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**Mid-term Evaluation of Support to Integrated Rural Development in
the Most Vulnerable Districts of the Uva and Central Provinces of
Sri Lanka (DCI-ASIE/2015/037-654)**

Final Report

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Abbreviations

ACCEND	Assisting Communities in Creating Environmental and Nutritional Development
ACSE	Active Citizen's Social Enterprise
ACTED	Agir aujourd'hui I Investir pour demain
ADRA	Adventist Development and Relief Agency
AI	Artificial Insemination
BCC	Behaviour Change Communication
BOQ	Bill of Quantities
BSC	Business Service Centre
CARE	Cooperative for Assistance and Relief Everywhere
CBO	Community Based Organisations
CDC	Child Development Centres
CDF	Community Development Forum
CDO	Child Development Officer

CDP	Community Development Plan
CEHF	Children's Emergency Healthcare Fund
CfP	Call for Proposal
CHAST	Children's Hygiene and Sanitation Training
CRC	Community Resource Centre
DAC	Development Assistance Committee
DAPH	Dept. of Animal Production and Health
DHS	Demographic and Health Survey
DNCWS	Department of National Community Water Supply
DoA	Department of Agriculture
DRR	Disaster Risk Reduction
DS	Divisional Secretariat
EDP	Economic Development Plan
EPF	Employee Provident Fund
ETF	Employee Trust Fund
EUD	EU Delegation
EUR	Euro
FHB	Family Health Bureau
GA	Government Agent
GAP	Gender Action Plan
GAP	Good Agricultural Practice
GBV	Gender Based Violence
GFWS	Gravity-Fed Water System
GN	Grama Niladhari
H&N	Health and Nutrition
HNC	Health and Nutrition Committee
ICT	Information and Communications Technology
IEC	Information Education and Communication
IED	Integrated Economic Development
IEE	Initial Environmental Examination
IGFWS	Improved Gravity- Fed Water System
IIDT	International Institute of Development Training
INGO	International Non-Governmental Organisation
IR	Inception Report
ISD	Institute of Social Development
JSRR	Job Site Rest Rooms
LA	Local Authority
LKR	Sri Lankan Rupees
M&E	Monitoring & Evaluation
MCH	Mother and Child Health
MH	Menstrual Hygiene
MOH	Medical Officer of Health
MoH	Ministry of Health
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding

MSME	Micro-Small-and-Medium-Enterprise
MTE	Mid-Term Evaluation
NBRO	National Building Research Organization
NCD	Non Communicable Diseases
NEDA	National Enterprise Development Authority
NF	Nucleus Foundation
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
OPD	Out Patient Department
OXFAM	Oxford Committee for Famine Relief
PHAST	Participatory Hygiene and Sanitation Training
PHDT	Plantation Human Development Trust
PHM	Public Health Midwife
PM	Praja Mandala, a civil rights movement
PPP	Purchasing Power Parity
PRA	Participatory Rural Assessment
Pradasaba	A government entity
R&D	Research & Development
REDA	Regional Economic Development Agency
RTU	Reaching the Unreached
RUTF	Ready to Use Therapeutic Food
SBCC	Social and Behaviour Change Communication
SDS	School Development Society
SLMNA	Sri Lanka Medical Nutrition Association
SME	Small and Medium Enterprise
SNF	Solids Not Fat
SRH	Sexual and Reproductive Health
STC	Steering Committee
ToC	Theory of Change
ToR	Terms of Reference
TNA	Training needs assessment
VC	Value Chain
VDP	Village Development Plan
WASH	Water, Sanitation, Hygiene
WMC	Water Management Committee

Currency exchange (October 2020)¹

1 EUR	= 216.09 LKR
1,000 LKR	= 4.63 EUR
1 USD	= 184.66 LKR
1,000 LKR	= 5.42 USD

¹ EU Currency Converter; https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/how-eu-funding-works/information-contractors-and-beneficiaries/exchange-rate-infoeuro_en

Executive Summary

1. Description of the project

Background of the project

Sri Lanka is a multi-ethnic, multi-religious island country with 21 million people distributed over 65,610 km²; until today Sri Lanka is characterised by a very high percentage of rural population, 81% as of 2018². The GDP per capita is USD 4,102 (WB, 2018). The target areas Central and Uva Provinces are one of the poorest regions of Sri Lanka with an area of 14,180 km² and a population of 3,680,000. Compared to other countries in the region, extreme poverty remains low. However, Sri Lanka is characterised by significant inequalities across geographical areas, sectors and social groups.

The Gini index in Sri Lanka is currently around 50 and that is roughly the same like in India. 0 would mean that there is no inequality in the country and 100 that there is an extreme inequality. However, the index is increasing since 2016 so that the inequality is increasing.

The four selected districts are Monaragala and Badulla in Uva Province and Matale and Nuwara Eliya in the Central Province; these districts are among the most vulnerable in Sri Lanka and therefore EU-SIRD is focusing in these areas only.

Badulla, Matale and Nuwara Eliya districts consist of mainly tea plantations, estates and adjacent rural villages. The rural villages in all four districts rely predominantly on agriculture with some 70% of labour force engaged in agriculture or wage labourers due to the seasonal nature of agricultural activities; their income is irregular, as these areas do not offer alternative employment opportunities. For the families engaging in agricultural activities there are little or no alternative employment opportunities due to the poor infrastructure facilities and the absence of private sector investment.

Across these districts, rural communities including the elderly and people with disabilities face severe hardships due to lack of social security, equitable access to health, education and alternative employment opportunities.

On top of the missing on-farm and off-farm employment opportunities, the health / water / sanitation and nutrition status is poor too. Finally, the socio-economic services by local authorities, community organisations, and private institutions are limited in range and very modest.

Description of the project/programme and its objectives

The specific objective of EU-SIRD is to promote the integrated, sustainable, climate-resilient, inclusive socio-economic development for rural and estate communities. More concrete, there are three result areas which the EU-SIRD intends to a) improve livelihoods and increase household income levels; b) improve health and nutrition (in particular for women and children below the age of five); and c) strengthen socio-economic service delivery by Local Authorities (LAs), community organisations, and private institutions.

² <https://www.indexmundi.com/facts/sri-lanka/indicator/SP.RUR.TOTL.ZS>

In the beginning, five independent applicants have been selected as winners of the tendering process / call for proposals. As the EUD wanted a more coherent intervention, efforts have been undertaken from all involved parties to capture the coherence of the interventions by developing a programme integration map and a programme theory of change. However, the EUD was not trying to transform the five projects into a single programme, which would not have been having five projects with different approaches and very individual by nature. When the project would have been set up as a programme from the beginning, better results could have been achieved, mainly by closer cooperation between the NGOs.

2. Evaluation Methodology

Purpose and scope of the evaluation

The EU-SIRD programme needed a Mid-Term Evaluation (MTE) and the MTE Team had the purpose to do a systematic and timely evaluation of the EU-SIRD programme including all five projects. As project evaluations should serve accountability, decision-making, learning and management purposes, the MTE Team put a special focus on coming up with a set of recommendations, based on findings that will allow EU-SIRD to bring the programme better on track again and to do some forward thinking on upcoming projects as well.

The main users of this evaluation will be the EU Delegation Colombo, the implementing partners (ACTED, CARE, OXFAM, ADRA, Stitching Solidaridad), the government beneficiaries, especially the focal Ministries of the five projects, and other interested development partners. The MTE Team hopes that the findings can inform a broader audience about the activities of the EU, especially related to “improved livelihoods and increased household income levels” as well as to “improved health and nutrition (in particular for women and children below the age of five)”.

Evaluation Questions

The Evaluation Questions are defined by the OECD-DAC and cover the ten main topics such as relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact, sustainability, ownership, coordination and monitoring, cross-cutting issues, EU added value and coherence of the actions. As these questions are too general, the MTE Team developed during the Inception Phase a set of around 55 Evaluation Questions, again grouped around the ten standard questions. This report brings the detailed answers for each of the five NGOs as well as a kind of summary related to the two lots.

Methodology

The MTE was planned to start with a desk phase to review project documents and do first interviews; afterwards the field phase should have continued with two missions in total; one mission to gather data from project sites and conduct more interviews with key stakeholders and a second mission later on, to run the feedback session. Report writing would have been the last part of the original set-up. However, the original set-up of this MTE was affected by COVID-19, as the two international consultants could not travel to Sri Lanka. Therefore, two additional local consultants were engaged, mainly to take over the field visits for the two international experts. Eventually, the evaluation team included three key experts and two local experts, whereas one key expert was fortunately from Sri Lanka.

The applied methodology was a combination of literature review (especially NGOs' reports), some desk research, interviews with NGOs' headquarters and field offices, field visits and a lot of meetings and interviews with all stakeholders. Having studied a great part of the reports and after several video conferences with the project implementing NGOs and frequent exchanges of emails, the MTE Team prepared two lists of questions to be answered during the field phase. The first list was based on the EQs according to the Development Assistance Committee (DAC) criteria and the other list can be considered as guiding questions for informal interviews and FG discussions, covering especially the Result Area 2. At that time an intensive analysis of the Theory of Change was also done, not only to understand the logic behind the programme but also to be in the position to provide sound recommendations for further projects.

During the field phase, the evaluation always kept the three result areas in mind and looked for cues as how each project/task/activity has contributed to achieving those key results areas. The achievement of the result areas are impact oriented which means long-term. However, the MTE Team was searching for indications and where it did not see such, the MTE Team raised questions to understand how each of these activities would help achieve the intended impact of the project.

The field phase took place between 23rd November and 11th December 2020, following the travel plans as agreed with the stakeholders and the EUD. The team moved from Matale via Nuwara Eliya and Badulla to Monaragala, partially using two and three cars. A lot of interviews with project staff, local authorities, partners, beneficiaries and others were arranged and site visits undertaken.

The two home-based international experts wrote different chapters and notes and were in a permanent contact with the team in the field. Due to ongoing communication including photo documentation, the teams in the field and at home offices worked on reports in parallel. After the field phase, a triangulation of results took place and the final report was drafted. At that time, there was a permanent exchange of information within the team and additionally individual video conferences were organised with all the involved NGOs, but also with the Technical Assistance Team.³ The video conferences allowed the NGOs to comment on the findings and facilitated an exchange of opinions and facts.

The communication with the EUD was of great importance in order to focus on the requested deliverables. The MTE Team also approached Mr. Somathilake H.P. from the National Planning Department to comment on the cooperation with the NGOs. Overall, four reports have been submitted.

Limitations

Travel restrictions did not allow the international experts to go to Sri Lanka. Therefore, meetings with key stakeholders and the implementing NGOs took place via video conferences. In order to facilitate the field mission and visits to project sites, two local experts were hired in addition.

It has to be stated that the scope of the evaluation was huge. Each of these five projects is so big that it warrants a separate evaluation. Understanding each project and looking at how these five projects as a consortium contribute to the overall programme is challenging and in a way limited by the number of expert-days earmarked to facilitate this work. In addition, each project had its own reporting system frequently changing log frames and adaptations concerning activities and indicators. As not being able to go to Sri Lanka, the international experts could not also participate in the field mission and inspect the project sites within Sri Lanka. This problem was largely solved by hiring two local experts especially

³ The review of the work of the Technical Assistance Team was not part of the ToR of the MTE Team.

for the field mission. To compensate for these missing personal contacts, a round of meeting with each NGO took place and – despite being important – that turned out to be very time consuming.

3. Key findings

Answers to the evaluation questions and findings

The economic situation in the targeted four districts in Uva and Central Province is underperforming, and vulnerable people, especially the ones living in the tea growing areas, are looking for on- and off-farm income generating activities. This is especially valid for women and youth, who face more difficulties than men do. To overcome these problems, the EU-SIRD programme focuses (under Result Area 1 / Lot 1) on improved livelihoods and increased household income levels.

Therefore, it is very relevant to improve the livelihoods of rural poor and the best way to do so is by increasing household income levels. This should be achieved by training and coaching, improving rural infrastructure and by generally setting up a more suitable business environment. Gender should not only be a cross-cutting issue but also a major one as the defined target group are poor women and youth, often living in tea estates.

Apart from these difficulties, women and children below the age of five have an urgent need for improved health and nutrition. To improve the current situation, the EU-SIRD programme supports (under Result Area 2) activities aiming at setting up sustainable water management systems, promoting the three components of Water Sanitation and Hygiene (i.e. access to safe water, access to sanitation, and hygiene promotion) and nutrition specific activities.

The relevance of Lot 2 projects could have been better. Though the target group is highly appreciating the improvements in infrastructure, the objective to reduce diarrhoea rates for the beneficiaries is unlikely as the current rates have already been low. In terms of the nutritional situation in Sri Lanka, the main problem is acute malnutrition (weight / height), but the projects aim at either reducing underweight (weight/age) or undernourishment (access to kcal). On the other hand, the only activity promoting the production of food are the home or nutrition gardens. This activity is usually geared towards improvement in micronutrient deficiencies, which have not been mentioned in the log frames of the Lot 2 projects.

The implementation of WASH infrastructure is lagging behind in Solidaridad's operations, partly due to the community-based approach, which took much more time than expected, in ADRA's operations, especially the drilling of boreholes is far behind schedule. Whether all boreholes can be implemented up to the end of the project depends on the ability to hire companies with drilling equipment as the project has only one machine.

Training activities have been almost completed in the Solidaridad project, but are far behind in the ADRA project. Both projects have in common that they are teaching WASH and nutrition topics in silos and not in an integrated manner. Though there is a good level of synergy (as Solidaridad is sharing all developed training material on a platform accessible to all partners in Sri Lanka), there is a need to develop a comprehensive training strategy showing how WASH, gender and nutrition topics together will achieve food and nutrition security. The strategy should as well be specific on target groups (not only women), venues (not only hospitals but communities) and partners (structures which will continue the implementation if projects are phasing out).

Finally, rural people in these districts face poor socio-economic service delivery by local authorities, community organisations, and private institutions. EU-SIRD is supporting in this field by assisting in improving the capacity and efficiency of local institutions (under the cross-cutting Result Are 3).

Taking into consideration that they have an overall budget of Euro 30 million over a project duration from mid-2017 towards roughly end-2021, achievements so far are modest. Additionally, some achievements (current values) - such as ACTED's specific objectives, OXFAM's percentage increase in number of local enterprises in target area, number of organisations supported by REDA and the demonstrated improvements of the Dept. of Rural Development and Construction in their capacity to build and maintain quality relationships with private sector - are not measured (yet) so that it is partially unknown what the current status is and what the results will be.

The deficits in project management are obvious and include:

- Poor project design without clear milestones (as interim results of Y2, Y3 and Y4) and time-tables
- Poor M&E of the in-house monitoring units of the NGOs due to limited data collection and therefore incomplete reporting to the EUD (so that it comes at least at the EU side to a limited understanding and an information deficit)
- Missing (in-house) expertise within the NGOs, mainly in technical (agriculture, hygiene, nutrition, construction), economic, socio-economic and financial areas; difficulties to recruit long-term experts if duty station is in Uva or Central Province

4. Conclusions

Conclusions

C1	All 5 projects show too complex interventions, too ambitious targets, and too heavy budgets of Euro 6 million in average.
C2	The 5 projects have been working in principle on two different topics but all in the same region. Synergies have not been fully utilised.
C3	The submitted project proposals are not well reflected in the accompanying logical frameworks and eventually log frames are not deeply discussed between the applicants and the EUD before approval.
C4	Within the NGOs, poor data availability and poor M&E system are in place; self-reported data and statements can be misleading; furthermore, imprecise terminology reduces the readability of the log frames and reports.
C5	All the projects are targeting substantial construction work that is often not convincing (except for water projects within WASH). The water quality improvements (ADRA) are significant.
C6	Research work is difficult, especially if done alone.
C7	Dealing with 4 VCs at the same time (OXFAM) in one project is too demanding.
C8	Training is successful, if trainees' way of thinking is changing. Despite having 5 projects, the trainings could have been more coordinated, e.g., using synergies between nutrition and small scale farming activities.
C9	The private sector was less involved in this programme than it would have been feasible. The main involvement of the private sector was in doing construction work and supplying equipment; not too much involvement of the private sector was observed when it came to supporting BDS providers, veterinary and extension services, milk storage, etc.

Lessons to be learned

L1	Too large and complex projects are pushing the management capacities of the NGOs (despite support from international HQs) and the EUD to their limits.
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L2	A Call for Proposals needs to be prepared in a way, that all applicants understand how activities will contribute to the overall programme - being in line with the Theory of Change.
L3	Log frames partially do not reflect the main intervention areas and cause complicated and not-satisfying M&E activities.
L4	Baseline studies should lead to the adaptation of the project design if needed. E.g., after baseline studies have shown the low prevalence rates for diarrhoeal disease, it became obvious that the projects could have changed their focus. - Projects with a nutrition focus need a baseline survey, which collects anthropometric data and potential determining factors.
L5	Construction work is definitely not the core competence of NGOs and it is expensive too. Consequently, construction often results in management and budgetary issues.
L6	Research projects should be planned in collaboration with local research institutes and should address the most pressing problems.
L7	Economic activities like strengthening value chains need in-depth know-how and experts in the field. - Make use of synergies by closer cooperation also with other NGOs. E.g., one project could focus on one or two VCs only, instead on several. If this VC is e.g., mushrooms, the one project could deal with seed production, the other one with input supply and the third one with access to markets.
L8	TNAs have been done and the needs of the trainees have been reflected as well as requirements by the authorities; authorities sometimes even provided trainers and then the NGO had just to facilitate the premises and organise the trainees. Practical training seems to be highly appreciated and if potential beneficiaries see that their needs are well reflected, the ownership towards the project and the linked trainings increase.
L9	More involvement of the private sector would provide business opportunities and reduce the dependency of the governmental actors. In addition, a more proactive involvement of the EUD would strengthen the position of the NGOs towards the authorities.

5.

No.	Recommendation	To be implemented by whom?	Priority	Importance
R1	To reduce the complexity of projects and the workload of the involved stakeholders, it is recommended to make a) smaller projects and b) to enlarge the budget for HR in the EUD; invested funds will pay off immediately by projects that are more efficient.	EU and NGOs	MT	High
R2	As a CfP is not a service tender, it requires some creative thinking in project development. However, in the future, it might need more guidance or given target indicators that have to be fulfilled. E.g., support a VC that will increase the income of beneficiaries by 10% in 4 years. Furthermore, the application might already include a short ToC.	EU and NGOs	MT	High
R3	Improve work of M&E units and request better log frames in the future to have permanently updated data available for better project steering and (internal and external) reporting.	NGOs	ST	Medium

R4	Better baseline studies will emerge if done in the first 3 months by the NGOs themselves (not being outsourced). That increases the understanding of the basis and leads to better and more realistic data collection. Better data allow better project management and reporting.	NGOs	ST	Medium
R5	Reduce involvement in construction activities.	NGOs	ST	Medium
R6	Stop all research activities (ADRA) as they cannot be completed in a sensible way during the project life span and the added value for the project is unclear.	NGOs	ST	High
R7	Reduce the number of VCs in upcoming projects. For the ongoing projects, hire local in-depth experts to work in the field and in close cooperation with the beneficiaries.	NGOs	LT	Medium
R8	Develop a comprehensive e.g., nutrition training strategy, including the following aspects: a) What are the main determinants of the nutrition problems in the area? B) Are these issues addressed in the present training materials?; c) Integrate WASH messages as an integral part.	NGOs	ST	High
R9	Incorporate the private sector better, without excluding the local authorities; especially in participating in joint trainings and in monitoring local authorities should play a bigger role. - Linked to that the EUD might need a more proactive involvement towards the authorities, especially when GoSL is not supporting the NGOs adequately.	NGOs	LT	Medium

1. Introduction

The European Union (EU) is supporting the Integrated Rural Development in the Most Vulnerable Districts of the Central and Uva Provinces of Sri Lanka, viz. in four selected districts. The goals of this EU support are to:

- 1) Sustainably improve the living conditions and health
- 2) Reduce poverty of vulnerable rural communities and
- 3) Enhance the food and nutrition security of communities, and here mainly the one of vulnerable women, youth and children.

The project “Support to Integrated Rural Development” (“EU-SIRD”) was launched in 2016 through a Call for Applicants (deadline was at 30/09/2016). 16 NGOs applied for this call and there was a sound competition. Five international NGOs have been selected and they had to inject a 10% contribution that is included in the total amount of each project. Furthermore, they had to follow the request from the EUD that the projects take place in Uva and Central Province, have a minimum (!) budget of Euro 4.5 million and focus on one of the two result areas, integrating the third one as a cross-cutting element.

Result Area 1: Improved livelihoods and increased household income levels. This will be achieved with activities aiming at promoting local business development, job creation and diversification, at improving rural infrastructure and at setting up an enabling business environment with due attention paid to environmental sustainability and climate resilience as well as at gender equality.

Result Area 2: Improved health and nutrition (in particular for women and children below the age of five). This will be achieved with activities aiming at setting up sustainable water management systems, promoting the three components of Water Sanitation and Hygiene (i.e. access to safe water, access to sanitation, and hygiene promotion) and nutrition specific activities.

Result Area 3: Strengthened socio-economic service delivery by local authorities, community organisations, and private institutions. This will be done by improving the capacity and efficiency of local institutions.

The following chapters answer the Evaluation Questions as defined in the Inception Report, assess the overall performance of the five NGOs / implementing agencies and as a final point bring the findings, conclusions and recommendations.

It is important for the Mid-Term Evaluation (MTE) Team to point out that the purpose of this MTE is not to blame someone or a specific NGO for mistakes that happened, but to look forward and provide constructive evidence-based recommendations for the remaining project duration of this project and also for upcoming EU support schemes.

Finally, it should be mentioned that with or without no-cost extension for the five NGOs, this Mid-Term Evaluation came late. However, there is time and room for improvements.

2. Answered Evaluation Questions

The Evaluation Questions (EQs) have been preliminary drafted and circulated in the Inception Report and are related to the five projects. These five projects are dealing broadly speaking with two result areas: 1) Improved livelihoods and increased household income levels and 2) Improved health and nutrition (in particular for women and children below the age of five). As a cross-cutting result area, there is also the strengthening of the socio-economic service delivery by local authorities, community organisations, and private institutions.

The MTE Team is summarizing below the answers on the 10 main EQs that are based on extracted from the chapter “detailed answers to the evaluation questions” in Annex 5.10., where all details can be seen. The answers are grouped into the two lots.

EQ 1 Relevance

➤ Lot 1

The Gini index⁴ in Sri Lanka is currently around 50 and that is roughly the same like in India. However, the index is increasing since 2016 when it was at around 40. This figure alone is a sound justification to go ahead with the development of an intervention trying to reduce this number. The result area 1 with improved livelihoods and increased household incomes is consequently a very relevant step to bring the Gini index down, especially as the EU-SIRD focuses on the most vulnerable districts of the Central and Uva Provinces of Sri Lanka.

A look into the revised Theory of Change (ToC) shows well the relevance of the Lot 1 interventions. The ToC was developed as follows; under the intermediate outcomes are the project outcomes and the remarks from the MTE Team are in *Italic*:

A. Better quality employment and increased incomes for men and women (outcome)

A1. Increased financial growth of target businesses (intermediate outcome)

- Targeted MSMEs are better integrated to the relevant value chains and addressing gender norms

A1 is a clear target and improved VCs are more profitable and support directly the overall outcome. It is not so obvious why addressing gender norms will contribute to the overall outcome; however, having better trained women in the VCs and in management position will assist in getting more profitable VCs.

A2. Increased informal sector entrepreneur income (intermediate outcome)

- MSME are strengthened through business training with ensured gender equality
- Gender equality in the selection of entrepreneurs to assist them in business development
- Special needs of women to grow their businesses are addressed

⁴ The Gini index, or Gini coefficient, is a measure of the distribution of income across a population. It is often used as a gauge of economic inequality, measuring income distribution among a population. The coefficient ranges from 0 (or 0%) to 1 (or 100%), with 0 representing perfect equality and 1 representing perfect inequality. - A higher Gini index indicates greater inequality, with high income individuals receiving much larger percentages of the total income of the population.

A2 is also a clear target and despite trying to get more registered entrepreneurs into the VCs, an increase of income in the informal sector entrepreneur is clearly directing to the overall outcome. Business training (by experienced business experts) is very beneficial and to integrate women again too, as there is still a large dormant potential. The focus is on business training and like anywhere else, it depends on the kind of training, if the newly developed skills can be transferred into a better business performance.

A3. Better jobs created in target businesses (intermediate outcome)

- Increased engagement of women and youth in skilled employment

Job creation – especially for unemployed people – is very useful; however, it is not obvious how more engagement results in more jobs.

A4. Better trained employees (intermediate outcome)

- Women and youth are trained in vocational and other technical skills

More training results in better-trained people, but not necessarily in more jobs. Without additional employees, there are no increased incomes for the target population. A4 is considerably weaker than A1- A3.

A5. Better enabling environment for micro and small enterprises (intermediate outcome)

- Women and youth have more voice and play more dignified roles due to reduced structural barriers
- Market agents are supported to provide finance and technology to target MSMEs
- CSOs and LGAs engage in policy dialogue

No doubt that a better business environment can set more entrepreneurial spirit free. However, the MTE Team would not see “business registration” and other rather formal administrative issues as crucial, but infrastructure, access to consulting services, access to land and finance are more important. It seems that under the pretext of enabling business environment, activities that are not very relevant for job creation and increased revenues have been promoted.

A6. Increased knowledge & best practices sharing for business improvement (intermediate outcome)

- Knowledge sharing avenues between small and large businesses are established

It is well known that nowadays networking is crucial for business contacts and these contacts should be encouraged. The question remains if the knowledge sharing activities result in business improvements and thus at least into increased revenues and profits, eventually also in more jobs. It seems that A6 could be found in A1 and A2. Finally, it is a very indirect approach to the overall outcome.

Summarizing, it seems that the intermediate outcomes A1 - A3 are strong and contribute directly to the overall outcome “better quality employment and increased incomes”, whereas the outcomes A4 – A6 are not so meaningful. All together the interventions of ACTED, CARE and OXFAM are highly relevant.

➤ Lot 2

Sri Lanka like many South-Asian countries has a substantial problem with high rates of acute malnutrition, which are since years with around 15 % at an emergency level. The current project, which has included two research projects, could have contributed to studying the determinants of acute malnutrition. Even the current issue of Field Exchange (October 2020)

is titled: Special Issue – Child Wasting in South Asia. The article states, “though Sri Lanka has national guidelines for the management of severe wasting that includes community-based management with RUTF (ready to use therapeutic foods), the outpatient treatment of severe wasting has only been decentralised to the district hospital level. Only paediatricians are authorised to prescribe RUTFs and this restricts access, particularly for severely wasted children living far from district hospitals.” Concisely, the community based management of severe acute malnutrition needs support but this problem has not been touched by the present project.

According to the National Strategic Framework for the Development of Health Services (2016 – 2025) prepared by the Ministry of Health, Nutrition and Indigenous Medicine - Sri Lanka, water sanitation and hygiene issues are not the top priority in this strategy. There is a little hint on the lack of hand washing (p. 45) which might be solved in the face of the corona pandemic and sanitation issues are covered in the context of urban public toilets (p. 45).

An independent evaluation led by the Asian Development Bank in 2018 confirmed that Sri Lanka has made significant achievements in the water and sanitation sector and is one of only three South Asian countries to have met both its water and sanitation Millennium Development Goal (MDG) targets. The Asian Development Bank (ADB), Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA), and the World Bank Group (WBG) are the major development partners supporting the sector, which remains a priority area for the three agencies as reflected in its share of assistance in their lending over the past decade. The evaluation concludes that although there has been an impressive progress in improving water and sanitation services, a need for supporting ongoing efforts on policy and institutional reforms remains, particularly with respect to introducing independent regulation and attracting private sector participation in service provision. Strengthening coordination mechanisms between development partners and with the government can greatly enhance the prospects of achieving these objectives.

Knowing that the prevalence rates of diarrhoea are relatively low as compared to acute malnutrition, the question remains, whether the focus of the project could have been modified.

Prior to the program formulation, the EU has commissioned a desk study to Verité Research, which was finalised in January 2015. The report states: “The needs of the estate communities have failed to be successfully addressed through WB and ADB projects. The WB pilot projects in the estate sector have not been very successful. Hence the evaluation report of the project has specifically referred to the estate sector as requiring further study before introducing community water supply projects due to lack of a clear legal and intuitional framework and the unique characteristics of the estate sector”.

EQ 2 Effectiveness

➤ Lot 1

The three projects from ACTED, CARE and OXFAM aim to improve the economics of the rural people in the targeted districts.

ACTED is trying to contribute to poverty reduction in Uva and Central Provinces of Sri Lanka and to sustainably improve the livelihoods of the most vulnerable rural and estate communities in Nuwara Eliya, Matale, Badulla and Monaragala districts through the promotion of an integrated, climate-resilient and inclusive socio-economic development.

CARE is aiming to contribute to improved socio-economic wellbeing of rural and estate communities and to support the development of an enabling and empowering business environment for establishing and sustaining income-generating and employment opportunities for vulnerable women, youth.

OXFAM is enhancing gender inclusive socio-economic development and to increase income levels and reduce poverty and inequality among rural and estate communities.

Comparing these three projects, one can see that improving livelihoods, increasing income and creating jobs are the key features.

ACTED will most likely not reach its targets in reducing the poverty of people in the targeted MSMEs living below \$1.25, and also the goal of 25% increase in turnover might not be realistic and finally, the project will not create 1,000 additional jobs, partially because of COVID-19.

CARE would like to increase the income levels of supported women-led MSMEs by 60% compared to 2018; the MTE Team did not come across any information why the income rose until May 2020 by 43% (which would be a positive sensation) and given the slowdown of the economy due to the pandemic situation, it does not seem realistic to achieve this target. The final evaluation will clarify that and if the provided data are adjusted for inflation which is quite high in Sri Lanka. In addition, the goal for the job creation was too ambitious as the baseline of employed women in 2018 was 1,109 women and in May 2020 - 1,232 women. It is also very unlikely to reach 2,250 women by the project's end.

OXFAM's intention to increase income levels measured by Reduction of Poverty Head Count index in the two provinces will most likely not be achieved, even if the baseline data is outdated as from 2016 and current values for 2020 are not provided.

Furthermore, there seems to be a substantial increase in average gross profit (gross profit refers to a company's profits earned after subtracting the costs of producing and distributing its products) among identified value chains, especially in the dairy VC; however the MTE Team could not follow the applied economic calculations and has to leave it to the final evaluation, if the dairy farmers in the target areas could increase their gross profits by almost 370%.

When focusing on these listed main indicators, it can be stated that most of these rather economic targets will not be achieved. However, for a final statement, more facts and calculations that are more transparent are needed and clear definitions, and the MTE Team hopes that the goals will be achieved for the sake of the rural population.

➤ Lot 2

Though both projects applied under the same lot, the effectiveness of the respective implementations of ADRA and Solidaridad differs a lot. Both projects have in common, that they lack a comprehensive ToC, which explains why certain activities are being implemented and how they will contribute to the overall objective. Both projects have in common, that the indicators chosen in the log frame are partly not SMART and in terms of the nutrition activities technically wrong. In addition, some of them have not been measured at baseline (weight / age: data taken from DHS report or MoH data).

Whilst ADRA hardware installations are far advanced, even though completed yet, these installations schedule in the Solidaridad project are far behind, partly due to the community-based approach, which took much more time than expected. Both projects' beneficiaries will profit from WASH infrastructure, once completed. However, the level of awareness raising and training activities differs as well. Training activities are far more advanced in the Solidaridad operations but lack behind in the ADRA project. (See detailed answers to evaluation questions in [Annex 5.10.](#))

Whilst training activities are completed and overachieved in the Solidaridad operations, ADRA trainings are far behind schedule. This shows that one cannot relate all delays to the COVID-19 situation.

It has to be stated that the nutrition and WASH trainings in both projects lack a comprehensive training strategy. Trainings are taking place in silos and the integrated character of food and nutrition security trainings are hardly met. This is most obvious when it comes to isolated WASH trainings, which should be part of an integrated training approach. It seems that there is no clear idea about a) the target groups b) the best venue c) the necessary content of trainings and d) mutual partnerships and agreements with government structures. This limits the effectiveness of the current trainings within the project structures.

Home / nutrition garden activities are part of both projects, even though they do not appear in the Solidaridad log frame. The level of implementation is different (See Annexes [5.4](#), [5.5](#), [5.13](#)). However, the MTE Team has the impression that there is no consequent implementation's strategy behind this implementation. A comprehensive strategy would imply a) the analysis of micronutrient deficiencies, b) the current production of crops c) an analysis of what would be needed to address some of the micronutrient deficiencies. In general, garden activities are highly appreciated by the beneficiaries, but the current level of implementation leaves room for improvements.

Finally, yet importantly, the home garden activities are the only activities that will help to improve dietary intake. They aim at micronutrient deficiencies, whilst the aim of the project is to reduce underweight (Solidaridad) or undernourishment (ADRA). Undernourishment is an indicator measuring the access to kcal, there are interventions that can contribute to the access to a diversity of food. Although the TA team has advised/recommended to address the gaps and shortcomings in the logframes, the projects were not able to amend the logframes accordingly.

EQ 3 Efficiency

➤ **Lot 1**

One has to read between the lines of the log frames to see, if the planned interventions have been there from the beginning or came later on.

An increase in agricultural productivity is usually not linked to hiring more people; rather the contrary is true that increased productivity - often through modern techniques - results in loss of agricultural jobs; tractors replace people. As the project is trying to increase productivity and at the same time create jobs, there might be a conflict. It would be better to focus on increasing profitability and assume that profitable companies will expand in value adding (agribusiness)

activities and then there is a chance that new jobs will be created in these new business activities.

Given the large budgets of Euro 6 million in average, the overall activities have not been well converted into results or impacts. Whereas many interventions are on track, even if sometimes slow, some of them show so far poor results like CARE's infrastructure activities as there only 15% have been transferred so far.

But also reverse results like that OXFAM wanted to make 5 milk storage facilities available for dairy farmers and ended up with 8, is on the one hand great, but it raises questions about the efficiency. There was a budget for 5 and suddenly 8 have been built / refurbished.

It is not directly an issue under efficiency, but it would be helpful to all interested stakeholders, if the used terminology would be better elaborated. Often definitions are applied that are not wrong, but maybe misleading. Clarifications could help (already within the log frames) also to assess the efficiency better. E.g., MSMEs in selected agricultural VCs have turned out to be input suppliers, other service providers, and many farmers. Of course, a subsistence farmer is also a MSME, but it would be more understandable to use reader friendly wording.

When looking at the efficiency of the individual interventions, then it seems that none of the investments have been calculated; in practice the NGOs proposed among others provision of equipment and construction of agricultural infrastructure like marketplaces, but all the decisions about doing these investments were not supported or justified by a cost-benefit analysis or a simple feasibility analysis, looking at IRR and NPVs. In the rare cases that a kind of cost-benefit analysis was done, it looked at the government side (as owner of the common marketplace) and how much it would have to charge from MSMEs renting stalls instead of looking at MSMEs and estimating an average profit.

Keeping in mind that the European taxpayer spent Euro 30 million on these five projects, one could have expected much more than training, supply of equipment and grants, many small infrastructure activities (that went into the property of the authorities) and activities in community strengthening and policy development. What could have been done more or better?

- (1) Increased household income through at least one well-functioning value chain (instead of having several, partially even within one NGO).
- (2) Local business development be reducing administrative burdens (or at least working into this direction as the decision is with the GoSL) and by providing services like technical skills, accounting skills, marketing skills and others but not by improving the business registrations process (that will lead to tax payments of the "beneficiaries"; it needs legalisation of the economic system but that is not what is expected from development aid).
- (3) Rural infrastructure is relevant but it should be managed by jointly owned premises / working facilities for processing of agricultural raw materials, not owned by the GoSL! Setting up private cooperatives or trading companies and transferring the assets to them not to favourite a single person.
- (4) Environment, climate resilience and gender have been minor cross-cutting topics, but would have had the potential for more.

➤ Lot 2

Both projects have changed and added activities that were not originally part of the proposal. Some activities from ADRA, like the distribution of hens or the provision of iron-rich supplementary food do not appear in the entire log frame. The MTE Team feels that these activities were added as the budget allowed it. Iron-deficiency anaemia has never been part of the baseline survey and the implementation is a kind of activism. In the case of Solidaridad, the project came up with a list of 38 sub-activities under just two activities from the LFA. The concept behind some of them is not clear as well.

The establishment of WMC and HNC needs to be analysed against the opportunity to channel certain activities through already existing groups, which could have been more efficient. For the technical part of the projects (infrastructure), there are deficiencies in the number of technical staff as well as problems with technical equipment (drilling machines). The financial management, however, seems appropriate and the contributions for infrastructure programs will facilitate the feeling of ownership.

