress reports for the 18 on-going LRF projects. • Supported LRF projects in improving their reporting mechanism. • Progress achieved was monitored, beneficiary feedback was assessed, and project linkages promoted within and among LRF projects as and highlight overlap and duplication. • Project documents, progress reports and relevant documentation of the 25 projects were updated on the MDTF Gateway. • The M&E has completed the desk review (Project documents and Progress reports) to the 18 on-going projects 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Held periodical and informal meetings with program/project managers to follow up on project progress. The meetings focused on the efficiency in project implementation with particular attention to the timely implementation; resources and time available as well as proper coordination with line ministries and governmental agencies. • Monitoring Field Visit to the LRF-21 Project Recovery and Rehabilitation of Dairy Sector in Bekaa Valley and Hermel-Akkar Uplands undertaken with the participation of representatives from the Ministry of Economy and Trade, UNRCO and UNDP's Expert. • Organized 4 field visits to project sites (Akkar, South Lebanon, Bekaa and Beirut Southern Suburbs). During the visit the focus was progress achieved, assessing beneficiary feedback, promote project linkages within and among LRF projects as and highlight overlap and duplication.

<p>Output 2: Revisions made for the outstanding projects - such as no cost time extension, budget re-evaluation or change in scope - will be effectively assessed and evaluated by the M&E team. This will improve all decision making outcomes and will ensure compliance with the above revisions.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensured transparency and visibility of the LRF projects through: (1) support the upload of the LRF project reports on the MDTF web-site and (2) brief the Technical Steering Group (TSG) every six weeks to ensure the full coordination and coherence of the LRF efforts among the team. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2 meetings with the Technical Steering Committee to brief the PAG on the progress achieved • Held 10 meetings -to discuss the implementation progress, project challenges and constrains, changes in project, no cost extension rationale, project status, upcoming plans- with LRF project managers of the following projects: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ LFR 22- LSER Phase I and II ➤ LRF 20- LAISER Phase I and II ➤ LRF 22- LSER Phase I and II ➤ LRF 1, 10, 16- CEDRO I, II, III ➤ LRF 21- FAO dairy project ➤ LRF 19- Art Gold project ➤ LRF 14- FAO ➤ LRF 23- Hydro ➤ LRF 9, 17- Flood ➤ LRF 7- MOSA • Held 16 periodical and informal meetings with program/project managers to follow up on project progress. The meetings focused on the efficiency in project implementation with particular attention to the timely implementation; resources and time available as well as proper coordination with line ministries and governmental agencies.
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Implementation Constraints

- The set up of the M&E Team has been delayed due to the difficulty of recruiting a qualified Admin and Finance Clerk candidate for this vacancy is a part time position. The LRF M&E Admin and Finance Clerk post was re-advertised twice, unfortunately, each of the selected candidates rejected the job offers.
- Coordination and synergy between projects with common interest and targets and implemented within the same geographical area is weak.
- Complementarily with other recovery and reconstruction projects/programmes funded by government or other non-LRF donor and non-governmental resources is pronounced and requires a better coordination mechanism.
- Starting up the implementation of a project, setting up the office is requiring more time than expected (i.e. the process to recruit the assistant is requiring too much time, thus reducing the efficiency of the office)
 - o Reporting format and mechanism
- In most cases progress reports need to provide more details on the progress achieved along with indicators in addition to the challenges faced.
- Most projects are aware about the LRF reporting format but do not use it efficiently. In many cases, the reporting process is more descriptive and does not provide critical analysis of the progress in project implementation to achieve the desired results and impacts
 - o Implementing agency level
- Despite the multiple efforts of the project team, the LRF is still facing some difficulties in communicating/coordinating with the implementing agencies.
 - o Field level
- LRF visibility at the field level is lacking. Local community usually considers support provided by the LRF projects as a contribution from the implementing agencies.

Lessons learned

- Multiple phased projects will have higher impact and ensure a better sustainability. Phase II usually builds on the success and achievements of the 1st phase (established administrative, management structure and trust at the community level).
- Cooperation among LRF projects and with Governmental agencies in most projects is weak. Project managers shall be encouraged by LRF to involve the concerned ministries at the technical levels.
- Building a good relationship with project managers is highly essential to establish an appropriate M&E system and ensure a two way communication channel.
- Reports do not always reflect the real progress. Increasing the number of field visits by the M&E Team is important to have a clearer picture.
- The coordination efforts of the M&E unit shall not be limited to LRF project managers/coordinators. It is important to ensure that government representatives and agencies are aware of the progress and involved in decision making

- Creating an information sharing platform will strengthen the coordination mechanism among the UN agencies and create a link with the concerned line ministries. Such a platform could include LRF project studies and assessments (such as strategies, territorial diagnosis and institutional mapping, etc.)
- Increasing cooperation and interaction among LRF projects will reduce overlapping and increase experience sharing. Government interaction and involvement in project implementation is variable in different projects and needs to be strengthened. The participation of the ministries and government agencies in project implementation has shown to increase the government ownership (case of the Ministry of Agriculture) and has proven to ensure a better sustainability.

IV. FUTURE WORK PLAN

The future work plan of the M&E unit is expected to include the following activities:

- Establishment of a coordination mechanism with the implementing UN agencies on the progress made by each project on quarterly basis;
- Design of a reporting template reflecting impact made by the projects' activities and the linkage between activities, outputs and outcomes;
- Design and implementation of a coordination meeting on improving the M&E mechanisms and tools for the on-going LRF projects;
- Follow up on the progress achieved by each of the LRF projects through sites visits assessing obstacles and constraints and convenient solutions for better results;
- Review of quarterly, annual and completion reports pertaining to the LRF projects;
- Contributing to the TSG periodic meetings aiming at assessing the status of each of the LRF projects, reviewing and advising on the extension requests;
- Contributing to the PAG periodic meetings and providing substantive support to the preparation of the meetings in terms of preparing relevant updated data on the on-going LRF projects;
- Assisting the UNRCO in raising additional funds for the up-coming new phases of the LRF.