



Mid-term evaluation of the Netherlands Food Security Programme in the Palestinian Territories

FINAL REPORT

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The purpose of this mid-term evaluation is to formulate a reasoned opinion on the relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact and sustainability of the funded projects with respect to the context, policy and procedures of NRO intervention. The consultant has examined the outcomes of the project in the light of the objectives fixed. He/she has also reviewed the execution and functioning of the project in its different phases of implementation and monitoring.

This evaluation has been financed by the NRO. The observations, assessments and recommendations expressed in this report are the sole responsibility of the authors.

Executive Summary

Introduction

The NRO Food Security Programme covers both the Gaza Strip and the West Bank and builds upon results achieved in the past. In the Multi-annual Strategic Plan for 2014-2017, the NRO has defined the following strategic goal, outcomes and outputs for food security in the oPT states:

“At a strategic level, the NRO wishes to contribute to a situation in which the Palestinian people within the Palestinian Territories have access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food, while Palestinian farmers, including smallholders, have the capacity to compete with their products in the national and international markets.”

Under the heading of this strategic goal the NRO has funded four projects that together form the Food Security Programme.

This mid-term evaluation according to its Terms of Reference seeks to:

- Improve implementation of the programme during the second part of implementation.
- Generate knowledge, identifying best practices and lessons learned that could be transferred to other programmes.

Methodology

The Mid-Term Review was performed by MDF Training & Consultancy by a team of three national and one international consultant. Fieldwork was carried out from May 6 through May 20th 2015 in 6 locations in the West Bank and three in Gaza. At these locations focus group discussions took place with farmers, cooperatives, and women's associations, interviews were held with field staff and local authorities, and project sites were visited. All interviews, focus group discussions and site visits were registered, to enable the comparison of data during the phase of analysis. Findings have been triangulated and compared by the four members of the review mission

Relevance

The programme as a whole is coherent, with four elements that complement and mutually reinforce each other. It builds upon previous experience, while aligning with relevant policies and addressing weaknesses of the previous phase. Theoretically the link between the programme and the objective of increasing food security is there, but, due to the type of beneficiaries and the choice of high value crops, in the practice of project implementation the relation is not always clear. As a result, the projects respond more to a livelihood strengthening objective than the aim to improve food security.

The programme has a strong technical focus; a clear stakeholder oriented approach might have been conducive to more holistic and sustainable strategies. It would also have helped to describe the theory of how change will happen, which brings more focus in the overall strategies. Insufficient strategic analysis seems to have been made of the highly negative impacts of the Israeli “matrix of control” over the Palestine Territories, and the best way to strengthen the rural economies in Gaza and the West Bank. The cross-cutting objective of gender mainstreaming needs more systematic attention and more substantial funding.

The programme works in close collaboration with national stakeholders. The choice of the High Value Crops (HVC) project to work with small or medium-sized (in average 70 members) farmer cooperatives may not be the most beneficial in terms of leverage and will require substantial

investments to sufficiently build their capacities. More efforts need to be made to increase the bargaining power of farmers with private sector/traders and government authorities. This could be done by strengthening the national cooperative movements, or unions, to break the cycle of marginalization and weakening of these movements by NGOs.

All projects have logical frameworks and indicators linked to the various result levels. On the whole, indicators related to straightforward technical interventions tend to be well formulated and measurable. Outcome indicators are more problematic and have so far not been informed; this means that progress towards projected outcomes is not being tracked. Management indicators are missing which makes it difficult to structurally track project expenditure and management mechanisms. All in all, there is important room for improvement in indicator formulation, the development of data collection instruments and in particular the actual monitoring and documentation of the project results, both by the NRO and the implementing agencies, supported by a regular external review process.

Effectiveness

Programme beneficiaries tend to be male middle income farmers (although the Gaza beneficiary incomes are lower than the West Bank incomes). The needy families targeted in Um An Nasser by the Gaza Buffer Zone Project may to a certain extent not be the final beneficiaries, as evidence suggests that the land is massively being rented to other farmers against minimal prices. While most programme beneficiaries derive their main income from farming, this does not seem to be the case for a group of Qalqilia beneficiaries (HVC) and an estimated 40% of the L&WRM Halhoul beneficiaries. It is not clear which target groups did not get to benefit from the programme. The poorest farmers, who are most in need of a food security programme, have not been reached.

Delays and unforeseen expenses were caused by the political situation (notably stop work orders and confiscations, and the 2014 Gaza war) and the 2013 winter storm. The difficulty of travel and communication between Gaza and the West Bank is another cause for delays, as is the building of partnerships with national government.

The Gaza Buffer Zone project has been more or less successful in achieving its objectives. 85% of the targeted land was reclaimed and is being cultivated, but not necessarily by the target group; two weeks of capacity building was short to turn Bedouins into farmers. The field coaching that was part of the project has not been provided.

The Sanitary and Phytosanitary Standards (SPS) project is well underway, be it that the creation of partnerships took more time than foreseen. The project is likely to succeed in making a good start with the SPS capacity strengthening, but for truly improved service delivery efforts beyond the (technical and financial) scope of this project are needed.

The HVC project has so far been very successful at building the farmers' capacities in good farming practices and Global GAP certification. Challenges are the farmer dependency on input subsidies and the economic feasibility of the high value crops. The focus on export crops adds to the economic vulnerability of the enterprises. The marketing component needs further strengthening and may not be entirely successful, due to the lack of dynamism and leverage of the farmers' associations. The environmental situation in Gaza is very challenging and requires a certain level of rethinking of strategies. The gender component ought to be better integrated in the main interventions, and the quality of delivery improved. To what extent the project will achieve its outcome is hard to predict at this point; the informing of its outcome indicators might provide a better sense of that.

The strength of the (Land & Water Resource Management) L&WRM project is the facilitation of autonomous agricultural development through the provision of adequate infrastructure. This is done in collaboration with local stakeholders and generates a lot of enthusiasm. In terms of contribution to food security it is likely to be more successful in areas that produce foodstuffs for the domestic market than areas where the beneficiaries derive their main income from other sources, and certain families benefitted more than others. While the secondary purpose of preserving Palestinian land rights was well served in that area, the question is whether this use of funds for heavy land reclamation is more beneficial than light land reclamation, which would enable the re-use of agricultural land for less cost and thus more beneficiaries¹. The holistic community based approach which is doing well in certain areas, is less successful in others. To effectively strengthen self-reliance, resilience and empowerment of the local community It would benefit from further articulation in concept and in practice.

The NRO actively supports the programme through diplomacy and problem solving, but its options are limited in the face of Israeli politics and the overall policy of the Netherlands. Follow-up mechanisms are not sufficiently in place for the NRO to effectively monitor project implementation and management, and the progress of the programme towards outcomes.

Efficiency

A comparison between the overhead cost of the different projects learns that the contribution to FAO administrative costs is considerably higher than to UAWC and that the complexity of the partnerships probably contributes to the staff cost of the HVC and the L&WRM projects. The NRO should not have accepted the very low overhead cost of 1.5 % of the L&WRM project, as this has negatively affected project implementation. The organisational structure of the projects is similar, with the exception of the Gaza Buffer Zone project, which was much smaller than the others and limited to one particular location.

The programme is organised in a rather vertical manner, with little lateral connections between the projects. One would imagine that the coherence between the programme components as expressed in the MASP could be translated into stronger field level coordination between the projects, which might lead to unexpected synergies and a more holistic approach.

A comparison of the three field-based projects in terms of cost per direct beneficiary suggests that the HVC project is the most expensive and the L&WRM the cheapest.

Sustainability

The degree to which programme beneficiaries experience ownership varies: they tend to be more confident about the knowledge they possess, than about the extent which resource rights and benefits are ensured. This relates to the context (notably the Israeli 'matrix of control'), but also to the economic feasibility of the crops. Issues for concern are the maintenance of the infrastructure created under the L&WRM project, and the reliance on the farmers' associations and the MoA for the institutional sustainability. However, UAWC seems to have put modalities in place both with beneficiary farmers and village and municipality councils, to ensure maintenance after works done. On the other hand, emerging results suggest that the infrastructure provision under the L&WRM Project generates autonomous agricultural investments by the farmers; this seems to be less widespread among HVC farmers who still struggle with the dependency on input subsidies created by the previous projects. The environmental sustainability strategy is solid within the context of conventional HVC farming, but in view of the vulnerability of the

¹ While there is a need to better define terminology and definitions (National standards for LR are being prepared with the MoA), light land reclamation (requiring still some investments and light equipment) is not necessarily synonymous to land rehabilitation, which by is considered by some as very light repair actions for which farmers do not need support from projects.

Palestinian territory more efforts might be required in the area of organic and ecological farming, while the issue of "exporting" water through the production of crops for the international market needs consideration when choosing crops.

*Recommendations
for the Current
Programme*

To increase the effectiveness and the sustainability of the current programme the MTR mission recommends the following measures.

- Continue to review the choice of crops in favour of more profitable and less perishable ones. Other factors to take into account are water efficiency and demand on the local market. This will reduce the risks for producers, and allow for the substitution of imports from Israel and hence strengthen the local economy in the Palestinian Territories.
- More efforts are needed for the branding, and marketing of Palestinian high quality products for the domestic market, while making use of the potential of Good Agricultural Practices (lower cost, higher quality and more safety). These efforts should include establishing standards and public awareness campaigns for safely produced domestic products.
- Investigate what is needed to enable the partner cooperatives to establish a viable marketing system and to operate the Global GAP system without the project. This might include linking them to the older cooperative movement and provide them with a business model to ensure sustainable income to cover the operational costs.
- Up scale the Global GAP achievements by involving the MoA in the dissemination of safe agricultural procedures among the wider farming communities, including all crops. This will contribute to the institutional sustainability and strengthen the extension services provided by the MoA.
- Investigate the possibilities of generalising holistic approaches as applied in Nazleh, taking into account each area's specific conditions, to contribute to the sustainability of the investments made by the L&WRM project.
- Strengthen local mechanisms with the targeted communities to ensure the maintenance of the infrastructural investments and at the same time strengthen self-reliance and resilience.
- Review the strategy and budget of the gender component of the HVC and the L&WRM projects to better ensure the mainstreaming of gendered interests and to value women as actors in the agricultural sector.
- Improve the monitoring system by creating better instruments (improved log frames, SMART indicators, increased frequency of reporting against indicators) to measure progress towards results (especially at the more strategic outcome levels) and identify lessons learned. A standardised report template would help the NRO in this regard.
- More structured efforts need to be made to document project/programme results, lessons learned and share them with a broader audience (annual reports are not enough for this). Additionally, (unannounced) monitoring visits need to be carried out, so as to better account for a substantial budget in the sector. These may be carried out by an external party.

*Recommendations
for the Future
NRO Programme*

Based on the findings of the mid-term review, for the development of the future NRO Food Security Programme, the mission recommends the following.

- Diversify partnerships by encouraging coalitions and tendering. In the review committee involve national stakeholders such as the MoA, to further increase a sense of ownership and to add to expertise and perspectives.

- Engage in a thorough value chain analysis to obtain better understanding of the economic feasibility of crops and the market, the potential of a crop for the household economy as a whole, and the environmental optimum.
- Develop an actor-oriented Theory of Change (ToC) with involvement of different segments of society. Defining a theory of how change will happen will allow for a more holistic approach and clearly defined strategies that take into consideration the specific characteristics of the context, notably the hazards related to the Israeli “matrix of control” over the Palestinian Territories. A thorough stakeholder and risk analysis need to be integrated in the design. The participants in the development of the ToC ought to be legitimate representatives of the different groups. Particular attention should be given to the representation of women's interests.
- A better integration of a gender approach. This means not 'activities for women', but a gendered analysis of the household economy and a needs assessment among women; the training of all NGO staff on gender mainstreaming; and the hiring of female field staff.
- Develop a mechanism to encourage exchange between projects to favour learning, integration of interventions and the creation of synergies.
- To increase the economic viability of farming and cooperatives there is a need to develop or rethink agricultural credit mechanisms (including insurance and risk issues), as well the cost and benefit of land reclamation versus light reclamation or land rehabilitation.
- Rethink the ability to influence the political system and counter Israeli “matrix of control” to move away from the Israeli defined box of containment.
- Ensure the monitoring instruments that favour learning and allow the NRO to track the progress towards results of its programme and the verification of beneficiary targeting.

Acronyms

ESDC	Economic and Social Development Centre of Palestine
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations
GAP	Good Agricultural Practices
GBZ	Gaza Buffer Zone
GIS	Geographic Information System
HVC	High Value Crops
JTT	Joint Technical Team
L&WRM	Land & Water Resource Management
LAS	League of Arab States
LRC	Land and Research Centre
MASP	Multi-Annual Strategic Plan
MGO	Mount of Green Olives
MoA	Ministry of Agriculture
MONE	Ministry of National Economy
MTR	Mid-Term Review
NRO	Netherlands Representative Office
oPT	Occupied Palestinian Territory
PA	Palestinian Authority
PHG	Palestinian Hydrology Group
PMU	Project Management Unit
PSC	Project Steering Committee
SPS	Sanitary and Phytosanitary Standards
ToC	Theory of Change
ToR	Terms of Reference
UAWC	Union of Agricultural Work Committees

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1 Introduction

NRO Programme

The NRO's Food Security Programme covers both the Gaza Strip and the West Bank and builds upon results achieved in the past. In the Multi-annual Strategic Plan for 2014-2017, the NRO has defined the following strategic goal, outcomes and outputs for food security in the oPT states: "At a strategic level, the NRO wishes to contribute to a situation in which the Palestinian people within the Palestinian Territories have access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food, while Palestinian farmers, including smallholders, have the capacity to compete with their products in the national and international markets."

Under the heading of this strategic goal the NRO has funded four projects that together form the Food Security Programme.

Objectives Mid- Term Review

This mid-term evaluation according to its Terms of Reference seeks to:

- Improve implementation of the programme during the second part of implementation.
- Generate knowledge, identifying best practices and lessons learned that could be transferred to other programmes.

The conclusions and recommendations generated by this evaluation are addressed to its main users: the Programs Management Units (PMUs), the donor and the other players in the agricultural sector, including other donors and the ministry of Agriculture. The recommendations concern the current as well as the future programme.

The unit of analysis or object of study for this mid-term evaluation is the joint programme, understood to be the set of components, outcomes, outputs, activities and inputs that were detailed in the joint programme document and in associated modifications made during implementation.

This mid-term evaluation has the following specific objectives:

- Assess progress against project outcomes and outputs
- Assess progress against project work plan
- Assess the efficiency of the project (value for money)
- Document obstacles, challenges and best practices
- Assess the need to revise implementation strategies and work plan of the project

2 Methodology

Desk review The desk review covered all key project documents, including proposals, amendments, budgets, and policy documents of the Netherlands Government, the Palestinian Authority and the implementing agencies, as well as relevant articles about the project context. It answered questions about the relevance and coherence of the design, the effectiveness and timeliness of the implementation, the monitoring and the efficiency of the project. Challenges, lessons and good practices mentioned in the progress reports have been compared with comparable data generated in interviews.

Field Work Field work took place from May 6 through May 20th 2015. The following sites were visited:

- Halhoul (Hebron)
- Beit Hassan (Nablus)
- Tammun
- Jenin (Mathalun, Burqin)
- Tulkarm (Nazleh and Kafa, Anabta)
- Qualqilia (city, Hablah, Kafr Laqif)
- Um An Nasser (Gaza)
- Beit Lahia (North Gaza)
- Muharrat (Khanyounis in Southern Gaza)

At these locations focus group discussions took place with farmers, cooperatives, and women's associations, interviews were held with field staff and local authorities, and project sites were visited. For a more detailed description of the data collection methods applied please refer to Annex 3.

Data Analysis All interviews, focus group discussions and site visits were registered, to enable the comparison of data during the phase of analysis. Findings have been triangulated and compared with the results of the participation and ownership tools. The scores of the latter were averaged and compared across projects or beneficiary groups. The qualitative data collected during the field work period have been compared with the project monitoring data and, where applicable and available, statistical information. All findings, conclusions and recommendations have been thoroughly discussed and compared by the four members of the review mission.

Limitations In view of time restrictions the review team has not been able to meet with community members who were not project beneficiaries (except in Um An Nasser), which limits the understanding of beneficiary selection processes to the views of project stakeholders. Engagement of the team with women farmers was limited, as only in two cases did time and circumstances allow for a focus group discussion with women only (not counting the women's cooperatives, of whom another two were met).

3 Key Features of the Palestinian Context

In Palestine, even more so than in many other regions in the world, the context is highly relevant for the feasibility of project implementation and results. Since its occupation of the West Bank and Gaza Strip in 1967, Israel has persistently pursued a policy of “containment” of the Palestinian population, both geographically and developmentally. More than twenty years after the Oslo Accords, Israel's continued control of the external borders of the Palestinian Territory and its long-standing subjugation of the Palestinian economy to its own interests ensure that the Palestinian economy and all other aspects of life remain almost exclusively dependent on Israel. Indeed, most sources argue that post-Oslo this dependence has been firmly entrenched, not only by a sophisticated and near-comprehensive “matrix of control” (Keating, Lowe and LeMore, 2005) over the movement and activity of the Palestinian population, while facilitating the near doubling of the Israeli settlement population in the same period, but also through the mal-intentioned application of economic policies set forth in the peace accords, particularly the Paris Protocol.