In terms of nutrition and WASH trainings, there is a need to consolidate activities with the respective ministries. This is important, as there is a need to ensure a handing over and thus sustainability.

It is efficient, that Solidaridad shared all training and ICT materials on an internet platform which is accessible not only by ADRA but by all projects in Sri Lanka. Whether this has improved the trainings implementation for ADRA and Solidaridad (or how often other partners are using this) needs to be measured at endline.

Whether the projects from Lot 1 and 2 implemented their activities in the most efficient and integrated manner cannot be answered. The MTE Team has asked for a comprehensive map, which includes all activities from the five projects. This would enable the MTE Team to have an overview of synergies and gaps within the program. This activity was apparently started with the assistance from ADRA but was not completed during the current evaluation.

EQ 4 Impact

➤ Lot 1

An impact is definitively achieved, if a change in the mind-set of the involved stakeholders has taken place; whereas premises and equipment can collapse after the project's end or even before, changed behaviour due to training, awareness raising and intensive coaching will last.

Training needs assessment is always needed upfront. In case training needs assessment is not done before conducting the trainings, it is not certain if the trainings corresponded to the real needs of the people.

Trainings show a big (bigger) impact, if the workshops are oriented towards practical skills like fodder production and nutrition for animals. All rather theoretical trainings like project cycle management and business plan writing for upcoming grant projects are not so relevant, as they do not contribute to an increase in daily revenues. For example, the practical training in value chains like dairy and cinnamon by OXFAM showed very good results and will therefore have an impact.

The impact of the programme to date is limited, but it is also difficult to judge as there was no impact assessment, and there was no convincing baseline study against which to judge impact. Despite the fact that ACTED produced eight baseline-like studies, the benefit was limited. According to the MTE Team, a baseline study is a document that clearly describes the socio-economic situation of the beneficiaries – especially in respect of the target indicators. E.g., when aiming to increase the number of cows in a specific target area, then the baseline study must describe in detail the performance of the cows at project’s start.

Whilst it may be too late to have a baseline study at this stage, any new programme or the extension of the current programme should start with a proper baseline study, and with clear performance indicators setting out where responsibility lies for implementation in each area.

Finally, the impact could have been bigger, if not that many activities would have taken place. It is already a challenge to improve substantially one agricultural value chain in four years, so why one project has to tackle four of them. Maybe to think about having one VC in the future, implemented by 3 NGOs in 3 districts in a similar way – to generate impact.

➤ **Lot 2**

It is evident that the target groups value especially the WASH infrastructure and garden activities. Whether the trainings will contribute to the intended change in baseline figures is questionable.

- Diarrhoea rates were already considerably low (in most places 2 % or below, only in some estate communities up to 6 %). The baseline figures looked at the incidence of diarrhoea during the last 6 month, but usually the recall is for the last 14 days!
- The sample size for some of the regions is too small to allow any representative result.
- Weight for age has never been measured but taken from DHS surveys of from hospital data. It is unclear whether the DHS has touched on the served communities and hospital-based data are most likely not precise (e.g., no idea whether the scales are calibrated).
- Data on dietary diversity did not follow the international standards.

Since the indicators are not well chosen, the project will not be able to measure its impact.

EQ 5 Sustainability

➤ **Lot 1**

The beauty of economic projects is that sustainability goes hand in hand with profitability. In case a business runs profitable for two to three years, then it can be assumed that it will continue doing so. (Therefore, it is so important that businesses start operating (with new machines, in new premises, on new markets) long before project’s end, to gain experience and make the first mistakes as long as supporting NGOs are still around.)

Working with mushrooms needs spores to start with; therefore, building a production facility makes perfectly sense, especially if there are farmers around struggling with the poor “seed” quality and the high prices.

However, building a facility and leaving the project as soon as the equipment is delivered, because everything was started too late, will most likely not result in a success story. The involved people have not been trained in the premises with this specific equipment, there was no coach available to accompany the seed centre as long until the produced spores are good enough in quality and price, etc.

➤ **Lot 2**

In terms of WASH infrastructure, there seems to be a donor dependency as beneficiaries are waiting for projects to rehabilitate, re-install or newly implement WASH hardware. The idea of maintenance has always been part of WASH projects, even in former projects. The question is why this concept of maintenance and sustainability failed. The same is true for promoting hygiene, hand washing, etc. Whether the current implementations will be more sustainable and successful can be answered in a few years only.

The formation of Water Management Committees was not completed during the time of the evaluation, which means they were not registered yet. These committees need to be somehow integrated into government structures and to be well recognised so that they can function in a sustainable manner. Working through existing groups could have been perhaps more sustainable.

Whether nutrition-training activities will continue after the projects fold up is unclear, due to the problematic coordination of activities with the MoH. However, the support to Mithuru Piyasa at hospital level will most likely continue as it is well embedded in MoH activities.

The projects need to work on a proper exit strategy, which will include the handing over of activities and a decision, which activities can be realistically implemented up to the end of the current project phase.

EQ 6 Ownership

Project ownership shows stakeholders identify themselves deeply with the project, which was developed by or at least with them.

➤ **Lot 1**

The MTE Team does not know if the vulnerable people in the target areas have seriously been involved in the project design. It seems that some NGOs had already projects in the area and they have been considered when designing the new ones. Ordinary people have most likely not been much involved; and when involved e.g., in prioritising infrastructure projects, then the decision might stem from wishful thinking and not based on analysis.

Ownership is shown – in a drastically way – when people contribute substantially to projects, in cash or in kind. Then they appreciate the project and do everything they can do. If grants and machines are rather distributed, then beneficiaries are thankful but do not show ownership.

The EU-SIRD projects are not characterised by an overwhelming contribution from the beneficiary, not even from the GoSL. When looking at the ownership of the handed-over projects, then it is obvious that roads, business centres, marketplaces and others have often been owned by the GoSL.

Keeping in mind the countless statements that the GoSL is blocking construction permits, resettling certain infrastructure activities and more, then the ownership is somehow disappointing; looking at most of the reports, it looks that the GoSL was not as supportive as it could have been expected, especially as the planned activities have been in line with the EU-Sri Lanka development cooperation.

The need of the GoSL - not a classical beneficiary - has been reflected, eventually too much.

➤ **Lot 2**

The involvement of the beneficiaries during the design phase of the entire programme remains unclear as this was based on a desk study done by a consultative group. Whether this was dealing with the most pressing need of beneficiaries remains unclear. However, based on the call for proposals in Lot 2, the projects developed the WASH plans in consultation with the beneficiaries.

During the project implementation, the Ministry of Health including its structures was involved in discussions, decisions and implementation of activities. The same is true for the Water Supply Drainage Board, Water Resources Board and DNCWS. School water and sanitation activities were designed by the Engineering Department.

The projects were able to use IEC materials developed by the health promotion bureau as well as material developed and shared by Solidaridad.

EQ 7 Coordination & Monitoring

➤ **Lot 1**

Coordination between the NGOs was weak from the beginning, as it was never planned to play a major role; the idea to form a programme instead of five projects emerged after project start, or at least materialised after it.

The coordination within the consortia - in respect to planning and managing multiple tasks simultaneously – was a challenge for all NGOs too.

A project area far away from headquarters required several branch offices in the field that again needed coordination – also in logistics. A very broad (or already too broad) range of activities within one consortia required management capacities that often did not exist. Coordination is needed to manage many experts (mainly for trainings), to deal with construction companies, to procure equipment (from computers to milk chilling tanks) and so on.

This coordination has to be managed and it has to be monitored for performance assessments (progress in achieving specific objectives) and bookkeeping.

The TA Team was primarily contracted to provide advisory support to build capacity of the implementing partners and to a minor extent to do some monitoring work. Advice – according to the TA Team - was largely considered as helpful by the NGOs. However, not all advice was followed proactively by the project teams and also the number of expert-days from the TA Team was limited. The NGOs were not contractually obligated to be open with key issues they

were facing nor to take the advice given by the TA Team. Overall, the set-up was not well designed, as the TA Team – despite trying seriously to encourage synergies - could neither assist the NGOs as much as needed nor efficiently improve the overall monitoring.

Finally, monitoring is in the best case closely linked to the log frame; the listed indicators have to be monitored permanently (bi-weekly) in order to have a sound management tool for project steering at hand. Additionally, it can be used for reporting, internally and externally.

As log frames are of poor quality and the staff of the M&E units not frequently in the field (on the farm, in the market, in the business centre, etc.), the monitoring is not functioning well; it is unlikely that the management is working smoothly while the M&E units are not providing adequate information. Furthermore, the MTE Team observed that the EUD is not always well informed.

➤ **Lot 2**

Staff from both projects are having regular and requested discussions with the local ministries to plan and implement activities in all areas. However, there seems to be no mechanism to regularly involve government officials in monitoring activities. The projects mentioned as well that the number of activities to be monitored per month is huge and that the staffing is inadequate to monitor all of them at a regular basis. The projects are sharing their progress in review meetings at provincial level and towards the EU in annual progress reports.

The coordination between the Water Resource Board and ADRA regarding the boreholes was difficult which led to a delay in the approval process. The coordination with the MoH has influenced the implementation of the respective activities as well.

The baseline surveys, which should provide a good foundation for the M& E system, were weak for various reasons. For some areas the sample size was far too small, some of the indicators have not been measured but taken from secondary sources, some of the indicators are technically wrong and not SMART.

Both projects have commissioned a mid-term survey, which was underway during the time of the Mid-Term Evaluation. However, the MTE Team was not able to get hold of preliminary data. Whether these assessments are done in an improved manner remains unclear.

The TA team has worked with all projects on a ToC (ex-post). Perhaps this has brought a better understanding amongst the different projects. However, this ToC is not following any vertical logic and needs a revision as well. In addition, the TA team supported the projects with a M&E training and has provided an input into mainstreaming gender into project activities.

EQ 8 Cross-cutting issues

➤ **Lot 1**

The EU-SIRD focuses on four poor districts in the centre of Sri Lanka and here on the most vulnerable people, especially on women and youth. Even within the districts, there is an emphasis on the tea growing areas, where people are facing problems in getting jobs and income (and sanitation, health and water) the most.

There was an intention for certain cross-cutting issues to be included in the project, being Gender Issues, Climate Change and Good Governance. However, altogether women and youth have not been as much in the focus as they could have been, not to mention persons with disabilities.

CARE has done within its gender activities a policy review (SME policy framework of 2018) to learn more about how many women and men have entered the MSME sector, how many will potentially succeed, how many have failed and why, the effectiveness of the coordinating mechanisms by state service providers and gaps in implementation of the SME Policy.

Food security was not in the focus of Lot 1, even as there would have been many opportunities for interlinkages such as income creation and food production.

Related to climate change adaptation and disaster risk reduction, e.g., OXFAM was working on this subject and had also a corresponding indicator “number of hectares of agricultural ecosystems where sustainable land management was practised”, as farmers have been trained in Good Agriculture Practices and on sustainable land management practices.

ACTED provided assets like retaining walls (gabion walls), fences, generators, etc. that also reflected the principles of DRR.

➤ **Lot 2**

Environment

ADRA has installed septic tanks above ground level to avoid contamination. All storage tanks have overflow pipes, which are diverted to a proper drain path to avoid erosion. In addition, the WASH plans of both projects include catchment protection with fencing and tree-planting surrounding the catchment to prevent the area from soil erosion.

Solid waste

That was a topic during CHAST and PHAST trainings.

Gender

- Both projects try to work in a gender responsive way. They have done gender awareness trainings for project staff.
- The target group selection and the special support to women headed households was very successful.
- The integration of men in nutrition trainings was intended but did not really work that well. The support to women and girls (menstrual hygiene) allowed girls to stay in school during menstruation.
- The support to Mithuru Piyasa at hospital level is a very good first step to combat gender-based violence (ADRA). However, the project could have done better by running some sensitization projects in the communities to explain to women and girls where they could attend to in case of GBV.

EQ 9 EU added value

➤ Lot 1

The EU-SIRD is not characterised by unique and measurable EU interventions. However, it is generally difficult to find something EU-specific in development projects and therefore NGOs are not to blame. As the Lot 1 projects are dealing with agriculture, there would have been the chance to discuss at least the establishment of (agricultural) cooperatives (or even the support of existing ones). In addition, the LEADER approach as practised in the EU MS would have offered chances in community mobilisation and small rural lighthouse projects.

➤ Lot 2

The menstrual hygiene activities are recommendable as they are allowing girls to attend school. Since there is no adequate baseline information, the information is based on qualitative findings. If ADRA will succeed in contributing to the national efforts to bring down the very high taxes on sanitary pads, this will be considered to be a big success. However, it is unclear whether this will be possible during the current project period.

The establishment of 10 jobsite restrooms (JSSRs) for women as tea packers so far can also be regarded as an unique EU value adding support.

EQ 10 Coherence of the Actions

➤ Lot 1

Inside the three projects, there is some coherence as improving livelihood is an overarching factor. Looking at OXFAM's Outcomes 1 and 2 (economic ones) and at the Outcomes 3 and 4 (social and political ones) then one could state that they complement each other, even if going into different directions.

The Coherence of the Actions at all Lot 1 projects is internally given, but not in an extraordinary way. The coherence of the actions of the individual NGO with the ones of the other NGOs is limited as the Coherence of the Actions with the "programme" also remains vague, but that is not necessarily the failure of the NGOs.

➤ Lot 2

Since there was no ToC from the onset of the programme there is a problem concerning the coherence of the actions. For future programmes of this size, it is advisable to develop the Theory of Change before launching the call for proposals. In this case, the different NGOs would have realised how the two lots should work together and where they could seek synergies.

It must be mentioned as well that the approval process for these projects was inadequate. The inadequacy of the log frames of both projects under Lot 2 was evident from the beginning and the adaptations of the log frame during the project life span did not bring important improvements. If this had been done before the approval, the baseline studies would have included indicators that will be able to measure the impact at the end of the project.

3. Overall assessment

3.1 ACTED - activities and achievements

ACTED - ACA/2017/385-994: Integrated Economic Development of Central and Uva Provinces of Sri Lanka; Budget EUR 7,357,666 (EU contribution only)

Start of the project - 13/07/2017

Foreseen end of the project - 12/07/2021; ACTED asked for a no cost extension until 13/01/2022 and that was approved by March 2021.

The project is implemented by the ACTED consortium, whereas the partners are Humanity & Inclusion (HI), CEFE NET (a Sri Lanka based consultancy specialised in formation of enterprises, part of the CEFE International network), Human Development Organisation (HDO) and Future in Our Hands Development Fund (FIOH).

The overall objective of ACTED concerning the “Integrated Economic Development” (IED) is “to contribute to poverty reduction in Uva and Central Provinces of Sri Lanka”. The specific objective is “to sustainably improve the livelihoods of the most vulnerable rural and estate communities in Nuwara Eliya, Matale, Badulla and Monaragala districts through the promotion of an integrated, climate-resilient and inclusive socio-economic development”.

The IED project is trying to improve the livelihoods of the most vulnerable rural and estate communities through the promotion⁵ of an integrated, climate-resilient and inclusive socio-economic development. Assuming that “promotion” is used here in the sense of elevation, upgrade, and advancement, then the objectives of ACTED are in line with the EU-SIRD Result Area 1: Improved livelihoods and increased household incomes. However, it was pointed out by the EU Delegation that there is a difference between livelihood development and increasing income and that ACTED intends to sustainably improve the livelihood of the target population, which can include income, productive assets, indebtedness, employment generation, etc. Therefore, the MTE Team does not look if the Result 1 is achieved, but just at the “improving livelihood” part.

See [Annex 5.1](#) for a more detailed analysis.

3.2 CARE - activities and achievements

CARE - ACA/2017/385-949: Enterprise; Budget EUR 4,896,845

Start of the project - 01/06/2017

Foreseen end of the project - 01/12/2020

No cost extension approved until 01/12/2021

The project is implemented by the CARE (CARE Deutschland-Luxemburg e.V.) consortium, whereas the partners are Chrysalis and British Council UK (BC); Chrysalis is active in the selected target areas, project implementation will be through existing field offices with oversight from Chrysalis head office in Colombo and BC experienced in business market studies and the entire consultation process.

⁵ Promotion means raise, elevation, upgrade, advancement and also advertising.

The overall objective of CARE within the “Enterprise” project is “to contribute to improved socio-economic wellbeing of rural and estate communities in Uva and Central Province”. The specific objective is to support the development of an enabling and empowering business environment for establishing and sustaining income-generating and employment opportunities for vulnerable women, youth and their communities there.

Since the project start, CARE focused on the following key issues:

- (1) Training of women and youth but also of government officers to be placed in the Business Development Centre; topics included business grow planning, cost calculation, digital marketing, finance (related to grants), Active Citizen's Social Enterprise (ACSE) leadership, Communication Skills, Vocational Training, Women Empowerment/Gender Awareness Raising, etc.
- (2) Grants for trainees to establish new businesses like apparel and textiles, food processing, manufacturing sweets, bites and mixtures, crafts and ornaments, bags, dairy products and spices.
- (3) Rural infrastructure for communities (government) such as roads, marketplaces, irrigation infrastructure and others that serve indirectly many persons; in total 100 infrastructures are planned. The communities have been approached through the Praja Mandalas, community level organisations formed and registered by the local authority with the purpose of providing facilities to communities within the local authority to spend their leisure time in a useful and profitable manner. The community organisation then elaborated Village Development Plans (VDP) with a priority list.
- (4) Strengthening Community Development Forums (CDF) to act as mini-parliaments to facilitate dialogue between stakeholders especially on political level.

CARE’s project is dealing mainly with improving livelihoods, especially of women and youth in the target area.

See [Annex 5.2](#) for a more detailed analysis.

3.3 OXFAM - activities and achievements

OXFAM - ACA/2017/387-345: Enhancing gender inclusive socio-economic development in Uva and Central Provinces; Budget EUR 6,266,510

Start of the project - 09/08/2017

Foreseen end of the project - 31/08/2021; OXFAM asked for a no cost extension until 28/02/2022; that is pending for approval from the EUD.

The project is implemented by the Oxfam Italia (OXFAM) consortium, whereas the partners are LEADS and SC.

OXFAM’s project “Enhancing gender inclusive socio-economic development in Uva and Central Provinces” deals with the overall objective “to increase income levels and reduce poverty and inequality among rural and estate communities”. Consequently, it is in line with the EU-SIRD Result Area 1: Improved livelihoods and increased household incomes.

OXFAM uses as an indicator for the overall objective, the reduced poverty head count index in the two Provinces. Even a big project cannot achieve such a target as its impact is too small.

It is hard to imagine that the OXFAM project with less than Euro 0.50 per year and inhabitant (in these two provinces) will achieve such an impact and the question arises, how such a target was developed and approved. CARE chose the same way in 2017, but has changed this indicator in late 2020. It is very important that indicators are directly linked to the interventions.

See [Annex 5.3](#) for a more detailed analysis.

3.4 ADRA - activities and achievements

ADRA - ACA/2017/386-359: ACCEND project: Assisting Communities in Creating Environmental and Nutritional Development; Budget EUR 5,299,944

Start of the project - 20/07/2017

Foreseen end of the project - 19/07/2021; ADRA asked for a no cost extension until 22/04/2022; that is pending for approval from the EUD.

The project is implemented by the Adventist Development and Relief Agency UK (ADRA) consortium, whereas the partners are ADRA Sri Lanka and Oxfam Italy.

The overall objective of ADRA's "Assisting Communities in Creating Environmental and Nutritional Development" (ACCEND) project is "to contribute towards the improvement of the health, nutrition, hygiene and sanitation of the rural and estate communities in the Uva and Central Provinces". The corresponding specific objective is "to strengthen communities and public institutions towards an integrated mutually accountable service delivery system in the WASH and Health sector".

In contrast to the previously described projects, this project is in line with the EU-SIRD Result Area 2: Improved health and nutrition (in particular for women and children below the age of five). This will be achieved with activities aiming at setting up sustainable water management systems, promoting the three components of Water Sanitation and Hygiene (i.e. access to safe water, access to sanitation, and hygiene promotion) and nutrition specific activities.

This overall objective will be evaluated against 1) positive opinions of the communities in the project area in Uva and Central Provinces about the lobbying and advocacy action carried by their CBOs to readying WASH and Health and Nutrition (H&N) issues at end of the project, 2) reduction of undernourishment, and 3) reduction in diarrhoea cases reported within the target communities by the end of the project.

See [Annex 5.4](#) for a more detailed analysis.

3.5 Stitching Solidaridad - activities and achievements

Stitching Solidaridad - ACA/2017/385-950: Reaching the unreached Estates and surrounding communities on equitable water, sanitation, hygiene (WASH) for improved health and nutrition; Budget EUR 5,619,616

Start of the project - 01/08/2017

Foreseen end of the project - 01/08/2021; Stitching Solidaridad asked for a no cost extension until 01/02/2022; that is pending for approval from the EUD.

The project is implemented by the Stitching Solidaridad consortium in cooperation with two local partners Institute of Social Development (ISD) and Nucleus Foundation (NF). Stitching Solidaridad together with ISD takes up the role of knowledge management, water mapping and WASH capacity development within the estates; whereas the NF plays the role of a community mobilizer in working with surrounding communities, capacity building and liaising with local authorities.

The overall objective of Stitching Solidaridad’s project “Reaching the Unreached Estates and Surrounding Communities on Equitable Water, Sanitation, Hygiene (WASH) for Improved Health and Nutrition Project” is to “improve health and nutritional status of marginalised and underserved communities living in 50 estates and 100 rural villages of Uva Province (Badulla & Monaragala Districts) and Central Province (Matale & Nuwara Eliya Districts)”. In alignment with the call of the proposal, Stitching Solidaridad is targeting the following specific objectives:

- a) Strengthening capacities of local functionaries and community institutions working in 50 estates, 100 surrounding rural villages and 50 schools on sustainable water and sanitation management.
- b) 200,000 population (50,000 HH) from underserved Estates and its surrounding villages have access to improved, adequate and sustainably managed water supply sources serving across 50 Estates, 100 surrounding rural villages and 50 primary and secondary schools.
- c) Sustainable nutrition, sanitation and hygienic practices promoted through community mobilisation and social and behaviour change communication (SBCC) processes in estate and surrounding rural villages.
- d) Inter-sectoral (public-private) convergence and civil society participation for strengthening service delivery of community organisations, local authorities, and public/private institutions on WASH at district and provincial levels.

See [Annex 5.5](#) for a more detailed analysis.

3.6 Coordination between EU Delegation, TA Team and INGOs

Within the EU-SIRD, a Technical Assistance (TA) Team was already foreseen at the time of formulating the programme and was included in the financing agreement. The main reason for incorporating a local consultancy for TA was that the envisaged large grants could create obstacles for the implementing NGOs in Sri Lanka. Therefore, it was planned that the consultancy – besides providing TA and monitoring - would help with the grant schemes and in addition provide capacity building for the five NGOs and their partners. The TA Team was contracted late, as the first call for tenders failed to contract a company due to technical weaknesses and ineligibilities of the tenders submitted. In the second run, the Sri Lankan International Institute of Development Training (Private) (IIDT) was contracted by EUD and started operations in early 2019.

The overall budget was rather modest with Euro 150,000 and the contract duration limited to 2.5 years, so that the assistance will run out soon, a while before the five NGO will close their projects.

The European Union contracted the IIDT mainly to produce baseline data, to ensure SMARTer indicators based on the baseline data and ensure that these are adopted by the NGOs, to ensure

an up-to-date M&E system in place at the NGOs, to improve complementarity, synergies and harmonisation among NGOs and to build capacities of the NGOs to attain the objectives of the programme.

These tasks point into the direction, that the EUD had already from the beginning their doubts, that the NGOs would be capable to implement their proposals.

Regarding baseline studies, the MTE Team still favours the approach that the NGOs do the baseline studies by themselves to make sure that they are also looking for the information needed, to confirm the achievements of the target indicators. Furthermore, it is utmost importance that the baseline studies are written in the first 6 months of a project to have a clear steering tool in hands. In this context, it is important that baseline studies elaborate in detail what the target indicators need, not the other way around as the indicators are laid down in the logical frameworks and are integrated part of the contractual obligations the NGOs should achieve.

The issue of SMARTer indicators raises the question, why these indicators have not been discussed more in detail before signing the contracts? It is difficult to start a project without knowing the performance indicators and to adjust them later. Of course, an adjustment of indicators and changes in the log frames should always be possible when needed, but at EU-SIRD it was possibly already obvious that the indicators would not fit for performance monitoring.

Furthermore, the EUD was obviously aware from the beginning that the NGOs are not having good M&E systems in place. If the EUD would have been convinced that M&E on NGOs' side is functioning well, it would not have instructed the TA Team accordingly. Finally, the EUD had most likely doubts that the NGOs have sufficient capacities; would it have been more appropriate not to approve the applications, if the EUD is not convinced about the management capacities of the NGOs? Eventually, that turned out later as the ToR for the TA Team might have been revised, compared to the original tender.

Eventually, the management and technical capacities (commercial issues, value chain) of the NGOs have not been as good as expected or not as described in the project proposals and therefore the TA Team might have been tasked with these specific duties. During project implementation, it might have turned out as well that the not all the foreseen staff was available, or at least not from the beginning.

Finally, the Head Office support of the NGOs can be questioned. Whereas good English skills for reporting have been provided in abundance, the technical support was not overwhelming. For example, ACTED mentioned that the project team in Sri Lanka was supported on a regular basis by the HQ in Paris, which draws on a wealth of experience from ACTED's work in over 40 countries around the world. However, it was not obvious how this international support materialised. This is important to mention as the EUD was looking for international NGOs to make use of their experiences.

These entire possible shortcomings might have been the reason why a TA Team was hired to improve the EU-SIRD performance. Definitely, such a complex programme needs a technical assistance. In general, this TA can be of external source or an in-house "back-up" team within the Delegation. Most likely IIDT as an external service provider was hired, as each project

requires different technical assistance and therefore this approach gives the EUD more flexibility.

Apart from providing support to the NGOs, the TA Team drafted a Theory of Change (ToC) after the start of the projects in 2019, also to bring the different projects closer to each other and to set a base for improved coordination and cooperation. Without a programme level ToC, it would have been difficult to understand the logic of how change is expected to happen in the programme. The drafted ToC helped to bring greater coherence and cohesion amongst the different projects and align them towards reaching the overall programme objective. The document was developed in consultation with the projects so that there is ownership by the NGOs as the implementing organisations. However, the ToC is not following a vertical logic but places all different programme components in parallel at one level. The MTE Team has developed a ToC for the projects in Lot 2 to show how different interventions will contribute to each other following the vertical logic. This approach shows clearly, that not all planned interventions follow this logic and some of them will not contribute to reaching the overall objectives of the project. See [Annex 5.13](#).

Of course, the programme ToC should have been developed at the design stage of the programme and the projects should have had to align with it at the time of submitting their proposals. It is evident that the CfPs was done without having a ToC in mind and without stricter guidelines, what the projects and the programme want to achieve.

3.7 Coordination between EU-SIRD programme and GoSL

Many development aid projects have a Project Steering Committee (PSC), more in order to overlook than to steer the different activities. Additionally, it is a sign of ownership, if governments actively engage in such meetings. The beneficiary country is often represented by a high-level representative from the government, e.g., Secretary of the Ministry of National Policies, Economic Affairs, Resettlement and Rehabilitation, Northern Province Development and Youth Affairs. Usually these meetings take place every 6 months so the EU-SIRD should have faced now the 6th or 7th Steering Committee Meeting. In fact, so far only one meeting took place at the end of July 2019. The 2nd SC Meeting was agreed to be held in December 2019, but did not take place. Missing regular SC Meetings makes the coordination between different stakeholders and the government more difficult.

The MTE Team had an exchange of emails with Mr. Somathilake H.P. from the National Planning Department, focal point at the Ministry of National Policies and Economic Affairs at project start.

He emphasised that the “Government and Project Partners have good cooperation at the national level and sub-national levels. No, conflicts do not have reported.” He was also satisfied with the reporting procedures and mentioned “partners are sharing the information on the time when requested”. Finally, he mentioned that he had “regular contacts with partners”.

Only due to the COVID-19 pandemic, he had a limited chance to assist them. However, before COVID-19, he had contacted the implementing NGOs and advised them “how to implement projects align with the government policies”.

The coordination between GoSL and the implementing iNGOs was good, the reporting well done and obviously, the projects have been implemented in line with the government policies.

According to the statements above, from the government's perspective the performance of their coordination role was good. Monitoring was eventually understood in the way that NGOs are reporting whenever something was requested, in other words a rather passive approach.

However, because only one Steering Committee Meeting took place in 2019, it seems that the NGOs did not receive much strategic direction and oversight for the implementation of the overall programme and respective projects.

4. Conclusions and recommendations

4.1 Lessons learnt, findings

The economic activities in the targeted four districts in Uva and Central Province are poorly developed, and vulnerable people, especially the ones living in the tea growing areas, are looking for on- and off-farm income generating activities. This is especially valid for women and youth, who face more difficulties than men do. To overcome these problems, the EU-SIRD programme focuses (under Result Area 1) on improved livelihoods and increased household income levels.

Apart from these difficulties, women and children below the age of five have an urgent need for improved health and nutrition. To improve the current situation, the EU-SIRD programme supports (under Result Area 2) activities aiming at setting up sustainable water management systems, promoting the three components of Water Sanitation and Hygiene (i.e. access to safe water, access to sanitation, and hygiene promotion) and nutrition specific activities.

Finally, rural people in these districts face poor socio-economic service delivery by local authorities, community organisations, and private institutions. The EU-SIRD is supporting in this field by assisting in improving the capacity and efficiency of local institutions (under the cross-cutting Result Area 3).

Currently five NGOs are trying to overcome these deficits, whereas three focus rather on the economic-oriented Result Area 1 and two focus on the rather health and nutrition oriented Result Area 2.

Taking into consideration that they have an overall budget of Euro 30 million over a project duration from mid-2017 towards roughly end-2021, achievements so far are modest.

Additionally, some achievements (current values) such as ACTED's specific objectives, OXFAM's % increase in number of local enterprises in target area, No. of organisations supported by REDA and Dept. of Rural Development and Construction demonstrating improvements in their capacity to build and maintain quality relationships with private sector are not measured (yet) so that it is partially unknown what the current status is and what the results will be.

It is important that all log frames show current values besides final targets to see at a glance the performance of the specific interventions. It is not suitable to state that this value will be measured later on or within another evaluation. It needs actual data to manage a project.

The deficits in project management are obvious and include:

- Poor project design without clear milestones (as interim results of Y2, Y3 and Y4) and timetables.
- Poor M&E due to limited data collection and therefore incomplete reporting to the EUD (so that it comes at least at the EU side to a limited understanding and an information deficit); reporting is also often “complicated” and is not showing a clear priority of activities.
- Missing (in-house) expertise, mainly in technical (agriculture, hygiene, nutrition, construction), economic, socio-economic and financial areas; difficulties to recruit long-term experts if duty station is in Uva or Central Province.
- Broad range of activities on NGO’s side and therefore no real focus of interventions.
- Counterparts (including authorities) show limited ownership, partially as the self-contribution to grants, machines, premises and others is limited; mentality might say that if it does not work out with this donor, then another will come).
- Major concerns of vulnerable women and youth are highlighted in the beginning and get out of focus later on.

Conclusions

As this project is very specific as in fact, there are five projects to be evaluated and these projects could be divided again into two different lots, the MTE Team is bringing conclusions as well as recommendations per lot, starting with the overall valid ones for the specific lot before adding more project-specific ones. Some of the conclusions as well as recommendations can be found in both lots and therefore it is recommended to read the text for both lots, as not to be too repetitive, some facts are just mentioned once.

Lot 1 for all three projects

- Transferred and applied skills show impact and will be sustainable, as e.g., farmers who have received good training and who achieve better farming results due to this training, will continue to improve their skills on their own and thus increase their yields further.
- Log frames are poorly designed and do not properly mirror the project set-up and hierarchy of goals. Most likely, the indicators proposed by the NGOs were not sufficiently reshaped and clarified. It turned out that in most cases they are not SMART; e.g., not Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant and Time-bound.
- The columns “current values” are partially until today empty, not showing any intermediary results. If intermediary results were reported more often, then the reader would see the development. The log frames of this lot often show in the baseline column “Baseline recorded (2018)” without providing a value and in the current value column “n/a – will be measured in endline”; in other words, no information is available where the project stands actually.
- Self-reported data and statements can be misleading, as beneficiaries (and those are the ones usually interviewed) will not criticise the NGOs as long as they get machines and grants. It needs evidence-based data, collected by the M&E units on the ground.
- Imprecise terminology reduces the readability of the log frames and reports; for example, one of the targets and indicators was that managers of MSMEs should receive rural advisory services with EU support. The first question that arises is what is in this project a typical MSME? The official definition of MSME is clear but in this case, it might be a subsistence farmer; this is irritating as it is not well described. Furthermore, what kind of rural advisory services will these people receive? Do the services cover

economic, technical or social issues? Are rural advisory services something related to veterinary services, or is business registration for rural companies here incorporated as well? Another example: The productivity and economic profitability of selected local value chains in target areas should be enhanced. The achievement will be measured by the indicator providing the number of hectares of agricultural ecosystems where sustainable land management practices have been introduced. What is the applied definition of sustainable land management? How will it be measured? What is the measurable difference between “traditional” and sustainable land management? Do the farmers increase their incomes if they apply on their land sustainable land management?

- All projects failed to develop a Theory of Change which would have allowed them to review their internal vertical logic.
- All projects seem to be too big, too complex and because of that, too expensive, consequently being a huge management challenge for the implementing NGOs.
- Management deficits are partially based on poor data availability, starting often with inadequate and late conducted baseline studies and limited M&E; field work like measurements of agricultural yields, analyses of balance sheets or other business records, close cooperation with tax authorities – these mentioned approaches to collect data (and to analyse them afterwards) were most likely not done often.
- Reporting is not done in a more or less uniformed way and often it does not reflect the indicators.
- Limited management capacities combined with limited technical expertise result in poorer project performance. It is not expected that the NGOs have all expertise within their core staff, but the required capacities should be made available at project’s start – and where needed; that is usually in the field.
- M&E is weak within all five implementing agencies. As long as soft facts like number of training courses or number of policy papers are demanded, the monitoring will focus too much on outputs and neglect the impacts. It needs more upfront-specified key data that has to be monitored – to determine project’s progress and to allow meaningful reporting.
- The private sector is not playing the role that it could; e.g., business services and veterinary services could have been purchased / facilitated by the private sector as well. The cooperation with the private sector was not approached intensively enough; almost all “common” infrastructures, from marketplaces to processing centres and irrigation channels could have been built with the private sector too; in case that an individual should not benefit, it would have been feasible to create all kind of cooperatives to make property “common” again. E.g., farmers who are in the same VC could have established an agricultural cooperative that builds joint processing facilities on private land. - The provision of substantial infrastructures was not sufficiently critical reflected; e.g., much too often the government becomes the final beneficiary as the owner of business centre production facilities, marketplaces and others.
- Ownership is strong if e.g., equipment was subsidised by matching grants; the smaller the beneficiaries’ contribution, the smaller the ownership. When it comes to common infrastructure or facilities owned by the “public”, then the ownership is usually very low.
- Training should change the way of thinking and the applied approach. A critical reflection is missing such as „was the training in business plan development“ useful? Could participants increase their profitability or at least turnover after the training? (List of participants are rather meaningless.)

Conclusions concerning ACTED

- As intensive (log frame) discussions in the approval phase of the proposals might not have taken place, it was not clarified how to measure the indicators; e.g., the agricultural value added per hectare among target producing MSMEs; can be applied for farmers only.
- It is important to measure turnover of MSMEs, and profits if possible, to document the business development trend. An indicator like signed purchase or sales agreements is meaningless, if the agreements were not binding; if binding, they would be sales contracts. Counting sales contracts is also not meaningful as it will be easier to measure turnover of MSMEs and profit.
- As seen in Output 2, ACTED is trying to “enable” Local Business Development Services providers, including financial institutions, to support target MSMEs to improve their economic development. As repeatedly mentioned, the log frames are weak and it is not relevant, if the service providers are able to do something, but if the economic performance of the targeted MSMEs is improving. The MTE Team is aware that ACTED has no direct influence how the MSMEs are running their businesses, but in this case it does not require an enabling business environment, it needs “consumed” services that then directly improve the economic performance.
- Getting a business registration is not a major obstacle for MSMEs as there are more urgently needed services like financial consultation and access to finance, production technology, marketing and access to markets. It is mainly in the interest of the authorities to get MSMEs registered but the authorities are not the beneficiaries. A female, poor tea-picker has other concerns than to formalise her business (to implement her business idea).

