



IMPACT EVALUATION FOR GAFSP FINANCED INVESTMENT PROJECTS

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BACKGROUND: ABOUT GAFSP

The Global Agricultural Food Security Program (GAFSP) is a multilateral mechanism to assist in the implementation of pledges made by the G8++ at the L'Aquila Summit in July 2009 and was set up in response to a request from the G20 in Pittsburgh in September 2009. The objective is to address the underfunding of country and regional agriculture and food security strategic investment plans already being developed by countries in consultation with donors and other stakeholders at the country-level. This will make aid contributions toward the achievement of the Millennium Development Goal 1 to cut hunger and poverty by half by 2015 more predictable.

The decision making body of GAFSP is the Steering Committee, established in April 2010. The Committee is comprised of an equal number of donor countries and recipient representatives as voting members. In addition, other stakeholders such as the World Bank, other multilateral development banks, UN agencies, and Civil Society Organizations (from the North and the South) fully participate in Committee deliberations as non-voting members.

The public sector window of GAFSP finances gaps identified by countries in their national agriculture and food security investment plans that are evidenced-based and inclusive of civil society and the private sector, such as those developed for the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP) for African countries. GAFSP provides grant financing to Supervising Entities for the benefit of countries (investment projects and/or technical assistance projects) and to regional economic organizations (technical assistance projects only). Countries are supported in the preparation and implementation by selected Supervising Entities. Potential Supervising Entities are Multilateral Development Banks (African Development Bank, Asian Development Bank, Inter-American Development Bank, World Bank), International Fund for Agricultural Development, Food and Agriculture Organization (for technical assistance projects only), and the World Food Programme (for technical assistance projects only).

The GAFSP is implemented as a Financial Intermediary Fund for which the World Bank (CFPMI) serves as Trustee. The World Bank also administers a Coordination Unit in the Agriculture and Rural Development Unit (ARD) that provides support to the GAFSP Steering Committee. GAFSP is expected to complete its activities in 2019, pending final decision by the Steering Committee based on funding availability and performance.

GAFSP's policy on impact evaluation

As per the GAFSP Monitoring & Evaluation Plan approved by the Steering Committee in February 2011 (available on the web at: <http://www.gafspfund.org/gafsp/content/monitoring-and-evaluation>), the GAFSP Steering Committee adopted a policy for all GAFSP public sector investment projects to undergo an Impact Evaluation (IE) as part of its agenda to foster lesson learning and accountable and effective aid. Given the small scale and difficulty in quantifying the benefits, Technical Assistance (only) projects are not required to undergo impact evaluations.

For a sub-set of GAFSP projects approved by the Steering Committee, an in-depth IE (using experimental or quasi-experimental evaluation methods) will be carried out by a suitable research organization with a proven track record in carrying out impact evaluations for government development projects for agriculture and food security initiatives.

For the remaining GAFSP projects, the recipient countries will arrange to have an external organization carry out rapid (non-experimental) evaluations.

The GAFSP Steering Committee has instructed the Coordination Unit to take on the coordination of the overall M&E of the program for public sector windows as part of its results reporting function to the Steering Committee.

World Bank's Development Impact Evaluation Initiative (DIME)

The GAFSP Steering Committee has indicated its preference that the World Bank's Development Impact Evaluation Initiative (DIME) be one of the impact evaluation options available to GAFSP Supervising Entities to carry out in-depth impact evaluations for GAFSP-financed investment projects. Supervising Entities may request the use of other similarly suitable organizations in the future upon the approval of the Steering Committee, but for now, none have requested to do so.

DIME is a broad-based World Bank program to generate knowledge on the effectiveness of government programs. It helps government agencies adopt a culture of real-time, evidence-based policy-making on the basis of rigorous impact evaluation. By testing how to make policies work, it contributes to improving policy performance. DIME works with 300 agencies in 72 countries across 15 thematic programs to generate knowledge, improve quality of operations, and strengthen country capacity for evidence-based policy-making. With 173 completed and 305 active studies in 72 countries to date, DIME is the largest initiative in the world designed to systematically learn from development experience on the basis of rigorous impact evaluation.

The initiative promotes a new business model that reinforces the analytical content of investment operations and delivers high-quality analytical products and just-in-time advice to clients to measure and improve results over time. It is implemented through sixteen thematic impact evaluation programs including agriculture. The aim for each program is to: (i) provide full and integrated analytical support to the relevant operations throughout the project cycle; (ii) ensure high quality and timely delivery of analytical products to the client at critical nodes in their decision-making process; and (iii) generalize lessons into wider knowledge products.