Even though the ToR for this Mid-Term Review specifies that details about the context ought to be included in an annex, the review team has decided to highlight a number of features here that directly affect the relevance, impact and sustainability of the NRO programme, and that therefore need to be taken into account in its assessment.

<i>Critical Moments in the Recent History of Palestine</i>	1987-1993	From 1987 to 1993, the First Palestinian Intifada against Israel takes place, ending with the 1993 Oslo Peace Accords. These accords established a Palestinian National Authority (PNA - also referred to as the Palestinian Authority, or PA) as an interim body to run parts of Gaza and the West Bank (but not East Jerusalem) pending an agreed permanent solution to the conflict, foreseen five years from Oslo..
	2000-2005	During the Second Intifada Israel withdraws from the Gaza Strip and begins building the West Bank barrier.
	2006	Hamas wins the Palestinian legislative elections.
	2007-present	Hamas takes control of the Gaza Strip after which Israel and Egypt decide upon a blockade of the area. This blockade affected the farming enterprises as import of inputs and export of products were restricted. The resulting political division has led to the formulation of two governments.
	2008-2009	Israel bombs Gaza in response to rocket fire. This operation was criticised for causing civilian deaths. The Israeli aggression has also caused significant loss in farm assets for most of Gaza farmers.
	2011	UNESCO admits the "State of Palestine" as a member in October.
	2012	The State of Palestine is upgraded in the UN to non-member observer state status, a move that allows it to take part in General Assembly debates and improves its chances of joining other UN agencies.
	2014	Israel bombs Gaza in response to a kidnapping of two Israeli youth. This operation caused more than 2,000 civilian deaths. The Israeli violence has led to further deterioration in the economic situation in general and the agricultural situation in particular.

Population The annual growth rate of 2.9% in the Palestinian Territory results in a population density of 1,100

pressure

persons/km² in the West Bank, and 4,657 persons/km² in Gaza (nearly 14 times as much as Israel). The environmental and developmental ramifications of population growth in both the West Bank and the Gaza strip are significant, especially given the constricted space in which the expanding population is able to live and secure its livelihood, further exacerbated by the highly limited access to Area C (63% of the West Bank) and the non-access to the Buffer Zone (17% of the Gaza strip, and about a third of its arable land).

*An Economy
under
Occupation*

The majority (90-95%) of the Palestinian private sector consists of small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs). Trade flows generate 85% of the Palestinian Territory's GDP, with imports of goods and services representing over 80% of trade flows and only 20% representing exports; 90% of Palestinian trade is with Israel. Agriculture remains an important sector, accounting for 25% of exports and roughly 15% of the workforce but only 8.2% of the GDP in 2008 (Passia, 2009; UNCTAD, 2011).

Palestine is now one of the most heavily subsidized countries in the world with in 2012 an aid package of 2.01 billion USD or (according to the IMF) 340 USD/capita/year in 2013 (Turner, 2014). In 2008, of total external funding to Palestine the PA received about 90% and the Palestinian NGOs 10% (Devoir, 2009). Funding of the PA consisted for a major part of budget support to finance staff salaries, including the security apparatus. Much of the NGO funding has been used to recover or compensate for the destruction caused by the Israeli occupation measures. At the same time the Israeli Authorities further tightened a purposeful policy of allowing mainly humanitarian aid. International organizations that focus primarily on development cooperation are refused permits to Gaza and are not getting the authorization to register in East Jerusalem

Since the Oslo Agreements Palestinian enterprises paid 35-40% more taxes than Israeli counterparts, while permits for investments plans were rarely given, only in case that these, according to the military authorities, would not conflict with the interests of Israeli producers (Bouillon, 2004).

As mentioned by Oxfam (2013) "Unemployment rates in Gaza have soared from less than 10 percent in the early 1990s to over 32 percent in 2013". Following the halt of the illegal tunnel trade since mid-2013, unemployment has increased dramatically reaching up to 46.9% in June 2014 (PCBS 2014). Only 11 percent of women in Gaza are employed, the lowest rate for female employment in the region. Nearly 50 percent of youth are unemployed and job prospects are severely curtailed by severe restrictions on movement out of Gaza for work (Oxfam, 2013).

Unemployment and food insecurity in the Palestinian Territory are closely related. Most of high food insecurity is not due to lack of availability of food in the market but to inaccessibility to food because people have no cash and income to pay for it.

Access to water

Since 1967, Israel is effectively in control of all aquifers which are in the Palestinian land. Israeli settlements in the West Bank are strategically constructed around this vital resource. Indeed 80 percent of Palestinian water resources are controlled by Israel and the 520,000 Israeli settlers use approximately six times the amount of water that the 2.6 million Palestinians in the West Bank use.

In Gaza, the sole source of sweet water available is the southern end of the Coastal Aquifer that stretches north along the Mediterranean coast. Due to the east-west direction of the ground water flow, water extracted in Israel affects the supply of water available to Gaza. Surface water that could have been available from Wadi Gaza, which finds its origin in the Hebron Mountains, is closed off by a dam in Israel east of Gaza. With no other source of water available to them,

Palestinians have resorted to over-extraction of the aquifer, resulting in seawater infiltration. In addition, lack of maintenance of the sewage system leads to sewage infiltration into the aquifer. Some 90-95% of Gaza's water is currently polluted and unfit for human consumption ((Amnesty International, 2009). Cropping patterns have changed in some areas of the Gaza strip as a result of low water quality. This has caused further poverty among farming communities.

Israel continues to maintain physical or de facto control over all of the Palestinian Territory's land borders, coastline, airspace and electromagnetic spectrum. The destruction of the Gaza sea- and airports and continued blocking of their reconstruction since then has rendered the Palestinian Territory "a de facto land-locked territory". All movements of persons and goods can therefore be made only via Egypt (highly limited now as well) and Israel and remains subject to restrictive, costly and volatile regulations. Participation in the international workforce is similarly restricted. Meanwhile, the blockade on Gaza has entered its eighth year. As consistently mentioned in several World Bank Reports over the last years Israeli access restrictions are considered the major impediment to Palestinian economic growth and development (World Bank, 2009, 2014).

Control over Movement

Since the Oslo Accords and the establishment of the PA in 1993, Israel has consolidated a comprehensive system of physical barriers and permits cementing the separation, isolation and fragmentation of the Palestinian population. Palestinians civil jurisdiction remains limited to the Gaza Strip and less than 40% of the West Bank. Israel has completely closed off over 60 % of West Bank land, primarily in Area C, to Palestinians (PCWG, 2010). In Gaza, Israel enforces a "buffer zone" (a military access restricted area), which has cut off Palestinian access to up to 17% of the Strip (35% of Gaza's agricultural land) (OCHA/WFP, 2010; Save the Children 2009) and 70-85% of the offshore fishing limit agreed in the Oslo Accords (Oxfam, 2014: 6). The construction of the 350 km long Separation Wall, beginning in 2002, and the associated regime of movement restrictions², as well as Israel's unilateral disengagement in 2005 from the Gaza Strip have led to unprecedented levels of separation not only between the Palestinian Territory and Israel but also between the Gaza Strip, East Jerusalem and the remainder of the West Bank.

Moreover, according to some observers, the Protocol not only served to hinder Palestinian trade and increase Palestinian dependence on Israeli imports and the Israeli market, but also fostered a monopolisation of trade in the hands of political-economic elites on the Palestinian side (Bouillon 2004, Turner 2014), marginalizing ordinary Palestinians and small- to-medium enterprises, which constitute over 90% of Palestinian enterprises in the Palestinian Territory (Bank of Palestine, Jan 2015: 24). This in turn has pushed up consumer prices and contributed to increasing economic disparities within Palestinian communities in the Palestinian Territory (UNCTAD in Bouillon, 2004: 92).

More broadly, analysts argue that while the customs union created after Oslo may appear to be simply a trade arrangement, this arrangement "was and remains key to Israel's containment of the Palestinian Territory, a strategy in which Israel refuses to accept Palestinian sovereignty, its access to its natural resources or to recognize their human rights in other final status arrangements, such as a single bi-national state" (Ahmad 2014: 1; UNCTAD, 2011). In this analysis, the union reflects a political rather than economic strategy, designed to "perennially" contain the Palestinian population both geographically and developmentally by continued postponement of defining national borders, an arrangement that "will persist so long as Israel's interest in maintaining what

²In 2012 OCHA counted 540 Israeli-controlled checkpoints, barriers and gates, 73 agricultural gates in the Separation Wall, and over 400 "flying" ad-hoc checkpoints deployed on average every month (OCHA Sep 2012: 32)

could be termed 'strategically absent' borders persists (Ahmad, 2014: 4)."

Settlement Expansion

Movement and access restrictions are intimately connected to the continued expansion of Israeli settlements and the network of roads serving them. As a special report by OCHA notes most of the movement restrictions imposed on Palestinians "are related, in one way or another, to the Israeli settlements established in contravention of international law. This includes restrictions aimed at protecting the settlements, securing areas for their expansion, and improving the connectivity between settlements and with Israel itself (OCHA Sep 2012: 2)." Within the complex matrix through which the Palestinian population is "contained" by the Separation Wall, separate road systems, a pervasive permit system and a highly restrictive planning regime, the confiscation of land, expropriation of water and other natural resources, the destruction of homes, basic infrastructure, agricultural land and economic enterprises, and forced displacement all remain a persistent reality for Palestinians. These same actions ensure that Israeli settlement population expands and thrives.

While Israel's settlements in the Gaza Strip were dismantled in August 2005, Israeli settlements in the West Bank continue to expand despite Israeli commitments under the Road Map and at Annapolis (2007). According to a 2014 World Bank report, settlement areas grew by 35% between 2000 and 2011 alone in the West Bank (Niksic, Nasser, Eddin and Cali, 2014: 13) with the actual territory controlled by settlement enterprises extending to 68% of Area C and more than 42% of the land in the West Bank; one-fifth of the land occupied by settlements is built on private Palestinian land (Oxfam, 2013: 1).

Internal political conflict

Internal political conflict has mired the development of a national developmental vision for Palestine. The National Government in Gaza is neglected by donors and international agencies. Planning for the agricultural sector and assessing its needs is done by international NGOs. Palestine lacks institutional frames where the role of national and international institutions are well defined and correctly practiced. Unified national strategies to make optimal use of the available national resources are missing.

4 Findings

Relevance of the Programme

Programme Outline

The programme aims to contribute to two strategic goals formulated in the NRO Multi-Annual Strategic Plan 2014-2017 as:

1. Sustainable increase in food production to the benefit of the Palestinian people through (1.1) improved access to and use of land and water for food production, and (1.2) improved agricultural productivity of existing Palestinian farmlands; and
2. Improved access to markets for Palestinian farmers through (2.1) increased competitiveness of agricultural products and (2.2) improved institutional capacity of the PA for service delivery to the agricultural sector.

This leads to the following outputs which the NRO aims to achieve:

- 1.1 Increased availability and use of land and water for food production;
- 1.2 Higher yields of horticultural crops produced by agricultural cooperatives;
- 2.1 Improved quality and marketability of Palestinian horticultural products;
- 2.2 PA institutions capacitated to implement the WTO sanitary and phytosanitary standards (SPS).

Cross cutting issues for each of the objectives are gender mainstreaming and environmental sustainability. Through this programme the NRO aims to build upon the results achieved in the past, but at the same time allow for the new "Aid, trade and investment" approach of the Dutch Government, the Palestinian National Development Plan, the Agriculture Sector Strategy and the recently released Palestinian Economic Initiative. The four projects funded under these objectives complement each other and respond to needs identified by the NRO in close collaboration with the Agriculture Sector Working Group, composed of various donor countries. The Land & Water Resource Management (L&WRM) Project addresses the first output; the Gaza Buffer Zone Project focuses on the second output, along with the HVC project, which also seeks to improve the quality and marketability of Palestinian horticultural products. The Sanitary and Phytosanitary Standards Project (SPS) addresses the last output.

In relation to the context described in the previous chapter, a programme can be designed to simply cope with the status quo and make the best of it; or it can be designed to challenge this *matrix of control*, and explore ways to counter its objectives of economic and political marginalization. As observed by the MTR Team there are elements of both.

L&WRM Project

While the L&WRM project builds upon a longstanding tradition of land reclamation in Palestine, activities seem to align with the second strategy. By terracing land, opening access roads, and providing irrigation networks infrastructure it aims to strengthen internal economic resilience. According to the guidelines adopted by the Agriculture Sector Working Group interventions ought to be founded upon a community-based approach, focusing on larger geographical areas with donors providing funding for the heavy work, while farmers commit themselves to follow up with productive activities on their land. This general strategy is approached in different ways across the West Bank. In areas such as Halhoul (Hebron) the primary objective appears to be to protect

Palestinian land from further confiscation by terracing an entire mountain in the direct vicinity of Israeli settlements. Such protection may be justifiable, and is very much in line with the strategy outlined above, although its effectiveness can be questioned. However, it may not necessarily be the best way to increase the livelihoods and resilience of local communities, as this geographic choice disproportionately benefits a limited number of families (land belonging to one extended family often being located in the same area). There are other examples, for instance in Nazleh Shaqieh , where a number of different but complementary activities (such as access roads, improvement of the water well pumping capacity, investments in agricultural water networks with the members of the local farmer association) triggered further investments in terracing and land rehabilitation. Although this was partly designed and partly created by farmers seizing the new opportunities that presented themselves, it seems to be the kind of concerted efforts at a watershed or sub-watershed (catchment) level that may be the most effective in both increasing food production and consolidating land for Palestinian use. The design might have been even stronger if it included support to farmer associations in crop production and its local marketing, and structured efforts to strengthen their organizational capabilities and political voice.

HVC Project

The HVC project was developed as a follow-up to two earlier projects funded by NRO. It targets the same beneficiaries and its approach is based on the previous model. Through stakeholder workshops in WB and Gaza priorities have been identified.

The project focuses on the consolidation of Good Agricultural Practices of High Value Crop farmers (mainly greenhouse production) in the West Bank and Gaza and the marketing of the produce. The farmer dependency on inputs created by the earlier projects is partly addressed through a clear phase-out of input support. The marketing component, and to a certain extent also the food processing component implemented with women's cooperatives, is an attempt at addressing the value chain, although the effort is partial and has not been preceded by a full-fledged value chain analysis. The latter would have allowed the project to take into account features that were noted in the proposal, but not really addressed in the project design (e.g. the risks associated with the choice of crops meant for export rather than the domestic market).

A more thorough assessment of environmental impact might have led to a different approach altogether. Whereas it is true that the improved agricultural practices compare favourably to common HVC production, the methods taught are still mainly conventional³ and include the use of chemicals that spread into the already vulnerable and polluted aquifers.

In addition, with these products scarce fresh water is (indirectly) exported, which might have been used differently and in ways that benefit the Palestinians more⁴. It is a fundamental question that requires reflection about the cost and benefit of different products and production methods, that needs to take into account the fact that because of the required capital investments HVC production is rarely accessible to small farmers and that further strengthening the better off farmers increases their power to compete over natural resources with their poorer colleagues.

Important questions can also be raised about the rationality of a strong focus on the export niche market for high value crops. Export from Gaza and the West Bank is subjected to important trade and physical restrictions by Israel, that create risks for profit margins and the quality of the mostly

³With the exception of certain Integrated Pest Management techniques and the use of bumblebees for pollination.

⁴E.g. the production of strawberries, which are not part of the common food pattern and not affordable for less privileged Palestinians, requires 1000 m³ of water per dunum per season. It thus competes with the production of basic foodstuffs.

perishable products, if not pure losses. Moreover, the intermediary benefits accrue for a substantial part to Israeli middlemen (for transportation, further processing, shipping, customs clearance, etc). Terms of trade for Palestinian export producers are therefore quite unfavourable. While the Netherlands' efforts to facilitate such exports with Israeli Authorities are laudable, they are not likely to lead to more equal trade relations with Palestine. A conscious choice for developing a strong internal agricultural market would probably have had higher impact, and given better prospects for sustainability⁵. The current choice of crops shows that profitability and marketability have not been sufficiently taken into account.

Gaza Buffer Zone Project In Gaza, the Buffer Zone project has focused on a highly marginalised Bedouin community with very few access rights to land and other resources. Through a selection process led by the municipality the most vulnerable were targeted for participation⁶. Two dunums of reclaimed land were offered to each selected family on the basis of a renewable annual contract of 50 USD of rent per dunum. Necessary inputs for cultivating the land were procured and distributed among beneficiaries (in conjunction with the training activities). These included compost, irrigation systems, seedlings and tools.

Facilitating access to land is relevant; supporting these communities in land use that is not in their practice and culture⁷ may, however, not be the most effective way to capitalize on such access to land. The investments made for agricultural production (wells, levelling, irrigation) do not seem supported by a sufficient level of capacity building. While pulling these communities in Gaza out of their marginalized social and economic position is urgent, other strategies may be more in line with of the Bedouin life style, and therefore more effective, such as supporting them in dairy and meat production, or the production of fodder with use of the treated waste water from the plant in the adjacent village.

SPS Project The last project in the Netherlands Food Security Programme aims to create the environment necessary to come to phytosanitary and food safety standards that are internationally recognized. This effort is complementary to the other efforts to increase the quality of high value crops and serves to improve local, regional and international market access of Palestinian agricultural products. This is of course relevant and a good step towards a viable agricultural development policy, and in line with the national agricultural strategies of 2012-2014 and 2015-2017. Difficulties arising from the fact that Palestine is ruled by two governments that make adaptations to the legal framework differently, and by decree, are adequately being addressed by the project.