Conclusions concerning CARE

- It was mentioned that there is a broad range of activities on NGO’s side, and the MTE Team thinks that the focus on too many areas of intervention is diluting the success of the project. CARE is improving the entrepreneurial culture of the targeted beneficiaries. It is doing that in six major areas in the MSME sector: income generation, employment, technology development, market development, business skill improvement and business growth and sustainability; that clearly demonstrates how many activities are undertaken and that is fine, but it needs a prioritisation of the major areas. Obviously, it is not the aim of CARE to improve the business skills of the targeted beneficiaries, if that would not lead to more income and employment. Maybe that is obvious, but in that case, it should be clearly noted in the reports. Additional income generation is taking place if the MSMEs are performing better than in the past and that is essential. If technologies have been developed or not is not relevant, as long as that does not lead to higher profitability (when speaking about economic projects).
- Grant investments can boost the economic performance of MSMEs and are therefore provided. Getting more transparency, it would be good to list – MSME per MSME – what was the volume of assets before the project, what was the grant investment and what was their own investment as a follow-up of the grant investment. It would be quite meaningful to see, that Euro 10 of grant investment (100%) would initiate an additional MSME investment e.g., Euro 30. Maybe that is even stated somewhere, but if so, then it is not easy to find – but would be a key message from the project.

Conclusions concerning OXFAM

- OXFAM is working with four agricultural value chains and the dairy value chain has already been a huge challenge.
- Some interventions like production and marketing of seed potatoes have not really started yet and the available data are pure theoretical; 1-2 years of practical work will show if the assumptions have been good and robust enough so that the activities will last for the sake of the seed potato and potato farmers.
- Missed opportunities to include deeper the private sector are cooperation of milk collection through MILCO and veterinary services through the corresponding department of the ministry. In addition, the supported Business Development Services have been mainly from the governmental side.

Lot 2 for both projects

- The design of the two projects under Lot 2 is related to the call for proposals from the EU. The overall programme design was based on a desk study which was done by a consultative group. The programme and project design reflect the specific expertise of this consultative group. The main nutrition problems in Sri Lanka were not part of the entire programme design.
- Both projects failed to develop a Theory of Change which would have allowed them to review their internal vertical logic.
- Roughing filter system in the uplift motion of flow and treated water could exceed the filter-media if inflow and outflow is not equal due to the seasonal variation and stagnate on the top. This stagnant water influences algae formation which is dangerous for health concerns. Once the operation of the scheme started, ADRA and Solidaridad should closely monitor the rough filter to avoid the stagnation of water. The permanent shade (cover) should be placed on the top of the roughing filter in-order to control algae.
- Both projects should contribute to improved nutrition and health but there is no expertise within the projects, understanding the concept of integrated food and nutrition security. Thus, understanding the need to implement an integrated approach is not visible. This leads to the fact that e.g. trainings in WASH and nutrition trainings are not combined but implemented in silos. In general, the MTE Team did not see a good training concept (in terms of content, implementation structure and gender sensitivity) and some of them are not well integrated into the governmental training structures.
- The training activities may have contributed to increased awareness amongst the beneficiaries. Whether this will contribute to behaviour change is questionable.
- The WASH trainings have received an increasing attention due to the pandemic situation. However, this interest is not necessarily attributable to the project but to the current situation and the danger will be that activities like handwashing will lose importance, once the pandemic is over.
- Both projects show a concentration on outputs and activities, which are measured. However, there is less emphasis on measuring outcomes.
- Another sign is that the projects want to combat undernutrition or undernourishment, but they are not investing in increasing food availability and access. The garden components are usually meant to increase dietary diversity with the aim of reducing micronutrient deficiencies. However, reducing micronutrient deficiencies is not present in the entire log frame.

- Garden activities (called home garden, nutrition garden, and school garden) are always appreciated. They were implemented sometimes well organised, sometimes without real concept. Sometimes beneficiaries were tired of taking part in just another exercise.
- Briefly, the baseline surveys did not measure malnutrition and did not do a proper determinant analysis, which would be needed to understand the bottlenecks that are to be addressed. It would inform home garden activities in terms of:
 - which foods are already grown or available at the markets?
 - which nutrients in the diet of people are missing?
 - which potential crops need to be grown in order to close the gap.
- Although the overall objective has nutrition improvement, the specific nutrition interventions targeting the improvement of the under nutrition of under-five children are not adequately implemented and it is doubtful whether it could be done in the last year to make an impact.
- The baseline surveys revealed that diarrheal diseases are not as prevalent as perhaps suspected. However, both projects are investing a lot to improve water and sanitation.

Conclusions concerning ADRA

- WMC formed with two members from each line houses and this shows WMC is an effective representation from the community. This concept could help to enable the community contribution of 15%. However, it has to be mentioned that neither WMCs nor HNCs have been registered yet. Whether it is advisable to always establish new groups is questionable in terms of sustainability. It would have been advisable to use existing groups for nutrition and WASH trainings. In this context, a closer collaboration with the MOH is needed in terms of all training activities.
- The water quality improvements brought by ADRA's design and construction is significant as compared to the existing system (removal of turbidity and solid particles is much higher).
- Providing toilet facilities (owner driven approach) to improve the hygiene practices is much appreciated.
- The support to menstrual hygiene is helpful as girls can go back to school. The plan to start an initiative to bring down taxes on sanitary pads is commendable, provided the project succeeds. However, the time left to start this important campaign is little and it would need a mechanism to continue this activity after the project has phased out.
- Activities to fight against GBV have been concentrated on hospital level only. There is a missing link to community sensitisation so that the services at hospital level will be used in a more efficient way. (Link to Mithuru Piyasa).
- ACCEND project has planned to print IEC materials in collaboration with MoH and use it for nutrition education and awareness creation. The collaboration with the MoH is recommendable. However, the MTE Team feels that it will be difficult to measure, how this material will contribute to a change during the project period.
- The two proposed research projects have not been implemented yet but were stuck in the design phase. It will not be possible to complete them and in addition, it is questionable whether the present idea will provide a good contribution to Sri Lanka's nutrition problems.
- Finally, the idea to contribute to the unknown kidney disease from the onset was not clear in the context of the overall log frame.

Conclusions concerning Solidaridad

- The basic concept of improving the water quality is not maintained in some of the water projects and awareness related water quality was neglected in their WASH planning activities. Improvement of water quality should have included the protection of water sources (catchment protection) as per CfP.
- During the procurement of construction material, the project has, at times, purchased substandard materials, which are already fixed and need to be replaced. It seems that there was a lack of a quality control mechanism when purchasing the materials.
- In the schools according to the specific requirement, water quality is improved through the introduction of activated carbon filters. However, fixing arrangements are not uniform and vary from district to district.
- The project has developed nutrition related materials and has done a training of trainers. In addition, they published these materials on an open source platform to make them available to all partners (not only within the programme). It is still unclear how this approach will be replicated, unless a clear handing over and exit strategy will be developed during the last months of the project.
- Most of the activities planned in the “soft” sector have been completed but the hardware sector lacks behind. In addition, the activities are not well synchronised between hardware and software, meaning that training and WASH installations do not go hand in hand.
- Gender mainstreaming has not been the main focus from the onset. However, with assistance of the EU TA Team, they developed a gender action plan and with time put increasing efforts into this topic. Solidaridad is planning a gender assessment which will be implemented outside the scope of the project under review.

4.2 Recommendations

Lot 1 for all three projects

Better **project design** with upfront-established ToC, better log frames with SMART indicators and milestones including a strict timetable. It is recommended not to change log frames during project implementation; that can be done at project’s start when discussing all details with the EU Delegation before the start of the activities.

More efficient **M&E units** with economic experts (if talking about economic projects) capable of doing all baseline studies (reflecting the baselines and the targets), regular data collection, especially concerning beneficiaries (not based on self-declared statements); these M&E units should do a more harmonised reporting (similar for each NGO) that could be reduced / compacted to 1-2 pages monthly bringing the key data like equipment and grants handed over, percentage of total budget spent (divided in few main categories), and other activities.

Construction work is of relevance to all three projects but none of the NGOs is specialised in this field. As Sri Lanka is a rather bureaucratic country, it is complicated getting environment permits, construction permits, and many others. Each paper and permit can be additional obstacles, and to solve them, it needs time. The recommendation for upcoming projects is to drastically reduce “funding” for construction work or at least to select consultancies / NGOs with sound experience in major construction projects. Finally, ToR of NGO’s staff should be well defined in the selection criteria according to the project scope.

Procurement is difficult, especially if dealing with hundreds of different machines, equipment etc. Would be easier to move to matching grants, providing from project's side a 40% financial contribution (anyway less than 50% to keep ownership of beneficiaries) and let the beneficiaries pre-finance the investment (like the EU agricultural support projects in Europe, called IPARD).

Improved **management capacity** from the beginning; full time experts located in the target areas on full time basis and not in Colombo; e.g., when doing seed potatoes, then it needs a seed potato expert.

Remain **focused on the beneficiaries**, vulnerable people in the selected districts, mainly women and youth – regardless in what sub-activity. Progress for the vulnerable should be better monitored.

Make use of **potential synergies** from the beginning between NGOs and also with other stakeholders; e.g., cooperate with agricultural extension service with clear responsibilities and duties; what is important is that projects facilitate something; e.g., the activities do not necessarily have to be executed by in-house employees, but that tasks can be sourced out to the public sector too (without that the public sector is paid therefore); also more cooperation with the private sector is recommended, leaving room for synergies as well.

To focus more on **technical trainings** conducted by sector specialists; less on management, finance, business plan writing, project cycle management, etc.

Do a **series of workshops** now, always one NGO with the EUD, and define a new timetable; in the remaining period focus only on construction and procurement that can be realised within the project duration. - Do not sign any further obligations from now on.

Recommendations concerning ACTED

- Make a short analysis (if there is sufficient time and expertise) to see how business registration helped 10 women-led MSMEs to improve their performance.
- Include English lessons when providing training to target BDS providers as internet researches will not be successful without fair command in English.

Recommendations concerning CARE

- Projects should not target issues that cannot be fully controlled by the project. It is fine to develop a policy paper on a governmental Business Service Centre but it is not recommended to create dependencies as waiting for approval from a cabinet. If GoSL wishes such a policy paper, go ahead in developing it and remain open for further discussions. However, do not put the project and the EUD under pressure to build these centres as the beneficiary then could ask for more, knowing that this is anyhow budgeted in the project. – Linked to that is the Strategy 06, where a draft proposal for amendment of relevant acts, proposed new laws, regulations and amendments will be conveyed to the Ministry of Industry and Commerce and other ministries. That is a reasonable approach and then it is the responsibility of the recipient to go ahead.

Recommendations concerning OXFAM

- Too late to skip some value chains, but make a priority list where tangible results can be expected; most likely dairy and cinnamon have the most potential from today's perspective.
- In upcoming projects, it would be good to start with test production immediately – to gain experience.
- Make a report how the seed potato project will allow additional income for the producer of seed potatoes and how the other potato farmers will benefit; will it be cheaper seed material, better seed material, or contract farming where rice and quality will be upfront agreed with final buyers.
- Make a workshop about the potential benefits when farmers are owning and running a milk collection centre. Will there be additional benefits if the farmers' group (association, cooperative, etc.) would own a milk truck to have the choice to deliver whoever offers best prices?

Lot 2 for both projects

- All laid pipes for distribution and transmission should be buried at least 450 mm in order to protect the pipes from direct sun light and effect of soil erosion.
- The MTE Team could not witness the action for catchment protection other than Nuwara Eliya district and as per the CfP, all the catchments should be protected. Introducing Water Safety Plan (all community water supply scheme government introducing Water Safety Plan) must be as part of the sustainability including with catchment protection.
- To ensure the improved water quality, ADRA and Solidaridad should test the water quality at the end user and at the intake location for verification. If possible, compare these quality data with baseline information and measurements, which were taken before starting the water schemes.
- For future project applications, please prepare a Theory of Change and question all activities concerning their contribution to the overall objective. This implies a log frame including the vertical logic and well-chosen and realistic indicators (SMART).
- Projects with a nutrition focus need a baseline survey, which collects anthropometric data and potential determining factors. This will allow projects to choose the most important interventions and target activities towards the most vulnerable people and households in the society. This could mean as well that the log frame will need a first adaptation, based on baseline results.
- Develop a comprehensive training strategy, including the following aspects:
 - What are the main determinants of the nutrition problems in the area?
 - Are these issues addressed in the present training materials?
 - Integrate WASH messages as an integral part.
 - Mainstream gender into these activities as a topic and in terms of targeting.
- The implementation of home-gardens needs to be based on a needs assessment (current food diversity, current nutrient deficiencies in the diet, local availability of land, seeds, tools and markets).
- Develop an exit strategy which includes:
 - how can we ensure sustainability of the newly formed groups (ADRA)?
 - handing over of training activities and concepts.

- Although not very strong elaborated, the baseline report recommendations should also be considered. That seems to be not taken seriously reflected by both projects.

Recommendations concerning ADRA

- The project has to ensure the sustainability of water supply scheme in the sense that these can be handled by WMCs.
- The project should design community-based approaches linking the community with the Mithuru Piyasa. This is necessary to sensitise the communities with respect to gender equality and issues of GBV.
- Discuss with MoH the Implement of nutrition specific interventions targeting undernourished children in all three areas.
- Stop all research activities and reserve the budget. This could be spent in a regional research project to help understanding the constantly high rates of child wasting (emergency level) across the region.

Recommendations concerning Solidaridad

- Implement a study to assess behaviour changes due to the various types of BCC and IPC trainings. A detailed study could help to understand how these trainings contribute to the Theory of Change.
- Develop transitioning plans and a sustainability strategy for CBOs.
- Ensure proper utilization of the developed nutrition and wash related materials.
- According to the CfP (WP 2.2) in hilly and estate areas, springs/streams would be protected in locations and catchment areas fenced off to prevent contamination of water points by human and animal activity. The MTE Team observed in Nuwara Eliya preliminary actions have been taken for catchment protection, whereas on the other hand in other districts an incredibly low priority is given for the catchment protection. Water Safety Plan is part of all community water supply scheme as per the government criteria. This Water Safety Plan must be introduced with help of DNCW as part of the sustainability including with catchment protection.
- Improved water supply is a key element in Solidaridad's concept. In the villages, people give a low priority to water quality and supply. In Wanarani village, Matale, the community receives - after the improvement of the water supply - water from the same source as the existing system without water treatment and addition with chlorination. The community is not aware about the water quality and the corresponding WASH plan; the water quality was simply neglected. Solidaridad might consider the improvement of water quality, which would enhance the health and hygiene practices within the community.
- Finally, continuous climate change is increasing the potential instances of water shortages. It may be worth introducing and supporting alternative water sources such as rainwater harvesting as a source of water for washing, gardening and sanitation purposes or creating possible backup water storage for drier periods or meet supply shortfalls in regular water supply. The approach to harvest rainwater is principally sound, however, in the past, most rainwater harvesting activities failed in the long run because of maintenance issues so that in upcoming interventions the maintenance must be prioritised when tackling rainwater harvesting.

5. Annexes

5.1 ACTED – detailed activities and achievements

In continuation of Chapter 3, the MTE Team will describe in a more detailed analysis the activities and achievements of the project.

The MTE Team is starting the evaluation primarily from the log frame, which should provide an overview of the project's goal, activities and anticipated results. Of special importance is the current situation and if the targets, according to the selected SMART indicators, will be or will be most likely achieved.

Looking at the specific objectives, the IED project intends to increase the income of employees of targeted MSMEs, increase the turnover of these MSMEs, create additional jobs and to improve the agricultural productivity. These indicators are well selected and could have provided objective results.

Finally, the EUD proposed to add the indicator “% increase of no. of productive assets”, targeting at assets that have not been provided by the project. This indicator seems to be questionable, because productive assets like machines usually increase quickly the turnover and if done properly, the profitability. Counting productive assets like machines in a company does not bring more insights into the commercial performance.

All the indicators for the specific objectives have been measured mainly by telephone interviews with stakeholders. The data provided to MTE Team are hard to be verified. However, ACTED emphasised that within its monitoring activities, the following documents are checked to verify all data collected from MSMEs: business registration; leasing/deeds; invoices; vouchers/bills; bank statements; employment contracts; pay rolls; check rolls; business insurances; GAP/SLS certificates, and training certificates.⁶

ACTED further explained “that if the M&E or programme team observes any inconsistency during data collection, they ask further questions to cross-check the information. At present, the above physical evidence is verified at all 320 MSMEs although of course not all MSMEs have all of the above documents available for cross-check during each visit. Nonetheless, the situation is in stark contrast to the baseline where less than 10 MSMEs had written employment contracts for staff and only a few were maintaining business records. That initial situation also helps to explain some of the limitations of the baseline and complications faced in measuring indicators over the course of the project”.

Sound information and data should in the best case be provided by bank statements, (certified) financial audits, social security contributions by companies for officially employed persons, signatures of informally employed seasonal workers showing that they have received in cash their remuneration and so on.

One of the specific objectives is the improvement of the agricultural productivity, which should be measured in agricultural value added per hectare. Often farmers don't have or have limited records and thus could not provide reliable data and track records; however, the field visit and

⁶ This double-check might be useful to be done during the final evaluation.

random checks showed that ACTED supported farmers to maintain hard records of their daily accounts. However, ACTED did not make analyses, e.g. gross-margin analyses together with farmers to get a rough idea about the development of yields, costs for input and revenues; the total number of involved farmers might be too big, but e.g. randomly selected 5% of all supported farmers should have been analysed in detail. In the meantime ACTED reported that this issue is from now on addressed.

Because of not well-documented data collection (or at least not having received corresponding reports), the MTE Team cannot verify if the reported incomes and number of jobs have increased or if the number of agricultural productivity was improved since project's start.

Of course, based on softer indicators, some presented findings seem to be realistic, but the evaluation would have expected a more thorough analysis by the M&E unit of ACTED. Under Sub-chapter 4.2. "Recommendations" the MTE Team will propose some changes for the remaining project duration, that will allow ACTED to capture some few verifiably data.

The overall objective of IED is to bring the proportion of employees of targeted MSMEs living below USD 1.25 (PPP) per day from 21.5% (2018/19) to around 11%. According to ACTED the value for August 2020 was 19.74%; given the economic crisis, it is not realistic that ACTED will achieve the target within the remaining lifespan of the project. (It is not clear why the baseline data have been shown for 2018/19 and not for 2017.)

ACTED wants that 80% of all target MSME's employees are reporting a 15% increase in income. An intensive coaching of the targeted MSMEs might have allowed such a target, when starting in mid-2017. From today's perspective, it does not seem realistic to the MTE Team, that ACTED can achieve this target.

Regarding the 25% increase in turnover by the end of the project, ACTED explains that – again - turnover rates have been recorded on a monthly basis since April 2020 only. From the current perspective, it does not seem realistic that this target will be achieved. ACTED stated further, that early data showed 70-80% turnover decrease from the baseline, but if the context remains stable (no further heavy lockdowns) then 60% of MSMEs could recover their losses to reach their baseline turnover level by July 2021. Furthermore, ACTED expects that 50% of MSMEs will reach the 25% increase target by the end of 2021, but without further explanation why that should be the case.

The creation of additional 1,000 jobs in the selected VCs – in the agro-input and output side, not in farming itself - moving from 765 fulltime jobs to 1,765, will not be achieved, as the curfew period had a significant impact on agricultural sectors and the income losses along the VC will not allow creating new employment within the project timeframe.

ACTED is proposing to measure instead business connections, but according to the MTE Team that is not a comparable indicator; it would be better to stick with the fulltime jobs as an indicator.

The indicator "increase of 20% of value added per hectare" in the selected agricultural VCs remains valid according to ACTED, however here are no baseline figures available yet.

The project set-up from ACTED focuses on three complementary sets of activity:

- (1) Strengthening SMEs (output 1) that are part of value chains with high potential for expansion, inclusion and diversification through provision of planning support, trainings, assets and linkages;
- (2) Improving the Business Development Services (BDS) mainly in the fields of coordination and organizational/technical competencies (output 2);
- (3) Promotion of a business enabling environment to favour long-term support to the SMEs (output Capacity building of local governance actors with a focus on integrated, climate-resilient and inclusive socio-economic development, coordination mechanisms (notably Enterprise Development Forums) and District Disaster Management.

Table 1 ACTED - Summary Outputs 1 – 3

#	Activity	Sub activities	Project Target	Activity completed	Achievement (%)
1.1	Capacitate MSMEs in target value-chains to expand their business and create sustainable employment for vulnerable people in the local economy	Create additional 1,000 jobs in target MSMEs, including: 500 for women, 100 for PwD, 300 for plantation community, 500 for farmers	1000	-46	-5
		Develop 320 Business Plans for target MSMEs during the project.	320	320	100
		Number of training days provided to the target MSMEs	13	11	85
		Value of assets or capital transferred to target MSMEs	2,105,600	619,941	29
		Signed purchase or sales agreements	640	0	0
		New or improved common business facilities are functioning in target areas	15	3	20
		Rural advisory services are received by MSME managers with EU support	320	320	100
1.2	Enable Local Business Development Services providers, including financial institutions, to support target MSMEs to pursue their development	Increase the performance of supported BDS providers - measured through the Private Sector Report Card	90%	0	0
		Develop certain number of individual action plans for the improvement of target BDS	60	59	99
		Draft document(s) that clarify the roles of the target BDS providers	1	1	100
		Transfer certain value of assets to target BDS	240,000	166,523	69
1.3	Encourage local authorities and deconcentrated	Improve the scoring of CSOs on ACTED tailored	70	39	56

government departments to improve the enabling business environment for target MSMEs through localised planning	capacity assessment tool by at least 1 point			
	Train target government agents and LA staff on participatory processes	400	86	22
	Develop inclusive risk-sensitive VDPs	80	80	100
	Develop inclusive, resilient and multi-stakeholder economic development plans	16	16	100
	Provide grants for CSOs or public private partnerships for implementation of the economic development plan successfully	20	19	95
	Provide grants to support resilience of stakeholders in the target value chains	6 for BDS and 80 for MSMEs	€ 15,000 out of € 50,000	
Relevant institutions commit a percentage to allocate a budget for prioritized needs in the DS economic development plans	40 % of prioritised needs			
Develop dissemination plans by district DMCs, which include warning and forecasting information for the business sector	4			

Ad Output 1

The supported value chains include dairy, vegetables, mushrooms, fruit, floriculture, and spices. Several market studies have been made but they provided rather general information, did not focus on the indicators in the log frame, and therefore can hardly be used for the needed baseline assessments. The support by ACTED materialised in different kinds of training (e.g., business plan writing) and provision of rural advisory services, in setting up common business facilities like mushroom spawn (seed) production centre, organic fertilizer and agriculture inputs production centre, fruit and vegetable dehydration centre, milk collection centre and others. Related to setting up common infrastructure, often business plans have been made. For example, the plan for the Bibila Pradasaba common marketplace provides details about the profitability from the point of the owner, but does not make specific assumptions, how much vendors have to sell to cover expenditures and make a profit. From the perspective of development aid one would have assumed that the vendors should be the beneficiaries and not the government as owner of this facility.

ACTED explained additionally that besides trainings in business plan development, business management, environmental sensitivity and equal employment opportunities there were also workshops, support for registration, licensing and technical trainings, and others. In addition, the provision of assets and financial linkages should be mentioned.

It has to be mentioned that all these common business facilities are heavily delayed, just partially by the pandemic. At some places, the construction has not started yet and even if on other sites the construction is already terminated, then it does not mean that the envisaged

activity started there. The main reason is a poor planning process, as it was not sufficiently considered that all business facilities would need a long time to train people and to coach them as long as they are finally running smoothly by themselves. A thumb-rule could be that the “premises” should be finished at mid-term of the project.

The MTE Team has eventually a slightly different view concerning statements as the project “was completed and handed over by the project in August 2020”. ACTED is not a construction company to build something and to hand it over. ACTED – and the other NGOs too – are sometimes constructing something, to make life of vulnerable people in target areas better. The purpose of e.g., a common market facility is that people improve their revenues. Consequently, it makes no sense to “hand over” a facility as long as it is not providing tangible benefits (mainly in economic terms) for the beneficiaries. As long as the benefits do not materialise, the project is not accomplished and until then it is not sustainable! The more a “construction” project is delayed, the less time remains for bringing it on track and that is one of the problems analysed by the evaluation. Despite an extension of the project seems feasible, it is not granted that it will bring the expected benefits within the extended period.

The common infrastructures are supported to improve the three value chains in the respective areas and set up to resolve the vulnerable people who do not have a common location for long term to put up for sale. A business plan was done for all common infrastructures with cost-benefit analysis; the owners of the businesses are usually from societies that are under the observation of government entities. E.g., Kotmale market centre belongs to authorities but the corresponding society will be in charge to run the centre. A cost-benefit analysis will be helpful for the society to improve the value addition of the products and to create the demand.

In order to enhance the SME’s value chains, small construction activities including supply of equipment and machinery are provided to the targeted SME’s with minimum contribution of 10% from SME’s. This intervention was very relevant for the IED project and had three times more budget than the common market facilities.

Often there is an extreme delay of the construction and procurement. The improvement of value chains has not resulted yet in a measurable increase in employment increment; it is feasible that the impact will materialise in few years.

Ad Output 2

Eventually the terminology “Business Development Service” provider is misleading, as one could understand here that private sector companies are providing mainly non-financial services to the private sector so that the private companies, start-ups or established ones, can start, sustain and grow their businesses.

The project kept the definition for BDS open and at the end, it turned out that only 10-20% of the service providers are from the private sector. The remaining 80-90% are governmental agencies and institutions that are providing their services like business registration, licensing and certification, financed by the Sri Lankan taxpayer.

For these mainly governmental service providers, premises have been rehabilitated or newly constructed and the staff was trained. Usually governmental services are not very good, especially if service providers are poorly paid and it makes sense to support them in delivering better services. However, it is not evident why that many governmental organisations have

been accepted by the project, especially as the EU is keen to support the private sector in each respect.

Without having detailed information, it seems that ACTED - but other NGOs as well - spends considerable time and efforts to get “approvals” from the Ministry of Industry and Commerce, and other institutions. During several online meetings, it was stressed out that in Sri Lanka, the role of the Government is overwhelming and this trend still seems to increase. It makes sense that the EU coordinates its activities with the GoSL. However, the EU is not proposing a “dirty business” but providing development aid and ACTED is implementing a Euro 7 million project, which was agreed upfront with the GoSL. In this context, it seems that the EU is too humble in the negotiations and that the NGOs at least accept too much guidance from governmental institutions. Gaining an official approval to be entitled to donate something sounds as the EU development aid would not be much appreciated.

Looking at the indicators and targets of this Output 2, and keeping in mind that almost all BDS providers have been governmental institutions, it is hard to talk about performance, impact of action plans and documents clarifying the role of the mainly governmental BDS providers. In addition, the indicator of “transferred assets” is not very meaningful, as what does it mean if an office has received a multi-media projector, a scanner, a printer and two laptops? It does not allow any measurement if the work performed by this office is now better than before the overall donation of Euro 240,000.

Ad Output 3

This output focuses on improving the business-enabling environment, especially for MSMEs. In this project, this task is not only given to the local authorities, but also to the Civil Society Organisation (CSOs). Several trainings were facilitated by ACTED, also on integrated, climate-resilient and inclusive socio-economic development, coordination mechanisms (notably Enterprise Development Forums) and District Disaster Management. According to ACTED the trained CSOs and local authorities (200 persons have been trained from the authorities) show a significant increase in their organizational capacity, but how this will assist the vulnerable poor in the districts is not fully understood by the MTE Team. Finally, 80 risk-sensitive Village Development Plans have been elaborated.

Whereas the log frame is talking under 3.4 about inclusive, resilient and multi-stakeholder economic development plans, the narrative report is dealing with Enterprise Development Forum. The log frame mentions as a risk that the Enterprise Development Forums might not remain a priority plan for the National Enterprise Development Authority (NEDA). These forums have the ambition of being multi-stakeholder sector platforms, gathering entrepreneurs, governmental staff, BDS providers, CSOs (farmers group/producer groups, Women/RDS), plantation trade unions, plantation estates managers and others. The objective is to promote economic development and identify economic opportunities. In principle that is a good idea, but of course seriously handicapped by the pandemic.

By August 2020, according to ACTED 16 forums have been established although some were not functioning to the expected levels as ACTED was unable to sufficiently address the complications created by COVID-19 and institutional problems within government agencies (lack of staff at NEDA, etc.). ACTED has since been regularly following up with the relevant authorities to address this.

Then 16 inclusive, resilient and multi-stakeholder economic development plans have been developed and linked to that, 18 grants have been provided to CSOs or public private partnerships for implementation of the economic development plans. Therefore, the project provided a budget of Euro 256,000. Results of the output and impact of these grant-assisted plans are not known yet as ACTED has not measured the achievements of the economic development plans yet.

The last task is the elaboration/revision and dissemination of District Disaster Management Plans by the Disaster Management Centres (DMCs). The purpose is to improve the communication from the Disaster Management Centre (under the Ministry of Defence) to the agriculture private sector at district and divisional level. Current communications from the DMC is limited and not widely accessible for the agriculture MSMEs who rely on this information to mitigate and manage their crops and businesses, especially during at-risk seasons (cyclones, floods, and drought). To support improvements and updates in the warning systems the project provides Euro 24,000.

It is astonishing how widespread the activities of ACTED are, all with the purpose “to contribute to poverty reduction”. Furthermore, it is remarkable how many plans have been made; business plans, Village Development Plans, economic development plans, and District Disaster Management Plans. Most of these plans have been supported by grants.

Summarising, it has to be stated that the overall objective reducing the percentage of employees of targeted MSMEs living below \$1.25 (PPP) per day by 50% will not be achieved. The first three specific objectives such as increase in income, increase in turnover and number of jobs created will not be achieved; job creation might not even reach the baseline, because of COVID-19. The 4th indicator is the agricultural value added; no data have been entered in the baseline column in the log frame and also no current values are available. This is astonishing as ACTED is dealing mainly with agricultural VCs. The last specific objective was the increase of productive assets, an indicator that was added later on because requested by the EUD. Altogether, none of the formal targets according to the log frame will be achieved and that is just partially due to COVID-19.

The focus under Output 1 on value chains is good, but most likely too many different VCs have been selected and also too much priority was given on construction work, an area where NGOs generally do not have much competency; more training, more joint field and farm visits (also with pragmatic sector experts), more recording is needed and it is not too late to do it from now on more intense. A tractor might collapse, but the well-trained farming skills will stay after the project’s end.

The main emphasis of Output 2 to improve BDS is important, as it needs more expertise at all types of enterprises; for the MTE Team it is disappointing that here so much efforts have been spent on governmental institutions and that these institutions have been financially heavily supported. The money would have been better invested, if it had been given as matching grants to the private sector.

Finally, Output 3 is promoting an enabling business environment for MSMEs, again a good choice. In practice however, this output looks mainly on different studies and economic development plans and it is not obvious how these plans are creating a better business environment.

As indicated earlier, the project is too complex, and with Euro 7 million too expensive and therefore brings ACTED's management capacities at its limits. That none of the main target will be achieved is partially due to the pandemic circumstances.

5.2 CARE – detailed activities and achievements

In continuation of Chapter 3, the MTE Team will describe in a more detailed analysis the activities and achievements of the project.

Training is always the right choice to capacitate the trainees; focus is again on women and young people. To transfer the gained knowledge into practice, generous support is offered to the trainees, if they submit sound business projects with corresponding business plans. Here the crucial question is if the equipment or other forms of support have been transferred quickly enough, so that the project has sufficient time to work with the beneficiaries over a longer period of time, minimum 1,5 production cycles (years) to settle their businesses as many of them have been start-ups. This classical approach usually shows good results.

Setting up BSCs, primarily for business registration, but also for ICT, finance and others is also a way to indirectly support the women and young ones in need of income generation. However, having in mind that these services are at least partially governmental services, the impact from supporting BSCs will last a while. The same can be said about the rural infrastructure provided by the EU; it will help all people, not specifically women and young ones, and the impact will take some time until it materialises in more jobs and revenues.

The policy part of the CARE project (Output 2) intends to empower rural communities; in principle this is to be welcomed, even if the question arises, who needs advisory forums and policy papers and how these policy papers will improve the living conditions in the poor rural areas.

The log frame has been revised in late 2020 and the Poverty Head Count Index as indicator was removed, that was a wise decision.

Looking at the three indicators of the overall objectives, then the first and most important target (60% increase in income) will most likely not be achieved. Even without obstacles because of political elections, Easter blast 2019 and COVID-19, a 60% increase in income (of targeted MSMEs) is not realistic.

Also a big project cannot have a realistic influence on targets like the reduction of Poverty Head Count Index; the Head Count Index measures the proportion of the population that is poor without indicating how poor the poor are. Even if there were no Easter Blast and COVID-19, it is hard to imagine that the OXFAM project with less than Euro 0.50 per year and inhabitant (in these two provinces) will achieve such an impact and the question arises, how such a target was developed and approved.

As not even a big project can have a realistic influence on targets like the reduction of Poverty Head Count Index in a province, it was good that CARE replaced this original indicator with the increased income level of youth and women in the targeted MSMEs.

The two other targets under overall objectives are less relevant but might be achieved. The target of the specific objective “increased number of employees in the 200 MSMEs” will not be met. The remaining five targets under specific objectives might be achievable by the project end, however these targets are poorly formulated and their achievement will not have the same importance like improved employment and increased income.

Looking closer to the specific objectives again, it says to support the development of an enabling and empowering business environment; that justifies the setup of Business Service Centres (BSCs) but says nothing about income generation and job creation, also not on doing so especially for the vulnerable women and young ones.

Possibly the idea behind was and still is that creating BSCs will provide so much insights, motivation and guidance, that indirectly or on the long run income generating opportunities emerge from the improved business environment.

This idea is reflected in the Output 1: Establishment and strengthening of SMEs (including social enterprises) led and managed by young men and women from rural and estate communities.

Similar to the ACTED approach, CARE also focuses only on half of the Result Area 1 as again the target of “increased household incomes” is by purpose cut out of the overall objective. At the same time, Enterprise has included income generation and job creation under the specific objectives.

The described indicators and targets, which have been changed since the beginning, will measure the achievement of the overall objectives: 1) 60% increase in income levels of youth and women out of 200 supported MSMEs, 2) 25% increase in productive assets owned and managed by youth and women, and 3) 45% increase in community, government and private investment in economic and community development.

In addition, here measurement of the annual net profit and annual turnover did not take place as all feedback from MSMEs is based on self-declared statements, the so-called Key Informant Interviews.

However, CARE stated that it has started to check the financial records and statements to verify increase in net profit; it would be good to check this again during the Final Evaluation and come to a final decision on data verification.

The definition for the used Net Profit was clarified; Net Profit is calculated by deducting the operational expenditures, loan interests and income tax from the sales revenues of the enterprise.

CARE stated further that from early 2021 on, “it is collecting the data on net profit by reviewing the financial records of the enterprises. Generally, the small-size enterprises have audited financial reports. But there are limitations when it comes to financial record maintenance of micro enterprises.” That is an appreciated development but the question remains why this kind of verification of financial data was not chosen since mid-2017? It is obvious that COVID-19 caused restrictions, but from mid-2017 until early 2020, there was no COVID-19. The MTE Team stated several times that all projects are more or less late, and the data collection shows this again.

Only for 2021, the project will select a random representative sample from the 200 MSMEs⁷ and will obtain the data on their annual net profit and turnover. CARE also plans to measure the increased income (wages) of employees working with the selected MSMEs. – Important will be to jointly analyse the MSMEs on their premises the available records and to encourage the MSMEs to record the missing ones too. Regarding M&E, all projects should stop consider information from Key Informants as evidence-based verification.

The indicator 2 is dealing with increased productive assets; i.e., productive assets are lands, buildings, machineries, equipment, and vehicles. These productive assets are newly added to the business with the a) project's grant investment, b) contribution of grantee, and c) other investments.

More productive assets contribute without doubt to socio-economic wellbeing of the involved MSMEs' owners. Nevertheless, what is the meaning of this indicator? It is known how much the project is contributing through grants, it is known how much the beneficiaries have to contribute to get these grants but nothing is known about additional contribution of grantees (not linked to the grants) and of other investments.

The target is 25% increase and possibly this increase is achieved by the grants alone? It seems that complicated indicators are chosen that are also not very meaningful, as increase of income of targeted MSMEs would be sufficient.

Another question is how the average value of productive assets managed by youth and women MSMEs assets are valued? The baseline shows a certain value of assets and if this value is composed by land, buildings, and others, then making this inventory company by company is already a challenging task.

The last overall objective is a 45% increase in community, government and private investment in economic and community development. Here CARE explained that the increased investment is measured by calculating the value of loans provided by government and private banks and financial institutes, community-based organizations, and grantees' investments to business. This indicator is again meaningless as loans provided by the GoSL are included. It cannot be concluded that a loan from the government automatically improves the socio-economic wellbeing of the peoples living there.