DIME was created in 2005 and is governed by the DIME Steering Group, which is composed of chief economists and directors who are staff of the World Bank (networks and regional units), and reports to the World Bank's Managing Director responsible for knowledge management and the World Bank Chief Economist. The DIME Secretariat within the Development Economics/Chief Economist Vice Presidency Operations and Strategy Unit (DECOS) of the World Bank provides technical leadership to operationalize the Steering Group's decisions.

RESPONSIBILITY/TASKS

As per the GAFSP Steering Committee's request, DIME will carry out the in-depth impact evaluation of GAFSP financed investment projects in accordance with the tasks outlined below, upon a request by a Supervising Entity.

1. Provide arrangements for identified GAFSP projects to participate in DIME organized Agricultural Adaptation Thematic Workshops. A list of projects approved by the Steering Committee for in-depth impact evaluations (experimental or quasi-experimental) will be communicated by the Coordination Unit to DIME. The Coordination Unit will work closely with DIME on administrative/logistical arrangements for GAFSP projects to participate in the workshops, which is the first step for projects to work with DIME (see Annex for DIME protocol). DIME will review the proposed delegation list for the workshop to ensure that a qualified delegation has been appointed from each GAFSP project team.
2. Prepare an impact evaluation plan for each investment project that has been identified by the SC and the SE for which it has been asked to evaluate. The plan will describe a timeline of key activities, main questions that will be addressed¹, methodologies to be used, main deliverables, and core team members with their functions including DIME staff and external researchers. The timeline of key activities will cover the expected duration of project preparation and implementation.

This plan will be reviewed and cleared by the relevant project representative of the Government (e.g. Project Director/Coordinator) and the relevant Supervising Entity Task Team Leader, and submitted to the Steering Committee for its approval, through the Coordination Unit. The Government's project representative and Supervising Entity's Task Team Leader should commit to fully cooperating with DIME on the stated activities and timeline by (i) clearly establishing with the DIME team the priorities of the evaluation, (ii) agreeing on any needed operational adjustments, (iii) facilitating access to project information, administrative data and access to target population for survey data collection, and (iv) cooperating on the monitoring on the ground to ensure that the IE protocols are followed and the intervention is rolled out as planned.

3. Provide relevant input into the GAFSP Annual Progress Report to be submitted to the Steering Committee and disclosed on the web.
4. Provide a cross-country report that covers findings from various GAFSP projects that have chosen to use DIME to the Steering Committee, at a time agreed to by the Steering Committee and DIME.
5. Prepare an annual budget for every fiscal year to carry out the impact evaluation of GAFSP projects, and submit to the Steering Committee for its approval, through the Coordination Unit.
6. Review contents prepared by the Coordination Unit for the Impact Evaluation page of the GAFSP website.

1. For all projects, DIME evaluation should include as part of their research questions: (i) the highest level project indicators when regular project M&E is not sufficient to measure the progress of these indicators with great certitude, and (ii) two GAFSP program goal indicators from the GAFSP M&E Plan ((1) Household income of direct beneficiaries, and (2) Proportion of target population below the minimum level of dietary energy consumption, disaggregated by gender and vulnerable groups)

7. Participate in relevant sessions of the GAFSP Steering Committee meetings as requested by the Steering Committee.

Expected Outcomes

1. For each GAFSP-financed project undergoing an in-depth impact evaluation conducted by DIME, a series of reports and shorter “DIME briefs” as stipulated in the impact evaluation plan for each project, to be submitted to the SE’s first for comments and comments and then to the GAFSP Steering Committee.
2. Relevant input material for the GAFSP Annual Progress to be submitted to the Coordination Unit.
3. Cross-country report that covers findings from various GAFSP projects (which will be sent to the SEs initially for comments).
4. Operational annual budget every year to be submitted to the Coordination Unit.

Reporting

DIME will report directly and be accountable to the GAFSP Steering Committee. The GAFSP Coordination Unit will facilitate the communication between the relevant parties (DIME, Steering Committee, and Supervising Entities) to ensure that deliverables are met and help with any troubleshooting as needed. The Coordination Unit will also coordinate with DIME to handle any necessary administrative/logistical matters related to GAFSP project teams’ travel to DIME workshops.