Gender Components The NRO acknowledges women's significant contribution to the rural economy through household food production, farming and the care of small ruminants. At the same time it is aware that they often have less access to factors of production such as capital, knowledge and land. By mainstreaming gender in its food security portfolio, the NRO aims to upgrade the role of women in the agricultural sector, both in qualitative and in quantitative terms.

All projects, with the exception of the SPS project, have a gender component or seek to include female beneficiaries. The L&WRM project targets 2-11% female land owners (depending on the intervention); the Gaza Buffer Zone project sought to benefit 24 women; for both the

⁵The added value of good agricultural practices can be used in the local market, as the demand for "safe products" can push up the prices. This will help to further disseminate the safe agricultural practices among local farmers.

⁶ Although for lack of a beneficiary data base the extent to which this process has been successful cannot be verified.

⁷ In fact, by many Bedouin communities agricultural practices are considered taboo and beneath their dignity. Such aspects of culture need to be thoroughly investigated and taken into account in project design.

interventions were aimed at mainly female headed households. If indeed, as mentioned in the HVC project document, agriculture provides employment to 22% of the female workforce, one would assume that there is a lot more potential to build the knowledge and livelihoods of female farmers. The HVC project does not specifically target female farmers for high value cropping, but focuses on food processing and marketing by women cooperatives. These cooperatives are in most cases urban based and only loosely connected to the HVC producers, if at all. Positive elements of this approach are the objective to achieve ISO certification for these food processing units and the focus on business plans and marketing. On the other hand, training and investments are minimal in comparison to the investments made in HVC farming. The choice for urban charitable organisations is not explained and unlikely lead to the empowerment of food insecure women in the West Bank.

In spite of UAWC's reported experience in women's empowerment, the latter's involvement as stakeholders and beneficiaries is only marginal and cannot be expected to lead to significant results. True gender mainstreaming requires a thorough analysis of the interests, possibilities and constraints of both men *and* women and implementation strategies that fit the needs of both. It also necessitates good knowledge of gender sensitive approaches among office and field based staff, and the presence of female field trainers and extension officers. A Ramallah based gender specialist is useful, but not in itself sufficient.

Out of the total project budget of 20 million USD, slightly over 100,000 USD, or 0.5%, is spent on gender mainstreaming; this is insignificant in the light of the objective to be achieved, and the role of women in agriculture.

Relation to Food Security

A general observation on relevance concerns the overall goal of food security of the programme. In its 2014-2017 Multi-Annual Strategic Plan (Multi-Annual Strategic Plan 2014-2017, 2014, p. 13) the NRO refers to the Socio-Economic and Food Security Survey, which defines Food Security as "physical and economic access for all people at all times to sufficient, safe, and nutritious food that meets their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life" (PCBS, 2014). According to this definition, food security is as much about the income to purchase food, as the physical access to food which is sufficient in quantity, nutritious and safe to consume. At the micro level, this means purchasing power (which is about the relation between income and prices), access to markets and availability of the right products in those markets. At the macro level it means that food needs to be available to the population in sufficient quantity and quality, and against affordable prices.

Improving food security therefore can include a broad range of possible actions, some more likely to benefit selected individuals, others impacting society as a whole. It is not necessarily related to the *production* of food, as long as food is available in the market. Interventions might focus on employment creation; lobby for lower consumer prices, equitable and inclusive policies, or for improved terms of trade for Palestinians in the face of Israeli occupation. The rationale for the focus on agriculture as described in the NRO MASP is its share in the economy (6% in 2012; MASP p 13) and its potential for growth through improved efficiency and enhanced infrastructure. The question is whether interventions related to agricultural development such as designed in the HVC and the L&WRD projects are the best strategy to contribute to food security in Palestine.

Strategies focused on export will benefit only the direct beneficiaries, i.e. mainly middle, and a few small income farmers. Although the programme aims to improve food security, the most food insecure people are unlikely to gain from these projects unless food stuffs become available to them against lower prices, or same price but better quality. The high value crops produced under

the HVC project are in most cases quite far removed from common consumption patterns (fresh herbs, **strawberries**, pineapples, cherry tomatoes, cut flowers, carambola, etc.) and therefore not likely to reach low income families. Although the project is slowly shifting away from above products to products that are more essential for poor people (tomatoes, peppers, cucumbers and other vegetables), much more effort is still necessary at the expense of current budgets for export production. Diversifying crop choices, as enhanced now by the project is considered a positive move of the HVC project as, indeed, this can contribute to more sustainable farming systems and more profitability for traditional HVCs sold in local markets.

Although in essence agricultural development projects to strengthen the local economy are important for both Gaza and the West Bank, it may be more relevant for such programmes to focus on the domestic market: there would be less risk involved, more people would benefit and the use of scarce resources would accrue to local consumption. At the same time, when working with middle income farmers 'strengthening livelihoods' appears to be a more fitting objective for the Netherlands' programme than 'increasing food security'. And finally, the relation between food security and food safety could be further investigated, which would strengthen the link between the SPS project and the strategic outcomes of the NRO programme.

Quality of the Theory of Change

A Theory of Change approach allows strategies to be designed in relation to the context, and challenges to be better predicted and avoided by describing explicitly how change will happen. It also provides focus by formulating results as changes that the programme expects or wishes to see in actors (e.g. "farmers in the HVC sector grow high quality crops against competitive prices"). If well done, it helps a programme to be more effective and efficient, and its results to be more sustainable.

When looking at the NRO Food Security Programme as a whole, the mission notes that the MASP as well as the project documents provide narratives that describe the choice of projects and interventions, but do not describe the details of how change will be effectuated. Choices appear to be inspired by previous choices rather than a systematic investigation of the strategies that are most likely to contribute to improved food security. Although the logical frameworks are clearly structured, results tend to be formulated as actions (e.g. "enhance", "improve", "reduce"), while in most cases the stakeholders responsible for the actions are not identified. Interestingly, the risks associated with the political insecurity and the previously mentioned Israeli matrix of control are mentioned, and even labelled as 'high risk' and 'high impact' (e.g. in the HVC project document and in the MASP (p21), but this has not visibly led to strategy adaptations.

The process of selection of partners

Four out of five⁸ of the current NRO food security projects have been contracted to FAO; only two out of the five have been tendered. One of the tendered projects was won by UAWC. While agriculture is FAO's core business, in Palestine it operates under the particular circumstance of an office that is specialised in humanitarian work and has only fairly recently (since 2006) engaged in developmental approaches. Since Palestine is not (yet) a member of FAO, the office receives no institutional funding from Rome and needs to cover all expenses through projects. The latter makes FAO in the oPT more expensive than elsewhere; the first makes it less experienced in sustainable development, although it benefits from technical support from its headquarter staff. Of the four projects contracted to FAO, the SPS project is closest to the mandate and expertise of a UN organisation through its focus on policy change and technical capacity building at

⁸ A fifth project started late 2014 under the title of Agri Wells, contracted to FAO for nearly 2.5 million USD. As the project had only just been launched it is not formally included in this review.

government level. The potential comparative advantage of an organisation like UAWC is its extensive experience in field operations, for which a UN organisation, by virtue of its mandate and structure is less suited. Irrespective of cost and performance though, contracting 80% of a portfolio to one party may not be in the best interest of the NRO, in particular when no tendering process has taken place.

For two projects alliances were formed. The HVC project works with UAWC for its experience in community development, Mount of Green Olives for its marketing experience and Asala for its experience with women cooperatives. While sub-contracting by FAO to national NGOs allows bringing down the cost, the cost of involvement of an international agency affects the number of staff that can be made available in the field. The L&WRM project works with the Land and Research Center (LRC), which brings its experience with GIS databases, ESDC (Economic and Social Development Center of Palestine), which is experienced in land reclamation and civil society empowerment, and the Palestinian Hydrology Group (PHG) which contributes its experience in water works.

Observations on the choice of cooperatives

The HVC project has chosen to work with cooperatives to further the development of HVC production and marketing. As in many other countries the cooperative movement has been subject to important criticism and has gone through positive and negative developments. In the West Bank this is compounded by a strong political dimension where the political left-leaning NGOs that were established towards the late 1980s considered many of the then existing cooperatives as too much subjected to Jordanian political influences. Indeed many of the older generation of agricultural cooperatives, the larger ones and probably more representative of the farmer grass root environment, were established with important financial support from the Jordanian government, when the West Bank fell under Jordanian authority before and after the 1967 occupation. The political influence that has been exercised by Jordan in that period started to vanish after the 1988 disengagement resolution between Jordan and the PLO concerning claims on the West Bank (occupied by Israel)⁹. While that is now more than 35 to 50 years ago, the political argument is still used by the large NGOs as a disqualifier, in spite of many other political events that have happened in the meantime.

The NGO movement from Oslo onwards has gained importance and is dominating other civil society organisations, thanks, among other reasons, to a donor community that had other vested interests (Hilal and Khan, 2004; Hanafi and Tabar; 2004; Turner, 2014). Small farmer associations were set-up by these NGOs and then transformed into cooperatives or societies¹⁰, with often no more than 20 to 35 members, many not registered under the cooperative law of the Ministry of Labour. This has led to an important weakening and marginalisation of the older cooperatives, notably in the olive oil sector, and which were in many cases more representative of the agricultural communities than the NGOs. Another consequence is the disastrous fragmentation of cooperative strength: many small cooperatives (and even unions) are now competing with each other and lack the leverage to influence agricultural policies, prices, tax systems and market strategies. If the HVC project had chosen to work with the larger cooperatives and the cooperative

⁹In Algiers, 1974, a decision was made by the League of Arab States (LAS) to recognize the PLO as the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people in and outside the occupied territories. This decision was further confirmed by the LAS in an Arab Summit meeting in Cairo in 1987. Following this decision, King Hussein of Jordan decided in 1988 that Jordan would formally disengage from, and renounce its claims on the West Bank, and recognise those of the PLO, which in essence meant acknowledgement of the right of the Palestinian people to their land.

¹⁰The difference lies in their registration. Many of the smaller associations have not officially been registered as cooperatives.

union, this would have considerably increased its ability to organize valid marketing positions for farmers and highly needed credit facilities.

The situation in Gaza is different, since cooperatives there are not linked to Jordan and were locally established. Some were created to serve a group of farmers with a specific cropping system such as cash crops (e.g. the strawberry farmers' cooperative and the Beit Hanoun Cooperative). Although these are legitimate representatives of the farmers, these cooperatives lack technical capacity and resources. To ensure sustainability of the designed activities, substantial investment in the capacity building of these cooperatives is required.

Relevance of the programme to the policy context & stakeholder involvement

The programme is well aligned with the National Agriculture Sector Strategy 2014-2016, the development of which was led by FAO, with input from many different stakeholders. The (sub) objectives that apply in particular are the following:

- Reclamation and rehabilitation of agricultural land and agricultural roads construction, particularly in mountains and in Area C (L&WRM)
- Intensification & diversification of used agricultural patterns, encouragement of export and substitution crops, but not at the expense of major crops, and encouragement of urban farming (HVC)
- Improvement of the quality and competitiveness of local products (HVC)
- Supporting farmers affected by occupation practices legally and financially (Gaza Buffer Zone L&WRM)
- Completion and updating of the legal framework governing agricultural work (SPS)
- Improvement of the performance and efficiency of agricultural institutions (SPS)

National stakeholders have been consulted, and are part of the project steering committees. Particularly the SPS project, which was designed entirely with and for the line ministries (Agriculture, National Economy, Health) and key national institutions (Palestinian Standards Institute, the Consumer Protection Associations, and the Food Industry Board) works closely with each of these parties. Local authorities are even more involved, especially in the L&WRM and Gaza Buffer Zone projects, in which village councils and municipalities played a key role in the setting of priorities, co-funding and execution of the interventions.

As much as the involvement of local authorities is needed and appreciated, it can also be problematic in areas where municipalities are dominated by a particular political affiliation. Given the short duration of the field mission it was hard to estimate to what extent the stakeholders that were consulted were representative of the population and to what extent minorities were served by the projects.

It is clear though that the projects have been organised around a predominantly male perspective, even though in some cases women were invited to participate in the meetings with the men (settings in which cultural expectations make it difficult for them to express their views). Given the fact that food security concerns both sexes in equal measure, this aspect of the programme needs rethinking. It is also clear that the focus is more on middle income farmers, which -as mentioned above- has consequences for the programme's relation to food security.

Relevance and quality of the indicators

All projects have logical frameworks and indicators linked to the various result levels. On the whole, indicators related to straightforward technical interventions tend to be well formulated and measurable. An example of a more complex indicator is: "a GIS/RS unit with geo-database (GIS/RS layers) is functional, hosted and managed at the MoA" (L&WRM Project). This can be a very good indicator, provided that it is further defined (e.g. how can functionality be determined?)

Does this indicator include milestones, or is it a simple yes/no indicator?).

An example of a less well formulated indicator is the following: "Percentage of targeted families who report having increased access to food security" (L&WRM Project). This indicator requires careful definition of food security at the family level, a description of the linkage between project interventions and increased food security, the method of "reporting" needs to be determined, and it requires at least a baseline and end line measurement. While the idea of measuring the project's contribution to food security is of course justified, it would be more informative to differentiate between micro and macro level food security, and perhaps limit the household level to "additional income derived from reclaimed land". The impact of agricultural roads and water provisions would be interesting, but difficult to measure and requires a refined tool. At the macro level the increase in food stuffs from the project intervention areas sold at the domestic market might be a relevant indicator, although this also requires careful monitoring.

A similar effort was formulated in the logical framework of the Gaza Buffer Zone Project through the following indicator: "Income received by beneficiaries when marketing their produce". While relevant, "income" needs further definition (is this benefit, or sales price?) and again, a refined instrument is necessary, as well as a system for the farmers to keep track of their sales and production cost (farm records). Perhaps because of this complexity this indicator was never informed.

In some cases indicators could not be well defined, because the results lacked specificity (see also the above section on the quality of the Theory of Change). E.g. Specific Objective 3 of the L&WRM Project reads: "Build the capacities and empower women and local civil society". It does not clearly identify the stakeholders (which women, who is meant by civil society?) or the change: which capacities need to be built? In what sense do the stakeholders need to be empowered? Inevitably an indicator like "Percentage of women participating in agriculture cooperation" will not provide relevant information without more specification.

Only the HVC and the L&WRM projects have developed data bases to keep track of beneficiary data and project implementation. The HVC project has baseline beneficiary data, which have not yet been updated, although the aim is to inform the indicators on an annual basis. It also keeps a crop based data base, which keeps track of the productivity and production of the participating farmers per locality. The gap here is individual production and marketing data per farmer, which would give a sense of their (increased) capacity to compete. The L&WRM Project keeps a detailed database in which project implementation is tracked on a monthly basis. While activity related indicators are closely monitored, the project appears to be challenged when it comes to outcome indicators, for which neither baseline nor current information is provided. This may be related to the above mentioned issues of indicator definition.

The design of a good monitoring system requires a great deal of reflection on the purpose of the monitoring (upward or downward accountability, learning, etc.), the information that is needed, the amount of information that can be collected and processed, and the process of data collection, in addition to careful indicator definition and the development of tools. It is as important to decide what is *not* needed, as it is to determine what is. The efforts that have been made so far enable the project staff to a certain extent to track implementation, but a further refining would be needed to enable learning and the documentation of the projects' contributions towards outcomes. Additionally, including a number of project management indicators would help the NRO in monitoring the programme.

Effectiveness

Programme beneficiaries

The SPS project by virtue of its nature has no direct beneficiaries. According to its final report, the Gaza Buffer Zone Project benefitted 125 families with 2 dunums of land¹¹(to be rented from the municipality against the annual sum of 50 USD per dunum), and 310 persons participated in the agricultural training. Because a beneficiary database for the project was not available, the MTR mission cannot assess the ratio of male/female beneficiaries and their income levels. After the project was completed the land was cultivated with mostly capital intensive production methods, involving drip irrigation and sprinklers, which without support would not have been accessible to the neediest families (the project target group). Farmers who were working the land during our visit suggested that about 60% of the land was rented to farmers from neighbouring villages against the annual sum of 200 Jordanian Dinar (approximately 282 USD). Other land was worked by Bedouins, but regrouped into larger parcels, possibly also through a system of renting. Although by renting the participating families do benefit somewhat (assuming that the rent is paid to them and not to the municipality who owns it), the value of the land was most likely underestimated, as a result of which the original target group gains very little from the asset that was made available to them. This result again raises questions about the project's underlying assumption that livestock owners could be turned into farmers through short term training. An approach that would more intensively involve beneficiaries in the design might have produced a project that would enable the population to combine the availability of land with small livestock and fodder production, or by renting the land in a way that would generate more profit.



Farmers from Beit Lahia in Um An Nasser: drip irrigation, sprinklers and fields covering 6-8 dunums, rented for 200 JD/dunum annually.



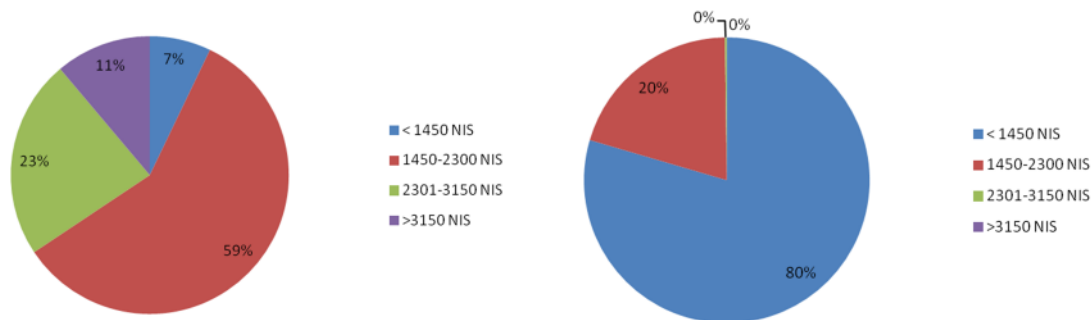
8 dunums of land cultivated by 4 brothers from Um An Nasser involving the use of sprinklers.