Moving to the specific objectives as stated in the log frame, the Enterprise project intends to achieve the following targets under the specific objective: 1) increased number of employed persons, especially youth and women (in line with grant investments) (baseline value should be doubled); 2) 60% of supported businesses demonstrating business growth (i.e. turnover and profit); 3) rural infrastructure supporting 75% of Praja Mandala and CDF members directly; 4) 10 agreements and actions agreed upon as an outcome of the meetings and events held between CSOs, LAs, enterprises and Business Member Organisations; 5) national SME policy reviewed and revised and plan of action to enact the policy developed; and finally 6) 60% of women and youth led MSMEs that have overcome the social norms which hinder women and youth's ability to lead and run businesses (access and control over resources, decision making in business, role shift of both the male and female partners, contribution to care role by male partner).

⁷ The project has 107 women-led enterprises and 59-youth led enterprises

The indicators 1 and 2 look straightforward. CARE mentioned regarding increased number of employed persons that these data are collected monthly by respective project coordinators using a given format by directly visiting project supported MSMEs or calling them if mobility is an issue. By May 2020, 1,615 jobs were reported from 148 enterprises, compared to 1,479 from 131 enterprises prior to grant investment. Looking at these numbers, it is obvious that CARE increased the number of supported enterprises and the number of employees went up – not a big surprise. It would have been more interesting to see the today’s employment numbers with the original 131 MSMEs.

Eventually even more jobs have been cancelled since May 2020 and the target of 3,000 direct employment cannot be reached within this project lifespan. The MTE Team also largely disagrees with the statement that “an enterprise needs at least 3-4 years to generate the targeted jobs”. However, no one could foresee the pandemic.

The COVID-19 lockdown results in the lay-off of employees and therefore the target will not be achieved; since May 2020, the direct employment has declined by 493 direct jobs due to COVID-19. However, CARE is optimistic that job creation will take place, once the MSMEs are given the total grant investments. Each selected MSME is getting the grant in several instalments. Enterprise has so far provided grants to 148 MSMEs. The average value of a grant is LKR 1.43 million (Euro 6,500). For each grant, there is the contribution of MSMEs, according to their financial abilities, to improve their business with their own funds but it was not a mandatory requirement to obtain a grant through the project. Unfortunately, by May 2020 – and until today - only a limited number of MSMEs have received the total investment from the project, which cannot be contributed only to COVID-19.

The indicator 2 under specific objectives focuses on business growth in line with the elaborated business plans.

With the increase of production, 50% of the MSMEs also reported marketing growth. Those MSMEs, which reported marketing growth, also mentioned that there was an improvement in sales figures. The other 50% of MSMEs require more time to improve their production and sales after receiving the grant – according to CARE. Grant investment is divided into four instalments. At the time of data collection, 74% of MSMEs had received the second instalment. After receiving the grant, they require time to purchase machines or build infrastructures. The project was already late and with the COVID-19 lockdown, most of the grantees could not purchase the machines or continue their infrastructure improvements. This was the main reason that only 50% of the MSMEs reported marketing improvements. During the COVID-19 lockdown period most of the apparel sector enterprises diversified their production to cater to the new market demand in the country; e.g. to produce and sell reusable facemasks to generate income during this difficult time. CARE partner Chrysalis connected them with government department and health authorities to ensure a market for their products; it seems that Chrysalis had the most entrepreneurial understanding of all participants.

At indicator 2, the question arises, why only 60% of project-supported businesses show a growth in sales? Should not each enterprise show a business growth, especially if supported by donors?

To measure the achieved business growth, CARE took some extra efforts and developed 12 criteria whereas two criteria represent already 80% of weightage – the increase in net profit and in direct employment. Why not to consider only increase in net profit? Why to make it that

complicated? This question popped up as currently only businesses that obtain scores above 80%, are rated by CARE as growing; in other words, a company that doubles its profit by setting off 5 employees is considered as "not growing". (Moreover, it is well known that usually increase in profitability goes hand-in-hand with a decrease in employment, especially in agriculture.)

Indicator 3 is already difficult to catch, as benefitting from supporting rural infrastructure is not clear at all; 75% of the targeted beneficiaries should benefit from this rural infrastructure, but what means benefitting? The indicator seems vague. CARE explained that Enterprise conducted at the beginning Participatory Rural Assessments (PRAs) with each village and developed Economic Development Plans (EDPs) to identify the needs of the local population and how they will benefit from the rural infrastructures. Some planning has been done upfront.

CARE reported that the average cost of 54 approved rural infrastructure is LKR 1.64 million (Euro 7,500). It includes 34 agricultural roads, 14 irrigation infrastructures like irrigation canals, water tanks for irrigation and shallow tube well irrigation and six marketing and sales centres.

These investments are based on participatory rural appraisals in selected villages, where Praja Mandala and Community Development Forums (CDFs) were formed. Economic Development Plans were prepared for each village to identify rural infrastructures. After approval by the Local Councils and other relevant government departments such as the Irrigation Department and the Department of Agrarian Services, the infrastructure was built. The EU contributed substantially to the financing:

- Agri Roads or Bridges – LKR 80.14 million (Euro 370,000)
- Irrigation Infrastructure – LKR 55.43 million (Euro 250,000)
- Marketing & Sales centres - LKR 28.98 million (Euro 130,000)

These infrastructures were selected based on the recommendations provided by the communities that economically benefit from them; however, often cost-benefit analyses have not been carried out except for to marketplaces / sales outlets and in these cases, the focus was on the owner of the places and not on the vendors.

Regarding rural infrastructure, the cost estimation for each construction site has increased from the initial budget and as the budget was not increased, now there is a financial gap to finish all infrastructure interventions.

So far, Enterprise has completed 16 rural infrastructures and 27 rural infrastructure activities are ongoing; CARE plans to complete all 60 projects by May 2021 as these rural infrastructure activities are not large-scale projects. CARE has already received the approvals from relevant government authorities. The extension period is up to November 2021. The project has hired the engineering consultants to supervise the construction process and it has a procurement consultant for the tendering processes.

Not much better is the indicator 4 (number of agreements and actions) as it is not explained what kind of agreements and actions CARE has in mind. If it is about business, then an increase in turnover would be easier to measure. When asked, CARE answered that the indicator captures the results of broader level networks like the establishment of business consortiums and partnerships with government and other organisations, which provide opportunities for MSMEs to improve their network and gain recognition.

The MTE Team considers this again as a very weak indicator and suggests to focus – if dealing with economic projects – on turnover and profitability as that would show if the targeted population is in total benefiting or not. Here 100 additional agreements do not have to materialise in financial revenues.

In addition, indicator 5 is not self-explanatory, as each one can review policy papers and develop an action plan. What should be the outcome? Maybe the NGO had in mind to remove some legal barriers.

In addition, indicator 6 is very soft and not SMART, as what is the meaning of overcoming social norms? How to measure that? Why 70% of the supported MSMEs that are led by women and youth? If a NGO can decide whom to support, the result could have been 100% as others would simply not have been supported. That depends only on the selection process. Would it not have been better to ask all MSMEs?

The mentioned first two indicators as increase income and employment are SMART; the other four indicators are very vague in the opinion of the MTE Team.

Again, similar to the ACTED project, the question arises why additional employment will be only achieved by grants; it would have been an ambitious target to coach MSMEs in four years so well, that turnover and employment would increase without providing grants.

As seen with other NGOs, a substantial part of information is gathered by key informant interviews, i.e. not evidence-based. For example increased net profit, increased annual turnover and exported products. Other targets like new infrastructure can be checked on the ground.

Furthermore, CARE stated that the annual net profit and annual turnover data were mainly derived from Key Informants' Interviews. Most of the MSMEs did not have formal financial records at the beginning of the project in 2017. As reported from the field mission of the MTE Team, nowadays many farmers keep records, which is a good development. However, CARE should have tried to get more insights into the available data; to increase the availability through planned financial and HR management trainings makes perfectly sense. Eventually, the weakness here was that more data could have been available than the collected by the M&E Unit.

Finally, the MTE Team wants to point out positively that the baseline studies have been produced internally; therefore, the project team could gain a broader understanding of the sectors. Also longer assistance in form of coaching was recognised as a key element, to bring beneficiaries on track.

Table 2 CARE - Summary Outputs 1 – 2

#	Activity	Sub activities	Project Target	Activity completed	Achievement (%)
1	To establish and strengthen SMEs (including social enterprises) that are led and managed by young men	To draft a number of inclusive action research papers related to economic empowerment and entrepreneurship of women and youth	7	7	100

2	and women from rural and estate communities	Targeted Praja Mandala and Community Development Forums develop and implement village / economic development plans that include identified specific economic needs of women and youth in accessing financial and technical resources	80	85	106
		To establish Business Service Centres (<i>Vyapara Piyasa</i>) that offer financial, technical and ICT services and are viable	4	1	25
		To strengthen viable local enterprises (with grants)	200	148	74
		To support functional social enterprises that promote economic, social and environmental wellbeing of rural and plantation communities	20	15	75
		To transfer a defined value of equipment	216	36	17
		To transfer a defined value of infrastructure	135	20	15
		To support MSMEs that are adopting business process changes with the support of project interventions	100	71	71
		To establish Advisory Fora consisting of key government, private sector, academic and civil society stakeholders with a clear mandate to develop a policy framework on job creation, entrepreneurship and social enterprises	3	1	33
		To encourage women and youth to engage actively in the Praja Mandala, CDFs, Business Forums and the Advisory Forum to influence decisions	6,228	4,338	70
		To draft a finally approved policy paper on Business Service Centre	3	1	33
		To conduct policy group discussions at national and provincial level	20	5	25
		To draft national action plans to implement the draft SME policy and to present to key government stakeholders	2	0	0
		To increase the voice and participation of women and youth in decision making around employment creation, business development and economic growth of the rural and estate sectors			

5.3 OXFAM - detailed activities and achievements

In continuation of Chapter 3, the MTE Team will describe in a more detailed analysis the activities and achievements of the project.

The specific objective / outcome is “to enhance rural and estate communities’ sustainable and diversified livelihoods with effective engagement in inclusive gender-sensitive socio-

economic development processes, in cooperation with private and public sectors”. The corresponding indicators are:

- Share of direct beneficiaries in target divisions living below the poverty line (LKR 4,099 in Nuwara Eliya; LKR 3,693 in Monaragala; LKR 3,895 in Badulla - August 2016); here again no monitoring takes place and it is unclear if the envisaged target will be achieved.
- Share of women beneficiaries in target divisions living below the poverty line; again, no current values are known in this field.
- Share of targeted households with more than one income source; the target is 90% of the households and by August 2020 97.3% have been achieved; no further explanation was provided in the OXFAM’s 3rd Interim Report except that “the data captured from project targeted beneficiaries“. Obviously, there is no corresponding evidence-based information available. – In this respect it has to be asked, if it is good when households have more than one source of income; in the USA the number of households and even persons with more than one source of income is growing, as people are not earning enough in one job; therefore there is a need of having two jobs – and that is definitely not a good sign. Furthermore, what is a target division?

Altogether, it is highly questionable if the overall and specific objectives’ targets will be achieved, especially as the end-August report with log frame does not show current values – with the exception of the last point having more than one source of income.

OXFAM is working with selected VCs and the first outcome (iOc1) is to “enhance productivity and economic profitability of selected local value chains in target areas” – and the corresponding targets / indicators are:

- Number of hectares of agricultural ecosystems where sustainable land management practices have been introduced; the target at project’s end is 307 ha and the current value is 277.87 ha. This value was stated by the Department of Export Agriculture and it was explained further that 277.87 ha of land under cinnamon and cocoa have been introduced to soil moisture conservation and sustainable land management practices; no further explanation was given and no evidence-based figures were made available. OXFAM wrote that in the coming months more farmers will undergo a training related to soil moisture conservation. That could be a hint, that the targeted farmers who had attended a specific training, are considered as farmers who were introduced to sustainable land management practices. It cannot be assumed as “documented” that farmers who did participate in a training about sustainable land management practices, changed their farming practices. It will require well-documented random checks of trained farmers on the ground to see, if they practice now sustainable land management. According to the United Nations, sustainable land management (SLM) is defined as “the use of land resources, including soils, water, animals and plants, for the production of goods to meet changing human needs, while simultaneously ensuring the long-term productive potential of these resources and the maintenance of their environmental functions”; in practice this might be increased crop rotation, avoiding erosion, etc.
- Increase in average gross profit among identified value chains over 4 years (disaggregated per value chain); as baseline values, OXFAM provides the average Gross Profit per farm including all four VCs and then the current values for dairy and cinnamon, as potato and cocoa are not providing profit yet. When looking for more detailed information for milk, one can find a lot of data in the “Baseline Survey of Dairy, Potato Seed, Cinnamon and Cocoa Value Chains in Nuwara Eliya, Badulla and

Monaragala Districts” from August 2019 (quite late, why not done in August 2017), including the gross profits of dairy farming in the study area. However, the baseline study does not seem to be written in a systematic way and the answers to verify indicators / targets are not elaborated. (This is again an example what happens if the M&E Unit is not doing the baseline, having the indicators very well in mind, but an external consultancy that was not well briefed to provide all data to verify the target achievements). – Here, it will need more information and especially the same set of data for 2017 and mid-2020, as without comparable data, differences cannot be calculated. The MTE Team had intensive communication with OXFAM but could not follow the applied economic calculations. However, if the value of increase in gross profit in dairy sector in two provinces is 370%, then development aid would not be needed any longer.

- Increase in average net profit does not show baseline figures, despite saying “to be updated in Year 1 of the implementation”; why is the gross profit known and not the net profit?⁸
- The last indicator is the number of public stakeholders / private companies / NGOs identifying researches as having influenced their programming on tea out-grower model; the current value is 4 and the targeted 20. See also Op 1.4. below.

Moving from Outcome 1 down to Output 1 in the dairy VC, then there is the Op 1.1. (related to iOc 1) “increased yield in dairy production, improved collection and expanded outreach in the three districts” with the two indicators a) number of men and women receiving veterinary advisory services and b) number of available milk storage facilities focusing on milk collection and outreach. The envisaged 50,000 milk farmers are almost reached, however it remains unclear how an intensified (public) veterinary service is increasing the milk production. OXFAM mentioned that in the past veterinary services have been provided only on-call and obviously now the veterinarians follow a more proactive approach. This indicator is questionable especially as the increased average gross profit of 370% in milk has already raised some question marks.

Regarding milk collection, it is evident that more available milk storage facilities – 8 today compared to 0 in 2017 - will improve the milk collection for the farmers, as then the distance to the collection centres will be most likely shorter. Here the imprecise terminology might be misleading, as milk collection, milk storage and milk chilling centres could be the same.

In many, if not in all projects, it can be observed how the NGOs supported primarily the GoSL through laboratories for the governmental veterinary services, through close cooperation with the parastatal MILCO dairy plant, and many other cases. It would have been worthwhile to provide the private sector with, e.g., a milk laboratory that could be owned by a milk farmers’ organisation and the same could be said regarding the milk collection centres. It would increase the marketing position of farmers, if they own a milk collection and chilling centre so that they can choose the dairy company to work with. If the centre is owned by e.g., MILCO, all the milk has to be sold to MILCO, even if the conditions are not preferable.

It has to be highlighted that – also confirmed by the field visits – the training activities in the agricultural VCs were well received and farmers have been well trained; e.g., training of milk

⁸ Gross profit refers to a company's profits earned after subtracting the costs of producing and distributing its products. Net profit is calculated as gross profit minus depreciation, interest, taxes, and other expenses.

farmers covered disease prevention and management, dairy nutrition, hygienic milk production and marketing, environmental friendly dairy farming, heifer calf rearing, genetic improvement and AI services and good dairy management practices (GMP).⁹ However, the envisaged timing of the training sessions was suitable in the beginning, but has been changed and OXFAM expects to complete all seven dairy modules with practical and demonstrative coaching before July 2021. Similar positive feedback on training was obtained concerning cinnamon farmers, especially as trained farmers could increase their income.

The Op 1.2. (related to iOc 1) is dealing with “Potato seeds reproduction units and marketing support for 40 estates farmers’ groups organized” and wants to measure the achievements of the targets by the number of greenhouses set-up and the number of potato seeds produced in the constructed green houses. - As the project is trying to enhance the productivity and economic profitability of selected local value chains in target areas, and as seed potato is one of the VCs, it needs one or more indicators, showing how the productivity and profitability of potatoes are increased. The given hint that greenhouses have been constructed is not directly linked with the indicator. It can be assumed that greenhouses, in fact that are mostly polytunnels, can boost any production and the seed potato production too. However, it would have been easier to show how many seed potatoes have been produced due to OXFAM’s intervention and how these seed potatoes increased the productivity and profitability of the potato VC. – Currently 30 farmer groups have been established and each group will manage one polytunnel; a group is composed by five people (1 youth + 4 estate workers). The other indicator, dealing with the 300,000 seed potatoes to be produced, does not allow a statement yet if the potato VC will then be more productive and profitable. Currently, there are no seed potatoes produced and OXFAM mentioned that there are problems. It is not certain, if the envisaged 300,000 potatoes (around 15 -18 tons)¹⁰ will be produced by project’s end.

The Op 1.3. (related to iOc 1) focuses on cinnamon (Badulla) and cocoa (Monaragala) processing and marketing systems for women producers set-up to enhance the productivity and economic profitability of cinnamon and cocoa. - The indicators are numbers of men and women who received specialised training on processing techniques for cinnamon and cocoa. Again, training alone does not allow any conclusion, if profitability and productivity was increased. - The next group of indicators is the increase of income of men and women or farmer groups in cinnamon and cocoa. OXFAM does not provide any baseline data, i.e. the average income of a cinnamon farmer in 2017, but declares that cinnamon farmers could until today increase their income by 41%. The field visits of the MTE Team observed also a positive trend; however, for a verification of this indicator, the shared data are too weak. Cocoa is not progressing yet, at least concerning income of the involved farmers. – Finally OXFAM wants to build five processing centres (2 for cocoa and 3 for cinnamon), but so far only one for cocoa was established. Processing centres can increase the profit for farmers, especially if the added value when selling the products is returned to the farmers and not kept within the processor.

As seen by the MTE Team in the field, the cinnamon processing centres in Nikapotha and Walibisa are under construction at costs of Euro 30,700 each and a third centre is planned to start at Wasanagama with the same budget. The cocoa processing centres at Badalkumbura and Madagama are completed at the costs of Euro 25,000 respectively 22,750.

⁹ As farmers did not have access to workshops and trainings programmes during the pandemic, EGSD team conveyed the latest dairy management practices through smart phones for interested farmers who had smart phone specially improvement of feeding.

¹⁰ For comparison, in Europe one produces from 1 ha (open field) around 30 tons of seed potatoes (Z1) and as 1/3 of the harvest will not fit by size, one can market around 20 tons.

The MTE Team in the field confirmed progress in the cocoa value chain improvement, mainly through training, and that the cocoa processing centre is already completed. Therefore, there will be sufficient time left to run the centre and to do a proper hand over/ownership transfer.

The final Op 1.4. (related to iOc 1) wants to have a set of possible income alternatives for estate areas assessed and proposes the number of estates interested in testing tea out-grower model in the target area at the end of the project and the number of economic alternatives tested as corresponding indicators.

OXFAM is testing possible income alternatives for estate areas; e.g. “tea out grower model”, identifying economic opportunities in tea out grower model, leasing out of a manageable amount of tea bushes distributed to workers or worker cooperatives. Only four tea estates are willing to piloting a model. The study about the six different models based on Sri Lankan and Indian experience is not finalised yet. The research will be presented to the wider audience in early 2021 and then pilots from selected companies could be started.

In this context the question arises, why to keep tea pickers in poorly paid employment. The advantages for the tea estates is obvious, getting raw material for a fixed price that allows clear calculation by transferring the entrepreneurial risk, social insurance payments, etc. to the tea pickers.

The Outcome 2 (iOc2) should be “increased engagement of unemployed rural and estate youth in skilled employment opportunities” – and the corresponding targets / indicators are:

- 300 new graduates of vocational and technical training among the target group are employed in decent employment; OXFAM is saying that mid-August 2020 251 graduates are employed; 155 Males and 96 Females.
- 134 out of the targeted 200 youth have started self-employment / income generating activities
- 10% increase in number of local enterprises in target area; here the baseline is missing saying how many enterprises exist in the target area and therefore an increase of 10% is not measurable.

Despite being published in the 3rd OXFAM Interim Report until August 2020, it is not confirmed that these data are from August and if they are from an earlier time in the year – i.e. before the COVID-19 impact – then these figures might not be valid anymore. Another insecurity is with the increase in local enterprises as it is not clear if that are indeed newly set-up enterprises or if these figures include enterprises that have recently been registered.

The log frame does not provide gender disaggregated data at baseline and no concrete targets for the end line of the project. The figures were supposed to be determined one year after the start of the project, i.e. mid-2018.

Following Output 2 comes Outcome 2, there is Op 2.1. (related to iOc 2): Coordination and quality assurance systems (scalable to national level) for vocational training developed:

- 50 centres are already upgraded/supported by OXFAM and therefore this target is already fulfilled.
- Number of staff capacitated for information centres & career guidance/life skills.

- 3,000 youth registered & successfully completed skill development courses; so far 2213 (year 3) have done so.

It would be interesting to find out in the final evaluation how many of these trained 3,000 youth got an employment by end of the project; maybe that could be monitored from now on. If comparing these 2,213 trained young people with those who got employment or started an entrepreneurial activity – around 390, then the percentage of bringing trained young persons into jobs and employment is around 18%.

Op 2.2. (related to iOc 2): Entrepreneurship and self-employment opportunities for vocational training graduate students enhanced; whereas the result is described very vaguely, the indicators are SMART.

- 600 youth, boys and girls, have received employment due to new skills developed; this target was topped with 3,323 youth who have entered the job market.
- No. of new enterprises/ start-ups / existing Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises who received MSME skill development initiative – Here already 215 enterprises have been trained, whereas the target was 150. That is positive, as training is in most cases very useful; however, the question arises how that was financed as obviously more training course have taken place.

Several big Skills & Job fairs were foreseen. Over the year, only 2 fairs were conducted across the three districts bringing together the training and employment sector in the fields of ICT, Healthcare, Construction, Agriculture, Engineering, and Hospitality & Tourism. Around 2,500 youth attended the fairs. To mitigate the adverse effects of COVID-19, the project team planned to host mini job fairs limiting the number of attendees and ensuring sufficient spacing for social distancing.

The Output 3 (iOc3) should be that “women play a more recognised and dignified social and economic role due to decreasing structural barriers” – and the corresponding targets / indicators are:

- 25% increase of people who oppose violence against women; this target was overachieved with 57%.
- 40% more women accessing community level, official (micro-) financial services was the target and it was achieved already with 47%, starting from 29%. This indicator is vague because assessing financial services is unclear; it could mean taking (micro) credits. Principally having access to finance is positive, but one cannot argue that having taken a credit, means that the economic position of a credit taker has been strengthened.
- 40% of women holding leadership positions (i.e. persons in charge of HR and budgets) in the set-up SMEs; the target was 10% and therefore it was fulfilled.

For the final evaluation, it might be worthwhile to analyse what support was provided to these SMEs and how it happened that women held so many leadership positions? However, it is a good sign.

The corresponding Output (Op 3.1. - related to iOc 3) was “multi-stakeholders’ mechanisms for gender awareness set-up” and the indicators “number of men directly involved in gender awareness raising” and “number key stakeholders (hospital, police, districts and divisions staff) promoting protection of women rights” are half-way achieved yet so that within the remaining

year they could be achieved. However, the meaningfulness of these indicators remains questionable.

The operational indicators under this outcome are showing gender transformative intentions, e.g. 1) No of men directly involved in gender awareness training, and 2) No of key stakeholders being sensitized concerning GBV.

The next Output (Op 3.2. - related to iOc 3) was “community support systems for women’s economic engagement introduced”. The first indicator “number of women engaged in new economic activities within community support groups” was overachieved and the second one “number of time savings groups established” stays at 48 groups whereas the target is 100 by the project’s end.

Both indicators are not meaningful, as what means “engaged”? Is an engaged person one who shows up once a year in a meeting or 10 times? Furthermore, what is the meaning of saving groups established? It is not relevant, if a training was done, a group established or a leaflet printed, relevant is only the impact. What has the group achieved?

The Outcome 4 (iOc4) is “improved space for CSOs and representational bodies to engage in policy dialogue on entrepreneurship development” – and the corresponding targets / indicators are:

- 100 organisations supported by REDA and Dept. of Rural Development and Construction demonstrating improvements in their capacity to build and maintain quality relationships with private sector; so far not a single organisation was supported. - One can ask again what the meaning of quality relationship is, etc.
- 30 producer groups with influencing plans that include policy targets issues and evidence out of total producer groups supported through the project; currently 56 groups have been supported.

This indicator is void of any gender-disaggregated data – even at the output level.

Moving from Outcome 4 to Outputs 4, the Op 4.1. (related to iOc 4) is aiming to “develop integrated plans for more inclusive service delivery (Central Province)”;

- 100 people trained on business and development support
- 10,000 people reached by the information campaign

Both activities have not started yet, respectively no results have been achieved so far.

Op 4.2 (related to iOc 4): Multi stakeholders’ groups able to work effectively on decision-making processes with government bodies organised (Uva Province)

- 1,109 Rural Development Societies reached by trained officers; baseline and target value are identical with 1,109. The evaluation does not regard this indicator as meaningful as “reaching” is not specific and measurable.

Summarising, the MTE Team concludes that the log frame was not well designed by OXFAM. Whereas the objectives are well formulated, already the iOc1: “Enhanced productivity and economic profitability of selected local value chains in target areas” shows questionable data for sustainable land management and gross profits. The iOc2: “Increased engagement of unemployed rural and estate youth in skilled employment opportunities” comes up with mixed results; the number of new graduates of vocational and technical training among the target

group are employed in decent employment, but the trainings did not take place in the targeted VCs. The indicator covering young people, who have started self-employment / income generating activities, is on track, but as self-employment is not defined, and as generating income does not provide any hint of how much income is earned, these indicators are very vague. The last indicator, number of local enterprises in target area, is not provided, as obviously M&E does not know how many local enterprises there are. If an organisation, working closely with the beneficiaries does not know approximately the number of enterprises, how should the Department of Census and Statistics know?

Table 3 OXFAM - Summary Outputs 1.1 – 4.2

#	Activity	Sub activities	Project Target	Activity completed	Achievement (%)
1.1	To increase the yield in dairy production, improve collection and expand outreach in the three districts	To provide veterinary advisory services to men	26,324	33,169	126
		To provide veterinary advisory services to women	24,340	9,435	39
		To make milk storage facilities available	5	8	160
1.2	To organize the potato seeds reproduction units and marketing support for 40 estates farmers' groups	To set up greenhouses	30	10	33
		To produce tubers (numbers) of seed potatoes in greenhouses (polytunnels)	300,000	0	0
		To make milk storage facilities available	5	8	160
1.3	To set up Cinnamon (Badulla) and Cocoa (Monaragala) processing and marketing systems for women producers	To train men in processing techniques for Cinnamon	350	232	66
		To train women in processing techniques for Cinnamon	550	296	59
		To train men in processing techniques for Cocoa	175	123	70
		To train women in processing techniques for Cocoa	325	116	36
		To increase the income of men and women or farmer groups in Cinnamon industry in %	20	41	205
		To increase the income of men and women or farmer groups in Cocoa industry in %	20	0	0
		To make processing centres for cinnamon and cocoa available	5	1	20
1.4	To assess a set of possible income alternatives for estate areas	To encourage estates in testing tea out- grower model in the target area	3	4	133
		To test economic alternatives	5	0	0

2.1	To develop a coordination and quality assurance systems (scalable to national level) for vocational training	To support / upgrade centres	50	50	100
		To train staff for information centres & career guidance / life skills	577	100	17
		To let youth successfully complete skill development courses	3,300	2,213	67
2.2	To enhance entrepreneurship and self-employment opportunities for vocational training graduate students	To facilitate employment due to new skills development for boys	300	1,961	654
		To facilitate employment due to new skills development for girls	300	1,362	454
		To train new enterprises/ start-ups / existing micro, small and medium enterprises through MSME skill development initiative	150	215	143
3.1	To set-up multi-stakeholders' mechanisms for gender awareness	To involve men directly in gender awareness raising	210	115	55
		To facilitate that key stakeholders (hospital, police, districts and divisions staff) promote the protection of women rights	400	182	46
3.2	To introduce community support systems for women's economic engagement	To engage women in new economic activities within community support groups	50	341	682
		To establish time savings groups	100	48	48
4.1	To develop integrated plans for more inclusive service delivery (Central Province)	To train people on business and development support	100	0	0
		To reach people by the information campaign	10,000	0	0
4.2	To enable that multi-stakeholders' groups work effectively on decision-making processes with government bodies (Uva Province)	To reach out Rural Development Societies by trained officers	1,109	26	2
		To train certain % of people on policy analysis, influencing and advocacy so that they have the knowledge to apply the acquired methodologies	80	90	113

5.4 ADRA - detailed activities and achievements

In continuation of Chapter 3, the MTE Team will describe in a more detailed analysis the activities and achievements of the project.

Regarding the positive opinions, ADRA said that no baseline study has been done, as this indicator was set after the baseline survey. This is a very weak indicator as “positive opinion” is not easily measured and not very meaningful. The original indicator (maternal mortality) was replaced by diarrhoea cases. Baseline data revealed that the diarrhoea prevalence was very low at baseline already so it will not be possible to measure a significant difference attributable

to project activities. The reduction of undernourishment is impossible as well. Undernourishment is an estimation of how many people do not have access to enough kcal in their daily diets. The project does not implement any activity that aims at increasing energy intake. The activities aim at increasing dietary diversity. These activities (home gardens) contribute to improved micronutrient intake. Micronutrient deficiencies have not been measured at baseline.

Intermediate Outcome 1: Vulnerable Rural and Estate communities have increased access to WASH facilities, improved personal hygiene and sanitation practices, and community driven services managed in collaboration with strengthened public authorities.

Table 4 ADRA - Output 1.1 – 1.3: Community owned water management systems established and strengthened

#	Activity	Sub activities	Project Target	Activity completed	Achievement (%)
1.1.1	Establish and/ or strengthen of community governance structure and water management committees (WMC)	Formation of WMC	52	55	106
		Capacity building of CBO, RDS and WMC	52	15	29
		Development of community development plan	52	18	35
		Establish a tariff system	1	0	0
1.1.2	Mainstreaming DRR practices and approaches by the WMC	Mainstreaming DRR practices and approaches by WMC	55	38	69
		Training of water committees on water safety and quality testing	26	6	23
		Provision of rain gauges	10	10	100
		Development of SMS alert system for evacuation	10	10	100
		Create a water forum	21	9	43
1.2.1	Improved access to safe water	Water quality study	2	2	100
		Awareness creation about water quality	65	34	52
		Provision of water purification units	2000	1988	99
		Travel for post monitoring	6	2	33
		Construct 20 gravity fed water systems	20	10	50
		Establish deep bore wells complete with hand pumps	100	0	0
		Repair existing, non- functional handpumps	250	250	100
1.3.1	Establish essential sanitation facilities	Construct 400 latrines	408	366	90
		Establish job-site restrooms	20	10	50

	Renovate latrines in Dickoya	4	4	100
	Establish bathing facilities for women, girls	35	0	0
	Restructure drainage system in estates	20	10	50

As it can be seen from the table above, the level of achievement varies amongst the different activities, some of them overachieved and others still at zero. However, zero does not mean that nothing has been done so far, but processes are going on and the completion stage has not been reached yet.

Whilst the WMCs have been formed (1.1.1), the training aspect is still behind schedule and the development of community plans likewise.

The early warning system (1.1.2) was planned in the landslide prone areas with support of National Building Research Organisation (NBRO). In this context, the SMS alert system has been developed and rain gears have been distributed. Anyhow, the high-tech rain gauge has an in-built SMS system, which needed a revision of the budget that was approved by the EUD. The alert system was established with a community-based information system. The successful continuation of the system is totally depending on the vigilance of community leaders. Mainstreaming Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) practices and the training of the WMCs on water safety and quality testing is behind schedule.

The repairing of 250 existing handpumps considerably improved the water issues in the villages. The increased quantity of water sufficiently supports the community for their water uses other than drinking purpose, reduces the travelling distance and costs for obtaining water from faraway.

The construction of new boreholes in Matale and Monaragala supports to overcome extraction of more water from existing boreholes and equal sharing of water among the society. This activity is significantly behind schedule due to the government regulations; all the approvals processes are extremely slow. Furthermore, climate condition and limited number of machineries will negatively influence the completion of work.

The construction of 400 latrines with owner driven approach enhanced the hygienic practices within the community. For vulnerable people, especially for disabled and elderly people, with the support of community contribution as owners account was the reflection of hygiene awareness and campaign.

Due to lack of clean water supply in the Base hospital in Dikoya, which receives about 600 patients daily, the hospital management faced difficulties to manage the water requirements. ADRA established water filtration and increased water storage capacity providing 24 hrs clean water supply and the improvement of toilets give pleasant environment for surrounding wards. The new generator installed by the project enables uninterrupted power supply for pumping water.

The provision of water purification units is almost completed, and the construction of gravity fed water systems is well underway, with a 50% completion rate. The planned improvement of

the IFGWS's is well approached and is designed to achieve topmost quality of water compared to the existing system.

The establishment of jobsite restrooms will be beneficial especially for women as tea packers are mainly females. 10 JSSRs are completed and the target is 20. In the past, during lunchtime or whilst waiting for weighing of the harvest, there was no place. The initial design was changed with an extension of the roof to minimize wind draft. This activity will be completed at the end of the project phase.

Establishment of basic bathing facilities for women, girls, and children has been reduced to 35, which reflects the adaptation to project realities. Initially, it was planned to construct 70 bathing places to improve the habit of bathing for estate women in the target area. Due to the water supply, provided directly to some of the households, women preferred to take bath at their own homestead and rejected a location for the common bathing place. The estimate for each bathing facility is now at Euro 520, which is more than the original estimate of Euro 188. This means that the total sum needed will exceed the initial budget. The budget has been realigned and was approved by the EUD.

20 locations were identified to restructure the drainage system in the tea estate communities and the respective design was prepared. This activity was started from December 2019 and 10 drainage systems have been completed. The intervention as such is important but the design could have been better. For example, in the Alton estate, in the upper division, a 65 m drainage was constructed with the required depth and part of the living area got rid from the flooding issues. However, not all people enjoy the benefits and still face water stagnation due to the storm water. If the drainage system had extended for another 60 m, the entire upper division would have had the possibility to overcome the storm water issue.

Table 5 ADRA - Output 1.4: Community's personal hygiene and environmental practices improved.

Activity number	Activity	Sub activities	Project Target	Activity completed	Achievement (%)
1.4.1	Implement PHAST and CHAST trainings	PHAST trainings	567	209	37
		CHAST trainings	378	217	57
1.4.2	Conduct awareness campaigns that promote personal hygiene and environmental sanitation, IEC materials and Information Communication and Technology (ICT) systems.	CHAT art competition	3	3	100
		Printing of IEC household awareness materials	7500	0	0
		Printing of IEC game boards	2000	0	0
		Printing of IEC Billboards	30	10	33
		Training of selected youths on ICT (Social Media)	1	0	0
1.4.3	Pilot innovative practices to improve hygiene and sanitation.	Rapid Market assessment	1	1	100
		Awareness creation in menstrual health	40	25	63
		Study on Tax Vs. Economic loss of tax on sanitary pads: case on Sri Lanka	1	0	0

		Dissemination of messages and opening dialogue	1	0	0
		Developing a signature campaign to request the reduction of taxation from 52% to 8%	1	0	0
		Dialogue with key decision makers and stakeholder related to reduction of taxes of this essential item	1	0	0
		Linking local pad manufacturers with schools (include a period management system - using sanitary pads.	1	0	0
		Awareness sessions with school authority and girls	30	8	27
		Disposal management facilities	10	3	30
		SRH Book Lets	350	350	100

The project has planned to conduct 567 PHAST and 378 CHAST trainings. CHAST trainings achieved more than 50%. However, the activities had to be stopped due to the pandemic. CHAST and PHAST activities covered the areas of personal and environmental hygiene and included topics relevant to COVID-19 prevention measures such as hand washing, which helped the beneficiaries in advance to face the pandemic situation. However, at the final evaluation a proper assessment should be conducted in order to assess if sustained behaviour changes happened.

The project had conducted an art competition for children under CHAST activity, in which the drawings will be used to print IEC material to increase household awareness. However, at the time of field data collection IEC materials were not ready to distribute.¹¹ According to the above table against target vs achievements none of the printing materials is readily available other than 10 billboards. Furthermore, it is doubtful how much it would contribute to the behaviour changes of the people during the project period before the final project evaluation.

The project stopped the plan to establish a localised production of sanitary pads and replaced it with the new activity to do a study and campaign on tax reduction on sanitary products. The project team is now working on this and having dialogues with officials on tax reduction as well as initiating a signature campaign to request the reduction of taxation.

