

**STDF/PG/126 EX-POST EVALUATION:  
HORTICULTURE DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL OF TANZANIA SUPPORT PROJECT**

EXPLANATORY NOTE

## **1 BACKGROUND**

1.1. The project STDF/PG/126 entitled: Horticulture Development Council of Tanzania (HODECT) Support Project was approved by the Working Group in June 2008 and implemented from July 2009 to August 2011 by the Tanzania Horticulture Association (TAHA).<sup>1</sup> The International Trade Centre (ITC) provided supervision and oversight services in relation to the implementation of the project. ITC had no background or prior involvement in the formulation of the project. The project aimed to support HODECT in setting up a public private partnership (PPP) and coordination mechanism to guide the development of the horticulture sector in Tanzania. The total project budget was \$268,755 and the contribution requested from STDF was US\$253,755.

1.2. The Working Group approved the project on the grounds that strengthening coordination and public-private dialogue in the horticulture sector can provide a forum to adequately identify and address SPS issues and assist in mainstreaming these issues in trade development policies. The project was judged timely as it coincided with momentum created by the adoption of Tanzania's Trade Integration Strategy (TTIS) (2009-2013), which had a special focus on private sector development. As such it complemented and possibly would benefit from other major initiatives such as Tanzania's Trade Sector Development Programme (TSDP).

1.3. At the outset, it should be noted that this project is one of STDF's earliest projects, by virtue of which the project document was not fully developed and reflected several weaknesses during project design phase. The project proposal was not elaborate and lacked an adequate project management structure and a clear monitoring and evaluation framework. The proposal addressed several problems related to the lack of coordination between public and private stakeholders in the horticulture sector in Tanzania, but it did not aim to address a specific SPS problem.

1.4. It should also be noted that arrangements related to the involvement of organizations in STDF projects in a supervisory capacity were considered to be inefficient in the evaluation of the Facility carried out in 2009. As a result, the Policy Committee decided to abolish the involvement of supervisory agencies in STDF projects shortly thereafter.

## **2 EVALUATION PROCESS**

2.1. In March 2012, the chairperson of the STDF Working Group (through randomized selection) selected project STDF/PG/126 for an external ex-post evaluation. Subsequently, the Secretariat requested the Working Group to provide names of potential qualified international consultants/experts to undertake this evaluation. In accordance with paragraph 105 of the STDF Operational Rules<sup>2</sup>, the Secretariat shared the names and CVs of three independent evaluators with the Working Group on 24 March 2014. The proposed consultants included: (i) Mr Frédéric Plumelle; (ii) Mr Leon Tomesen; and (iii) Mr Surendra Kotecha.

2.2. The Secretariat received no comments from the Working Group. Based on a review of the CVs, the chairperson of the Working Group (in 2014) proposed that Mr Surendra Kotecha should undertake the evaluation. The Secretariat contracted Mr Kotecha (hereafter: "the consultant") on 25 April 2014.

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<sup>1</sup> TAHA is a private sector business association created in 2004, which groups together all aspects of the Horticulture Industry in Tanzania. For more information see: <http://taha.or.tz/>

<sup>2</sup> Paragraph 105 stipulates: "*For evaluations, a shortlist of three independent evaluators, drawn from a roster of consultants maintained by the STDF Secretariat, shall be circulated to the Working Group for comments. The final selection of evaluators shall be made by the STDF Secretariat, in consultation with the chairperson of the Working Group as necessary.*" ( ).

2.3. The consultant submitted a first version of the evaluation report in October 2014. The draft report did not satisfactorily meet the STDF Guidelines for the Evaluation of Projects (document STDF 214)<sup>3</sup>. The Secretariat acknowledged that the consultant faced some challenges in undertaking the evaluation, mainly due to the duration of time since the project had ended, and during which time HODECT had become dysfunctional, but also considered that there was substantial room for improvement. The Secretariat provided detailed comments on the draft report, including feedback to improve the drafting, analysis and structure of the report. Specifically, the Secretariat requested the consultant to improve the report's substance, conclusions and recommendations.

2.4. The Secretariat received a revised second version of the report in March 2015. The report was circulated to the Working Group for consideration at the meeting on 12-13 October 2015. The Secretariat views that the revised report does not take into account nor gives adequate consideration to its earlier comments and suggestions provided.

### **3 OUTSTANDING ISSUES**

3.1. Broadly, the consultant's evaluation notes that the project was partly successful since it managed to raise awareness on the issues and the potential of the horticulture sector among relevant stakeholders. However, the evaluation fails to document and explain the reasons for non-achievement of various project outcomes. Notably, although the project provides for the creation of a legally recognized company – HODECT Limited, this was not achieved during the project. The consultant highlights the non-registration of HODECT as a legal entity as a major hindrance to HODECT's sustainability and hence a major shortfall of the project. However, he does not analyse why this legal entity was not established during project implementation (despite it being planned from the start).