The HVC project keeps a beneficiary database which lists 997 beneficiaries¹², among whom 27 women (3%). Of these women farmers 24 are Gaza based; the West Bank list counts 3 women. For the work done by the project with women's cooperatives no beneficiary records are kept, although the report mentions 279 women supported through project services.

An analysis of the estimated farmers' incomes reveals that the Gaza farmers are significantly poorer than the West Bank farmers.

¹¹ Although some of the beneficiaries met during field work acknowledged having received more than 2 dunums.

¹² The 2014 annual report mentions 1,279 participating farmers (p10).



Income Levels HVC Beneficiaries West Bank (N=547)

Income Levels HVC Beneficiaries Gaza Strip (N=450)

In 2012 1450 NIS (\$377) was established as the minimum wage in Palestine; 2300 NIS (\$597) represents the National Poverty line, below which a household averaging 6 persons cannot meet all its basic requirements (food, shelter, clothing, the cost of schooling, and medical expenses)¹³. The charts show that the estimated farmers' incomes in Gaza are nearly all below the poverty line, while 41% of the West Bank incomes are above that level. For most of the beneficiaries farming is their main source of income. However, the Qalqilia recipients of project support show a deviation from this pattern: 33 out of 84 beneficiaries derive 50% or less of their income from farming and 22 of these are in the highest income category. The project documents provide no explanation as to why these farmers were targeted, other than that most were also beneficiaries under the two previous HVC projects.

The L&WRM project has shared a database with the MRT, which is more output focused than beneficiary oriented. Participating farmers are counted, but not identified, which does not enable the reader to tell to what extent they benefit from one or several services (e.g. agricultural roads and land reclamation), and consequently, to what extent the numbers should be added up. All interventions are strongly focused on male household representatives; depending on the type of service 2-11% of the beneficiaries are women (mainly belonging to female headed households).

Agricultural roads by:	F	M	Total	Land reclamation by:	F	M	Total
ESDC	147	2351	2498	ESDC	3	16	19
UAWC	367	2377	2744	UAWC	24	187	211
LRC	24	445	469	LRC	3	39	42
TOTAL	538	5173	5711	TOTAL	30	242	272
%	9%	91%	100%	%	11%	89%	100%

Water works by PHG:	F	M	Total
Irrigation networks and Supply Pipes	8	379	387
Artificial Recharge Well	0	24	24
Solar Energy & 400M of steel irrigation pipes	0	30	30
TOTAL	8	433	441
%	2%	98%	100%

The focus group discussions learned that the degree to which beneficiaries of the L&WRM project

¹³ When the minimum wage was set in 2012 by the Palestinian Authority, civilians objected that this amount was significantly below the poverty line (Miller, Times of Israel, October 9th 2012).

were involved in farming varied across the project implementation areas: while, for example, in Nazleh Shaqieh or in the Jenin area people were heavily dependent on farming, in Hebron many beneficiaries derived their primary income from salaried jobs. Although land was successfully reclaimed in that area, and it clearly served the underlying political purpose of preserving Palestinian land rights, the link to food security is not strong there. The process of beneficiary selection did involve local stakeholders, but it was more area focused than stakeholder oriented (the strategy was to claim an entire mountain, rather than scattered plots). Because of traditional inheritance patterns some families that had adjacent plots benefitted a lot, whereas it remains unclear who did not get to participate in the project and on what grounds. Participation did require a certain level of investment (in the terracing, but also in subsequent crop growing), which made it less accessible to the poorest.

Factors contributing to progress or delay

An important factor contributing to progress is the sense of ownership of the various projects by local stakeholders. This applies in particular to the L&WRM project, which benefits from considerable buy-in by village councils and municipalities, in addition to the project beneficiaries. Local authorities work in close collaboration with the project staff for the realisation of agricultural roads, and contribute from their own resources even though this is officially not part of their mandate. With the HVC project this sense of ownership appears to lie more with the individual farmers. Greatly appreciated everywhere, but in particular in Gaza, is the capacity building in Good Agricultural Practices (GAP). While the mission heard mixed opinions about the value added of Global GAP Certification (which is meant for export and entails a cost), the knowledge about the right use of fertilizers, pesticides and water was welcomed by all. Gaza farmers are very much aware of the precariousness of their ecosystem and the water pollution due to the use of chemicals. As much as the farmers, consumers in Gaza, and to a lesser extent West Bank, appear to care about safe and home grown products. It may very well be that there is potential to further exploit this in the domestic marketing of high value crops.

Delays and unforeseen expenses are caused in the first place by Israeli stop work orders and confiscations. The L&WRM project so far faced three of these, causing each between one and two months of delay, several thousands of USD to be paid in penalties each time and over 100,000 USD of lost income to the contractors. Israeli authorities also create obstacles and delays for the export of crops, sometimes leading to the complete loss of (perishable) crops. The Gaza Buffer Zone project was belated by 6 months at the start, as it had to wait for Israeli approval for the land reclamation. In addition, Gaza was badly affected by a big storm in the winter of 2013, causing major damage to the infrastructure created in Um An Nasser, and again by the July 2014 war, which led to a loss of crops and infrastructure of both Um An Nasser and HVC farmers throughout Gaza. The estimated damage amounted to 1,770,000 USD for the HVC farmers¹⁴. The Gaza Buffer Zone project also suffered from the halting of sand excavation by the Ministry of National Economy, as a result of which the third and last phase of the project could not be implemented. The SPS project had a slow start, because the creation of partnerships between the various national stakeholders involved took much longer than foreseen. Another factor causing delays for this project was the difficulty of communication between the West Bank and Gaza and the impediment for the project's legal advisor to travel to Gaza during the research on existing legal and policy provisions. This is an issue not just related to the travel restrictions between Gaza and the West Bank, but also to the staffing profile of the project: all senior staff is West Bank based. Hiring senior staff in Gaza would solve the

¹⁴ The NRO provided extra funding to repair the damages (841,000 USD).

issue.

Contribution of the programme to its outputs

The table below provides an estimate of the extent to which the programme interventions are leading towards the intended outputs. The Gaza Buffer Zone project being the only project that has phased out, for most of the programme only trends can be established at this point. Please refer to Figure 1 for a complete overview of the NRO programme's result chain as derived from the logical frameworks and the MASP 2014-2017.

300 dunums of reclaimed land are being used to grow fruit & vegetables (Gaza Buffer Zone)

In total 258 dunums of land were reclaimed for crop cultivation and 21 dunums were made into agricultural roads. This is 42 + 9 dunums short of the original target, due to the fact that the Ministry of National Economy stopped excavating sand in the area. The area was provided with a well and drip irrigation. The well is not functioning, but FAO is trying to solve the issue with the contractor. Other wells exist in the area, although only one appears to be functional. The farmers complained that they could not grow water melon for lack of water.

Because of the reduced area of reclaimed land the final report states that 125 persons benefitted, instead of 150¹⁵. The surface is being used for vegetable and fruit production, though not necessarily by the target population; farmers from a neighbouring village who rented land from the Bedouins estimated that about 60% of all land was rented out against a price of 200 Jordanian Dinar per dunum per year.

150 beneficiaries of Bedouin origin have the knowledge & skills to make a living growing fruit & vegetables (Gaza Buffer Zone)

Following a needs assessment in Um An Nasser FAO decided to provide training to 310 persons instead of the original 150 targeted. A two-week training programme was provided by staff members from the Al Azhar University, Faculty of Agriculture & Environment. The programme focused on organic farming techniques, as the land had been bare long enough to be considered virgin and would not require chemicals to produce.

It is not clear¹⁶ how the doubling of the number of participants affected the training programme (was the budget enhanced, the programme shortened, the number of participants per session increased?) and if the quality of the programme could be maintained. The fact that a considerable proportion of the reclaimed land is not worked by the target population may point to an insufficient level of training, a lack of interest for vegetable growing or a combination of these.

Although extension services were foreseen in the project, the farmers interviewed claimed that none had been provided.

¹⁵As mentioned earlier, this could not be verified for lack of a database.

¹⁶The project final report does not provide information other than that pre- and post-training evaluations suggested that "all training groups enjoyed an increased knowledge of organic agriculture best practices" (p16). Project staff was no longer available to answer questions.

Priorities and a national phyto-sanitary work plan are established, prioritised and agreed with all stakeholders (SPS)

Upon the establishment of the various joint stakeholder committees the project carried out an extensive self-evaluation of the existing phyto-sanitary capacity. Based on identified weaknesses and opportunities a National Phyto-Sanitary Action Plan was drafted, which at the time of the field mission had been submitted for validation to the MoA. Only a small portion of the recommended actions listed in the plan will be funded through this project, but priorities now being decided upon, other donors already started proposing their support. At the same time, a legal study was performed to support the process of harmonization of the laws and policies with respect plant health.

Strengthened capacity for developing and implementing a sustainable strategic SPS-related Food Safety Plan (SPS)

A similar study was carried out in the area of food safety. Difficulties encountered are that recent legislation in Gaza may be different from the West Bank because of the two-government situation, and that the PA has no authority over agriculture in all of Area C. Because of this complexity and the existing overlap in responsibilities between the various stakeholders (Ministry of Health, Ministry of Agriculture, Ministry of National Economy, etc.) the challenge is more institutional than technical, and requires a multi-stakeholder approach. This has led to delays compared to the original work plan, but a skeleton for the National Food Safety Strategy is now available. The need for the strengthening of competences was assessed and the actual capacity building is about to start.

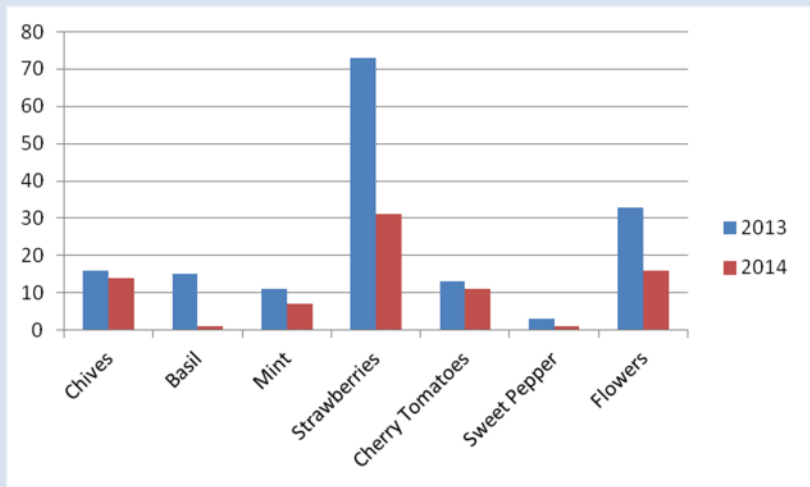
Enhance the HVC sector to increase its share in the domestic (import substitution) and international market (HVC)

To achieve this objective the HVC project provides training to farmers, MoA extension officers and selected farmers from the cooperatives, who have declared to be prepared to provide extension services to fellow members. In addition, it pilots new crops with the objective of increasing the farmers' marketing potential, it supports the Global GAP certification of cooperatives, and seeks to establish HVC marketing mechanisms.

The underlying assumption of the training of extension officers is that extension services will subsequently be provided. As far as the MoA extension is concerned, this does not (yet) appear to be the case: throughout the West Bank and the Gaza Strip farmers asserted that the only extension provided was by the project itself. Another assumption of the project is that the cooperatives will be able to hire the extension officers trained by the project, the feasibility of which seems doubtful in view of the size and the financial capacity of most of the project's cooperatives.

No figures are available to assess the share of the HVC sector in the domestic and international market, or the project's contribution towards that share. The only figures provided by the project that allow for comparison is the export of a number of crops from Gaza in two subsequent years. From 2013 to 2014 these figures show a net decline of 49% when comparing the same crops and 30% when

including the tomatoes and cucumbers that were added to the range in 2014.



Truckloads of HVC exported from Gaza in 2013 and 2014 (Source: Project Progress Reports)

The difference was caused mainly by the decreased export of strawberries and cut flowers. Possible reasons are the destruction of crops during the 2014 war, or the closing of borders as a result of that war, but farmers also mentioned that with reduced input subsidies the production of cut flowers and strawberries was no longer economically feasible.

A Gaza farmer of cherry tomatoes decided to destroy his crop, as the Israeli border was closed when it needed harvesting, and the local market price was lower than the cost of the labour necessary to harvest the crop.



Unmarketable cherry tomatoes in Gaza

This example and the figures above do not say much about the total volume of high value crops produced and marketed in Gaza or about West Bank production and marketing, but they confirm the mission's impression from focus group discussions with farmers that export involves many challenges and that the profitability of crops for which until recently input support was provided is yet to be demonstrated.

The potential impact of the project at both farm level and the level of the national economy is not being measured, as a result of which the adaptation of strategies remains approximate.

Improve the institutional performance & service delivery capacity of farmers' cooperatives (HVC)

The project concentrates a lot of effort on the capacity building of the cooperatives, mainly with respect to marketing. Training is provided, the cooperatives are supported with the development of business plans, and FAO facilitates exchange visits. Packaging houses built under the previous project have been equipped, cooling trucks have been ordered and a joint marketing company was created.

The company has thus far not been successful in export. Obstacles mentioned by cooperative board members are the monopoly of certain Palestinian traders, insufficient funds to enable export and to cover the running cost of the company, insufficient cooling capacity, and lack of insight into the Israeli market.

Interestingly, the project also provides technical support to a group of three farmers in Tammoun who started their own company for the production and marketing of fresh herbs. The three men grow herbs on 80 dunums and employ 25 persons in their packaging house. They manage to export their goods to Jordan, the Gulf, Germany and Russia. This thriving business was created without project support; the project stepped in only to assist the business men with their Global GAP certification. The farmers were supported to improve their production quality through training and extension. The ensuing certification has enabled them to access the EU markets.

Comparing the two, this company shows a vitality which appears to be missing entirely in the cooperatives that operate in the same area, with the same economic and political challenges. This might be reason for the project to reflect on the cooperative model and the best way of stimulating the marketing of crops.



An empty packaging house run by the cooperative in Tammoun



High productivity in the privately run packaging house in Tammoun

In spite of all efforts, service delivery in most cooperatives remains

limited thus far to the sale of farm inputs. Most do not have the leverage and the financial capacity to employ staff to provide extension or marketing services. It is difficult to predict to what extent the objective can be achieved, as the level of ambition is not expressed in its wording.

Reduce the detrimental impact on the environment of the HVC chain & optimise use of resources (HVC)

Most of the activities scheduled under this objective have not yet been implemented except for training on efficient water management and irrigation scheduling. The FAO has baseline data on average water use per location and per type of crop; these data have not yet been updated. Not much can be said therefore about the level of achievement of this objective, other than that the Good Agricultural Practices on which the farmers in this and the previous phases of the project have been extensively trained include efficient resource management.

Increase women’s involvement in the HVC chain by promoting production & marketing (HVC)

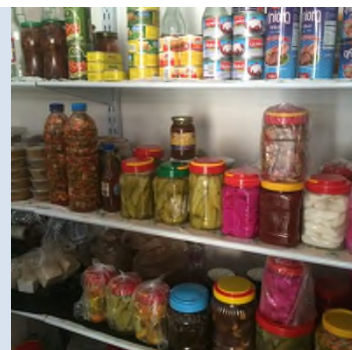
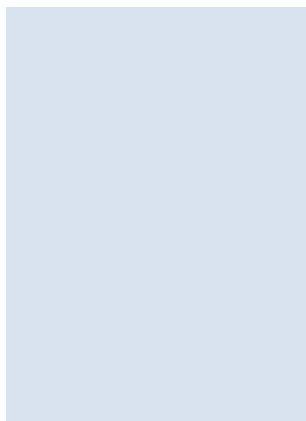
The women's associations included in the project benefitted from basic equipment, training on food processing and marketing, the development of business plans and visits to agricultural fairs. As mentioned earlier, these activities are not connected to the HVC production. In terms of funding this component is of little consequence: out of the total project budget of 8,125,759 USD, only around 160,000 USD is meant for this objective (less than 2%). The food processing observed by the MTR mission lacked imagination and professionalism, and was not economically feasible. Although the project interestingly aims for ISO certification, the equipment available in the work spaces is unlikely to meet the ISO standards. Business plans were developed, but the women participating in the focus group discussions were not able to explain their contents. The combination of all of these factors does not lead one to believe that this component will effectively increase women’s involvement in the HVC chain.



Traditional activities: thyme, pickles and cookies



Gas bottles in the kitchen



Pickles sold in used plastic bottles



Tomato paste: more professionally processed, but not economically feasible

Build a dynamic MoA database to support the development of agricultural resources (L&WRM)

The project has collected all data that need to feed into the database (coordinates of reclaimed land, agricultural roads and water works). The building of the database itself is about to start. The data will be supportive in the defence of Palestinian land rights.