World Bank Roles

Recognizing that DIME is a unit of the World Bank, while GAFSP has been structured as a multilateral mechanism through which funding flows to countries through multiple agencies (Asian Development Bank, African Development Bank, Food and Agricultural Organization, Inter-American Development Bank, International Fund for Agricultural Development, World Bank, World Food Programme), the Steering Committee states its understanding and intention that DIME’s role is technical and does not represent the World Bank’s (Management or Executive Board) opinion on the progress or effectiveness of any projects subjected to impact analysis. The choice to use DIME rests with the relevant Supervising Entity and Supervising Entities will not be negatively impacted (financially or otherwise) should they choose not to have their in-depth impact evaluations conducted by DIME. The GAFSP Coordination Unit’s role vis-a-vis DIME will be limited to facilitation, sharing of information and dissemination of impact evaluation results to the GAFSP Steering Committee and to Supervising Entities. The arrangements with DIME will not replace the GAFSP procedures that specify that all Supervising Entities use their own policies and procedures in the GAFSP project cycle. The funding for these tasks will be transferred to DIME by the Trustee based on decisions made by the Steering Committee. Any necessary arrangements for this transfer will be agreed between the Trustee, DIME, and the Steering Committee. The Bank, as Trustee, will not have any responsibility for the use of funds transferred to DIME or for DIME’s actions or activities. As noted earlier, DIME will be accountable to the Steering Committee for the use of the funds so transferred to it.

Annex: Summary of DIME protocol

Below is a list of summarized steps that are typically followed for projects on which DIME is engaged in impact evaluation (IE).

- **Project selection:** DIME normally selects projects in collaboration with sector managers and Task Team Leaders. For GAFSP projects, projects will be selected by the Steering Committee in collaboration with Task Team Leaders of the GAFSP Supervising Entities (SE) concerned and government counterparts.
- **Cross country Workshops:** Selected projects participate in DIME Impact Evaluation (IE) cross-country workshop. Workshop objectives include sharing of international evidence and training on IE methods, and preparation of IE designs through project specific discussions facilitated by IE experts (from DIME and external researchers). Teams agree on evaluation questions, operationally viable identification strategies, operational adjustments, data, and preliminary timeline and budget.
- DIME assigns research teams to each IE project. A typical research team consists of: (i) at least one PhD economist with experience in the impact evaluation field as well as some experience in the sector of interest or a related sector, and (ii) a junior level economist (typically with a master's graduate or a Ph.D. student) with technical impact evaluation skills who will be placed in the field to supervise the data collection activities and work with the team on a day-to-day basis. Each team will work under the overall supervision of the Head of DIME and the Task Team Leader for the Agricultural Adaptations program (AADAPT) of DIME.
- DIME processes an IE budget code. This is an analytical product/budget code that requires approval by the Country Director and Sector Manager (for World Bank projects). For other Supervising Entity projects, DIME will arrange the process internally.
- **Follow up visit(s):** DIME organizes follow up mission in coordination with the SE Task Team Leader of the SEs concerned. Follow up visit(s) serve to refine the design of the evaluation, and prepare data collection instruments and TOR for the baseline.
- **DIME research team prepares a Concept Note and organizes a Concept Note Review:** Typically the Concept Note is reviewed by two peer reviewers (one expert from the regional unit and another from the research department). For GAFSP projects, the peer reviewers could include external experts such as operational specialists from the relevant Supervising Entity, members of the GAFSP Technical Advisory Committee, or other economists/experts familiar with the particular topic of the evaluation.
- **Data collection support:** DIME hires a field coordinator for each IE project. Field coordinators work with the implementing agency to support all aspects of IE implementation including training and supervision of data collection, monitoring of intervention, and training of local staff working on the IE. Field coordinators are hired on Short Term Consultancy arrangements and usually reside in country for one to two years.
- **Data collection:** DIME contracts baseline data collection.
- **Data analysis:** DIME research team prepares a baseline report and discusses results with project team and implementing agency. The report is submitted to the GAFSP Steering Committee for comments.
- **Second/third data collection:** DIME contracts follow up (midline or endline) data collection.

- **Second/third data analysis:** DIME research team prepares midline or endline impact evaluation report and discusses results with project team and implementing agency. Each report and shorter “DIME briefs” are submitted to the GAFSP Steering Committee for comments.
- **Dissemination:** Results are published on the DIME website. In addition, the finished evaluation reports will be submitted for publication in peer-reviewed journals and published in the DIME working paper series and other suitable outlets following World Bank internal and external publication protocols. For GAFSP projects, in addition to the above, the results will also be uploaded onto the IE page of the GAFSP website and key findings will be summarized and included in the Annual Progress Report.