The project has conducted menstrual hygiene awareness programmes in schools targeting school authority and girls. In addition, the project is supporting schools to have incinerator facilities to dispose the sanitary napkins. Unfortunately, the project is not supporting the rehabilitation nor the construction of latrine facilities.

Table 6 ADRA - Output 1.5: Mutually accountable technical monitoring services led by the government in place

Activity number	Activity	Sub activities	Project Target	Activity completed	Achievement (%)
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¹¹ IEC material includes calendars and school timetables for 2021. They have been finalised and distribute early 2021 – but not during field phase

1.5.	Mutually accountable technical monitoring services led by the government in place	Mapping of existing hand pumps – rural sector	2	2	100.00
		Mapping of IGFWS – Estate sector	1	1	100.00
		Building Capacity of local authorities (skills)	3	0	0
		Building Capacity of local authorities (knowledge)	3	0	0
		Building Capacity of local authorities (attitudes)	3	0	0
		Technical training for NWSDB	1	0	0
		Conduct awareness campaign on government services available for communities	46	4	8.69

With the exception of the handpumps and IGFWS mapping, all other activities stopped due to COVID-19. The technical training for NWSDB was stopped as the trainings were planned to be conducted in India and international travels are not advisable. The activity should now take place in Sri Lanka – using a different approach.

Intermediate Outcome 2: Improve health and nutritional status within the estate and rural communities by increasing access to proper health care knowledge and practice

Table 7 ADRA - Output 2.1 Improved health and nutrition practices introduced at household and community level.

Activity number	Activity	Sub activities	Project Target	Activity completed	Achievement (%)
2.1.1	Establish Health and Nutrition Committees (HNC)	Establish Health and Nutrition Committees (HNC)	52	53	102
2.1.2	Set up Children's Emergency Healthcare Fund (CEHF) and insurance coverage for children under 5 in estates.	Changed the activity as government programme is going on			
2.1.3	Set up referral system between and public-private poverty reductions programs	Set up referral system between and public-private poverty reductions programs	1	0	0
2.1.4	Raise awareness on nutrition at household and community level	Establishing and the promotion of home gardening to increase nutritional intake.	1500	1188	79
		Nutritional cookery classes for men and women	216	53	25

		Conducting biannually health and nutritional fairs	99	31	31
		Establishing nutrition gardens - Estate	30	26	87
2.1.5	Raise awareness on nutrition among children and youth	Establishment of school gardening for nutrition	31	21	68
		Revitalizing and refurbishing of the crèches in the tea estates and primary schools within the rural communities	28	10	36
2.1.6	Pilot innovative practices to improve health and nutrition.	Community mobilization (PD Health)	3	0	0

The ACCEND project overall objective has the indicator reduction of undernourishment. Mainly the output 2.1 activities are contributing to improve the nutrition status of the children in project targeted areas. The activities planned under this output are contributing to facilitate the community level support system strengthening, increasing of dietary diversity and direct intervention to support malnourished children in the area.

Health and nutrition committees are the main linkages to the serve the communities and so far the project has formed 53 HNCs, however the registration process has not yet happened. MOHs having “mother support groups” formed in the areas in supporting to health and nutrition related activities. The project stated that whenever there was a mother support group, the project assigned the HNC function to the same group. The project tried to encourage the role of men in these mother support groups. In general, one can question the name “mother support group” as fathers may not see their role in it. The name “Health and Nutrition Committee” provides more opportunities to address important nutrition and health topics to the entire community. It is the more gender appropriate name. This discussion should take place with the Ministry of Health and all important stakeholders.

Under the activity 2.1.4 Raise awareness on nutrition at household and community level, the project had targeted four sub-activities as mentioned in table above.

The home gardening activity to improve the diet diversity is progressing in all areas. However, there is a need to do a context specific assessment to see how much this has contributed to the family consumption and dietary diversity enhancement. Biannual health and nutrition fairs are behind schedule due to COVID-19. The project has planned to conduct nutrition cookery classes with the direction and contribution of MOHs, based on an initial dietary recall assessment. The analysis and reporting have not been completed at the time of the evaluation. According to ADRA team, they are planning to include the topics of basic nutrition on gender related nutritional issues including the practical demonstration. These activities will need to include men (gender mainstreaming) and a close monitoring to understand, whether this leads to changes in nutrition behaviour. Utensils were provided to MOHs in some areas to support the facilitation of this activity.

The project had supported to establish 21 school gardens, however during the field visit none of them was accessible as the schools were closed for many months due to COVID pandemic. Hence, it is necessary to come up with a sustainability mechanism to maintain the school gardening if the project is continuing to support to this activity. The project had started supporting the renovation of primary schools but not started the renovations of the crèches in the tea estates.

The main nutrition specific activity “Pilot innovative practices to improve health and nutrition” is on hold due to the pandemic situation. There is no chance to complete the activity up to the end of the project in a meaningful way.

Table 8 ADRA - Output 2.2: Public health institutions strengthened and infrastructure improved

No.	Activity	Sub activities	Project Target	Activity compl.	Achievement (%)
2.2.1	Conduct capacity building trainings for PHI, Midwives, nurses and other hospital staff.	Knowledge and awareness - Conduct capacity building trainings for PHI, Midwives, nurses and other hospital staff	4	4	100
		Attitude related trainings - Conduct capacity building trainings for PHI, Midwives, nurses and other hospital staff	4	3	75
		Skills development trainings - Conduct capacity building trainings for PHI, Midwives, nurses, and other hospital staff	4	2	50
		Renovate and upgrade polyclinics	30	8	27
2.2.2	Support the health care system by establishing an improved computerized database system for hospital clusters and the MOH office	Development of information management system for MOH office	1	0	0
2.2.3:	Raise awareness on CKD/ CKDu within authorities and communities at risk	Awareness creation on CKDu	21	0	0
		IEC materials	1	0	0
2.2.4:	Support and to strengthen Gender Base Violence prevention and care.	Digital awareness – hardware support	1	0	0
		Support and to strengthen Gender Base Violence prevention and care	12	8	67
		Development of awareness materials (billboards, leaflets etc.)	10	10	100
		Support the GBV desk to establishing a mapping mechanism	1	1	100
		Conduct positive gender messaging	10	4	40
		Installation of billboards	10	0	0
2.2.5:	Assist the development of a health and nutrition plan for the District of Nuwara Eliya	Assist the development of a health and nutrition plan for the District of Nuwara Eliya - Initial discussion with relevant government authorities	1	1	100
		Development of the health and Nutrition plan	1	1	100
		Final submission and presentation to NE RDHS	1	1	100
2.2.6:	Provide health and nutrition policy recommendations to the	Research on health and nutrition in collaboration with the Ministry of Health and university - CKDu	1	0	0

Ministry of Health and related departments.	Lobby with relevant stakeholders to influence polices - CKDu	1	0	0
	Research on health and nutrition in collaboration with the Ministry of Health and university - Nutrition	1	0	0
	Lobby with relevant stakeholders to influence polices - Nutrition	1	0	0

Under the activity “conduct capacity building trainings” for public health staff, almost 75% of the trainings are completed by the project in various themes. The specific training topics have been selected by the Health officials (See Intermediary Note 2, Sub-chapter 3.5). Renovation and upgrading of polyclinics were started in two districts Matale and Monaragala at the time of field data collection.

The previous activity 2.2.2 Establish an improve computerized database system for the MOH office changed as “Support the health care system by establishing an improved computerised database system for hospital clusters and the MOH office” in the updated log frame. The activity to facilitate a computerised database system for the MOH has been replaced as per the discussions with the district health officials. Now there should be support for the hospital data management system which has not started at the time of the Mid-Term Evaluation.

The previous activity 2.2.3 has been revised as “Raise awareness on CKD/CKDu within authorities and communities at risk” in the updated log frame. The MTE Team understood that the screening activity had to be changed as the Government was already engaged in it. (See Intermediary Note 2, Sub-chapter 3.5).

Under the activity 2.2.4 gender-based violence prevention activities, the project had supported the GBV desk in Dickoya hospital. This was aligned with the national level programme “Mithuru Piyasa”. However, in order to improve the entire situation and family wellbeing, gender aspects are important, and awareness creation should have taken place in all districts at community level. The project could have done better gender mainstreaming integrated to all the activities.

The project has supported the meetings organised by the Regional Director of health services Nuwara Eliya District to develop the health and nutrition plan for the District.

Under the activity 2.2.6 none of the planned researches started and designs were not yet available on nutrition and CKDu. ADRA is planning to do research on under nutrition, which will be more of a pre- and post-intervention study. The topic of the research is “Weight gain following an enhanced nutrition care package among children aged 6-36 months in estate and rural communities in Nuwara Eliya district.” It will measure weight gains following nutrition packages in Ambagamuwa. The research is still in the design phase and has not started yet. Thus, the results will not be available at the end of the current project cycle as the project extension time is not sufficient. It is questionable if it will contribute to understand the malnutrition problem in Sri Lanka.

Worthwhile to mention the mechanisms of identifying training topics by ADRA.

Table 9 ADRA’s mechanisms of identifying training topics

Trainings	Details related to assessments and trainings
PHAST and CHAST	The PHAST and CHAST methodologies have the assessment of current behaviours and improvement needs in-built within the trainings. Hence simply following the modules were adequate.
CBO (WMC/HNC)	The project mobilised the communities and re-grouped the existing CBOs or established new CBOs (WMC/HNC) wherever necessary. A consultant was hired to conduct an assessment of the current CBOs and to submit a report that also included a training area needed to strengthen them further. The training modules were further aligned to match the 7 steps of module of CBO formation that is promoted by the government. These 7 modules are a mandate if the CBOs are to be registered under the government (DNCWS).
MOH Office	<p>The project initially discussed with the MOH about the training opportunity and identified the areas that need to equip the staff for better service delivery. The project was invited to participate in the monthly planning meetings for a focus group discussion (FGD) with the entire MOH staff to identify the areas that need strengthening, based on which the first training was conducted. At the end of the training an evaluation form was filled by the participants with one question on the need of further training. The second set of training were based on their request.</p> <p>E.g., Basic computer literacy knowledge for MOH staff, Language training for Hatton staff (as the PHMs are mostly Sinhala speaking and the communities are Tamil speaking, Mental health and counselling training.)</p> <p>The next phase of training followed the same process, during the monthly meeting FGD, the information gathered from the training evaluation form was also shared before finalising on the next topic. This activity was geared to address Output 2.2 of “Public health institutions strengthened and infrastructure improved” and OP2.2 Indicator 1: “# of midwives trained by the end of the project”.</p>
Drilling Trainings	Focus areas (drilling) was clearly mentioned in the proposal in line with the information gathered through the needs assessment prior to the proposal development. The project still followed the assessment process through dialogues with the WRB and NWSDB. The activity had to be adopted to the global pandemic and travel restrictions as the training was initially planned to be conducted in India. The project through discussions and with the WRB and NWSDB explored other possible training topics and needs before finalising to conduct the same training in Sri Lanka and include additional participants.
Other trainings (Water safety planning, DRR and Cookery Classes)	The project discussed with the relevant local government and aligned the trainings to match with the ongoing programs of the government.

	The Water Safety Planning ToTs were conducted with the resource persons who were government officials and then the field Officers conducted the same training at community level (e.g., Water safety planning training.)
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5.5 Stitching Solidaridad - detailed activities and achievements

In continuation of Chapter 3, the MTE Team will describe in a more detailed analysis the activities and achievements of the project.

Table 10 Stitching Solidaridad - Outcome 1: Strengthened capacities of local functionaries and community institutions working in 50 estates, 100 surrounding rural villages including 50 schools on sustainable water and sanitation management

Activity No	Activity	Planned	Achieved	% Achievement
A 1.1.1	Mapping and identification of functionaries in new project locations	708	796	112
A 1.1.2	Rapid Needs Assessment on WASH and Nutrition for informing programming	1	1	100
A 1.1.3	Developing, reviewing, and updating WASH modules for Estates and Rural communities	10	13	130
A 1.1.4	Provincial and district level orientation and review workshops	48	42	88
A 1.1.5	Development of Estate and Village WASH plans for the project intervention areas	236	237	100
A 1.1.6	Planning and execution of training for frontline functionaries 27 Workshops of Functionary training (person-sessions)	2,382	3319	140
	Training for teachers on WASH and Nutrition	405	804	199
A 1.1.7	Identification, planning execution of capacity building for community leaders for WASH & Nutrition monitoring (32 Workshops)	2,382	3,165	133
A 1.1.8	Community based maintenance of WASH: Capacity building of local Masons and technicians for sustaining WASH	472	367	78

Outcome 1 comprises all initial activities that are needed to execute the rest of the activities. As evident from the table above, most of the planned activities have been achieved or even over-achieved in quantitative terms and a few remaining activities can be done during the remaining project period. During the field phase, the MTE Team met with the functionaries¹² and reviewed the WASH plans.

Based on the rapid needs assessment and WASH vulnerabilities assessment, all the villages and estates have done WASH plans in a participatory approach with the leadership of the CBO to address the issue of water in the community.

¹² Functionaries for a village or estate divisions Grama Niladhari (Village level administrative focal person), Economic Development Officer, Public Health Midwife, Estate Welfare officer, Estate Child development officer, School teachers etc.

There were 27 workshops conducted for functionaries' orientation and capacity building while 32 workshops were conducted targeting the CBO leaders on WASH and nutrition monitoring. 367 masons and plumbers were trained, who carry out the maintenance of water projects.

Table 11 Stitching Solidaridad - Outcome 2: Access to water supply sources

Access to improved, adequate and sustainably managed water supply sources

Activity No	Activity	Planned	Achieved	% Achievement
A 2.1.1	Water vulnerability analysis in project locations	236	174	73
A 2.1.2	Planning and setting up safe drinking water facilities	236	131	56
A 2.1.3	Setting up of community-based water supply system including storage, treatment, distribution, and water resource protection.	236	90	38
A 2.1.4	Mobilising private sector engagement	8	2	25
A 2.1.5	Mass media activities	120	50	42

Outcome 2 includes all activities to improve water supply in the various project areas. Since not all water vulnerability reports have been completed (as evident from the table above), the next implementation steps are behind schedule. What is not evident from the activities above is that the project did not concentrate on water availability alone but invested in sanitation facilities likewise.

To improve the quality of drinking water for community and sanitation facilities in the schools, Solidaridad allocated 28.6% for infrastructure development and 22% for training and awareness for WASH and hygiene promotion.

Currently around 30% of the target is achieved; that means there are more projects still in the estimation stage or in the process of tendering. Water supply projects in Uva province are badly affected due to the delaying of design and estimation.

On the other hand, due to the budget restriction, the implementation of the WASH plan is at risk. The budget restriction was encountered because the total number of water supply facilities increased from 150 to 237; after discussing this issue with the EUD, the original number of 150 facilities was re-confirmed. However, some construction plans in already identified villages have been dropped due to non-availability of water sources.

For design and estimation, the absence of in-house resources makes the infrastructure component dependent on the government institution, which delivered documents with slow mechanism because of inadequate resources. Some location experts are outsourced but their intervention in the project do not fully correspond with the scope of expected output.

For quality improvement of water supply in schools, activated carbon filters in central province and RO filters in Uva province are introduced as an innovative filtration system, which gives more improvement on bacteriological quality of the water.

Table 12 Stitching Solidaridad - Outcome 3: Nutrition, sanitation and hygiene

Nutrition, sanitation and hygiene practices sustainably improved

Activity No	Activity	Planned	Achieved	% Achievement
A 3.1.1	Formation of Male and Female groups Estates, Rural villages	155	153	99
A 3.1.2	Establishing ICT based Community Resource Centres (CRC)	236	186	79
A 3.1.3	Interpersonal Communication (IPC) sessions with Community members through community groups	1,888	1,998	105
A 3.1.4	Designing BCC Plans with Community Groups	236	237	100
A 3.1.5	BCC sessions with community groups	2,832	4,177	147

The project has achieved or partly over-achieved the planned activities as it can be seen from the table above. The only remaining activity is to establish the projected number of ICT-based community resource centres; that must be completed as most of it were observed as planned at the time of the field data collection.

The formation of 150 of male and 150 of female groups in estates, rural villages contributing to the social mobilization. Through the collective collaborations so that they have access to and awareness of their rights and services. It is an opportunity for them to share their inputs and contribute to the development of the area.

The project has initiated ICT based resource centres for the purpose of information sharing and knowledge dissemination among schoolchildren and villagers as much as possible on WASH, nutrition and gender to communities.

The activity Interpersonal Communication (IPC) sessions has 12 sub-activities as listed in Intermediary Note 2 section 8.5. Although the number of people targeted for the interventions is overachieved, there is a huge underspend observed in the budget. Similarly in the activity BCC session with the community also has around 20 sub-activities with wider areas of topics. The contribution of some of these activities to the overall objective and outcomes is doubtful. (See Intermediary Note 2).

Table 13 Stitching Solidaridad - Outcome 4: Collaboration

Collaboration between public and private sector established for improvement of rural water supply schemes and the environment

Activity No	Activity	Planned	Achieved	% Achievement
A 4.1.1	Convene multi-stakeholder platform on WASH including dissemination at Project End	32	7	22

5.9 Evaluation matrix

Table 14 Evaluation Questions and indicators

Evaluation Questions	Criteria	Indicator and/ or evaluation approach	Data Source
EQ 1 (Relevance)			
1	To what extent is the Action contributing to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Beneficiaries' needs, ○ Sri Lanka's needs and priorities in the relevant sectors of intervention, ○ EU-Sri Lanka cooperation priorities? 	Economic data Coherence of policy papers	Need assessments and EU country strategy
2	Are the projects' approaches / set-ups and methodologies appropriate for achieving the 3 Result Areas?	Log frames indicators and others	Progress reports, log-frames
3	Is the quality of the log-frames appropriate, in particular SMART indicators and targets?		Log frames
4	Do the individual projects' objectives reflect the overall EU-SIRD targets?	Cohesion of overall project targets with EU-SIRD targets	Log frames from the contracts of EU with NGOS
EQ 2 (Effectiveness)			
5	To what extent the planned results have been delivered and received as perceived by key beneficiaries and documented with solid data?		Interviews, site visits, focus group meetings, progress reports
6	To what extent the intended beneficiaries are – up to now - benefitting from the programme results – also in financial terms?	Revenues before and after the projects	Interviews, site visits, focus group meetings, progress reports

7	Are the main assumptions and risk assessments still valid and what is their effect on the achievement of the specific objectives?		Baseline studies, progress reports, interviews, site visits
8	What degree of flexibility and adaptability to facilitate rapid responses to changes in circumstances is in place (including political events, COVID-19, etc.)?	Revised log-frames, eventually also contracts	
9	To what extent the Technical Assistance Team of EU-SIRD improved the performance of the implementing agencies?		Interviews, desk research of existing reports
10	Is the approach through “CfPs” the most effective one to solve specific problems?	To what % projects’ targets have been achieved till today	Progress reports, interviews
11	Were gender issues sufficiently mainstreamed in all projects?	Gender specialists in all project teams	Interviews, desk research of existing reports
12	How was the need for trainings, grants, better access to finance and others analysed before or at project’s start?		EU idea and design reports from the early beginning, baseline studies
13	How is the quality of work plans and day-to-day management (management of the budget, personnel, etc.) as well the respect of deadlines at each one of the five implementing partners?	Quality and meaningfulness of the reports, comparison of agreed deadlines and submission dates	Interviews, desk research of existing reports
EQ 3 (Efficiency)			
14	Do the main project activities show progress against the log-frame indicators? Have the programme's / projects’ resources and activities been managed and delivered adequately?		Log-frames, progress reports, interviews, site visits, budget analyses
15	To what extent did the grants (and other contributions) boost the results?	Cost benefit considerations	Progress reports, site visits, interviews
16	To what extent did the provided agricultural and WASH infrastructure improve the situation	Benefits, soft and hard facts	

	of the beneficiaries, especially vulnerable women and youth, also in financial terms?		
17	Have the infrastructure components been implemented cost-effective?	Comparison actual costs versus planned costs	Log frames, progress reports, interviews (with procurement specialist in NGOs), site visits, budget analyses
18	Are the implementing partners working in parallel or is there a reasonable division of labour by content and geographical distribution?		Interviews with implementing partners and the EUD
19	Was this differentiation in content and geographical area considered in the Call for Proposals?	Analysis who is doing what and where	Interviews with implementing partners and the EUD
20	Was the private sector involved in delivering services and goods?		Progress reports, tender announcements, budget reviews
EQ 4 (Impact)			
21	Where signs of impact (e.g., sustainably improvement of the living conditions, of productivity in agriculture, more people in jobs) have been materialised?	Increase in yield per ha, per milking cow, employment after participation in trainings, etc.	Log frames, progress reports, site visits, interviews
22	What additional signs can be expected after a prolongation?		Interviews, site visits
23	Are these impacts big enough to be measured at province or district level?	Indicators to be checked if realistic	Log frames, progress reports
EQ 5 (Sustainability)			
24	What kind of sustainable initiatives have been introduced by the projects that will continue after the projects' end?	Listing most initiatives and	Interviews, desk research of existing reports

25	What is the prospect for the sustainability of the benefits (e.g. agricultural and water / sanitation infrastructure) from the projects in terms of financial viability, recurrent cost financing and asset maintenance?	Available budgets compared with estimated upcoming expenditures	Investment proposals and calculations, progress reports, site visits, interviews
26	Are any institutional changes likely to stay in place and are they supported by adequate government funding?	Shown ownership	Interviews with authorities
27	Do CBOs/LAs/Estate Management have adequate capacity (financial, HR, etc.) for continued implementation after project's closure? Are key stakeholders equipped for its continuation?	Available budgets and actual HR	Budget reviews of mentioned stakeholders, review of need analyses and training reports; interviews with key stakeholders
EQ 6 (Ownership)			
28	To what extent national beneficiaries have been involved in the design and implementation of the projects?	Number of interviewed potential beneficiaries	Interviews with beneficiaries, progress reports
29	Is there a substantial contribution, eventually even in cash and not only in kind, from the beneficiaries and from the GoSL (to confirm indirectly their commitments)?	Available budgets, co-financing activities	Interviews with local stakeholders and authorities
30	Number of Steering Committee Meetings (2017 – 2020)?	Request by EUD for these meetings	Interviews with authorities and EUD, progress reports, STC meeting memos
31	What is the level of policy support provided by the projects and responsiveness of GoSL?	Kind of policy support; request for this support from GoSL	Progress reports, interviews with NGOs and authorities

EQ 7 (Coordination & Monitoring)			
32	How is coordination and monitoring organised inside the implementing partners?	Minutes of meetings, frequency of formal and unofficial meetings, achievements of coordination (examples)	Progress reports, interviews, site visits also in remote project offices
33	To what extent there has been adequate coordination set up and monitor at different levels of implementation (coordination with national and local institutions, implementing partners, beneficiaries, stakeholders, other donors, etc.)?	Number of coordination meetings, free exchange of reports, official visits by the authorities at projects' sites	Progress reports, interviews, meetings
34	How is the quality of the monitoring system, accuracy and flexibility, and the adequacy of baseline information submitted to EUD? Have key stakeholders been kept adequately informed?	Information bulletins to stakeholders; joint monitoring in specific areas with information sharing	Interviews with NGOs, progress reports
35	How does the coordination between the different implementing partners look like?	Coordination achievements	Interviews with NGOs, progress reports
36	How was the coordination between implementing partners and EUD organised?	Frequency of personnel changes on both sides	Interviews with NGOs and EUD, progress reports
37	What was the role of the Technical Assistance Team EU-SIRD?	Inputs from the team, except ToC	Interviews with team members,
EQ 8 (Cross-cutting issues)			
38	How have environmental impacts been considered in the design and construction of (agricultural, sanitary/water) infrastructure?	Environmental Impact Assessments	Reports, interviews, site visits

39	Are policies and measures for solid wastes reduction/re-utilization/recycling introduced at LAs and community level, a) in relation to project's activities, and b) in relation to the overall community management?	Relevant documentation	Reports, interviews, site visits
40	Are environmental policies, targets and legal framework obligations considered in community planning exercise?	Exchange of emails with authorities	Interviews with NGO-staff in charge of environmental issues
41	What kind of environmental education / information opportunities (whether training, awareness campaigns, etc.) are offered and activated in overall community planning processes realized by projects?	List of environmental issues per project	Interviews with NGO-staff in charge of environmental issues
42	How are gender issues integrated in the projects and where can they be seen best?	Relevant reports or studies	Interview with NGO staff in charge of e gender
EQ 9 (EU added value)			
43	Is the EU support generating better results (adding more value) than other donors could do?		
44	In what fields is EU intervention unique and measurable?		
EQ 10 (Coherence of the Actions)			
45	How do the result areas / intervention components fit in with one another and with the objectives?		
46	Have there been ideas regarding internal coherence by the EUD, when launching the	Minutes of meetings or smaller notes	Interviews with EUD

	CfP and when approving the proposals? What was expected?		
47	Are there joint internal reports available by the 5 implementing partners?	Reports	Progress reports, interviews with NGOs
48	To what extent is this intervention coherent with other interventions that have similar objectives?	Planning documents from before the project start (if available)	Interviews with EUD and NGOs

5.10 Detailed answers to the evaluation questions

ACTED

➤ **EQI Relevance**

❖ *To what extent is the Action contributing to Beneficiaries' needs?*

It is very relevant to sustainably improve the livelihoods of the most vulnerable rural and estate communities through promotion of an integrated, climate-resilient and inclusive socio-economic development, especially when looking at the indicators and targets, it becomes evident that the following should be achieved: 80 % of all target MSME's employees have a 15% increase in income; 25 % of supported MSMEs increase their turnover by at least a 25%; 1,000 new jobs created in the target value-chains; 20 % more agricultural value added per hectare (EURF) at target MSMEs

❖ *To what extent is the Action contributing to Sri Lanka's needs and priorities in the relevant sectors of intervention?*

The intervention targeting business development, job creation (for vulnerable people) (Op 1) and improving public and private business services (Op 2) is highly relevant for Sri Lanka.

❖ *To what extent is the Action contributing to EU-Sri Lanka cooperation priorities?*

As shown in the EU's Multiannual Indicative Programme (mip) 2014-2020 for Sri Lanka, there are three sectors for interventions with the following specific objectives: 1) Sustainably improve the living conditions and promote poverty reduction of vulnerable rural communities through the provision of basic infrastructure and social services; 2) Contribute to the enhancement of food and nutrition security of communities in target areas through the promotion of inclusive sustainable agricultural practices that bring green economic growth and improved climate change resilient livelihoods, with efficient natural resources management; 3) Foster inclusive and sustainable economic development through strengthening the role of private sector and SME's and job creation and 4) Strengthen capacities and good governance of inclusive and sustainable local development involving all relevant stakeholders. ACTED is in line mainly with the specific objective 2, 3 and 4.

❖ *Are the projects' approaches / set-ups and methodologies appropriate for achieving the 3 Result Areas?*

The approaches are appropriate to achieve Result Areas 1 and 3. However, the targets 1 - 4 under specific objectives will not be achieved and not only because of Easter Blast and COVID-19.

❖ *Is the quality of the log frames appropriate, in particular SMART indicators and targets?*

The quality of the log frame is good; however, the indicator for the overall objective is too large and not under direct influence of the project. Indicators 1 - 4 of the specific objectives are good. A weak point is that the baseline data are not provided, it is just mentioned baseline recorded in 2018 and one in 2018/2019.

The agricultural value per ha was never measured by ACTED's M&E unit and positive achievements cannot be verified. The number of productive assets is not a sound indicator, as assets have been distributed by the project; eventually that would have been an indicator if there had been no distribution of assets by the project. See report.

❖ ***Do the individual projects' objectives reflect the overall EU-SIRD targets?***

The objectives of EU-SIRD are copied and pasted from the call - and thus they reflect the EU overall SIRD target; ACTED is supporting SMEs and value chains in capacity building to create new employment opportunities and to increase level of incomes, thus contributing to poverty reduction in Uva and Central Provinces.

Overall impression

The ACTED project with its economic activities is very relevant, however it could have been done better.

➤ ***EQ2 Effectiveness***

❖ ***To what extent the planned results have been delivered and received as perceived by key beneficiaries and documented with solid data?***

None of the overall and specific outcomes will be achieved and the newly introduced target concerning the increase of productive assets cannot be achieved, as there was no target proposed at all, however that is considered as a rather meaningless indicator. Documentation with solid data is rather poor.

On micro-level, many key beneficiaries are satisfied with the results.

❖ ***To what extent the intended beneficiaries are – up to now - benefitting from the programme results – also in financial terms?***

Regarding Op 1, people are benefitting from training, transfer of assets or capital, access to new or improved common business facilities and most likely through intensified rural advisory services. - Related to Op 2, people might benefit from improved government services (as 90 % of supported BDS are government agencies); ACTED wrote making significant changes at the BDS performance can be slow. BDS providers are definitely benefitting from the project by receiving assets, but it is not clear if that was the goal as the EU wants to support mainly the role of private sector. A clear guidance at the start of the project that not more than e.g. 40 % of BDS providers can be governmental institutions, would have helped. - Finally, Op 3. wants to improve the enabling business environment for target MSMEs through localised planning (log frame) and to strengthen the capacities of local governance actors, including CSOs, local authorities and GN/DS officers to support inclusive, resilient and multi-stakeholder economic development (Technical Proposal); not obvious how supporting MSMEs is linked to e.g., Village Development Plans. The MTE Team thinks that an enabling business environment is characterised by getting easily and quickly permits and documents (e.g. food safety and export certificates) from the local authorities, furthermore, advise e.g. on tax issues and more. - In any case, the 19 grants awarded to CSOs and public private partnerships for implementation of the economic development plans are very welcomed.

❖ ***Are the main assumptions and risk assessments still valid and what is their effect on the achievement of the specific objectives?***

"It seems that government approvals could have been obtained sometimes faster if there would have been a more pro-active attitude of the authorities; also potential beneficiaries of usually state-owned plantations have not always been allowed to participate in project activities.

The economic downturn through COVID-19 could have not been expected, but even before indicators did not look good."

❖ ***What degree of flexibility and adaptability to facilitate rapid responses to changes in circumstances is in place (including political events, COVID-19, etc.)?***

ACTED is trying to work as flexible as possible and is using home-office work as well; however the work with the beneficiaries in the field cannot be done "remotely" and therefore not much flexibility can be expected. Like all other NGOs, a No-Cost-Extension was requested.

❖ ***To what extent the Technical Assistance Team of EU-SIRD improved the performance of the implementing agencies?***

The TA Team of EU-SIRD had the task to assist the NGOs and to monitor them (without having executive power over them); assistance took place in some training courses; critical remarks and assistance on outcome reporting have been made by the TA Team.

Most probably, it was useful having a TA Team around but the evaluation is not sure if that improved significantly the performance of the NGOs. Often targets according to logframes have been missed and the EUD was not informed well by the installed reporting system.

❖ ***Is the approach through "CfPs" the most effective one to solve specific problems?***

There are two options; either the tasks is well defined, including several sub-tasks, or the topic of the development is rather generally described. The first approach has the advantage that the client (the EUD) gets what seem to be most relevant for improving the circumstances. The other approach rather leaves the decision to the applying NGOs and hopes that they provide something substantial, as they should know the situation in the targets provinces best. - It seems that the second approach was chosen at EU –SIRD. In fact, the five NGOs submitted proposals according to their point of view and these proposals have not been – or at least not much – been fine-tuned to fit both sides – the EUD and the NGOs. - At least for the three projects in Result Area 1 - Improved livelihoods and increased household income levels – the chosen approach, leaving much room for the ideas of the NGOs, was not the most effective ones, as many targets have not been achieved. (That leads to a new question if the targets have been realistic, if the indicators have been SMART and the indicators have not been – if it is allowed to generalise – SMART.

❖ ***Were gender issues sufficiently mainstreamed in all projects?***

The word gender does not appear in the log frame, even if the focus is on the most vulnerable rural and estate communities. The log frame distinguished in job creation between women and others, but that looks more like a statistical exercise instead of gender mainstreaming.

❖ ***How was the need for trainings, grants, better access to finance and others analysed before or at project's start?***

There is no society where trainings are not required or at least helpful; also here. Hard to imagine that there is a need for grants; however, donor programmes are in most cases working with grant mechanism, often to support the trainees in implementing their new developed skills. Introducing grants can speed up project implementation and in the best case also the impact. However, most likely there is never "a need" for grants. Situation is lightly different when it comes to financing. Development is possible without external financing but here again; access to finance can push the progress.

There is not much evidence that before or at project start potential beneficiaries have been interviewed in depth to find out about their real needs and therefore offered training deals with business plan writing, several trainings for the government agents (a primary responsibility of the ministry in charge) and also technical trainings. These technical trainings for several

agricultural value chains have been useful, but the evaluation is not sure if they have been developed on a training needs assessment upfront.

The MTE Team has the impression that most trainings are “standard” like business plan writings. As soon as the training lessons are getting pragmatic and offering new skills for specific tasks within a VC, then the interest and success comes immediately. As long as the trainings are just considered as a burden that has to be shouldered by trainees to become eligible for grants and other gratifications, trainings are questionable.

When speaking to the staff of MSMEs and BSCs, then they mentioned that the training programmes and individual action plans prepared have been useful.

❖ *How is the quality of work plans and day-to-day management (management of the budget, personnel, etc.) as well the respect of deadlines at each one of the five implementing partners?*

The MTE Team did not have much insights into these management plans; however all projects are late and not only because of COVID-19, but most likely because a too late/slow start of the project; there is the impression that before 2019 not much was initiated.

The need for trainings including relevant topics have not been assessed in a sufficient manner. The trainings are not based on shortcomings and weaknesses and are not sufficiently coordinated with the Ministry of Health. There is no clear idea of what an integrated training in food and nutrition security will include (determinants of malnutrition, WASH, food diversity, health gender, etc.)

Overall impression

A lot of targets have not been achieved and therefore the ACTED intervention was not very effective.

➤ ***EQ3 Efficiency***

❖ *Do the main project activities show progress against the log-frame indicators? Have the programme's / projects' resources and activities been managed and delivered adequately?*

According to the original log frame, the overall objective will not be achieved and none of the four specific objectives are measured so far! It is unknown how the income of MSME employees has changed, how the turnover of the MSMEs has changed (company by company), how many jobs have been created (or been lost) in the four VCs, and finally if the agricultural value added per hectare was increased or decreased.

Keeping in mind that the overall budget for ACTED was EUR 7,357,666, it cannot be stated that project's resources and activities been managed and delivered adequately.

❖ *To what extent did the grants (and other contributions) boost the results?*

Most likely, grants boosted the results. However, it would have been nice if the M&E units would have done a short analysis, especially to monitor the performance of grant supported stakeholders with the non-supported ones.

Altogether it has to be said that grants had an overall budget that was a fraction of the budget for transferred MSMEs assets.

- ❖ *To what extent did the provided agricultural and WASH infrastructure improve the situation of the beneficiaries, especially vulnerable women and youth in financial terms?*

n/a

- ❖ *Have the infrastructure components been implemented cost-effective?*

Infrastructure plays an important role at ACTED; poly tunnels, cattle sheds, mushroom production facility and much more; as there is a transparent tendering process involved, it can be assumed that the implementation was cost-effective. The question seems to be rather if all these infrastructure measures have been necessary, as construction business is not a domain of NGOs in general.

This too strong focus on infrastructure construction is linked to the requirement to spend at least Euro 4.5 million; eventually that provoke a wrong orientation in the project design.

- ❖ *Are the implementing partners working in parallel or is there a reasonable division of labour by content and geographical distribution?*

As the five NGOs started five projects, there was no reasonable division of labour. Also the fact that the EUD tried later to form a programme out of these projects no real synergies have been achieved.

- ❖ *Was this differentiation in content and geographical area considered in the Call for Proposals?*

It looks, as there was no differentiation considered; however, it would have been feasible to divide the target area among the three projects under Result Area 1 and apply a more focus approach, while reducing overheads, office and transport costs.

- ❖ *Was the private sector involved in delivering services and goods?*

The delivery of services was not dominated by the private sector, whereas goods / equipment and construction work was provided by the private sector.

Overall impression

The relation between inputs - EUR 7,357,666 – and results (as in outputs) is not impressive.

➤ ***EQ4 Impact***

- ❖ *Where signs of impact (e.g., sustainably improvement of the living conditions, of productivity in agriculture, more people in jobs) have been materialised?*

Commercially (increase of income and job creation) the projects have not been successfully - yet.

- ❖ *What additional signs can be expected after a prolongation?*

Trainings, especially if not focused on planning (business planning, village planning), improves the capacities of the trainees

- ❖ *Are these impacts big enough to be measured at province or district level?*

The impacts are not big enough to be measured on province level; better M&E is needed to get sound data on the performance of the beneficiaries and then the impact of the approached people could be measured.

Overall impression

The overall impact will eventually materialise, but from today's point of view and keeping in mind the huge budget, it seems to be rather low.