Improve agricultural production to increase food security & income (L&WRM)

Even though the project is only mid way through implementation, improved and increased agricultural production can already be demonstrated in certain areas. The availability of roads and water has considerably increased the potential and the area under cultivation in for example Nazleh Shaqieh (private land reclamation generated by improved access to water), Jabat (from 100 to 1000 dunums under irrigation), and Tulkarm (300 dunums opened up through roads); the recharge wells in Marj Sanour in Jenin have enabled the cultivation of crops in the planting season in a previously flooded area. Production costs have been reduced through more efficient water consumption (payment per volume used instead of per hour) and the use of solar energy for pumping (e.g. Beit Hassan). As mentioned earlier, the impact on agricultural production in the short term may be less in Hebron, where the beneficiaries of land reclamation tend to derive their main income from salaried positions. However, land reclaimed in Halhoul will be planted with grapes which may provide more impact later as grape vines needs 3-5 years after planting to provide products.

As also stated earlier, the link with food security is complex. In its database UAWC has indicators such as "increase in the number of dunums of cultivated area in the targeted locations", and "increased production (in KG) from developed reclaimed area", but no information is provided in relation to these indicators so far. To assess the relation with food security the volume of additional produce sold on the domestic market needs to be established and changes in household consumption should be measured. The relation with increased income could be established by assessing the returns on the additional sale of crops.

Build the capacities & empower women & local civil society (L&WRM)

The objectives of this component are to empower women as change catalysts, and to train farmer collectives in participatory community development. The idea of the first part is interesting enough: to build the capacities of 10 women's CBOs in inheritance rights for women and lobby & advocacy techniques. The resources set aside to achieve this are extremely limited though: a total of 14,400 USD of the 12 million project budget, which will be used for 190 hours of training spread over 10 different groups (nearly 400 women to date), in addition to some TV spots and lectures. Neither the project document nor the progress report explains how this "empowerment" fits into the overall project strategy and what will be done with the knowledge acquired by the women. The activity is not really supported by the project, as women beneficiaries of the main project interventions are limited to female household heads and make up only 2-11% of the participating farmers, depending on the type of intervention (see also the tables on page 24).

The second part of this component appears to be more integrated: the aim is to involve the community organisations in project management and train them on the various aspects thereof. The acquired skills are to be directly applied in the project implementation. It is also more supported budget-wise with 108,000 USD, although the amount is still limited considering the great number of project locations and the need to strengthen community resilience in the face of the Israeli "matrix of control".

Contribution of the programme to its outcomes

As mentioned above, for most of the programme it is still early to assess the contribution of the programme to its outcomes. The Gaza Buffer Zone project having phased out it is possible to gauge its effect to some extent, although the challenge here is the lack of documentation of project results. For the other projects we have sought to identify trends.

150 Bedouin families in Umm al-Nasser Village improve their income by an average of \$2,000/year (Gaza Buffer Zone)

The project served 125 families instead of 150 because of the difficulties with land reclamation as explained earlier. No data¹⁷ are available to estimate the impact of the project on income, other than the assertion by farmers from neighbouring villages that they rent the land from the Bedouin population against 200 Jordanian Dinar (282 USD) per dunum. After deduction of the 50 USD due to the municipality this leaves the family with an annual income of 464 USD for 2 dunums, less than 25% of the targeted income increase. It is at this point impossible to estimate the impact on revenue for the Bedouins who do cultivate their land, as crops vary and the success rate is unknown.

The project successfully targeted a number of women, even though the final number of female beneficiaries is not known. The women

¹⁷ The project had proposed to keep track of field performances in the FAO online data base Hortivar. Although this is an excellent idea, the data base contains no data for WBGS as yet.

	<p>met by the mission affirmed to have benefitted from the project, but said that their sons had participated in the training in their stead. They might have participated in the sessions had the trainer been female, but basically they were themselves more interested in small livestock production than vegetable farming. The sons cultivate the land under their authority.</p>
<p>Improved effectiveness and efficiency of the MoA to deliver its services in relation to SPS (compliance with 50% of measures) (SPS)</p>	<p>Since the project has only just established the priorities and needs in the areas of plant health and food safety, it is too early to measure its outcome. However, given the complexities of the topics and the context, the project duration (22 months of implementation left), and the funding level (1,367,658 USD, of which 350,000 USD reserved for the implementation of phytosanitary measures and 152,000 USD for various training sessions), compliance of the government with 50% of the measures to be proposed does not seem feasible.</p>
<p>Sustainably improve the capacities and self reliance of small & medium scale HV & export crop producers in the WBGS, by developing sustainable marketing systems, improved production chains, enhanced capacities & involvement of all stakeholders (HVC)</p>	<p>Although the concepts of "small" and "medium scale" farmers have not been defined by the project, as argued above the project beneficiaries are more likely medium than small scale farmers, in particular in the West Bank. Their capacities have absolutely been built in GAP and new crop varieties. GAP application has a positive impact on the quality and safety of the produce, and it brings down the production cost, which ought to increase the competitiveness of the farmers on the international and domestic market. To what extent it will impact their self reliance will depend on the economic feasibility of the crops and the quality of the marketing strategies. Both need to be further investigated in the specific contexts of West Bank and Gaza. What works in one area may not work in the other, because of the characteristics of the ecosystem, the nature of the domestic market and the possibilities for export. In the discussions with farmers and project staff the mission's attention has been drawn to certain features which might give direction for the remainder of the project:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Perishable crops are particularly vulnerable for export, given the unpredictable closing of the Israeli borders. • There is potential for the domestic marketing of safe products, notably in Gaza where consumers are conscious of the risks of chemicals and water pollution. • There appears to be potential within WBGS for produce of Palestinian origin, particularly if of better quality than the Israeli alternative. • Evidence in certain parts of West Bank suggests that consumers would be prepared to pay a higher price for Palestinian quality products. This requires good branding and marketing.
<p>Improve the food security and reduce</p>	<p>The assumption underlying this objective is that the provision of the right infrastructure will boost agricultural production, which will lead</p>

poverty in vulnerable rural areas through comprehensive development of available agricultural resources including land, water and human capacity (L&WRM)

to more income and improved food security. As explained earlier the relation between increased production and food security is complex. What can be said, and has been affirmed in relation to the project output ("Improve agricultural production to increase food security & income"), is that there is ample evidence that the infrastructural provisions are opening up new areas for cultivation and that in most areas the opportunities thus provided are eagerly used. Careful monitoring is required to ascertain to what extent this added production will lead to more income and food security, either at the micro or the macro (West Bank) level.

Role of the NRO in the programme

The NRO actively supports the programme through follow-up in the field, diplomatic actions, trade missions to the Netherlands, and close coordination with national and international stakeholders. Diplomacy plays a role whenever project implementation is hindered by stop orders or confiscations, but the NRO (with support from the embassy in Tel Aviv) also seeks to facilitate cross-border trade with the Israeli authorities. An important contribution in that respect was the purchase of two container scanners to facilitate the procedures at the borders of West Bank/Jordan and Gaza/Israel.

As much as this support is critical and appreciated, the influence of the NRO on Israeli politics remains limited. The scanners are used, but conditions are placed by the Israeli authorities that cause extra cost and delays for the passage of Palestinian goods, causing damage especially to perishable products such as strawberries. Borders are closed at unpredictable times, and work done in Area C or the Gaza buffer zone remains hazardous at all times.

Contribution of the programme to the NRO Strategic Goals (Impact level)

To what extent are the four projects and the NRO efforts contributing to the achievement of the two strategic goals?

Through the L&WRM and the Gaza Buffer Zone projects *improved access to and use of land and water for food production (1.1)* is absolutely being achieved, in spite of challenges caused by stop orders, confiscations, and delayed financial contributions by participating farmers and local authorities. As argued above, the question of whether these projects reach the intended beneficiaries cannot be answered as conclusively. Similarly, more evidence is needed to assess the extent to which the programme leads to *improved agricultural productivity of existing Palestinian farmlands (1.2)*. When updated the HVC database should be able to provide that information, but there may not be a lot to gain in productivity in this third phase of the NRO efforts, as most participating farmers were practising (Global) GAP already in the previous phase. It is probably early to establish an increase in productivity for the L&WRM project, but given the increased access to water, the increased possibilities for sound water management, and better access to the land this may indeed be expected for the current and next agricultural season.

Whether or not this leads to a *sustainable increase in food production to the benefit of the Palestinian people* depends on many factors. Sustainability is related to economic feasibility, environmental factors and the sense of ownership of the programme stakeholders. The latter will be discussed in more detail in the section on sustainability below. Just like the productivity, the volume of food production needs to be monitored by the projects. Results should already be visible for the short term crops produced under the HVC project. For longer term crops (fruit trees, pineapple, grapes) the area under cultivation provides a good proxy indicator. It should be noted though that not all crops produced under the HVC project are food crops (20% of the export crops

are cut flowers) and that in the case of export crops the *Palestinian people* who benefit are the farmers only. The trade of export crops is in the hands of Israeli middle men and traders, or, in the case of West Bank only, a few big Palestinian traders. Domestically sold produce also benefits the Palestinian consumer.

The *increased competitiveness of agricultural products* (2.1) depends mainly on the HVC project and its success throughout the value chain. Whereas the focus to date is mainly on export, there are indications that the domestic market has potential and involves less risk. Both require good marketing and branding, the capacity strengthening of which has only just started. The economic feasibility of certain crops has yet to be demonstrated. Most assured so far is the quality side of the competition to which GAP and Global GAP certification have greatly contributed. Competitiveness depends not only on the efforts of individual farmers, but also on the prices that can be negotiated by their cooperatives. As explained earlier, there is still a lot to be gained in that area.

The SPS project is still in its early stages and it would be too soon to expect *improved institutional capacity of the PA for service delivery to the agricultural sector* (2.2). While the project is working hard to strengthen the PA's institutional capacity, it is a long way to improved service delivery. There is a big funding gap: for plant health alone the estimated budget needed to implement the national action plan is 10,000,000 USD, of which the project can provide 350,000; the needs for food safety are not yet known. Other than funding, correct service delivery requires active involvement at the field level. If the level of extension services provided today is anything to go by, efforts beyond the scope of this project will be necessary.

And finally, *access to markets for Palestinian farmers* depends to a great extent on factors outside the control of the project or the NRO. Although small improvements may be negotiated, proper access is largely dependent on the political will of the Israeli authorities and -all political issues aside- very often not in their economic interest, given the similarity in products and ecosystem. Adding to that the current political climate, shows that aiming for export remains a hazardous endeavour.

With respect to the crosscutting objective of *gender mainstreaming*, previous sections have shown that additional efforts and funds will be required to achieve this. Women get to benefit very little from the main programme and the so-called 'gender activities' are under-budgeted and insufficiently connected to the main strategies.

Good efforts are made to reduce the use of chemicals and fresh water. Still, most of the HVC farming involves conventional techniques that include the use of fertilizer and pesticides (an interesting exception is pineapple). To achieve true *environmental sustainability* the options of organic farming could be further explored. Given the extreme fragility of the ecosystem in the oPT, and especially in Gaza, this might soon even become imperative.

All in all, the assessment of project and programme contributions to impact is hindered by the lack of monitoring of progress towards outcomes.

Note on the Quality of Training

Although training under the NRO programme appears in most cases to be provided by highly qualified trainers, and the training topics are relevant, no documentation has been shared with the MTR team that testifies to the quality of the training sessions (e.g. increase in knowledge through pre- and post training tests) and the coherence of the various capacity building programmes (which should ideally include refresher training and coaching, as the impact of a single training course tends to be limited). Such coherence would be more apparent through stakeholder oriented output formulation and related progress indicators.

Follow-up Mechanisms

The challenges encountered by the HVC project in its first year of implementation (unfinished packaging houses, staff not trained) and the exploitation of the Um An Nasser land by farmers from neighbouring villages suggest that the NRO is facing difficulties regarding the monitoring of project implementation. This may in part be related to staff capacity within the NRO, but also to the fact that few systems are in place to enable effective monitoring. Both technical and financial reporting happens on an annual free format basis. The current reports do not include a systematic planned vs. actual comparison, nor do projects report against indicators. The reporting frequency is too low to adequately track the implementation and expenditure process. Although field visits are frequently made by the NRO, field based monitoring ((preferably un-announced) verifications of implementation) does not seem to be happening.

Measures for Problem Solving

The challenging context has required both NRO and the project staff to be flexible and innovative when it comes to solving problems. The NRO has made extra funds available for the damages caused by the 2013 winter storm and the 2014 Gaza war. It has allowed L&WRM to use the project funds flexibly to enable payment for the confiscations of machinery. In case of stop work orders, alternative routes for the agricultural roads are found. Extra costs have also been absorbed by local authorities, because they understood the value of the L&WRM project for their community. These examples show that the creativity that is necessary to answer to upcoming problems is employed at all levels.

Good Practices

A number of particularly good practices that have been identified by the team.

The holistic approach developed by the L&WRM project, such as in the watershed of Nazleh Shaqieh or the flooded valley in Maythaloun- Sanur, Jenin: the combination of roads and water facilitates autonomous agricultural development. Added advantages are the increased connectivity between the area under cultivation and nearby urban centres. This brings down the cost of transportation, but it also improves access to services such as schools, the market, and health centres, thus impacting the quality of life in general for the rural population. The project activities in these areas could gain even further in impact by supporting the farmer association in crop production and its marketing, as well by structured efforts to strengthen their organizational capabilities and political voice.



The Development of the watershed in Nazleh Shaqieh: roads and piped water have opened up new agricultural areas.

The training on Good Agricultural Practices has a number of benefits. It promotes the right use of (scarce) resources, it reduces use of chemicals, and it encourages environmentally friendly methods, such as the pollination of tomatoes by bumblebees and pest control through the use of pheromones. The application thus has a positive impact on the environment, brings down production cost, increases the quality and the safety of the produce, and it increases the

competitiveness of the Palestinian farmers on the global market. The appliance of GAP is a prerequisite for Global GAP certification, which provides access to international markets.



Bumble bees instead of hormones



Natural pest control

The Gaza Buffer Zone Project established collaboration with the Faculty of Agriculture & Environment of the Al Azhar University to provide a two-week training programme to the participating farmers. This partnership was interesting as it allowed the farmers to benefit from state of the art knowledge, while it gave a boost to the faculty. In addition, the programme innovatively focused on organic farming techniques, which is interesting in view of the environmental challenges that the Gaza Strip is currently facing.

Worth mentioning is also the extensive collaborative structure that has been put in place by the SPS project. Although it took time to establish the various committees, it was worth the investment as the success of this project will depend largely on the collaboration between the different ministries and other national parties.

Efficiency

Implementing agencies: comparison of overhead & coordination structures

As shown in the table below, there is considerable difference between the projects in terms of their cost of overhead. FAO calculates a standard contribution of 10% in admin cost, which is payable to its HQ in Rome and does not include the project's contribution to the running cost of the Palestine offices. Between the FAO projects the cost of staff varies greatly: from 3% for the Gaza Buffer Zone project to 36% for the HVC project. This brings the total overhead for the HVC project to 45%. The L&WRM project budget includes a 1.5% proportion of admin cost only, which the staff admitted was underestimated and negatively affecting project implementation in the sense that it disproportionately burdened the staff of the local NGOs.

Although a simple comparison of project budgets as the one presented in the table does not do justice to the specificity of each project, the HVC project budget comprises an unusual high amount of overhead, which may be due to the layered management structure of the project, in addition to the percentage due to Rome.

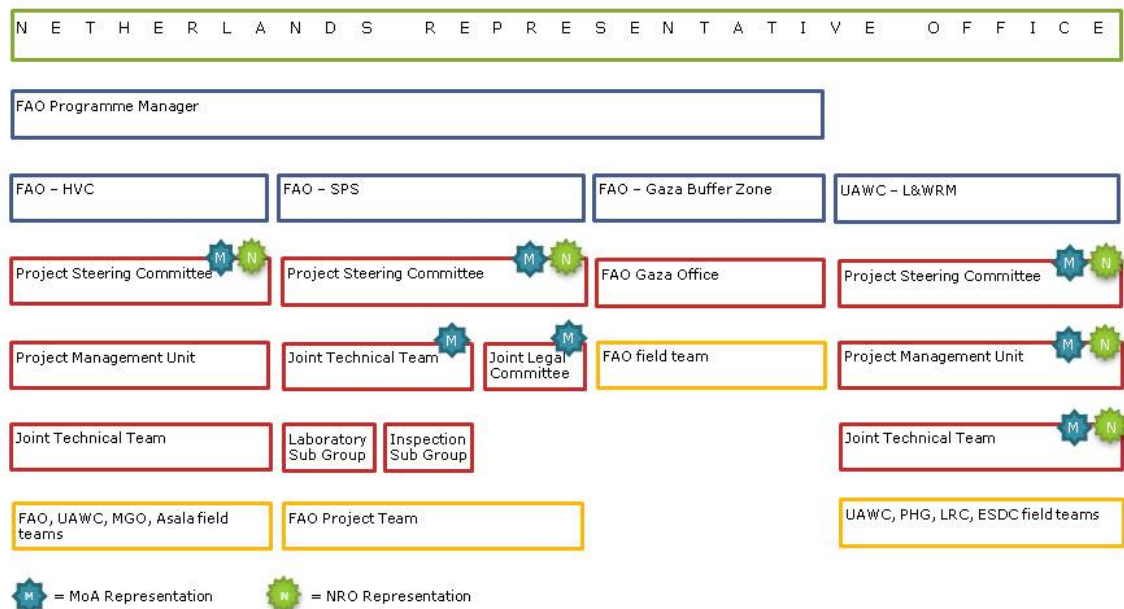
Budget line	HVC-FAO	GBZ-FAO	SPS-FAO	L&WRC-UAWC
Admin	\$580,442	\$45,200	\$124,333	\$147,880
	10%	9%	10%	1.5%
HR	\$2,277,738	\$15,500	\$180,000	\$1,572,313
	36%	3%	13%	16%
Total Overhead	\$2,858,180	\$60,700	\$304,333	\$1,720,193
	45%	12%	22%	17%

NB. Figures are based on information provided to the MRT by the projects

The organisation chart below demonstrates that the projects are organised around very similar management structures, with the exception of the Gaza Buffer Zone project, which was much smaller than the others and limited to one particular location. Project oversight is assured by the steering committees, which include representation from the donor and the Ministry of Agriculture. The coordination of the implementation is the main task of the Joint Technical Teams, while the liaison between these levels is foreseen by the Project Management Unit (PMU), responsible for the daily management. As the SPS project is less operational it does not comprise a PMU, but rather a Joint Legal Committee, which oversees the harmonisation of the laws relating to plant health and food safety. L&WRM and HVC projects require good coordination because of the complexity of working with four partners. To which extent the PMU and JTTs are complementary in practice is difficult to say, but worth investigating, as a certain degree of economy and an increased ability to decide and create synergies might be gained.