3.2. The report does not take stock of HODECT's day-to-day functioning, composition, or any of the outputs achieved under the project. For instance, the consultant reports that the National Horticulture Strategy (NHS) produced under the project did not fully cover the challenges and the opportunities of the sector - but he does not explain the reasons for this nor does he provide recommendations for the future. Likewise, the consultant notes that HODECT did not sufficiently reach out to stakeholders in order to establish itself as a platform of coordination - but he does not explain why this did not happen despite the various outreach activities implemented under the project.

3.3. Other critical questions still remain such as: (i) if the project was implemented (and not only supervised) by an international organization, would that have led to better quality outputs (such as the NHS), owing to technical advice provided by the implementing agency and more clout in selecting an expert to elaborate the NHS?; and (ii) was there a failure in the selection of workshops, study tours, exhibitions and other events that the HODECT Secretariat participated in?

3.4. Finally, a detailed analysis of whether HODECT managed to perform its role of coordinator of various initiatives in the horticulture sector is lacking. Other important aspects, including the role of members in HODECT, the role played by TAHA (and possible competition with HODECT within the horticulture sector), and the role of the supervisory agency in advising on the structure of HODECT and on corrective measures during project implementation to ensure sustainability, have not been considered during the evaluation.

3.5. In light of the significant number of outstanding questions and improvements needed, the Secretariat was unable to approve the second revised evaluation report. Subsequently, the consultant was informed of steps required to cease collaboration.<sup>4</sup>

### **4 LESSONS LEARNED**

4.1. Notwithstanding the weaknesses of the second version of the evaluation report, the Secretariat was able to derive a few key lessons and recommendations for the benefit of donors

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<sup>3</sup> A copy of the Guidelines (document STDF 214) was annexed to the Consultant's Contract.

<sup>4</sup> The Consultant was contacted by email in on 25 June 2015 and a letter from the Secretary of the STDF was sent on 31 July 2015.

and for future STDF programme development, both in terms of process and substance. These include, *inter alia*:

- a. The HODECT project was elaborated and driven mainly by one person (i.e. the first HODECT chairman). After this person moved on to other responsibilities, HODECT was unable to continue growing and project itself as a coordination forum. Therefore, broad-based consultation during project development is a prerequisite to ensure strong ownership by national agencies/ministries.
- b. Staff from public sector entities and TAHA lost interest in HODECT after the project was completed. They were not officially designated to continue representing their institutions in HODECT and did not consider it a priority. They only participated in HODECT meetings as long as these were supported by the project and stopped attending after the project ended. An entity like HODECT should have been legally registered in order to enhance its functioning and sustainability. This could have helped in maintaining consistency in staff involvement.
- c. The paucity of information gathered during the consultant's field visit was partly due to staff turnover, but also due to the fact that HODECT did not publicize itself enough to be identified and "recalled" as the national coordination platform for horticulture. For instance, the Secretariat noted that during the life of the project, development partners active in the country were aware of the existence of HODECT and considered it a potentially good forum for horticulture stakeholders to discuss relevant donor programmes in this area. However, at the time of the evaluation, no donor seemed to still remember HODECT. For future similar projects, promotional activities and communication plans should be prepared during the project, as part of the exit strategy after the end of the project to ensure consolidation and sustainability.
- d. In order for HODECT to be financially sustainable, it should have been established as a formal PPP with TAHA as the main representative of the private sector. While this was the aim and intent of the project, TAHA failed to make HODECT an efficient PPP. Typically, HODECT should have had a cost-recovery mechanism using fees from the private sector to run the very lean secretariat that managed it. However, this was not the case since TAHA was billing the project for office space and evicted the HODECT Secretariat from its building after the project ended. One could argue that office space should have been TAHA's contribution to the PPP. In addition, one way to create a well-functioning PPP is make sure that it has a clear definition of roles and responsibilities among all stakeholders involved. Presumably, implementation of the project was challenging since TAHA soon considered HODECT as a threat and competitor. It was reported that TAHA was subsequently receiving donor funding to act as a platform of coordination of capacity building projects in the horticulture sector, a role that was precisely attributed to HODECT.
- e. This project, with considerable scope for conflict of interest and turf defending, would have benefitted from full implementation by an international organization, acting as honest broker. The supervision provided by ITC seems to have fallen short of addressing challenges and getting stakeholders to agree on a corrective course of action during implementation. This is inherent to the role of supervisory agency, which was limited to clearing progress reports and did not leave much space for thorough monitoring and guidance. As mentioned in section 1.4 above, the Policy Committee decided to abolish the supervisory arrangement for STDF for these reasons.

4.2. Given that the project application was not fully mature/developed at the time of submission and a significant amount of time has lapsed since the project was completed (which makes it challenging to collect good information in the field), and also in light of the lessons identified above, the Secretariat suggests not to engage in any further evaluation activities for project STDF/PG/126.