➤ **EQ5 Sustainability**

❖ What kind of sustainable initiatives have been introduced by the projects that will continue after the projects' end?

Because of few M&E data, it is hard to predict what project's activities will last. Training if needed for the daily work and when it brings immediate return in higher product quality and/or prices, will last as the skills have been transferred to the beneficiaries.

Common infrastructure does not mean that it will last, as few often control the common goods and if there is no strict performance monitoring, it might not last. If managers of these common facilities were paid only a success fee, the probability to last would be higher.

Finally, all governmental institutions including Business Development Service providers depend fully on the national budget and here priorities can shift quickly.

❖ What is the prospect for the sustainability of the benefits (e.g. agricultural and water / sanitation infrastructure) from the projects in terms of financial viability, recurrent cost financing and asset maintenance?

The transferred assets and capital to target MSMEs during the project duration will further increase the profitability if used properly during the project duration. Only in case that accurate introduction and accompanying coaching was provided, this sustainability is more or less guaranteed. The same is valid for the new or improved common business facilities. As currently only 3 out of 16 common infrastructure measures are in operation and as the production is just starting, it is too early to allow any outlook on the future profitability.

❖ Are any institutional changes likely to stay in place and are they supported by adequate government funding?

Not sure if Local Business Development Services (BDS) providers, as mainly state agencies, will stay in place. That depends on adequate allocations from the national budget and as GoSL only communicates "intentions" (that are not binding), this needed budget allocation is not fixed yet. Furthermore, decision makers can change with each new election and from this point the sustainability of these institutions are not secured.

❖ Do CBOs/LAs/Estate Management have adequate capacity (financial, HR, etc.) for continued implementation until project's closure? Are key stakeholders equipped for its continuation?

n/a

Overall impression

Training might provide long lasting impact; the situation is not clear at the common infrastructure, as building something does not mean it is already working, especially if a procurement, processing and sales process is involved.

➤ **EQ6 Ownership**

❖ *To what extent national beneficiaries have been involved in the design and implementation of the projects?*

It seems that some NGOs had already had in the area previous projects and they have been considered when designing the new ones. Most likely ordinary people have not been much involved; and when involved e.g., in prioritizing infrastructure projects, then the decision might stem from wishful thinking and are not based on analysed. The needs of the GoSL - not a classical beneficiary - have been reflected, eventually too much.

❖ *Is there a substantial contribution, eventually even in cash and not only in kind, from the beneficiaries and from the GoSL (to confirm indirectly their commitments)?*

It look as if the GoSL was one of the main beneficiaries of the EU-SIRD project because of provided market centres, production facilities, business centres and various trainings; from governmental side not much commitment – apart from goodwill – was recognised. The beneficiaries of assets had to contribute but not substantially.

❖ *Number of Steering Committee Meetings (2017 – 2020)?*

Since the programme start in mid-2017, there was only one Steering Committee Meeting held in July 2019. Even considering the political turbulences, Eastern blast and the pandemic, the fact that there was one meeting shows a very limited ownership of the GoSL in the EU development aid. - OXFAM has records available for district level stakeholder meetings.

❖ *What is the level of policy support provided by the projects and responsiveness of GoSL?*

Policy is everything that involves more than two persons and therefore each development project has a policy dimension. For example ACTED supported the drafting of the Economic Development Plan for Ambagamuwa and therefore got involved in policy and politics.

Governments, also the one from Sri Lanka, are always very open for transfer of assets, infrastructure or something similar; when it comes to advises and policy papers, the situation might turn, as governments do not like international consultants who are developing a strategy or a policy paper.

If as in the case with the mentioned economic development plan, also economic development grants are involved, the responsiveness of governments is getting bigger.

Overall impression

There are no signs of overwhelming ownership – from none of the stakeholders.

➤ **EQ7 Coordination and Monitoring**

❖ *How is coordination and monitoring organised inside the implementing partners?*

As all 5 projects had a very broad range of activities – from training, to construction, grant schemes and others - in a rather large geographical target area. The requirement within the CfP to submit only projects with minimum Euro 4.5 million created too complex projects, therefore involved too many consortium partners and even more subcontracted companies, so that coordination and monitoring was for the very beginning on a challenge. It seems that the lead

companies (INGOs) had a limited overview from the beginning; that became evident when data and contacts have been needed and have not been available at HQs, or when asking for financial budget details. Answers how much has been spent on construction sites or how much was given in cash or kind to beneficiaries were difficult to obtain. - If reporting requirements between INGOs and EUD were formulated stricter - also formally, the coordination and monitoring within the implementing partners would have been better as then the consortium partners would have reported in the same way to the NGO as the NGOs would have done towards the EUD. – The overall reporting was done usually by the lead company / NGO.

❖ To what extent there has been adequate coordination set up and monitor at different levels of implementation (coordination with national and local institutions, implementing partners, beneficiaries, stakeholders, other donors, etc.)?

Better coordination and monitoring would have brought a more successful project implementation. It seems that in many cases, the coordination with national and local authorities was a one-way communication, the authorities declared what they want, and the NGOs delivered. This has also to be seen under social aspects (as discussed) as the government is highly respected and might therefore demand sometimes more than needed for the sake of the projects. - However, coordination took place but it could have been more efficient; for example it would have been possible to limit the geographical areas of the NGOs; in Result Area 1 three NGOs have implemented similar economic projects and it would have been feasible to harmonise their activities by content and allocate specific geographical areas to each NGOs; that would have reduced overlapping activities, and would have reduced coordination and M&E work substantially, leaving more time to focus on the vulnerable poor.

❖ How is the quality of the monitoring system, accuracy and flexibility, and the adequacy of baseline information submitted to EUD? Have key stakeholders been kept adequately informed?

ACTED started monitoring of turnover of supported MSMEs in April 2020, whereas the project started mid-2017. The project wants to achieve at least 640-signed purchase or sales agreements; that is not a well-chosen indicator as what is a signed agreement saying in addition to the turnover? Sometimes, the log frame shows poor indicators such as “number of people receiving rural advisory services with EU support through this action“. ACTED trained people in business management, dairy management and others; that sounds like a classroom training with dozens of people: under receiving advisory services, the evaluation had hoped to understand like an advisor goes and visits the „beneficiary“ to assist in a specific case. In addition, number of people trained is also not very meaningful, as what was the result of the training? Looking at training attendance lists and training reports as proposed by ACTED, does not provide any insights, does not give a preliminary understanding of the impact. One could also dig deeper and ask if these people have been trained in topics that they have selected or if the trainings were the “carrots” to obtain a grant or other benefits later on.

The EUD was not well informed (at least regarding the figures) for the overall and specific objectives, partially as even ACTED does not know them. Consequently, also other stakeholders cannot be well informed.

❖ How does the coordination between the different implementing partners look like?

The coordination was not "encouraged" from the beginning, as the five projects have been formed into one programme later on. However, the NGOs are exchanging views and try to avoid overlapping activities.

❖ ***How was the coordination between implementing partners and EUD organised?***

The EU approach to form a programme instead of 5 projects came most likely too late, even if the intention was good. Probably, it could have been done better, also by empowering the TA Team that had largely advisory functions.

❖ ***What was the role of the Technical Assistance Team EU-SIRD?***

The TA Team should contribute to the achievements of the specific objectives - improved livelihoods and increased household incomes and improved health and nutrition - of the programme integrated, sustainable, climate resilient and inclusive socio-economic development for the most vulnerable rural and estate communities in the target area. - Furthermore, the EU wanted to achieve an improved impact, effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability of EU-SIRD and the TA Team should provide baseline data, reshape SMARTer indicators, and develop more synergies among NGOs and more capacities in each NGO. - As advisor the role of the TA Team was restricted, as they could propose something, but not implement it. Looking at the role of the TA Team, the question comes up why such a team was needed? Was it already from the beginning the feeling that the NGOs would not have enough capacity? Why have the indicators not been reshaped by the EUD in the beginning, before signing the contracts? Why has the TA Team been tasked to deliver baseline data? Was it maybe from the beginning evident that the NGOs will face difficulties in that? - The role of the Technical Assistance Team EU-SIRD was an advisory role that can only be successful if the advised NGOs would do what was told to them. On the other hand, the NGOs had no direct power to “request” some deliverables. - The role of the Technical Assistance Team EU-SIRD was not designed in the best way and the long hesitation of the GoSL to nominate one, did not improve the situation.

Overall impression

Looking at the log frame, one can see that there would be room for more M&E.

➤ ***EQ8 Cross-cutting issues***

❖ ***How have environmental impacts been considered in the design and construction of (agricultural, sanitary/water) infrastructure?***

All construction activities need a governmental approval and to get it, the project has to respect environmental laws.

❖ ***Are policies and measures for solid wastes reduction/re-utilization/recycling introduced at LAs and community level, a) in relation to project’s activities, and b) in relation to the overall community management?***

n/a

❖ ***Are environmental policies, targets and legal framework obligations considered in community planning exercise?***

Construction permits are issued only if the project is in line with the environmental policies and regulations. Legal requirements seem to be respected. Not sure if additional efforts have been made to be more environment friendly.

❖ ***What kind of environmental education/information opportunities (whether training, awareness campaigns, etc.) are offered and activated in overall community planning processes realized by projects?***

ACTED did awareness raising on environmental sensitivity for the targeted MSMEs.

❖ ***How are gender issues integrated in the projects and where can they be seen well?***

From the beginning, a Gender and Inclusion specialist was foreseen to focus on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment. Unfortunately, the position of the project's gender adviser has been vacant from July 2020 due to difficulty in recruiting a suitable replacement.

Under "Training 1: CSO governance, administration and organisational management", two workshops took place on equal employment, gender equality, inclusion of persons with disabilities (notably the need for disability accommodation), and inclusion of other socially excluded groups such as plantation communities.

Overall impression

Cross-cutting issues have been integrated by ACTED but did not play a major role.

➤ ***EQ9 EU added value***

❖ ***Is the EU support generating better results (adding more value) than other donors could do?***

No, but except EU funding not much EU support was provided; experts have not been from EU Member States.

❖ ***In what fields is EU intervention unique and measurable?***

The MTE Team does not think that there is a single intervention that was unique or could have been done by no one outside the EU. Consequently, there is also no measurable unique value adding process. Agricultural cooperatives, LEADER-like regional development planning, but also specific technologies could have offered opportunities for unique interventions.

Overall impression

Special EU added value was not detected in this project, but it has to be said that in many other projects it is hard to see some unique contributions, eventually because the dev aid is will interconnected.

➤ ***EQ10 Coherence of the Actions***

❖ ***How do the result areas / intervention components fit in with one another and with the objectives?***

This project deals with Result Area 1, the economic one; therefore the expected Op 1. - MSMEs in target value-chains are capacitated to expand their business and create sustainable employment for vulnerable people in the local economy - fits to the project-set-up. Also Op 2. - Local Business Development Services (BDS) providers, including financial institutions, are able to support target MSMEs to pursue their development – could be in line with the economic side of this project, even if many service providers are not from the private sector and have rather administrative character. Moreover, Op 3. - CSOs, Local Authorities and deconcentrated government departments improve the enabling business environment for target MSMEs through localised planning – could fit into the economic objectives well but are already leaving the pure commercial sector, again, as Local Authorities and deconcentrated government departments have a rather administrative character.

Theoretically, everything seems to fit together.

❖ ***Have there been ideas regarding internal coherence by the EUD, when launching the CfP and when approving the proposals? What was expected?***

Most likely, but the programme idea was not fully developed at project's start and the assisting Technical Assistance Team came very late.

❖ ***Are there joint internal reports available by the 5 implementing partners?***

Joint reporting was never foreseen as in the beginning there have been 5 individual projects and not a programme. Later on the EU tried to create a joint with a common ToC but as the programme was not foreseen from the beginning, the joint reporting was never requested and therefore not done.

❖ ***To what extent is this intervention coherent with other interventions that have similar objectives?***

The implementing NGO is partially coordinating with the 2 other NGOs from the same Result Area; a better planning - that would have had to be initiated by the EUD - with focus on programme instead projects, would have improved the situation; e.g., more synergies would have been possible.

Overall impression

The Coherence of the Actions by ACTED is given, but not in an extra-ordinary way.

CARE

➤ **EQI Relevance**

❖ ***To what extent is the Action contributing to Beneficiaries' needs?***

It is very relevant to increase income levels and reduce poverty and inequality among rural and estate communities.

❖ ***To what extent is the Action contributing to Sri Lanka's needs and priorities in the relevant sectors of intervention?***

To intervene in rural and estate communities with the aim to improve SMEs (including social enterprises) performances contributes substantially to Sri Lanka's needs. Whereas the SME support aims to improve the economic situation, the empowerment of voice and participation of women and youth in decision-making targets more the social side. If an increased women participation will lead to more employment, business development and economic growth is not yet expressed in convincing figures.

❖ ***To what extent is the Action contributing to EU-Sri Lanka cooperation priorities?***

As shown in the EU's Multiannual Indicative Programme (mip) 2014-2020 for Sri Lanka, CARE's project is largely in line with fostering inclusive and sustainable economic development through strengthening the role of private sector and SME's and job creation.

❖ ***Are the projects' approaches / set-ups and methodologies appropriate for achieving the 3 Result Areas?***

The approaches are partially appropriate to achieve Result Areas 1 and 3. However, the target to increase income levels of youth and women will not be achieved.

❖ ***Is the quality of the log-frames appropriate, in particular SMART indicators and targets?***

The log frame is weak and selected indicators are not always meaningful. E.g. measuring a project success / impact like increase income on a provincial basis is not meaningful, as a single project cannot have an impact on a province. Furthermore, some definitions are vague like productive assets owned and managed by youth and women. In case that this should provide insights into the economic performance, then the indicator provides only very indirectly an answer. In addition, the increase in community, government and private investment in economic and community development as a single figure does not allow any conclusions, how the project intervention assisted the beneficiaries. Investments by the government come from the national budget and are usually politically motivated. Therefore, the MTE Team does not see the interconnection between government spending in a community and e.g. the training provided by the NGO.

What conclusions can be drawn from an indicator dealing with “To conduct policy group discussions at national and provincial level”? If this indicator would have been “5 days’ workshop at 8 hours daily with the director of the government agency XYZ about local infrastructure including a short summary paper” then everyone interested in this project could have had an understanding of the intentions.

❖ ***Do the individual projects’ objectives reflect the overall EU-SIRD targets?***

As a project of Lot 1 with a strong economic focus the CARE project reflects intentions of the Multi-annual Indicative Programme 2014-2020 for Sri Lanka, i.e. integrated rural development (strengthening of SMEs (including social enterprises) led and managed by young men and women from rural and estate communities, job creation, increase of income) and democratic governance and reconciliation (review of national SME policy papers, establish an advisory forum consisting of key government stakeholders with a clear mandate to develop a policy framework on job creation and entrepreneurship).

➤ ***EQ2 Effectiveness***

❖ ***To what extent the planned results have been delivered and received as perceived by key beneficiaries and documented with solid data?***

The project is not characterized by solid data and beneficiaries have not yet benefitted from the project in the planned amount; as seen in the Summary Outputs 1 – 2, the transfer of equipment reached so far only 17% and the transfer of infrastructure just 15%.

❖ ***To what extent the intended beneficiaries are – up to now - benefitting from the programme results – also in financial terms?***

All persons who have received grants so far, machines and others are benefitting in financial terms. However, it would have been more interesting to see how the training influences the performance of the individuals MSMEs and how an improved performance is mirrored in an increased income. When distributing cash (just as an example), then the recipients are better off – of course.

❖ ***Are the main assumptions and risk assessments still valid and what is their effect on the achievement of the specific objectives?***

CARE wrote in the log frame under assumptions:

- There will be substantial buy-in from national level authorities as the proposed action is aligned to the national policy agenda.
- The planned local authority elections and power changes will not significantly impact the ability to implement the action.

- The Government of Sri Lanka's positively supports implementation of policies that are more focused on economic growth within each province.

The MTE Team is not convinced that these assumptions materialised during project implementation.

❖ *What degree of flexibility and adaptability to facilitate rapid responses to changes in circumstances is in place (including political events, COVID-19, etc.)?*

Looking in the delays that are taking place related to e.g. the transfer of equipment reached and of infrastructure, the flexibility to respond to changes in circumstances cannot be seen.

❖ *To what extent the Technical Assistance Team of EU-SIRD improved the performance of the implementing agencies?*

The Technical Assistance Team could have improved the situation much more if it would have been hired in the beginning; it is well known that the tendering process has taken place in time, however the first tender did not bring a decision. Furthermore, the TA Team had an advisory and not a management role and could therefore not intervene (if they would have liked to do so).

❖ *Is the approach through "CfPs" the most effective one to solve specific problems?*

There are two options; either the tasks are well defined, including several sub-tasks, or the topic of the development is rather generally described. The first approach has the advantage that the client (the EUD) gets what seem to be most relevant for improving the circumstances. The other approach rather leaves the decision to the applying NGOs and hopes that they provide something substantial, as they should know the situation in the targeted provinces best. - It seems that the second approach was chosen at EU –SIRD. In fact, the five NGOs submitted proposals according to their point of view and these proposals have not been – or at least not much – been fine-tuned to fit both sides – the EUD and the NGOs. - At least for the three projects in Result Area 1 - Improved livelihoods and increased household income levels – the chosen approach, leaving much room for the ideas of the NGOs, was not the most effective ones, as many targets have not been achieved. (That leads to a new question if the targets have been realistic, if the indicators have been SMART and the indicators have not been – if it is allowed to generalise – SMART.

❖ *Were gender issues sufficiently mainstreamed in all projects?*

Rather not; this project targeted primarily women and youth; however, there was no special focus on gender-aspects.

❖ *How was the need for trainings, grants, better access to finance and others analysed before or at project's start?*

CARE was one of the NGOs that did baseline studies with in-house capacities and therefore understood the needs from the beginning better than the others.

❖ *How is the quality of work plans and day-to-day management (management of the budget, personnel, etc.) as well the respect of deadlines at each one of the five implementing partners?*

The MTE Team did not have much insights into these management plans; however all projects are late and not only because of COVID-19, but most likely because a too late/slow start of the project; there is the impression that before 2019 not much was initiated

Overall impression

It is not guaranteed that despite extension of the project duration, the majority of the objectives and results of these interventions will be achieved. Given the large budget of this project, much more could have been achieved. However, only the final evaluation will provide a final answer.

➤ **EQ3 Efficiency**

- ❖ ***Do the main project activities show progress against the log-frame indicators? Have the programme's / projects' resources and activities been managed and delivered adequately?***

Employment generation is not evident yet. CARE says that the rural and plantation communities have mostly benefited from the employment opportunities generated by the micro small and medium enterprises (MSMEs) and on the other side that there is a 9% increase in direct employment (1615 Direct Employees 1232 Women, 383 Men, 630 Youth). Due to an ambitious target and unfortunate circumstances like COVID-19, the project activities have not delivered adequately.

However, when looking at the output activities then all activities show progress against the log frame indicators except the drafting of the national action plans to implement the draft SME policy.

- ❖ ***To what extent did the grants (and other contributions) boost the results?***

When looking at generation of income and employment, then the data do not provide clear answers how far grants have boosted results. The grants, machines and others have to be seen as additional assets in a company and then it would be good to measure the hopefully increased production, which results from the provided machines. Just providing grants and machines increases assets at company sides, of course, but did it improve the productivity, and more importantly the profitability?

- ❖ ***To what extent did the provided agricultural and WASH infrastructure improve the situation of the beneficiaries, especially vulnerable women and youth in financial terms?***

The MTE Teams cannot provide an answer here.

- ❖ ***Have the infrastructure components been implemented cost-effective?***

Probably yes, because of the huge number of infrastructure components the budget was tight. The question seem to be rather if all these infrastructure measures have been necessary, as construction business is not a domain of NGOs in general.

- ❖ ***Are the implementing partners working in parallel or is there a reasonable division of labour by content and geographical distribution?***

All implementing partners try to avoid overlapping activities, but more synergies could have been achieved, e.g. by harmonising the economic parts of all three NGOs and by giving a stricter geographical focus to each of them.

- ❖ ***Was this differentiation in content and geographical area considered in the Call for Proposals?***

No, even obviously some fine-tuning took place when awarding the contracts.

- ❖ ***Was the private sector involved in delivering services and goods?***

Yes.

Overall impression

The relation between inputs and results (as in outputs) was not as good as it could have been.

➤ **EQ4 Impact**

- ❖ *Where signs of impact (e.g., sustainably improvement of the living conditions, of productivity in agriculture, more people in jobs) have been materialised?*

The value-wise transfer of equipment and infrastructure will definitely improve. For sure, that will impact onto improvement of the living conditions, increase in agricultural productivity and involve more people in jobs, but at the same time it is questionable if the available budget would have left more room, therefore.

- ❖ *Are these impacts big enough to be measured at province or district level?*

CARE changed the log frame for the better, by moving from increase in income levels of youth and women at province level towards increased Net Profit of women-owned MSMEs.

Overall impression

The efficiency of this project is weak. The question arises if CARE or any other NGO must get involved into procurement of machines, construction of facilities and others. Despite the potential positive impact for development, it is outside the core competencies of NGOs. NGOs being very familiar with the local circumstances, might consider to focus more on coaching and all kind of personal assistance to beneficiaries and that especially by know-how transfer. In a certain way, the evaluation team proposes a move more towards soft support instead of hardware.

➤ **EQ5 Sustainability**

- ❖ *What kind of sustainable initiatives have been introduced by the projects that will continue after the projects' end?*

Transferred equipment will remain if beneficiaries have been well trained how to use it and common infrastructure too, if the local authorities are capable to run them in the public interest.

- ❖ *What is the prospect for the sustainability of the benefits (e.g. agricultural and water / sanitation infrastructure) from the projects in terms of financial viability, recurrent cost financing and asset maintenance?*

First it needs the transfer of equipment (currently only 17% of the overall volume) and of infrastructure (just 15%).

- ❖ *Are any institutional changes likely to stay in place and are they supported by adequate government funding?*

Governmental institutional changes will stay in place if the e.g., policy related interventions will still be done and if the GoSL will finance them; a worst case scenario could be that the GoSL sells the Business Service Centres, rehabilitated with EU funding. To avoid that, more contractually binding documents would be needed at highest level – or future Business Service Centres will be built in cooperation with the private sector – also on private land.

- ❖ *Do CBOs/LAs/Estate Management have adequate capacity (financial, HR, etc.) for continued implementation after project's closure? Are key stakeholders equipped for its continuation?*

n/a

Overall impression

It seems to be too early to say something about the sustainability of e.g., Business Service Centres.

➤ **EQ6 Ownership**

❖ *To what extent national beneficiaries have been involved in the design and implementation of the projects?*

It seems that some NGOs had already in the area previous projects and they have been considered when designing the new ones. Ordinary people have most likely not been much involved; and when involved e.g., in prioritizing infrastructure projects, then the decision might stem from wishful thinking and are not based on analysed. The need of the GoSL - not a classical beneficiary - have been reflected, eventually too much.

❖ *Is there a substantial contribution, eventually even in cash and not only in kind, from the beneficiaries and from the GoSL (to confirm indirectly their commitments)?*

Such a substantial contribution from both sides could not be observed.

❖ *Number of Steering Committee Meetings (2017 – 2020)?*

Just one SCM took place since mid-2017, reflecting also a limited interest by the GoSL.

❖ *What is the level of policy support provided by the projects and responsiveness of GoSL?*

The responsiveness of GoSL to policy issues like arranging an Advisory Forum with key government stakeholders, conducting a policy group discussion at national and provincial level and developing a regional and national plan of action and follow up with key government stakeholders was limited.

Overall impression

CARE said that the authorities showed ownership as they allocated land resources to the project; however, all built infrastructures including the land remained in government's property.

➤ **EQ7 Coordination and Monitoring**

❖ *How is coordination and monitoring organised inside the implementing partners?*

This is a rather small project with a budget of Euro 4,896,845 only. Nevertheless, the project is complex and would require more management capacities, regardless of the number of partners in the consortium.

❖ *To what extent there has been adequate coordination set up and monitor at different levels of implementation (coordination with national and local institutions, implementing partners, beneficiaries, stakeholders, other donors, etc.)?*

The internal coordination is good and the monitoring weak; a way out would be to do a workshop for all NGOs what data have to be monitored and reported – even for the remaining lifespan of EU-SIRD but also for upcoming projects.

- ❖ ***How is the quality of the monitoring system, accuracy and flexibility, and the adequacy of baseline information submitted to EUD? Have key stakeholders been kept adequately informed?***

M&E activities leave a lot of room for improvements, not only for CARE.

- ❖ ***How does the coordination between the different implementing partners look like?***

As mentioned at other occasions, the coordination was not foreseen until the programme-approach came up after project start and after approval of the deliverables. Most likely, all NGOs could have done better, if that was already stated in the CfPs.

- ❖ ***How was the coordination between implementing partners and EUD organised?***

In addition, what has been answered at the other NGOs, it should be said that the coordination or maybe better the information exchange was not always satisfying - that concerns all NGOs. A stricter and shorter reporting format might be the solution, focusing on monthly updated key figures that should come from the log frames; better log frames will lead to more meaningful key figures that would better reflect the ongoing interventions and their success.

- ❖ ***What was the role of the Technical Assistance Team EU-SIRD?***

The TA Team should contribute to the achievements of the specific objectives - improved livelihoods and increased household incomes and improved health and nutrition - of the programme integrated, sustainable, climate resilient and inclusive socio-economic development for the most vulnerable rural and estate communities in the target area. - Furthermore, the EU wanted to achieve an improved impact, effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability of EU-SIRD and the TA Team should provide baseline data, reshape SMARTer indicators, and develop more synergies among NGOs and more capacities in each NGO. - As advisor the role of the TA Team was restricted, as they could propose something, but not implement it. Looking at the role of the TA Team, the question comes up why such a team was needed? Was it already from the beginning the feeling that the NGOs would not have enough capacity? Why have the indicators not been reshaped by the EUD at the beginning, before signing the contracts? Why has the TA Team been tasked to deliver baseline data? Was it maybe from the beginning evident that the NGOs will face difficulties in that? - The role of the Technical Assistance Team EU-SIRD was an advisory role that can only be successful if the advised NGOs would do what was told to them. On the other side, the NGOs had no direct power to “request” some deliverables. - The role of the Technical Assistance Team EU-SIRD was unfortunate and the long hesitation of the GoSL to nominate one, did not improve the situation.

Overall impression

There is a potential to improve the coordination of the project internally, with other NGOs and with TA Team and EUD; more important is to improve the monitoring, the M&E.

➤ **EQ8 Cross-cutting issues**

- ❖ ***How have environmental impacts been considered in the design and construction of (agricultural, sanitary/water) infrastructure?***

CARE reported that 52 grant receiving MSMEs have adopted environmentally friendly practices. No further information could be found about these practices but eventually the eco-friendly packaging of Malmee is one of these cases. The company changed its polythene based pack to a 100% paper-based pack as illustrated by a photo and confirmed through a field visit by CARE and direct business observations. However, it would be good to analyse this case in

the final report, as some doubts remain especially about the reclosable closure; the company itself did not mention the new 100% paper-based packaging but wrote about “an attractive, durable and eco-friendly packaging”.

- ❖ ***Are policies and measures for solid wastes reduction/re-utilization/recycling introduced at LAs and community level, a) in relation to project’s activities, and b) in relation to the overall community management?***

n/a

- ❖ ***Are environmental policies, targets and legal framework obligations considered in community planning exercise?***

Construction permits are issued only if the project is in line with the environmental policies and regulations. Legal requirements seem to be respected. Not sure if additional efforts have been made to be more environment friendly. However, if mistakes happen, they will be corrected.

- ❖ ***What kind of environmental education/information opportunities (whether training, awareness campaigns, etc.) are offered and activated in overall community planning processes realized by projects?***

CARE reported that 52 MSMEs adopted environmentally friendly practices after grant investment. That is positive but why was CARE not in the position to achieve these results / impacts only with grant investments? (For all NGOs it is important to achieve changes without “paying” therefore.)

- ❖ ***How are gender issues integrated in the projects and where can they be seen best?***

It was not a specific gender oriented project. However, with a view to foster gender-responsive enterprise development and promotion, the project has invested in 76 women-owned enterprises to eliminate the barriers women entrepreneurs encounter in accessing finance and networking. That is good, but gender orientation could do more than just select more women entrepreneurs for financial (and technical) support. Especially it remained unknown, if women entrepreneurs who received a commercial credit improved their economic performances. This issue could be monitored during the remaining project duration, to see the benefits of providing access to finance.

Overall impression

Cross-cutting issues have been integrated in the activities.

➤ ***EQ9 EU added value***

- ❖ ***Is the EU support generating better results (adding more value) than other donors could do?***

Most likely, not; there was no EU specific ideas, procedures, innovations involved; however, the MTE Team would have to state the same for almost all EU financed projects.

- ❖ ***In what fields is EU intervention unique and measurable?***

The MTE Team does not think that there is a single intervention that was unique or could have been done by no one outside the EU. Consequently, there is also no measurable unique value adding process. Agricultural cooperatives, LEADER-like regional development planning, but also specific technologies could have offered opportunities for unique interventions.

Overall impression

It seems that EU added value is not a concern to the interventions, even if it should. Possible that could be a topic for a workshop to analyse what specific EU expertise could be provided to the rural areas of Sri Lanka.

➤ **EQ10 Coherence of the Actions**

❖ ***How do the result areas / intervention components fit in with one another and with the objectives?***

The two targeted outputs - Output 1: Establishment and strengthening of SMEs (including social enterprises) led and managed by young men and women from rural and estate communities and Output 2: Increased voice and participation of women and youth in decision making around employment creation, business development and economic growth of the rural and estate sectors are not very much interrelated, but both serve the improved socio-economic wellbeing of the targeted rural population. The “commercial” impact of the Output 1 will be more significant.

❖ ***Have there been ideas regarding internal coherence by the EUD, when launching the CfP and when approving the proposals? What was expected?***

Most likely, but the programme idea was not fully developed at project’s start and the assisting Technical Assistance Team came very late.

❖ ***Are there joint internal reports available by the 5 implementing partners?***

Joint reporting was never foreseen as in the beginning there were 5 individual projects and not a programme. Later on the EU tried to create a joint with a common ToC but as the programme was not foreseen from the beginning, the joint reporting was never requested and therefore not done.

❖ ***To what extent is this intervention coherent with other interventions that have similar objectives?***

The implementing NGO is partially coordinating with the 2 other NGOs from the same Result Areas; an earlier orientation towards a programme instead of 5 projects would have improved the situation; e.g., more synergies would have been possible, eventually even a division of work according to provinces or districts.

Overall impression

As stated at other NGOs as well, the Coherence of the Actions remains limited, but is not necessarily the failure of the NGOs.

OXFAM

➤ **EQ1 Relevance**

❖ ***To what extent is the Action contributing to Beneficiaries' needs?***

It is very relevant to increase income levels and reduce poverty and inequality among rural and estate communities.

EGSD refurbished, built and partially equipped milk chilling and collection centres, laboratories, seed potato -, cinnamon – and cocoa processing centres that provide benefits to

the farmers but are not owned by the farmers as usually the ownership is with the local authorities or semi-public companies like MILCO.

❖ ***To what extent is the Action contributing to Sri Lanka's needs and priorities in the relevant sectors of intervention?***

Increasing income levels of specific disadvantaged target groups contributes to the relevant sectors; iOc1 and iOc2 are very relevant for an economic project (Result Area 1) and iOc3 and iOc4 are relevant for the inclusive gender-sensitive socio-economic development as well as for the CSOs' operations.

❖ ***To what extent is the Action contributing to EU-Sri Lanka cooperation priorities?***

As shown in the EU's Multiannual Indicative Programme (mip) 2014-2020 for Sri Lanka, there are three sectors for interventions with the following specific objectives: 1) Sustainably improve the living conditions and promote poverty reduction of vulnerable rural communities through the provision of basic infrastructure and social services; 2) Contribute to the enhancement of food and nutrition security of communities in target areas through the promotion of inclusive sustainable agricultural practices that bring green economic growth and improved climate change resilient livelihoods, with efficient natural resources management; and 3) Foster inclusive and sustainable economic development through strengthening the role of private sector and SME's and job creation. OXFAM is very much in line with the specific objective 1 and partially with the objectives 2 and 3. Therefore, it is contributing the cooperation priorities.

❖ ***Are the projects' approaches / set-ups and methodologies appropriate for achieving the 3 Result Areas?***

It is very unlikely – regardless of Easter Blast and COVID-19 – that the project will achieve the overall objective to increase income levels and reduce poverty and inequality in the target areas. The approached VCs dairy and cinnamon might have some overall positive results and the support for the vocational training; also, there will be some benefits in form that women play a more recognized social and economic role; the support for CSOs remains unclear to the evaluation. Altogether, the approaches were not well chosen, as too many sub-projects have been started – while not having the capacities to manage these sub- projects, not to talk about the in-house capacities.

❖ ***Is the quality of the log-frames appropriate, in particular SMART indicators and targets?***

The quality of the log frame is very poor and most indicators are a) either not SMART or b) SMART but not "measured"; instead, verifying data on the ground, interviews with farmers are used to get feedback that is not verified.

❖ ***Do the individual projects' objectives reflect the overall EU-SIRD targets?***

To a large part, objectives are reflected; however "strengthening the role of private sector" was only followed half-heartedly.

➤ ***EQ2 Effectiveness***

❖ ***To what extent the planned results have been delivered and received as perceived by key beneficiaries and documented with solid data?***

Within the overall and specific outcomes, only the target of having households with more than one income source is already achieved and, as the number of income sources does not say anything about the total household income, this indicator is meaningless. Furthermore, within

iOc1 and 2 some targets might be achieved; the evaluation team still misses solid data and therefore the reported data remain questionable.

On micro-level, many key beneficiaries are satisfied with the results.

❖ ***To what extent the intended beneficiaries are – up to now - benefitting from the programme results – also in financial terms?***

Cinnamon and cocoa beneficiaries could increase their processing quality and the prices have increased too. Dairy farmers due to the adoption of model farming technique increase their production and new collecting centres promotes the evening milking, which enables to increase their income as well as highly reduces the spoilage. – A better monitoring would have allowed more sustainable results.

❖ ***Are the main assumptions and risk assessments still valid and what is their effect on the achievement of the specific objectives?***

Main assumptions have been that “plantation economy remains stable and workers’ wages don’t further decrease” and “no economic shocks badly affect the propensity to hire new skilled and semi-skilled workers by private sector”.

Tea production in Sri Lanka had steady growth up to 1970 and thereafter stagnation started. That is closely linked with the nationalization of plantations. The Sri Lankan tea industry has lost its market leadership position in the global market. With declining production, increasing cost of production, low farm productivity and price competition in the international market, Sri Lankan tea industry is permanently declining; these facts have been known at project start and therefore it was wrong to mention under risk related assumptions in the log frame that the “plantation economy remains stable”. - On top of that came unexpected the Eastern Blast 2019, two elections with turbulences and finally COVID-19 in early 2020. Therefore, the main assumptions are not valid any longer and the achievements of the objectives are jeopardized.

❖ ***What degree of flexibility and adaptability to facilitate rapid responses to changes in circumstances is in place (including political events, COVID-19, etc.)?***

OXFAM is trying to work as flexible as possible and is using home-office work as well; however the work with the beneficiaries in the field cannot be done "remotely" and therefore not much flexibility can be expected. Like all other NGOs, a No-Cost-Extension was requested.

❖ ***To what extent the Technical Assistance Team of EU-SIRD improved the performance of the implementing agencies?***

The Technical Assistance Team of EU-SIRD had the task to assist the NGOs and to monitor them (without having executive power over them); assistance took place in some training courses; critical remarks and assistance on outcome reporting have been made by the TA Team also on OXFAM; for example to keep (better) records on cocoa bean production and rejected milk. Despite having a data analysis specialist in the TA Team, data have obviously not been critical (enough) analysed and therefore the MTE Team is struggling with verifying submitted data. Most probably, it was useful having a TA Team around but the evaluation is not sure of that improved the performance of the NGOs, including OXFAM.

❖ ***Is the approach through “CfPs” the most effective one to solve specific problems?***

A CfP can be an effective approach to achieve targets. Most project’s interventions are taking place like described already in the proposal, only the Diploma Programme and seed potato farming is causing obstacles.

It might need clearer targets and sub-targets already laid out in the CfP, a) to provide a better guidance for NGOs and b) to get closer to the primary goals of the EU country strategy.

❖ ***Were gender issues sufficiently mainstreamed in all projects?***

The project has taken steps to mainstream gender issues in various ways; integrating into value chains and involving women, integrating to vocational training, conducting programmes including campaigns, establishing forums to address and aware the people in the targets areas on issues such as GBV, empowering the women through the formation of WWI groups.