Noteworthy is also that for none of the organisations except Asala the field staff includes women¹⁸; if women are to be targeted and their needs understood it is critical that they can meet female staff in the field. Gender mainstreaming was considered the task of a single gender specialist in the PMU; to be successful its implications should be understood and carried by the entire project, from the highest to the lowest level.

NRO Food Security Programme – ORGANISATIONAL CHART



Interaction

The organisation of the programme is rather vertical, as shown in the organisation chart. Each

¹⁸ The only women encountered in the field were two female extension officers hired by one of the cooperatives in Gaza. Their wages were so low that these positions are unlikely to be sustainable.

*between
programme
components*

project has its own management and coordination structure, which links vertically to the NRO, but there is no lateral connection. The programme does not operate as a programme in that sense, even though the same stakeholders appear in the different coordination structures, FAO is responsible for three projects and UAWC is implementer for two. Also between project partners coordination happens more at PMU level than at the field level. One would imagine that the coherence between the programme components as expressed in the MASP could be translated into stronger field level coordination between the projects, which might lead to unexpected synergies and a more holistic approach, in particular for the HVC and L&WRM projects.

In terms of the pace of project implementation, the impact that is expected from the capacity building of government entities by the SPS project is not likely to happen until after the HVC and L&WRM projects have phased out, and will thus not be able to positively influence this programme period.

*Ownership of
the
programme*

Across the board, the programme beneficiaries and stakeholders interviewed showed great enthusiasm for the project interventions. Although requested contributions were considered challenging and sometimes caused delays, as far as the review team knows they were all made. Farmers and local authorities could easily explain the benefits; in some cases the projects led to new initiatives, such as the exploitation of new farmland opened up by agricultural roads, or the establishment of a private solar energy system, inspired by the perceived advantages of the system applied by the L&WRM project. Some HVC farmers in Gaza discovered the marketing potential of Global GAP crops as safe products.

The sense of ownership of the beneficiaries is closely related to the sustainability of the programme. For this reason the concept of ownership is considered in more detail in the next chapter and broken down into different aspects measured during the focus groups discussions.

Ownership by the government varies from one project to another, but appears stronger at the national level than at the level of the field. E.g. the technical support provided by the HVC project has not (yet) translated into an increase in the provision of extension services. The projects benefit from support at the highest levels, but for effective leadership a more elevated level of effort is required.

*Cost
Effectiveness
and Expense
Rate of the
Projects*

The information available with regard to the Gaza Buffer Zone Project budget and expenses is limited and does not allow for an in-depth analysis. As beneficiary records have not been kept, it is impossible to tell who benefited from which support and the price of that support. Although the final report mentions that funds have been reallocated from the cancelled third phase of land reclamation to enable the restoring of infrastructure damaged by the winter storm, the final report suggests that the required sum was taken from input support and tools: the 'expendable procurement' line was reduced from 185,000 USD to 17,211 USD, while 'contracts' was increased from 195,000 USD to 364,583 USD. It is unclear to what extent this did not affect the distribution of inputs and tools, nor can any information be derived with regard to the efficiency of resource use. The project decided to double the number of participants in training techniques; no information is available about the manner in which expenses for these extra participants were covered and how this influenced the training quality and project results. The project managed to leverage extra resources to add a drainage system to prevent new damage to the site in the case of future flooding.

At 57% of project implementation the HVC Project has spent 64% of its budget. Activity expenses appear to be on track; the budget lines for salaries and operational running cost risk being depleted before the end of the project though, with only 22% and 26% remaining respectively. If expenditure

carries on at this rate a budget revision may be necessary.

Due to implementation delays explained in its annual report, by the end of December 2014 the L&WRM Project had spent 30.5% of its total budget (US \$ 3,050,000). To catch up it has scheduled to spend 53% in FY15 and the remaining 16.5% in FY16. The report contains no further details to review the expense pattern or the cost effectiveness.

For the SPS Project 87% of the budget remains unused after 9 months of implementation (out of 36). Until December 31st 2014 only salaries had been paid; the cost effectiveness of its implementation cannot as yet be judged.

A rough measure of the cost of the three field-based projects compared to their benefit in terms of individual strengthening of food security or livelihoods, is the division of the total project budget by the total number of direct beneficiaries. Although a more precise analysis would require a better understanding of the various definitions of 'direct beneficiaries' and the final yield of the projects in terms of outcome achievement, this comparison might provide guidance for future investments by the NRO.

Assuming that the L&WRM beneficiary numbers of the different components refer to different persons¹⁹, the table below suggests that the HVC Project is by far the most expensive. This remains the case even if the budget is corrected for the cost of overhead or if for the L&WRM Project only the beneficiaries of agricultural roads are counted. The high cost per beneficiary of the HVC project can in part be explained by the input subsidies. Since in most cases middle income farmers are targeted and the investments benefit the individual farming enterprise in particular, the extent to which this cost is justified is questionable.

	HVC-FAO	GBZ-FAO	L&WRC-UAWC
Direct beneficiaries	997	125	6,424
Total budget	\$8,125,760	\$497,200	\$10,006,550
Cost/beneficiary	\$8,150	\$3,978	\$1,558
Budget without overhead	\$5,267,580	\$436,500	\$8,286,357
Cost/beneficiary WO	\$5,283	\$3,492	\$1,290

Sustainability

Ownership

For sustainable project results the role of local communities is critical. It is therefore important to ensure that these local communities can assume ownership and a sense of accountability with regard to use and management of the natural resources within their community domain. From work done in dry land environments in the Sahel (community forestry) and in the Middle East (water resource and range management), it appears that if essential pre-conditions for such ownership and accountability for management practices are not fulfilled this will form almost insurmountable constraints for local users to sustain the management of their local land and water resources be that for agriculture, orchards or grazing. Similarly, in many cases local farmers will not assume ownership because they do not feel that the activity, investment and/or its results are really theirs (ownership).

¹⁹ See also the comment on page 24 with respect to the L&WRM database.

Important preconditions for communities to assume ownership and accountability are assured benefits, resource rights, appropriate knowledge and claim-making power (Laban, 1994; Laban et al, 2009; Laban and Haddad, 2015). Investment interventions in farming communities therefore need to take this into account to be valid and sustainable.

During the fieldwork phase the MTR team submitted a series of 20 questions to eight different groups of project beneficiaries, which focussed on the four themes mentioned above. The farmers were asked to rate their perceptions with respect to each of the topics on a scale from 1-4, whereby 1 represented 'none' or 'low' and 4 stood for 'all' or 'high'. The figure below shows the average scores for all locations and projects. It demonstrates that the farmers feel most confident about the knowledge they possess (of technical aspects, prices, markets and the weather conditions) and least about the degree to which resource rights are ensured. Resource rights include access to land and land ownership, access to water and other critical resources, and cooperative support in ensuring the right prices.

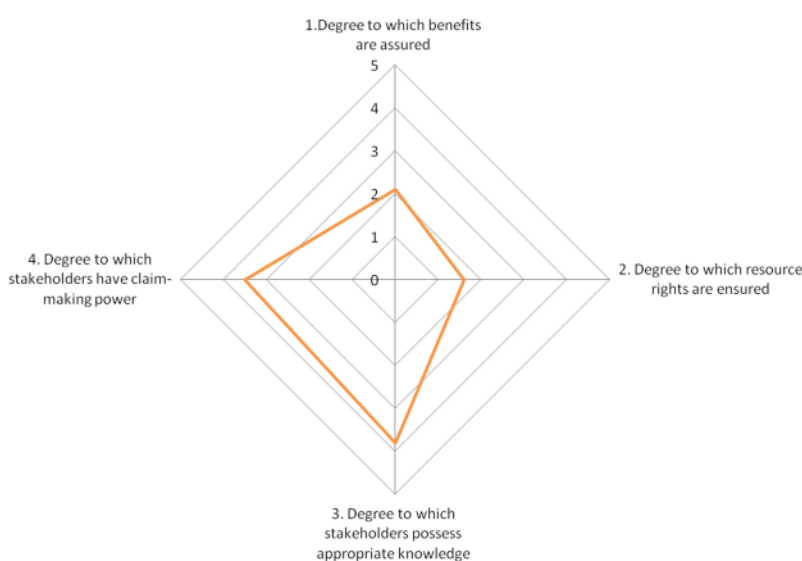


Figure: Average scores for all locations and projects

The participants were also moderately sure of the benefits, which include the return on sales of their crop, ability to increase the benefits, the likelihood that they would grow the same crop if they had to purchase all inputs, the influence of market factors on benefits and the extent to which the benefits had improved their economic situation. The picture for claim making power is in general that people know where to go and how to claim their rights, but are not too sure to get satisfaction for their claims.

Irrespective of variations, knowledge scores highest everywhere. Scores for benefits are lowest in Beit Hassan, which reflects the farmers' perception that they have little or no influence on the market and that they are in competition with Israeli produce. Perceptions of resource rights are lowest in Um An Nasser and Halhoul. For the first this reflects the high level of insecurity related to the buffer zone and the fact that the land is rented from the municipality. People feel that it can be taken from them anytime. For Halhoul it is probably related to the stop orders and confiscations experienced there. The question about the extent to which land ownership is ensured shows enormous variation, which reflects the difference in land rights in the various areas: strong agricultural traditions and registered land rights in the Jenin area vs. rented and insecure land in Gaza (Beit Lahia and Um An Nasser).

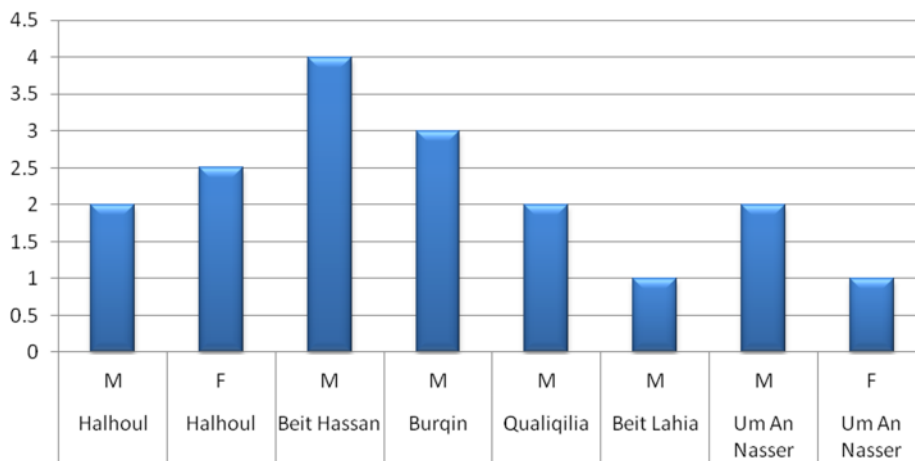


Figure: Farmers perceptions of the extent to which land ownership is ensured

The scores for the accountability of the government and the cooperative towards the farmers and the services provided by the cooperatives hover around 1, which means that they are basically nonexistent. This confirms our concern with respect to the choice of farmers' associations and the ownership displayed by the government so far.

Sustainability strategies

The project documents of the Gaza Buffer Zone and the SPS projects do not include a sustainability strategy; the two other project documents discuss economic, institutional and environmental sustainability strategies. Throughout the programme the approach is similar. Economic sustainability is sought through the creation of new infrastructure on the hard ware side, and the reduction of production cost and higher selling prices on the software side. The latter is to be achieved through the technical capacity building of farmers and improved marketing by cooperatives. The cooperatives are also the main pillar for the institutional capacity building, along with the MoA and the Palestinian Standards Institute, from which improved inspection services and quality control are expected. Environmental sustainability is concentrated on the better use of resources through GAP, but also on the protection of farmland and erosion control through the terracing and planting of hilly areas.

The sustainability of roads, terraces and water works depends on the maintenance of these structures. This has not been addressed in any of the project documents and annual reports, and will be a weak spot unless good systems are in place. As previously discussed, the technical capacity building has to a large extent been achieved (though less in the Gaza Buffer Zone project), even if it only has its use to the extent that the crops are economically feasible. Depending on the smaller farmers' associations for improved marketing may not be the most viable strategy; if this choice is maintained it requires substantial investments to achieve sustainable results. A question that requires reflection is how to develop the cooperative sector to empower farmers in price negotiations with traders and market outlets (as is discussed earlier). The environmental sustainability strategy is solid within the context of conventional HVC farming, but in view of the vulnerability of the Palestinian territory more efforts might be required in the area of ecological or organic farming.

Sustainability and the Israeli matrix of control

Amidst all of these challenges, the most critical is probably the political and economic context and the control exerted by Israel over Palestine. Recent developments point to ever more grim prospects with regard to the possibility of a viable Palestinian State. The Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, was re-elected on the promise that there would never be a Palestinian state.

He appointed a justice minister and a defence minister who are known for their ultranationalist views. A recent expression of these views was the decision on May 4 by the Israeli High Court of Justice to give the Civil Administration a green light to demolish the Palestinian village of Susya and forcefully relocate its residents (Brown, 2015).

The implication for the sustainability of the NRO programme is that the less its results depend on the good will of the Israeli authorities the better. As argued before, the focus on export is hazardous and is likely to remain so in the near future. This would plead for more focus on the domestic market, but also increased emphasis on interventions aimed at the resilience and empowerment of local farming communities to face the constraints of the Israeli Occupation, an issue which has been barely touched upon in the projects under evaluation here.

5 Conclusions & Recommendations

Conclusions

Relevance

The programme as a whole is coherent, with four elements that complement and mutually reinforce each other. It builds upon previous experience, while aligning with relevant policies and addressing weaknesses of the previous phase. Theoretically the link between the programme and the objective of increasing food security is there, but, due to the type of beneficiaries and the choice of high value crops, in the practice of project implementation the relation is not always clear.

The programme has a strong technical focus; a clear stakeholder oriented approach might have been conducive to more holistic and sustainable strategies. It would also have helped to describe the theory of how change will happen, which brings more focus in the overall strategies. Insufficient strategic analysis seems to have been made of the highly negative impacts of the Israeli “matrix of control” over the Palestine Territories, and the best way to strengthen the rural economies in Gaza and the West Bank. The cross-cutting objective of gender mainstreaming needs more systematic attention and more substantial funding.

The programme works in close collaboration with national stakeholders. The choice of the HVC project to work with smaller farmers' associations may not be the most beneficial in terms of leverage and will require substantial investments to sufficiently build their capacities.

All projects have logical frameworks and indicators linked to the various result levels. On the whole, indicators related to straightforward technical interventions tend to be well formulated and measurable. Outcome indicators are more problematic and have so far not been informed; management indicators are missing. There is room for improvement in indicator formulation, the development of data collection instruments and in particular the actual monitoring and documentation of the project results, both by the NRO and the implementing agencies.

Effectiveness

Programme beneficiaries tend to be male middle income farmers (although the Gaza beneficiary incomes are lower than the West Bank incomes). The needy families targeted in Um An Nasser by the Gaza Buffer Zone Project may to a certain extent not be the final beneficiaries, as evidence suggests that the land is massively being rented to other farmers against minimal prices. Most derive their main income from farming, except for a group of Qalqilia beneficiaries (HVC) and an estimated 40% of the L&WRM Halhoul beneficiaries²⁰. It is not clear which groups did not get to benefit from the programme.

Delays and unforeseen expenses were caused by the political situation (notably stop work orders and confiscations, and the 2014 Gaza war) and the 2013 winter storm. The difficulty of travel and communication between Gaza and the West Bank is another cause for delays, as is the building of partnerships with national government.

The Gaza Buffer Zone project has been more or less successful in achieving its objectives. 85% of the

²⁰According to L&WRM project staff. The numbers could not be verified for lack of a beneficiary data base.

targeted land was reclaimed and is being cultivated, but not necessarily by the target group; two weeks of capacity building was short to turn Bedouins into farmers. The field coaching that was part of the project has not been provided.

The SPS project is well underway, be it that the creation of partnerships took more time than foreseen. The project is likely to succeed in making a good start with the SPS capacity strengthening, but for truly improved service delivery efforts are needed beyond the (technical and financial) scope of this project.

The HVC project has so far been very successful at building the farmers 'capacities in good farming practices and Global GAP certification. Challenges are the farmer dependency on input subsidies and the economic feasibility of the high value crops. The focus on export crops adds to the economic vulnerability of the enterprises. The marketing component needs further strengthening and may not be entirely successful, due to the lack of dynamism and leverage of the farmers' associations. The environmental situation in Gaza is very challenging and requires a certain level of rethinking of strategies. The gender component ought to be better integrated in the main interventions, and the quality of delivery improved. To what extent the project will achieve its outcome hard to predict at this point; more frequent informing of its outcome indicators might provide a better sense of that.

The strength of the L&WRM project is the facilitation of autonomous agricultural development through the provision of adequate infrastructure. This is done in collaboration with local stakeholders and generates a lot of enthusiasm. In terms of contribution to food security it is likely to be more successful in areas that produce foodstuffs for the domestic market than areas where the beneficiaries derive their main income from other sources and certain families benefitted more than others. While the secondary purpose of preserving Palestinian land rights was served in that area, the question is whether this use of funds for heavy land reclamation is more beneficial than light reclamation or land rehabilitation, which would enable the re-use of agricultural land for less cost and thus more beneficiaries. The holistic community based approach which is doing well in certain areas, is less successful in others. To effectively strengthen self-reliance, resilience and empowerment of the local community It would benefit from further articulation in concept and in practice.

The NRO actively supports the programme through diplomacy and problem solving, but its options are limited in the face of Israeli politics and the overall policy of the Netherlands. Follow-up mechanisms are not sufficiently in place for the NRO to effectively monitor project implementation and management, and the progress of the programme towards outcomes.

Efficiency

A comparison between the overhead costs of the different projects learns that the contribution to FAO administrative costs is considerably higher than to UAWC and that the complexity of the partnerships probably contributes to the staff cost of the HVC and the L&WRM projects. At the same time, the allocated administrative overhead cost allocated to the L&WRM project is too low to allow adequate project implementation. The organisational structure of the projects is similar, with the exception of the Gaza Buffer Zone project, which was much smaller than the others and limited to one particular location.

The programme is organised in a rather vertical manner, with little lateral connections between the projects. One would imagine that the coherence between the programme components as expressed in the MASP could be translated into stronger field level coordination between the projects, which might lead to unexpected synergies and a more holistic approach.

A comparison of the three field-based projects in terms of cost per direct beneficiary suggests that the HVC project is the most expensive and the L&WRM the cheapest.

Sustainability

The degree to which programme beneficiaries experience ownership varies: they tend to be more confident about the knowledge they possess, than about the extent to which resource rights and benefits are ensured. This relates to the context (notably the Israeli 'matrix of control'), but also to the economic feasibility of the crops. Maintenance of the infrastructure created under the L&WRM project by land owners of land reclamation investments and by village/municipality councils for agricultural roads, as well as the reliance on the farmers' associations and the MoA for the institutional sustainability need close monitoring and to be taken into account in final project evaluation. On the other hand, emerging results suggest that the infrastructure provision under the L&WRM Project generates autonomous agricultural investments by the farmers; this seems to be less widespread among HVC farmers who still struggle with the dependency on input subsidies created by the previous projects. The environmental sustainability strategy is solid within the context of conventional HVC farming, but in view of the vulnerability of the Palestinian territory more efforts might be required in the area of organic and ecological farming, while the issue of "exporting" water through the production of crops for the international market needs consideration when choosing crops.

Recommendations

Current Programme

To increase the effectiveness and the sustainability of the current programme the MTR mission recommends the following measures.

- Continue to review the choice of crops in favour of more profitable and less perishable ones. Other factors to take into account are water efficiency and demand on the local market. This will reduce the risks for producers, and allow for the substitution of imports from Israel and hence strengthen the local economy in the Palestinian Territories.
- More efforts are needed for the branding, and marketing of Palestinian high quality products for the domestic market, while making use of the potential of Good Agricultural Practices (lower cost, higher quality and more safety). These efforts should include establishing standards and public awareness campaigns for safely produced domestic products.
- Investigate what is needed to enable the partner cooperatives to establish a viable marketing system and to operate the Global GAP system without the project. This might include linking them to the older cooperative movement and provide them with a business model to ensure sustainable income to cover the operational costs.
- Up scale the Global GAP achievements by purposefully involving the MoA in the dissemination of safe agricultural procedures among the wider farming communities, including all crops. This will contribute to the institutional sustainability and strengthen the extension services provided by the MoA.
- Investigate the possibilities of generalising holistic approaches as applied in Nazleh, taking into account each area's specific conditions, to contribute to the sustainability of the investments made by the L&WRM project.
- Strengthen mechanisms with the targeted communities to ensure the maintenance of the

infrastructural investments and at the same time strengthen self-reliance and resilience.

- Review the strategy and budget of the gender component of the HVC and the L&WRM projects to better ensure the mainstreaming of gendered interests and to value women as actors in the agricultural sector.
- Improve the monitoring system by creating better instruments to measure progress towards results and identify lessons learned and by increasing the frequency of reporting against indicators. A standardised report template would help the NRO in this regard. Additionally.
- More structured efforts need to be made to document project/programme results, lessons learned and share them with a broader audience (annual reports are not enough for this). Additionally, (unannounced) monitoring visits need to be carried out, so as to better account for a substantial budget in the sector. These may be carried out by an external party.

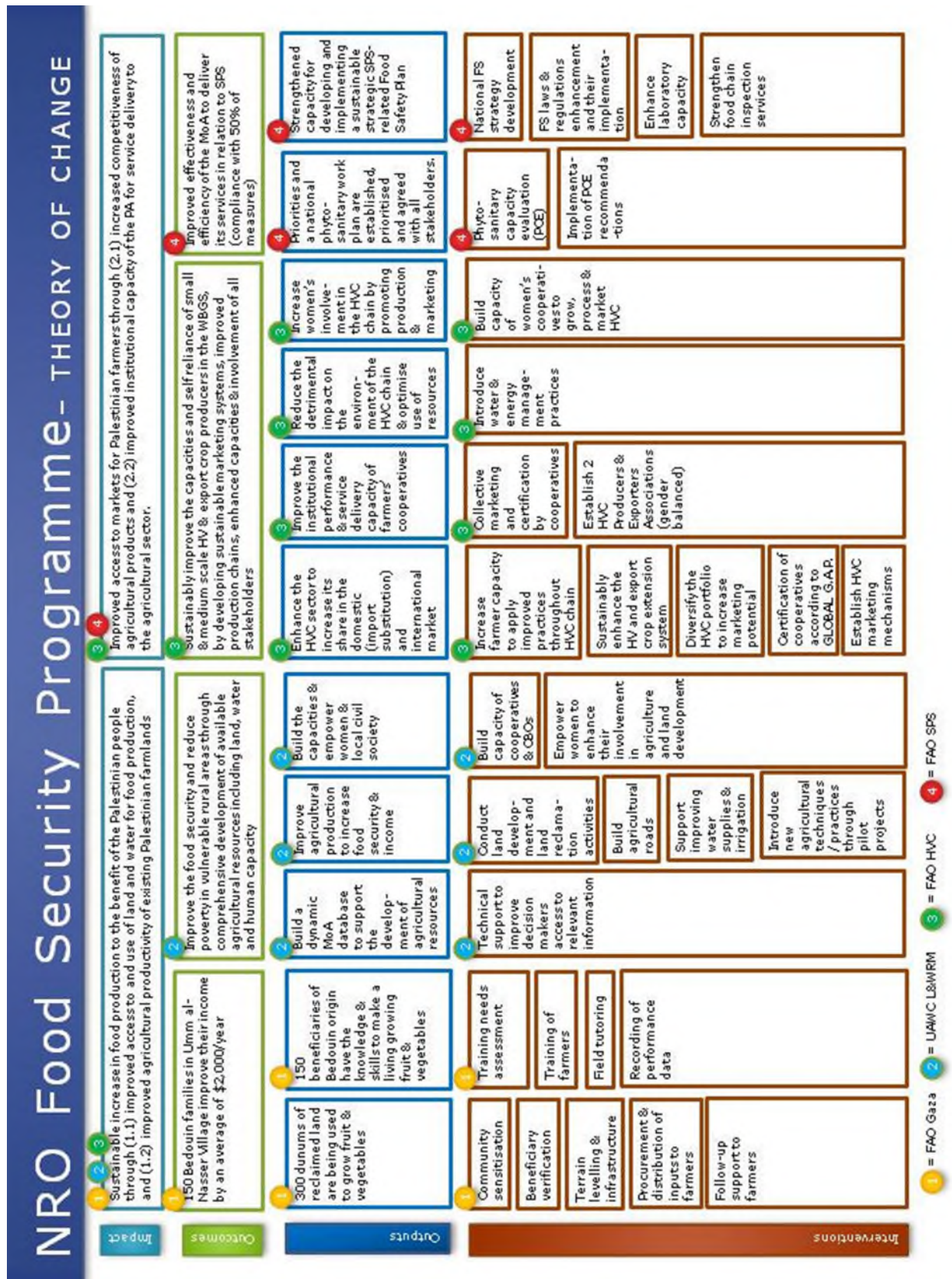
Future Programme

Based on the findings of the mid-term review, for the development of the future NRO Food Security Programme, the mission recommends the following.

- Diversify partnerships by encouraging coalitions and tendering. In the review committee involve national stakeholders such as the MoA, to further increase a sense of ownership and to add to expertise and perspectives.
- Engage in a thorough value chain analysis to obtain better understanding of the economic feasibility of crops and the market, the potential of a crop for the household economy as a whole, and the environmental optimum.
- Develop an actor-oriented Theory of Change (ToC) with involvement of different segments of society. Defining a theory of how change will happen will allow for a more holistic approach and clearly defined strategies that take into consideration the specific characteristics of the context, notably the hazards related to the Israeli “matrix of control” over the Palestinian Territories. A thorough stakeholder and risk analysis need to be integrated in the design. The participants in the development of the ToC ought to be legitimate representatives of the different groups. Particular attention should be given to the representation of women's interests.
- A better integration of a gender approach. This means not 'activities for women', but a gendered analysis of the household economy and a needs assessment among women; the training of all NGO staff on gender mainstreaming; and the hiring of female field staff.
- Develop a mechanism to encourage exchange between projects to favour learning, integration of interventions and the creation of synergies.
- To increase the economic viability of farming and cooperatives there is a need to develop or rethink agricultural credit mechanisms (including insurance and risk issues), as well the cost and benefit of land reclamation versus light reclamation or land rehabilitation.
- Rethink the ability to influence the political system and counter Israeli “matrix of control” to move away from the Israeli defined box of containment.
- Ensure the monitoring instruments that favour learning and allow the NRO to track the progress towards results of its programme and the verification of beneficiary targeting.

Annexes

Annex 1: Theory of Change of the NRO Food Security Programme



Annex 2: Comparing Water Use of two Green House Crops

During the HVC Project pineapples were introduced as a pilot HVC, as it was considered a crop with marketing potential, and less environmental impact and production cost than, for example strawberry, because it can be grown without the use of fertilizers and pesticides, but also because of its water use. A study by Basel Natsheh et.al. (Strawberry (*Fragaria ananassa* Duch.) Plant Productivity Quality in Relation to Soil Depth and Water Requirements., 2015, p. 6) estimated the water requirements of one dunum of hanging strawberries in Palestine at 386 m³/season (9 months of continuous production) with a soil depth of 7 cm and at 520 m³/season with a 15 cm soil depth. One dunum of pineapples requires 520m³/year. As the crop takes 2.6 years to ripen the first and second crop require 2.6 and 2 times as much water as subsequent crops (as of the second year the crop will be interspaced with new offshoots, and the harvest will be annual). One dunum of pineapple will produce approximately 8,000 fruits (one per seedling), with an average weight of 1kg. While absolute water use is higher for pineapple than for strawberry, the use per kilogram of fruit is less than for both types of strawberry culture as of the third year, and less than for the 15CM culture as of the first year.

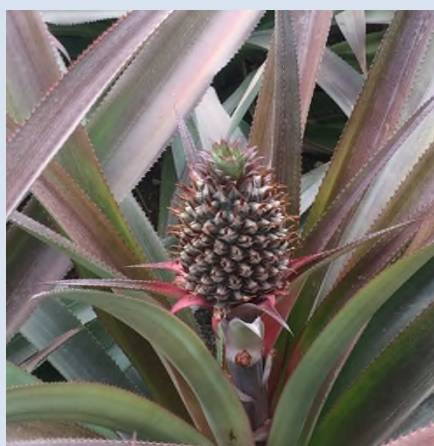
Compared to strawberry therefore, pineapple is potentially interesting from an environmental and production cost perspective. Its real potential also depends on the beginning and end of the value chain though: the market value, farmers' access to offset markets, but especially on access to seedlings, as the seedling market is controlled by Israel and to date pineapple seedlings cannot be legally obtained in WBGS.

Unit	Strawberry 7CM	Strawberry 15CM	Pineapple
Water use/season	386 m ³	314 m ³	520 m ³
Water use 1st crop	386 m ³	314 m ³	1352 m ³
Water use 2nd crop	386 m ³	314 m ³	1040 m ³
Water use subsequent crops	386 m ³	314 m ³	520 m ³
Water use/ kg of fruit	0,09 m ³ /kg	0,19 m ³ /kg	0,065 m ³ /kg

Hanging strawberries



Pineapple



Annex 3: Methodology

This section discusses in details the methodology that was used during the assignment. It describes the various tools and methods and how they complement each other. The instruments listed here are included in the Annexes.

Desk Review The desk review covered all key project documents, including proposals, amendments, budgets, and policy documents of the Netherlands Government, the Palestinian Authority and the implementing agencies, as well as relevant articles about the project context. It answered questions about the relevance and coherence of the design, the effectiveness and timeliness of the implementation, the monitoring and the efficiency of the project. Challenges, lessons and good practices mentioned in the progress reports have been compared with comparable data generated in interviews.

Result Chain Analysis As the unit of study for this mid-term evaluation is the joint programme, the team started with a reconstruction of the overall programmatic intervention logic / results chain based on the project documents. This result chain is presented in a flowchart in Annex 1. Subsequently, interviews with the project stakeholders at different levels enabled the team to reconstruct the de-facto result chain, to assess the effectiveness of the programme at different result levels, as well as the contribution of the project interventions to the results.

The *output level* relates to the project deliverables of the four projects making up the programme as reflected in their respective logical frameworks. The information provided in project progress and monitoring reports about (progress towards) these deliverables, was verified during field visits and interviews with stakeholders directly involved in producing and “receiving” those deliverables.

The project *outcome level* reflects how the project results of the interventions are being used. As this is a mid-term review, results at this level were not (yet) reflected clearly in the project progress / monitoring reports. The available documentation was therefore complemented with interview information pointing to “early signs” that illustrate progress towards project outcomes. By doing this for each of the four projects, more information about the “contribution gap” between output and outcomes became available. This assessment included an analysis of the factors that explain progress (or lack thereof).

The third level (programme impact) relates more to macro-level results in the food security situation and the competitiveness of farmers in the oPT. The national indicators informed by the NRO were compared with interview information and the plausibility of the programme's contribution to improved food security analysed. Analysis at this level also included the detection of political and economic obstacles towards achieving the desired programme outcomes.

Interviews with Key Stakeholders Interviews were held with project staff, NRO staff, and national and local stakeholders. Depending on the project these included government departments, cooperatives, village councils and municipalities. The open ended questions addressed the relevance, effectiveness and the sustainability of the project, while probing into constraints and successes through lessons learned and emerging good practices.

Interviews with farmers The team interviewed a selection of farmers presented by the implementing agencies. Focus group discussions were held with men and women separately in locations with a significant number of female beneficiaries; time did not allow to interview women separately where they were only one

or two. The discussions were sequenced in the following manner:

- Reconstruction of the de-facto result chain through questions oriented around result areas of the project (without actually referring to the project to enable the team to establish the actual contribution of project interventions to the results)
- Inventory of participation in project activities to establish the de facto time-line of the project
- The application of the participation tool (see below for details)
- The application of the ownership & accountability tool (see below for details)
- Open ended questions about the relevance of the design, good practices and lessons learned.
- The questionnaires per project are included in Annex 3.

Participation Tool

Measuring participation provides an indication of where and how the project is owned by the different stakeholders. For triangulation purposes at least two different sources rate the participation of each group of stakeholders (male & female farmers, cooperative leadership, CBOs, local government, national government) in the various stages and components of the project according to the following scale:

<i>Score</i>	<i>Typology</i>	<i>Definitions</i>
1	Passive participation	People participate by being told what is going to happen or has happened. It is a unilateral announcement by an administration or project management without any listening to people's responses. The information being shared belongs only to external professional.
2	Participation in information giving	People participate by answering questions posed by extractive researchers using questionnaire surveys or similar approaches. People do not have the opportunity to influence proceedings, as the findings of the research are neither shared nor checked for accuracy.
3	Participation by consultation	People participate by being consulted and external agents listen to views. These external agents define both problems and solutions, and may modify these in the light of people's responses. Such a consultative process does not concede any share in decision making and professionals are under no obligation to take on board people's views.
4	Participation for material incentives	People participate by providing resources, for example labour in return for food, cash or other material incentives. Much on-farm research falls in this category, as farmers provide the fields but are not involved in the experimentation of the process of learning. It is very common to see this called participation, yet people have no stake in prolonging activities when the incentives end.
5	Functional participation	People participate by forming groups to meet predetermined objectives related to the project, which can involve the development or promotion of externally initiated social organisation. Such involvement does not tend to be at early stages of project cycles or planning, but rather after major decisions have been made. These institutions tend to be independent on external initiators and facilitators, but may become self-dependent.
6	Interactive participation	People participate in joint analysis, which leads to action plans and the formation of new local institutions or the strengthening of existing ones. It tends to involve interdisciplinary methodologies that seek multiple perspectives and make use of systematic and structuring learning processes. These groups take control decisions, and so people have a stake in maintaining structures or practices.
7	Self-mobilisation	People participate by taking initiatives of external institutions to change systems. Such self-initiated mobilisation and collective action may or may not challenge existing inequitable distributions of wealth and power.