❖ ***How was the need for trainings, grants, better access to finance and others analysed before or at project's start?***

At project's start a baseline survey was conducted by external evaluators in collaboration with Oxfam and consortia partners (Save the Children and Leads- SCI). The baseline studies are in general not oriented sufficiently towards the indicators and later on, the analysis of implemented interventions like access to finance is not followed-up in detail. If access to finance is crucial – and of course it is – then OXFAM's M&E unit would be well advised to look what has happened with the provided financing (from commercial banks) and what was the impact.

❖ ***How is the quality of work plans and day-to-day management (management of the budget, personnel, etc.) as well the respect of deadlines at each one of the five implementing partners?***

OXFAM is doing district-based budget and work plan monitoring on a monthly basis and is discussing issues, challenges and future actions.

➤ ***EQ3 Efficiency***

❖ ***Do the main project activities show progress against the log-frame indicators? Have the programme's / projects' resources and activities been managed and delivered adequately?***

Looking at Summary Outputs 1.1 – 4.2 the current achievements are mixed.

❖ ***To what extent did the grants (and other contributions) boost the results?***

Due to introducing model farming techniques, processing techniques and increasing collecting centres with awareness and training programmes, the beneficiaries' income should increase

❖ ***To what extent did the provided agricultural and WASH infrastructure improve the situation of the beneficiaries, especially vulnerable women and youth, also in financial terms?***

It is very likely that investments by OXFAM into agricultural infrastructure like the 5 processing centres for cinnamon and cocoa and the upgrading, renovating and new establishments of collection and chilling centres will improve the situation of vulnerable beneficiaries. However, to get there, it does not only need the finishing of the facilities but also intensive and long-lasting coaching of the staff that will work there. It is not sure that the project duration will be long enough to secure this outcome.

❖ ***Have the infrastructure components been implemented cost-effective?***

Investment calculations took place for the tendering process, but not for many projects upfront cost-benefit analyses have been made. Therefore, it is not known, if the investments per se make sense; when investments have been realized, then it was done cost-effective.

❖ ***Are the implementing partners working in parallel or is there a reasonable division of labour by content and geographical distribution?***

All implementing partners try to avoid overlapping activities, but more synergies could have been achieved, e.g. by harmonising the economic parts of all three NGOs and by giving a stricter geographical focus to each of them.

❖ ***Was this differentiation in content and geographical area considered in the Call for Proposals?***

No, even obviously some fine-tuning took place when awarding the contracts.

❖ ***Was the private sector involved in delivering services and goods?***

Oxfam works with the private sectors on goods and service delivery, market linkages and is partnering with private sector on technical training and market linkages.

➤ **EQ4 Impact**

❖ ***Where signs of impact (e.g., sustainably improvement of the living conditions, of productivity in agriculture, more people in jobs) have been materialised?***

Generally, income level is expected to increase with the improvement of value chain in target areas. The sustainable living condition and increment of jobs will be measured through end line surveys; ongoing monitoring in this respect is rather weak.

❖ ***What additional signs can be expected after a prolongation?***

The project will get most likely a no cost extension, to finish in a physical sense most of the foreseen projects. The transfer of premises and machines should be the beginning of a cooperation and not be regarded as the end. No additional signs are expected after the prolongation.

❖ ***Are these impacts big enough to be measured at province or district level?***

It is hard to imagine that the OXFAM project with less than Euro 0.50 per year and inhabitant (in these two provinces) will achieve measurable impacts on province level.

➤ **EQ5 Sustainability**

❖ ***What kind of sustainable initiatives have been introduced by the projects that will continue after the project's end?***

Job info centres have been upgraded and the staff capacitated; however not sure if that state budget driven initiative will be sustainable. Market linkages have been created, especially for cinnamon and cocoa and if they can be seen as a win-win situation, then they will remain.

Confirmed purchasing prices can be changed overnight, especially if there are no binding contracts,

❖ ***What is the prospect for the sustainability of the benefits (e.g. agricultural and water / sanitation infrastructure) from the projects in terms of financial viability, recurrent cost financing and asset maintenance?***

The common infrastructure for cinnamon and cocoa processing can generate great benefits; however crucial will be the role of local authorities controlling these infrastructures.

E.g., MILCO will keep and maintain the milk collection and cooling centres, but especially MILCO is a heavily indebted company that might stop their activities soon; that will depend on the will of the GoSL.

❖ ***Are any institutional changes likely to stay in place and are they supported by adequate government funding?***

Government funding is never guaranteed, and all statements from officials can be regarded as “intentions”. Private sector institutions are more likely to stay.

❖ ***Do CBOs/LAs/Estate Management have adequate capacity (financial, HR, etc.) for continued implementation after project’s closure? Are key stakeholders equipped for its continuation?***

Stakeholders are capable to implement activities continuously e.g., laboratories will be maintained by Department of Animal and Production. Other private sectors signed a MoU for continuation.

➤ **EQ6 Ownership**

❖ ***To what extent national beneficiaries have been involved in the design and implementation of the projects?***

The impression prevails that the national beneficiaries have not been much involved; that means beneficiaries in the sense of farmers or women groups; as far it concerns the GoSL, the authorities have been involved; most likely when designing the technical proposal, already the two veterinary laboratories in Hatton at the Ambagamuwa DS Division and in Thalawakale at the Nuwara Eliya DS Divisions have been agreed with the DAPH of the Central Province.

❖ ***Is there a substantial contribution, eventually even in cash and not only in kind, from the beneficiaries and from the GoSL (to confirm indirectly their commitments)?***

Not much.

❖ ***Number of Steering Committee Meetings (2017 – 2020)?***

Since the programme start in mid-2017 there was only one Steering Committee Meeting held in July 2019. Even considering the political turbulences, Eastern blast and the pandemic, the fact that there was one meeting shows a very limited ownership of the GoSL in the EU development aid. - OXFAM has records available for district level stakeholder meetings.

❖ ***What is the level of policy support provided by the projects and responsiveness of GoSL?***

OXFAM is engaged in to engage in policy dialogue on entrepreneurship development but the GoSL is not making a pro-active impression and therefore the responsiveness is limited.

➤ **EQ7 Coordination and Monitoring**

❖ ***How is coordination and monitoring organised inside the implementing partners?***

As all 5 projects had a very broad range of activities – from training, to construction, grant schemes and others - in a rather large geographical target area. The requirement within the CfP to submit only projects with minimum Euro 4.5 million created too complex projects, therefore involved too many consortium partners and even more subcontracted companies, so that coordination and monitoring was for the very beginning on a challenge. It seems that the lead

companies (INGOs) had a limited overview from the beginning; that became evident when data and contacts have been needed and have not been available at HQs, or when asking for financial budget details. Answers how much has been spend on construction sites or how much was given in cash or kind to beneficiaries were difficult to obtain. - If reporting requirements between INGOs and EUD would have been stricter formulated - also formally, the coordination and monitoring within the implementing partners would have been better as then the consortium partners would have reported in the same way to the NGO as the NGOs would have done towards EUD. – The overall reporting was done usually by the lead company / NGO.

❖ ***To what extent there has been adequate coordination set up and monitor at different levels of implementation (coordination with national and local institutions, implementing partners, beneficiaries, stakeholders, other donors, etc.)?***

Better coordination and monitoring would have brought a more successful project implementation. It seems that in many cases, the coordination with national and local authorities was a one-way communication and the authorities declared what they want and the NGOs delivered. This has also to be seen under social aspects (as discussed) as the government is highly respected and might therefore demand sometimes more than needed for the sake of the projects. - However, coordination took place but it could have been more efficient; for example it would have been possible to limit the geographical areas of the NGOs; in Result Area 1 three NGOs have implemented similar economic projects and it would have been feasible to harmonise their activities by content and allocate specific geographical areas to each NGOs; that would have reduced overlapping activities, and would have reduced coordination and ME work substantially, leaving more time to focus on the vulnerable poor.

❖ ***How is the quality of the monitoring system, accuracy and flexibility, and the adequacy of baseline information submitted to EUD? Have key stakeholders been kept adequately informed?***

M&E activities leave a lot of room for improvements. E.g. the indicators % increase in average gross profit among identified value chains over 4 years (disaggregated per value chain) need more explanations and more transparent calculations, similar for increase in average Net profit among identified value chains.

❖ ***How does the coordination between the different implementing partners look like?***

The coordination was not "encouraged" from the beginning, as the 5 projects have been formed into 1 programme later on. However, the NGOs are exchanging views and try to avoid overlapping activities.

❖ ***How was the coordination between implementing partners and EUD organised?***

Communication was done on a regular basis and interim reports have been submitted periodically. Also all financial adjustments are coordinated with EUD.

❖ ***What was the role of the Technical Assistance Team EU-SIRD?***

The TA Team should contribute to the achievements of the specific objectives - improved livelihoods and increased household incomes and improved health and nutrition - of the programme integrated, sustainable, climate resilient and inclusive socio-economic development for the most vulnerable rural and estate communities in the target area. - Furthermore, the EU wanted to achieve an improved impact, effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability of EU-SIRD and the TA Team should provide baseline data, reshape SMARTer indicators, and develop more synergies among NGOs and more capacities in each NGO. - As

advisor the role of the TA Team was restricted, as they could propose something, but not implement it. Looking at the role of the TA Team, the question comes up why such a team was needed? Was it already from the beginning the feeling that the NGOs would not have enough capacity? Why have the indicators not been reshaped by the EUD at the beginning, before signing the contracts? Why has the TA Team been tasked to deliver baseline data? Was it maybe from the beginning evident that the NGOs will face difficulties in that? - The role of the Technical Assistance Team EU-SIRD was an advisory role that can only be successful if the advised NGOs would do what was told to them. On the other side, the NGOs had no direct power to “request” some deliverables. - The role of the Technical Assistance Team EU-SIRD was unfortunate and the long hesitation of the GoSL to nominate one, did not improve the situation.

Overall impression

The coordination within project partners and with the MTE Team was good, however the monitoring (M&E) needs more attention. Many baseline data are still missing, despite the project is ending soon; but maybe there is no intention to work on them and deliver a completed log frame with all baseline data as soon as possible.

➤ ***EQ8 Cross-cutting issues***

❖ How have environmental impacts been considered in the design and construction of (agricultural, sanitary/water) infrastructure?

When obtaining an approval from Predasasha (Community Centre) it includes all related environmental considerations. Until now for infrastructure implementation, there was no environmental impact observed; but the diversion of wastewater towards stream should be avoided for pollution of streams.

❖ Are policies and measures for solid wastes reduction/re-utilization/recycling introduced at LAs and community level, a) in relation to project’s activities, and b) in relation to the overall community management?

N/A

❖ Are environmental policies, targets and legal framework obligations considered in community planning exercise?

Training on sustainable land management practices have been offered to the farming community of cocoa, cinnamon and to the relevant authorities (Department of Export Agriculture) and addressed issues on drought related to dairy farming in dry zone areas (Monaragala). Good Agriculture Practices has been trained as well.

❖ What kind of environmental education/information opportunities (whether training, awareness campaigns, etc.) are offered and activated in overall community planning processes realized by projects?

Farmers have been trained on Good agriculture Practices but also on sustainable land management practices. It is unknown if that led to overall community planning processes.

❖ How are gender issues integrated in the projects and where can they be seen best?

OXFAM’s main concern is besides economic development is gender and this is the only project with a specific gender outcome (iOc3) which states: Women play a more recognised and dignified social and economic role due to decreasing structural barriers. Gender issues can be best seen at the setting up of women groups, mobilizing government stakeholders, awareness campaigns, including street campaign etc. to fight for women’s rights and against gender-based

violence. The project receives a lot of support from the women's bureau (district secretariat) and from the Government. This is true for Monaragla and Nuwara Eliya but is lacking behind in Badulla due to a weak coordination.

Overall impression

OXFAM can do better.

➤ **EQ9 EU added value**

❖ Is the EU support generating better results (adding more value) than other donors could do?

No; results are good in cinnamon, but not convincing in other areas.

❖ In what fields is EU intervention unique and measurable?

As said earlier, the MTE Team does not think that there is a single intervention that was unique or could have been done by no one outside the EU. Consequently, there is also no measurable unique value adding process. Agricultural cooperatives, LEADER-like regional development planning, but also specific technologies could have offered opportunities for unique interventions. Financing alone is not unique.

Overall impression

Nothing was done that is typical or unique for the EU, however that is not a mistake of OXFAM.

➤ **EQ10 Coherence of the Actions**

❖ How do the result areas / intervention components fit in with one another and with the objectives?

Looking at the Outcomes 1 and 2 (economic ones) and at the Outcomes 3 and 4 (social and political ones) then one could state that they complement each other, even going into different directions.

❖ Have there been ideas regarding internal coherence by the EUD, when launching the CfP and when approving the proposals? What was expected?

The EUD launched the tender (CfP) for individual projects; most likely quite early the EUD realized that it would be better for synergies and others to have a more common approach and hired the TA Team, that started as a first activity the ToC; however the TA Team (International Institute of Development Training (Pvt) Ltd) started very late and to a certain degree, it was too late when the TA Team came up with the programme and the overarching ToC.

❖ Are there joint internal reports available by the 5 implementing partners?

Joint reporting was never foreseen as in the beginning there have been 5 individual projects and not a programme. Later on the EU tried to create a joint with a common ToC but as the programme was not foreseen from the beginning, the joint reporting was never requested and therefore not done.

❖ To what extent is this intervention coherent with other interventions that have similar objectives?

The implementing NGO is partially coordinating with the 2 other NGOs from the same Result Area; overall, there have been too many initiatives in a limited project area, so that not only these 5 NGOs crossed their ways frequently but also donor projects too.

ADRA

➤ **EQ1 Relevance**

❖ ***To what extent is the Action contributing to Beneficiaries' needs?***

The project is trying to address the needs of each community and has a strength and flexibility to adapt activities according to need of the community and current government needs, regulations and requirements. In general, the project is relevant for those benefitting from the interventions, be it improved drinking water, sanitation facilities, restrooms etc. However, the evaluation team did not see a process, wherein the target groups were able to express their own development needs before the project was designed.

❖ ***To what extent is the Action contributing to Sri Lanka's needs and priorities in the relevant sectors of intervention?***

Sri Lanka, like many South-Asian countries has a substantial problem with high rates of acute malnutrition, which are since years with around 15 % at an emergency level. The current project is addressing undernourishment or underweight but not the high wasting rates. Even the intended research will not help to understand the main determinants of this problem.

Prevalence rates of diarrhoea are relatively low as compared to acute malnutrition, the question remains, whether the focus of the project could have been modified.

❖ ***To what extent is the Action contributing to EU-Sri Lanka cooperation priorities?***

The current projects and programs form the major part of the current EU Sri Lanka cooperation strategy and are thus in line with this document.

❖ ***Are the projects' approaches / set-ups and methodologies appropriate for achieving the 3 Result Areas?***

The project is focussing mainly on results area 2 (improved health and nutrition) and a little on result area 3 (strengthened socio-economic service delivery by local authorities, community organisations, and private institutions). This will be achieved by activities aiming at improving the capacity and efficiency of local institutions.

The project set-up has a weak ToC, which was never developed from the onset and is considered not sufficiently appropriate to achieve the expected results. The MTE Team has developed a ToC, which will help to understand how activities should be planned to achieve the expected results. This ToC (see Annex 5.13) shows clearly the deficits and in addition, that not all outputs and activities are contribution to the vertical logic.

❖ ***Is the quality of the log-frames appropriate, in particular SMART indicators and targets?***

Even though the log frame has been adapted and indicators have been changed, the most recent version of the log frame still includes indicators that cannot be measured and cannot be related to project activities alone (see ToC in Annex 5.13).

➤ **EQ2 Effectiveness**

❖ *To what extent the planned results have been delivered and received as perceived by key beneficiaries and documented with solid data?*

14 out of 20 IGFWS's are in completion stage, which is very impressive and there is hope that this activity will be completed at the end of the project.

The rehabilitation of existing hand pumps is completed and the construction of new boreholes delayed as the important hydrogeological survey was delayed.

The owner driven toilet construction approach is effective and will be completed.

Rehabilitation of polyclinics and primary schools with supplying of equipment are doing well and almost in the completion stage.

The 20 job site rest rooms (JSSR) will be most likely completed in July 2021, the intended number of communal bathing places has been reduced to 35 – according to the need and related design, approvals are completed, and these are in the tendering stage.

The nutrition education component is very diverse and varies amongst intervention zones. However, it does not include many nutrition specific interventions.

Cookery classes are still far behind, partly due to COVID-19. However, the MTE Team did not see a clear and comprehensive strategy (ideal to have an integrated approach in terms of WASH, food diversity, home gardening, and nutrition). This would include a needs assessment, compilation of topics and corresponding material, implementation strategy (where, when and for whom), Training of Trainers (ToT), and last but not least a close collaboration with the relevant Ministries and departments at national level.

There are three different garden interventions (home-, nutrition-, school-). Home gardens are managed well in some communities and the project is trying to replicate the successful model in the remaining ones. For all of them, there is no visible concept, which explains as well the underlying theory of change.

The research projects are partly in the design phase but have not been implemented yet.

❖ *To what extent the intended beneficiaries are – up to now - benefitting from the programme results – also in financial terms?*

Communities, which were targeted through WASH infrastructure, have benefitted from it – wherever it is finalised.

Women feel more dignified the project assisted the construction of bathing places, job site rest rooms (JSRRs) and latrines.

In some areas with home garden activities, beneficiaries can demonstrate how much they harvest – and how the crops are used.

❖ *Are the main assumptions and risk assessments still valid and what is their effect on the achievement of the specific objectives?*

Since it is difficult to gather people under COVID 19 conditions, most of the interventions in the software sector stopped.

The climatic and geographical condition could affect the construction of borehole.

❖ *What degree of flexibility and adaptability to facilitate rapid responses to changes in circumstances is in place (including political events, COVID-19, etc.)?*

ACCEND project included COVID-19 response activities, through the project's activities, as it is relevant to the situation. They prepared a document on COVID-19 response.

The project assisted the installation of more hand-washing stations and included the topic into the IEC material.

The danger is that these activities will be related to COVID 19 only and will be abandoned once the pandemic is over¹³.

❖ To what extent the Technical Assistance Team of EU-SIRD improved the performance of the implementing agencies?

The TA Team:

- developed ToC for programme in collaboration with projects. However, this ex-post ToC does not follow a vertical logic and the MTE Team has tried to improve the ToC (see Annex 5.13)
- provided a gender sensitisation workshop and assisted the project to develop a gender action plan; and
- helped to develop and support all relevant M& E activities.

❖ Is the approach through “CfPs” the most effective one to solve specific problems?

The call for proposals was based on the desk study which was done by the Verité Research Institute. The choice of the Research Institute determines already the outcome, as it will depend on the mix of experts and their technical field, which programme will be designed in the end. Whilst hardware activities may be straight forward, the MTE Team believes that there was little or no expertise in the nutrition sector amongst the researchers. At least, the integrated character of food and nutrition security projects is not visible in the entire programme and project design.

❖ Were gender issues sufficiently mainstreamed in all projects?

The project has tried to mainstream gender in two ways;

- a) Mainstreaming through activities e.g. special attention was given during the provision of WASH facilities such as construction of toilets with very specific selection criteria (women, disabled)
- b) The project supported women through, e.g. a menstrual hygiene program, as well as activities to combat GBV. However, the activities combatting GBV were concentrated on hospital level (Mithuru Piyasa) without any community sensitization plan and thus there is scope to improve this important intervention with the aim of improving of gender equality.

❖ How was the need for trainings, grants, better access to finance and others analysed before or at project's start?

The need for trainings including relevant topics has not been assessed in a sufficient manner. The trainings are not based on shortcomings and weaknesses and are not sufficiently coordinated with the Ministry of Health. There is no clear idea of what an integrated training in food and nutrition security will include (determinants of malnutrition, WASH, food diversity, health gender, etc.)

In addition, the activities are not well coordinated with the relevant Ministries

¹³ This has been observed during the Ebola crises in West Africa

❖ ***How is the quality of work plans and day-to-day management (management of the budget, personnel, etc.) as well the respect of deadlines at each one of the five implementing partners?***

Project level budget and activity management by the project staff seem handled well.

The contribution and collaboration received from the MOH is much less which is partly due to COVID 19 as well.

Overall impression

While many hardware components have been implemented effectively, the software components of the project a partly far behind schedule and less well planned.

➤ ***EQ3 Efficiency***

❖ ***Do the main project activities show progress against the log-frame indicators? Have the programmes' / projects' resources and activities been managed and delivered adequately?***

In general, yes – see chapter 3.4. on activities and achievements and Annex 5.4.

A number of activities have changed and deviated from the original proposal.

Some activities, like distribution of hens or provision of iron-rich supplementary food, do not appear in the entire log frame. It seems they took place because the budget allowed these expenditures.

All infrastructure activities are planned and implementing as per the CFP.

Bathing places are reduced to 35 and relevant budget was realigned to further improve the planned installations.

❖ ***To what extent did the grants (and other contributions) boost the results?***

The minor contribution to toilet construction is a way to ensure ownership but is not boosting the result.

Improvement of water quality included a 5% cash contribution from the community (+10% in kind from community +10% from estate management) which will boost the effective participation of the community members who are going to manage the water supply system.

The sharing of IEC material from Solidaridad is an efficient way to work. However, it is not clear whether this has really improved the work of ACCEND in this sector, as they had not yet implemented it.

❖ ***To what extent did the provided agricultural and WASH infrastructure improve the situation of the beneficiaries, especially vulnerable women and youth, also in financial terms?***

WASH infrastructure is highly appreciated by beneficiaries - better access to good quality water and latrines, however, due to the already low diarrhoea rates, it will not be possible to measure any impact.

In the owner driven approach, with community contribution vulnerable women received toilet facility.

The impact of home gardens can be measured through quantitative surveys only (if beneficiaries are documenting their yields and indicate whether they consume or sell). However, discussions with HNCs and beneficiaries revealed that home-gardens helped to save money and that people are enjoying it. Whether they contribute to increased dietary diversity should be measured in the end line survey.

❖ ***Have the infrastructure components been implemented cost-effective?***

For water supply projects had an inbuilt contribution from community and estate management (25 %) and 15 % all other infrastructure projects. For each contract (material or skilled labour), the project launched separate tenders and supervision was done by ADRA technical staff. The contractor profit margin is nil, therefore, the cost for the project is very controllable.

❖ ***Are the implementing partners working in parallel or is there a reasonable division of labour by content and geographical distribution?***

The MTE was requesting a mapping exercise from the partners to understand who intervenes where and with which intervention. This would be a perfect tool to understand whether there is a good and fair distribution of activities across the project area and whether synergies can be found or whether overlapping was avoided.

❖ ***Was the private sector involved in delivering services and goods?***

n/a

➤ **EQ4 Impact**

❖ ***Where signs of impact (e.g., sustainably improvement of the living conditions, of productivity in agriculture, more people in jobs) have been materialised?***

Health and nutrition impact need to be measured through quantitative surveys. Baseline figures were provided but the sample size in many regions was too small. The endline survey needs to capture qualitative statements as well.

It is clear that people appreciate hardware brought to them - whether the impact can be measured in improved health outcomes (reduced diarrhoea rates) is questionable as prevalence rates were already low at baseline.

❖ ***What additional signs can be expected after a prolongation?***

Most of the WASH interventions will be most likely completed and will support the community to accommodate the changes.

The time should be used to develop ex-post an inclusive training strategy together with the MoH, including a handing over. This seems to more important than trying to complete all intended trainings

The planned research can be put on halt - and research grants could be used in a more efficient and effective way to address the main nutrition problems in Sri Lanka.

❖ ***Are these impacts big enough to be measured at province or district level?***

The activities are implemented in rural settings at divisional secretariat level only (Sub districts). Therefore, it is difficult to measure the impact at province or district level.

In general, some of the indicators in the log frame are not measurable. This is due to many reasons. On the one side, these indicators are not SMART indicators and on the other side, for some of them there is no or inadequate baseline information.

The project has not concentrated on the most severe problems. The diarrhoea prevalence has been low (data from DHS and not from baseline) and the project is using enormous resources to bring down this prevalence from around 2 % to anything lower.

The same is true for achieving an improved dietary intake or a reduction in malnutrition. There were no anthropometric measurements done at baseline – and the indicator weight for age is unspecific. Concerning the dietary diversity of children and mothers, the following need to be taken into consideration. The survey sample in some areas is much too small to allow the presentation of results by project region. In addition, the dietary diversity of mothers has a different set up as compared to that of children (see table 4.37 on p 58 of the baseline report).

Since the indicators set for health and nutrition are not adequately chosen, the project will not be able to measure impact concerning nutrition or the reduction of diarrheal diseases.

➤ **EQ5 Sustainability**

❖ ***What kind of sustainable initiatives have been introduced by the projects that will continue after the projects' end?***

The formation of Water Management Committees, which will be responsible for the maintenance of water supply schemes and borehole hand pumps (jointly with CBO's), is considered as a tool to achieve sustainability. More important is that the cost for maintenance is and will be collected from water users according to the water meter reading. In other areas, a fixed monthly payment enables the WMC to do regular maintenance such as purchase and supply of chlorine.

As to the numerous trainings, it remains unclear, whether the current level of achievement will allow any sustainability at this point.

❖ ***What is the prospect for the sustainability of the benefits (e.g. agricultural and water / sanitation infrastructure) from the projects in terms of financial viability, recurrent cost financing and asset maintenance?***

There seems to be a donor dependency, as beneficiaries are waiting for projects to rehabilitate, re-install of newly implement WASH hardware. The idea of maintenance has always been part on WASH interventions - even in former projects - and the question; whether this project did, it successfully can be answered in a few years only.

There may be the time to re-think project activities in the WASH sector to make them more sustainable. Water wells, hand pumps, water management schemes have been part of development aid since decades. This includes all the necessary software components, like training on hygiene and sanitation, handwashing and so on. If this would be important for people, they will go for it, as they will go all out to have a mobile phone.

❖ ***Are any institutional changes likely to stay in place and are they supported by adequate government funding?
Do CBOs/LAs/Estate Management have adequate capacity (financial, HR, etc.) for continued implementation after project's closure? Are key stakeholders equipped for its continuation?***

The support to Mithuru Piyasa at hospital level will most likely continue as it is well embedded in MoH activities.

The formation of new CBOs, which are not yet registered, is another questionable approach as it is unclear how they will be supported in future. Working through existing groups, mainstreaming training topics, could have been more advisable and perhaps sustainable.

The same is true for cooking classes – whether the activity will continue is unclear and if it does, the question is, what would be advisable – the community or hospital level.

➤ **EQ6 Ownership**

❖ ***To what extent national beneficiaries have been involved in the design and implementation of the projects?***

The involvement during the design phase of the entire program remains unclear, as the programme was based on a desk study done by a consultative group.

The application from ADRA towards the call for proposals includes some activities as well, which needed to be revised as the need was not there (e.g. CDKU research or tracing).

The project staff is having regular and requested discussions with the local MOH staff to plan and implement the activities in the areas. MOH staff public health inspectors, Public health nursing sisters and public health midwives are involved in monitoring of the activities carried out in collaboration with them. However, there is no such engagement at national level.

Project staff is attending the provincial and district level coordination and progress monitoring meetings organised by the provincial directors of health services and regional directors of health services.

Water Supply and Drainage Board, Water Resources Board and DNCWS are also coordinating progress planning and progress review meetings. In addition, the Water Safety plan training was conducted by DNCWS.

However, there was not much evidence on a set proper mechanism to monitor project implementation at national level, but the Government parties contribute to project local level monitoring when the project staff need support.

❖ ***Is there a substantial contribution, eventually even in cash and not only in kind, from the beneficiaries and from the GoSL (to confirm indirectly their commitments)?***

The project has utilized for most of the health and nutrition awareness the IEC materials developed by the Health promotion Bureau of the Ministry of Health at national level.

Project is depending on the technical and human resources from the MoH at district and local level to implement some of the awareness creation activities; e.g. nutrition cookery classes by MOH and menstrual hygiene awareness programs with the support of district health officials.

For the construction of IGWFS, the estate management contributed 10% (by providing labours, storage facility, transport) and the community 15% through the labour force by shiramadna (10%) and 5% of the project cost in cash.

For toilet construction the owner contribute around 18% which is estimated in terms of material and unskilled labour.

In the other all construction activities such as restructuring of drainage, JSSR and bathing places, a maximum 10% of the contribution was from community and estate management in kind.

❖ ***Number of Steering Committee Meetings (2017 – 2020)?***

WASH – Multi stakeholder forum organised by Solidaridad took place at provincial level.

ADRA has participated in the first meeting only (out of 3) and due to COVID the meetings stopped later; ADRA initiated in the Ambangamuwa division a divisional steering committee for the water forum, and it was held in March 2020 with active participation of DS and PS, Estate Management, PHDT and other NGOs. Due to COVID-19, the water forum is suspended.

❖ ***What is the level of policy support provided by the projects and responsiveness of GoSL?***

Project is not up to that level yet. The project is intending to get involved at policy level with the advocacy initiative on the reduction of taxation on sanitary napkins.

➤ ***EQ7 Coordination and Monitoring***

❖ ***How is coordination and monitoring organised inside the implementing partners?***

The project staff is having regular and requested discussions with the local MOH staff to plan and implement the activities in the areas. MOH staff public health inspectors, Public health nursing sisters and public health midwives are involved in monitoring of the activities carried out in collaboration with them.

Whenever necessary the project team meets the estate management to discuss the implementation of project and to get necessary support from the management.

Project staff is attending the provincial and district level coordination and progress monitoring meetings organised by the provincial directors of health services and regional directors of health services.

Water board and DNCWS are also coordinating progress planning and progress review meetings.

However, there was not much evidence on a properly set mechanism to monitor the project implementation, but Government parties contribute to project level monitoring when the project staff needs support.

❖ ***To what extent there has been adequate coordination set up and monitor at different levels of implementation (coordination with national and local institutions, implementing partners, beneficiaries, stakeholders, other donors, etc.)?***

Periodically, the project is updating the DS and discusses the progress with the estate manager.

Once in three months progress is being presented in the NGO coordination meeting chaired by Government Agent with planning directors.

Coordination between Water Resource Board and project regarding borehole construction was not in order therefore the approval process was delayed.

- ❖ ***How is the quality of the monitoring system, accuracy and flexibility, and the adequacy of baseline information submitted to EUD? Have key stakeholders been kept adequately informed?***

At the initial stage of the project, a baseline survey was done and submitted to the EUD. Not all baseline indicators are allowing to measure impact as some of the indicators are not SMART and not relevant in relation to the project.

Internal monitoring system is led by the M&E specialist who is tracking achievements at the activity level and reports them to the EUD (interim reports including proposed changes).

The project has taken the support of an external party to conduct a mid-term evaluation to see the progress of indicators achievement. The results are not available yet.

- ❖ ***How does the coordination between the different implementing partners look like? /How was the coordination between implementing partners and EUD organised?***

ADRA and Solidaridad, both implementing under the same Lot, knew each other before the onset of the program and were communicating on a regular basis.

ADRA is planning to use the nutrition education material developed by Solidaridad.

- ❖ ***What was the role of the Technical Assistance Team EU-SIRD?***

The Technical Assistance team has worked in collaboration with the projects on the ToC (ex-post). The TA team has organised an input to mainstream gender. The TA team has provided M&E training.

➤ **EQ8 Cross-cutting issues**

- ❖ ***How have environmental impacts been considered in the design and construction of (agricultural, sanitary/water) infrastructure?***

All the septic tank for toilets are constructed above the ground level to avoid the contamination of black water with flood when water table rises.

All storage tank overflow pipes are diverted to proper drain path to avoid unnecessary soil erosion.

Sedimentation setup has implemented to minimise small particles scape into the water system. Catchment protection has planned to build the fence around the intake and tree planting, but these are not implemented yet.

- ❖ ***Are policies and measures for solid wastes reduction/re-utilization/recycling introduced at LAs and community level, a) in relation to project's activities, and b) in relation to the overall community management?***

During PHAST and CHAST, people have been trained to reduce solid waste.

- ❖ ***Are environmental policies, targets and legal framework obligations considered in community planning exercise?***

n/a

- ❖ ***What kind of environmental education/information opportunities (whether training, awareness campaigns, etc.) are offered and activated in overall community planning processes realized by projects?***

Regarding the early warning system awareness has been given to CBO's leaders, Estate management representative and key members of community. People were trained on the precautions to be taken – depending on rainfall data.

❖ ***How are gender issues integrated in the projects and where can they be seen best?***

The project has mainstreamed gender, using a horizontal and vertical approach. One example is the gender sensitive targeting in the WASH implementation (horizontal) which was successful.

The integration of men in nutrition education was intended but did not work that well.

The vertical approach can be seen, when looking at the support to menstrual hygiene or the activities aiming at reducing gender-based violence. However, the support to Mithuru Piyasa could have focused on linkages to community level programs to have a wider coverage.

➤ **EQ9 EU added value**

❖ ***Is the EU support generating better results (adding more value) than other donors could do?***

Cannot be answered without knowing who else is intervening in this area and knowing these result.

❖ ***In what fields is EU intervention unique and measurable?***

Perhaps the menstrual hygiene activities allowing girls to attend school. However, since there is no baseline information, the judgement is a qualitative one.

Whether the project will succeed in bringing down the very high taxation on sanitary pads remains to be seen.

➤ **EQ10 Coherence of the Actions**

❖ ***How do the result areas / intervention components fit in with one another and with the objectives?***

The development of the ToC from the beginning would have brought a better vertical logic into the project. Some activities seem to happen as the budget allows more interventions - but they were not planned originally (see ToC in Annex 5.13).

❖ ***Have there been ideas regarding internal coherence by the EUD, when launching the CfP and when approving the proposals? What was expected?***

Apparently no, as the ToC for the entire program was developed ex-post.

Quality feedback to log frames and SMART indicators was missing likewise.

❖ ***Are there joint internal reports available by the 5 implementing partners?***

Joint reporting was never foreseen. The common ToC was developed ex-post but did not contribute to more collaboration between partners. Joint reporting was never requested.

❖ ***To what extent is this intervention coherent with other interventions that have similar objectives?***

With Solidaridad interventions.

Stitching Solidaridad

➤ **EQI Relevance**

❖ ***To what extent is the Action contributing to Beneficiaries' needs?***

In general, the project is relevant for those benefitting from the interventions, be it improved drinking water, sanitation facilities, behaviour change promotion, facilities for resource centres etc. However, the evaluation team did not see a process, wherein the target groups were able to express their own development needs before the project was designed. This gap was to some extent addressed with the WASH and BCC plan preparation work of the RTU project, after the initiation of the project.

Based on the rapid needs assessment and WASH vulnerabilities assessment, all the villages and estates have done WASH plans in a participatory approach under the leadership of the CBOs to address water issues in the community. These plans were developed with villagers, village level officials and the divisional secretariat level officers had participated as well. The process was facilitated by project staff and all plans are being implemented with the support of the CBOs. Based on the WASH plans, BCC plans were developed for the estate or GN division.

Solidaridad allocated 28.6% for infrastructure development and 22 % for trainings and behaviour change promotion.

❖ ***To what extent is the Action contributing to Sri Lanka's needs and priorities in the relevant sectors of intervention?***

The project is relevant for each community and has strength and flexibility to adapt activities according to need of the community and current government needs, regulations and requirements.

The project has developed WASH plans in a participatory manner (water supply, quality improvement, WASH training) considering the priorities of the country needs according to the relevant provincial and district plans.

WASH implementation in schools is highly relevant (water supply, toilets, menstrual hygiene) which is a major gap in the country.

Nutrition interventions are generally important for the communities and the country, however, whether the chosen approach is efficient, effective and sustainable is a different question.

❖ ***To what extent is the Action contributing to EU-Sri Lanka cooperation priorities?***

Problem of acute malnutrition (weight / height) is the pre-dominant nutrition problem in Sri Lanka. The prevalence rate is since years at an emergency level but has not even been mentioned in the entire project.

In contrary, diarrheal diseases have prevalence rates of about 2 % only, and impact cannot be measured.

Water and Sanitation are not the top priorities in the MoH strategy, except lack of hand washing facilities which has been addressed, especially with the COVID 19 additional activities.

❖ ***Are the projects' approaches / set-ups and methodologies appropriate for achieving the 3 Result Areas?***

The RTU project's four outcomes contribute directly to achieve two result areas of EU-SIRD.

It contributes specifically on improving health, nutrition including addressing water, sanitation and hygiene issues.

Strengthening the community level systems and structures through the strengthening of CBOs, supporting schools, working with functionaries etc.

The log frame includes indicators that cannot be measured and cannot be related to project activities alone (see ToC in Annex 5.13).

❖ ***Is the quality of the log-frames appropriate, in particular SMART indicators and targets?***

The log frame includes indicators that cannot be measured and cannot be related to project activities alone (see ToC in Annex 5.13).

The project has organised 38 sub-activities under only two activities from the LFA. However, the concept behind it is not clear.