Ownership & Accountability Tool

For sustainable project results the role of local communities is critical. It is therefore important to ensure that these local communities can assume ownership and a sense of accountability with regard to use and management of the natural resources within their community domain. From work done in dry land environments in the Sahel (community forestry) and in the Middle East (water resource and range management), it appears that if essential pre-conditions for such ownership and accountability for management practices are not fulfilled this will form almost insurmountable constraints for local users to sustain the management of their local land and water resources be that for agriculture, orchards or grazing. Similarly, in many cases local farmers will not assume ownership because they do not feel that the activity, investment and/or its results are really theirs (ownership). Important preconditions for communities to assume ownership and accountability are assured benefits, resource rights, appropriate knowledge and claim-making power (Laban, 1994; Laban et al, 2009; Laban and Haddad, 2015). Investment interventions in farming communities therefore need to take this into account to be valid and sustainable.

The evaluators applied a tool to measure the degree to which the beneficiaries of the projects (male and female) share a sense of ownership with respect to the benefits, resource rights, knowledge and claim-making power. A total of 20 questions rated the 4 criteria, the result of which was presented in graphs that were compared across projects, locations and beneficiary groups.

Site Visits

The information obtained through interviews was complemented with site visits in various locations in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. The visits allowed the team to get an idea of the actual realisations and the project context.

Efficiency Assessment

The “efficiency” assessment was largely based on a comparative analysis of cost of overhead and interventions, based on the projects' financial reports and their respective contributions to outcomes.

Attribution or contribution of the observed changes to interventions.

Changes on indicators were attributed to an intervention only if there was enough evidence supporting causality and if other potential causes were satisfactorily ruled out. As, however, deciding what evidence is ‘enough’ and ‘satisfactorily’ is no mathematical process, peer review of collected evidence and collective decision making in the team was used, so that all expertise available in the team was used optimally and conclusions were triangulated.

Systematic contribution analysis from output to outcome level results was based on efforts to dissect the contribution gap by mapping out “pathways of change” that distinguish early from more advanced signs of progress. These change stories had to logically support contribution claims.

Validation and triangulation

As a rule, conclusions can only be drawn if there are sufficient independent sources (at least two) that support them. To guarantee participation of all necessary informants, it is important to assure the anonymity of sources in the report. No quotes or statements were published unless explicit approval has been given. Further the team kept a keen eye on potential interrelatedness and interdependency of sources.

Independence of the evaluation team

The team members are independent of the subject of evaluation. The independent operation of the team was ensured in the following manners:

- Information sources were systematically documented
- Field visits / meetings took place without NRO project staff being present
- In the evaluation findings facts were separated from opinions, and sources were be

documented (while respecting the anonymity of respondents)

- Findings were weighed against the robustness of evidence provided, and
- Evidence was analysed jointly by the team and conclusions verified with the project stakeholders, to even-out any interests that may have arisen during the evaluation.

Data Analysis

All interviews, focus group discussions and site visits were registered, to enable the comparison of data during the phase of analysis. Findings were triangulated and compared with the results of the participation and ownership tools. The scores of the latter were averaged and compared across projects or beneficiary groups, while the results were graphically presented. The qualitative data collected during the field work period were compared with the project monitoring data and, where applicable and available, statistical information.

Annex 4: References

- Programme related documents*
- Gaza BufferZone project proposal - FINAL VERSION
 - Gaza BufferZone project, Final Financial Report
 - Gaza BufferZone project, Final Technical Report
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 - HVC FAO First amendment_Budget of HVC programme -considering the PHH top up 26 Sep 2013
 - HVC FAO First amendment_Summary proposal of approved PHH amendment made to the HVC programme 26 Sep 2013
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 - L&WRM UAWC Final Report_LWRM_NRO_PMU_F
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 - L&WRM UAWC Project Data Base
 - L&WRM UAWC Report 1 July to 31 December 2013 IF
 - L&WRM UAWC Report 1 July to 31 December 2013 Revised F separate report
 - L&WRM UAWC Report Financial 1 jan - 31 dec 2014
 - L&WRM UAWC Report Narrative and Financial Report 1 jan - 31 dec 2014
 - National Agriculture Sector Strategy 2014-2016
 - NRO Annual Report 2014
 - NRO Multi-Annual Strategic Plan 2014-2017
 - PA Agriculture Sector Strategy
 - Palestinian Economic Initiative
 - Palestinian National Development Plan

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 SPS FAO PROPOSAL final April 2014
 SPS FAO PROPOSAL Master Document 25 March 2014
 SPS FAO Report IF 2014 27 March 2015

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Annex 5: List of Persons Met

List of participants in Focus Group Discussions and Semi-Structured Interviews

	Name	Position	Organization
<i>NRO</i>	Gert Kampman	Deputy Head/Head of Development Cooperation	NRO
	Wijnand Marchal	First Secretary Food Security	NRO
	Michael Duijff	Head of Operations/Consular and Finance	NRO
	Thameen Hijawi	Advisor	NRO
<i>Programme Staff</i>	Azam Saleh	Programme Director	FAO
	Nasser Samara	HVC Project Director	FAO
	Foad Abu Seif	Acting general director	UAWC
	D. Mohammad Awad	Land development project team leader	UAWC
	Omar Tabakhnah	M&E manager	UAWC
	Medhat Atawneh	Project coordinator	LRC
	Reslan Shanableh	Project coordinator	LRC
	Kanaan Al-Sewadeh	Project coordinator	PHG
	Emad Ed-deen Jawabreh	Project coordinator	ESDC
	Bahaa Ed-Deen Natour	Project coordinator	UAWC
	Sami Dauod	Project coordinator	PHG
	Emad Ed-Deen Jawabreh	Project coordinator	ESDC
	Mohammad Mara'i	Project coordinator	UAWC
	Saleh hammad	Project coordinator	UAWC
	Islam Nayrookh	HVC project manger	UAWC
	Sa'adah Abo Sheikah	Jenin area director	UAWC
<i>Halhoul L&WRM</i>	Esam Abu Asbeh	Farmer	Land Reclamation/ Roads
	Ahmad Al-Saadah	Farmer	Land Reclamation/ Roads
<i>May 7</i>	Adel Saadah	Farmer	Land Reclamation/ Roads
	Ashraf Saadah	Farmer	Land Reclamation/ Roads
	Belal Saadah	Farmer	Land Reclamation/ Roads
	Adnan Abu Rayyan	Farmer	Land Reclamation/ Roads
	Omar Tabakhna	Farmer	Land Reclamation/ Roads
	Sumayyah Saadah	Farmer	Land Reclamation/ Roads
	Jehad Doudah	Farmer	Land Reclamation/ Roads
	Entesar Mohammad	Farmer	Land Reclamation/ Roads
	Najah Abu Rayyan	Farmer	Land Reclamation/ Roads
	Kamel Alqashqesh	Farmer	Land Reclamation/ Roads
<i>Beit Hasan / Nablus L&WRM</i>	Khaled Hamadan	Head of village Council/ Farmer	Solar Energy/ Land Reclamation
	Tamer Hamdan	Farmer	Land Reclamation/ Roads
	Mohammad Eshtayeh	Farmer	Land Reclamation/ Roads
<i>May 9</i>	Mohammad Saleh	Farmer	Solar Energy
	Bade'a Mubarak	Farmer	Land Reclamation/ Roads
	Zahi Mahmoud	Farmer	Solar Energy
	Bahjat Eshtayeh	Farmer	Land Reclamation/ Roads
	Nafeesah Hamed	Farmer	Land Reclamation/ Roads
	Amer Eshtayeh	Farmer	Land Reclamation/ Roads
	Hasan Jaber	Farmer	Land Reclamation/ Roads
	Mohammad Dauod	Farmer	Land Reclamation/ Roads
<i>Tammun and Jordan</i>	Hazzaa Daraghmeh	Chairperson of Al ard Agricultural cooperative	Jeftlek
	Rafat Shaheen	Member Froush Beit Dajan	Froush Beit Dajan

<i>Valley</i>		cooperative	
<i>HVC</i>	Ameed Mohammad	Member Froush Beit Dajan cooperative	Froush Beit Dajan
<i>May 9</i>	Esam Foqha	Chairperson Albaidaa Cooperative	Ein Albaidaa
	Ghassan foqaha	Chairperson	Kardalah
	Mohammad Radwan	Member Kardla Agricultural cooperative	Kardalah
	Mohammad Hussein Besharat	Chairperson Tammoun Agricultural Association	Tammoun
<i>Maythalon / Jenin</i>	Muneer Barham	Sirees	Agricultural Roads
	Jamal Nairat	Maythalon	Agricultural Roads/ Recharge wells
<i>L&WRM</i>	Muneer Hasan	Maythalon	Agricultural Roads/ Recharge wells
<i>May 10</i>	Yousef Fayez	Sirees	Agricultural Roads
	Fayez Nairat	Maythalon	Agricultural Roads/ Recharge wells
	Khair Mohammad	Msalyeh	Agricultural Roads
	Adeeb Nairat	Maythalon	Agricultural Roads/ Recharge wells
	Sireen Nairat	Maythalon	Agricultural Roads/ Recharge wells
	Samah Rabaiaa	Maythalon	Agricultural Roads/ Recharge wells
	Hazza'a Abu Khader	Aljdayydeh	Agricultural Roads
	Bassam Eisah	Sanour	Agricultural Roads
	Jawad Eisah	Sanour	Agricultural Roads
	Mohammad Qtait	Sirees	Agricultural Roads
	Arafat Fakhouri	Jabaa	Agricultural Roads
	Maher Malaysheh	Jabaa	Agricultural Roads
	Muneer Nairat	Maythalon	Agricultural Roads/ Recharge wells
	Maarouf Rabaiaa	Maythalon	Agricultural Roads/ Recharge wells
	Abdel-Qader Rabaiaa	Maythalon	Agricultural Roads/ Recharge wells
	Mohammad Rabaiaa	Maythalon	Agricultural Roads/ Recharge wells
	Rafe' Rabaiaa	Maythalon	Agricultural Roads/ Recharge wells
	Ahmad Saif	Maythalon	Agricultural Roads/ Recharge wells
<i>Burqeen/ Jenin</i>	Mohammad Mura'i	Kafr Dan	Chairperson/ Manager of cooperative marketing company
<i>HVC</i>	Mohammad Es'ayyed	Burqeen	Cooperative member
	Allam Khlouf	Burqeen	Cooperative member
<i>May 10</i>	Abd Es-Salam Sha'aban	Jalameh	Chairperson
	Mohammad Abu Rub	Qabatya	Cooperativ member
	Abdallah Nazzal	Qabatya	Cooperative member
<i>Jenin</i>	Mohammad Mura'i	Kafr Dan	Chairperson/ Manager of cooperative marketing company
<i>HVC</i>	Mohammad Es'ayyed	Burqeen	Cooperative member
	Allam Khlouf	Burqeen	Cooperative member

<i>May 10</i>	Abd Es-Salam Sha'aban Mohammad Abu Rub Abdallah Nazzal	Jalameh Qabatya Qabatya	Chairperson Cooperativ member Cooperative member
<i>Tulkarm</i>	Ahmad Khaled	Thennabeh	High Value Crops
<i>HVC</i>	Muntaser Kettaneh	Baqah	High Value Crops
<i>May 11</i>	Naeem Shukri	Atteel	High Value Crops
	Saeed Jaber	Baqah	High Value Crops
	Shareef	Atteel	High Value Crops
	Iyad Mallouh	Thennabeh	High Value Crops
	Alaa Awni	Thennabeh	High Value Crops
<i>Tulkarm/N azleh</i>	Saif Ed-Deen Kittaneh	Alnazleh Alsharqyeh	Project Committee
<i>Sharqeyeh</i>	Waleed Kittaneh	Alnazleh Alsharqyeh	Member of Project
<i>L&WRM</i>	Ahmad Kittaneh	Alnazleh Alsharqyeh	Member of Village Council
	Husni Hamad	Saida	Member of Village Council
<i>May 11</i>	Tayseer Raddad	Saida	Member of Village Council
	Mansour Kittaneh	Alnazleh Alsharqyeh	Farmer
	Ibraheem Hamad	Saida	Farmer
	Hatem Kittaneh	Alnazleh Alsharqyeh	Farmer
	Ahmad Kittaneh	Alnazleh Alsharqyeh	Farmer
	Ramzi Asi	Beit Leqya	Farmer
	Omar Awad	Far'oun	Farmer
	Naser Kittaneh	Alnazleh Alsharqyeh	Farmer
	Khaled Sami	Alnazleh Alsharqyeh	Farmer
	Watheq Ghazi	Bal'a	Farmer
	Tareq Ghazi	Bal'a	Farmer
	Ibraheem Abdallah	Alnazleh Alsharqyeh	Farmer
	Hatem Raddad	Saida	Farmer
	Rashad Kittaneh	Alnazleh Alsharqyeh	Head of Village council
<i>Qalqilia</i>	Rami Aljada'	Hablah	High Value Crops
<i>HVC</i>	Jameel Dauod	Qalqilyah	High Value Crops
<i>May 12</i>	Ahmad Zaid	Qalqilyah	High Value Crops
	Mohammad Baker	Azzoun	High Value Crops
	Saeed Younes	Qalqilyah	High Value Crops
	Othman Abu Khader	Qalqilyah	High Value Crops
<i>Kafr Laqif women cooperative</i>	Ammal Naser	Chairperson	High Value Crops
	Huda Jaber	Member	High Value Crops
	Hanan Awad	Member	High Value Crops
<i>Qalqilia</i>	Saryeh Jaber	Member	High Value Crops
<i>HVC</i>	Manal Assaf	Member	High Value Crops
<i>May 12</i>	Dalal Assaf	Member	High Value Crops
	Basemah Awad	Member	High Value Crops
	Shireen Jaber	Member	High Value Crops
	Tharwat Jarrar	Treasures	High Value Crops
<i>Beit Lahia cooperati- ves</i>	Jamal Mai	Gaza COOP	
	Jamal Abd Naja	Agricultural COOP	
	Kamal Abdallah Sabbah	Alamena	
<i>HVC</i>	Jalal Fadous	farmers union	
	Yosef El Zaneen	Bet Hanoon COOP	
<i>May 18</i>	Mohammed Gaben	Bit Lahia COOP	
	Haded Ata kelany	Biet lahia COOP	
	Mahmoud Ibrahiem Shafiee	Farmer	
	Jalal Warsh Agha	Farmer	
	Mohammed Badaan bala	Farmer	
	Mohammed Akram Hamdona	Farmer	

	Jihad Mohammed Hamdona	Farmer
	Abd Jalel Mai	Farmer
	Ayman Sobhi Sohof	Farmer
<i>Gaza City</i>	Refqa Al Hamalawi	Food processing unit
<i>17 May</i>	Sana Ghool	Food processing unit
	Hind Khres	Food processing unit
	Nema Abu Farea	Farmers
	Mariam Suliman Dahel	Farmers
	Fadwa Mohammed Abu Mateq	Farmers
	Safeia Salim Khateeb	Farmers
	Ibrahiem Mahmoud Abu Kaidah	Farmer
	Ibrahiem Abu Ghazzal	Farmer
	Mohammed Abu Ghararah	Farmer
	Mohammed Suliman Abu Farieh	Farmer
	Sabah Abu Ghararah	Farmer
	Mohammed Ahmed Abu Mured	Farmer
	Ahmed Mohammed Abu Kaidah	Farmer
	Khaled Othaman Harb	Farmer
<i>Beit Lahia cooperatives</i>	Jamal Mai	Gaza COOP
	Jamal Abd Naja	Agricultural COOP
	Kamal Abdallah Sabbah	Alamena
<i>HVC</i>	Jalal Fadous	farmers union
<i>May 18</i>	Yosef El Zaneen	Bet Hanoon COOP
	Mohammed Gaben	Bit Lahia COOP
	Haded Ata kelany	Biet lahia COOP
	Mahmoud Ibrahiem Shafiee	Farmer
	Jalal Warsh Agha	Farmer
	Mohammed Badaan bala	Farmer
	Mohammed Akram Hamdona	Farmer
	Jihad Mohammed Hamdona	Farmer
	Abd Jalel Mai	Farmer
	Ayman Sobhi Sohof	Farmer
<i>HVC Project Team Gaza</i>	Ibrahim Khudair	field supervisor
<i>May 18</i>	Joma El Hashash	field supervisor
	Samer Shair	field supervisor
	Mousa Al Jadba	field supervisor
	Raed Jilal	field coordinator
	Basher Al Anakh	project manager
	Mahammed Al Bakri	general director
<i>MoA Gaza</i>	Nabil Abu Shamala	Director of strategic planning
<i>May 19</i>	Wael Thbet	Director of plant protection department

Annex 6: Terms of Reference



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