Construction of infrastructures is not directly linked with an outcome indicator but with number of beneficiaries.

❖ ***Do the individual projects' objectives reflect the overall EU-SIRD targets?***

n/a

➤ ***EQ2 Effectiveness***

❖ ***To what extent the planned results have been delivered and received as perceived by key beneficiaries and documented with solid data?***

Outcome 1: Most of the planned activities targets have been achieved or even over-achieved in quantitative terms and the remaining activities can be done during the remaining project period.

Outcome 2: Mainly the construction related activities and around 30% of the target have been achieved. This means more projects are in the estimate stage or in the process of tendering. Water supply projects in Uva province are badly affected due to the delaying of design and estimation.

Outcome 3: The project has achieved and partly over-achieved the planned activities. The only activity remaining is to establish the projected number of resource-centres in the communities. This can be done up to the end of the current project phase.

Outcome 4: This outcome is still behind schedule. More information is available in Chapter 3.5 under activities and achievements and in Annex 5.5. Multi stakeholder platforms on WASH were launched in Central and Uva Provinces and five wash platforms took place until 2019 chaired by the Chief Secretaries of respective provinces. The project planned to sign with respective ministry but due to the change of government in April 2019, it did not happen.

❖ ***To what extent the intended beneficiaries are – up to now - benefitting from the programme results – also in financial terms?***

Beneficiaries will most likely benefit from the infrastructure (once completed) as well as from home gardens. This needs to be verified by quantitative data from mid-term and endline survey.

❖ ***Are the main assumptions and risk assessments still valid and what is their effect on the achievement of the specific objectives?***

Since it is difficult to gather people under COVID 19 conditions, most of the interventions in the soft component were interrupted.

The project encountered budget restrictions because the water supply facilities increased from 150 to 237 (according to the WASH plans).

❖ ***What degree of flexibility and adaptability to facilitate rapid responses to changes in circumstances is in place (including political events, COVID-19, etc.)?***

The project has supported beneficiaries and other stakeholders during the COVID pandemic through a rapid response mechanism. They identified the needs and provided masks, sanitizers, hand-washing stations etc. The project has done it by realigning the budget (Euro 8,600).

❖ ***To what extent the Technical Assistance Team of EU-SIRD improved the performance of the implementing agencies?***

Is the approach though "CfPs" the most effective one to solve specific problems?

n/a

The call for proposals was based on the desk study, which was done by the Verité Research Institute. The choice of the Research Institute determines already the outcome, as it will depend on the mix of experts and their technical field, which program will be designed at the end. Whilst hardware activities may be straight forward, the MTE team believes, that there was little or no expertise in the nutrition sector amongst the researchers. At least, the integrated character of food and nutrition security projects is not visible in the entire program and project design.

Infrastructure activities significantly exceeded the quantity presented in the CfP for the same allocated budget. This shows that the needs assessment has to come first and the project proposal and funding should be based on actual needs.

❖ ***Were gender issues sufficiently mainstreamed in all projects?***

Project is trying to work in a gender responsive way, however, no specific activity or budget line.

Project developed a gender action plan under TA guidance.

Gender awareness trainings for project staff – needs to be re-enforced (see EQ 8 Cross-cutting issues: gender).

For more information, see section on gender mainstreaming in the Intermediary Note 2.

❖ ***How was the need for trainings, grants, better access to finance and others analysed before or at project's start?***

The need for trainings including relevant topics have not been assessed in a sufficient manner.

The trainings are not based on shortcomings and weaknesses and are not sufficiently coordinated with the Ministry of Health.

❖ ***How is the quality of work plans and day-to-day management (management of the budget, personnel, etc.) as well the respect of deadlines at each one of the five implementing partners?***

The project partners have divided the activities: Solidaridad is responsible for the construction related activities; and ISD and NF are responsible for "soft" sector activities. Among those two

organizations, there is another level of division: NF is working in villages and ISD mainly in estate areas and a few villages.

Unfortunately, though the training component is almost completed, people are still waiting to receive the hardware in many areas.

The management of the WASH activities seems less effective as some major constructions related activities have not even started at the time of mid-term evaluation.

In addition, the technical support to the projects is also challenged as there are not sufficient technical human resources, partly due to the heavy workload.

A mapping of activities across the project area could have supported day-to-day management, even in terms of possible synergies with other partners. This never took place.

➤ **EQ3 Efficiency**

❖ ***Do the main project activities show progress against the log-frame indicators?***

Most of the training activities have been completed and balance will be completed within the project period. However, the hardware components are still behind schedule (see tables in Intermediary Report).

❖ ***Have the programmes' / projects' resources and activities been managed and delivered adequately?***

For overall management of the infrastructure component, the present number of technically qualified staff is insufficient. In addition, the technical staff turnover is significant.

In the absence of in-house resources, the project depends on government institutions, which slowed down the process. In some locations, work has been outsourced but the quality of their intervention did not fully correspond with the scope of expected output.

As the project is focusing on improvement of nutrition there is need to organise nutrition programs in a more efficient way. This includes a close collaboration with the Government sector and a strategy that is as well community based and that goes beyond implementing one or two sessions.

The approach to develop training materials and make them available across the country for dissemination is very efficient.

ICT based resource centres for the purpose of information sharing and knowledge dissemination were established in already existing buildings (no new constructions) with the aim to share the knowledge on WASH, nutrition, and gender. Generally, beneficiaries said, project is supportive to them, but some gaps in accessing the benefits of these centres. Only in places where these buildings were not having sufficient space, were not easily accessible, or did not have power supply, the project constructed alternative places.

The project has organised 38 sub-activities under only two activities from the LFA. However, the concept behind it is not clear.

❖ ***To what extent did the grants (and other contributions) boost the results?***

The grants were used for the improvement of water availability and quality in schools, estates, and villages. This was done through construction of related infrastructure and promotion of hygienic practices by means of training.

In the schools, introducing of latest filtration techniques increased the quality of water in high scale and it improves the drinking quantity of water among students. MTE Team observed formation of health club in the schools, very well supported for the WASH and Hygiene practices.

❖ ***To what extent did the provided agricultural and WASH infrastructure improve the situation of the beneficiaries, especially vulnerable women and youth, also in financial terms?***

Water is an essential need of the community and thus the project improved the WASH situation for the most vulnerable communities, schools, and target groups (women, disabled, and children).

❖ ***Have the infrastructure components been implemented cost-effective?***

The water supply system was planned, using gravity feeding and all the reservoirs were constructed in higher location to avoid pumping. For the distribution system, the project provided the material and excavation, and the community did laying.

There is not much inadequacy of funding for the activities. In case of shortage, the project is trying to get the partners contribution.

Project implemented by Estate co-operative society, and payments are done according to work progress. About 20% of the overall cost will be contributed by the community. This includes excavation for the foundation and pipe laying. In some locations, actual cost is more than budgeted. In this case, the implementation is co-financed by the government institutions.

❖ ***Are the implementing partners working in parallel or is there a reasonable division of labour by content and geographical distribution? Was this differentiation in content and geographical area considered in the Call for Proposals?***

As the MTE never received the requested mapping of activities, this question cannot be answered, neither for the project nor for the entire programme.

❖ ***Was the private sector involved in delivering services and goods?***

Two private sector companies are involved to supply activated carbon filters and RO plant.

There are six private sector organizations involved in supporting collaboratively to serve the target groups (mentioned in the Intermediary Note 2).

➤ **EQ4 Impact**

❖ ***Where signs of impact (e.g., sustainably improvement of the living conditions, of productivity in agriculture, more people in jobs) have been materialised?***

Strengthening of School level WASH facilities and behaviour changes promotion through Health club's reinforcement added positive change to school system and to children e.g. improved school attendance.

Hand-washing and personal hygiene trainings were well received, especially during the COVID-19 period. The pandemic has helped to raise awareness and interest in hygiene and sanitation. However, the danger is, that this will be discarded, once the pandemic is over.

❖ ***What additional signs can be expected after a prolongation?***

If the project can get the no cost extension, the time can be used for a systematic hand over of trainings (content, strategy, etc.).

Whether all infrastructure projects can be completed is questionable, as infrastructure is far behind schedule. The expected scope of the work is far behind schedule (see Intermediary Note 2).

❖ ***Are these impacts big enough to be measured at province or district level?***

The overall indicators, which have been defined in the log frame are in many cases not SMART enough to capture the impact.

Weight for age figures have not been measured at baseline.

Waterborne diseases have not been analysed at a clinical level. The measurement of diarrhoeal diseases can be done. In the communities, outside the estates, the prevalence rate was already low. Perhaps, one can see a reduction in diarrheal diseases in the estates, provided the WASH infrastructure is completed in time – long enough to show impact.

➤ **EQ5 Sustainability**

❖ ***What kind of sustainable initiatives have been introduced by the projects that will continue after the projects' end?***

Unclear for the software component, unless there is improved coordination and corporation with the MoH at local level. Nutrition sessions and WASH related training material is made available on a common platform and has a good chance to be used beyond the project life span.

The project has conducted training of trainers. Trainer replicated it once in community setting. No plan to organize it thereafter. Utensils also provided to CBOs – thus, there should be some follow up programs, but it is unclear how it will be organized.

Family nutrition sessions, (food demonstration ToT done by SLMNA) could have been better integrated into the MoH System. In addition, sessions should go beyond popularizing recipes, should have included nutrition messages.

❖ ***What is the prospect for the sustainability of the benefits (e.g., agricultural and water / sanitation infrastructure) from the projects in terms of financial viability, recurrent cost financing and asset maintenance?***

The formation of a water forum, which is responsible for maintenance of water supply schemes in the estate cooperative society, has the potential for sustainability.

The cost for maintenance is collected from the water users according to the water meter reading or fixed monthly payment. This enables a regular maintenance such as purchase and supply of chlorine or other consumables.

❖ ***Are any institutional changes likely to stay in place and are they supported by adequate government funding?***

In the estates, the cooperative society is responsible for maintenance of the system. In the society, the estate manager is chairperson and workers are members and this society. However, members, as estate workers, will find it difficult to express their thoughts and it will lead to a dominant approach by the estate manager.

❖ ***Do CBOs/LAs/Estate Management have adequate capacity (financial, HR, etc.) for continued implementation after project's closure? Are key stakeholders equipped for its continuation?***

The project has conducted capacity building programmes for CBOs, estate officials etc. They have identified a functionaries group to support the interventions in the area. The project has emphasized the involvement of the government from the beginning.

They had various forums and steering group formed.

A proper exit strategy and transition plan should be done to ensure the sustainability.

➤ **EQ6 Ownership**

❖ ***To what extent national beneficiaries have been involved in the design and implementation of the projects?***

The project involved national level experts in the design and planning of the WASH and nutrition related trainings. However not the MoH, but the Sri Lanka Medical Nutritionist Association has provided support to the family nutrition activity. For the design and estimation of water supply infrastructure, DCWS and local Government were involved. - School water and sanitation activities were designed by the Engineering Department.

❖ ***Is there a substantial contribution, eventually even in cash and not only in kind, from the beneficiaries and from the GoSL (to confirm indirectly their commitments)?***

Community contribution is done for excavation work and depending on the construction site, this contribution goes up to 20% of the project cost.

❖ ***Number of Steering Committee Meetings (2017 – 2020)?***

The initial plan was to have quarterly meetings of the multi stakeholder platform; however, that was not possible due to the availability of the high officials and also recently, COVID-19 had an impact.

❖ ***What is the level of policy support provided by the projects and responsiveness of GoSL?***

n/a

➤ **EQ7 Coordination and Monitoring**

❖ ***How is coordination and monitoring organised inside the implementing partners?***

The project staff is having regular coordination meetings with all project partners. In addition, they meet with provincial, district and local MOH officials.

There is a gap in human resources to do a harmonized M&E. For ISD, monitoring and documentation staff is not available, and the funds allocated for such a position is inadequate to get experts for this position. In addition, the designation is M&D not M&E, so qualified people are not considering the position as it's more related to documentation.

In NF, the Program Director and Manager is handling the M&E part with the support of an assistant. For Solidaridad, the M&E position is vacant, but the Monitoring as such is supported by a Project Analyst who maintains the project database.

All three organisations mentioned that one Project Coordinator is not enough to cover a whole district. There are about 150 activities per month to be monitored but it is realistic to cover about 30 in terms of monitoring and reporting.

❖ ***To what extent there has been adequate coordination set up and monitor at different levels of implementation (coordination with national and local institutions, implementing partners, beneficiaries, stakeholders, other donors, etc.)?***

No mechanism to involve government officials for the M&E. The project team sharing the information at the progress review meetings at provincial level.

At provincial level: WASH steering committee, quarterly meeting. Biannually monitoring of the provincial plans and also discussion about the project progress.

No direct monitoring of the project by the any of the partners.

Each Divisional secretariat has to certify the annual action plans of the NGO and submitting it to NGO secretariat.

MOH level - PHIs and PHMs are monitoring their interventions, as the projects are facilitating the MOH activities they are unintentionally monitoring the project activities.

❖ ***How is the quality of the monitoring system, accuracy and flexibility, and the adequacy of baseline information submitted to EUD? Have key stakeholders been kept adequately informed?***

NGO steering committee coordinator, DS, Chairman PS, Provincial Planning Director said that coordination part of Solidaridad is poor and that ISD & NF updated their progress frequently.

Several baseline indicators do not allow to measure progress and impact as some of the indicators are not SMART and not relevant in relation to project activities (see statements on ToC in Annex 5.13).

❖ ***How does the coordination between the different implementing partners look like?***

ADRA and Solidaridad, both implementing under the same Lot, knew each other before the onset of the program and were communicating on a regular basis. In addition, ADRA was able to use the nutrition education material developed by Solidaridad.

❖ ***How was the coordination between implementing partners and EUD organised?***

See above

❖ ***What was the role of the Technical Assistance Team EU-SIRD?***

The Technical Assistance team has worked in collaboration with the projects on the ToC (ex-post).

The TA team has organised an input to mainstream gender and gave support in terms of M&E.

➤ **EQ8 Cross-cutting issues**

- ❖ *How have environmental impacts been considered in the design and construction of (agricultural, sanitary/water) infrastructure?*

The WASH plan includes catchment protection with fencing and tree planting surrounding the catchment to protect the area and reduce soil erosion.

- ❖ *Are policies and measures for solid wastes reduction/re-utilization/recycling introduced at LAs and community level, a) in relation to project's activities, and b) in relation to the overall community management?*

n/a

- ❖ *Are environmental policies, targets and legal framework obligations considered in community planning exercise?*

n/a

- ❖ *What kind of environmental education/information opportunities (whether training, awareness campaigns, etc.) are offered and activated in overall community planning processes realized by projects?*

n/a

- ❖ *How are gender issues integrated in the projects and where can they be seen best?*

Project is trying to work in a gender responsive way, however, no specific activity or budget line.

Gender awareness trainings for project staff – needs to be re-enforced.

They do have 8 gender-related indicators in the log frame (prepared a gender-related checklist recently). Solidaridad is going to do a gender assessment funded by the India Office.

➤ **EQ9 EU added value**

- ❖ *Is the EU support generating better results (adding more value) than other donors could do?*

Cannot be judged without knowing the other partners intervening in the same field.

- ❖ *In what fields is EU intervention unique and measurable?*

Perhaps the menstrual hygiene activities allowing girls to attend school. However, since there is no baseline information, the judgement is a qualitative one.

➤ **EQ10 Coherence of the Actions**

- ❖ *How do the result areas / intervention components fit in with one another and with the objectives?*

The development of the ToC from the beginning would have brought a better vertical logic into the project. Some activities seem to happen as the budget allows more interventions - but they were not planned originally (see ToC in Annex 5.13).

- ❖ *Have there been ideas regarding internal coherence by the EUD, when launching the CfP and when approving the proposals? What was expected?*

Apparently no, as the ToC for the entire program was developed ex-post. Quality feedback to log frames and SMART indicators was missing likewise.

❖ ***Are there joint internal reports available by the 5 implementing partners?***

Joint reporting was never foreseen as in the beginning there have been 5 individual projects and not a programme. Later on the EU tried to create a joint with a common ToC but as the programme was not foreseen from the beginning, the joint reporting was never requested and therefore not done.

❖ ***To what extent is this intervention coherent with other interventions that have similar objectives?***

With ADRA interventions.

5.11 Direct costs per NGO

Table 15 Direct costs per NGO

Name of NGO	Cost for salaries, travel, transport, per diem, office rent	Cost for training, workshops & awareness	Cost for infrastructures	Cost for visibility	Total direct cost
ACTED	2 755 747,21	308 600,10	692 967,52	5 604,10	7 479 590,06
Disbursement %	36.8%	4.1%	9.3%	0.1%	50%
CARE	669 881,22	346 098,06	202 476,49	22 005,06	1 240 460,83
Disbursement %	54%	28%	16%	1.77%	24%
OXFAM	1 871 733,20	555 041,45	747 650,75	15 374,39	3 189 799,79
Disbursement %	28.9%	8.6%	11.6%	0.2%	49%
ADRA	1 632 886,36	317 510,17	1 023 601,29	6 294,71	5 503 108,90
Disbursement %	30%	6%	19%	0.1%	54%
SOLIDARIDAD	1 483 718,88	933 330,82	957 777,95	47 738,06	3 422 565, 71
Disbursement %	25.9%	16.3%	16.7%	0.8%	60%

The MTE Team prepared the financial structure with key direct cost budget lines, based on the NGOs' initial budgets. (See Intermediary Note 1, Annex 5.2 – NGOs' cost structures). The NGOs provided the fund disbursement requested as per the above cost lines. The disbursement percentage is calculated against the budget. All NGOs' disbursement % is exceeding 50%, except for CARE which could be a recording error.

5.12 Progress data per NGO and region for Infrastructure

Using the weighted average method, the weightage is given based on the cost of each infrastructure activity, estimated time duration and apart from that, risk factor is also included.

Table 16 Progress data for the NGOs

Name of NGO	Overall weighted progress in %
ACTED	43.50
CARE	57.90
OXFAM	64.12
ADRA	43.15
SOLIDARIDAD	41.56

Table 17 Provincial wise progress of the NGOs

Name of NGO	Estimated weightage and progress					
	Central Province %			Uva Province %		
	Estimated weightage	Achieved w. progress	In %	Estimated weightage	Achieved w. progress	In %
ACTED	53.11	23.40	44.07%	46.89	20.10	42.86%
CARE	52.06	20.82	40.00%	47.94	37.07	77.33%
OXFAM	58.56	44.73	76.37%	41.44	19.40	46.81%
ADRA	78.53	36.18	46.08%	21.47	6.97	32.45%
SOLIDARIDAD	48.03	22.22	46.26%	51.97	19.34	37.22%

Name of NGO	Matale			Nuwara Eliya		
	Estimated weightage	Achieved w. progress	%	Estimated weightage	Achieved w. progress	%
ACTED	34.69	12.95	37.32%	18.42	10.46	56.77%
CARE	25.38	10.15	40.00%	26.68	10.67	40.00%
OXFAM				58.56	44.73	76.37%
ADRA	21.02	7.44	35.38%	57.51	28.75	49.99%
SOLIDARIDAD	30.42	11.43	37.58%	17.60	10.78	61.25%

Table 18 District-wise estimated weightage and progress of the NGOs

Name of NGO	Matale			Nuwara Eliya		
	Estimated weightage	Achieved w. progress	%	Estimated weightage	Achieved w. progress	%
ACTED	34.69	12.95	37.32%	18.42	10.46	56.77%
CARE	25.38	10.15	40.00%	26.68	10.67	40.00%
OXFAM				58.56	44.73	76.37%
ADRA	21.02	7.44	35.38%	57.51	28.75	49.99%
SOLIDARIDAD	30.42	11.43	37.58%	17.60	10.78	61.25%

Name of NGO	Badulla			Monaragala		
	Estimated weightage	Achieved w. progress	%	Estimated weightage	Achieved w. progress	%
ACTED	28.75	14.20	49.39%	18.15	5.90	32.53%
CARE	26.08	21.33	81.80%	21.87	15.74	72.00%
OXFAM	29.02	12.42	42.80%	12.42	6.97	56.16%
ADRA				21.47	6.97	32.45%
SOLIDARIDAD	26.78	12.73	47.55%	25.19	6.61	26.23%

The above weighted average results (output) could be compared within the NGOs as per district, province and overall. There is no comparison between the NGOs' progress status because each NGO's activities and nature of scope are different.

5.13 Theory of Change ADRA and Solidaridad

The "Programme Theory of Change and Aggregate Indicators" provides at the end a short overview on Outcome and Indicators and the listed indicators seem to be very weak for the following reasons.

Historically, the Theory of Change (ToC) was drafted by the Technical Assistance Team EU-SIRD after the start of the five projects in 2019; the development of the ToC was part of the TA Team's proposal. That is a rather unusual approach as in the best case the ToC should have

been developed at the design stage of the programme and the projects should have had to align with it at the time of submitting their proposals.

The positive side of having such a ToC, even if late, was that it helped bringing greater coherence and cohesion amongst the different projects and trying to align them towards reaching the overall programme objective. Also positive was the fact, that the ToC was developed in consultation with the projects so that there is some ownership by them as the implementing organisations. However, if not being part of the five service contracts of the NGOs, it has to be seen rather as voluntarily.

When analysing the mentioned ToC, one can see that two major topics are determining all these five projects:

A. Better health and nutrition of communities (as outcome)

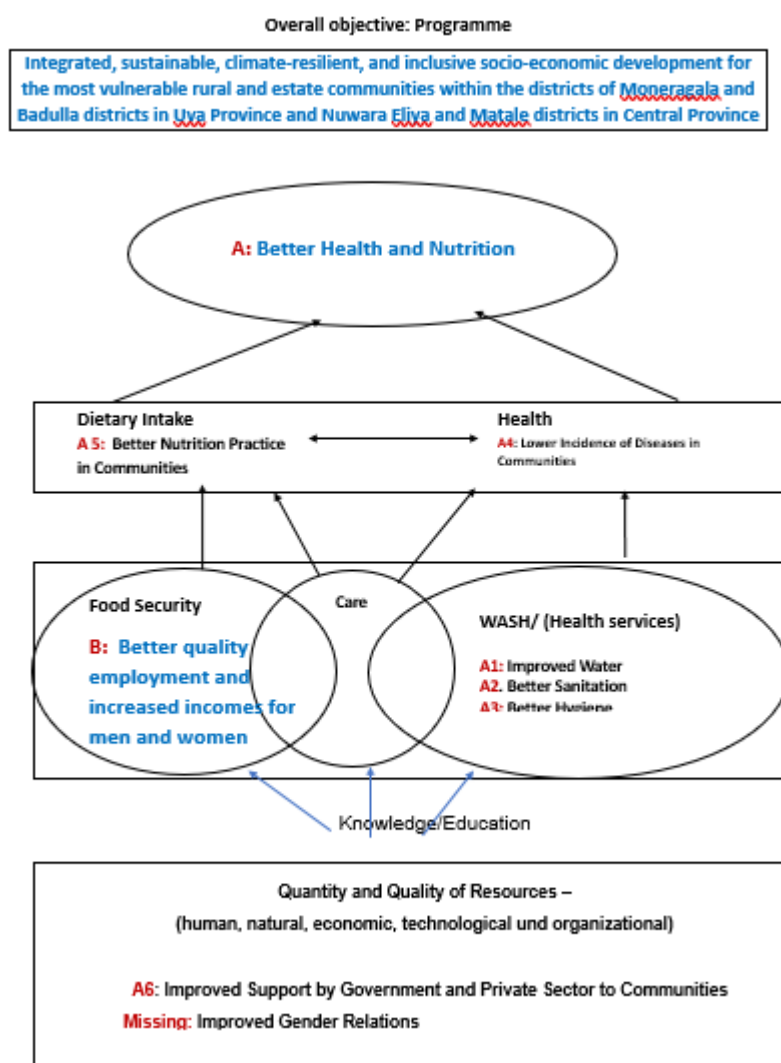
The main actors under this outcome are Solidaridad and ACTED. They have identified 6 immediate outcomes, namely:

- A1. Improved quality of water in communities
- A2. Better sanitation practices in communities
- A3. Better hygiene practices in communities
- A4. Lower incidence of disease in communities
- A5. Better nutrition in communities
- A6. Improved support by government and private sector to communities

It can be stated that these outcomes are a summary of outcomes from the different implementing partners, but they do not resemble a ToC.

One can easily portrait these different outcomes in a logical sequence, which shows much better, how different outcomes can lead to better health and nutrition. The UNICEF conceptual framework will help to understand how the different outcomes can build synergies and contribute to the overall outcome. As can be seen from the graphic below, an improved nutrition and health outcome can be achieved, if all different components of this framework will be addressed by a project. What is missing on the Theory of change are gender sensitive and transformative actions. The food security side in the overall theory of change will be dealt with in Component B: Better employment and increased incomes for men and women, which will contribute to improved food security at the same time.

Conceptual framework



Intermediary Outcomes under B

B1. Increased financial growth of target businesses	B2. Increased Informal sector entrepreneur income	B3. Better jobs created in target businesses	B4. Better trained employees	B5. Better enabling environment for micro and small enterprises	B6. Increased business linkages
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Better employment and increased incomes for women and men (as outcome) has 6 Intermediary Outcomes and they are all related to business and income growth.

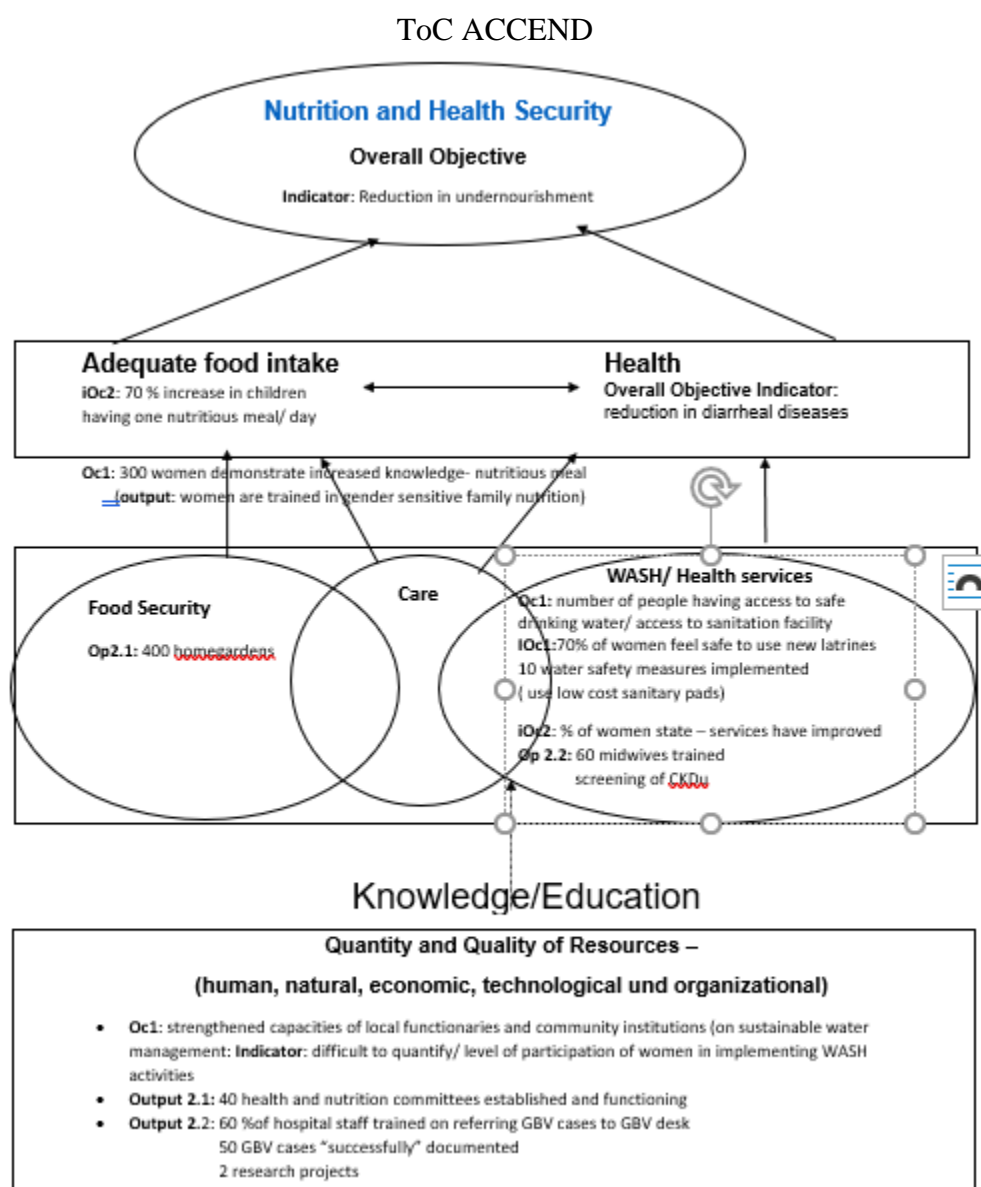
- B1: Increased financial growth of target business
- B2: Increased informal sector entrepreneur income
- B3: Better jobs created in target business
- B4: Better trained employees
- B5: Better enabling environment for micro and small enterprises
- B6: Increased business linkage

Increased income will enable people to achieve food security as it will allow better market access. At the same time, this income could be used to improve WASH facilities and access to health care.

However, these synergies can only apply, if both outcomes, A& B are targeting the same communities and ideally households. That means households with improved WASH facilities but unimproved employment and business schemes will not be able to achieve the overall programme goal. Likewise, households with improved employment and business schemes without improve WASH, health and nutrition will equally not profit from improved livelihoods.

Looking at the projects under Lot A, the following more specific ToCs can be demonstrated, using the same logical framework. The first example has been developed for ACCEND under ADRA

ADRA



Comments

1. The main indicator used in the log frame is not measurable and does not relate to the project activities. Undernourishment describes access to kcal per person, but there is no effort to increase food production to enhance caloric intake. In addition, undernourishment is an estimation based on three subsequent estimates¹⁴.
2. The indicator chosen to measure undernourishment is Weight/ Age. Whilst this is already a mistake, this indicator has not been measured at baseline but is taken from DHS data, covering a much wider area. Whether these prevalence data are correct for the intervention communities cannot be answered and the impact cannot be measured this way.
3. The second indicator - “prevalence of diarrheal diseases” has been measured at baseline and is, with approximately 2 % low. Thus, differences cannot be measured, unless a huge sample will be surveyed.
4. The project wants to train 300 women only in how to prepare a nutritious meal and there should be a 70 % increase in children having one nutritious meal per day. According to the intervention logic, this does not make any sense. First, the number of 300 women is too low for a project of this size and budget. Secondly, children should have more than one nutritious meal per day and the question is, whether it would be better to measure meal frequency and dietary diversity within 24 hours.
5. The home garden activity is the only activity on the food security side and aims at improving micro-nutrient intake and not necessarily increase the increased intake of food kcal.

Overall, the vertical logic of the project needs to be reviewed. Though interesting for the Sri Lankan context, the investigations into the CKDu does not really fit into the intervention logic to reach reduced diarrhoea prevalence rates and better nutrition practice. On the other side, food security interventions could have been strengthened to support improved dietary intake.

Solidaridad

Comments

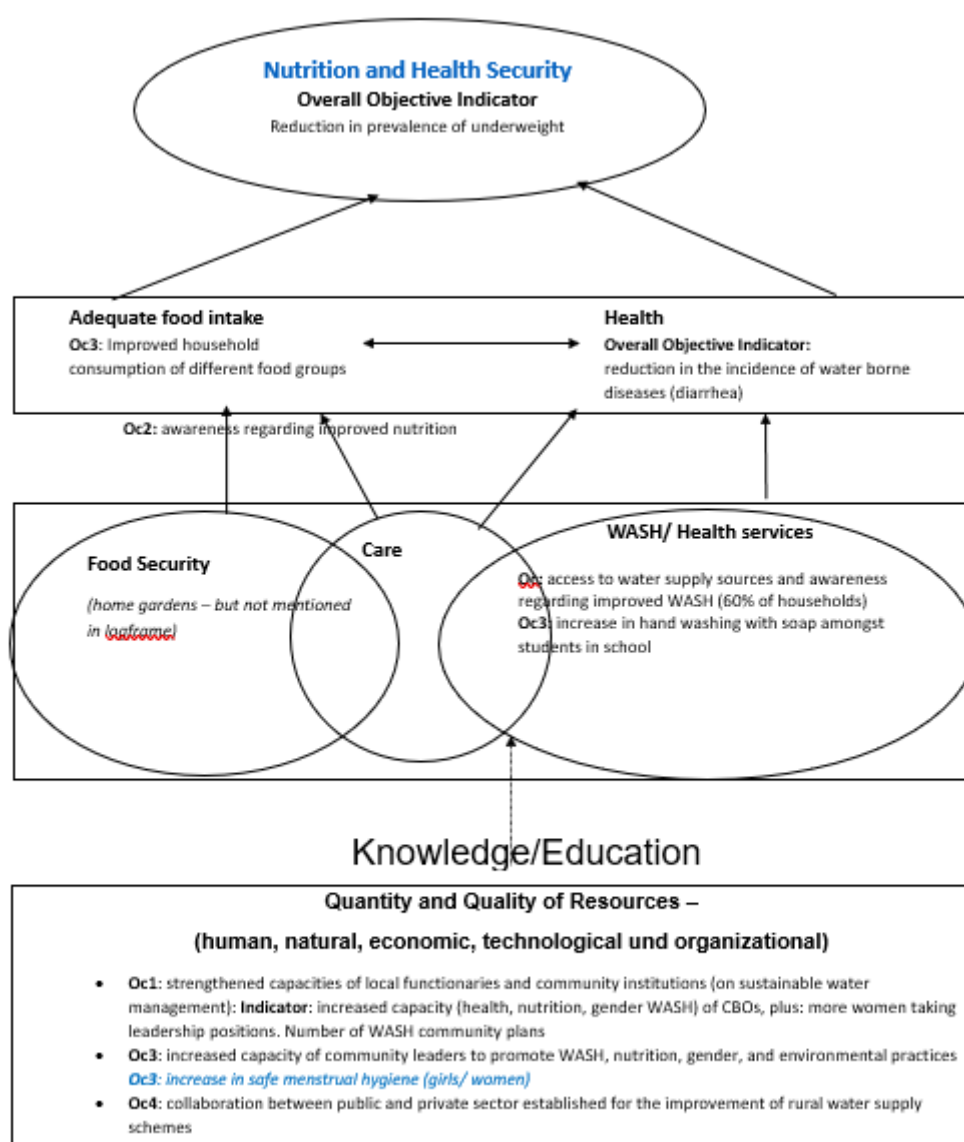
1. As can be seen from the ToC below, the main indicator used in the Solidaridad log frame is underweight. This indicator has not been measured at baseline, but data are taken from the health system (Road to Health Cards). The data are not taken the same day of the survey and they are not taken with the same measuring equipment. This can cause numerous problems, including missing calibration, measuring mistakes (like false match with age, reading mistakes, etc.).
2. The second indicator relates to the reduction of water borne diseases. However, the project did not measure the incidence of water borne diseases – there was no clinical assessment. Instead, the prevalence of diarrhoeal diseases has been assessed. This can be water borne, water washed, food based etc. This is not a serious problem as we can easily replace the term “water borne” with “diarrhoea prevalence”.
3. The log frame of the project had no activities and outcomes under the food security aspect, which is necessary to improve dietary intake. However, the project adopted a

¹⁴ Undernourishment is estimated in three steps: 1) Estimate of kcal available in a country, based on the food balance sheets (FAO); 2) Estimate of population in a country or region 3) Estimate on how many people will not reach the food security minimum, or the kcal necessary per day

home garden intervention as well. Otherwise, the left side of the conceptual framework is weak like in the case of ACCEND.

- The provision of sanitary napkins is a particularly useful intervention with the primary objective to allow girls the access to education. Education is key in promoting gender equality, but gender equality has not been an outcome of the entire project.

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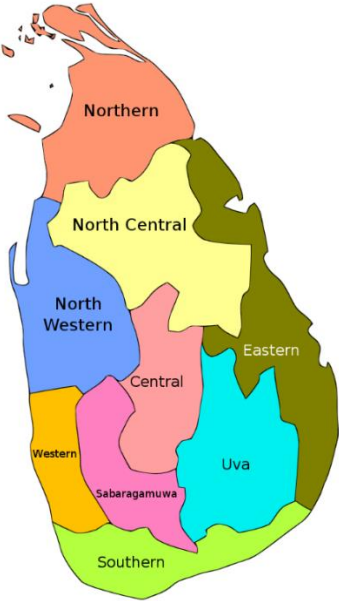


5.14 Geographical map

UVA Province
1,250,000 inhabitants
8,500 sq. km

Central Province
2,400,000 inhabitants
5,600 sq. km

Total 3.65 million people on 14,000 sq. km



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